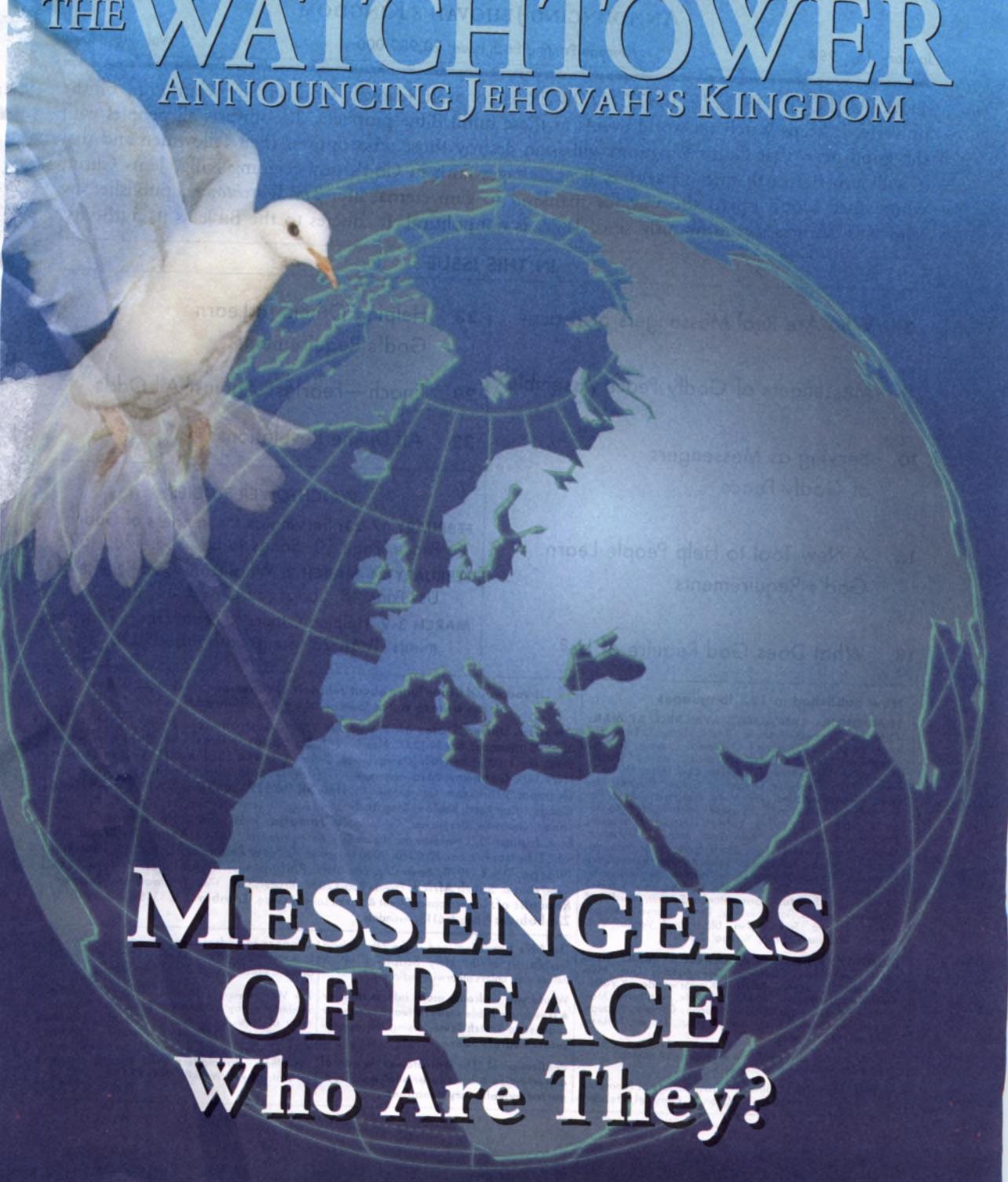


JANUARY 15, 1997

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



**MESSENGERS
OF PEACE
Who Are They?**

THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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

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Who Are Real Messengers of Peace?

ON May 31, 1996, news sources proclaimed what appeared to be a message of peace. On the preceding day, an official statement was released affirming that Benjamin Netanyahu, who was about to become Israel's prime minister, was "deeply committed to the continuation of the peace process, peace with security, between the state of Israel and all its neighbors, including the Palestinians."

Netanyahu's highly publicized election caused many to wonder if peace in the Middle East might be more than just a dream. If so, could other nations follow suit, forgetting their differences?

Of course, it is easier to promise peace than it is to achieve it. Realizing this, many were skeptical. As journalist Hemi Shalev put it, "half of the public in Israel is now going around with a feeling that redemption is at hand, and the other believes that it is trapped in a hell on earth." In summary, he stated: "Some rejoice; others weep."

So it goes with man's attempts at peace. The victory of one leader and his supporters spells defeat for the opposing camp. Dissatisfaction leads to disillusionment, and disillusionment, often to rebellion. Whether in the Middle East, Latin America, Eastern Europe, or anywhere else—mankind's efforts at peace are so illusory.

Real Peace at Hand!

During the time that peace in the Middle East was an especially hot news topic, another message of peace was heard. This was not a highly publicized political speech; nor was it a peace treaty between nations. Rather, this message proclaimed a peace that will come about only through God's Kingdom. Where was this message heard? At over 1,900 "Messengers of Godly Peace" District Conventions being held by Jehovah's Witnesses throughout the world during 1996/97.

At these conventions it was made clear that no human government can bring true peace and security. Why? Because this would require putting an end to the things that rob us of peace on a daily basis. True peace means waking up every morning without the threat of war or violence. It means no more crime, no more locks on our doors, no more fear of walking the streets, no more families torn apart. What government on earth can accomplish all of that? Indeed, what government on earth would even dare to promise it?

God's Kingdom, however, can and will bring these things about. The Bible promises: "Look! The tent of God is with mankind, and he will reside with them, and they will be his peoples. And God himself will be with them. And he will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed

away." (Revelation 21:3, 4) What relief that will bring to suffering mankind!

Jehovah God's promise is not an empty one. The Bible assures us: "God is not a man that he should tell lies, neither a son of mankind that he should feel regret. Has he himself said it and will he not do it, and has he spoken and will he not carry it out?" (Numbers 23:19) Yes, what God has promised will come to pass—to the blessing of all those who take their stand on his side.

God's Messengers of Peace

Jehovah's Witnesses are well-known for their zealous preaching about God's Kingdom. Each year, they collectively spend more than a billion hours sharing the Bible's heartening message with others. This is in fulfillment of Jesus' words: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come." (Matthew 24:14) The message that the Witnesses bring is indeed "good news," for it heralds God's heavenly Kingdom as the only hope for mankind. And what a solid hope for the future it is!

Even now God's Kingdom is producing in

its subjects a genuine bond of peace and brotherly love. Jesus said: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves." (John 13:35) Jehovah's Witnesses endeavor to live up to this basic requirement of true Christianity. As a result, theirs is a marvelous brotherhood uniting Jews and Arabs, Croatians and Serbs, Hutu and Tutsi. This peace that the majority of mankind can only dream about is now the possession of millions of Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide.

Encouragement to continue living by Bible principles and to keep on preaching the good news of God's Kingdom was highlighted on the "Messengers of Godly Peace" District Convention program. We invite you to read the following report of the stirring three-day convention that millions have been enjoying.





Messengers of Godly Peace Assemble

"WE HAVE been built up by every district convention we've attended," says a Christian elder from the United States. "However, this year was just indescribable. We left each day wondering how the next day would exceed our expectations, and we were not disappointed!"

If you attended one of the "Messengers of Godly Peace" District Conventions, you

no doubt would agree with this enthusiastic delegate. Each day of the convention focused on a different aspect of the commission that Jehovah's Witnesses carry out as God's messengers. Let us review the three-day program.

"How Comely . . . the One Publishing Peace"

This was the theme of the convention's first day. It was based on Isaiah 52:7. In these difficult times, many are serving Jehovah under challenging circumstances. The talk "Hearing From Zealous Proclaimers of Peace" included interviews with some of these faithful ones. Hearing their personal expressions was indeed encouraging, and conventioners were thus assured that Jehovah can strengthen them too, even supplying "power beyond what is normal" to help them to endure.—2 Corinthians 4:7.

Jehovah's requirements are not burdensome. (1 John 5:3) This was made clear in the last talk of the morning program, climaxing with the release of a 32-page brochure entitled *What Does God Require of Us?* This beautifully illustrated new study aid will no doubt play a significant role in helping many more to learn about God's purposes. Comments on the use of this new publication are found in the last study article in this magazine and on pages 16 and 17.

The talk "Enduring in Work That Is



Good" emphasized that Jehovah is well aware of our trials. To endure means that we stand our ground and do not lose hope. Jehovah has given us his Word, his spirit, and his organization to assist us. It takes endurance to preach, yet preaching helps us to endure, for it keeps our faith alive. So close to the finish line, we should not let our problems dampen our zeal, for only those who endure to the end will be saved.—Matthew 24:13.

The keynote address, "Our Role as Messengers of Godly Peace," called attention to the release of Jewish exiles from Babylon and the restoration of pure worship in Jerusalem in 537 B.C.E. This event, the speaker explained, was just a foregleam of what God's Kingdom will soon accomplish on a worldwide scale. (Psalm 72:7; Isaiah 9:7) Our present assignment is to preach the good news about this Kingdom and to live in harmony with that message. Love for God and neighbor should impel us to continue in this work without letup.—Acts 5:42.

