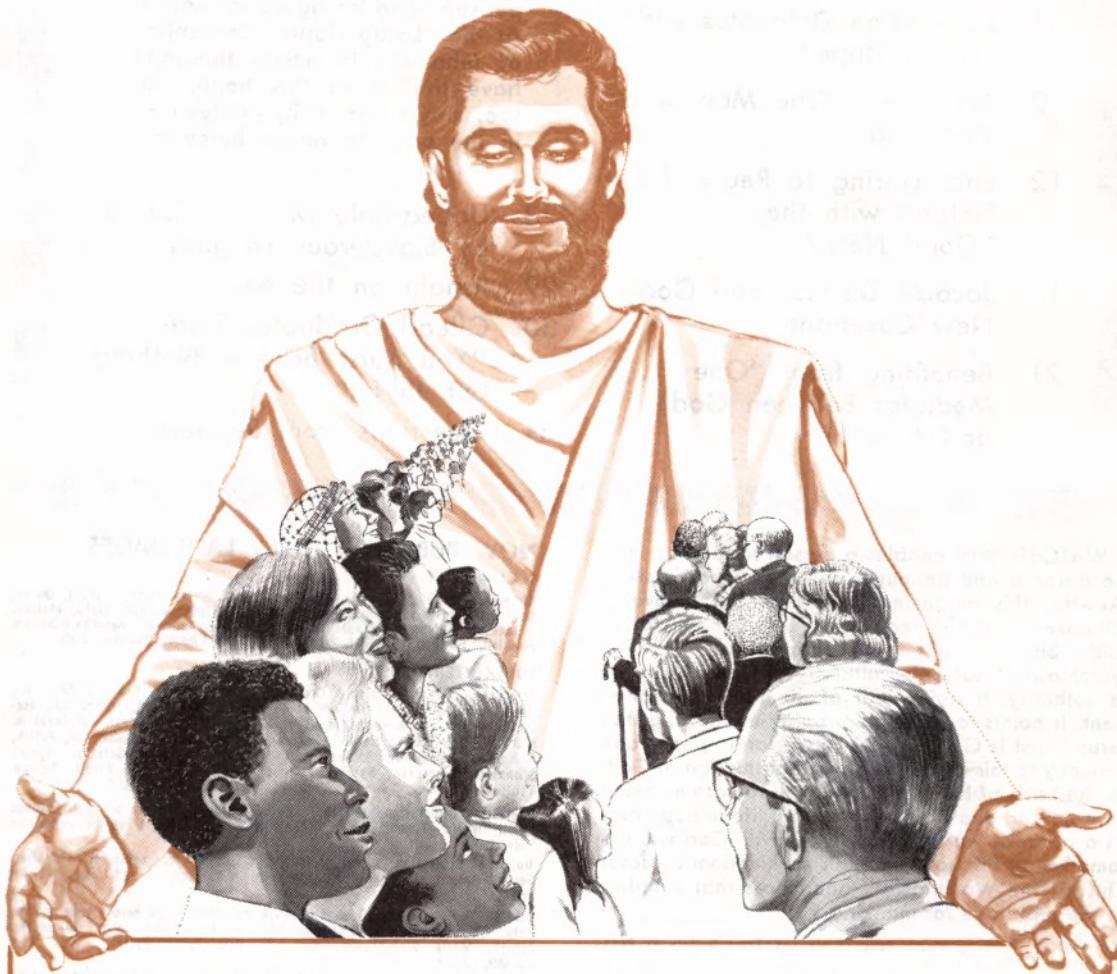


NOVEMBER 15, 1979

# THE WATCHTOWER

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



***Benefiting from "One Mediator Between God and Men"***

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A WATCHTOWER enables a person to look far into the distance and announce to others what is seen. Likewise, this magazine, published by Jehovah's Witnesses, aids the reader to see what the future holds. Since it began publication in 1879, "The Watchtower" has held faithfully to God's Word as its authority. It stays clear of all political involvement. It points to the Bible prophecies showing that Jesus Christ is God's means for restoring peace and harmony to this globe. It shows that this Son of God, on the basis of his shed blood, will release mankind from sin and death to enjoy eternal life in happiness on a paradise earth. Because Jehovah God will accomplish all this soon through his kingdom by Jesus Christ, "The Watchtower" announces that kingdom as the real hope for mankind.

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# HOPE

## -A Valuable Possession

**H**OPE has tremendous sustaining power. Believing that their hard lot would eventually improve, many persons have endured injustices, oppression and deprivation. At times, hospital patients who had been given up by physicians as incurable experienced an amazing recovery. Why? Because they never lost hope. On the other hand, persons with the best potential for getting well died when they yielded to fear and despair.

In recent years, physicians and others have come to a greater appreciation of the value of hope. However, only our Creator, Jehovah God, knows fully how important it is. In his great love for humankind, he provided a sure hope at a time when there seemed to be no bright prospects. The Most High pronounced a judicial decree that gave rise to hope. Against whom was this judgment directed, and why did it point to a better future for the offspring of our first parents, Adam and Eve?

From the Bible book of Genesis, we learn that a lowly serpent was used to deceive Eve. Satan the Devil, an invisible spirit person, is identified elsewhere in Scripture as the one who was responsible for the deception, evidently employing the serpent much as a ventriloquist uses a dummy. This spirit person had deliberately set himself in opposition to God and had also slandered him. Thus he made himself Satan, meaning "Resister," and Devil, meaning "Slanderer." In view of the Adversary's use of the serpent, the Bible calls him the "original serpent."—Gen. 3:1-6; John 8:44; Rev. 12:9.

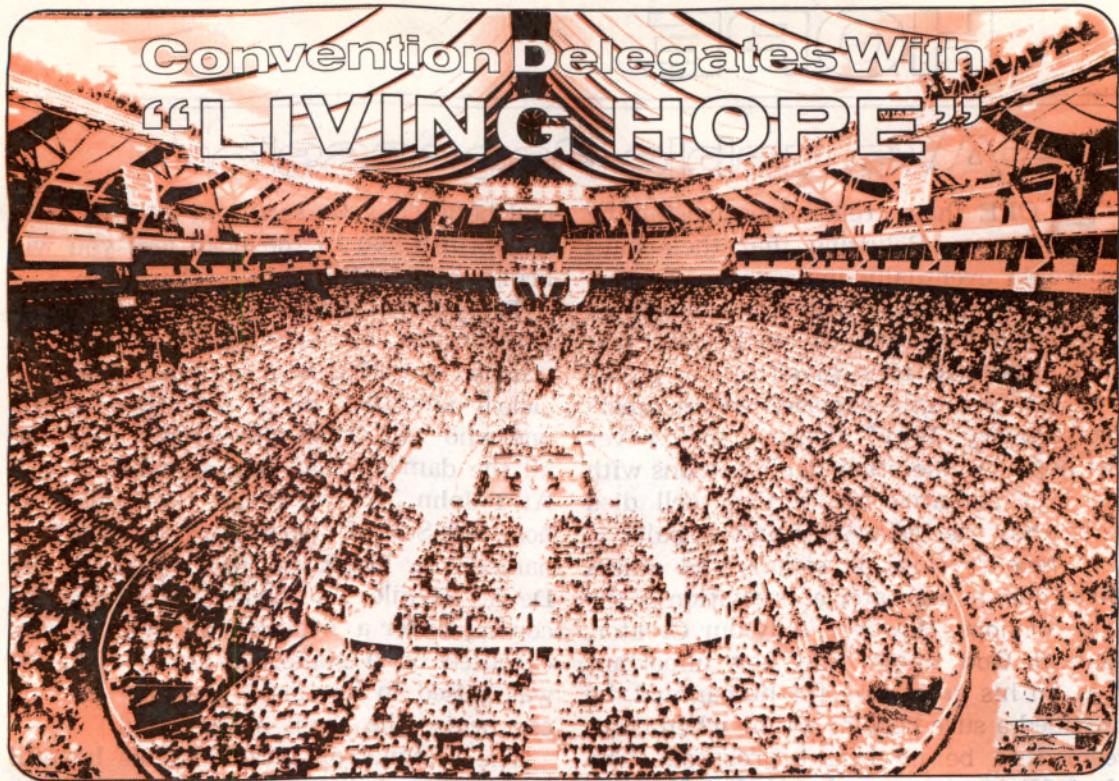
Therefore, judgment was directed to this "original serpent" as follows: "I shall put enmity between you and the woman

and between your seed and her seed. He will bruise you in the head and you will bruise him in the heel."—Gen. 3:15.

The judicial decree regarding the original serpent revealed that he would be crushed out of existence. Jesus Christ is clearly identified in the Scriptures as the one who will crush the serpent, undoing all the damage that this one has caused. At 1 John 3:8, we read: "For this purpose the Son of God was made manifest, namely, to break up the works of the Devil." While on earth, Jesus did, of course, suffer a 'heel wound' when he was executed on a stake. However, since he was raised to immortal heavenly life, he can bruise the Devil in the head.

The removal of Satan and his baneful influence, and the undoing of all his wicked works, will bring about grand blessings for mankind. Fulfilled will be these comforting words: "[God] will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore."—Rev. 21:4.

In this 20th century, hundreds of thousands of persons have been comforted by this wonderful hope set forth in the Scriptures. A remarkable demonstration of this could be seen at the series of "Living Hope" District Conventions held by Jehovah's Witnesses, starting in June of this year. In the continental United States, 982,585 persons assembled at 93 conventions, and 8,630 were baptized. Like assemblies were being held in other parts of the northern hemisphere. Still other "Living Hope" conventions are planned for the southern hemisphere. Just how did the delegates at these gatherings give evidence of being sustained by hope?



IT IS a joy to be together again, to feast at Jehovah's table, to rejoice in the happiest associations and to be encouraged to "continue in the Lord with hearty purpose." (Acts 11:23) The delegates were in full harmony with these words of the chairman's opening address at the "Living Hope" conventions. Their very presence indicated this.

While many of the assemblies were in progress, travel posed a problem in the United States because gasoline could not readily be obtained. One Witness said: "I filled my tank with gasoline days before the assembly when I found an open station. Then I parked my car and walked until it was time to leave for the convention." Others made similar arrangements, to make sure that they would have enough gasoline to get to the convention city of their choice.

Not to be overlooked are the commendable efforts that mothers put forth to be in attendance with their babies and small children. How encouraging it was to see them tenderly caring for their little ones while striving to benefit from the assembly program! The presence of family groups also provided a fine testimony to observers, proving that hope has a wholesome effect on the lives of people. One woman in downtown Portland, Maine, commented: "I think it's wonderful how you people bring your children with you—even little ones with their name badges pinned on them. I've been watching you people every morning going to the convention—it's a beautiful sight." A postman in the same city was moved to stop a Witness and his wife to tell them: "I really admire you people—all so well dressed, even the little ones."

