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DECEMBER 1, 1981

THE WATCHTOWER
Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

Christ's Return How? When?



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OUR COVER: How? When? Where? Many questions arise with regard to the promised return of Christ. It is hoped the articles on the following pages will help you to find the answers to such questions

A WATCHTOWER provides a vantage point from which the watchman can observe and warn of approaching danger. This magazine, published by Jehovah's Witnesses since 1879, serves a similar purpose. It keeps watch on world events in these critical times and calls attention to God's warning of his vengeance soon to be executed on those ruining the earth. It comforts all peoples with the hope that God's kingdom by Jesus Christ is about to bring in a global paradise of peace. It encourages all to exercise faith in the ransoming power of Jesus' shed blood, and points to the joyous prospect of everlasting life on earth under the sovereignty of the true God, Jehovah. "The Watchtower Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom" is nonpolitical, and adheres to the Bible as authority.

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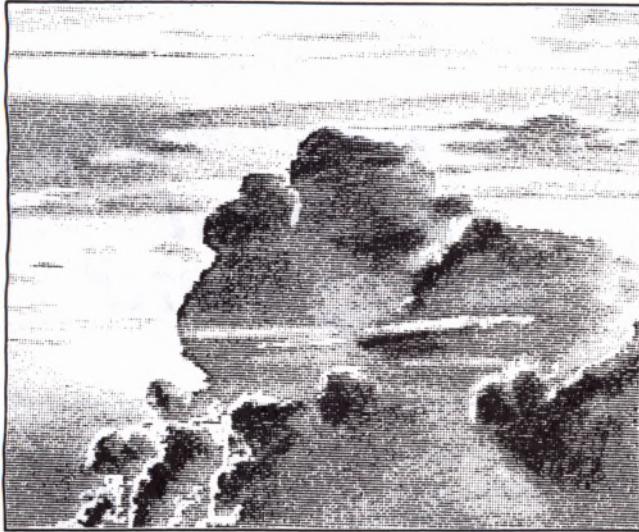
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Has Christ Returned?

“JESUS CHRIST’ COMES BACK—IN KITWE.” Thus read the front-page heading of the *Times of Zambia*, March 24, 1980. The article continued: “A man proclaiming himself as Jesus Christ is organising a religious movement. . . . He has chosen 12 men as his disciples . . . ‘I am the real Jesus Christ and the masses have accepted me,’ he said.”

It is evident from news reports that this is not an isolated case. In some countries a whole cult, the “Moonies,” has grown up around Sun Myung Moon, described in the press by such designations as “Lord of the Second Advent,” “the Third Adam, the New Messiah.”

Awaiting the return of Christ is not a modern phenomenon. Down through history many humans have misrepresented themselves as the returned Christ. Millions of others have awaited Jesus’ second advent. Speaking of the “faithful of the early [Christian] church,” the *Encyclopaedia*

Britannica comments: “They believed that the promises of the Old Testament about the coming bringer of salvation had been fulfilled in Jesus Christ, but that the fulfillment was not yet complete. Thus, they awaited Christ’s Second Coming, which they believed was imminent.”

However, many today view with skepticism those Bible prophecies that speak of Christ’s return. This is illustrated by the comment of a religious editor of a U.S. daily newspaper who wrote: “It has been remarked that ‘we can find a hundred different times in history when, according to the wars-earthquakes-famine timetable, Jesus should have come back.’ ”

This confused situation regarding Christ’s return forces us to face up to some pointed questions, such as: Is Christ really supposed to return in the flesh? Will we get to see him? How will we recognize him with so many frauds about? The following article will answer some of these questions.



Could Christ Return Without Being Seen?

WHY should this question arise? Simply because Jesus himself said to his disciples: "The sign of the Son of man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will beat themselves in lamentation, and *they will see the Son of man* coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." (Matt. 24:30) But later on while eating his last supper with his disciples, he said: "A little longer and *the world will behold me no more*, but you will behold me, because I live and you will live." (John 14:19) This seeming contradiction is further complicated by the revelation given to the apostle John some six decades later. It reads: "Look! He is coming with the clouds, and *every eye will see him*, and those who pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth will beat themselves in grief because of him."—Rev. 1:7.

Is all this 'seeing' and 'beholding' to be taken literally? Or could there be some deeper meaning to it? The importance of these questions is illustrated by what happened in the first century of our Common Era, when many Jews were expecting their Messiah.

APPEARING, BUT NOT RECOGNIZED

Back then the lead question might have been, 'Could the Messiah, or Christ, appear without being *recognized*?' Obviously he

would be visible as a man, but would the Jewish public distinguish him as the One sent by God?

The Bible record clearly indicates how the majority of the crowd reacted. On his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, they were crying out: "Save, we pray, the Son of David! Blessed is he that comes in Jehovah's name!" When others asked: "Who is this?" the crowds kept saying: "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee!" It looked to them as if this miracle man was going to go into action and free the Jews from the Roman yoke. But it did not turn out that way. Jesus was not a political revolutionary, but, rather, promoted spiritual freedom and religious purity. What a letdown for the nationalistic ambitions of many back there! This "messiah" did not fit into their preconceived idea of a savior for Israel. What a contrast between the friendly crowd of Nisan 9 (Sunday) and the bloodthirsty mob of Nisan 14 (Friday)! "They all said: 'Let him be impaled!' . . . 'His blood come upon us and upon our children.'"—Matt. 21:9-11; 27:22-25.

Because of their shortsightedness the majority of the Jewish people missed out on the glorious privilege of being kings with Christ in his heavenly kingdom. Their political and patriotic ideals clouded their vision of spiritual blessings that could

have resulted in good for them. They wanted a messiah only for their generation and for their particular problem—the Roman occupation of their land. They failed to recognize the true Messiah in spite of all his credentials.—Matt. 1:21–2:6.

IS THERE A MODERN PARALLEL?

Is it possible that something similar has occurred in our 20th century? Could it be that millions are wrongly expecting to see Christ arrive literally on the clouds?

We have an immediate clue to these questions in Jesus' warning to his followers: "If anyone says to you, 'Look! Here is the Christ,' or, 'There!' do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will give great signs and wonders so as to mislead, if possible, even the chosen ones. Look! I have forewarned you." (Matt. 24:23-25) This indicates that Christ's presence will not be visible at this or at that geographical location. Therefore, those claiming to be the returned Christ, or to have seen him "here" or "there," are either deluded or frauds.

The key to understanding the whole matter lies in the question that four of Christ's disciples posed to their Master as

Though the crowds at first hailed Jesus, he did not turn out to be the kind of messiah many had expected



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they viewed Jerusalem and its temple from the nearby Mount of Olives. Jesus had startled them by prophesying that the temple, the very center of Jewish worship at that time, would be utterly destroyed. So they asked him: "Tell us, When will these things be, and what will be the sign of your *presence* [Greek, *parousia*] and of the conclusion of the system of things?"

Now, maybe you would like to compare that text, quoted from the *New World Translation*, with your own copy of the Bible. According to the *Authorized Version* and the *American Standard Version*, this text reads: "What shall be the sign of thy *coming*, and of the end of the world?" *The New English Bible* reads: "What will be the signal for your *coming* and the end of the age?" And *The Living Bible* says: "What events will signal your *return*, and the end of the world?"—Matt. 24:3.

The various translations noted here have put many people off the track with regard to the true meaning and application of Jesus' answer to his disciples. It is one thing for events to indicate that someone is coming or returning, and something entirely different for events to prove that

the awaited person has already arrived. Perhaps you have experienced this while waiting for someone at an airport or a train station. There is the same subtle shade of difference between Christ's returning and the "presence" of him as being already here. Does that surprise you?

But how can we know which is the more precise translation—"presence" or "coming"? Let us turn to another text that uses the same Greek word *parousia* and see how it is translated in certain previously quoted Bibles. For example, at Philippians 2:

12 we read: "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence [Greek, *parousia*] only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." (*Authorized Version*) Now here *The New English Bible* says: "So you too, my friends, must be obedient, as always; even more, now that I am away, than when I was *with you*." Compare *Philippians* 1:26, which uses *parousias*.*

What words are here used as the translation of *parousia*? "Presence" and "with you." "Arrival" or "coming" would not fit. Incidentally, the specific Greek word for "coming," *eleúsis*, was used by the Christian martyr Stephen when he presented the following forthright question in his defense before the Jewish Sanhedrin court: "Which one of the prophets did your forefathers not persecute? Yes, they killed those who made announcement in advance concerning the *coming* [Greek, *eleúseos*] of the righteous One."—Acts 7:52.

* If you would like to check all the 24 occurrences of *parousia*, they are as follows: Matthew 24:3, 27, 37, 39; 1 Corinthians 15:23; 16:17; 2 Corinthians 7:6, 7; 10:10; Philippians 1:26; 2:12; 1 Thessalonians 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23; 2 Thessalonians 2:1, 8, 9; James 5:7, 8; 2 Peter 1:16; 3:4, 12; 1 John 2:28. It is also interesting to note that, of the five writers of the Christian Greek Scriptures who used the word *parousia*, three were of the group that raised the question to Jesus on the Mount of Olives.—Mark 13:3.



VISIBLE OR INVISIBLE?

Now the question is, If Jesus gave visible signs to indicate his presence, his effective return, would he then be personally visible or invisible? Rather than accept traditional ideas on this, let us be guided by what the Scriptures indicate. For example, the apostle Peter wrote in his first inspired letter: "Why, even Christ died once for all time concerning sins, a righteous person for unrighteous ones, that he might lead you to God, he being put to death in the flesh, but being made alive in the spirit." (1 Pet. 3:18) The apostle Paul adds to the testimony, saying: "Consequently from now on we know no man according to the flesh. Even if we have known Christ according to the flesh, certainly we now know him so no more." —2 Cor. 5:16.

