

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



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KENYA

COVER: Near the Mbololo hills in southeast Kenya, two sisters witness to passersby on the main road through the township of Tausa, Taita District

POPULATION

44,250,000

PUBLISHERS

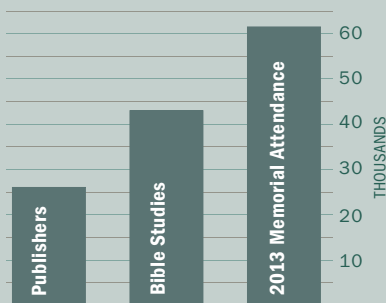
26,060

BIBLE STUDIES

43,034

2013 MEMORIAL ATTENDANCE

60,166



STUDY ARTICLES

- **Have Unshakable Faith in the Kingdom**
- **You Will Become “a Kingdom of Priests”**

The Messianic Kingdom is the means that Jehovah is using to fulfill his purpose for the earth and mankind. As we discuss how several of the covenants mentioned in the Bible relate to that heavenly government, discover why we can put our unshakable confidence in the Kingdom.

- **Cherish Your Privilege of Working With Jehovah!**

This article will consider both ancient and modern examples of people serving Jehovah. It will deepen our appreciation for the privilege we have of working with our God, something that is to be truly cherished.

- **“Keep Your Minds Fixed on the Things Above”**

In these last days, the challenges to our faith are many. What can we learn from faithful men of old who faced similar challenges, men such as Abraham and Moses? This study will help us to endure by encouraging us to keep our minds fixed on Jehovah God and his Kingdom.

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3 They Offered Themselves Willingly—In Taiwan

18 Milestones in My Life of Kingdom Service

THE **WATCHTOWER**[®]
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THEY OFFERED
THEMSELVES
WILLINGLY



in Taiwan



UNTIL about five years ago, **Choong Keon** and **Julie**, a married couple now in their mid-30's, served as regular pioneers in Sydney, Australia. "We had part-time secular work and lived a comfortable life," relates Choong Keon. "Where we lived, the weather was great and the lifestyle easygoing. We enjoyed being close to our family and friends." Still, Choong Keon and Julie felt uneasy. Why? They knew that their circumstances allowed them to do more in Jehovah's service, but they hesitated to make the needed changes.

Then, at a convention in 2009, they heard a talk that touched them deeply. The speaker directed his words to those who could expand their ministry. He said: "Think of this: A driver can make his car turn left or right but only if the car is moving. Similarly, Jesus may direct us in expanding our ministry but only if we are moving—if we are putting forth real effort to reach our goal."* The cou-

ple felt as if the speaker were talking directly to them. At that same convention, a missionary couple serving in Taiwan were interviewed. They spoke about their joy in the ministry and stressed that much help was still needed. Again, Choong Keon and Julie felt as if these words were directed just to them.

"Following that convention," relates Julie, "we prayed to Jehovah to give us the courage to take the step to move to Taiwan." She adds: "But we were scared. It felt as if we were about to jump into a pool at the deep end for the first time." A scripture that helped them to make that "jump" was Ecclesiastes 11:4, which states: "The one who watches the wind will not sow seed, and the one who looks at the clouds will not reap." Says Choong Keon: "We made up our minds to

* See the book *"Bearing Thorough Witness" About God's Kingdom*, chapter 16, paragraphs 5-6.



stop ‘watching and looking’ and to start ‘sowing and reaping’ instead.” They prayed—and prayed some more—read life stories of missionaries, exchanged a flurry of e-mails with those who had already moved to Taiwan, sold their cars and furniture, and arrived in Taiwan three months later.

DISCOVERING THE JOY OF PREACHING

More than 100 brothers and sisters from foreign countries are currently serving in Taiwan in areas where the need for Kingdom publishers is great. They have come from Australia, Britain, Canada, France, Japan, Korea, Spain, and the United States, and they vary in age from 21 to 73. Among

them are more than 50 single sisters. What has helped these zealous brothers and sisters to carry out their ministry in a foreign country? Let us find out.