A highlight of Friday's program was the symposium "Watch Out for the Hidden Snares of Entertainment." Today's music, movies, videos, television shows, video games, books, magazines, and comics often reflect demonic thinking. Therefore, we need to "abhor what is wicked" and "cling to what is good." (Romans 12:9) Yes, we must regard corrupt entertainment as repugnant and shrink away from it, while we dwell on things that are chaste, virtuous, and praiseworthy. (Philippians 4:8) The publications and research tools provided by Jehovah's organization stimulate our minds with upbuilding thoughts and train us to distinguish right from wrong. (Hebrews 5:14) We should cling to these provisions as we would to a raft in a turbulent sea.

Next came the talk "Oppose the Devil—Tolerate No Rivalry." Shortly before they

were to enter the Promised Land, thousands of Israelites were ensnared by immorality. Phinehas tolerated no rivalry toward true worship. He took decisive action against wrongdoers, and his exclusive devotion pleased Jehovah. (Numbers 25:1-13) Satan's goal is to render each one of us unfit to enter into God's new world. Like Phinehas, we must therefore oppose the Devil's efforts to defile us. Whether married or single, we must "flee from fornication."—1 Corinthians 6:18.

"Loyally Upholding the Integrity of God's Word" was the concluding talk of the convention's first day. Many translators alter or omit portions of the Scriptures. For instance, to placate advocates of women's rights, the translators of *The New Testament and Psalms: An Inclusive Version* refer to God, not as the Father, but as the Father-Mother and to Jesus as "the Human One" rather than the "Son of man." In contrast, the *New World Translation* adheres so faithfully to the original-language text that it has served to clarify our thinking on a number of Scriptural matters. For example, the speaker said: "It was the accurate renderings in the *New World Translation* that provided the basis for our reorganizing the congregations by appointing the bodies of elders, in closer conformity to the pattern set in the first-century Christian congregation." We demonstrate our loyalty to God's Word by reading it daily and by applying its counsel. The speaker also said: "We show that we are loyal advocates of God's Word by zealously preaching it to others and by using it carefully as we teach others, never trying to make it fit our ideas by twisting or stretching what it says."

'The Peace of God Excels All Thought'

This theme, based on Philippians 4:7, set the tone for day two of the convention. Much

of the information presented dealt with the proper view of one's ministry, family, dedication, and other aspects of daily life.

After a discussion of the day's text, a symposium was presented entitled "Messengers Bringing Good News of Peace." Our message is one of peace, and it should be delivered in a peaceful manner. (Ephesians 6:15) Our objective is to win hearts, not arguments. The training and publications that we receive from Jehovah's organization help us to do just that. We should not let indifference or apathy discourage us. Rather, we should continue to 'do our utmost,' having a healthy routine of personal study, meeting attendance, and participation in the preaching work. (2 Timothy 2:15) Not to be overlooked is the doing of good to others, especially to those related to us in the faith. (Galatians 6:10) Of course, doing our utmost does not mean working ourselves into ex-

haustion. What each one is able to do according to his own ability and circumstances is acceptable to Jehovah.

God's people give of their time, energy, and resources to advance Kingdom interests. The talk "Cheerful Giving Within Jehovah's Organization" brought out that as more sheeplike ones respond to the Kingdom message, there is a need for additional equipment, meeting places, and branch facilities. Our contributions enable the organization to have at its disposal whatever is needed to accomplish the worldwide preaching work. Generous giving also honors Jehovah and brings joy to the giver. Therefore, as Christians, we must not neglect this important aspect of our worship.—2 Corinthians 8:1-7.

Closing the morning session was the baptism talk—always a highlight at large gatherings of Jehovah's Witnesses. What a joy to see newly dedicated ones follow in Jesus' footsteps by submitting to water baptism! (Matthew 3:13-17) All who take this step have been educated in the source of the greatest wisdom—the Bible. Moreover, they have found real purpose in life, and they are blessed with the peace that comes from knowing that they are doing what is right.—Ecclesiastes 12:13.

Pointed counsel was given in the talk "Let Discernment Safeguard You." Discernment is very important with regard to business dealings. We should not carry on personal business activities in the Kingdom Hall, nor should we exploit fellow Christians for



Young and old alike want to know what God requires

financial gain. (Compare John 2:15, 16.) Discernment is also needed when investing in a business or when borrowing or lending money. "The failure of business ventures among Christians has led to disappointment and even to loss of spirituality on the part of some who hastily entered into risky moneymaking schemes," noted the speaker. Though it is not wrong for Christians to do business with one another, caution is certainly wise. And when a business agreement is made between two parties, the terms should always be set forth in writing.

God's standard for men and women was discussed in the talk "Male and Female He Created Them." The roles of the sexes have been distorted throughout history. "Many mistakenly equate masculinity with harsh domination, toughness, or machismo," said the speaker. "In certain cultures it would be rare, even shameful, for a man to weep in public or even in private. Yet, John 11:35 relates that while in the crowd outside Lazarus' tomb, 'Jesus gave way to tears.'" What about women? Femininity is often equated with physical attractiveness. But the speaker asked: "If a woman is pretty but lacks sensibleness and is argumentative, sarcastic, or arrogant, can she really be pretty in the true sense of the word, truly feminine?" (Compare Proverbs 11:22; 31:26.) In their speech, conduct, and grooming, Christian men and women strive to follow Bible standards. Said the speaker: "A man who displays the fruitage of the spirit is easy to respect, and a woman who does so is easy to love."—Galatians 5:22, 23.

Next came the symposium "The God of Peace Cares for You." Many Christians have financial anxieties. Nevertheless, Jehovah promises: "I will by no means leave you nor by any means forsake you." (Hebrews 13:5) Despite economic hardships, some have shown confidence in this promise by entering the auxiliary or the reg-

ular pioneer service. Others who cannot now pioneer put Kingdom interests first by seizing every opportunity to witness. (Matthew 6:33) All such efforts are to be commended! Jehovah's organization has provided numerous publications to assist us with our ministry and to help us cope with our problems. If we show appreciation for Jehovah's spiritual provisions, he will bless us with peace in these economically turbulent times.—Psalm 29:11.

At the close of the day's final talk, "Pursue Godly Peace in Family Life," conventioners were delighted to receive the new book, *The Secret of Family Happiness*. "Diligently study this book personally and as family groups," urged the speaker. "Earnestly endeavor to apply its Bible-based counsel, and you are sure to increase the peace and happiness of your family."

"Observe the Oneness . . . in the Uniting Bond of Peace"

Based on Ephesians 4:3, this was a fitting theme for the final day of the convention. Jehovah's Witnesses, drawn from all nations of the world, have been taught by God. Therefore, they love peace. They follow Jesus' example and endeavor "to observe the oneness of the spirit in the uniting bond of peace."

The peace that permeates God's organization was highlighted in the symposium "Identifying the Right Kind of Messengers." False prophets existed in ancient Israel. However, God's true messengers—such prophets as Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah—accurately foretold the downfall of Jerusalem, the period of exile, and the eventual liberation of God's people. A similar situation exists today. False messengers abound in the realms of politics and false religion. Yet, Jehovah has raised up his Witnesses to proclaim his purpose with regard to this system of things. Particularly since

A Loving Provision for Families

Those in attendance on the second day of the "Messengers of Godly Peace" District Convention were thrilled to receive the new publication entitled *The Secret of Family Happiness*. This book contains Scriptural information that will benefit all families that love God.

An elder from Connecticut, U.S.A., comments: "On June 15, we received our *Family Happiness* book. By June 16, I was halfway through reading it. On the 17th, we had our first family study in it, and we were so encouraged! On that same day, I completed reading the book. This fine publication shall no doubt prove to be dear to all who avail themselves of it. The book's candor and up-to-date information offer further proof that 'the faithful and discreet slave' is giving 'food at the proper time' and is very much aware of our needs in these trying times."—Matthew 24:45-47.



*The Secret of
FAMILY
HAPPINESS*

1919, Jehovah's servants have been used to proclaim God's message. How different they are from the false messengers of Christendom! May we diligently play our part in this work until Jehovah says that it is done.

The talk "Listen to and Obey God's Word" emphasized that the Scriptures are the greatest source of guidance, comfort, and hope. (Isaiah 30:20, 21; Romans 15:4) Today's world is increasingly permissive. More than ever, we therefore need to listen to the counsel that comes from God's Word and organization. Jehovah knows our weaknesses, and in his Word he has clearly marked out the course that will benefit us. Knowing that Jehovah is backing us up gives us confidence to move ahead with anything that he asks of us.

This set the tone for the full-costume drama that followed. It was entitled "Why Respect Theocratic Arrangements?" Using the Bible account of Gideon as a basis, this presentation drove home a powerful lesson—we must follow God's instructions and not substitute our own thinking or try to sidestep theocratic counsel.

The public discourse was on the subject

"True Peace At Last!—From What Source?" The peace that God promises goes beyond anything this world can imagine. "True peace means peace every day," said the speaker. "God's peace means a world without sickness, pain, sorrow, and death." The Bible tells us that Jehovah "is making wars to cease to the extremity of the earth." (Psalm 46:9) How will he do this? By removing the fomenter of war, Satan the Devil. (Revelation 20:1-3) This will open the way for meek ones to 'possess the earth and find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace.'—Psalm 37:11.

Following a summary of the *Watchtower* study article for the week, the final talk for the convention was presented. Entitled "Moving Forward as Messengers of Godly Peace," this stirring discourse stressed that our preaching work is both unique and urgent. Now is not a time to relax, loiter, or turn back to erroneous ideas. We are equipped with what we need—God's message, his holy spirit, and numerous provisions that come from his loving theocratic organization. As Jehovah's servants, may we therefore keep moving forward as messengers of godly peace!

SERVING AS MESSENGERS OF GODLY PEACE

"How comely upon the mountains are the feet of . . . the one publishing peace."—ISAIAH 52:7.

