

# The WATCHTOWER

*Announcing*  
**JEHOVAH'S  
KINGDOM**

JULY 1, 1969

Semimonthly

**JEHOVAH, THE GREAT OVERSEER  
AND SHEPHERD OF HIS PEOPLE**

**JEHOVAH SHEPHERDS THE  
CHRISTIAN CONGREGATION**

**WHY LOOK INTO THE BIBLE?**

**RETURN TO JEHOVAH  
WHILE THERE IS YET TIME**

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**"YOU ARE MY WITNESSES," SAYS JEHOVAH.—Isa. 43:12**

## THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER"

Every watchtower has its purpose. It serves as an elevated place for a wide-awake person with sharp vision. It enables him to see far ahead into the distance and tell those below for whom he is a watchman what is drawing near, whether it is a danger against which to prepare or it is something good over which to be glad with strong faith and hope.

Because of having the name "The Watchtower" this magazine justly has to render a similar useful service to the people of all nations. This is an international magazine and makes no racial distinctions, for we are all facing a common world danger; we are all hoping for a common good.

Ever since "The Watchtower" began to be published in July of 1879 it has looked ahead into the future, always striving to aid its readers to advance in knowledge and to gain a clearer picture of the glorious new order of things that is in store for righteous mankind. No, "The Watchtower" is no inspired prophet, but it follows and explains a Book of prophecy the predictions in which have proved to be unerring and unfailing till now. "The Watchtower" is therefore under safe guidance. It may be read with confidence, for its statements may be checked against that prophetic Book.

Among the many nations of today there are hundreds of differing religions. Which one does this magazine present? Not the confused religions of Christendom, but the religion of the oldest sacred Book on earth. Which Book? The Sacred Bible of the Holy Scriptures, written by inspiration in the name of the Creator of heaven and earth, the only living and true God.

The sacred, nonpolitical purpose of "The Watchtower" is accordingly to encourage and promote study of the Holy Bible and to give our many readers the needed unsectarian help to understand that Book of true religion and infallible prophecy. Thus this magazine will be helping them to prove worthy of perfect life and happiness in God's promised new order under His everlasting kingdom of righteousness.



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"They will all be taught by Jehovah."—John 6:45; Isaiah 54:13

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AS - American Standard Version

Le - Isaac Leeser's version

AT - An American Translation

Mo - James Moffatt's version

AV - Authorized Version (1611)

Ro - J. B. Rotherham's version

Dy - Catholic Douay version

RS - Revised Standard Version

JP - Jewish Publication Soc.

Yg - Robert Young's version

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# The WATCHTOWER

Announcing  
JEHOVAH'S  
KINGDOM

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## GENEROSITY *inspires* GENEROSITY

**H**E THAT sows sparingly will also reap sparingly; and he that sows bountifully will also reap bountifully." Those words of the Christian apostle Paul are good advice, not only for gardeners and farmers, but for all who would have good relations with their Creator and their fellows.—2 Cor. 9:6.

True, there are those who abuse generosity, but in the main the words of Jesus apply: "Practice giving, and people will give to you. They will pour into your laps a fine measure, pressed down, shaken together and overflowing. For with the measure that you are measuring out, they will measure out to you in return."—Luke 6:38.

Jesus Christ himself experienced the working out of this principle in his earthly ministry. He was the personification of generosity. Zealously and unselfishly he

preached the good news of God's kingdom to the poor. He comforted the mourning ones, cured the sick, healed the blind and crippled and even raised the dead. He neither charged for his services nor expected a certain salary to be paid him; he did not even take up collections, things that are common practice on the part of ever so many who claim to be following in his footsteps. Yet Jesus never wanted for anything in the way of food, clothing or shelter, even if he did not have a home that he could call his own. People generously, voluntarily supported him in his ministry.

—Luke 7:22; 8:1-3; 9:58.

Not only did his generosity inspire others to give him the material necessities of life, but it also inspired others to show like generosity in leaving all things to share in his ministry. Thus on one occasion he was able to send out twelve apostles to preach and perform miraculous works and on another occasion to send out seventy others of his disciples to do the same work. And what an example of generosity those early Christians showed right after Pentecost! Those among them who had property sold it and brought the proceeds to the apostles so that none among them would be in need.—Luke 9:1-6; 10:1-7; Acts 4:32-35.

That generosity inspires generosity is just as true today as it was in the days of early Christianity. The Christian witnesses of Jehovah generously give of their time,

energy and means to let others hear the good news of God's kingdom. Why? Because they have become acquainted with the generous God Jehovah. Concerning him we read, "God is love." From him comes down "every good gift and every perfect present," including that of his only-begotten Son, the costliest gift of all.—1 John 4:8; Jas. 1:17; John 3:16.

In turn, as they manifest generosity by preaching the good news of God's kingdom still others are inspired to express generosity by sharing with them in preaching the good news. Likewise in their local congregations the presiding minister and his ministerial assistants generously serve without pay, take no collections, and so it is not surprising that the necessary means for the renting or building of Kingdom Halls is voluntarily, generously contributed by the individual members of these congregations. To all such the inspired words apply: "The righteous is generous and gives."—Ps. 37:21, RS.

That generosity inspires generosity was strikingly illustrated at the worldwide "Good News for All Nations" District Assemblies held during the summer of 1968. For example, two women had freely turned over their home to a group of Witnesses attending the Spokane, Washington, assembly. The Witnesses, not wishing to accept the accommodations altogether free, used a glass jar for each one to contribute something for the use of the rooms. At the end of the assembly the two women brought the money to the auditing department of the assembly as a contribution to the cause of the Witnesses. The total amount was \$50.81.

At one assembly in Denmark, Witness painters assisted the painter employed by the new sports stadium so that he could

get his job done before his vacation and also before the Witnesses used the stadium for their assembly. This generous gesture so pleased the stadium manager that he did not charge the assembly for the use of lights and telephone during the assembly. Truly generosity inspires generosity.

Today many accuse youths of being selfish, and not without some good reason. But could not at least part of the reason be the fact that adults are not setting them an example of unselfishness? That this could well be the case can be seen by the cooperation Witness youths gave their elders at these District Assemblies. Commenting on this fact, the Montreal, Canada, *La Presse*, Canada's largest French-language daily, August 7, 1968, stated:

"Another useful contribution of Jehovah's witnesses is the accent this group places on family unity, respect for the authority of the family head and participation by adolescents in common endeavors. In these three spheres we get the impression that certain of their methods might be studied and profitably used by other religious denominations . . . It is interesting to observe that instruction based on Bible principles . . . produces in general a youth better protected from delinquency." Yes, these young folks are inspired to unselfish activity by reason of the generous example of their parents and elders.

Does generosity inspire generosity? No question about it! The principle Jesus Christ stated, that generosity influences others to be generous, is true. That principle is also implied in the words of wise King Solomon: "The generous soul will itself be made fat, and the one freely watering others will himself also be freely watered."—Prov. 11:25.





# Why look into the Bible?

CAN you imagine a world of mankind in which the Asiatic, the Negro and the "white man" all delight to call one another "brother"? Can you imagine a world with just one religion? A world with all men united in a loving bond of worship of the one God who created heaven and earth? The most widely distributed and most widely read book of all history tells of this glorious prospect. It is a very ancient book, and at the same time the most up-to-date.

This book of practical wisdom was compiled entirely by Orientals. However, its message is not just for Asiatics of the Near or Far East, but also for Africans, for Europeans, for Americans—for all mankind! As stated in this book: "God is not partial, but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him."\* This book is the Holy Bible.

A young man of Hiroshima tells how the religion of the Bible influenced his life:

"In 1963 I was preparing to go to Nara to receive training as a missionary of Tenrikyo [the Religion of Heavenly Wisdom], when one day a missionary of Jehovah's witnesses called on me, and I accepted a book called 'From Paradise Lost to Paradise Regained.' I had had some interest in the Bible, and this visit prompted me to read again the book of Proverbs. The missionary called again, and invited me to attend a public talk, which

was followed by a study of the *Watchtower* magazine article, 'Inner Harmony—Proof of the Bible's Divine Authorship,' and announcements concerning the International Assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses, to be held in Kyoto, August 21-25. So I arranged to attend this assembly before going on to Nara for my Tenrikyo missionary training, which was to commence August 26.

"The Program at the Kyoto Assembly was educational and proved most interesting to me. One after another, the various speakers gave logical, realistic and upbuilding talks—all based on the Bible. Moreover, all in attendance called one another 'brother' and 'sister' and mingled in a most friendly way. There was none of the gloom and coldness that I had been accustomed to at religious gatherings. Everyone was so kind, and the atmosphere was so bright. Also, overseas visitors of many races and nationalities were in attendance, but without any sign of racial prejudice. Toward the end of the assembly a 'brother' invited me to return to Hiroshima with him and study the Bible. . . . I never did make it to Nara and Tenrikyo missionary training. . . . After devoting a full month to Bible study, I began to be trained in the ministry by Jehovah's witnesses, and after four months I symbolized my dedication to Jehovah by water baptism, being accepted fully into the New World society of Jehovah's witnesses."

This young man had wanted to be a missionary. But a missionary of what? This, he did not know—until study of the Bible revealed to him the "one faith" based on the promises of Jehovah God, Creator of heaven and earth.—Eph. 4:5, 6.

## CHRISTENDOM'S RECORD

This "one faith" should not be confused with the religions of Christendom. Christendom's sects have long since apostatized from the teachings of the Bible. That is why Christendom's history is so cruel and

\* The apostle Peter, at Acts 10:34, 35.

violent, with a long record of prosecuting inquisitions, crusades, world wars and vest-pocket wars. During World War II, it was Christendom's Nazis, bound by concordat to the Vatican, that threw some ten thousand of the Christian witnesses of Jehovah into concentration camps. Hundreds of these true Christians were executed because they refused to support Hitler's war. They chose death rather than violate the Bible principle stated at Isaiah 2:4: "And they will have to beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning shears. . . . neither will they learn war any more."

Christendom today is plagued by increasing crime, racial and other violence, and immorality. Its churches are filled with doubts and strife. The Bible foretold the development of this apostate system that substitutes the superstition and ritual of ancient Babylon for pure Bible teaching. The fruits of its lawlessness toward God are seen everywhere today. They are not the fruits of Christian love.—Matt. 13:37-43; 7:21-23.

