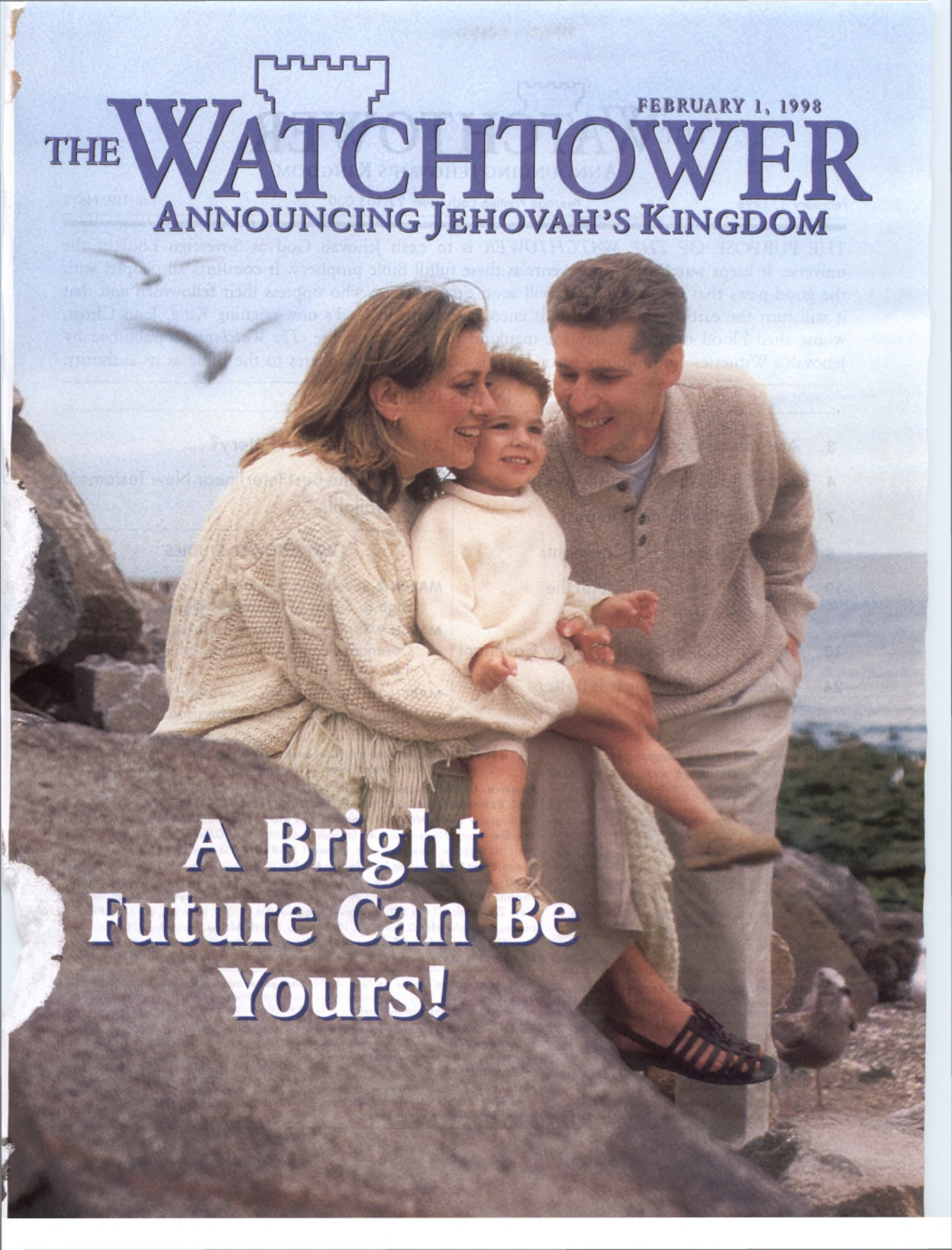
FEBRUARY 1, 1998

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



A Bright Future Can Be Yours!

THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

February 1, 1998 | Average Printing Each Issue: 22,103,000 | Vol. 119, No. 3

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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Now published in 128 languages.

SEMIMONTHLY LANGUAGES AVAILABLE BY MAIL: Afrikaans, Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Bengali, Bicol, Bislama, Bulgarian, Cebuano,* Chichewa, Chinese, Chinese (Simplified), Cibemba, Croatian, Czech,* Danish,*# Dutch,* Efik, English,*# (also Braille), Estonian, Ewe, Fijian, Finnish,*# French,*# Ga, Georgian, German,*# Greek,* Gujarati, Gun, Hebrew, Hiligaynon, Hindi, Hiri Motu, Hungarian,* Igbo, Iloko,* Indonesian, Italian,*# Japanese*# (also Braille), Kannada, Kinyarwanda, Korean* (also Braille), Latvian, Lingala, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Malagasy, Malayalam, Maltese, Marathi, Myanmar, Nepali, New Guinea Pidgin, Norwegian, Pangasinan, Papiamento, Polish,* Portuguese* (also Braille), Rarotongan, Romanian,* Russian,* Samar-Leyte, Samoan, Sepedi, Serbian, Sesotho, Shona, Sinhalese, Slovak, Slovenian, Solomon Islands Pidgin, Spanish,*# Sranantongo, Swahili, Swedish,*# Tagalog,* Tahitian, Tamil, Telugu, Thai, Tigrinya, Tongan, Tshiluba, Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Twi, Ukrainian,* Venda, Vietnamese, Wallisian, Xhosa, Yoruba, Zulu

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The Bible translation used is the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References,* unless otherwise indicated.

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Publication of "The Watchtower" is part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations.

Changes of address should reach us 30 days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label).

The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) is published semimonthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483. Periodicals Postage Paid at Brooklyn, NY, and at additional mailing offices. **Postmaster:** Send address changes to Watchtower, **Wallkill, NY 12589.**

Printed in U.S.A.

Are You an Optimist or a Pessimist?

"IT WAS the best of times, it was the worst of times, . . . it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us." The opening words of Charles Dickens' literary masterpiece *A Tale of Two Cities* skillfully contrast how events can affect our thinking, our feelings, and our outlook.

The French Revolution

From the book *Pictorial History of the World*

The two cities referred to were London and Paris during the turmoil of the French Revolution. For the oppressed citizens of 18th-century France, the revolution's proclamation of the rights of man was indeed a "spring of hope." But for those of the ancien régime, or the outgoing political system, it was a "winter of despair," leading to death and destruction.

Optimism or pessimism? It all depended on which side you were on. And it still does.

Time for Self-Scrutiny

Are you an optimist? Do you see the bright side of life, always anticipating the best? Or are you inclined to be pessimistic, taking a negative view of your prospects, hoping for the best but at the same time expecting the worst?

Sixty years ago American novelist James Branch Cabell summed up the two conflicting philosophies this way: "The optimist proclaims that we live in the best of all possible worlds; and the pessimist fears this is true." If you feel that this view is rather cynical, examine the pros and cons of just three aspects of today's world as presented below. Then analyze your reactions, and ask yourself, 'Am I an optimist or a pessimist?'

Lasting Peace: How many world trouble spots can you name? Ireland, the former Yugoslavia, the Middle East, Burundi, Rwanda—these readily come to mind. Can these and other struggles ever be resolved to ensure permanent, global peace? Is the world headed for peace?

Economic Stability: Hoping for monetary union by 1999, European Union countries are seriously confronting problems with inflation and public borrowing. Elsewhere, corruption erodes the economic structure of many American and African nations, where inflation imposes an almost impossible burden and ethnic problems still divide. Is world economic stability just ahead?

Unemployment: In the 1997 national election, British churches united to urge all political parties to put full employment high on their agendas. But with nearly 30 percent of the world's work force out of work or underemployed, can there be lasting, full employment—especially for the young?

How easy it is to feel pessimistic! Yet there is a bright side, and we invite you to consider how it is possible to develop an optimistic outlook.

Sound Basis for Optimism Today

HISTORIAN and sociologist H. G. Wells, born in 1866, exerted a powerful influence on 20th-century thinking. Through his writings, he expounded his conviction that the millennium would coincide with the onward march of science. Thus, *Collier's Encyclopedia* recalls Wells' "boundless optimism" as he worked unceasingly to advance his cause. But it also notes that his optimism was shattered when World War II erupted.

As Wells came to the realization that "science could work for evil as well as for good, his faith deserted him, and he declined into pessimism," states *Chambers's Biographical Dictionary*. Why did this happen?

H. G. Wells

Corbis-Bettmann

Wells' faith and optimism were based solely on human achievements. When he realized that mankind was incapable of attaining his Utopia, he had nowhere else to turn. Desperation quickly turned into pessimism.

Today, many people have the same experience for the same reason. They are bubbling with optimism when they are young but fall into sullen pessimism as they get older. There are even young ones who give up on the so-called normal way of life and indulge in drug abuse, promiscuity, and other destructive life-styles. What is the answer? Consider the following examples from Bible times and see what basis there is for optimism—past, present, and future.

Abraham's Optimism Rewarded

In the year 1943 B.C.E., Abraham moved from Haran, crossed the Euphrates River, and entered the land of Canaan. Abraham has been described as "the father of all those having faith," and what a fine example he set!—Romans 4:11.

Abraham was accompanied by Lot, the orphaned son of Abraham's brother, and by Lot's family. Later, when a famine struck the land, the two families moved to Egypt, and in due course they returned together. By this time both Abraham and Lot had accumulated much wealth, as well as flocks and herds. When quarreling broke out between their herdsmen, Abraham took the initiative and said: "Please, do not let any quarreling continue between me and you and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we men are brothers. Is not the whole land available to you? Please, separate from me. If you go to the left, then I will go to the right; but if you go to the right, then I will go to the left." —Genesis 13:8, 9.

Abraham, being the senior, could have directed matters in his own favor, and Lot, out of deference to his uncle, could have conceded the choice to Abraham. Instead, "Lot raised his eyes and saw the whole District of the Jordan, that all of it was a well-watered region before Jehovah brought Sodom and Gomorrah to ruin, like the garden of Jehovah, like the land of Egypt as far as Zoar.

Then Lot chose for himself the whole District of the Jordan." With such a choice, Lot had every reason to be optimistic. But what of Abraham?—Genesis 13:10, 11.

Was Abraham being foolhardy, putting the welfare of his family at risk? No. Abraham's positive attitude and generous spirit paid a rich dividend. Jehovah said to Abraham: "Raise your eyes, please, and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward, because all the land at which you are looking, to you and to your seed I am going to give it until time indefinite."—Genesis 13:14, 15.

Abraham's optimism had a sound basis. It was founded on God's promise that he would make a great nation out of Abraham so that "all the families of the ground [would] certainly bless themselves by means of [Abraham]." (Genesis 12:2-4, 7) We too have reason to be confident, knowing that "God makes all his works cooperate together for the good of those who love God."—Romans 8:28.