### **HOPE NOT MISPLACED**

For some, their being able to attend the assembly confirmed that their hope in God rested on a solid foundation. Take the case of Robin and her two daughters Kim and Kari. On learning of their intention to attend the "Living Hope" convention, the husband, not a Witness, said: "I can't afford any four-day vacation trip at my expense." Robin tells of what happened, saying:

"We wondered and prayed. Could we raise enough strawberries in our modest patch and sell the berries for enough money to pay for our stay at the assembly city? Our neighbor was no encouragement. Compared with ours, his plants looked so strong and healthy. . . .

"However, our strawberries produced so well that we raised enough money for ourselves and also were able to help two other Witnesses to attend. In fact, people came from all around to look at the strawberry plants that produced so well. The whole time that we were picking strawberries, we talked to the berry buyers about the convention and the encouragement we would receive there. The neighbor just could not understand how our little plants greatly outproduced his.

"But this solved only one of our problems. We still had no means of transportation to the assembly. In due time, our prayers were answered again. My daughter Kari graduated from high school this year. One day, her uncle from out of town showed up with a graduation present—a car.

"So all obstacles were removed and we were able to attend the assembly, where my daughter Kim and I symbolized our dedication by baptism."

### **SUSTAINED BY HOPE**

The fact that hope has tremendous power was particularly in evidence among the handicapped individuals present for



**Paralyzed from birth, Wayne Patrick, now a Christian elder, listened to the "Living Hope" program from his bed**

the conventions. There were persons confined to wheelchairs, others who were virtually helpless and those who were both blind and deaf but who were helped to benefit from the program by interpreters who used the touch method.

Fifty-five-year-old Marvin, for example, has been at many assemblies over the years. Appreciatively, he said: "The only reason I am able to attend is that my mother gets me ready and a kind, lovable, dependable fellow Witness does the back-breaking job of lifting me in and out of a wheelchair. As a cerebral palsy victim, I have been confined to the chair for the past nine years. During my 32 years as a witness of Jehovah, I have had the privilege and pleasure of attending many assemblies—international, district and circuit. I have learned something new and different at each one. Due to the fine instructions and advice given at them, a person becomes a better servant of Jehovah. Of course, an individual must not forget the joy and pleasure of seeing dear old friends and meeting new ones. I am looking forward to the day when 'the lame one will climb up just as a stag does, and the tongue of the speechless one

will cry out in gladness.' "—Isa. 35:6.

Wayne, another Witness, has been paralyzed from birth. But he, too, attended one of the "Living Hope" conventions. The family owns a motor home that is wired for sound, making it possible for him to hear the convention program from his bed inside. Relating how her son came to have a God-given hope, the mother stated:

"My son Wayne was injured with instruments at the time of his birth. This resulted in his having spastic paralysis, a form of cerebral palsy. As he began to develop, I was told that his mind was teachable but much repetition would be necessary.

"I would take Wayne with me when sharing Bible truth from door to door, carrying him in my arms for many years until he got too heavy for me. Even from an early age, he showed a love for the truth, and the things that he was learning seemed to reach his heart. He had such a thirst for knowledge that he would spell words to me, asking me how to say them. Sometimes he would have me repeat a word several times until he could remember and get the sense of it. In 1960 Wayne was baptized at the age of 19.

"He is not able to attend meetings at



Five generations of this family enjoyed convention at San Antonio, Texas

the Kingdom Hall in person, since he is confined to his hospital bed at home. But we have closed-circuit television, and he is able to see what goes on at the hall. We also have a direct wire so that he can participate in the meetings regularly. From his bed, for over two years Wayne has been serving as an elder in the congregation. He conducts five Bible studies now with persons who come to his motor home, and has conducted as many as 11 at one time."

Wayne himself made the following expressions: 'I am convinced that if you can take in knowledge, Jehovah will open a way for you to give it out and to serve him.

Even if you cannot speak or hear, your happiness, faith and endurance can help other people, and this will result in a witness.'

The entire cast of a Bible drama, in full costume, came to see Wayne during the convention. They left greatly encouraged because of having observed such a remarkable example of faith and hope.

#### THEY GAINED A HOPE

Not a few persons attending the "Living Hope" conventions had come to appreciate how sad their plight was before acquiring an accurate knowledge of the truth. In some cases, they had a yearning for truth that was not satisfied until they were in their declining years.

There is 77-year-old Chris, who got baptized at the assembly in Billings, Montana. "In 1934," he said, "I left the Catholic Church and began looking for truth." Then he went from church to church and spent thousands of dollars, traveling to many locations in the United States. Several times he thought that he had found the truth. But, then, it always seemed that it 'wasn't quite enough' and so the search for truth continued. "Finally," he states, "I joined up with a 'TV religion,' sending them large sums of money and going on crusade trips to different parts of the world. After receiving a letter from one of the 'TV preachers' informing me that my dues had gone up to \$295 per month, I came to realize that this couldn't be the truth; it was highway robbery. I decided, 'Hands off,' but couldn't

shake him off. Letters kept coming, trying to gain my favor and my money.

"In view of my age, I decided to stop my search for truth and stay home on the farm. Then, one of Jehovah's Witnesses made home visits in our isolated area and began talking with my son-in-law, who also lives and works on my farm. He wasn't interested. But what the Witness said about the Kingdom made sense to me. So I asked him to come back to talk with me some more."

What was the result? A Bible study was started. Chris concludes: "Learning the truth from the Bible has given me real hope for the future."

A deaf Witness who is also legally blind



John C. Booth, of Brooklyn Bethel, examines convention release with three young Witnesses

made it very clear how the Bible's message has given him hope and a real purpose in living. He stated:

"All my life I have been determined not to let my handicap become an obstacle to a full and happy life. I was on my high-school track team, held first place in the blind bowling league and eventually received an award for outstanding achievement as a handicapped person. All of this

made me proud and self-confident but not happy. I became the first handicapped person to be employed by Polaroid, and had a responsible position. To attract women, I bought a large house and a boat. But neither material possessions nor immorality brought any sense of fulfillment. I had no goals in life, no future. As a Catholic, I sought to attain heavenly life by scrupulous observance of rituals. But the connection between God's laws and my way of life was never explained. These disappointments made me a skeptic.

"One of Jehovah's Witnesses found me in this condition. He returned the following week with a Witness who knew sign language. By holding her hand as she made the signs, I was able to communicate. My response to almost every sentence was, 'Where's the proof?' A Scriptural answer would always be given.

"At first I really wasn't interested in the Bible but wanted to test out Jehovah's Witnesses, expecting them to be like the members of other religions. I kept waiting for the day that a bill would be presented for the Bible lessons, but that day never came. I would ask them to do little errands for me, not because I couldn't do them myself but to see if they would be willing to do something other than study the Bible with me. When attending meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses, I would approach those present, smelling their breath to determine whether it carried any scent of alcohol or tobacco. I would invite the deaf Witness for a cookout in my yard and afterward check to determine whether anything had been taken from my home. Finally, I came to recognize that these people were different and that their message was the truth.

"How thankful I am to Jehovah for giving me time to develop a good heart and granting me a real hope for the future! It is a joy to share regularly in preaching the 'good news' to others, not only to the deaf people in our area but also from door to door. I look forward to the time when I will be able to hear and see. I have full faith in the promises of the God who cannot lie."—Heb. 6:17, 18.

#### THEY TOOK TIME TO SHARE THEIR HOPE

On Friday morning of the assembly, many Witnesses availed themselves of the opportunity to share their hope with residents of the convention cities. The news media took considerable interest in this public witness. As observers, a number of newspaper reporters even accompanied the Witnesses in this activity.

In Providence, Rhode Island, a newspaper reporter heard a 72-year-old woman tell a Witness: "I was so mad this morning that I wanted to go to Washington and blow it up." After the Witness turned her attention to the Bible's answer to the world's problems, she said: "I suppose you're right. Maybe you have the right attitude—positive thinking. You know what? I feel more cheerful already. I don't even feel like blowing up Washington anymore."

The series of "Living Hope" conventions has indeed proved to be a blessing to all in attendance as well as to many other persons who were reached with the Bible's message in the assembly cities. If you are among those who seek a bright hope for the future, we invite you to speak with Jehovah's Witnesses the next time they call in your area. Why not find out for yourself how powerful a force a God-given hope can be in your life?

"I rejoiced when they were saying to me:  
'To the house of Jehovah let us go.'"—Ps. 122:1.



## JONATHAN 'one man in a thousand'

regarded as a serious threat to their position.

Early in the reign of his father, Jonathan distinguished himself as a brave warrior. With a thousand poorly equipped men, he overcame the armed Philistine garrison at Geba. (1 Sam. 13:1-3) Jonathan must have been at least 20 years old then, as that was the minimum age for Israel's soldiers.—Num. 1:3.

Later, with divine help, Jonathan and his armor-bearer struck down about 20 enemy Philistines. This deed paved the way for the Israelites to gain a victory over their foes. During this campaign, Jonathan unknowingly disregarded his father's rash oath. For Saul to carry out the full consequences of this oath required that his son be executed. Jonathan did not shrink back in fear but said to his father: "Here I am! Let me die!" Recognizing that Jehovah had been with Jonathan, the people, however, redeemed him.—1 Sam. 14:1-45.

It was nearly 20 years later that David killed the Philistine giant Go-

WISE King Solomon observed: "One man out of a thousand I have found." (Eccl. 7:28) This indicates that an ideal man is rare. Few stand out in moral excellence. One who did was Jonathan, the son of King Saul. He was courageous, loyal and unselfish. If there ever was a man who might have been justified in yielding to feelings of jealousy, rivalry or envy, Jonathan was that man. But he manifested great affection for and loyalty to the very person whom less noble men would have

liath. David's courageous act, carried out with full faith in Jehovah's saving power, stirred the heart of Jonathan. The Bible reports: "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) In token of his friendship, Jonathan gave David his garments, his sword, his bow and his belt.—1 Sam. 18:4.

When David later showed himself courageous in leading the Israelite forces in battle against the Philistines, the women greeted the returning victors with song and dances. They sang: "Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his tens of thousands." (1 Sam. 18:5-7) This incited Saul to even greater jealousy, and he began regarding David with extreme suspicion. Failing in his attempt to kill David with a spear, Saul later agreed to give him Michal his daughter in marriage, provided that David present proof of his having killed 100 enemy Philistines. In this Saul fully believed that David would fall at enemy hands. However, David re-

his desire to have David put to death, Jonathan intervened and succeeded in getting his father to promise not to kill his friend. Later, however, David was forced to flee for his life, since Saul again threw a spear at him. The king also sent men to watch David's house during the night, with the understanding that they would kill him in the morning. That night David made a successful escape through a window in his home.—1 Sam. 19:1-12.