THERE is good news to be proclaimed! It is news of peace—real peace. It is a message of salvation that has to do with the Kingdom of God. Long ago the prophet Isaiah wrote about it, and his words have been preserved for us at Isaiah 52:7, where we read: “How comely upon the mountains are the feet of the one bringing good news, the one publishing peace, the one bringing good news of something better, the one publishing salvation, the one saying to Zion: ‘Your God has become king!’”

² Jehovah inspired his prophet Isaiah to record that message for the benefit of ancient Israel and for our benefit today. What does it mean? At the time that Isaiah wrote those words, the northern kingdom of Israel may already have been taken into exile by the Assyrians. Later, the inhabitants of the southern kingdom of Judah would be taken as exiles to Babylon. Those were days of heartache and turmoil in the nation because the people had not been obedient

1, 2. (a) As foretold at Isaiah 52:7, what good news is to be published? (b) What did Isaiah's prophetic words mean in the case of ancient Israel?



to Jehovah and were therefore not at peace with God. As Jehovah told them, their sinful conduct was causing a division between them and their God. (Isaiah 42:24; 59:2-4) Through Isaiah, however, Jehovah foretold that in due time the gates of Babylon would swing open. God's people would be free to return to their homeland, there to rebuild Jehovah's temple. Zion would be restored, and worship of the true God would again be carried on in Jerusalem.—Isaiah 44:28; 52:1, 2.

³ This promise of deliverance was also a prophecy of peace. Being restored to the land that Jehovah had given the Israelites would be evidence of God's mercy and of their repentance. It would indicate that they were at peace with God.—Isaiah 14:1; 48:17, 18.

“Your God Has Become King!”

⁴ When Jehovah performed this deliverance in 537 B.C.E., the announcement could

3. How was the promise of restoration for Israel also a prophecy of peace?
4. (a) In what sense could it be said in 537 B.C.E. that ‘Jehovah had become king’? (b) How did Jehovah maneuver matters for the benefit of his people in later years?

fittingly be made to Zion: "Your God has become king!" True, Jehovah is the "King of eternity." (Revelation 15:3) But this deliverance of his people was a fresh display of his sovereignty. In a striking manner, it demonstrated the superiority of his power over the mightiest human empire down to that time. (Jeremiah 51:56, 57) As a result of the operation of Jehovah's spirit, other conspiracies against his people were thwarted. (Esther 9:24, 25) Again and again Jehovah intervened in a variety of ways to cause the kings of Medo-Persia to cooperate with the carrying out of his own sovereign will. (Zechariah 4:6) The marvelous events that took place in those days are recorded for us in the Bible books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Haggai, and Zechariah. And how faith strengthening it is to review them!

⁵ Yet, what took place in 537 B.C.E. and thereafter was only a beginning. Immediately following the prophecy of restoration in chapter 52, Isaiah wrote about the coming of the Messiah. (Isaiah 52:13-53:12) By means of the Messiah, who proved to be Jesus Christ, Jehovah would provide a message of deliverance and peace of even greater significance than what occurred in 537 B.C.E.

Jehovah's Greatest Messenger of Peace

⁶ Jesus Christ is Jehovah's greatest messenger of peace. He is the Word of God, Jehovah's own personal Spokesman. (John 1:14) Consistent with this, some time after being baptized in the Jordan River, Jesus stood up in the synagogue in Nazareth and read aloud his commission from Isaiah chap-

5. What significant events are pointed to at Isaiah 52:13-53:12?

6. Who is Jehovah's greatest messenger of peace, and what commission did he apply to himself?

ter 61. That commission made clear that what he was sent forth to preach involved "release" and "recovery," as well as opportunity to find acceptance with Jehovah. Yet, Jesus did more than proclaim a message of peace. God had also sent him to provide the basis for enduring peace.—Luke 4:16-21.

⁷ At the time of Jesus' birth, angels had appeared to shepherds near Bethlehem, praising God and saying: "Glory in the heights above to God, and upon earth *peace among men of goodwill.*" (Luke 2:8, 13, 14) Yes, there would be peace for those to whom God showed goodwill because they exercised faith in the provision he was making through his Son. What would that mean? It would mean that although humans are born in sin, they could gain a clean standing with God, an approved relationship with him. (Romans 5:1) They could enjoy the inner calm, the peace, that is possible in no other way. At God's appointed time, there would be a release from all the effects of sin inherited from Adam, including sickness and death. No longer would people be blind or deaf or lame. Frustrating weakness and heartbreaking mental disorders would be permanently removed. It would be possible to enjoy life in perfection forever.—Isaiah 33:24; Matthew 9:35; John 3:16.

⁸ To whom is godly peace offered? It is offered to all who exercise faith in Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul wrote that 'God saw good through Christ to reconcile to himself all other things by making peace through the blood Jesus shed on the torture stake.' The apostle added that this reconciliation would involve "the things in the heavens"—that is, those who would be joint heirs with Christ in heaven. It would also

7. What results from the peace with God that is made possible through Jesus Christ?

8. To whom is godly peace offered?

involve "the things upon the earth"—that is, those who would be favored with the opportunity to live forever on this earth when it is brought to the full condition of Paradise. (Colossians 1:19, 20) Because of their availing themselves of the value of Jesus' sacrifice and because of their obedience to God from the heart, all of these could enjoy warm friendship with God.—Compare James 2:22, 23.

⁹ How vital such peace with God is! If there is no peace with God, there can be no lasting or meaningful peace in any other relationship. Peace with Jehovah is the foundation for true peace on earth. (Isaiah 57:19-21) Appropriately, Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6) To this one through whom humans can be reconciled to God, Jehovah has also entrusted ruling authority. (Daniel 7:13, 14) And concerning the results of Jesus' princely rule over mankind, Jehovah promises: "To peace there will be no end."—Isaiah 9:7; Psalm 72:7.

¹⁰ God's message of peace is needed by all humankind. Jesus personally set a zealous example in preaching it. He did so in the temple area in Jerusalem, on the mountain-side, along the road, to a Samaritan woman at a well, and in the homes of the people. Wherever there were people, Jesus made opportunities to preach about peace and the Kingdom of God.—Matthew 4:18, 19; 5:1, 2; 9:9; 26:55; Mark 6:34; Luke 19:1-10; John 4:5-26.

Trained to Walk in Christ's Footsteps

¹¹ Jesus taught his disciples to preach

9. (a) Peace with God influences what other relationships? (b) With a view to lasting peace everywhere, what authority did Jehovah confer on his Son?

10. How did Jesus set an example in publishing God's message of peace?

11. For what work did Jesus train his disciples?

God's message of peace. Just as Jesus was Jehovah's "faithful and true witness," they recognized that they also had the responsibility to witness. (Revelation 3:14; Isaiah 43:10-12) They looked to Christ as their Leader.

¹² The apostle Paul reasoned on the importance of the preaching activity, saying: "The Scripture says: 'None that rests his faith on him will be disappointed.'" That is, no one who exercises faith in Jesus Christ as Jehovah's Chief Agent of salvation will be disappointed. And no one's ethnic background is a disqualifying factor, for Paul added: "There is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for there is the same Lord over all, who is rich to all those calling upon him. For 'everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah will be saved.'" (Romans 10:11-13) But how were people going to learn about that opportunity?

¹³ Paul dealt with that need by asking questions that each servant of Jehovah does well to think about. The apostle asked: "How will they call on him in whom they have not put faith? How, in turn, will they put faith in him of whom they have not heard? How, in turn, will they hear without someone to preach? How, in turn, will they preach unless they have been sent forth?" (Romans 10:14, 15) The record of early Christianity bears eloquent testimony that men and women, young and old, responded to the example set by Christ and his apostles. They became zealous proclaimers of the good news. In imitation of Jesus, they preached to people wherever they could find them. With a desire to miss no

12. How did Paul show the importance of the preaching activity?

13. What was needed if people were to hear the good news, and how did first-century Christians respond to that need?

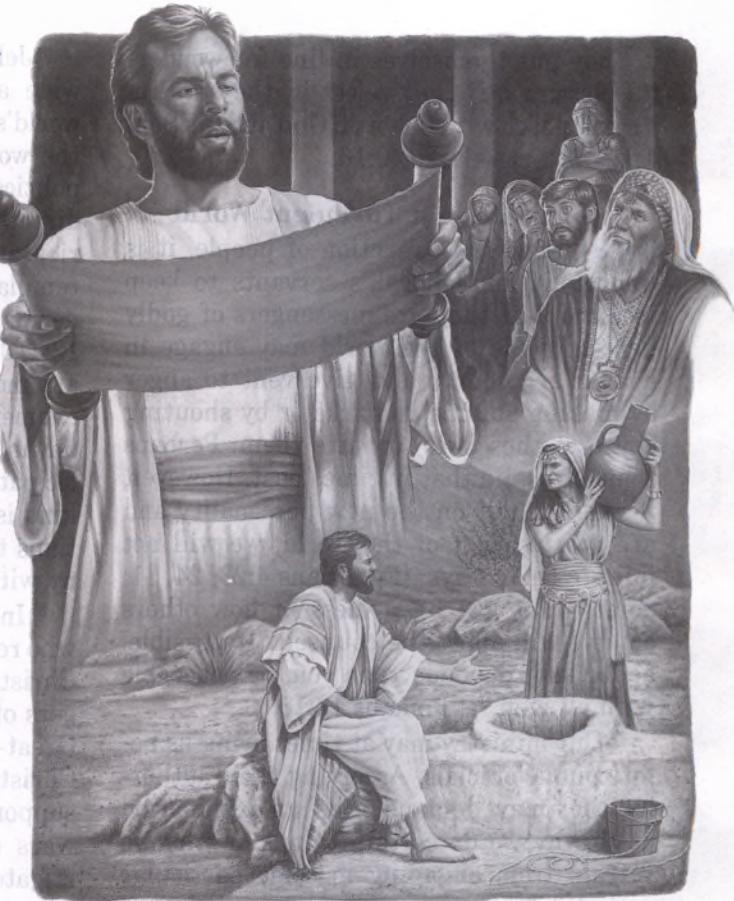
one, they carried on their ministry both in public places and from house to house.—Acts 17:17; 20:20.

