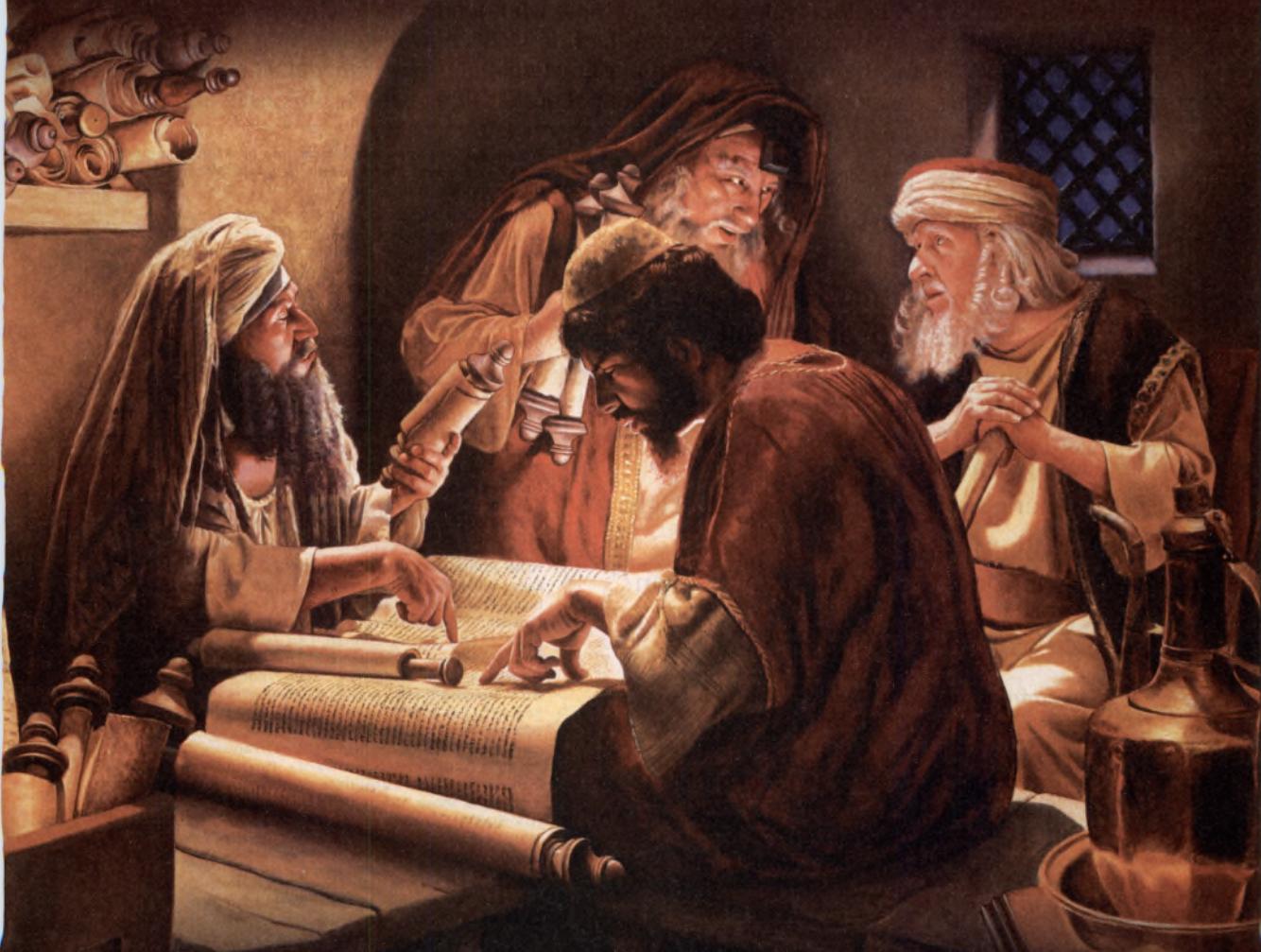


FEBRUARY 15, 2006

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



What Does the Messiah's Coming Mean to You?

THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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

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Do We Need a Messiah?

YOU might well ask that question, "Do we need a Messiah?" Yes, it would be logical to wonder whether a Messiah would have any real effect on you.

Some whose opinion you may respect would assure you that the answer is clear and unequivocal: You definitely do need a Messiah, just as much as everyone else does. An expert in Jewish law in the first century wrote of the Messiah: "No matter how many the promises of God are, they have become Yes by means of him." He thus highlighted the key role that the Messiah plays in our Creator's purpose to bless all nations of the earth. (2 Corinthians 1:20) The Messiah's function is so vital that his arrival and life are the focus of Bible prophecy. In a handbook used by millions over the last 70 years, Henry H. Halley asserted: "The Old Testament was written to create an anticipation of, and pave the way for, the Coming of [the Messiah]." But is his coming necessary? Why should you be concerned?

"Messiah" actually means "Anointed One" and is the equivalent of the well-known term "Christ." This One, whom the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1970 Edition, refers to as "the ultimate redeemer," had to come because of the irreverent actions of the first human pair, Adam and Eve. They were created perfect, with the delightful prospect of endless life in Paradise, but they lost that prospect. A rebellious angel, who became known as Satan the Devil, suggested



that their Creator was too restrictive and that they would fare better by deciding for themselves what was good and what was bad.—Genesis 3:1-5.

Eve was deceived and believed that lie. Adam, apparently valuing his wife's companionship above loyalty to God, became an accomplice in that Devil-instigated rebellion. (Genesis 3:6; 1 Timothy 2:14) By their actions, they did more than forfeit their own prospect of endless life in paradisaic surroundings. They bequeathed to their unborn offspring sin and its consequence, death.—Romans 5:12.

Our Creator, Jehovah, immediately determined the means to reverse the evil effects of the chain of events set in motion by the rebellion. He would accomplish a reconciliation by means of what would later be a legal principle in the Mosaic Law—like for like. (Deuteronomy 19:21; 1 John 3:8) This legal principle had to be satisfied if any of Adam and Eve's hapless descendants were ever to receive endless life on a paradise

earth, as the Creator had purposed for the human family. This leads us to the Messiah.

When sentencing the Devil, Jehovah God declared in the first Bible prophecy: "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." (Genesis 3:15) One Bible scholar noted that "the story of the messianic promises as the Scriptures present it begins with [this] statement." Another observed that the Messiah is God's instrument that "will reverse the whole calamity of the

fall," bringing blessings to mankind in the process.—Hebrews 2:14, 15.

You may sense, though, that mankind at present is far from being blessed. Instead, the human race is mired in hopelessness and despair. Thus, *The World Book Encyclopedia* says that "many Jews still expect a Messiah to come" and that he "will correct wrongs and defeat the enemies of the people." However, the Bible says that the Messiah has already come. Is there reason to believe what the Bible says? The following article will answer.



"WE HAVE found the Messiah." "We have found the one of whom Moses, in the Law, and the Prophets wrote." Two devoted first-century Jews made those startling announcements. At last, the hoped-for Messiah had arrived. They were convinced!—John 1:35-45.

When you think about it, given the historical and religious backdrop of that time, their conviction is all the more significant. A number of would-be liberators appeared amid great fanfare and promise, but hopes were soon dashed as such men failed to deliver the Jews from the Roman yoke.—Acts 5:34-37.

"We Have Found the Messiah"

However, those two Jews—Andrew and Philip—never wavered in their conviction that they had found the true Messiah. Rather, in the following years, their confidence increased as they personally witnessed the powerful works that this man performed in fulfillment of the features of the Messiah's role.

Why did these two and many others put faith in him, convinced that he was not just a counterfeit Messiah or a disappointing fraud? What were the credentials that made him convincingly the genuine Messiah?

According to the historical account, Andrew and Philip identified Jesus of Nazareth, the former carpenter, as the promised and

long-awaited Messiah. (John 1:45) A careful historian of that era, Luke, states that this coming of the Messiah occurred "in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar." (Luke 3:1-3) That 15th year of Tiberius' reign began in September of 28 C.E. and ended in September of 29 C.E. Luke further states that the Jews at this time "were in expectation" of the Messiah's arrival. (Luke 3:15) Why was he expected at that particular time? We shall see.

Messianic Credentials

Considering the Messiah's vital role, you can appreciate that the Creator, Jehovah, would logically provide definite clues to assist the watchful and faithful ones to identify the promised Messiah. Why? Because in that way, careful individuals would not be deceived by impostors, as so many people were.

When presenting himself to another government, an ambassador is expected to confirm his appointment with the necessary credentials. Similarly, Jehovah had recorded well in advance the requirements that the Messiah would meet. Thus, when "the Chief Agent" appeared, it would be as if he came with documentation, or credentials, that would confirm his identity.—Hebrews 12:2.

The requirements that the credentials would have to match were set out in many Bible prophecies written centuries beforehand. They foretold in minute detail the manner of the Messiah's coming, the nature of his ministry, his suffering at the hands of others, and the type of death he would experience. You may be interested in knowing that those reliable prophecies also foretold his resurrection, his exaltation to the right hand of God, and finally the blessings his future Kingdom rule would bring. In this way, Bible prophecies provided a

unique pattern that might be likened to a fingerprint, which can identify only one person.

Of course, when Jesus appeared on the scene in 29 C.E., not all Messianic prophecies were fulfilled then and there. For example, he had not yet been put to death and resurrected. Nevertheless, Andrew, Philip, and many others put faith in Jesus because of what he taught and did. They saw abundant proof that he was, in fact, the Messiah. If you had lived back then and could have studied the evidence firsthand with an open mind, you too would probably have been convinced that Jesus was the Messiah.

A Composite Picture

What would have helped you reach that conclusion? Over the centuries, Bible prophets supplied specific requirements that the Messiah would have to meet, identifying him unmistakably. As the prophets supplied these details over the centuries, a picture of the Messiah gradually emerged. Henry H. Halley observed: "Suppose a number of men of Different Countries, who had never seen, nor in any way communicated with, one another, would walk into a room, and each lay down a piece of Carved Marble, which pieces, when Fitted Together, would make a Perfect statue—how account for it in any other way than that Some One Person had drawn the Specifications, and had sent to each man his part?" He then asks: "How can this Amazing Composite of Jesus' Life and Work, put together by Different Writers of Different Centuries, Ages Before Jesus Came, be explained on any other basis than that ONE SUPERHUMAN MIND supervised the Writing?" Halley concluded that it was "The Miracle of the Ages!"

This "miracle" began in the first book of the Bible. In addition to the first Bible prophecy that indicated the role of the

► 455 B.C.E., "the word to restore . . . Jerusalem"



◀ 483 years (69 prophetic weeks)—Daniel 9:25 ▶

► 29 C.E., the Messiah arrives



Messiah, the writer of Genesis recorded that the Messiah would come through Abraham's line of descent. (Genesis 3:15; 22:15-18) Another clue revealed that the Messiah would be of the tribe of Judah. (Genesis 49:10) God told the Israelites through Moses that the Messiah would be a greater spokesman and deliverer than even Moses.—Deuteronomy 18:18.

During King David's time, prophecy revealed that the Messiah would be David's heir to the throne and that His kingdom would be "firmly established to time indefinite." (2 Samuel 7:13-16) The book of Micah disclosed that the Messiah would be born in David's town, Bethlehem. (Micah 5:2) Isaiah foretold that He would be born of a virgin. (Isaiah 7:14) The prophet Malachi predicted that His coming would be heralded by someone like Elijah.—Malachi 4:5, 6.

