

FEBRUARY 1, 2002

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

What Is Your View of Cleanliness?

February 1, 2002

Average Printing Each Issue: 24,147,000

Vol. 123, No. 3

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

IN THIS ISSUE

- 3 How Important Is Cleanliness?
- 4 Cleanliness—What Does It Really Mean?
- 8 Learn a Lesson From Nicodemus
- 13 Kingdom Proclaimers Report
- 14 Are You Among Those Loved by God?
- 19 Have You Received "the Spirit of the Truth"?
- 24 Jehovah Taught Us Endurance and Perseverance
- 29 Questions From Readers
- 30 A City Upon a Mountain
- 32 Wise in Their Own Way

WATCHTOWER STUDIES

MARCH 4-10:

- Are You Among Those Loved by God?
Page 14. Songs to be used: 35, 50.

MARCH 11-17:

- Have You Received "the Spirit of the Truth"?
- Page 19. Songs to be used: 57, 17.

Publication of *The Watchtower* is part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations.

The Bible translation used is the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References*, unless otherwise indicated.

The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) is published semimonthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; M. H. Larson, President; G. F. Simoni, Secretary-Treasurer; 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483. Periodicals Postage Paid at Brooklyn, NY, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Watchtower, Wallkill, NY 12589.

Changes of address should reach us 30 days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label).

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MONTHLY LANGUAGES AVAILABLE BY MAIL: Armenian, Azerbaijani (Cyrillic script), Azerbaijani (Roman script), Cambodian, Chitonga, Gilbertese, Greenlandic, Hausa, Icelandic, Isoko, Kaonde, Kazakh, Kiluba, Kirghiz, Kirundi, Kwanyama/Ndonga, Luganda, Luvale, Marshallese, Mauritian Creole, Monukotape, Moore, Niuean, Ossetian, Otetela, Palauan, Persian, Ponapean, Seychelles Creole, Tatar, Tiv, Trukese, Tumbuka, Tuvaluan, Umbundu, Yapese, Zande

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How Important Is Cleanliness?

CLEANLINESS means different things to different people. For instance, when a little boy is told by his mother to wash his hands and face, he may think that holding his fingers under a running faucet and wetting his lips is enough. But Mother knows better. She takes him back into the bathroom and scrubs his hands and face with plenty of soap and water—despite his loud protests!

Of course, standards of cleanliness are not the same around the world, and people grow up with varying concepts of cleanliness. In times past, a clean, well-ordered school environment in many countries helped students develop good habits of cleanliness. Today, some school grounds are so full of litter and debris that they resemble a garbage dump more than a place to play or exercise. And what about the classroom? Darren, a janitor in an Australian high school, observed: "Now we see filth in the classroom as well." Some students take the instruction "Pick it up" or "Clean it up" to mean that they are being pun-

ished. The problem is that some teachers do use cleaning as a means of punishment.

On the other hand, adults are not always good examples of cleanliness, either in everyday life or in the business world. For example, many public places are left messy and unsightly. Some industries pollute the environment. Pollution, however, is caused, not by faceless industries and businesses, but by people. While greed is probably the main cause of the worldwide problem of pollution and its many ill effects, part of the problem is the result of unclean personal habits. A former director general of the Commonwealth of Australia supported this conclusion when he said: "All questions of public health reduce themselves to a consideration of the one man, the one woman, the one child."

Still, some feel that cleanliness is a personal matter and should be of no concern to anyone else. Is that really so?

The importance of cleanliness cannot be overemphasized when it comes to our food—whether we buy it at a market, eat it at a restaurant, or have a meal at a

friend's home. A high standard of cleanliness is expected of those handling or serving the food we eat. Dirty hands—theirs or ours—can be the cause of many sicknesses. What about hospitals—of all places, the place where we expect to find cleanliness? *The New England Journal of Medicine* reported that unwashed hands among doctors and nurses may help explain why hospital patients develop infections that cost up to ten billion dollars a year to cure. We rightly expect that no one will endanger our health by his unclean habits.

It is also a very serious matter when someone—deliberately or thoughtlessly—pollutes our water supplies. And how safe is it to stroll barefoot along a beach where one may see used syringes left behind by drug addicts and others? Perhaps of even greater personal im-

portance is the question: Is cleanliness practiced in our own home?

Suellen Hoy, in her book *Chasing Dirt*, asks: "Are we as clean as we used to be?" She answers: "Probably not." She cites shifting social values as the main reason. As people spend less and less time at home, they simply pay someone else to do the cleaning for them. Consequently, maintaining a clean environment is no longer a matter of personal importance. "I don't clean the shower—I clean myself," said one man. "At least, if my house is dirty, I'm clean."

Cleanliness, however, is much more than outward appearance. It is an all-embracing ethic of sound living. It is also a state of mind and heart that involves our morals and worship. Let us see how this is the case.



Cleanliness

What Does It Really Mean?

BECAUSE of the shockingly unhygienic conditions in Europe and the United States during the 18th and 19th centuries, missionaries of that period preached what might be termed "a doctrine of cleanliness." This doctrine equated filth with sin, whereas cleanliness was said to bring one closer to God. Perhaps this is what made popular the axiom "Cleanliness is next to godliness."

This view was taken by the Salvation Army, founded by William and Catherine Booth. According to the book *Health and Medicine in the Evangelical Tradition*, one of their earliest slogans was:

"Soap, Soup, and Salvation." Then, when Louis Pasteur and others demonstrated beyond doubt the connection between illness and bacteria, it only added impetus to and a scientific basis for better public-health schemes.

Some of the immediate measures taken included not requiring a witness in court to kiss the Bible and abolishing the common drinking cup at schools and railway stations. Efforts were even made to replace the common chalice at religious services with individual cups. Yes, those early pioneers did seem to have considerable success in changing people's attitudes toward cleanliness. So

much so that one writer called the result "a love affair with cleanliness."

This "love affair with cleanliness," however, apparently was only skin deep. It was not long before enterprising merchants turned the humble soap into a beauty product. Clever advertisements led customers to believe that using certain personal hygiene products would give the user social status that others could only envy. Television perpetuates this fantasy. The successful and glamorous people featured in commercials and on soap operas are seldom seen cleaning the house, sweeping the yard, picking up trash, or cleaning up after their pet cats and dogs.

There also are those who reason that going out to work pays the bills, whereas housework or other cleaning chores are of no financial value. And as there is no monetary reward involved, why should they care for the environment? One result of this has been that some people today think that all there is to cleanliness is personal hygiene.

God's View of Cleanliness

There is no doubt that those early efforts to teach cleanliness did help improve people's living conditions. And rightly so, for cleanliness is a quality that belongs to and originated with the holy and clean God, Jehovah. He teaches us to benefit ourselves by becoming holy and clean in all our ways.—Isaiah 48:17; 1 Peter 1:15.

Jehovah God is exemplary in this respect. Cleanliness, as well as his other invisible qualities, is clearly seen in God's visible creation. (Romans 1:20) We observe that the creation itself causes no lasting pollution. The earth with its many ecological cycles is a self-cleaning marvel, and it is designed for clean, healthful living. Such clean work could come only from a clean-minded Designer. We can deduce from this, therefore,

that worshipers of God should be clean in all aspects of their life.

Four Aspects of Cleanliness

The Bible identifies four aspects of cleanliness that worshipers of God should strive for. Let us consider each of these.

Spiritual. This could be considered the most important cleanliness of all because it has to do with a person's prospects for everlasting life. However, this is often the most neglected aspect of cleanliness. Simply put, to be spiritually clean means never to cross the line that God has drawn between true worship and false, for God views any type of false worship as unclean. The apostle Paul wrote: "'Get out from among them, and separate yourselves,' says Jehovah, 'and quit touching the unclean thing'; 'and I will take you in.'" (2 Corinthians 6:17) The disciple James is also very specific in this respect: "The form of worship that is clean and undefiled from the standpoint of our God and Father is this: . . . to keep oneself without spot from the world." —James 1:27.

God clearly demonstrated his disapproval of mixing false worship with his true worship. False worship often includes unclean practices and detestable idols and gods. (Jeremiah 32:35) Thus, true Christians are urged to shun any involvement with unclean worship.—1 Corinthians 10:20, 21; Revelation 18:4.

Moral. Here, too, God draws a clear line between what is clean and what is unclean. As a whole, the world has come to be as described at Ephesians 4:17-19: "They are in darkness mentally, and alienated from the life that belongs to God . . . Having come to be past all moral sense, they gave themselves over to loose conduct to work uncleanness of every sort with greediness." Such immoral thinking expresses itself in many ways, overt and subtle, hence Christians need to be on guard.

Lovers of God know that prostitution, homosexuality, premarital sex, and pornography are violations of Jehovah's standard of moral cleanliness. However, expressions of these practices are commonplace in the entertainment and fashion world. Christians must therefore be on guard against such trends. Wearing skimpy, revealing clothes to Christian meetings or social gatherings draws unnecessary attention to the human body and shows a lapse of chasteness. Besides bringing unclean worldly thinking into the Christian association, dressing that way has the potential to create unclean thoughts in others. This is an area where Christians need to work hard at displaying "wisdom from above."—James 3:17.

Mental. The secret recesses of one's mind should not be a repository of unclean

A clean home is the responsibility of everyone living in it



thoughts. Jesus warned against unclean thinking when he said: "Everyone that keeps on looking at a woman so as to have a passion for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." (Matthew 5:28; Mark 7:20-23) These words apply equally to viewing pornographic pictures and films, reading accounts of lewd sexual activities, and listening to suggestive lyrics of songs. Thus, Christians must avoid defiling themselves by entertaining unclean thoughts that could give rise to unclean, unholy speech and actions.—Matthew 12:34; 15:18.

Physical. Holiness and physical cleanliness are closely linked in the Bible. For example, Paul wrote: "Beloved ones, let us cleanse ourselves of every defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in God's fear." (2 Corinthians 7:1) True Christians, therefore, should strive to keep their body, home, and surroundings clean and tidy, as much as circumstances permit. Even where water for washing or bathing is in short supply, Christians should try to do the best they can to keep clean and presentable.