Thereafter Jonathan cooperated with David in an effort to determine just how his father felt about his friend. Saul became enraged and lashed out against his son with the words: "You son of a rebellious maid, do I not well know that you are choosing the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of the secret parts of your mother? For all the days that the son of Jesse is alive on the ground, you and your kingship will not be firmly established. So now send and fetch him to me, for he is destined for death." When Jonathan protested, his infuriated father hurled the spear at him.—1 Sam. 20:1-33.

Subsequently, at a previously arranged spot, Jonathan met David. Both men reaffirmed their friendship and their loyalty. (1 Sam. 20:35-42) That such a friendship came into existence and continued is indeed remarkable. Jonathan was the heir apparent to the throne and knew that the kingship would eventually come into the hands of David. Additionally, he was David's senior by about 30 years. Yet Jonathan was able to rejoice in David's successes and to weep with him in his affliction. Doubtless the friendship of Jonathan helped David to maintain proper regard for the king so as not to take advantage of opportunities to harm him. While Saul was ruthlessly pursuing David, Jonathan had occasion to strengthen his friend. Regarding one instance, we read: "Jonathan the son of Saul now rose up and went to David at Horesh, that he might

## In Coming Issues

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- **Liberation and Survival of Christendom's Fall**
- **Could You Be Your Own Enemy?**

turned with 200 foreskins of the Philistines—evidence that he had slain that many. This only intensified Saul's fear of and hatred for David.—1 Sam. 18:8-29.

But Jonathan did not allow his father's jealous hatred to destroy his friendship with David. When Saul openly expressed

strengthen his hand in regard to God. And he went on to say to him: 'Do not be afraid; for the hand of Saul my father will not find you, and you yourself will be king over Israel, and I myself shall become second to you; and Saul my father also has knowledge to that effect.'—1 Sam. 23:16, 17.

How noble Jonathan was in being content to take the second place in the kingdom! Such unselfish devotion was possible because Jonathan accepted David as Jehovah's choice for the kingship and loved him for his fine qualities.

Jonathan, though, did not become second in the kingdom but died along with his father in battle. (1 Sam. 31:2) The death of Saul and Jonathan provided the oc-

casion for David to compose a dirge, called "The Bow." Initially, this dirge became part of the collection of poems, songs and other writings that constituted the book of Jashar. Thereafter "The Bow" was set forth in the inspired record of 2 Samuel. The composition itself was to be taught to the sons of Judah.—2 Sam. 1:17-27.

When we consider the marvelous bond of friendship that existed between David and Jonathan, we can readily appreciate why David expressed himself as he did in "The Bow." He lamented as follows: "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) Truly, Jonathan was 'one man in a thousand.'

## Did Moses Go Back on His Word?

AT THE end of the ninth plague—three days of total darkness—Pharaoh threatened Moses: "Watch yourself! Do not try to see my face again, because on the day of your seeing my face you will die." (Ex. 10:28) According to Exodus 10:29, Moses replied: "That is the way you have spoken. I shall not try to see your face anymore."

In the next chapter of Exodus, verses 4 to 8, however, we read of Moses' announcing the 10th plague to Pharaoh. Had Moses gone back on his word? No, this does not appear to be the case. Evidently Exodus 11:1-3 should be viewed as being parenthetical. Thus, after Moses said: "I shall not try to see your face anymore," he did not quit speaking but followed up this statement with the announcement of the 10th plague. Then, as the account says, Moses "went out from Pharaoh in the heat of anger."—Ex. 11:8.

Only by knowing that the 10th plague would be the very last could Moses have told Pharaoh that he would not try to see his face again.

Otherwise, it would have been presumptuous for him to agree to something that might not have been in harmony with Jehovah's will. The words of Exodus 11:1-3 reveal that Moses was aware that the 10th plague would be the last, and these words also supply information as to what the Israelites were to do after that plague came upon the Egyptians.—Compare Exodus 11:2, 3 with Exodus 12:35, 36.

As things worked out, Pharaoh was forced to send for Moses and Aaron. Humbled by the 10th plague, Pharaoh told them: "Get up, get out from the midst of my people, both you and the other sons of Israel, and go, serve Jehovah, just as you have stated. Take both your flocks and your herds, just as you have stated, and go. Also, you must bless me besides." (Ex. 12:31, 32) What a contrast! The Pharaoh who threatened Moses with death now pleads for a blessing. He did not want Moses and the other Israelites to leave Egypt still cursing him and wanting further calamity to befall him.



## Endeavoring To Reach All Finland With The "Good News"

IT TAKES effort to reach everyone with the "good news," and that is especially true in Finland. Located in the far corner of Europe between Sweden and the Soviet Union, Finland is one of the northernmost countries of the world. And it is cold, but not as frigid and snowbound as you might think, thanks to the warming effect of the Gulf Stream.

Most of the 4,743,000 inhabitants of this "land of a thousand lakes" speak Finnish, although Swedish is the mother tongue of about 7 percent of the population. It is believed that the Finns originally migrated here from somewhere in southeastern Russia. They are closely related to the Estonians and, more distantly, to the Hungarians.

Officially, more than 92 percent of the people belong to the official state religion, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. But many persons contend that the Bible was merely written by men and seriously question what it has to say. In this they echo the teaching of some prom-

inent clergymen. Church attendance is about 3 percent, but menfolk attend only for some special occasion, such as a wedding or a funeral. Of course, the Finns need the "good news," and the more than 13,000 Jehovah's Witnesses here are making strenuous efforts to reach them with this heartening message. But how did proclamation of the "good news" get started in Finland?

### RAPID GROWTH IN A FERTILE FIELD

Back in 1909, colporteurs, or full-time workers, from Sweden first came to Finland and distributed some Bible literature. But a real start was made later the same year, when a religious man from Turku set out on a pilgrimage to Palestine but was delayed in Sweden. There he received a witness and obtained a Bible study aid written by C. T. Russell, the first president of the Watch Tower Society. Soon the man realized that it contained the truth. Abandoning his trip, he returned to Finland, took the book to his friend Kaarlo Harteva

in Helsinki and asked him to translate it into Finnish. These two men soon were baptized and energetically went about the task of spreading the "good news" throughout this land, translating the literature and giving public Bible talks.

Their diligent efforts brought swift results. When C. T. Russell visited Finland in 1912, almost 2,000 persons came to hear him speak, and 140 attended the convention then held. Reports indicate that 477 public talks were given here in 1912, with 17 individuals sharing in the colporteur work. J. F. Rutherford addressed an audience of 3,000 when he visited Finland in 1913.

The fine evangelizing spirit evident among God's people here in those early days has continued down to the present time. And from a "lightning" start, God's work has made steady progress. Now there are 251 congregations spread throughout the country. Back in 1922, a "Freedom of Religion" Act became law. It then was possible for individuals so desiring to resign from the state church. Also, the new law guaranteed each one the right to practice his religion, as long as it did not conflict with good morals and habits. This provided the basis for the official registration, in 1945, of the Religious Association of Jehovah's Witnesses. However, a branch office of the Watch Tower Society had been established at Helsinki in 1911, and regular publication of the Finnish *Watchtower* had begun in 1912.

#### EFFORT NEEDED TO REACH THE PEOPLE

In those early years, it was far from easy to reach the people in this large, sparsely populated country, a third of which lies north of the Arctic Circle. Vast forests cover a third of the land, and water and swamps another tenth. There are beautiful lakes—not just 1,000, but almost 60,000—with more than twice

as many islands, including some 30,000 around the coastline. Hence, traveling to reach the people is a slow process, and this was especially true in those early times. Today, roads and transportation have improved tremendously, and there are more cars, fine trains and buses and an excellent airline system.

Finland's gaining of independence from Russia in December 1917 brought on a civil war, with the contending factions fighting for control. In spite of all the resulting problems, however, true Christians kept right on declaring the "good news," and new congregations were formed.

During World War II Finnish witnesses of Jehovah had to contend with bans on their literature as well as arrests and imprisonment, particularly with regard to their Christian neutrality. (John 15:19) But their efforts in declaring the "good news" were blessed greatly. In 1944 there was a 62-percent increase in Kingdom proclaimers, and by 1945 the publisher total was up to 1,632 in 267 congregations. Today, there is one witness of Jehovah for every 373 persons in this land, surely evidence of God's blessing.

Of course, the Arctic climate presents a challenge. But these bearers of the "good news" dress warmly and go out in the coldest weather to reach the people in their homes. Sometimes the cold can be a help. To illustrate: A certain man saw some Witnesses approaching his house one wintry day. Not wanting to talk to them, he headed for the attic, intending to remain there while his wife spoke to them. From his vantage point in the cold, unheated attic, he could hear the Kingdom publishers talking to his wife in the warm room below. Just as he was hoping that the visitors would quit speaking and leave, to his dismay he heard his wife offer to make coffee for them. Then, as he sat shivering, he heard the Witnesses offer to

have a six-month Bible study with the wife. Well, that was too much! He could not possibly stay in the attic for six months! So down he came to join in the conversation and get some hot coffee. The study was started, the man joined in, and today he is one of our spiritual brothers.

#### **CONSOLIDATING THE CONGREGATIONS**

Back in 1949 there were 415 congregations with an average of nine publishers in each. This was so due to a lack of transportation and the relative isolation of the brothers in rural areas. But as conditions improved, more and more congregations were combined, and this greatly encouraged and strengthened Finnish Christians. Now there are only 251 congregations, but each has an average of 52 Kingdom publishers, making it possible to hold more instructive and faith-strengthening meetings.

Since 1968 about 100 new Kingdom Halls have been built, and now almost 200 congregations meet regularly in their own halls. The new Bethel home erected in 1961 proved too small for the expansion, and two large extensions were added to the building in the 1970's. Then, in 1978, at Hämeenlinna, property was purchased for a circuit assembly hall. This fine, attractive structure seating 1,300 persons was completed early in 1979. It serves about 9,000 Witnesses in southern Finland.

#### **ADAPTING TO THE PEOPLE**

When calling from house to house, Witnesses endeavor to have friendly conversations. But this calls for adaptability. In the cities, householders seem to feel greater pressures, and there is a need to "get to the point" rather quickly. However, in certain rural areas, usually the Witnesses can go ahead with their Scriptural topic only after answering such questions as

"Where did you say you came from?" and "Are you married?" In certain parts of Finland, it is rather difficult to start conversations with householders. But patient Kingdom proclaimers there often are rewarded with fine discussions. Interestingly, that part of the country has the highest ratio of Witnesses to population.

