

# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

FEBRUARY 15, 2008

## STUDY EDITION

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THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE, *The Watchtower*, is to honor Jehovah God, the Supreme Ruler of the universe. Just as watchtowers in ancient times enabled a person to observe developments from afar, so this magazine shows us the significance of world events in the light of Bible prophecies. It comforts people with the good news that God's Kingdom, which is a real government in heaven, will soon bring an end to all wickedness and transform the earth into a paradise. It promotes faith in Jesus Christ, who died so that we might gain everlasting life and who is now ruling as King of God's Kingdom. This magazine has been published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879 and is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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## PURPOSE OF STUDY ARTICLES

### **Study Articles 1, 2** PAGES 3-11

Meditating on Bible accounts strengthens our faith. If we keep Jehovah before us, he will answer our prayers. But we must obey God and always trust in him. Walking in his ways will make us trustworthy, humble, courageous, and concerned about others.

### **Study Articles 3, 4** PAGES 12-20

Jesus Christ was the greatest Missionary. Learn how he was trained, how he taught, and what endeared him to people. Find out how to imitate Jesus and how we can teach in a way that moves the heart of those to whom we declare the good news.

### **Study Article 5** PAGES 21-25

Learn why it can be said that Christ's presence covers an extended period of time. Examine the Scriptural evidence identifying those who make up "this generation" mentioned by Jesus. (Matt. 24:34) And see why it is not possible to calculate the length of "this generation."

## ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:



### **Learn From the Errors of the Israelites**

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### **Gilead Graduates Are Urged to "Start Digging"**

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# KEEP JEHOVAH BEFORE YOU CONSTANTLY

*"I have placed Jehovah in front of me constantly."—PS. 16:8.*

**J**EHOVAH'S written Word contains a splendid record of God's dealings with mankind. It mentions many people who have figured in the outworking of God's purpose. Of course, their words and deeds are not included in the Bible as mere stories for our enjoyment. Instead, such accounts can draw us closer to God.—Jas. 4:8.

<sup>2</sup> All of us can learn much from the experiences of well-known Bible characters—Abraham, Sarah, Moses, Ruth, David, Esther, the apostle Paul, and others. However, accounts about less prominent individuals can also benefit us. Meditating on Bible narratives can help us to act in harmony with the psalmist's words: "I have placed Jehovah in front of me constantly. Because he is at my right hand, I shall not be made to totter." (Ps. 16:8) How are we to understand these words?

<sup>3</sup> A soldier usually wielded his sword with his right hand, leaving that side unprotected by the shield held in his left hand. Yet, he was protected if a friend fought near him on his right. If we keep Jehovah in mind and do his will, he will protect us. So let us see how considering Bible accounts can strengthen our faith so that we "keep Jehovah always before [us]."—*Byington*.

## Jehovah Answers Our Prayers

<sup>4</sup> *If we keep Jehovah before us, he will answer our prayers.* (Ps. 65:2; 66:19) We have proof of

1. What effect can Bible narratives have on us?
- 2, 3. How are we to understand the words of Psalm 16:8?
4. Give a Scriptural example showing that God answers prayers.

this in the case of Abraham's oldest servant, likely Eliezer. Abraham sent him to Mesopotamia to obtain a God-fearing wife for Isaac. Eliezer prayed for divine guidance and recognized it as such when Rebekah watered his camels. Because he was prayerful, Eliezer found the one who became Isaac's beloved wife. (Gen. 24:12-14, 67) True, Abraham's servant was on a special mission. But should we not be just as confident that Jehovah hears our prayers?

<sup>5</sup> At times, we may need to pray quickly for God's help. On one occasion, Persian King Artaxerxes noticed that his cupbearer Nehemiah was gloomy. "What is this that you are seeking to secure?" asked the king. "At once [Nehemiah] prayed to the God of the heavens." Nehemiah could not linger in that apparently silent prayer. Yet, God answered it, for Nehemiah was given the king's support to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. (*Read Nehemiah 2:1-8.*) Yes, even a brief, silent prayer can be effective.

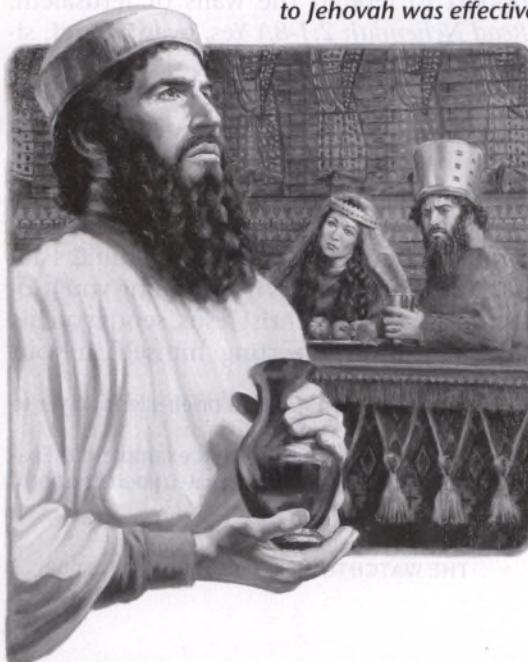
<sup>6</sup> We are urged to "pray for one another," even though we do not always get immediate proof that such prayers are being answered. (Jas. 5:16) Epaphras, "a faithful minister of the Christ," prayed earnestly for those related to him in the faith. Writing from Rome, Paul said: "Epaphras, who is from among you [Colossians], a slave of Christ Jesus, sends you his greetings, always exerting himself in your

5. Why can we say that even a brief, silent prayer to Jehovah can be effective?
- 6, 7. (a) As regards prayer, what example did Epaphras set? (b) Why should we pray in behalf of others?

behalf in his prayers, that you may finally stand complete and with firm conviction in all the will of God. I indeed bear him witness that he puts himself to great effort in behalf of you and of those at Laodicea and of those at Hierapolis.”—Col. 1:7; 4:12, 13.

<sup>7</sup> Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis were cities in the same area of Asia Minor. Christians at Hierapolis lived among worshippers of the goddess Cybele, materialism threatened those in Laodicea, and the Colossians were endangered by human philosophy. (Col. 2:8) No wonder Epaphras, who was from Colossae, ‘exerted himself in prayers’ for believers in that city! The Bible does not disclose how the prayers of Epaphras were answered, but he did not stop praying for fellow believers; neither should we. Although we are not ‘busybodies in other people’s matters,’ perhaps we know that a family member or a friend is experiencing a severe test of faith. (1 Pet. 4:15) How appropriate it would be to pray privately in his behalf! Paul was helped by the supplications of others, and our prayers can likewise do much good. —2 Cor. 1:10, 11.

*Nehemiah's prayer  
to Jehovah was effective*



<sup>8</sup> Do others look upon us as men and women of prayer? After Paul met with the elders from Ephesus, “he kneeled down with all of them and prayed.” Then “quite a bit of weeping broke out among them all, and they fell upon Paul’s neck and tenderly kissed him, because they were especially pained at the word he had spoken that they were going to behold his face no more.” (Acts 20:36-38) We do not know the names of all those elders, but it is evident that they appreciated the importance of prayer. Surely we ought to cherish the privilege of praying to God and should ‘lift up loyal hands’ in faith that our heavenly Father will answer us.—1 Tim. 2:8.

### Obey God Completely

*9 Keeping Jehovah in mind constantly will help us to obey him, and we will reap blessings as a consequence. (Deut. 28:13; 1 Sam. 15:22)* This calls for an obedient spirit. Consider the attitude of five fleshly sisters, the daughters of Zelophehad, who lived in Moses’ day. Among the Israelites, sons customarily received the inheritance from their fathers. The man Zelophehad died without sons, and Jehovah directed that these five women were to receive the entire inheritance—on one condition. They had to marry sons of Manasseh so that the inherited property would remain with the same tribe.—Num. 27:1-8; 36:6-8.

<sup>10</sup> Zelophehad’s daughters had faith that things would work out well if they obeyed God. “Just as Jehovah had commanded Moses, that is the way the daughters of Zelophehad did,” says the Bible. “Accordingly Mah-

8. (a) How do we know that the elders from Ephesus appreciated the importance of prayer? (b) What should be our attitude regarding prayer to God?

9, 10. (a) What example was set by the daughters of Zelophehad? (b) How might the obedience of Zelophehad’s daughters affect a single Christian’s view of marriage?

*Remembering how matters turned out for Naomi will help us to trust in Jehovah*

lah, Tirzah and Hoglah and Milcah and Noah, the daughters of Zelophehad, became the wives of the sons of their father's brothers. To some of the families of the sons of Manasseh the son of Joseph they became wives, that their inheritance might continue together with the tribe of the family of their father." (Num. 36:10-12) Those obedient women did what Jehovah commanded. (Josh. 17:3, 4) With similar faith, spiritually mature unmarried Christians obey God by marrying "only in the Lord."—1 Cor. 7:39.

<sup>11</sup> We need to obey Jehovah completely, as the Israelite Caleb did. (Deut. 1:36) After Israel's deliverance from Egypt in the 16th century B.C.E., Moses sent 12 men to spy out Canaan, but only 2 of the spies—Caleb and Joshua—urged the people to have full trust in God and enter the land. (Num. 14:6-9) Some four decades later, Joshua and Caleb were still alive and following Jehovah fully, and God used Joshua to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land. However, the ten faithless spies evidently died during Israel's 40-year trek in the wilderness.—Num. 14:31-34.

<sup>12</sup> As an elderly survivor of Israel's experience in the wilderness, Caleb could stand before Joshua and say: "I followed Jehovah my God fully." (Read Joshua 14:6-9.) Eighty-five-year-old Caleb asked that he be given the mountainous region that God had promised him, although it was inhabited by enemies in their great fortified cities.—Josh. 14:10-15.

<sup>13</sup> Like faithful and obedient Caleb, we will have divine support if we 'follow Jehovah fully.' If we face great obstacles, we will be blessed as we 'follow Jehovah fully.' But do

11, 12. How did Caleb show that he had confidence in God?

13. Despite our trials, we will be blessed if we do what?



ing so throughout life, as Caleb did, can be a challenge. Although King Solomon started out very well, his wives inclined his heart to serve false gods in his old age, and "he did not follow Jehovah fully like David his father." (1 Ki. 11:4-6) Regardless of the trials we must face, may we always obey God completely and keep him before us constantly.

### **Always Trust in Jehovah**

<sup>14</sup> *We need to trust in God especially when we are depressed because our future seems bleak.* Consider elderly Naomi, who lost her husband and her two sons to the enemy death. When she returned to Judah from Moab, she lamented: "Do not call me Naomi [‘My Pleasantness,’ ftn.]. Call me Mara [‘Bitter,’ ftn.], for the Almighty has made it very bitter for me. I was full when I went, and it is empty-handed that Jehovah has made me return. Why should you call me Naomi, when it is Jehovah that has humiliated me and the

14, 15. From Naomi's experiences, what have you learned about the need to trust in God?

Almighty that has caused me calamity?"—Ruth 1:20, 21.

<sup>15</sup> Although Naomi was distressed, a careful reading of the book of Ruth shows that she kept on trusting in Jehovah. And how things changed for her! Naomi's widowed daughter-in-law Ruth became the wife of Boaz and gave birth to a son. Naomi became the child's nurse, and the account says: "The neighbor ladies gave it a name, saying: 'A son has been born to Naomi.' And they began to call his name Obed. He is the father of Jesse, David's father." (Ruth 4:14-17) When Naomi is resurrected to life on earth, she will learn that Ruth, who will also be there, became an ancestress of Jesus, the Messiah. (Matt. 1:5, 6, 16) Like Naomi, we cannot be sure of how negative situations will turn out. Therefore, let us always trust in God, just as we are admonished at Proverbs 3:5, 6: "Trust in Jehovah with all your heart and do not lean upon your own understanding. In all your ways take notice of him, and he himself will make your paths straight."