A further defining Messianic detail appeared in the book of Daniel. Pinpointing the very year of the Messiah's appearance, the prophecy states: "You should know and have the insight that from the going forth of the word to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem *until Messiah the Leader*, there will be seven weeks, also sixty-two weeks. She will return and be actually rebuilt, with a public square and moat, but in the straits of the times."—Daniel 9:25.

Persian King Artaxerxes gave "the word" to restore and rebuild Jerusalem in the 20th year of his reign. His reign began in 474 B.C.E., so his 20th year would be 455 B.C.E. (Nehemiah 2:1-8) Thus, a period

of 69 (7 plus 62) prophetic weeks would separate the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem and the appearance of the Messiah. Sixty-nine literal weeks, of course, equal only 483 days, or less than two years. But when the stated prophetic rule of "a day for a year" is applied, it reveals that the Messiah would appear 483 years later, in 29 C.E.—Ezekiel 4:6.*

Although a number of Messianic claimants appeared at various times, Jesus of Nazareth appeared on the world scene in 29 C.E. (Luke 3:1, 2) In that very year, Jesus came to John the Baptizer and was baptized in water. Jesus was then anointed with holy spirit as the Messiah. Later, John, the foretold Elijah-like forerunner, introduced Jesus to Andrew and another disciple, calling Him "the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world."—John 1:29; Luke 1:13-17; 3:21-23.

Genealogy and Messiah's Identification

The inspired prophecies linked the Messiah to particular Jewish families. So it is only reasonable that the omniscient Creator would arrange the Messiah's coming at a time when the genealogical records were available to verify his ancestry.

McClintock and Strong's *Cyclopedia* states: "There can be little doubt that the registers of the Jewish tribes and families perished at the destruction of Jerusalem [in 70 C.E.], and not before." There are

* For more details on Daniel 9:25, see *Insight on the Scriptures*, Volume 2, pages 899-904, published by Jehovah's Witnesses.



► 1914, the Messiah enthroned in heaven

► The Messiah will soon end wickedness and make earth a paradise



clear indications that Matthew and Luke wrote their Gospels before 70 C.E. Hence, they could have consulted these records in compiling their accounts of Jesus' ancestry. (Matthew 1:1-16; Luke 3:23-38) And surely on an issue of such momentous importance, many of their contemporaries would have wanted to verify Jesus' ancestry for themselves.

A Chance Fulfillment in Jesus?

Still, is it possible that Jesus' fulfilling Messianic prophecies was mere coincidence? In an interview, one scholar answered: "Not a chance. The odds are so astronomical that they rule that out. Someone did the math and figured out that the probability of just eight prophecies being fulfilled is one chance in one hundred million billion." Putting those odds in perspective, he stated: "If you took this number of silver dollars, they would cover the state of Texas [an area of 266,807 square miles] to a depth of two feet. If you marked one silver dollar among them and then had a blindfolded person wander the whole state and bend down to pick up one coin, what would be the odds he'd choose the one that had been marked?" He then stated that those are "the same odds that anybody in history could have fulfilled just eight of the [Messianic] prophecies."

Yet, during his three-and-a-half-year ministry, Jesus fulfilled not just eight but many Bible prophecies. In view of such overwhelming evidence, that scholar conclud-

ed: "Jesus—and only Jesus throughout all of history—managed to do it."

Messiah's "Coming"

Clearly, the Messiah came in 29 C.E. in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. That was his coming as a humble, suffering Redeemer. He did not come as an all-conquering King to break the oppressive yoke of the Romans, as most Jews and even his followers seemed to have expected. (Isaiah, chapter 53; Zechariah 9:9; Acts 1:6-8) His future coming, however, was foretold to be with power and great authority.—Daniel 2:44; 7:13, 14.

A careful study of Bible prophecies has convinced reasoning people around the globe that the Messiah came in the first century and that he was to return. Evidence establishes that his foretold return, the beginning of his "presence," occurred in 1914.* (Matthew 24:3-14) In that year, Jesus was invisibly enthroned in the heavens as the King of God's Kingdom. Shortly, he will act to rid the earth of the effects of the rebellion in Eden. His subsequent Thousand Year Reign will bless all those manifesting faith in him as the promised Seed, the Messiah, who "takes away the sin of the world."—John 1:29; Revelation 21:3, 4.

Jehovah's Witnesses would be happy to discuss with you that evidence and to point out from the Bible what the Messiah's rule can mean for you and your loved ones.

* For more details, see chapters 10 and 11 of the book *Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses.



BOLIVIA'S ISOLATED TOWNS HEAR GOOD NEWS

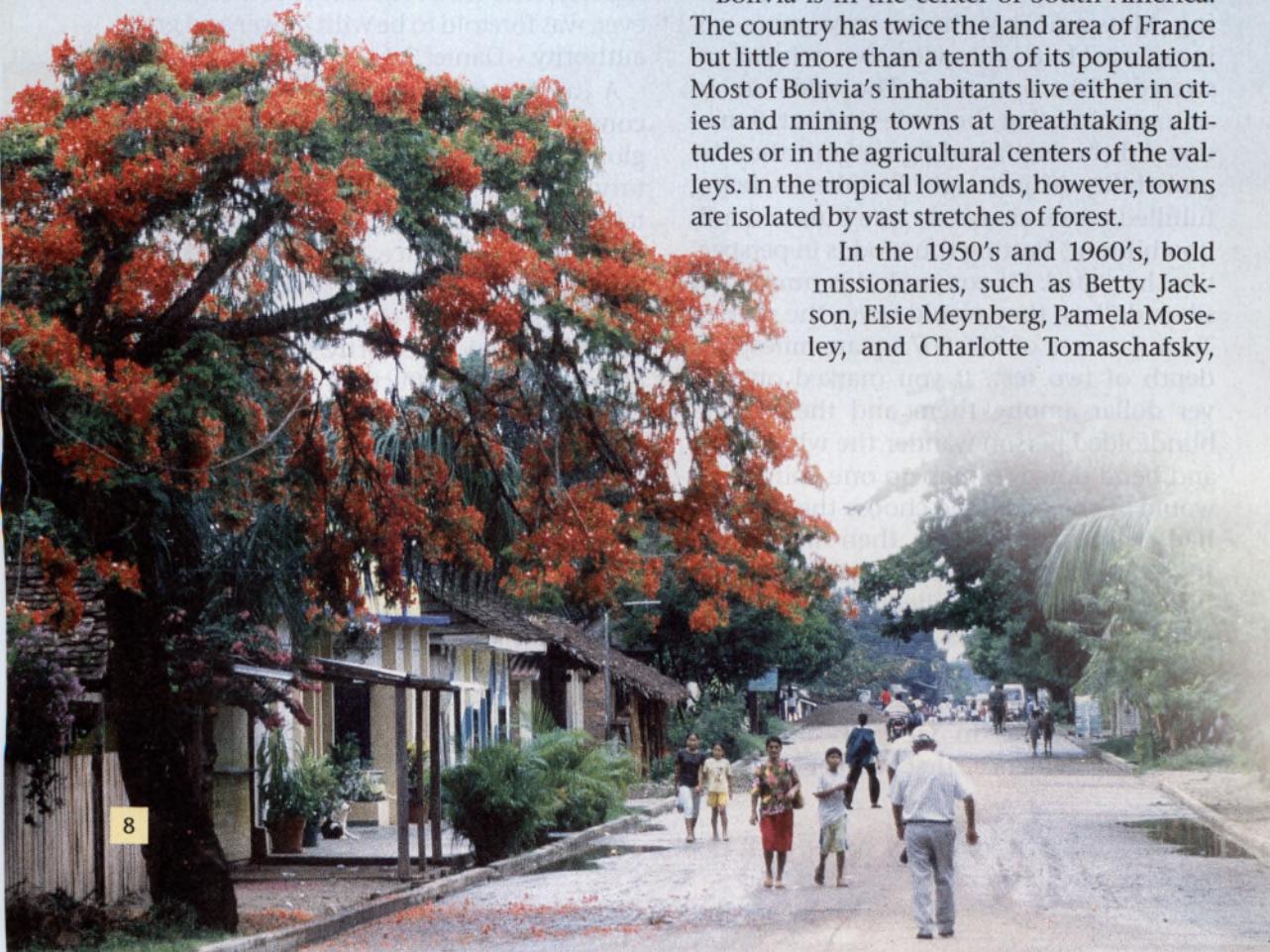
OME 20 of us gather on the beach, eagerly anticipating a day trip to visit villages upriver. We are at the foot of the Andes, where the river Beni arrives at the vast flatlands of the Amazon basin. It is a place of extraordinary beauty.

We, however, are not tourists. Some of us are local people; a number of us came from distant cities to live here in Rurrenabaque, a pretty little town with flowering trees, thatched-roof houses, and streets disturbed only by the occasional motorcycle taxi. Why are we making this trip?

What is happening here is typical of developments in many other parts of Bolivia. Jehovah's Witnesses from the cities and from other countries are taking the good news of God's Kingdom to the smaller towns.—Matthew 24:14.

Bolivia is in the center of South America. The country has twice the land area of France but little more than a tenth of its population. Most of Bolivia's inhabitants live either in cities and mining towns at breathtaking altitudes or in the agricultural centers of the valleys. In the tropical lowlands, however, towns are isolated by vast stretches of forest.

In the 1950's and 1960's, bold missionaries, such as Betty Jackson, Elsie Meynberg, Pamela Moseley, and Charlotte Tomaschafsky,



spearheaded the work in many isolated towns. They taught Bible truth to sincere people and helped to establish small congregations. During the 1980's and 1990's, a six-fold increase in the number of Jehovah's Witnesses took place, mainly in the cities. Now there are congregations in every neighborhood. You can find them in the prosperous districts, where people work in high-rise office blocks, live in elegant mansions, and shop in supermarkets. But there are also congregations in the outlying neighborhoods, where people live in adobe huts, shop in open-air markets, and wear colorful indigenous dress. Yet, what can be done to help more people in the isolated places to come to know Jehovah?

Sacrificing the Convenience of City Life

During the last two decades, there has been a massive shift of people from Bolivia's mining towns and countryside into the cities. People moving in the opposite direction—from city to village—is unusual. Many villages have only one telephone and have electricity for only a few hours a day. Witnesses who live in these small towns may see fellow believers only at annual conventions, and traveling to these may be expensive, dangerous, and exhausting. Village schools offer only basic education. What, then, motivates a number of Jehovah's Witnesses to move from the cities to the villages?

"I had the opportunity to pursue a career in the city of La Paz," said Luis not long ago. "But my parents always presented the disciple-making work as the most desirable career. So I took a short course in construction methods. During a vacation in Rurrenabaque, I noticed the people's eagerness to listen to the good news. When I saw how few broth-

ers were there, I felt that I just had to come and help. I am now conducting 12 home Bible studies. For example, I study with a young man and his wife who have four children. He used to drink a lot and gamble, but he has left all of that behind and has started telling his friends what he is learning about Jehovah. He always prepares his lesson. When he has to be away for three or four days logging in the forest, he feels bad because he does not want to miss anything. When I see them all at Christian meetings, I feel that the sacrifice of coming here was worth it."