Laura, a single sister from Canada, serves as a pioneer in western Taiwan. But until some ten years ago, she did not like the preaching work at all. Laura explains, “I went out in the ministry only just enough not to like it.” Then friends in Canada asked her to go with them to Mexico to share in the preaching work for a month. “That was the first time I spent any real amount of time in service, and to my surprise it was wonderful!”

That pleasant experience motivated Laura to consider moving to a foreign-language congregation in Canada. She enrolled in a Chinese-language course, served with a Chinese group, and set the goal of moving to Taiwan, which goal she realized in September 2008. “It took me about a year to feel comfortable in my new surroundings,” says Laura, “but now I can’t imagine going back to Canada.” How does she feel about the preaching work? “It’s a joy,” she says. “There’s nothing more satisfying than to see how Bible students change their life as they come to know Jehovah. Serving in Taiwan has given me the opportunity to taste that deep joy many times.”



- (1) Laura
- (2) Brian and Michelle
- (3) Kristin and Michelle
- (4) William and Jennifer
- (5) Megan
- (6) Cathy



5

DEALING WITH THE LANGUAGE BARRIER

Brian and **Michelle**, a couple in their mid-30's from the United States, moved to Taiwan about eight years ago. At first, they felt that they had no meaningful share in the ministry. But an experienced missionary told them: "Even if you can only hand a tract to someone, you should remember that it will likely be the very first time that person receives a message about Jehovah. So you're already having an important share in the ministry!" That encouraging comment greatly helped Brian and Michelle not to give up. Another brother told them: "To avoid discouragement, measure your progress in learning Chinese, not from day to day, but from assembly to assembly." And indeed, they progressed and are proving to be effective pioneers today.

What may motivate you to take on the task of learning a foreign language? Try to visit the country where you would like to serve. Go to the meetings, associate with the local brothers and sisters, and accompany them in the preaching work. Says Brian: "After you observe that so many respond favorably to the Kingdom message and you experience the warm love of the brothers and sisters, you will be moved to take on the challenges of serving in a foreign land."

WHAT ABOUT SECULAR WORK?

Several "need greaters" in Taiwan have been able to support themselves as pioneers by teaching English. **Kristin** and **Michelle** sell seafood.

Kristin explains, "I had never done that before, but this line of work helps me to be able to stay in the country." In time, Kristin found some regular customers. This part-time job enables him to support himself and his wife financially, and it leaves them enough time to spend in their primary activity—the pioneer ministry, fishing for men.

"ENJOY THE JOURNEY"

William and **Jennifer**, a couple from the United States, arrived in Taiwan about seven years ago. "Learning the language, serving as pioneers, caring for the congregation, and looking after some financial matters have, at times, been exhausting," says William. What has helped them to succeed and stay happy? They try to set reasonable goals. For instance, by not setting their expectations too high while they were learning Chinese, they did not become overly discouraged when progress was slow.

William recalls that a traveling overseer once told him, "Enjoy the journey, not just the destination." In other words, after setting a spiritual goal, we should enjoy the steps we take that lead to fulfilling the goal. Applying that advice, says William, helped him and his wife to be flexible, to listen to the counsel of the responsible local brothers, and to adjust their way of doing things so that they could make a success of their ministry in a new land. He adds, "It also helped us to remember to take some time to enjoy the natural beauty of our island assignment."

Like William and Jennifer, **Megan**, a single pioneer sister from the United States, is 'enjoying her journey' while trying to reach her goal of speaking Chinese more fluently. Every weekend she joins a group of publishers who preach in a fascinating territory—the port of Kaohsiung, the largest harbor of Taiwan. Megan has been able to share the good news from ship to ship and to preach to fishermen from Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vanuatu. "Since the fishermen are in port only for a short

time, we start a Bible study with them right then and there. To reach them all, I often study with four or five people at the same time.” And how is she doing with learning Chinese? She says, “I wish I could learn faster, but I keep in mind what a brother once told me, ‘Do your best, and Jehovah will take care of the rest.’”

SAFE, SIMPLE, AND EXCITING

Before **Cathy**, from Britain, moved abroad, she researched which foreign assignment would be safe for a single sister. She mentioned her concerns in prayer to Jehovah and wrote letters to several branch offices, inquiring about the possible dangers for single sisters. After that, she carefully considered the replies to her letters and concluded that Taiwan would be a suitable choice for her.