Some years ago, a circuit overseer told of a young man named Risto. Congregation meetings were held in the house where he lived. But Risto did not take part in them and hardly ever said a word. The others in the family said he was not interested. After working all the nearby territory, the circuit overseer asked Risto to guide him and his wife to the only group of houses not yet worked.

Seeing that there were not too many houses in that area, the circuit overseer asked Risto if he would like to go along with them. The young man agreed to this, and the neighbors gave them a friendly reception. After the first couple of calls, the circuit overseer suggested that it might be more appropriate for Risto to invite his neighbors to the public talk being held in his house, and this he gladly did. Later, he even offered the magazines to the householders. When the family heard that Risto had actually spoken to the people about the Bible, they were amazed. "We didn't know you were interested!" they exclaimed. "Why didn't you tell us?" "Well, you never asked," replied Risto. After that he made fine progress and has been doing excellent work as a special pioneer (a full-time Kingdom proclaimer) for several years now.

#### **OPPOSITION FAILS TO STOP OUR WORK**

Finland has a tradition of freedom, and officials generally try to treat everyone fairly. But there have been some efforts to stop the witness work.

For example, a few years ago, the As-

sociation of Finnish Cities drew up a set of suggested ordinances for cities and towns, and one of the articles in these "police regulations" bans religious work that involves "endeavoring to go from house to house." Their argument was that ringing doorbells, especially in apartment buildings, disturbed the peace of the householders. Many cities and towns adopted the new ordinances.

Realizing that there are many people ringing doorbells in apartment houses, and that the noise can disturb people in adjoining dwellings, Jehovah's Witnesses have endeavored to stagger their calls instead of calling at each apartment in succession. Otherwise, they have continued witnessing from house to house, an activity that is very much appreciated by a great many people. For several years no actual difficulties were encountered. But one day, two pioneers in the small coastal town of Loviisa happened to call at the home of a policeman who contended that they were breaking the law. Later, they received notice to pay a fine, but chose instead to take the case to court.

#### **COURT RECOGNIZES PEOPLE'S RIGHT TO BE CALLED UPON**

In their legal brief, the brothers stated that ringing a person's doorbell in a proper manner and for a legitimate reason cannot logically be viewed as disturbing the peace of the householder, for he has such a bell so that someone can ring it when desiring to speak to him. The brief showed that it is part of the religion of Jehovah's Witnesses to take the Bible message to the people from house to house, and that the government approved this method of evangelizing when it granted a charter to the religious association of the Witnesses. It was shown that many people want Jehovah's Witnesses to call on them and that it would be an abridgment of freedom to

ban all house-to-house calls just because a minority do not desire to have such calls.

The young pioneer told the court that he had been a drug addict before meeting Jehovah's Witnesses and would never have known that he could ask them for help with his problem; so he was very glad that they had made an unsolicited call on him. They had helped him to overcome the drug habit and become a useful citizen, and he said that many others would appreciate help but do not know where to obtain it. He pointed out that it is necessary to look for such people by calling at the doors.

After listening to the argument, the magistrate agreed that the brother had not broken the ordinance because he had not tried to go inside the houses. On this basis the charge was dismissed and the prosecutor did not appeal the decision. So, as the local newspaper said the next day, in Loviisa it is legal to go from house to house to talk about religion, so long as you do not try to go inside. Since then, many towns and cities have repealed the ordinance, and some officials have made favorable remarks on the good work that Jehovah's Witnesses are doing by going from house to house with the Bible.

Finns have been living in comparative tranquillity for many years now. But as rising inflation, unemployment and crime add to the feeling of insecurity, more and more people are interested in knowing what the Bible has to say about the future. Truly, in Finland, as elsewhere in Christendom, there is 'famine for hearing the words of Jehovah.' (Amos 8:11) But in this land of many lakes, green forests and white snow, of light summer nights and wintry northern lights, Jehovah's Witnesses are determined to keep on making the effort to reach all with the hope-inspiring "good news."

# JACOB'S DISTRESS AND GOD'S

"I will conclude with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah."

JACOB and Rachel were lovers. Jacob, who came to be known as Israel, became the father of the 12-tribe nation of Israel. Rachel, as his preferred wife, became the mother of the tribe of Benjamin. The tribe of Judah descended from Jacob's less loved wife Leah. So the name Jacob became a symbol of the whole nation, and Rachel symbolized an honored motherly representative of that nation. Distress without any equal up till then was foretold for Jacob, and Rachel was to feel the grievous effects of it. At the prospect of such a distress happening in his day, the prophet Jeremiah, who lived in Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin, was inspired to say:

<sup>2</sup> "Alas! For that day is a great one, so that there is no other like it [in previous history], and it is the time of distress for Jacob. But he will be saved even out of it."—Jer. 30:7.

<sup>3</sup> What this unprecedented "time of distress for Jacob" would mean for symbolic Rachel was foretold in Jeremiah 31:15 in these words: "In Ramah [a city in the territory of Benjamin] a voice is being heard, lamentation and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping over her sons. She has refused to be comforted over her sons, because they are no more." This meant, not that they had been killed, but that they had been captured and taken away from their homeland to an enemy country as exiles. Ah, yes! After 18 months of dis-

tressing siege by the Babylonian conquerors, Jerusalem, which lay at the northern border between the territories of Judah and Benjamin, had been demolished, its temple destroyed, the king, princes and priests captured, and the vast majority of the survivors taken into exile in Babylon. By the middle of the seventh lunar month (Tishri) of 607 B.C.E., the whole

Rachel weeping over her sons



1, 2. (a) What roles did Jacob and Rachel play with regard to the nation of Israel? (b) How was unparalleled trouble foretold for Jacob?

3. (a) Over what situation was Rachel foretold to weep uncomforted? (b) When did the "time of distress" overtake Jacob?

# NEW COVENANT

ew covenant."—Jer. 31:31.

land of the Kingdom of Judah was forsaken by the few Jews left behind and was left desolate without man and domesticated beast. This desolate, unoccupied state of the land was divinely decreed to continue for 70 years.

<sup>4</sup> What a "time of distress" that was for Jacob! He was not spared it, he did

4. When was Jacob to be "saved" out of the foretold distress?

not escape it, and it would not be until after those 70 years of complete desolation of the land that God would fulfill the comforting words that he added: "But he will be saved even out of it." (Jer. 30:7) How was this salvation to be?

<sup>5</sup> Jehovah enlarged upon this subject when, after foretelling Rachel's bereavement of her sons, he added the words: "This is what Jehovah has said: 'Hold back your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears, for there exists a reward for your activity,' is the utterance of Jehovah, 'and they [your sons] will certainly return from the land of the en-

5. What did Jehovah say for the comfort of Rachel, and how did he fulfill his promise?



emy."'" (Jer. 31:16) The "land of the enemy" was Babylon. (Mic. 7:8-10) So the Babylonian hold on the "sons" of Rachel was to be broken. As a reassurance of this to the bereaved Rachel, God went on to say: "'And there exists a hope for your future,' is the utterance of Jehovah, 'and the sons will certainly return to their own territory.'" (Jer. 31:17) To the amazement of the unbelieving hostile nations, this return to their own territory, including Ramah, took place from 537 B.C.E. onward. (Neh. 7:30; 11:31-33) After such a distressing national "break-down" in 607 B.C.E., what a miraculous "recuperation" Jehovah brought about!

<sup>6</sup> Regarding this he said: "'For I shall bring up a recuperation for you, and from your strokes I shall heal you,' is the utterance of Jehovah. 'For a woman chased away is what they called you: "This is Zion, for which no one is searching."' This is what Jehovah has said: 'Here I am gathering the captive ones of the tents of Jacob, and for his tabernacles I shall have pity. And the city [Zion, or, Jerusalem] will actually be rebuilt upon her mound; and upon its rightful site the dwelling tower itself will sit. And from them there will certainly go forth thanksgiving, and the sound of those who are laughing.'" —Jer. 30:17-19.

<sup>7</sup> Jehovah is a "happy God," and he wants those in a relationship with him by a covenant to be happy also. He himself laughs! His promise of future laughing for the exiled Jewish people proved that he had not broken off the Law covenant that had been mediated by the prophet Moses between Him and the nation of Israel. But O how the Israelites had broken the terms of that covenant! "Further-

6. In line with healing her "strokes," how would Jehovah transform Zion, or Jerusalem, from being like a woman chased away for whom no man is searching? 7. What about that utterance of Jehovah shows whether at the time of the "strokes" Jehovah would break off the Law covenant, but how had the Jewish people treated that covenant?

more," said Jehovah to them, "they built the high places of Baal that are in the valley of the son of Hinnom [to the south of the temple of Jerusalem], in order to make their sons and their daughters pass through the fire [as human sacrifices] to Molech, a thing that I did not command them, neither did it come up into my heart to do this detestable thing, for the purpose of making Judah [the Kingdom of Judah] sin."—Jer. 32:35.

<sup>8</sup> For reasons like that the Israelites deserved to have trouble like an onward pressing tempest come upon the Kingdom of Judah and its capital, Jerusalem. But, after foretelling this, merciful Jehovah went on to say: "'At that time [of Israel's restoration],' is the utterance of Jehovah, 'I shall become God to all the families of Israel; and as for them, they will become my people.'"—Jer. 30:23 through 31:1.

<sup>9</sup> Despite their past unsavory history, God would deal with them according to what they now proved to be. He would seek their welfare and would set before them the opportunity to continue in happy relationship with him indefinitely. As to this, he said:

<sup>10</sup> "Here I am collecting them together out of all the lands to which I shall have dispersed them in my anger and in my rage and in great indignation; and I will bring them back to this place and make them dwell in security. And they will certainly become my people, and I myself shall become their God. And I will give them one heart and one way in order to fear me always, for good to them and to their sons after them. And I will conclude with them an indefinitely lasting covenant, that I shall not turn back from behind them, for me to do them good; and the fear of me I shall put in their heart in

8. So after what deserved experience would the Israelites become a people to Jehovah?

9, 10. For the regathered Israelites to continue indefinitely in a happy relationship with him, what would Jehovah put into their hearts, with what effect?

order not to turn aside from me. And I will exult over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land in trueness with all my heart and with all my soul." —Jer. 32:37-43; also 31:27-30.

#### A BETTER COVENANT

<sup>11</sup> With such an excellent *new* start, how is it that rebuilt Jerusalem lasted only 606 years longer, or down to the summer of 70 C.E.? Certainly, in view of how Jehovah in the above words had covenanted to back up his people, the fault could not be laid at his doorstep. Not because of any shortcomings on his part could the need arise for making a new covenant. And yet by means of Jeremiah he announced that he would make a new and better covenant. Moreover, fleshly Israel could be first to take advantage of it!