¹⁴ Of course, not everyone received Christian preachers kindly. Nevertheless, Paul's quotation from Isaiah 52:7 proved true. After asking the question, 'How will they preach unless they have been sent forth?' he added: "Just as it is written: 'How comely are the feet of those who declare good news of good things!'" Most of us do not think of our feet as being comely, or beautiful. So, then, what does this mean? It is the feet that ordinarily move a person about as he goes out to preach to others. Such feet really represent the person. And we can be sure that to many who heard the good news from the apostles and from other first-century disciples of Jesus Christ, these early Christians were indeed a beautiful sight. (Acts 16:13-15) More than that, they were precious in the sight of God.

¹⁵ Jesus' followers had a message of peace, and they delivered it in a peaceful manner. Jesus gave his disciples these instructions: "Wherever you enter into a house say first, 'May this house have peace.' And if a friend of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if there is not, it will turn back to you." (Luke 10:5, 6) *Shalom*', or "peace," is a traditional Jewish greeting. However, Jesus' instructions involved much more than this. As "ambassa-

14. How did it prove true that "the feet" of those declaring the good news were "comely"?

15, 16. (a) How did the early Christians demonstrate that they truly were messengers of peace? (b) What can help us to carry on our ministry in the same way that first-century Christians did?



Like Jesus, Jehovah's Witnesses are messengers of godly peace

dors substituting for Christ," his anointed disciples urged people: "Become reconciled to God." (2 Corinthians 5:20) In harmony with Jesus' instructions, they talked to people about God's Kingdom and what it could mean for them as individuals. Those who listened received a blessing; those who rejected the message lost out.

¹⁶ Jehovah's Witnesses carry on their ministry in the same way today. The good news that they take to people is not theirs; it belongs to the One who sent them. Their commission is to deliver it. If people accept

it, they put themselves in line for wonderful blessings. If they reject it, they are rejecting peace with Jehovah God and his Son, Jesus Christ.—Luke 10:16.

Peaceable in a Turbulent World

¹⁷ Whatever the reaction of people, it is important for Jehovah's servants to keep in mind that they are messengers of godly peace. People of the world may engage in heated arguments and give vent to anger by making cutting remarks or by shouting abuse at those who irritate them. Perhaps some of us did that in times past. However, if we have put on the new personality and are now no part of the world, we will not imitate their ways. (Ephesians 4:23, 24, 31; James 1:19, 20) Regardless of how others act, we will apply the counsel: "If possible, as far as it depends upon you, be peaceable with all men."—Romans 12:18.

¹⁸ Our ministry may at times bring us before public officials. Asserting their authority, they may 'demand of us' an explanation as to why we do certain things or why we refrain from engaging in some particular activity. They may want to know why we preach the message that we do—one that exposes false religion and that tells of the end of the present system of things. Our respect for the example set by Christ will move us to manifest a mild temper and deep respect. (1 Peter 2:23; 3:15) Frequently, such officials are under pressure from the clergy or possibly from their own superiors. A mild answer may help them to appreciate that our activity is no threat to them or to the peace of the community. Such a reply engenders a spirit of respect, cooperation, and peace in those who accept it.—Titus 3:1, 2.

17. Even when confronted by abusive people, how should we conduct ourselves, and why?
18. How should we respond if a public official is harsh with us, and why?

¹⁹ Jehovah's Witnesses are known worldwide as people who take no part in the world's strife. They do not get involved in the world's conflicts over race, religion, or politics. (John 17:14) Because God's Word directs us to "be in subjection to the superior authorities," we would not even contemplate participating in acts of civil disorder to protest government policies. (Romans 13:1) Jehovah's Witnesses have never joined any movement aimed at overthrowing a government. In view of the standards set by Jehovah for his Christian servants, their participating in bloodshed or violence of any kind is unthinkable! Not only do true Christians talk about peace; they live in harmony with what they preach.

²⁰ In contrast with true Christians, those who represent the religious organizations of Christendom have not proved to be messengers of peace. The religions of Babylon the Great—Christendom's churches and non-Christian religions alike—have condoned, supported, and actually taken the lead in wars of the nations. They have also instigated persecution and even the murder

19. In what activities do Jehovah's Witnesses never engage?

20. As to peace, what sort of record has Babylon the Great made?

What Is Your Answer?

- What fulfillment did Isaiah 52:7 have upon ancient Israel?
- How did Jesus prove to be the greatest messenger of peace?
- How did the apostle Paul connect Isaiah 52:7 with the work in which Christians share?
- What is involved in being messengers of peace in our day?

Jehovah's Witnesses remain peaceable no matter how people react to the Kingdom message



of faithful servants of Jehovah. Regarding Babylon the Great, Revelation 18:24 therefore declares: "In her was found the blood of prophets and of holy ones and of all those who have been slaughtered on the earth."

²¹ Unlike the religions of Christendom

21. How do many honesthearted ones respond when they see the difference in the conduct of Jehovah's people and of those practicing false religion?

and the rest of Babylon the Great, true religion is a positive, unifying force. To his true followers, Jesus Christ said: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves." (John 13:35) That is a love that transcends the national, social, economic, and racial boundaries now dividing the rest of humankind. Having observed this, millions of people earth wide are saying to Jehovah's anointed servants: "We will go with you people, for we have heard that God is with you people."—Zechariah 8:23.

²² As Jehovah's people, we rejoice greatly in what has been accomplished, but the work is not yet done. After sowing seed and cultivating his field, a farmer does not quit. He keeps on working, especially at the height of the harvest season. Harvest-time calls for sustained, intense effort. And right now there is a greater harvest of worshipers of the true God than ever before. This is a time of rejoicing. (Isaiah 9:3) True, we encounter opposition and indifference. As individuals, we may be endeavoring to deal with serious illness, difficult family situations, or economic hardship. But love for Jehovah impels us to persevere. The message that has been entrusted to us by God is something that people need to hear. It is a message of peace. Indeed, it is the message that Jesus himself preached—the good news of the Kingdom of God.

22. How do we view the witness work that yet needs to be done?

A New Tool to Help People Learn God's Requirements

"**T**S simple, direct, and kind approach will produce results beyond expectations. The subjects are presented in such an uncomplicated and pleasant manner that any sincere, searching person will be moved to say, 'God is really among you.' " (1 Corinthians 14:25) So said one of Jehovah's Witnesses from Thailand when describing the new brochure, *What Does God Require of Us?* It has been released by the Watch Tower Society at the "Messengers of Godly Peace" District Conventions during 1996/97.

This 32-page, full-color brochure is designed as a Bible study course. It covers the basic teachings of the Bible. The wording is simple and concise, explaining clearly what God requires of us. Readers should have no difficulty understanding it. How may you conduct a Bible study in this new brochure?

Use the questions. There are questions at the beginning of each lesson. In parentheses after each question, you will find the numbers of the paragraphs in which the answers are found. These questions may be used both as a preview and as a review teaching aid. For example, at the beginning of a home Bible study, you might ask the student the questions so as to get his comments. Rather than correcting any wrong answers immediately, you could proceed with the study. At the end of the lesson, you could go back to the questions to see if the student is now able to answer them in harmony with the Bible.

Look up the scriptures. In each lesson, short statements of Bible truths are accompanied by supporting scriptures. Since most of the scriptures are cited, not quoted, it is important to encourage the student to look these texts up in

his own Bible. He needs to read and meditate on God's Word before he can apply it in life. —Joshua 1:8.

Highlight the pictures. The brochure is generously illustrated with photographs and paintings—more than 50 pieces of artwork in all. These are provided not only for visual appeal but also as further teaching aids. For example, the last two lessons (one page each, on facing pages) are entitled "Helping Others to Do God's Will" and "Your Decision to Serve God." The photographs that spread across the two pages trace the spiritual progress of the same person, showing him witnessing informally, sharing in the house-to-house work, making his dedication, and finally getting baptized. By directing the student's attention to these pictures, you help him to see the steps that are required in order to serve God.

What if an interested person does not read well or is unable to read at all? The Society is making this new brochure available on audio-cassette in a number of languages. The cassette contains the text of the brochure as well as many of the cited scriptures. It is recorded as follows: The first question is read, followed by the paragraph (or paragraphs) answering it, along with some of the cited scriptures. Then the next question is read, followed by the text and scriptures that answer it, and so on. The student can listen to the recording as he prepares for the study. The cassette can also be used when conducting the study.

Those present at the convention were eager to use this new brochure in their field ministry. For example, just days after receiving the brochure, two pioneers (full-time evangelizers) from

the United States placed it with a young couple on whom they had been calling. When the couple looked at the table of contents, the lesson "Practices That God Hates" caught their attention. "I was always taught that God could never hate—he's all love," said the young woman. "This is the one I'm going to read first." When the two pioneers returned the following week, the young woman said: "I was reading the new brochure. It's so hard to do all the things we should. Jehovah isn't pleased with us—we aren't married. But we have made a decision. We have made arrangements to get married next Friday." Embracing the pioneer couple, they added: "We apologize for not having the regular study, but this is a big weight off of us."

By all means, use the new *Require* brochure. It is a fine tool to help others learn God's requirements.



How will you use the new brochure?

WHAT DOES GOD REQUIRE OF US?

"This is what the love of God means, that we observe his commandments; and yet his commandments are not burdensome."—1 JOHN 5:3.