In 2004, at age 31, Cathy moved to Taiwan, where she lives as simply as she can. She relates: “I asked the brothers and sisters where the best places are to buy fruits and vegetables at low prices. Their good advice helped me to stretch my savings.” What helps her to maintain a simple life? Cathy says: “I often pray to Jehovah to help me be content with the simple food I eat and the modest clothes I wear. I feel that Jehovah an-

swers my prayers by teaching me what my needs are and by helping me not to miss my wants.” She adds: “I enjoy my simple lifestyle because it helps me to focus on spiritual concerns.”

Cathy’s life, though, is not only simple but also exciting. She explains why: “I am able to preach in an area where many people respond to the good news. That’s a real joy!” When she arrived in Taiwan, there were two Chinese congregations in the city where she began serving as a pioneer, but today there are seven congregations. Says Cathy: “To see close up such amazing growth and to share in bringing in the harvest makes my daily life buzz with excitement!”

“THEY NEEDED EVEN ME!”

How have things turned out for Choong Keon and Julie, mentioned in the introduction? Choong Keon initially felt that his limited Chinese made him of little use in the congregation. But the local brothers felt otherwise. “When our congregation was divided into two congregations, I was given many additional responsibilities as a ministerial servant,” says Choong Keon. “At that moment, I really felt that I was serving where the need was greater. It was so great,” he says with a smile, “that they needed even me!” Today, he serves as an elder. Adds Julie: “We feel a sense of accomplishment, satisfaction, and happiness that we have never felt before. We came here to help, but we feel that we have been helped by this exciting experience. We thank Jehovah for allowing us to serve here!”

In many lands, there is still a need for more workers in the spiritual harvest. Are you finishing your secular schooling and wondering what to do with your life? Are you single and desirous of being more useful in Jehovah’s organization? Would you like to give your family a rich spiritual heritage? Are you retired, having a lifetime of valuable experience to share with others? You can be sure that rich blessings await you if you decide to expand your ministry by serving where there is a greater need for Kingdom publishers.





Have Unshakable Faith in the Kingdom

“Faith is the assured expectation of what is hoped for.”

—HEB. 11:1.

AS Jehovah’s Witnesses, we often say that God’s Kingdom is the only solution to all our problems, and we eagerly direct people’s attention to this vital Scriptural truth. We also find great comfort in the hope that the Kingdom provides us. How strong, though, is our conviction that the Kingdom is a reality that will accomplish its intended purpose? What basis is there for us to have unshakable faith in the Kingdom? —Heb. 11:1.

² The Messianic Kingdom is an arrangement established by the Almighty himself to accomplish his purpose regarding his creation. The Kingdom is based on an unshakable foundation—Jehovah’s absolute right to rule. Important aspects of the Kingdom—its king, his corulers, the domain of their rule—have all been legally established by means of covenants, that is, by legal contracts or arrangements in which one of the binding parties is either God or his Son, Jesus Christ. Reflecting on these covenants will enhance our understanding of how God’s purpose is sure to become a

1, 2. What will strengthen our conviction that the Kingdom will accomplish God’s purpose for mankind, and why? (See opening image.)

USING THE CHART “HOW GOD WILL ACCOMPLISH HIS PURPOSE,” REVIEW . . .

the Edenic promise.

the Abrahamic covenant and
the Davidic covenant.

the covenant for a priest like
Melchizedek.

reality and will help us to see how stable this arrangement is.—**Read Ephesians 2:12.**

³ The Bible refers to six primary covenants that relate to the Messianic Kingdom in the hands of Christ Jesus. They are (1) the Abrahamic covenant, (2) the Law covenant, (3) the Davidic covenant, (4) the covenant for a priest like Melchizedek, (5) the new covenant, and (6) the Kingdom covenant. Let us examine how each covenant relates to the Kingdom and advances the outworking of God's purpose for the earth and for mankind.—See the chart "How God Will Accomplish His Purpose."