Two Optimistic Spies

More than 400 years later, the nation of Israel stood poised to enter Canaan, "a land flowing with milk and honey." (Exodus 3:8; Deuteronomy 6:3) Moses commissioned 12 chieftains to 'search out the land and bring back word concerning the way by which they should go up and the cities to which they will come.' (Deuteronomy 1:22; Numbers 13:2) All 12 spies were unanimous in their description of the land's prosperity, but 10 of them gave a pessimistic report that instilled fear in the hearts of the people. —Numbers 13:31-33.

Joshua and Caleb, on the other hand, presented to the people an optimistic message and did all they could to allay their fears. Their attitude and report reflected full confidence in Jehovah's ability to fulfill his word to return them to the Promised Land —but to no avail. Instead, "all the assembly talked of pelting them with stones."—Numbers 13:30; 14:6-10.

Moses urged the people to trust in Jehovah, but they refused to listen. Because they persisted in their pessimistic attitude, the whole nation had to wander 40 years in the wilderness. Of the 12 spies, only Joshua and Caleb experienced the rewards of optimism. What was the basic problem? Lack of faith, as the people looked to their own wisdom. —Numbers 14:26-30; Hebrews 3:7-12.

Jonah's Vacillation

Jonah lived in the ninth century B.C.E. The Bible indicates that he was a faithful prophet of Jehovah to the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel, sometime during the reign of Jeroboam II. Yet he refused to accept a commission to go to Nineveh to serve a warning to the people. The historian Josephus says that Jonah "thought it better to slip out of the way" and make for Joppa instead. There he boarded a boat to Tarshish, likely modern-day Spain. (Jonah 1:1-3) Why Jonah took such a pessimistic view of this assignment is explained at Jonah 4:2.

Jonah eventually agreed to accomplish his mission, but he grew angry when the people of Nineveh repented. So Jehovah taught him a fine lesson of compassion by causing the bottle-gourd plant under which Jonah was sheltering to wither and die. (Jonah 4:1-8) Jonah's feelings of sorrow at the demise of the plant should more correctly have been directed to the 120,000 men in Nineveh who did not "know the difference between their right hand and their left."—Jonah 4:11.

What can we learn from Jonah's experience? Sacred service allows no room for pessimism. If we discern Jehovah's direction and follow through with full confidence, we will enjoy success.—Proverbs 3:5, 6.

Optimism Amid Adversities

"Do not show yourself heated up because of the evildoers," King David declared. "Do not be envious of those doing unrighteousness." (Psalm 37:1) That is, indeed, wise counsel, for today injustice and crookedness are all around us.—Ecclesiastes 8:11.

Even if we do not envy the unrighteous, however, it is easy to feel frustrated when we see innocent people suffer at the hands of the wicked or when we ourselves are being dealt with unjustly. Such experiences may even cause us to develop a despondent or pessimistic attitude. When we feel that way, what should we do? First, we can keep in mind that the wicked cannot complacently assume that retribution will never come. Psalm 37 goes on to assure us in verse 2: "Like grass they [evildoers] will speedily wither, and like green new grass they will fade away."

In addition, we can continue to do what is good, remain optimistic, and wait upon Jehovah. "Turn away from what is bad and do what is good, and so reside to time indefinite," continued the psalmist. "For Jehovah is a lover of justice, and he will not leave his loyal ones."—Psalm 37:27, 28.

True Optimism Prevails!

What, then, about our future? The Bible book of Revelation tells us about "things that must shortly take place." Among them, a rider on a fiery-colored horse, depicting war, is revealed "to take peace away from the earth."—Revelation 1:1; 6:4.

A popular—and optimistic—opinion held in Britain during World War I was that it would be the last major war. In 1916, British statesman David Lloyd George was more realistic. He said: "This war, *like the next war,* is a war to end war." (Italics ours.) He was right. World War II only accelerated the production of more fiendish methods of mass destruction. Over 50 years later, still no end to war is in sight.

In the same book of Revelation, we read of other horsemen—symbolizing famine, pestilence, and death. (Revelation 6:5-8) They are further aspects of the sign of the times. —Matthew 24:3-8.

Are these causes for pessimism? By no means, for the vision also describes "a white horse; and the one seated upon it had a bow; and a crown was given him, and he went forth conquering and to complete his conquest." (Revelation 6:2) Here we see Jesus Christ as a heavenly King removing all wickedness, riding to establish peace and harmony worldwide.*

As King-Designate, Jesus Christ while on earth taught his disciples to pray for that Kingdom. Perhaps you too have been taught to say the "Our Father," or the Lord's Prayer. In it we pray for God's Kingdom to come, for his will to be accomplished here on earth as in heaven.—Matthew 6:9-13.

Rather than trying to patch up the present system of things, Jehovah, acting through his Messianic King, Christ Jesus, will remove it completely. In its place, says Jehovah, "I am creating new heavens and a new earth; and the former things will not be called to mind, neither will they come up into the heart." Under the heavenly Kingdom government, the earth will become a peaceful, happy home for mankind, where life and work will be a constant joy. "Be joyful forever in what I am creating," says Jehovah. "The work of their own hands my chosen ones will use to the full." (Isaiah 65:17-22) If you base your hope for the future on that unfailing promise, you will have every reason to be optimistic—now and forever!

* For a detailed discussion of this vision, please see chapter 16 of the book *Revelation—Its Grand Climax At Hand!,* published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

KINGDOM PROCLAIMERS REPORT

Endurance Leads to God's Blessing in Malawi

JOSEPH was a faithful servant of Jehovah. (Hebrews 11:22) He was also a man of outstanding endurance. Even though he was betrayed by his own brothers, twice sold into slavery, and later thrown into prison under false charges, Joseph did not crumble. Rather, he patiently endured years of tribulation, humbly awaiting Jehovah's blessing. —Genesis 37:23-28, 36; 39:11-20.

Likewise today, Jehovah's Witnesses in Malawi have waited patiently for God's blessing. For 26 years, these Christian Witnesses endured governmental bans, severe opposition, and many atrocities. But their endurance has paid off!

When persecution broke out in Malawi in late 1967, there were about 18,000 Kingdom publishers. Imagine the joy of the Witnesses when they learned that the 1997 service year began with a new peak of 38,393 publishers—more than twice as many as at the start of the ban! Moreover, attendance at the 13 "Messengers of Godly Peace" District Conventions held in Malawi swelled to over 117,000. Truly, Jehovah has blessed their faith and endurance.

An example of this blessing is the experience of a young man named Machaka. When Machaka accepted an offer to study the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses, his parents became very upset. They said: "If you want to become a Witness, you must move away from home." This threat, however, did not discourage him from continuing his study. As a result, Machaka's parents confiscated all his clothes. The brothers responded by buying him some more. When Machaka's parents learned about this, they told him: "If the Witnesses are going to support you, you must leave and go live with them." After considering the matter carefully, Machaka left home, and a Witness family in the local congregation took him in.

Machaka's parents were so annoyed that they decided to move away from the area in order to avoid all contact with the Witnesses. Machaka, of course, was distressed by this, but he found much comfort when the brothers discussed with him Psalm 27:10, which states: "In case my own father and my own mother did leave me, even Jehovah himself would take me up."

In time, Machaka's parents softened in their position, and he decided to move back home. Apparently their son's determination to serve Jehovah made a powerful impression on them because they too wanted a Bible study with Jehovah's Witnesses! They also attended all three days of the "Messengers of Godly Peace" District Convention, after which they were moved to declare: "Truly, this is God's organization."

Yes, opposition may be trialsome, but God's loyal messengers do not give up. They courageously press on, knowing that "tribulation produces endurance; endurance, in turn, an approved condition." (Romans 5:3, 4) Jehovah's Witnesses in Malawi can rightly attest that endurance leads to God's blessing.

JEHOVAH IS A GOD OF COVENANTS

"I will conclude with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah a new covenant."—JEREMIAH 31:31.

ON THE night of Nisan 14, 33 C.E., Jesus celebrated the Passover with his 12 apostles. Since he knew that this would be his final meal with them and that he would soon die at the hands of his enemies, Jesus took advantage of the occasion to explain many important matters to his closest disciples.—John 13:1-17:26.

[2] It was at this time that, after dismissing Judas Iscariot, Jesus instituted the only annual religious observance commanded for Christians—the Memorial of his death. The record says: "As they continued eating, Jesus took a loaf and, after saying a blessing, he broke it and, giving it to the disciples, he said: 'Take, eat. This means my body.' Also, he took a cup and, having given thanks, he gave it to them, saying: 'Drink out of it, all of you; for this means my "blood of the covenant," which is to be poured out in behalf of many for forgiveness of sins.'" (Matthew 26:26-28) Jesus' followers were to memorialize his death in a simple, dignified manner. And Jesus referred to a covenant in connection with his death. In the account in Luke, it is called "the new covenant."—Luke 22:20.

[3] What is the new covenant? If it is the *new* covenant, does that mean that there is an *old* covenant? Are any other covenants related to it? These are important questions because Jesus said that the blood of the covenant would be poured out "for forgiveness of sins." All of us desperately need such forgiveness.—Romans 3:23.

1, 2. (a) What celebration did Jesus initiate on the night of Nisan 14, 33 C.E.? (b) What covenant did Jesus refer to in connection with his death?

3. What questions are asked about the new covenant?

A Covenant With Abraham

[4] To understand the new covenant, we have to go back almost 2,000 years before Jesus' earthly ministry to the time when Terah and his family—including Abram (later, Abraham) and Abram's wife, Sarai (later, Sarah)—trekked from prosperous Ur of the Chaldeans to Haran in northern Mesopotamia. They stayed there until Terah's death. Then, at Jehovah's command, the 75-year-old Abraham crossed the Euphrates River and traveled southwestward to the land of Canaan to live a nomadic life in tents. (Genesis 11:31-12:1, 4, 5; Acts 7:2-5) That was in 1943 B.C.E. While Abraham was still in Haran, Jehovah had said to him: "I shall make a great nation out of you and I shall bless you and I will make your name great; and prove yourself a blessing. And I will bless those who bless you, and him that calls down evil upon you I shall curse, and all the families of the ground will certainly bless themselves by means of you." Later, after Abraham had crossed into

4. What ancient promise helps us to understand the new covenant?

Through the Law covenant, Jehovah administered an illustrative fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant

Canaan, Jehovah added: "To your seed I am going to give this land." —Genesis 12:2, 3, 7.

[5] The promise to Abraham was related to another of Jehovah's promises. Indeed, it made Abraham a key figure in human history, a link in the fulfillment of the first prophecy ever recorded. After Adam and Eve sinned in the garden of Eden, Jehovah pronounced judgment on both of them, and on the same occasion, he addressed Satan, who had misled Eve, saying: "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 3:15) Jehovah's covenant with Abraham indicated that the Seed through whom Satan's works would be brought to nothing would appear in the lineage of that patriarch.