#### CHRISTIANITY IS DIFFERENT

What, then, is true Christianity? It is the unsectarian religion of the Bible. It centers around the worship of the one Almighty God—the living God, Jehovah. When Jesus Christ was here on earth, he made manifest the name and purposes of his Father, Jehovah, and he also gave his own life in sacrifice, so that mankind might be ransomed from the power of death and enter into an eternity of perfect life on a paradise earth.—John 17:3, 6.

Jehovah's grand purposes include removing wickedness from this earth, and making it a glorious place for man's habitation. Even now, though selfish men abuse it, earth is beautiful to behold. As one of the astronauts of the Apollo-8 moon flight commented: "In the whole universe, wher-

ever we looked, the only bit of color was back on the earth. There we could see the royal blue of the seas, the tans and browns of the land, and the whites of the clouds. . . . It was the most beautiful thing to see, in all the heavens. People down here don't realize what they have."\* The miracle of the earth and its life are indeed something for which we should thank Jehovah God!

But true Christians go farther than this. They study God's Word, the Bible, to find out what God's purpose is toward this earth. They rejoice in his promise that this earth will soon become a paradise, teeming with a united mankind that enjoys the fullness of life in perfection. They show gratitude by sharing in the urgent work of proclaiming the way of salvation to all nations of mankind before this wicked system ends.—2 Tim. 4:2.

#### THE RELIGION OF LIFE

The religion of the Bible provides education for joyful, meaningful living, both now and in the future paradise earth. (Eccl. 2:24, 25; Phil. 4:8, 9) But most religious sects today are more concerned with rites for the dead than with care of the living. In this connection, the book *Religions in Japan*, published in 1959 by the Ministry of Education, Government of Japan, states on page 104:

"Since this time [the Meiji Era, commencing 1868], Buddhism has become a religion which mainly holds funeral rites and memorial services for the dead. These memorial services are held at each Danka (believer's home), and the 'Higan Hoyo' or equinoctial services in the spring and the autumn are observed in grand ceremonies in each temple. This is the main work of Buddhism."

We might add that funeral rites are also one of the main functions of the religious sects of Christendom.

\* Time, Inc., Radiopress to *The Yomiuri*, Tokyo, January 17, 1969.

However, the Bible gives no instructions on rites for the dead. One reason is that the dead are not in *gokuraku* (the Buddhist "heaven"), nor in *jigoku* (the Buddhist "hell"), nor in any intermediate place, as many have taught since the days of ancient Babylon. The Bible says plainly concerning the dead: "The living are conscious that they will die; but as for the dead, they are conscious of nothing at all." (Eccl. 9:5, 10) So, of what benefit are rites for the dead?

However, the Bible tells Christians not to "sorrow just as the rest also do who have no hope." (1 Thess. 4:13) Why is this? It is because of the hope for the dead. All of "the dead, the great and the small," who are in the common grave of mankind, are to come forth on this earth again by a resurrection. (Rev. 20:11-15) If they exercise faith in Jesus' sacrifice on their behalf and meet God's other requirements for living in the paradise earth, they may attain to human perfection and everlasting life. Do you find this hard to believe? Anticipating the wonderment of his hearers, Jesus said: "Do not marvel at this, because the hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear [the Son of God's] voice and come out."—John 5:28, 29.

The Bible describes also a "great crowd" out of all nations and peoples. These separate from false religion. These do not get involved in demonstrations, in student riots or in tearing down established authority. Instead, they learn to live by Bible principles, leaving it to God to remedy earth's problems in his own due time. Peaceably and zealously they proclaim God's kingdom by Christ as the hope for mankind. This "great crowd" expects, by Jehovah's undeserved kindness, to survive the destruction of the present wicked system and to enter into the abundance

of real life in the paradise earth.—Rev. 7:9-17; 21:3-5; John 11:25, 26.

#### WHY SO MUCH CONFUSION IN RELIGION?

With mankind facing so glorious a future, the wonder is that so few have accepted the Bible hope. Why is this so? The Bible itself answers, at 2 Corinthians 4:3, 4: "If, now, the good news we declare is in fact veiled, it is veiled among those who are perishing, among whom the god of this system of things has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, that the illumination of the glorious good news about the Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine through." The "god of this system of things" is a very real invisible person. The Bible describes him also as "the one called Devil and Satan, who is misleading the entire inhabited earth." (Rev. 12:9) And what a confused mess has resulted from his misruling this earth!

More than four thousand years ago in ancient Babylon God first scattered mankind because of their apostatizing to false religion. To this day, Satan uses sectarian religion as a principal means of confusing mankind. He makes it appear desirable to settle down in the religion inherited from one's parents.

But what assurance can a person have that the religion of his parents is the right one? In Japan, for example, Government statistics published in 1957 showed this country to have 379 religious sects, of which 38 belonged to Christendom. With Japan's population standing at 90,000,000 at that time, the various sects claimed 123,000,000 adherents, indicating that many belonged to more than one religion.\* However, since all these sects conflict with one another, this would give each adherent only one or two chances in 379 of be-

\* *Religions in Japan*, Ministry of Education, Japan, page 82.

longing to the true religion—if any of them were true.

Adding to modern-day sectarian confusion are the many new religions that have mushroomed since World War II. In Japan, at least 171 of these new sects are listed. However, most of them draw on the superstitions of the older sects. For example, Japan's Nichiren Buddhism is the forerunner of Reiyukai, Risho Kosai Kai and Soka Gakkai, all of which subscribe to the sutra of the "Lotus of Truth." To illustrate the kind of teaching in Lotus Sutra, the following is quoted from its concluding chapter 28:

"The man who brings out the faults and criticizes the devotees of this sutra shall contract leprosy in this existence. He who scoffs at the devotee of this sutra shall in every existence have his teeth broken and separated, his lips shall be ugly, his nose flat, his feet and hands contorted, his eyes squinting, his body disgusting; he shall have ulcers, pus, and blood shall come from his body, his belly shall swell up with water, he shall be short of breath and suffer from all kinds of malignant and serious diseases. Therefore, if one should see—even from afar—a man who is keeping this sutra, one should rise and show him the same reverence as the Buddha."<sup>\*</sup>

By way of contrast, it is suggested that you read the Psalms of the Bible or Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, at Matthew chapters five through seven. Which kind of teaching do you prefer? Happy are those who separate themselves from childish superstitions. Of far greater benefit is the "wisdom from above," Jehovah's teaching, which is "reasonable, . . . full of mercy and good fruits, . . . not hypocritical."

—Jas. 3:17.

\* *The New Religions of Japan*, Harry Thomsen, page 114.

#### WHICH RELIGION IS GOOD?

It clearly cannot be said that "all religion is good." There is much that is confusing, much that is misleading, much that is demoralizing in the modern-day world empire of Babylonish religion. The Bible foretold this vast system of sectarian religion as "Babylon the Great, the mother of the harlots and of the disgusting things of the earth." Religion's spiritual harlotry in forming political parties and indulging in politics for selfish ends does not have God's blessing! The urgent call now goes out to all of those still in "Babylon," but who seek after true religion and life: "Get out of her, my people, if you do not want to share with her in her sins, and if you do not want to receive part of her plagues." For the fast-deteriorating world situation today shows that God's execution of judgment on false religion is close at hand!—Rev. 17:5, 15-17; 18:4.

But more is required than abandoning false religion. Jehovah God requires of those who will gain everlasting life that they learn and practice true religion. This means studying the Bible and cultivating love for Jehovah God, for his Son, Christ Jesus, and for his kingdom whereby he causes his will to take place upon earth. (Matt. 6:9, 10) The Bible contains more wisdom than in all the encyclopedias and textbooks ever written by men. It provides education for life. Its wise counsel and instruction are essential, if you wish to plan a bright future for yourself and your family. Jehovah's witnesses will be glad to help you, free of charge, to study the Bible, so that you may find pure religion and the truth that leads to eternal life.



# RETURN <sup>to</sup> JEHOVAH

## *while there is yet time*

AS WE read the history of the nation of Israel in the Bible we cannot fail to be impressed by the frequency of their falling away from the pure worship of Jehovah in violation of their covenant with him. Not once, not twice, but dozens of times they broke his commandments and turned aside to the impure worship of idol gods. This displeased Jehovah intensely. We might expect that after several experiences of this kind he would have cast aside the whole nation as irretrievably wicked. But more than a thousand years after giving them his commandments, what do we find?

The nation was still turning aside into unfaithful ways, but Jehovah was still calling upon them to return to him. "For I am Jehovah; I have not changed. And you are sons of Jacob; you have not come to your finish. From the days of your forefathers you have turned aside from my regulations and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you," Jehovah of armies has said." (Mal. 3:6, 7) What a wonderful record Jehovah sets for us in the qualities of long-suffering and mercy. Can we learn anything from this today?

### NEED TO RETURN TODAY

Unhappily there are many today who have followed the same course as Israel. They have learned of Jehovah through a study of his Word and by associating with his people and have shared in the work of making public declaration of the good news of God's kingdom, even in some cases dedicating their lives to Jehovah and serving him happily for a number of years. Then something has occurred in their lives that has caused their love to cool off. They have quit associating with other Christians in meetings and service to Jehovah. This has proved to be due to a variety of causes.

Some were evidently stumbled from the Christian path because they had mistakenly looked upon it as a short sprint rather than a long race of endurance. Weariness overtook them because the road seemed long and the way hard. Perhaps they might have been encouraged by Paul's words: "So let us not give up in doing what is fine, for in due season we shall reap if we do not tire out."—Gal. 6:9.

Others were overcome by opposition and even outright persecution from members of their own family, relatives, friends. They might have been helped to endure

by perfecting the love of God, for John says: "There is no fear in love, but perfect love throws fear outside, because fear exercises a restraint. Indeed, he that is under fear has not been made perfect in love."—1 John 4:18.

Many young people in particular have been turned aside by what the apostle Paul calls "the desires incidental to youth." Instead of fleeing from them, as Paul admonishes, they have sought after them, very often in companionship with unbelieving young people, forgetting that bad associations spoil useful habits. (2 Tim. 2:22; 1 Cor. 15:33) Other young ones, despairing of finding a suitable marriage mate in the congregation of Jehovah's people, have looked outside, in violation of the apostle's instruction to marry "only in the Lord," and many have suffered shipwreck of their faith.—1 Cor. 7:39.

