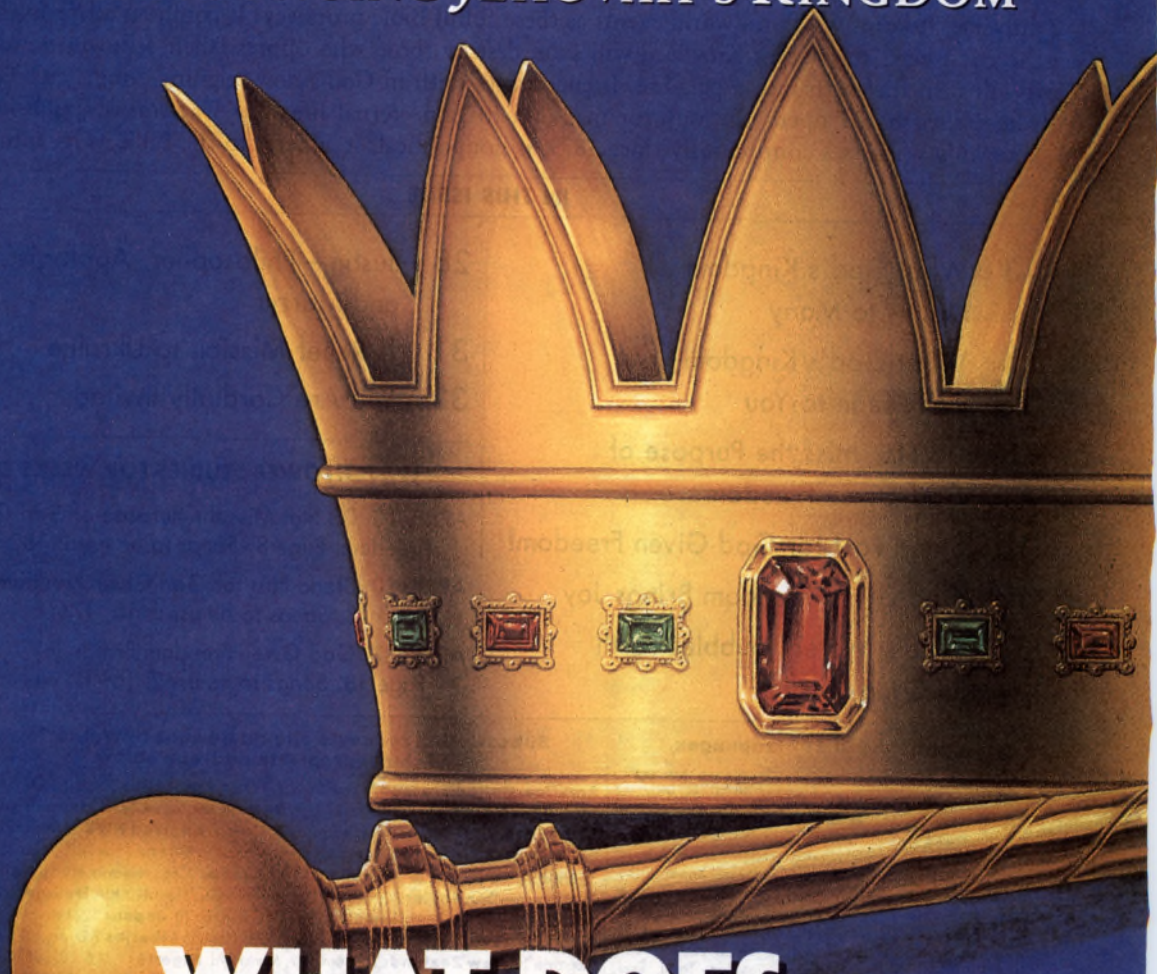


MARCH 15, 1992

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



**WHAT DOES
GOD'S KINGDOM
MEAN TO YOU?**

THE WATCHTOWER[®]

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

March 15, 1992

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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.

IN THIS ISSUE

- 3 What God's Kingdom Means to Many
- 4 What God's Kingdom Can Mean to You
- 8 Do Not Miss the Purpose of God-Given Freedom
- 13 Stand Fast for God-Given Freedom!
- 18 God-Given Freedom Brings Joy
- 24 "Life's Water" Bubbles Forth in Cape Verde

- 28 Justin—Philosopher, Apologist, and Martyr
- 31 A Relief Mission to Ukraine
- 32 You Are Cordially Invited

WATCHTOWER STUDIES FOR WEEKS OF

- APRIL 13: Do Not Miss the Purpose of God-Given Freedom. Page 8. *Songs to be used:* 160, 111.
- APRIL 20: Stand Fast for God-Given Freedom! Page 13. *Songs to be used:* 10, 174.
- APRIL 27: God-Given Freedom Brings Joy. Page 18. *Songs to be used:* 16, 19.

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What God's Kingdom Means to Many

JESUS CHRIST often spoke about the Kingdom of God.

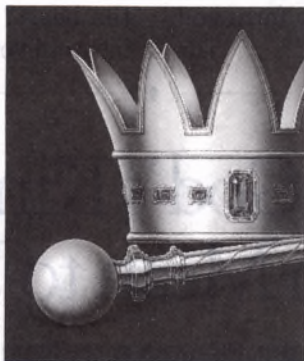
In this regard historian H. G. Wells wrote: "Remarkable is the enormous prominence given by Jesus to the teaching of what he called the Kingdom of Heaven, and its comparative insignificance in the procedure and teaching of most of the Christian churches. This doctrine of the Kingdom of Heaven, which was the main teaching of Jesus, and which plays so small a part in the Christian creeds, is certainly one of the most revolutionary doctrines that ever stirred and changed human thought."

Why do the churches have so little to say about God's Kingdom? One reason may be that there is uncertainty about the Kingdom. What views have been held concerning it?

How the Kingdom Has Been Viewed

Some have identified God's Kingdom with the Catholic Church. After the bishops accepted Emperor Constantine as their head at the Council of Nicaea in the year 325 C.E., the church became involved in politics, and the people were told that the Kingdom had already come. The *Encyclopædia Britannica* explains that according to the theology of Augustine (354-430 C.E.), "the Kingdom of God has already begun in this world with the institution of the church" and is "already present in the sacraments of the church."

Others view God's Kingdom as a human



achievement. Says the same encyclopedia: "The Reformation churches . . . soon became institutional territorial churches, which in turn repressed the end-time expectation" regarding the coming of God's Kingdom. H. G. Wells wrote: "Men shifted the reference of their lives from the kingdom of God and the brotherhood of mankind to those apparently more living realities, France and England, Holy Russia, Spain, Prussia . . . They were the real and living gods of Europe."

In modern times too, the Kingdom has been secularized. The *Encyclopædia Britannica* explains: "Characteristic is the basic attitude that man himself has to prepare the future perfect society in a formative and organizing manner and that 'hoping' and 'awaiting' are replaced by human initiative." Regarding the "social gospel," the same reference work continues: "This movement viewed the Christian message of the Kingdom of God mainly as an impulse for the reorganization of the secular conditions of society in the sense of a Kingdom of God ethic."

Many Jews have also viewed the Kingdom as a human achievement. In 1937 a conference of Reform rabbis in Columbus, Ohio, U.S.A., said: "We regard it as our historic task to co-operate with all men in the establishment of the kingdom of God, of universal brotherhood, justice, truth and peace on earth. This is our messianic goal."

Another widely held view is that God's Kingdom is a condition of one's heart. In the United States, for instance, the Southern Baptist Convention of 1925 declared: "The Kingdom of God is the reign of God in the heart and life of the individual in every human relationship, and in every form and institution of organized society. . . . The

Kingdom of God will be complete when every thought and will of man shall be brought into captivity to the will of Christ."

So, then, is the church the Kingdom of God? Will that Kingdom be brought about through secular means? Is it a condition of the heart? And what can God's Kingdom mean to you?

What God's Kingdom Can Mean to You

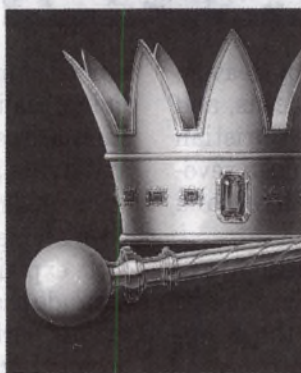
JESUS CHRIST taught his followers to pray: "Let your kingdom come." (Matthew 6:10) How often those words have been addressed to God by those professing to be Jesus' followers!

However, Jesus did more than teach his disciples to pray for the Kingdom of God. He made the Kingdom a principal subject of his preaching work. In fact, the *Encyclopædia Britannica* says that God's Kingdom "is generally considered to be the central theme of Jesus' teaching."

When Christ's followers pray for the Kingdom, for what are they actually praying? What can God's Kingdom mean to them and to you? And how did Jesus view it?

Jesus' View of the Kingdom

Jesus often called himself "the Son of man." (Matthew 10:23; 11:19; 16:28; 20:18, 28) This reminds us of the prophet Daniel's reference to "a son of man."



Concerning a future heavenly event, Daniel said: "I kept on beholding in the visions of the night, and, see there! with the clouds of the heavens someone like a son of man happened to be coming; and to the Ancient of Days he gained access, and they brought him up close even before that One. And to him there were given

rulership and dignity and kingdom, that the peoples, national groups and languages should all serve even him."—Daniel 7: 13, 14.

Speaking about the time when he would receive this rulership, Jesus told his apostles: "When the Son of man sits down upon his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also yourselves sit upon twelve thrones." Jesus also said: "When the Son of man arrives in his glory, . . . all the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. . . . These [unrighteous ones] will

depart into everlasting cutting-off, but the righteous ones into everlasting life." —Matthew 19:28; 25:31, 32, 46.

These prophetic references to thrones and all the national groups indicate that the Kingdom is a government in which Jesus and some of his followers would be rulers over mankind. That government would have the power to cut off the unrighteous in death. Under Kingdom rule, however, those righteously disposed would receive God's gift of eternal life.

Clearly, then, the Kingdom of God is a divinely instituted heavenly government. The Kingdom is not the church, and the Scriptures do not allow for a secular view of it. Furthermore, a God-given government could not be something merely within a person's heart. Since God's Kingdom is a government, it does not become something in our heart when we embrace Christianity. But why do some think that the Kingdom is a condition involving the heart?

The Kingdom Within Us?

Some feel that the Kingdom is in our heart because of the way Luke 17:21 has been rendered by certain Bible translators. According to the *New International Version*, Jesus there said: "The kingdom of God is within you."

In this regard *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* states: "Although frequently cited as an example of Jesus' 'mysticism' or 'inwardness,' this interpretation rests chiefly upon the old translation, 'within you,' . . . understood in the unfortunate modern sense of 'you' as singular; the 'you' . . . is plural (Jesus is addressing the Pharisees—vs. 20) . . . The theory that the kingdom of God is an inner state of mind, or of personal salvation, runs

counter to the context of this verse, and also to the whole N[ew] T[estament] presentation of the idea."