Physical cleanliness would also preclude the use of tobacco in any form, overindulgence in drinking alcohol, and any form of drug abuse, which befoul and damage the body. The shepherd described in The Song of Solomon appreciated the sweet fragrance of the Shulammite girl's clothing. (Song of Solomon 4:11) Caring for our personal hygiene is a loving thing to do, as we want to avoid inflicting unpleasant odors on those around us. Perfumes and colognes may be pleasant, but they are no substitute for regular bathing and clean clothes.

Keeping a Balanced View

When it comes to physical cleanliness, people can go to extremes. On the one hand,

The earth is a self-cleaning marvel



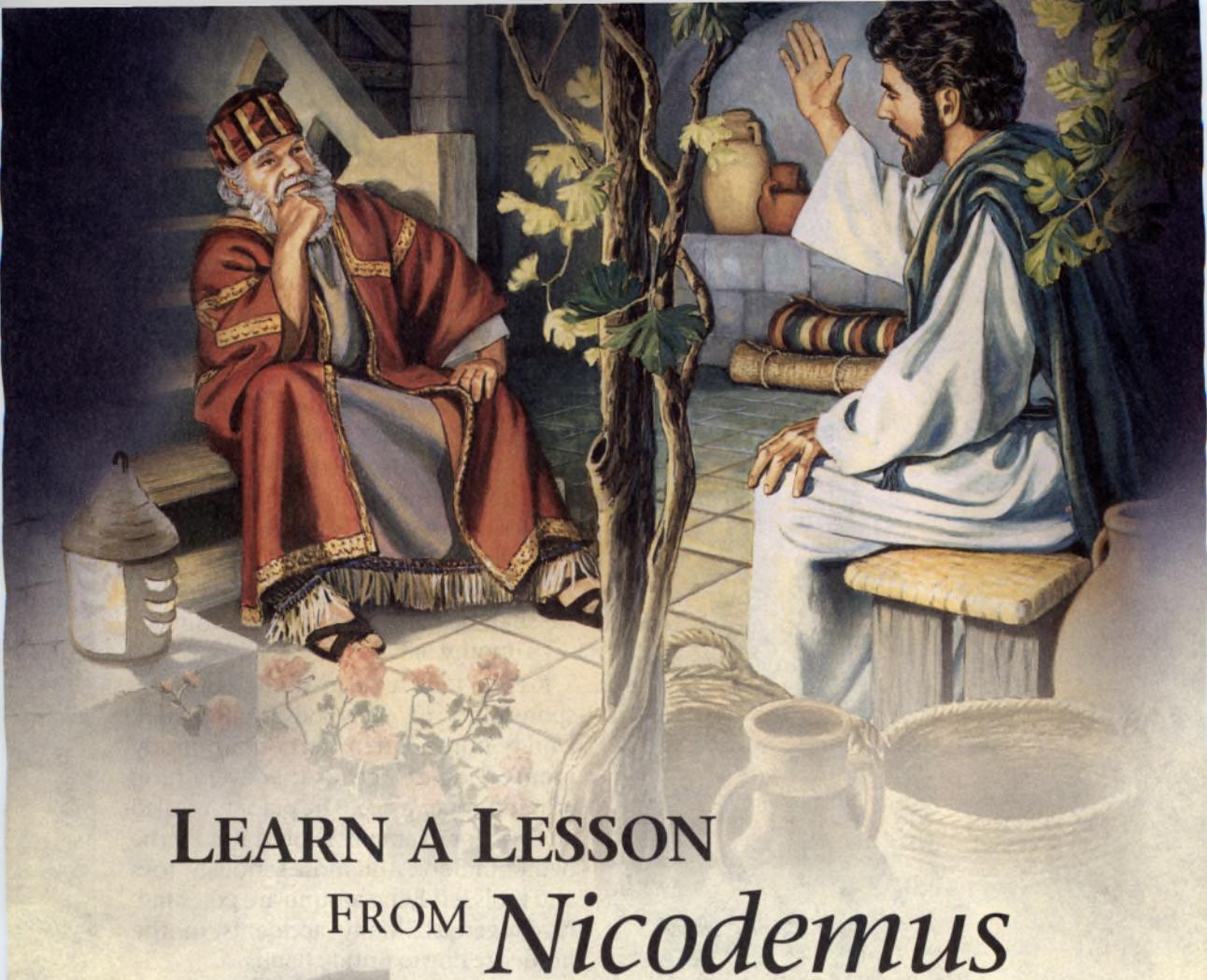
being fanatic about cleanliness can rob us of the joy of living. It can also consume much precious time. On the other hand, dirty and unkempt homes may prove to be costly to repair. Between these extremes is the practical, sensible approach to keeping our home clean and presentable.

Keep it simple. Cluttered homes or rooms are difficult to clean, and dirt may not be so easily detected in such congested surroundings. Modest, uncluttered homes take less time to clean. A simple life-style is highly recommended in the Bible: "Having sustenance and covering, we shall be content with these things."

—1 Timothy 6:8.

Keep it tidy. A clean home is the responsibility of everybody living in it. Untidy homes often start out as untidy rooms. Tidiness means that everything is in its proper place. The place for soiled clothes, for example, should not be the bedroom floor. And more seriously, toys and tools left lying around are potentially dangerous. Many accidents in the home are due to untidy habits.

Clearly, cleanliness and the Christian way of life are inseparable. Concerning a godly way of life, the prophet Isaiah speaks of "the Way of Holiness." And he adds the sobering thought that "the unclean one will not pass over it." (Isaiah 35:8) Yes, cultivating good habits of cleanliness now gives strong evidence of our faith in God's promise that he will soon establish a clean paradise earth. Then, in all parts of this beautiful planet, all people will glorify Jehovah God by complying fully with his perfect standards of cleanliness.—Revelation 7:9.



LEARN A LESSON FROM *Nicodemus*



"**I**F ANYONE wants to come after me, let him disown himself and pick up his torture stake day after day and follow me continually." (Luke 9:23) Humble fishermen and a despised tax collector readily accepted that invitation. They left everything behind to follow Jesus.—Matthew 4:18-22; Luke 5:27, 28.

Jesus' call is still heard today, and many have responded. However, some who take pleasure in studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses hesitate to 'disown themselves and pick up their torture stake.' They are reluctant to accept the responsibility and privilege of being Jesus' disciples.

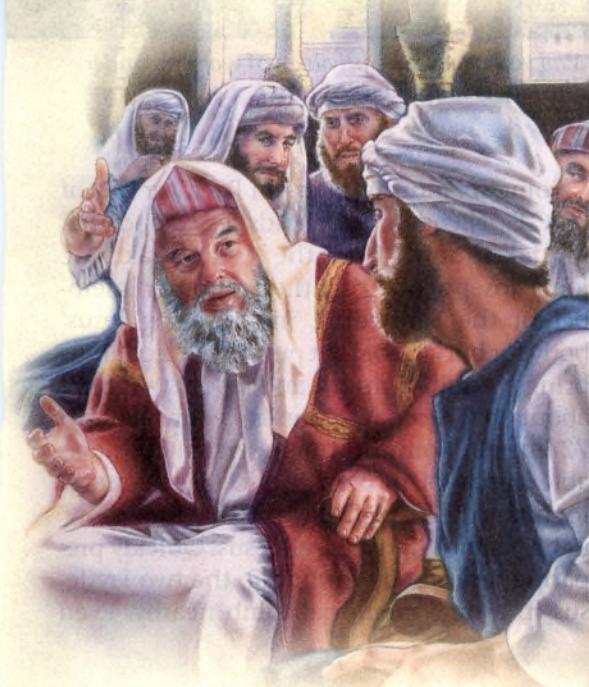
Why do some hold back from accepting Jesus' invitation and dedicating themselves to Jehovah God? Granted, those who were not brought up with the Judeo-Christian concept

of monotheism may need considerable time before coming to a full appreciation of the existence of a personal, almighty Creator. Yet, even after they have become convinced that God is real, some beg off from following in the footsteps of Jesus. They may fear what their relatives and friends will think of them if they become Jehovah's Witnesses. Others, who lose sight of the urgency of the times in which we live, turn to the pursuit of fame and fortune. (Matthew 24:36-42; 1 Timothy 6:9, 10) Whatever the case may be, for those who keep on postponing their decision to become Jesus' followers, there is a lesson to be learned from the account of Nicodemus, a wealthy Jewish ruler in Jesus' day.

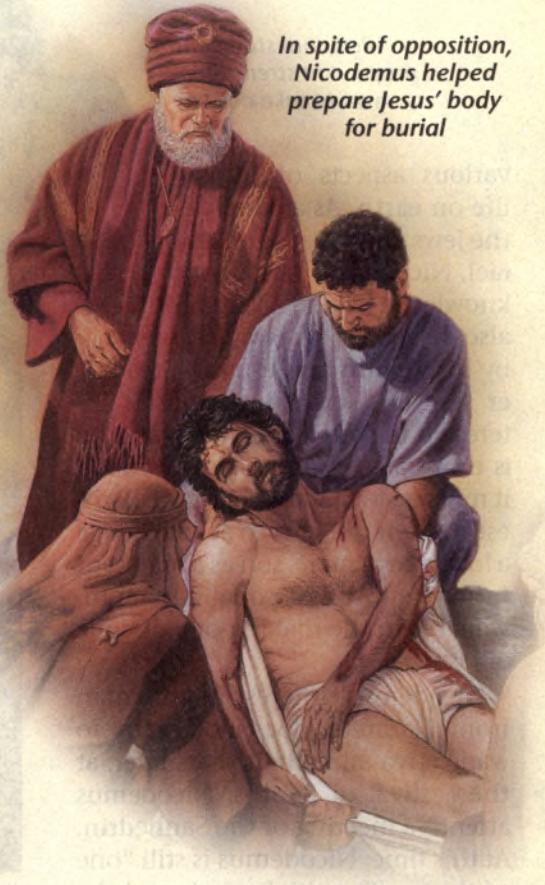
Blessed With Wonderful Opportunities

Only about six months after Jesus started his earthly ministry, Nicodemus recognizes

At first, Nicodemus courageously stood up for Jesus



In spite of opposition, Nicodemus helped prepare Jesus' body for burial



that Jesus 'as a teacher has come from God.' Impressed by the miracles that Jesus recently performed in Jerusalem at the Passover of 30 C.E., Nicodemus comes, under the cover of darkness, to confess his belief in Jesus and to learn more about this teacher. At that, Jesus tells Nicodemus a profound truth about the need to be "born again" in order to enter the Kingdom of God. On this occasion, Jesus also says the words: "God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life."—John 3:1-16.