If Jesus were to return in the flesh, would this really benefit mankind, or would it be contrary to our best interests? It would, in fact, put in question the validity of his sacrifice and the purpose of his first coming to the earth. Christ himself said: "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; if anyone eats of this bread he will live forever; and, for a fact, the bread that I shall give [not loan temporarily] is my flesh in behalf of the life of the world." (John 6:51) His sacrifice is the basis for mankind's redemption, and his resurrection to spirit life means that we have a compassionate advocate to plead on our behalf. Thus Paul wrote: "Christ Jesus is the one who died, yes, rather the one who was raised up from the dead, who is on the right hand of God, who also pleads for us." Mankind would gain nothing if Christ were to abandon that position in order to appear in the flesh on earth. —Rom. 8:34.

Then what is the alternative to Christ's second coming in the flesh? Simply stated, it is his presence, or *parousia*, as the invisible Son of God, invested with Kingdom power and directing his attention to the earth. That is why he gave us visible signs by which to verify his invisible presence.—Matt. 24:3-25:46.

HOW 'SEEN' AND 'BEHELD'?

With these points in mind, let us go back to the texts we quoted at the beginning of this article. One of them was John 14:19, where Jesus said: "A little longer and the world will behold me no more, but you will behold me, because I live and you will live." Yes, his followers, but not the general public, beheld him on various occasions after his resurrection. It was not that he had taken up again his sacrificed body but, rather, that he had materialized fleshly bodies according to the needs of the occasion, as angels had done previously. (Luke 1:11, 26, 27; 2:9-14) In two instances, he appeared to his disciples when they were together in a room "although the doors were locked." Certainly no normal flesh-and-blood creature could appear and disappear in such circumstances.—John 20:19, 26; 1 Cor. 15:3-8.

Of course, there is a much greater meaning to Jesus' words "you will behold me" than just his appearances as the resurrected Christ. He himself had said a little earlier: "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." Here was a clear indication that his anointed followers would share his heavenly dwelling and behold him on that plane of life.—John 14:2, 3.

But how are we to understand Revelation 1:7, which indicates that even un-

believers would "see him"? That scripture states: "Look! He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, and those who pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth will beat themselves in grief because of him." Is that to be taken literally? If Christ rides with the literal clouds, how can every eye see him? If he is visible

If Jesus gave visible signs to indicate his presence, then would he personally be visible or invisible?



in Australia, then he certainly will not be visible simultaneously in Europe and most other parts of the earth, regardless of his altitude. The fact that Christ's presence is associated with the figurative use of clouds in various texts helps us to understand that his presence has to be invisible, since clouds do not aid visibility, as any airplane pilot or air-traffic controller well knows.

Now, who are those who have pierced him? Literally, Roman soldiers did this, but they have long been dead. (John 19: 23, 32-34) So these words must have some other significance. Jesus himself supplies the clue in his parable of the 'sheep and the goats' when he says: "To the extent that you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me." (Matt. 25: 31-46) Therefore, those nations and individuals that mistreat or 'pierce' Christ's disciples on earth in this 20th century are counted as 'piercing' Christ during this time of his invisible presence. And they will be made to know the seriousness of what they have done and who is judging them. Yes, "all the tribes of the earth"

will "see," or mentally perceive, Christ's presence and revelation by reason of the sudden change of circumstances that will come upon them. They will come to realize that Christ is ruling in judgment, but not in their favor. They will have good reason to beat themselves in grief.

On the other hand, millions of persons around the world have come to recognize Christ's presence since the eventful year 1914. Although they know that wars, famines and earthquakes have been common to many generations, they recognize that no other generation experienced even one world war, let alone two. No previous generation has gained the potential virtually to destroy human society. Although they know that Christ's prophecy had a minor fulfillment prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E., they also realize that the wording of the prophecy pointed to something more. The many facets of the sign Jesus foretold are apparent now, and some of the generation that saw the start of these calamities in 1914 are still with us.

—Matt. 24:34.

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

So now the question is, What attitude will you take toward Christ's invisible presence, his *parousia*? In this age of growing cynicism many have chosen to show indifference or scorn. But can you afford to do that when dealing with God's purpose of salvation for mankind? Is it wise to dismiss lightly the Sovereign Lord Jehovah's guarantees and provisions for the future of the human family? In this respect Peter's warning is appropriate:

Theocratic Progress in Athens

Because of a court victory our first 'House of Prayer' (actually, Kingdom Hall) has been under preparation in Athens. The authorities have now given permission to display a sign outside the building that reads 'House of

"You know this first, that in the last days there will come ridiculers with their ridicule, proceeding according to their own desires and saying: 'Where is this promised presence of his? Why, from the day our forefathers fell asleep in death, all things are continuing exactly as from creation's beginning.' "—2 Pet. 3:3, 4.

When the time comes for Christ's manifestation or judicial action toward this world, there will be no room for pleas of ignorance or indifference due to circumstances. Jesus himself spelled it out clearly, saying: "Then the sign of the Son of man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will beat themselves in *lamentation*, and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." That obligatory recognition of Christ's presence will come too late for their good. This will mean destruction for those who have not paid heed.—Matt. 24:30; Rev. 1:7; 11:18.

So what can you do to receive God's blessing now? Humbly seek Jehovah while he may be found. Read and study the Bible with a view to knowing how Christ became the perfect redeeming sacrifice at his first coming, and a glorious spirit king at his presence, during which we now live. This can mean life and joy for you. Get in touch with Jehovah's Witnesses at their local Kingdom Hall without delay. They will gladly help you to understand your Bible, free of any charge. If you do not know of the Witnesses in your neighborhood, then feel free to write to the publishers of this magazine at the nearest address indicated on page 2.—Zeph. 2:3.

Prayer—Athens' congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses—a steppingstone, we hope, toward establishing many more 'Houses of Prayer' in Greece.—Report from Watch Tower Society's branch.



"KINGDOM LOYALTY"

What Does It Mean To You?

"**K**NOW this, that in the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here. For men will be . . . *disloyal*." (2 Tim. 3:1, 2) No one can deny that today we are experiencing a fulfillment of these prophetic words. There is an ever-growing, prevailing spirit of disloyalty abroad in the world. It is present at every level of human society, eating into good relationships between individuals, families, neighbors and nations alike. It is one of those things that is so "hard to deal with," characterizing the "last days" of this present world's system of things.

But how refreshingly different was the overall spirit and message highlighting the hundreds of "Kingdom Loyalty" District Conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses held during this year! The theme of "Kingdom Loyalty" was in direct keeping with the words of David: "Your loyal ones will bless you [Jehovah]. About the glory of your kingship they will talk." (Ps. 145: 10, 11) What took place at these large, multiracial earth-wide gatherings proved conclusively that today there are still many persons living who are out of harmony with this world's disloyal trends. Instead, they want to display loyalty in all their dealings with their fellow humans, and especially do they want to remain loyal to "the kingdom of our Lord [Jehovah] and of his Christ."—Rev. 11:15.

Were you privileged to be present at one of these conventions? We hope you were. If so, how were you affected by the many talks, life experiences and thrilling Bible dramas that were presented? Did you feel a deepening of your relationship with Jehovah and a growing appreciation of all that your dedication to him means and involves? Did the kingdom of God become more real to you? In a word—What does *Kingdom Loyalty* mean to you now?

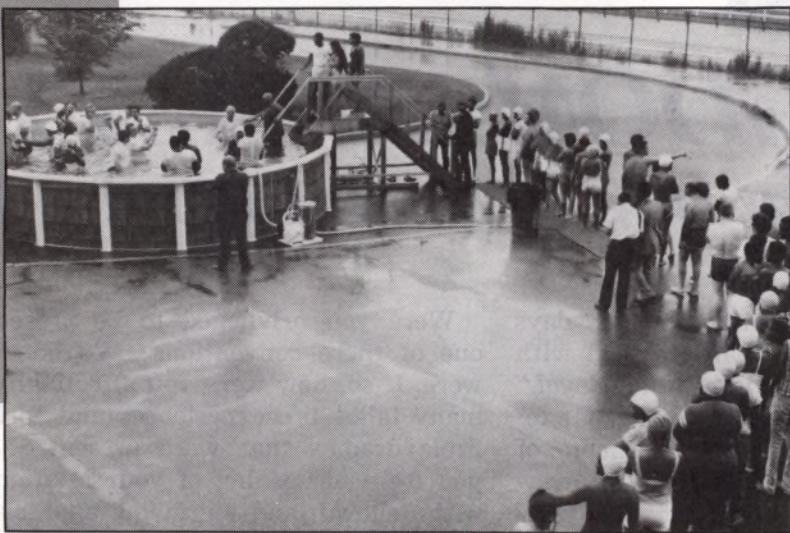
For the benefit of all our readers let us analyze the underlying meaning of the theme of the program and some of the highlights that were presented. This will crystallize in our minds the overall objective of these conventions and will show how the question of *Kingdom Loyalty* should affect every facet of our life.

WHAT IS LOYALTY?

The word "loyalty" is translated from the Hebrew noun *hhe'sedh*. It has reference to a kindness that lovingly attaches itself to an object and never lets go until its purpose in connection with that object is realized. This is the wonderful quality that God always expresses toward his purposes and to his servants. Above all things, Jehovah is loyal to his rightful sovereignty. The time has come for God's sovereignty to be expressed toward this earth through



One 72-year-old woman, baptized at the Belmont Park district convention in New York, expressed her Kingdom loyalty by saying: "There is no doubt in my mind that this is the right religion . . . I want to serve Jehovah as the only true God"



the Messianic kingdom placed in the hands of God's Son, Jesus Christ, and 144,000 heavenly associate rulers and priests. This kingdom is something to which Jehovah is especially attached and which he never abandons until 'all the nations come and worship before him.'—Rev. 15:4.

Little wonder, then, that Jehovah's loyalty is especially directed toward all those who earnestly keep praying: "Let your kingdom come." (Matt. 6:10) This was the area of Christian loyalty that received particular attention at the conventions. Can you see yourself as a subject of God's kingdom? A *loyal* subject? One who will always be attached to Jehovah, to his Son and to other loyal subjects and proclaimers of the Kingdom? (Matt. 22:37; 1 Pet. 4:8) If this is how you feel, if this is your determination, then you have caught the spirit and the meaning of the term *Kingdom Loyalty*. You can

be happy in the knowledge that "with someone loyal [Jehovah] will act in loyalty."—2 Sam. 22:26.