Some were making good progress in serving Jehovah when they took offense over something another Christian brother or sister said or did. Because they failed to handle this matter as outlined in God's Word, it eventually assumed gigantic proportions in their minds and stumbled them out of the way of the truth.—Matt. 18:15-17; Eph. 4:26.

Additionally, not a few have been ensnared by Satan in serious sin, often in some form of sexual immorality. This has produced a bad conscience and a consequent loss of holy spirit. Being overtaken by shame, they have cut themselves off from association with Jehovah's people and have slipped back into the world.

Another powerful force that has turned many back from serving Jehovah has been the strong current trend for love of ease and comfort, making life as easy as possible. It often leads to excessive love of pleasure and seeking after material possessions.

Many have looked forward eagerly to having children and training them up in Jehovah's service, only to be overcome by their inability to cope with the attendant difficulties and to maintain spirituality at the same time. Even a seemingly simple operation, such as moving to another town or another country, has been a cause of turning many aside from the active Christian life to which they dedicated themselves. Failing to get in touch immediately with fellow Christians in their new location, and thinking they would wait until they were thoroughly settled down and had everything shipshape *in the home*, they discovered that through their long absence they lost the desire to share in spiritual activities and studies. These problems were surely encompassed by Jesus when he said: "But pay attention to yourselves that your hearts never become weighed down with overeating and heavy drinking and anxieties of life, and suddenly that day be instantly upon you as a snare."—Luke 21:34, 35.

Do you perhaps recognize yourself as one who formerly served Jehovah but who for some reason turned aside? If so, have you ever felt that you would love to return to Jehovah if you could? Have you perhaps felt, as some have, that you have strayed from Jehovah so long and so far that you cannot return? If you feel that way, then please be assured that Jehovah God does not feel the same way. Be assured that he is as keenly interested in you today as he was in those Israelites in Malachi's day to whom he said: "Return to me, and I will return to you."

#### WHY SHOULD YOU RETURN?

The simple answer, which we are sure you know very well, is that this means your life, your eternal life. "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one

whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ." (John 17:3) To keep on taking in this life-giving knowledge you must reassociate with Jehovah's congregation.

You have known the hope of life. You have had the joy of looking forward to eternal life in the new order, free from sickness, pain, fear, anxiety and worry, and surrounded by your loved ones. Do you have anything now that can really compare with this hope? Will this system of things really allow you to enjoy life to the full today? All around you people are slaving night and day for riches, cheating and lying for power and possessions, plunging into the mad pursuit of sensual pleasure to shut out the frightening facts of a world facing disintegration. You really want something better than that for yourself and your family, do you not?

And what of God's promise of the resurrection of the dead in his new order so close at hand? Doubtless you have loved ones whom you sorely miss. Do you not want to be there to welcome them back when Jehovah raises them to the prospect of eternal life in a paradise earth? Of course you do! These are powerful reasons why you should now return to Jehovah while there is yet time.

#### TIME TO RETURN RUNNING OUT

If you are one who formerly studied God's Word with Jehovah's witnesses, you well know the abundance of Bible evidence proving that since the year 1914 this whole system of things has been in its "time of the end" and is facing complete destruction soon at the universal war of Armageddon. You have read Jesus' words in Matthew 24, Luke 21 and Mark 13 describing the world wars we have seen, accompanied by famine, pestilence and great earthquakes. You have read his description of the lawlessness and the violence that are now sweeping the entire earth,

threatening to plunge even the greatest nations into anarchy. You have also read the apostle Paul's description in Second Timothy 3:1-5 of the moral degeneracy in public and private life that certainly marks this generation as being in its last critical days.

Do you not recall that Jesus, in prophesying of this period of the last days which commenced in 1914, also said: "Truly I say to you, This generation will by no means pass away until all things occur"? (Luke 21:32) People who were only just old enough to understand what was happening to the world in 1914 are now approaching seventy years of age. Yes, the numbers of that generation are dwindling fast, but before they all pass away this system must meet its end in the war of Armageddon. Surely this highlights what a very short time now remains to return to Jehovah.

#### THE WAY OF RETURN

"He that approaches God must believe that he is and that he becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him." (Heb. 11:6) Do you believe this? Are you earnestly seeking Jehovah? Do you believe that he will reward your search? If you do, then you must return to Jehovah with your whole heart. You must approach him in humble, earnest prayer, entreating him to direct your steps in the future, while you resolve that you will put forth a consistent effort backed by his holy spirit to follow his direction. "Draw close to God, and he will draw close to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you indecisive ones. Humble yourselves in the eyes of Jehovah, and he will exalt you."—Jas. 4:8, 10.

Yes, it calls for humility to turn back to Jehovah. "God opposes the haughty ones, but he gives undeserved kindness to the humble ones." (Jas. 4:6) In a cold

world, do you not want to feel the warmth of God's kindness, even though you may feel you do not deserve it? Then, "humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."—1 Pet. 5:6.

Resolve that right away, this week, you will start once again to attend the meetings at your local Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses. If you do not know the address, write to the branch office of the Watch Tower Society in your country and they will be glad to put you in touch. Your Christian brothers will welcome you. They will be happy to see you and to help you in your study of the Bible.

If you feel that you need to be reestablished in an accurate knowledge of the truth, they will be glad to conduct you through a comprehensive six-month study of the essential truths of the Bible with the aid of the Watch Tower Society's 192-page Bible-study aid *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*. And that is what you really want, is it not? They will really give you all the practical assistance you may need to get your feet firmly fixed once more on the way to life. They feel as Jesus felt when he gave the illustration in Matthew 18:12-14:

"What do you think? If a certain man comes to have a hundred sheep and one of them gets strayed, will he not leave the ninety-nine upon the mountains and set out on a search for the one that is straying? And if he happens to find it, I certainly tell you, he rejoices more over it than over the ninety-nine that have not strayed. Likewise it is not a desirable thing with my Father who is in heaven for one of these little ones to perish."

#### COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- Reviving the Spirit of Self-Sacrifice.
- Sacrifices That Are Acceptable to God.
- Development of Trinity in the Creeds.

#### JEHOVAH WILL WELCOME YOUR RETURN

Never forget that Jehovah is a God of infinite mercy to those who are of a humble and contrite heart. (Isa. 57:15) Do not feel that you have sinned too deeply to return. "Though the sins of you people should prove to be as scarlet, they *will be* made white just like snow; though they should be red like crimson cloth, they will become even like wool." (Isa. 1:18) Do not feel that you have separated yourself from Jehovah over too long a period of time to be able to close the gap. Some have returned to Jehovah after straying away for many years. In this year 1969 an aged man in Britain is again studying the Bible with Jehovah's witnesses and attending their meetings. His previous contact with them was fifty-five years ago during World War I when he studied with one of Jehovah's witnesses for two years and then fell away. Now he is returning to Jehovah.

If you feel that you have strayed from Jehovah, be assured that he wants you to return, and so do your brothers. It is not difficult to find Jehovah, for, "in fact, he is not far off from each one of us." (Acts 17:27) Humbly call upon him today in prayer, begging him to forgive your past sins and mistakes. Open your heart to him and ask him to help you bear your load. (1 Pet. 5:7) Earnestly entreat him to give you liberally of his holy spirit to enable you henceforth to do his will. (1 John 5:14) Then act! Do not delay! Do not put it off! Time is rapidly running out. Get back into association with Jehovah and with his people. Yes, return to Jehovah *now*, while there is yet time.

# JEHOVAH

## *The Great Overseer and Shepherd of His People*

"You were like sheep, going astray; but now you have returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls."—1 Pet. 2:25.

**A**RE you aware that there is someone vitally interested in mankind's welfare and that this someone is no ordinary person, but is, in fact, the Creator of the universe, the all-wise and omnipotent one whose name is Jehovah? Yes, as a Great Shepherd of his people, Jehovah the Creator is interested in the welfare of mankind, and this in spite of the fact that his lofty throne in heaven is apparently countless millions of light-years away from this earth. Mankind concerns Jehovah even though he is a God of dynamic energy, one who is ever using that energy in a constructive way throughout a universe so vast that to him all the nations of this earthly globe are as the film of dust on the scales. (Isa. 40:15) In spite of the fact that mankind is born in sin and shaped in iniquity, still Jehovah God, Creator of the universe, truly does care for mankind.

<sup>2</sup> This interest on Jehovah's part is more than just a passing or casual thing. Rather, it is an intense interest. Isaiah, speaking of Jehovah, says: "Like a shepherd he will shepherd his own drove. With his arm he will collect together the lambs; and in his bosom he will carry them. Those giving suck he will conduct with care." (Isa. 40:11) We can well understand why King David so confidently could say: "Jehovah

is my Shepherd. I shall lack nothing."—Ps. 23:1.

<sup>3</sup> How very true it is that mankind truly lacks nothing when the First Person of the universe cares for him. And, to ensure that mankind is properly cared for, Jehovah has appointed a fine shepherd to give close supervision for mankind's protection and guidance. Jesus himself said: "I am the fine shepherd; the fine shepherd surrenders his soul in behalf of the sheep. I am the fine shepherd, and I know my sheep and my sheep know me." (John 10:11, 14) With such care from on high mankind is, indeed, favored. Just imagine! It is possible to know Jehovah God and his Son Christ Jesus and to be known by them.

<sup>4</sup> However, a problem arises with mankind in that the great majority have turned their hearts and minds away from Jehovah and his Son, Christ Jesus. This great majority has concluded that it can live as it desires without any need of direction and care on the part of Jehovah God. This turning away from the care and concern of Jehovah began very early in man's history. Adam and Eve by their course of action showed that they did not want Jehovah to care for them, but, rather, that they wanted to act independently and not have to answer to anyone concerning their conduct. From Adam and Eve

1. Who in the universe is very interested in man's welfare, and this in spite of what condition of man?  
2. How great is the interest that God has in man, and to what is Jehovah likened by Isaiah?

3. How has Jehovah shown that he means to give close attention to the supervision of man?  
4. What have the majority of mankind done to show they are not interested in Jehovah's caring for them?

has sprung the entire human race; and, because of being endowed with free moral agency, that is, freedom to choose to do right or to do wrong, mankind during his existence of almost six thousand years on earth has been choosing whether he will come under the direction and care of the Great Shepherd or will direct his life independently without the oversight of the Creator of the universe.