[6] Since Jehovah's promise was related to a seed, Abraham needed a son through whom the Seed could come. But he and Sarah grew into old age and were still childless. Finally, though, Jehovah blessed them, miraculously reviving their procreative powers, and Sarah bore Abraham a son, Isaac, thus keeping alive the promise of a seed. (Genesis 17:15-17; 21:1-7) Years later, after testing Abraham's faith—even to the point of his willingness to offer his beloved son, Isaac, in sacrifice—Jehovah repeated his promise to Abraham: "I shall surely bless you and I shall surely multiply your seed like the stars of the heavens and like the grains of sand that are on the seashore; and your seed will take possession of the gate of his enemies. And by means of your seed all nations of the earth will certainly bless themselves due to the fact that you have listened to my voice." (Genesis 22:15-18) This extended promise is often called the Abrahamic covenant, and the later new covenant would be closely linked to it.

[7] In time, Isaac had twin boys, Esau and Jacob. Jehovah chose Jacob to be the ancestor of the Promised Seed. (Genesis 28:10-15; Romans 9:10-13) Jacob had 12 sons. Clearly,

5. Jehovah's promise to Abraham is linked to what historic prophecy?

6. (a) Through whom would Jehovah's promise to Abraham be fulfilled? (b) What is the Abrahamic covenant?

7. How did Abraham's seed begin to increase in number, and what circumstances led them to be residents in Egypt?

it was now time for Abraham's seed to begin to increase. When Jacob's sons were adults, many with families of their own, a famine forced all of them to move down to Egypt where, by divine providence, Jacob's son Joseph had prepared the way. (Genesis 45:5-13; 46:26, 27) After a few years, the famine in Canaan eased. But Jacob's family stayed in Egypt—at first as guests but later as slaves. It was not until 1513 B.C.E., 430 years after Abraham crossed the Euphrates, that Moses led Jacob's descendants out of Egypt to freedom. (Exodus 1:8-14; 12:40, 41; Galatians 3:16, 17) Jehovah would now give special attention to his covenant with Abraham.—Exodus 2:24; 6:2-5.

"The Old Covenant"

[8] When Jacob and his sons moved into Egypt, they were an extended family, but their descendants left Egypt as a large body of populous tribes. (Exodus 1:5-7; 12:37, 38) Before Jehovah brought them to Canaan, he led them southward to the foot of a mountain named Horeb (or, Sinai) in Arabia. There, he made a covenant with them. This came to be called "the old covenant" in relation to "the new covenant." (2 Corinthians 3:14) By means of the old covenant, Jehovah administered in an illustrative way the fulfillment of his covenant with Abraham.

[9] Jehovah explained to Israel the terms of this covenant: "If you will strictly obey my voice and will indeed keep my covenant, then you will certainly become my special property out of all other peoples, because the whole earth belongs to me. And you yourselves will become to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." (Exodus 19:5, 6) Jehovah had promised that Abraham's seed would (1) become a great nation, (2) be given victory over their enemies, (3) inherit the land of Canaan, and (4) be a channel for blessings to the nations. Now he revealed that they themselves could inherit these blessings as his special people, Israel, "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation," if they would obey his commands. Did the Israelites agree to enter into this covenant? They answered as one person: "All that Jehovah has spoken we are willing to do."—Exodus 19:8.

[10] Hence, Jehovah organized the Israelites into a nation. He gave them laws regulating worship and civil life. He also provided a tabernacle (later, a temple in Jerusalem) and a priesthood to render sacred service in the tabernacle. Keeping the covenant meant obeying Jehovah's laws and, especially, worshiping only him. The first of the Ten Commandments that were the nucleus of those laws was: "I am Jehovah your God, who have brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slaves. You must not have any other gods against my face."—Exodus 20:2, 3.

Blessings Through the Law Covenant

[11] Were the promises in the Law covenant fulfilled toward Israel? Did Israel become "a holy nation"? As descendants of Adam, the Israelites were sinners. (Romans 5:12) Still, under the Law, sacrifices were offered to cover their sins. Regarding the sacrifices offered on the annual Atonement Day, Jehovah said: "On this day atonement will be made for you to pronounce you clean.

8. What did Jehovah conclude with Jacob's offspring at Sinai, and what did this have to do with the Abrahamic covenant?

9. (a) What four things did Jehovah promise through the Abrahamic covenant? (b) What further prospects did Jehovah's covenant with Israel open up, and on what condition?

10. How did Jehovah organize the Israelites into a nation, and what did he expect of them?

11, 12. In what ways were the promises in the old covenant fulfilled toward Israel?

You will be clean from all your sins before Jehovah." (Leviticus 16:30) When faithful, therefore, Israel was a holy nation, cleansed for Jehovah's service. But this clean condition depended on their obeying the Law and continually offering sacrifices.

12 Did Israel become "a kingdom of priests"? Right from the start, it was a kingdom, with Jehovah as heavenly King. (Isaiah 33:22) Further, the Law covenant included provisions for a human kingship, so that later Jehovah was represented by kings ruling in Jerusalem. (Deuteronomy 17:14-18) But was Israel a kingdom of *priests?* Well, it had a priesthood rendering sacred service at the tabernacle. The tabernacle (later, the temple) was the center of pure worship for Israelites and also for non-Israelites. And the nation was the sole channel of revealed truth to mankind. (2 Chronicles 6:32, 33; Romans 3:1, 2) All faithful Israelites, not just Levitical priests, were Jehovah's "witnesses." Israel was Jehovah's "servant," formed to 'recount his praise.' (Isaiah 43:10, 21) Many humble foreigners saw Jehovah's power in behalf of his people and were attracted to pure worship. They became proselytes. (Joshua 2:9-13) But only one tribe actually served as anointed priests.

Proselytes in Israel

13 What was the standing of such proselytes? When Jehovah made his covenant, it was only with Israel; those of the "vast mixed company," although present, were not named as participants. (Exodus 12:38; 19:3, 7, 8) Their firstborn were not taken into account when the ransom price for the firstborn of Israel was calculated. (Numbers 3:44-51) Decades later when the land of Canaan was divided between the Israelite tribes, nothing was set aside for non-Israelite believers. (Genesis 12:7; Joshua 13:1-14) Why? Because the Law covenant was not made with proselytes. But proselyte men were circumcised in obedience to the Law. They observed its regulations, and they benefited from its provisions. Proselytes as well as Israelites came under the Law covenant.—Exodus 12:48, 49; Numbers 15:14-16; Romans 3:19.

14 For example, if a proselyte accidentally killed someone, he could, like an Israelite, flee to a city of refuge. (Numbers 35:15, 22-25; Joshua 20:9) On Atonement Day a sacrifice was offered "in behalf of the entire congregation of Israel." As part of the congregation, proselytes shared in the proceedings and were covered by the sacrifice. (Leviticus 16:7-10, 15, 17, 29; Deuteronomy 23:7, 8) So closely were proselytes associated with Israel under the Law that at Pentecost 33 C.E. when the first 'key of the kingdom' was used in behalf of the Jews, proselytes also benefited. As a result, "Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch," became a Christian and was among the "seven certified men" appointed to care for the needs of the Jerusalem congregation.—Matthew 16:19; Acts 2:5-10; 6:3-6; 8:26-39.

Jehovah Blesses Abraham's Seed

15 With Abraham's descendants organized as a nation under the Law, Jehovah blessed them according to his promise to the patriarch. In 1473 B.C.E., Moses' successor, Joshua, led Israel into Canaan. The subsequent division of the land among the tribes fulfilled Jehovah's promise to give the land to

13, 14. (a) Why can it be said that proselytes were not participants in the Law covenant? (b) How did proselytes come under the Law covenant?

15, 16. How was Jehovah's covenant with Abraham fulfilled under the Law covenant?

Abraham's seed. When Israel was faithful, Jehovah fulfilled his promise to give them victory over their enemies. This was especially true during the rule of King David. By the time of David's son Solomon, a third aspect of the Abrahamic covenant was fulfilled. "Judah and Israel were many, like the grains of sand that are by the sea for multitude, eating and drinking and rejoicing." —1 Kings 4:20.

16 How, though, would the nations bless themselves through Israel, Abraham's seed? As already mentioned, Israel was Jehovah's special people, his representative among the nations. Shortly before Israel marched into Canaan, Moses said: "Be glad, you nations, with his people." (Deuteronomy 32:43) Many foreigners responded. "A vast mixed company" had already followed Israel out of Egypt, witnessed Jehovah's power in the wilderness, and heard Moses' invitation to rejoice. (Exodus 12:37, 38) Later, the Moabitess Ruth married the Israelite Boaz and became an ancestress of the Messiah. (Ruth 4:13-22) The Kenite Jehonadab and his descendants and the Ethiopian Ebed-melech distinguished themselves by adherence to right principles when many natural Israelites were unfaithful. (2 Kings 10:15-17; Jeremiah 35:1-19; 38:7-13) Under the Persian Empire, many foreigners became proselytes and fought with Israel against her enemies. —Esther 8:17, footnote.

A New Covenant Needed

17 Still, in order to receive the complete fulfillment of God's promise, God's special nation had to be faithful. It was not. True, there were Israelites of outstanding faith. (Hebrews 11:32–12:1) Nevertheless, on many occasions the nation turned to pagan gods, hoping for material benefits. (Jeremiah 34:8-16; 44:15-18) Individuals misapplied the Law or just ignored it. (Nehemiah 5:1-5; Isaiah 59:2-8; Malachi 1:12-14) After Solomon's death, Israel became divided into a northern and a southern kingdom. When the northern kingdom proved utterly rebellious, Jehovah announced: "Because the knowledge is what you yourself have rejected, I shall also reject you from serving as a priest to me." (Hosea 4:6) The southern kingdom was also severely punished because of its proving false to the covenant. (Jeremiah 5:29-31) When the Jews rejected Jesus as the Messiah, Jehovah likewise rejected them. (Acts 3:13-15; Romans 9:31–10:4) Finally, Jehovah made a new arrangement to administer the complete fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant.—Romans 3:20.

17. (a) Why did Jehovah reject the northern and the southern kingdom of Israel? (b) What led to the final rejection of the Jews?

18 That new arrangement was the new covenant. Jehovah had foretold this when he said: " 'Look! There are days coming,' is the utterance of Jehovah, 'and I will conclude with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah a new covenant' . . . 'This is the covenant that I shall conclude with the

18, 19. What new arrangement did Jehovah make so that the Abrahamic covenant could be fulfilled in a complete way?

Can You Explain?

- ☐ What did Jehovah promise in the Abrahamic covenant?
- ☐ How did Jehovah administer toward fleshly Israel the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant?
- ☐ How did proselytes benefit from the old covenant?
- ☐ Why was a new covenant needed?

house of Israel after those days,' is the utterance of Jehovah. 'I will put my law within them, and in their heart I shall write it. And I will become their God, and they themselves will become my people.'"—Jeremiah 31:31-33.