Since you are now the subject of a very real kingdom, God's kingdom, then you must be prepared to submit loyalty and be

obedient to all the laws and principles of that heavenly government. They are all set out for us in God's Word, the Bible. They apply to all areas of the Christian's life: within the family circle, in one's preaching activity as a minister of the good news of God's kingdom, within the Christian congregation and in one's general attitude toward the worldwide theocratic arrangement that Jehovah is now using on this earth. These four areas of the Christian's life were dealt with under the themes Family Day, Field Ministry Day, Congregation Day and Kingdom Day. Let us briefly discuss each of these in turn to make certain we understand the wide scope of *Kingdom Loyalty*, and so have help in answering the personal question: *What Does It Mean to Me?*



A 71-year-old man, having given up lifelong heavy drinking and smoking, was baptized at Dodger Stadium, Los Angeles, and had this to say on the question of loyalty: "One can't sit on the fence forever . . . I truly have found love in my heart for Jehovah and it is my desire to serve him forever"

FAMILY DAY

Parents—what do your children reveal about you? What is first in your life? Is it Kingdom interests or material things? The answers to such searching questions are bound up with your loyalty to Jehovah. If you sow loyalty to God's kingdom in your child, you may reap loyalty. (Compare 2 Corinthians 9:6.) How can you do this? Regularly study God's Word with your family. Reason with your children as to why Jehovah's counsel is the best. Go places together. Do things together as a family. Keep the lines of communication open. The congregation can help, but never can it take your place as a diligent parent. (Eph. 6:4) Never give up trying to instill Kingdom Loyalty in your children!

Children—Be cooperative and obey your parents and the elders in the congregation. Avoid all forms of bad conduct and filthy language. This is being loyal to your parents, to the congregation and to Jehovah. What is your goal in life? To develop good spiritual qualities? To share in the ministry regularly? To attend meetings regularly? To improve your relationship with

Jehovah? To become a pioneer, a missionary, a Bethel worker? If these are your goals, you will be reflecting the training of loyal parents and proving yourself to be a loyal subject of God's kingdom.

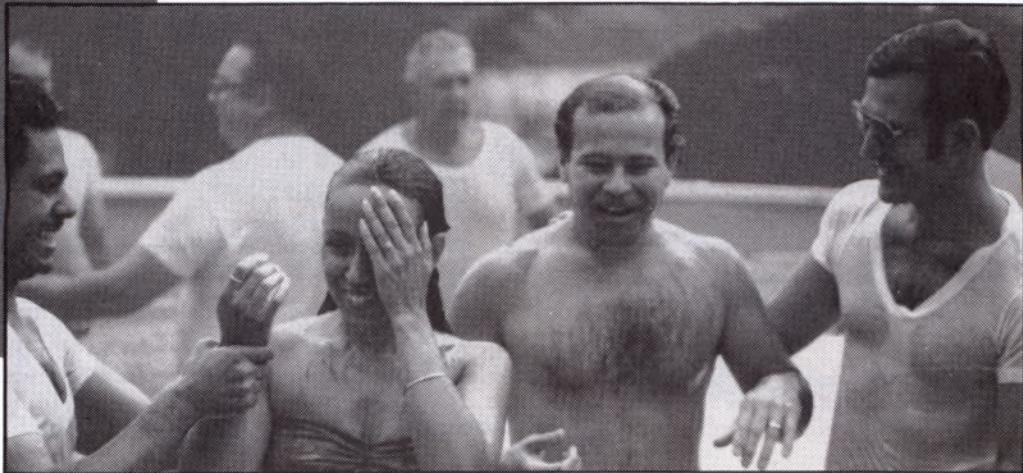
FIELD MINISTRY DAY

Jesus said: "He that has endured to the end is the one that will be saved." (Matt. 24:13) Keeping spiritual goals in view helps all of us to endure. These goals include Christian maturity and increased privileges of service, especially the full-time ministry. Overseers and parents alike can do much to encourage old and young to reach out for this grand privilege of service and so 'seek God's kingdom first in their life.' (Matt. 6:33) This, too, is being loyal to God's kingdom. Today, the call to action is: Forward, You Ministers of the Kingdom! Indeed, all of God's ministers should be forward-looking and forward-moving, thus following the example of Jehovah and Christ Jesus.

CONGREGATION DAY

"An overseer must be . . . loyal." (Titus 1:7, 8) Loyal to what? To Jehovah and

These happy parents of two young sons were among 744 others who were baptized at Belmont Park this summer. They were baptized together, publicly demonstrating their loyalty to Jehovah and Jesus Christ



Jehovah Rewards His Loyal Ones

Israel's first king, Saul, became disobedient—not waiting on Jehovah, doing things his own way. So Jehovah anointed David as king but left Saul on the throne. (1 Sam. 13:9-14; 15:13-23; 16:11-23) Saul became jealous of David and tried to kill him.



How would your loyalty to Jehovah stand up under such trying conditions? Would you have waited on Jehovah or tried to correct things in your own way?

"Saul sought to pin David to the wall with the spear, but he dodged from before Saul, so that he struck the spear into the wall."—1 Sam. 19:10.

With 3,000 men Saul went hunting for David. Saul himself entered a cave where David and his men were hiding. David was urged to kill Saul, but he said: "It is unthinkable on my part, from Jehovah's standpoint, that I should do this thing to . . . the anointed of Jehovah."—1 Sam. 24:4, 6.

Saul died in battle with the Philistines. Later, "the older men of Israel . . . anointed David as king over Israel."—2 Sam. 5: 1-3.

David was a model of loyalty to his God, Jehovah. He never ran ahead of Him, to do things in his own way. Jehovah called him "a man agreeable to my heart, who will do all the things I desire."—Acts 13:22.

Will Jehovah say the same of you? Will you always wait for him to act? Will you be loyal to Jehovah, his approved anointed ones and his theocratic organization and its arrangements? If you are, then Jehovah will reward you as he did David.

Beware of Rebellious Talk

The sons of Israel had agreed: "All that Jehovah has spoken we are willing to do." (Ex. 19:1-5, 8) However, murmuring and complaining against Moses broke out in the camp. It was led by Korah, Dathan and Abiram. They influenced others and soon many were in open opposition to Jehovah.

How would you have reacted to that rebellious talk? Would your faith in Jehovah's servant Moses have remained firm like that of Caleb and Joshua?

A man who gathered sticks on the Sabbath was brought before Moses. Jehovah had him put to death, for it was a violation of God's law—not 'just a little thing.'

—Num. 15:32-36.

"All the assembly talked of pelting" Joshua and Caleb with stones because, of the 12 men sent to spy out Canaan, they alone showed faith that Jehovah would give the Israelites the land.—Num. 13:25-14:10.

Jehovah commanded Aaron, also Korah with 250 others, to offer incense. Fire came down and consumed the rebels. Next, Jehovah caused the earth to swallow up Dathan and Abiram and their households as well as Korah's household. (Num. 16:32) Thus He settled the issue of theocratic appointment.

Rebellion may start as a little thing—criticizing the elders' decision or some provision of the "faithful and discreet slave." But it can lead to open opposition. Jude warns: "Too bad for them, because they . . . have perished in the rebellious talk of Korah." Far better it is to take Jude's further advice: "But you, beloved ones, . . . keep yourselves in God's love."

—Jude 11, 20, 21.



his righteous principles, to Christ and his "discreet slave" and to the congregation arrangement.—Matt. 24:45-47; 1 Thess. 2:10; Rev. 1:12-17; Eph. 1:22, 23.

Are you an overseer? Then follow Jesus' example. He gave of himself self-sacrificingly. Doing Jehovah's work was the paramount thing in his life. His zeal was also shown in his love of goodness and hatred of badness.—1 Pet. 2:21; Heb. 1:9.

What is your attitude toward directives from "the faithful and discreet slave"? Loyalty should move you to be "ready to obey." (Jas. 3:17) Always try to capture the spirit of information published by the "slave" class. Then convey this to the congregation. The brothers need your loyal example as you cooperate with the rest of the body of elders. They need your support in the ministry and all congregation arrangements. Your loyalty will be rewarded as surely as David's was. (Ps. 18:1-3, 25) You will have a clear conscience, peace of mind and a loyally united, strong congregation.

KINGDOM DAY

"God is a God, not of disorder, but of peace." (1 Cor. 14:33) Jehovah God knows how to arrange matters so that everything governed by his laws has its place. His creation testifies to this fact. Little wonder, then, that Jehovah has always concerned

himself with the peace and order of his true worshipers on the earth. A fine example of this and its beneficial results is to be found in Gideon's little band of 300 warriors who shared in a great theocratic victory over their enemies. Why did they win? Because of loyal obedience and strict compliance with theocratic instructions given through their battle leader. "All the while they kept standing each one in his place," we are told. (Judg. 7:19-21) What a wonderful example for true worshipers today! Instead of forging ahead with our own ideas and methods, let us willingly submit to the theocratic arrangement, recognizing the channel through which Jehovah directs his people.

JEHOVAH GUARDS HIS LOYAL ONES

These were some of the highlights presented at the "Kingdom Loyalty" conventions, bringing home to all present that "the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ" is more and more influencing the lives of all true worshipers today. (Rev. 11:15) Great indeed is the present reward of all those proving loyal to God's kingdom. Proverbs 2:8 assures them: "He [Jehovah] will guard the very way of his loyal ones." Jehovah's Witnesses believe this. With confidence they are determined now to go on advancing as God's loyal Kingdom proclaimers.