<sup>5</sup> Though the great majority of mankind has turned its back on Jehovah and his loving interest in man's welfare, still Jehovah, as a Great Shepherd, has patiently put up with man and has seen fit to continue to give care and love to those from among mankind who turn to him for help and who desire to have him as their Shepherd. The Bible record shows that, while Adam and Eve were desirous of acting independently of Jehovah, one of their first offspring, Abel, desired to know Jehovah and serve him and be directed by him. The Bible book of Hebrews speaks of him as a "righteous" man. (Heb. 11:4) However, the early history of man from the days of Adam and Eve until the days just prior to the flood in Noah's time shows that there were not many who desired to come under the protective care of Jehovah.

<sup>6</sup> By the time that the flooding of our earth in a global inundation took place (about 2370 B.C.E., or some 1,656 years from the placing of man and woman in the Garden of Eden), there were only eight persons (Noah's family) living on earth who desired to come under the loving care of the Great Shepherd, Jehovah God. In fact, the Bible record tells us: "Jehovah saw that the badness of man was abundant in the earth and every in-

clination of the thoughts of his heart was only bad all the time."—Gen. 6:5.

<sup>7</sup> Because Noah and his family loved Jehovah they were preserved through the flood that God brought upon this earth, destroying wickedness. From these flood survivors mankind once again got a start as they multiplied and began filling the earth. It was only after some one hundred years following the flood when Nimrod, a mighty hunter in opposition to Jehovah, founded the city of Babel. Nimrod and his followers wanted nothing to do with the leadership and care offered mankind by Jehovah. They wanted to exist independently of the Creator, Jehovah God. Nimrod founded his own religion and formed ideas separate from the right worship of Jehovah. As history shows, the great majority of mankind have preferred the religion of Babylon to the right worship of Jehovah.

<sup>8</sup> About two thousand years after man's creation in Eden there was a child born in the Mesopotamian valley, in what is today known as Iraq. His name was Abram (Abraham). As this child grew to manhood he showed that he wanted to come under the guidance of the Great Shepherd Jehovah God. Because of his showing the right heart attitude toward Jehovah this is what Jehovah said to Abram: "Go your way out of your country and from your relatives and from the house of your father to the country that I shall show you; and I shall make a great nation out of you and I shall bless you and I will make your name great; and prove yourself a blessing." (Gen. 12:1, 2) It was with this pronouncement that Jehovah began building up what would in time amount to a nation that would be under his leadership

5. Though the majority of mankind have left Jehovah's loving care, how has Jehovah reacted?

6. What were conditions like just prior to the flood of Noah's day?

7. What began to develop shortly after the flood of Noah's day?

8. 9. How did Jehovah make a start toward eventually having a nation of people he would shepherd in righteousness?

and care. Isaac, the offspring of Abraham, and Jacob, the offspring of Isaac, were also men who willingly put themselves under the direction of Jehovah. In time the offspring of the twelve sons of Jacob came to constitute the twelve tribes making up the nation of Israel.

<sup>10</sup> These tribes had their beginning as an independent nation when delivered from Egypt under the leadership of Moses in 1513 B.C.E. Under God's direction Moses led them out of Egypt and to Mount Sinai in Arabia. It was at Mount Sinai that Jehovah gave to this nation his rules and regulations which were to guide this nation as it came under his protective care as the Great Shepherd.

<sup>10</sup> Moses took seriously his responsibilities of dealing with the people of Israel, and acting as the spokesman for Jehovah. It was no small task for him to give attention to this great crowd of people that constituted the nation of Israel. However, Moses assumed his responsibilities, striving to carry them out according to Jehovah's direction. It was during the time that he was handling the problems for the people of Israel in the wilderness that Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, visited him. The Bible account relates some of the responsibilities of Moses in these words: "And it came about on the next day that Moses sat down as usual to serve as judge for the people, and the people kept standing before Moses from the morning till the evening." (Ex. 18:13) As the representative earthly shepherd of Jehovah for the people Moses indeed was doing the best he possibly could to care for the needs of the people whom he was governing, or shepherding. However, it was noticed by Jethro that this responsibility on Moses' shoulders was indeed greater than he could possibly continue to bear by himself.

10. (a) Who became like a visible shepherd for Jehovah over the nation of Israel? (b) How did Moses show his deep concern for the people of Israel?

Therefore, the Bible account tells us this: "And Moses' father-in-law got to see all that he was doing for the people. So he said: 'What kind of business is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone continue sitting and all the people continue taking their stand before you from morning till evening?' Then Moses said to his father-in-law: 'Because the people keep coming to me to inquire of God. In the event that they have a case arise, it must come to me and I must judge between the one party and the other, and I must make known the decisions of the true God and his laws.' "—Ex. 18:14-16.

<sup>11</sup> It was readily apparent that Moses was indeed concerned for the welfare of the people of Israel and realized that they needed help, direction and loving care. Moses wanted to do God's will for the people. This was no small task, for as the Bible record shows, the people were standing before Moses from morning till evening to have him hear their problems and make decisions that would aid them. Ask yourself, How long would it be possible for one man alone to sit day after day hearing and deciding every problem that hundreds of thousands of people may have had? Evidently this is how Jethro saw the matter, too, for he said to his son-in-law, Moses: "It is not good the way you are doing. You will surely wear out, both you and this people who are with you, because this business is too big a load for you. You are unable to do it by yourself." (Ex. 18:17, 18) This advice from Jethro was timely and wise. The load of responsibility for each problem of each Israelite was truly too big a load for one man to care for in a right way. Therefore, Jethro continued: "Now listen to my voice. I shall advise you, and God will prove to be with

11, 12. (a) Due to Moses' heavy work load, what advice did Jethro give him? (b) What kind of men did Jethro recommend that Moses choose, and so who, really, would such men be like?

you. You yourself serve as representative for the people before the true God, and you yourself must bring the cases to the true God. And you must warn them of what the regulations and the laws are, and you must make known to them the way in which they should walk and the work that they should do. But you yourself should select out of all the people capable men, fearing God, trustworthy men, hating unjust profit; and you must set these over them as chiefs over thousands, chiefs over hundreds, chiefs over fifties and chiefs over tens.”—Ex. 18:19-21.

<sup>12</sup> Undoubtedly this was good advice that would aid Moses in governing the people. It is noted that Jethro called upon Moses to select men who were capable, men that feared God. They had to be trustworthy men, not the type who would look for unjust profit. This would mean their qualifications must be the same as Moses’ qualifications. As assistant shepherds to Moses they would have qualities like the Great Shepherd so as to deal justly with the people.—Ps. 19:7-9.

<sup>13</sup> Jethro then continued: “And they must judge the people on every proper occasion; and it must occur that every big case they will bring to you, but every small case they themselves will handle as judges. So make it lighter for yourself, and they must carry the load with you. If you do this very thing, and God has



Moses listened to the advice of his father-in-law and chose capable men to act as undershepherds with him in hearing problems and making decisions commanded you, you will then certainly be able to stand it and, besides, this people will all come to their own place in peace.”—Ex. 18:22, 23.

<sup>14</sup> Moses listened to the advice of his father-in-law, and he went about choosing capable men to act as undershepherds with him in governing the nation of Israel. He followed the instructions to appoint some as chiefs over thousands, chiefs over hundreds and over fifties and over tens. The Bible account shows that, whenever difficult cases came to the attention of these assistant shepherds, cases that they could not handle, they would bring these to Moses, and Moses, in turn, would handle them in a righteous way.—Ex. 18:24-26.

#### THE PATTERN CONTINUED

<sup>15</sup> Thus, early in the history of the Jewish nation, long before they ever entered into the land promised to their forefather Abraham, Jehovah as the Shepherd of his people set a pattern for the shepherding

13, 14. How did Jethro suggest Moses divide the work, and did Moses do as Jethro suggested?

15, 16. How do we know the pattern suggested by Jethro was followed after Moses’ death?

of his sheep that would be followed even down to our time.

<sup>16</sup> After the death of Moses, Joshua became Israel's visible shepherd under the direction of Jehovah, and it was under the leadership of Jehovah through Joshua that the nation of Israel began their march into the Promised Land and proceeded to take possession of that which Jehovah had given them as an inheritance. The arrangement for capable, God-fearing, honest men to continue in positions of responsibility aided the nation in conducting its war campaign and settling the land of promise. Just before the death of Joshua we are told this: "And Joshua proceeded to assemble all the tribes of Israel together at Shechem and to call the older men of Israel and its heads and its judges and its officers, and they went taking their stand before the true God." (Josh. 24:1) At this time Joshua himself reminded these capable men of the responsibilities resting upon their shoulders and upon the entire nation so that they might continue to walk under the leadership of the Great Shepherd, Jehovah God. By doing so they would receive a grand blessing and great favor.

<sup>17</sup> Following the death of Joshua the nation of Israel in its tribal inheritances continued some 300 years under the direction of judges who acted in many ways as shepherds to the people. The Bible book bearing the name Judges relates some of the acts of such judges and the conduct of the people during this time in the *history of the Israelite nation*. As their First Shepherd, Jehovah patiently led them and blessed them. It was a difficult period for Israel because in many instances they did not drive out the worshipers of false gods in the land, but allowed them to remain, and these came to be a snare to Israel.

17. (a) Why was the period of the judges a trying time for Israel? (b) What does Judges 2:19-22 tell regarding Jehovah's disappointment with Israel?

The false religious practices of these pagan inhabitants influenced the Israelites, and many times, instead of staying under the watchful care of Jehovah as their Shepherd, they would stray into the enemy camp and participate in religious idolatries that angered Jehovah. The Bible record shows that, when a righteous judge would die, the people would be like sheep without a shepherd and, instead of looking to Jehovah, they would be led into wrong paths. One such instance is recorded for us in Judges 2:19-22: "And it occurred that when the judge died they would turn around and act more ruinously than their fathers by walking after other gods to serve them and bow down to them. They did not refrain from their practices and their stubborn behavior. Finally Jehovah's anger blazed against Israel and he said: 'For the reason that this nation have overstepped my covenant that I commanded their forefathers and have not listened to my voice, I too, for my part, shall not drive out again from before them a single one of the nations that Joshua left behind when he died, in order by them to test Israel, whether they will be keepers of Jehovah's way by walking in it just as their fathers kept it, or not.' "

<sup>18</sup> Following the turbulent period of the judges Jehovah, at the request of the people of Israel, in time granted them a human king as ruler. The king was to represent Jehovah before the people and was to walk in uprightness as Jehovah's representative, even as Moses, Joshua, and the upright judges in Israel had done. Such kings were to follow Jehovah's written word carefully. (Deut. 17:14-20) The Word of God relates in detail how the conduct of the kings, as shepherds or leaders of Israel, resulted either in Jehovah's favor or in his disfavor. The kings were

18. (a) How were Israel's kings to conduct themselves as leaders and shepherds of the Israelites? (b) What did many kings not prove to be in Israel?

often influenced by the people. Many kings proved they were not capable men, fearers of God, trustworthy and haters of unjust profit. Their selfish inclinations at times led them and the entire nation into great difficulty and oppression. Instead of shepherding the people as Jehovah's earthly representatives, they became unjust, unkind and led Israel in false paths.—Isa. 1:4.