19 This is the new covenant that Jesus referred to on Nisan 14, 33 C.E. On that occasion, he revealed that the promised covenant was about to be concluded between his disciples and Jehovah, with Jesus as mediator. (1 Corinthians 11:25; 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 12:24) Through this new covenant, Jehovah's promise to Abraham was to have a more glorious and lasting fulfillment, as we will see in the following article.

GREATER BLESSINGS THROUGH THE NEW COVENANT

"Jesus . . . is also the mediator of a correspondingly better covenant."—HEBREWS 8:6.

AFTER Adam and Eve sinned, Jehovah pronounced judgment on Satan, the one who deceived Eve, saying: "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 3:15) When Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River in 29 C.E., the Seed promised in Eden finally appeared. At his death on a torture stake in 33 C.E., a part of that ancient prophecy was fulfilled. Satan had 'bruised the heel' of the Seed.

2 Happily, that wound, while excruciatingly painful, was not permanent. Jesus was raised from the dead an immortal spirit and ascended to his Father in heaven, where he offered the value of his shed blood as "a ransom in exchange for many." Thus, his own words came true: "The Son of man must be lifted up, that everyone believing in him may have everlasting life. For God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life." (Matthew 20:28; John 3:14-16; Hebrews 9:12-14) The new covenant plays a key role in the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy.

1. Who proved to be the 'seed of the woman' promised in Eden, and how was he 'bruised in the heel'?
2. According to Jesus' own words, how does his death benefit humankind?

The New Covenant

3 Shortly before his death, Jesus told his followers that his shed blood was the "blood of the [new] covenant." (Matthew 26:28; Luke 22:20) Ten days after he ascended to heaven, the new covenant was seen to be in operation when holy spirit was poured out on about 120 disciples gathered in an upper room in Jerusalem. (Acts 1:15; 2:1-4)

3. When was the new covenant first seen to be in operation?

The bringing of these 120 disciples into the new covenant showed that the "former" covenant, the Law covenant, was now obsolete. —Hebrews 8:13.

[4] Was the old covenant a failure? Not at all. True, since it was now replaced, fleshly Israel was no longer God's special people. (Matthew 23:38) But that was because of Israel's disobedience and rejection of Jehovah's Anointed One. (Exodus 19:5; Acts 2: 22, 23) Before the Law was replaced, however, it accomplished much. For centuries, it provided a way of approach to God and protection from false religion. It contained foregleams of the new covenant and, with its repeated sacrifices, demonstrated man's desperate need of redemption from sin and death. Indeed, the Law was a "tutor leading to Christ." (Galatians 3:19, 24; Romans 3:20; 4:15; 5:12; Hebrews 10:1, 2) However, it was through the new covenant that the blessing promised to Abraham would be realized in full.

Nations Blessed Through Abraham's Seed

[5] Jehovah promised Abraham: "By means of your seed all nations of the earth will certainly bless themselves." (Genesis 22:18) Under the old covenant, many meekhearted foreigners were blessed through their association with Israel, the national seed of Abraham. In its basic spiritual fulfillment, however, the Seed of Abraham was one perfect man. Paul explained this when he said: "The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. It says, not: 'And to seeds,' as in the case of many such, but as in the case of one: 'And to your seed,' who is Christ."—Galatians 3:16.

4. Was the old covenant a failure? Explain.
5, 6. In the basic, spiritual fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant, who is the Seed of Abraham, and which nation was the first to receive a blessing through him?

[6] Yes, Jesus is the Seed of Abraham, and through Him the nations receive a blessing far superior to anything possible for fleshly Israel. Indeed, the first nation to receive this blessing was Israel itself. Soon after Pentecost 33 C.E., the apostle Peter said to a group of Jews: "You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God covenanted with your forefathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth will be blessed.' To you first God, after raising up his Servant, sent him forth to bless you by turning each one away from your wicked deeds."—Acts 3:25, 26.

[7] Soon the blessing was extended to Samaritans and then to Gentiles. (Acts 8:14-17; 10:34-48) Sometime between 50 and 52 C.E., Paul wrote to Christians in Galatia in Asia Minor: "The Scripture, seeing in advance that God would declare people of the nations righteous due to faith, declared the good news beforehand to Abraham, namely: 'By means of you all the nations will be blessed.' Consequently those who adhere to faith are being blessed together with faithful Abraham." (Galatians 3:8, 9; Genesis 12:3) Although many Christians in Galatia were "people of the nations," they were blessed through Jesus because of their faith. In what way?

[8] Paul told the Galatian Christians, of whatever background: "If you belong to Christ, you are really Abraham's seed, heirs with reference to a promise." (Galatians 3: 29) For those Galatians, the blessing through Abraham's Seed included their being participants in the new covenant and also being coheirs with Jesus, associates with Jesus in the seed of Abraham. We do not know the population of ancient Israel.

7. What nations were blessed through Jesus, the Seed of Abraham?
8. For Christians of Paul's day, being blessed through Abraham's Seed included what, and how many, finally, receive such a blessing?

We know only that it came to be "like the grains of sand that are by the sea for multitude." (1 Kings 4:20) We do, however, know the final number of Jesus' associates in the spiritual seed—144,000. (Revelation 7:4; 14:1) Those 144,000 come out of "every tribe and tongue and people and nation" of mankind and share in administering to yet others the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant. —Revelation 5:9.

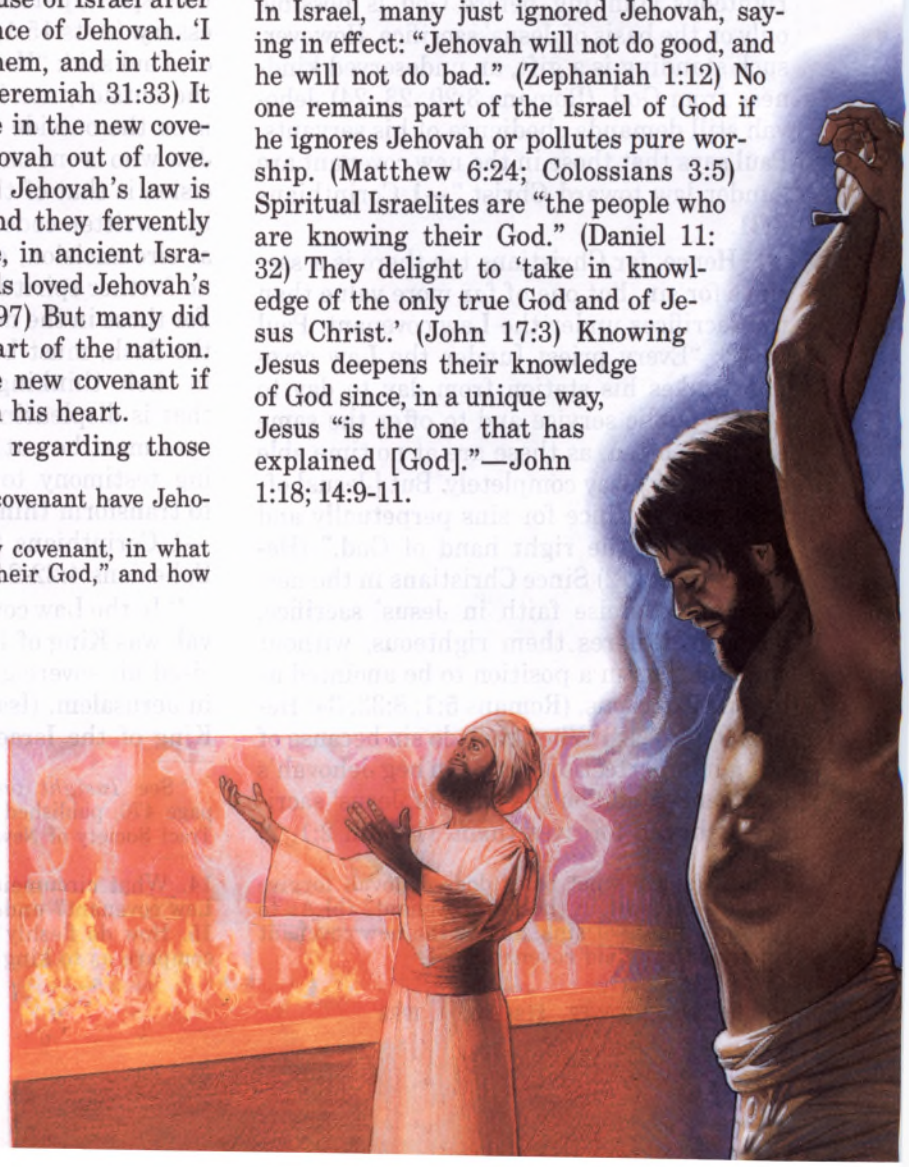
A Prophecy Fulfilled

9 When foretelling the new covenant, Jeremiah wrote: "'This is the covenant that I shall conclude with the house of Israel after those days,' is the utterance of Jehovah. 'I will put my law within them, and in their heart I shall write it.'" (Jeremiah 31:33) It is a characteristic of those in the new covenant that they serve Jehovah out of love. (John 13:35; Hebrews 1:9) Jehovah's law is written in their heart, and they fervently desire to do his will. True, in ancient Israel some faithful individuals loved Jehovah's law intensely. (Psalm 119:97) But many did not. Yet they remained part of the nation. No one can remain in the new covenant if God's law is not written in his heart.

10 Jehovah further said regarding those in the new covenant: "I will become their God, and they themselves will become my people." (Jeremiah 31:33) In ancient Israel many worshiped the gods of the nations, but they remained Israelites. On the basis of the new covenant, Jehovah created a spiritual nation, "the Israel of God," to replace fleshly Israel. (Galatians 6:16; Matthew 21:43; Romans 9:6-8) However, no one remains a part of the new spiritual nation if he ceases to worship Jehovah and him alone.

11 Jehovah also said: "They will all of them know me, from the least one of them even to the greatest one of them." (Jeremiah 31:34) In Israel, many just ignored Jehovah, saying in effect: "Jehovah will not do good, and he will not do bad." (Zephaniah 1:12) No one remains part of the Israel of God if he ignores Jehovah or pollutes pure worship. (Matthew 6:24; Colossians 3:5) Spiritual Israelites are "the people who are knowing their God." (Daniel 11:32) They delight to 'take in knowledge of the only true God and of Jesus Christ.' (John 17:3) Knowing Jesus deepens their knowledge of God since, in a unique way, Jesus "is the one that has explained [God]."—John 1:18; 14:9-11.

9. How do those in the new covenant have Jehovah's law within them?
10, 11. For those in the new covenant, in what way does Jehovah "become their God," and how will they all know him?