Blind Witness

Vicente is blind and 75 years of age. He has served in Spain as an auxiliary pioneer for some five years, distributes about 110 magazines each month, and conducts three Bible studies. One cold winter's night his service companion did not show up to accompany him to a return visit on an interested person, scheduled for 9:15 p.m. Since it was a little early to make the visit and not wanting to waste time waiting, Vicente decided to make a door-to-door call by himself. The man who answered the door

Saves a Life

treated him kindly, listened to the Kingdom hope and accepted the two magazines offered. A few weeks later when a further visit was made to take him the most recent issues, the man said: "Señor Vicente, if you had not called at my door that night, we would not be talking together today. I had decided to shoot myself with a pistol. At that moment, I only desired to die, but now as I read these magazines and learn more about the Kingdom, my will to live is growing stronger and stronger."

INSIGHT ON THE NEWS

● Kenya's Anglicans reportedly have been urged to baptize polygamists as church members. It seems that a "theological consultation" held in Mombasa recommended

Theologians: 'Baptize Polygamists'

church Consultative Council's bulletin "Anglican Information," a polygamist's taking any additional wives after baptism would result in restriction from Communion and the holding of church office. The theologians were said to have considered "the hardness of man's heart" in making their recommendation.

Such a basis for theological decisions may make it easier to attract church membership, and may even appear to have Scriptural authority, as when Jesus told the Jews that Moses had "made the concession" of divorce to them "out of regard for [their] hard-heartedness." But Jesus followed up by declaring that Christian standards could not be altered on such grounds, noting that "such has not been the case from the beginning," and requiring that Christians hold to God's original righteous standard. (Matt. 19:8, 9) So, too, a married Christian in good standing must be "a husband of one wife." (1 Tim. 3:2, 12) God's Word condemns adulterously 'defiling the marriage bed.'—Heb. 13:4.

● Recently two prominent British scientists, Sir Fred Hoyle and Chandra Wickramasinghe, admittedly were 'driven by logic' to conclude that

"No Logical Way Out"

there must be a Creator. "It is quite a shock," said Wickramasinghe, a professor of applied mathematics and astronomy. The Sri Lankan-born astronomer explained: "From my earliest training as a scientist I was very strongly brainwashed to believe that science cannot be consistent with any kind of deliberate creation. That notion has had to be very painfully shed. I am quite uncomfortable in the situation, the state of mind I now find myself in. But there is no logical way out of it."

Though Wickramasinghe and Hoyle continue to believe that evolution controls the

development of life forms, their calculations of the odds against life itself starting spontaneously moved the professors to write: "Once we see . . . that the probability of life, originating at random is so utterly minuscule as to make it absurd, it becomes sensible to think that the favourable properties of physics on which life depends are in every respect 'deliberate,' " or created.

Professor Wickramasinghe also said: "I now find myself driven to this position by logic. There is no other way in which we can understand the precise ordering of the chemicals of life except to invoke the creations on a cosmic scale. . . . We were hoping as scientists that there would be a way round our conclusion, but there isn't." That is just the point made by another well-educated man who lived in Bible times: "[God's] invisible attributes . . . have been visible, ever since the world began, to the eye of reason, in the things he has made."—Rom. 1:20, "The New English Bible."

● Minister Gordon Nodwell, of Canada's United Church in Toronto, recently wrote an article on the Bible for the "United Church Observer."

The Bible and "Babes" Among other things, he stated: "I believe that while some of the old biblical stories are entertaining for children, it is nonsense to think that the Bible can be taught to children, or that, once taught, they will 'have it' forever. The Bible takes every bit of adult understanding that mature minds can bring to it—and then some."

Is Bible understanding truly beyond the grasp of children? Jesus declared: "You have hidden these things from the wise and intellectual ones and have revealed them to babes." Approaching the Bible from a worldly, philosophical viewpoint rather than one of childlike humility certainly does 'hide' its message from such clergymen. But God commands even "little ones" to congregate with their families to "listen" and to "learn" from God's law. Would God himself require this if it were "nonsense to think that the Bible can be taught to children"?—Matt. 11:25; Deut. 31:12.



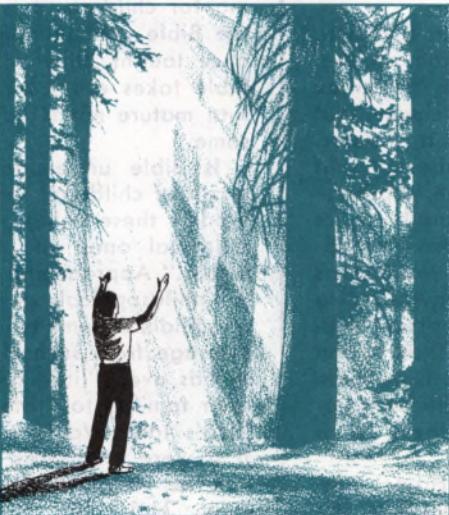
'Light Has Flashed Up for the Righteous'

"Light itself has flashed up for the righteous one, and rejoicing even for the ones upright in heart."—Ps. 97:11.

WHAT is one thing that distinguishes the righteous from the wicked, the true servants of Jehovah God from those in bondage to God's adversary, Satan the Devil? Doubtless more than anything else it is the fact that the righteous, the true servants of Jehovah God, enjoy light. For them, indeed, "light itself has flashed up." (Ps. 97:11) As for the wicked, they walk in darkness. Yes, "the path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shin-

1. What is one thing that distinguishes the righteous from the wicked?

In an early morning walk things get clearer as one gets closer and as darkness gradually turns to light



ing ever brighter till the full light of day. But the way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know what makes them stumble."—Prov. 4:18, 19, *New International Version*.

² Note that the shining of light on the path of the righteous is progressive. It keeps "shining ever brighter." We might illustrate this by a man who gets up before daybreak and who sets out on foot to travel through the countryside. He might see an outline of a building in the distance, but at first cannot tell whether it is a barn or a house. Gradually as day dawns and he gets closer he can see that it is a house. After a while he is able to tell that it is a wooden, not a brick, house. Then, later, he can make out the color of the house, and so forth.

³ The experience of God's servants has been just like that. Viewing certain matters from a distance in time and with only a little light on the subject, often we have had an incomplete, and even an inaccurate,

2. How might the increase of light on the path of the righteous be illustrated?

3. What factors have a bearing on the light's increasing?

view of things. In such situations we may well have been influenced by previously held views. But as the light gets brighter and we draw much closer to events, then our understanding of the outworking of God's purposes becomes clearer. Prophecies open up to us as Jehovah's holy spirit sheds light upon them, and as they are fulfilled in world events or in the experiences of God's people. Has this not been just the way that Jehovah God has dealt with his servants from early times? Indeed it has been!

EXAMPLE OF ABRAHAM

⁴ Consider Abraham, the man of faith whom God called his friend. (Isa. 41:8; Jas. 2:23) Despite his close relationship with Jehovah God, he did not at first have a complete understanding of God's purposes. We can see this from a number of developments in Abraham's life—his understanding gradually improved. God called him to leave his home country, telling him that He would make a great nation of him and that through him all the families of the earth would bless themselves. But Abraham did not know all the details; we read that he obeyed "although not knowing where he was going." (Heb. 11:8) Further, though God promised him that his seed would be given the land, Abraham did not know how this would come about. He even expressed concern that his servant Eliezer might inherit his house. Then Jehovah made matters plain, telling Abraham: "One who will come out of your own inward parts will succeed you as heir." (Gen. 12:1-3, 7; 15:2-4) Since Abraham's wife, Sarah, was barren, she asked him to have relations with her maid, Hagar, by whom he had Ishmael. Later God explained to Abraham that the heir of promise would be through Sarah.—Gen. 17:15-17.

⁵ So we can see that, whereas every-

4, 5. How did God gradually reveal his purpose to Abraham?

thing Jehovah revealed directly to Abraham was true, yet Abraham did not accurately understand how God would work out this purpose. Still, he continued to exercise faith and to wait on Jehovah, receiving further enlightenment as time went on. Likewise, when Jehovah commanded him to offer up his son Isaac as a sacrifice on Mount Moriah, Abraham did not know exactly how this matter would be worked out. But he had faith that God would raise up a seed through Isaac even if God had to raise Isaac from the dead.—Heb. 11:17-19.

DANIEL AND OTHER PROPHETS

⁶ Among the many prophets Jehovah favored with direct revelations was Daniel, a "very desirable man" to God. (Dan. 10:11, 19) Jehovah gave him much specific information regarding both his own time and future times; yet Daniel did not understand all that was involved. Regarding some of the visions he saw, he said: "I heard, but I could not understand." When he asked for more information he was told: "Go, Daniel, because the words are made secret and sealed up until the time of the end." (Dan. 12:8, 9) Similarly, Jehovah God kept revealing many truths to his servants the prophets. Yet there were many things that they did not get to understand.

⁷ That is why the apostle Peter could write: "Concerning this very salvation a diligent inquiry and a careful search were made by the prophets who prophesied about the undeserved kindness meant for you. They kept on investigating what particular season or what sort of season the spirit in them was indicating concerning Christ when it was bearing witness beforehand about the sufferings for Christ and about the glories to follow these. It was

6, 7. (a) What words of Daniel show that God reveals matters only at His due time? (b) What testimony does the apostle Peter give along this line?

revealed to them that, not to themselves, but to you, they were ministering the things that have now been announced to you." In fact, even angels did not have a full and complete understanding of how God's purposes would work out.—1 Pet. 1:10-12.

⁸ The last of such prophets was John the Baptizer. God used him to prepare the way before the Christ, Jesus. (Luke 1:16, 17; 2:76-79) John was highly favored in getting from God the sign that identified the Messiah, and in introducing him to Israel. (John 1:26-36) Even so, John did not understand clearly all the details pertaining to Jesus' first coming. This can be seen from the fact that while John was in prison he sent his disciples to Jesus with the inquiry: "Are you the Coming One, or are we to expect a different one?" John's query was not an expression of a lack of faith but a desire for more specific confirmation. Jesus' reply, pointing to his works, without a doubt comforted John.—Matt. 11:2-6.

JESUS AND HIS APOSTLES

⁹ God reveals his will to his servants only in his due time, and this applied even to Jesus Christ. Undoubtedly Jesus received direct information while he was with his Father in heaven. Yet he himself did not know when the end of our present system of things would come. That is why he confessed: "Concerning that day and hour nobody knows, neither the angels of the heavens nor the Son, but only the Father."—Matt. 24:36.

