

# THE WATCHTOWER

JULY 1, 1995

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

"WHAT IS  
TRUTH?"

# THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

July 1, 1995

Average Printing Each Issue: 16,100,000

Vol. 116, No. 13

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

## IN THIS ISSUE

- 3 "What Is Truth?"
- 5 Why Search for Truth?
- 9 Christian Witnesses  
With Heavenly Citizenship
- 14 "The Israel of God"  
and the "Great Crowd"
- 20 Dwellers Together  
in a Restored "Land"
- 26 Alone but Never Abandoned

- 30 Kingdom Proclaimers Report
- 31 Questions From Readers
- 32 "Beyond the Borders of Sanity"

## WATCHTOWER STUDIES

- AUGUST 7-13:** Christian Witnesses With Heavenly Citizenship. Page 9. Songs to be used: 17, 11.
- AUGUST 14-20:** "The Israel of God" and the "Great Crowd." Page 14. Songs to be used: 215, 34.
- AUGUST 21-27:** Dwellers Together in a Restored "Land." Page 20. Songs to be used: 158, 220.

### Now published in 120 languages.

#### SEIMONTHLY LANGUAGES AVAILABLE BY MAIL:

Afrikaans, Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Bengali, Bicol, Bis-  
lama, Bulgarian, Cebuano, Chichewa, Chinese, Chinese  
(Simplified), Cibemba, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch,  
Efik, English\* (also Braille), Estonian, Ewe, Fijian, Finnish,  
French, Ga, German, Greek, Gujarati, Hiligaynon,  
Hindi, Hiri Motu, Hungarian, Igbo, Iloko, Indonesian,  
Italian, Japanese\* (also Braille), Kannada, Korean, Ling-  
gala, Macedonian, Malagasy, Malayalam, Marathi, Myan-  
mar, Nepali, New Guinea Pidgin, Norwegian, Pangasinan,  
Papiamento, Polish, Portuguese, Rarotongan, Romanian,  
Russian, Samoan, Samoan, Sepedi, Serbian, Sesotho,  
Shona, Sinhalese, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish, Swahili,  
Swedish, Tagalog, Tahitian, Tamil, Telugu, Thai, Tshilu-  
ba, Tsonga, Twana, Turkish, Twi, Ukrainian, Venda, Viet-  
namese, Wallian, Xhosa, Yoruba, Zulu

**MONTHLY LANGUAGES AVAILABLE BY MAIL:** Armenian, Cambodian, Georgian, Greenlandic, Gun, Hausa, Hebrew, Icelandic, Kinyarwanda, Kinyamama/Ndanga, Latvian, Lithuanian, Luganda, Maltese, Marshallese, Moore, Niuean, Palauan, Persian, Ponapean, Sango, Silozi, Solomon Islands Pidgin, Sranantongo, Tongan, Trukese, Tuvaluan, Urdu, Yopese

\* Study articles also available in large-print edition.  
\* Audiocassettes also available.

© 1995 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. All rights reserved. Milton G. Henschel, President

If you would like to learn about Jehovah's Witnesses or their publications, please write to Watch Tower at the appropriate address below.

**America, United States of:** Wallkill, NY 12589. **Australia:** Box 280, Ingleburn, N.S.W. 2565. **Bahamas:** Box N-1247, Nassau, N.P. **Barbados:** Fontabelle Rd., Bridgetown. **Canada:** Box 4100, Halton Hills (Georgetown), Ontario L7G 4Y4. **England:** The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RP. **Germany:** Niederselters, Am Steinfeil, D-65618 Selters. **Ghana:** Box 760, Accra. **Guyana:** 50 Brickdam, Georgetown 16. **Hawaii 96819:** 2055 Kam IV Rd., Honolulu. **Hong Kong:** 4 Kent Road, Kowloon Tong. **India:** Post Bag 10, Lonavla, Pune Dis., Mah. 410 401. **Ireland:** 29A Jamestown Road, Finglas, Dublin 11. **Jamaica:** Box 180, Kingston 10. **Japan:** 1271 Nakashinden, Ebina City, Kanagawa Pref., 243-04. **Kenya:** Box 47788, Nairobi. **Liberia:** P.O. Box 10-0380, 1000 Monrovia 10. **New Zealand:** P.O. Box 142, Manurewa. **Nigeria:** P.M.B. 1090, Benin City, Edo State. **Philippines, Republic of:** P.O. Box 2044, 1099 Manila. **South Africa:** Private Bag X2067, Krugersdorp, 1740. **Trinidad and Tobago, Republic of:** Lower Rapsey Street & Laxmi Lane, Curepe. **Zambia:** Box 33459, Lusaka 10101. **Zimbabwe:** 35 Fife Avenue, Harare.

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

Would you welcome more information or a free home Bible study? Please send your request to Watch Tower, using the appropriate address above.

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

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

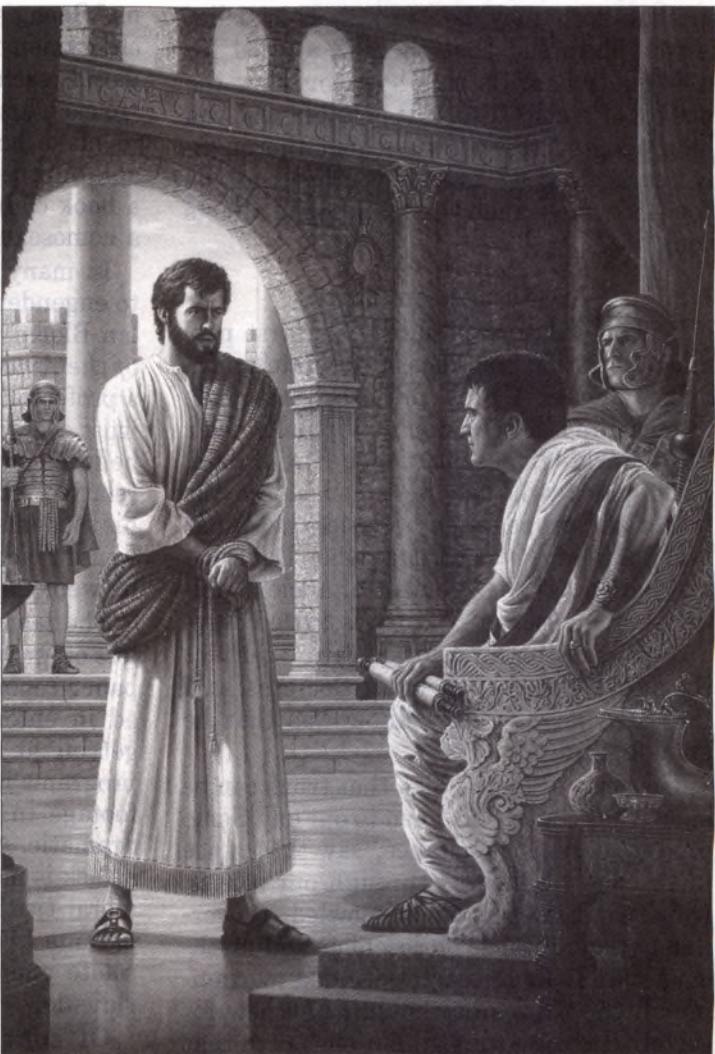
The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) is published monthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483. Second-class postage paid at Brooklyn, NY, and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to Watchtower, Wallkill, NY 12589. Printed in U.S.A.

# "What Is Truth?"

THE two men facing each other could scarcely have been more dissimilar. One was a politician who was cynical, ambitious, wealthy, ready to do anything to advance his own career. The other was a teacher who spurned wealth and prestige and was prepared to sacrifice his life to save the lives of others. Needless to say, these two men did not see eye to eye! On one matter in particular, they disagreed absolutely—the matter of truth.

The men were Pontius Pilate and Jesus Christ. Jesus was standing before Pilate as a condemned criminal. Why? Jesus explained that the reason for this—indeed, the very reason that he had come to the earth and undertaken his ministry—came down to one thing: truth. "For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world," he said, "that I should bear witness to the truth."—John 18:37.

Pilate's reply was a memorable question: "What is truth?" (John 18:38) Did he really want an answer? Probably not. Jesus was the kind of man who could answer any question asked of him in sincerity, but he did not answer Pilate. And the Bible says that after asking his question, Pilate walked straight out of the audience chamber. The Roman governor likely asked



the question in cynical disbelief, as if to say, "Truth? What is that? There is no such thing!"\*

\* According to Bible scholar R. C. H. Lenski, Pilate's "tone is that of an indifferent worldling who by his question intends to say that anything in the nature of religious truth is a useless speculation."

Pilate's skeptical view of truth is not uncommon today. Many believe that truth is relative—in other words, that what is true to one person may be untrue to another, so that both may be "right." This belief is so widespread that there is a word for it—"relativism." Is this how you view the matter of truth? If so, is it possible that you have adopted this view without thoroughly questioning it? Even if you have not, do you know how much this philosophy affects your life?

### An Assault on Truth

Pontius Pilate was hardly the first person to question the idea of absolute truth. Some ancient Greek philosophers made the teaching of such doubts virtually their life's work! Five centuries before Pilate, Parmenides (who has been considered the father of European metaphysics) held that real knowledge was unattainable. Democritus, hailed as "the greatest of ancient philosophers," asserted: "Truth is buried deep. . . . We know nothing for certain." Perhaps the most revered of them all, Socrates, said that all that he really knew was that he knew nothing.

This assault on the idea that truth can be known has continued down to our day. Some philosophers, for instance, say that since knowledge reaches us through our senses, which can be deceived, no knowledge is verifiably true. French philosopher and mathematician René Descartes decided to examine all the things he thought he knew for certain. He discarded all but one truth that he deemed incontrovertible: "*Cogito ergo sum*," or, "I think, therefore I am."

### A Culture of Relativism

Relativism is not limited to philosophers. It is taught by religious leaders, indoctrinated in schools, and spread by the media. Episcopal bishop John S. Spong said a few

years ago: "We must . . . move from thinking we have the truth and others must come to our point of view to the realization that ultimate truth is beyond the grasp of all of us." Spong's relativism, like that of so many clergymen today, is quick to drop the Bible's moral teachings in favor of a philosophy of "to each his own." For example, in an effort to make homosexuals feel more "comfortable" in the Episcopal Church, Spong wrote a book claiming that the apostle Paul was a homosexual!