A footnote to Luke 17:21 in the *New International Version* shows that Jesus' words could be rendered: "The kingdom of God is among you." Other Bible translations read: "The kingdom of God is among you" or "is in the midst of you." (*The New English Bible*; *The Jerusalem Bible*; *Revised Standard Version*) According to the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, Jesus said: "The kingdom of God is in your midst." Jesus did not mean that the Kingdom was in the hearts of the proud Pharisees whom he was addressing. Rather, as the long-awaited Messiah and King-Designate, Jesus was in their very midst. But some time would pass before God's Kingdom would come.

When It Would Come

Certain followers of Jesus Christ have been chosen as his corulers in the heavenly Messianic Kingdom. Like Jesus, they die in faithfulness to God and are resurrected to spirit life in heaven. (1 Peter 3:18) Comparatively few in number, they will be 144,000 kings and priests bought from among mankind. (Revelation 14:1-4; 20:6) Jesus' corulers include his faithful apostles. —Luke 12:32.

Speaking to his followers on one occasion, Jesus promised: "There are some of those standing here that will not taste death at all until first they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." (Matthew 16:28) Interestingly, the next verse indicates that Jesus' promise was fulfilled just a few days later. He then took three of his disciples up into a mountain where he was transfigured before them, and they thus had a vision of him in Kingdom glory.

(Matthew 17:1-9) But the Kingdom was not established at that time. When would that take place?

One of Jesus' illustrations indicates that he would not immediately be installed as Messianic King. At Luke 19:11-15, we read: "He spoke . . . an illustration, because he was near Jerusalem and they were imagining that the kingdom of God was going to display itself instantly. Therefore he said: 'A certain man of noble birth traveled to a distant land to secure kingly power for himself and to return. Calling ten slaves of his he gave them ten minas and told them, "Do business till I come." . . . Eventually when he got back after having secured the kingly power, he commanded to be called to him these slaves to whom he had given the silver money, in order to ascertain what they had gained by business activity.'"

In those days it could take some time for a man to travel from Israel to Rome, wait in that city until he secured kingly power, and return to his homeland as king. Jesus was the "man of noble birth." He would receive power as King from his Father in heaven but would not immediately be installed as Messianic King. His followers would do business by carrying on the work of proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom for a considerable time before he would return as King.

How the Kingdom Comes

What are lovers of God requesting when they pray for his Kingdom to come? They are actually asking that the heavenly Kingdom take decisive action by destroying man-made governmental systems that have failed to live up to their promise of bringing about true peace and prosperity. Pointing to this development, the prophet Daniel wrote: "In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom

that will never be brought to ruin. And the kingdom itself will not be passed on to any other people. It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite." (Daniel 2:44) When would this happen?

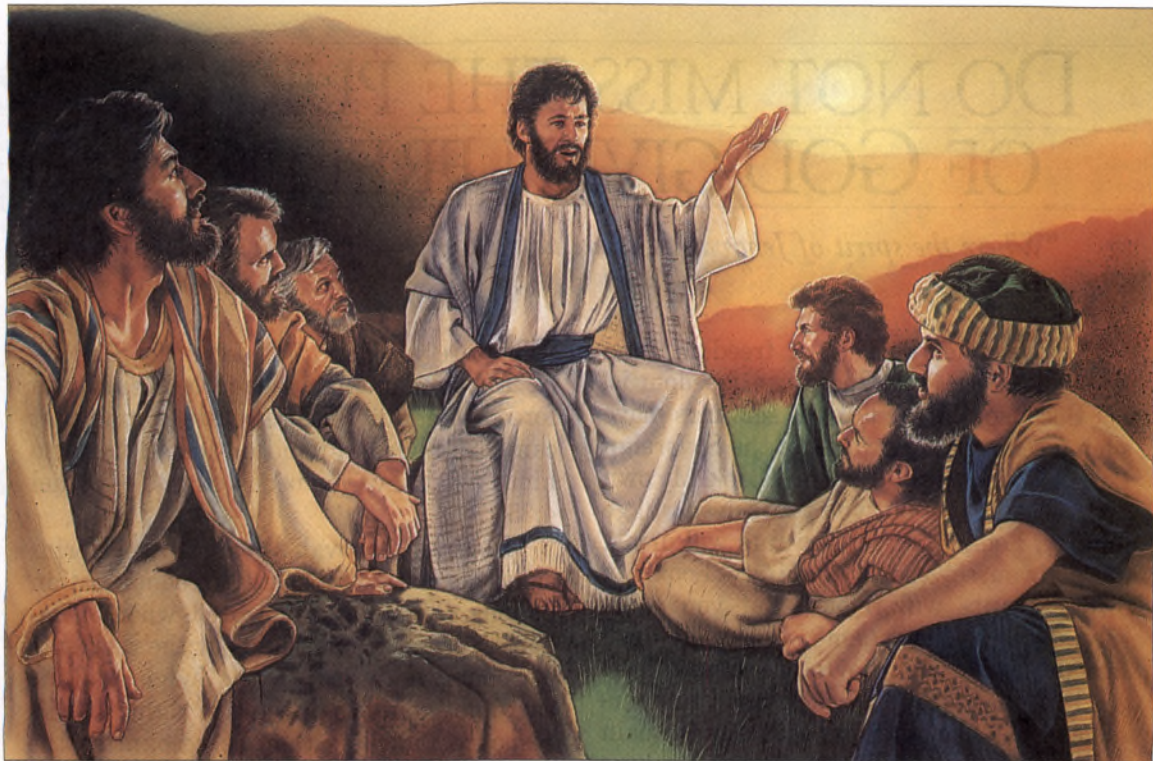
Jesus foretold that this would take place within the generation of those who would witness an extraordinary upheaval in human affairs. Concerning his "presence," Jesus gave a composite "sign" involving such developments as unparalleled warfare, earthquakes, famines, pestilences—yes, and the worldwide preaching of the good news of God's Kingdom.—Matthew, chapters 24, 25; Mark, chapter 13; Luke, chapter 21.

Jesus' prophecy involves events taking place right now—in our 20th century. Hence, it will not be long before God's Kingdom brings grand blessings to mankind. You can be among those to enjoy the benefits of Kingdom rule. But just what can God's Kingdom mean to you and your loved ones?

Blessings of Kingdom Rule

Happiness will prevail earth wide. Under "a new heaven"—the heavenly Kingdom—will be "a new earth," a global society of obedient Kingdom subjects. "God himself will be with them," wrote the apostle John. "And he will wipe out every tear from their eyes." There will be no reason for anything but happiness then, for "neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore."—Revelation 21:1-4.

Death will be no more. This terrible cause of grief will no longer rob us of friends and loved ones. "As the last enemy, death is to be brought to nothing." (1 Corinthians 15:26) What joy will exist when funerals are supplanted by resurrections of those in God's memory!—John 5:28, 29.



Vibrant health will replace illness and infirmity. No longer will hospital beds be filled with those troubled by physical and mental illnesses. The Master Physician, Jesus Christ, will apply the value of his ransom sacrifice “for the curing of the nations.” (Revelation 22:1, 2; Matthew 20:28; 1 John 2:1, 2) The cures he performed while on the earth were but a sample of what he will do by means of the Kingdom. —Compare Isaiah 33:24; Matthew 14:14.

Food supplies will be abundant. As the psalmist said, “there will come to be plenty of grain on the earth; on the top of the mountains there will be an overflow.” (Psalm 72:16) To this, Isaiah’s prophecy adds: “Jehovah of armies will certainly make for all the peoples, in this mountain, a banquet of well-oiled dishes, a banquet of wine kept on the dregs, of well-oiled dishes

Do you believe what Jesus said about God’s Kingdom?

filled with marrow, of wine kept on the dregs, filtered.” (Isaiah 25:6) Surely, famine will not stalk earth’s inhabitants under Kingdom rule.

The entire earth will become a paradise. Thus will be fulfilled this promise of Jesus to a contrite evildoer: “You will be with me in Paradise.” (Luke 23:43) You too can enjoy life eternal on this earth, an earth cleansed of wickedness and transformed into a pleasurable, parklike globe.—John 17:3.

These marvelous prospects are set before all obedient mankind. Jehovah’s inspired Word, the Bible, gives these blessed assurances. And all of this is what God’s Kingdom can mean to you.

DO NOT MISS THE PURPOSE OF GOD-GIVEN FREEDOM

"Where the spirit of Jehovah is, there is freedom."—2 CORINTHIANS 3:17.

JEHOVAH is the God of freedom. And what a blessing God-given freedom is! Because his dedicated servants have such freedom, these words of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah apply to them: "Look! My own servants will eat, but you yourselves will go hungry. Look! My own servants will drink, but you yourselves will go thirsty. Look! My own servants will rejoice, but you yourselves will suffer shame. Look! My own servants will cry out joyfully because of the good condition of the heart, but you yourselves will make outcries because of the pain of heart and you will howl because of sheer breakdown of spirit."—Isaiah 65:13, 14.

² God's people enjoy this spiritually prosperous state because they are led by his spirit, or active force. The apostle Paul said: "Jehovah is the Spirit; and where the spirit of Jehovah is, there is freedom." (2 Corinthians 3:17) What is the purpose of God-given freedom? And what is required of us to use it to the full?

The Freedom God Has

³ Jehovah alone has absolute freedom. None of his creatures can limit his freedom because he is Almighty God and the Universal Sovereign. As the faithful man Job said, "who can resist him? Who will say to him,

1. Why does Isaiah 65:13, 14 apply to Jehovah's Witnesses?

2. Why are Jehovah's people spiritually prosperous?

3. What kind of freedom does God have, and why?

"What are you doing?" (Job 9:12) Similarly, Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar was forced to admit: "There exists no one that can check [God's] hand or that can say to him, 'What have you been doing?'"—Daniel 4:35.

⁴ However, Jehovah's own righteous principles keep that absolute freedom within bounds. This was illustrated when Abraham expressed concern about the residents of Sodom and asked: "Is the Judge of all the earth not going to do what is right?" God's response indicates that he recognizes the responsibility to do what is right. He would not have destroyed Sodom if any righteous inhabitants had remained in it. (Genesis 18:22-33) God also keeps his freedom within bounds because his love and wisdom make him slow to anger and he exercises self-control.—Isaiah 42:14.

Limitations of Human Freedom

⁵ Though Jehovah has absolute freedom, all others act within limitations set by their nature, abilities, and realm of habitation, as well as such factors as the presently limited life-span of sinful humans. God created man with perfect freedom to function within the realm that Jehovah had set for him. There are several other reasons why human freedom is limited, not absolute.