Forgiveness of sins has deeper meaning for those under the new covenant than for those under the old covenant

[12] Finally, Jehovah promised: "I shall forgive their error, and their sin I shall remember no more." (Jeremiah 31:34b) The Law of Moses included hundreds of written regulations that Israelites were called on to obey. (Deuteronomy 28:1, 2, 15) All who broke the Law offered sacrifices to cover their sins. (Leviticus 4:1-7; 16:1-31) Many Jews came to believe that they could become righteous through their own works according to Law. Christians, though, realize that they can never *earn* righteousness by their own works. They cannot avoid sinning. (Romans 5:12) Under the new covenant, a righteous standing before God is possible only on the basis of Jesus' sacrifice. However, such standing is a gift, an undeserved kindness from God. (Romans 3:20, 23, 24) Jehovah still demands obedience of his servants. Paul says that those in the new covenant are "under law toward Christ."—1 Corinthians 9:21.

[13] Hence, for Christians too there is a sacrifice for sin, but one of far more value than the sacrifices under the Law covenant. Paul wrote: "Every priest [under the Law covenant] takes his station from day to day to render public service and to offer the same sacrifices often, as these are at no time able to take sins away completely. But [Jesus] offered one sacrifice for sins perpetually and sat down at the right hand of God." (Hebrews 10:11, 12) Since Christians in the new covenant exercise faith in Jesus' sacrifice, Jehovah declares them righteous, without sin, and thus in a position to be anointed as his spiritual sons. (Romans 5:1; 8:33, 34; Hebrews 10:14-18) When they do sin because of human imperfection, they can beg Jehovah's forgiveness, and on the basis of Jesus' sacrifice, Jehovah forgives them. (1 John 2:1, 2) However, if they choose a course of deliberate sin, they lose their righteous standing and the privilege of being participants in the new covenant.—Hebrews 2:2, 3; 6:4-8; 10:26-31.

12, 13. (a) On what basis does Jehovah forgive the sins of those in the new covenant? (b) As to the forgiveness of sins, how is the new covenant superior to the old covenant?

The Old Covenant and the New

[14] Males in the old covenant were circumcised as a sign that they were under the Law. (Leviticus 12:2, 3; Galatians 5:3) After the Christian congregation began, some felt that non-Jewish Christians should also be circumcised. But the apostles and elders in Jerusalem, guided by God's Word and by holy spirit, perceived that this was not necessary. (Acts 15:1, 5, 28, 29) A few years later, Paul said: "He is not a Jew who is one on the outside, nor is circumcision that which is on the outside upon the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one on the inside, and his circumcision is that of the heart by spirit, and not by a written code." (Romans 2:28, 29) Literal circumcision, even for fleshly Jews, had no further spiritual value in Jehovah's eyes. For those in the new covenant, the heart, not the flesh, must be circumcised. Everything in their thinking, desires, and motivation that is displeasing or unclean in Jehovah's eyes must be cut out.* Many today are living testimony to the power of holy spirit to transform thinking patterns in this way. —1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Galatians 5:22-24; Ephesians 4:22-24.

[15] In the Law covenant arrangement, Jehovah was King of Israel, and in time he exercised his sovereignty through human kings in Jerusalem. (Isaiah 33:22) Jehovah is also King of the Israel of God, spiritual Israel,

* See *Insight on the Scriptures,* Volume 1, page 470, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

14. What circumcision was required under the Law covenant? under the new covenant?
15. How do fleshly Israel and the Israel of God compare as to kingly rulership?

and since 33 C.E., he has ruled through Jesus Christ, who received "all authority . . . in heaven and on the earth." (Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:19-23; Colossians 1:13, 14) Today, the Israel of God recognizes Jesus as King of God's heavenly Kingdom, which was established in 1914. Jesus is a far better King than were even Hezekiah, Josiah, and the other faithful kings of ancient Israel.—Hebrews 1:8, 9; Revelation 11:15.

16 Israel not only was a kingdom but also had an anointed priesthood. In 33 C.E., the Israel of God replaced fleshly Israel and became Jehovah's "servant," his "witnesses." (Isaiah 43:10) Jehovah's words to Israel recorded at Isaiah 43:21 and Exodus 19:5, 6 henceforth applied to the spiritual Israel of God. God's new spiritual nation was now "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for special possession," responsible for 'declaring abroad Jehovah's excellencies.' (1 Peter 2:9) All in the Israel of God, men and women, form a collective priesthood. (Galatians 3:28, 29) As the subsidiary part of the seed of Abraham, they now say: "Be glad, you nations, with his people." (Deuteronomy 32:43) Those of spiritual Israel still remaining on earth make up "the faithful and discreet slave." (Matthew 24:45-47) Only in association with them can acceptable sacred service be rendered to God.

God's Kingdom —The Final Fulfillment

17 Israelites born after 1513 B.C.E. came into the Law covenant at birth. Those whom Jehovah takes into the new covenant also experience a birth—in their case, a spiritual birth. Jesus mentioned this to the Pharisee Nicodemus when he said: "Most truly I say to you, Unless anyone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3) The 120 disciples at Pentecost 33 C.E. were the first imperfect humans to experience this new birth. Declared righteous under the new covenant, they received holy spirit as "a token in advance" of their royal inheritance. (Ephesians 1:14) They were "born from the spirit" to become adopted sons of God, which made them Jesus' brothers and thus "joint heirs with Christ." (John 3:6; Romans 8:16, 17) Their being "born again" opened the way for wonderful prospects.

18 When mediating the new covenant, Jesus made an additional covenant with his followers, saying: "I make a covenant with you, just as my Father has made a covenant with me, for a kingdom." (Luke 22:29) This Kingdom covenant put things in place for the fulfillment of a remarkable vision, recorded at Daniel 7:13, 14, 22, 27. Daniel saw "someone like a son of man" being given kingly authority by "the Ancient of Days," Jehovah God. Then Daniel saw that "the holy ones took possession of the kingdom itself." Jesus is the one "like a son of man" who, in 1914, received the heavenly Kingdom from Jehovah God. His spirit-anointed disciples are "the holy ones" who share with him in that Kingdom. (1 Thessalonians 2:12) How?

19 After their death, these anointed ones are like Jesus raised from the dead as immortal spirit creatures to serve with him as kings and priests in heaven. (1 Corinthians 15:50-53; Revelation 20:4, 6) What a glorious hope! "They are to rule as kings over the earth," not merely the land of Canaan. (Revelation 5:10) Will they 'possess the gates of their enemies'? (Genesis 22:17) Yes, and in a conclusive way, when they witness the

16. What kind of priesthood is the Israel of God?

17. What birth do those in the new covenant experience?

18. Being born again opens the door to what wonderful prospects for those in the new covenant?

19, 20. (a) For those in the new covenant, what final, glorious fulfillment will Jehovah's promise to Abraham have? (b) What further question needs to be considered?

destruction of the inimical religious harlot, Babylon the Great, and when these resurrected anointed ones share with Jesus in shepherding the nations "with an iron rod" and in crushing the head of Satan. They will thus have a part in fulfilling the final detail of the prophecy at Genesis 3:15.—Revelation 2:26, 27; 17:14; 18:20, 21; Romans 16:20.

[20] Still, we may ask, Do the Abrahamic covenant and the new covenant involve only these 144,000 faithful souls? No, others who are not directly in these covenants will be blessed through them, as will be seen in the following article.

Do You Remember?

- ☐ When was the new covenant first seen to be in operation?
- ☐ What was accomplished through the old covenant?
- ☐ Who primarily is Abraham's Seed, and in what order were nations blessed through that Seed?
- ☐ For the 144,000, what is the final fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant and the new covenant?

THE OTHER SHEEP AND THE NEW COVENANT

"The foreigners . . . , all those keeping the sabbath in order not to profane it and laying hold of my covenant, I will also bring them to my holy mountain."—ISAIAH 56:6, 7.

IN THE fourth vision in the book of Revelation, the apostle John saw the destructive winds of Jehovah's judgment held back while the sealing of all members of "the Israel of God" was being completed. These are the first to be blessed through Jesus, the principal part of the seed of Abraham. (Galatians 6:16; Genesis 22:18; Revelation 7:1-4) In that same vision, John saw "a great crowd, which no man was able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues . . . , crying with a loud voice, saying: 'Salvation we owe to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb.'" (Revelation 7:9, 10) In saying, "Salvation we owe . . . to the Lamb," the great crowd show that they too are blessed by means of Abraham's Seed.

[2] This great crowd was recognized back in 1935, and today it numbers more than five million. Marked to survive the great tribulation, its members will be separated

1. (a) According to John's vision, what is accomplished while the winds of Jehovah's judgment are being held back? (b) What remarkable crowd did John see?

2. When did the great crowd make its appearance, and how is it identified?

for everlasting life when Jesus divides "the sheep" from "the goats." Christians of the great crowd are among the "other sheep" in Jesus' illustration of the sheepfolds. They hope to live forever on a paradise earth. —Matthew 25:31-46; John 10:16; Revelation 21:3, 4.

[3] For the 144,000, the blessing of the Abrahamic covenant is administered through the new covenant. As *participants* in this covenant, they come "under undeserved kindness" and "under law toward Christ." (Romans 6:15; 1 Corinthians 9:21) Hence, only the 144,000 members of the Israel of God have properly partaken of the emblems during the Memorial of Jesus' death, and only with them did Jesus make his covenant for a Kingdom. (Luke 22:19, 20, 29) Members of the great crowd are not participants in the new covenant. However, they associate with the Israel of God and live with them in their "land." (Isaiah 66:8) So it is reasonable to say that they too come under Jehovah's undeserved kindness and under the law toward Christ. While not *participants* in the new covenant, they are *beneficiaries* of it.

"Foreigners" and "the Israel of God"

[4] The prophet Isaiah wrote: "The foreigners that have joined themselves to Jehovah to minister to him and to love the name of Jehovah, in order to become servants to him, all those keeping the sabbath in order not to profane it and laying hold of my covenant, I will also bring them to my holy mountain and make them rejoice inside my house of prayer. Their whole burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be for acceptance upon my altar." (Isaiah 56:6, 7) In Israel, this meant that "foreigners," non-Israelites, would worship Jehovah—loving his name, obeying the terms of the Law covenant, keeping the Sabbath, and offering sacrifices at the temple, God's "house of prayer."—Matthew 21:13.

[5] In our day, "the foreigners that have joined themselves to Jehovah" are the great crowd. These minister to Jehovah in association with the Israel of God. (Zechariah 8:23) They offer the same acceptable sacrifices as the Israel of God. (Hebrews 13:15, 16) They worship in God's spiritual temple, his "house of prayer." (Compare Revelation 7:15.) Do they keep the weekly Sabbath? Neither anointed nor other sheep are commanded to do this. (Colossians 2: 16, 17) However, Paul said to anointed Hebrew Christians: "There remains a sabbath resting for the people of God. For the man that has entered into God's rest has also himself rested from his own works, just as God did from his own." (Hebrews 4:9, 10) Those Hebrews entered into this "sabbath resting" when they subjected themselves to "the righteousness of God" and rested from trying to justify themselves by works of the Law. (Romans 10:3, 4) Anointed Gentile Christians enjoy the same rest by subjecting themselves to Jehovah's righteousness. The great crowd join them in that rest.