Juana is a single parent. "I used to work as a housemaid in La Paz," she says. "When my son was small, I took up the full-time

Betty Jackson



Elsie Meynberg



Pamela Moseley



Charlotte Tomaschafsky, far right

ministry in the city. When I visited Rurrenabaque on a trip, I realized how much more I could accomplish by moving here. So we came, and I got a job as a maid. At first, the heat and the insects were difficult to endure. But we've been here seven years now. I am able to conduct many Bible studies each week, and many students show appreciation by coming to the meetings." Juana and her son are among those boarding the boat to go upriver. You are welcome to come along.

The Trip Upriver

The outboard engine roars as we head for the narrow gap between the mountains. A flock of parrots screech, protesting our presence. The muddy waters from the mountains swirl fiercely about us as the boatman expertly steers across the current. By midmorning we are disembarking at a small village. There we meet an overseer of the Rurrenabaque Congregation, and he shows us where to preach.

The villagers receive us hospitably, either under the shade of a tree or inside a house built of bamboo and thatched with palm leaves. Soon we meet a young couple busy crushing sugarcane in a locally made wooden press. Juice gushes into a copper bowl. Later, they will boil the juice until it becomes dark molasses that can be sold in town. They in-



vite us into their home and ask many questions about the Bible.

We continue on up the river, preaching from village to village. Many appreciate hearing what the Bible says about an end to sickness and death. (Isaiah 25:8; 33:24) Here, where medical care is scarce, most families have suffered the bitter experience of losing a child. Life as subsistence farmers and fishermen is hard and insecure. Thus, many find very interesting God's promise recorded in Psalm 72 about a government that will eliminate poverty. Still, do you think that interested people living in such isolated places would make the effort to attend Christian meetings? That question concerned Eric and Vicky, who are full-time ministers in Santa Rosa, a three-hour drive farther into the Amazon basin.

Eric and Vicky came to serve where there is a need for more Kingdom publishers



Each week the Vaca family travel three hours on bicycles to the Kingdom Hall



Will the Interested Ones Come?

Eric and Vicky came to Bolivia from California, U.S.A., 12 years ago. A traveling overseer suggested that they move to Santa Rosa. "There are only two telephones in town and no Internet access," says Vicky. "There is abundant wildlife. We often see alligators, ostriches, and big snakes while we visit outlying areas on our motorcycles. More interesting than the animals, however, are the people. We study the Bible with the Vacas, a young couple who have four small children. They live about 16 miles out of town. The father used to be a drunk, but now he has changed. Each week, he brings his entire family and his younger sister to the Kingdom Hall. He transports his wife and baby on the luggage rack of his big bicycle. The nine-year-old carries his little sister on another bike, and the eight-year-old pedals by himself. It takes them three hours to get there." The family really love Jehovah and make every effort to associate with the congregation.

In just 18 months, 3 have qualified for baptism, and about 25 come to the new Kingdom Hall in Santa Rosa. Although lots of people want to study the Bible, many have formidable obstacles to overcome in order to serve Jehovah.

The Challenge of Legalizing Marriages

Marina and Osni, missionaries serving in an isolated town near Bolivia's border with Brazil, explain that many here do not see marriage as a permanent bond. They go from one partner to another. "It's a problem that prevents spiritual progress," says Osni. "When people want to become true Christians, it is a complicated and expensive process. Some have to resolve previous partnerships and then get married legally. Nevertheless, recognizing that proper marriage registration is a Scriptural requirement, some have worked really hard to earn the



Villagers near the river Beni listen intently to the good news

money needed for the legal fees."—Romans 13:1, 2; Hebrews 13:4.

Marina relates the experience of Norberto. "He lived with several women before moving in with a woman who was a baker. She was some 35 years younger than he was and had a son whom Norberto adopted. As the boy grew up, Norberto wanted to be a better example for him. So when a Witness called at the bakery, offering free home Bible studies, Norberto accepted, even though he could not read and was already over 70 years old. When Norberto and his partner learned about Jehovah's requirements, they got legally married and afterward were baptized. The boy has become a responsible Christian youth—just what his stepfather had hoped would happen. Norberto learned to read, and he has even given talks at congregation meetings. Despite being quite feeble because of his age, he is a zealous minister of the good news."

Empowered by Jehovah's Spirit

Jesus told his early followers: "You will receive power when the holy spirit arrives upon you, and you will be witnesses of me . . . to the most distant part of the earth." (Acts 1:8) How encouraging it is to see God's spirit motivating Christian men and women to move out to distant parts! For example, in 2004 some 30 zealous Christians accepted temporary assignments to isolated territories



Robert and Kathy serve as missionaries in Camiri

as special pioneer ministers. They appreciate the example of some 180 foreigners who have come to Bolivia to serve as pioneers, circuit overseers, Bethel volunteers, or missionaries. The 17,000 Kingdom publishers in Bolivia conduct some 22,000 Bible studies in the homes of interested people.

Sensing that they are guided by Jehovah's spirit brings great joy to all these brothers. For example, Robert and Kathy accepted an assignment as missionaries to Camiri. Situated amid rolling green hills by a river, Camiri has always been an isolated town. "It seems we came at just the right time," says Robert. "In two years, some 40 people have become publishers of the good news."

A Drunken Gambler Listens

Many townspeople are impressed by the changes made by those who study the Bible. For instance, one day about four years ago, a drunken man named Ariel was in bed with a hangover. Although his gambling made him popular, he had nagging thoughts about his mounting debts, troubled marriage, and neglected daughters. His thoughts were interrupted by one of Jehovah's Witnesses calling from house to house. Ariel listened long and hard as the brother explained the Scriptures. Soon Ariel was in bed again, reading about a happy family life, Paradise, and service to God. He later agreed to study the Bible.

By the time the missionaries arrived in Camiri, Ariel's wife, Arminda, was also studying—but with little enthusiasm. "I'll try anything to stop him from drinking," she said. "But I doubt that it will do any good. He's a lost cause." The Bible study was more interesting than she had expected, however. Within a year, she was baptized and witnessing to her family. Before long, several of her relatives dedicated their lives to Jehovah.

As for Ariel, it was a struggle for him to stop drinking, smoking, and gambling. The turning point came when he invited all his acquaintances to the Memorial of Jesus' death. He had decided: "Those who don't come, I'll drop. I'll study the Bible with those who come." He started three Bible studies that way. Even before Ariel became a member of the congregation, he studied the Bible with a relative who progressed and was baptized on the same day as Ariel was. Says Arminda: "It's as though the Ariel that was doesn't exist anymore."

Robert reports: "At last count, 24 members of this family were attending the meetings regularly. Ten are baptized, and eight others are unbaptized publishers. Some who observed their changed conduct also began studying the Bible and are coming to congregation meetings. Attendance has increased from 100 to 190. Kathy and I are conducting about 30 Bible studies, and they all attend meetings. We feel good about being here."

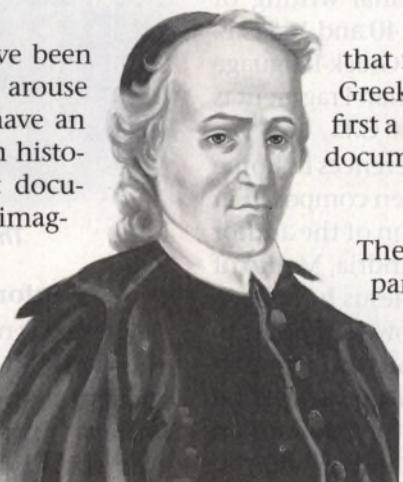
What is happening in Bolivia's isolated towns is but a small part of a worldwide ingathering that was foretold in Revelation chapter 7, which tells of a gathering during "the Lord's day" of those who will survive the great tribulation. (Revelation 1:10; 7:9-14) Never before in human history have millions from all nations been united in worship of the only true God. What thrilling evidence that the fulfillment of God's promises is near!

Early Confirmation of the BIBLE CANON

"EVERY line seems to have been written specifically to arouse the curiosity of those who have an interest in primitive Christian history." That is how an ancient document was described. Can you imagine which document?

It is one you may or may not have heard of—the Muratorian Fragment. In either case, you might wonder, 'What makes the Muratorian Fragment so special?' It is the oldest existing canon, or authoritative list of books, of the Christian Greek Scriptures.

You might take it for granted that certain books belong in the Bible. Yet, would it surprise you to know that there was a time when some doubted which individual books should be included? The Muratorian Fragment, or canon, sets out a list of writings considered to be inspired. As you can understand, the exact content of the Bible is of immense importance. So, what did that document reveal regarding the books



Ludovico Antonio Muratori

Fragments: Diritti Biblioteca Ambrosiana. Vietata la riproduzione. Aut. No. F 157 / 05; Muratori, based on line art: © 2005 Brown Brothers

that now make up the Christian Greek Scriptures? Well, consider first a bit of background about the document.

Its Discovery

The Muratorian Fragment is part of a manuscript codex of 76 parchment leaves, each measuring 11 by 7 inches. Ludovico Antonio Muratori (1672-1750), a distinguished Italian historian, discovered it in the Ambrosian Library, Milan, Italy. Muratori published his find in 1740, thus its

name—Muratorian Fragment. It seems that the codex was produced in the eighth century in the ancient monastery of Bobbio, near Piacenza, northern Italy. It was moved to the Ambrosian Library at the beginning of the 17th century.

The Muratorian Fragment consists of 85 lines of text found on leaves 10 and 11 of the codex. The text is in Latin, evidently copied by a scribe who was not very careful. But some of his errors have been identified by

comparing it with the same text included in four 11th- and 12th-century manuscripts.

When Was It Written?

You might wonder, though, when the information in the Muratorian Fragment was originally written. It seems that the original was composed in Greek many centuries before the Fragment text, which is a Latin translation of the Greek. Here is a clue that helps in dating the original. The Fragment mentions a non-Biblical book, the *Shepherd*, and states that a man named Hermas wrote it “very recently, in our times, in the city of Rome.” Scholars date the final writing of Hermas’ *Shepherd* between 140 and 155 C.E. Thus, you can see why the Greek-language original of the Latin Muratorian Fragment is dated to between 170 and 200 C.E.

The direct and indirect references to Rome suggest that it could have been composed in that city. But the identification of the author is debated. Clement of Alexandria, Melito of Sardis, and Polycrates of Ephesus have been suggested. Most scholars, however, point to Hippolytus, a prolific author who wrote in Greek and lived in Rome during the period in which the contents of the Muratorian Fragment were likely composed. While you might find that of passing interest, you probably want to know more about its contents that makes it so valuable.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Jehovah’s Word Is Alive—Highlights From the Book of Esther

Wholesome Recreation That Refreshes

“Keep Your Senses Completely”



The Ambrosian Library

Information It Contains

The text is not merely a list of the books of the Christian Greek Scriptures. It also comments on the books and their respective writers. If you read the text, you would see that the first lines of the manuscript are missing, and it also seems to end abruptly. It starts by mentioning the Gospel of Luke, and the document states that the writer of this Bible book was a physician. (Colossians 4:14) It states that Luke’s is the third Gospel, so you can see that the missing initial part likely made reference to the Gospels of Matthew and Mark. If that is your conclusion, you would find support in the Muratorian Fragment, which says that the fourth Gospel is that of John.