MY RELIGION is good enough for me!" Is that not what people often say? Actually, though, the question should be, "Is my religion pleasing to God?" Yes, God has requirements for those who want to worship him acceptably. Should that surprise us? Not really. Suppose you owned a beautiful home, one that you recently renovated at great cost. Would you allow just anyone to live there? Of course not! Any potential tenant would have to meet your requirements.

² Similarly, Jehovah God has provided this earthly home for the human family. Under the rule of his Kingdom, the earth will soon

1, 2. Why is it not surprising that God has requirements for those who want to worship him acceptably?

be "renovated"—transformed into a beautiful paradise. Jehovah will accomplish this. At great cost to himself, he gave his only-begotten Son to make it possible. Surely, God must have requirements for those who will live there!—Psalm 115:16; Matthew 6:9, 10; John 3:16.

³ How can we find out what God's requirements are? Jehovah inspired wise King Solomon to sum up what He expects of us. After reflecting on all that he had pursued—including wealth, building projects, musical interests, and romantic love—Solomon came to this realization: "The conclusion of the matter, everything having been heard, is: Fear the true God and keep his command-

3. How did Solomon sum up what God expects of us?

Crocodile: By courtesy of Australian International Public Relations; bear: Safari-Zoo of Ramat-Gan, Tel Aviv

We learn about Jehovah from the book of creation and from the Bible



ments. For this is the whole obligation of man.”—Ecclesiastes 12:13.

“His Commandments Are Not Burdensome”

⁴ “Keep his commandments.” Basically, that is what God expects of us. Is that too much for him to ask? Not at all. The apostle John tells us something very reassuring about God’s commandments, or requirements. He wrote: “This is what the love of God means, that we observe his commandments; and yet his commandments are not burdensome.”—1 John 5:3.

⁵ The Greek word translated “burdensome” literally means “heavy.” It can refer to something that is hard to live up to or difficult to fulfill. At Matthew 23:4, it is used to describe the “heavy loads,” the man-made rules and traditions, that the scribes and Pharisees put upon people. Do you get the sense of what the aged apostle John is concluding? God’s commandments are not a heavy burden, nor are they too difficult for us to observe. (Compare Deuteronomy 30:11.) On the contrary, when we love God, meeting his requirements makes us happy. It gives us a precious opportunity to demonstrate our love for Jehovah.

⁶ To show our love for God, we need to know specifically what he expects of us. Let us now discuss five of God’s requirements. As we do so, keep in mind what John wrote: ‘God’s commandments are not burdensome.’

Take In Knowledge of God

⁷ The first requirement is *taking in knowledge of God*. Consider Jesus’ words recorded in John chapter 17. The setting was the final night of Jesus’ life as a human. Jesus

4-6. (a) What is the literal meaning of the Greek word translated “burdensome”? (b) Why can we say that God’s commandments are not burdensome?

7. Upon what is our salvation dependent?

had spent much of the evening preparing his apostles for his departure. He was concerned about their future, their *everlasting* future. Raising his eyes to heaven, he prayed for them. In verse 3, we read: “This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ.” Yes, their salvation was dependent upon their “taking in knowledge” of both God and Christ. That applies to us too. To gain salvation, we must take in such knowledge.

⁸ What does it mean to ‘take in knowledge’ of God? The Greek word here translated “taking in knowledge” signifies “to come to know, recognize” or “to understand completely.” Notice, too, that the rendering “*taking in knowledge*” implies that this is an ongoing process. To take in knowledge of God thus means to come to know him not superficially but intimately, developing an understanding friendship with him. A continuing relationship with God brings ever-increasing knowledge of him. This process can continue forever, for we will never learn all that there is to know about Jehovah.—Romans 11:33.

⁹ How do we take in knowledge of God? There are two books that can help us. One is the book of creation. The things Jehovah has created—both animate and inanimate—give us some insight into the kind of person he is. (Romans 1:20) Consider some examples. The roaring of a majestic waterfall, the pounding of the surf during a storm, the sight of the starry heavens on a clear night—do not such things teach us that Jehovah is a God “vigorous in power”? (Isaiah 40:26) A child laughing as he watches a puppy chasing its tail or a kitten

8. What does it mean to ‘take in knowledge’ of God?

9. What can we learn about Jehovah from the book of creation?

playing with a ball of wool—does that not suggest that Jehovah, “the happy God,” has a sense of humor? (1 Timothy 1:11) The taste of a delicious meal, the pleasing scent of flowers in a meadow, the vivid colors of a delicate butterfly, the sound of birds singing in the springtime, the warm embrace of a loved one—do we not discern from such things that our Creator is a God of love, who wants us to enjoy life?—1 John 4:8.

¹⁰ There is, however, a limit to what we can learn about Jehovah from the book of creation. To illustrate: What is God’s name? Why did he create the earth and put mankind on it? Why does God permit wickedness? What does the future hold for us? For answers to such questions, we must go to the other book that imparts knowledge of God—the Bible. In its pages, Jehovah reveals things about himself, including his name, his personality, and his purposes—information that we cannot obtain from any other source.—Exodus 34:6, 7; Psalm 83:18; Amos 3:7.

¹¹ In the Scriptures, Jehovah also imparts vital knowledge concerning other persons we need to know about. For example, who is Jesus Christ, and what role does he play in the outworking of Jehovah’s purposes? (Acts 4:12) Who is Satan the Devil? In what ways does he mislead people? How can we avoid being misled by him? (1 Peter 5:8) The life-saving answers to these questions are found only in the Bible.

¹² Is it a burden to take in such knowledge of God and his purposes? By no means! Can you remember how you felt when you first learned that God’s name is Jehovah, that his

- 10, 11. (a) What things about Jehovah and his purposes can we not learn from the book of creation? (b) The answers to what questions are found only in the Bible?
12. How would you explain why it is not a burden to take in knowledge of God and his purposes?

Kingdom will restore Paradise to this earth, that he gave his beloved Son as a ransom for our sins, as well as other precious truths? Was it not like removing a veil of ignorance and seeing things clearly for the first time? Taking in knowledge of God is not a burden. It is a delight!—Psalm 1:1-3; 119:97.

Measuring Up to God’s Standards

¹³ As we take in knowledge of God, we come to realize that we need to make changes in our lives. This brings us to the second requirement. We must *measure up to God’s standards for right conduct and accept his truth*. What is truth? Does it really matter to God what we believe and what we do? Many people today evidently do not think so. A report published by the Church of England in 1995 suggested that living together without being married should not be viewed as a sin. “The phrase ‘living in sin’ stigmatizes and isn’t helpful,” stated one church bishop.

¹⁴ So, then, is “living in sin” no longer a sin? Jehovah tells us in no uncertain terms how he feels about such conduct. His Word, the Bible, states: “Let marriage be honorable among all, and the marriage bed be without defilement, for God will judge fornicators and adulterers.” (Hebrews 13:4) Sex before marriage may not be a sin in the view of liberal clergymen and churchgoers, but it is a serious sin in God’s eyes! And so are adultery, incest, and homosexuality. (Leviticus 18:6; 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10) God requires that we refrain from such practices, which he views as unclean.

¹⁵ It is not enough, however, to refrain from practices that God views as sinful.

- 13, 14. (a) As we take in knowledge of God, what changes do we need to make in our lives? (b) God requires that we refrain from what unclean practices?

15. How do God’s requirements involve both the way we treat others and what we believe?

God's requirements also involve the way we treat others. In the family, he expects the husband and the wife to have love and respect for each other. God requires that parents care for the material, spiritual, and emotional needs of their children. He tells children to be obedient to their parents. (Proverbs 22:6; Colossians 3:18-21) And what about our beliefs? Jehovah God wants us to avoid beliefs and customs that come from false worship or that are contrary to the clear truth taught in the Bible.—Deuteronomy 18:9-13; 2 Corinthians 6:14-17.

¹⁶ Is it a burden for us to measure up to God's standards for right conduct and to accept his truth? Not when we consider the benefits—marriages in which husband and wife love and trust each other instead of marriages that are torn apart because of infidelity; homes where children feel loved and wanted by their parents instead of families in which children feel unloved, neglected, and unwanted; a clean conscience and good health instead of feelings of guilt and a body ravaged by AIDS or some other sexually transmitted disease. Surely, Jehovah's requirements do not deprive us of anything we need in order to enjoy life!—Deuteronomy 10:12, 13.

Show Respect for Life and Blood

¹⁷ As you bring your life into harmony with God's standards, you come to appreciate how precious life truly is. Let us now discuss a third requirement of God. We must *show respect for life and blood*. Life is sacred to Jehovah. It should be, for he is the Source of life. (Psalm 36:9) Why, even the life of an unborn child inside its mother is precious to Jehovah! (Exodus 21:22, 23) Blood represents life. Therefore, blood too

16. Explain why it is not a burden to measure up to God's standards for right conduct and to accept his truth.
17. How does Jehovah view life and blood?

is sacred in God's eyes. (Leviticus 17:14) It should come as no surprise, then, that God expects us to view life and blood as he does.

¹⁸ What does respect for life and blood require of us? As Christians, we do not take unnecessary risks with our lives just for excitement. We are safety conscious and therefore make sure that our cars and homes are safe. (Deuteronomy 22:8) We do not use tobacco, chew betel nut, or take addictive or mind-warping drugs for pleasure. (2 Corinthians 7:1) Because we listen to God when he says to 'abstain from blood,' we do not allow blood to be transfused into our bodies. (Acts 15:28, 29) Although we love life, we will not try to save our present life by breaking God's law and thus jeopardize our prospect of *everlasting* life!—Matthew 16:25.

¹⁹ Is it a burden for us to treat life and blood as sacred? By no means! Think about it. Is it a burden to be free of lung cancer caused by smoking tobacco? Is it a burden to escape mental and physical addiction to harmful drugs? Is it a burden to keep from contracting AIDS, hepatitis, or some other disease from a blood transfusion? Clearly, our avoiding hurtful habits and practices is in our best interest.—Isaiah 48:17.