4. How is it that Jehovah keeps his freedom within bounds?

5. What are some factors that limit human freedom?

Human freedom is limited by such factors as the law of gravity

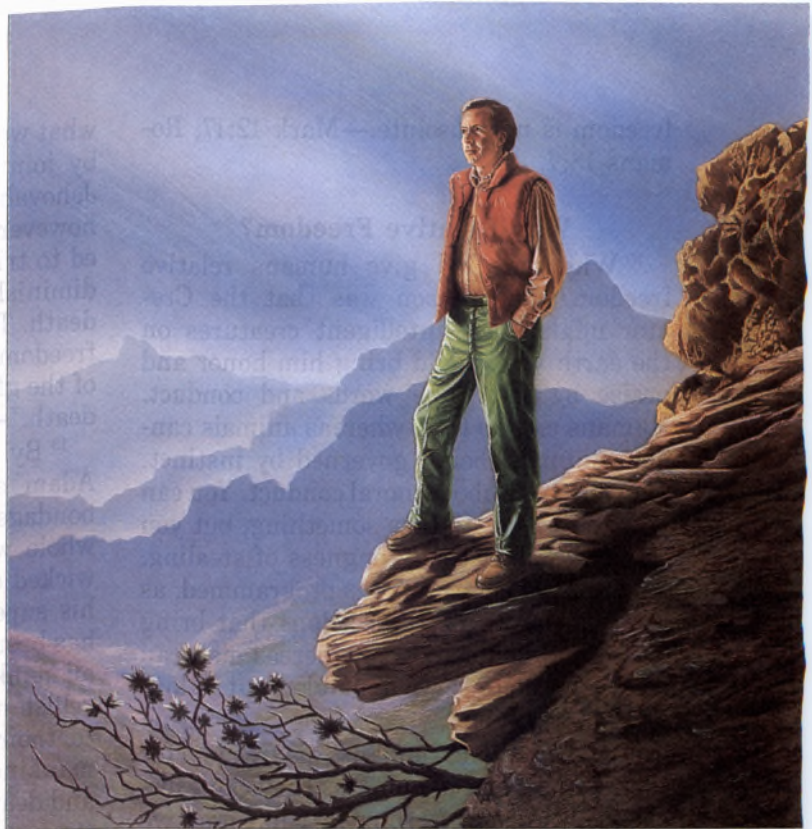
⁶ First, human freedom is limited because God created man to serve His purpose. Jehovah is 'worthy to receive the glory and the honor and the power because he created all things and because of his will they existed and were created.' (Revelation 4:11) So man is accountable to his Maker, who has rightly made laws by which humans are to be governed. In ancient Israel under the Mosaic Law, God required that individuals be put to death if they abused his name or broke the Sabbath law. (Exodus 20:7; 31:14, 15; Leviticus 24:13-16; Numbers 15:32-36) Though we as Christians are not under the Law, our freedom is limited because we are accountable to Jehovah, who is our Judge, Statute-giver, and King.—Isaiah 33:22; Romans 14:12.

⁷ Second, human freedom is limited because of God's physical laws. For example, because of the law of gravity, a man cannot jump off a skyscraper without harming or killing himself. Clearly, God's physical laws limit man's freedom to do certain things.

⁸ Third, human freedom is limited because of God's moral laws. Most likely, you have observed the outworking of what Paul wrote at Galatians 6:7, 8: "Do not be misled: God is not one to be mocked. For whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap; because he who is sowing with a view to his

6. Accountability to God has what bearing on our freedom?

7, 8. (a) How do physical laws limit human freedom? (b) What other laws of God limit our freedom as humans?



flesh will reap corruption from his flesh, but he who is sowing with a view to the spirit will reap everlasting life from the spirit." Incontrovertibly, Jehovah God's moral laws also limit our freedom, but obeying them is required for us to gain life.

⁹ Fourth, man's freedom is limited because he is part of human society. Hence, he should have freedom only to the extent that it does not unjustly interfere with that of others. Christians must be in subjection to governmental "superior authorities," obeying them as long as they do not demand that we violate God's laws. (Romans 13:1; Acts 5:29) For example, we should obey laws regarding payment of taxes, the speed at which we drive an automobile, and so forth. The fact that we must obey such laws of "Caesar" further shows that our God-given

9. How does our being part of human society limit our freedom?

freedom is not absolute.—Mark 12:17; Romans 13:7.

Why Relative Freedom?

¹⁰ Why did God give humans relative freedom? One reason was that the Creator might have intelligent creatures on the earth who would bring him honor and praise by their fine words and conduct. Humans can do this, whereas animals cannot. Animals, being governed by instinct, know nothing about moral conduct. You can train a dog not to take something, but you cannot teach it the wrongness of stealing. An animal with its actions programmed, as it were, cannot make decisions that bring praise and honor to God, whereas man can freely choose to serve his Maker out of love and appreciation.

¹¹ God also gives humans this freedom for their benefit and happiness. They can exercise their relative freedom by being creative and inventive, benevolent and cooperative. Humans also have freedom of choice in such matters as vocation and place of residence. Today, economic and political factors often limit that freedom of choice, but this may be due to human greed, not because of the way God originally created mankind.

¹² Though Jehovah gave humans great freedom, the vast majority today are in frustrating bondage. What happened? The first human pair, Adam and Eve, missed the purpose of God-given freedom. They went beyond divine limits on their freedom and challenged God's rightful rulership over them as the Sovereign Lord, Jehovah. (Genesis 3:1-7; Jeremiah 10:10; 50:31) Not content to use their freedom to honor God, they used it selfishly, to decide independently

what was right and what was wrong, thereby joining Satan in his rebellion against Jehovah. Instead of getting more freedom, however, sinful Adam and Eve were subjected to trialsome restrictions and bondage, a diminishing of their freedom, and finally death. Their offspring inherited this loss of freedom. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." "The wages sin pays is death."—Romans 3:23; 5:12; 6:23.

¹³ By reason of the rebellion in Eden, Adam and his offspring also came into bondage to Satan the Devil. Why, "the whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one"! (1 John 5:19) It is because of his superior power and ability that Satan has been able to deceive and make slaves of all mankind estranged from God. Moreover, selfish men have dominated fellow humans to their injury. (Ecclesiastes 8:9) Hence, mankind in general is now in bondage to sin and death, to Satan and his demons, and to the world's political, economic, and religious systems.

True Freedom Made Possible

¹⁴ Gaining freedom from sin, death, and the Devil and his world is bound up with God's determination to settle the issue regarding the rightfulness of his own universal sovereignty. Because Satan raised this issue, Jehovah has allowed him to remain in existence, even as He permitted Pharaoh to exist for a time. This is in order that Jehovah may fully demonstrate his power and have his name declared in all the earth. (Exodus 9:15, 16) God will soon vindicate himself as Universal Sovereign and sanctify his holy name by removing the reproach brought upon it through the rebellion of Satan, Adam, and Eve. Thus, those fearing

10, 11. Why did Jehovah give humans relative freedom?

12. Why are the majority of mankind in bondage?

13. Why has Satan been able to enslave humans?

14. Mankind's hope for true freedom is bound up with what?

Jehovah will be released from bondage to sin and death and will be brought into a new world of God-given freedom.—Romans 8: 19-23.

¹⁵ To restore freedom to humankind, God sent his Son to the earth as a man. By voluntarily giving up his perfect human life, God's Son, Jesus Christ, provided the ransom sacrifice, the basis for setting mankind free. (Matthew 20:28) He also proclaimed a message of freedom. At the beginning of his ministry, he applied to himself the words: "The spirit of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah is upon me, for the reason that Jehovah has anointed me to tell good news to the meek ones. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to those taken captive and the wide opening of the eyes even to the prisoners."—Isaiah 61:1; Luke 4:16-21.

¹⁶ How would people gain that freedom? Jesus said: "If you remain in my word, you are really my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." Thus, Jesus' followers have come to enjoy spiritual freedom. (John 8:31, 32, 36) Further, Jesus told Roman governor Pontius Pilate: "For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone that is on the side of the truth listens to my voice." (John 18:37) Jews who accepted the truth as preached and exemplified by Jesus repented of their sins, corrected their erring course, presented themselves to Jehovah, and were baptized as Jesus had been. (Matthew 3: 13-17; Acts 3:19) In this way they came to enjoy relative God-given freedom.

¹⁷ Jehovah gives his loyal servants free-

15. What role did Jesus play in the restoration of freedom to mankind?

16. What steps did first-century Jews have to take to gain true freedom?

17. Why does Jehovah give his servants freedom?

dom primarily in vindication of his own sovereignty but also for their comfort or benefit. He freed the Israelites from Egyptian bondage so that they might glorify him as a kingdom of priests, his witnesses. (Exodus 19:5, 6; Isaiah 43:10-12) Similarly, Jehovah brought his people out of Babylonian exile primarily to rebuild his temple and restore true worship. (Ezra 1:2-4) When the exiles concerned themselves only with their own material comforts, Jehovah sent his prophets Haggai and Zechariah to alert them to their obligations before God. Having their God-given freedom thus put in proper perspective resulted in the completion of the temple, to God's glory, and also in the comfort and well-being to his people.

Not Missing the Purpose of God-Given Freedom

¹⁸ What about God's modern-day servants? As an organization, they have not missed the purpose of their God-given freedom. In the 1870's they began to get free from Babylonish errors and to enjoy increased Christian freedom. This was in keeping with Proverbs 4:18, which says: "The path of the righteous ones is like the bright light that is getting lighter and lighter until the day is firmly established." Yet, as God's ancient people were taken into Babylonian captivity for a time, in 1918 Jehovah's servants came into a measure of bondage to Babylon the Great. (Revelation 17:1, 2, 5) Members of that world empire of false religion exulted when the figurative "two witnesses" lay spiritually dead. But by God's undeserved kindness, in 1919 his anointed servants were revived, being set free spiritually. (Revelation 11:3, 7-11) Putting their God-given freedom to use, they became zealous witnesses of the Most High.

18. Why can it be said that Jehovah's modern-day servants have not missed the purpose of their God-given freedom?

Therefore, how appropriate it was that they, in 1931, joyfully embraced the name Jehovah's Witnesses! (Isaiah 43:10-12) Particularly since 1935 have anointed Witnesses been joined by "a great crowd," who hope to gain eternal life on earth. They too are not missing the purpose of their God-given freedom.—Revelation 7:9-17.