In many lands the school systems seem to engender a similar type of thinking. Allan Bloom wrote in his book *The Closing of the American Mind*: "There is one thing a professor can be absolutely certain of: almost every student entering the university believes, or says he believes, that truth is relative." Bloom found that if he challenged his students' conviction on this matter, they would react with astonishment, "as though he were calling into question  $2 + 2 = 4$ ."

The same thinking is promoted in countless other ways. For instance, TV and newspaper reporters often seem more interested in entertaining their viewers than in getting at the truth of a story. Some news programs have even doctored or faked film footage in order to make it appear more dramatic. And in entertainment a stronger attack is mounted on truth. The values and moral truths that our parents and grandparents lived by are widely viewed as obsolete and are often held up to outright ridicule.

Of course, some might argue that much of this relativism represents open-mindedness and therefore has a positive impact on human society. Does it really, though? And what about its impact on you? Do you believe that truth is relative or nonexistent? If so, searching for it may strike you as a waste of time. Such an outlook will affect your future.

# Why Search for Truth?

MANY religious organizations claim to have the truth, and they offer it eagerly to others. However, between them they offer a dizzying profusion of "truths." Is this just another evidence that all truths are relative, that there are no absolute truths? No.

In his book *The Art of Thinking*, Professor V. R. Ruggiero expresses his surprise that even intelligent people sometimes say that truth is relative. He reasons: "If everyone makes his own truth, then no person's idea can be better than another's. All must be equal. And if all ideas are equal, what is the point in researching any subject? Why dig in the ground for answers to archeological questions? Why probe the causes of tension in the Middle East? Why search for a cancer cure? Why explore the galaxy? These activities make sense only if some answers are better than others, if truth is something separate from, and unaffected by, individual perspectives."

In fact, no one *really* believes that there is no truth. When it comes to physical realities, such as medicine, mathematics, or the laws of physics, even the staunchest relativist will believe that some things are true. Who of us would dare to ride in an airplane if we did not think that the laws of aerodynamics were absolute truths? Verifiable truths do exist; they surround us, and we stake our lives on them.

## The Price of Relativism

It is in the moral realm, though, where the errors of relativism are most apparent, for it is here that such thinking has done the most harm. *The Encyclopedia Americana* makes this point: "It has been seriously doubted whether knowledge, or known truth, is humanly attainable... It is certain,

however, that whenever the twin ideals of truth and knowledge are rejected as visionary or harmful, human society decays."

Perhaps you have noticed such decay. For example, the Bible's moral teachings, which say clearly that sexual immorality is wrong, are only rarely held as truths anymore. Situation ethics—"decide what is right for you"—is the order of the day. Could anyone claim that social decay has *not* resulted from this relativistic outlook? Surely the worldwide epidemics of sexually transmitted diseases, broken homes, and teenage pregnancies speak for themselves.

## What Is the Truth?

So let us leave the murky waters of relativism and examine briefly what the Bible describes as the pure waters of truth. (John 4:14; Revelation 22:17) In the Bible, "truth" is not at all like the abstract, intangible concept over which philosophers debate.

When Jesus said that his whole purpose in life was to talk about the truth, he was speaking of something that faithful Jews had valued for centuries. In their sacred writings, the Jews had long read of "truth" as something concrete, not theoretical. In the Bible, "truth" translates the Hebrew word "*'emeth'*," which signifies that which is firm, solid, and, perhaps most of all, *reliable*.

The Jews had good reason for viewing truth in that way. They called their God, Jehovah, "the God of truth." (Psalm 31:5) This was because everything Jehovah said he would do, he did. When he made promises, he kept them. When he inspired prophecies, they were fulfilled. When he uttered final judgments, they were carried out. Millions of Israelites had been eyewitnesses of

## Does the Truth Ever Change?

THAT question was raised by V. R. Ruggiero in his book *The Art of Thinking*. His answer is no. He elaborates: "It may sometimes seem to, but on closer inspection it will be found not to."

"Consider," he says, "the case of the authorship of the first book of the Bible, the book of Genesis. For centuries Christians and Jews alike believed that the book had a single author. In time this view was challenged, and eventually replaced by the belief that as many as five authors contributed to Genesis. Then, in 1981, the results of a 5-year linguistic analysis of Genesis were published, stating that there is an 82 percent probability of single authorship, as originally thought.

"Has the truth about the authorship of Genesis changed? No. Only our belief has changed. . . . The truth will not be changed by our knowledge or by our ignorance."

these realities. The inspired penmen of the Bible recorded them as indisputable facts of history. Unlike other books viewed as sacred, the Bible is not set against a backdrop of myth or legend. It is firmly grounded in verifiable facts—historical, archaeological, scientific, and sociological realities. No wonder the psalmist says of Jehovah: "Your law is truth. . . . All your commandments are truth. . . . The substance of your word is truth!"—Psalm 119:142, 151, 160.

Jesus Christ echoed the words of that psalm when he said in prayer to Jehovah: "Your word is truth." (John 17:17) Jesus knew that everything his Father spoke was absolutely firm and reliable. Likewise, Jesus was "full of . . . truth." (John 1:14) His followers learned as eyewitnesses, and recorded for all posterity, that everything he said was rock solid, the truth.\*

However, when Jesus told Pilate that he

\* There are over 70 places in the Gospel accounts where Jesus is recorded as using a unique expression to emphasize the truthfulness of his words. He would often say "Amen" ("Truly," NW) to introduce a sentence. The corresponding Hebrew word meant "certain, true." Notes *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*: "By introducing his words with amen Jesus labelled them as certain and reliable. He stood by them and made them binding on himself and his hearers. They are an expression of his majesty and authority."

had come to earth to speak the truth, he had a specific truth in mind. Jesus made that statement in response to Pilate's question: "Are you a king?" (John 18:37) God's Kingdom, and Jesus' own role as its King, were the very theme, the core, of Jesus' teaching while he was on earth. (Luke 4:43) That this Kingdom will sanctify Jehovah's name, vindicate his sovereignty, and restore faithful mankind to eternal and happy life is the "truth" in which all genuine Christians hope. Since Jesus' role in the fulfillment of all of God's promises is so pivotal, and since all of God's prophecies become "Amen," or true, because of him, Jesus could well say: "I am the way and the truth and the life."—John 14:6; 2 Corinthians 1:20; Revelation 3:14.

Recognizing this truth as completely reliable means a great deal to Christians today. It means that their faith in God and their hope in his promises are based on facts, on realities.

### Truth in Action

Not surprisingly, the Bible links truth with action. (1 Samuel 12:24; 1 John 3:18) To God-fearing Jews, truth was not a subject for philosophizing; it was a way of life. The Hebrew word for "truth" could also mean

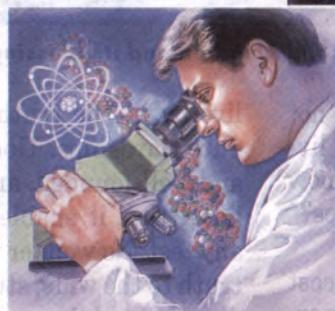
"faithfulness" and was used to describe one who could be trusted to act on his word. Jesus taught his followers to view truth in the same light. He passionately decried the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, the wide gulf between their self-righteous words and their unrighteous deeds. And he set the example in living by the truths he taught.

So it should be for all of Christ's followers. To them, the truth of God's Word, the exhilarating good news of God's Kingdom under the rulership of Jesus Christ, is more, far more, than mere information. That truth moves them to action, compels them to live by it and share it with others. (Compare Jeremiah 20:9.) To the first-century Christian congregation, the way of life they adopted as followers of Christ was sometimes known simply as "the truth" or "the way of the truth."—2 John 4; 3 John 4, 8; 2 Peter 2:2.

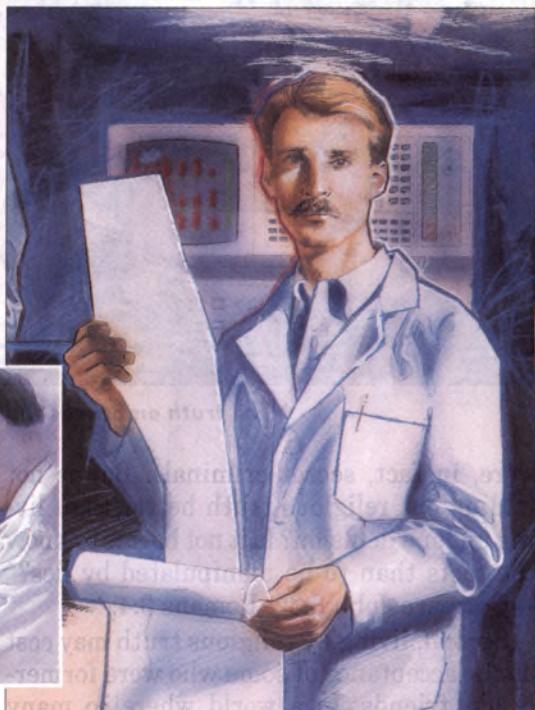
### A Treasure Worth Any Price

Granted, accepting the truths of God's

**Scientific progress is based on the uncovering of scientific truths**



Word exacts a price. First, just learning the truth can be a shattering experience. *The Encyclopedia Americana* observes: "The truth is often disagreeable, because it fails to support prejudice or myth." Seeing our beliefs exposed as untrue can be disillusioning, especially if we were taught by trusted religious leaders. Some might liken the experience to finding out that trusted parents



### Reverence for Truth

"REVERENCE for truth is not simply the pseudo-cynicism of our own age which tries to 'unmask' everything, in the belief that no one and nothing can genuinely lay claim to truth. It is the attitude which combines joyful confidence that truth can indeed be found, with a humble submission to truth whenever and wherever it emerges. Such openness to truth is required of those who worship the God of truth; whilst a due reverence for truth ensures honesty in a man's dealings with his neighbour, both in word and deed. This is the attitude, we have seen, to which both the O[ld] T[estament] and the N[new] T[estament] bear witness."—*The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Volume 3, page 901.



***The truth embraces the Kingdom and its blessings***

were, in fact, secret criminals. But is not finding out religious truth better than living under a delusion? Is it not better to know the facts than to be manipulated by lies?\*—Compare John 8:32; Romans 3:4.

Second, living by religious truth may cost us the acceptance of some who were formerly our friends. In a world where so many have “exchanged the truth of God for the lie,” those who hold firm to the truth of God’s Word seem peculiar and are sometimes shunned and misunderstood.—Romans 1:25; 1 Peter 4:4.