²⁰ Consider this experience. Some years ago, a Witness woman who was about three and a half months pregnant began to hemorrhage one evening and was rushed to the hospital. After a doctor examined her, she overheard him tell one of the nurses that they would have to terminate the pregnancy. Knowing how Jehovah views the life of the unborn, she firmly refused an abortion, telling the doctor: "If it's alive, leave it there!" She continued to suffer some bleeding at

18. What does Jehovah's view of life and blood require of us?

19. Explain how we benefit from showing respect for life and blood.

20. How did one family benefit from having God's view of life?

times, but several months later she gave birth prematurely to a healthy boy who is now 17 years old. She explained: "Our son was told all of this, and he said that he was glad he wasn't thrown into the garbage. He knows that our serving Jehovah is the only reason he is even alive." Surely, having God's view of life was no burden to this family!

Serving Along With Jehovah's Organized People

²¹ We are not alone in making the changes needed to bring our lives into harmony with God's standards. Jehovah has a people on this earth, and he expects us to serve him along with them. This brings us to the fourth requirement. We must *serve Jehovah with his spirit-directed organization.*

²² How, though, can God's organized people be identified? According to the standards set out in the Scriptures, they have real love among themselves, they have deep respect for the Bible, they honor God's name, they preach about his Kingdom, and they

21, 22. (a) With whom does Jehovah expect us to serve him? (b) How can God's organized people be identified?

Do You Recall?

- Why are God's commandments not burdensome?
- How do we take in knowledge of God?
- Why is it not a burden to measure up to God's standards for right conduct and to accept his truth?
- What does God's view of life and blood require of us?
- With whom does God expect us to serve him, and how can they be identified?

are no part of this wicked world. (Matthew 6:9; 24:14; John 13:34, 35; 17:16, 17) There is only one religious organization on this earth that has all these marks of true Christianity—*Jehovah's Witnesses!*

²³ Is it a burden to serve Jehovah along with his organized people? No, indeed! On the contrary, it is a precious privilege to have the love and support of a worldwide family of Christian brothers and sisters. (1 Peter 2: 17) Imagine surviving a shipwreck and finding yourself in the water, struggling to stay afloat. When you feel that you cannot make it any longer, a hand reaches out to you from a lifeboat. Yes, there are other survivors! In the lifeboat, you and the others take turns rowing to shore, picking up other survivors along the way.

²⁴ Are we not in a similar situation? We have been pulled from the dangerous "waters" of this wicked world into the "lifeboat" of Jehovah's earthly organization. Within it, we serve side by side as we head for the "shores" of a righteous new world. If the pressures of life should cause us to grow weary along the way, how thankful we are for the assistance and comfort of true Christian companions!—Proverbs 17:17.

²⁵ What about others—honesthearted people who are still in the "water"? We have an obligation to help them into Jehovah's organization, do we not? (1 Timothy 2: 3, 4) They need help to learn what God requires. This brings us to the fifth requirement of God. We must *be loyal proclaimers of God's Kingdom.* What this involves will be discussed in the following article.

23, 24. How can we illustrate that it is not a burden to serve Jehovah along with his organized people?

25. (a) What obligation do we have toward those who are still in the "waters" of this wicked world? (b) What requirement of God will be discussed in the following article?

HELPING OTHERS TO LEARN GOD'S REQUIREMENTS

"Necessity is laid upon me. Really, woe is me if I did not declare the good news!"—1 CORINTHIANS 9:16.

JEHOVAH has good news for mankind. He has a Kingdom, and he wants people everywhere to hear about it! Once we learn this good news, God requires that we share it with others. This is a twofold work. First, *we must proclaim the good news of God's Kingdom*. In his prophecy about "the conclusion of the system of things," Jesus said: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come."—Matthew 24:3, 14.

² The second aspect of this work involves *teaching those who respond favorably to the Kingdom proclamation*. After his resurrection, Jesus told a large group of his disciples: "Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit, teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you. And, look! I am with you all the days until the conclusion of the system of things." (Matthew 28:19, 20) The 'things Christ had commanded' did not originate with him; he taught others to observe God's commandments, or requirements. (John 14:23, 24; 15:10) Teaching others to 'observe the things Christ has commanded' thus in-

1, 2. (a) In what twofold work does Jehovah require us to share? (b) What must honesthearted people learn in order to become subjects of God's Kingdom?

volves helping them to learn God's requirements. Honesthearted people must meet God's requirements in order to become subjects of his Kingdom.

³ What is God's Kingdom? And what will it accomplish that makes the Kingdom message such good news? God's Kingdom is a heavenly government. It is very dear to Jehovah's heart, for it is the means by which he will sanctify his name, clearing it of all reproach. The Kingdom is the instrument that Jehovah will use to cause his will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. That is why Jesus taught us to pray for God's Kingdom to come and urged us to put it first in our lives. (Matthew 6:9, 10, 33) Do you see why it is so important to Jehovah that we teach others about his Kingdom?

A Challenge but Not a Burden

⁴ Is it a burden to preach this good news? Absolutely not! To illustrate: A father has an obligation to provide for his family materially. Failure to do so is tantamount to rejecting the Christian faith. The apostle Paul wrote: "Certainly if anyone does not provide for those who are his own, and especially for those who are members of his household, he has disowned the faith

3. What is God's Kingdom, and what will it accomplish that makes the Kingdom message such good news?

4. How can it be illustrated that our obligation to preach the good news is not a burden?



**Our preaching
and disciple-making
work is no burden**

and is worse than a person without faith." (1 Timothy 5:8) But is that obligation a burden for the Christian man? Not if he loves his family, for in that case he *wants* to provide for them.

⁵ Similarly, the work of preaching and disciple making is an obligation, a requirement, on which our very lives depend. Paul put it this way: "Necessity is laid upon me. Really, woe is me if I did not declare the good news!" (1 Corinthians 9:16; compare Ezekiel 33:7-9.) However, our motive for preaching is love, not mere duty. Primarily we love God, but we also love our neighbors, and we know how important it

5. Although the preaching and disciple-making work is an obligation, why should we be delighted to share in it?

is for them to hear the good news. (Matthew 22:37-39) It gives them a hope for the future. God's Kingdom will soon correct injustices, remove all oppression, and restore peace and unity—all to the everlasting blessing of those who submit to its righteous rule. Are we not delighted, yes thrilled, to share such good news with others?—Psalm 110:3.

⁶ At the same time, this preaching and disciple-making work presents a real challenge. People differ. All do not have the same interests or abilities. Some are well educated, while others have very little education. Reading—once a favorite pastime—is now often viewed as a chore. Aliteracy, which is

6. Why does the preaching and disciple-making work present a real challenge?

defined as "the quality or state of being able to read but uninterested in doing so," is a growing problem, even in countries that boast a high literacy rate. How, then, can we help people with such diverse backgrounds and interests to learn what God requires? —Compare 1 Corinthians 9:20-23.

Properly Equipped to Help Others

⁷ A challenging task is easier to perform if you have the proper tools or equipment. A tool that is appropriate for a particular job today may be modified or even replaced tomorrow because of changing needs. It is similar with our commission to proclaim the message about God's Kingdom. Over the years, "the faithful and discreet slave" has provided us with just the right tools, publications specially designed for use in conducting home Bible studies. (Matthew 24:45) We thus have been equipped to help people of "all nations and tribes and . . . tongues" to learn God's requirements. (Revelation 7:9) From time to time, fresh instruments have been provided to keep up with the changing needs in the world field. Let us consider a few examples.

⁸ From 1946 to 1968, the book "*Let God Be True*" was used as a powerful instrument for Bible education, and some 19,-250,000 copies were published in 54 languages. Released in 1968, the book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life* was for many years effectively used in studying the Bible with interested ones. Previously, it was not uncommon for some to study with

7. How has "the faithful and discreet slave" equipped us to help others learn God's requirements?

8. (a) What part did the book "*Let God Be True*" have in furthering Bible education? (b) What instrument for the Bible study work was provided in 1968, and how was it specially designed? (c) How did the *Truth* book aid in the disciple-making work?

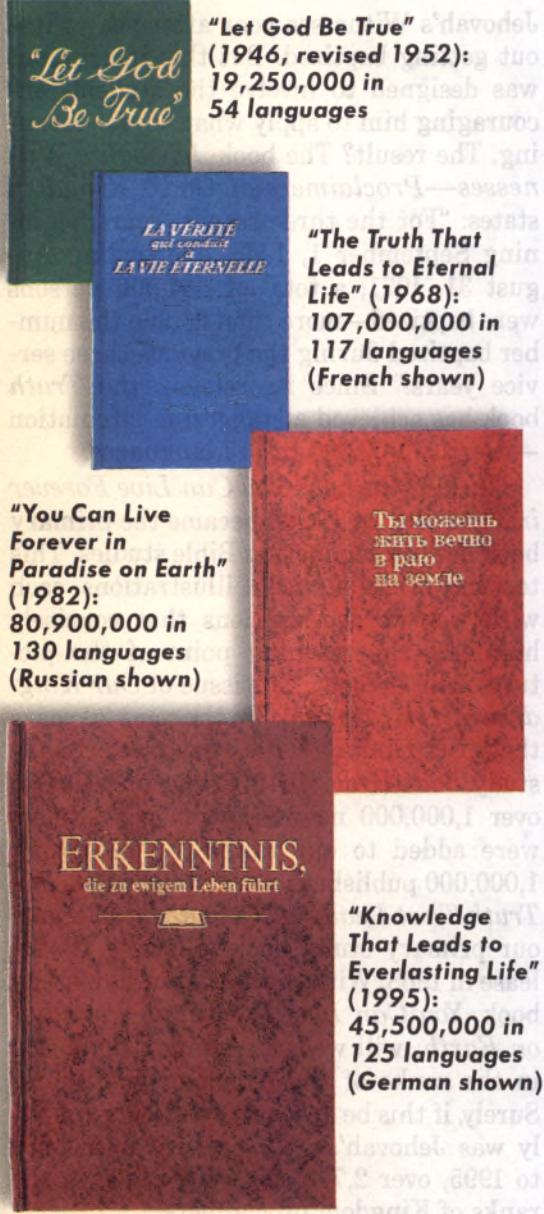
Jehovah's Witnesses year after year without getting baptized. But this instrument was designed to involve the student, encouraging him to apply what he was learning. The result? The book *Jehovah's Witnesses—Proclaimers of God's Kingdom* states: "For the three service years beginning September 1, 1968, and ending August 31, 1971, a total of 434,906 persons were baptized—more than double the number baptized during the previous three service years!" Since its release, the *Truth* book has achieved a staggering circulation—over 107,000,000 in 117 languages.