¹⁹ Jehovah's people are putting their God-given freedom to good use in two especially noteworthy ways. For one thing, they use it to pursue an upright course. (1 Peter 2:16) And what a fine reputation they have! For example, a man once entered a Kingdom Hall in Zurich, Switzerland, and said that he wanted to become one of Jehovah's Witnesses. Asked why, he stated that his sister was a Witness and had been disfellowshipped for immorality. He said: 'That's the organization I want to join—one that does not tolerate bad conduct.' With good reason the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* has observed that Jehovah's Witnesses have gained the reputation of being "one of the best-behaved groups in the world."

²⁰ Jehovah's Witnesses also make use of their God-given freedom by fulfilling their commission to preach the good news of the Kingdom, as Jesus did. (Matthew 4:17) By word of mouth and printed page, both formally and informally, they are announcing Jehovah's Kingdom. In doing so they greatly benefit themselves by strengthening their faith and brightening their hope. Moreover, this activity serves to save both them and those who listen to them. (1 Timothy 4:16) Regarding this activity, the book *Dynamic Religious Movements* says: "It would be difficult to find members of any other group who work as hard at their religion as do the Witnesses."

19, 20. (a) What is one noteworthy way in which Jehovah's people put their God-given freedom to good use? (b) In what other notable way do Jehovah's Witnesses make good use of the freedom God has given them?

²¹ How Jehovah is blessing us in carrying out the purpose of our God-given freedom! This can be seen from last year's field service report—a peak of over four million Kingdom publishers, with over ten million attending the Memorial of Jesus' death. In one survey, Ireland had 29 consecutive monthly publisher peaks; Mexico had 78 peaks in 80 months; and Japan had 153 peaks in a row!

Make Good Use of Your God-Given Freedom

²² If you are one of Jehovah's dedicated Witnesses, are you making good use of the freedom that God has given you? Each of us might well ask himself: 'Am I careful to use my God-given freedom so as to avoid stumbling anyone by wrong conduct? Am I conscientiously obeying the laws of Caesar, though putting God's law first? Do I fully cooperate with the congregation elders? Am I using my God-given freedom to the full in preaching the good news? Do I always have "plenty to do in the work of the Lord"? Am I avidly pursuing a secular career when I could be putting my God-given freedom to

21. What evidence is there that Jehovah is blessing the ministry of his people?

22. What is the essence of some thought-provoking questions we might ask ourselves?

How Would You Answer?

- ☐ What kind of freedom does God have?
- ☐ Human freedom has what limitations?
- ☐ How was true freedom made possible?
- ☐ What must we do to avoid missing the purpose of God-given freedom?

better use by expanding my ministry, reaching out for greater responsibility in the congregation or for full-time service?' —1 Corinthians 15:58.

²³ May all of us "taste and see that Jehovah is good." (Psalm 34:8) Let us trust in

23. What should we do so that we do not miss the purpose of God-given freedom?

him, conform to his laws, and glorify his holy name by zealously announcing his Kingdom. Remember that those 'sowing bountifully will also reap bountifully.' (2 Corinthians 9:6) Therefore, let us render wholehearted service to Jehovah and show that we have not missed the purpose of our God-given freedom.

STAND FAST FOR GOD-GIVEN FREEDOM!

"For such freedom Christ set us free. Therefore stand fast, and do not let yourselves be confined again in a yoke of slavery."—GALATIANS 5:1.

JEHOVAH'S people are free. But they do not seek independence from God, for that would mean bondage to Satan. They cherish their close relationship with Jehovah and rejoice in the freedom he gives them.

² Our first parents, Adam and Eve, lost God-given freedom by sinning and becoming slaves of sin, death, and the Devil. (Genesis 3:1-19; Romans 5:12) Why, Satan put the whole world on the sinful road to destruction! But those standing fast for God-given freedom walk on the road to life eternal.—Matthew 7:13, 14; 1 John 5:19.

Freedom From Bondage

³ Jehovah purposed that humans honoring his name would be free from bondage to Satan, sin, and death. That hope was held

- 1, 2. How was God-given freedom lost?
3. What hope did God hold out in Eden?

out when God told the serpent used by Satan in Eden: "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." (Genesis 3:14, 15) Jesus Christ, the Seed from Jehovah's heavenly organization, suffered a bruised heel when he died on the stake, but God thus provided a ransom sacrifice to free believing mankind from sin and death. (Matthew 20:28; John 3:16) In time, Jesus will bruise the head of Satan, the original Serpent.—Revelation 12:9.

⁴ Some 2,000 years after the promise given in Eden, "Jehovah's friend" Abraham obeyed God and left the city of Ur for another place. (James 2:23; Hebrews 11:8) He thus received God-given freedom and no longer lived as a slave of Satan's world of

4. What freedom was enjoyed by Abraham, and what did Jehovah promise him?

false religion, corrupt politics, and greedy commerce. To the Edenic prophecy, God added promises that all families and nations would bless themselves by means of Abraham and his Seed. (Genesis 12:3; 22:17, 18) Abraham was free of condemnation because 'he put faith in Jehovah, who counted it to him as righteousness.' (Genesis 15:6) Today, a close relationship with Jehovah similarly brings God-given freedom from condemnation and from slavery to the world lying in Satan's power.

A Gripping Symbolic Drama

⁵ So that Abraham might have a seed, his barren wife, Sarah, offered him her servant girl, Hagar, as a child bearer. By her, Abraham fathered Ishmael, but God did not choose him as the promised Seed. Rather, when Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah was 90, Jehovah enabled them to have a son named Isaac. When Ishmael mocked Isaac, Hagar and her son were sent away, leaving Abraham's son by the free woman Sarah as Abraham's undisputed seed. Like Abraham, Isaac also exercised faith and enjoyed God-given freedom.—Genesis 16:1-16; 21:1-21; 25:5-11.

⁶ These events foreshadowed things very significant to lovers of God-given freedom. This was noted in the letter the apostle Paul wrote to the congregations of Galatia about 50 to 52 C.E. By then the governing body had decided that circumcision was not required of Christians. But false teachers had persuaded some of the Galatians that it was a vital feature of Christianity.

⁷ Paul told the Galatians: A person is declared righteous through faith in Christ, not by works of the Mosaic Law. (1:1-3:14)

5. The birth of Isaac was linked with what circumstances?

6, 7. Of what had false teachers convinced some Galatian Christians, but what did Paul explain?

The Law did not invalidate the promise linked with the Abrahamic covenant but made transgressions manifest and served as a tutor leading to Christ. (3:15-25) By his death, Jesus released those under Law, enabling them to become sons of God. Hence, returning to an arrangement of observing days, months, seasons, and years would mean going back into slavery. (4:1-20) Paul then wrote:

⁸ "Tell me, you who want to be under law, Do you not hear the Law? For example, it is written that Abraham acquired two sons, one [Ishmael] by the servant girl [Hagar] and one [Isaac] by the free woman [Sarah]; but the one by the servant girl was actually born in the manner of flesh, the other by the free woman through a promise. These things stand as a symbolic drama; for these women mean two covenants, the one [the Law covenant] from Mount Sinai [where God inaugurated that covenant with the Israelites], which brings forth children for slavery, and which is Hagar. [The other covenant was the one made with Abraham regarding his Seed.] Now this Hagar means Sinai, a mountain in Arabia, and she corresponds with the Jerusalem today, for she is in slavery with her children [descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob]. But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother."—Galatians 4:21-26.

⁹ In this symbolic drama, Abraham was a figure of Jehovah. "The free woman," Sarah, pictured God's "woman," or holy universal organization. It produced Christ, the Seed of that symbolic woman and of the Greater Abraham. (Galatians 3:16) To show people the way of release from unclean worship, sin, and Satan, Jesus taught the

8, 9. (a) In your own words, explain briefly what Paul said at Galatians 4:21-26. (b) In this symbolic drama, who or what was pictured by Abraham and by Sarah, and who is the promised Seed?

truth and exposed false religion, but Jerusalem and her children remained in religious bondage because they rejected him. (Matthew 23:37, 38) Jesus' Jewish followers became free from the Law, which showed up their bondage to imperfection, sin, and death. Free indeed are all humans who accept Jesus as the One brought forth by God's "woman" to be the Messianic King and the Emancipator 'proclaiming liberty to the captives'!—Isaiah 61:1, 2; Luke 4: 18, 19.

Avoid a Slavish Yoke

¹⁰ To those forming Abraham's seed along with Christ, the Greater Isaac, Paul says: "The Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother. . . . We, brothers, are children belonging to the promise the same as Isaac was. But just as then the one born in the manner of flesh [Ishmael] began persecuting the one born in the manner of spirit [Isaac], so also now. . . . We are children, not of a servant girl, but of the free woman. For such freedom [from the Law] Christ set us free. Therefore stand fast, and do not let yourselves be confined again in a yoke of slavery."—Galatians 4:26–5:1.

¹¹ Any of Jesus' followers would have been confined in a yoke of slavery if they had submitted to the Law. False religion is a present slavish yoke, and Christendom parallels ancient Jerusalem and her children. But anointed ones are children of Jerusalem above, God's free heavenly organization. They and fellow believers with earthly hopes are no part of this world and are not in bondage to Satan. (John 14:30; 15:19; 17:14, 16) Liberated by truth and by Jesus' sacrifice, let us stand fast for our God-given freedom.

10, 11. From what yoke of slavery did Christ set his followers free, and what parallels can be drawn today?

Taking a Stand for God-Given Freedom

¹² Millions now enjoy true freedom as Jehovah's Witnesses. Bible studies are being held with other millions, many of whom are "rightly disposed for everlasting life." Upon becoming believers, they will take a stand for God-given freedom by getting baptized. (Acts 13:48; 18:8) But what steps precede Christian baptism?

¹³ *Before getting baptized, a person must acquire and act on accurate knowledge of the Scriptures.* (Ephesians 4:13) Thus, Jesus told his followers: "Go . . . and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit, teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you."—Matthew 28:19, 20.

¹⁴ Being baptized in the name of the Father means to acknowledge Jehovah's office and authority as God, Creator, and Universal Sovereign. (Genesis 17:1; 2 Kings 19:15; Revelation 4:11) Baptism in the name of the Son calls for recognition of Christ's office and authority as an exalted spirit creature, the Messianic King, and the one through whom God has provided "a corresponding ransom." (1 Timothy 2:5, 6; Daniel 7:13, 14; Philippians 2:9–11) A person baptized in the name of the holy spirit realizes that it is God's active force used by Jehovah in creation and in inspiring Bible writers, as well as in other ways. (Genesis 1:2; 2 Peter 1:21) Of course, there is much more to learn about God, Christ, and the holy spirit.

12. What course is taken by believers, and what will now be discussed?

13. What relationship is there between knowledge and baptism?

14. Being baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the holy spirit calls for what knowledge?



Do you know what steps precede baptism as one of Jehovah's Witnesses?