The Fragment confirms that the book of Acts of Apostles was written by Luke for the “most excellent Theophilus.” (Luke 1:3; Acts

1:1) Then it goes on to list the letters of the apostle Paul to the Corinthians (two), to the Ephesians, to the Philippians, to the Colossians, to the Galatians, to the Thessalonians (two), to the Romans, to Philemon, to Titus, and to Timothy (two). The letter of Jude and two letters of John are also mentioned as inspired books. The apostle John's first letter was already alluded to, along with his Gospel. Apocalypse, or Revelation, concludes the list of the books considered inspired.

It is significant that the Fragment mentions an Apocalypse of Peter but states that some felt that it should not be read by Christians. The writer warns that counterfeit writings were already circulating in his day. The Muratorian Fragment explains that these should not be accepted, "for it is not fitting that gall be mixed with honey." The document also mentions other texts that were not to be included among the holy writings. That was either because they were written after the apostolic period, as was the *Shepherd* of Hermas, or because they were written to support heresies.

You may have observed from the foregoing that the letter to the Hebrews, Peter's two letters, and that of James are not mentioned in this catalog of authentic Bible books. However, noting the workmanship of the scribe who copied the manuscript, Dr. Geoffrey Mark Hahneman observed that it is "reasonable to suggest that the Fragment may have contained other references



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The Muratorian Fragment

now lost, and that James and Hebrews (and 1 Peter) may have been among them."—*The Muratorian Fragment and the Development of the Canon*.

The Muratorian Fragment thus confirms that most of the books now found in the Christian Greek Scriptures were already considered canonical in the second century C.E. Of course, the canonicity of the Bible books—that is, their right to be included in the divine library—does not depend on their being mentioned in a certain ancient list. What gives evidence that the Bible's books are the product of holy spirit is their content. They all support the authorship of Jehovah God and are in complete harmony. The harmony and balance of the 66 canonical books of the Bible testify to their unity and completeness. Thus, you do well to accept them for what they truthfully are, Jehovah's Word of inspired truth, preserved until our day.—1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17.

AN ADMINISTRATION FOR FULFILLING GOD'S PURPOSE

"[God] operates all things according to the way his will counsels."—EPHESIANS 1:11.

ON Wednesday evening, April 12, 2006, some 16 million people will gather to observe the Lord's Evening Meal. In each meeting place, there will be a table on which unleavened bread, representing Christ's body, and red wine, symbolizing his shed blood, will have been set. Toward the end of a discourse explaining the meaning of the Memorial of Jesus' death, these emblems—first the bread, then the wine—will be passed among all present. In relatively few congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses, one or more in attendance will partake of the emblems. In many cases, however, no one present will partake. Why is it that only a few Christians, those who hope to live in heaven, partake, whereas the majority, those who hope to live forever on earth, do not partake?

² Jehovah is a God of purpose. In fulfilling his purpose, he "operates all things according to the way his will counsels." (Ephesians 1:11) He first created his only-begotten Son. (John 1:1, 14; Revelation 3:14) Then, through this Son, Jehovah created a family of spirit sons and eventually the physical universe, including the earth and man upon it.—Job 38:4, 7; Psalm 103:19-21; John 1:2, 3; Colossians 1:15, 16.

³ Jehovah did not create the earth as a testing ground to enlarge his family of spirit sons

in heaven, as taught by many churches of Christendom. He created it with a definite purpose in mind, for it "to be inhabited." (Isaiah 45:18) God created the earth for man and man for the earth. (Psalm 115:16) The entire globe was to become a paradise, filled with righteous humans, who would cultivate it and take care of it. Never was the prospect of eventually going to heaven held out to the first human couple.—Genesis 1:26-28; 2:7, 8, 15.

Jehovah's Purpose Challenged

⁴ A spirit son of God rebelled and set out to thwart Jehovah's purpose, abusing the divine gift of free will. He disturbed the peace that comes to all who manifest loving submission to Jehovah's sovereignty. Satan led the first human couple to embark on a course of independence from God. (Genesis 3:1-6) He did not deny Jehovah's power, but

4. How was Jehovah's way of exercising sovereignty challenged at the dawn of human history?



he challenged His way of exercising sovereignty and therefore His right to rule. Thus, the fundamental issue of Jehovah's sovereignty came into focus here on earth, at the very dawn of mankind's history.

⁵ Bound up with that primary issue of universal sovereignty is a secondary issue raised by Satan in the days of Job. Satan cast doubt on the motive of Jehovah's creatures in submitting to Him and serving Him. Satan implied that they were doing so for selfish reasons and that put to the test they would turn against God. (Job 1:7-11; 2:4, 5) While raised in connection with a human servant of Jehovah, this challenge also involved the spirit sons of God, even Jehovah's only-begotten Son.

⁶ Faithful to his purpose and to the meaning of his name, Jehovah caused himself to become a Prophet and a Savior.* He told Satan: "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." (Genesis 3:15) By means of the Seed of his "woman," or the heavenly part of his organization, Jehovah

* The divine name literally means "He Causes to Become." Jehovah can become whatever is necessary to fulfill his purpose.—Exodus 3:14, footnote.

5. What secondary issue was raised, implicating whom?

6. How did Jehovah prove to be faithful to his purpose and to his name?

would answer Satan's challenge and provide Adam's descendants with hope of deliverance and life.—Romans 5:21; Galatians 4:26, 31.

"The Sacred Secret of His Will"

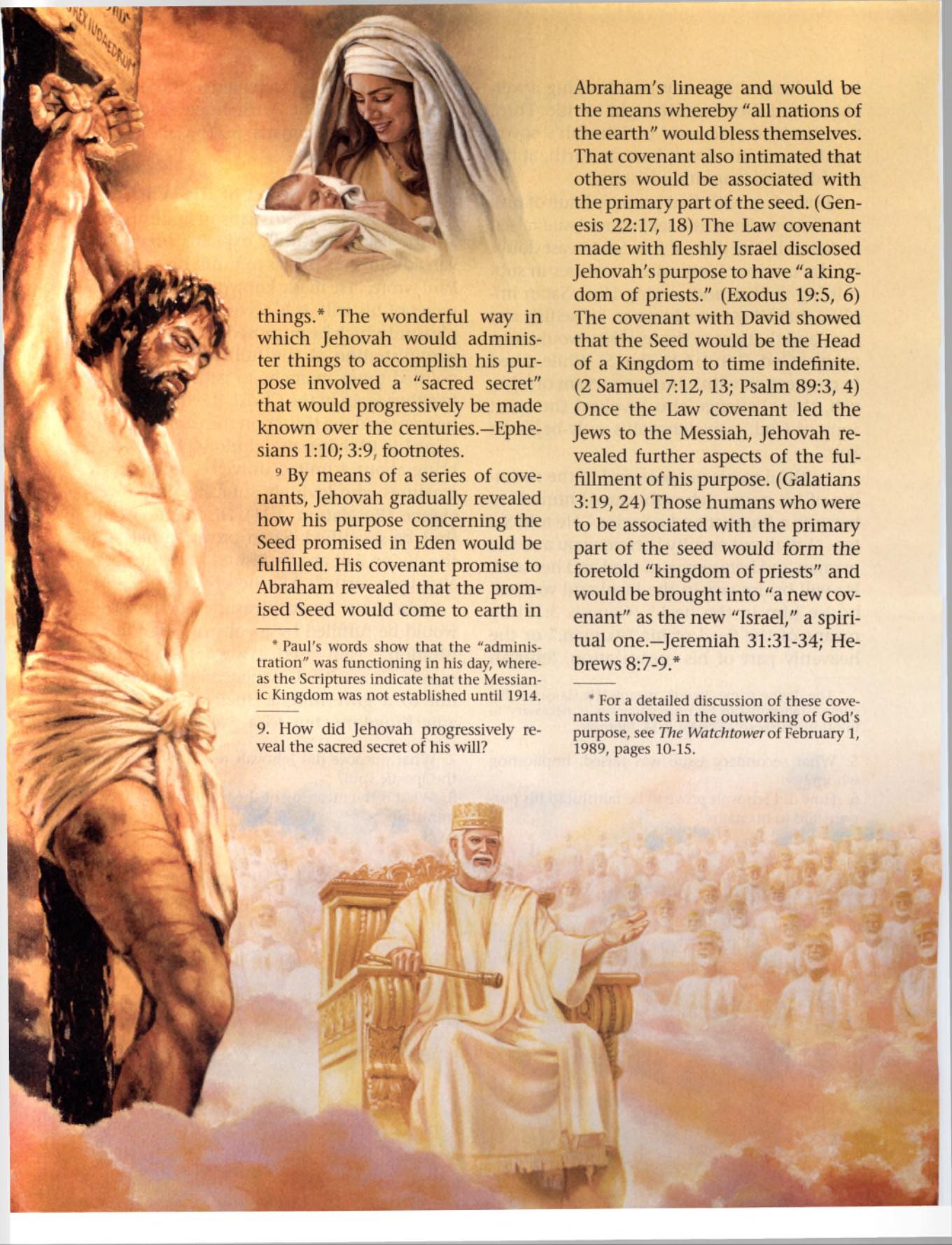
⁷ In his letter to Christians in Ephesus, the apostle Paul beautifully explains how Jehovah administers things to fulfill his purpose. Paul wrote: "He made known to us the sacred secret of his will. It is according to his good pleasure which he purposed in himself for an administration at the full limit of the appointed times, namely, to gather all things together again in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth." (Ephesians 1:9, 10) Jehovah's glorious purpose is to bring about a united universe occupied by creatures who lovingly submit to his sovereignty. (Revelation 4:11) His name would thus be sanctified, Satan proved a liar, and the divine will accomplished "as in heaven, also upon earth."—Matthew 6:10.

⁸ Jehovah's "good pleasure," or purpose, would be fulfilled by means of "an administration." Paul used a word that literally means "household management." It refers, not to a government, such as the Messianic Kingdom, but to a way of managing

7. What purpose did Jehovah reveal by means of the apostle Paul?

8. What is the meaning of the word translated "administration"?





Abraham's lineage and would be the means whereby "all nations of the earth" would bless themselves. That covenant also intimated that others would be associated with the primary part of the seed. (Genesis 22:17, 18) The Law covenant made with fleshly Israel disclosed Jehovah's purpose to have "a kingdom of priests." (Exodus 19:5, 6) The covenant with David showed that the Seed would be the Head of a Kingdom to time indefinite. (2 Samuel 7:12, 13; Psalm 89:3, 4) Once the Law covenant led the Jews to the Messiah, Jehovah revealed further aspects of the fulfillment of his purpose. (Galatians 3:19, 24) Those humans who were to be associated with the primary part of the seed would form the foretold "kingdom of priests" and would be brought into "a new covenant" as the new "Israel," a spiritual one.—Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:7-9.*

things.* The wonderful way in which Jehovah would administer things to accomplish his purpose involved a "sacred secret" that would progressively be made known over the centuries.—Ephesians 1:10; 3:9, footnotes.

⁹ By means of a series of covenants, Jehovah gradually revealed how his purpose concerning the Seed promised in Eden would be fulfilled. His covenant promise to Abraham revealed that the promised Seed would come to earth in

* Paul's words show that the "administration" was functioning in his day, whereas the Scriptures indicate that the Messianic Kingdom was not established until 1914.

9. How did Jehovah progressively reveal the sacred secret of his will?

* For a detailed discussion of these covenants involved in the outworking of God's purpose, see *The Watchtower* of February 1, 1989, pages 10-15.