⁹ In 1982 the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth* became the primary book used in conducting Bible studies. This tool has over 150 visual illustrations, each with well-worded captions that concisely highlight the teaching point of the pictures. The October 1982 issue of *Our Kingdom Ministry* stated: "In the some 20 years that '*Let God Be True*' was our primary study book (from 1946 to the mid-1960's) over 1,000,000 new Kingdom proclaimers were added to our ranks. Then another 1,000,000 publishers were added when *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life* became our primary study book following its release in 1968. With the use of our new study book, *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*, will we see a similar expansion in the ranks of the Kingdom publishers? Surely, if this be Jehovah's will!" It evidently was Jehovah's will, because from 1982 to 1995, over 2,700,000 were added to the ranks of Kingdom proclaimers!

¹⁰ "The harvest is great, but the workers

9. What special feature does the *Live Forever* book have, and what impact did it have on the ranks of Kingdom proclaimers?

10. What new tool was provided in 1995, and why should it enable Bible students to make fairly rapid spiritual progress?



"Let God Be True" (1946, revised 1952):
19,250,000 in
54 languages

"The Truth That
Leads to Eternal
Life" (1968):
107,000,000 in
117 languages
(French shown)

"You Can Live
Forever in
Paradise on Earth"
(1982):
80,900,000 in
130 languages
(Russian shown)

Ты можешь
жизнь вечно
в раю
на земле

"Knowledge
That Leads to
Everlasting Life"
(1995):
45,500,000 in
125 languages
(German shown)

and discreet slave" provided a new tool, the 192-page book entitled *Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life*. This valuable instrument does not dwell on false doctrines. It presents Bible truths in a positive way. It is hoped that it will enable Bible students to make fairly rapid spiritual progress. The *Knowledge* book is already having an impact on the world field with 45,500,000 copies printed in 125 languages and with translation into an additional 21 languages under way.

¹¹ From time to time, 'the faithful slave' has provided tools designed for a specific, or limited, audience. For example, what about people who might need special help because of their cultural or religious background? How can we assist them to learn God's requirements? In 1982 we received just what we needed—the 32-page brochure *Enjoy Life on Earth Forever!* This generously illustrated publication has been an effective tool in teaching those who are illiterate or who read poorly. It contains a very simple and easy-to-understand presentation of basic Scriptural teachings. Since its release, the *Life on Earth* brochure has made a powerful mark on our global teaching program. Over 105,100,000 copies have been printed in 239 languages, making it the most widely translated publication the Watch Tower Society has produced to date!

¹² In addition to printed publications, starting in 1990 'the faithful slave' has pro-

11. What effective tool was provided to help teach those who are illiterate or who read poorly, and how has it made a powerful mark on our global teaching program?

12, 13. (a) Since 1990, 'the faithful slave' has provided what fresh way to reach a widespread audience? (b) How may we use the Society's videos in our field ministry? (c) What new tool was recently provided to assist in our disciple-making work?

are few," said Jesus. (Matthew 9:37) The harvest is, indeed, great. There is still much to do. In some lands people have to get on a waiting list for Bible studies. So with a view to spreading the knowledge of God more quickly, in 1995 "the faithful

vided us with a means of instruction that offers a fresh way to reach a widespread audience—videocassettes. In October of that year, the 55-minute video *Jehovah's Witnesses—The Organization Behind the Name* was released—the first video ever produced by the Watch Tower Society. The beautiful, informative presentation, available in 35 languages, shows the worldwide organization of Jehovah's devoted people fulfilling Jesus' command to proclaim the good news in all the earth. The video is especially designed to assist in our disciple-making work. Kingdom publishers wasted no time in putting this new tool to use in the field ministry. Some carried it in their book bags, ever ready to show or lend it to interested people. Shortly after its release, a traveling overseer wrote: "Videos have become a 21st-century means to reach the minds and hearts of millions of persons, so it is our hope that this video will be only the first in a long line of videos that the Society will use to further the worldwide Kingdom work." Indeed, more videos have been provided, including the three-part series *The Bible—A Book of Fact and Prophecy* and *Jehovah's Witnesses Stand Firm Against Nazi Assault*. If the Society's videos are available in your language, have you made use of them in your field ministry?*

¹³ Recently a new tool, the brochure *What Does God Require of Us?*, was pro-

* The book *Jehovah's Witnesses—Proclaimers of God's Kingdom* says: "Videocassettes are by no means taking the place of the printed page or personal witnessing. The Society's publications continue to fill a vital role in spreading the good news. The house-to-house work of Jehovah's Witnesses remains a solidly based Scriptural feature of their ministry. However, videocassettes now supplement these as valuable tools for cultivating faith in Jehovah's precious promises and stimulating appreciation for what he is having done on the earth in our day."

vided to assist in our disciple-making work. Why was it published? How may it be used?

Examining a New Tool

¹⁴ The new publication *What Does God Require of Us?* is designed for people who already believe in God and respect the Bible. Traveling overseers as well as Gilead-trained missionaries with many years of experience in developing lands assisted in the preparation of this brochure. It contains a well-rounded study course, covering the basic teachings of the Bible. The wording is warm, simple, and direct. At the same time, the text is not simplistic. It presents not just "milk" but also "solid food" from God's Word in a way that most people should be able to understand.—Hebrews 5:12-14.

¹⁵ In recent years Kingdom publishers in various lands have asked for just such a publication. For example, the Watch Tower Society's branch in Papua New Guinea wrote: "People are confused by conflicting religious teachings. They need concise statements of truth, supported by a number of Bible texts that they can check in their own Bibles. They need a clear and specific presentation of what God requires

14, 15. For whom is the *Require* brochure designed, and what does it contain?

In Our Next Issue

Set Free by the Truth

"This Is How God Loved Us"

Music's Place in Modern Worship

of true Christians and which customs and practices are unacceptable to him." The *Require* brochure is just what we need to help such ones learn God's requirements.

¹⁶ How may you use this new instrument? First, it can be used to study with people who have difficulty reading or who may not be inclined to read.* Such individuals may benefit from the simple explanations in the brochure. After reviewing an advance copy of this publication, Watch Tower branches wrote the following: "The brochure will be very useful in many parts of the country where people are not inclined to read extensively." (Brazil) "There are quite a number of immigrants who cannot read their native language and who still have some difficulty reading French. This brochure may be used as an aid in studying with such ones." (France) Can you think of people in your

* For an explanation of how to conduct a study in the *Require* brochure, see the article "A New Tool to Help People Learn God's Requirements," on pages 16-17.

16. (a) Who particularly may benefit from the simple explanations in the new brochure? (b) How might those in your territory benefit from the *Require* brochure?

Can You Explain?

- In what twofold work does Jehovah require his servants to share?
- Why is our obligation to preach and make disciples not a burden for us?
- "The faithful and discreet slave" has provided what tools for use in our preaching and disciple-making work?
- For whom is the *Require* brochure designed, and how may we use it in our ministry?

territory who might benefit from the *Require* brochure?

¹⁷ Second, in many lands the brochure may be useful in starting Bible studies with God-fearing people regardless of how educated they are. Of course, effort should be made to start a study in the book *Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life*. But in some cases it may be easier to start a study in a brochure. Then at an appropriate time, the study should be transferred to the *Knowledge* book, our primary and preferred study aid. Regarding this use of the *Require* brochure, Watch Tower branches wrote: "Starting Bible studies is difficult, and the chances of starting a study seem to be better when publishers begin with a brochure." (Germany) "A brochure of this nature will be most effective in starting new Bible studies, which could then be continued with the *Knowledge* book." (Italy) "Although the Japanese have a high level of education, most have a very limited knowledge of the Bible and its basic teachings. The brochure should be a fine stepping-stone to the *Knowledge* book."—Japan.

¹⁸ The Society's branches around the world requested this brochure, and approval has been given to translate it into 221 languages. May this new publication prove valuable in helping us to assist others to learn what Jehovah God requires of them. For our part, let us remember that meeting God's requirements, including the command to preach and make disciples, gives us a precious opportunity to show Jehovah how much we love him. Yes, what God requires of us is no burden. It is the best way to live!—Psalm 19:7-11.

17. In what way may the new brochure be useful in many lands, and why?
18. What should we remember about meeting God's requirements?

ENOCH

Fearless Against All Odds

FOR a good man, it was the worst of times. Ungodliness saturated the earth. There was a steady decline in the moral condition of mankind. In fact, it would soon be said: "Jehovah saw that the badness of man was abundant in the earth and every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only bad all the time."—Genesis 6:5.

Enoch, the seventh man in the genealogical line from Adam, had the courage to be different. He stood firm for righteousness regardless of the consequences. Enoch's message was so tormenting to ungodly sinners that he came to be marked for murder, and only Jehovah could help him.—Jude 14, 15.