Corinth repented of fornication, idolatry, adultery, homosexuality, stealing, greed, drunkenness, reviling, and extortion. As a result, they were "washed clean" in Jesus' blood, were "sanctified" as those set apart for Jehovah's service, and were "declared righteous" in the name of Jesus Christ and with the spirit of God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11) So repentance is a step toward a good conscience and God-given freedom from plaguing guilt over sin.—1 Peter 3:21.

¹⁷ *Conversion must also occur before a person can be bap-*

¹⁵ *Prior to baptism, a person must exercise faith based on accurate knowledge. "Without faith it is impossible to please [Jehovah] well." (Hebrews 11:6) An individual exercising faith in God, Christ, and the divine purpose will want to be one of Jehovah's Witnesses, living in harmony with God's Word and having a meaningful share in preaching the good news. He will speak about the glory of Jehovah's kingship.—Psalm 145:10-13; Matthew 24:14.*

¹⁶ *Repentance is another prerequisite for baptism. To repent means to "change one's mind with regard to past (or intended) action, or conduct, on account of regret or dissatisfaction," or to "feel regret, contrition, or compunction for what one has done or omitted to do." First-century Jews needed to repent of their sins against Jesus Christ. (Acts 3:11-26) Some believers in*

tized as one of Jehovah's Witnesses. A repentant individual's conversion takes place after he rejects his wrong course and determines to do what is right. Hebrew and Greek verbs relating to conversion mean "turn back, turn around, or return." When used in a good spiritual sense, this refers to a turning to God from a wrong way. (1 Kings 8:33, 34) Conversion requires "works that befit repentance," that we do what God commands, abandon false religion, and direct our heart unswervingly to Jehovah so as to serve him alone. (Acts 26:20; Deuteronomy 30:2, 8, 10; 1 Samuel 7:3) This calls for "a new heart and a new spirit," for changed thinking, disposition, and aim in life. (Ezekiel 18:31) The resulting new personality replaces ungodly traits with godly qualities. (Colossians 3:5-14) Yes, true repentance really causes one to "turn around."—Acts 3:19.

15. Why must a person exercise faith before being baptized?

16. What is repentance, and how is it related to Christian baptism?

17. Conversion means what, and what does it require of one planning to be baptized?

¹⁸ *Dedication to God in prayer must precede baptism.* (Compare Luke 3:21, 22.) Dedication means a setting apart for a sacred purpose. So important is this step that we should express to God in prayer our decision to give him exclusive devotion and serve him forever. (Deuteronomy 5:8, 9; 1 Chronicles 29:10-13) Of course, our dedication is not to a work but to God himself. That point was made clear at the funeral of the Watch Tower Society's first president, Charles Taze Russell. On that occasion in 1916, the Society's secretary-treasurer, W. E. Van Amburgh, said: "This great worldwide work is not the work of one person. It is far too great for that. It is God's work and it changes not. God has used many servants in the past and He will doubtless use many in the future. Our consecration [dedication] is not to a man, or to a man's work, but *to do the will of God*, as He shall reveal it unto us through His Word and providential leadings. God is still at the helm." But what else must be done about dedication to God?

¹⁹ *Public evidence of dedication to Jehovah is provided when a person is baptized.* Baptism is a symbol indicating that the person undergoing water immersion has made an unconditional dedication to Jehovah God through Jesus Christ. (Compare Matthew 16:24.) When a baptismal candidate is buried under the water and then lifted out of it, he dies figuratively to his former course of life and is raised to a new way of life, now to do the will of God unreservedly. (Compare Romans 6:4-6.) When Jesus was baptized, he presented himself to his heavenly Father in an unreserved way. (Matthew 3:

18. Why make a dedication to God in prayer, and what is the significance of this step?

19. (a) How do individuals give public evidence of dedication to Jehovah? (b) Of what is water baptism a symbol?

13-17) And the Scriptures repeatedly show that qualified believers get baptized. (Acts 8:13; 16:27-34; 18:8) To become one of Jehovah's Witnesses today, therefore, a person must be a believer who truly exercises faith and gets baptized.—Compare Acts 8:26-39.

Stand Fast!

²⁰ If you have taken a firm stand for God-given freedom by becoming a baptized Witness of Jehovah, he will bless you as he has blessed his servants in the past. For instance, Jehovah blessed aged Abraham and Sarah with a God-fearing son, Isaac. By faith the prophet Moses chose to be ill-treated with God's people "rather than to have the temporary enjoyment of sin, because he esteemed the reproach of [being an ancient type of] the Christ [or God's Anointed One] as riches greater than the treasures of Egypt." (Hebrews 11:24-26) Moses had the privilege of being used by Jehovah to lead the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage. Moreover, because he served God faithfully, he will be resurrected and

20. What are some Biblical examples proving that we will be blessed for taking a stand for God-given freedom as baptized Witnesses of Jehovah?

How Would You Answer?

- ☐ What hope did God hold out when God-given freedom was lost?
- ☐ From what "yoke of slavery" did Christ set his followers free?
- ☐ What steps precede baptism as one of Jehovah's Witnesses?
- ☐ What Scriptural examples prove that we will be blessed for taking a stand for God-given freedom?

will serve as one of the “princes in all the earth” under the Greater Moses, Jesus Christ.—Psalm 45:16; Deuteronomy 18:17-19.

²¹ Dedicated Christians today can also be encouraged by considering women who became truly free and joyful. Among them was the Moabitess Ruth, who experienced both the heartache of widowhood and the joy of God-given freedom from false religion. Abandoning her people and her gods, she stuck with her widowed mother-in-law, Naomi. “Where you go I shall go,” said Ruth, “and where you spend the night I shall spend the night. Your people will be my people, and your God my God.” (Ruth 1:16) As the wife of Boaz, Ruth became the mother of David’s grandfather Obed. (Ruth 4:13-17) Why, Jehovah granted this humble non-Israelite woman “a perfect wage” by allowing her to become an ancestress of Jesus the Messiah! (Ruth 2:12) How joyful

21. What encouraging examples are given concerning godly women of ancient times?

Ruth will be when she is resurrected and learns that she had such a privilege! Similar joy will undoubtedly fill the hearts of the resurrected former harlot Rahab, who was freed from immorality and false worship, as well as erring but repentant Bath-sheba, for they also will learn that Jehovah allowed them to become ancestresses of Jesus Christ.—Matthew 1:1-6, 16.

²² A consideration of recipients of God-given freedom could go on and on. For example, their number includes the men and women of faith mentioned in Hebrews chapter 11. They suffered tribulation and ill-treatment, “and the world was not worthy of them.” Add to their number the loyal first-century followers of Christ and other faithful ones since then, including the millions now serving Jehovah as his Witnesses. As we shall next see, if you have taken a stand with them for God-given freedom, you have many reasons for joy.

22. What will be considered in the next article?

GOD-GIVEN FREEDOM BRINGS JOY

“The joy of Jehovah is your stronghold.”—NEHEMIAH 8:10.

JEHOVAH fills the hearts of his people with joy. This state of great happiness or exultation results from the acquisition or expectation of good. Humans dedicated to God can experience such an emotion because joy is a fruit of his holy spirit,

1. What is joy, and why can those dedicated to God experience it?

or active force. (Galatians 5:22, 23) So even if distressing trials beset us, we can be joyful as Jehovah’s servants, who are led by his spirit.

² On a special occasion in the fifth century B.C.E., the Jews used their God-given

2. Why did the Jews rejoice on a special occasion in Ezra’s day?

freedom to hold a joyous Festival of Booths in Jerusalem. After Ezra and other Levites read and explained God's Law to them, "the people went away to eat and drink and to send out portions and to carry on a great rejoicing, for they had understood the words that had been made known to them." —Nehemiah 8:5-12.

The Joy of Jehovah Is Our Stronghold

³ During that festival, the Jews realized the truthfulness of the words: "The joy of Jehovah is your stronghold." (Nehemiah 8:10) This joy is our stronghold too if we are standing fast for God-given freedom as dedicated, baptized Witnesses of Jehovah. A few of us have experienced an anointing by holy spirit and adoption into God's family as heavenly joint heirs with Christ. (Romans 8:15-23) The vast majority of us today have the prospect of life in an earthly paradise. (Luke 23:43) How joyful we should be!

⁴ Though we have wonderful prospects, it is not easy to endure sufferings and persecution. We can do so, however, because God gives us his holy spirit. With it we have joy and the conviction that nothing can rob us of our hope or of God's love. Moreover, we can be sure that Jehovah will be our stronghold as long as we love him with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind.—Luke 10:27.

⁵ Jehovah's people enjoy rich blessings and have many reasons to rejoice. Some reasons for joy are suggested in Paul's letter to the Galatians. Others are indicated elsewhere in the Scriptures. It will lift our spirits to consider such joyous blessings.

3. Under what circumstances can "the joy of Jehovah" be our stronghold?

4. Why can Christians endure sufferings and persecution?

5. Where may we find reasons to rejoice?

Value God-Given Freedom

⁶ *As Christians, we have the joyous blessing of an acceptable standing with God.* Since Christ freed his followers from the Mosaic Law, the Galatians were urged to stand fast and not be confined in that "yoke of slavery." What about us? If we tried to be declared righteous by keeping the Law, we would be parted from Christ. Aided by God's spirit, however, we await the hoped-for righteousness resulting from faith operating through love, not from physical circumcision or other works of the Law. —Galatians 5:1-6.

⁷ *It is a blessing to use our God-given freedom to "serve Jehovah with rejoicing."* (Psalm 100:2) Indeed, it is an inestimable privilege to render sacred service to "Jehovah God, the Almighty," the very "King of eternity"! (Revelation 15:3) If waves of low self-esteem ever sweep over you, it may be helpful to realize that God has drawn you to himself through Jesus Christ and has granted you a share in "the holy work of the good news of God." (Romans 15:16; John 6:44; 14:6) What reasons for joy and gratitude to God!

⁸ *Another cause for joy is our God-given freedom from Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion.* (Revelation 18:2, 4, 5) Though this religious harlot figuratively "sits on many waters," meaning "peoples and crowds and nations and tongues," she does not sit on, or religiously influence and control, Jehovah's servants. (Revelation 17:1, 15) We rejoice in God's wonderful light, while supporters of Babylon the Great are in spiritual darkness.

6. Why did Paul urge the Galatian Christians to stand fast?

7. How should we view sacred service to Jehovah?

8. As to Babylon the Great, what cause for joy do God's people have?

(1 Peter 2:9) Yes, it may be difficult to understand some "deep things of God." (1 Corinthians 2:10) But prayers for wisdom and help by holy spirit assist us to comprehend Scriptural truth that sets its possessors free spiritually.—John 8:31, 32; James 1:5-8.