¹⁰ Jesus himself acted in harmony with the principle stated at Proverbs 4:18 in dealing with his disciples. He told them much about the Kingdom: that he would

8. How did a question of John the Baptizer show that his understanding was incomplete?

9. What shows that Jesus did not have a complete understanding of his Father's purposes?

10, 11. (a) What mistaken conclusion did Jesus' disciples reach regarding the Kingdom? (b) Why did Jesus limit what he told his apostles about the future, as well as about other matters?

go away and that he would return after a long time and take them home to him in the heavens. In spite of all of this, however, his apostles held to the idea that the Messianic kingdom would be the restored kingdom of David in Jerusalem. That is why they asked the resurrected Jesus: "Lord, are you restoring the kingdom to Israel at this time?" Jesus told them that there were some things they could not understand as yet, saying: "It does not belong to you to get knowledge of the times or seasons which the Father has placed in his own jurisdiction."—Acts 1:6, 7.

¹¹ That there is a due time to gain understanding of certain features of God's purposes is clear from Jesus' words to his apostles: "I have many things yet to say to you, but you are not able to bear them at present." (John 16:12) This indicates that God gives his servants understanding of his will in accordance with their ability to grasp and make use of such understanding. True, Jesus told his apostles that God's spirit would guide them "into all truth." (John 16:13) But did Jesus mean that from the day they received holy spirit they would discern *all* truth, without their needing to get further understanding later? The facts show that this was not the case.

GENTILES ADMITTED

¹² On the day of Pentecost in 33 C.E. the disciples did receive holy spirit and with it a much clearer appreciation of the truth pertaining to Jesus' resurrection, his ascension to heaven and the significance of the kingdom of God. This knowledge infused them with zeal to tell the "good news" to others. Even though Jesus had said they should make disciples of people of all nations, at first they limited their preaching to the Jews, non-Jewish proselytes and then, in time, to the Sa-

12, 13. (a) What clearer appreciation did Jesus' followers receive at Pentecost, and what effect did it have on them? (b) Although Jesus had commissioned them to make disciples of people of all the nations, when first did they begin to do so, and why first then?

maritans. They did not understand that they should go to the uncircumcised Gentiles. (Matt. 28:19, 20) No doubt Jehovah withheld such enlightenment, for the prophecy of Daniel had stated that the Messiah would keep the covenant with the Jews in force for the rest of the 70th week.—Dan. 9:24-27.

¹³ When that "week" ended in 36 C.E., Jehovah God acted positively in opening up the "good news" to the people of the nations. Peter truly needed help to adjust his thinking before entering the home of an uncircumcised Gentile considered unclean by the Law. He had to be instructed while in a trance: "You stop calling defiled the things God has cleansed." So Peter and the other apostles had to change their viewpoint on this matter. Peter did so and was used by God to declare to the Gentiles that the way to God's heavenly kingdom was open.—Acts 10:9-43.

¹⁴ Yet, 13 years later, circumcision was still a matter of dispute among some Christians. It was necessary for Paul and other disciples to go to Jerusalem in order to take this matter up with the apostles and other elders, who at that time made up the governing body for Christian congregations. This body heard what Peter had to say about the conversion of Cornelius, and Paul's evidence about the mighty works God had performed in connection with Paul's ministry to the Gentiles. Then they considered what God's inspired Word had to say about the matter. With the help of holy spirit they came to the right conclusion, namely, that while certain standards of conduct were required, it was not necessary for Gentiles to be circumcised and keep the Mosaic law in order to become Christians.—Acts 15:1-16:5.

¹⁵ About six years after this meeting,

14. What light did the early Christians receive years later as to the requirements of the Mosaic law?

15, 16. (a) What words of Paul show he recognized that the revealing of the truth was progressive? (b) What similar testimony did the apostle Peter give?

Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthians, in which he stated concerning spirit-begotten Christians of his time: "For we have partial knowledge and we prophesy partially; but when that which is complete arrives, that which is partial will be done away with. For at present we see in hazy outline by means of a metal mirror, but then it will be face to face. At present I know partially, but then I shall know accurately even as I am accurately known." So even at this point spirit-begotten Christians, including the apostle Paul himself, had not been led by holy spirit to a complete knowledge of all truth. Their knowledge was still only partial, to the extent that God had given them understanding up to that time. But it was sufficient for the needs they then had.
—1 Cor. 13:9, 10, 12.

¹⁶ Some nine years after Paul had written the foregoing, or about the year 64 C.E., what did Peter write his fellow Christians? After discussing the transfiguration experience that confirmed Jesus to be the Son of God, he went on to say: "Consequently we have the prophetic word made more sure; and you are doing well in paying attention to it as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until day dawns and a daystar rises, in your hearts." (2 Pet. 1:16-21) So Christians still needed to search the Scriptures, giving much attention to the prophetic word, which would be like a lamp shining in a dark place. This they must continue to do clear down to the time when anointed Christians would experience their reward at the glorious revelation of Jesus Christ.

¹⁷ Some 32 years after Peter wrote his second letter, or some 63 years after Pentecost 33 C.E., the apostle John received and recorded the series of visions that make up the book of Revelation. In these

17. (a) With the giving of the book of Revelation, what new truths became known to Christians? (b) When was more light due to shine on that book?

visions a number of truths concerning God's purposes were revealed to spirit-begotten Christians for the first time. For instance, they thus learned that 144,000 men and women would be redeemed from all nations to be joint heirs with Jesus Christ in heaven and would rule as kings, priests and judges in the Messianic kingdom of 1,000 years' duration. (Rev., chaps. 7, 14 and 20) Yet even Christians of that early time did not have complete knowledge. Students of God's Word today can see that the visions of Revelation, though they may have been instructive and encouraging to Christians of John's day, are of special value to those living in the "Lord's day," where we now find ourselves. (Rev. 1:10) Thus Revelation 5:1-14 pictorially describes a scroll, with seals that had to be loosed so that the scroll could be opened. This indicates that at the time of the fulfillment of the prophecies of Reve-

lation there must be a gradual unfolding of knowledge and understanding as each seal is loosed in its turn.

¹⁸ So we can see that, both with regard to Jehovah's faithful servants in pre-Christian times and the congregation of anointed Christians of the first century of our Common Era, without exception all had incomplete knowledge and understanding. They had to continue to make progress, readjusting their understanding as they observed and experienced the gradual outworking of Jehovah's purposes. For them, the path of the righteous ones has indeed been like 'a bright light that gets ever lighter and lighter.' (Prov. 4:18) As the light increased, they grew in knowledge, discerning more fully the grand truths that Jehovah kept revealing to them.

¹⁹ But what of Jehovah's servants at the time of the end? An angel had told Daniel: "O Daniel, make secret the words and seal up the book, until the time of the end. Many will rove about [in God's Word], and [as a result] the true knowledge will become abundant." (Dan. 12:4) In verse 10, it is further stated concerning God's servants: "Many will cleanse themselves and whiten themselves and will be refined. And the wicked ones will certainly act wickedly, and no wicked ones at all will understand; but the ones having insight will understand." Would this enlightenment come all at once? To be identified as 'those having insight' would it require that God's servants have complete, detailed knowledge and understanding, so that they would not need, in time, to make any readjustments or changes in their views of certain teachings or other matters? These questions and others will be considered in the following articles.

18. How, then, did Jehovah God reveal truths to his servants in ancient times and during the first century?

19. What did God say to the prophet Daniel regarding knowledge and understanding at the "time of the end"?

Jehovah's dealings with his servants in times past show that understanding of his purposes often comes gradually.

Abraham did not know just how God's promise regarding the "seed" would work out.

Daniel did not understand the final outcome of his prophecies.

John the Baptizer, who introduced the Messiah, later asked to be enlightened as to whether another was coming.

Jesus himself did not know the day and hour of the "great tribulation."

The apostles had to learn progressively that the kingdom is heavenly and that Gentiles, too, may inherit it.

It was only upon receiving the book of Revelation that the early Christians learned that Christ's reign would be 1,000 years long and that he would have 144,000 joint heirs.



The Light's Increase in Modern Times

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

THE Bible record from Genesis through Revelation shows that the path of Jehovah's servants has indeed been as a bright light that gets ever lighter. (Prov. 4:18) In the days of Jesus and his apostles many of the prophecies relating to the Messiah became understandable, even as Matthew and other Gospel writers testified. And the pouring out of God's spirit at Pentecost and the taking of the "good news" to the Gentiles were accompanied by further illumination upon God's Word.—Acts 2:14-36; 10:34-43; 15:6-21.

However, after the death of the apostles a period of darkness gradually engulfed the professed followers of Jesus Christ. "Oppressive wolves" took over. (Acts 20:29, 30) It was even as Jesus foretold in one of his parables. He compared the kingdom of heaven to "a man that sowed fine seed in his field." Then an "enemy came and oversowed weeds in among the wheat." As a result, the weeds predominated in that worldwide religious field for many, many centuries. But with the harvesttime there comes a separation.

1. What evidence have we considered already as to the fulfillment of Proverbs 4:18?
2. (a) What accounts for a period of darkness settling down upon the professed followers of Jesus Christ?
(b) What played a major role in the harvest separating work?

That harvesttime is now upon us, for "the harvest is a conclusion of a system of things." Happily, a "wheat" class of true Christians has been gathered. The facts show that ever-increasing light on the pathway of these Christians plays a major role in separating them from the lawless "weeds," whose end is destruction.—Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43.*

LIGHT ON JEHOVAH GOD AND HIS WORD

In the early 1870's a group of earnest, open-minded Bible students started to meet for an unbiased study of God's Word. Instead of the creeds of Christendom, they took the inspired Scriptures as their guide. The wisdom, reasonableness, harmony and power of the Bible's message shone into their hearts. It convinced them—contrary to the prevailing atheistic and evolutionary teachings—of the basic fact that an intelligent Creator really exists. They could see that "effects must be produced by competent causes" and that "the immensity of creation, its symmetry, beauty, order, harmony, diversity" testify concerning Him as the great Designer.† (Rom.