¹⁰ In line with the administration of the divine purpose, the time came for the foretold Seed to appear on earth. Jehovah sent the angel Gabriel to tell Mary that she would give birth to a son who was to be called Jesus. The angel said to her: "This one will be great and will be called Son of the Most High; and Jehovah God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule as king over the house of Jacob forever, and there will be no end of his kingdom." (Luke 1:32, 33) The identity of the promised Seed thus became clear.—Galatians 3:16; 4:4.

¹¹ Jehovah's only-begotten Son was to come to earth and be tested to the limit. The perfect answer to Satan's challenge would be in Jesus' hands. Would he remain faithful to his Father? This involved a sacred secret. The apostle Paul later explained Jesus' role: "The sacred secret of this godly devotion is admittedly great: 'He was made manifest in flesh, was declared righteous in spirit, appeared to angels, was preached about among nations, was believed upon in the world, was received up in glory.'" (1 Timothy 3:16) Yes, by his unflinching integrity until his death, Jesus provided the definitive answer to Satan's challenge. But other details of the sacred secret remained to be uncovered.

"The Sacred Secret of the Kingdom of God"

¹² During one of his preaching tours of Galilee, Jesus indicated that the sacred secret was closely related to his Messianic Kingdom government. He told his disciples: "To you it is granted to understand the sacred secrets of the kingdom of the heavens [kingdom of

10, 11. (a) How did Jehovah reveal the foretold Seed? (b) Why did God's only-begotten Son come to earth?

12, 13. (a) What is one aspect of "the sacred secret of the kingdom of God"? (b) What was involved in Jehovah's selecting a limited number of humans to go to heaven?

God," Mark 4:11]." (Matthew 13:11) One aspect of that secret involved Jehovah's selecting a "little flock" of 144,000 humans to be associated with his Son as part of the seed, to reign with him in heaven.—Luke 12:32; Revelation 14:1, 4.

¹³ Since humans were created to live on earth, "a new creation" by Jehovah was required in order for some humans to go to heaven. (2 Corinthians 5:17) Speaking as one of those chosen to share this exceptional heavenly hope, the apostle Peter wrote: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for according to his great mercy he gave us a new birth to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an incorruptible and undefiled and unfading inheritance. It is reserved in the heavens for you."—1 Peter 1:3, 4.

¹⁴ Another part of the sacred secret with regard to the future Kingdom government was God's will to include non-Jews among the small number of humans who would be called to reign with Christ in heaven. Paul explained this facet of Jehovah's "administration," or way of managing the fulfillment of his purpose: "In other generations this secret was not made known to the sons of men as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by spirit, namely, that people of the nations should be joint heirs and fellow members of the body and partakers with us of the promise in union with Christ Jesus through the good news." (Ephesians 3:5, 6) The comprehension of this part of the sacred secret was revealed to the "holy apostles." Similarly today, if it were not for the help of the holy spirit, we would not understand these "deep things of God."—1 Corinthians 2:10; 4:1; Colossians 1:26, 27.

14. (a) How were non-Jews involved in "the sacred secret of the kingdom of God"? (b) Why are we able to understand these "deep things of God"?

¹⁵ "The hundred and forty-four thousand" seen standing with "the Lamb" on heavenly Mount Zion are said to have been "bought from the earth," "bought from among mankind as firstfruits to God and to the Lamb," Christ Jesus. (Revelation 14:1-4) Jehovah chose the first of his heavenly sons to become the primary part of the seed promised in Eden, but why did he select Christ's associates from among mankind? The apostle Paul explains that this limited number was "called according to his [Jehovah's] purpose," "according to the good pleasure of his will."—Romans 8:17, 28-30; Ephesians 1:5, 11; 2 Timothy 1:9.

¹⁶ Jehovah's purpose is to sanctify his great and holy name and vindicate his universal sovereignty. By his incomparably wise "administration," or way of managing things, Jehovah sent his firstborn Son to earth, where he was tested to the limit. Furthermore, Jehovah determined that the Messianic Kingdom government of his Son would include humans who had also upheld His sovereignty until death.—Ephesians 1:8-12; Revelation 2:10, 11.

¹⁷ Jehovah showed his great love for Adam's descendants by having his Son come to the earth and by selecting from among

15, 16. Why did Jehovah select Christ's associate rulers from among mankind?

17. Why can we be glad that Christ and his associate rulers once lived as humans?

By Way of Review

- Why did Jehovah create the earth and put man upon it?
- Why was it necessary for Jehovah's only-begotten Son to be tested on earth?
- Why did Jehovah select Christ's associate rulers from among mankind?

mankind those who would be the Son's joint heirs in the Kingdom government. How could that benefit others who have proved faithful to Jehovah, from Abel onward? Born slaves to sin and death, imperfect humans would need to be spiritually and physically healed and brought to perfection, in line with Jehovah's original purpose for mankind. (Romans 5:12) How comforting it is for all of those who look forward to everlasting life on earth to know that their King will show them love and kind understanding just as he did to his disciples during his earthly ministry! (Matthew 11:28, 29; Hebrews 2:17, 18; 4:15; 7:25, 26) And how reassuring it is for them to realize that Christ's associate king-priests in heaven were once men and women of faith who themselves contended with personal weaknesses and experienced life's challenges as we do!—Romans 7:21-25.

Jehovah's Unfailing Purpose

¹⁸ We are now better able to understand the import of Paul's words to anointed Christians, as found at Ephesians 1:8-11. He said that Jehovah had made known to them "the sacred secret of his will," that they were "assigned as heirs" with Christ, and that they were "foreordained according to the purpose of him who operates all things according to the way his will counsels." We perceive that this fits into Jehovah's marvelous "administration" of things for the fulfilling of his purpose. This also helps us to understand why only a few Christians attending the Lord's Evening Meal partake of the emblems.

¹⁹ In the following article, we will see what the Memorial of Christ's death means to those Christians whose hope is heavenly. We will also learn why millions whose hope is to live forever on earth should be intensely interested in what the Memorial symbolizes.

18, 19. Why are Paul's words at Ephesians 1:8-11 clearer to us, and what will be considered in the following article?

GATHERING THINGS IN HEAVEN AND THINGS ON EARTH

"It is according to his good pleasure . . . to gather all things together again in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth." —EPHESIANS 1:9, 10.

UNIVERSAL PEACE! Such is the glorious purpose of Jehovah, "the God of peace." (Hebrews 13:20) He inspired the apostle Paul to write that His "good pleasure" is "to gather all things together again in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth." (Ephesians 1:9, 10) Just what is implied by the verb translated 'gather together again' in this verse? Bible scholar J. B. Lightfoot notes: "The expression implies the entire harmony of the universe, which shall no longer contain alien and discordant elements, but of which all the parts shall find their centre and bond of union in Christ. Sin and death, sorrow and failure and suffering, shall cease."

"Things in the Heavens"

² The apostle Peter summed up the wonderful hope of true Christians when he wrote: "There are new heavens and a new earth that we are awaiting according to his promise, and in these righteousness is to dwell." (2 Peter 3:13) The "new heavens" here promised refer to the new governing authority, the Messianic Kingdom. "The things in the heavens" mentioned by Paul in his letter to the Ephesians are to be gathered "in the Christ." They are the limited number of humans chosen to rule with Christ in the heavens. (1 Peter 1:3, 4) These 144,000 anoint-

ed Christians are "bought from the earth," "bought from among mankind," to be joint heirs with Christ in his heavenly Kingdom. —Revelation 5:9, 10; 14:3, 4; 2 Corinthians 1:21; Ephesians 1:11; 3:6.

³ Anointed Christians are brought forth, or born again, by the holy spirit to become Jehovah's spiritual sons. (John 1:12, 13; 3:5-7) Being adopted by Jehovah as "sons," they become Jesus' brothers. (Romans 8:15; Ephesians 1:5) As such, even while on earth, they are said to be 'raised up and seated together in the heavenly places in union with Christ Jesus.' (Ephesians 1:3; 2:6) They occupy this elevated spiritual position because they have been "sealed with the promised holy spirit, which is a token in advance of [their] inheritance" reserved for them in the heavens. (Ephesians 1:13, 14; Colossians 1:5) These, then, are "the things in the heavens," of whom the total number foreordained by Jehovah needed to be gathered.

The Gathering Begins

⁴ In line with Jehovah's "administration," or way of managing things, the gathering of "the things in the heavens" was to begin "at the full limit of the appointed times." (Ephesians 1:10) That due time arrived at Pentecost 33 C.E. That day, holy spirit was poured out on the apostles and a group of disciples,

1. What is Jehovah's "good pleasure" for heaven and earth?
2. Who are "the things in the heavens" that need to be gathered?

3. How can it be said that anointed ones are 'seated in the heavenly places' even while on earth?
4. When and how did the gathering of "the things in the heavens" begin?

men and women. (Acts 1:13-15; 2:1-4) This gave evidence that the new covenant had come into operation, marking the birth of the Christian congregation and of the new nation of spiritual Israel, "the Israel of God."—Galatians 6:16; Hebrews 9:15; 12:23, 24.

⁵ The Law covenant made with fleshly Israel did not produce "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" that would serve forever in heaven. (Exodus 19:5, 6) Jesus told the Jewish religious leaders: "The kingdom of God will be taken from you and be given to a nation producing its fruits." (Matthew 21:43) That nation, spiritual Israel, is composed of anointed Christians taken into the new covenant. To these, the apostle Peter wrote: "You are 'a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for special possession, that you should declare abroad the excellencies' of the one that called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. For you were once not a people, but are now God's people." (1 Peter 2:9, 10) Fleshly Israel were no longer Jehovah's covenant people. (Hebrews 8:7-13) As Jesus had foretold, the privilege of being a part of the Messianic Kingdom was taken from them and given to the 144,000 members of spiritual Israel.—Revelation 7:4-8.

Taken Into the Kingdom Covenant

⁶ On the night that Jesus instituted the Memorial of his death, he told his faithful apostles: "You are the ones that have stuck with me in my trials; and I make a covenant with you, just as my Father has made a covenant with me, for a kingdom, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel." (Luke 22:28-30) Jesus here referred to a special covenant that he made with

5. Why did Jehovah create a new "nation" to replace fleshly Israel?

6, 7. What special covenant did Jesus make with his spirit-begotten brothers, and what does this mean for them?

his 144,000 spirit-begotten brothers, who would remain "faithful even to death" and prove themselves 'conquerors.'—Revelation 2:10; 3:21.

⁷ Those of this limited group forgo all hopes of living forever on earth as humans of flesh and blood. They will reign with Christ in heaven, sitting on thrones to judge humankind. (Revelation 20:4, 6) Let us now examine other scriptures that apply only to these anointed ones and that show why the "other sheep" do not partake of the Memorial emblems.—John 10:16.

⁸ The anointed share in Christ's sufferings and are willing to submit to a death like his. As one of that group, Paul stated that he was prepared to make any sacrifice so that he might "gain Christ . . . so as to know him and the power of his resurrection and a sharing in his sufferings." Yes, Paul was willing to submit himself "to a death like his." (Philippians 3:8, 10) Many anointed Christians have endured in their fleshly bodies "the death-dealing treatment given to Jesus."—2 Corinthians 4:10.