⁹ *We enjoy the blessing of continued freedom from religious error, but to keep that liberty, we must reject apostasy.* The Galatians had been running the Christian race well, but some were hindering them from obeying the truth. Such wicked persuasion was not from God and was to be resisted. As a little leaven ferments a whole lump, false teachers or a leaning toward apostasy can corrupt an entire congregation. Paul wished that advocates of circumcision seeking to subvert the Galatians' faith not just be circumcised but get themselves sexually mutilated. Strong language indeed! But we must be just as firm in rejecting apostasy if we are to maintain our God-given freedom from religious error.—Galatians 5:7-12.

Slave for One Another in Love

¹⁰ *God-given freedom has brought us into association with a loving brotherhood, but we must do our part to show love.* The Galatians were not to use their freedom as "an inducement for the flesh" or an excuse for unloving selfishness. They were to slave for one another with love as the motivation. (Leviticus 19:18; John 13:35) We too must avoid the backbiting and hatred that can result in our being annihilated by one another. Of course, this will not occur if we show brotherly love.—Galatians 5:13-15.

¹¹ *By using our God-given freedom in har-*

9. If we are to enjoy the blessing of continued freedom from religious error, what must we do?

10. What is our responsibility as part of the Christian brotherhood?

11. How can we be a blessing to others, and how may they bless us?

mony with the leadings of God's spirit, we will show love and be a blessing to others. It should be a habit to allow ourselves to be controlled and led by holy spirit. Then we will not be bent on unlovingly satisfying our sinful flesh that "is against the spirit in its desire." If we are led by God's spirit, we will do what is loving but not because rules demand compliance and impose penalties on wrongdoers. For instance, love—not just a law—will keep us from slandering others. (Leviticus 19:16) Love will move us to speak and act in kind ways. Because we display the spirit's fruit of love, others will bless us, or speak well of us. (Proverbs 10:6) Moreover, association with us will be a blessing to them.—Galatians 5:16-18.

Contrasting Fruitage

¹² *Many blessings associated with our God-given freedom result from avoiding the sinful "works of the flesh."* As God's people, we, in general, avoid much anguish because we do not practice fornication, uncleanness, and loose conduct. By avoiding idolatry, we have the joy that results from pleasing Jehovah in that regard. (1 John 5:21) Since we do not practice spiritism, we are free of domination by demons. Our Christian brotherhood is not ruined by enmities, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, contentions, divisions, sects, and envies. And our joy is not lost in drunken bouts and revelries. Paul warned that those practicing the works of the flesh will not inherit God's Kingdom. Because we heed his words, however, we can cling to the joyous Kingdom hope.—Galatians 5:19-21.

¹³ *God-given freedom brings us joy because Christians display the fruitage of Jehovah's*

12. What are some of the blessings associated with avoiding the sinful "works of the flesh"?

13. Jehovah's holy spirit produces what fruitage?

spirit. From Paul's words to the Galatians, it is easy to see that the works of the sinful flesh are like thorns in contrast with the spirit's splendid fruitage of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, and self-control implanted in godly hearts. Determined to live contrary to the desires of the sinful flesh, we wish to be led by God's spirit and to live by it. The spirit makes us humble and peaceable, not "egotistical, stirring up competition with one another, envying one another." No wonder it is a joy to associate with those displaying the spirit's fruitage!—Galatians 5:22-26.

Other Reasons for Joy

¹⁴ *Associated with our God-given spiritual freedom is the blessing of protection from Satan and the demons.* To succeed in our wrestling against wicked spirit forces, we must wear "the complete suit of armor from God." We need the girdle of truth and the breastplate of righteousness. Our feet must be shod with the equipment of the good news of peace. Needed, too, is the large shield of faith, with which to quench the wicked one's burning missiles. We must wear the helmet of salvation and wield "the sword of the spirit," God's Word. Let us also "carry on prayer on every occasion in spirit." (Ephesians 6:11-18) If we wear the spiritual armor and reject demonism, we can be fearless and joyful.—Compare Acts 19:18-20.

¹⁵ *Joy is ours because our conduct harmonizes with God's Word, and we are free of the guilt plaguing many wrongdoers.* We 'exercise ourselves continually to have a consciousness of committing no offense

14. What armor do we need in our fight against wicked spirit forces?

15. What joyous blessing is ours because we conduct ourselves in harmony with God's Word?

against God and men.' (Acts 24:16) Hence, we need not fear the divine retribution due to befall willful, unrepentant sinners. (Matthew 12:22-32; Hebrews 10:26-31) By applying the counsel of Proverbs 3:21-26, we come to realize the fulfillment of those words: "Safeguard practical wisdom and thinking ability, and they will prove to be life to your soul and charm to your throat. In that case you will walk in security on your way, and even your foot will not strike against anything. Whenever you lie down you will feel no dread; and you will certainly lie down, and your sleep must be pleasurable. You will not need to be afraid of any sudden dreadful thing, nor of the storm upon the wicked ones, because it is coming. For Jehovah himself will prove to be, in effect, your confidence, and he will certainly keep your foot against capture."

¹⁶ *Another cause for joy is our God-given freedom to approach Jehovah in prayer with the assurance that we will be heard.* Yes, our prayers are answered because we have the reverential "fear of Jehovah." (Proverbs 1:7) Moreover, we are helped to keep ourselves in God's love by "praying with holy spirit." (Jude 20, 21) This we do by manifesting a heart condition acceptable to Jehovah and by praying under the spirit's influence for things in harmony with his will and his Word, which shows us how to pray and what to ask for in prayer. (1 John 5:13-15) If we are sorely tried and do not know what to pray for, 'the spirit joins in with help for our weakness, pleading for us with groanings unuttered.' God answers such prayers. (Romans 8:26, 27) Let us pray for holy spirit and allow it to produce in us those of its fruits particularly needed to face a certain trial. (Luke 11:13) We will

16. How is prayer a cause for joy, and what part does Jehovah's spirit play in this regard?

also increase our joy if we prayerfully and diligently study God's spirit-inspired Word and Christian publications prepared under the spirit's guidance.

Blessed With Ever-Present Help

¹⁷ *By using our God-given freedom aright, we have the joy of knowing that Jehovah is with us.* When adverse circumstances caused Moses to leave Egypt, by faith "he continued steadfast as seeing the One who is invisible." (Hebrews 11:27) Moses did not walk alone; he knew that Jehovah was with him. Similarly, the sons of Korah sang: "God is for us a refuge and strength, a help that is readily to be found during distresses. That is why we shall not fear, though the earth undergo change and though the mountains totter into the heart of the vast sea; though its waters be boisterous, foam over, though the mountains rock at its uproar." (Psalm 46:1-3) If you have such faith in God, he will never abandon you. Said David: "In case my own father and my own mother did leave me, even Jehovah himself would take me up." (Psalm 27:10) What joy there is in knowing that God cares for his servants so much!—1 Peter 5:6, 7.

¹⁸ *Having the joy of Jehovah, we possess God-given freedom from overwhelming anxiety.* "Do not be anxious over anything," said Paul, "but in everything by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God; and the peace of God that excels all thought will guard your hearts and your mental powers

17. How do the experiences of Moses and the words of David show that Jehovah is with His people?

18. Why do those having the joy of Jehovah possess God-given freedom from overwhelming anxiety?

by means of Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6, 7) The peace of God is an incomparable calmness even in the most trying circumstances. With it our hearts remain calm—something good for us spiritually, emotionally, and physically. (Proverbs 14:30) It also helps us to maintain mental balance, for we know that nothing God allows can do us lasting harm. (Matthew 10:28) This peace resulting from a close relationship with God through Christ is ours because we are dedicated to Jehovah and submit to the guidance of his spirit, which produces such fruits as joy and peace.

¹⁹ *Keeping our hearts fixed on our God-given freedom and the Kingdom hope will help us to be joyful.* For instance, sometimes little can be done about poor health, but we can pray for wisdom and fortitude to cope with it and may find comfort in thinking about the spiritual health we now enjoy and the physical cures that will occur under Kingdom rule. (Psalm 41:1-3; Isaiah 33:24) Though we may have to endure privations today, there will be no shortage of life's

19. Keeping our hearts fixed on what will help us to be joyful?

How Would You Answer?

- ☐ How can "the joy of Jehovah" be our stronghold?
- ☐ Religiously speaking, what blessings has God-given freedom brought to Jehovah's people?
- ☐ Why slave for one another in love?
- ☐ What are some blessings associated with God-given freedom?
- ☐ How can God's people remain joyful?

"Count every thorn a flower; every sharp rock a milestone, hurrying you onward to the goal"

necessities in the Paradise earth so near at hand. (Psalm 72:14, 16; Isaiah 65:21-23) Yes, our heavenly Father will sustain us now and ultimately make our joy complete. —Psalm 145:14-21.

Cherish Your God-Given Freedom

²⁰ As Jehovah's people, surely we should cherish the God-given freedom that has brought us joy and so many blessings. No wonder Psalm 100:1-5 urges us to come into God's presence "with a joyful cry." Jehovah owns us and cares for us as a loving Shepherd. Yes, "we are his people and the sheep of his pasture." His Creatorship and grand qualities provide us with incentive to enter the court-yards of his sanctuary with praise and thanksgiving. We are moved to "bless his name," to speak well of Jehovah God. Further, we can always rely on his loving-kindness, or compassionate regard, for us. "Generation after generation" Jehovah is faithful, unswerving in showing love to those doing his will.

²¹ As imperfect humans, we cannot now escape all trials. With divine help, however,

20. According to Psalm 100:1-5, how should we present ourselves before Jehovah?

21. What encouragement was offered in the first issue of this magazine, and what should we do about God-given freedom?

we can be courageous and joyful Witnesses of Jehovah. Noteworthy in this regard are these words found in the first issue of this journal (July 1879): "Courage . . . my Christian brother or sister, seeking with weary step to run the narrow way. Heed not the rugged course; it is all hallowed and sanctified by the blessed feet of the Master. Count every thorn a flower; every sharp rock a milestone, hurrying you onward to the goal. . . . Keep your eye fixed on the prize." The millions now serving Jehovah keep their eyes on the prize and have many reasons for courage and joy. With them, stand fast for God-given freedom. Do not miss its purpose, and may the joy of Jehovah always be your stronghold.



“Life’s Water” Bubbles Forth in

C · A · P · E V · E · R · D · E

“THE existence and practice of worship of Jehovah’s Witnesses in Cape Verde since the year 1958 is a noteworthy fact,” explained the minister of justice of the Republic of Cape Verde. He was speaking to two Witnesses who had been summoned to his office. “We regret that it took so long for Jehovah’s Witnesses to be legally recognized,” he added.