<sup>19</sup> For many hundreds of years Jehovah showed patience and long-suffering with Israel's visible shepherds and with the people he had chosen to shepherd as his representative nation on earth. Jehovah's forbearance and love continued even though Israel turned from him to follow the false religious practices of the nations roundabout. Finally, however, the long-suffering and endurance on the part of Jehovah came to an end. In the days of Jeremiah, Jehovah spoke to the appointed shepherds who had become exceedingly lax, saying: "Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of my pasturage! . . . Therefore this is what Jehovah the God of Israel has said against the shepherds who are shepherding my people: 'You yourselves have scattered my sheep; and you kept dispersing them, and you have not turned your attention to them. Here I am turning my attention upon you for the badness of your dealings,' is the utterance of Jehovah."—Jer. 23:1, 2.

<sup>20</sup> Due to their not imitating the fine qualities of the Great Shepherd Jehovah, in caring for those in whom he showed great interest, Jehovah was indeed against such ones and warned of their coming destruction. However, Jehovah well realized that even among his people there were

those who wanted to do the proper thing and who wanted to continue under his watchful care and serve him with a pure heart. These he did not forget. His words were: "'And I myself shall collect together the remnant of my sheep out of all the lands to which I had dispersed them, and I will bring them back to their pasture ground, and they will certainly be fruitful and become many. And I will raise up over them shepherds who will actually shepherd them; and they will be afraid no more, neither will they be struck with any terror, and none will be missing,' is the utterance of Jehovah." (Jer. 23:3, 4) Then, looking forward to a time in the distant future, Jehovah said: "And I will raise up to David a righteous sprout. And a king will certainly reign and act with discretion and execute justice and righteousness in the land."—Jer. 23:5.

<sup>21</sup> While Jehovah's chosen nation of Israel came to a disastrous end in 607 B.C.E., for not following the Great Shepherd's advice, still Jehovah remembered the righteous ones among the people. He made the promise that they would one day have over them a righteous shepherd, one who would deal with them even as he himself dealt with them in righteousness.

<sup>22</sup> The Bible clearly shows that with the coming of the Lord Jesus as Messiah, Jehovah had his appointed shepherd of the sheep for the benefit of his people. Jesus said of himself, "I am the fine shepherd." During the three and a half years of Jesus' earthly ministry he set about to show how well qualified he was as the fine shepherd of Jehovah, and how, in turn, he was able to select from among mankind those who had proved to be capable men, fearers of God, trustworthy, not seeking unjust profit. The first of these were the apostles

19. (a) What did Jehovah continue to do even though Israel was unfaithful? (b) How did Jehovah condemn the shepherds of Israel through his servant Jeremiah? 20, 21. Even though so many in Israel turned from Jehovah, why did Jehovah continue to show loving-kindness and mercy, and what did he promise?

22, 23. Whom did Jehovah select as his fine shepherd, and how did the fine shepherd make sure Jehovah's sheep would be properly cared for?

whom Jesus selected from among his disciples to be the foundation stones of the Christian congregation. Truly those whom Jesus chose proved to be fine undershepherds, working in close harmony with the Lord Jesus, the fine shepherd, and his Fa-

ther, Jehovah, the First or Great Shepherd of the sheep.

<sup>23</sup>To appreciate the great responsibility that these apostles knew fell upon their shoulders, as shepherds of the sheep, we will leave to the next article to relate.

## JEHOVAH *Shepherds the Christian Congregation*

JESUS CHRIST gave a fine example to his followers of what a shepherd should be like in caring for the sheeplike people of the earth. Jesus one time said that those who had seen him had seen the Father, because Jesus bore such an outstanding resemblance of the Father in all he said and did. Not only did the early congregation of the Lord's people have qualified men who were indeed interested in them, but some of these men had had the unique privilege of close association with Jesus in his earthly ministry.

<sup>2</sup>One illustration that Jesus gave of the type of shepherd he was, as a representative of his Father, and that his followers should be, is shown in Matthew 18:12-14. There Jesus gave this illustration: "What do you think? If a certain man comes to have a hundred sheep and one of them gets strayed, will he not leave the ninety-nine upon the mountains and set out on a search for the one that is straying? And if he happens to find it, I certainly tell

you, he rejoices more over it than over the ninety-nine that have not strayed. Likewise it is not a desirable thing with my Father who is in heaven for one of these little ones to perish." How forcefully Jesus made the point that a shepherd truly cares for each sheep, especially for one that might stray from the fold and be endangered.

<sup>3</sup>One of the twelve chosen by the Lord Jesus, and who became a shepherd of the flock of God, was a man named Peter. In his writings we are told that Peter was an apostle of Jesus Christ and his first letter was penned to the "temporary residents scattered about in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." In this letter Peter gives many words of encouragement concerning the activity and conduct of Christians. When coming to the close of this letter Peter says: "Therefore, to the older men among you I give this exhortation, for I too am an older man like them and a witness of the sufferings of the

1. Like whom was Jesus and thus like whom would those he chose as qualified men be?

2. Cite the example Jesus gave of a concerned and loving shepherd.

3, 4. (a) How did Peter admonish shepherds to be like Jesus and his Father, Jehovah? (b) How would such care by these earthly shepherds be strengthening to the congregation?

Christ, a sharer even of the glory that is to be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God in your care, not under compulsion, but willingly; neither for love of dishonest gain, but eagerly; neither as lording it over those who are God's inheritance, but becoming examples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd has been made manifest, you will receive the unfadable crown of glory."—1 Pet. 5:1-4.

<sup>4</sup> These words of admonition by Peter were to the older men, the "capable men" in the congregation. They were to be taking tender care of the congregation, because it belonged to God. They were to do this, not because they were compelled to do so, but because they willingly wanted to serve the interests of the flock of God. They were not to be doing this work for any love of dishonest gain, but they were to be eager to imitate the Lord Jesus as well as Jehovah the Great Shepherd. They were to have the interests of the brothers at heart, setting a fine lead for them. This, indeed, was asking much of these shepherds. On the other hand, had not Jehovah the Great Shepherd shown such qualities by his interest in those who wanted to love and serve him? It was by Jehovah's undeserved kindness that Peter and the other apostles, and now these older men, were being used in the capacity of shepherds. These words of counsel reached many of the early congregations and indeed must have strengthened such congregations.

<sup>5</sup> The apostle Paul, also one of the apostles chosen to shepherd the congregations, especially being used to go to the non-Jewish peoples, had in mind the need for a proper view of this shepherding activity. In speaking to the older men of the congregation in Ephesus, Paul said: "Pay attention to yourselves and to all the flock,

among which the holy spirit has appointed you overseers, to shepherd the congregation of God, which he purchased with the blood of his own Son." (Acts 20:28) Paul, as Peter, realized the need for proper shepherding by the older men. And the apostles knew that when they were not there to give the fine shepherding lead to the congregation, difficulties would enter in among the people, even as Israel itself had drifted from pure worship. In fact, it was Paul who said: "I know that after my going away oppressive wolves will enter in among you and will not treat the flock with tenderness, and from among you yourselves men will rise and speak twisted things to draw away the disciples after themselves."—Acts 20:29, 30.

<sup>6</sup> It was shortly after the death of the apostles, the last of whom died around the year 100 C.E., that these "oppressive wolves" began to enter in among the flock and ceased following the fine instructions for shepherds as given by the apostles and other older men in the first-century congregation. Within not too many years the congregation of God came under the oppressive rule of false shepherds, and great darkness came upon the Christian congregation. The book *History of the Christian Church*, by Henry C. Sheldon (copyright 1894, page 239), says this concerning the early church: "While the Church had its special officers from the outset, these were not at first, with the exception of the apostles, widely distinguished from the general body of believers. A priesthood in the more emphatic sense was not congenial to the thought of the first generations of Christians. . . . 'The distinction,' says Ritschl, 'between the active and the passive members of the congregation—in other words, the Catholic conception of priesthood—is foreign to the first two

5. Who did Paul say appointed the shepherds in the congregation, and what did he say would happen in time?

6. How did "oppressive wolves" enter in among the flock of God, and with what results?

centuries.' " The development of the episcopacy, or the government of the church by a hierarchy of bishops was gradual, but it brought with it "oppressive wolves" from among the flock of God who rose and who spoke twisted things to draw away disciples after themselves, even as the apostle Paul by holy spirit had warned would happen. History shows that as apostate Christianity came into favor with the political government it became more and more a part of this wicked system and drifted farther and farther from the teachings of Jesus Christ.

<sup>7</sup> It was the Lord Jesus who said in prayer to his heavenly Father that his followers were no part of the world just as he was no part of the world and that his kingdom was no part of this world. (John 17:16; 18:36) But by the fourth century the union of church and state shows that the apostles' warning came true. Those left as shepherds of the flock turned to the world and became part of it. Writing of this union, the above-mentioned publication continues: "Church and State felt the uniting bond of common interests. The emperor saw that a measure of influence and agency in the affairs of the State might profitably be conceded to the Church. The Church felt that so useful an ally as the emperor ought to be allowed considerable prerogatives in her domain, that he might the more perfectly forward her interests. The extent to which imperial interference might properly go was not stated or understood; but in an age of despotic rule the concession to the temporal prince to interfere at all, in a sovereign capacity, would naturally enable him in a short time to become a most powerful factor in the affairs of the Church."

—Pages 379, 380.

7. What advice of the fine shepherd, Jesus, did the now false shepherds not heed, and what was the result to the Christian congregation?