A PROMISE REVEALS HOW GOD'S PURPOSE WILL BE FULFILLED

⁴ After preparing our beautiful planet for human habitation, Jehovah issued three decrees regarding humans: Our God would create mankind in his image, humans were to expand Paradise globally and fill the earth with righteous offspring, and humans were prohibited from eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and bad. (Gen. 1:26, 28; 2:16, 17) There was no need for anything more. After the creation of man, adherence to the other two decrees was all that was necessary to have God's purpose fulfilled. How, then, did the need for covenants arise?

⁵ In a villainous attempt to thwart God's purpose, Satan the Devil instigated a rebellion. He did so by focusing

his attention on the decree he could most easily influence—the one that required obedience on the part of man. He tempted the first woman, Eve, to disobey the prohibition regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and bad. (Gen. 3:1-5; Rev. 12:9) In doing so, Satan challenged God's right to rule over His creation. Later, Satan also imputed selfish motives to God's loyal servants.—Job 1:9-11; 2:4, 5.

⁶ How would Jehovah respond to Satan's challenge in Eden? Destroying the rebels would, indeed, bring an end to their rebellion. But it would also mean that God's expressed purpose to have the earth filled with obedient descendants of Adam and Eve would go unfulfilled. Rather than executing the rebels right then and there, the wise Creator responded with a profound prophecy—the *Edenic promise*—to ensure that every detail of his word would come true.—**Read Genesis 3:15.**

⁷ By means of the Edenic promise, Jehovah passed judgment on the serpent and its offspring representing Satan the Devil and all those who would take his side on the issue of God's right to rule. The true God gave to the offspring of his heavenly woman the authority to destroy Satan. Thus, the Edenic promise not only emphasized that the instigator of the rebellion in the garden of Eden and all ill effects of his action would be done away with but also identifies the means by which this would take place.

⁸ Who would the woman's offspring prove to be? Since the offspring is to

3. What will we examine in this article and in the one that follows?

4. As stated in Genesis, what decrees did Jehovah issue regarding humans?

5, 6. (a) How did Satan try to thwart God's purpose? (b) How did Jehovah respond to Satan's challenge in Eden?

7. What assurance does the Edenic promise give us about the serpent and its offspring?

8. What can be said about the identity of the woman and her offspring?

Abraham demonstrated
his unshakable faith
in God's promises
(See paragraph 10)



crush the serpent's head, that is, "bring to nothing" the spirit creature Satan the Devil, the offspring would have to be a spirit person. (Heb. 2:14) Therefore, the woman giving birth to the offspring would also be of a spiritual nature. While the offspring of the serpent proliferated, the identity of the offspring and the woman remained a mystery for almost 4,000 years after Jehovah gave the Edenic promise. Meanwhile, Jehovah made several covenants that identify the offspring and assure His servants that the offspring would be the means by which God would undo the disaster that Satan had brought on the human family.

A COVENANT IDENTIFIES THE OFFSPRING

⁹ Some two millennia after passing sentence on Satan, Jehovah com-

manded the patriarch Abraham to leave his home in Ur in Mesopotamia and go to the land of Canaan. (Acts 7:2, 3) Jehovah said to him: "Go out from your land and away from your relatives and from the house of your father to the land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and I will make your name great, and you will become a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who calls down evil on you, and all the families of the ground will certainly be blessed by means of you." (Gen. 12:1-3) This is the earliest *recorded* account of the **Abrahamic covenant**—the covenant that Jehovah God made with Abraham. Exactly *when* it was that Jehovah first made the covenant with Abraham is not known. However, it went into effect in 1943 B.C.E., when 75-year-old Abraham left Haran and crossed the Euphrates River.

9. What is the Abrahamic covenant, and when did it go into effect?

¹⁰ Jehovah restated his promise to Abraham a number of times, adding further details. (Gen. 13:15-17; 17:1-8, 16) And when Abraham demonstrated unshakable faith in God's promises by showing willingness to offer up his only son, Jehovah reinforced the covenant with an unconditional promise. **(Read Genesis 22:15-18; Hebrews 11:17, 18.)** After the Abrahamic covenant went into effect, Jehovah gradually revealed important details about the offspring of the woman. The offspring would descend from Abraham, would be many in number, would have a kingly function, would destroy all enemies, and would be a blessing for many others.