<sup>12</sup> In 1513 B.C.E. Jehovah had concluded a Law covenant with Israel by means of Moses as mediator. That was 906 years before Jehovah used Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, to destroy Jerusalem and its temple. But that did not make his Law covenant with Israel null and void. So Jehovah did not need another covenant of a different kind in order to heal the wounded condition of the Jews by delivering them from the enemy land of Babylon and restoring them to their God-given homeland. However, by doing this he reassured himself as being their God and he reassured them that they were still his people and that Zion, or Jerusalem, was no longer like a "woman chased away" for whom no one was searching.

<sup>13</sup> Jehovah purposed to make a surpassing demonstration of his loving-kindness to his covenant people. That is why he did

not let the sword of their conquerors kill them off completely. There were to be survivors. These would find living in exile in an enemy land to be like tenting in a wilderness in which they found no real repose, for it was not their homeland, not their God-given land. By repentantly turning to Him in this "wilderness" condition, they would find favor in his sight, because he had not broken off his covenant with them. The happy results he foretold:

<sup>14</sup> "The people made up of survivors from the sword found favor in the wilderness, when Israel was walking to get his repose [in his Palestinian homeland]. From far away Jehovah himself appeared to me, saying: 'And with a love to time indefinite I have loved you. That is why I have drawn you with loving-kindness. Yet shall I rebuild you and you will actually be rebuilt, O virgin of Israel. You will yet deck yourself with your tambourines and actually go forth in the dance of those who are laughing. You will yet plant vineyards in the mountains of Samaria [formerly occupied by the Northern Kingdom of Israel]. The planters will certainly plant and start to use them. For there exists a day when the lookouts in the mountainous region of Ephraim [the leading tribe of the Northern Kingdom of Israel] will actually call out, "Rise up, O men, and let us go up to Zion [Jerusalem], to Jehovah our God."'" —Jer. 31:2-9.

<sup>15</sup> Ah, yes, all the southern and northern tribes of Israel would be regathered and would reunite in worshiping Jehovah in Zion! That meant that, because of God's indefinitely lasting love, Jacob (all 12 tribes of Israel) would be saved out of the "time of distress" that culminated for him with the desolating of Jerusalem and Judah in 607 B.C.E. (Jer. 30:7) Yet, even

<sup>16</sup> According to that just-quoted prophecy, where would all 12 tribes of Israel renew their worship of Jehovah? (b) What would he afterward make with the house of Israel, and with what effects upon his people?

before that "distress" occurred, Jehovah's loving-kindness moved him to foretell something more wonderful than merely the regathering of his exiled people:

<sup>16</sup> "Look! There are days coming," is the utterance of Jehovah, 'and I will conclude with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah a new covenant; not one like the covenant that I concluded with their forefathers in the day of my taking hold of their hand to bring them forth out of the land of Egypt, "which covenant of mine they themselves broke, although I myself had husbandly ownership of them,"' is the utterance of Jehovah. 'For this is the covenant that I shall conclude with the house of Israel after those days,' is the utterance of Jehovah. 'I will put my law within them, and in their heart I shall write it. And I will become their God, and they themselves will become my people.' 'And they will no more teach each one his companion and each one his brother, saying, "Know Jehovah!" for they will all of them know me, from the least one of them even to the greatest one of them,' is the utterance of Jehovah. 'For I shall forgive their error, and their sin I shall remember no more.'"

—Jer. 31:31-34.

#### A NEW MEDIATOR NEEDED

<sup>17</sup> Are we today interested in that new covenant? We should be, for it is still in force. But with whom has it been in force till now? The millions of Jews throughout the earth do not claim that it is in force with them. They believe that they are still under the covenant made with their forefathers at Mount Sinai. That was more than 3,490 years ago! Jehovah's promise of a new covenant was made through Jeremiah more than 2,580 years ago. If those Jews are right, why has God been so long about putting the promised new covenant

17. Why should we today still be interested in the new covenant, and how long ago was it that the Law covenant was already old and about to pass away?

into force? Why, more than 1,900 years ago the Jewish Law covenant was already old and apparently due to pass away to make way for the new covenant. Did it do so?

<sup>18</sup> On this point a Jewish student who used to sit at the feet of the famous Pharisee teacher, Gamaliel in Jerusalem, wrote: "In his saying 'a new covenant' he has made the former one obsolete. Now that which is made obsolete and growing old is near to vanishing away." (Heb. 8:13; 2 Cor. 3:14) When the Jewish writer penned those words to Christianized Hebrews in Jerusalem, it was about the year 61 C.E. In an earlier letter to Christian congregations in the Roman province of Galatia, he wrote: "Why, then, the Law? It was added [to the Abrahamic covenant concerning the Seed] to make transgressions [by humans] manifest, until the seed [of Abraham] should arrive to whom the promise had been made; and it was transmitted through angels by the hand of a mediator."—Gal. 3:19.

<sup>19</sup> That unnamed mediator was Moses. Now if the making of the old Law covenant required him as a mediator between God and imperfect, sinful men, certainly the making of the new covenant between God and men would call for a mediator, even though he is not mentioned in Jeremiah 31:31-34. By Jeremiah's time Moses was long dead. Because he had acted as mediator, the Law of the old covenant was called "the law of Moses."—Acts 15:5.

<sup>20</sup> The new covenant, because of being a superior covenant, deserved to have a mediator superior to Moses. Let us now note how the heavenly Provider of the new

18. (a) God's promise of a covenant that was "new" indicated what concerning the Law covenant and put it in what age bracket? (b) How was that Law code transmitted to the nation of Israel?

19. Because the Law covenant needed Moses as a mediator, what does this argue regarding the new covenant, which is also made between God and men?

20, 21. (a) In foretelling the new covenant, how did God indicate its superiority over the previous covenant? (b) What would God make out of the Israelite covenanters if they faithfully kept covenant?

covenant indicated its superiority over the previous covenant. He speaks of it as "not one like the covenant that I concluded with their forefathers in the day of my taking hold of their hand to bring them forth out of the land of Egypt, 'which covenant of mine they themselves broke, although I myself had husbandly ownership of them.'" (Jer. 31:32) He had in mind to make something grand out of them by means of the covenant that he concluded with the Israelites after he brought them up out of Egypt. Hence, he said to them:

<sup>21</sup> "If you will strictly obey my voice and will indeed keep my covenant, [what then?] then you will certainly become my special property out of all other peoples, because the whole earth belongs to me. And you yourselves will become to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." —Ex. 19:5, 6.

<sup>22</sup> Certainly the words "a kingdom of priests" point to a government ideally suited to the needs of all mankind. Its priests represent and serve God the Savior

of mankind. In itself, the "kingdom of priests" is a "nation," a national group clean enough to be called "holy," fit to be used by God. From all the other nations on earth God picked it out. It was meant to be God's "special property," just as a wife is the special property of her husband. In fact, God likened the redeemed Israelites of old to a national wife by saying that he "had husbandly ownership of them." But, instead of rendering wifely subjection to him by keeping his sacred covenant, she ignored the special obligations of this favored relationship. (Jer. 3:1-3, 20) She deserved to be divorced!

<sup>23</sup> From the later history of that ancient covenant people of Jehovah God, we know that things did not improve permanently for them. So the fact that the Law covenant mediated by Moses did not work cannot be disputed. How glad we can be therefore that God did not give up in making arrangements in behalf of that desired "kingdom of priests"! Looking to that ideal government, he replaced the old covenant with the better one.

22. (a) Such a "kingdom of priests" would be what kind of government and suitable for whom? (b) To whom would that "holy nation" be a "special property," and in what kind of relationship to him?

23. Did the Mosaic Law covenant work, and what did God do about the purposed ideal government for mankind?

## Benefiting from

### "One Mediator Between God And Men"

**T**O DAY none of the 152 nations composing the United Nations are in-

1. (a) Why are the Jews of today not interested in a new covenant? (b) Who alone could propose the new covenant and its mediator?

terested in making a covenant with Jehovah, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. No, not even the 15,000,000 Jews that at present are scattered around the earth.

In spite of the prophecy of Jeremiah 31:31-34, they prefer to believe that they are still under the old Law covenant mediated by Moses. "Because of not knowing the righteousness of God but seeking to establish their own [by striving to keep the Law covenant], they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God," available to them through the new covenant. (Rom. 10:1-3) Jehovah, the God of true righteousness, proposed the new covenant. He alone could establish it and pick the suitable mediator for it.

<sup>2</sup> "Look! There are days coming," is the utterance of Jehovah, 'and I will conclude with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah a new covenant; . . . 'For this is the covenant that I shall conclude with the house of Israel after those days,' is the utterance of Jehovah. 'I will put my law within them, and in their heart I shall write it. And I will become their God, and they themselves will become my people. And they will no more teach each one his companion and each one his brother, saying, "Know Jehovah!" for they will all of them know me, from the least one of them even to the greatest one of them,' is the utterance of Jehovah. 'For I shall forgive their error, and their sin I shall remember no more.'"—Jer. 31:31-34.

<sup>3</sup> When did Jehovah conclude that new covenant "with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah"? The timing of this depended upon the mediator whom Jehovah picked for the covenant. Moses was not to be resurrected from the dead in order to mediate the new covenant. He could be of no more help to those in the new covenant than he was to Israel.

<sup>4</sup> We are left in no doubt as to who the

2. With whom did Jehovah say he would establish the new covenant, and what would he do by means of it regarding their error and sin and their knowledge of him?

3. Upon the appearing of whom did the timing of the new covenant depend, and did this involve Moses?

4. According to a Hebrew student of the Pharisee teacher Gamaliel, who is God's mediator of the new covenant?

required mediator proved to be. Here we turn to the inspired letter written to Hebrews by a Hebrew, by that student who used to sit at the feet of the noted Pharisee teacher of the first century of our Common Era, namely, Gamaliel. Showing the difference between Moses and the new mediator, he proceeds to say: "Just as Moses, when about to make the tent in completion, was given the divine command: For says he: 'See that you make all things after their pattern that was shown to you in the mountain [Sinai].' But now Jesus has obtained a more excellent public service, so that he is also the mediator of a correspondingly better covenant, which has been legally established upon better promises." (Heb. 8:5, 6) "And Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and the blood of sprinkling, which speaks in a better way than Abel's blood."—Heb. 12:24.

<sup>5</sup> Jesus recognized that the time had come for Jehovah to replace the old Mosaic Law covenant with the new covenant. So, on the Passover night before his death on Friday, Nisan 14, 33 C.E., he started a memorial of his sacrificial death. When he took the Memorial wine cup, he said to his eleven faithful apostles: "Drink out of it, all of you; for this means my 'blood of the covenant,' which is to be poured out in behalf of many for forgiveness of sins." (Matt. 26:27, 28) Or, as the apostle Paul phrases Jesus' words: "This cup means the new covenant by virtue of my blood. Keep doing this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." (1 Cor. 11:25) For parts of three days he was dead in a memorial tomb and could not begin to act as mediator of that new covenant.