### Rely on Holy Spirit

<sup>16</sup> *If we keep Jehovah before us constantly, he will lead us by his holy spirit.* (Gal. 5:16-18) God's spirit was upon the 70 older men chosen to help Moses in "carrying the load of

16. How did God's holy spirit help certain older men in ancient Israel?

### How Would You Answer?

- How do we know that Jehovah hears prayers?
- Why should we obey God completely?
- Even if we are depressed, why should we always trust in Jehovah?
- How does God's holy spirit help his people?

the people" of Israel. Only Eldad and Medad are named, but the spirit enabled all of them to carry out their duties. (Num. 11:13-29) Undoubtedly, they were capable, God-fearing, trustworthy, and honest like those chosen earlier. (Ex. 18:21) Such qualities are displayed by Christian elders today.

<sup>17</sup> Jehovah's holy spirit played an important role in the construction of the tabernacle in the wilderness. Jehovah appointed Bezalel as the principal artisan and builder of the tabernacle, promising to "fill him with the spirit of God in wisdom and in understanding and in knowledge and in every kind of craftsmanship." (Ex. 31:3-5) Men "wise of heart" worked with Bezalel and his assistant Oholab in carrying out that wonderful assignment. Moreover, Jehovah's spirit moved willinghearted people to make generous contributions. (Ex. 31:6; 35:5, 30-34) That same spirit motivates God's present-day servants to do all they can to promote Kingdom interests. (Matt. 6:33) We may have certain abilities, but we need to pray for holy spirit and let it lead us if we are to accomplish the work Jehovah has given his people in our day.—Luke 11:13.

### Always Revere Jehovah of Armies

<sup>18</sup> *The holy spirit produces within us a reverent attitude that keeps Jehovah before us constantly.* God's ancient people were told: "Jehovah of Armies you are to revere as holy." (Isa. 8:13, *Byington*) Two reverent elderly persons in first-century Jerusalem were Simeon and Anna. (*Read Luke 2:25-38.*) Simeon put faith in the Messianic prophecies and was "waiting for Israel's consolation." God poured out holy spirit upon Simeon and assured him that he would live to see the Mes-

17. Jehovah's holy spirit had what role in the construction of the tabernacle?

18, 19. (a) What kind of attitude does God's holy spirit produce within us? (b) What have you learned from the examples of Simeon and Anna?

siah. And that is what happened. One day in the year 2 B.C.E., Jesus was brought to the temple by Mary and Joseph, the infant's mother and adoptive father. Moved by holy spirit, Simeon uttered prophetic words about the Messiah and foretold sorrow for Mary, who experienced grief when Jesus was impaled on a torture stake. But imagine the great joy Simeon experienced when he took into his arms "the Christ of Jehovah"! And what a fine example of reverence Simeon set for God's servants today!

<sup>19</sup> The reverent 84-year-old widow Anna "was never missing from the temple." She rendered sacred service to Jehovah night and day "with fastings and supplications." Anna too was present when the babe Jesus was brought to the temple. How grateful she was

to see the future Messiah! Indeed, she "began returning thanks to God and speaking about the child to all those waiting for Jerusalem's deliverance." Anna just had to share this good news with others! Like Simeon and Anna, elderly Christians today are very glad that people are never too old to serve Jehovah as his Witnesses.

<sup>20</sup> Regardless of our age, we need to keep Jehovah before us constantly. Then he will bless our humble efforts to tell others about his kingship and his wonderful works. (Ps. 71:17, 18; 145:10-13) If we are to honor Jehovah, however, we must display godly qualities. What can we learn about such traits by examining further Bible accounts?

20. Regardless of our age, what do we need to do, and why?

## WALK IN JEHOVAH'S WAYS

*"Happy is everyone fearing Jehovah, who is walking in his ways."—PS. 128:1.*

HAPPINESS—everybody wants it. But you will undoubtedly agree that desiring happiness and even pursuing it are not the same as experiencing it.

<sup>2</sup> Yet, happiness is attainable. "Happy is everyone fearing Jehovah, who is walking in his ways," says Psalm 128:1. We can be happy if we revere God and walk in his ways by doing his will. What effect can this have on our conduct and on the qualities we display?

### Prove Yourself Trustworthy

<sup>3</sup> Those fearing Jehovah are trustworthy, even as he is. Jehovah fulfilled every promise

1, 2. Why can we be sure that happiness is attainable?

3. How is trustworthiness linked with our dedication to God?

he made to ancient Israel. (1 Ki. 8:56) Our dedication to God is the most significant promise we could ever make, and frequent prayer will help us to keep it. We can pray as did the psalmist David: "You yourself, O God, have listened to my vows. . . . I will make melody to your name forever, that I may pay my vows day after day." (Ps. 61:5, 8; Eccl. 5:4-6) To be God's friends, we must be trustworthy.—Ps. 15:1, 4.

<sup>4</sup> In the days of Israel's Judges, Jephthah vowed that if Jehovah gave him victory over the Ammonites, he would present as "a burnt offering" the first one meeting him upon his return from battle. That one turned

4. How did Jephthah and his daughter treat the vow he made to Jehovah?

out to be Jephthah's daughter—his only child. With faith in Jehovah, both Jephthah and his unmarried daughter fulfilled his vow. Although marriage and childbearing were highly esteemed in Israel, Jephthah's daughter willingly remained single and enjoyed the privilege of engaging in sacred service at Jehovah's sanctuary.—Judg. 11:28-40.

<sup>5</sup> The godly woman Hannah proved trustworthy. She lived with her Levite husband, Elkanah, and his other wife, Peninnah, in the mountainous region of Ephraim. Peninnah bore several children and taunted barren Hannah particularly when the family went to the tabernacle. On one of these occasions, Hannah vowed that if she bore a son, she would give him to Jehovah. She soon became pregnant and gave birth to a boy who was given the name Samuel. After he was weaned, Hannah presented him to God at Shiloh, lending Samuel to Jehovah “all the days of his life.” (1 Sam. 1:11) She thus fulfilled her vow even though she did not know that she would eventually have other children.—1 Sam. 2:20, 21.

<sup>6</sup> The first-century Christian Tychicus was a trustworthy man and a “faithful minister.” (Col. 4:7) Tychicus traveled with the apostle Paul from Greece through Macedonia, into Asia Minor, and perhaps on to Jerusalem. (Acts 20:2-4) He may have been “the brother” who helped Titus to administer the gift for needy fellow believers in Judea. (2 Cor. 8: 18, 19; 12:18) When Paul was first imprisoned in Rome, he had the trustworthy emissary Tychicus carry letters to fellow believers in Ephesus and Colossae. (Eph. 6:21, 22; Col. 4:8, 9) During his second Roman imprisonment, Paul sent Tychicus to Ephesus. (2 Tim. 4:12) If we are trustworthy, we too will enjoy blessings in Jehovah's service.

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5. In what respect did Hannah prove trustworthy?
  6. How was the trustworthiness of Tychicus manifested?

<sup>7</sup> *God expects us to be trustworthy friends.* (Prov. 17:17) King Saul's son Jonathan befriended David. When Jonathan heard that David had killed Goliath, “Jonathan's very soul became bound up with the soul of David, and Jonathan began to love him as his own soul.” (1 Sam. 18:1, 3) Jonathan even warned David when Saul wanted to kill him. After David fled, Jonathan met him and made a covenant with him. Speaking to Saul about David almost cost Jonathan his life, but the two friends met again and renewed their bond of friendship. (1 Sam. 20:24-41) At their last meeting, Jonathan strengthened David's hand “in regard to God.”—1 Sam. 23:16-18.

<sup>8</sup> Jonathan died in battle against the Philistines. (1 Sam. 31:6) In a dirge, David sang: “I am distressed over you, my brother Jonathan, very pleasant you were to me. More wonderful was your love to me than the love from women.” (2 Sam. 1:26) This love was affection between friends and had no sexual

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- 7, 8. Why can we say that David and Jonathan were true friends?

*Trustworthy Jephthah and his daughter fulfilled his vow, although doing so was difficult*



overtones. David and Jonathan were true friends.

### Always Be "Humble in Mind"

<sup>9</sup> To be God's friends, we must be "humble in mind." (1 Pet. 3:8; Ps. 138:6) The importance of humility is shown in Judges chapter 9. Gideon's son Jotham said: "Once upon a time the trees went to anoint a king over them." The olive tree, the fig tree, and the vine were mentioned. They represented worthy individuals who did not seek to rule over their fellow Israelites. But the bramble—useful only as fuel—represented the kingship of proud Abimelech, a murderer eager to dominate others. Though he 'played the prince over Israel three years,' he met an untimely death. (Judg. 9:8-15, 22, 50-54) How much better it is to be "humble in mind"!

<sup>10</sup> In the first century C.E., tensions arose between proud King Herod Agrippa of Judea and the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon, who sought peace with him. When Herod was giving a public address on one occasion, they cried out: "A god's voice, and not a man's!" Herod did not reject such adulation, and Jehovah's angel struck him so that he died a terrible death "because he did not give the glory to God." (Acts 12:20-23) What if we are somewhat skilled as a speaker or a teacher of Bible truths? Then let us credit God for what he allows us to do.—1 Cor. 4:6, 7; Jas. 4:6.

### Be Courageous and Strong

<sup>11</sup> If we humbly walk in Jehovah's ways, he will give us courage and strength. (Deut. 31:6-8, 23) Enoch, the seventh man in the genealogical line from Adam, courageously walked with God by pursuing an up-

9. How is the importance of humility shown in Judges chapter 9?

10. What have you learned from Herod's failure to "give the glory to God"?

11, 12. How does Enoch's experience show that Jehovah gives his servants courage and strength?

right course amid his wicked contemporaries. (Gen. 5:21-24) Jehovah strengthened Enoch to deliver a powerful message to them because of their ungodly words and deeds. (Read Jude 14, 15.) Do you have the courage needed to declare God's judgments?

<sup>12</sup> Jehovah executed judgment on the ungodly in the global Flood of Noah's day. Yet, Enoch's prophecy is of encouragement to us, for ungodly people of our day will soon be destroyed by God's holy myriads. (Rev. 16:14-16; 19:11-16) In answer to our prayers, Jehovah gives us courage to declare his message, whether it relates to his judgments or to blessings under Kingdom rule.

<sup>13</sup> We need God-given courage and strength to cope with depressing problems. When Esau took two Hittite women as wives, "they were a source of bitterness of spirit to [his parents] Isaac and Rebekah." Rebekah even lamented: "I have come to abhor this life of mine because of the daughters of Heth. If [our son] Jacob ever takes a wife from the daughters of Heth like these from the daughters of the land, of what good is life to me?" (Gen. 26:34, 35; 27:46) Isaac took matters in hand and sent Jacob away to find a wife among the worshippers of Jehovah. Although Isaac and Rebekah could not change what Esau had done, God gave them the wisdom, courage, and strength to remain faithful to Him. If we pray for needed help, Jehovah will do the same for us.—Ps. 118:5.

<sup>14</sup> Centuries later, a little Israelite girl taken captive by a marauding band became a servant in the home of the Syrian army commander Naaman, a man afflicted with leprosy. Having heard about the miracles God performed through the prophet Elisha, the girl courageously told Naaman's wife: 'If my

13. Why can we be sure that God can provide the courage and strength that we need in order to cope with depressing problems?

