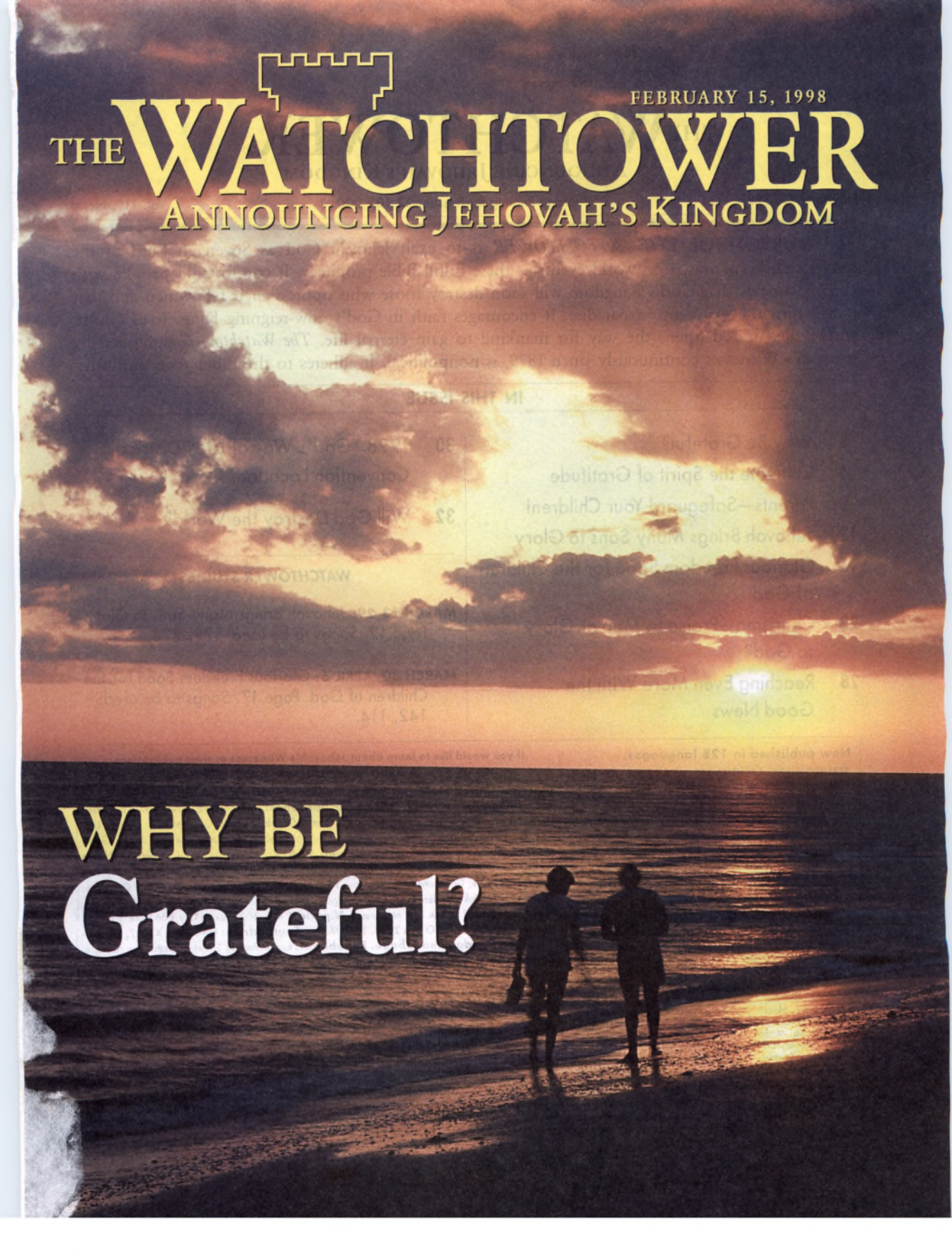




THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

FEBRUARY 15, 1998

WHY BE Grateful?

THE WATCHTOWER[®]

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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

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WHY BE GRATEFUL?

SPINAL surgery forced Harley to change his career from a machinist to an office clerk. When asked how he felt about this change, Harley said: "I do miss working with machinery. But, in all honesty, I am happier with my present work than with my previous job."

Giving a reason for his contentment, Harley relates: "It is the attitude of the people I work with. Unlike those at my previous place of employment, my current supervisor and coworkers are appreciative of what I do, and they don't hold back from giving commendation. This has made all the difference in the world." Feeling useful and needed, Harley is now a happy worker.

Words of commendation or gratitude,

when deserved, are truly heartwarming. The effect of ingratitude, on the other hand, can be as chilling as Shakespeare observed: "Blow, blow, thou winter wind, thou art not so unkind as man's ingratitude." Sadly, many have been the recipients of such unkindness.

Guard Against Ingratitude

In today's world sincere expressions of gratitude are disappearing. A writer, for instance, raised a question: "If the bride found time to address 200 wedding invitations, why can't she find time to write thank-you notes for 163 presents?" Often even the simple word "thanks" goes unsaid. Gratitude is increasingly being replaced by a me-first

attitude. This situation is one of the identifying marks of the last days. The apostle Paul warned: "You must realise that in the last days the times will be full of danger. Men will become utterly self-centred . . . They will be utterly lacking in gratitude." —2 Timothy 3:1, 2, *Phillips*.

In other cases, gratitude is replaced by flattery. Expressions of gratitude are made from the heart without thought of personal gain. However, flattery, usually insincere and exaggerated, may stem from the ulterior motive of getting ahead or gaining certain personal advantages. (Jude 16) Besides beguiling the recipient, such smooth talk tends to be the fruitage of pride and haughtiness. Who, then, would want to be victimized by insincere flattery? But genuine gratitude is truly refreshing.

The person expressing gratitude benefits from doing so. The warmth he experiences because of being grateful at heart contributes to his happiness and peace. (Compare Proverbs 15:13, 15.) And being a positive

quality, gratitude protects him from such negative feelings as anger, jealousy, and resentment.

"Show Yourselves Thankful"

The Bible urges us to cultivate a spirit of gratitude, or thankfulness. Paul wrote: "In connection with everything give thanks. For this is the will of God in union with Christ Jesus respecting you." (1 Thessalonians 5:18) And Paul counseled the Colossians: "Let the peace of the Christ control in your hearts . . . And show yourselves thankful." (Colossians 3:15) Numerous psalms contain expressions of thanks, indicating that heartfelt gratitude is a godly virtue. (Psalm 27:4; 75:1) Clearly, Jehovah God is pleased when we manifest thankfulness in everyday matters of life.

But what factors in this unthankful world make it difficult for us to cultivate the spirit of gratitude? How may we display a thankful attitude in daily life? These questions will be discussed in the next article.

CULTIVATE THE SPIRIT OF GRATITUDE

A PHYSICIAN in New York State saves Marie's life in an emergency situation. But 50-year-old Marie neither thanks the doctor nor pays her bill. How typical of ingratitude!

The Bible relates that once, upon entering a village, Jesus encountered ten men who had the terrible disease leprosy. They cried out to him with loud voices: "Jesus, Instructor, have mercy on us!" Jesus commanded:

"Go and show yourselves to the priests." The lepers accepted his direction, and while on the way, they began to see and feel their restored health.

Nine of the cured lepers continued on their way. But the other leper, a Samaritan, returned to look for Jesus. This former leper praised God, and upon finding Jesus, he fell at his feet, thanking him. In reply Jesus said: "The ten were cleansed, were they

not? Where, then, are the other nine? Were none found that turned back to give glory to God but this man of another nation?" —Luke 17:11-19.

An important lesson is implied by the question: "Where, then, are the other nine?" Like Marie, the nine lepers had a serious shortcoming—they did not show gratitude. Such ingratitude is very prevalent today. What is the reason for this?

Basic Cause of Ingratitude

Ingratitude stems basically from selfishness. Consider our first human parents, Adam and Eve. Jehovah created them with divine attributes and provided everything for their happiness, including a beautiful garden home, perfect surroundings, and meaningful and satisfying work. (Genesis 1:26-29; 2:16, 17) Yet, under the pressure of Satan's appeal to their self-interest, as a couple they gave way to disobedience and responded with contempt to Jehovah's beneficence.—Genesis 3:1-5; Revelation 12:9.

Consider also the people of ancient Israel, whom God had chosen to be his special property. How grateful all Israelite parents must have been on the night of Nisan 14, 1513 B.C.E.! On that momentous night, the angel of God brought death to "every first-born in the land of Egypt" but passed over the properly marked Israelite houses. (Exodus 12:12, 21-24, 30) And upon being delivered from Pharaoh's army at the Red Sea, with hearts full of gratitude, 'Moses and the sons of Israel proceeded to sing to Jehovah.' —Exodus 14:19-28; 15:1-21.

Nevertheless, just weeks after leaving Egypt, "the entire assembly of the sons of Israel began to murmur." How quickly they fell victim to ingratitude! They missed "sitting by the pots of meat . . . , eating bread to satisfaction," which they had enjoyed in Egypt, the land of their servitude. (Exodus

16:1-3) Clearly, selfishness works against cultivating and manifesting gratitude.

Being descendants of sinful Adam, all humans are born with a selfish streak and a tendency toward ingratitude. (Romans 5:12) Unthankfulness is also a part of the selfish spirit that dominates the people of this world. Like the air we breathe, that spirit is everywhere, and it affects us. (Ephesians 2:1, 2) We, then, need to cultivate a grateful disposition. How may we do so?

Meditation a Must!

Webster's Third New International Dictionary defines gratitude as "the state of being grateful: warm and friendly feeling toward a benefactor prompting one to repay a favor." A feeling cannot be turned on and off mechanically; it must spring unprompted from within a person. Gratitude is more than a mere display of good manners or a form of etiquette; it stems from the heart.

How can we learn to feel grateful at heart? The Bible attributes much of what we feel to our choice of thoughts. (Ephesians 4:22-24) Learning to feel grateful starts with meditating appreciatively on the kindnesses we receive. In line with this, Dr. Wayne W. Dyer, who works in the mental-health field, says: "You cannot have a feeling (emotion) without first having experienced a thought."

Take, for example, the matter of thankfulness for the creation around us. When you look at a star-packed sky on a cloudless night, how do you feel about what you are experiencing? King David expressed the awe he felt: "When I see your heavens, the works of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have prepared, what is mortal man that you keep him in mind, and the son of earthling man that you take care of him?" And in the silence of the night, the

stars spoke out to David, prompting him to write: "The heavens are declaring the glory of God; and of the work of his hands the expanse is telling." Why did starry heavens touch David so deeply? He himself answers: "I have meditated on all your activity; I willingly kept myself concerned with the work of your own hands."—Psalm 8:3, 4; 19:1; 143:5.

David's son Solomon also appreciated the value of thinking about the wonders of creation. For instance, concerning the part that rain clouds play in refreshing our earth, he wrote: "All the winter torrents are going forth to the sea, yet the sea itself is not full. To the place where the winter torrents are going forth, there they are returning so as to go forth." (Ecclesiastes 1:7) So it is that after the rains and the rivers have refreshed the earth, their waters are recycled from the oceans back into the clouds. What would this earth be like without this purifying and recycling of water? How grateful Solomon must have felt when dwelling upon these thoughts!

A grateful person also values his relationships with family members, friends, and acquaintances. Their acts of kindness capture his attention. As he appreciatively considers their favors, he feels thankful at heart.