What a marvelous prospect lies before Nicodemus! He may become a close associate of Jesus, able to witness firsthand

Personal study and prayer can strengthen you to take action

various aspects of Jesus' life on earth. As a ruler of the Jews and a teacher in Israel, Nicodemus has a good knowledge of God's Word. He also has keen insight, as seen by his identifying Jesus as a teacher sent by God. Nicodemus is interested in spiritual matters, and he is unusually humble. How difficult it must be for a member of the highest court of the Jews to acknowledge a lowly carpenter's son as a man sent from God! All such qualities are invaluable in the making of a disciple of Jesus.

Nicodemus' interest in this man from Nazareth does not seem to wane. Two and a half years later, at the Festival of Booths, Nicodemus attends a meeting of the Sanhedrin. At this time, Nicodemus is still "one of them." The chief priests and the Pharisees send officers to arrest Jesus. The officers return and report: "Never has another man spoken like this." The Pharisees start to belittle them: "You have not been misled also, have you? Not one of the rulers or of the Pharisees has put faith in him, has he? But this crowd that does not know the Law are accursed people." Nicodemus cannot hold back any longer. He speaks up: "Our law does not judge a man unless first it has heard from him and come to know what he is doing, does it?" He then finds himself the target of criticism from the other Pharisees: "You are not also out of Galilee, are you? Search and see that no prophet is to be raised up out of Galilee."—John 7:1, 10, 32, 45-52.



Will you accept the privilege of working under the leadership of Jesus Christ?

Some six months later, on Passover Day of 33 C.E., Nicodemus beholds Jesus' body being taken down from the torture stake. He joins Joseph of Arimathea, another member of the Sanhedrin, in preparing Jesus' body for burial. For that purpose, Nicodemus brings "a roll of myrrh and aloes" weighing about 100 Roman pounds, equivalent to 72 English pounds. It represents a considerable outlay of money. It also takes courage for him to be identified with "that impostor," as his fellow Pharisees call Jesus. Quickly preparing Jesus' body for burial, the two lay Jesus in a new memorial tomb nearby. Even

at this moment, however, Nicodemus still is not identified as a disciple of Jesus!—John 19:38-42; Matthew 27:63; Mark 15:43.

Why He Did Not Act

Why Nicodemus begged off from 'picking up his torture stake' and following Jesus, John did not reveal in his account. However, he left some clues that might explain this Pharisee's indecision.

First of all, John pointed out that the Jewish ruler "came to [Jesus] in the night." (John 3:2) One Bible scholar suggests: "Nicodemus came by night, not out of fear, but to avoid the crowds that would have interrupted his interview with Jesus." Yet, John referred to Nicodemus as "the man that came to [Jesus] in the night the first time" in the same context in which he referred to Joseph of Arimathea as "a disciple of Jesus but a secret one out of his fear of the Jews." (John 19:38, 39) It is likely, therefore, that Nicodemus called on Jesus under the cover of darkness out of "fear of the Jews," just as others in his day feared having anything to do with Jesus.—John 7:13.

Have you put off the decision to become one of Jesus' disciples because of what your relatives, friends, or colleagues might say? "Trembling at men is what lays a snare," says a proverb. How can you deal with that fear? The proverb continues: "But he that is trusting in Jehovah will be protected." (Proverbs 29:25) In order to build that trust in Jehovah, you need to come to see for yourself that God will sustain you when you are in sore straits. Pray to Jehovah, and ask him to give you the courage to make even minor decisions regarding your worship. Gradually, your faith and trust in Jehovah will grow to the point that you will be able to make major decisions in harmony with God's will.

Nicodemus' position and prestige as a member of the ruling class may also have

prevented him from taking the important step of disowning himself. At that time, he must still have had a strong attachment to his position as a member of the Sanhedrin. Do you hesitate to take action to become Christ's follower because you may lose a prestigious position in society or may have to sacrifice certain prospects for advancement? None of these things can compare with the distinction of being able to serve the Most High of the universe, who is willing to satisfy requests you make in harmony with his will.—Psalm 10:17; 83:18; 145:18.

Another possible reason for Nicodemus' procrastination might have been related to his riches. As a Pharisee, he might have been influenced by the others, "who were money lovers." (Luke 16:14) The fact that he was able to afford an expensive roll of myrrh and aloes testifies to his means. Some today keep delaying the decision to take up the responsibilities of a Christian because they are anxious about their material belongings. However, Jesus admonished his followers: "Stop being anxious about your souls as to what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your bodies as to what you will wear. . . . For your heavenly Father knows you need all these things. Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you." —Matthew 6:25-33.

He Had Much to Lose

Interestingly, the account about Nicodemus, which appears only in John's Gospel, leaves unsaid whether he ever became Jesus' follower or not. According to one tradition, Nicodemus took a stand for Jesus, got baptized, became a target of Jewish persecution, was removed from his position, and was finally banished from Jerusalem. Whatever

the case, one thing is certain: He had much to lose by procrastinating while Jesus was here on earth.

If Nicodemus had started following Jesus at the time of his very first encounter with the Lord, he could have become a close disciple of Jesus. With Nicodemus' knowledge, insight, humility, and awareness of spiritual needs, he could have become an outstanding disciple. Yes, he could have heard the amazing speeches by the Great Teacher, learned vital lessons from Jesus' illustrations, witnessed eye-opening miracles that Jesus performed, and gained strength from Jesus' parting admonition to his apostles. But he missed out on all of that.

Nicodemus' indecisiveness meant a great loss on his part. Included was Jesus' warm invitation: "Come to me, all you who are toiling and loaded down, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am mild-tempered and lowly in heart, and you will find refreshment for your souls. For my yoke is kindly and my load is light." (Matthew 11:28-30) Nicodemus missed the opportunity to experience this refreshment literally from Jesus himself!

How About You?

Since 1914, Jesus Christ has been present in heaven as the King of God's heavenly

Kingdom. Foretelling what would take place during his presence, he said among other things: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come." (Matthew 24:14) Before the end comes, that worldwide preaching work must be accomplished. Jesus Christ takes pleasure in having imperfect humans take part. You too may have a share in this work.

Nicodemus recognized that Jesus came from God. (John 3:2) From studying the Bible, you may have come to a similar conclusion. You may have made changes in your way of life to conform to Bible standards. You may even be attending meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses to take in further knowledge of the Bible. You are to be commended for such efforts. Yet, Nicodemus needed to go beyond simply showing appreciation for Jesus as the one sent by God. He needed to "disown himself and pick up his torture stake day after day and follow [Jesus] continually."—Luke 9:23.

Take to heart what the apostle Paul tells us. He wrote: "Working together with him, we also entreat you not to accept the undeserved kindness of God and miss its purpose. For he says: 'In an acceptable time I heard you, and in a day of salvation I helped you.' Look! Now is the especially acceptable time. Look! Now is the day of salvation."—2 Corinthians 6:1, 2.

Now is the time to develop the faith that moves you to action. To that end, meditate on the things that you are studying in the Bible. Pray to Jehovah, and ask him for help to display such faith. As you experience his helping hand, your appreciation and love for him will move you to want to 'disown yourself and pick up your torture stake day after day and follow Jesus Christ continually!' Will you act now?

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Godly Principles Can Benefit You

Coping With "a Thorn in the Flesh"

A Hiding Place From the Wind

Modern-Day Martyrs Bear Witness in Sweden

THE Greek word for "witness" is *martyr*, from which comes the English word "martyr," meaning "one who bears witness by his death." Many first-century Christians gave a witness about Jehovah by dying for their faith.

Similarly, in the 20th century, thousands of Witnesses died at the hands of Hitler's henchmen for maintaining their neutrality in political and nationalistic issues. These modern-day martyrs also provide a powerful witness. This is what took place in Sweden recently.

In connection with the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II, the Swedish government initiated a nationwide educational campaign about the Holocaust. The project was called Living History. Jehovah's Witnesses were invited to take part and to share their experiences.

The Witnesses responded by staging an exhibition entitled The Forgotten Victims of the Holocaust. It opened at the Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses in Strängnäs. Witness Holocaust survivors were on hand to share their experiences with the more than 8,400 visitors who came on the first day! By the end of 1999, the exhibition had appeared in over 100 museums and public libraries throughout Sweden, and some 150,000 people had seen it. Visitors included a number of government officials, who commented favorably on what they saw.

No other single event in connection with the activities of Jehovah's Witnesses in Sweden has had such extensive public coverage and received as much favorable publicity. Many visitors asked: "Why haven't you told us about your Holocaust experiences before?"



After the exhibition had been shown in their area, one congregation reported a 30-percent increase in home Bible studies! One Witness invited a fellow worker to see the exhibit. The colleague gladly accepted and brought along a friend. Afterward, the friend said that she found it hard to understand how people could have such strong faith that they would rather be executed than sign a document relinquishing their faith. This led to further discussions, and a Bible study was started with her.

Like their first-century counterparts, these 20th-century faithful martyrs have boldly borne witness that Jehovah is the only true God, who is worthy of our unswerving faith and loyalty.—Revelation 4:11.