14. How did a little Israelite girl display courage?

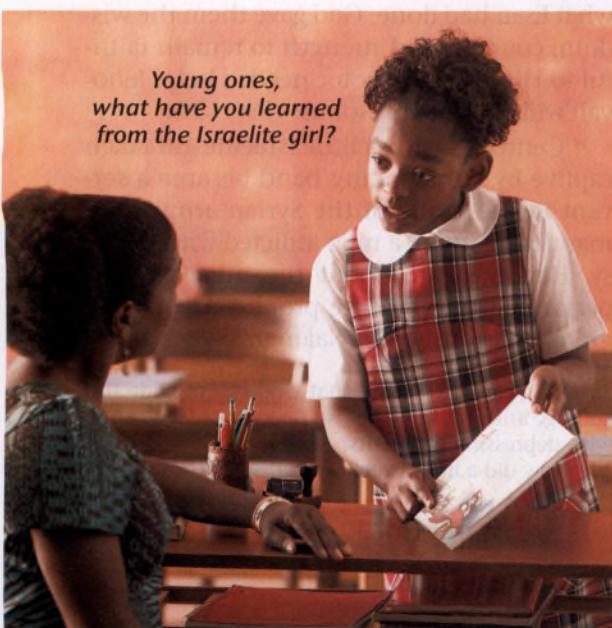
master would go to Israel, Jehovah's prophet would cure him of his leprosy.<sup>1</sup> Naaman did go to Israel, and he was miraculously healed. (2 Ki. 5:1-3) What a fine example that girl is for youngsters who rely on Jehovah for the courage to witness to teachers, schoolmates, and others!

<sup>15</sup> God-given courage helps us to endure persecution. Consider King Ahab's household steward Obadiah, a contemporary of the prophet Elijah. When Queen Jezebel ordered the slaughter of God's prophets, Obadiah hid 100 of them "by fifties in a cave." (1 Ki. 18:13; 19:18) Would you courageously aid persecuted fellow Christians, as Obadiah helped Jehovah's prophets?

<sup>16</sup> If we are persecuted, we can be confident that Jehovah will be with us. (Rom. 8:35-39) In the open-air theater at Ephesus, Paul's coworkers Aristarchus and Gaius faced a mob likely numbering into the thousands. The silversmith Demetrius had incited a riot. He and fellow craftsmen made silver shrines of the goddess Artemis, and their profit-

15. What courageous action was taken by Ahab's household steward Obadiah?

16, 17. How did Aristarchus and Gaius react to persecution?



Young ones,  
what have you learned  
from the Israelite girl?

able business was threatened because Paul's preaching work caused many of the city's residents to forsake idol worship. The mob dragged Aristarchus and Gaius into the theater and kept shouting: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" Aristarchus and Gaius probably expected to die, but the city recorder quieted the crowd.—Acts 19:23-41.

<sup>17</sup> If you had undergone such an experience, would you have sought a less challenging life? There is no indication that Aristarchus or Gaius lost courage. Being from Thessalonica, Aristarchus knew that proclaiming the good news could result in persecution. Sometime earlier, a riot had occurred when Paul preached there. (Acts 17:5; 20:4) Because Aristarchus and Gaius walked in Jehovah's ways, they had God-given strength and courage to endure persecution.

### Keeping an Eye on Others' Interests

<sup>18</sup> Whether we are now being persecuted or not, we should be concerned about fellow Christians. Prisca and Aquila were "keeping an eye" on the interests of others. (*Read Philippians 2:4.*) That fine married couple may have provided lodging for Paul in Ephesus, where the silversmith Demetrius fomented the riot mentioned earlier. That situation may have moved Aquila and Prisca to 'risk their necks' for Paul. (Rom. 16:3, 4; 2 Cor. 1:8) Today, concern for our persecuted brothers makes us "cautious as serpents." (Matt. 10:16-18) We carry on our work cautiously and refuse to betray them by divulging their names or other information to persecutors.

<sup>19</sup> Keeping an eye on the interests of others takes various forms. Some Christians have needs, and we may be able to fill those needs. (Eph. 4:28; Jas. 2:14-17) In the first-

18. How were Prisca and Aquila "keeping an eye" on the interests of others?

19. What good things did Dorcas do for others?



**How did Dorcas fill the needs of fellow Christians?**

century congregation at Joppa, there was a generous woman named Dorcas. (*Read Acts 9:36-42.*) Dorcas “abounded in good deeds and gifts of mercy” that evidently included the making of garments for needy widows. Her death in 36 C.E. caused much sadness among the widows. God used the apostle Peter to resurrect Dorcas, and it is very likely that she spent the rest of her life on earth joyfully preaching the good news and doing good things for others. How glad we are to have such unselfish Christian women among us today!

<sup>20</sup> *We look out for the interests of others by encouraging them.* (Rom. 1:11, 12) Paul’s coworker Silas was a source of encouragement. After the circumcision issue was decided about 49 C.E., the governing body in Jerusalem sent out emissaries to carry a letter to believers elsewhere. Silas, Judas, Barnabas, and Paul took it to Antioch. There Silas and Judas “encouraged the brothers with many a discourse and strengthened them.”—Acts 15:32.

20, 21. (a) What does encouragement have to do with looking out for others’ interests? (b) What can you do to be encouraging?

<sup>21</sup> Later, Paul and Silas were jailed at Philippi, but as the result of an earthquake, it was possible for them to give a witness and see the jailer and his household become believers. Before leaving that city, Silas and Paul encouraged the brothers. (Acts 16:12, 40) Like Paul and Silas, seek to encourage others by your comments, talks, and zealous field service. And when you have a “word of encouragement,” by all means, “tell it.”—Acts 13:15.

**Continue to Walk in Jehovah’s Ways**

<sup>22</sup> How grateful we should be for the true-life accounts recorded in the Word of Jehovah, the “God of all encouragement”! (2 Cor. 1:3, *Byington*) If we are to benefit from these experiences, we must apply the Bible’s lessons to our life and allow ourselves to be led by God’s holy spirit.—Gal. 5: 22-25.

<sup>23</sup> Meditation on Bible accounts will help us to display godly qualities. It will strengthen our relationship with Jehovah, who grants us “wisdom and knowledge and rejoicing.” (Eccl. 2:26) In turn, we can make God’s loving heart rejoice. (Prov. 27:11) May we be determined to do so by continuing to walk in Jehovah’s ways.

22, 23. How can we really benefit from Bible accounts?

**How Would You Answer?**

- How can you prove yourself trustworthy?
- Why should we be “humble in mind”?
- How can Bible accounts help us to be courageous?
- In what ways can we keep an eye on the interests of others?

# JESUS CHRIST —THE GREATEST MISSIONARY

*"I am a representative from him, and that One sent me forth."*—JOHN 7:29.

**W**HAT comes to mind when you hear the word "missionary"? Some think of Christendom's missionaries, many of whom meddle in the political and economic affairs of the countries where they serve.

As one of Jehovah's Witnesses, however, you likely think of the missionaries sent out by the Governing Body to preach the good news in various lands around the earth. (Matt. 24:14) These missionaries unselfishly devote their time and effort to the noble cause of helping people to draw close to Jehovah God and enjoy a precious relationship with him.—Jas. 4:8.

<sup>2</sup> The words "missionary"

and "missionaries" do not appear in the main text of the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*. In its footnote on Ephesians 4:11, however, the *Reference Bible* suggests that the Greek word translated "evangelizers" can also be rendered "missionaries." Jehovah is the greatest Evangelizer, but he cannot be called the greatest Missionary, for he was never sent by anyone. Concerning his heavenly Father, though, Jesus Christ said: "I am a representative from him, and that One sent me forth." (John 7:29) In an expression of great love for the world of mankind, Je-



vah sent his only-begotten Son to the earth. (John 3:16) Jesus can be called the greatest Missionary, the ultimate Missionary, because one reason why he was sent to earth was to "bear witness to the truth." (John 18:37) He was completely successful in proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom, and the benefits of his service are still available to us. For example, we can apply his teaching methods in our ministry, whether we are assigned as missionaries or not.

<sup>3</sup> Jesus' role as a Kingdom proclaimer raises such questions as these: What did Jesus experience on earth? Why was his teaching effective? And what made his ministry successful?

## A Willing Spirit Amid New Surroundings

<sup>4</sup> Present-day missionaries and some Christians who move to places where the need for Kingdom preachers is greater may have to become accustomed to conditions below the living standard they have been used to. But we cannot even imagine the contrast between Jesus' circumstances on earth and those in heaven, where he lived with his Father among angelic creatures who served Je-

1, 2. What is a missionary, and who can be called the greatest Missionary?

3. What questions are we going to consider?  
4-6. What were some changes Jesus faced upon being sent to earth?

hovah with pure motives. (Job 1:6; 2:1) How different it was to be among sinful humans in a corrupt world! (Mark 7:20-23) Jesus even had to deal with rivalry among his closest disciples. (Luke 20:46; 22:24) Of course, he dealt perfectly with everything he encountered on earth.

<sup>5</sup> Jesus did not miraculously start to speak a human language; he began to learn it as a babe. What a change from being in command of the angels in heaven! On earth, Jesus used at least one of “the tongues of men.” It was completely different from ‘the tongues of angels.’ (1 Cor. 13:1) When it came to winsome words, however, no human ever spoke as Jesus did.—Luke 4:22.

<sup>6</sup> Consider other ways in which things changed greatly for God’s Son when he came to earth. Although Jesus did not inherit sin from Adam, He did become a human, like those who would later become his “brothers,” or anointed followers. (*Read Hebrews 2:17, 18.*) On the last night of his earthly life, Jesus refrained from asking his heavenly Father to send “more than twelve legions of angels.” But just think of the angelic creatures over whom he had authority as Michael the Archangel! (Matt. 26:53; Jude 9) Yes, Jesus did perform miracles; yet, what he did while on earth was relatively limited compared with what he would have been able to accomplish in heaven.

<sup>7</sup> During his prehuman existence as “the Word,” Jesus may have been God’s Spokesman who guided the Israelites through the wilderness. (John 1:1; Ex. 23:20-23) However, they had “received the Law as transmitted by angels but [had] not kept it.” (Acts 7:53; Heb. 2:2, 3) In fact, the first-century Jewish religious leaders failed to discern the intent of the Law. For example, consider the Sabbath law. (*Read Mark 3:4-6.*)

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7. How did the Jews act as far as the Law was concerned?

The scribes and Pharisees “disregarded the weightier matters of the Law, namely, justice and mercy and faithfulness.” (Matt. 23:23) Nevertheless, Jesus did not give up and cease to declare the truth.

<sup>8</sup> Jesus had a willing spirit. He was moved by love for people and keenly wanted to help them. He never lost the evangelizing spirit. And because of his faithfulness to Jehovah while on earth, Jesus “became responsible for everlasting salvation to all those obeying him.” Moreover, “in that he himself has suffered when being put to the test, he is able to come to the aid of those [like us] who are being put to the test.”—Heb. 2:18; 5:8, 9.

### Well-Trained as a Teacher

<sup>9</sup> Before present-day Christians are sent out as missionaries, the Governing Body arranges for them to be trained. Did Jesus Christ receive training? Yes, but he did not attend the rabbinic schools before being anointed as the Messiah; neither was he taught at the feet of some prominent religious leaders. (John 7:15; compare Acts 22:3.) Why, then, was Jesus so qualified to teach?

<sup>10</sup> Regardless of what Jesus may have learned from his mother, Mary, and his adoptive father, Joseph, he received his principal training for the ministry from the highest Source. Concerning this, Jesus said: “I have not spoken out of my own impulse, but the Father himself who sent me has given me a commandment as to what to tell and what to speak.” (John 12:49) Notice that the Son was given specific instruction about what to teach. Before coming to the earth, Jesus undoubtedly spent much time listening to his Father’s instruction. What better training could he have received?

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8. Why can Jesus come to our aid?

9, 10. What kind of training did Jesus receive before being sent to earth?

<sup>11</sup> From the time he was created, the Son had an intimate relationship with his Father. During his prehuman existence, Jesus discerned God's attitude toward humans by observing Jehovah's dealings with them. God's love for mankind was reflected in the Son to such an extent that as wisdom personified, he could say: "The things I was fond of were with the sons of men."—Prov. 8:22, 31.