* See pages 102, 103 in the book "*Let Your Kingdom Come*," published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

† *Studies in the Scriptures*, Vol. 1, pp. 29-35.

3, 4. What facts regarding the Creator, Jehovah God, did the early Bible Students learn to appreciate?

1:20) They also gained a clear concept of the Creator's personality, that he has four cardinal attributes or basic qualities, namely, infinite wisdom, boundless power, perfect justice and matchless love.—Deut. 32:4; Ps. 62:11; Prov. 2:6, 7; 1 John 4:8.

* Moreover, they learned to appreciate that God is 'from everlasting to everlasting' and that his name is Jehovah. (Ps. 83:18; 90:2) They came to see that the chief dogma of Christendom—the Trinity doctrine—is both unreasonable and unscriptural. The light of Bible truth showed them that God is "one Jehovah," that Jesus is the Son of God (his own testimony establishing that his Father 'is greater than he is') and that God's holy spirit, far from being the third person of the Trinity, is 'God's energy that he uses to accomplish varying results.'*—Mark 12:29; John 14:28; Acts 2:17, 18.

With boldness and conviction they preached that the Bible is God's inspired Word; that in view of God's attributes it is reasonable to expect the Creator to provide a divine revelation for the guidance of man. They described the Bible as "the torch of civilization and liberty." It is "the oldest book in existence; it has outlived the storms of thirty centuries." Moreover, "all other books combined have failed to bring the joy, peace and blessing to the groaning creation that the Bible has brought."† These sincere students saw in the unselfish, self-sacrificing lives of the Bible writers clear proof that their motives were pure. In sum, they got to see that 'the Bible is a reasonable and harmonious statement of the causes of evil, and that it tells of the remedy and the final results; and it serves to guide and strengthen the servants of Jehovah God.'

* "The Watch Tower Reprints," Vol. 1, pp. 369-371.
† *Studies in the Scriptures*, Vol. 1, p. 38.

5. What stand did those lovers of truth take regarding the Bible?

JESUS CHRIST AND THE KINGDOM

From the beginning, these earnest Bible Students, as they called themselves, clearly understood the basic truths regarding Jesus Christ. He is God's "only-begotten Son." He had a prehuman existence. He gave his life as a "ransom for all." He was resurrected a spirit and ascended to heaven as a spirit, and he was to return as a spirit—the invisible Messianic king of God's kingdom. Important indeed is the subject of Christ's second coming: Why, how and when?—John 3:16; 17:5; 1 Tim. 2:5, 6; 1 Pet. 3:18.

The ever-increasing light made clear to these Christians the importance of Jehovah's kingdom as the only remedy for mankind's ills. That kingdom consists of Jesus Christ and his 144,000 associates, redeemed from among men, and who rule with him as kings and priests for 1,000 years. On the basis of Christ's ransom sacrifice, the King resurrects all the redeemed ones in the memorial tombs, with prospects of eternal life on a paradise earth. Thus the Bible holds out two destinies for those of saved mankind—a heavenly destiny for a "little flock" of Kingdom heirs, and life on earth for Jesus' "other sheep," who include "a great crowd" of survivors of earth's greatest "tribulation" and also the many, many millions who are in the memorial tombs and who will come forth to enjoy life on the paradise earth.—Luke 12:32; John 5:28, 29; 10:16; Rev. 7:9, 14; 14:1, 4; 20:6.

The increasing light also revealed to these open-minded students of the Bible that the teachings of Christendom on the nature of the human soul and the condition of the dead are completely in error! They saw clearly that when Adam was created he 'became a living soul,' and that

6. What truths did these Bible Students appreciate regarding Jesus Christ?
7. What did the increasing light reveal regarding God's kingdom and its blessings?
8. What understanding was gained as to the human soul and the condition of the dead?

when he returned to the ground because of his disobedience, he died as a soul, simply ceasing to exist. Yes, he returned to the dust from which he had been taken in the first place. In the death state there is no consciousness, no activity. (Gen. 2:7; 3:19; Eccl. 9:5, 10) The "wages sin pays is death," not eternal torment. A burning hell and a tormenting purgatory exist only in the minds of misinformed religionists. It is because man actually ceases to exist at death that there is need of a resurrection, in order that he may benefit from Christ's sacrifice.—Rom. 6:23.

CHRISTIAN OBLIGATIONS

⁹ These Christians also took seriously what the Bible has to say about true holiness. This is not to be confused with an assumed piety or sanctimoniousness. They saw that they must live by such Bible principles as, "Let marriage be honorable among all, and the marriage bed be without defilement, for God will judge fornicators and adulterers." (Heb. 13:4) They appreciated that they could not wink at or tolerate among themselves such practices as fornication, adultery and homosexuality—which the Bible condemns. (1 Cor. 6:9, 10) Likewise, they must avoid all lawbreaking, paying back "Caesar's things to Caesar," as well as "God's things to God." They must be honest in all their dealings with others, living by the Christian rule: "Just as you want men to do to you, do the same way to them."—Matt. 22:21; Luke 6:31.

¹⁰ The chief concern of these Bible Students apparently was cultivating a Christ-like personality. Also, they saw the need to bear witness to God and Jesus. They realized that each Christian, having received the light of truth, was obligated to

9. What stand did these enlightened Christians take as to holiness?

10. What truth did these Christians early realize as to the Christian commission?

spread that light to others. They recognized the need to be a minister of God, letting one's light shine both by fine Christian conduct and by word of mouth. (Matt. 5:14-16) In fact, quite early a call went out: "Wanted, 1,000 Preachers." It was a special appeal to those without family obligations who could devote one half or more of their time to spreading the "good news" by means of the printed page.

¹¹ To become a Christian minister, each one must believe God's Word, repent, be converted and exercise faith in God and in Jesus Christ as mankind's Redeemer. The individual must become "consecrated" to God, to do His will and be baptized by total immersion in water. (Acts 3:19; Matt. 28:19, 20) Since they were all ministers, these Christians rejected a clergy-laity distinction. From God's Word, however, they did see the need to appoint qualified men as "elders" and "deacons" to care for the needs of each congregation.—Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:1-10, 12, 13.

¹² As light kept increasing, they appreciated more and more the importance of publishing Jehovah's name, and his kingdom as mankind's only hope. They also saw that there are but two organizations in the universe and that everyone belongs either to God's organization or to Satan's, the latter on earth being composed of big business, big politics and big religion. God's heavenly organization of loyal spirit creatures is represented on earth by his organized witnesses. (Gal. 4:26; 2 Cor. 4:4) It follows that Christians may not engage in politics nor get involved in violence between the nations; in fact, they may not even take part in nationalistic exercises. Jehovah God's servants support and fight for his kingdom, though not with carnal weapons.—Matt.

11. What steps did one need to take to become a Christian minister, and why was the clergy-laity distinction rejected?

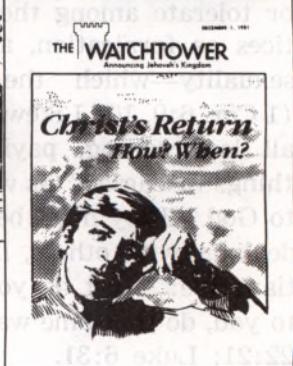
12. What truth regarding organizations did these learn to appreciate, and what logically followed?

26:52; John 15:19; 18:36; 2 Cor. 10:4; Jas. 1:27; 4:4.

¹³ In time these faithful servants of Jehovah came to realize that the vindication of Jehovah's name is the great issue confronting mankind, and that this is far more important, even, than the salvation of human creatures. This was indeed a brill-

iant flash of light, shining forth more brightly than anything previously understood. This striking truth made the distinction between the true and the counterfeit Christian religion still more obvious. Once this weighty truth was appreciated it was not long until these Christians saw that their designation (Bible Students), while not incorrect, was not distinctive enough. For one thing, their prime mission and purpose in life was not simply to be students of the Bible but to be also wit-

nesses for Jehovah. Nor did the name Bible Students distinguish them from the millions who claimed to study the Bible but who, nevertheless, subscribed to creedal error. So by the enlightening power of God's holy spirit they saw that the designation that did properly and uniquely apply to them was that found at Isaiah 43: 10-12, namely, "Jehovah's witnesses." In 1931, they joyfully accepted this name.



LIGHT ON PROPHECIES AND PARABLES

¹⁴ Up to this time, many persons held the view that the return of the Jews to their homeland was in fulfillment of Bible prophecy. But no, these beautiful and encouraging restoration prophecies had their initial fulfillment back in the sixth cen-

13. Understanding what striking issue caused these Bible Students to adopt the name "Jehovah's witnesses," and why was it so fitting?

14. What understanding did the increasing light reveal regarding the restoration prophecies?

tury B.C.E. when the Jews returned from Babylon, and they have their major fulfillment in our day on *spiritual* Israel. We see proof of their fulfillment in the spiritual paradise in which the modern "Israel of God" and their loyal companions find themselves.—2 Cor. 12:4; Gal. 6:16.

¹⁵ More accurate understanding of Jesus' parables also resulted. An outstanding example involved the parable of the sheep and the goats, as recorded at Matthew 25: 31-46. It had long been thought that this parable would be fulfilled during Christ's 1,000-year reign. But then Jehovah's Witnesses saw that it simply could not apply at that time. Among the many reasons was that during Christ's millennial reign his "brothers" would not be upon the earth, let alone be in need because of being sick or persecuted. So it must be fulfilled now, as the enthroned Jesus in heaven gathers the nations for judgment, and this is borne out by the observable facts in fulfillment.

¹⁶ Likewise, the parable of the rich man and Lazarus has been illuminated. It was seen that the rich man represented, not the Jewish nation as a whole, but the hypocritical affluent religious leaders of Jesus' day, and correspondingly the religious clergy of Christendom in our day. —Luke 16:19-31.