[6] Further, other sheep lay hold of the new covenant just as foreigners of old laid hold of the Law covenant. In what way? Not by becoming participants in it but by submitting to the laws associated with it and benefiting from its arrangements. (Compare Jeremiah 31:33, 34.) Like their anointed companions, the other sheep have Jehovah's law written 'in their heart.' They deeply love and obey Jehovah's commandments and principles. (Psalm 37:31; 119:97) Like anointed

3. How are anointed Christians and other sheep different with regard to the new covenant?

4, 5. (a) According to Isaiah, what group would minister to Jehovah? (b) How is Isaiah 56:6, 7 fulfilled upon the great crowd?

6. How do other sheep today lay hold of the new covenant?

Christians, they know Jehovah. (John 17:3) What about circumcision? Some 1,500 years before the making of the new covenant, Moses urged the Israelites: "You must circumcise the foreskin of your hearts." (Deuteronomy 10:16; Jeremiah 4:4) While compulsory fleshly circumcision passed away with the Law, both the anointed and the other sheep must "circumcise" their hearts. (Colossians 2:11) Finally, Jehovah forgives the error of the other sheep on the basis of Jesus' shed "blood of the covenant." (Matthew 26:28; 1 John 1:9; 2:2) God does not adopt them as spiritual sons, as he does the 144,000. But he does declare the other sheep righteous, in the sense that Abraham was declared righteous as God's friend.—Matthew 25:46; Romans 4:2, 3; James 2:23.

7 For the 144,000, being declared righteous opens the way to their having the hope of ruling with Jesus in the heavenly Kingdom. (Romans 8:16, 17; Galatians 2:16) For the other sheep, being declared righteous as God's friends allows them to embrace the hope of everlasting life in a paradise earth—either by surviving Armageddon as part of the great crowd or through the 'resurrection of the righteous.' (Acts 24:15) What a privilege to have such a hope and to be a friend of the Sovereign of the universe, to be "a guest in [his] tent"! (Psalm 15:1, 2) Yes, both anointed and other sheep are blessed in a wonderful way through Jesus, the Seed of Abraham.

A Greater Atonement Day

8 When discussing the new covenant, Paul reminded his readers of the annual Atonement Day under the Law covenant. On that day, separate sacrifices were offered—one for the priestly tribe of Levi and another for the 12 nonpriestly tribes. This has long been explained as prefiguring Jesus' great sacrifice that would benefit both the 144,000 with a heavenly hope and the millions who have an earthly hope.* Paul showed that in the fulfillment the benefits of Jesus' sacrifice are administered through a greater Atonement Day under the new covenant. As High Priest of this greater day, Jesus gave his perfect life as an atonement sacrifice in order to obtain "an everlasting deliverance" for humans.—Hebrews 9:11-24.

9 Many Hebrew Christians of the first century were still "zealous for the [Mosaic] Law." (Acts 21:20) Fittingly, then, Paul reminded them: "[Jesus] is a mediator of a new covenant, in order that, because a death has occurred for their release by ransom from the transgressions under the former covenant, the ones who have been called might receive the promise of the everlasting inheritance." (Hebrews 9:15) The new covenant freed Hebrew Christians from the old covenant, which exposed their sinfulness. Thanks to the new covenant, they could embrace "the promise of the everlasting [heavenly] inheritance."

10 "Everyone" who "exercises faith in the Son" will benefit from the ransom sacrifice. (John 3:16, 36) Paul said: "The Christ was offered once for all time to bear the sins of many; and the second time that he appears it will be apart from sin and to those earnestly looking for him for their salvation." (Hebrews 9:28) Today, those earnestly looking for Jesus include surviving anointed

7. What prospect opens up for other sheep today, who are declared righteous as Abraham was?
8. What was prefigured by the Atonement Day sacrifices under the Law?

* See *Survival Into a New Earth*, chapter 13, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

9. Being in the new covenant, what could Hebrew anointed Christians embrace?
10. For what do anointed and other sheep thank God?

SACRED SERVICE IN THE TEMPLE

The great crowd worships with anointed Christians in the earthly courtyard of Jehovah's great spiritual temple. (Revelation 7:14, 15; 11:2) There is no reason to conclude that they are in a separate Court of the Gentiles. When Jesus was on earth, there was a Court of the Gentiles in the temple. However, in the divinely inspired plans of Solomon's and Ezekiel's temples, there was no provision for a Court of the Gentiles. In Solomon's temple, there was an outer courtyard where Israelites and proselytes, men and women, worshiped together. This is the prophetic pattern of the earthly courtyard of the spiritual temple, where John saw the great crowd rendering sacred service.

However, only priests and Levites could enter the inner courtyard, where the great altar was situated; only priests could enter the Holy; and only the high priest could enter the Most Holy. The inner courtyard and the Holy are understood to foreshadow the unique spiritual condition of anointed Christians on earth. And the Most Holy pictures heaven itself, where anointed Christians receive immortal life along with their heavenly High Priest.—Hebrews 10:19, 20.

Christians of the Israel of God and the millions making up the great crowd, who also have an everlasting inheritance. Both classes thank God for the new covenant and for the life-giving blessings associated with it, including the greater Atonement Day and the ministry of the High Priest, Jesus, in the heavenly Most Holy.

Busy in Sacred Service

[11] In his letter to the Hebrews, Paul stressed the superior value of Jesus' sacrifice in the new covenant arrangement as compared with the sin offerings under the old covenant. (Hebrews 9:13-15) Jesus' better sacrifice is able to "cleanse our consciences from dead works that we may render sacred service to the living God." For Hebrew Christians, "dead works" included "the transgressions under the former covenant." For Christians today, they include sins committed in the past over which there has been true repentance and which God has forgiven. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11) With consciences cleansed, anointed Christians render "sacred service to the living God." And so do the great crowd. Having cleansed their consciences through "the blood of the Lamb," they are in God's great spiritual temple, "rendering him sacred service day and night."—Revelation 7:14, 15.

[12] In addition, Paul said: "Let us approach with true hearts in the full assurance of faith, having had our hearts sprinkled from a wicked conscience and our bodies bathed with clean water." (Hebrews 10:22) How can we show that we have "the full assurance of faith"? Paul urged Hebrew Christians: "Let us hold fast the public declaration of our [heavenly] hope without wavering, for he is faithful that promised. And let us consider one another to incite to love and fine works, not forsaking the gathering of ourselves together, as some have the custom, but encouraging one another, and all the more so as you behold the day drawing near." (Hebrews 10:23-25) If our faith is alive, we too will not 'forsake the gathering of ourselves

11. With consciences cleansed through Jesus' sacrifice, what do both anointed and other sheep happily do?

12. How do we show that we have "the full assurance of faith"?

together.' We will delight to incite our brothers and be incited by them to love and fine works and to be strengthened for the vital work of publicly declaring our hope, whether it is earthly or heavenly.—John 13:35.

The "Everlasting Covenant"

13 What happens when the last of the 144,000 realize their heavenly hope? Will the new covenant cease to apply? At that time, there will be on earth no remaining member of the Israel of God. All participants in the covenant will be with Jesus "in the kingdom of [his] Father." (Matthew 26:29) But we remember Paul's words in his letter to the Hebrews: "The God of peace . . . brought up from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep with the blood of *an everlasting covenant.*" (Hebrews 13:20; Isaiah 55:3) In what sense is the new covenant everlasting?

14 First, unlike the Law covenant, it will never be replaced. Second, the results of its operation are permanent, even as is Jesus' kingship. (Compare Luke 1:33 with 1 Corinthians 15:27, 28.) The heavenly Kingdom has an eternal place in Jehovah's purposes. (Revelation 22:5) And third, other sheep will continue to benefit from the new covenant arrangement. During Christ's Thousand Year Reign, faithful humans will keep on "rendering [Jehovah] sacred service day and night in his temple" just as they do now. Jehovah will not bring up again their past sins that were forgiven on the basis of Jesus' "blood of the covenant." They will continue to enjoy a righteous standing as Jehovah's friends, and his law will still be written in their hearts.

15 Will Jehovah then be able to say of these human servants: 'I am their God, and they are my people'? Yes. "He will reside with them, and *they will be his peoples.* And God himself will be with them." (Revelation 21:3) They will become "the camp of the holy ones," earthly representatives of "the beloved city," the heavenly bride of Jesus Christ. (Revelation 14:1; 20:9; 21:2) All of this will be possible because of their faith in Jesus' shed "blood of the covenant" and their subjection to the heavenly kings and priests, who when on earth were the Israel of God.—Revelation 5:10.

16 What of the dead who are resurrected on earth? (John 5:28, 29) They too will be invited to "bless themselves" by means of Jesus, the Seed of Abraham. (Genesis 22:18) They also will have to love the name of Jehovah, ministering to him, offering acceptable sacrifices, and rendering sacred service in his house of prayer. Those who do so will enter into God's rest. (Isaiah 56:6, 7) By the end of the thousand years, all faithful ones will have been brought to human perfection through the ministration of Je-

13, 14. In what ways is the new covenant everlasting?

15. Describe Jehovah's relationship with his earthly worshipers in the new world.

16. (a) What possibilities await those resurrected to the earth? (b) What blessings will come at the end of the thousand years?

Did You Understand?

- ☐ Besides anointed Christians, who are being blessed through Abraham's Seed?
- ☐ In being blessed through the new covenant, how are the other sheep like proselytes under the old covenant?
- ☐ How are the other sheep blessed through the greater Atonement Day arrangement?
- ☐ Why did Paul call the new covenant an "everlasting covenant"?

In view of the joy that awaits us, let us "have faith to the preserving alive of the soul"

sus Christ and his 144,000 fellow priests. They will *be* righteous, not merely be *declared* righteous as friends of God. They will "come to life," being completely free of sin and death inherited from Adam. (Revelation 20:5; 22:2) What a blessing that will be! From our perspective today, it seems that the priestly work of Jesus and the 144,000 will then have been accomplished. The blessings of the greater Atonement Day will have been applied in full. Further, Jesus will 'hand over the kingdom to his God and Father.' (1 Corinthians 15:24) There will be a final test for mankind, and then Satan and his demons will be destroyed forever.—Revelation 20:7, 10.

17 What role, if any, will the "everlasting covenant" play in the exciting era that will then begin? That is not for us to say. What Jehovah has so far revealed is enough for now. It leaves us awestruck. Just think —everlasting life as part of "new heavens and a new earth"! (2 Peter 3:13) May nothing weaken our desire to inherit that promise. Standing firm may not be easy. Paul said: "You have need of endurance, in order that, after you have done the will of God, you may receive the fulfillment of the promise." (Hebrews 10:36) Remember, though, that any problem to be overcome, any opposition to be surmounted, pales into insignificance beside the joy that awaits us. (2 Corinthians 4:17) Hence, may none of us be "the sort that shrink back to destruction." Rather, may we prove ourselves to be "the sort that have faith to the preserving alive of the soul." (Hebrews 10:39) May we all have full trust in Jehovah, the God of covenants, to the eternal blessing of each and every one of us.