<sup>12</sup> The training that the Son received also included observing how his Father managed adverse circumstances. For example, consider Jehovah's dealings with the wayward Israelites. Nehemiah 9:28 states: "As soon as they were at rest, they would again do what is bad before you [Jehovah], and you would leave them to the hand of their enemies, who would tread them down. Then they would return and call to you for aid, and you yourself would hear from the very heavens and deliver them in accord with your abundant mercy, time and again." Working with and observing Jehovah, Jesus cultivated similar compassion for the people in his territory.—John 5:19.

<sup>13</sup> Jesus put this training to work as he compassionately dealt with his disciples. On the night before his death, all the apostles he had

11. To what extent did Jesus reflect his Father's attitude toward mankind?

12, 13. (a) How did Jesus learn by observing his Father's dealings with the Israelites? (b) How did Jesus use the training he received?

### How Would You Respond?

- What training did Jesus receive before coming to earth?
- How was Jesus' way of teaching superior to that of the scribes and Pharisees?
- What qualities endeared Jesus to people?

loved so much "abandoned him and fled." (Matt. 26:56; John 13:1) The apostle Peter even denied Christ three times! Nevertheless, Jesus left a way open for his apostles to return to him. He told Peter: "I have made supplication for you that your faith may not give out; and you, when once you have returned, strengthen your brothers." (Luke 22:32) Spiritual Israel has successfully been founded on "the apostles and prophets," and the foundation stones of the wall of New Jerusalem bear the names of the 12 faithful apostles of the Lamb, Jesus Christ. To this day, anointed Christians along with their dedicated associates, the "other sheep," flourish as a Kingdom-preaching organization under the mighty hand of God and the leadership of his beloved Son.—Eph. 2:20; John 10:16; Rev. 21:14.

### How Jesus Taught

<sup>14</sup> How did Jesus put his training into practice in teaching his followers? When we compare Jesus' instruction with that of the Jewish religious leaders, we clearly see the superiority of Jesus' way of teaching. The scribes and Pharisees 'made God's word invalid because of their tradition.' In contrast, what Jesus spoke was not of his own originality; he stuck to God's word, or message. (Matt. 15:6; John 14:10) That is also what we need to do.

<sup>15</sup> Another factor made Jesus totally different from the religious leaders. Regarding the scribes and Pharisees, he said: "All the things they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds, for they say but do not perform." (Matt. 23:3) Jesus practiced what he taught. Let us consider an example that proves this to be true.

<sup>16</sup> Jesus urged his disciples to "store up . . .

14, 15. In what ways did Jesus' teaching contrast with that of the scribes and Pharisees?

16. Why would you say that Jesus lived in harmony with his words recorded at Matthew 6:19-21?

treasures in heaven." (*Read Matthew 6:19-21.*) Did Jesus himself live in accord with that admonition? Yes, for he could truthfully say concerning himself: "Foxes have dens and birds of heaven have roosts, but the Son of man has nowhere to lay down his head." (*Luke 9:58*) Jesus lived simply. He was primarily occupied with proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom, and he demonstrated what it meant to be free of the anxieties that come from storing up treasures on earth. Jesus pointed out how much better it is to store up treasures in heaven, "where neither moth nor rust consumes, and where thieves do not break in and steal." Are you following Jesus' admonition to store up treasures in heaven?



## Qualities That

### Endeared Jesus to People

<sup>17</sup> What qualities made Jesus an extraordinary evangelizer? One was his attitude toward the people he helped. Among the fine qualities of Jehovah that Jesus reflected were humility, love, and compassion. Note how these traits drew many to Jesus.

<sup>18</sup> Having accepted the assignment to come to the earth, Jesus "emptied himself and took a slave's form and came to be in the likeness of men." (*Phil. 2:7*) That was an act of humility. Furthermore, Jesus did not look down on people. He did not have the attitude, 'I came all the way from the heavens, so you should listen to me.' Unlike self-proclaimed

false messiahs, Jesus did not go about trumpeting his role as the true Messiah. Sometimes he told people to refrain from telling others who he was or what he had done. (*Matt. 12:15-21*) Jesus wanted people to make their decision to follow him based on what they themselves observed. How blessed his disciples were that their Lord did not expect them to be like the perfect angels with whom he had associated in heaven!

<sup>19</sup> Jesus Christ also expressed love—a dominant

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17. What qualities made Jesus an extraordinary evangelizer?  
18. Why can it be said that Jesus was humble?

19, 20. How did love and compassion move Jesus to help people?

**How did Jesus teach  
the crowds?**

quality of his heavenly Father. (1 John 4:8) Jesus taught his audiences out of love. For instance, consider his feelings for a certain young ruler. (*Read Mark 10:17-22.*) Jesus "felt love for him" and wanted to help him, but the young ruler did not give up his many possessions in order to become a follower of Christ.

<sup>20</sup> Among Jesus' endearing qualities was his compassion. Like all imperfect humans, those who responded to his teaching were burdened with problems. Aware of this, Jesus taught them with compassion and pity. To illustrate: On one occasion, Jesus and his apostles were so busy that they did not have time even to eat a meal. However, what was Jesus'

reaction when he saw that a crowd had gathered? "He was *moved with pity for them*, because they were as sheep without a shepherd. And he started to teach them many things." (Mark 6:34) Jesus noticed the pitiful condition of the people in his territory and expended himself in teaching them and performing miracles for their benefit. Some were attracted by his fine qualities, were moved by his words, and became his disciples.

<sup>21</sup> There is much more that we can learn about Jesus' earthly ministry, as the next article will show. In what further ways can we imitate Jesus Christ, the greatest Missionary?

21. What will we consider in the next article?

## IMITATE THE GREATEST MISSIONARY

*"Become imitators of me, even as I am of Christ."*—1 COR. 11:1.

THE apostle Paul imitated the greatest Missionary, Jesus Christ. Paul also urged his fellow Christians: "Become imitators of me, even as I am of Christ." (1 Cor. 11:1) After Jesus gave his apostles an object lesson in humility by humbly washing their feet, he told them: "I set the pattern for you, that, just as I did to you, you should do also." (John 13:12-15) As present-day Christians, we have an obligation to imitate Jesus Christ in our words and deeds and in the qualities we display.  
—1 Pet. 2:21.

<sup>2</sup> In the preceding article, we learned that a

1. Why should we imitate Jesus Christ?
2. Even if you have not been appointed by the Governing Body as a missionary, what attitude can you have?

missionary is one who is sent as an evangelizer—one who brings good news to others. In this regard, Paul posed some interesting questions. (*Read Romans 10:11-15.*) Note that the apostle asked: "How . . . will they hear without someone to preach?" He then quoted the words from Isaiah's prophecy: "How comely are the feet of those who declare good news of good things!" (Isa. 52:7) Even if you have not been appointed and sent forth to serve as a missionary in a foreign assignment, you can have the evangelizing spirit, imitating Jesus as a zealous proclaimer of the good news. Last year, 6,957,854 Kingdom publishers 'did the work of evangelizers' in 236 lands.—2 Tim. 4:5.

## **"We Have Left All Things and Followed You"**

<sup>3</sup> To fulfill his assigned role on the earth, Jesus "emptied himself and took a slave's form," leaving behind his heavenly life and glory. (Phil. 2:7) Whatever we do in imitation of Christ cannot be compared with what Jesus did when coming to the earth. But we can remain steadfast as his followers, not longingly looking back at what we had in Satan's world.—1 John 5:19.

<sup>4</sup> On one occasion, the apostle Peter told Jesus: "Look! We have left all things and followed you." (Matt. 19:27) Peter, Andrew, James, and John quickly abandoned their nets when invited to follow Jesus. They left behind the fishing business and made the ministry their vocation. According to Luke's Gospel account, Peter said: "Look! We have left our own things and followed you." (Luke 18:28) Most of us did not have to leave *all* "our own things" behind so as to follow Jesus. However, we did have to 'disown ourselves' to become followers of Christ and wholehearted servants of Jehovah. (Matt. 16:

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3, 4. What did Jesus leave behind in heaven, and what must we do in order to be his followers?

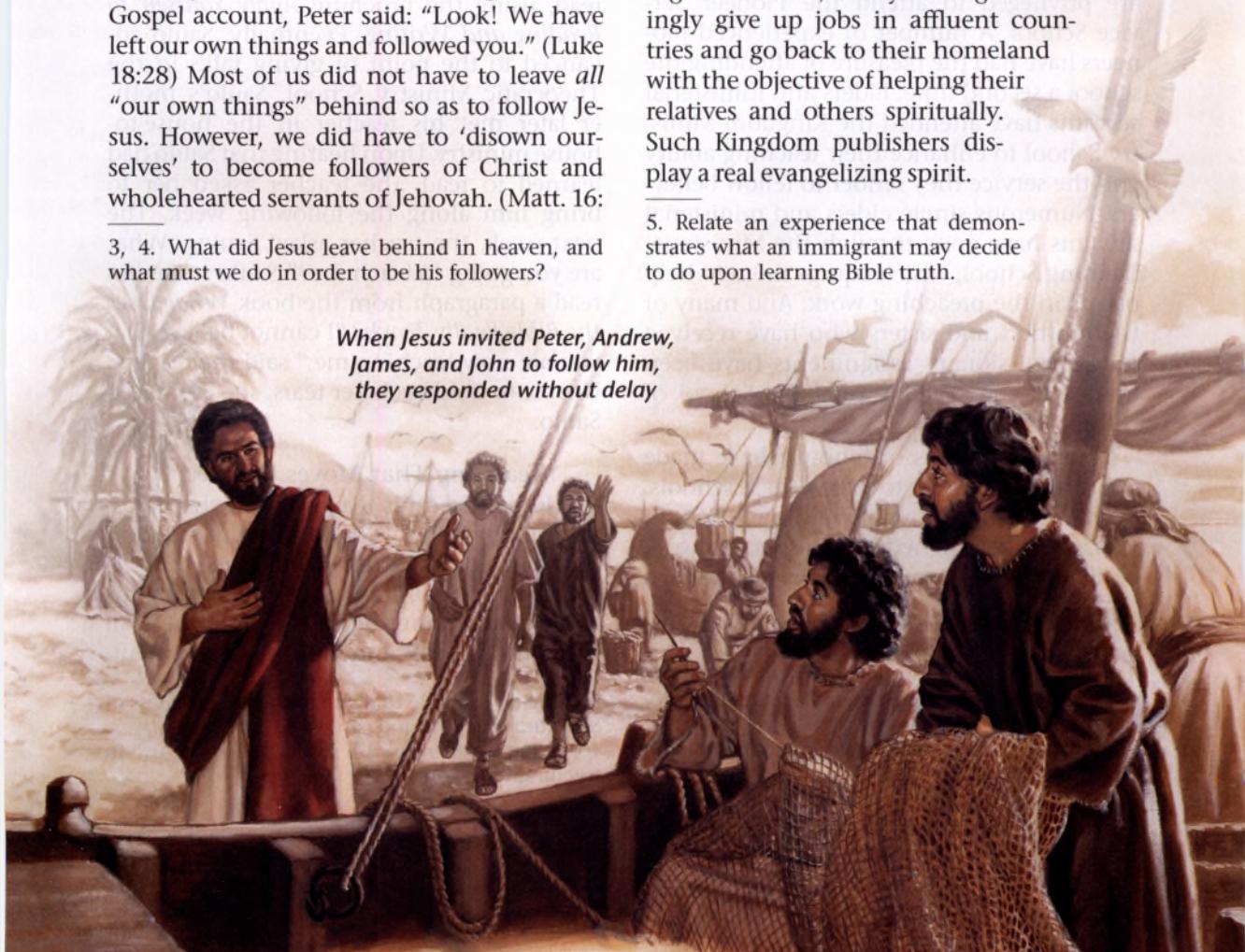
*When Jesus invited Peter, Andrew, James, and John to follow him, they responded without delay*

24) Such a course has resulted in rich blessings. (*Read Matthew 19:29.*) Having an evangelizing spirit in imitation of Christ brings joy to our heart, especially if we have had even a small part in helping someone to draw close to God and his beloved Son.