¹⁷ Similarly, the increased light caused Jehovah's servants to appreciate that the book of Revelation has its climactic fulfillment beginning with "the Lord's day," that is, since 1914, and not during the entire history of the Christian congregation from apostolic times to the present, as once thought. (Rev. 1:10) They came to understand that the beginning of "the Lord's day" had been marked by a war in heaven in which Michael (the enthroned Jesus Christ) and his angels cast Satan

The modern servants of Jehovah understood early that:

Jehovah is the one true God and Jesus Christ is his only-begotten Son.

The holy spirit is God's active force.

The soul is mortal and the hope for the dead is in a resurrection.

Christ will have 144,000 joint heirs in the heavens, whereas the rest of obedient mankind will receive eternal life on a paradise earth.

In time they also got to appreciate:

That God permitted wickedness because of the issue of universal sovereignty.

That the restoration prophecies apply to spiritual Israel.

That the fulfillment of Revelation is in the "Lord's day."

and his angels out of heaven. (Rev. 12:1-12) Jehovah's people rejoiced greatly to note that their Kingdom work had been foretold, particularly in Revelation chapters 2, 3, 6-11.

THEOCRATIC ORDER

¹⁸ Many more examples could be given of the light's increase in modern times, but space permits listing just one more. This relates to theocratic law or God-governed procedure. In the latter part of the 19th century, the Bible Students had a democratic way of governing their congregations; they wanted to get away from an autocratic hierarchical system. But in the year 1938 they realized that this democratic arrangement lacked Scriptural support. It was not in line with theocratic order, which is rule from God downward, rather than from men upward. (Isa. 60:1, 17-19) So in more recent times, by direc-

15, 16. What light was shone on two of Jesus' parables?

17. What remarkable understanding did they gain concerning the book of Revelation?

18. What was learned as to theocratic order in the Christian congregations, and how was this put into effect?

tion of holy spirit, the "faithful and discreet slave" does the appointing of men in the congregations to serve as elders and ministerial servants. (Acts 20:28) These must have the Scriptural qualifications stated at 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9.

19 Truly, all the foregoing demonstrates that the pathway of Jehovah's people has been and is like the bright light that gets ever brighter. (Prov. 4:18) As they came out of the gross darkness enveloping "Babylon the Great," the world empire of false religion, it was not to be expected that they would see all things immediately in their true light. (Rev. 17:5) The brilliance of revealed truth could have had a

* Jesus Christ foretold that he would put this "faithful and discreet slave" in charge of all his belongings to provide spiritual food for his followers. The foregoing facts prove that this "slave" is a composite individual and is associated with the Christian witnesses of Jehovah.—Matt. 24:45-47.

19. Why was it not to be expected that full and complete light would come at once?

blinding, even a confusing, effect upon them spiritually. This could be compared to a person's coming out of a totally dark room into bright sunlight. It would take time for the person's eyes to adjust to the sudden glare of brilliant sunlight.

20 And, as we have seen, the progressive light of truth covers a wide range. There are refined understandings as to doctrines, as to prophecies, as to Christian conduct and the commission of Christians, as to the meaning of Jesus' parables, as to proper congregational organization, and so forth. All of this is clear enough. But some might ask the question: Why does it seem that the path of true Christians does not always go straight forward? What is the explanation? For answers to these questions we refer the reader to the succeeding article.

20. (a) What wide range has been covered by the progressive light of truth? (b) What question remains for consideration?

The Path of the Righteous Does Keep Getting Brighter



"When one ruling over mankind is righteous, . . . then it is as the light of morning, when the sun shines forth."—2 Sam. 23:3, 4.

THE light on the pathway of Jehovah's servants from earliest times to the present has kept on increasing. This has been even more so since that notable year 1914 when, as developments here on

1. What does 2 Samuel 23:3, 4 lead us to expect, and has this been realized?

earth showed, "the kingdom of the world did become the kingdom of our Lord [Jehovah] and of his Christ." (Rev. 11:15) Light from God's Word has flashed forth, like the sunshine on "a morning without clouds" to illuminate ever more clearly

the pathway that Jehovah's servants must tread.—2 Sam. 23:3, 4.

² However, it may have seemed to some as though that path has not always gone straight forward. At times explanations given by Jehovah's visible organization have shown adjustments, seemingly to previous points of view. But this has not actually been the case. This might be compared to what is known in navigational circles as "tacking." By maneuvering the sails the sailors can cause a ship to go from right to left, back and forth, but all the time making progress toward their destination in spite of contrary winds. And that goal in view for Jehovah's servants is the "new heavens and a new earth" of God's promise.—2 Pet. 3:13.

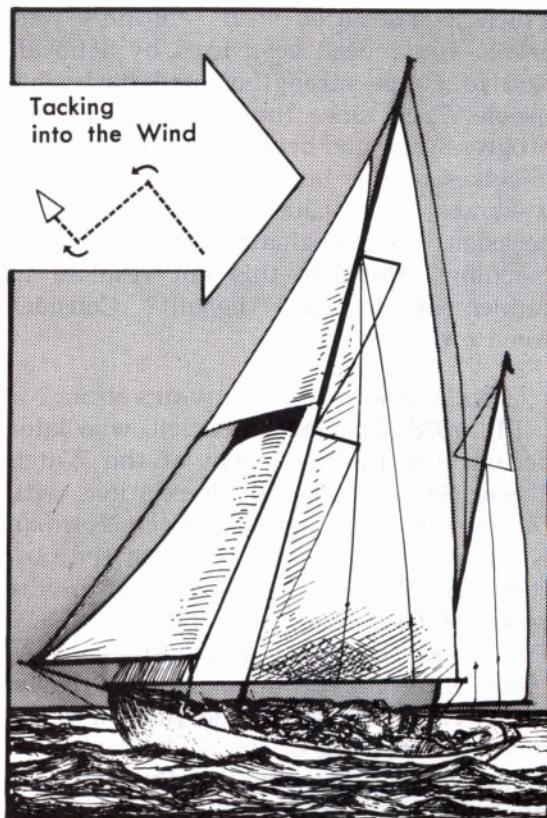
³ There is no question that Jehovah God is continuing to bless the global activity of his witnesses, as directed by the "faithful and discreet slave." This can be seen by the fruits. Remember, Jesus said: "Every good tree produces fine fruit." And such righteous fruits are to be seen internationally today in one people only—the united, global society of Jehovah's Witnesses.—Matt. 7:17.

⁴ No matter where we may live on earth, God's Word continues to serve as a light to our path and a lamp to our roadway as to our conduct and beliefs. (Ps. 119:105) But Jehovah God has also provided his visible organization, his "faithful and discreet slave," made up of spirit-anointed ones, to help Christians in all nations to understand and apply properly the Bible in their lives. Unless we are in touch with this channel of communication that God is using, we will not progress along the road to life, no matter how much Bible reading we do.—Compare Acts 8:30-40.

2. How may we regard periodic adjustments in viewpoint?

3. What evidence is there that Jehovah is continuing to bless his witnesses?

4, 5. In addition to his inspired Word, what other instrument has Jehovah God used to guide his people?



⁵ Regarding God's channel of communication, Jesus said that the "faithful and discreet slave" would provide spiritual nourishment at the right time for all his followers and that he would set this "slave" over all his belongings. (Matt. 24:45-47) It is also noteworthy that the apostle Paul, at Ephesians 4:11-16, indicated that the Christian congregation needed not only such inspired instruments as apostles and prophets but also evangelizers, shepherds and teachers to help Christians to arrive at the oneness in the faith and the accurate knowledge of the Son of God, and to gain full spiritual maturity.—See also 1 Corinthians 1:10; Philippians 1:9-11.

⁶ This "faithful and discreet slave,"

6. Because of what factors has it been necessary at times to reevaluate viewpoints?

which is associated with Jehovah's Witnesses, has indeed been used by Jehovah God to guide, strengthen and direct his people. True, since the light shines forth progressively, and because there have been mistakes due to human imperfection and weakness, these Christians have had, on occasion, to reevaluate viewpoints and teachings. But has this not resulted in refinement, to their benefit? Consider some examples.

THE RANSOM AND JEHOVAH'S NAME

⁷ In 1878, Charles T. Russell, who later became the first president of the Watch Tower Society, severed his relations with the coeditor of *The Herald of the Morning*, N. H. Barbour, over the issue of the ransom. Mr. Barbour rejected belief in the power of Jesus' sacrifice to take away sins. For years thereafter Bible Students, as these witnesses of Jehovah then called themselves, considered the ransom to be the main teaching of the Bible. And there is no question that salvation through faith in Christ's ransom is emphasized in God's Word. (John 3:16; Acts 4:12; Heb. 5:9; Rev. 7:10) Jesus' ransom sacrifice was prophetically foreshadowed by Abraham's offering up Isaac and by the sacrifices under the Mosaic law. It was foretold also by the prophets. So the Bible Students placed great stress on what Jesus Christ did for humankind.—Luke 24:25-27, 44.

⁸ However, the Bible shows that there is something far more important than our personal salvation. It is the great issue involving Jehovah's universal sovereignty, which Satan called in question at the time of the rebellion in Eden. (Gen. 3:15; 1 Cor. 15:24, 25; Rev. 11:15; 12:10) It calls for the vindication of Jehovah's name. Indeed, the entire theme of the Bible, from Gen-

esis to Revelation, is the Messianic kingdom, whereby that glorious Name is vindicated, exalted for all time! Some 75 times in the Bible we read God's own declaration: 'They will have to know that I am Jehovah.* His witnesses came to appreciate in time that creatures could plead with Jehovah God on the basis of his name's being involved and that "everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah will be saved." (Rom. 10:13; Joel 2:32; Zeph. 3:9) So for some years Jehovah's name and its vindication were made so prominent that critics of the Witnesses accused them of not believing in Jesus Christ. However, at most, this was a matter of overemphasis. As regular readers of *The Watchtower* in recent decades well appreciate, the Christian witnesses of Jehovah certainly have been giving due credit to Jesus' role in the outworking of God's purposes. Indeed, Jehovah's prophetic Word focuses on Jesus as God's 'Chief Agent of salvation.'—Heb. 2:10; 12:2; Rev. 19:10.