ARE YOU AMONG THOSE LOVED BY GOD?

"He that has my commandments and observes them, that one is he who loves me. In turn he that loves me will be loved by my Father."—JOHN 14:21.

Jehovah loves his human creation. In fact, he loves the world of mankind "so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) As the time for observing the Memorial of Christ's death approaches, true Christians should more than ever be conscious that Jehovah "loved us and sent forth his Son as a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins."—1 John 4:10.

² On the night of Nisan 14, 33 C.E., Jesus and his 12 apostles assembled in an upper room in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover, commemorating the Israelites' deliverance from Egypt. (Matthew 26:17-20) After celebrating this Jewish festival, Jesus dismissed Judas Iscariot and instituted a commemorative supper that was to become the Christian Memorial of Christ's death.* Using unfermented bread and red wine as emblems, or symbols, of his physical body and blood, Jesus had the 11 remaining apostles share together in this communion meal. Details on how he proceeded are given by the Synoptic Gospel writers Matthew, Mark, and Luke and by the apostle Paul, who termed it "the Lord's evening meal."—1 Corinthians 11:20;

* For 2002, as calculated Biblically, Nisan 14 begins at sundown, Thursday, March 28. That evening, Jehovah's Witnesses around the world will assemble to commemorate the death of the Lord, Jesus Christ.

1, 2. (a) How did Jehovah show his love for humankind? (b) What did Jesus institute on the night of Nisan 14, 33 C.E.?

Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:19, 20.

³ Interestingly, the apostle John made no mention of the passing of the bread and wine, perhaps because by the time he wrote his Gospel account (about 98 C.E.), the procedure was well established among the early Christians. (1 Corinthians 11:23-26) However, under inspiration, John alone supplied us with some vital information regarding what Jesus said and did just before and just after He instituted the Memorial of His death. These thrilling details fill no less than five chapters of John's Gospel. They leave no doubt as to the kind of individuals God loves. Let us examine John chapters 13 through 17.

Learn From Jesus' Exemplary Love

⁴ Love is a prominent theme throughout these chapters containing Jesus' parting counsel to his followers. In fact, various forms of the word "love" occur there 31 times. Jesus' deep love for his Father, Jehovah, and for his disciples is nowhere made more apparent than in these chapters. Jesus' love for Jehovah can be deduced from all the Gospel accounts of his life, but only John records that Jesus explicitly stated: "I love the Father." (John 14:31) Jesus also stated that Jehovah loves him

3. In what important ways is the apostle John's account of Jesus' final hours with his disciples in the upper room different from others?

4. (a) How did John emphasize the dominant theme of Jesus' meeting with his disciples when he instituted the Memorial? (b) What is one important reason why Jehovah loves Jesus?

and explained why. He said: "Just as the Father has loved me and I have loved you, remain in my love. If you observe my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have observed the commandments of the Father and remain in his love." (John 15:9, 10) Yes, Jehovah loves his Son because of his implicit obedience. What a fine lesson for all followers of Jesus Christ!

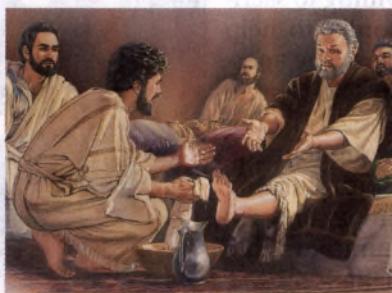
⁵ Jesus' profound love for his followers is underscored at the very beginning of John's account of Jesus' final meeting with the apostles. John related: "Now, because he knew before the festival of the passover that his hour had come for him to move out of this world to the Father, Jesus, having loved his own that were in the world, loved them to the end." (John 13:1) On that memorable evening, he gave them an unforgettable lesson in lovingly serving others. He washed their feet. This was something that each of them should have been willing to do for Jesus and for their brothers, but they held back. Jesus performed this humble task and then said to his disciples: "If I, although Lord and Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash the feet of one another. For I set the pattern for you, that, just as I did to you, you should do also." (John 13:14, 15) True Christians should be willing and happy to serve their brothers.—Matthew 20:26, 27, footnote; John 13:17.

Follow the New Commandment

⁶ John's account of what occurred in the

5. How did Jesus demonstrate his love for his disciples?

6, 7. (a) What important detail does John supply concerning the institution of the Memorial? (b) What new commandment did Jesus give his disciples, and what was new about it?



Jesus gave his apostles an unforgettable lesson in loving service

upper room on the night of Nisan 14 is the only one that specifically mentions the departure of Judas Iscariot. (John 13:21-30) Harmonizing the Gospel accounts indicates that only after this traitor was gone did Jesus institute the Memorial of His death. He then spoke at length with his faithful apostles, giving them parting counsel and instructions. As we prepare ourselves to attend the Memorial, we should be intensely interested in what Jesus said on that occasion, and all the more so because we certainly want to be among those whom God loves.

⁷ The very first instruction Jesus gave to his disciples after instituting the Memorial of his death was something new. He declared: "I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves." (John 13:34, 35) What was new about this commandment? A little later that evening, Jesus clarified matters, stating: "This is my commandment, that you love one another just as I have loved you. No one has love greater than this, that someone should surrender his soul in behalf of his friends." (John 15:12, 13) The Mosaic Law commanded the Israelites to 'love their fellow as themselves.' (Leviticus 19:18) But Jesus' commandment went further. Christians were to love one another as Christ loved them, being willing to sacrifice their very lives for their brothers.

⁸ The Memorial season is an appropriate

8. (a) What does self-sacrificing love involve? (b) How do Jehovah's Witnesses manifest self-sacrificing love today?

time to examine ourselves, individually and as a congregation, to see if we really have this distinguishing mark of true Christianity—Christlike love. Such self-sacrificing love could mean, and sometimes has meant, that a Christian would risk his life rather than betray his brothers. More often than not, though, it involves our being willing to sacrifice our personal interests in order to help and serve our brothers and others. The apostle Paul was a fine example in this regard. (2 Corinthians 12:15; Philippians 2:17) Jehovah's Witnesses are known throughout the world for their self-sacrificing spirit, helping their brothers and their neighbors and expending themselves to communicate Bible truth to their fellowmen.*—Galatians 6:10.

Relationships to Be Treasured

⁹ Nothing could be more precious to us than to be loved by Jehovah and his Son, Christ Jesus. To have and feel this love, however, we must do something. On that final night with his disciples, Jesus said: "He that has my commandments and observes them, that one is he who loves me. In turn he that loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and will plainly show myself to him." (John 14:21) Since we treasure our relationship with God and with his Son, we joyfully obey their commandments. This includes the new commandment to show self-sacrificing love and also the order Christ gave after his resurrection "to preach to the people and to give a thorough witness," endeavoring to "make disciples" of those who accept the good news.—Acts 10:42; Matthew 28:19, 20.

¹⁰ Later that night, in answer to a ques-

* See the book *Jehovah's Witnesses—Proclaimers of God's Kingdom*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses, chapters 19 and 32.

9. To maintain our precious relationship with God and his Son, what are we happy to do?

10. What precious relationships are open to the anointed and to the "other sheep"?



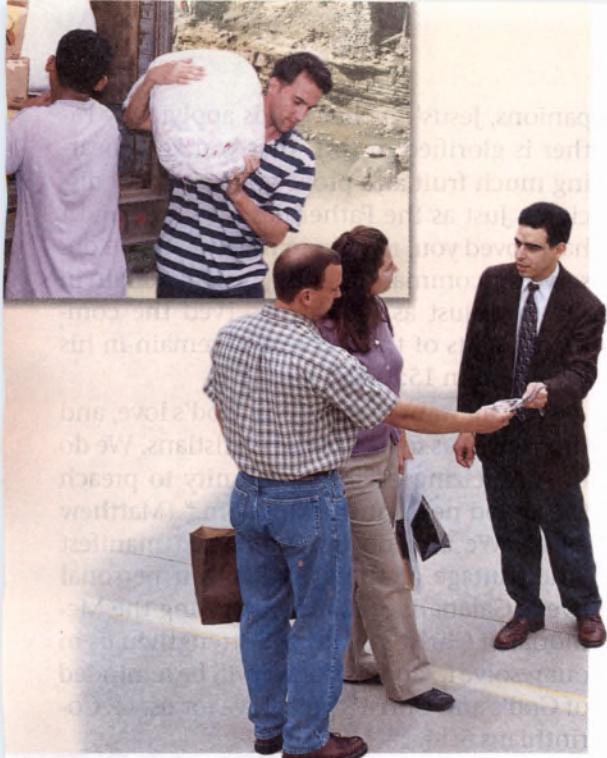
Christ's disciples obey his command to show self-sacrificing love

tion put to him by the faithful apostle Judas (Thaddaeus), Jesus said: "If anyone loves me, he will observe my word, and my Father will love him, and we shall come to him and make our abode with him." (John 14:22, 23) Even while still on earth, anointed Christians, called to reign with Christ in heaven, have a particularly close relationship with Jehovah and with his Son. (John 15:15; 16:27; 17:22; Hebrews 3:1; 1 John 3:2, 24) But their "other sheep" companions, whose hope is to live forever on earth, also have a precious relationship with their "one shepherd," Jesus Christ, and with their God, Jehovah, provided they prove to be obedient.—John 10:16; Psalm 15:1-5; 25:14.

"You Are No Part of the World"

¹¹ During this last meeting with his faithful disciples before his death, Jesus gave a sobering warning: If a person is loved by God,

11. What sobering warning did Jesus give his disciples?



he will be hated by the world. He declared: "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were part of the world, the world would be fond of what is its own. Now because you are no part of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, on this account the world hates you. Bear in mind the word I said to you, A slave is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you also; if they have observed my word, they will observe yours also."—John 15:18-20.