⁹ When instituting the Lord's Evening Meal, Jesus said: "This means my body." (Mark 14:22) He was referring to his literal body, soon to be beaten and bloodied. Bread without leaven was a fitting symbol of that body. Why? Because in the Bible, leaven can denote sin or wickedness. (Matthew 16:4, 11, 12; 1 Corinthians 5:6-8) Jesus was perfect, and his human body was without sin. He would offer that perfect body as a propitiatory sacrifice. (Hebrews 7:26; 1 John 2:2) His doing so would benefit all faithful Christians, whether they hoped for life in heaven or everlasting life on a paradise earth.—John 6:51.

8. What do the anointed indicate by partaking of the bread? (See box on page 23.)

9. What body is represented by the Memorial bread?

"The Body of the Christ"

At 1 Corinthians 10:16, 17, Paul, in discussing the particular import of the bread for spirit-anointed brothers of Christ, mentioned "body" in a special sense. He said: "The loaf which we break, is it not a sharing in the body of the Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, although many, are one body, for we are all partaking of that one loaf." When anointed Christians partake of the Memorial bread, they declare their unity within the congregation of anointed ones, which is like a body with Christ as the Head.—Matthew 23:10; 1 Corinthians 12:12, 13, 18.

¹⁰ Concerning the wine that anointed Christians partake of at the Memorial, Paul wrote: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of the Christ?" (1 Corinthians 10:16) In what way do those partaking of the wine 'share in the blood of the Christ'? They certainly do not share in providing the ransom sacrifice, since they themselves need redemption. Through their faith in the redeeming power of Christ's blood, their sins are forgiven and they are declared righteous for life in heaven. (Romans 5:8, 9; Titus 3:4-7) It is by means of Christ's shed blood that the 144,000 joint heirs of Christ are "sanctified," set apart, cleansed from sin to be "holy ones." (Hebrews 10:29; Daniel 7:18, 27; Ephesians 2:19) Yes, it is with his shed blood that Christ "bought persons for God out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and . . . made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God, and they are to rule as kings over the earth."—Revelation 5:9, 10.

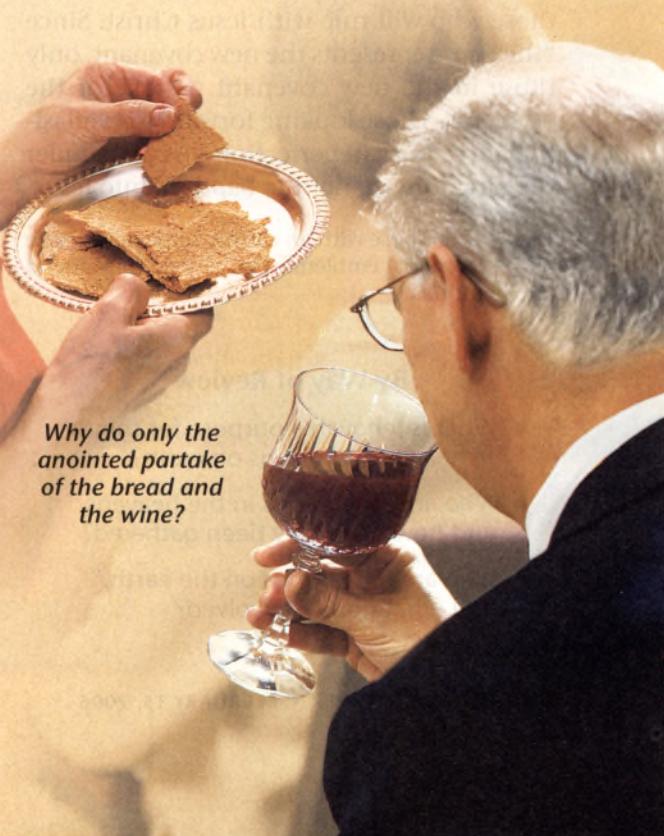
10. In what way do those who partake of the Memorial wine 'share in the blood of the Christ'?

¹¹ When Jesus inaugurated the Memorial of his death, he handed the cup of wine to his faithful apostles and said: "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." (Matthew 26:27, 28) Just as the blood of bulls and goats validated the Law covenant between God and the nation of Israel, Jesus' blood made valid the new covenant that Jehovah would make with spiritual Israel, beginning at Pentecost 33 C.E. (Exodus 24:5-8; Luke 22:20; Hebrews 9:14, 15) By drinking the wine that symbolizes the "blood of the covenant," the anointed indicate that they have been taken into the new covenant and are receiving the benefits of it.

¹² The anointed are also reminded of something else. Jesus told his faithful

11. What do the anointed indicate by drinking the Memorial wine?

12. How are the anointed baptized into Christ's death?



Why do only the anointed partake of the bread and the wine?

disciples: "The cup I am drinking you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am being baptized you will be baptized." (Mark 10:38, 39) The apostle Paul later spoke of Christians' being "baptized into [Christ's] death." (Romans 6:3) The anointed live a life of sacrifice. Their death is sacrificial in that they renounce any hope of everlasting life on earth. The baptism of these anointed Christians into Christ's death is completed when after dying faithful they are resurrected as spirit creatures to "rule together as kings" with Christ in heaven.—2 Timothy 2:10-12; Romans 6:5; 1 Corinthians 15:42-44, 50.

Partaking of the Emblems

¹³ Since sharing in the bread and wine passed during the Memorial involves all of this, it would obviously be inappropriate for those having an earthly hope to partake. Those with an earthly hope discern that they themselves are not anointed members of the body of Christ, nor are they in the new covenant that Jehovah made with those who will rule with Jesus Christ. Since "the cup" represents the new covenant, only those in the new covenant partake of the emblems. Those looking forward to everlasting life in human perfection on earth under the Kingdom are neither baptized into Jesus'

13. Why do those with an earthly hope not partake of the Memorial emblems, but why do they attend the Memorial?

By Way of Review

- What is Jehovah's purpose for things in heaven and things on earth?
- Who are "the things in the heavens," and how have they been gathered?
- Who are "the things on the earth," and what hope is involved?

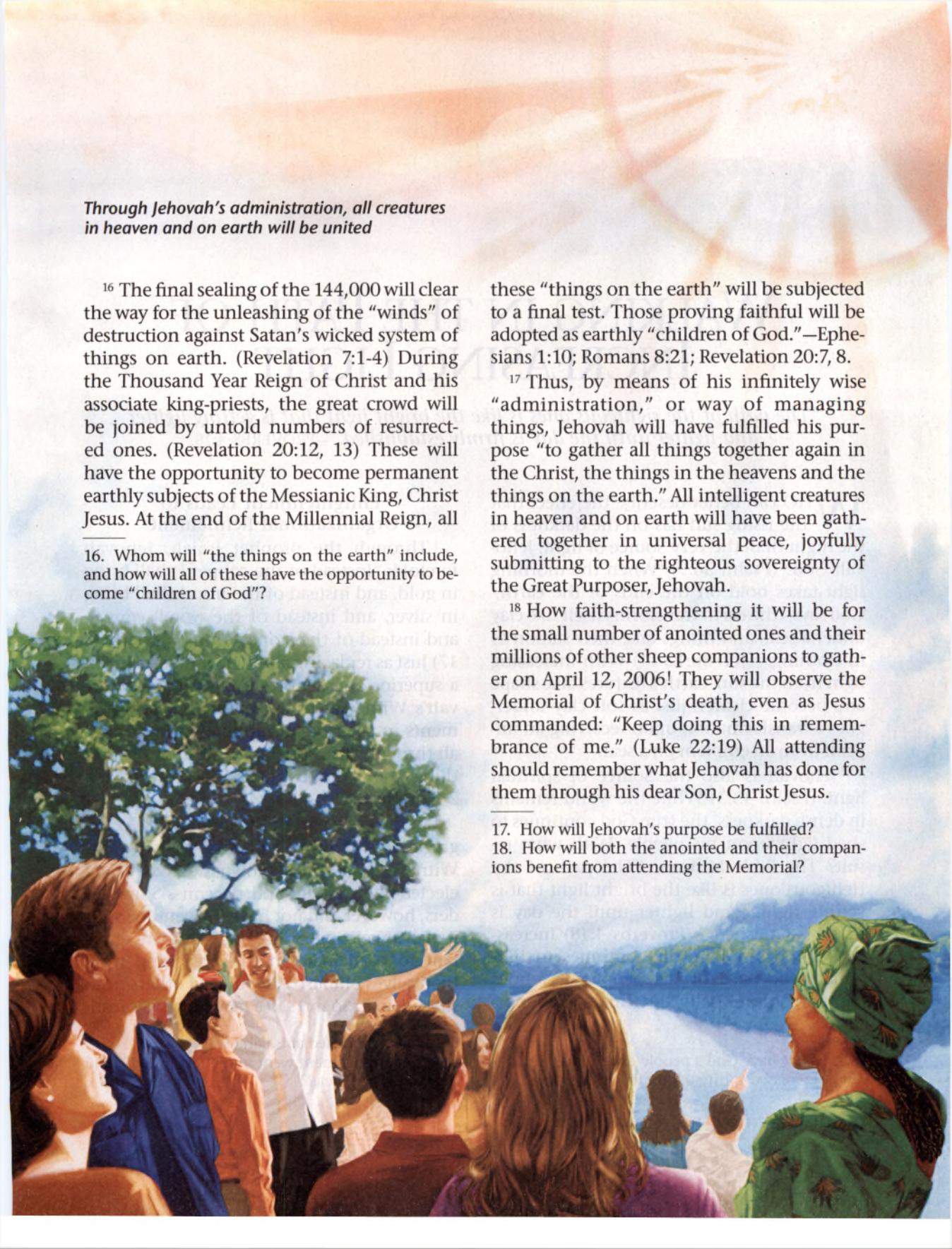
death nor called to rule with him in heaven. Were they to partake of the emblems, it would signify something that is not true with respect to them. Thus, they do not partake, though they do attend the Memorial as respectful observers. They are thankful for all that Jehovah has done for them by means of his Son, including the extending of forgiveness on the basis of Christ's shed blood.

¹⁴ The final sealing of the relatively small number of Christians called to reign with Christ in heaven is nearing completion. Until the end of their life of sacrifice on earth, the anointed are spiritually strengthened by partaking of the Memorial emblems. They feel a bond of unity with their brothers and sisters as members of Christ's body. Their partaking of the emblematic bread and wine reminds them of their responsibility to remain faithful until death.—2 Peter 1:10, 11.

Gathering of "Things on the Earth"

¹⁵ Since the mid-1930's, a growing number of "other sheep," who are not of the "little flock" and whose hope is everlasting life on earth, have rallied to the side of the anointed. (John 10:16; Luke 12:32; Zechariah 8:23) They have become the loyal companions of Christ's brothers, giving valuable assistance in preaching "this good news of the kingdom" for a witness to all the nations. (Matthew 24:14; 25:40) In so doing, they have put themselves in line to be judged by Christ as his "sheep," placed on his "right hand" of favor when he comes to judge the nations. (Matthew 25:33-36, 46) Through faith in Christ's blood, they will make up the "great crowd," who will survive "the great tribulation."—Revelation 7:9-14.

14. How are the anointed strengthened spiritually by partaking of the bread and the wine?
15. Who have been gathered to the side of anointed Christians?