⁹ Such adjustments might be said to follow a principle that has been said to govern the progress of scientific truth. In brief, it works something like this: At first there is a proposition made that is subject to argumentation. It holds out great possibilities for enlightenment or practical application. But then in time it is seen to have certain flaws or weaknesses. So the tendency is to go to a proposition at the opposite extreme. Later it is found that that position does not represent the whole truth either, and so there is a combining of the valid points in both positions. Time and again this principle has applied in the way Proverbs 4:18 has been fulfilled.†

* Some 60 times in the book of Ezekiel alone; also at Exodus 6:7; Deuteronomy 29:6; Isaiah 49:23; Joel 3:17, and other texts.

† This has been termed the *thesis* (proposition), *antithesis* (opposing proposition) and *synthesis* (a combining of the two).

9. What principle governing scientific progress appears to have application here?

7. Why and on what basis was the teaching of the ransom made so prominent by the Bible Students?
8. (a) What was then seen to be of greater importance?
(b) To what did this lead, but what adjustment was made in later decades?

CONDUCT AND PREACHING

¹⁰ Consider another example of progressive understanding: For some 40 years the Bible Students stressed the importance of cultivating a fine Christian personality, which cultivation they called "character development." It was stressed so strongly because of its being neglected in Christendom. True, Christians were also to bear witness by speaking to others about God's purposes, but this was more or less secondary. Later, when God's people got to appreciate the importance of Jehovah's name and that they were to witness to his name and kingdom, this was emphasized, with the result that less attention was paid to cultivating a Christlike personality. It was argued that above all else Jesus came to bear witness, and that preaching is what really counts. It became necessary to find a balance between the two positions.

—Rom. 10:10; Gal. 5:22, 23.

¹¹ In due course, that happy balance was reached. Christians need both to cultivate the fruitage of God's spirit and to witness fearlessly and faithfully for Jehovah. Both of these requirements are important. We cannot neglect the one on the premise of doing the other. The apostle Paul said: "Woe is me if I did not declare the good news!" But he also said: "I pummel my body and lead it as a slave, that, after I have preached to others, I myself should not become disapproved somehow."

—1 Cor. 9:16, 27.

SUBJECTION TO THE "SUPERIOR AUTHORITIES"

¹² Arriving at a proper understanding of Romans 13:1-7 furnishes yet another instance of "navigating" toward the correct viewpoint. The early Bible Students rightly understood that the "higher powers," or "superior authorities," were the govern-

10, 11. In their turn, what two positions were stressed, but with what final outcome?

12, 13. (a) What view was taken first regarding the "higher powers" of Romans 13:1? (b) To what opposite extreme did this lead, but with what apparent benefit?

mental rulers of this world. (Compare *Authorized Version* and *New World Translation*.) On the basis of that understanding they concluded that if a Christian were drafted in time of war he would have to serve in the army, don a uniform and go off to battle. But it was allowed that, when it came to actually killing a fellowman, he could shoot in the air instead.

¹³ However, it was quite apparent that the apostle Paul could not be advocating such a course. The question arose: Could the "higher powers," then, refer to Jehovah God and Jesus Christ? For a time, God's people held to this viewpoint. And during the troubrous years of World War II this at least fortified them in 'obeying God as ruler rather than men,' as they built up a marvelous record of fearless Christian neutrality throughout the earth. (Acts 5: 28, 29) There has never been any question that Christians must give their primary allegiance to the Sovereign Lord Jehovah and his Messianic king, Jesus Christ. But are these at the same time the "superior authorities" to whom we must 'render tax, tribute and honor'?—Rom. 13:7.

¹⁴ Happily, in the year 1962, Jehovah led his people to an understanding of the principle of *relative subjection*. It was seen that dedicated Christians must obey secular rulers as the "superior authorities," gladly recognizing these as "God's minister," or servant, for their good. (Rom. 13:4) However, if these "authorities" ask them to violate God's laws, what then? Up to that point Christians have obeyed the command at Romans 13:1: "Let every soul be in subjection to the superior authorities." But this is qualified by Jesus' words, as recorded at Matthew 22:21: "Pay back, therefore, Caesar's things to Caesar, but God's things to God." So whenever "Caesar" asks Christians to do things contrary to God's will, they must place

14. How was the matter of subjection to worldly governmental authorities finally seen in its true light?

Jehovah's law ahead of "Caesar's." This is contrary to what is practiced in Christendom in general. Many so-called Christians scruple little about violating God's laws when commanded to do so by Caesar. One patriot even expressed it this way: "Our country! . . . may she always be in the right; but our country, right or wrong." But not so the Christian witnesses of Jehovah! When commanded to go contrary to God's will, they echo the words of Jesus' apostles, saying: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men."—Acts 5:29.

WHO ARE MINISTERS?

¹⁵ To cite one more example of progressive enlightenment, there is the question as to whether all sincerely dedicated Christians are ministers, regardless of age or sex. For many years it was held by Jehovah's Witnesses that all who repented, converted, exercised faith in God and Christ, dedicated themselves to Jehovah to do his will as revealed by Christ, and were baptized, were indeed ministers. But then some raised objections. Governmental authorities often did not appreciate this position. It was also argued that many languages did not have an equivalent for

the term "minister" and so it should not be used in a religious sense by those whose languages did have it. Also, it was argued that baptism hardly seemed an adequate ordination ceremony. But, were these valid reasons for restricting the designation "minister" to those appointed to office in the congregation, to elders and "deacons," or ministerial servants?

¹⁶ The fact is that the law of the land usually allows each religious organization the right to determine what makes a person one of its ministers. If others do not appreciate their position or agree with it, this is of no consequence. Nor does it matter that many languages do not have an equivalent for the term "minister." That should not prevent those whose languages do have such a term—English, Italian, Spanish and others—from using it if it serves a valid purpose.

¹⁷ The term "minister" is a useful one, for it refers to a special kind of "servant," one with an exalted, special assignment of service. Anyone, regardless of age and sex, who is able to demonstrate that he or she has a good understanding of God's will and purposes for mankind, and who has brought his or her life in line with Bible principles, and who has also made a dedication and been baptized in keeping with Jesus' command at Matthew 28:19, 20, is truly one of God's ministers. In fact, it can be said that such a one is more qualified to speak for God than any of those who have attended theological seminaries but who do not understand God's purposes and may not have brought their lives in line with God's righteous requirements. Those truly serving God can say with the apostle Paul: "I glorify my ministry."—Rom. 11:13.

¹⁸ It must be emphasized that the term "minister" is not a title but a description.

^{17, 18}. Who really may be termed "ministers," and how should they regard their "ministry"?

In Coming Issues

- **Jesus Christ—
Babe in a Manger
or Heavenly King?**
- **Now Is the Time
to Preach the Word**
- **Rearing Happy Children
in a Troubled World**

Through study and experience Jehovah's servants now see in proper balance:

That the vindication of Jehovah's name is more important than the salvation of creatures.

That showing zeal in witnessing and cultivating the fruits of the spirit are of like importance.

That the Christian's subjection to secular authorities is a relative subjection.

Their honored position as ministers, truly representing Jehovah, regardless of the way others view them.

(Compare Matthew 20:28.) It is not enough for a person to take the steps qualifying him to be baptized as a servant of Jehovah God. The individual must make his ministry, his "sacred service" to Jehovah God, the chief aim in his life. Otherwise, regardless of how much time he may be able to devote to his ministry because of circumstances outside his control, he could not properly term himself a minister or be considered by others as being one of God's ministers.—Rom. 12:1; 2 Tim. 4:5.

¹⁹ Of course, such development of understanding, involving "tacking" as it were, has often served as a test of loyalty for those associated with the "faithful and discreet slave." However, progress is being made continually toward fuller appreciation of the "good news" and all that it means. It has been the experience of those who stay close to God's organization that questions and things hard to understand are always cleared up with the passing of time. And as the light shines forth ever more clearly, how heartwarming and satisfying the way proves to be! It is as Peter expressed it when some of the disciples

19. (a) Such development of understanding has resulted in what, but how are loyal ones blessed? (b) What is Jehovah's arrangement for dispensing spiritual food, and why should it always be our choice?

stumbled over Jesus' teaching: "Lord, whom shall we go away to? You have sayings of everlasting life." (John 6:68) The Lord Jesus Christ still has those "sayings," and he is dispensing them through the one "faithful and discreet slave" organization that he today uses on earth. It is like the "good tree" that Jesus described as bringing forth "fine fruit." (Matt. 7:17) Apart from this, the only choice is association with Satan's political "wild beast" and "Babylon the Great," the world empire of false religion. (Rev. 13:1; 17:5) No dedicated Christian would want to return to that!—2 Pet. 2:22; John 14:6.

²⁰ Indeed, "light itself has flashed up for the righteous one." (Ps. 97:11) Proverbs 4:18 is being fulfilled, in that "the path of the righteous ones" is like a light shining ever more brightly. If at times there is a measure of adjustment, invariably an improved position results. The refinement has not been in vain. With Christ now reigning, the enlightenment enjoyed by Jehovah's people "is as the light of morning, when the sun shines forth." (2 Sam. 23:3, 4; Matt. 25:31) Favored indeed are all those who serve loyally with the "faithful and discreet slave" organization, Jehovah's visible agent of communication! Theirs is the wise choice, for their pathway leads on to the precious goal of everlasting life in the new order that Jehovah is creating.—Isa. 65:17, 18; 66:22.

20. (a) Why can we now be more confident than ever about 'the light that shines forth'? (b) What happy future is in prospect for all who choose the pathway of increasing light?

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

January 3: 'Light Has Flashed Up for the Righteous.' Page 16. Songs to Be Used: 100, 23.

January 10: The Light's Increase in Modern Times. Page 21. Songs to Be Used: 91, 109.

January 17: The Path of the Righteous Does Keep Getting Brighter. Page 26. Songs to Be Used: 69, 43.