But the truth is worth this twofold price. Knowing the truth sets us free from lies, delusions, and superstitions. And when we

live by it, the truth strengthens us to endure hardships. God’s truth is so reliable and well-founded, and it so inspires us with hope, that it enables us to stand up under any test. No wonder the apostle Paul likened truth to the wide, sturdy leather belt, or girdle, that soldiers wore into battle!—Ephesians 6:13, 14.

The Bible proverb says: “Buy truth itself and do not sell it—wisdom and discipline and understanding.” (Proverbs 23:23) To dismiss truth as relative or nonexistent is to miss out on the most thrilling and fulfilling quest that life offers. To find it is to find hope; to know and love it is to know and love the Creator of the universe and his only-begotten Son; to live by it is to live with purpose and peace of mind, now and forever.—Proverbs 2:1-5; Zechariah 8:19; John 17:3.

\* The Greek word for “truth,” *aletheia*, derives from a word meaning “not concealed,” so the truth often involves the revealing of that which was formerly hidden.—Compare Luke 12:2.

# CHRISTIAN WITNESSES WITH HEAVENLY CITIZENSHIP

*"As for us, our citizenship exists in the heavens."*—PHILIPPIANS 3:20.

INDIVIDUALS born as humans will reign as kings and priests in heaven, even over angels. (1 Corinthians 6:2, 3; Revelation 20:6) What an amazing truth that is! Yet, Jehovah purposed it, and he brings it about through his only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Why does our Creator do such a thing? And how should knowledge of it affect a Christian today? Let us see how the Bible answers these questions.

<sup>2</sup> When John the Baptizer was preparing the way for Jesus, he announced that Jesus would do something new. The record says: “[John] would preach, saying: ‘After me someone stronger than I am is coming; I am not fit to stoop and untie the laces of his sandals. I baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with holy spirit.’” (Mark 1:7, 8) Before that time, no one had been baptized with holy spirit. This was a new arrangement involving holy spirit, and it had to do with Jehovah’s about-to-be-revealed purpose to prepare humans for heavenly rulership.

## Born Again

<sup>3</sup> In a secret meeting with a prominent Pharisee, Jesus revealed more about this

1. What wonderful purpose does Jehovah have regarding some humans?
2. What new thing did John the Baptizer announce that Jesus would do, and what was this new thing related to?
3. What new things about the Kingdom of heaven did Jesus explain to Nicodemus?

divine purpose. The Pharisee, Nicodemus, came to Jesus at night, and Jesus said to him: “Unless anyone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (John 3:3) Nicodemus, who as a Pharisee must have studied the Hebrew Scriptures, knew something about the grand truth of the Kingdom of God. The book of Daniel prophesied that the Kingdom would be given to “someone like a son of man” and to “the people who are the holy ones of the Supreme One.” (Daniel 7:13, 14, 27) The Kingdom was to “crush and put an end” to all other kingdoms and to stand forever. (Daniel 2:44) Likely, Nicodemus thought that these prophecies would be fulfilled with regard to the Jewish nation; but Jesus said that to see the Kingdom, one had to be born again. Nicodemus did not understand, so Jesus went on to say: “Unless anyone is born from water and spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”—John 3:5.

<sup>4</sup> John the Baptizer had spoken of baptism with holy spirit. Now, Jesus adds that an individual must be *born* from holy spirit if he is to enter into the Kingdom of God. By this unique birth, imperfect men and women enter into a very special relationship with Jehovah God. They become his adopted children. We read: “As many as did receive [Jesus], to them he gave authority to become God’s children, because

4. For those born from holy spirit, how would their relationship with Jehovah change?

they were exercising faith in his name; and they were born, not from blood or from a fleshly will or from man's will, but from God."—John 1:12, 13; Romans 8:15.

### Children of God

<sup>5</sup> When Jesus spoke to Nicodemus, holy spirit had already come upon Jesus, anointing him for his future kingship in God's Kingdom, and God had publicly acknowledged Jesus as His Son. (Matthew 3:16, 17) Jehovah begot more spiritual children at Pentecost 33 C.E. Faithful disciples gathered in the upper room in Jerusalem were baptized with holy spirit. At the same time, they were born again from holy spirit to be God's spiritual sons. (Acts 2:2-4, 38; Romans 8:15) Further, they were anointed with holy spirit with a view to a future heavenly inheritance, and they were sealed in an initial way with holy spirit as a token of the certainty of that heavenly hope. —2 Corinthians 1:21, 22.

<sup>6</sup> These were the first imperfect humans chosen by God to enter into the Kingdom. That is, after their death and resurrection, they were to become part of the heavenly Kingdom organization that would rule over humans and angels. Jehovah purposes that by means of this Kingdom, his great name will be sanctified and his sovereignty vindicated before all creation. (Matthew 6:9, 10; John 12:28) How fitting that humans have a part in that Kingdom! Satan used humans when raising his first challenge against Jehovah's sovereignty back in the garden of Eden, and now Jehovah purposes that humans will be involved in answering that challenge. (Genesis 3:1-6; John 8:44) The

5. When were the faithful disciples baptized with holy spirit, and what related operations of holy spirit occurred at the same time?
6. What is Jehovah's purpose regarding the heavenly Kingdom, and why is it fitting that humans should have a part in this?

*Over a period of almost two thousand years, Jehovah chose those who would rule in the heavenly Kingdom*



apostle Peter wrote to individuals chosen to rule in that Kingdom: “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.

<sup>7</sup> As adopted sons of God, these chosen Christians became brothers of Jesus Christ. (Romans 8:16, 17; 9:4, 26; Hebrews 2:11) Since Jesus proved to be the Seed promised to Abraham, these spirit-anointed Christians are an associate, or subsidiary, part of that Seed, which would confer a blessing upon believing mankind. (Genesis 22:17, 18; Galatians 3:16, 26, 29) What blessing? The opportunity of being redeemed from sin and reconciled to God and of serving him now and for eternity. (Matthew 4:23; 20:28; John 3:16, 36; 1 John 2:1, 2) Anointed Christians on earth point righthearted ones to this blessing by bearing witness to their spiritual brother Jesus Christ and to their adoptive Father, Jehovah God.—Acts 1:8; Hebrews 13:15.

<sup>8</sup> The Bible speaks of a “revealing” of these spirit-begotten sons of God. (Romans 8:19) Entering into the Kingdom as associate kings with Jesus, they share in destroying Satan’s world system of things. Afterward, for a thousand years, they help to channel the benefits of the ransom sacrifice to mankind and thus raise the human race to the perfection that Adam lost. (2 Thessalonians 1:8-10; Revelation 2:26, 27; 20:6; 22:1, 2) Their revealing includes all of this. It is something that the believing human creation eagerly awaits.

7. What unique relationship with Jesus is enjoyed by those baptized with holy spirit?
8. What is the “revealing” of the spirit-begotten sons of God?

<sup>9</sup> The worldwide body of anointed Christians is “the congregation of the firstborn who have been enrolled in the heavens.” (Hebrews 12:23) They are the first to benefit from Jesus’ ransom sacrifice. They are also “Christ’s body,” which shows their intimate relationship with one another and with Jesus. (1 Corinthians 12:27) Paul wrote: “Just as the body is one but has many members, and all the members of that body, although being many, are one body, so also is the Christ. For truly by one spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink one spirit.”—1 Corinthians 12:12, 13; Romans 12:5; Ephesians 1:22, 23; 3:6.

### **“The Israel of God”**

<sup>10</sup> For more than 1,500 years prior to Jesus’ coming as the promised Messiah, the fleshly nation of Israel was Jehovah’s special people. Despite constant reminders, the nation as a whole proved unfaithful. When Jesus appeared, the nation rejected him. (John 1:11) Thus, 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) Recognizing that “nation producing [the] fruits [of the Kingdom]” is vital for salvation.

<sup>11</sup> The new nation is the anointed Christian congregation, born at Pentecost 33 C.E. Its first members were Jewish disciples of Jesus who accepted him as their heavenly King. (Acts 2:5, 32-36) However, they were members of God’s new nation, not on the basis of their Jewish descent, but on the basis of faith in Jesus. Thus, this new Israel of God was something unique—a spiritual

9. How does the Bible refer to the worldwide body of anointed Christians?

- 10, 11. In the first century, why was a new Israel needed, and who made up this new nation?

nation. When the majority of the Jews refused to accept Jesus, the invitation to be part of the new nation was extended to the Samaritans and then to the Gentiles. The new nation was called "the Israel of God."—Galatians 6:16.

<sup>12</sup> In ancient Israel, when non-Jews became proselytes, they had to submit to the Mosaic Law, and males had to symbolize this by getting circumcised. (Exodus 12:48, 49) Some Jewish Christians felt that the same should apply to non-Jews in the Israel of God. However, Jehovah had something different in mind. Holy spirit directed the apostle Peter to the home of the Gentile Cornelius. When Cornelius and his family responded to Peter's preaching, they received holy spirit—even before they were baptized in water. This showed clearly that Jehovah had accepted these Gentiles as members of the Israel of God without demanding that they submit to the Mosaic Law.—Acts 10:21-48.

<sup>13</sup> A number of believers found this hard to accept, and soon the whole matter had to be discussed by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. That authoritative body listened to testimony detailing how holy spirit had been active upon non-Jewish believers. Bible research showed that this was in fulfillment of inspired prophecy. (Isaiah 55:5; Amos 9:11, 12) A correct decision was arrived at: Non-Jewish Christians did not have to submit to the Mosaic Law. (Acts 15:1, 6-29) Thus, spiritual Israel was truly a new nation and not just a sect of Judaism.

<sup>14</sup> In harmony with this, when writing to anointed Christians of the first century, the disciple James addressed his letter to "the

12, 13. How did it become clear that the new Israel was not just a sect of Judaism?

14. What is implied by James' calling the Christian congregation "the twelve tribes that are scattered about"?

twelve tribes that are scattered about." (James 1:1; Revelation 7:3-8) Of course, citizens of the new Israel were not assigned to specific tribes. There was no division into 12 distinct tribes in spiritual Israel as there had been in fleshly Israel. Nevertheless, James' inspired expression indicates that in Jehovah's sight the Israel of God had completely replaced the 12 tribes of natural Israel. If a natural-born Israelite became part of the new nation, his fleshly descent—even if he was of the tribe of Judah or Levi—had no significance.—Galatians 3:28; Philippians 3:5, 6.