17. In view of the joy that awaits us, what should each of us be determined to do?

"YOUR LOVING-KINDNESS IS BETTER THAN LIFE"

As told by Calvin H. Holmes

It was December of 1930, and I had just finished milking the cows when Dad came home from visiting a nearby neighbor. "This is a book Wyman lent me," he said as he pulled a blue publication out of his pocket. It was entitled *Deliverance,* published by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. Dad, who rarely read anything, read that book late into the night.

LATER, Dad borrowed other books, with such titles as *Light* and *Reconciliation,* by the same publishers. He found Mother's old Bible and stayed up late at night to read in the light of a kerosene lamp. A great change came over Dad. That winter he talked for hours to us—my mother, my three sisters, and me—as we huddled around our old wood-burning stove.

Dad said that the people publishing these books were called Bible Students and that, according to them, we were living in "the last days." (2 Timothy 3:1-5) He explained that the earth would not be destroyed at the end of the world but that under God's Kingdom it would be turned into a paradise. (2 Peter 3:5-7, 13; Revelation 21:3, 4) That sounded really interesting to me.

Dad began talking to me as we worked together. I remember that we were husking corn when he explained that God's name is Jehovah. (Psalm 83:18) Thus, during the spring of 1931, when I was only 14, I took my stand for Jehovah and his Kingdom. I prayed to Jehovah in the old apple orchard behind the house and solemnly promised that I would serve him forever. My heart was already moved by

the loving-kindness of our wonderful God. —Psalm 63:3.

We lived on a farm about 20 miles from St. Joseph, Missouri, U.S.A., and less than 40 miles from Kansas City. Dad was born in a log cabin that my great-grandfather had built on the farm in the early part of the 19th century.

Training for the Ministry

In the summer of 1931, our family heard on the radio the public talk "The Kingdom, the Hope of the World," which Joseph Rutherford, then president of the Watch Tower Society, gave at a convention in Columbus, Ohio. It stirred my heart, and I was glad to share with Dad in distributing among our acquaintances the booklet that contained this important public address.

In the spring of 1932, I attended my first meeting of Jehovah's Witnesses. Our neighbor invited Dad and me to hear a talk in St. Joseph by George Draper, a traveling overseer of Jehovah's Witnesses. When we arrived, the meeting was half over, and I found a place to sit behind the sturdy, broad back of J. D. Dreyer, who was to play an important role in my life.

In September 1933, I attended an assembly with Dad in Kansas City, where I first shared in public preaching. Dad gave me three booklets and instructed me to say: "I am one of Jehovah's Witnesses preaching the good news of God's Kingdom. No doubt you have heard Judge Rutherford over the radio. His talks are broadcast by more than 300 stations each week." Then I offered a booklet. That evening, as I milked the cows back on the farm, I thought that this had been the most memorable day of my life.

Soon winter set in, and travel for us was limited. But then Brother Dreyer and his wife visited and asked if I would like to come to their home on Saturday evening and stay overnight. The six-mile walk to the Dreyer home was well worth the effort because I was able to accompany them in the ministry the following day and attend the *Watchtower* Study in St. Joseph. Since then, I have seldom missed sharing in the ministry on Sundays. Brother Dreyer's training and counsel proved invaluable.

On September 2, 1935, I was finally able to symbolize my dedication to Jehovah by water baptism at an assembly in Kansas City.

Beginning of a Lifelong Career

Early in 1936, I applied to serve as a pioneer, or full-time minister, and I was put on the list of those looking for a pioneer partner. Shortly thereafter I received a letter from Edward Stead of Arvada, Wyoming. He explained that he was confined to a wheelchair and needed help to pioneer. I immediately accepted his offer and was appointed a pioneer on April 18, 1936.

Before I left to join Brother Stead, my mother spoke to me alone. "Son, are you sure this is what you want to do?" she asked.

"Life would not be worth living otherwise," I replied. I had come to appreciate that Jehovah's loving-kindness is more important than anything else.

Pioneering with Ted, as we called Brother Stead, was excellent training. He was filled with zeal and had a very appealing way of presenting the Kingdom message. But about all Ted could do was write and talk; all his joints were locked by rheumatoid arthritis. I would get up early and wash and shave him, prepare breakfast, and feed him. Then I would dress him and get him ready for service. That summer we pioneered in Wyoming and Montana, camping out at night. Ted slept in the special cab built on his pickup truck, and I slept on the ground. Later that year I moved south to pioneer in Tennessee, Arkansas, and Mississippi.

In September 1937, I attended my first big convention in Columbus, Ohio. There arrangements were made to spearhead the preaching work with the use of the phonograph. We called each time we used the phonograph a setup. One month I had over 500 setups, and more than 800 people listened. After witnessing in many towns of eastern Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia, I was invited to serve as a special pioneer in a new capacity, working in conjunction with the zone servant, as traveling overseers were then called.

Street witnessing in Belgium in 1948

My parents in 1936

We spearheaded the preaching work with the phonograph

I visited congregations and isolated groups in West Virginia—spending two to four weeks with each one—and took the lead in the field ministry. Then, in January 1941, I was appointed a zone servant. By then Mother and my three sisters—Clara, Lois, and Ruth—had taken their stand for the Kingdom. So our whole family attended the big convention in St. Louis together that summer.

Shortly after the convention, zone servants were notified that zone work would terminate at the end of November 1941. The following month the United States entered World War II. I was assigned to the special pioneer service, which required spending 175 hours a month in the ministry.

Special Privileges of Service

In July 1942, I received a letter that asked whether I would be willing to serve abroad. After responding in the affirmative, I was invited to Bethel, the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses, in Brooklyn, New York. About 20 single brothers were called in for special training at the same time.

Nathan H. Knorr, then president of the Watch Tower Society, explained that the preaching activity had fallen off and that we would be trained to strengthen congregations spiritually. "We don't want to know only what's wrong in the congregation," he said, "but what you did about it."

While we were at Bethel, Fred Franz, who succeeded Brother Knorr as president in 1977, gave a talk in which he said: "World War II will end, and a great preaching work will open up. No doubt millions will yet be gathered into Jehovah's organization!" That talk completely changed my outlook. When assignments were made, I learned I was to visit all the congregations in the states of Tennessee and Kentucky. We were called servants to the brethren, an identification since changed to circuit overseer.

I started serving congregations on October 1, 1942, when I was still only 25. At that time the only way to reach some congrega-

tions was by foot or by horseback. Sometimes I slept in the same room as the family who put me up.

When I was serving the Greeneville Congregation in Tennessee in July 1943, I received an invitation to attend the second class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead. At Gilead, I learned what it really means "to pay more than the usual attention to the things heard" and always to have "plenty to do in the work of the Lord." (Hebrews 2:1; 1 Corinthians 15:58) The five months of the school course flew by quickly, and graduation day came on January 31, 1944.

Canada and On to Belgium

A number of us were assigned to Canada, where a ban had recently been lifted on the activity of Jehovah's Witnesses. I was assigned to the traveling work, which required covering great distances between some congregations. As I traveled, it was a joy to hear experiences about how our preaching work had been carried on during the ban in Canada. (Acts 5:29) Many told about the so-called blitz when during a single night, a booklet was placed in practically every home from one end of Canada to the other. What good news it was to learn in May 1945 that the war in Europe was over!

That summer, while serving a congregation in the small town of Osage, Saskatchewan, I received a letter from Brother Knorr, which read: "I am extending to you the privilege of going to Belgium. . . . There is much work to be done in that land. It's a war-torn country, and our brethren need help, and it seems well to send someone from America to give them the proper aid and comfort they need." I replied immediately, accepting the assignment.

In November 1945, I was in Brooklyn Bethel studying French with Charles Eicher, an elderly Alsatian brother. I also received some rapid training in branch procedure. Before leaving for Europe, I paid a brief visit to my family and friends in St. Joseph, Missouri.

On December 11, I left New York on the *Queen Elizabeth,* and four days later I arrived in Southampton, England. I stayed a month at the Britain branch, where I received additional training. After that, on January 15, 1946, I crossed the English Channel and disembarked at Ostend, Belgium. From there I went by train to Brussels, where the entire Bethel family met me at the railway station.

Stepped-Up Postwar Activity

My assignment was to oversee the Kingdom work in Belgium, yet I couldn't even speak the language. In about six months, I knew enough French to get by. It was a privilege to work alongside ones who had risked their lives to carry on the preaching work during five years of Nazi occupation. Some of them had recently been released from concentration camps.

The brothers were eager to get the work organized and to feed those hungering for Bible truth. So arrangements were made to hold assemblies and for traveling overseers to visit congregations. We also had encouraging visits from Nathan Knorr, Milton Henschel, Fred Franz, Grant Suiter, and John Booth—all representatives from Brooklyn headquarters. In those early days, I served as circuit overseer, district overseer, and branch overseer. On December 6, 1952, after nearly seven years of service in Belgium, I married Emilia Vanopslaugh, who also worked in the Belgium branch.

A few months later, on April 11, 1953, I was summoned to the local police station and informed that my presence was dangerous to the security of Belgium. I went to Luxembourg to wait while an appeal of my case was made to the Council of State.

In February 1954 the Belgium Council of State upheld the decree that my presence was a danger to the country. The evidence provided was that since my arrival in Belgium, the number of Witnesses in the country had increased dramatically—from 804 in 1946 to 3,304 in 1953—and that, as a result, the security of Belgium was threatened because many young Witnesses were taking a firm stand for Christian neutrality. Thus, Emilia and I were assigned to Switzerland, where we began serving in the circuit work in the French-speaking section.

The Kingdom Ministry School—a school to provide advanced training for Christian elders—was established in 1959 at South Lansing, New York. I was invited there to receive training to teach classes of this school in Europe. While I was in the United States, I visited my family in St. Joseph, Missouri. There I saw my dear mother for the last time. She died in January 1962; Dad had passed away in June 1955.

The Kingdom Ministry School in Paris, France, began in March 1961, and Emilia accompanied me. District overseers, circuit overseers, congregation overseers, and special pioneers came for the school from France, Belgium, and Switzerland. During the next 14 months, I conducted 12 classes of this four-week course. Subsequently, in April 1962, we learned that Emilia was pregnant.

Adjusting to Circumstances

We returned to Geneva, Switzerland, where we had permanent resident permits. However, it was not easy to find a place to live, for there was a severe housing shortage. Finding employment was not easy either. Finally I got a job in a big department store in the center of Geneva.

I had spent 26 years in the full-time ministry, so our changed circumstances required quite an adjustment. During the 22 years that I worked in the department store and helped rear our two daughters, Lois and Eunice, our family always put Kingdom interests first. (Matthew 6:33) After my retirement from secular work in 1985, I began serving as a substitute circuit overseer.