Expressing Gratitude

What a simple word "thanks" is! It is so easy to utter such an expression. And opportunities to do so abound. How refreshing is a warm and sincere Thank You to someone who holds a door open for us or picks up something we have dropped! Hearing that expression can make the job of a store clerk or a waitress at a restaurant or the mailman lighter and more rewarding.

Sending thank-you cards is a convenient way to express gratitude for acts of kindness. Many of the cards available in stores

express the sentiments beautifully. But would it not be a loving personal touch to add words of appreciation in your own handwriting? Some even prefer to omit a printed card, sending instead a personal note. —Compare Proverbs 25:11.

Likely, those most deserving of our gratitude are the ones closest to us at home. The Bible says of a capable wife: "Her owner rises up, and he praises her." (Proverbs 31:28) Are not a husband's heartfelt expressions of thanks to his wife conducive to a home environment of peace and contentment? And is not the husband also glad to come home to a warm and appreciative greeting from his wife? These days, the pressures on marriage are many, and when pressures mount, tempers flare easily. The one of grateful disposition is ready to make allowances and is quick to overlook and forgive.

Youths too need to be conscious to offer their parents heartfelt expressions of appreciation. Of course, parents are not perfect, but that is no reason to be ungrateful for what they have done for you. The love and attention that they have given since your birth cannot be purchased. If they have taught you the knowledge of God, you have an added reason to be grateful.

"Sons are an inheritance from Jehovah," declares Psalm 127:3. So parents should look for opportunities to commend their children rather than resort to nagging them about trivialities. (Ephesians 6:4) And what a privilege they have to help young ones under their care to cultivate the spirit of gratitude!—Compare Proverbs 29:21.

Thankful to God

Jehovah God is the Giver of "every good gift and every perfect present." (James 1:17) Especially important is the gift of life, for everything we have or might plan will

become valueless if we lose life. The Scriptures urge us to remember that “with [Jehovah God] is the source of life.” (Psalm 36: 5, 7, 9; Acts 17:28) To cultivate a grateful heart toward God, we need to meditate on his generous provisions that sustain our physical and spiritual lives. (Psalm 1:1-3; 77:11, 12) Such a heart will prompt us to show appreciation in words and actions.

Prayer is one obvious way to express our gratitude to God. The psalmist David declared: “Many things you yourself have done, O Jehovah my God, even your wonderful works and your thoughts toward us; there is none to be compared to you. Were I inclined to tell and speak of them, they have become more numerous than I can recount.” (Psalm 40:5) May we be moved similarly.

David was also determined to show God his appreciation by the words he spoke to others. He said: “I will laud you, O Jehovah, with all my heart; I will declare all your wonderful works.” (Psalm 9:1) Speaking to others about God, expressing ourselves by sharing with them the truth from his Word, is probably the finest way to show him our gratitude. And this will help us to be more grateful in other aspects of life.

“The one offering thanksgiving as his sacrifice is the one that glorifies me; and as for the one keeping a set way, I will cause him to see salvation,” says Jehovah. May you experience the joy that comes from showing your heartfelt gratitude to him. —Psalm 50:23; 100:2.

***Life is a gift from God.
Be sure to add a personal touch***



P A R E N T S

Safeguard Your Children!

IN A Nigerian secondary school, a girl who was notorious for sexual immorality was fond of lecturing fellow female students on matters of sex. One of her prescriptions for abortion was stout beer heavily drugged with a tobacco substance. Her stories, which she culled from pornographic literature, enthralled many of her fellow students. Some began to experiment with sex, and one of them became pregnant. To induce an abortion, she drank the stout/tobacco concoction. Within a few hours, she began to vomit blood. A few days later, she died in the hospital.

In today's world, many youths speak unceasingly about sex, bringing ruin to credulous listeners. To whom should youngsters turn to find accurate knowledge that will safeguard them? How fine it is when they can look to their godly parents, who have the responsibility to raise them in "the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah." —Ephesians 6:4.

African Attitudes Toward Sex Education

Throughout the world, many parents find it difficult to discuss with their children



matters of sex. This is particularly true in Africa. Observed Donald, a father in Sierra Leone: "It's almost never done. It's not a part of African culture to do so." A Nigerian woman named Confident agrees: "My parents see sex as something never to be mentioned openly; it's culturally taboo."

In some African cultures, it is considered obscene to mention such sex-related words as penis, semen, or menstruation. One Christian mother even forbade her daughter to use the word "sex," though she said the daughter could use the word "fornication." In contrast, God's Word the Bible speaks with frankness about sex and the sexual organs. (Genesis 17:11; 18:11; 30:16, 17; Leviticus 15:2) The purpose of this is not to shock or excite but to protect and instruct God's people.—2 Timothy 3:16.

Aside from cultural taboos, another reason why some parents hold back was expressed by a Nigerian father: "If I discuss sex with my children, it could stimulate them to commit sexual immorality." But does dignified, Bible-based information about sex encourage children to rush out and experiment? No, it does not. In fact, it may well be that the less knowledge young-

sters have, the more likely they are to get into trouble. "Wisdom [based on accurate knowledge] is for a protection," states the Bible.—Ecclesiastes 7:12.

In Jesus' illustration, a discreet man, foreseeing the possibility of future storms, built his house on a rock mass while a foolish man built on sand and suffered disaster. (Matthew 7:24-27) Similarly, discreet Christian parents, knowing that their children will face stormlike pressures to conform to the world's loose sexual standards, fortify their children with the accurate knowledge and understanding that will help them to remain firm.

An additional reason why many parents do not discuss sex with their children was stated by an African woman: "When I was a youth, my Witness parents did not discuss sex matters with me, so it hasn't come to my mind to discuss these things with my children." However, the pressures are greater on today's young people than they were on young people 10 or 20 years ago. This is not surprising. God's Word foretold that "in the last days . . . , wicked men and impostors will advance from bad to worse, misleading and being misled."—2 Timothy 3:1, 13.

Adding to the problem is the fact that many children are reluctant or unable to confide in their parents. Two-way communication often is poor on even trivial matters. Lamented a 19-year-old youth: "I do not discuss things with my parents. There is not good communication between me and my father. He does not pay attention."

Youngsters may also fear that inquiries about sexual matters will bring bad consequences. A 16-year-old girl said: "I do not discuss sex problems with my parents because of the way they react to such things. Some time ago my senior sister asked Mum some questions relating to sex. Instead of Mum helping her with her problem, she

became suspicious of her intentions. Often Mum would call me and inquire about my sister, at times making insinuations about her morals. I don't want to risk losing Mum's love for me, so I keep my problems away from her."

Why Instruct?

Instructing our children to an adequate extent in sexual matters is not merely the right thing to do but the kind thing to do. If parents do not teach their children about sex, others will—usually sooner than parents anticipate and almost never in accord with godly principles. A 13-year-old girl committed fornication because she was told by a schoolmate that if she did not lose her virginity, she would suffer terrible pain in the future. "They will cut your hymen with scissors," she was told. When asked later why she did not tell her Christian mother what she had heard, the girl replied that such matters were never discussed with adults.

Said a Nigerian girl: "My school friends tried to convince me that sex was something that all normal human beings must take part in. They told me that if I did not take part in sex now, when I reached 21 years of age, I would start to experience a sickness that would have a disastrous impact on my womanhood. Hence, in order to avert such terrible danger, they said, it was good to experience sexual relations before marriage."

Having had good communication with her parents, she immediately recognized a conflict with what she had learned at home. "As usual, I went back home and told my mother what they had told me at school." Her mother was able to counter the false information.—Compare Proverbs 14:15.

By imparting the knowledge needed to help children attain godly wisdom in matters of sex, parents equip them to discern



Christian youths who receive Bible-based information from parents can reject distorted tales that other youths tell

dangerous situations and to recognize people who wish to exploit them. It helps to protect them against the heartache of sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancy. It contributes to their self-respect and the respect they earn from others. It frees them from misconceptions and anxiety. It fosters a healthy, positive attitude toward proper sex, contributing to happiness if they later marry. It can help them to maintain an approved standing with God. And as children see the loving concern shown to them, it can move them to respect and love their parents all the more.

Good Communication

In order for parents to tailor counsel to the needs of their children, there must

be two-way communication. Unless parents know what is in their children's minds and hearts, even sound counsel may be of little benefit, much as if a doctor tried to prescribe medicine without knowing the nature of the patient's illness. To be effective counselors, parents must know what their children really think and feel. They need to understand the pressures and problems their children are facing and the questions that are troubling them. It is important to listen carefully to children, to be "swift about hearing, slow about speaking."—James 1: 19; Proverbs 12:18; Ecclesiastes 7:8.

It takes time, patience, and effort for parents to cultivate and maintain a close relationship with their children, a relationship in which children feel free to lay bare their innermost feelings. But how beautiful it is when this is achieved! Says a West African father of five: "I am both a father and a confidant. The children discuss freely

with me all subjects, including sex. Even the girls confide in me. We take time to discuss their problems. They also share their joys with me."

Bola, one of his daughters, says: "I do not keep any secret from my father. Father is considerate and empathetic. He doesn't bully us or treat us harshly, even when we have done wrong. Instead of flaring up, he will analyze the matter and show us what we should do or what we should not have done. He often refers to the *Youth* book and the *Family Happiness* book."*

When possible, it is good for parents to start talking to their children about sex when the children are quite young. This lays the basis for ongoing discussions through the often difficult teenage years. When discussions are not started early, it is sometimes awkward to introduce them later on, but it can be done. Said one mother of five: "I forced myself to talk about it until finally I was no longer uncomfortable, nor was the child." With so much at stake, such efforts are surely worthwhile.

Protected and Happy

Children appreciate parents who lovingly equip them with the knowledge that will safeguard them. Consider the comments by some African Witnesses of Jehovah:

Said Mojisola at age 24: "I will always remain grateful to my mother. She gave me the needed education on sex at the right time. Though I felt embarrassed when she was discussing those matters long ago, now I see the good things my mother did for me."

Added Iniobong: "I am always happy when I look back and think of what Mum has done for me by giving me adequate training on sex. It has been a very vital aid in piloting me

into womanhood. I vow to do the same for my future children."

Nineteen-year-old Kunle said: "My parents have helped me to withstand pressures from worldly women for free sex. If it wasn't for the training they gave me, I would have fallen into sin. I will always appreciate what they did."

Christiana said: "I derive lots of benefits from having a dialogue with my mother regarding sex. I have been protected from deadly diseases and unwanted pregnancy, and I have been able to set a good example for my younger brothers and sisters to follow. I have also gained respect from people, and my future husband will respect me too. More important, I have a good relationship with Jehovah God for keeping his commandment."

Bola, mentioned earlier, said: "I had a classmate who said that sex is to be enjoyed without any commitment to marriage. To her, it was fun. However, she found it was no fun when she got pregnant and could not write the school certificate examination with us. If I did not have a good father to guide me, perhaps I could have been like her, learning the hard way."

What a blessing when Christian parents help their children become "wise for salvation" in this sex-mad world! (2 Timothy 3: 15) Their Bible-based instruction is like a precious necklace that adorns and beautifies children in the eyes of God. (Proverbs 1:8, 9) Children feel secure, and parents enjoy deep satisfaction. Said an African father who always strives to keep the lines of communication open with his youngsters: "We have peace of mind. We are confident that our children know what is pleasing to Jehovah; they cannot be misled by outsiders. We are confident that they will not do things that will bring pain to the family. I thank Jehovah that they have justified our confidence."

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JEHOVAH BRINGS MANY SONS TO GLORY

*"It was fitting for [God], in bringing many sons to glory,
to make the Chief Agent of their salvation perfect
through sufferings."*—HEBREWS 2:10.