That meeting, held on November 30, 1990, will long be remembered by Jehovah’s Witnesses in Cape Verde. It signaled their official recognition as a legal religious association in that country. To the two Witnesses present, however, it sounded a personal note, for it was in 1958 that one of them—Luis Andrade—came across some Bible literature published by the Watch Tower Society. After reading the publications from cover to cover, he knew that he had found the truth. Eagerly, he shared what he had learned with Francisco Tavares, a longtime friend. During the next few years, both of them continued to take in the waters of truth by reading the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines, received by subscription. Ten years later, in 1968, they were baptized during the first visit of a traveling overseer to Cape Verde.

Brothers Andrade and Tavares recog-

nized their responsibility to have a part in sounding out the invitation: “Come! . . . take life’s water free.”

(Revelation 22:17) They were willing to accept the challenge of their scattered and difficult territory. Cape Verde consists of ten main islands plus some islets in the Atlantic Ocean, about 350 miles west of Dakar, Senegal. The name Cape Verde, meaning “Green Cape,” was originally applied to the peninsula on

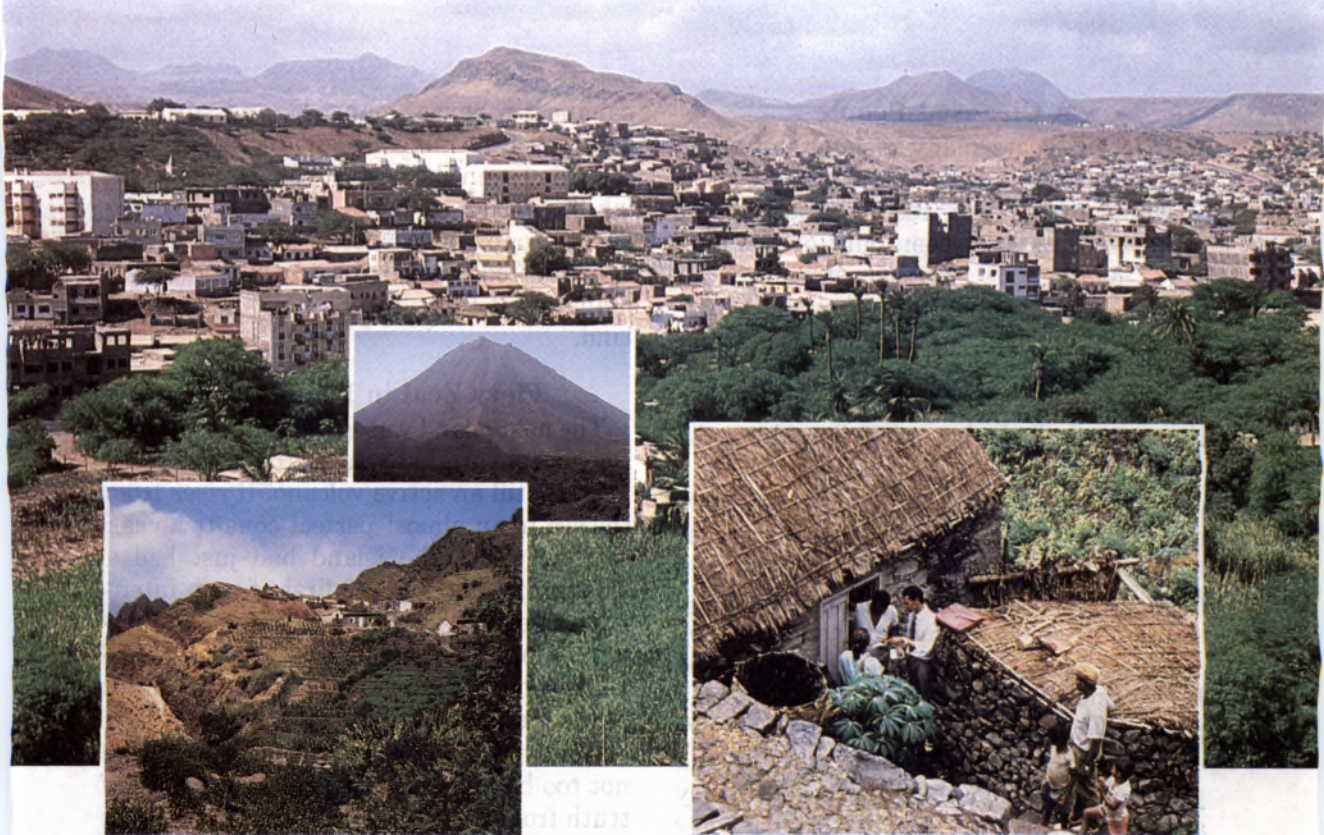
the African coast. However, these islands are far from being green, since the rainfall is meager, and the 350,000 inhabitants must eke out a living from the parched land.

During the last 30 years, missionaries and special pioneers have worked hard as full-time ministers bringing life’s water to the islanders. What has been the outcome of such labor? Recently, a traveling overseer from Portugal made a visit to the congregations in Cape Verde. We will let him tell us what he found.

São Vicente Hears the “Pure Language”

Our first stop in Cape Verde was the city of Porto Grande on São Vicente Island. Driving from the airport into town, we saw





the rocky hillsides covered with windblown sand. Desertification of North Africa has already reached the islands of Cape Verde! From December to February, the harmattan—the hot, dry wind from the Sahara—sweeps across the ocean and covers the islands with sheets of sand and dust. At times the dust clouds are so thick that planes cannot fly. What little vegetation remains is dried up when the harmattan arrives.

Spiritually speaking, however, sources of water are readily available. Jehovah's Witnesses have established two congregations in Porto Grande, and 167 Kingdom publishers are busy taking the life-giving waters of truth to the 47,000 inhabitants of São Vicente Island. On weekends, some 400 people come to the Bible-based meetings at the Kingdom Hall.

During the week-long visits, final preparations were being made for the "Pure Language" District Convention to be held at the best theater in the city. (Zephaniah 3:9) Along with the local people, delegates from the islands of Santo Antão and São Nicolau brought the attendance to a peak of 756. Twenty-four persons were baptized. The program included a Bible drama presented by the Witnesses. A man who was the rehearsal director for a film production attended the drama and observed: "We trained for a year and even then we had a lot of problems. The participants in your drama did much better with only two months of training." With the successful conclusion of the convention, it was time for us to move on to the city of Praia, the capital of Cape Verde Republic, on the island of São Tiago.

A Cleansed People

In recent years many residents of other islands have flocked to the capital in search of employment. As a result, thousands of primitive huts have been built on the outskirts of the city, further straining the limited water supply and sanitary provisions. To supplement their income, many families raise goats, pigs, and chickens. It is common to see these roaming freely in the streets. This has contributed to the spread of disease.

In spite of such difficult conditions, however, there are now two thriving congregations in Praia, with a total of about 130 Kingdom publishers. These happy Witnesses certainly have 'benefited themselves' by applying what they have learned from the Bible. Endeavoring to be a clean and holy people, our brothers and their children have enjoyed better health, both spiritually and physically. Though their life is hard, they are spiritually rich.—Isaiah 48:17; 1 Peter 1:15, 16.

As we arrived, the brothers were busy preparing for their district convention. Witnesses and interested persons from all over São Tiago as well as the islands of Sal and Fogo made their way to the convention, and Jehovah blessed them with a peak attendance of 472. Everyone was so happy, including the many little ones with shining faces! As we sat in the midst of that attentive throng, it was evident that we should never despise "the day of small things." (Zechariah 4:10) All of this had grown from two persons who learned the truth just over 30 years ago!

Before leaving the island, we went to visit the two small groups, Vila Assomada and Tarrafal, outside the city. The island was hilly, barren, and dry. But here and there, we saw green patches of flourishing vegetation and trees—acres of coconut palms,

bananas, papayas, mangoes, and so forth. This called to mind Isaiah's prophecy that some day even the desert will blossom. (Isaiah 35:1) Like an oasis, even now the two small groups of Witnesses offer abundant spiritual food and drink to the thousands living, as it were, in a spiritually parched land.

Fiery Zeal in Fogo Island

The next island was Fogo, meaning "fire." Its volcanic origin explains the name. Cano Peak is still an active volcano. It rises from the sea in an almost perfect cone to a peak of 9,300 feet. The island had just had a substantial rainfall, the first of such intensity in years. There was an air of exhilaration among the people, and they were unusually busy with their bean and manioc crops, staples in the Cape Verde diet.

However, these appreciative people were not too busy to stop and take in waters of truth from the Bible. We were able to meet with three different groups, even though it was a struggle to get to them because cars were few and in poor repair. We were overjoyed when a total of 162 persons came to the meetings, for there were only 42 Kingdom publishers on the island. This was a reflection of the zeal of this small group of brothers and sisters, who spend an average

In Our Next Issue

Hailing God's New World
of Freedom

Do You Have Faith Like Elijah's?

Jehovah's Way
Is the Best Way of Living

of 15 hours each month bringing the symbolic water of truth and life to the 32,000 inhabitants of Fogo Island.

Fruitage in a Catholic Land

We had yet to visit our brothers on Santo Antão and São Nicolau islands. As these names indicate, the Roman Catholic Church has exerted its influence over the islands for several centuries. Although Catholicism remains the principal religion in Cape Verde, many sincere people are turning to the Bible for its refreshing waters of truth.

The 49 Kingdom publishers in the two small congregations on opposite ends of Santo Antão work hard to meet the spiritual needs of its 44,000 inhabitants. When 512 persons came to the public Bible talk at the Porto Novo Congregation, it was clear to the 32 Kingdom publishers there that many sheeplike people in Santo Antão are thirsting for the waters of truth.

The work on São Nicolau Island started some years ago when a pioneer sister in Portugal by means of correspondence conducted a Bible study with a family on the island. Then, in 1978, another pioneer in Portugal decided to return to his native island, São Nicolau, to share Bible truth with its 15,000 inhabitants. When he conducted the first Bible meeting on the island, the attendance was just one person—him! But Jehovah God answered the fervent prayers he offered at that meeting. During our visit, the 48 publishers in the three congregations were thrilled to see that a total of 335 persons had come to the meetings.

The first circuit assembly on the island was held during our visit, and the local theater was made available to us free of charge. Town officials provided sound equipment and free transportation. The 19 publishers of the host congregation cared

for the accommodations for 100 delegates and prepared food for the 208 in attendance. In spite of the many hardships our brothers face daily, they made a contribution to the Society's Kingdom Hall Fund.

The fine conduct of Jehovah's Witnesses is well-known here, and many employers seek them out when workers are needed. For example, the owner of the only gas station on the island asked a Witness to work for him, since he needed someone honest. The brother already had a job but said he would see if he could find someone else. "Only if he is a baptized Witness!" insisted the owner. Two months later he told our brother: "Jehovah's Witnesses are the only people who should handle money!"