<sup>5</sup> Valmir, a Brazilian man living in the interior of Suriname, was a gold miner. He was an alcoholic who led an immoral life. Once when he was in a city, Jehovah's Witnesses started to study the Bible with him. He studied every day, made many changes, and was soon baptized. When he saw that his work made it difficult to live in harmony with his newfound faith, he sold his lucrative business and moved back to Brazil to help his family find spiritual treasures. Upon learning Bible truth, many immigrants willingly give up jobs in affluent countries and go back to their homeland with the objective of helping their relatives and others spiritually. Such Kingdom publishers display a real evangelizing spirit.

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5. Relate an experience that demonstrates what an immigrant may decide to do upon learning Bible truth.



<sup>6</sup> A number of Witnesses have been able to move to areas where the need for Kingdom preachers is greater. Some even serve abroad. Personally, we may not be in a position to make such a move, but we can imitate Jesus by always doing our best in the ministry.

### Jehovah Provides Needed Training

<sup>7</sup> Just as Jesus received training from his Father, we can take advantage of the education that Jehovah is now providing. Jesus himself said: "It is written in the Prophets, 'And they will all be taught by Jehovah.'" (John 6:45; Isa. 54:13) Today, there are schools especially designed to equip us as Kingdom proclaimers. Doubtless, all of us have benefited in some way from the Theocratic Ministry School in our local congregations. Pioneers are privileged to attend the Pioneer Service School. A number of experienced pioneers have had the pleasure of attending the school a second time. Elders and ministerial servants have attended the Kingdom Ministry School to enhance their teaching ability and the service they render to fellow believers. Numerous single elders and ministerial servants have gone through the Ministerial Training School, which equips them to help others in the preaching work. And many of the brothers and sisters who have received foreign missionary assignments have been trained at the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead.

<sup>8</sup> Many Witnesses of Jehovah have made adjustments in order to attend these schools. To attend the Ministerial Training School in Canada, Yugu resigned from his secular work because his employer denied his request for a

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6. What can we do if we cannot move to where the need for Kingdom proclaimers is greater?
  7. What schools are available for training those who want to enhance their ability as Kingdom proclaimers?
  8. How much do some brothers value the training that Jehovah provides?

leave. "I don't regret it," said Yugu. "In fact, if they had given me a leave of absence as a favor, they might have expected me to stay with the company permanently out of loyalty. But now I am available for whatever assignment I might yet receive from Jehovah." To take advantage of training provided by God, many have willingly sacrificed what they once valued highly.—Luke 5:28.

<sup>9</sup> Scriptural teaching and earnest effort are very effective. (2 Tim. 3:16, 17) Consider what happened in the case of Saulo in Guatemala. He was born with a slight mental disability, and one of his teachers told his mother that she should not force the boy to learn to read, as that would only frustrate him. Saulo left school without knowing how to read. However, a Witness taught Saulo to read, using the brochure *Apply Yourself to Reading and Writing*. Eventually, Saulo advanced to the point of giving talks in the Theocratic Ministry School. Saulo's mother later met his teacher in the house-to-house ministry. Upon hearing that Saulo had learned to read, the teacher asked her to bring him along the following week. The next week, the teacher asked Saulo, "What are you going to teach me?" Saulo started to read a paragraph from the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* "I cannot believe that you are now teaching me," said the teacher. Unable to hold back her tears, she embraced Saulo.

### Teaching That Moves the Heart

<sup>10</sup> Jesus based his teaching on what Jehovah taught him directly and on instruction found in God's written Word. (Luke 4:16-21; John 8:28) We imitate Jesus by applying his counsel and adhering to the Scriptures. All of us thus speak and think in agreement,

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9. Give an example that shows the effectiveness of Scriptural teaching and earnest effort.
  10. What excellent tool is available for our use in teaching Bible truth?

and this contributes to our unity. (1 Cor. 1:10) How grateful we are that "the faithful and discreet slave" provides Bible-based publications to help us maintain unity in our teaching and accomplish our work as evangelizers! (Matt. 24:45; 28:19, 20) One of these publications is the *Bible Teach* book, now available in 179 languages.

<sup>11</sup> Studying the Scriptures using the *Bible Teach* book can even change the heart of opposers. On one occasion Lula, a pioneer sister in Ethiopia, was conducting a Bible study when a relative of the student burst in and said that they need not have such a study. Lula calmly reasoned with the relative, using the illustration about counterfeit money in chapter 15 of the *Bible Teach* book. The woman calmed down and allowed them to resume the study. In fact, she was there for the next study and requested her own Bible study, even offering to pay for it! She was soon studying three times a week and made fine spiritual progress.

<sup>12</sup> Young people can help others by using the *Bible Teach* book. When 11-year-old Keanu in Hawaii was reading this book in school, one of his classmates asked him, "Why don't you celebrate holidays?" Keanu read the answer right from the appendix topic "Should We Celebrate Holidays?" He then turned to the book's table of contents and asked the boy which subject interested him the most. A Bible study was started. Last service

11. How did a sister in Ethiopia overcome opposition by using the *Bible Teach* book?

12. Give an example to show how young people can effectively teach Bible truths.

*Such publications as the "Bible Teach" book help us to maintain unity in our teaching*

year, Jehovah's Witnesses conducted 6,561,426 Bible studies, many of which put the *Bible Teach* book to good use. Are you using this tool on Bible studies?

<sup>13</sup> Studying the Scriptures using the *Bible Teach* book can exert a strong influence on those desiring to do God's will. A special pioneer couple in Norway started a Bible study with a family from Zambia. The Zambian couple had three daughters and did not want another baby. So when the woman became pregnant, they decided in favor of an abortion. A few days before consulting with a doctor, they studied the chapter entitled "A Godly View of Life." The picture of an unborn child appearing in that chapter touched the couple so deeply that they decided against the abortion. They continued to make fine spiritual progress and named their newborn son after the study conductor.

13. In what way can studying the Bible have a strong influence on people?



<sup>14</sup> An important aspect of Jesus' way of teaching was that he lived in harmony with what he taught. Many people come to appreciate the fine conduct of Jehovah's Witnesses, who imitate Jesus in this regard. A businessman in New Zealand had his car broken into and his briefcase stolen. He reported this to the police, who said: "Your only chance of getting your property back would be if one of Jehovah's Witnesses was to find it." A Witness delivering newspapers found the briefcase. Notified of this, the owner came to the sister's home. He was relieved to find that a document that was invaluable to him was there. The sister told him, "It was only proper that I return the property, especially as I am one of Jehovah's Witnesses." The businessman was amazed, remembering what the constable had told him that very morning. Clearly, true Christians are living according to the teachings found in the Bible and in imitation of Jesus.—Heb. 13:18.

### Imitate Jesus' Attitude Toward People

<sup>15</sup> Jesus' attitude toward people attracted them to his message. For instance, his love and humility drew lowly ones to him. He expressed compassion for those who came to him and comforted them with kind words, healing many physically. (*Read Mark 2:1-5.*) We cannot perform miracles, but we can

14. Illustrate how living in harmony with what we teach can produce good results.

15, 16. How can we attract people to the message we preach?

### How Would You Respond?

- How is Jehovah training us to be evangelizers?
- Why is the *Bible Teach* book effective in our ministry?
- How can we imitate Jesus in our attitude toward people?

show love, humility, and compassion—qualities that help to draw people to the truth.

<sup>16</sup> Compassion played a role when a special pioneer named Tariua called at the home of an elderly man named Beere, who lives on one of the more isolated islands of Kiribati in the South Pacific. Though the man indicated that he was unwilling to listen, Tariua noticed that he was partially paralyzed and felt compassion for him. "Have you heard what God promises for people who are sick and elderly?" she asked. Then she read a passage from Isaiah's prophecy. (*Read Isaiah 35:5, 6.*) Intrigued, the man said, "I've been reading the Bible for years and have been visited by a missionary from my religion for many years, but I've never seen that in the Bible." A Bible study was started with Beere, and he made fine spiritual progress. Yes, he was severely crippled, but he is now baptized, takes the lead in caring for an isolated group, and is able to walk all over the island preaching the good news.

### Continue to Imitate Christ

<sup>17</sup> As joyful experiences in the ministry repeatedly demonstrate, we can be successful evangelizers if we cultivate and display the qualities manifested by Jesus. How fitting it is, then, that we imitate Christ as zealous evangelizers!

<sup>18</sup> When some became Jesus' disciples in the first century, Peter asked: "What actually will there be for us?" Jesus replied: "Everyone that has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for the sake of my name will receive many times more and will inherit everlasting life." (Matt. 19:27-29) That is certain to be our experience if we continue to imitate the greatest Missionary, Jesus Christ.

17, 18. (a) How can you become a successful evangelizer? (b) What is in store for those who take their ministry seriously?

# CHRIST'S PRESENCE —WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU?

*"What will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things?"*—MATT. 24:3.

NARLY two thousand years ago, a question was raised by four of Jesus' apostles in a private conversation with their Master on the Mount of Olives. They asked: "When will these things be, and what will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things?" (Matt. 24:3) In that question, the apostles used two very interesting expressions, "your presence" and "the conclusion of the system of things." To what do those expressions refer?

To take the second expression first, consider the term "conclusion," the translation of the Greek word *syn-te'lei-a*. In the *New World Translation*, this word is consistently rendered "conclusion," whereas a related Greek word, *te'los*, is translated "end." The difference in the meaning of these two words can be illustrated by describing a talk given at the Kingdom Hall. The conclusion of the

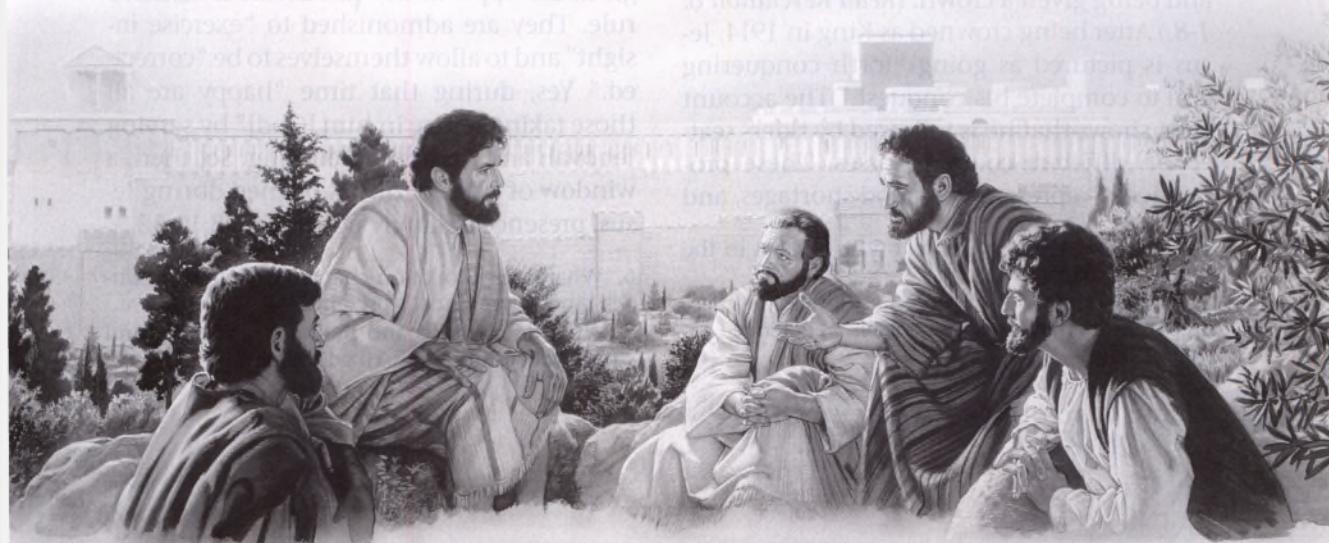
1. What interesting question did Jesus' apostles ask him?
2. What is the underlying meaning of the word "conclusion"?

talk is the last section, in which the speaker spends a little time reminding the audience of what he has been discussing and then shows how that information applies to them. The end of the talk is when the speaker walks off the platform. In a similar way, Biblically speaking, the term "the conclusion of the system of things" refers to the period of time leading up to and including its end.