¹² Jesus gave this warning so that these 11 apostles and all true Christians after them would not be discouraged and give up because of the world's hatred. He added: "I have spoken these things to you that you may not be stumbled. Men will expel you from the synagogue. In fact, the hour is coming when everyone that kills you will imagine he has

12. (a) Why did Jesus warn his disciples that the world would hate them? (b) What would it be well for all to consider as the Memorial approaches?

rendered a sacred service to God. But they will do these things because they have not come to know either the Father or me." (John 16:1-3) One Bible lexicon explains that a form of the verb here rendered "stumbled" means "to cause a person to begin to distrust and desert one whom he ought to trust and obey; to cause to fall away." As the time to observe the Memorial approaches, all would do well to reflect on the life course of faithful ones, past and present, and imitate their example of steadfastness under trial. Do not allow opposition or persecution to cause you to desert Jehovah and Jesus, but be resolved to trust and obey them.

¹³ In his closing prayer before leaving that upper room in Jerusalem, Jesus said to his Father: "I have given your word to them, but the world has hated them, because they are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world. I request you, not to take them out of the world, but to watch over them because of the wicked one. They are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world." (John 17:14-16) We can be sure that Jehovah watches over those whom he loves, to strengthen them as they keep separate from the world.—Isaiah 40:29-31.

Remain in the Father's Love and in the Son's Love

¹⁴ During the intimate conversation he had with his faithful disciples on the night of Nissan 14, Jesus likened himself to "the true vine," in contrast with the 'degenerate vine' of unfaithful Israel. He said: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the cultivator." (John 15:1) Centuries earlier, the prophet Jeremiah recorded these words of Jehovah to his renegade people: "I had planted you as a choice red vine . . . So how have you been changed

13. What did Jesus request in behalf of his followers in a prayer to his Father?

14, 15. (a) To what did Jesus liken himself, in contrast with what 'degenerate vine'? (b) Who are "the branches" of "the true vine"?

toward me into the degenerate shoots of a foreign vine?" (Jeremiah 2:21) And the prophet Hosea wrote: "Israel is a degenerating vine. Fruit he keeps putting forth for himself.... Their heart has become hypocritical."—Hosea 10:1, 2.

¹⁵ Rather than producing the fruitage of true worship, Israel fell into apostasy and produced fruit for itself. Three days before his final meeting with his faithful disciples, Jesus told the hypocritical Jewish leaders: "I say to you, The kingdom of God will be taken from you and be given to a nation producing its fruits." (Matthew 21:43) That new nation is "the Israel of God," made up of 144,000 anointed Christians, who are likened to "the branches" of "the true vine," Christ Jesus.—Galatians 6:16; John 15:5; Revelation 14:1, 3.

¹⁶ Jesus told the 11 apostles present with him in that upper room: "Every branch in me not bearing fruit he takes away, and every one bearing fruit he cleans, that it may bear more fruit. Remain in union with me, and I in union with you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it remains in the vine, in the same way neither can you, unless you remain in union with me." (John 15:2, 4) The modern history of Jehovah's people shows that the faithful remnant of anointed Christians have remained in union with their Head, Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 5:23) They have accepted cleansing and pruning. (Malachi 3:2, 3) Since 1919, they have brought forth Kingdom fruitage in abundance, first other anointed Christians and, since 1935, an ever-increasing "great crowd" of companions.—Revelation 7:9; Isaiah 60:4, 8-11.

¹⁷ To all anointed Christians and their com-

16. What did Jesus urge the 11 faithful apostles to do, and what can be said of the faithful remnant in this time of the end?

17, 18. (a) What words of Jesus help the anointed and the other sheep to remain in Jehovah's love? (b) How will attending the Memorial help us?

panions, Jesus' further words apply: "My Father is glorified in this, that you keep bearing much fruit and prove yourselves my disciples. Just as the Father has loved me and I have loved you, remain in my love. If you observe my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have observed the commandments of the Father and remain in his love."—John 15:8-10.

¹⁸ We all want to remain in God's love, and this moves us to be fruitful Christians. We do this by seizing every opportunity to preach the "good news of the kingdom." (Matthew 24:14) We also do our utmost to manifest "the fruitage of the spirit" in our personal lives. (Galatians 5:22, 23) Attending the Memorial of Christ's death will strengthen us in our resolve to do this, for we will be reminded of God's and Christ's great love for us.—2 Corinthians 5:14, 15.

¹⁹ After instituting the Memorial, Jesus promised that his Father would send his faithful followers a "helper, the holy spirit." (John 14:26) How this spirit helps the anointed and the other sheep to remain in Jehovah's love will be examined in the following article.

19. What further help will be discussed in the following article?

Review Questions

- What practical lesson in loving service did Jesus give to his disciples?
- With respect to what is the Memorial season an appropriate time for self-examination?
- Why should we not be stumbled by Jesus' warning about hatred and persecution by the world?
- Who is "the true vine"? Who are "the branches," and what is expected of them?

HAVE YOU RECEIVED “THE SPIRIT OF THE TRUTH”?

“The Father . . . will give you another helper to be with you forever, the spirit of the truth.”—JOHN 14:16, 17.

LORD, where are you going?” That was one of the questions that Jesus’ apostles put to him during the final hours he spent with them in an upper room in Jerusalem. (John 13:36) As the meeting progressed, Jesus informed them that now he was due to leave them to return to his Father. (John 14:28; 16:28) He would no longer be with them bodily to instruct them and answer their questions. He reassured them, however, saying: “I will request the Father and he will give you another helper [or, comforter] to be with you forever.”—John 14:16, footnote.

² Jesus identified that helper and explained how it would assist his disciples. He told them: “These things, however, I did not tell you at first, because I was with you. But now I am going to him that sent me . . . It is for your benefit I am going away. For if I do not go away, the helper will by no means come to you; but if I do go my way, I will send him to you; . . . When that one arrives, the spirit of the truth, he will guide you into all the truth.”—John 16:4, 5, 7, 13.



³ This promise was fulfilled at Pentecost 33 C.E., as the apostle Peter attested: “This Jesus God resurrected, of which fact we are all witnesses. Therefore because he was exalted to the right hand of God and received the promised holy spirit from the Father, he has poured out this which

you see and hear.” (Acts 2:32, 33) As we shall see later, the holy spirit poured out at Pentecost accomplished many things for the early Christians. But Jesus promised that “the spirit of the truth” would ‘bring back to their minds all the things he had told them.’ (John 14:26) It would enable them to remember Jesus’ ministry and teachings, even his very words, and put these into writing. This would be especially helpful to the aged apostle John at the end of the first century C.E. when he set about writing his Gospel. That account includes the precious counsel Jesus gave when he instituted the Memorial of his death.—John, chapters 13-17.

⁴ Jesus also promised those early disciples that the spirit would ‘teach them all things’ and ‘guide them into all the truth.’ The spirit

1. What important information did Jesus give his disciples during his final hours with them in the upper room?

2. What did Jesus promise to send to the disciples after his going away?

3. (a) When was “the spirit of the truth” sent to the early Christians? (b) What was one important way in which the spirit was a “helper” for them?

4. How did “the spirit of the truth” help the early anointed Christians?

would help them to understand the deeper things of the Scriptures and preserve their unity of thought, understanding, and purpose. (1 Corinthians 2:10; Ephesians 4:3) The holy spirit thus empowered those early Christians to act as a collective "faithful and discreet slave" to supply individual anointed Christians with spiritual "food at the proper time."—Matthew 24:45.

The Spirit Bears Witness

⁵ On the night of Nisan 14, 33 C.E., Jesus intimated to his disciples that they would later be received by him and dwell with him and his Father in heaven. He told them: "In the house of my Father there are many abodes. Otherwise, I would have told you, because I am going my way to prepare a place for you. Also, if I go my way and prepare a place for you, I am coming again and will receive you home to myself, that where I am you also may be." (John 13:36; 14:2, 3) They would reign with him in his Kingdom. (Luke 22:28-30) For them to have this heavenly hope, they would be "born from the spirit" as spiritual sons of God and be anointed to serve as kings and priests with Christ in heaven.—John 3:5-8; 2 Corinthians 1:21, 22; Titus 3:5-7; 1 Peter 1:3, 4; Revelation 20:6.

⁶ This "heavenly calling" began at Pentecost 33 C.E. and, in the main, appears to have ended in the mid-1930's. (Hebrews 3:1) The number of those sealed by the holy spirit to be part of spiritual Israel is 144,000, "bought from among mankind." (Revelation 7:4; 14:1-4) These were baptized into the spiritual body of Christ, into his congregation, and into his death. (Romans 6:3; 1 Corinthians

5. (a) What new perspective did Jesus open up to his disciples on the night of Nisan 14, 33 C.E.? (b) What role would the holy spirit play in fulfilling Jesus' promise?

6. (a) When did the heavenly calling begin, and how many receive this calling? (b) Those called were baptized into what?

12:12, 13, 27; Ephesians 1:22, 23) After their water baptism and anointing with holy spirit, they entered into a sacrificial course, a life of integrity until their death.—Romans 6:4, 5.

⁷ As spiritual Israelites, these anointed Christians were in the new covenant made between Jehovah and "the Israel of God." (Galatians 6:16; Jeremiah 31:31-34) The new covenant was validated by Christ's shed blood. Jesus mentioned this when he instituted the Memorial of his death. Luke records: "He took a loaf, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to them, saying: 'This means my body which is to be given in your behalf. Keep doing this in remembrance of me.' Also, the cup in the same way after they had the evening meal, he saying: 'This cup means the new covenant by virtue of my blood, which is to be poured out in your behalf.'" (Luke 22:19, 20) The remnant, or remaining members of the 144,000 still on earth, are the ones who rightly partake of the emblematic bread and wine at the Memorial of Christ's death.

⁸ How do the anointed know that they have received the heavenly calling? They receive unmistakably the witness of the holy spirit. The apostle Paul wrote to such ones: "All who are led by God's spirit, these are God's sons. . . . The spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are God's children. If, then, we are children, we are also heirs: heirs indeed of God, but joint heirs with Christ, provided we suffer together that we may also be glorified together." (Romans 8:14-17) This witness of the spirit is so powerful that those who have the slightest doubt about having received the heavenly calling can reasonably conclude that they have not, and they will therefore refrain from partaking of the emblems at the Memorial.