The Last Stop—Sal Island

Our final stop on this trip was the island of Sal. Its name means "salt," and that readily indicates the main industry on this island. Here the small congregation consists of 22 publishers, who work hard to bring the Kingdom message to the 6,500 residents. It was a real pleasure to share the good news with these islanders, for we were invited inside at almost every home and were able to talk to several members of the household.

The visit to Sal Island completed our tour. What a blessing it was to work with these faithful servants of Jehovah in Cape Verde! There are now 531 Kingdom publishers on these islands, and that number will surely grow as the 2,567 persons who attended the Memorial of Christ's death in 1991 continue to receive spiritual provisions. Though most of Jehovah's Witnesses here have little materially, they are rich and well-nourished spiritually. And how grateful they are that Jehovah is causing life's water to bubble forth abundantly on these islands to his glory and praise!

JUSTIN

Philosopher, Apologist, and Martyr

“WE DEMAND that the charges against the Christians be investigated, and that, if these be substantiated, they be punished as they deserve . . . But if no one can convict us of anything, true reason forbids you, for the sake of a wicked rumour, to wrong blameless men . . . For if, when ye have learned the truth, you do not what is just, you will be before God without excuse.”

With these words, Justin Martyr, a professed Christian of the second century C.E., appealed to Roman emperor Antoninus Pius. Justin asked for a sober-minded judicial inquiry into the lives and beliefs of professing Christians. This demand for justice came from a man with a very interesting background and philosophy.

Early Life and Training

Justin was a Gentile, born about 110 C.E. in Samaria in the city of Flavia Neapolis, the modern Nablus. He called himself a Samaritan, though likely his father and grandfather were Roman or Greek. His upbringing in pagan customs, coupled with a thirst for truth, led to a diligent study of philosophy. Unsatisfied in his search among the Stoics, Peripatetics, and Pythagoreans, he pursued the ideas of Plato.

In one of his works, Justin tells of his



desire to converse with philosophers and says: “I surrendered myself to a certain Stoic; and having spent a considerable time with him, when I had not acquired any further knowledge of God (for he did not know himself), . . . I left him and betook myself to another.”

—*Dialogue of Justin, Philosopher and Martyr, With Trypho, a Jew.*

Justin next went to a Peripatetic who was more interested in money than in truth. “This man, after having entertained me for the first few days,” says Justin, “requested me to settle the fee, in order that our intercourse might not be unprofitable. Him, too, for this reason I abandoned, believing him to be no philosopher at all.”

Eager to hear the “choice philosophy,” Justin “came to a Pythagorean, very celebrated—a man who thought much of his own wisdom.” Justin says: “When I had an interview with him, willing to become his hearer and disciple, he said, ‘What then? Are you acquainted with music, astronomy, and geometry? Do you expect to perceive any of those [godly] things which conduce to a happy life, if you have not been first informed on [these]?’ . . . He dismissed me when I confessed to him my ignorance.”

Though discouraged, Justin kept on searching for truth by turning to the renowned Platonists. He states: “I thereupon

spent as much of my time as possible with one who had lately settled in our city—a sagacious man, holding a high position among the Platonists,—and I progressed, and made the greatest improvements daily . . . , so that in a little while I supposed that I had become wise; and such,” Justin concludes, “was my stupidity.”

Justin’s search for truth through contacts with philosophers had been in vain. But while meditating at the seashore, he met an aged Christian, “a certain old man, by no means contemptible in appearance, exhibiting meek and venerable manners.” The ensuing conversation directed his attention to basic Bible teachings that focus on the need for accurate knowledge of God.—Romans 10:2, 3.

The unnamed Christian told Justin: “There existed, long before this time, certain men more ancient than all those who are esteemed philosophers, both righteous and beloved of God, who . . . foretold events which would take place, and which are now taking place. They are called prophets. These alone both saw and announced the truth to men, . . . being filled with the Holy Spirit.” Further whetting Justin’s appetite, the Christian said: “Their writings are still extant, and he who has read them is very much helped in his knowledge of the beginning and end of things.” (Matthew 5:6; Acts 3:18) As the kindly gentleman urged, Justin diligently examined the Scriptures and seems to have gained a measure of appreciation for them and Bible prophecy, as seen in his writings.

A Closer Look at His Works

Justin was impressed with the fearlessness of Christians in the face of death. He also appreciated the truthful teachings of the Hebrew Scriptures. To support argu-

ments in his *Dialogue With Trypho*, Justin quoted from Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Jonah, Micah, Zechariah, and Malachi, as well as the Gospels. His appreciation of these Bible books is seen in the dialogue with Trypho, in which Justin dealt with the Judaism that believed in the Messiah.

It is reported that Justin was an evangelizer, declaring the good news at every opportunity. Likely, he traveled extensively. Some of his time was spent in Ephesus, and he apparently resided in Rome for a considerable period.

Justin’s literary works include apologies written in defense of Christianity. In his *First Apology*, he seeks to dispel the gross darkness of pagan philosophy by means of light from the Scriptures. He declares that the wisdom of philosophers is false and hollow in contrast with the forceful words and works of Christ. (Compare Colossians 2:8.) Justin pleads for the despised Christians with whom he identifies himself. After his conversion, he continued to wear a philosopher’s attire, saying that he had attained the only true philosophy.

For refusing to worship pagan gods, second-century Christians were considered atheistic. “We are not atheists,” countered Justin, “worshipping as we do the Maker of the universe . . . Our teacher of these things is Jesus Christ . . . He is the Son of the true God.” Regarding idolatry, Justin said: “They make what they call a god; which we consider not only senseless, but to be even insulting to God . . . What infatuation! that dissolute men should be said to fashion and make gods for your worship.”—Isaiah 44:14-20.

With numerous references to the Christian Greek Scriptures, Justin expresses his belief in the resurrection, Christian morals, baptism, Bible prophecy (especially concerning Christ), and Jesus' teachings. Regarding Jesus, Justin quotes Isaiah, stating: "The government shall be upon [Christ's] shoulders." Justin also says: "If we looked for a human kingdom, we should also deny our Christ." He discusses the trials and obligations of Christians, maintains that proper service to God requires being a doer of His will, and further says that "persons should be sent by Him into every nation to publish these things."

The Second Apology of Justin (believed to be merely a continuation of the first) is addressed to the Roman Senate. Justin appeals to the Romans by relating the experiences of Christians, who were persecuted after coming to an accurate knowledge of Jesus Christ. The moral excellence of Jesus' teachings, reflected in the conduct of Christian citizens, seemed of little value to Roman authorities. Rather, merely confessing discipleship could have fatal consequences. Regarding a former teacher of Christian doctrines, Justin quoted an individual named Lucius, who asked: "Why have you punished this man, not as an adulterer, nor fornicator, nor murderer, nor thief, nor robber, nor convicted of any crime at all, but who has only confessed that he is called by the name of Christian?"

The extent of prejudice against professed Christians at that time is indicated by Justin's statement: "I too, therefore, expect to be plotted against and fixed to the stake, by some of those I have named, or perhaps by Crescens, that lover of bravado and boasting; for the man is not worthy of the name of philosopher who publicly bears witness

against us in matters which he does not understand, saying that the Christians are atheists and impious, and doing so to win favour with the deluded mob, and to please them. For if he assails us without having read the teachings of Christ, he is thoroughly depraved, and far worse than the illiterate, who often refrain from discussing or bearing false witness about matters they do not understand."

His Death

Whether at the hands of Crescens or other Cynics, Justin was denounced to the Roman prefecture as a subversive and was condemned to die. In about 165 C.E., he was beheaded in Rome and became a "martyr" (meaning "witness"). Hence, he is called Justin Martyr.

The writing style of Justin may lack the luster and tact of other learned men of his day, but his zeal for truth and righteousness was apparently genuine. To what extent he lived in harmony with the Scriptures and Jesus' teachings cannot be said with certainty. Yet, Justin's works are valued for their historical content and many Scriptural references. They provide insight into the lives and experiences of professed Christians of the second century.

Noteworthy are Justin's efforts to show the emperors the injustice of persecution directed against Christians. His rejection of pagan religion and philosophy in favor of accurate knowledge of God's Word reminds us that in Athens the apostle Paul boldly spoke to Epicurean and Stoic philosophers about the true God and the resurrected Jesus Christ.—Acts 17:18-34.

Justin himself had some knowledge of a resurrection of the dead during the Millennium. And how faith-strengthening the Bible's true resurrection hope is! It has sus-

tained Christians in the face of persecution and has enabled them to endure great trials, even to death.—John 5:28, 29; 1 Corinthians 15:16-19; Revelation 2:10; 20:4, 12, 13; 21:2-4.

So, then, Justin sought truth and rejected Greek philosophy. As an apologist, he defended the teachings and practices of pro-

fessed Christians. And for professing Christianity himself, he suffered martyrdom. Especially noteworthy was Justin's appreciation for truth and his bold witnessing in the face of persecution, for these qualities are found in the lives of Jesus' genuine followers today.—Proverbs 2:4-6; John 10:1-4; Acts 4:29; 3 John 4.

A Relief Mission to Ukraine

A GAIN the grim reports fill the media. Economic chaos, food shortage, and hunger are stalking the earth—this time in parts of the former Soviet Union. The Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses recently asked the branch office of the Watch Tower Society in Denmark to organize relief for needy Witnesses in Ukraine. What did the Danish brothers do?

They went right to work! The branch office immediately sent brothers out to scour the markets for the best buys in foodstuffs. Word went out to all congregations of Jehovah's people in Denmark, notifying them of the need. The branch reports: "All congregations were more than willing to contribute. Finally, we were able to give tangible proof of the sympathy we had for those suffering ones." Five trucks along with two vans and 14 volunteer drivers reported at the Denmark branch on Saturday, December 7, 1991. Branch workers filled the trucks with the foodstuffs they had bought.

At noon on Monday, December 9, the convoy set out on the long journey through Europe to Ukraine. "It was a touching scene as the whole Bethel family assembled

to wave them good-bye," the branch writes. "Knowing that many relief missions have been victims of attacks, we followed our brothers with many prayers all the way."

On December 18 the suspense ended. The Denmark branch received word that the convoy had arrived safely in Lviv, Ukraine. The brothers in Ukraine had received the aid. How relieved they were to unload 1,100 family-size, 44-pound packages—each containing meat, flour, rice, sugar, and other staples! In all, the convoy delivered some 22 tons of supplies. The Denmark branch writes: "Our joy is great, as we thank Jehovah for his protection and for giving us this opportunity to extend a helping hand."

A shipment of clothing is also planned. The branch reports that in this regard as well, "the response of the congregations has been overwhelming." Jehovah does indeed 'enrich his people for every sort of generosity.' (2 Corinthians 9:11) They, in turn, feel deeply the joy that comes from giving freely to their brothers and sisters. The love they thereby show is an identifying mark of Jesus' followers. (John 13:35) Such love is all too rare in this needy world.



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