¹¹ While the Abrahamic covenant had a literal fulfillment for the descendants of Abraham when they inherited the Promised Land, the Scriptures show that the terms of that covenant also have a spiritual fulfillment. (Gal. 4:22-25) In this greater fulfillment, as the apostle Paul explained under inspiration, the primary part of the offspring of Abraham is Christ and the secondary part refers to the 144,000 spirit-anointed Christians. (Gal. 3:16, 29; Rev. 5:9, 10; 14:1, 4) The woman producing the offspring is none other than "the Jerusalem above"—the heavenly part of God's organization, made up of loyal spirit creatures. (Gal. 4:26, 31) As the Abrahamic covenant promised, the offspring of the woman would bring blessings to mankind.

10. (a) How did Abraham demonstrate unshakable faith in God's promises? (b) What details did Jehovah gradually reveal about the offspring of the woman?

11, 12. How do the Scriptures show that the Abrahamic covenant has a greater fulfillment, and what does that mean for us?

¹² The Abrahamic covenant points to the King and to his corulers in God's Kingdom, and it forms the legal foundation of the Kingdom of the heavens. (Heb. 6:13-18) How long will this covenant stay in effect? It is "an everlasting covenant," states Genesis 17:7. It remains in effect until the Messianic Kingdom destroys God's enemies and all the families of the earth have been blessed. (1 Cor. 15:23-26) In fact, those who will then live on earth will benefit in an everlasting way. God's covenant with Abraham shows that Jehovah is determined to fulfill his purpose that righteous humans "fill the earth"—Gen. 1:28.

A COVENANT TO ENSURE THAT THE KINGDOM WILL LAST

¹³ The Edenic promise and the Abrahamic covenant establish the vital point that Jehovah's sovereignty as expressed through the Messianic Kingdom is solidly based on God's righteous standards. (Ps. 89:14) Will the Messianic government ever become corrupt and therefore have to be eliminated? Another legal covenant guarantees that this will never happen.

¹⁴ Consider what Jehovah promised King David of ancient Israel by means of the *Davidic covenant*. **(Read 2 Samuel 7:12, 16.)** Jehovah made this covenant with David during David's reign in Jerusalem, promising him that the Messiah would be his descendant. (Luke 1:30-33) Thus, Jehovah further narrowed the line of descent of the offspring and established that an heir of David would have "the legal right" to the throne of the Messianic Kingdom. (Ezek. 21:25-27) Through Jesus, David's kingship

13, 14. What does the Davidic covenant guarantee regarding the Messiah's rule?

“will be firmly established forever.” Indeed, David’s offspring “will endure forever; his throne will endure like the sun.” (Ps. 89:34-37) Yes, the Messiah’s rule will never become corrupt, and its accomplishments will last forever!

A COVENANT FILLS THE NEED FOR A PRIESTLY FUNCTION

¹⁵ While the Abrahamic covenant and the Davidic covenant make it certain that the offspring of the woman would have a kingly function, that role alone would not suffice to bring blessings to people of all nations. For them to be truly blessed, they would have to be freed from their sinful state and brought into Jehovah’s universal family. To accomplish this requires that the offspring also serve in a priestly capacity. The wise Creator provided for this by means of another legal arrangement, the *covenant for a priest like Melchizedek*.

¹⁶ Jehovah revealed through King David that He would make a personal covenant with Jesus with a twofold objective: to have him “sit at [God’s] right hand” until he subdues his enemies and to be “a priest forever in the manner of Melchizedek.” (**Read Psalm 110:1, 2, 4.**) Why “in the manner of Melchizedek”? Because long before any descendants of Abraham inherited the Promised Land, Melchizedek, the king of Salem, served as “priest of the Most High God.” (Heb. 7:1-3) He was directly appointed by Jehovah to do so. He is the only one mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures who served as both a king and a priest. Moreover, since he was without a re-

corded predecessor or successor, he can be called “a priest for all time,” or forever.

¹⁷ Jesus is directly appointed to be a priest by means of this personal covenant that Jehovah made with him, and he will remain “a priest forever in the manner of Melchizedek.” (Heb. 5: 4-6) This clearly shows that Jehovah has legally bound himself to use the Messianic Kingdom to accomplish his original purpose concerning humans on earth.