<sup>8</sup> Under Constantine this union of church and state indeed did prove to be to Constantine's advantage and to the weakening of the true Christian principles laid down by Jesus for his followers. It was Constantine who is reported to have said to a company of bishops: "You are bishops whose jurisdiction is within the Church; I, also, am a bishop, ordained by God to overlook whatever is external to the Church." We are told: "He [Constantine] published decrees confirming the decisions of the bishops on questions of doctrine and worship, banished ecclesiastics who refused to subscribe the standard creed, ordered the restoration of excommunicated persons in the face of episcopal opposition, and prohibited the assemblies of various heretical and schismatic parties."—*History of the Christian Church*, Sheldon, pages 380, 381.

<sup>9</sup> It was not long before all types of persons wanted to become "Christians" because of the favor being shown them by the political state. These persons had no intention of living lives in harmony with the example set by Christ Jesus, but were only interested in personal gain. The false shepherds who crept into the congregation had indeed spoken twisted things and had led astray many who wanted to follow the fine shepherd, Jesus Christ, and be under the watchful care of the Great Shepherd, Jehovah God. This was to last for many centuries. In fact, it was not until the latter part of the nineteenth century in the midst of great religious confusion that Jehovah again would have a faithful shepherd organization among mankind to guide and direct the efforts of his people in the time of the end of this wicked system of things. Jehovah through the apostle Paul gave inspired information that is part of the Holy Scriptures, so that in the time

8. To what extent did Constantine the Roman emperor come to speak for the apostate Christian congregation?

9. What now happened to the flocklike organization of God's people, and how long was it to last?

of the end man would know there would be a reestablishment of right worship under the watchful care of loving earthly shepherds imitating Jehovah and his fine shepherd Jesus Christ.—Eph. 1:8-10.

<sup>10</sup> After literally hundreds of years of activity by false shepherds, who fleeced the sheep and ruined the flock, Jehovah again has faithful shepherds to care for those of mankind who want to come under his loving care. Christendom's shepherds can well be likened to the false shepherds in ancient Israel, and Jehovah's word equally applies to them as spoken by the mouth of Ezekiel: "Woe to the shepherds of Israel, who have become feeders of themselves! Is it not the flock that the shepherds ought to feed? The fat is what you eat, and with the wool you clothe your own selves. The plump animal is what you slaughter. The flock itself you do not feed. The sickened ones you have not strengthened, and the ailing one you have not healed, and the broken one you have not bandaged, and the dispersed one you have not brought back, and the lost one you have not sought to find, but with harshness you have had them in subjection, even with tyranny. And they were gradually scattered because of there being no shepherd, so that they became food for every wild beast of the field, and they continued to be scattered. My sheep kept straying on all the mountains and on every high hill; and on all the surface of the earth my sheep were scattered, with no one making a search and with no one seeking to find."—Ezek. 34:2-6.

<sup>11</sup> Then, telling what he would do, Jehovah through Ezekiel continues: "And I will raise up over them [his sheep] one shepherd, and he must feed them, even my servant David. He himself will feed

them, and he himself will become their shepherd. And I myself, Jehovah, will become their God, and my servant David a chieftain in the midst of them. I myself, Jehovah, have spoken." (Ezek. 34:23-25) Jehovah's Greater David, his Son, Christ Jesus, has indeed become in these days a fine shepherd for the sheep of Jehovah, and working closely with him are undershepherds, faithful men, capable men, fearers of God, and haters of unjust profit. In this twentieth century Jehovah has again raised up shepherds to care for his sheep.

<sup>12</sup> Those whom Jehovah has chosen through Christ Jesus have proved themselves to be capable men. Because Jehovah has chosen such kind of men, he once again is having his sheep gathered together into his fold, and they, in turn, are aiding many others to walk on the roadway to life.

#### WHERE TO LOOK NOW

<sup>13</sup> You may now ask, Where should one look to find such faithful earthly shepherds, and among what organization of people will one find persons truly interested in caring for the spiritual needs of the Lord's sheep? Recognizing the way the religious organizations of Christendom have turned their backs on God's Word and have watered down God's commandments and teachings, many have become disgusted with apostate religion, and feel that it is not being used by God to help the people. Knowing of the responsibilities resting upon those who would be shepherds, and those who would be sheep, we call upon you to investigate the organization of Jehovah's witnesses to see what it is doing to help people come under the loving care of the Great Shepherd, Jehovah God.

10. How does Ezekiel 34:2-6 describe false shepherds, and what happened to the Great Shepherd's sheep? 11, 12. But what would Jehovah eventually do for his sheep?

13. Why have many lost confidence in any apostate religious movement, but what are we asked to do?

<sup>14</sup> Incorporated in 1884 the Watch Tower Society has been carrying on a shepherding work for over eighty years. This Society is today organized theocratically, with Jehovah the Great Shepherd, operating through his fine shepherd and by holy spirit making appointments of qualified men on this earth to act as shepherds of God's flock. Those appointed as shepherds of the flock must be, as were those chosen in the days of Moses, capable men, fearers of God, trustworthy and not looking for unjust profit. They must meet the requirements set out by holy spirit through the apostle Paul in his letter to Timothy. Such qualifications are these: "If any man is reaching out for an office of overseer, he is desirous of a fine work. The overseer should therefore be irreprehensible, a husband of one wife, moderate in habits, sound in mind, orderly, hospitable, qualified to teach, not a drunken brawler, not a smiter, but reasonable, not belligerent, not a lover of money, a man presiding over his own household in a fine manner, having children in subjection with all seriousness."

—1 Tim. 3:1-4.

<sup>15</sup> The shepherds are a part of the congregation and not separate from it. This means these shepherds share in all of the activity of the congregation and take the lead for the benefit of the sheep, so that they will have a fine example to follow. One sharing as a shepherd of the Lord's sheep must show by his conduct and by his love for Jehovah and the sheep that his concern is for those whom Jehovah loves and is leading, namely, his sheeplike people. Paul shows the shepherd should set the lead in upright conduct. Those charged with shepherding the Lord's flock do not simply tell others what they must do, but they take the lead in doing the

same work, including preaching the good news of God's kingdom, as did the fine shepherd Jesus Christ, when on earth. There exists no clergy-laity distinction, but all together are brothers and servants of Jehovah and one another. The appointment of all overseers, or shepherds, in the congregation conforms with the standard of instruction given by holy spirit as outlined in God's Word.

<sup>16</sup> As overseer, or shepherd of God's sheeplike people, he has great responsibility in a congregation and is charged with looking after the welfare of those associated with the congregation. He must remember that in dealing with the sheeplike ones he cannot be harsh or oppressive. Rather, he must imitate the qualities that Jesus showed and that made him such an outstanding representative of his Father, Jehovah. An overseer who recalls the tender way in which the Lord Jehovah dealt with the people of Israel for many hundreds of years, in spite of their wayward course of action and their failing to keep His commandments, will recognize the necessity of being long-suffering and patient in dealing with those who belong to the Lord. While the overseer will want the congregation of sheeplike persons to operate efficiently, and he will make every effort to see that things in the congregation are done in a right way, he will never sacrifice love, understanding and compassion, for efficiency. In the congregation the overseer will find that he must spend time visiting those who are sick physically and spiritually. He wants to be upbuilding and helpful to them. He has to realize that, while something may not appear to be a problem to him, it may well be a problem for someone else. Not everyone sees everything in exactly the same way. Therefore, the overseer has

14. How is the Watch Tower Society organized, and what qualifications must shepherds today meet?

15. How are the shepherds or overseers today no different from the rest of the sheep in the congregation?

16. (a) Whom must the shepherds today imitate? (b) By his remembering God's tender care for Israel of ancient times, what will the overseer or shepherd today seek to do?

to be understanding, knowing that each servant of Jehovah is a different person and has to be dealt with oftentimes in a different way in order to get a right and loving response from such individual.

<sup>17</sup> Because of the serious problems that do arise in life that require the attention of mature older men, the organization has by holy spirit been made aware of the need of distributing the load of responsibility in the congregation. Even as Moses had to have help, so in modern times those serving the interests of their fellow Christians need assistance. So while there is a governing body of Christians charged with the oversight of the work, they alone could not handle all of the problems that arise in the lives of the Great Shepherd's people around the earth. Therefore, by holy spirit some are appointed as supervisors, or shepherds in countries and islands throughout the earth. In modern times we refer to such shepherds as branch servants. Within countries appointments of older men are made to fill other positions, such as district and circuit servants. They have certain responsibilities to fulfill toward groups or congregations of God's people in a particular area. Still others are appointed as congregation shepherds or overseers of perhaps 10 to 100 or 150 persons, and, in turn, there are some appointed as assistants to these congregation shepherds to help with the needs of the people in the congregations. All of this is done with the end in view of aiding the sheep belonging to the fine shepherd Jesus Christ and his Father Jehovah God.

17. Outline how responsibility for the Lord's sheep today has been distributed to many.



A loving overseer of God's people finds time to help those with problems; he never sacrifices love, understanding and compassion for efficiency

<sup>18</sup> All of these older men serving the interests of the Lord's sheep seek the direction of the Great Shepherd and his Son in dealing with the problems that arise. These shepherds carefully consider all problems of a serious nature that arise in congregations and they search the Word of God for direction and help, so as to make proper decisions. They are shepherds of God's people and therefore need to have a sound knowledge of God's Word. They need to be able to handle that Word in a right and worthy manner. (2 Tim. 2:15) Those serving as shepherds need to be the type of men who are swift about hearing, slow about speaking and slow about wrath. (Jas. 1:19) They should prove to be like those spoken of by Isaiah: "Look! A king will reign for righteousness itself; and as respects princes, they will rule as princes for justice itself. And each one must prove to be like a hiding place from the wind and a place of concealment from the rainstorm, like streams of water

18. (a) How do today's shepherds in congregations show they are dependent upon Jehovah for help? (b) What do faithful shepherds prove to be, according to Isaiah 32:1, 2?

in a waterless country, like the shadow of a heavy crag in an exhausted land." (Isa. 32:1, 2) Such men are themselves greatly respected and dearly loved by those associated with them in the congregations.

<sup>19</sup> It was the Lord Jesus who said: "I know my sheep and my sheep know me,"

19. How can we be confident now that Jehovah the Great Shepherd cares for us?

and so it must be that the shepherds of God's sheep, which in turn are Christ's sheep, must know those in the congregation and be known by them. In that way we will know that it is Jehovah, God of the universe, who cares for us and feeds us through faithful undershepherds even today in the time for the conclusion of the present wicked system of things.