What of the "presence" that the apostles asked about? This is the translation of the Greek word *pa·rou·si'a*.\* Christ's *pa·rou·si'a*, or presence, started with Jesus' installation as King in heaven in 1914 and continues on to include the "great tribulation," during which he comes to destroy the wicked. (Matt. 24:21) Many different things, including "the

\* The meaning of *pa·rou·si'a* is seen from the contrast that is made between the "presence" and "absence" of the apostle Paul both at 2 Corinthians 10:10, 11 and at Philippians 2:12. For a detailed discussion, see *Insight on the Scriptures*, Volume 2, pages 676-9.

3. What are some of the things that occur during Jesus' presence?



last days" of this wicked system of things, the gathering of the chosen ones, and their resurrection to heavenly life, occur during this presence of Jesus. (2 Tim. 3:1; 1 Cor. 15:23; 1 Thess. 4:15-17; 2 Thess. 2:1) It could be said that the period constituting "the conclusion of the system of things" (*syn-te'lei-a*) corresponds to or runs parallel with the period called Christ's presence (*pa·rou·si'a*).

### An Extended Period of Time

<sup>4</sup> The fact that the word *pa·rou·si'a* refers to an extended period of time harmonizes with what Jesus said with regard to his presence. (*Read Matthew 24:37-39.*) Notice that Jesus did not liken his presence to the relatively short period of time during which the Flood occurred in Noah's day. Rather, he compared his presence to the much longer period of time that led up to the Flood. Included therein were Noah's building of the ark and his preaching work, right up until the time that the Flood finally arrived. Those events occurred over many decades. In a similar way, Christ's presence includes the events leading up to and including the great tribulation.—2 Thess. 1:6-9.

<sup>5</sup> Other Bible prophecies make it evident that Christ's presence refers to an extended period of time and not merely to his coming to destroy the wicked. The book of Revelation portrays Jesus as riding on a white horse and being given a crown. (*Read Revelation 6:1-8.*) After being crowned as King in 1914, Jesus is pictured as going "forth conquering and to complete his conquest." The account then shows that he is followed by riders seated on different-colored horses. These prophetically represent war, food shortages, and

*After being crowned as King in 1914, Jesus is pictured as "conquering"*

pestilence, all of which have occurred over the extended period of time that is referred to as "the last days." We are seeing the fulfillment of this prophecy in our lifetime.

<sup>6</sup> Revelation chapter 12 provides further details concerning the establishment of God's Kingdom in heaven. There we read of a battle in the invisible realm. Michael—Jesus Christ in his heavenly position—and his angels fight against the Devil and his demons. As a result, Satan the Devil and his hordes are cast down to the earth. At that point, the account tells us, the Devil has great anger, "knowing he has a short period of time." (*Read Revelation 12:7-12.*) Clearly, then, the establishment of Christ's Kingdom in heaven is followed by a period of time that is marked by increased "woe" for the earth and its inhabitants.

<sup>7</sup> The second psalm likewise speaks prophetically of the installation of Jesus as King upon heavenly Mount Zion. (*Read Psalm 2:5-9; 110:1, 2.*) However, this psalm also indicates that there is a period of time when earth's rulers, along with their subjects, are given an opportunity to submit to Christ's rule. They are admonished to "exercise insight" and to allow themselves to be "corrected." Yes, during that time "happy are all those taking refuge in him [God]" by serving Jehovah and his appointed King. So, then, a window of opportunity is opened during Jesus' presence in kingly power.—Ps. 2:10-12.



4. How does Jesus' presence find a parallel in the events of Noah's day?
5. How do the words recorded in Revelation chapter 6 indicate that Jesus' presence is an extended period of time?
6. What does Revelation chapter 12 help us to understand about Christ's presence?
7. What does the second psalm speak about, and what opportunity is described therein?



### Recognizing the Sign

<sup>8</sup> When asked by the Pharisees about the time the Kingdom would come, Jesus answered that it would not come "with striking observableness" from their viewpoint. (Luke 17:20, 21) Unbelievers would not understand. How could they? They did not even recognize Jesus as their future King. So who would both recognize the sign of Christ's presence and understand its significance?

<sup>9</sup> Jesus went on to say that his disciples would see the sign just as clearly as they would see "lightning, by its flashing, [which] shines from one part under heaven to another part." (*Read Luke 17:24-29.*) It is of interest to note that Matthew 24:23-27 directly links the same point with the sign of Christ's presence.

8, 9. Who would recognize the sign of Christ's presence and understand its meaning?

### The Generation Seeing the Sign

<sup>10</sup> Previously, this journal has explained that in the first century, "*this generation*" mentioned at Matthew 24:34 meant "the contemporaneous generation of unbelieving Jews."<sup>\*</sup> That explanation seemed reasonable because all other recorded uses that Jesus made of the term "generation" had a negative connotation, and in most cases, Jesus used a negative adjective, such as "wicked," to describe the generation. (Matt. 12:39; 17:17; Mark 8:38) Thus, it was felt that in the modern-day fulfillment, Jesus was referring to the wicked "generation" of unbelievers who would see both the features that would characterize "the conclusion of the system of things" (*syn-te'lei-a*) and the system's end (*te'los*).

<sup>11</sup> It is true that when Jesus used the word "generation" negatively, he was speaking to or about the wicked people of his day. But was that necessarily true of his statement recorded at Matthew 24:34? Recall that four of Jesus' disciples had approached him "privately." (Matt. 24:3) Since Jesus did not use negative qualifiers when speaking to them about "this generation," the apostles would no doubt have understood that they and their fellow disciples were to be part of the "generation" that would not pass away "until all these things [would] occur."

<sup>12</sup> On what basis may we draw that conclusion? By carefully considering the context. As

\* See *The Watchtower*, November 1, 1995, pages 11-15, 19, 30, 31.

10, 11. (a) What explanation was previously given concerning the "generation" mentioned at Matthew 24:34? (b) Who would Jesus' disciples have no doubt understood to be included in that "generation"?

12. What does the context reveal concerning those to whom Jesus was referring when he used the term "generation"?

recorded at Matthew 24:32, 33, Jesus said: "Now learn from the fig tree as an illustration this point: Just as soon as its young branch grows tender and it puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. Likewise also *you*, when you see *all these things*, know that he is near at the doors." (Compare Mark 13:28-30; Luke 21:30-32.) Then, at Matthew 24:34, we read: "Truly I say to you that *this generation* will by no means pass away until *all these things* occur."

<sup>13</sup> Jesus said that it was his disciples, soon to be anointed with holy spirit, who should be able to draw certain conclusions when they saw "all these things" occur. So Jesus must have been referring to his disciples when he made the statement: "This generation will by no means pass away until all these things occur."

<sup>14</sup> Unlike unbelievers, Jesus' disciples would not only see the sign but also understand its significance. They would "learn" from the features of that sign and "know" their true meaning. They would fully appreciate that "he is near at the doors." While it is true that both unbelieving Jews and faithful anointed Christians saw a limited fulfillment

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13, 14. Why can we say that the "generation" that Jesus referred to must have been his disciples?

of Jesus' words in the first century, only his anointed followers back then could learn from these events—could understand the true meaning of what they saw.

<sup>15</sup> Those without spiritual understanding today have felt that there has been no "striking observability" with regard to the sign of Jesus' presence. They reason that everything is continuing on as it did in the past. (2 Pet. 3:4) On the other hand, Christ's faithful anointed brothers, the modern-day John class, have recognized this sign as if it were a flash of lightning and have understood its true meaning. As a class, these anointed ones make up the modern-day "generation" of contemporaries that will not pass away "until all these things occur."<sup>\*\*</sup> This suggests that some who are Christ's anointed brothers will still be alive on earth when the foretold great tribulation begins.

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\* The time period during which "this generation" lives seems to correspond to the period covered by the first vision in the book of Revelation. (Rev. 1:10-3:22) This feature of the Lord's day extends from 1914 until the last of the faithful anointed ones dies and is resurrected.—See *Revelation—Its Grand Climax At Hand!* page 24, paragraph 4.

15. (a) Who make up the modern-day "generation" that Jesus referred to? (b) Why are we not able to calculate the exact length of "this generation"? (See the box on page 25.)

*"This generation will by no means pass away until all these things occur"*



# Can We Calculate the Length of “This Generation”?

The word “generation” usually refers to people of various ages whose lives overlap during a particular time period or event. For example, Exodus 1:6 tells us: “Eventually Joseph died, and also all his brothers and *all that generation*.” Joseph and his brothers varied in age, but they shared a common experience during the same time period. Included in “*that generation*” were

some of Joseph’s brothers who were born *before* him. Some of these outlived Joseph. (Gen. 50:24) Others of “*that generation*,” such as Benjamin, were born after Joseph was born and may have lived on *after* he died.

So when the term “*generation*” is used with reference to people living at a particular time, the exact length of that time cannot be stated ex-

cept that it does have an end and would not be excessively long. Therefore, by using the term “*this generation*,” as recorded at Matthew 24:34, Jesus did not give his disciples a formula to enable them to determine when “*the last days*” would end. Rather, Jesus went on to emphasize that they would not know “*that day and hour*.”—2 Tim. 3:1; Matt. 24:36.

## “Keep on the Watch”

<sup>16</sup> More is needed, though, than merely recognizing the sign. Jesus went on to say: “What I say to *you* I say to *all*, Keep on the watch.” (Mark 13:37) This is of utmost importance to all of us today whether of the anointed or of the great crowd. Nine decades have passed since Jesus was installed as King in heaven in 1914. As challenging as it may be, we must prove ourselves ready and *keep* on the watch. Understanding that Christ is present invisibly in Kingdom power helps us to do that. It also alerts us to the fact that soon he will come to destroy his enemies “at an hour that [we] do not think likely.”—Luke 12:40.

<sup>17</sup> Our understanding of the meaning of Christ’s presence helps to intensify our feelings of urgency. We know that Jesus is already present and has been reigning invisibly as King in heaven since 1914. Soon he

16. What must all of Christ’s disciples do?
17. How should this understanding make us feel, and what should we be determined to do?

will come to destroy the wicked and bring about vast changes to this entire globe. We should therefore be more determined than ever to take an active part in the work that Jesus foretold when he 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* [*te’los*] will come.”—Matt. 24:14.

## How Would You Answer?

- How do we know that Jesus’ presence is an extended period of time?
- Who recognize the sign of Jesus’ presence and understand what it means?
- The modern-day generation mentioned at Matthew 24:34 is made up of whom?
- Why are we unable to calculate the exact length of “*this generation*”?