### A New Covenant

<sup>15</sup> In Jehovah's eyes, non-Israelite members of this new nation are full-fledged spiritual Jews! The apostle Paul explained: "He is not a Jew who is one on the outside, nor is circumcision that which is on the outside upon the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one on the inside, and his circumcision is that of the heart by spirit, and not by a written code. The praise of that one comes, not from men, but from God." (Romans 2:28, 29) Many Gentiles responded to the invitation to be part of the Israel of God, and this development fulfilled Bible prophecy. For example, the prophet Hosea wrote: "I will show mercy to her who was not shown mercy, and I will say to those not my people: 'You are my people'; and they, for their part, will say: 'You are my God.'"—Hosea 2:23; Romans 11:25, 26.

<sup>16</sup> If the spiritual Israelites were not under the Mosaic Law covenant, on what basis were they part of the new nation? Jehovah made a new covenant through Jesus with this spiritual nation. (Hebrews 9:15) When Jesus initiated the Memorial of his

15, 16. (a) How does Jehovah view non-Jewish members of the Israel of God? (b) On what legal basis was the new Israel established?

death, on Nisan 14, 33 C.E., he passed bread and wine to the 11 faithful apostles and said that the wine symbolized the "blood of the covenant." (Matthew 26:28; Jeremiah 31:31-34) As related in Luke's account, Jesus said that the cup of wine symbolized "the new covenant." (Luke 22:20) In fulfillment of Jesus' words, when the holy spirit was poured out at Pentecost and the Israel of God was born, the Kingdom was taken away from fleshly Israel and given to the new, spiritual nation. In place of fleshly Israel, this new nation was now Jehovah's servant, composed of his witnesses.—Isaiah 43:10, 11.

### "New Jerusalem"

<sup>17</sup> What glory awaits those privileged to share in the heavenly calling! And what a delight it is to learn of the wonders that await them! The book of Revelation gives us thrilling glimpses of their heavenly inheritance. For example, at Revelation 4:4, we read: "Round about the throne [of Jehovah] there are twenty-four thrones, and upon these thrones I saw seated twenty-four elders dressed in white outer garments, and upon their heads golden crowns." These 24 elders are anointed Christians, resurrected and now occupying the heavenly position Jehovah promised them. Their crowns and thrones remind us of their royalty. Think, too, of their wondrously high privilege of serving around Jehovah's throne!

<sup>18</sup> At Revelation 14:1, we catch another glimpse of them: "I saw, and, look! the Lamb standing upon the Mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand having his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads." Here we see the limited number of these anoint-

17, 18. What descriptions are given in the book of Revelation of the glory that awaits anointed Christians?

ed ones—144,000. Their royal status is discerned in that they stand with Jehovah's enthroned King, "the Lamb," Jesus. And they are on heavenly Mount Zion. Earthly Mount Zion was the location of Jerusalem, Israel's royal city. Heavenly Mount Zion represents the exalted position of Jesus and his joint heirs, who make up heavenly Jerusalem.—2 Chronicles 5:2; Psalm 2:6.

<sup>19</sup> In harmony with this, the anointed in their heavenly glory are also spoken of as "New Jerusalem." (Revelation 21:2) Earthly Jerusalem was "the city of the great King" and also the location of the temple. (Matthew 5:35) The heavenly New Jerusalem is the royal Kingdom organization through which the great Sovereign, Jehovah, and his appointed King, Jesus, now rule and in which priestly service is performed as rich blessings flow from Jehovah's throne for the healing of mankind. (Revelation 21:10, 11; 22:1-5) In another vision John

19, 20. (a) Of what heavenly organization will anointed Christians be a part? (b) Over what period of time did Jehovah select those whose citizenship would be in the heavens?

### Do You Remember?

- What are the different operations of the spirit upon those with a heavenly inheritance?
- What intimate relationship do the anointed enjoy with Jehovah? with Jesus?
- How is the congregation of anointed Christians described in the Bible?
- On what legal basis was the Israel of God established?
- What heavenly privileges await anointed Christians?

hears faithful, resurrected, anointed Christians referred to as ‘the Lamb’s wife.’ What a warm picture this paints of the intimacy they will enjoy with Jesus and of their willing subjection to him! Picture the joy in heaven when the last of them finally receives his heavenly reward. Now, at last, “the marriage of the Lamb” can take place! That royal heavenly organization will then be complete.—Revelation 19:6-8.

<sup>20</sup> Yes, wonderful blessings are in store for those of whom the apostle Paul said:

“As for us, our citizenship exists in the heavens.” (Philippians 3:20) For almost two thousand years, Jehovah has been selecting his spiritual children and preparing them for a heavenly inheritance. According to all the evidence, this work of selection and preparation is about complete. But there was more to follow, as revealed to John in his vision recorded in Revelation chapter 7. So now, another group of Christians demands our attention, and we will consider this group in the next article.

---

## “THE ISRAEL OF GOD” AND THE “GREAT CROWD”

---

*“I saw, and, look! a great crowd, which no man was able to number.”*

—REVELATION 7:9.

THE founding of “the Israel of God” in 33 C.E. was a major step in the outworking of Jehovah’s purposes. (Galatians 6:16) Its anointed members have the hope of being immortal spirit creatures and ruling with Christ in God’s heavenly Kingdom. (1 Corinthians 15:50, 53, 54) In that position they have a leading part in sanctifying Jehovah’s name and crushing the head of the great Adversary, Satan the Devil. (Genesis 3:15; Romans 16:20) No wonder that Satan did all in his power to destroy this new congregation, both by persecuting

1-3. (a) What glorious heavenly prospects do anointed Christians have? (b) How did Satan try to destroy the first-century congregation? (c) What happened in 1919 that showed that Satan’s efforts to corrupt the anointed Christian congregation had failed?

it and by trying to corrupt it!—2 Timothy 2:18; Jude 4; Revelation 2:10.

<sup>2</sup> While the apostles were alive, Satan could not succeed. After their death, however, apostasy spread unchecked. Eventually, to human eyes, the pure Christian congregation founded by Jesus seemed to have been corrupted when Satan brought forth the apostate religious travesty today known as Christendom. (2 Thessalonians 2:3-8) Nevertheless, true Christianity persisted.—Matthew 28:20.

<sup>3</sup> Jesus, in his illustration of the wheat and the weeds, foretold that true Christians would grow for a time along with “weeds,” or false Christians; and this happened. But he also said that during the last days, “the sons of the kingdom” would again

be visibly separate from "the weeds." (Matthew 13:36-43) This also proved true. In 1919 genuine anointed Christians came out of Babylonish captivity. They were divinely recognized as "the faithful and discreet slave," and they boldly set about preaching the good news of the Kingdom. (Matthew 24:14, 45-47; Revelation 18:4) Nearly all of them were Gentiles; but because they had the faith of Abraham, they were in reality 'Abraham's offspring.' They were members of "the Israel of God."—Galatians 3:7, 26-29.

### The "Great Crowd"

<sup>4</sup> To start with, those who responded to the preaching of these anointed Christians also became spiritual Israelites, the remaining ones of the 144,000, with a heavenly hope. (Revelation 12:17) However, particularly in the 1930's, another group became noticeable. These were identified with the "other sheep" of the illustration of the sheepfolds. (John 10:16) They were disciples of Christ with the hope of everlasting life on a paradise earth. They were the spiritual offspring, as it were, of anointed Christians. (Isaiah 59:21; 66:22; compare 1 Corinthians 4:15, 16.) They recognized the anointed Christian congregation as the faithful and discreet slave, and like their anointed brothers, they had deep love for Jehovah, faith in Jesus' sacrifice, zeal for praising God, and willingness to suffer for righteousness' sake.

<sup>5</sup> At first the position of these other sheep was not well understood, but with the passing of time, things became clearer. In 1932 anointed Christians were encouraged to urge other sheep to share in the preaching work—something many other sheep were already doing. In 1934 other sheep were en-

4. What group of Christians became noticeable, particularly in the 1930's?
5. How has the position of the other sheep become progressively better understood?

couraged to submit to water baptism. In 1935 they were identified with the "great crowd" of Revelation chapter 7. In 1938 they were invited to attend the Memorial of the death of Jesus Christ as observers. In 1950 mature men among them were discerned to be among the "princes" who serve as "a hiding place from the wind and a place of concealment from the rainstorm." (Psalm 45:16; Isaiah 32:1, 2) In 1953, God's earthly organization—the greater part of which by then was made up of other sheep—was seen as the nucleus of the earthly society that would exist in the new world. In 1985 it was understood that on the basis of Jesus' ransom sacrifice, other sheep are declared righteous as friends of God and with a view to surviving Armageddon.

<sup>6</sup> By now, in this latter part of "the last days," the great majority of the 144,000 have died and received their heavenly reward. (2 Timothy 3:1; Revelation 6:9-11; 14:13) Christians with an earthly hope now do most of the preaching of the good news, and they count it a privilege to support Jesus' anointed brothers in this. (Matthew 25:40) However, these anointed ones are the faithful and discreet slave by means of whom spiritual food has been supplied all through these last days. What will be the situation of the other sheep when all the anointed ones have received their heavenly reward? What provisions will then be made for the other sheep? A brief look at ancient Israel will help us answer those questions.

### A Typical "Kingdom of Priests"

<sup>7</sup> When Jehovah chose Israel as his special nation, he made a covenant with them,

6. What are the relative positions of the anointed and the other sheep today, leading to what questions?
7. 8. To what extent was ancient Israel a kingdom of priests and a holy nation under the Law covenant?

saying: "If you will strictly obey my voice and will indeed keep my covenant, then you will certainly become my special property out of all other peoples, because the whole earth belongs to me. And you yourselves will become to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." (Exodus 19:5, 6)

Israel was Jehovah's special people on the basis of the Law covenant. How, though, would the promise involving a kingdom of priests and a holy nation be fulfilled?