# ARE YOU A Spiritual Person?

**A**RE you a spiritual-minded person or are you a physical-minded person? This is a question that all who claim to be servants of Jehovah God would do well to ask themselves. Why? Because of the words of the apostle Paul found at 1 Corinthians 2:14, 15. These show that "a physical man does not receive the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him . . . However, the spiritual man examines indeed all things."

While the "spiritual man" mentioned at 1 Corinthians 2:15 primarily refers to those footstep followers of Christ who have heavenly hopes, in a sense all who truly serve God can be said to be spiritual persons. Such faithful men of old as Abel, Noah, Abraham and the long line of faithful Hebrew prophets and kings can be said to have been spiritual men even though they entertained earthly hopes.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE "SPIRITUAL MAN"

The "spiritual man" referred to by the apostle Paul is not one who all day long wears a sanctimonious or religious expression on his face. Not at all! He does not wear his spirituality on his sleeve, so to speak. He knows that the scribes and Pharisees who opposed Jesus Christ were not spiritual men. They might have had the reputation of being such because of their repeating long prayers in public and wearing conspicuous religious paraphernalia. But those very things stamped them as actually being physical men and hypocrites at that, for they did it solely to be seen of men.—Matt. 6:5; 23:5.

In contrast to all such is the "spiritual man." He sincerely worships Jehovah God "with spirit and truth," the only acceptable way. He has faith, he *knows* that God is, that God lives, for all visible creation testifies eloquently to His existence. (John 4:24; Rom. 1:20) Knowing that God

is "the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him," the spiritual man has dedicated himself to serve God and to follow in the footsteps of God's Son, Jesus Christ.—Heb. 11:6; Matt. 16:24.

The Creator is very real to the "spiritual man." Like Moses of old, he walks through life as though seeing Him that is invisible. (Heb. 11:23-28) Because God is so real to him he trusts in Jehovah with all his heart and does not lean upon his own understanding, but in all his ways he takes notice of God. He therefore delights to commune with God in prayer. He appreciates what a precious privilege talking with God is and how much at all times he needs God's help. So he takes time to begin and end each day with praise, thanksgiving and petitions to his heavenly Father. Nor is he ever in such haste to eat that he cannot take time to thank God for each meal and to pray God's blessing upon it.—Prov. 3:5, 6; Phil. 4:6, 7.

Yes, the spiritual man is 'conscious of his spiritual need.' He appreciates that "man must live, not on bread alone, but on every utterance coming forth through Jehovah's mouth." Instead of making food, clothing, shelter and worldly pleasures his chief interests, he 'keeps on seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.' He feels like the psalmist who said: "How I do love your law! All day long it is my concern." He is drawn to associate with others who are spiritual persons.—Matt. 5:3; 4:4; 6:25, 33; Ps. 119:97; Rom. 1:9-12.

That is why the spiritual man 'buys out time' from his daily affairs to *study* the Word of God. He not only reads God's Word, the Holy Bible, daily, but he also wants to understand what he reads. He is open-minded to offers of help and finds that the Bible-study aids published by the Watch Tower Society and distributed by the Christian witnesses of Jehovah are of

the greatest value in getting to understand God's Word and purposes. That is why he also wisely takes advantage of the opportunities afforded by the congregation meetings of the Witnesses to increase his understanding of God's Word.—Acts 8:30-35; Heb. 10:23-25.

Another basic characteristic of the spiritual man is his hope. It is no blind hope. No, he has a solid hope, strong, as an anchor to his soul, based on God's promises and performances in times past as recorded in His Word. He knows God cannot lie. Because of his hope the spiritual man is not unduly disturbed because of the increase of wickedness and violence and because the future looks so dark. He knows that very soon 'God's kingdom will come and his will then will be done upon earth as it is in heaven.'—Matt. 6:10; Heb. 6:18, 19.

Since "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks," the spiritual man delights in discussing things relating to God's Word and purposes. When enjoying the company of others at social gatherings or when together in such activities as building or cleaning a Kingdom Hall or in preconvention work, the spiritual man tactfully causes the conversation to center around upbuilding, spiritual things.—Matt. 12:34.

#### THE SPIRITUAL MAN IS GOD-ORIENTED

A person may be idealistic and noble-minded and yet not be a spiritual person. How so? Because being a spiritual person involves more than merely having the welfare of man at heart as does the humanist.

The spiritual man knows that to love his neighbor as himself is only the second commandment and that the first and chief commandment is to 'love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind and

with your whole strength."—Mark 12:29-31; Luke 6:31.

Yes, the spiritual man is God-oriented. He looks to God's Word rather than to mere human reasoning for guidance. He works at his job, 'not with acts of eye-service, as a man pleaser,' but "with fear of Jehovah," "as to Jehovah." So he not only pays back Caesar's things to Caesar but is even more concerned with paying back God's things to God. He therefore gives God exclusive devotion.—Col. 3:22, 23; Matt. 22:21; Ex. 20:5.

#### THE SPIRITUAL MAN AS OVERSEER

The spiritual man does not lose sight of Christian principles in his relations with fellow Christians. In particular will the spiritual man be careful to be governed by Christian principles if he has oversight of other Christians. For example, an overseer in God's organization may also have a responsible position in the business world. Dealing all day with persons who not only are driven by purely selfish considerations but also are quick to take advantage of any mildness or kindness shown, a Christian may find himself becoming hard and abrupt.

Unless he is careful he may find himself dealing in that way with his fellow Christians who are unselfishly serving God. How unwise, how ill-advised, how unloving such an attitude would be! Are you avoiding such a mistake? Consider how much work Jesus had to accomplish in just a few short years. Had he been so efficiency-minded, would he have chosen nearly all humble Galileans to be his apostles? And what patience he showed in dealing with them!

The overseer today, whether of a congregation, a convention or a convention department, will do well to follow Jesus' example in this respect. While concerned with getting things done, you would not

want to handle your brothers in a harsh and brusque manner as though you were a ruthlessly efficient executive of a business enterprise, would you? So, even though you may have many things crowding in on your mind, as the apostle Paul did, do not overlook the need to manifest empathy. (2 Cor. 11:29) Instead of giving terse, abrupt commands, why not rather speak to your brothers in a kind tone and ask, "Would you please do this? Would you like to do that?" Why, of course, they would! They want to do all they can to further Jehovah's work, for they are doing it all out of love. And would it not be better to begin the morning with considering the day's Bible text and comment than being solely concerned that each one reports for work on time?

Should your Christian brothers be slow in "catching on" or show poor judgment, do not impatiently take the attitude that they should have known better. No, while being exemplary in zeal and efficiency yourself, do not drive others or expect as much of others as you do of yourself. Rather, remember in dealing with your brothers to manifest the fruitage of God's holy spirit. In particular give thought to love, kindness and mildness.—Gal. 5:22, 23.

Could Christians who are spiritual persons be more fully spiritual than they are at times? There is a tendency on the part of some when engaged in God's work to let the thinking of a physical man govern their relations with their Christian brothers, especially if they have some serving under them. Pertinent here are the apostle Paul's words: "Brothers, we request you and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, just as you received the instruction from us on how you ought to walk and please God, just as you are in fact walking, that

you would keep on doing it more fully.”—1 Thess. 4:1.

In view of all the foregoing, Are you a spiritual person? It is well if you can answer “Yes” to that question. Then the question remains, Could you be doing it more fully? If so, you and no doubt others will be happier if you do so!

## Your Decision TO SERVE GOD

**T**HERE is so much for which to thank and praise Jehovah God. He has mercifully made provision for us to enjoy eternal life. Already he has arranged to erase the death-dealing effects of sin by providing his own Son as a ransom sacrifice for obedient humans. God's original purpose to have his earthly children enjoy a paradise home forever will soon be realized! Does not this loving provision of God cause your heart to overflow with thankfulness to Him?—John 3:16; 1 John 4:9-11.

True, none of us know everything about Jehovah and his ways. He is so great that humans will always be learning new things concerning him. (Rom. 11:33) But on the basis of what you already know, have you not come to appreciate that everything he does is right and that there is every reason to put full confidence in him? Are you not convinced that he truly loves his creatures, that he is merciful and gracious, yet, at the same time, perfect in justice and limitless in power and wisdom? Truly he is beyond compare! (Ps. 86:5, 10, 15) If this is the way you feel about Jehovah God, you will be moved to serve Him, and nothing will hold you back.

Two courses are open to all humans. One leads to death and the other to eternal life. God's Word says: “I have put life and death before you, the blessing and the malediction; and you must choose life in order that you may keep alive.”—Deut. 30:19, 20.

Which course will you choose? Making the choice to serve Jehovah will lead to your greatest possible happiness, both now and forever. As the psalmist said: “Happy is the man in fear of Jehovah, in whose commandments he has taken very much delight.”—Ps. 112:1.

### DEDICATION AND BAPTISM

When love for God moves you so that you want to do his will, then it is proper that you go to him in prayer through Jesus Christ and express your desire to be one of his servants, walking in the footsteps of his Son. It is appropriate that you tell Jehovah that you want to belong to him and that you want to do his will both now and for all time to come. (Ps. 104:33) In this way you dedicate yourself to God. This is a personal, private matter. Each person must decide for himself whether

he will serve Jehovah. No one else can do it for you.

After you have made your dedication to Jehovah to do his will, he will expect you to keep it. It is no light matter even though expressed privately to him. You should prove that you are a person of your word by faithfully sticking to this decision or dedication as long as you live.—Ps. 50:14.

You can be sure that the Devil will use every possible means to make you break faith with Jehovah. The Bible describes the Devil as “a roaring lion, seeking to devour someone.” But Jehovah himself will be with you. You can always turn to him in prayer, and he will support you. Also, God has an organization here on earth, and here you will find mature Christians who will gladly give you loving encouragement and support.—1 Pet. 5:8, 9; 3:12; 1 Thess. 5:11.

Deciding personally to serve Jehovah and expressing this determination in prayer is important. But there is something more. This was shown by Jesus Christ, who provided a pattern for us to follow. Remember, Jesus did more than just tell his Father that he had come to do His will. (Heb. 10:7; Ps. 40:8) When he began his service as a preacher of God's kingdom Jesus went to John the Baptist, at the Jordan River, and was baptized in water.—Matt. 3:13-15.