# Learn From the Errors of the Israelites

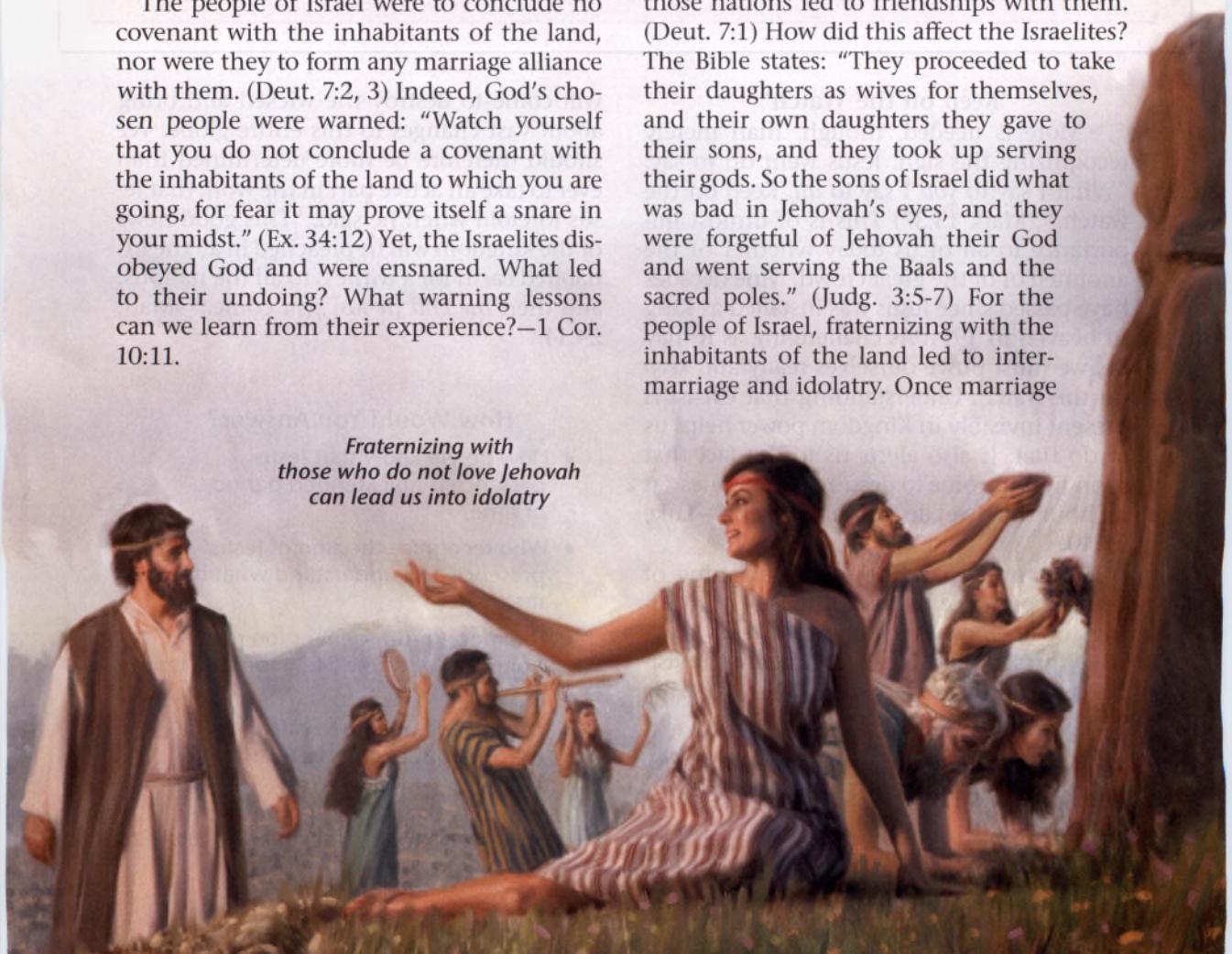
THE Israelites knew what Jehovah expected of them as they entered the Promised Land. Through Moses, God had commanded: "You must drive away all the inhabitants of the land from before you and destroy all their stone figures, and all their images of molten metal you should destroy, and all their sacred high places you should annihilate."—Num. 33:52.

The people of Israel were to conclude no covenant with the inhabitants of the land, nor were they to form any marriage alliance with them. (Deut. 7:2, 3) Indeed, God's chosen people were warned: "Watch yourself that you do not conclude a covenant with the inhabitants of the land to which you are going, for fear it may prove itself a snare in your midst." (Ex. 34:12) Yet, the Israelites disobeyed God and were ensnared. What led to their undoing? What warning lessons can we learn from their experience?—1 Cor. 10:11.

## From Fraternizing to Idolatry

In taking possession of the Promised Land, the Israelites won early victories over its inhabitants. However, the sons of Israel failed to obey God's commands fully. They did not drive out the enemy. (Judg. 1:1-2:10) On the contrary, as the Israelites took up dwelling among the "seven nations" who populated the land, regular contact with the people of those nations led to friendships with them. (Deut. 7:1) How did this affect the Israelites? The Bible states: "They proceeded to take their daughters as wives for themselves, and their own daughters they gave to their sons, and they took up serving their gods. So the sons of Israel did what was bad in Jehovah's eyes, and they were forgetful of Jehovah their God and went serving the Baals and the sacred poles." (Judg. 3:5-7) For the people of Israel, fraternizing with the inhabitants of the land led to intermarriage and idolatry. Once marriage

*Fraternizing with  
those who do not love Jehovah  
can lead us into idolatry*



alliances were formed, the likelihood of Israel's driving the pagans away from the land dwindled. True worship was corrupted, and the Israelites themselves took up serving false gods.

As their friends, the inhabitants of the Promised Land presented a greater spiritual danger to the Israelites than they had as their foes. Consider another way in which religious corruption might have occurred.

### **From Farming to Baal Worship**

On entering the Promised Land, the sons of Israel ceased being nomads and many became farmers. The agricultural methods that they used were probably similar to those employed by the people who cultivated the land before them. Evidently, this transition went beyond the possible adoption of Canaanite farming methods. Associating with the local people also lured the Israelites into accepting their beliefs linked to agriculture.

The Canaanites worshipped many Baals—gods thought to bring fertility to the soil. Besides tilling the land and reaping its produce, in time the Israelites joined in honoring Canaanite gods as the givers of plenty. Many in Israel thus made a pretense of worshipping Jehovah, but in reality they engaged in outright apostasy.

### **Powerful Warning for Us Today**

It is unlikely that the Israelites had any intention of getting involved in Baal worship and its debauchery when they first came in contact with the people of the Promised Land. Yet, that is where their association led them. Should we not expect such detrimental effects if we fraternize with those who may be friendly but do not share Christian beliefs, values, and principles? Of course, some contact with unbelievers may be necessary at our place of employment, at school, or perhaps even at home. However, the experience of the Israelites is a warning

to us that seeking such association is to court trouble. The Bible states this inescapable truth: "Bad associations spoil useful habits."—1 Cor. 15:33.

Today, we face many challenges that are similar to those faced by the Israelites. Modern-day society has its share of idols. They include money, entertainment personalities, sports figures, political systems, certain religious leaders, and even family members. Any of these could potentially become our focus in life. Cultivating close friendships with those who do not love Jehovah can lead us to spiritual ruin.

Illicit sex was an integral part of Baal worship that attracted and seduced many Israelites. Similar snares still claim victims among God's people. For example, the click of a mouse at a computer in the privacy of one's own home may be all that a curious or unwary person needs to ruin his good conscience. How sad it would be if a Christian were to be enticed by Internet pornography!

### **"Happy Are Those Observing His Reminders"**

The decision to obey Jehovah or not to obey him in choosing our associates is a personal one. (Deut. 30:19, 20) Hence, we need to ask ourselves: 'With whom do I associate while engaging in leisure activities? What are their values and their morals? Do they worship Jehovah? Will being in their company encourage me to be a better Christian?'

The psalmist sang: "Happy are the ones faultless in their way, the ones walking in the law of Jehovah. Happy are those observing his reminders; with all the heart they keep searching for him." (Ps. 119:1, 2) Indeed, "happy is everyone fearing Jehovah, who is walking in his ways." (Ps. 128:1) When it comes to choosing our associates, may we learn from the errors of the Israelites and be completely obedient to Jehovah.—Prov. 13:20.

# Jehovah's Word Is Alive

## Highlights From the Book of Mark

THE Gospel of Mark is the shortest of the four Gospels. Written by John Mark some 30 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, it is a fast-moving, action-packed account of Jesus' three-and-a-half-year ministry.

Evidently intended for non-Jews, particularly the Romans, the book of Mark presents Jesus as the miracle-working Son of God who carries on a vigorous preaching campaign. The emphasis is on what Jesus did rather than what he taught. Paying attention to the Gospel of Mark will strengthen our faith in the Messiah and motivate us to be zealous proclaimers of God's message in the Christian ministry.—Heb. 4:12.

### THE GREAT GALILEAN MINISTRY (Mark 1:1–9:50)

After covering the activity of John the Baptizer and Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness in just 14 verses, Mark begins an exciting report of Jesus' Galilean ministry. The repeated use of the expression "immediately" lends a sense of urgency to the account.—Mark 1:10, 12.

In less than three years, Jesus completes three preaching campaigns in Galilee. Mark presents the account mostly in chronological order. The Sermon on the Mount is omitted, as are many of Jesus' longer discourses.

#### *Scriptural Questions Answered:*

**1:15—“The appointed time” for what had been fulfilled?** Jesus was stating that the appointed time had been fulfilled for him to commence his ministry. Because he was on hand as King-Designate, God's Kingdom had drawn near. Righthearted people could then

respond to his preaching work and take steps that would bring them God's approval.

**1:44; 3:12; 7:36—Why did Jesus not want his miracles advertised?** Rather than have people reach conclusions based on sensational or possibly distorted reports, Jesus wanted them to see for themselves that he was the Christ and to make a personal decision based on that evidence. (Isa. 42:1-4; Matt. 8:4; 9:30; 12:15-21; 16:20; Luke 5:14) An exception was the case of the formerly demon-possessed man in the country of the Gerasenes. Jesus told him to go home and report the matter to his relatives. Jesus had been entreated to go away from that area, so he would have had very little or no contact with the people there. The presence and the testimony of a man to whom Jesus had done a good deed could serve to counteract any negative talk about the loss of the swine.—Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-39.

**2:28—Why is Jesus called “Lord even of the sabbath”?** “The Law has a shadow of the good things to come,” wrote the apostle Paul. (Heb. 10:1) As the Law stipulated, the Sabbath came after six days of work, and Jesus performed many of his cures on that day. This foreshadowed the peaceful rest and other blessings that mankind will experience under the Thousand Year Reign of Christ after the end of Satan's oppressive rulership. Therefore, the King of that Kingdom is also “Lord of the sabbath.”—Matt. 12:8; Luke 6:5.

**3:5; 7:34; 8:12—How could Mark have known details about Jesus’ emotional state?** Mark was neither one of the 12 apostles nor a close companion of Jesus. Ancient

tradition has it that Mark's close associate, the apostle Peter, was the source of much of Mark's information.—1 Pet. 5:13.

**6:51, 52—What was “the meaning of the loaves” that the disciples failed to grasp?** Just a few hours earlier, Jesus had fed 5,000 men besides women and children with only five loaves and two fishes. “The meaning of the loaves” that the disciples should have understood from that event was that Jesus had been empowered by Jehovah God to perform miracles. (Mark 6:41-44) If they had grasped the greatness of power that Jesus had been given, they would not have been so amazed when he miraculously walked on water.

**8:22-26—Why did Jesus restore the blind man's sight in two steps?** Jesus might have done this out of consideration for the man. The gradual restoration of sight to a man who had been accustomed to darkness for a long time may have allowed him to adjust to the brilliance of the sunlight.