Enoch and the Universal Issue

Long before Enoch's birth, the issue of universal sovereignty was raised. Did God have the right to rule? In effect, Satan the Devil said no. He maintained that intelligent creatures would do better if they were independent of God's direction. Satan tried to build his case against Jehovah God by craftily maneuvering humans to his side. Adam, his wife Eve, and their first son, Cain, are notorious for siding with Satan by choosing self-rule rather than God-rule. The first human pair did this by partaking of fruit God had forbidden, and Cain did



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so by willfully murdering his righteous brother, Abel.—Genesis 3:4-6; 4:8.

Abel had courageously stood on Jehovah's side. Since Abel's integrity had promoted pure worship, undoubtedly Satan was delighted to see Cain vent murderous rage upon him. From that time on, Satan has wielded the "fear of death" as an intimidating weapon. He wants to strike fear in the heart of anyone inclined to worship the true God.—Hebrews 2:14, 15; John 8:44; 1 John 3:12.

By the time of Enoch's birth, Satan's view that humans would not uphold Jehovah's sovereignty likely seemed well supported. Abel was dead, and his faithful example was not being followed. Yet, Enoch proved himself to be an exception. He had a firm basis for faith, for he was well acquainted with the events that took place in the garden of Eden.* How he must have cherished Jehovah's prophecy indicating that a promised Seed would bring an end to Satan and his devices!—Genesis 3:15.

With this hope ever before him, Enoch was not intimidated by the historical Devil-inspired murder of Abel. Rather, he kept walking with Jehovah, pursuing a lifelong

* Adam was 622 years old when Enoch was born. Enoch lived on some 57 years after Adam's death. Hence, their lifetimes overlapped for a considerable time.

God's Name Profaned

About four centuries before Enoch, Adam's grandson Enosh was born. "At that time a start was made of calling on the name of Jehovah," says Genesis 4:26. Some Hebrew-language scholars believe that this verse should read "began profanely" to call on God's name or, "then profanation began." Concerning that period in history, the Jerusalem Targum says: "That was the generation in whose days they began to err, and to make themselves idols, and surnamed their idols by the name of the Word of the Lord."

The time of Enosh saw widespread misuse of Jehovah's name. It is possible that men applied the divine name to themselves or to certain people through whom they pretended to approach Jehovah God in worship. Or they may have applied the divine name to idols. In any case, Satan the Devil had the human race securely entangled in the snare of idolatry. By the time of Enoch's birth, true worship was rare. Anyone like Enoch, who lived the truth and preached it, was unpopular and therefore the object of persecution.—Compare Matthew 5:11, 12.

course of righteousness. Enoch kept himself separate from the world, shunning its independent spirit.—Genesis 5:23, 24.

Furthermore, Enoch courageously spoke up and made it clear that the Devil's evil works would meet with failure. Under the influence of God's holy spirit, or active force, Enoch prophesied regarding the wicked: "Look! Jehovah came with his holy myriads, to execute judgment against all, and to convict all the ungodly concerning all their ungodly deeds that they did in an ungodly way, and concerning all the shocking things that ungodly sinners spoke against him."—Jude 14, 15.

Because of Enoch's fearless proclamations, the apostle Paul, in writing to Hebrew Christians, included him among the great "cloud of witnesses" who set a sterling example of faith in action.* (Hebrews 11:5; 12:1) As a man of faith, Enoch per-

* The rendering "witnesses" at Hebrews 12:1 comes from the Greek word *mar'tys*. According to Wuest's *Word Studies From the Greek New Testament*, this word denotes "one who testifies, or can testify, to what he has seen or heard or knows by any other means." *Christian Words*, by Nigel Turner, says that the word means one who speaks "from personal experience . . . , and from conviction about truths and views."

severed in a course of integrity for more than 300 years. (Genesis 5:22) How Enoch's faithfulness must have irritated God's enemies in heaven and on earth! Enoch's stinging prophecy elicited Satan's hatred, but it brought Jehovah's protection.

God Took Enoch—How?

Jehovah did not permit Satan or his earthly servants to kill Enoch. Instead, the inspired record says: "God took him." (Genesis 5:24) The apostle Paul describes matters this way: "By faith Enoch was transferred so as not to see death, and he was nowhere to be found because God had transferred him; for before his transference he had the witness that he had pleased God well."—Hebrews 11:5.

How was Enoch "transferred so as not to see death"? Or as rendered in the translation by R. A. Knox, how was Enoch "taken away without the experience of death"? God peacefully terminated Enoch's life, sparing him the pangs of death from either sickness or violence at the hands of his enemies. Yes, Jehovah cut short Enoch's life at the age of 365—quite a young person in comparison with his contemporaries.

Did Enoch Go to Heaven?

"By faith Enoch was transferred so as not to see death." In their rendering of this portion of Hebrews 11:5, some Bible translations indicate that Enoch did not really die. For example, A New Translation of the Bible, by James Moffatt, states: "It was by faith that Enoch was taken to heaven so that he never died."

Some 3,000 years after Enoch's day, however, Jesus Christ stated: "No man has ascended into heaven but he that descended from heaven, the Son of man." (John 3:13) The New English Bible reads: "No one ever went up into heaven except the one who came down from heaven, the Son of Man." When Jesus made that statement, even he had not ascended to heaven.—Compare Luke 7:28.

The apostle Paul states that Enoch and others making up the great cloud of pre-Christian witnesses 'all died' and "did not get the fulfillment of the promise." (Hebrews 11:13, 39) Why? Because all humans, including Enoch, have inherited sin from Adam. (Psalm 51:5; Romans 5:12) The only means of salvation is through the ransom sacrifice of Christ Jesus. (Acts 4:12; 1 John 2:1, 2) In Enoch's day that ransom had not yet been paid. Therefore, Enoch did not go to heaven, but he is asleep in death awaiting a resurrection on earth.—John 5:28, 29.

How was Enoch given a "witness that he had pleased God well"? What evidence did he have? Likely, God put Enoch into a trance, even as the apostle Paul was "caught away," or transferred, evidently receiving a vision of the future spiritual paradise of the Christian congregation. (2 Corinthians 12:3, 4) The witness, or evidence, that Enoch had been pleasing to God could have entailed a visionary glimpse of the future earthly Paradise in which all those living will support God's sovereignty. Perhaps it was while Enoch was thus experiencing a rapturous vision that God took him in painless death to sleep until the day of his resurrection. It appears that, as in the case of Moses, Jehovah disposed of Enoch's body, for "he was nowhere to be found."—Hebrews 11:5; Deuteronomy 34:5, 6; Jude 9.

The Prophecy Fulfilled

Today, Jehovah's Witnesses declare the essence of Enoch's prophecy. From the Scriptures, they show how it will be fulfilled when God destroys the ungodly in the near future. (2 Thessalonians 1:6-10) Their message makes them unpopular, for it differs greatly from this world's views and goals.

The opposition they encounter does not surprise them, for Jesus warned his followers: "You will be objects of hatred by all people on account of my name."—Matthew 10:22; John 17:14.

Like Enoch, however, present-day Christians are assured of eventual deliverance from their enemies. The apostle Peter wrote: "Jehovah knows how to deliver people of godly devotion out of trial, but to reserve unrighteous people for the day of judgment to be cut off." (2 Peter 2:9) God may see fit to remove a problem or a trying situation. Persecution may come to an end. If not, though, he knows how to "make the way out" so that his people can endure their tests successfully. Jehovah even supplies "power beyond what is normal" when necessary.—1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Corinthians 4:7.

As "the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him," Jehovah will also bless his faithful servants with everlasting life. (Hebrews 11:6) For the vast majority of them, this will be eternal life in an earthly paradise. Like Enoch, may we therefore fearlessly proclaim God's message. In faith, let us do this against all odds.



All Divine Revelations?

COULD God's spirit, which inspired the Holy Bible, also be responsible for other books that some consider to be holy? (2 Timothy 3:16) This question was raised by an Italian Jesuit journal (*La Civiltà Cattolica*), published "under the supervision of the [Vatican] Secretariat of State" and thus considered authoritative in Catholic circles.

"God, by means of the action of Holy Spirit, scattered the seed of the Word even in some holy books of a non-Jewish and non-Christian tradition," said the Jesuit journal. For the Jesuits, "holy" books, such as the Zoroastrian Avesta or the Confucian Four Books, were written "not without some particular influence of Holy Spirit, and therefore, in some measure they contain a 'divine revelation.'"

However, the article makes a clarification. "Not all that such holy books contain is the word of God," it states, adding that those who wrote these books may have "suffered the influence of a polytheistic environment or the philosophical context" in which they lived and acted. According to Marco Politi, Vatican affairs correspondent for the Italian newspaper *La Repubblica*, this stand "opens previous-

ly unthinkable possibilities in relations between the Catholic Church and the great historical religions," returning to the spirit of various inter-confessional prayer meetings like that in Assisi, in 1986, vigorously promoted by John Paul II.

Jehovah is not a God of disorder and confusion. (1 Corinthians 14:33) So we cannot rightly conclude that his holy spirit, or active force, would inspire even a portion of any books that are not in full harmony with his Word, the Bible. Rather than encouraging ecumenical approaches between different "religious traditions," the Christian apostle Paul wrote that there is "one hope . . . , one Lord, one faith, one baptism." —Ephesians 4:4, 5.

That "one hope" hinges upon putting faith in Jesus Christ. The Bible appropriately states: "There is no salvation in anyone else, for there is not another name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must get saved." (Acts 4:12) No other "holy book" presents Jesus as the central figure in the outworking of God's purposes. Only if we accept the Bible as the Word of God can it teach us about Jehovah God's loving provision for salvation.—John 17:3; 1 Thessalonians 2:13.