<sup>8</sup> Israel, when faithful, acknowledged Jehovah's sovereignty and accepted him as their King. (Isaiah 33:22) Thus, they were a kingdom. But, as was later revealed, the promise about "a kingdom" would mean even more than that. Further, when they obeyed Jehovah's Law, they were clean, separated from the nations around them. They were a holy nation. (Deuteronomy 7:5, 6) Were they a kingdom of *priests*? Well, in Israel the tribe of Levi was set aside for temple service, and within that tribe there was the Levitical priesthood. When the Mosaic Law was inaugurated, Levite males were taken in exchange for the firstborn of every non-Levite family.\* (Exodus 22:29; Numbers 3:11-16, 40-51)

\* When Israel's priesthood was inaugurated, the firstborn sons of the non-Levite tribes of Israel and the males of the tribe of Levi were counted. There were 273 more firstborn than Levite males. Hence, Jehovah ordered that five shekels for each of the 273 should be paid as a ransom for the excess.

Thus, every family in Israel was, as it were, represented in temple service. This was the closest the nation got to being a priesthood. Nevertheless, they represented Jehovah before the nations. Any foreigner who wished to worship the true God had to do so in association with Israel.—2 Chronicles 6:32, 33; Isaiah 60:10.

<sup>9</sup> After the death of Solomon, God's people split into the northern nation of Israel under King Jeroboam and the southern nation of Judah under King Rehoboam. Since the temple, the center of pure worship, was in the territory of Judah, Jeroboam instituted an illegal form of worship by setting up images of calves in his own national territory. Further, "he began to make a house of high places and to make priests from the people in general, who did not happen to be of the sons of Levi." (1 Kings 12:31) The northern nation sank deeper into false worship when King Ahab allowed

his foreign wife, Jezebel, to establish Baal worship in the land. Finally, Jehovah pronounced judgment on the rebellious kingdom. Through Hosea, he said: "My people will certainly be silenced, because there is no knowledge. Because the knowledge is what you yourself have rejected, I shall also reject you from serving as a priest to me."

9. What caused Jehovah to reject the northern kingdom of Israel 'from serving as a priest to him'?



*As a royal priesthood,  
anointed Christians declare  
Jehovah's glory on earth*

(Hosea 4:6) Soon after, the Assyrians wiped out the northern kingdom of Israel.

<sup>10</sup> What of the southern nation, Judah? In the days of Hezekiah, Jehovah said to them through Isaiah: "You are my witnesses, . . . even my servant whom I have chosen, . . . the people whom I have formed for myself, that they should recount the praise of me." (Isaiah 43:10, 21; 44:21) When faithful, the southern kingdom served to proclaim to the nations Jehovah's glory and to attract righthearted ones to worship him at his temple and be ministered to by the legitimate Levite priesthood.

### Foreigners in Israel

<sup>11</sup> As for the foreigners who responded to this national witness, provision was made for them in the Law given through Moses—whose wife, Zipporah, was a Midianite. "A vast mixed company" of non-Israelites left Egypt with Israel and were present when the Law was given. (Exodus 2:16-22; 12:38; Numbers 11:4) Rahab and her family were saved out of Jericho and later accepted into the Jewish congregation. (Joshua 6:23-25) Soon after, the Gibeonites made peace with Israel and were assigned tasks in connection with the tabernacle.—Joshua 9:3-27; see also 1 Kings 8:41-43; Esther 8:17.

<sup>12</sup> Eventually, foreigners served in high positions. Uriah the Hittite, Bath-sheba's husband, was counted among "the mighty men" of David, as was Zelek the Ammonite. (1 Chronicles 11:26, 39, 41; 2 Samuel 11:3, 4) Ebed-melech, an Ethiopian, served in the palace and had access to the king. (Jeremiah 38:7-9) After Israel returned from

10. How did the southern kingdom of Judah, when faithful, represent Jehovah before the nations?

11, 12. Name some foreigners who came to serve Jehovah in association with Israel.

exile in Babylon, non-Israelite Nethinim were given increased responsibility in assisting the priests. (Ezra 7:24) Since a number of these faithful foreigners, or alien residents, are viewed as foreshadowing the great crowd today, their situation is of interest to us.

<sup>13</sup> Such ones were proselytes, dedicated worshipers of Jehovah under the Mosaic Law who were separated from the nations along with the Israelites. (Leviticus 24:22) They offered sacrifices, kept clear of false worship, and abstained from blood, just as the Israelites did. (Leviticus 17:10-14; 20:2) They helped in the construction of Solomon's temple and joined in the restoration of true worship under King Asa and King Hezekiah. (1 Chronicles 22:2; 2 Chronicles 15:8-14; 30:25) When Peter used the first key of the Kingdom at Pentecost 33 C.E., his words were heard by "Jews and [non-Jewish] proselytes." Possibly, some of the three thousand baptized that day were proselytes. (Acts 2:10, 41) Shortly after, an Ethiopian proselyte was baptized by Philip—before Peter used the final key of the Kingdom with Cornelius and his family. (Matthew 16:19; Acts 8:26-40; 10:30-48) Clearly, proselytes were not viewed as Gentiles.

<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, the position of proselytes in the land was not like that of native-born Israelites. Proselytes did not serve as priests, and their firstborn were not represented in the Levitical priesthood.\* And

\* The vast mixed multitude of non-Israelites were present when the Law was inaugurated in 1513 B.C.E., but their firstborn were not taken into account when the Levites were taken as an exchange for the firstborn of Israel. (See paragraph 8.) Hence, the Levites were not taken in exchange for the firstborn of these non-Israelites.

13, 14. (a) What were the privileges and responsibilities of proselytes in Israel? (b) How were Israelites to view faithful proselytes?



**The final fulfillment  
of Exodus 19:6 is  
the Kingdom**

our tutor leading to Christ, that we might be declared righteous due to faith." (Galatians 3:24) Unhappily, most Israelites failed to be led to Christ by the Law. (Matthew 23:15; John 1:11) So Jehovah God rejected that nation and caused "the Israel of God" to be born. Moreover, he extended to non-Jews the invitation to become full-fledged citizens in this new Israel. (Galatians 3:28; 6:16) It is on this new nation that Jehovah's promise at Exodus 19:5, 6 about a royal priesthood has its wonderful, final fulfillment. How?

<sup>16</sup> Peter quoted Exodus 19:6 when he wrote to anointed Christians of his day: "You are 'a cho-

sen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for special possession.'" (1 Peter 2:9) What does this mean? Are anointed Christians on earth kings? No, their kingship is still future. (1 Corinthians 4:8) Nevertheless, they are "royal" in the sense that they are marked for future royal privileges. Even now they are a nation under a king, Jesus, appointed by the Great Sovereign, Jehovah God. Paul wrote: "[Jehovah] deliv-

proselytes had no land inheritance in Israel. Still, Israelites were commanded to be considerate of faithful proselytes and to view them as brothers.—Leviticus 19:33, 34.

### The Spiritual Nation

<sup>15</sup> The Law was designed to keep Israel clean, separate from the nations around them. But it served another purpose. The apostle Paul wrote: "The Law has become

15. What resulted when natural Israel refused to accept the Messiah?

16, 17. In what sense are anointed Christians on earth "royal"? a "priesthood"?

ered us from the authority of the darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of his love.”—Colossians 1:13.

<sup>17</sup> Are anointed Christians on earth a priesthood? In a sense, yes. As a congregation, they serve an undisputable priestly function. Peter explained this when he said: “You yourselves . . . are being built up a spiritual house for the purpose of a holy priesthood.” (1 Peter 2:5; 1 Corinthians 3:16) Today, the remnant of anointed Christians as a body are “the faithful and discreet slave,” the channel for the distribution of spiritual food. (Matthew 24:45-47) As was the case in ancient Israel, any who wish to worship Jehovah have to do so in association with these anointed Christians.

<sup>18</sup> Moreover, anointed Christians took over from Israel the privilege of witnessing to Jehovah’s greatness among the nations. The context shows that when Peter called anointed Christians a royal priesthood, he had the preaching work in mind. Indeed, he

18. As a priesthood, the anointed Christian congregation on earth has what primary responsibility?

### Can You Explain?

- How has the position of the other sheep become progressively better understood?
- Why did Jehovah reject the northern kingdom of Israel from serving as a priest to him?
- When faithful, what was the position of Judah before the nations?
- What was the position of faithful proselytes in Israel?
- How does the anointed congregation serve as a kingdom of priests?

combined in one quotation Jehovah’s promise at Exodus 19:6 with His words to Israel at Isaiah 43:21 when he said: “You are . . . ‘a royal priesthood, . . . [so] that you should declare abroad the excellencies’ of the one that called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” (1 Peter 2:9) In harmony with this, Paul spoke of the declaration of Jehovah’s excellencies as a temple sacrifice. He wrote: “Through [Jesus] let us always offer to God a sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of lips which make public declaration to his name.”—Hebrews 13:15.

### A Heavenly Fulfillment

<sup>19</sup> However, Exodus 19:5, 6 ultimately has a far more glorious fulfillment. In the book of Revelation, the apostle John hears heavenly creatures applying this scripture as they praise the resurrected Jesus: “You were slaughtered and with your blood you bought persons for God out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and you 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) In its final sense, then, the royal priesthood is God’s heavenly Kingdom, the ruling authority for which Jesus taught us to pray. (Luke 11:2) All 144,000 anointed Christians who endure faithful to the end will have a part in that Kingdom arrangement. (Revelation 20:4, 6) What a wonderful fulfillment of the promise made so long ago through Moses!

<sup>20</sup> What does all of this have to do with the situation of the great crowd and their future when all the anointed have received their wonderful inheritance? This will become clear in the final article of this series.

19. What is the final, grand fulfillment of the promise that Israel would be a kingdom of priests?

20. What question still has to be answered?

# DWELLERS TOGETHER IN A RESTORED “LAND”

*“As for you, the priests of Jehovah you will be called; the ministers of our God you will be said to be.”—ISAIAH 61:6.*

**I**N ANCIENT times, Israel when faithful served on the world scene as a witness to Jehovah's glory. (Isaiah 41:8, 9; 43:10) Many foreigners responded and came to worship Jehovah in association with His chosen people. In effect, they said to Israel what Ruth said to Naomi: “Your people will be my people, and your God my God.” (Ruth 1:16) They submitted to the terms of the Law covenant, the men getting circumcised. (Exodus 12:43-48) Some of the women married Israelites. Rahab of Jericho and Ruth the Moabitess became ancestresses of Jesus Christ. (Matthew 1:5) Such proselytes were part of the congregation of Israel.—Deuteronomy 23:7, 8.