<sup>6</sup> Although Jeremiah 31:31-34 did not mention it, yet a sacrifice was needed to put the new covenant in force. Sacrifice

5. How did Jesus, before his death, show that he recognized that the time had come for the old Law covenant to be replaced by the new covenant?

6. For the carrying out of God's words in the new covenant about forgiving error and remembering sin no more, what was necessary?

was needed because, in the statement of the new covenant, God said: "I shall forgive their error, and their sin I shall remember no more." (Jer. 31:34) The blood of animal victims was used in the making of the old Mosaic Law covenant, and for cleansing purposes. In line with this, the mediator Moses "sprinkled the tent and all the vessels of the public service likewise with the blood. Yes, nearly all things are cleansed with blood according to the Law, and unless blood is poured out no forgiveness takes place." (Heb. 9:21, 22) The value of the lifeblood of Jesus was still in his possession when he was raised from the dead on Sunday, Nisan 16, 33 C.E. This is what Hebrews 13:20 indicates when it says: "The God of peace . . . brought up from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep with the blood of an everlasting covenant, our Lord Jesus."—John 10:11.

<sup>7</sup> Because the new covenant was made operative by means of a better sacrifice, the Christianized Hebrews were asked: "How much more will the blood of the Christ, who through an everlasting spirit offered himself without blemish to God, cleanse our consciences from dead works that we may render sacred service to the living God?" Because Christ's blood does have such power to cleanse us from the sin that condemns us, we next read: "So that is why he is a mediator of a new covenant, in order that, because a death has occurred for their release by ransom from the transgressions under the former covenant, the ones who have been called [by God] might receive the promise of the everlasting inheritance." (Heb. 9:14, 15) But when did Christ's blood begin to cleanse the consciences of those Christianized Hebrews who had been under "the former covenant," the Law covenant that

had been mediated by Moses at Mount Sinai?

<sup>8</sup> Not at Christ's resurrection from the dead, but the 50th day from then. That is, on the day of Pentecost after he had ascended to heaven and had entered into God's presence "into heaven itself, now to appear before the person of God for us."—Heb. 9:24.

<sup>9</sup> On that day of Pentecost the apostle Peter gave a speech to the Jews and circumcised Jewish proselytes that pricked their consciences. "What shall we do?" they asked. Peter replied: "Repent, and let each one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the free gift of the holy spirit." (Acts 2:37, 38) This promise of forgiveness of their sins over which they had repented proved something. What? That God's new covenant with its provision for forgiveness of sins had gone into effect that very day, inasmuch as the old Mosaic Law covenant had been nailed to the death stake of Jesus Christ!—Eph. 2:15, 16; Col. 2:14; Heb. 8:8-13; Jer. 31:34.

<sup>10</sup> This same fact was emphasized a few days later. Peter then said to a gathering of bloodguilty Jews at the temple: "Repent, therefore, and turn around so as to get your sins blotted out, that seasons of refreshing may come from the person of Jehovah and that he may send forth the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven, indeed, must hold within itself until the times of restoration of all things of which God spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets of old time." Finally Peter ended his speech by saying: "To

8. When did Christ's blood begin to cleanse the consciences of the Christianized Hebrews who had been under the former Law covenant?

9. On Pentecost day when Peter told the conscience-stricken Jews that forgiveness of their sins would result if they got baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, what did this prove with regard to covenants?

10. How did Peter emphasize this fact about covenants a few days later when speaking to bloodguilty Jews at Jerusalem's temple?

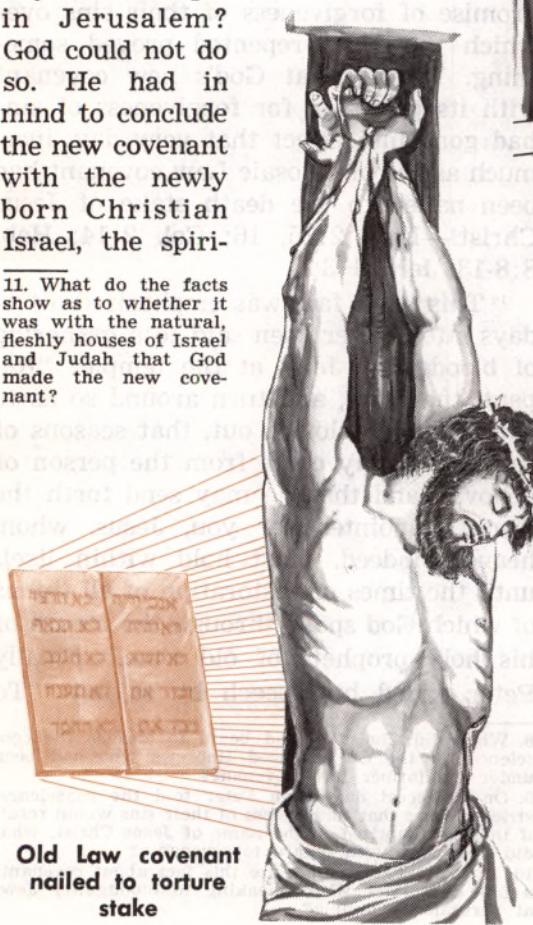
7. Because Christ offered a better sacrifice for the sake of the new covenant, what does his blood do with respect to the conscience and also in behalf of God's "called" ones?

you first God, after raising up his Servant, sent him forth to bless you by turning each one away from your wicked deeds.”—Acts 3:19-21, 26.

#### “MEDIATOR” TO HOW MANY?

<sup>11</sup> However, was God making the new covenant with the natural, fleshly “house of Israel” and the natural, fleshly “house of Judah”? How could that be possible, inasmuch as the natural Jews of those two houses had violently rejected the prospective Mediator of that new covenant and were, as a nation, celebrating the Pentecostal festival on the appointed day at the temple in Jerusalem? God could not do so. He had in mind to conclude the new covenant with the newly born Christian Israel, the spiri-

11. What do the facts show as to whether it was with the natural, fleshly houses of Israel and Judah that God made the new covenant?



Old Law covenant nailed to torture stake



New covenant went into effect at Pentecost

tual Israel, it having its birth on that very Pentecostal day when the “holy spirit fell upon” the baptized disciples of Jesus Christ, about 120 of them. (Acts 11:15) These had waited, not at the temple, but in an upper room in Jerusalem. There those disciples, already immersed in water, were begotten by God’s spirit to become his spiritual children, “the Israel of God.” As such they were introduced into the new covenant through the heavenly Mediator, Jesus Christ, the Prophet greater than Moses.—Acts 2:1-36; Joel 2:28, 29; John 3:3, 5; Gal. 6:16.

<sup>12</sup> So Jesus Christ in heaven is the Mediator between God and the spiritual Israelites, while these are still in the flesh as men and women. Even within the membership limits of this small “holy nation”

12. In harmony with God’s order of procedure, how was the mediatorship of Jesus Christ widened out in the year following that Pentecost?

the mediatorship of Jesus Christ has expanded, for God has followed a certain order in admitting classes of persons into the new covenant. Thus, for about a year from Pentecost of 33 C.E., Jesus was the Mediator of only those spiritual Israelites who had been fleshly Jews or circumcised Jewish proselytes. About 3,000 of these were added to spiritual Israel on that day of Pentecost, 33 C.E. (Acts 2:10, 37-41) Then, likely in the following year (34 C.E.) as a side effect of the persecution by Saul of Tarsus, the "good news" about the Christ was preached in Samaria and the holy spirit 'fell upon' the baptized believers there. (Acts 8:15-17) From then on the mediatorship of Jesus was widened out to benefit spiritual Israelites who had been men and women of Samaria, Samaritans.

<sup>13</sup> Two years now pass. Finally, in the autumn of 36 C.E., or three and a half years after Jesus' death and resurrection, he begins to be mediator to a third class of spiritual Israelites, those taken out from the uncircumcised Gentiles, beginning with the Italian centurion, Cornelius. After the apostle Peter reported on this surprising turn of events to the Christianized Jews at Jerusalem, they said: "Well, then, God has granted repentance for the purpose of life to people of the [uncircumcised] nations also."—Acts 8:1 through 11:18.

<sup>14</sup> More than 20 years after that, Paul was acting still as an apostle to the nations and was finishing his third missionary tour. On his way back to Jerusalem he stopped at Miletus and talked to elders of the congregation at Ephesus, Asia Minor. He told them how he had worked, saying: "I thoroughly bore witness both to Jews and to Greeks about repentance toward

God and faith in our Lord Jesus. And now, look! bound in the spirit, I am journeying to Jerusalem." (Acts 20:21, 22) He was no longer serving as a Pharisee in the interest of the old Mosaic Law covenant. Rather, as he writes in 2 Corinthians 3:5, 6, "our being adequately qualified issues from God, who has indeed adequately qualified us to be ministers of a new covenant, not of a written code, but of spirit; for the written code condemns to death, but the spirit makes alive."

<sup>15</sup> Whom did the apostle mean here by the pronoun "us"? In the introduction to his letter he identifies for us who are included in "us," by saying: "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through God's will, and Timothy our brother to the congregation of God that is in Corinth." (2 Cor. 1:1) So, both Paul and Timothy were "ministers of a new covenant, . . . of spirit." Paul did not mean by this expression that he and Timothy were a Mediation Board, sharing mediatorship with Jesus. No, for they themselves were mere spiritual Israelites in behalf of whom Jesus served as God's Mediator. Jesus alone is the "mediator of a new covenant."—Heb. 12:24.

<sup>16</sup> In writing to Timothy directly, Paul leads up to a mention of the mediatorship of Jesus as he goes on to say: "Hymenaeus and Alexander belong to these, and I have handed them over to Satan that they may be taught by discipline not to blaspheme. I therefore exhort, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, offerings of thanks, be made concerning all sorts of men [but not including Hymenaeus and Alexander the blasphemers], concerning kings and all those who are in high station; in order that we may go on

13. Two years after the admission of the Samaritans, how did Jesus become mediator to a third class of spiritual Israelites, and how did the Christianized Jews at Jerusalem acknowledge this?

14. What did Paul tell the elders of Ephesus about his preaching of repentance toward God, and in the interest of what covenant was he now serving as a minister?

15. When speaking of "ministers of a new covenant," whom did Paul include in the pronoun "us," and were these part of a Mediation Board between God and men? 16, 17. In 1 Timothy 1:20 through 2:7, by what line of thought does Paul lead up to the mention of Christ Jesus as a mediator?

leading a calm and quiet life with full godly devotion and seriousness.