Emilia's health has been very poor, but she does what she can in the ministry. Lois served as a pioneer for about ten years. What a spiritual highlight it was to be able to enjoy with her that most wonderful international convention in Moscow during the summer of 1993! Shortly afterward, on a vacation trip in Senegal, Africa, Lois lost her life while swimming in the ocean. The love and kindness of our African brothers and the missionaries was a great comfort to me when I traveled to Senegal to care for the burial. How I long to see Lois in the resurrection!—John 5:28, 29.

I am grateful to have enjoyed for well over four decades the loyal support of a loving companion. Indeed, despite my heartaches and troubles, Jehovah's loving-kindness has been sweet and has made life worth living. My heart is moved to proclaim regarding our God, Jehovah, in the words of the psalmist: "Because your loving-kindness is better than life, my own lips will commend you." —Psalm 63:3.

In Our Next Issue

Why Be Grateful?

Parents—Safeguard Your Children!

Glorious Freedom Soon for the Children of God

Is It Praise or Flattery?

SOMEONE says to you, "Your new hairstyle looks great!" Is it praise or flattery? "That suit is just perfect for you!" Praise or flattery? "This is the most delicious meal I have ever tasted!" Is it praise or flattery? When we receive such compliments, we may wonder whether they are really sincere and truthful or whether they are simply meant to please us without necessarily being believed by the speaker.

How can we know whether what a person says to us is praise or flattery? Does it matter? Can we not just accept at face value what is said and bask in the pleasure it gives us? What about when we give praise to others? Have we ever examined our motives? Thinking about these questions can help us to be discerning and to use our tongue in a manner that brings praise to Jehovah God.

Praise and Flattery Defined

Praise is defined by *Webster's Dictionary* as an expression of approval or commendation, and the word can also denote worship or the giving of glory. Clearly the latter two meanings refer only to praise that is directed to Jehovah God. This is an integral part of true worship, as the inspired psalmist exhorts: "For it is good . . . , it is pleasant—praise is fitting." "Every breathing thing—let it praise Jah." —Psalm 147:1; 150:6.

However, this does not mean that praise cannot be given to humans. It can, in the sense of commendation, approval, or a favorable judgment. In a parable given by Jesus, a master tells his servant: "Well done, good and faithful slave!"—Matthew 25:21.

On the other hand, flattery is defined as false, insincere or excessive praise, where the flatterer usually has motives of self-interest. Artful commendation or adulation is given to gain favor or material benefits from another or to create a feeling of obligation toward the flatterer. So flatterers are motivated by selfishness. According to Jude 16, they are "ready with flattery for other people when they see some advantage in it."—*The Jerusalem Bible.*

The Scriptural View

What is the Scriptural view of praising fellow humans? Jehovah sets a pattern for us to follow in this regard. We are told in the Bible that we will be praised if we do

Jehovah's will. The apostle Paul says that "each one will have his praise come to him from God." Peter tells us that the tested quality of our faith "may be found a cause for praise." So the fact that Jehovah will praise humans shows us that giving genuine praise is a kind, loving, and beneficial act, one not to be overlooked.—1 Corinthians 4:5; 1 Peter 1:7.

Another source from which praise can come to us, according to the Bible, is government authorities who observe our good conduct and honestly commend us. "Keep doing good," we are told, "and you will have praise from it." (Romans 13:3) We may also receive praise from people who sincerely believe what they are saying and who have no ulterior motive in praising us. The inspired Scriptures say at Proverbs 27:2: "May a stranger, and not your own mouth, praise you." This indicates that accepting praise from humans is proper.

Not so with giving or receiving flattery. Why is flattering speech so displeasing to Jehovah? For one thing, it is insincere, and Jehovah condemns insincerity. (Compare Proverbs 23:6, 7.) Further, it is not honest. Describing people who warrant God's disapproval, the psalmist says: "All they do is lie to one another, flattering lips, talk from a double heart. May Yahweh slice off every flattering lip."—Psalm 12:2, 3, *JB*.

Above all, flattery is unloving. It is motivated by selfishness. After speaking of the flatterers, the psalmist David quotes them as saying: "With our tongue we shall prevail. Our lips are with us. Who will be a master to us?" Jehovah describes such selfish ones as 'despoilers of the afflicted ones.' Their flattering tongues have been used, not to build up others, but to despoil them and afflict them.—Psalm 12:4, 5.

Flattery—A Trap

"An able-bodied man that is flattering his companion is spreading out a mere net for his steps." So says wise King Solomon, and how true that is! (Proverbs 29:5) The Pharisees tried to spread a trap for Jesus with flattery. They said: "Teacher, we know you are truthful and teach the way of God in truth, and you do not care for anybody, for you do not look upon men's outward appearance." How disarming that sounded! But Jesus was not taken in by their smooth talk. He knew that they did not believe his truthful teaching but were just trying to trap him in his speech on the issue of paying tax to Caesar.—Matthew 22:15-22.

In sharp contrast with Jesus was first-century King Herod. When he gave a public address in the town of Caesarea, the people responded: "A god's voice, and not a man's!" Instead of rebuking the people for such blatant, false praise, Herod accepted the flattery. Jehovah's angel brought instant retribution as Herod was stricken with a worm infestation that resulted in his death.—Acts 12:21-23.

A mature Christian will be alert to recognize flattery for what it is. Congregation elders should be particularly wary when someone involved in a judicial matter is effusive with admiration, perhaps even to the point of comparing one elder with another and saying how much kinder and empathetic the one being spoken to was.

The Bible clearly shows another pitfall that flattery can pose when it describes how a young man is lured into immorality by a seductress. (Proverbs 7:5, 21) This warning is germane to the situation today. Among those who are disfellowshipped from the Christian congregation each year, many are removed for immoral conduct.

Could such a fall into gross sin have started with flattery? Since humans are so desirous of compliments and of being well spoken of, smooth talk from flattering lips can lower a Christian's resistance to improper conduct. When such is not guarded against, it could lead to serious consequences.

Safeguards Against Flattery

Flattery gratifies the self-love or vanity of the one flattered. It tends to give a person an inflated view of his own worth, making him feel superior to others in some way. The philosopher François de La Rochefoucauld likened flattery to counterfeit money, "which, but for vanity would have no circulation." Thus, the way to safeguard oneself is to heed the apostle Paul's down-to-earth admonition: "I tell everyone there among you not to think more of himself than it is necessary to think; but to think so as to have a sound mind, each one as God has distributed to him a measure of faith."—Romans 12:3.

Though our natural inclination is to want to hear what is pleasing to our ears, what we really need most of the time are Bible-based counsel and discipline. (Proverbs 16:25) King Ahab wanted to hear only what pleased him; his servants even asked the prophet Micaiah to let his word become "like the word of one of them [Ahab's flattering prophets], and you must speak good." (1 Kings 22:13) Had Ahab been willing to listen to straight talk and change his rebellious ways, he could have prevented the terrible battle losses to Israel and also his own death. For our own spiritual welfare, we should be quick to respond to the firm, yet loving, counsel of appointed Christian elders, who want to help us to stay on the straight path of truth, rather than search out people who keep telling us how wonderful we are, tickling our ears with flattering speech!—Compare 2 Timothy 4:3.

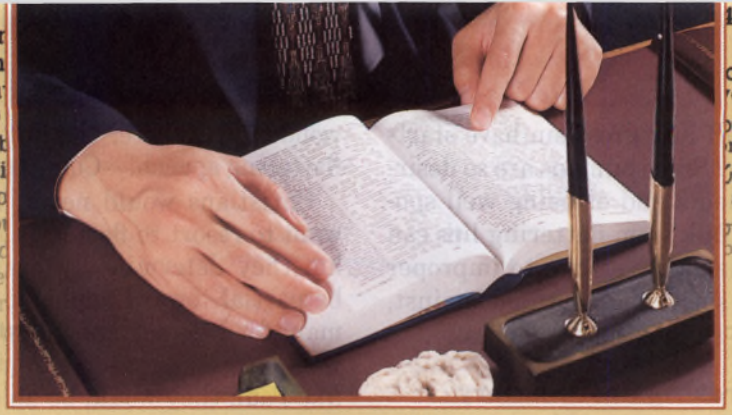
Christians would never, for any reason, want to resort to flattery. Like faithful Elihu, they determinedly pray: "Let me not be partial toward anybody, nor flatter any man; for I do not know how to flatter, else would my Maker soon take me away." Then, like Paul, they would be able to say: "At no time have we turned up either with flattering speech . . . or with a false front for covetousness."—Job 32:21, 22, *An American Translation;* 1 Thessalonians 2:5, 6.

Praise Where It Is Due

The inspired proverb shows that praise can act like a touchstone, saying: "The melting-pot is for silver and the crucible for gold, but praise is the test of character." (Proverbs 27:21, *The New English Bible*) Yes, praise may foster feelings of superiority or pride, leading to a person's downfall. On the other hand, it can reveal his modesty and humility if he acknowledges his indebtedness to Jehovah for anything he has done that has brought him praise.

Sincere praise for worthy conduct or attainments builds up both the giver and the recipient. It makes for warm and wholesome appreciation one for another. It encourages striving for praiseworthy goals. Deserving praise given to the young may make them want to work harder. It may help mold their character as they aim to live up to the standards expected of them.

Let us, therefore, avoid flattery—whether on the giving or on the receiving end. Let us be humble when accepting praise. And let us be generous and whole-souled in giving praise—regularly to Jehovah in our worship and sincerely to others in the form of wholesome commendation and appreciation, remembering that "a word at its right time is O how good!"—Proverbs 15:23.



"It Is the Best Interlinear New Testament Available"

THAT is how Dr. Jason BeDuhn describes *The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures*. He explains:

"I have just completed teaching a course for the Religious Studies Department of Indiana University, Bloomington, [U.S.A.] . . . This is primarily a course in the Gospels. Your help came in the form of copies of *The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures* which my students used as one of the textbooks for the class. These small volumes were invaluable to the course and very popular with my students."

Why does Dr. BeDuhn use the *Kingdom Interlinear* translation in his college courses? He answers: "Simply put, it is the best interlinear New Testament available. I am a trained scholar of the Bible, familiar with the texts and tools in use in modern biblical studies, and, by the way, not a member of the Jehovah's Witnesses. But I know a quality publication when I see one, and your 'New World Bible Translation Committee' has done its job well. Your interlinear English rendering is accurate and consistent to an extreme that forces the reader to come to terms with the linguistic, cultural, and conceptual gaps between the Greek-speaking world and our own. Your 'New World Translation' is a high quality, literal translation that avoids traditional glosses in its faithfulness to the Greek. It is, in many ways, superior to the most successful translations in use today."

The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures is published by Jehovah's Witnesses to help lovers of God's Word get acquainted with the original Greek text of the Bible. It contains *The New Testament in the Original Greek* on the left-hand side of the page (compiled by B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort). A literal word-for-word English translation is found under the lines of Greek text. In the narrow right-hand column is the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, which allows you to compare the interlinear translation with a modern English translation of the Bible.