<sup>2</sup> Similar to proselytes in Israel, the “great crowd” today have said to the anointed remnant: “We will go with you people, for we have heard that God is with you people.” (Revelation 7:9; Zechariah 8:23) They recognize that these anointed Christians are Jehovah's “faithful and discreet slave,” and they work so closely with them that the anointed and the “other sheep” are “one flock, one shepherd.” (Matthew 24:45-47; John 10:16) What will happen to the great crowd when all their anointed brothers receive their heavenly reward? They need have no fear. Throughout these “last days,” Jehovah has made preparation for that time.—2 Timothy 3:1.

1, 2. (a) What was the situation of proselytes in Israel? (b) What spirit have members of the “great crowd” shown in modern times?

## A Spiritual “Land”

<sup>3</sup> The heavenly governing arrangement of which the 144,000 anointed Christians will be a part was prophesied by the apostle Peter. He said: “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) These “new heavens” were established in 1914, when Christ was enthroned as King in the heavenly Kingdom. But what of the “new earth”?

<sup>4</sup> In 1919, Jehovah brought the anointed remnant out of captivity to Babylon the Great. (Revelation 18:4) For the leaders of Christendom, this dramatic event was totally unexpected. Regarding it, the Bible says: “Who has heard of a thing like this? Who has seen things like these? Will a land be brought forth with labor pains in one day? Or will a nation be born at one time?” (Isaiah 66:8) When the anointed congregation suddenly appeared before the nations as a liberated people, it was indeed a nation “born at one time.” What, though, was the “land”? In a sense, it was a spiritual equivalent of the land of ancient Israel. It was the realm of activity granted to the

3. What are the “new heavens” prophesied by Peter, and when were they established?
4. (a) What unexpected event occurred in 1919? (b) What was the ‘nation born at one time,’ and what was the ‘land brought forth with labor pains’?

newborn "nation," a place where the Paradise prophecies of the book of Isaiah have a modern, spiritual fulfillment. (Isaiah 32: 16-20; 35:1-7; compare Hebrews 12:12-14.) Wherever a Christian may be physically, he is in that "land."

<sup>5</sup> What had this to do with the "new earth" prophesied by Peter? Well, that new "nation," born in 1919 in a restored "land," was to develop into a worldwide organization made up of anointed and nonanointed praisers of Jehovah. This organization will survive Armageddon into God's new world. In this way that nation could be viewed as the nucleus of the righteous human society, the new earth, that will exist after the destruction of Satan's world.\* By the mid-1930's, the anointed, as a group, had been gathered into the restored land. Since then, the emphasis has been on gathering the great crowd of other sheep, which today numbers almost five million. (Revelation 14:15, 16) Is the "land" overpopulated? No, its boundaries can be extended as widely as necessary. (Isaiah 26:15) Indeed, it is thrilling to see its population growing as the anointed remnant fills the "land" with "produce"—healthful, invigorating spiritual food. (Isaiah 27:6) But what is the position of these other sheep in the restored "land" of God's people?

### Foreigners Active in the "Land"

<sup>6</sup> Just as proselytes in the land of Israel submitted to the Mosaic Law, the great crowd today in the restored "land" obey Jehovah's commandments. Educated by their anointed brothers, they abstain from false worship in all its forms and observe the

\* See "New Heavens and a New Earth," published in 1953 by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., pages 322-3.

5. What nucleus came to exist in 1919? Explain.
6. How have foreigners been active in the "land" of God's people?

sanctity of blood. (Acts 15:19, 20; Galatians 5:19, 20; Colossians 3:5) They love Jehovah with their whole heart, mind, soul, and strength and love their neighbor as themselves. (Matthew 22:37; James 2:8) In ancient Israel proselytes helped with the building of Solomon's temple and supported restorations of true worship. (1 Chronicles 22:2; 2 Chronicles 15:8-14; 30:25) Today, the great crowd also share in building projects. For example, they help to build up congregations and circuits, to say nothing of undertaking material construction projects, such as Kingdom Halls, Assembly Halls, and branch facilities.

<sup>7</sup> In 537 B.C.E., when Israel returned from exile in Babylon, they set about organizing service on the temple site. However, the Levites who returned were not very numerous. Hence, the Nethinim—circumcised alien residents who previously were assistants of the Levites—were given increased privileges in temple service. They were not, however, equals of the anointed Aaronic priests.\*—Ezra 7:24; 8:15-20; Nehemiah 3:22-26.

<sup>8</sup> Anointed Christians today have followed this pattern. As "the time of the end" has progressed, the remaining ones of the anointed have become fewer and fewer in the "land" of God's people. (Daniel 12:9; Revelation 12:17) In view of this, the great crowd now accomplish most of the work of rendering "sacred service." (Revelation 7:15) Following the lead of their anointed brothers, they "offer to God a sacrifice of

\* For a full discussion, see the article "Jehovah's Provision, the 'Given Ones'" in the April 15, 1992, issue of *The Watchtower*.

7. What happened in postexilic Jerusalem when there were not enough Levites to carry out temple services?

8. 9. How have the other sheep taken on an increasing share of the work of rendering sacred service during the last days?

praise, that is, the fruit of lips which make public declaration to his name." They "do not forget the doing of good and the sharing of things with others," knowing that "with such sacrifices God is well pleased." —Hebrews 13:15, 16.

<sup>9</sup> Moreover, with the great crowd increasing by the hundreds of thousands each year, there is an ever-growing need for oversight. At one time this was handled exclusively by anointed Christians. Now, oversight of most congregations, as well as circuits, districts, and branches, has of necessity been entrusted to the other sheep. In 1992 a few of these were given the privilege of attending meetings of committees of the Governing Body and serving as nonvoting helpers. Still, the other sheep remain loyal to their anointed fellow Christians and feel privileged to support them as Jehovah's faithful and discreet slave.—Matthew 25:34-40.

### "Like a Sheik"

<sup>10</sup> The way the faithful and discreet slave has used other sheep in positions of responsibility was prophesied at Zechariah 9:6, 7. There we read: "I shall certainly cut

10, 11. Following the pattern of some Philistines, how have some former enemies of God's people had a change of heart? With what result?

## In Our Next Issue

Does God Rule the World?

Christian Women  
Deserve Honor and Respect

Disfellowshipping  
—A Loving Provision?

off the pride of the Philistine. And I will remove his bloodstained things from his mouth and his disgusting things from between his teeth, and he himself also will certainly be left remaining for our God; and he must become like a sheik in Judah, and Ekron like the Jebusite."\* The Philistines were sworn enemies of Jehovah's people, as Satan's world is today. (1 John 5:19) Just as the Philistines were finally annihilated as a people, so this world, with its religious, political, and commercial elements, will soon experience Jehovah's destructive rage.—Revelation 18:21; 19:19-21.

<sup>11</sup> However, according to the words of Zechariah, some Philistines had a change of heart, and this foreshadowed that some worldlings today would not remain at enmity with Jehovah. They would cease religious idolatry with its abominable rites and disgusting sacrifices and be cleansed in Jehovah's eyes. In our day such reformed "Philistines" are found in the great crowd.

<sup>12</sup> According to the prophecy, the major Philistine city of Ekron would become "like the Jebusite." The Jebusites too were once enemies of Israel. Jerusalem was in their hands until David conquered it. Nevertheless, some of those surviving the wars with Israel evidently became proselytes. They served in the land of Israel as slaves and even had the privilege of working on the construction of the temple. (2 Samuel 5:4-9; 2 Chronicles 8:1-18) Today, "Ekronites" who turn to worshiping Jehovah also have privileges of service in the "land" under the oversight of the faithful and discreet slave.

<sup>13</sup> Zechariah says that the Philistine would be like a sheikh in Judah. The He-

\* See *Paradise Restored to Mankind—By Theocracy!*, published in 1972 by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., pages 264-9.

12. In modern times, how has "Ekron" become "like the Jebusite"?

13. What were sheiks in the ancient world?



**The modern Philistine will be  
"like a sheik in Judah"**

to Moses. (Numbers 1:4-16) Similarly, in the organization of the army, chiefs of thousands were second only to the general or the king.—2 Samuel 18:1, 2; 2 Chronicles 25:5.

<sup>14</sup> Zechariah did not prophesy that the repentant Philistine would actually be a sheikh in Israel. That would not be proper, since he was not a natural-born Israelite. But he would be *like* a sheikh, occupying a position of authority comparable to a sheikh. And so it has proved to be. As the remnant of anointed Christians decrease in number and many of those who survive are limited by age, well-trained other sheep take up the slack, as it were. They do not want to supplant their

anointed brothers. But the faithful and discreet slave gives them authority as needed in the "land" so that God's organization can continue to move ahead in an organized way. Such a progressive process is seen in yet another prophecy.

#### Priests and Farmers

<sup>15</sup> Isaiah 61:5, 6 reads: "Strangers will

14. How today has the "Philistine" become like a sheikh?

15. (a) In the fulfillment of Isaiah 61:5, 6, who are "the priests of Jehovah," and when do they serve in this capacity in a complete sense?

(b) Who are the "strangers" who do Israel's agricultural work, and—in a spiritual sense—what does this work involve?

brew word '*al-luph'*, when translated "sheikh," means "leader of a thousand" (or, "chiliarch"). It was a very high position. The early nation of Edom apparently had only 13 sheikhs. (Genesis 36:15-19) The word "sheikh" is not often used when speaking of Israel, but the expression "head (or, chief) of a thousand" appears frequently. When Moses summoned representatives of the nation of Israel, he called on "the heads of the thousands of Israel."\* There were 12 of these, evidently subordinate only

\* Hebrew: *ra'-sheh' al-pheh' Yis-ra-el'*, translated *khi-li'ar-khoi Is-ra-el'* "chiliarchs of Israel" in the Septuagint.



*The anointed and  
the other sheep  
serve together in the  
spiritual land*

actually stand and shepherd the flocks of you people, and the foreigners will be your farmers and your vinedressers. And as for you, the priests of Jehovah you will be called; the ministers of our God you will be said to be. The resources of the nations you people will eat, and in their glory you will speak elatedly about yourselves.” Today, “the priests of Jehovah” are anointed Christians. In a final and complete sense, they will serve as “priests of Jehovah . . . , ministers of our God,” in the heavenly Kingdom. (Revelation 4:9-11) Who are the “strangers” responsible for agricultural work? These are the other sheep, who dwell in the “land” of the Israel of God. What are the shepherd-

ing, farming, and vinedressing that are entrusted to them? In the important spiritual sense, these tasks have to do with helping, nurturing, and harvesting people.—Isaiah 5:7; Matthew 9:37, 38; 1 Corinthians 3:9; 1 Peter 5:2.