JEHOVAH created the earth to be the eternal home of a perfect human family enjoying endless life. (Ecclesiastes 1:4; Isaiah 45:12, 18) True, our forefather Adam sinned and thus passed sin and death on to his offspring. But God's purpose for humankind will be fulfilled through his Promised Seed, Jesus Christ. (Genesis 3:15; 22:18; Romans 5:12-21; Galatians 3:16) Love for the world of mankind moved Jehovah to give "his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) And love motivated Jesus "to give his soul a ransom in exchange for many." (Matthew 20:28) This "corresponding ransom" buys back the rights and prospects forfeited by Adam and makes everlasting life possible.—1 Timothy 2:5, 6; John 17:3.

² The application of Jesus' ransom sacrifice was typified on the annual Day of Atonement. On that day, Israel's high priest first sacrificed a bull as a sin offering and presented its blood at the sacred Ark in the Most Holy of the tabernacle, and later in the temple. This was done in behalf of himself, his household, and the tribe of Levi. Simi-

larly, Jesus Christ presented to God the value of his blood first to cover the sins of his spiritual "brothers." (Hebrews 2:12; 10:19-22; Leviticus 16:6, 11-14) On Atonement Day, the high priest also sacrificed a goat as a sin offering and presented its blood in the Most Holy, thus making atonement for the sins of the 12 nonpriestly tribes of Israel. Likewise, the High Priest Jesus Christ will apply his lifeblood in behalf of those of mankind exercising faith, canceling out their sins.—Leviticus 16:15.

Brought to Glory

³ For 1,900 years, God has been doing something remarkable in connection with Jesus' "brothers." Regarding this, the apostle Paul wrote: "We behold Jesus, who has been made a little lower than angels, crowned with glory and honor for having suffered death, that he by God's undeserved kindness might taste death for every man. For it was fitting for the one [Jehovah God] for whose sake all things are and through whom all things are, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Chief Agent of their salvation perfect through sufferings." (Hebrews 2:9, 10) The Chief Agent of salvation is Jesus Christ, who learned perfect obedi-

1. Why can we be sure that Jehovah's purpose for mankind will be fulfilled?

2. How was the application of Jesus' ransom sacrifice typified on Israel's annual Atonement Day?

3. According to Hebrews 2:9, 10, what has God been doing for 1,900 years?

ence through the things he suffered while living as a man on the earth. (Hebrews 5:7-10) Jesus was the first to be begotten as a spiritual son of God.

⁴ Jehovah used his holy spirit, or active force, to beget Jesus as his spiritual Son, in order to bring him to heavenly glory. While alone with John the Baptizer, Jesus underwent total water immersion to symbolize the presentation of himself to God. Says Luke's Gospel account: "When all the people were baptized, Jesus also was baptized and, as he was praying, the heaven was opened up and the holy spirit in bodily shape like a dove came down upon him, and a voice came out of heaven: 'You are my Son, the beloved; I have approved you.'" (Luke 3:21, 22) John saw the holy spirit come upon Jesus and heard Jehovah speak in open approval of him as His beloved Son. At that time and by holy spirit, Jehovah begot Jesus as the first of the 'many sons to be brought to glory.'

⁵ Jesus' "brothers" have been the first to benefit from his sacrifice. (Hebrews 2:12-18) In vision, the apostle John saw them already in glory on heavenly Mount Zion with the Lamb, the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ. John also disclosed their number, saying: "I saw, and, look! the Lamb standing upon the Mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand having his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads. . . . These were bought from among mankind as firstfruits to God and to the Lamb, and no falsehood was found in their mouths; they are without blemish." (Revelation 14:1-5) So the 'many sons brought to glory' in heaven total only 144,001—Jesus and his spiritual brothers.

4. When and how was Jesus begotten as God's spiritual Son?

5. Who have been the first to benefit from Jesus' sacrifice, and what is their number?

"Born From God"

⁶ Those begotten by Jehovah are "born from God." Addressing such individuals, the apostle John wrote: "Everyone who has been born from God does not carry on sin, because His [Jehovah's] reproductive seed remains in such one, and he cannot practice sin, because he has been born from God." (1 John 3:9) This "reproductive seed" is God's holy spirit. Working in conjunction with his word, it has given each of the 144,000 "a new birth" to a heavenly hope.—1 Peter 1:3-5, 23.

⁷ Jesus was God's Son from his human birth, even as the perfect man Adam was the "son of God." (Luke 1:35; 3:38) After Jesus' baptism, however, it was significant that Jehovah declared: "You are my Son, the beloved; I have approved you." (Mark 1:11) By this declaration accompanying the flow of holy spirit, it was clear that God then brought Jesus forth as His spiritual Son. As it were, Jesus was then given "a new birth" with the right to receive life once more as a spirit Son of God in heaven. Like him, his 144,000 spiritual brothers are "born again." (John 3:1-8; see *The Watchtower*, November 15, 1992, pages 3-6.) Also like Jesus, they are anointed by God and commissioned to proclaim good news.—Isaiah 61:1, 2; Luke 4:16-21; 1 John 2:20.

Proof of Begettal

⁸ There was proof that Jesus had been spirit-begotten. John the Baptist saw the spirit descend upon Jesus and heard God's declaration of the newly anointed Messiah's spiritual sonship. But how would Jesus' disciples know that they had been spirit-begotten? Well, on the day of his ascension

6, 7. Who are "born from God," and what does this mean for them?

8. What proof of spirit-begettal was there in the case of (a) Jesus (b) his early disciples?

to heaven, Jesus said: "John, indeed, baptized with water, but you will be baptized in holy spirit not many days after this." (Acts 1:5) Jesus' disciples were "baptized in holy spirit" on the day of Pentecost 33 C.E. That outpouring of the spirit was accompanied by 'a noise from heaven like a rushing stiff breeze' and "tongues as if of fire" upon each of the disciples. Most remarkable was the disciples' ability "to speak with different tongues, just as the spirit was granting them to make utterance." So there was visible and audible evidence that the way into heavenly glory as God's sons had been opened up for followers of Christ.—Acts 2: 1-4, 14-21; Joel 2:28, 29.

⁹ Some time afterward, Philip the evangelizer preached in Samaria. Though the Samaritans accepted his message and were baptized, they lacked evidence that God had begotten them as his sons. When the apostles Peter and John prayed and laid their hands on those believers, "they began to receive holy spirit" in some way that was evident to observers. (Acts 8:4-25) This was proof that the believing Samaritans had been spirit-begotten as sons of God. Similarly, in 36 C.E., Cornelius and other Gentiles accepted God's truth. Peter and the Jewish believers who had accompanied him "were amazed, because the free gift of the holy spirit was being poured out also upon people of the nations. For they heard them speaking with tongues and magnifying God." (Acts 10:44-48) Many first-century Christians received "gifts of the spirit," such as speaking in tongues. (1 Corinthians 14:12, 32) These individuals thus had clear evidence that they had been spirit-begotten. But how would later Chris-

9. What proof was there that the Samaritans, Cornelius, and others of the first century had been spirit-begotten?

tians know whether they had been spirit-begotten or not?

The Witness of the Spirit

¹⁰ All 144,000 anointed Christians have had absolute evidence that they have God's spirit. In this regard, Paul wrote: "You received a spirit of adoption as sons, by which spirit we cry out: 'Abba, Father!' The spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are God's children. If, then, we are children, we are also heirs: heirs indeed of God, but joint heirs with Christ, provided we suffer together that we may also be glorified together." (Romans 8:15-17) Anointed Christians have a filial spirit toward their heavenly Father, a dominant sense of sonship. (Galatians 4:6, 7) They are absolutely certain that they have been begotten by God to spiritual sonship as joint heirs with Christ in the heavenly Kingdom. In this, Jehovah's holy spirit plays a definite role.

¹¹ Under the influence of God's holy spirit, the spirit, or dominant attitude, of anointed ones impels them to respond in a positive way to what God's Word says about the heavenly hope. For instance, when they read what the Scriptures say about Jehovah's spiritual children, they spontaneously acknowledge that such words apply to them. (1 John 3:2) They know that they have been "baptized into Christ Jesus" and into his death. (Romans 6:3) Their firm conviction is that they are God's spiritual sons, who will die and be resurrected to heavenly glory, as Jesus was.

¹² Being begotten to spiritual sonship is not a cultivated desire. Spirit-begotten ones do not want to go to heaven because of dis-

10, 11. On the basis of Romans 8:15-17, how would you say that the spirit bears witness with those who are Christ's joint heirs?

12. What has God's spirit engendered in anointed Christians?



tress over present hardships on earth. (Job 14:1) Rather, Jehovah's spirit has engendered in truly anointed ones a hope and desire uncommon to humans in general. Such begotten ones know that everlasting life in human perfection on a paradise earth surrounded by a happy family and friends would be wonderful. However, such life is not the principal desire of their hearts. Anointed ones have such a strong heavenly hope that they willingly sacrifice all earthly prospects and attachments.—2 Peter 1: 13, 14.

¹³ The God-given hope of heavenly life is so strong in such ones that their sentiments are like those of Paul, who wrote: "We know that if our earthly house, this tent, should be dissolved, we are to have a building from God, a house not made with

13. According to 2 Corinthians 5:1-5, what was Paul's 'earnest desire,' and what does this indicate regarding spirit-begotten ones?

At Pentecost 33 C.E., evidence was given that the way into heavenly glory had been opened up

hands, everlasting in the heavens. For in this dwelling house we do indeed groan, earnestly desiring to put on the one for us from heaven, so that, having really put it on, we shall not be found naked. In fact, we who are in this tent groan, being weighed down; because we want, not to put it off, but to put on the other, that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now he that produced us for this very thing is God, who gave us the token of what is to come, that is, the spirit." (2 Corinthians 5:1-5) Paul's 'earnest desire' was to be resurrected to heaven as an immortal spirit creature. Referring to the human body, he used the metaphor of a collapsible tent, a fragile and temporary dwelling compared to a house. Though living on earth in a mortal,

fleshly body, Christians who have the spirit as a token of coming heavenly life look forward to “a building from God,” an immortal, incorruptible spirit body. (1 Corinthians 15:50-53) Like Paul, they can earnestly say: “We are of good courage and are well pleased rather to become absent from the [human] body and to make our home [in heaven] with the Lord.”—2 Corinthians 5:8.

Taken Into Special Covenants

¹⁴ Spirit-begotten Christians are certain that they have been taken into two special covenants. Jesus mentioned one of these when he used unleavened bread and wine to institute the Memorial of his coming death and said of the wine cup: “This cup means the new covenant by virtue of my blood, which is to be poured out in your behalf.” (Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25) Who are the parties to the new covenant? Jehovah God and members of spiritual Israel—those whom Jehovah purposes to bring to heavenly glory. (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Galatians 6:15, 16; Hebrews 12:22-24) Made operative by Jesus’ shed blood, the new covenant takes out of the nations a people

14. When instituting the Memorial observance, what covenant did Jesus first mention, and what role does it play in connection with spiritual Israelites?

What Is Your Answer?

- ☐ Whom does God ‘bring to heavenly glory’?
- ☐ What does it mean to be “born from God”?
- ☐ How does ‘the spirit bear witness’ with some Christians?
- ☐ Spirit-begotten ones have been taken into what covenants?

for Jehovah’s name and makes these spirit-begotten Christians part of Abraham’s “seed.” (Galatians 3:26-29; Acts 15:14) The new covenant provides for all spiritual Israelites to be brought to glory by being resurrected to immortal life in heaven. Being “an everlasting covenant,” its benefits will last forever. It remains to be seen whether this covenant will also play a role in other ways during the Millennium and thereafter.—Hebrews 13:20.