Through Jehovah's administration, all creatures in heaven and on earth will be united

¹⁶ The final sealing of the 144,000 will clear the way for the unleashing of the "winds" of destruction against Satan's wicked system of things on earth. (Revelation 7:1-4) During the Thousand Year Reign of Christ and his associate king-priests, the great crowd will be joined by untold numbers of resurrected ones. (Revelation 20:12, 13) These will have the opportunity to become permanent earthly subjects of the Messianic King, Christ Jesus. At the end of the Millennial Reign, all

16. Whom will "the things on the earth" include, and how will all of these have the opportunity to become "children of God"?

these "things on the earth" will be subjected to a final test. Those proving faithful will be adopted as earthly "children of God."—Ephesians 1:10; Romans 8:21; Revelation 20:7, 8.

¹⁷ Thus, by means of his infinitely wise "administration," or way of managing things, Jehovah will have fulfilled his purpose "to gather all things together again in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth." All intelligent creatures in heaven and on earth will have been gathered together in universal peace, joyfully submitting to the righteous sovereignty of the Great Purposer, Jehovah.

¹⁸ How faith-strengthening it will be for the small number of anointed ones and their millions of other sheep companions to gather on April 12, 2006! They will observe the Memorial of Christ's death, even as Jesus commanded: "Keep doing this in remembrance of me." (Luke 22:19) All attending should remember what Jehovah has done for them through his dear Son, Christ Jesus.

17. How will Jehovah's purpose be fulfilled?

18. How will both the anointed and their companions benefit from attending the Memorial?

WALKING IN THE PATH OF INCREASING LIGHT

"The path of the righteous ones is like the bright light that is getting lighter and lighter until the day is firmly established."—PROVERBS 4:18.

WHO can better describe the effect that the rising sun has on the darkness of the night than the very Source of light, Jehovah God? (Psalm 36:9) 'When the morning light takes hold on the ends of the earth,' God says, 'the earth transforms itself like clay under a seal, and things take their station as in clothing.' (Job 38:12-14) With increasing light from the sun, earth's features take shape and become clearer, just as soft clay undergoes a transformation upon receiving an imprint from an emblem on a seal.

² Jehovah is also the Source of spiritual light. (Psalm 43:3) While the world remains in dense darkness, the true God continues to shed light upon his people. With what result? The Bible answers: "The path of the righteous ones is like the bright light that is getting lighter and lighter until the day is firmly established." (Proverbs 4:18) Increasing light from Jehovah continues to illuminate the path of his people. It refines them organizationally, doctrinally, and morally.

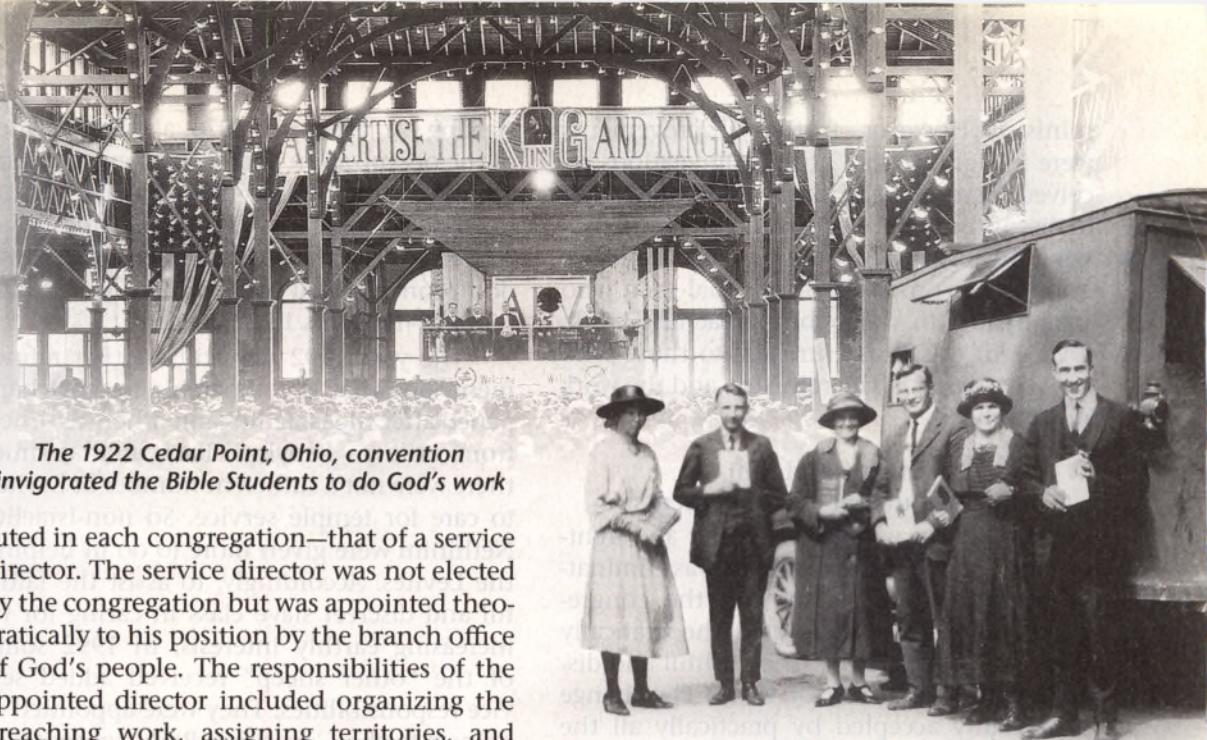
1, 2. What have God's people experienced as a result of increased spiritual light from Jehovah?

Enlightenment Leads to Organizational Refinements

³ Through the prophet Isaiah, Jehovah foretold: "Instead of the copper I shall bring in gold, and instead of the iron I shall bring in silver, and instead of the wood, copper, and instead of the stones, iron." (Isaiah 60:17) Just as replacing an inferior material with a superior one denotes improvement, Jehovah's Witnesses have experienced improvements in their organizational arrangements all through "the conclusion of the system of things," or "the last days."—Matthew 24:3; 2 Timothy 3:1.

⁴ In the early part of the last days, the congregations of Bible Students, as Jehovah's Witnesses were then known, democratically elected their elders and deacons. Some elders, however, did not have the genuine spirit of evangelizing. Some not only were reluctant to participate in the preaching work themselves but also discouraged others from sharing in it. So in 1919 a new office was insti-

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3. What is promised at Isaiah 60:17?
 4. What arrangement went into effect in 1919, and how was it beneficial?



The 1922 Cedar Point, Ohio, convention invigorated the Bible Students to do God's work

tuted in each congregation—that of a service director. The service director was not elected by the congregation but was appointed theocratically to his position by the branch office of God's people. The responsibilities of the appointed director included organizing the preaching work, assigning territories, and encouraging participation in the field ministry. During the years that followed, the Kingdom-preaching work received a tremendous stimulus.

⁵ All in the congregation were further invigorated by the exhortation "Advertise, advertise, advertise, the King and his kingdom," given in 1922 at the Bible Students' convention at Cedar Point, Ohio, U.S.A. By 1927 field service was organized to the point that Sunday was designated as the most suitable day for participating in the house-to-house preaching work. Why that day? Because Sunday was the day when most people were off work. Jehovah's Witnesses today manifest the same spirit by endeavoring to call on people at times when they are most likely to be at home, such as on weekends and in the evenings.

⁶ A great impetus to the Kingdom-proclamation work came on Sunday after-

5. What refinement became a reality in the 1920's?
6. In 1931, what resolution was adopted, and how did that affect the Kingdom-proclamation work?

noon, July 26, 1931, when a resolution was adopted, first at a convention in Columbus, Ohio, U.S.A., and thereafter around the world. In part, the resolution stated: "We are servants of Jehovah God commissioned to do a work in his name, and, in obedience to his commandment, to deliver the testimony of Jesus Christ, and to make known to the people that Jehovah is the true and Almighty God; therefore we joyfully embrace and take the name which the mouth of the Lord God has named, and we desire to be known as and called by the name, to wit, *Jehovah's witnesses*." (Isaiah 43:10) How clearly that new name defined the primary activity of all of those bearing that name! Yes, Jehovah had work for all his servants to share in. The overall response was enthusiastic indeed!

⁷ Many elders humbly devoted themselves to the preaching work. In some places, though, elected elders put up considerable resistance to the idea that everyone in the congregation should participate in the public

7. What change was introduced in 1932, and why?

ministry. However, further improvements were in sight. In 1932 the congregations received instruction through *The Watchtower* to discontinue the electing of elders and deacons. Instead, they were to elect a service committee composed of spiritual men who participated in the public preaching work. Oversight was thus entrusted to those who actively shared in the ministry, and the work moved ahead.

Increased Light Means Further Improvements

⁸ The light was "getting lighter and lighter." In 1938 the use of elections was eliminated altogether. All servants in the congregation were to be appointed theocratically under the oversight of "the faithful and discreet slave." (Matthew 24:45-47) The change was readily accepted by practically all the congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses, and the work of witnessing continued to bear fruit.

⁹ Beginning October 1, 1972, another adjustment in congregational oversight became effective. The arrangement of oversight by a body of elders was instituted in the congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide, replacing oversight by just one congregation servant, or overseer. This new arrangement has provided tremendous encouragement for mature men to qualify to take the lead in the congregation. (1 Timothy 3:1-7) As a result, a greater number of brothers have gained experience in caring for congregational responsibilities. How valuable they have proved to be in shepherding the many new ones who have accepted Bible truth!

¹⁰ The members of the Governing Body were organized into six committees, and

8. What refinement came about in 1938?
9. In 1972, what arrangement was instituted, and why was that an improvement?
10. What arrangement was implemented in 1976?

starting on January 1, 1976, all the activities of the organization and of the congregations around the earth came under the supervision of these committees. What a blessing it has proved to be to have all aspects of the Kingdom work directed by a "multitude of counselors"!—Proverbs 15:22; 24:6.

¹¹ The year 1992 saw still another refinement, one that is comparable to what happened after the Israelites and others returned from exile in Babylon. Back at that time, there were not a sufficient number of Levites to care for temple service. So non-Israelite Nethinim were given more to do in helping the Levites. Accordingly, to assist the faithful and discreet slave class in caring for its increasing earthly interests, in 1992 some of the "other sheep" received added service responsibilities. They were appointed as helpers to the Governing Body committees.—John 10:16.

¹² What has resulted from all of this? "I will appoint peace as your overseers and righteousness as your task assigners," says Jehovah. (Isaiah 60:17) There is "peace" among Jehovah's servants today, and love of "righteousness" has become their 'task assigner'—the force that impels them to serve God. They are well-organized to carry out the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making work.—Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20.

Jehovah Illuminates the Path Doctrinally

¹³ Jehovah is also progressively illuminating the path of his people doctrinally. Revelation 12:1-9 provides an example. The account refers to three symbolic characters—"a woman" who is pregnant and gives birth, a

11. What refinement was introduced in 1992, and why?
12. How has Jehovah appointed peace as our overseers?
13. In the 1920's, how did Jehovah illuminate the path of his people doctrinally?

"dragon," and "a son, a male." Do you know whom each figure represents? They were identified in an article entitled "Birth of the Nation," which appeared in the March 1, 1925, issue of *The Watch Tower*. That article gave God's people a better understanding of the prophecies about the birth of the Kingdom, insight that made it clear that there exist two distinct organizations—Jehovah's and Satan's. Then in 1927/28, God's people recognized that Christmas and birthday celebrations are unscriptural, and they discontinued observing such.