<sup>16</sup> At present, a small number of spiritual Israelites remain on earth sharing in the spiritual shepherding, farming, and vine-dressing. When the anointed congregation in its entirety is finally united with Christ, all this work will be left to the other sheep. Even the human oversight of the “land”

16. Who will eventually handle all the work in the “land” of God’s people?

will then be in the hands of qualified other sheep, who in the book of Ezekiel are designated as a chieftain class.—Ezekiel, chapters 45, 46.\*

### The “Land” Endures

<sup>17</sup> Yes, the great crowd need have no fear! Jehovah has made ample preparations for them. A most important development on earth during these last days has been the gathering and sealing of anointed ones. (Revelation 7:3) While seeing that this is done, however, Jehovah has brought the other sheep into association with them in a restored spiritual land. There they have been spiritually fed and trained in Christian living. Further, they have been well grounded in sacred service, including oversight. For this they are deeply grateful to Jehovah and their anointed brothers.

<sup>18</sup> When Gog of Magog makes his final assault on God's people, other sheep will stand firm with the anointed remnant in “the land of open rural country.” Other sheep will still be in that “land” when they survive the destruction of the nations and enter into God's new world. (Ezekiel 38:11; 39:12, 13; Daniel 12:1; Revelation 7:9, 14) Continuing faithful, they will never have to leave that delightful location.—Isaiah 11:9.

<sup>19</sup> Israel of old was ruled by human kings and had Levitical priests. In the new world,

\* See “*The Nations Shall Know That I Am Jehovah*”—*How?*, published in 1971 by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., pages 401-7.

17. What preparations has Jehovah been making throughout these last days?
18. Through what events will the other sheep stay loyally in the “land” of spiritual Israel?
- 19, 20. (a) In the new world, what grand oversight will inhabitants of the “land” enjoy? (b) To what do we look forward with great anticipation?

Christians will have far grander oversight. Under Jehovah God, they will be subject to the great High Priest and King, Jesus Christ, and to the 144,000 associate priests and kings—some of whom they formerly knew as their Christian brothers and sisters on earth. (Revelation 21:1) Faithful inhabitants of the spiritual land will live on an earth restored to a literal paradise, delighting in the healing blessings channeled down through New Jerusalem.—Isaiah 32:1; Revelation 21:2; 22:1, 2.

<sup>20</sup> As Jehovah's grand celestial chariot moves unstoppably forward to achieve his purposes, all of us look forward with keen anticipation to fulfilling our assigned part. (Ezekiel 1:1-28) When those purposes are finally accomplished, think with what joy Jehovah's triumphant sanctification will be celebrated! The mighty anthem recorded at Revelation 5:13 will then be sung by all creation: “To the One sitting on the throne and to the Lamb be the blessing and the honor and the glory and the might forever and ever”! Whether our place will be in heaven or on earth, do we not long to be there, joining our voices in that magnificent chorus of praise?

### How Do You Answer?

- What “land” was restored in 1919, and how was it filled with inhabitants?
- How have other sheep been given increased responsibilities in the “land” of God's restored people?
- In what way are members of the great crowd “like the Jebusite”? “like a sheik in Judah”?
- How long will faithful other sheep remain in the “land”?

# ALONE BUT NEVER ABANDONED

AS TOLD BY ADA LEWIS

I have always been inclined to be a loner.

I am also strongly determined—others sometimes call it stubborn—in everything I do. I know, too, how easy it is to be outspoken, and this trait has caused me problems down through the years.

**Y**ET, I am grateful that Jehovah God has not rejected me because of my personality flaws. By a study of his Word, I have been able to modify my personality and have thus served his Kingdom interests for some 60 years. Since childhood, I have been a lover of horses, and God's help in controlling my somewhat obstinate streak has often reminded me of how a bridle can be used to control a horse.

I was born near a beautiful blue lake at Mount Gambier in South Australia in 1908. My parents had a dairy farm, and I was the eldest daughter of eight children. Our father died when we were all quite young. That left me much of the responsibility of managing the farm, since my two older brothers needed to work away from home to bring in an income for the family. Life on the farm was demanding, hard work.



## First Contact With Bible Truth

Our family attended the Presbyterian Church, and we were regular, practicing members. I became a Sunday-school teacher and took seriously the responsibility to teach the children what I believed to be spiritually and morally right.

In 1931 my grandfather died, and among his possessions were several books written by then president of the Watch Tower Society, J. F. Rutherford. I began to read *The Harp of God* and *Creation*, and the more I read, the more astonished I was to learn that many things that I believed and had been teaching the children were not supported by the Bible.

It was a shock to learn that the human soul is not immortal, that most people will not go to heaven when they die, and that there is no eternal suffering in hellfire for the wicked. I was also disturbed to find out

that observing the weekly Sunday sabbath is not a Christian requirement. So I was faced with a serious decision: to stick with the conventional teachings of Christendom or to begin teaching Bible truth. It did not take me long to decide to quit all my association with the Presbyterian Church.

### Now Really Alone

My family, friends, and former church acquaintances were far from pleased when I announced my intention to leave the church and no longer teach Sunday school. And when they found out that I was getting involved with the so-called Judge Rutherford people, that only added fuel to the fiery gossip. I was not actually ostracized, but most of my family and former friends were cool toward me, to say the least.

The more I studied and checked the scriptures listed in the books I was reading, the more I began to see the need to preach publicly. I learned that Jehovah's Witnesses went from house to house as part of their public ministry. But at that time there were no Witnesses in our district. Therefore, no one encouraged me or showed me how to preach the good news of God's Kingdom. (Matthew 24:14) I felt very much alone.

Nevertheless, the Bible command to preach to others kept ringing in my ears, and I decided I *must* begin to preach somehow. After a lot of prayer, I decided to start calling at the homes of neighbors simply to tell them what I had learned from my studies and to try to show them these things from their own Bibles. My first house was that of my previous Sunday-school superintendent. His icy response and negative comments about my deserting the church were certainly not an encouraging start. But I felt a warm glow and a strange inner strength as I left his home and continued to call at other homes.

There was really no outright opposition, but I was amazed at the general indifference of previous church associates when I called on them. To my surprise and disappointment, I experienced the stiffest opposition from my eldest brother, reminding me of Jesus' words: "You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, . . . and you will be objects of hatred by all people because of my name."—Luke 21:16, 17.

I had become an experienced rider at an early age, so I decided that the quickest way to reach peoples' homes would be on horseback. This enabled me to go farther afield into nearby rural territory. However, one afternoon my horse stumbled and fell on a slippery road, and I suffered a badly fractured skull. For a time, there were fears that I might not survive. After that fall, if the roads were wet or slippery, I traveled by horse and sulky rather than on horseback.\*

### Contact With the Organization

Some time after my accident, a group of full-time preachers, now called pioneers, visited the Mount Gambier district. Thus, for the first time, I was able to talk face-to-face with fellow believers. Before leaving, they encouraged me to write to the Watch Tower Society's branch office and inquire about how I could share in the public preaching work in a more organized way.

After writing to the Society, I received books, booklets, and a printed testimony card for use in introducing myself at the doors. I felt a little closer to my spiritual brothers and sisters because of mail contact with the branch office. But when the pioneer group left and moved on to the next town, I felt more alone than ever.

As a result of my regular witnessing

\* A sulky is a light, two-wheeled vehicle.

rounds each day—mainly by horse and sulky—I became well-known in the district. At the same time, I was able to care for my farm chores. By then my family had become resigned to this routine and made no effort to interfere. For four years I served in this way as an isolated, unbaptized proclaimer of the good news.

### **Convention and, At Last, Baptism**

In April 1938, Brother Rutherford visited Australia. The clergy's strong opposition resulted in cancellation of the contract for the Sydney Town Hall. However, at the last minute, permission to use the Sports Grounds was obtained. The forced change of plans actually proved beneficial, since many thousands more could be accommodated at the larger Sports Grounds. Some 12,000 came, the interest of many apparently having been aroused by the clergy-inspired opposition to our meeting.

In connection with Brother Rutherford's visit, a convention of several days was also held in a nearby Sydney suburb. It was there that at last I symbolized my dedication to Jehovah God by water baptism. Can you imagine the joy I experienced finally to assemble with hundreds of brothers and sisters from all over the vast Australian continent?

### **Back to Mount Gambier**

On returning home, I felt terribly alone, yet I was more determined than ever to do what I could in the Kingdom work. Shortly I became acquainted with the Agnew family—Hugh, his wife, and their four children. They lived in the town of Millicent, just 30 miles from Mount Gambier, and I would travel 30 miles each way by horse and sulky to conduct a regular Bible study with them. When they embraced the truth, my loneliness was relieved.

In a short time, we were formed into a group for organized witnessing. Then, happily, my mother began to take an interest and joined me on the 60-mile round-trip to the study with the newly formed group. From then on, Mother was always encouraging and helpful, although it was a few years before she was baptized. No more loneliness now!

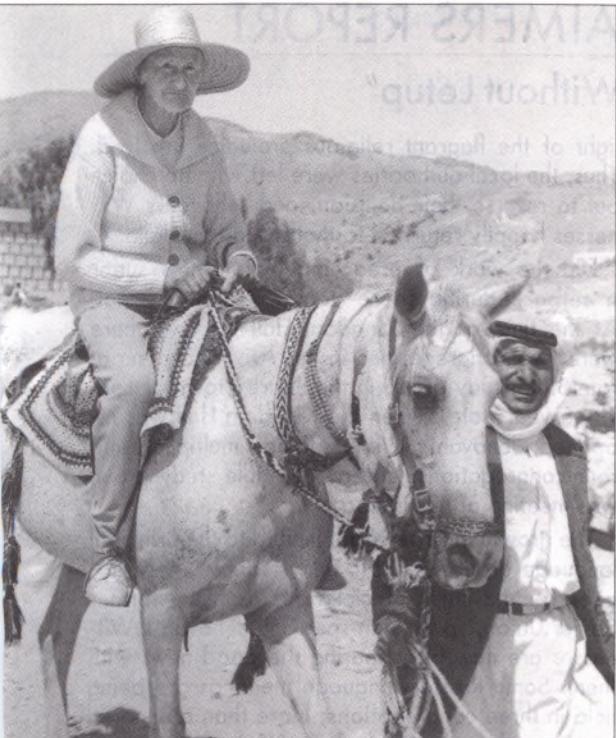
Our small group produced four pioneers, the three Agnew girls—Crystal, Estelle, and Betty—and me. Later, in the early 1950's, all three girls attended the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead. They were assigned as missionaries to India and Sri Lanka, where they still serve faithfully.