¹⁵ The “many sons” Jehovah purposed to ‘bring to glory’ have also been taken individually into the covenant for a heavenly Kingdom. Regarding this covenant between himself and his footstep followers, Jesus said: “You are the ones that have stuck with me in my trials; and I make a covenant with you, just as my Father has made a covenant with me, for a kingdom, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel.” (Luke 22:28-30) The Kingdom covenant was inaugurated when Jesus’ disciples were anointed with holy spirit at Pentecost 33 C.E. That covenant remains operative between Christ and his associate kings forever. (Revelation 22:5) So, then, spirit-begotten Christians are positive that they are in the new covenant and in the covenant for the Kingdom. At observances of the Lord’s Evening Meal, therefore, only the relatively few remaining anointed ones yet on the earth partake of the bread, representing Jesus’ sinless human body, and the wine, signifying his perfect blood poured out in death and validating the new covenant.—1 Corinthians 11:23-26; see *The Watchtower*, February 1, 1989, pages 17-20.

15. In harmony with Luke 22:28-30, Jesus’ anointed followers began to be taken into what other covenant, and when?

Called, Chosen, and Faithful

¹⁶ The first application of Jesus' ransom sacrifice makes it possible for 144,000 to be *called* to heavenly life and *chosen* by being spirit-begotten by God. To be brought to glory, of course, they have to 'do their utmost to make their calling and choosing sure,' and they must prove *faithful* to death. (2 Peter 1:10; Ephesians 1:3-7; Revelation 2:10) The small remnant of anointed ones yet on earth are maintaining their integrity though opposed by "ten kings" that depict all the political powers. "These

16, 17. (a) To be brought to glory, what must be true of all the 144,000? (b) Who are the "ten kings," and how are they treating the earthly remnant of Christ's "brothers"?

will battle with the Lamb," said an angel, "but, because he is Lord of lords and King of kings, the Lamb will conquer them. Also, those called and chosen and faithful with him will do so."—Revelation 17:12-14.

¹⁷ Human rulers can do nothing against Jesus, the "King of kings," for he is in heaven. But they demonstrate hostility toward the remnant of his "brothers" still on the earth. (Revelation 12:17) That will end at God's war of Armageddon, when victory is ensured for the "King of kings" and his "brothers"—"those called and chosen and faithful." (Revelation 16:14, 16) In the meantime, spirit-begotten Christians are very busy. What are they doing now, before they are brought to glory by Jehovah?

GLORIOUS FREEDOM SOON FOR THE CHILDREN OF GOD

"The creation was subjected to futility . . . on the basis of hope that the creation itself also will be set free from enslavement to corruption and have the glorious freedom of the children of God."—ROMANS 8:20, 21.

JEHOVAH gave his only-begotten Son as a ransom sacrifice that opened the way to heavenly life for 144,000 humans and eternal earthly prospects for the rest of mankind. (1 John 2:1, 2) As noted in the preceding article, Jesus' sacrifice for spirit-begotten Christians was typified when Israel's high priest sacrificed a bull as a sin offering for himself, his household, and the tribe of Levi on the annual Day of Atonement.

1. How was Jesus' sacrifice typified on Atonement Day?

ment. On the same day, he sacrificed a goat as a sin offering for all the other Israelites, even as Christ's sacrifice will benefit mankind in general. A live goat symbolically carried off the people's collective sins of the past year, disappearing in the wilderness.* —Leviticus 16:7-15, 20-22, 26.

² After outlining the hope of humans who

* See *Insight on the Scriptures*, Volume 1, pages 225-6.

2, 3. What is meant by Paul's statement recorded at Romans 8:20, 21?



Millions have begun 'taking life's water free.' Are you among them?

would become heavenly "sons of God," the apostle Paul said: "The eager expectation of the creation is waiting for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not by its own will but through him that subjected it, on the basis of hope that the creation itself also will be set free from enslavement to corruption and have the glorious freedom of the children of God." (Romans 8:14, 17, 19-21) What is the meaning of this statement?

³ When our forefather Adam was created as a perfect human, he was a "son [or, child] of God." (Luke 3:38) Because of sinning, he came into "enslavement to corruption" and passed this condition on to the human race. (Romans 5:12) God allowed humans to be

born with "futility" facing them because of their inherited imperfection, but he gave hope through the "seed," Jesus Christ. (Genesis 3:15; 22:18; Galatians 3:16) Revelation 21:1-4 points to the time when 'death, mourning, outcry, and pain will be no more.' Since this is a promise to "mankind," it assures us that a new earthly society of humans living under Kingdom rule will experience restoration of mind and body to full health and everlasting life as earthly "children of God." During Christ's Thousand Year Reign, obedient humans "will be set free from enslavement to corruption." After proving loyal to Jehovah during a final test, they will be free forever from inherited sin and death. (Revelation 20:7-10) Those

on earth will then “have the glorious freedom of the children of God.”

They Are Saying “Come!”

⁴ What a marvelous hope is set before mankind! No wonder spirit-begotten Christians yet on earth are zealously taking the lead in telling others about it! As those who will become part of the “bride” of the glorified Lamb, Jesus Christ, the anointed remnant are involved in the fulfillment of these prophetic words: “The spirit and the bride keep on saying: ‘Come!’ And let anyone hearing say: ‘Come!’ And let anyone thirsting come; let anyone that wishes take life’s water free.” (Revelation 21:2, 9; 22:1, 2, 17) No, the benefits of Jesus’ ransom sacrifice are not limited to the 144,000 anointed ones. God’s spirit keeps on working through the remaining ones of the bride class on earth in saying “Come.” Anyone hearing who is thirsting for righteousness is invited to say “Come,” availing himself of Jehovah’s bountiful provision for salvation.

⁵ Jehovah’s Witnesses have faith in God’s provision for life through Jesus Christ. (Acts 4:12) They are happy to have in their midst honesthearted ones who desire to learn about God’s purposes and do his will. Their Kingdom Halls are open to all who wish to ‘come and take life’s water free’ in this “time of the end.”—Daniel 12:4.

Changes With the Passing of Time

⁶ God has a time to carry out his purposes, and this affects his dealings with humans. (Ecclesiastes 3:1; Acts 1:7) Though God’s spirit came upon his servants of pre-Christian times, they were not begotten as

his spiritual sons. Beginning with Jesus, however, Jehovah’s time had come to use the holy spirit to beget dedicated men and women to a heavenly inheritance. And what about our day? The same spirit is operating on Jesus’ “other sheep,” but it is not arousing in them the hope and desire for heavenly life. (John 10:16) With eternal life on a paradise earth as their God-given hope, they joyfully support the anointed remnant in giving a witness during this period of transition from the old world to God’s righteous new world.—2 Peter 3:5-13.

⁷ God began ‘to bring many sons to glory’ with the outpouring of holy spirit at Pentecost 33 C.E., and he apparently set a time for completing the spiritual “Israel of God” totaling 144,000. (Hebrews 2:10; Galatians 6:16; Revelation 7:1-8) Beginning in 1879, a harvest work involving anointed Christians was often mentioned in this magazine. But the Bible Students (now called Jehovah’s Witnesses) also knew that the Scriptures hold out the hope of eternal life on a paradise earth. For example, the *Watch Tower* issue of July 1883 said: “When Jesus has established his kingdom, bound evil, etc., this earth will become a *paradise*, . . . and all that are in their graves shall come into it. And by becoming obedient to its laws they may live forever in it.” As time passed, the harvest of anointed ones diminished, and gradually individuals who did not have the heavenly hope were harvested into Jehovah’s organization. Meanwhile, God granted his anointed servants, born-again Christians, noteworthy insight.—Daniel 12:3; Philippians 2:15; Revelation 14:15, 16.

7. What harvest work were the Bible Students concerned with, but what did they know about paradise?

4. What does it mean to “take life’s water free”?

5. Who are Jehovah’s Witnesses happy to have in their midst?

6. How has God’s spirit operated on Jehovah’s servants during various time periods?

⁸ Particularly since 1931 have those with the earthly hope been associating with the Christian congregation. In that year, Jehovah enlightened the remnant of spirit-begotten Christians to see that Ezekiel chapter 9 refers to this earthly class, who are being marked for survival into God's new world. In 1932 it was concluded that such present-day sheeplike ones were prefigured by Jehu's associate Jonadab (Jehonadab). (2 Kings 10:15-17) In 1934 it was made clear that "Jonadabs" should "consecrate," or dedicate, themselves to God. In 1935 the "great multitude," or "great crowd"—formerly thought to be a secondary spiritual class that would be "companions" of the bride of Christ in heaven—was identified as other sheep having an earthly hope. (Revelation 7:4-15; 21:2, 9; Psalm 45:14, 15) And especially since 1935 have anointed ones been spearheading a search for upright people yearning to live forever on a paradise earth.

⁹ After 1935 some Christians who had been partaking of the bread and wine at the Lord's Evening Meal ceased to partake. Why? Because they realized that their hope was earthly, not heavenly. Said one woman who was baptized in 1930: "Though [partaking] was considered the right thing to do, especially for zealous full-time ministers, I never was convinced that I had a heavenly hope. Then, in 1935, it was made clear to us that there was being gathered a great crowd with the hope of living forever on earth. Many of us rejoiced to understand that we were part of that great crowd, and we ceased partaking of the emblems." Even Christian publications changed in nature.

8. How did an understanding of the earthly hope develop in the early 1930's?

9. After 1935, why did some Christians cease to partake of the emblems at the Lord's Evening Meal?

While those of former years had been designed primarily for Jesus' spirit-begotten followers, from 1935 onward *The Watchtower* and other literature of the 'faithful slave' provided spiritual food suited to the needs of both the anointed and their associates having the earthly hope.—Matthew 24:45-47.

¹⁰ Suppose an anointed one became unfaithful. Would there be a replacement? Paul indicated as much in his discussion of the symbolic olive tree. (Romans 11:11-32) If a spirit-begotten one needs to be replaced, likely God would give the heavenly calling to someone whose faith had been exemplary in rendering sacred service to him for many years.—Compare Luke 22:28, 29; 1 Peter 1:6, 7.

Many Reasons for Gratitude

¹¹ Wherever we serve Jehovah in faithfulness, he will satisfy our needs and upright desires. (Psalm 145:16; Luke 1:67-74) Whether we have a genuine heavenly hope or our prospect is earthly, we have many sound reasons for gratitude to God. He always does things that are in the best interests of those who love him. The disciple James said that "every good gift and every perfect present is from above, for it comes down from the Father of the celestial lights," Jehovah God. (James 1:17) Let us take note of a few of these gifts and blessings.

¹² *Jehovah has given each of his faithful servants a wonderful hope.* He has called some to heavenly life. To his pre-Christian witnesses, Jehovah gave the splendid hope

10. How might an unfaithful anointed one be replaced?

11. Regardless of the nature of our hope, of what does James 1:17 assure us?

12. Why can we say that Jehovah has given each of his faithful servants a wonderful hope?

of a resurrection to everlasting life on the earth. For instance, Abraham had faith in the resurrection and awaited “the city having real foundations”—the heavenly Kingdom under which he will be resurrected to earthly life. (Hebrews 11:10, 17-19) Once again, in this time of the end, God is granting millions the hope of everlasting life on a paradise earth. (Luke 23:43; John 17:3) Surely, any to whom Jehovah has given such a grand hope should be deeply grateful for it.