7. Why do only anointed Christians rightly partake of the emblems at the Memorial?
8. How do the anointed know that they have received the heavenly calling?

The Spirit and the Other Sheep

⁹ Having in mind the limited number of Christians called to make up spiritual Israel, Jesus referred to them as the “little flock.” They are admitted into the “fold” of the new covenant, in contrast with the numberless “other sheep,” whom Jesus said he must also gather. (Luke 12:32; John 10:16) Those of the other sheep gathered in the time of the end will make up the “great crowd” destined to survive “the great tribulation,” with the prospect of living forever on a paradise earth. Interestingly, the vision John received at the end of the first century C.E. distinguishes between this great crowd and the 144,000 members of spiritual Israel. (Revelation 7:4, 9, 14) Do the other sheep also receive the holy spirit, and if so, how does it affect their lives?

¹⁰ The holy spirit does indeed play an important part in the lives of the other sheep. They symbolize their dedication to Jehovah by being baptized “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit.” (Matthew 28:19) They recognize Jehovah’s sovereignty, submit to Christ as their King and Redeemer, and yield to the action of God’s spirit, or active force, in their lives. Day by day, they make room in their lives for “the fruitage of the spirit,” namely “love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control.”—Galatians 5:22, 23.

¹¹ The other sheep must also allow God’s Word and his holy spirit to purify, or sanctify, them. The anointed are already sanctified in a very special way, being declared righteous and holy as Christ’s bride. (John 17:17; 1 Co-

9. What two distinct groups are mentioned in the Gospels and in the book of Revelation?

10. How are the other sheep baptized “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit”?

11, 12. (a) How are the anointed sanctified in a very special way? (b) In what way are the other sheep sanctified and made holy?



“The spirit of the truth” was poured out on the disciples at Pentecost 33 C.E.

rinthians 6:11; Ephesians 5:23-27) The prophet Daniel speaks of them as “the holy ones of the Supreme One,” who receive the Kingdom under the “son of man,” Christ Jesus. (Daniel 7:13, 14, 18, 27) Earlier, through Moses and Aaron, Jehovah declared to the nation of Israel: “I am Jehovah your God; and you must sanctify yourselves and you must prove yourselves holy, because I am holy.”—Leviticus 11:44.

¹² The word “sanctification” basically means “the act or process of making holy, separating, or setting apart for the service or use of Jehovah God; the state of being holy, sanctified, or purified.” As early as 1938, *The Watchtower* stated that the Jonadabs, or other sheep, “must learn that consecration [dedication] and sanctification are required of each one who shall become a part of the great multitude and live on earth.” In the vision of the great crowd, recorded in the book of Revelation, they are spoken of as having “washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” and as rendering Jehovah “sacred service day and night in his temple.” (Revelation 7:9, 14, 15) With the help of the holy spirit, the other sheep do their utmost to measure up to Jehovah’s requirements of holiness.—2 Corinthians 7:1.

Doing Good to Christ's Brothers

¹³ Jesus highlighted the close bond between the other sheep and the little flock in his parable of the sheep and the goats, included in his prophecy on "the conclusion of the system of things." In that parable, Christ clearly showed that the salvation of the other sheep is closely linked to their conduct toward the anointed, whom he called "my brothers." He stated: "The king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who have been blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the founding of the world. . . . Truly I say to you, To the extent that you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'"—Matthew 24:3; 25:31-34, 40.

¹⁴ The expression "to the extent that you did it" refers to acts of loving support given to Christ's spirit-begotten brothers, whom Satan's world has treated as strangers, even throwing some of them into prison. They have been in need of food, adequate clothing, and health care. (Matthew 25:35, 36, footnote) In this time of the end, since 1914, many of the anointed have found themselves in such situations. The modern history of Jehovah's Witnesses attests that they have been succored by their loyal companions, the other sheep, as these were moved by the spirit.

¹⁵ Christ's anointed brothers on earth in this time of the end have particularly received the active support of the other sheep in carrying out the God-given commission to 'preach this good news of the kingdom in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations.' (Matthew 24:14; John 14:12) While

13, 14. (a) According to Jesus' parable of the sheep and the goats, upon what does the salvation of the sheep depend? (b) In this time of the end, how have the other sheep done good to Christ's brothers?

15, 16. (a) In what activity have the other sheep particularly helped Christ's anointed brothers on earth? (b) How have the anointed expressed their appreciation to the other sheep?

the number of anointed ones on earth has been diminishing over the years, that of the other sheep has expanded to include literally millions. Thousands of these have served as full-time evangelizers—pioneers and missionaries—spreading the Kingdom good news to "the most distant part of the earth." (Acts 1:8) Others share in the witness work as much as they can and joyfully support this important work financially.

¹⁶ How Christ's anointed brothers appreciate this loyal support by their other sheep companions! Their feelings were well expressed in the book *Worldwide Security Under the "Prince of Peace,"* provided by the slave class in 1986. It says: "Since World War II, the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy for 'the conclusion of the system of things' is largely due to the role that the 'great crowd' of 'other sheep' carry out. . . . Profuse thanks, therefore, to the international, multilingual 'great crowd' for the overwhelming part that they have played in the fulfilling of [Jesus'] prophecy at Matthew 24:14!"

'Not Made Perfect Apart From Us'

¹⁷ Speaking as one of the anointed and re-

17. In what way will faithful ones of old who will be resurrected on earth "not be made perfect apart from" the anointed?

By Way of Review

- When was "the spirit of the truth" sent to the early Christians, and how did it prove to be a "helper"?
- How do the anointed know that they have received the heavenly calling?
- In what ways does God's spirit operate on the other sheep?
- How have the other sheep done good to Christ's brothers, and why will they "not be made perfect apart from" the anointed?

ferring to faithful men and women who lived before Christ, the apostle Paul wrote: "All these, although they had witness borne to them through their faith, did not get the fulfillment of the promise, as God foresaw something better for us [the anointed], in order that they might not be made perfect apart from us." (Hebrews 11:35, 39, 40) During the Millennium, Christ and his 144,000 anointed brothers in heaven will act as kings and priests and dispense the benefits of Christ's ransom sacrifice on earth. The other sheep will thus "be made perfect" in body and mind.—Revelation 22:1, 2.

¹⁸ All of this should impress upon the minds of the other sheep why the Christian Greek Scriptures focus so much attention on Christ and his anointed brothers and their central role in the outworking of Jehovah's purposes. The other sheep therefore consider it a privilege to support in every way possible the anointed slave class while awaiting "the revealing of the sons of God" at Armageddon and during the Millennium. They can look forward to being "set free from enslavement to corruption and have the glorious freedom of the children of God."—Romans 8:19-21.

18. (a) What should the Biblical facts help the other sheep to appreciate? (b) In what hope do the other sheep await "the revealing of the sons of God"?

The other sheep have done good to Christ's brothers by supporting them in fulfilling the divine commission to preach



United in the Spirit at the Memorial

¹⁹ In his closing prayer on the night of Nisan 14, 33 C.E., Jesus said: "I make request . . . in order that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in union with me and I am in union with you, that they also may be in union with us, in order that the world may believe that you sent me forth." (John 17: 20, 21) Out of love, God sent his Son to give his life for the salvation of the anointed ones and the world of obedient mankind. (1 John 2:2) "The spirit of the truth" has united Christ's brothers and their companions. On the evening of March 28, after sundown, both classes will meet together to commemorate Christ's death and remember all that Jehovah has done for them through the sacrifice of his dear Son, Christ Jesus. May their presence on that important occasion strengthen their unity and renew their determination to keep on doing the will of God, thus giving evidence that they rejoice to be among those whom Jehovah loves.

19. What has "the spirit of the truth" done for the anointed and their companions, and how will they be especially united on the evening of March 28?





JEHOVAH TAUGHT US ENDURANCE AND PERSEVERANCE

AS TOLD BY

ARISTOTELIS APOSTOLIDIS

In the northern foothills of the Caucasus Mountains lies Pyatigorsk, a Russian city famous for its mineral springs and gentle climate. Here I was born to Greek refugees in 1929. Ten years later, after the nightmare of Stalinist purges, terror, and ethnic cleansing, we became refugees again, as we were forced to move to Greece.

AFTER we moved to Piraiévs, Greece, the word "refugees" took on a whole new meaning for us. We felt like complete strangers. Although my brother and I bore the names of two famous Greek philosophers, Socrates and Aristotle, we seldom heard those names used. Everyone called us the little Russians.

Shortly after the outbreak of World War II, my beloved mother died. She had been the center of our home, and the loss was devastating. Since she had been sickly for a while, she had taught me to perform many house-

hold chores. This training proved very useful later in life.

War and Liberation

The war, the Nazi occupation, and the unrelenting shelling by the Allied forces made every day seem to be the last one. There was so much poverty, hunger, and death. From the age of 11, I had to work very hard along with my father in order to support the three of us. My secular education was hampered by a limited grasp of the Greek language, as well as by the war and its aftermath.

The German occupation of Greece ended in October 1944. Shortly thereafter, I came in contact with Jehovah's Witnesses. Amid the despair and misery of the times, the Bible hope of a bright future under God's Kingdom touched my heart. (Psalm 37:29) God's promise of endless life under peaceful conditions here on earth proved to be a real balm for my wounds. (Isaiah 9:7) In 1946 my father and I were baptized, symbolizing our dedication to Jehovah.

The next year, I had the joy of receiving my first assignment as advertising servant (later called magazine servant) in the second congregation organized in Piraiévs. Our territory stretched from Piraiévs right down to Eleusis, a distance of about 30 miles. At that time, many spirit-anointed Christians served in the congregation. I had the privilege of working with them and learning from them. I enjoyed their association because they had endless experiences to relate about the strenuous effort required to carry out the preaching work. From their life course, it was clear that to serve Jehovah faithfully, a lot of patience and perseverance is required. (Acts 14:22) How happy I am that there are more than 50 congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses in this area today!