In January 1941 the activity of Jehovah's Witnesses was banned in Australia, so we quickly went into action. We put everything that we used in the ministry—literature, portable phonographs, recorded Bible lectures, and so forth—into a large tin trunk. Then we placed the trunk in a shed and brought in cartloads of hay to bury it.

Despite the ban, we continued with our house-to-house preaching, but cautiously, using only the Bible when talking to householders. I would hide magazines and booklets under the saddle of my horse and bring them out only when genuine interest in the Kingdom message was located. Finally, in June 1943, the ban was lifted, and we were once again able to offer literature openly.

### **New Assignments**

In 1943, I made myself available as a pioneer, and the following year I left Mount Gambier for another assignment. First, I was invited to serve for a short time at the Society's branch office in Strathfield. Following this I received, in turn, assignments in small towns in southern New



South Wales and western Victoria. However, one of my most spiritually rewarding assignments was with a large congregation in the city of Melbourne. Having come from a small country town, I learned a great deal serving there.

In my assignment in the lower Gippsland district of Victoria, my pioneer companion, Helen Crawford, and I conducted many Bible studies and, in a short time, saw the formation of a congregation. That district had a large rural territory, and for transportation we had an old, unreliable motor vehicle. Sometimes we rode, but many times we pushed. How I longed for a horse! At times, I could truthfully say: "I would give *anything* (except the Kingdom) for a horse!" In most towns of that district today, there are strong congregations and fine Kingdom Halls.

In 1969, I received an assignment to Canberra, the capital of Australia. This was a challenging and colorful place in which to witness, since we often contacted personnel at the many foreign embassies. I still serve here, but in recent years I have concentrated my witnessing on the industrial area of the city.

In 1973, I had the privilege of attending large conventions in the United States. Another highlight of my life was being a convention delegate in 1979 and touring Israel and Jordan. Visiting the actual sites mentioned in the Bible and reflecting on the events that happened there was indeed a moving experience. I was able to sample what it feels like to float in the Dead Sea, with its dense salty waters, and during our visit to Petra in Jordan, I had opportunity once again to ride a horse. This brought back to mind those earlier days when horses had enabled me to reach scattered and rural areas with the Kingdom message.

#### Continued Full-Time Service

My desire to keep on in the full-time service despite advancing years has been kept alive by such special provisions as the Pioneer Service School and the pioneer meetings held in conjunction with circuit assemblies, as well as the continual encouragement I receive from traveling overseers. I truly can say that Jehovah has kindly seen to it that my days of being alone are a thing of the past.

I am now 87 years of age, and after some 60 years of serving Jehovah, I have a word of encouragement for others who may also be outspoken and strongly independent: *Always submit to Jehovah's leading.* May Jehovah help us control our outspokenness, and may he constantly remind us that though we might often feel alone, he will never abandon us.

# KINGDOM PROCLAIMERS REPORT

## "They Continued Without Letup"

SINCE the days of Jesus Christ and his apostles, religious leaders have gone to great lengths in their efforts to impede the preaching of the good news of God's Kingdom. The apostles were repeatedly and positively "ordered" by the local authorities in Jerusalem to "stop speaking upon the basis of Jesus' name." (Acts 5:27, 28, 40) Nevertheless, the Bible account states that "the word of God went on growing, and the number of the disciples kept multiplying in Jerusalem very much."—Acts 6:7.

Two millennia later we still find religious leaders in Israel who influence the local authorities to obstruct the work of true Christians in that country. Under pressure exerted by extremist religious elements, in November 1987, local authorities in Tel Aviv, Israel, ordered the Witnesses to stop having Christian meetings at the Kingdom Hall located in the Watch Tower Society's branch office. The order went into effect in October 1989. In compliance, the Witnesses met in rented facilities in the area for three years while their Kingdom Hall remained virtually unused.

In the meantime, the matter was brought to the attention of the Israeli High Court of Justice. The state attorney's office reviewed the argument presented by the Witnesses and declared that there was no possible defense against their appeal in the

light of the flagrant religious prejudice involved. Thus, the local authorities were left with no choice but to reverse their decision, and Jehovah's Witnesses happily returned to their Kingdom Hall.

Did the work of preaching Bible truths suffer a setback during those years? Absolutely not! At the time of the Kingdom Hall closure, there were two congregations in Tel Aviv and a separate Bible study group in the nearby town of Lod. Three years later, when the Kingdom Hall was reopened, Jehovah's Witnesses had multiplied into four congregations, and a new Bible study group was meeting at Beersheba.

The growth in Israel is not limited to the principal language groups, Arabic and Hebrew. There has been a mass influx of emigrants from the former Soviet Union, so Russian-speaking Jehovah's Witnesses are now busy sharing the good news with them. Some Russian-language meetings are being held in three congregations; more than a hundred people gathered recently for a Russian assembly.

Undoubtedly, prejudiced religionists will continue their campaign against true worship. But Kingdom proclaimers continue to imitate the first-century Christians who, in spite of opposition, "continued without letup teaching and declaring the good news about the Christ, Jesus."—Acts 5:42.

### ANNUAL MEETING OCTOBER 7, 1995

THE ANNUAL MEETING of the members of Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania will be held on October 7, 1995, at the Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 2932 Kennedy Boulevard, Jersey City, New Jersey. A preliminary meeting of the members only will convene at 9:30 a.m., followed by the general annual meeting at 10:00 a.m.

The members of the Corporation should inform the Secretary's Office now of any change in their mailing addresses during the past year so that the regular letters of notice and proxies can reach them during July.

The proxies, which will be sent to the members along with the notice of the annual meeting, are to

be returned so as to reach the Office of the Secretary of the Society not later than August 1. Each member should complete and return his proxy promptly, stating whether he is going to be at the meeting personally or not. The information given on each proxy should be definite on this point, since it will be relied upon in determining who will be personally present.

It is expected that the entire session, including the formal business meeting and reports, will be concluded by 1:00 p.m. or shortly thereafter. There will be no afternoon session. Because of limited space, admission will be by ticket only. No arrangements will be made for tying in the annual meeting by telephone lines to other auditoriums.

## QUESTIONS FROM READERS

**Was God being partial in choosing for the early governing body men who had the same racial and national background—all being Jews?**

No, he certainly was not. All those whom Jesus first called as his disciples were Jews. Then, at Pentecost 33 C.E., Jews and Jewish proselytes were the first ones to be anointed with holy spirit and thus come in line to reign with Christ in heaven. Only later were Samaritans and uncircumcised Gentile converts included. Hence, it is understandable that the governing body in that period was composed of Jews, "apostles and older men in Jerusalem," as mentioned at Acts 15:2. These were men who had a broader base of Scriptural knowledge and years of experience in true worship, and they had had more time to develop into mature Christian elders.—Compare Romans 3:1, 2.

By the time of the meeting of the governing body recounted in Acts chapter 15, many Gentiles had become Christians. These included Africans, Europeans, and people from other regions. Yet, there is no record that any of such Gentiles had been added to the governing body to make Christianity appealing to non-Jews. While these newly converted Gentile Christians were equal members in "the Israel of God," they would have respected the maturity and greater experience of the Jewish Christians, such as the apostles, who were part of the governing body back then. (Galatians 6:16) Notice at Acts 1:21, 22 how highly regarded such experience was.—Hebrews 2:3; 2 Peter 1:18; 1 John 1:1-3.

For many centuries God had dealt in a special way with the nation of Israel, from which Jesus selected his apostles. It was no error or injustice that no apostles came from what is now South America or Africa or the Far East. In time men and women from those places would have an opportunity to gain privileges far grander than being an apostle on earth, being a member of the first-century governing body, or having any other appointment among God's people today.—Galatians 3:27-29.

One apostle was moved to state that "God is not partial, but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him." (Acts 10:34, 35) Yes, the benefits of Christ's ransom are available to all, without partiality. And individuals out of every tribe and tongue and nation will be included in the heavenly Kingdom and in the great crowd that will live forever on earth.

Many humans become sensitive over racial, linguistic, or national backgrounds. This is illustrated by what we read at Acts 6:1 about an issue that caused murmuring between Greek-speaking Christians and those who were Hebrew speaking. We may have grown up with or have absorbed current sensitivities about language, race, ethnic background, or gender. In view of that very real possibility, we do well to put forth determined effort to allow our feelings and reactions to be molded by God's view, which is that all humans are equal before him, no matter what our external appearance. When God had the qualifications for elders and ministerial servants recorded, he made no mention of race and national background. No, he focused on the spiritual qualifications of those who might be available to serve. That is true of local elders, traveling overseers, and branch personnel today, as it was true of the governing body in the first century.



# "Beyond the Borders of Sanity"

**S**INCE wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that we have to erect the ramparts of peace." (Charter of the UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) With this statement in mind, in 1993 over 500 experts attending a UN conference on disarmament considered religion's role in building such ramparts.

Jonathan Granoff, representing the Lawyers' Alliance for World Security, moderated the conference. He noted: "The extent of present religious and ethnic conflict is beyond the borders of civilized conduct, possibly beyond the borders of sanity." The words of John Kenneth Galbraith were aptly quoted during the conference: "More people have been killed in the name of religion than all the wars and natural disasters put together."

ed of enemies two miles out from the walls at Nablus  
whereby God's view which is most often deployed in war on matters where our enemies  
are depicted as evil, and our own side as good.  
John Kenneth Galbraith once said: "More people have  
been killed in the name of religion than all the wars and natural disasters put together."  
He also noted that the decision to take up arms again  
is made on the basis of fear and suspicion of others, nothing else.

Dr. Seshagiri Rao said: "Physicians are supposed to cure and not spread diseases. Religious traditions are not supposed to spread hatred and violent conflict against one another. They are meant to be forces of reconciliation. In practice though, they have often functioned and still function as divisive forces."

Some years ago, the London Catholic Herald commented that peace could be ensured "if the churches of today could come out with a joint condemnation of war." However, the newspaper added: "We know that this will never happen." A Catholic nun once commented: "How different the world would be if we all woke up one morning firmly decided not to take up arms again, . . . just like Jehovah's Witnesses!"

Tom Haley/Sipa Press