<sup>17</sup> "This is fine and acceptable in the sight of our Savior, God, whose will is that all sorts of men should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, a man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a corresponding ransom for all [or, for all kinds of people, *margin*] —this is what is to be witnessed to at its own particular times. For the purpose of this witness I was appointed a preacher and an apostle—I am telling the truth, I am not lying—a teacher of [uncircumcised] nations in the matter of faith and truth."—1 Tim. 1:20 through 2:7.

<sup>18</sup> Thus Paul exhorted that "supplications, prayers, intercessions" should be made "concerning kings and all those who are in high station." But he was not exhorting Timothy to act as a mediator between God and those public officials. The converting of such public officials to Christianity was not to be the motive behind those "supplications, prayers, intercessions." Who, really, were the ones to benefit from such pleas directed to God? The purpose behind such representations to God was what? "That we [Christians like Paul and Timothy] may go on leading a calm and quiet life with full godly devotion and seriousness."—1 Tim. 2:2.

<sup>19</sup> Leading such a calm, godly, serious life would work for the salvation of Christians who offered these petitions concerning political rulers. Salvation of such inoffensive Christians was "fine and acceptable in the sight of our Savior, God." Why so? Because it is God's will "that all sorts of men should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth." In

18. (a) Was Paul thus exhorting Timothy to act as a mediator between God and those public officials? (b) Who were the ones to benefit from those pleas to God concerning such public officials?

19. The leading of such a godly life would work for what accomplishment, and to whom was this "fine and acceptable"?

harmony with this the one here called "our Savior" is, not Jesus Christ, but "God."

<sup>20</sup> What, then, is Christ's role in this program of salvation? Paul proceeds to say: "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men [not, *all* men], a man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a corresponding ransom for all."—1 Tim. 2:5, 6.

<sup>21</sup> Paul was writing according to the facts of the first century of Christianity, during which the new covenant had been put into operation. Into it "men" of all nationalities, Jews, Samaritans, uncircumcised Gentiles, had already been brought after being made a part of spiritual Israel. Christ Jesus was the mediator of that new covenant. Paul's letter to Timothy regarding this was a case of one 'minister of the new covenant' writing to another 'minister of the new covenant.' That new covenant between "our Savior, God," and spiritual Israel continues as long as there are spiritual Israelites still in the flesh as "men" here on earth. So the covenant is in force today. Jesus' "corresponding ransom for all" lays the basis for men and women of all sorts to become spiritual Israelites and be brought into the new covenant of which Christ Jesus is the "one mediator."

<sup>22</sup> There are still more than 9,000 who profess to be spiritual Israelites in the new covenant. Like Paul and Timothy, these are "ministers of a new covenant." (2 Cor. 3:6; 1:1) Evidently the new covenant is nearing the end of its operation for the purpose of producing 144,000 spiritual Israelites who meet God's approval for being associated with Jesus Christ in

20. According to 1 Timothy 2:5, 6, what is the role of Christ Jesus in God's program of salvation?

21. (a) Paul's letter to Timothy was a case of what minister writing to what other minister? (b) How long does that covenant last, and what part does the "corresponding ransom for all" play in this connection?

22. (a) How is it evident that the new covenant is nearing its end, and when will Christ's mediatorship end? (b) Why will the glorified spiritual Israelites need no mediator, and in what capacities will they act then?

the heavenly kingdom, the ideal government for mankind. When the last of these approved spiritual Israelites cease to be "men" because of earthly death and a resurrection to a share in the heavenly kingdom, then the mediatorship of Jesus Christ will cease also. Their inherited sinful condition in the flesh, which called for a mediator to act between them and the God of holiness, will be left behind. Like the holy angels of heaven, these glorified spiritual Israelites will need no mediator between them and Jehovah God. (Rev. 22:3, 4) Under Jesus Christ they will serve as kings, priests and associated judges over all the world of mankind.—Rev. 7:4-8; 14:1-3; 20:4, 6; Luke 22:28-30.

#### A "GREAT CROWD" OF EARTHLY BENEFICIARIES

<sup>23</sup> Today, according to authentic records, there is a "great crowd" of dedicated, baptized Christians who actively collaborate with the small remnant of spiritual Israelites. Ever since the spring of 1938 they have been invited to attend the annual memorial celebration of Christ's death, not to partake of the memorial emblems, the unleavened bread and the red wine, but as respectful observers.\* They recognize Jesus Christ as their heavenly King since the Gentile Times ended in 1914. They zealously join the remnant of spiritual Israelites in preaching "this good news of the kingdom" in all the inhabited earth for a "witness to all the nations" before this system of things ends in the coming "great tribulation." (Matt. 24:14, 21)

\* See announcement "Memorial," p. 50, *Watchtower* issue of February 15, 1938; also p. 75, paragraphs 51, 52, *Watchtower* issue of March 1, 1938. Note announcement "Memorial" in *Watchtower*, February 15, 1937, p. 50.

23, 24. (a) Who now actively collaborate with the remnant of spiritual Israelites, and what invitation was extended to them with regard to the Lord's Evening Meal? (b) What do they recognize themselves not to be, and yet how do they benefit now from the operation of the new covenant?

They recognize that they are not spiritual Israelites in the new covenant mediated by Jesus Christ, nor part of the "chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation." —1 Pet. 2:9.

<sup>24</sup> Yet they do benefit from the operation of the new covenant. They benefit from this just as, in ancient Israel, the "alien resident" benefited from residing in among the Israelites who were in the Law covenant.—Ex. 20:10; Lev. 19:10, 33, 34; Rev. 7:9-15.

<sup>25</sup> To keep in relationship with "our Savior, God," the "great crowd" needs to remain united with the remnant of spiritual Israelites. Why? Because these spiritual Israelites are the "holy nation" of which we read in Jeremiah 31:35, 36, right after God's promise of the new covenant: "This is what Jehovah, the Giver of the sun for light by day, the statutes of the moon and the stars for light by night, the One stirring up the sea that its waves may become boisterous [against the Egyptians pursuing the Israelites], the One whose name is Jehovah of armies, has said: 'If these regulations could be removed from before me,' is the utterance of Jehovah, 'those who are the seed of Israel could likewise cease from proving to be a nation before me always.'"

<sup>26</sup> Jehovah could no more let spiritual Israel pass out of existence from within his universal organization than he could let the heavenly luminaries that regulate light for our earth cease to be. In the heavens spiritual Israel will be the New Jerusalem in which Jesus Christ will reign as King over the surviving "great crowd" and all the human dead resurrected to life in a paradise earth.—Rev. 21:2-24.

25. To keep in relationship with Jehovah God, the "great crowd" must remain united with whom, and why so?

26. So the spiritual Israel is to be as permanent in God's universal organization as what, and where will Jesus Christ reign over those in the paradise earth?



## Unbearable Distress Caused by Slanderous Tongues

**W**HOLESOOME speech can build up and encourage. An inspired proverb declares: "Pleasant sayings are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and a healing to the bones." (Prov. 16:24) Honey tastes good and provides quick refreshment for the hungry person. Pleasant sayings can be just as refreshing to the physical organism, for they can put one in a happy frame of mind. When a person is cheerful, in good spirits, he usually stands straighter and moves with liveliness.

However, when individuals become the object of slanderous speech, this can result in unbearable distress for them. This was the experience of the psalmist. He prayed to be delivered from being brought to ruin by the lying tongues that were wagging against him. In Psalm 120:1, 2, we read: "To Jehovah I called in the distress of mine, and he proceeded to answer me. O Jehovah, do deliver my soul from false lips, from the tricky tongue."

The lying words of the slanderers were like arrows shot from a warrior's bow. Like burning coals, these lying words intensified the fire of contention and strife. But would such hurtful speech continue on indefinitely? No, the psalmist confidently looked forward to a day of reckoning, saying: "What will one give to you, and what will one add to you, O you tricky tongue? Sharpened arrows of a mighty man, along with burning coals of the broom trees." (Ps. 120:3, 4) Since the psalmist had made his appeal to Jehovah, the Most High would be the one who would silence the slanderous tongues of the

wicked. The slanderous tongue would bring calamity upon itself. It would be silenced by a warrior's arrows and by God's fiery judgment comparable to charcoal made from the wood of broom trees, which burns with intense heat.

Meanwhile the psalmist continued to sense keenly the distress of living among hateful peoples, comparing it to being an alien resident among the barbarians of Meshech and the fierce, nomadic tent dwellers of Kedar. "Woe to me," he exclaims, "for I have resided as an alien in Meshech! I have tabernacled together with the tents of Kedar."—Ps. 120:5.

Because he had already lived too long among the haters of peace, the psalmist longed for tranquillity. But the wicked simply would not permit him to have it. They were ever ready to pick a quarrel with him. The psalmist continues: "For too long a time my soul has tabernacled with the haters of peace. I stand for peace; but when I speak, they are for war."—Ps. 120:6, 7.

If we, like the psalmist, are for peace, we should bridle our tongues and not cause others distress by cutting, undermining speech. The Bible's counsel is: "Let a rotten saying not proceed out of your mouth, but whatever saying is good for building up as the need may be, that it may impart what is favorable to the hearers." (Eph. 4:29) While having to put up with reproachful and lying speech from others, we can take comfort in the fact that Jehovah God will in due time set all things straight.

# INSIGHT ON THE NEWS

- The author of a recently published theological best seller entitled "Predigten für Zweifler" (Sermons for Doubters) discussed some of his views during ceremonies held at a Lutheran academy in the Federal Republic of Germany.

## Should a Christian Doubt?

"Faith needs doubt," he contended, going on to say that placing our trust in Jesus Christ remains a matter of uncertainty. "There are no guarantees." He also spoke of certain "wholesome effects" of doubt, such as its preventing a person from becoming fanatical and from getting into a "rut of piety."

However, the Bible does not link 'faith and doubt' as belonging together. It defines true faith as "the assured expectation of things hoped for." (Heb. 11:1) In fact, God "furnished a guarantee to all men" for their faith by raising Jesus Christ from the dead. (Acts 17:31) Moreover, the Bible makes it clear that there are no "wholesome effects" from a Christian's having doubt about his faith. When discussing prayer, James wrote: "Let him keep on asking in faith, not doubting at all, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven by the wind and blown about. In fact, let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from Jehovah; he is an indecisive man, unsteady in all his ways."—Jas. 1:6-8.

- The United States government has recently stepped in to crack down on so-called "white-collar" and business crime. Federal investigators "have become convinced that business crime is much more widespread than was previously believed," says the magazine "U.S. News & World Report."