¹³ *Jehovah imparts his holy spirit as a gift to his people.* Christians given a heavenly hope are anointed with holy spirit. (1 John 2:20; 5:1-4, 18) Yet, God’s servants having earthly prospects have the spirit’s help and guidance. Among these was Moses, who had Jehovah’s spirit, as did the 70 men appointed to assist him. (Numbers 11:24, 25) Under the influence of holy spirit, Bezalel served as an expert craftsman in connection with Israel’s tabernacle. (Exodus 31:1-11) God’s spirit came upon Gideon, Jephthah, Samson, David, Elijah, Elisha, and others. Though these individuals of ancient times will never be brought to heavenly glory, they were guided and helped by holy spirit, as are Jesus’ other sheep today. So, then, possession of God’s spirit does not mean that we necessarily have the heavenly calling. Yet, Jehovah’s spirit provides guidance, helps us to preach and fulfill other God-given assignments, gives us power beyond what is normal, and produces in us its fruitage of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, and self-control. (John 16:13; Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 4:7-10; Galatians 5:22, 23) Should we not be thankful for this gracious gift from God?

13. How has God’s holy spirit operated on his people?

¹⁴ *Knowledge and wisdom are gifts from God for which we should be grateful, whether our hope is heavenly or earthly.* Accurate knowledge of Jehovah helps us to “make sure of the more important things” and “to walk worthily of Jehovah to the end of fully pleasing him.” (Philippians 1:9-11; Colossians 1:9, 10) Godly wisdom serves as a protection and a guide in life. (Proverbs 4:5-7; Ecclesiastes 7:12) True knowledge and wisdom are based on God’s Word, and the few remaining anointed ones are especially drawn to what it says about their heavenly hope. However, love for God’s Word and a good understanding of it do not constitute God’s way of indicating that we have been called to heavenly life. Men like Moses and Daniel even wrote portions of the Bible, but they will be resurrected to life on the earth. Whether our hope is heavenly or earthly, all of us receive spiritual food through Jehovah’s approved “faithful and discreet slave.” (Matthew 24:45-47) How grateful all of us are for the knowledge thus acquired!

¹⁵ *One of God’s greatest gifts is the loving provision of Jesus’ ransom sacrifice, which benefits us whether we have a heavenly prospect or an earthly hope.* God loved the world of mankind “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.” (John 3:16) And Jesus’ love motivated him “to give his soul a ransom in exchange for many.” (Matthew 20:28) As the apostle John explained, Jesus Christ “is a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins [those of the anointed], yet not for ours only but also for the whole world’s.” (1 John 2:1, 2) Hence, all of us

14. How do we benefit from God’s gifts of knowledge and wisdom?

15. What is one of God’s greatest gifts, and how do you view it?

should be deeply grateful for this loving provision for salvation to life eternal.*

Will You Be Present?

¹⁶ Gratitude for the ransom provided by God by means of his Son should move us to be present at Kingdom Halls or other places where Jehovah's Witnesses will assemble after sundown on April 11, 1998, to commemorate the death of Christ. When he instituted this observance with his faithful apostles on the last night of his earthly life, Jesus said: "Keep doing this in remembrance of me." (Luke 22:19, 20; Matthew 26:26-30) The few remaining anointed ones will partake of the unleavened bread, representing Jesus' sinless human body, and the unfortified red wine, signifying his blood poured out in sacrifice. Only spirit-begotten Christians should partake because only they are in the new covenant and in the Kingdom covenant and have the undeniable testimony of God's holy spirit that theirs is a heavenly hope. Millions of others will be present as respectful observers who are grateful for the love shown by God and Christ in connection with Jesus' sacrifice that makes eternal life possible.—Romans 6:23.

¹⁷ Former religious views, strong emotions arising from the death of a loved one, hardships now associated with earthly life, or the feeling of having received some special blessing from Jehovah might lead some to assume mistakenly that heavenly life is for them. But all of us should remember that the Scriptures do not command us to partake of Memorial emblems to

* See *The Watchtower*, March 15, 1991, pages 19-22.

16. What notable event will be commemorated after sundown on April 11, 1998, and who should be present?

17. What should we remember with regard to spirit-anointing?

show our gratitude for Christ's ransom sacrifice. Moreover, spirit-anointing "depends, not upon the one wishing nor upon the one running, but upon God," the One who begot Jesus as a spiritual Son and who brings only 144,000 other sons to glory.—Romans 9:16; Isaiah 64:8.

¹⁸ Everlasting life on a paradise earth is the God-given hope of the vast majority of humans serving Jehovah in these last days. (2 Timothy 3:1-5) Soon, they will enjoy this marvelous paradise. Princes will then administer earthly affairs under heavenly rule. (Psalm 45:16) Peaceful conditions will exist as earth's inhabitants comply with God's laws and learn more about the ways of Jehovah. (Isaiah 9:6, 7; Revelation 20:12) There will be plenty of work to do, building homes and subduing the earth. (Isaiah 65:17-25) And think of the happy family reunions as the dead return to life! (John 5:28, 29) After a final test, all wickedness will be gone. (Revelation 20:7-10) Forever afterward, the earth will be filled with perfect humans who are 'set free from enslavement to corruption and who have the glorious freedom of the children of God.'

18. For most of those serving Jehovah today, what blessings lie ahead?

How Would You Answer?

- ☐ What does it mean to "take life's water free"?
- ☐ Whether our hope is heavenly or earthly, what reasons do we have for gratitude to God?
- ☐ What annual observance should all of us attend?
- ☐ For most of Jehovah's people, what does the future hold?



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CHARISMA *Praise to Man or Glory to God?*

"A RULER ought to excel his subjects not only in point of being actually better than they, but that he ought also to cast a sort of spell upon them," wrote Xenophon, a famous Greek general. Today, many would call such a "spell" charisma.

Not all human rulers have charisma, of course. But those who have it use their ability to inspire devotion and to manipulate the masses for their own ends. Perhaps the most notorious recent example was Adolf Hitler. "[In 1933] to the majority of Germans Hitler had—or would shortly assume—the aura of a truly charismatic leader," writes William L. Shirer in his book *The Rise and*

Fall of the Third Reich. "They were to follow him blindly, as if he possessed a divine judgment, for the next twelve tempestuous years."

Religious history is also full of charismatic leaders who inspired people to be devoted to them but who brought disaster upon their followers. "Be careful that no one misleads you," warned Jesus, "for many men will come in my name saying 'I am the Christ', and they will mislead many." (Matthew 24:4, 5, *Phillips*) Charismatic false Christs did not appear only in the first century. During the 1970's, Jim Jones proclaimed himself the "messiah of the People's Temple." He was described as

“a charismatic churchman” with “a strange power over people,” and in 1978 he instigated one of the greatest mass suicides of history.*

Evidently, charisma can be a dangerous gift. The Bible, however, talks about a different type of gift, or gifts, from God, available to all for the benefit of all. The Greek word for this gift is *kha'ri-sma*, and it appears 17 times in the Bible. One Greek scholar defines it as ‘a free and undeserved gift, something given to a man unearned and unmerited, something which comes from God’s grace and which could never have been achieved or possessed by a man’s own effort.’

So from the Scriptural standpoint, *kha'ri-sma* is a gift received, thanks to God’s undeserved kindness. What are some of these gifts that God has kindly given us? And how can we use them to bring praise to him? Let us consider three of these gracious gifts.

Everlasting Life

The greatest gift of all is undoubtedly the gift of everlasting life. Paul wrote to the Roman congregation: “The wages sin pays is death, but the gift [*kha'ri-sma*] God gives is everlasting life by Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 6:23) It is worth noting that the “wages” (death) are something we have earned, albeit unwillingly, by our sinful nature. On the other hand, the everlasting life that God makes available is something totally undeserved that we could never earn on our own merits.

The gift of everlasting life should be treasured and shared. We can help people get to know Jehovah, to serve him and thus be favored with the gift of everlasting life. Revelation 22:17 says: “The spirit and the

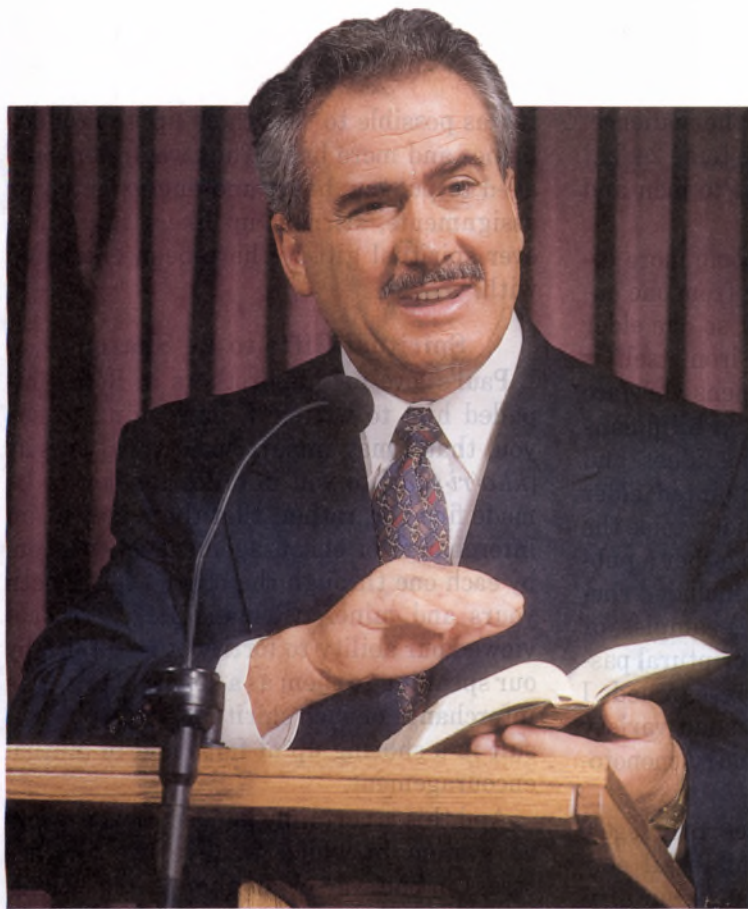
bride keep on saying: ‘Come!’ And let anyone hearing say: ‘Come!’ And let anyone thirsting come; let anyone that wishes take life’s water free.”

How can we lead others to this life-giving water? Mainly by using the Bible to good effect in our ministry. It is true that in some parts of the world, people rarely read or think about spiritual things; nevertheless, there are always opportunities to ‘awaken the ear’ of someone. (Isaiah 50:4) In this regard, we can be confident in the Bible’s motivating force, “for the word of God is alive and exerts power.” (Hebrews 4:12) Whether it be the Bible’s practical wisdom, the comfort and hope it offers, or its explanation about the purpose of life, God’s Word can touch the heart and start people on the road to life.—2 Timothy 3:16, 17.

Additionally, Bible-based literature can help us say “Come!” The prophet Isaiah foretold that during this time of spiritual darkness, ‘Jehovah would shine forth’ upon his people. (Isaiah 60:2) Publications of the Watch Tower Society reflect this blessing from Jehovah, and every year they lead thousands of people to Jehovah, the Source of spiritual enlightenment. Throughout their pages prominence is not given to individuals. As the introduction to *The Watchtower* explains, “the purpose of *The Watchtower* is to exalt Jehovah God as Sovereign Lord of the universe. . . . It encourages faith in God’s now-reigning King, Jesus Christ, whose shed blood opens the way for mankind to gain eternal life.”