COVENANTS FORM A LEGAL BASIS FOR THE KINGDOM

¹⁸ As we look at the covenants we have considered, we can see how they relate to the Messianic Kingdom and how the Kingdom arrangement is solidly based on legal contracts. The Edenic promise binds Jehovah to fulfill his purpose regarding the earth and mankind by means of the offspring of the woman. Who would the offspring be, and in what capacity would that offspring serve? The Abrahamic covenant provides the framework for all of this.

¹⁹ The Davidic covenant further narrows the line of descent of the primary part of the offspring and gives him the right to rule over the earth so that the accomplishments of the Kingdom will be everlasting. The covenant for a priest like Melchizedek becomes the basis for the offspring to serve in a priestly capacity. Jesus will not be alone in raising mankind to perfection, however. Others are also anointed to serve as kings and priests. Where would they come from? That will be discussed in the following article.

15-17. According to the covenant for a priest like Melchizedek, in what additional capacity would the offspring serve, and why?

18, 19. (a) What do the covenants we have discussed so far show about the Kingdom? (b) What question remains?



HOW GOD WILL ACCOMPLISH HIS PURPOSE

The Edenic promise points to the Kingdom as the means by which God's original purpose for the earth and mankind will be fulfilled. The following six covenants advance the outworking of God's purpose:

ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

PARTIES: Jehovah and Abraham

PURPOSE: It forms a legal basis for the "offspring" of "the woman" of Genesis 3:15 to rule in the Kingdom

LAW COVENANT

PARTIES: Jehovah and natural Israel

PURPOSE: It protects the "offspring" and leads humans to the Messiah

DAVIDIC COVENANT

PARTIES: Jehovah and David

PURPOSE: It establishes that the Messianic King will come from David's line and that what the Kingdom accomplishes will be everlasting

COVENANT FOR A PRIEST LIKE MELCHIZEDEK

PARTIES: Jehovah and Jesus

PURPOSE: It provides a legal arrangement for Jesus—the primary part of the woman's "offspring"—to be king and priest forever

NEW COVENANT

PARTIES: Jehovah and spiritual Israel

PURPOSE: It provides a legal basis for 144,000 Christians to be adopted as sons of God and to form the secondary part of the "offspring"

KINGDOM COVENANT

PARTIES: Jesus and spiritual Israel

PURPOSE: It legally joins anointed Christians with Christ to rule as kings and serve as priests in heaven



You Will Become “a Kingdom of Priests”

*“You will become to me a kingdom of priests
and a holy nation.”—EX. 19:6.*

THE first prophecy recorded in the Bible is of great significance in the outworking of Jehovah’s purpose. When making the Edenic promise, the true God declared: “I will put enmity between you [Satan] and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring.” How intense would this enmity be? “He [the offspring of the woman] will crush your [Satan’s] head, and you will strike him in the heel,” said Jehovah. (Gen. 3:15) The enmity between the serpent and the woman would be so fierce that Satan would spare no effort to obliterate her offspring.

² It is no wonder that the psalmist cried out in prayer to God about His chosen people: “Look! your enemies are in an uproar; those who hate you act arrogantly. With cunning they secretly plot against your people; they conspire against your treasured ones. They say: ‘Come, let us annihilate them as a nation.’” (Ps. 83:2-4) The line of descent of the offspring of the woman had to be protected from extermination and contamination. To accomplish this, Jehovah made further binding legal arrangements that would protect the fulfillment of his purpose.

1, 2. What protection did the offspring of the woman need, and why?

**USING THE CHART
“HOW GOD WILL
ACCOMPLISH HIS
PURPOSE,” REVIEW . . .**

the Law covenant.

the new covenant.

the Kingdom covenant.

A COVENANT THAT PROTECTS THE OFFSPRING

³ As the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob multiplied into the millions, Jehovah made a nation out of them—the nation of ancient Israel. Through Moses, Jehovah concluded a unique national covenant with them by giving them the Law, and the nation of Israel agreed to the terms of that covenant. The Bible relates: “[Moses] took the book of the covenant and read it aloud to the people. And they said: ‘All that Jehovah has spoken we are willing to do, and we will be obedient.’ So Moses took the blood [of the sacrificed bulls] and sprinkled it on the people and said: ‘This is the blood of the covenant that Jehovah has made with you in harmony with all these words.’”—Ex. 24:3-8.