#### Lessons for Us:

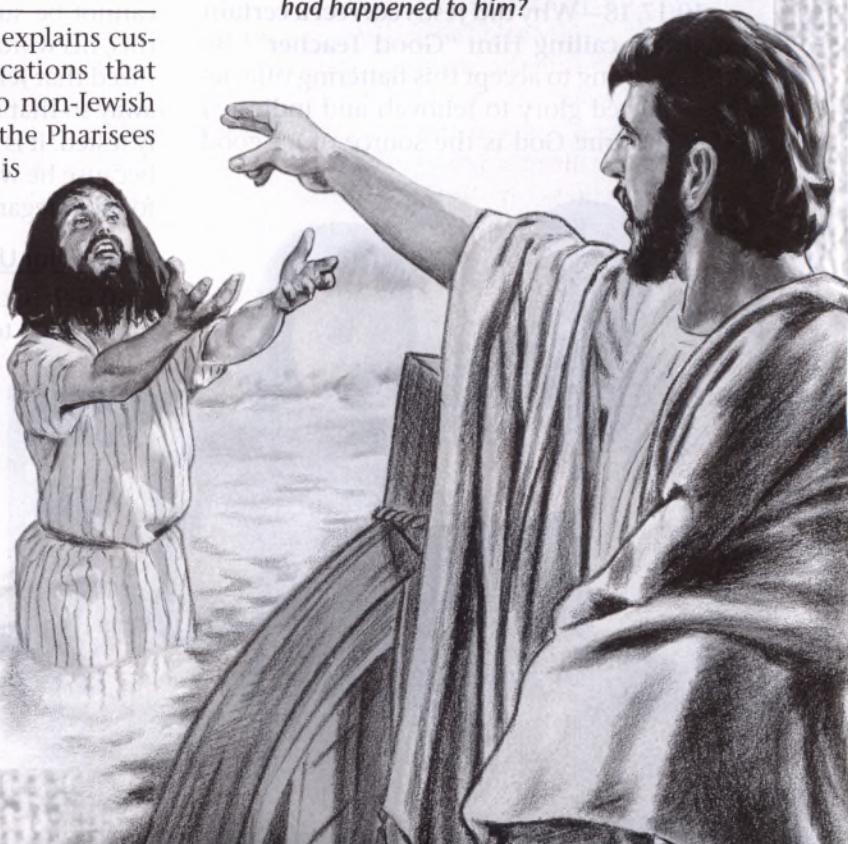
**2:18; 7:11; 12:18; 13:3.** Mark explains customs, terms, beliefs, and locations that might have been unfamiliar to non-Jewish readers. He makes it clear that the Pharisees “practiced fasting,” that corban is “a gift dedicated to God,” that the Sadducees “say there is no resurrection,” and that the temple was “in view” from “the Mount of Olives.” Since the genealogy of the Messiah would be of interest mainly to the Jews, he leaves it out altogether. Mark thus provides an example for us. We should take into consideration the background of our listeners when we engage in the Christian ministry or give talks at congregation meetings.

**3:21. Jesus' relatives were unbelievers.** Hence, he is empathetic toward those who because of their faith are opposed or mocked by their unbelieving family members.

**3:31-35.** At his baptism, Jesus became God's spiritual Son, and “the Jerusalem above” was his mother. (Gal. 4:26) From then on, Jesus' disciples were nearer and dearer to him than his fleshly relatives were. This teaches us to put spiritual interests first in our lives.—Matt. 12:46-50; Luke 8:19-21.

**8:32-34.** We should be quick to recognize and reject any mistaken kindness displayed by others. A follower of Christ must be prepared to “disown himself,” that is, to deny himself and say no to selfish desires and ambitions. He should be willing to “pick up his torture stake”—to suffer, if need be, or be shamed or persecuted or even put to death for being a Christian. And he must

*Why did Jesus tell this man  
to report to his relatives all that  
had happened to him?*



"continually follow" Jesus, conforming to His pattern of life. The course of discipleship requires that we develop and maintain a self-sacrificing spirit like that of Christ Jesus.—Matt. 16:21-25; Luke 9:22, 23.

**9:24.** We should not be ashamed to confess our faith or to plead for more faith.—Luke 17:5.

### THE FINAL MONTH (Mark 10:1-16:8)

Toward the end of 32 C.E., Jesus comes to "the frontiers of Judea and across the Jordan," and again crowds come to him. (Mark 10:1) After preaching there, he is on his way to Jerusalem.

On Nisan 8, Jesus is at Bethany. He is reclining at a meal when a woman comes in and pours perfumed oil upon his head. The events from Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem to his resurrection are described in chronological order.

#### *Scriptural Questions Answered:*

**10:17, 18—Why did Jesus correct a certain man for calling Him "Good Teacher"?** By thus refusing to accept this flattering title, Jesus directed glory to Jehovah and indicated that the true God is the source of all good

things. Moreover, Jesus drew attention to the fundamental truth that the Creator of all things, Jehovah God, alone has the right to set the standards of good and bad.—Matt. 19:16, 17; Luke 18:18, 19.

**14:25—What did Jesus mean when he said to his faithful apostles: "I shall by no means drink anymore of the product of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God"?** Jesus was not suggesting that there is literal wine in heaven. Since rejoicing is sometimes symbolized by wine, however, Jesus was referring to the joy of being together with his resurrected anointed followers in the Kingdom.—Ps. 104:15; Matt. 26:29.

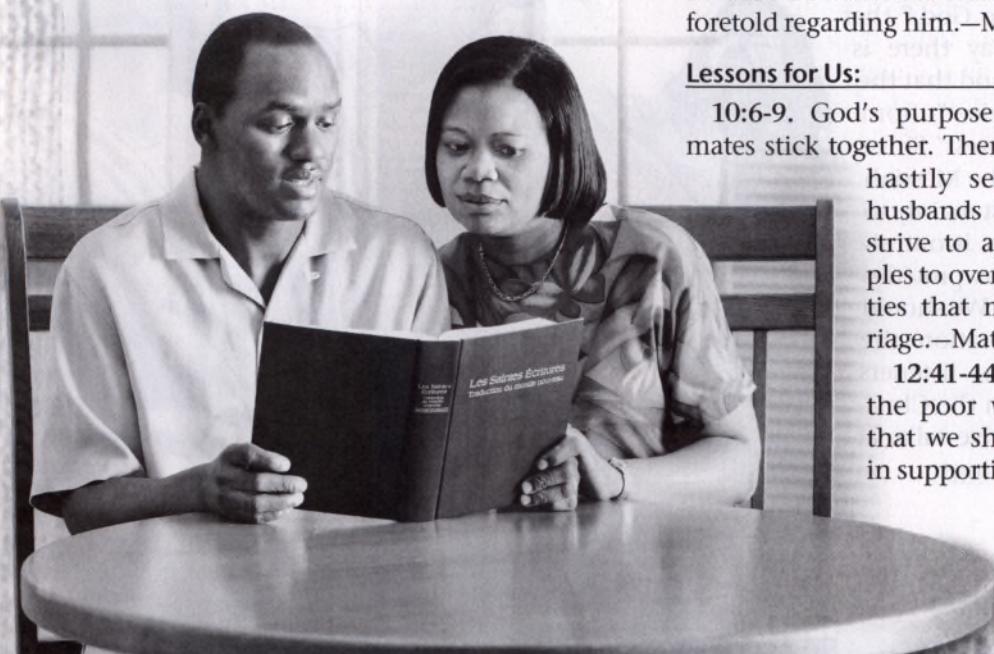
**14:51, 52—Who was the young man who "got away naked"?** Mark alone refers to this incident, so we can reasonably conclude that he was speaking of himself.

**15:34—Did Jesus' words "my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" indicate a lack of faith on his part?** No. While we cannot be sure of Jesus' motives for saying this, his words may indicate that Jesus recognized that Jehovah had taken His protection away so that His Son's integrity could be fully tested. It is also possible that Jesus said this because he wanted to fulfill what Psalm 22:1 foretold regarding him.—Matt. 27:46.

#### *Lessons for Us:*

**10:6-9.** God's purpose is that marriage mates stick together. Therefore, rather than hastily seeking a divorce, husbands and wives should strive to apply Bible principles to overcome any difficulties that may arise in marriage.—Matt. 19:4-6.

**12:41-44.** The example of the poor widow teaches us that we should be unselfish in supporting true worship.



# GILEAD GRADUATES ARE URGED TO "START DIGGING"

**O**N Saturday, September 8, 2007, a crowd of 6,352 from 41 lands was present at the graduation of the 123rd class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead. At 10:00 a.m., the chairman of the program, Anthony Morris of the Governing Body, welcomed the audience. After some opening comments, he introduced the first speaker, Gary Breaux of the United States Branch Committee.

Brother Breaux assured the students that regardless of their physical appearance, those who do Jehovah's will are beautiful in His eyes. (Jer. 13:11) He urged the graduates to maintain that kind of beauty. Next, Gerrit Lösch of the Governing Body stressed that it is proper to hope for a reward when we serve Jehovah. (Heb. 11:6) However, our *motive* should be unselfish love.

The overseer of the Theocratic Schools Department, William Samuelson, next urged the graduates to stick to the dignified assignment of announcing the reigning King and to manifest their dignity by their good conduct.\* Sam Roberson, assistant overseer of the Theocratic Schools Department, encour-

aged the graduates always to look for the good in others. Then the graduates would be better able to "have love for the whole association of brothers."—1 Pet. 2:17.

After those stimulating talks, Gilead instructor Mark Noumair interviewed a number of graduates who recounted experiences they had had in the field service during the Gilead course. They left the listeners in no doubt of their love for the ministry and their desire to help others. Kent Fischer of the Patterson Bethel Office then interviewed Branch Committee members from three lands that have received missionaries. The words of these fine brothers assured the audience, which included many of the graduates' parents, that new missionaries are well looked after in their assignments. Izak Marais of the Translation Services Department next interviewed some longtime missionaries, whose experiences gave the graduates a foretaste of joys to come.

The main talk on the program, delivered by Geoffrey Jackson of the Governing Body, was on the theme "After All You Have Heard—What Now?" Brother Jackson, who served as a missionary for nearly 25 years in the South Pacific, discussed the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount. In that discourse, Jesus spoke of two men, one discreet and the

\* The Theocratic Schools Department, under the oversight of the Teaching Committee, oversees Gilead, the school for Branch Committee members, and the school for traveling overseers.

## CLASS STATISTICS

- Number of countries represented: 10 • Number of countries assigned to: 24
- Total number of students: 56 • Average age: 33.5 • Average years in truth: 17.9
- Average years in full-time ministry: 13.8



### 123rd Graduating Class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead

In the list below, rows are numbered from front to back, and names are listed from left to right in each row.

- (1) Esparza, E.; Papaya, S.; Bilal, A.; Suárez, M.; Evers, E.; Dimichino, K. (2) Rosa, M.; Fujii, R.; Ratey, O.; Leveton, J.; Van Leemputten, M. (3) Boscaino, A.; Beck, K.; Budanov, H.; Braz, C.; Peltz, K.; Siaw, A. (4) Leveton, S.; Santikko, H.; Conte, S.; Wilson, J.; Rylatt, J.; Pierce, S.; Fujii, K. (5) Rosa, D.; Boscaino, M.; Austin, V.; Rodiel, P.; Bilal, P.; Dimichino, P. (6) Ratey, B.; Czyzyk, D.; Clarke, C.; Riedel, A.; Esparza, F.; Siaw, P.; Van Leemputten, T. (7) Rodiel, J.; Evers, J.; Green, J.; Czyzyk, J.; Santikko, M.; Rylatt, M. (8) Peltz, L.; Austin, D.; Riedel, T.; Beck, M.; Pierce, W.; Conte, S.; Green, S. (9) Suárez, J.; Clarke, J.; Papaya, S.; Budanov, M.; Wilson, R.; Braz, R.

other foolish, who built houses. The speaker pointed out that both houses may have been in the same general location. However, the foolish man built on the surface, on sand, while the discreet man dug down until he found a rock foundation on which to build. When a fierce storm occurred, the house built on rock survived but the one built on sand collapsed.—Matt. 7:24-27; Luke 6:48.

Jesus explained that the foolish man resembled those who did no more than listen to Jesus' teachings. The wise man was like those who listened to and applied Jesus'

words. Brother Jackson told the graduates, "When you apply in the missionary field what you learned through Bible study, you will be like the discreet man." So in conclusion, he urged the graduates to "start digging" in their missionary assignments.

Finally, the graduates received their diplomas and assignments, and Brother Morris gave some concluding admonition. He encouraged the graduates always to follow Jesus and never fail to rely on Jehovah for strength. The graduation program was then brought to a close.