A full-time Christian minister, who for many years has had notable success in her ministry, comments on the value of *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* in helping people draw close to God: “When my Bible students start to read and enjoy *The Watchtower* and *Awake!*, they make rapid progress. I

* A total of 913 people died, including Jim Jones himself.



see the magazines as an invaluable aid in helping people get to know Jehovah.”

Service Privileges

Timothy was a Christian disciple who was granted another gift that deserved special attention. The apostle Paul told him: “Do not be neglecting the gift [*kha’ri-sma*] in you that was given you through a prediction and when the body of older men laid their hands upon you.” (1 Timothy 4:14) What was this gift? It involved Timothy’s appointment as a traveling overseer, a service privilege that he had to care for responsibly. In the same passage, Paul exhorted Timothy: “Continue applying yourself to public reading, to exhortation, to teaching. Pay constant attention to yourself and

to your teaching. Stay by these things, for by doing this you will save both yourself and those who listen to you.”—1 Timothy 4:13, 16.

Elders today also need to cherish their service privileges. As Paul points out, one way they can do this is by ‘paying attention to their teaching.’ Rather than imitating worldly charismatic leaders, they direct attention to God, not to themselves. Jesus, their Exemplar, was an outstanding teacher who doubtless had a magnetic personality, but he humbly gave glory to his Father. “What I teach is not mine, but belongs to him that sent me,” he declared.—John 5:41; 7:16.

Jesus glorified his heavenly Father by using God’s

Word as the authority for his teaching. (Matthew 19:4-6; 22:31, 32, 37-40) Paul likewise stressed the need for overseers to ‘hold firmly to the faithful word in respect to their art of teaching.’ (Titus 1:9) By basing their talks firmly on the Scriptures, elders will, in effect, be saying as Jesus did: “The things I say to you men I do not speak of my own originality.”—John 14:10.

How can elders ‘hold firmly to the faithful word’? By centering their talks and meeting assignments on God’s Word, explaining and emphasizing the texts that they use. Dramatic illustrations or amusing anecdotes, especially if overdone, may distract the audience from God’s Word and draw attention to the speaker’s own ability. The verses of the Bible, on the other hand, are what will

reach the heart and motivate the audience. (Psalm 19:7-9; 119:40; compare Luke 24:32.) Such talks draw less attention to men and give more glory to God.

Another way elders can become more effective teachers is by learning from one another. As Paul helped Timothy, so one elder can assist another. "By iron, iron itself is sharpened. So one man sharpens the face of another." (Proverbs 27:17; Philippians 2:3) Elders benefit by sharing ideas and suggestions. One recently appointed elder explained: "An experienced elder took the time to show me how he put together a public talk. In his preparation, he included rhetorical questions, illustrations, examples, or short experiences, as well as Scriptural passages that he had carefully researched. I have learned from him how to add variety to my talks in order to avoid a dry, monotonous delivery."

All of us who enjoy service privileges, whether we are elders, ministerial servants, or pioneers, need to treasure our gift. Shortly before his death, Paul reminded Timothy 'to stir up like a fire the gift [*kha'ri-sma*] of God which was in him,' which in Timothy's case involved some special gift of the spirit. (2 Timothy 1:6) In Israelite homes, fires were often just glowing coals.

It was possible to 'stir them up' to produce flames and more heat. Thus we are encouraged to put our heart and energy into our assignments, stirring up like a fire whatever spiritual gift we have been entrusted with.

Spiritual Gifts to Be Shared

Paul's love for his brothers in Rome impelled him to write: "I am longing to see you, that I may impart some spiritual gift [*kha'ri-sma*] to you in order for you to be made firm; or, rather, that there may be an interchange of encouragement among you, by each one through the other's faith, both yours and mine." (Romans 1:11, 12) Paul viewed our ability to fortify others' faith by our speaking to them as a spiritual gift. The interchange of such spiritual gifts would result in a shoring up of faith and in mutual encouragement.

And this is certainly needed. In this wicked system in which we live, we all face stress in one way or another. A regular interchange of encouragement, however, can help us to persevere. The idea of interchange—both giving and receiving—is important to maintaining spiritual strength. True, we all need heartening from time to time, but we can all build one another up as well.

If we are alert to notice fellow believers who are downhearted, we may be 'able to comfort those in any sort of tribulation with the comfort with which we ourselves are being comforted by God.' (2 Corinthians 1:3-5) The Greek word for comfort (*pa-ra'kle-sis*) literally means "a calling to one's side." If, when needed, we are alongside to offer a helping hand to our brother or sister, doubtless we ourselves will receive the same loving support when we are in need.—Ecclesiastes 4:9, 10; compare Acts 9:36-41.

In Our Next Issue

Why Are They Asking Forgiveness?

Appreciating Christian Gatherings

Men "With Feelings Like Ours"

Of great benefit also are the loving shepherding visits of the elders. Though there are occasions when visits are made to give Scriptural counsel on a matter requiring attention, most shepherding visits are occasions for encouragement, a 'comforting of hearts.' (Colossians 2:2) When overseers make such faith-strengthening visits, they are really imparting a spiritual gift. Like Paul, they will find this unique form of giving rewarding, and they will develop a "longing" for their brothers.—Romans 1:11.

This was true in the case of an elder in Spain, who relates the following experience: "Ricardo, an 11-year-old boy, seemed to express little interest in the meetings and the congregation in general. So I asked Ricardo's parents for permission to visit their son, to which they readily agreed. They lived in the mountains about one hour's drive from my home. Ricardo was evidently pleased to see the interest I took in him, and he responded right away. He soon became an unbaptized publisher and an energetic member of the congregation. His reserved nature was replaced by a happier more outgoing personality. Several in the congregation asked: 'What's happened to Ricardo?' They seemed to notice him for the first time. Reflecting on that crucial shepherding visit, I feel that I have gained more than Ricardo. When he enters the Kingdom Hall, his face beams, and he comes rushing over to greet me. It has been a joy to see his spiritual progress."

Doubtless, shepherding visits, such as this one, are richly blessed. Such visits are in line with Jesus' plea: "Shepherd my little sheep." (John 21:16) Of course, elders are not the only ones who can impart such spiritual gifts. Everyone in the congregation can incite others to love and fine works. (Hebrews 10:23, 24) Just as climbers who are scaling a mountain are roped together,

so we are joined together by spiritual bonds. Inevitably, what we do and say affects others. A cutting remark or harsh criticism can fray the bonds that unite us. (Ephesians 4:29; James 3:8) On the other hand, choice words of encouragement and loving assistance can help our brothers surmount their difficulties. In this way we will be sharing spiritual gifts of lasting value.—Proverbs 12:25.

Reflecting God's Glory in a Fuller Measure

It is clear that every Christian has a measure of charisma. We have been granted the priceless hope of everlasting life. We also have spiritual gifts that we can share with one another. And we can strive to inspire or motivate others toward right ends. Some have additional gifts in the form of service privileges. All these gifts are proof of God's undeserved kindness. And since any gift that we might have is something we have received from God, we certainly have no reason to boast.—1 Corinthians 4:7.

As Christians, we do well to ask ourselves, 'Will I use any degree of charisma that I might have to bring glory to Jehovah, the Giver of "every good gift and every perfect present"? (James 1:17) Will I imitate Jesus and minister to others according to my abilities and circumstances?'

The apostle Peter sums up our responsibility in this regard: "In proportion as each one has received a gift [*kha'ri-sma*], use it in ministering to one another as fine stewards of God's undeserved kindness expressed in various ways. If anyone speaks, let him speak as it were the sacred pronouncements of God; if anyone ministers, let him minister as dependent on the strength that God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ."—1 Peter 4:10, 11.

Reaching Even More With the Good News

AS I thought about the people in my homeland, I realized that many know Jehovah's Witnesses only from news reports. These people ought to be contacted, I thought, so that they might learn who Jehovah's Witnesses are and what they really believe. But how could I help? My husband is a Christian elder, and he provided me with wise guidance and suggestions.

We found a key idea in the article "Magazines That Give Practical Comfort," published in the January 8, 1995, issue of *Awake!* magazine. Regarding the activity of a Witness, the article says: "She has been making it a point to collect older copies of certain *Awake!* magazines that other Witnesses have accumulated at home. Then she visits agencies that she feels might show special interest in some of the topics."

With the help of my husband, I soon collected several hundred copies of the magazines. From these I was able to select a variety of subjects suitable for people I would try to contact.

Using telephone directories and public records, I compiled a list representing hospitals, youth hostels, and nursing homes. I also listed funeral directors, school supervisors and counselors, medical examiners, and officials of prisons and law courts. My list included directors of institutions for alcoholics and drug

addicts, associations for environmental issues, for the disabled and war victims, and for nutritional research. Nor did I overlook heads of offices for welfare, social services, and family affairs.

What Would I Say?

The first thing I did when making a visit was to identify clearly who I was. Then I mentioned that my visit should take just a few minutes.

Once face-to-face with the person in charge, I would say: "I am one of Jehovah's Witnesses. However, I am not here to have a religious discussion, which might be inappropriate during office hours." Usually the atmosphere became more relaxed. Then, adapting my comments to the situation, I would continue: "The reason for my visit is twofold. First, I wish to express my appreciation for the work that is being organized by your office. After all, it should not be taken for granted that someone expends his time and energy in behalf of the general public. This is certainly to be commended." In many cases the person approached in this way was surprised.

By now the person most likely was wondering what the second reason of my visit was. I would continue: "The second reason for my visit is this: From our *Awake!* magazine, which is published internationally, I have picked out some articles that deal particularly with your

type of work and the problems associated with it. I am sure that you would like to know how an international journal views these problems. I will be glad to leave these copies with you." Often I was told that my efforts were appreciated.

Surprising and Rewarding Results

When I used this approach, most gave me a friendly reception; only one in 17 turned me down. I had numerous experiences that were both surprising and rewarding.

For example, after trying four times and waiting patiently, I succeeded in meeting a district school inspector. He was a very busy man. Yet, he was most friendly and talked to me for a while. When I took my leave, he said: "I really appreciate your effort, and I definitely will read your literature carefully."

On another occasion, I called at a district court, meeting the principal judge, a middle-aged man. When I entered his office, he looked up from his papers rather irritated.

"Office hours are Tuesday morning only, and then I will be available for any information," he said gruffly.

"Allow me to apologize for having come at an inappropriate time," I replied quickly and added, "Of course, I would be happy to come again at another time. But my visit is actually of a private nature."

Now the judge was curious. He asked, in a much less hostile tone, what I wanted. I repeated that I would call again on Tuesday.

"Please, take a seat," he insisted, quite to my surprise. "What do you want?"

A lively conversation followed, and he apologized for having been so unfriendly in the beginning because he was really very busy.

"Do you know what I like about Jehovah's Witnesses?" the judge asked after a while. "They have well-founded principles from which they do not deviate. Hitler tried everything he could, but the Witnesses still did not go to war."

When two of us entered one office, the secretaries there recognized us. Then the executive secretary spoke up coolly, "The president never receives any parties."

"But he will receive us," I replied calmly, "because we are Jehovah's Witnesses. We are not petitioners, and our visit will not last longer than three minutes." In my heart I prayed fervently, "O Jehovah, please let this turn out well!"

The secretary responded in an aloof manner, "All right, then, I'll try." She walked away. After about two minutes, that seemed like an eternity to me, she reappeared followed by the president himself. Not saying anything, he led the way to his office, passing two other rooms.

As we began to converse, he became more and more friendly. He willingly accepted the special issues of the *Awake!* magazine when we offered them. We thanked Jehovah for this opportunity to give a good witness about the purpose of our work.