An Unexpected Challenge

Sometime later, I became acquainted with Eleni, a lovely, zealous young Christian woman in the city of Patras. We were engaged by the end of 1952. After a few months, however, Eleni fell seriously ill. The doctors found that she had a brain tumor, and her condition was critical. She had to undergo surgery immediately. After much effort, we were able to locate a doctor in Athens who—despite the inadequate means available back then—was willing to comply with our religious beliefs and perform sur-



With my wife, Eleni, after her second operation, in 1957

gery without blood. (Leviticus 17:10-14; Acts 15:28, 29) Following the operation, the doctors were cautiously optimistic about my fiancée's prospects, without ruling out the possibility of a relapse.

What was I supposed to do in this situation? In view of the changed circumstances, should I end the engagement and set myself free? No! With my betrothal, I had made a promise, and I wanted my yes to mean yes. (Matthew 5:37) Not for a moment did I allow myself to think otherwise. Under the care of her older sister, Eleni partially recovered, and we got married in December 1954.

Three years later, Eleni had a relapse, and the same doctor had to perform another operation. This time he worked deeper into the brain in order to remove the tumor completely. As a result, my wife was left partially paralyzed, and her speech center was badly affected. Now a whole new set of complicated challenges arose for both of us. Even the simplest task became a major obstacle for my dear wife. Her deteriorating condition necessitated drastic changes in our everyday routine. Above all, it required a great amount of endurance and perseverance.

It was now that the training that I had received from my mother proved invaluable. Early each morning, I prepared all the ingredients for meals, and Eleni cooked. Very often we invited guests, including full-time ministers, people with whom we studied the Bible, and needy fellow Christians from the congregation. They all agreed that these meals were very tasty indeed! Eleni and I also cooperated on other household chores, so that our home was clean and tidy. This extremely demanding situation was to continue for 30 years.

Zeal Despite Infirmity

It was very moving for me and others to note that nothing could lessen my wife's love for Jehovah and her zeal for his service. In time, and with persistent effort, Eleni managed to express herself with a very limited vocabulary. She loved to approach people on the street with the good news from the Bible. When I went on business trips, I took her along and parked the car near a busy sidewalk. She opened the car window and invited passersby to take copies of *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* On one occasion, she placed 80 copies in two hours. Very often she used up all the older magazines that were available in the congregation. Eleni was also regular in other forms of preaching.

During all the years that my wife was an invalid, she was always with me at the meetings. She never missed a convention or an assembly, even when we had to travel abroad because of the persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses in Greece. Despite her limitations, she happily attended conventions in Austria, Germany, Cyprus, and other countries. Eleni never complained or became demanding, even when my increased responsibilities in Jehovah's service occasionally made things inconvenient for her.



At a convention in Nuremberg, Germany, in 1969

As for me, this situation provided a long-term education in endurance and perseverance. I experienced Jehovah's helping hand many times. Brothers and sisters made real sacrifices in order to help us in any way possible, and the doctors kindly supported us. During all those difficult years, we never lacked life's necessities, although our demanding circumstances made it impossible for me to hold a full-time job. Jehovah's interests and service were always given top priority.—Matthew 6:33.

Many have asked what sustained us during those trying times. As I now look back, I realize that personal study of the Bible, heartfelt prayer to God, regular attendance at Christian meetings, and zealous participation in the preaching work strengthened our endurance and perseverance. We were always reminded of the encouraging words of Psalm 37:3-5: "Trust in Jehovah and do good; . . . Take exquisite delight in Jehovah . . .

Roll upon Jehovah your way, and rely upon him, and he himself will act." Another verse that proved valuable to us was Psalm 55:22: "Throw your burden upon Jehovah himself, and he himself will sustain you." Like a child with complete trust in his father, we not only threw our burdens upon Jehovah but also left them with him.—James 1:6.

On April 12, 1987, while my wife was preaching in front of our house, a heavy iron door swung shut behind her, hurling her onto the sidewalk, seriously injuring her. As a result, she remained in a coma for the next three years. She died in early 1990.

Serving Jehovah to the Best of My Abilities

Back in 1960, I was appointed to serve as a congregation servant in Nikaia, Piraiévs. Since then, I have had the privilege of serving in a number of other congregations in Piraiévs. Although I never had children of my own, I have had the joy of helping many spiritual children become steadfast in the truth. Some of them now serve as congregation elders, ministerial servants, pioneer ministers, and members of the Bethel family.

After democracy was restored in Greece in 1975, Jehovah's Witnesses were able to hold their conventions freely, not having to hide in the woods anymore. The experience that some of us had acquired while organizing conventions abroad now proved invaluable. Thus, I had the joy and the privilege of serving on various convention committees for many years.

Then, in 1979, plans were made to build the first Assembly Hall in Greece, on the outskirts of Athens. I was assigned to help organize and carry out this huge construction project. This job also required a lot of endurance and perseverance. Working for three

years with hundreds of self-sacrificing brothers and sisters forged a strong bond of love and unity among us. The memories from this project are indelibly inscribed on my heart.

Satisfying the Spiritual Needs of Prisoners

A few years later, a new door of opportunity opened. Near the territory of my congregation, in Korydallos, is one of the largest prisons in Greece. Since April 1991, I have been appointed to visit this prison every week as a minister of Jehovah's Witnesses. There I am allowed to conduct Bible studies and Christian meetings with inmates who are interested. Many of them have made big changes, proving the immense power of God's Word. (Hebrews 4:12) This has impressed both the prison staff and other inmates. Some of the prisoners with whom I studied the Bible have been released and are now publishers of the good news.

For some time I studied with three notorious drug dealers. As they made spiritual progress, they came to their Bible study shaved, hair neatly combed, and wearing a shirt and tie in the middle of August—one of the hottest months in Greece! The director of the prison, the chief warden, and some employees rushed from their offices to see this phenomenon. They could not believe their eyes!

Another encouraging experience took place in the women's block of the prison. A Bible study was started with a woman serving a life sentence for murder. She was known for her rebellious ways. However, soon the Bible truth she was learning brought about such notable changes that many remarked that she was like a lion changing into a lamb! (Isaiah 11:6, 7) She quickly gained the respect and trust of the



The group of brothers and sisters who helped the sick and the elderly

director of the prison. I was happy to see her make fine spiritual progress and reach the point of dedicating herself to Jehovah.

Helping the Infirm and the Aged

Seeing my wife's long battle with illness has made me more sensitive to the needs of the sick and the elderly among us. Every time our publications featured articles that encouraged us to reach out and give loving assistance to such individuals, my interest was aroused. I treasured and collected such articles. After the passing of some years, I had accumulated a folder of more than a hundred pages—starting with the article "Consideration for Older Persons and Afflicted Ones," in the July 15, 1962, issue of *The Watchtower*. Many of these items showed that it is advantageous for each congregation to provide organized assistance to the sick and the aged.—1 John 3:17, 18.

The elders set up a group of brothers and sisters who made themselves available to look after the needs of the sick and the aged in our congregation. We organized the volunteers into various teams—such as those who could help during the day, others who could help through the night, those

who could provide transportation, and those who were available on a 24-hour basis. These last ones made up a kind of flying squad.

The results of such efforts have been encouraging. For example, a sick sister who lived alone was found unconscious on the floor during one of the daily visits that were made on her. We notified a sister who lived nearby and who had a car. She took the sick sister to the nearest hospital in record time—only ten minutes! The doctors said that this saved her life.

The gratitude that is shown to the members of the group by the infirm and the elderly is very satisfying. Having the hope of living with these brothers and sisters in God's new system under different circumstances is heartwarming. And knowing that they were helped to endure because of the support that they received during their sufferings is yet another reward.

Perseverance Has Brought Rewards

I now serve as an elder in one of the Píraiévs congregations. Despite advanced age and health problems, I am happy that I can still have an active share in the activities of the congregation.

Over the years, trying circumstances, difficult challenges, and unforeseen occurrences have called for an inordinate amount of tenacity and perseverance. Yet, Jehovah has always given me the needed strength to overcome these problems. Time and again, I have experienced the truth of the psalmist's words: "When I said: 'My foot will certainly move unsteadily,' your own loving-kindness, O Jehovah, kept sustaining me. When my disquieting thoughts became many inside of me, your own consolations began to fondle my soul."—Psalm 94:18, 19.

Questions From Readers

To what extent do the limits on marriage between relatives set out in the Mosaic Law apply to Christians today?

The Law given by Jehovah to the nation of Israel has little to say about wedding ceremonies and procedures. It does, however, set out prohibitions against certain marriage relationships. For example, at Leviticus 18:6-20, we find a list of prohibited relations involving a "close fleshly relative." That passage goes into considerable detail outlining which fleshly relatives must not enter into sexual relations with each other. Of course, Christians are not under the Mosaic Law or bound by its decrees. (Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 2:14) Even so, this does not mean that Christians can simply ignore this matter when choosing whom to marry. There are a number of reasons why this is the case.

To begin with, there are secular laws that regulate marriage between close relatives, and Christians are basically obligated to obey the laws of the land in which they live. (Matthew 22:21; Romans 13:1) Such laws, of course, vary from place to place. Most modern laws of this type are based primarily on genetic considerations. It is a known fact that marriage between close fleshly relatives is more likely to expose any offspring to genetic defects and diseases. For this reason and because of their "subjection to the superior authorities," Christians entering into marriage abide by the local marriage laws.