⁴ The **Law covenant** went into effect at Mount Sinai in 1513 B.C.E. By means of that covenant, the ancient nation of Israel was set apart as God’s chosen nation. Jehovah now became ‘their Judge, their Lawgiver, and their King.’ (Isa. 33:22) The history of Israel provides a record of what happens when God’s righteous standards are either observed or ignored. Since the Law forbade intermarrying with pagans and participation in false worship, it was designed to prevent Abraham’s line of descent from being contaminated.—Ex. 20:4-6; 34:12-16.

⁵ The Law covenant also provided an arrangement for a priesthood, fore-

3, 4. (a) When did the Law covenant go into effect, and what did the nation of Israel agree to do? (b) What was the Law covenant designed to prevent?

5. (a) The Law covenant opened up what opportunity for Israel? (b) Why did God reject Israel?



Israel’s disobedience did not mean that the Law covenant had failed

(See paragraphs 3-6)

shadowing a greater arrangement in the future. (Heb. 7:11; 10:1) In fact, through that covenant, Israel had a unique opportunity and privilege to become “a kingdom of priests,” provided they met the stipulation to obey Jehovah’s laws. (**Read Exodus 19:5, 6.**) Israel, however, failed to meet this requirement. Instead of esteeming the arrival of the Messiah, the primary part of Abraham’s offspring, the nation rejected him. Consequently, God rejected that nation.

⁶ Israel’s failure to remain faithful to Jehovah and thus supply all those who would make up a kingdom of priests did not mean that the Law had failed. The Law was to protect the offspring and lead humans to the Messiah. Once the Christ came and was identified, the Law’s role was realized. “Christ is the end of the Law,” states the Bible. (Rom.

6. What did the Law accomplish?

10:4) The question, though, remains: Who would then have the opportunity to become a kingdom of priests? Jehovah God provided another legal contract to form a new nation.

A NEW NATION COMES INTO EXISTENCE

⁷ Long before the Law covenant was canceled, Jehovah foretold through the prophet Jeremiah that He would make with the nation of Israel “a new covenant.” (Read **Jeremiah 31:31-33.**) That covenant would be unlike the Law covenant in that it would make possible the forgiveness of sins without the need for animal sacrifices. How would it do that?

⁸ Centuries later, Jesus instituted the Lord’s Evening Meal on Nisan 14, 33 C.E. Speaking of the cup of wine, he told his 11 faithful apostles: “This cup means the new covenant by virtue of my blood, which is to be poured out in your behalf.” (Luke 22:20) Matthew’s account quotes Jesus as saying regarding the wine: “This means my ‘blood of the covenant,’ which is to be poured out in behalf of many for forgiveness of sins.”—Matt. 26:27, 28.

⁹ Jesus’ shed blood validates the *new covenant*. That blood also makes possible the forgiveness of sins once and for all time. Jesus is not a party to the new covenant. Being without sin, he needs no forgiveness. But God could apply the value of Jesus’ shed blood to Adam’s descendants. He could also adopt certain devoted humans “as sons” by anointing

them with holy spirit. (Read **Romans 8:14-17.**) Being considered to be without sin in God’s eyes, they would in a sense be like Jesus, the sinless Son of God. These anointed ones would become “joint heirs with Christ” and have the opportunity of becoming “a kingdom of priests.” This was a privilege that the nation of Israel under the Law could have had. Concerning the “joint heirs with Christ,” the apostle Peter stated: “You are ‘a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for special possession, that you should declare abroad the excellencies’ of the One who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” (1 Pet. 2:9) How vital the new covenant is! It enables Jesus’ disciples to become the secondary part of Abraham’s offspring.

THE NEW COVENANT GOES INTO EFFECT

¹⁰ When did the new covenant go into effect? Not when Jesus made reference to it on his last night on earth. For it to go into operation, Jesus’ blood had to be poured out and its value had to be presented to Jehovah in heaven. Moreover, the holy spirit needed to be poured out on those who would be “joint heirs with Christ.” Hence, the new covenant went into effect at Pentecost 33 C.E. when Jesus’ loyal disciples were anointed with holy spirit.