The Bible reveals that Jehovah God approved of Jesus' baptism. It says that, on that important occasion, “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.’ Furthermore, Jesus himself, when he commenced his work, was about thirty years old.”—Luke 3:21-23.

Since Jesus set the pattern, dedicated Christians today also should be baptized. In fact, Jesus commanded his followers to make disciples of people of all nations and then to baptize these new disciples. This is no baptizing of infants. It is baptism of persons who have become *believers*, having made up their minds to serve Jehovah. —Matt. 28:19; Acts 8:12.

What, then, does Christian baptism signify? It is not a washing away of one's sins, because cleansing from sin comes only through faith in Jesus Christ. The Bible explains: “By means of him [Jesus] we have the release by ransom through the blood of that one, yes, the forgiveness of our trespasses.”—Eph. 1:7.

So rather than being a cleansing from sin, Christian baptism is a public demonstration, testifying that one has made a solemn dedication to Jehovah God and is presenting himself to do His will. Thus, baptism is not to be viewed as of little importance. It is a requirement for all who obediently walk in the footsteps of Jesus Christ.

The Bible says that, after his baptism, Jesus “came up from the water.” He had been actually down in the water so that John could completely immerse him. The Bible also says that at a later time John “was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was a great quantity of water there.” (Matt. 3:16; John 3:23) So, baptism was no mere sprinkling with water.

Proper Christian baptism is accomplished by having a devoted servant of God—a male, as John the Baptist was—completely immerse the person in water and then raise him up again. If you have made up your mind to serve Jehovah and want to be baptized, then make this known to the overseer of the congregation of Jehovah's witnesses with which you are as-

sociated. He will gladly assist you, without any charge for the baptism.

#### THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

Of course, dedication and baptism are not the end of one's doing God's will. They are only the beginning. They mark the start of a happy life of serving Jehovah, with the prospect of continuing alive forever, doing his will. A dedicated Christian should always have the attitude of Jesus Christ, who said: "I seek, not my own will, but the will of him that sent me." "My food is for me to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work." —John 5:30; 4:34.

A principal part of God's work for Jesus on earth was to preach the kingdom of God, and to lay the foundation for a preaching organization to carry on this activity after his death. Jesus said: "Also to other cities I must declare the good news of the kingdom of God, because for this I was sent forth." That was God's will for him, and Jesus faithfully did it.—Luke 4:43; John 17:4.

What is God's will for Christians today? It is for them to do a similar preaching work, and one of great urgency. Bible prophecy reveals unmistakably that we are living now during "the conclusion of the system of things." And Jesus foretold regarding this time: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come." —Matt. 24:3, 14.

It is God's will that this preaching work be done now. The warning concerning the end of this wicked system must be sounded. Meek ones need to be shown the place of safety. Will you share in this work? —Zeph. 2:2, 3; Prov. 24:11, 12.

Jesus Christ set the example in performing the ministry. He preached everywhere, in the cities and villages, in homes

and in public places—even to a woman at a wellside. (John 4:7, 21-24) A true Christian today will follow Jesus' example. He will preach at every opportunity. He will not simply wait for people to come to him, but he will endeavor to seek out persons with a listening ear.

"Go," Jesus commanded, "make disciples of people of all the nations." (Matt. 28:19; see also 10:11-13) This command applies to all Christians—laborers and housewives, elderly persons and youths—even as it did in the first century. The Bible says that the apostles Peter and John were "unlettered and ordinary," and it also speaks of "Phoebe our sister, who is a minister." Christians from all walks of life shared in the ministry.—Acts 4:13; Rom. 16:1.

Early Christians followed Jesus' instruction and example, making a special effort to call on people in their homes. (Luke 8:1; 10:1-6; Acts 5:42) The apostle Paul said: "I did not hold back from telling you any of the things that were profitable nor from teaching you publicly and from house to house." (Acts 20:20) This is still the principal way that true Christians carry on their ministry in our day.

Those who share in this grand work do not do so in their own strength. Jehovah God backs them up. By his spirit he qualifies and empowers them for the ministry. (2 Cor. 3:5, 6; 2 Tim. 4:17) Through his visible organization he provides training and assistance, at no financial cost, for all his witnesses. You, too, can enjoy the benefits of this provision, at your local Kingdom Hall.

When you make your wholehearted decision to serve Jehovah God, you will experience rich blessings. The happiness that you have had in learning the truth about Jehovah and his purpose will be greatly enlarged as you share it with others and

see the fine changes that it brings in their lives.—Acts 20:35; John 13:17.

As you more fully apply God's Word in your own life you will be drawn closer to your Creator. You will enjoy his loving care in ways that you have never experi-

enced before. (Rev. 7:9-17) Indeed, your wise course will make God's own heart rejoice. (Prov. 27:11) And what joy will be yours as you experience fulfillment of the psalmist's words: "Happy is the people whose God is Jehovah!"—Ps. 144:15.

## Happy Because of Being Jehovah's People

*What blessings did ancient Israel enjoy due to having Jehovah as their God?*

Among these blessings was the miraculous deliverance at the Red Sea in 1513 B.C.E. (Ex. 12:1-15:21) Two months later they were blessed by entering into a covenant with Jehovah and receiving a perfect set of laws from him. (Ex. 19:1-20:18) Forty years later they experienced the blessings of entering the land flowing with milk and honey. (Deut. 6:3) Under King David's reign they enjoyed many victories over their enemies, and under King Solomon that nation's happiness reached its peak.—1 Ki. 4:20-25.

As long as that nation worshiped Jehovah as their God its people were a happy people.  
—Ps. 33:12.\*

*Since Pentecost of 33 C.E. who have been Jehovah's happy people and nation?*

Since that Pentecost it has been spiritual Israel that has been Jehovah's happy nation and people. On that day Jehovah poured out his holy spirit upon them, and they all began to speak in foreign tongues.—Acts 2:1-41.

These were not only anointed with God's holy spirit to proclaim everywhere the good news of God's kingdom but also begotten of God's spirit to be God's spiritual sons with the grand hope and promise of membership in God's heavenly kingdom with Jesus Christ.

*What dramatic rebirth did this nation experience in 1919?*

Even as ancient Israel was released from Babylonian captivity in keeping with God's promise, so also was spiritual Israel in modern times. It was taken captive and brought into a state of deathlike inactivity during World War I and then was reborn at "one time" in

1919. At the same time its religious position and relationship to God, its "land," was brought forth as "in one day." Suddenly the dynamic leading representatives of the Watch Tower Society were released from imprisonment. The international organization was reconstructed. Yes, dramatically, as if arising from the dead, the persecuted remnant of anointed Christians strode fearlessly upon the world stage of action. Fully alive, they began producing and bearing the fruits of the Kingdom; they thenceforth proclaimed God's kingdom as having come into power at the close of the Gentile times in 1914.—Isa. 66:5-8; Luke 21:24.

*Who are increasingly now sharing happiness with Jehovah's spiritual nation?*

Since the rebirth of Jehovah's nation in 1919 its membership has increased to the full number of its citizen body, namely, 144,000. (Rev. 14:1, 3) Each year the remaining earthly members of that nation grow fewer and fewer, as one by one they complete their earthly course and are united with their Lord in heaven. Those continuing on earth lovingly endeavor to share their happiness with others.

As a result their happiness is spreading to a "great crowd" of "other sheep" who are like 'alien residents' dwelling within the "gates" of spiritual Israel and having become "one flock" with the remnant under "one shepherd," Jesus Christ.—Rev. 7:9; John 10:16; Ex. 20:10.

These share with the remnant the happiness of having Jehovah, "the happy God," as their God, and are privileged to worship him "with spirit and truth." In turn, these endeavor to share their happiness with still others by proclaiming the good news of God's kingdom.—1 Tim. 1:11; John 4:24; Matt. 24:14.

\* For details see *The Watchtower*, November 15, 1968.



- Why does the *New World Translation* read "epileptic" at Matthew 4:24, whereas some translations say "lunatic"?—P. K., U.S.A.

In the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* this verse reads: "And the report about him went out into all Syria; and they brought him all those faring badly, distressed with various diseases and torments, demon-possessed and epileptic and paralyzed persons, and he cured them."—Matt. 4:24.

The Greek word translated "epileptic" at Matthew 4:24 and 17:15 is *seleniazomai*, meaning literally "to be moon struck." Many older Bible translations have used the corresponding word "lunatic," from the Latin *luna*, meaning "moon." Does "lunatic" adequately convey the correct meaning though? No, it does not, for

scholars generally agree that the malady intended is not mental derangement or insanity, but rather the chronic disease of the central nervous system now termed epilepsy. And this understanding is borne out by the use of this Greek word in ancient non-Biblical literature.

At one time people believed that "the epileptic seizures supposedly followed the phases of the moon." (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*, by A. T. Robertson, Vol. 1, p. 37) Whether that thought was current when Matthew wrote his Gospel is not known. However, his use of this common Greek term does not mean that he felt that the moon caused or aggravated epilepsy, any more than people today, when they use the words "lunacy" and "lunatic," think that the moon causes madness.

In view of the significance of the Greek word involved, many modern translations use "epileptic" at Matthew 4:24 or in a footnote. (Note *The Jerusalem Bible* in French, Spanish and English.) Thus, the rendering of Matthew 4:24 in the *New World Translation* reflects an interest in conveying in modern speech the exact meaning of the Bible.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### FIELD MINISTRY

True happiness comes, not from the mere possession of material things, but rather from the worship of the true God, Jehovah. Jehovah is "the happy God," and happy are those who worship him! Said the inspired psalmist: "Happy is the nation whose God is Jehovah, the people whom he has chosen as his inheritance." (1 Tim. 1:11; Ps. 33:12) Happy people like to share their happiness with others. And this is especially true of Jehovah's people! Since the basis for happiness is spirituality, Jehovah's witnesses will be sharing spiritual good things with their neighbors during July by offering them the fine Bible-study aid *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*, for only 25c.

July 20: Jehovah, the Great Overseer and Shepherd of His People. Page 397. Songs to Be Used: 60, 41.

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July 20: Jehovah, the Great Overseer and Shepherd of His People. Page 397. Songs to Be Used: 60, 41.  
July 27: Jehovah Shepherds the Christian Congregation. Page 403. Songs to Be Used: 37, 118.