Then there is the matter of what is acceptable and what is unacceptable in the community in which one lives. Almost every culture has rules and customs that censure marriage between people who are closely related by blood, often viewing such unions as incestuous and hence taboo. Even though the specific relationships proscribed may vary greatly in different cultures, "generally speaking, the closer the genetic relationship between two people, the stronger and more highly charged is the taboo prohibiting

or discouraging sexual relations between them," says *The Encyclopædia Britannica*. Thus, even where no incestuous relationships are involved, Christians do not want to act with total disregard for established customs or the legitimate sensibilities of the community, so as not to bring reproach on the Christian congregation or on God's name.—2 Corinthians 6:3.

Not to be overlooked is our God-given conscience. All people are born with a sense of right and wrong, good and bad. (Romans 2:15) Their conscience tells them what is normal and proper and what is unnatural and offensive, unless it has been distorted or deadened by perverted practices. Jehovah alluded to this fact when he gave the Israelites his law against marriage between close fleshly relatives. We read: "The way the land of Egypt does, in which you dwelt, you must not do; and the way the land of Canaan does, into which I am bringing you, you must not do; and in their statutes you must not walk." (Leviticus 18:3) Christians treasure their Bible-based conscience and do not allow it to be corrupted by the twisted sense of right and wrong of the nations.—Ephesians 4:17-19.

What, then, can we conclude? While Christians are not under the Mosaic Law, their conscience tells them clearly that marriage between close fleshly relatives—such as father and daughter, mother and son, brother and sister—is totally unacceptable in the Christian community.* As the circle of kinship expands, Christians recognize that there are laws and statutes that govern legal marriage and that there are standards that are socially and culturally acceptable. These must be taken into careful consideration so that we can comply with the Scriptural injunction: "Let marriage be honorable among all."—Hebrews 13:4.

* For a detailed discussion of the subject, please see the article "Incestuous Marriages—How Should Christians View Them?" in *The Watchtower*, March 15, 1978, pages 25-6.

A City Upon a Mountain



“YOU are the light of the world. A city cannot be hid when situated upon a mountain,” Jesus told his disciples in his famous Sermon on the Mount.—Matthew 5:14.

Many Judean and Galilean towns were located on mountains rather than in the valleys below. The principal reason for choosing hilltop locations was safety. In addition to invading armies, marauder bands used to ravage Israelite settlements. (2 Kings 5:2; 24:2) Resolute citizens could defend a tightly grouped cluster of houses on top of a mountain much easier than a lowland town, which required a larger wall for protection.

Since the walls of Jewish houses were often plastered with lime, a whole cluster of these whitewashed houses huddled together on a hilltop could easily be seen for miles around. (Acts 23:3) In the bright Palestinian sunshine, these hill towns shone like a beacon, just as similar Mediterranean towns still do in our day.

Jesus used this striking aspect of the Galilean and Judean countryside to teach his followers the role of a true Christian. “Likewise let your light shine before men,” he told them, “that they may see your fine works and give glory to your Father who is in the heavens.” (Matthew 5:16) While Christians do not perform fine works to be praised by men, their good conduct does not go unnoticed.—Matthew 6:1.

Such good conduct is particularly conspicuous during the district conventions of Jehovah’s Witnesses. One newspaper in Spain, referring to a recent convention, reported:

“While interest in religious themes is on the wane in other denominations, this is not the case with Jehovah’s Witnesses. Since they do not want the Bible to lose its relevance, they put the Word of God into practice.”

Thomas, the caretaker of a stadium in the northwest of Spain that the Witnesses regularly used, appreciated being around people who put the Word of God into practice. He postponed his retirement for several weeks so that he could be present for a district convention of Jehovah’s Witnesses. When many delegates, including young ones, approached him after the convention to thank him for his cooperation over the years and to wish him well during his retirement, he broke down in tears. “Getting to know you people has been one of the best experiences of my life,” he said.

A city on a mountain captures the attention of an observer because it stands out against the skyline and because any white houses in it reflect the light of the sun. Likewise, true Christians stand out as different because they endeavor to follow elevated Scriptural standards of honesty, morality, and compassion.

In addition, Christians reflect the light of truth by means of their preaching activity. The apostle Paul said of the first-century Christians: “Since we have this ministry according to the mercy that was shown us, we do not give up . . . but by making the truth manifest [recommend] ourselves to every human conscience in the sight of God.” (2 Corinthians 4:1, 2) Though they met with op-

position everywhere they preached, Jehovah blessed their ministry, so that by about the year 60 C.E., Paul could write that the good news was being preached "in all creation that is under heaven."—Colossians 1:23.

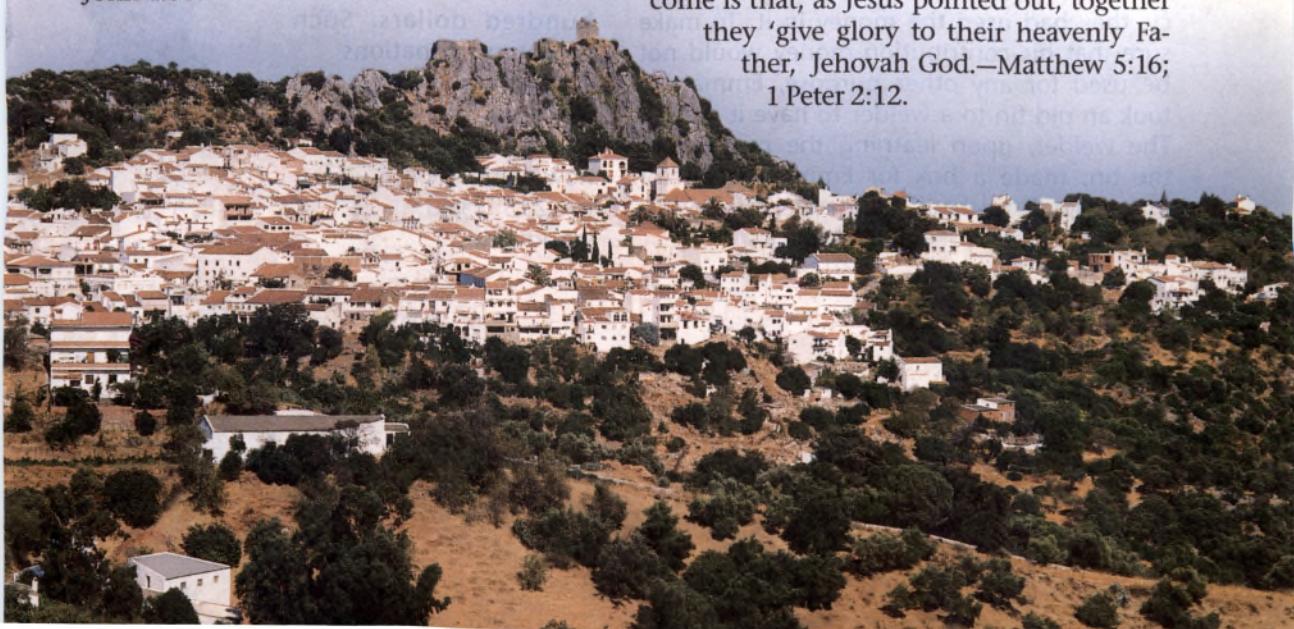
Today, Jehovah's Witnesses also take seriously their responsibility to 'let their light shine before men,' as Jesus commanded. By word of mouth and by published material, Jehovah's Witnesses disseminate the Kingdom good news in 235 lands around the world. That the light of Bible truth may reach as many people as possible, they have made their Bible publications available in some 370 languages.—Matthew 24:14; Revelation 14:6, 7.

In many places, the Witnesses have taken up the challenge of learning the languages of people who have emigrated from countries where the preaching work is or has been restricted. For example, in a number of the larger cities in North America, there has been a large influx of people from China and Russia. Local Witnesses have endeavored to learn Chinese, Russian, and other languages in order to preach the good news to the newcomers. In fact, accelerated courses in a number of languages are being conducted so that the good news may be preached to still others while the field is "white for harvesting."

—John 4:35.



The prophet Isaiah foretold: "It must occur in the final part of the days that the mountain of the house of Jehovah will become firmly established above the top of the mountains, and it will certainly be lifted up above the hills; and to it all the nations must stream." Both by their conduct and by their ministry, Jehovah's Witnesses are helping people everywhere to come to "the mountain of the house of Jehovah" to be instructed about God's ways and to learn to walk in God's path. (Isaiah 2:2, 3) The happy outcome is that, as Jesus pointed out, together they 'give glory to their heavenly Father,' Jehovah God.—Matthew 5:16; 1 Peter 2:12.



Wise in Their Own Way

"**A**DULTS have wisdom, but children are wise in their own way," says a Nigerian proverb. Edwin, a Christian elder in Nigeria, found this to be true.

One day, Edwin found a metal box under his desk at home.

"Whose is this?" Edwin asked his three children.

"It's mine," responded eight-year-old Emmanuel. He hastened to add that this rusted, five-inch-square iron box with a slit in the top was for contributions to the worldwide work of Jehovah's Witnesses. "Since I do not go to the Kingdom Hall every day," he explained, "I decided to make a box so that whenever I do not use my snack money, I can put it in the box."

Emmanuel's father had a box at home for saving money to attend the annual district convention. But because of a family emergency, they had used the money in it. To make sure that his contribution money would not be used for any other purpose, Emmanuel took an old tin to a welder to have it sealed. The welder, upon learning the purpose of the tin, made a box for Emmanuel out of scrap metal. Michael, Emmanuel's five-year-old brother, also asked for a box.



Amazed at what the children had done, Edwin asked them why they had had the boxes made. Michael responded: "I want to contribute!"

Unknown to their parents, Emmanuel, Michael, and Uchei, their nine-year-old sister, had been saving part of their lunch money and putting it in the boxes. Where did they get the idea? As soon as the children were old enough to hold money in their hands, their parents taught them to drop some money into the contribution box at the Kingdom Hall. Obviously, the children learned their lesson well.

When the boxes were filled, they were cut open. The savings totaled \$3.13 (U.S.) —no insignificant sum in a country where the average annual income is just a few hundred dollars. Such voluntary donations support the preaching work of Jehovah's Witnesses now being done in 235 lands worldwide.