Church-going Crooks  
Who are committing "white-collar" type

The estimates of total losses have more than doubled since the early 1970s to as high as 44 billion dollars a year." The type of theft accounting for the largest share of this—up to \$10 billion—is said to be that of employees stealing from their employers. Bribery, kickbacks, embezzlement and shoplifting are also included.

crimes? An expert on the subject, management professor W. S. Albrecht, answers that, among other things, "He's more likely to be married [than are other property thieves], less likely to be divorced; less likely to have used drugs or alcohol; more likely to be an active church member."

Evidently the limited moral instruction that such persons are receiving as church members is not helping them to 'be transformed by making their minds over to the perfect will of God,' as the apostle Paul said that true Christian instruction would. In fact, such a failure of religion to affect the moral lives of adherents was said to mark the "final age of this world" when many people would "preserve the outward form of religion, but are a standing denial of its reality."—Rom. 12:2; 2 Tim. 3:1, 5, "The New English Bible."

- An article entitled "Synthetic Blood Substitutes" won a prize in an essay contest in the Federal Republic of Germany. The article traced

## Blood View Reasonable

the recent development of synthetic blood substitutes. It explained that experiments had proved that animals whose blood had been partially or wholly replaced by synthetic blood substitutes not only survived but continued to develop normally. It concluded by saying: "Despite many unsolved problems, proof has been given that for a certain period of time synthetic substitutes can take over some of the functions of blood. This means that the use of synthetic blood substitutes for persons who have had a severe loss of blood . . . has now been brought into the realm of possibility."

One such recently developed blood substitute actually has been used on humans in Japan, and is credited with saving the life of a patient. The key feature of these substitutes is that they have an oxygen-carrying capacity like that of blood.

These facts confirm that Jehovah's Witnesses are not acting irresponsibly or unreasonably when they, for religious reasons, refuse to accept blood transfusions and request alternatives.—Acts 15:29; 21:25.

# Gilead Graduates Told: "You Must Become Nothing but Joyful"

SEPTEMBER 16, 1979, brought great joy to the 67th class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead; it was graduation day. Gathered together at Jehovah's Witnesses Assembly Hall, Long Island City, New York, the 51 students heard the school's president, F. W. Franz, admonish them to be joyful. He stressed the joy that went with the Festival of Booths, which celebrated the ingathering of the fruits of the ground in ancient Israel.

To a total audience of 2,033, the school's president described the prolonged joyfulness of this Festival of Ingathering. It lasted for seven days, and Jehovah through Moses told the people: "You must become nothing but joyful."—Deut. 16:15.

Franz pointed out two joyful features that were later added to this festival, and these were carried out when Jesus was on earth. One was the priest's going to the pool of Siloam with a golden pitcher, filling it with water, returning to the temple and pouring it out into a basin leading to the base of the altar. At the time of the pouring of the water there was great rejoicing, so much so that it was said that 'he who has not seen the pouring out of the water of Siloam has never seen rejoicing in his life.'

Another joyful feature of the festival, Franz explained, took place at night. There were four great golden lampstands in the Court of the Women, and each lampstand had four great golden bowls. Oil was added and the old clothing of priests served as wicks. When the lamps were lit, the brilliance was such that the whole city seemed illuminated. Certain men danced and sang. This lasted till daybreak.

He explained further that when Jesus attended the Festival of Booths in the year 32 C.E. he may have alluded to the ceremony with the water of Siloam when he cried out: "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. He that puts faith in me, just as the Scripture has said, 'Out from his inmost part streams of living water will flow.'" (John 7:37, 38) Also, Jesus may have alluded to the lighting up of Jerusalem by the lamps during the festival when he said to the Jews: "I am the light of the world."—John 8:12.

Does the Festival of Booths, or Ingathering, have an antitypical fulfillment? If so, when?

Franz explained that the Scriptures provide some clues to understanding this. For example, Isaiah 12:3 foretold a time when God's people would 'draw water with exultation.' At Matthew 13:39 Jesus revealed that the "harvest is a conclusion of a system of things." And at Matthew 24:31, in a context dealing with the "sign" of the conclusion of the system of things, Jesus foretold the gathering of his "chosen ones" world wide. So the joyful Festival of Booths, or Ingathering, could not begin its modern-day fulfillment before the "time of the end." Such gathering is now under way since 1919 and will lead to a time of great joy.

But what is being gathered? People. So the 51 graduates were encouraged by the school's president to continue to have a part in this ingathering work, serving as "the light of the world" in their respective missionary assignments. "Keep on loving the Festival of Ingathering and of Booths," he stressed in closing. "May your rejoicing from Jehovah be a strengthening to you and may you keep on rejoicing" forever.

Earlier, another speaker also stressed happiness. Joel Adams told the students that Jehovah is pleased that they are happy. He encouraged them not to let little things rob them of joy. "Keep your happy spirit," he admonished. "Yes, Jehovah is a happy God, and he wants us to be happy in our lives. It is an honor to him when we maintain a happy spirit."

J. E. Barr similarly encouraged the students: "How much you have to be thankful for—this happy day of your graduation! May none of you during all the years that lie ahead ever lose the feeling of thankfulness to Jehovah. It is the secret to your enduring joy and happiness wherever your assignment may be."

In the afternoon the Gilead graduates put on a joyful international musical program, displaying the cultural music and dance of the countries that the missionaries represent. The afternoon was climaxed by the graduates' staging a drama stressing the need for appreciation of things that are really important. Entitled "Do Not Despise Sacred Things," it was about Jacob and Esau.

As the day's program came to a close with prayer by M. G. Henschel, the graduates were determined to heed Jehovah's word through Moses: "You must become nothing but joyful."

# QUESTIONS from READERS

- If a man (or, a woman) ran off with another's mate, could he be forgiven and accepted back into the Christian congregation?

This sort of thing occurs with some frequency among those not trying to live by Bible standards. By comparison, it is infrequent among those associated with Jehovah's people, which makes it more shocking if it does occur. Still, there is no need to think that a case like this should be handled according to some human rule. As with other sins, before such a person could be accepted by God and his people, the sinner would have to repent and show clearly fruits of repentance.

God's dealings with the Israelites indicate his forgiveness, at times, of even shocking and persistent sin. (Deut. 4:30; Isa. 55:7; 57:16-18; Zech. 1:3, 4) Jesus mentioned the "joy in heaven over one sinner that repents." Then he illustrated the point with the story of the prodigal son who squandered his money on debauched living with harlots. When the son came to his senses, returned and sought forgiveness for sinning against both heaven and his father, the father warmly forgave him.—Luke 15:1-7, 11-24.

Yet, the Bible also shows that a Christian who sins and does not repent should be expelled from the congregation in order to keep it spiritually pure. (1 Cor. 5:1-5, 11-13) That happened to a man in Corinth who openly lived an immoral life. The Scriptures indicate that in order for him to be accepted back into the congregation such a man would have to repent, reject his immoral course, turn around and produce fruit befitting repentance. Apparently he did so soon afterward. In Second Corinthians, thought to have been written less than a year later, the apostle Paul urged the congregation to forgive a sinner, evidently referring to that disfellowshiped man who must have repented.—2 Cor. 2:5-10; Matt. 3:7, 8; Acts 26:20.

This Scriptural disfellowshipping procedure is employed by congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses today, also. And in accord with this example, there is no set length of time before

reinstatement; it awaits *genuine* repentance, which may even take years.

In the unusual case brought up in the question, scheming and deceit may well have been manifest. For example, a man (perhaps himself married) gets infatuated with someone else's wife. There then may be hidden flirting, secret meetings and unrevealed displays of passion. Lies and deceit may be used to keep this from others, particularly the innocent mate or mates. In time the pair might run off together, and after unscriptural divorce may marry each other. They may well have calculated the outcome, realizing that disfellowshipping will follow. But they think that "maybe in a year or so" they can claim repentance and get reinstated, thus having things just the way they want. However, it is a grave mistake to presume on divine mercy. Galatians 6:7 guarantees: "God is not one to be mocked. For whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap." That Jehovah looks with disapproval upon fornication is seen in many scriptures and this should not be overlooked by those entertaining wrong desires.—Compare Revelation 21:8; 22:15.

If in time such a disfellowshiped person comes to the spiritual elders representing the congregation and asks to be reinstated, what occurred, as well as the wrongdoer's attitude, would have to be considered. Regarding the unity of the faith, Paul spoke of not being influenced by "the trickery of men, by means of cunning in contriving error." (Eph. 4:13, 14) That is true in avoiding doctrinal error and it is equally so in avoiding having in the congregation persons who deliberately have used deceit and trickery to accomplish wickedness.—Compare 2 Corinthians 11:13; Psalm 101:7; 119:118.

The committee of elders handling such a request for reinstatement would want to give thought to the difference between a person who succumbs to sin in a moment of weakness and someone who conspires to sin. We can recall that God showed mercy to Peter after he denied Jesus three times; yet God executed Ananias and Sapphira, who schemed in their hearts how to carry out their deceit.—Acts 5:1-11.

Elders thus need to exercise great caution in cases where hypocritical pretense and conspiracy are involved. A person may profess sorrow and repentance, but if he were back where he started, would he "do it all over

again"? Would he leave his mate for another? Of course, now he has entered a new marriage and so cannot simply end it and return to the way things were before; the former marriage ended with the divorce, adultery and remarriage. (Matt. 19:9) Yet, does he manifest genuine repentance, being "crushed" and cut to the heart? (Isa. 57:15) Does he have a repulsion for the sin he committed, rather than mere sorrow that he is disfellowshipped and is not able to enjoy Christian association? Has he over a sufficient period of time, which is not predetermined, produced the fruit that befits repentance? The elders would need to be convinced, without a doubt, that there is true repentance. If they do not sincerely feel confident on this, they may decide to wait and meet again to review the matter after more evidence has accumulated.

The elders should feel keenly their responsibility to protect the congregation, yet always being conscious of God's mercy and desire that persons gain life. (Rom. 2:4) They realize that they do not have superhuman ability to read

hearts and motives perfectly, as does Jehovah, to whom the sinner is accountable. (Heb. 4:13) So they will strive to guide their consideration and decision by God's Word and what they can determine as to the disfellowshiped person's attitude and heart condition. If in time the committee of elders should conclude that the sinner has truly repented and worked to purify his heart, reinstatement is in order, even as occurred with the man in Corinth. (Jas. 4:8) But there is no set time for that to take place. And even though the congregation may reinstate such a sinner, it is to be remembered that he or she must yet "stand before the judgment seat of God" to render an account.—Rom. 14:10-12.

## "WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

December 23: Jacob's Distress and God's New Covenant. Page 16. Songs to Be Used: 7, 67.

December 30: Benefiting from "One Mediator Between God and Men." Page 21. Songs to Be Used: 81, 110.