¹⁴ The 1930's saw further light shed on three doctrinal truths. For years, the Bible Students had known that the great multitude, or the "great crowd," spoken of at Revelation 7:9-17 was different from the 144,000, who would rule with Christ as kings and priests. (Revelation 5:9, 10; 14:1-5) However, the identity of the great multitude remained unclear. Just as increasing morning light causes otherwise obscure objects to take on shape and color, in 1935 the great multitude was identified as those who survive "the great tribulation," with the prospect of living forever on earth. Later in the same year came a clarification that affected school-age children of Jehovah's Witnesses in a number of countries. While patriotic fervor was running high the world over, the Witnesses recognized that saluting the flag is much more than a mere formalism. In the following year, another doctrinal truth, that Christ died on a stake, not a cross, was explained.—Acts 10:39.

¹⁵ In the wake of World War II, during which it had become standard practice to treat wounded soldiers with blood transfusions, there was increased light on the sanctity of blood. The July 1, 1945, issue of

14. What doctrinal truths were clarified in the 1930's?

15. When and how was the sanctity of blood brought to the fore?

The Watchtower encouraged "all worshipers of Jehovah who seek eternal life in his new world of righteousness to respect the sanctity of blood and to conform themselves to God's righteous rulings concerning this vital matter."

¹⁶ In 1946 a need was seen for a fresh Bible translation that took advantage of the latest scholarship and was not tainted by dogmas based on traditions of Christendom. Work on such a translation began in December 1947. In 1950 the *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures* was released in English. The Hebrew Scriptures in English came in five volumes, released progressively beginning in 1953. The final volume was released in 1960, a little over 12 years after the translation project began. The complete *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* in one volume was released in 1961. Now available in many languages, this translation has some outstanding features. It restores the divine name, Jehovah. Moreover, its literal rendering of the original writings has provided the basis for continuous progress in the understanding of divine truth.

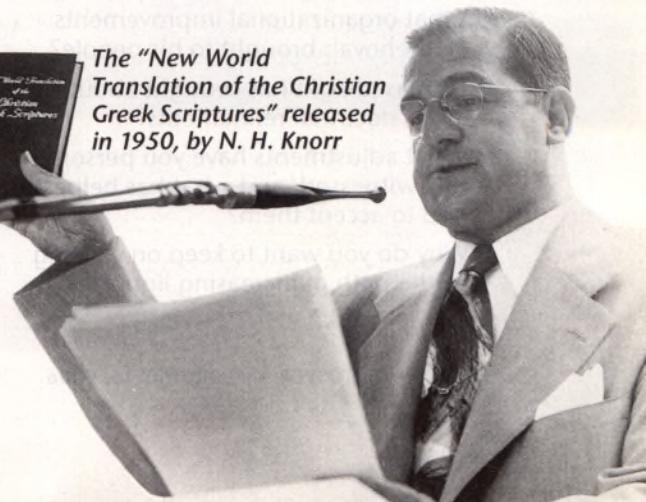
¹⁷ Clarification of "the superior authorities" of Romans 13:1 and the extent of a Christian's subjection to them came in 1962.

16. When was the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* released, and what are two outstanding features of it?

17. What increased light was shed in 1962?



The "New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures" released in 1950, by N. H. Knorr



An in-depth study of the 13th chapter of Romans and Scriptural texts such as Titus 3: 1, 2 and 1 Peter 2:13, 17 made it clear that the expression "superior authorities" refers, not to Jehovah God and Jesus Christ, but to human governmental authorities.

¹⁸ In the years that followed, the path of the righteous ones continued to get brighter and brighter. In 1985 light was shed upon what it means to be declared righteous "for life" and righteous as a friend of God. (Romans 5:18; James 2:23) The meaning of the Christian Jubilee was thoroughly explained in 1987.

¹⁹ In 1995 the separating of "the sheep" from "the goats" was more clearly understood. The year 1998 saw the detailed explanation of Ezekiel's temple vision, which is already in the course of fulfillment. In 1999 came clarification of when and how 'the disgusting thing stands in a holy place.' (Matthew 24:15, 16; 25:32) And in 2002 further discernment was gained regarding what it means to worship God "with spirit and truth."—John 4:24.

²⁰ In addition to the organizational and

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18. What are some truths clarified in the 1980's?
 19. How has Jehovah provided more spiritual light for his people in recent years?
 20. In what other area have God's people experienced refinements?

Do You Recall?

- What organizational improvements has Jehovah brought to his people?
- Increased light has brought about what doctrinal refinements?
- What adjustments have you personally witnessed, and what has helped you to accept them?
- Why do you want to keep on walking in the path of increasing light?

doctrinal refinements, there have been refinements with regard to Christian conduct. For example, in 1973 the use of tobacco was seen as a "defilement of flesh" and was to be viewed as serious wrongdoing. (2 Corinthians 7:1) A decade later, the July 15, 1983, issue of *The Watchtower* clarified our position on the use of firearms. These are just some examples of the increasing light in our time.

Go On Walking in the Path of Increasing Light

²¹ "Accepting a change when it comes and adapting to it can be difficult," admits one longtime elder. What has helped him accept the many refinements he has witnessed in the 48 years that he has been a Kingdom proclaimer? He answers: "Having the right attitude is the key. Refusing to accept a refinement is to be left behind as the organization moves ahead. If I find myself in a situation where changes seem hard to accept, I reflect on Peter's words to Jesus: 'Lord, whom shall we go away to? You have sayings of everlasting life.' Then I ask myself, 'Where shall I go away to—out there into the darkness of the world?' This helps me to hold firmly to God's organization."—John 6:68.

²² The world around us is certainly in dense darkness. As Jehovah continues to shed light on his people, the gap between them and those of the world keeps on widening. What does this light do for us? Well, just as shining a spotlight on a pothole on a dark roadway does not remove the hole, light from God's Word does not remove pitfalls. Yet, divine light surely helps us to avoid them so that we can continue walking in the path of increasing light. Let us, then, continue to pay attention to Jehovah's prophetic word, "as to a lamp shining in a dark place."—2 Peter 1:19.

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21. Having what attitude will help us to go on walking in the path of increasing light?
 22. How do we benefit from walking in the light?

Questions From Readers

What three dangers was Jesus warning against at Matthew 5:22?

In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus Christ warned his followers: "I say to you that everyone who continues wrathful with his brother will be accountable to the court of justice; but whoever addresses his brother with an unspeakable word of contempt will be accountable to the Supreme Court; whereas whoever says, 'You despicable fool!' will be liable to the fiery Gehenna."—Matthew 5:22.

Jesus used things familiar to the Jews—the court of justice, the Supreme Court, and the fiery Gehenna—to convey to them the increasing severity of the punishments for sins of increasing seriousness.

First, Jesus said that everyone who continues wrathful with his brother will be accountable to "the court of justice," the local court. According to tradition, these courts were set up in cities with an adult male population of 120 or more. (Matthew 10:17; Mark 13:9) The judges at such a court had authority to render judgment, even on murder cases. (Deuteronomy 16:18; 19:12; 21:1, 2) Thus, Jesus was showing that a person who harbors smoldering wrath against his brother is committing a serious sin.

Jesus next said that a person who "addresses his brother with an unspeakable word of contempt will be accountable to the Supreme Court." The Greek word *rha·ka'* (footnote) rendered "an unspeakable word of contempt" means "empty" or "empty-headed." According to *The New Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, that word was "a term of reproach used by the Jews in the time of Christ." Jesus was thus warning against the seriousness of expressing hatred toward a countryman with a derogatory term

of contempt. Jesus was as much as saying that a person using such a word would be judged not just by a local court but by the Supreme Court, the full Sanhedrin—the judicial body in Jerusalem made up of the high priest and 70 older men and scribes.—Mark 15:1.

Finally, Jesus explained that if a person addresses another, "You despicable fool!" he would be liable to the fiery Gehenna. The word "Gehenna" comes from the Hebrew words *geh hin·nom'*, meaning "valley of Hin-nom," which lay to the west and south of ancient Jerusalem. In Jesus' day, the valley had become a place for burning refuse, including the bodies of vile criminals who were considered undeserving of a decent burial. So the word "Gehenna" was a fitting symbol of complete destruction.

What, then, did the expression "despicable fool" signify? The word used here sounded similar to a Hebrew term that means "rebellious," or "mutinous." It designates a person as morally worthless, an apostate and a rebel against God. So the person addressing his fellow as a "despicable fool" is as much as saying that his brother should receive a punishment fit for a rebel against God, everlasting destruction. From God's standpoint, the one uttering such a condemnation against another could merit that severe sentence—everlasting destruction—himself.—Deuteronomy 19:17-19.

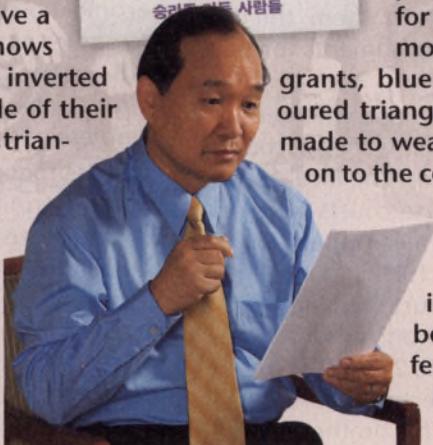
Consequently, Jesus was setting a higher standard for his followers than that found in the principles behind the Mosaic Law. While people believed that a murderer would be "accountable to the court of justice," Jesus went further. He taught that his followers should avoid even harboring animosity against their brothers.—Matthew 5:21, 22.

"WHAT DOES THE PURPLE TRIANGLE MEAN?"

"A FEW days ago, I received a copy of *The Watchtower* from one of Jehovah's Witnesses," wrote a civil servant working at the ministry of justice in Seoul, Republic of Korea. He continued: "Reading it, I learned some facts about the persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses under Nazi and Communist regimes. But I have a question. The cover photo shows Jehovah's Witnesses with an inverted purple triangle on the left side of their coats. What does the purple triangle mean?"

In Germany under the Nazi regime, Jehovah's Witnesses refused to hail Hitler, and they maintained neutrality on political and military issues. So the Nazis cruelly persecuted them, incarcerating some 12,000 Witnesses for varying lengths of time in prisons and concentration camps. About 2,000 of them died, hundreds being executed.

What did the purple triangle on their prison garb signify? "The various categories of prisoners in the [Nazi] camps carried special distinguishing marks," explains the book *Anatomy of the SS State*. "The uniform



system of marking introduced before the war consisted in sewing a triangular piece of material on to each prisoner's uniform, the colour depending on his category: for political prisoners, red; for Jehovah's Witnesses, purple; for anti-socials, black; for criminals, green; for homosexuals, pink; for emigrants, blue. In addition to the coloured triangle Jewish prisoners were made to wear a yellow triangle sewn on to the coloured triangle in such a way as to form the hexagonal Star of David."

"If its moral significance is widely remembered in time," wrote Professor John K. Roth in his book *Holocaust Politics*, "the purple triangle can yet be a shield against disaster, a shield whose triangular points direct our attention and commitment toward the good that most deserves human respect." Jehovah's Witnesses have produced the award-winning documentary *Jehovah's Witnesses Stand Firm Against Nazi Assault*. Why not ask one of Jehovah's Witnesses to make it possible for you to view this video?