Looking back on the many wonderful experiences, I have come to appreciate more fully what the apostle Peter said: "For a certainty I perceive that God is not partial, but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him." (Acts 10:34, 35) God's will is that people of all backgrounds, languages, or social positions be given the opportunity to know his purpose for mankind and for the earth.—*Contributed.*

1998

"GOD'S WAY OF LIFE"

DISTRICT CONVENTION LOCATIONS

MAY 22-24

CICERO, IL, Hawthorne Race Track, 35th & Cicero Ave.
LONG BEACH, CA, Long Beach Convention Center Arena, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.
SAN DIEGO, CA, Qualcomm (Jack Murphy) Stadium, 9449 Friars Rd.

MAY 29-31

CICERO, IL, Hawthorne Race Track, 35th & Cicero Ave.

JUNE 5-7

CICERO, IL, Hawthorne Race Track, 35th & Cicero Ave.
LONG BEACH, CA, Long Beach Convention Center Arena, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.
PHILADELPHIA, PA, Veterans Stadium, S. Broad & Pattison Ave.
SAN DIEGO, CA (Spanish only), Qualcomm (Jack Murphy) Stadium, 9449 Friars Rd.
TOPEKA, KS, Kansas Expocentre, Landon Arena, One Expocentre Dr.
UNIONDALE, NY, Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 1255 Hempstead Tpk.
WINSTON-SALEM, NC, Lawrence Joel Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 2825 University Pkwy.

JUNE 12-14

CICERO, IL, Hawthorne Race Track, 35th & Cicero Ave.
COLUMBUS, OH, Greater Columbus Convention Center, 400 N. High St.
HOUSTON, TX, Astrodome, Loop 610 at Kirby Dr.
KANSAS CITY, MO, Kemper Arena, 1800 Genessee St.
LONG BEACH, CA (Spanish only), Long Beach Convention Center Arena, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.
MADISON, WI, Dane County Memorial Coliseum, 1881 Expo Mall East.
MEMPHIS, TN, Mid-South Coliseum, Mid-South Fairgrounds.
NEW HAVEN, CT, Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 275 S. Orange St.
PONTIAC, MI, Silverdome, 1200 Featherstone Rd.
RENO, NV, Lawlor Events Center, 15th & Virginia Sts.
ST. PETERSBURG, FL, Bayfront Center, 400 1st St. S.
SAN FRANCISCO, CA, Cow Palace, Geneva Ave.
WEST PALM BEACH, FL, Auditorium, 1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.

JUNE 19-21

BILLINGS, MT, MetraPark Arena, Hwy. #10.
CICERO, IL (Spanish only), Hawthorne Race Track, 35th & Cicero Ave.
COLUMBIA, SC, Carolina Coliseum, Assembly & Blossom Sts.
COLUMBUS, OH, Greater Columbus Convention Center, 400 N. High St.
FORT WORTH, TX, Fort Worth (Tarrant County) Convention Center, 1111 Houston St.
KANSAS CITY, MO, Kemper Arena, 1800 Genessee St.
LONG BEACH, CA (Spanish only), Long Beach Convention Center Arena, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.
MACON, GA, Coliseum, 200 Coliseum Dr.
MEMPHIS, TN, Mid-South Coliseum, Mid-South Fairgrounds.
NAMPA, ID, The Idaho Center, 5000 Garrity Blvd.
NEW HAVEN, CT, Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 275 S. Orange St.
PORTLAND, ME, Cumberland County Civic Center, 1 Civic Center Sq.
RENO, NV, Lawlor Events Center, 15th & Virginia Sts.
ROCHESTER, MN, Mayo Civic Center Arena, 30 2nd Ave. S.E.

ST. PETERSBURG, FL, Bayfront Center, 400 1st St. S.
SAN FRANCISCO, CA, Cow Palace, Geneva Ave.
WEST PALM BEACH, FL, Auditorium, 1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.
WINSTON-SALEM, NC, Lawrence Joel Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 2825 University Pkwy.

JUNE 26-28

ALBANY, GA, Civic Center, 100 W. Oglethorpe Ave.
AMARILLO, TX, Civic Center Coliseum, 3rd & Buchanan Sts.
AMHERST, MA, The Mullins Center, University of Massachusetts, Commonwealth Ave.
CICERO, IL (Spanish only), Hawthorne Race Track, 35th & Cicero Ave.
COLUMBIA, SC, Carolina Coliseum, Assembly & Blossom Sts.
COLUMBUS, OH, Greater Columbus Convention Center, 400 N. High St.
FORT WORTH, TX, Fort Worth (Tarrant County) Convention Center, 1111 Houston St.
HAMMOND, LA, Southeastern Louisiana University Center, 700 University Ave.
KENNEWICK, WA (Spanish only), Tri-Cities Coliseum, 7100 W. Quinault.
LONG BEACH, CA, Long Beach Convention Center Arena, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.
MACON, GA, Coliseum, 200 Coliseum Dr.
MADISON, WI, Dane County Memorial Coliseum, 1881 Expo Mall East.
MEMPHIS, TN, Mid-South Coliseum, Mid-South Fairgrounds.
NEW HAVEN, CT (Spanish only), Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 275 S. Orange St.
OGDEN, UT, Dee Events Center, 4600 South 1400 E.
PORTLAND, ME, Cumberland County Civic Center, 1 Civic Center Sq.
RENO, NV, Lawlor Events Center, 15th & Virginia Sts.
ROCHESTER, MN, Mayo Civic Center Arena, 30 2nd Ave. S.E.
ST. PETERSBURG, FL, Bayfront Center, 400 1st St. S.
SAN FRANCISCO, CA, Cow Palace, Geneva Ave.
WEST PALM BEACH, FL, Auditorium, 1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.
WINSTON-SALEM, NC, Lawrence Joel Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 2825 University Pkwy.

JULY 3-5

ALBANY, GA, Civic Center, 100 W. Oglethorpe Ave.
ALBUQUERQUE, NM, University of New Mexico - University Arena, 1414 University Blvd. S.E.
AMARILLO, TX (Spanish only), Civic Center Coliseum, 3rd & Buchanan Sts.
AMHERST, MA, The Mullins Center, University of Massachusetts, Commonwealth Ave.
BIRMINGHAM, AL, Civic Center Coliseum, One Civic Center Plaza.
COLUMBIA, MO, Hearnes Center, 260 Hearnes Ctr.
COLUMBIA, SC, Carolina Coliseum, Assembly & Blossom Sts.
FORT WORTH, TX, Fort Worth (Tarrant County) Convention Center, 1111 Houston St.
HAMMOND, LA, Southeastern Louisiana University Center, 700 University Ave.
JACKSON, MS, Mississippi Coliseum, 1207 Mississippi St.
KENNEWICK, WA (Spanish only), Tri-Cities Coliseum, 7100 W. Quinault.
LINCOLN, NE, Devaney Sports Center, 16th St. & Military Rd.

LONG BEACH, CA, Long Beach Convention Center Arena, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.
LONG BEACH, CA (Chinese only), Long Beach Convention Center Grand Ballroom, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.

LONG BEACH, CA (Italian only), Long Beach Convention Center Terrace Theater, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.

LONG BEACH, CA (Japanese only), Long Beach Convention Center Exhibit Hall C, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.

LONG BEACH, CA (Korean only), Long Beach Convention Center Exhibit Hall B, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.

LONG BEACH, CA (Tagalog only), Long Beach Convention Center Exhibit Hall B, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.

LONG BEACH, CA (Vietnamese only), Long Beach Convention Center Exhibit Hall A, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.

MACON, GA, Coliseum, 200 Coliseum Dr.
MADISON, WI, Dane County Memorial Coliseum, 1881 Expo Mall East.

NEW HAVEN, CT, Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 275 S. Orange St.

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK, Myriad, One Myriad Gardens.

PEORIA, IL, Peoria Civic Center Arena, 201 S.W. Jefferson St.

RICHMOND, VA, Coliseum, 601 E. Leigh St.

ROCHESTER, MN, Mayo Civic Center Arena, 30 2nd Ave. S.E.

ST. PETERSBURG, FL, Bayfront Center, 400 1st St. S.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (Spanish only), Cow Palace, Geneva Ave.

SPRINGFIELD, IL, Prairie Capital Convention Center, One Convention Center Plaza.

SYRACUSE, NY, Onondaga County War Memorial Arena, 515 Montgomery St.

TACOMA, WA, Tacoma Dome, 2727 E. "D" St.

UNIONDALE, NY, Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 1255 Hempstead Tpk.

WEST PALM BEACH, FL, Auditorium, 1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.

JULY 10-12

ALBUQUERQUE, NM, University of New Mexico - University Arena, 1414 University Blvd. S.E.
AMARILLO, TX (Spanish only), Civic Center Coliseum, 3rd & Buchanan Sts.

AMHERST, MA, The Mullins Center, University of Massachusetts, Commonwealth Ave.

BISMARCK, ND, Civic Center Arena, 601 E. Sweet Ave.

DAYTON, OH, Ervin J. Nutter Center, Wright State University, Colonel Glen Hwy.

HAMMOND, LA, Southeastern Louisiana University Center, 700 University Ave.

HOUSTON, TX (Spanish only), Astrodome, Loop 610 at Kirby Dr.

JACKSON, MS, Mississippi Coliseum, 1207 Mississippi St.

JACKSONVILLE, FL, Memorial Coliseum, Gator Bowl Sports Complex.

KENNEWICK, WA, Tri-Cities Coliseum, 7100 W. Quinault.

MACON, GA, Coliseum, 200 Coliseum Dr.

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK, Myriad, One Myriad Gardens.

RICHMOND, VA, Coliseum, 601 E. Leigh St.

ST. PETERSBURG, FL, Bayfront Center, 400 1st St. S.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (Spanish only), Cow Palace, Geneva Ave.

SPRINGFIELD, IL, Prairie Capital Convention Center, One Convention Center Plaza.

SYRACUSE, NY, Onondaga County War Memorial Arena, 515 Montgomery St.
TACOMA, WA, Tacoma Dome, 2727 E. "D" St.
UNIONDALE, NY, Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 1255 Hempstead Tpk.
WEST PALM BEACH, FL, Auditorium, 1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.

JULY 17-19

AMHERST, MA, The Mullins Center, University of Massachusetts, Commonwealth Ave.
BAKERSFIELD, CA, Bakersfield Convention Center, 1001 Truxtun Ave.
CLEVELAND, OH, Cleveland State University Convocation Centre, Prospect & E. 21st Sts.
COLUMBUS, GA, South Commons Civic Center, 400 4th St.
DENVER, CO, McNichols Sports Arena, 1635 Clay St.
HAMPTON, VA, Coliseum, 1000 Coliseum Dr.
HUNTSVILLE, AL, Von Braun Civic Center Arena, 700 Monroe St.
JACKSONVILLE, FL, Memorial Coliseum, Gator Bowl Sports Complex.
JOHNSON CITY, TN, Freedom Hall Civic Center Arena, Liberty Bell Blvd.
KENNEWICK, WA, Tri-Cities Coliseum, 7100 W. Quinault.
LOUISVILLE, KY, Freedom Hall Coliseum, Kentucky Fair & Expo Center, 937 Phillips Ln.
PHILADELPHIA, PA, Veterans Stadium, S. Broad & Pattison Ave.
RICHMOND, VA, Coliseum, 601 E. Leigh St.
TACKFORD, IL, Metrocentre Arena, 300 Elm St.
ST. PETERSBURG, FL (Spanish only), Bayfront Center, 400 1st St. S.
TACOMA, WA, Tacoma Dome, 2727 E. "D" St.
WEST PALM BEACH, FL (Spanish only), Auditorium, 1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.

JULY 24-26

AMHERST, MA, The Mullins Center, University of Massachusetts, Commonwealth Ave.
BAKERSFIELD, CA, Bakersfield Convention Center, 1001 Truxtun Ave.
CLEVELAND, OH, Cleveland State University Convocation Centre, Prospect & E. 21st Sts.
CORPUS CHRISTI, TX, Memorial Coliseum, 402 S. Shoreline Blvd.
DAYTON, OH, Ervin J. Nutter Center, Wright State University, Colonel Glen Hwy.
DENVER, CO, McNichols Sports Arena, 1635 Clay St.
HAMPTON, VA, Coliseum, 1000 Coliseum Dr.
HUNTSVILLE, AL, Von Braun Civic Center Arena, 700 Monroe St.
JACKSONVILLE, FL, Memorial Coliseum, Gator Bowl Sports Complex.
JERSEY CITY, NJ (French only), Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 2932 Kennedy Blvd.
JOHNSON CITY, TN, Freedom Hall Civic Center Arena, Liberty Bell Blvd.
RICHMOND, VA, Coliseum, 601 E. Leigh St.
ROCHESTER, NY, Community War Memorial, 100 Exchange Blvd.
ST. PETERSBURG, FL (Spanish only), Bayfront Center, 400 1st St. S.
TACOMA, WA, Tacoma Dome, 2727 E. "D" St.
WEST PALM BEACH, FL (Spanish only), Auditorium, 1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.

JULY 31-AUGUST 2

BAKERSFIELD, CA (Spanish only), Bakersfield Convention Center, 1001 Truxtun Ave.
CLEVELAND, OH, Cleveland State University Convocation Centre, Prospect & E. 21st Sts.
CORPUS CHRISTI, TX, Memorial Coliseum, 402 S. Shoreline Blvd.
DAYTON, OH, Ervin J. Nutter Center, Wright State University, Colonel Glen Hwy.
ESCONDIDO, CA (American Sign Language only), Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 1873 Iris Ln.
JERSEY CITY, NJ (French only), Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 2932 Kennedy Blvd.
KENNEWICK, WA, Tri-Cities Coliseum, 7100 W. Quinault.
LONG BEACH, CA, Long Beach Convention Center Arena, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.
ROCHESTER, NY, Community War Memorial, 100 Exchange Blvd.
ST. PETERSBURG, FL (Spanish only), Bayfront Center, 400 1st St. S.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, Cow Palace, Geneva Ave.
WEST PALM BEACH, FL (Spanish only), Auditorium, 1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.

AUGUST 7-9

BAKERSFIELD, CA (Spanish only), Bakersfield Convention Center, 1001 Truxtun Ave.
BATON ROUGE, LA, L.S.U. Assembly Center, Louisiana State University, N. Stadium Dr.
CLEVELAND, OH, Cleveland State University Convocation Centre, Prospect & E. 21st Sts.
CORPUS CHRISTI, TX (Spanish only), Memorial Coliseum, 402 S. Shoreline Blvd.
JERSEY CITY, NJ (American Sign Language only), Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 2932 Kennedy Blvd.
LONG BEACH, CA (Spanish only), Long Beach Convention Center Arena, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.
ROANOKE, VA, Civic Center, 710 Williamson Rd. N.E.
ROCHESTER, MN, Mayo Civic Center Arena, 30 2nd Ave. S.E.
SAN FRANCISCO, CA, Cow Palace, Geneva Ave.
TOLEDO, OH, University of Toledo - Savage Hall, 2801 W. Bancroft.
UNIONDALE, NY (Spanish only), Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 1255 Hempstead Tpk.
WEST PALM BEACH, FL (Spanish only), Auditorium, 1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.

AUGUST 14-16

BAKERSFIELD, CA, Bakersfield Convention Center, 1001 Truxtun Ave.
BELTON, TX, Bell County Expo Center Arena, 301 W. Loop 121.
CORPUS CHRISTI, TX (Spanish only), Memorial Coliseum, 402 S. Shoreline Blvd.
ROCHESTER, MN, Mayo Civic Center Arena, 30 2nd Ave. S.E.
TOLEDO, OH, University of Toledo - Savage Hall, 2801 W. Bancroft.
TUCSON, AZ, Convention Center, 260 S. Church St.
UNIONDALE, NY (Spanish only), Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 1255 Hempstead Tpk.
WEST PALM BEACH, FL (Spanish only), Auditorium, 1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.

AUGUST 21-23

BAKERSFIELD, CA, Bakersfield Convention Center, 1001 Truxtun Ave.
BELTON, TX, Bell County Expo Center Arena, 301 W. Loop 121.
CORPUS CHRISTI, TX (Spanish only), Memorial Coliseum, 402 S. Shoreline Blvd.
TUCSON, AZ (Spanish only), Convention Center, 260 S. Church St.
UNIONDALE, NY (Spanish only), Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 1255 Hempstead Tpk.
WEST PALM BEACH, FL (Spanish only), Auditorium, 1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.

AUGUST 28-30

BELTON, TX, Bell County Expo Center Arena, 301 W. Loop 121.
CORPUS CHRISTI, TX (Spanish only), Memorial Coliseum, 402 S. Shoreline Blvd.
TUCSON, AZ (Spanish only), Convention Center, 260 S. Church St.
UNIONDALE, NY, Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 1255 Hempstead Tpk.
WEST PALM BEACH, FL (French only), Auditorium, 1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.

SEPTEMBER 4-6

LONG BEACH, CA (Spanish only), Long Beach Convention Center Arena, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.
TUCSON, AZ, Convention Center, 260 S. Church St.
UNIONDALE, NY, Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 1255 Hempstead Tpk.

SEPTEMBER 11-13

LONG BEACH, CA (Spanish only), Long Beach Convention Center Arena, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.
TUCSON, AZ, Convention Center, 260 S. Church St.

Britain

JULY 24-26

BRISTOL, Bristol City Football Club, Ashton Gate.
DUDLEY (Punjabi only), Assembly Hall, 22 Castle Hill.

EDINBURGH, Murrayfield Rugby Stadium, Murrayfield.
LEEDS, Leeds United Football Club, Elland Rd.
LONDON (TWICKENHAM) (French and Spanish also), Rugby Football Union, Rugby Road, Twickenham, Middx.
MANCHESTER, Manchester Arena, Hunts Bank.
NORWICH, Norwich City Football Club, Carrow Rd.
PLYMOUTH, Plymouth Argyle Football Club, Home Park.
WOLVERHAMPTON, Wolverhampton Wanderers Football Club, Molineux Stadium, Waterloo Rd.

Ireland

JULY 3-5

NAVAN, CO. MEATH., Navan Exhibition Centre, Trim Rd.

JULY 10-12

NAVAN, CO. MEATH., Navan Exhibition Centre, Trim Rd.

JULY 17-19

NAVAN, CO. MEATH., Navan Exhibition Centre, Trim Rd.

Canada

JUNE 12-14

MONTREAL, QUE. (Arabic only), Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 12700, boul. Metropolitain Est, Pointe-aux-Trembles.

MONTREAL, QUE. (French only), Sign language also, Stade Olympique, 4141, avenue Pierre-de-Coubertin.

MONTREAL, QUE. (Greek only), Stade Olympique, Hall d'exposition—Grandes hauteurs, 4141, avenue Pierre-de-Coubertin.

MONTREAL, QUE. (Portuguese only), Maurice-Richard Arena, 2800, rue Viau.

JUNE 19-21

MONCTON, N.B., Coliseum Agrena, Killam Dr.
VANCOUVER, B.C. (Sign language also), Pacific Coliseum, P.N.E. Grounds, Hastings St. E. & Renfrew St.

JUNE 26-28

BRAMPTON, ONT. (Polish only), Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, Hwy. 7, 1 mile W. of Mississauga Rd., Norval.

CALGARY, ALTA., Canadian Airlines Saddledome, 555 Saddledome Rise, S.E.

TORONTO, ONT. (Sign language also), Sky-Dome, 1 Blue Jays Way.

VANCOUVER, B.C. (Sign language also), Pacific Coliseum, P.N.E. Grounds, Hastings St. E. & Renfrew St.

JULY 3-5

MOUNT PEARL, NFLD., Mount Pearl Glacier, Olympic Dr.

SELKIRK, MAN., Selkirk Recreation Complex, 55 Easton Dr.

VICTORIA, B.C., Esquimalt's Archie Browning Sports Centre (Arena), 1151 Esquimalt Rd.

JULY 10-12

BRAMPTON, ONT. (Italian only), Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, Hwy. 7, 1 mile W. of Mississauga Rd., Norval.

GRANDE PRAIRIE, ALTA., Canada Games Arena, 10017 99th Ave.

KITCHENER, ONT. (Spanish only), Kitchener Memorial Auditorium Complex, 400 East Ave.

NANAIMO, B.C., Frank Crane Arena, Beban Park Recreation Centre, 2300 Bowen Rd.

SASKATOON, SASK. (Sign language also), Saskatchewan Place, 3515 Thatcher Ave.

SELKIRK, MAN., Selkirk Recreation Complex, 55 Easton Dr.

JULY 17-19

CALGARY, ALTA. (Spanish only), Calgary Kingdome Hall Centre of Jehovah's Witnesses, 2900 14th Ave. N.E.

PRINCE GEORGE, B.C., Prince George Multiplex Arena, 2188 Ospika Blvd.

SHERBROOKE, QUE., Palais des sports, 360, rue Parc.

JULY 24-26

CORNWALL, ONT., Ed Lumley Arena, Cornwall Civic Complex, 100 Water St. E.

SURREY, B.C. (Spanish only), Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 15577 82nd Ave.



Will God Destroy the World?

ACCORDING to Pope John Paul II, humans can look forward to the future with confidence. Throughout history, he noted, "men have continued to commit sins, perhaps even greater than those described before the flood." Even so, the pope explained, "from the words of the covenant God made with Noah we realize that now there is no sin that can bring God to destroy the world he himself created."

Is it true that God will never destroy the world? The Bible states that after the Deluge, God said to Noah: "No more will all flesh be cut off by waters of a deluge, and no more will there occur a deluge to bring the earth to ruin." (Genesis 9:11) The pope says that with these words, God "committed himself to preserving [the earth] from destruction."

The Bible makes it clear that the Creator will not allow our planet to be destroyed. "The earth

is standing even to time indefinite," says the Bible. (Ecclesiastes 1:4) But there is more to be learned from the Deluge—something that the pope did not comment on.

Jesus said that conditions on earth at the time of his future presence would be "just as the days of Noah were," when people "took no note until the flood came and swept them all away." (Matthew 24:37-39) Similarly, the apostle Peter wrote that just as "the world of that time suffered destruction when it was deluged with water," so also "the day of judgment and of destruction of the ungodly men" looms over the present world.—2 Peter 3:5-7.

Did Jesus and Peter forget about God's covenant with Noah? By no means! Just as he stated in the covenant with Noah, God will not employ floodwaters to bring this wicked system of things to an end. Instead, he will use the might of the "King of kings and Lord of lords," Jesus Christ. (Revelation [Apocalypse] 19:11-21) According to the Bible, therefore, the earth will not be destroyed, but the "world" of evil mankind will without fail come to an end. (Proverbs 2:21, 22; Revelation 11:18) Afterward, "the righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it."—Psalm 37:29.