¹¹ Though the former Law covenant was in a sense made “obsolete” when Jehovah announced through Jeremiah that He would conclude a new covenant

7. What did Jehovah foretell through Jeremiah concerning a new covenant?

8, 9. (a) What does Jesus’ shed blood accomplish? (b) What opportunity was opened up for those in the new covenant? (See opening image.)

10. When did the new covenant go into effect, and why not until then?

11. How did the new covenant make it possible for both Jews and Gentiles to become part of spiritual Israel, and how many would be in the new covenant?

with Israel, it did not actually end until the new covenant went into effect. (Heb. 8:13) When that happened, God could view both Jewish and uncircumcised Gentile believers in the same light, since their “circumcision is that of the heart by spirit and not by a written code.” (Rom. 2:29) By concluding the new covenant with them, God would put his laws “in their mind, and in their hearts [he would] write them.” (Heb. 8:10) The total number of those in the new covenant would be 144,000, making up a new nation—“the Israel of God”—spiritual Israel.—Gal. 6:16; Rev. 14:1, 4.

¹² How do the Law covenant and the new covenant compare? The Law covenant was between Jehovah and natural Israel; the new covenant is between Jehovah and spiritual Israel. Moses was the mediator of the former covenant; Jesus is the Mediator of the new one. The Law covenant was validated by means of animal blood; the new covenant was validated by the shed blood of Jesus. And the nation of Israel was organized through the Law covenant under Moses; those in the new covenant are organized under Jesus—the Head of the congregation.—Eph. 1:22.

¹³ The new covenant relates to the Kingdom in that it produces a holy nation that has the privilege of becoming kings and priests in that heavenly Kingdom. That nation constitutes the secondary part of Abraham’s offspring. (Gal. 3:29) The new covenant thus reinforces the Abrahamic covenant.

12. What comparisons can be made between the Law covenant and the new covenant?

13, 14. (a) How does the new covenant relate to the Kingdom? (b) What is necessary for spiritual Israel to be able to rule with Christ in heaven?

¹⁴ One more aspect of the Kingdom remains to be established. The new covenant produces spiritual Israel and provides the basis for its members to become “joint heirs with Christ.” A binding legal arrangement, however, is needed to allow them to join Jesus in his Kingdom as kings and priests in heaven.

A COVENANT THAT ALLOWS OTHERS TO RULE WITH CHRIST

¹⁵ After instituting the Lord’s Evening Meal, Jesus made a covenant with his faithful disciples, often referred to as the *Kingdom covenant*. (Read **Luke 22:28-30**.) Unlike other covenants, in which Jehovah is one of the parties to the covenant, this is a personal covenant between Jesus and his anointed followers. When saying, “just as my Father has made a covenant with me,” Jesus was apparently alluding to the covenant that Jehovah had made with him to be “a priest forever in the manner of Melchizedek.”—Heb. 5:5, 6.

¹⁶ The 11 faithful apostles had ‘stuck with Jesus in his trials.’ The Kingdom covenant assured them that they would be with him in heaven and sit on thrones to rule as kings and serve as priests. However, those 11 would not be the only ones to have that privilege. The glorified Jesus appeared to the apostle John in a vision and said: “To the one who conquers I will grant to sit down with me on my throne, just as I conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.” (Rev. 3:21) Thus, the Kingdom covenant is made with the 144,000

15. What personal covenant did Jesus make with his faithful apostles?

16. What does the Kingdom covenant make possible for anointed Christians?



Through the Messianic Kingdom, Jehovah will make his purpose for the earth a reality (See paragraphs 15-18)

anointed Christians. (Rev. 5:9, 10; 7:4) This is the covenant that forms a legal basis for them to rule with Jesus in heaven. This is similar to a bride from a noble family who might marry a ruling king and come into position to share in his ruling power. In fact, the Scriptures refer to anointed Christians as “the bride” of Christ, “a chaste virgin” promised in marriage to the Christ.—Rev. 19:7, 8; 21:9; 2 Cor. 11:2.

HAVE UNSHAKABLE FAITH IN GOD’S KINGDOM

¹⁷ All the covenants that we have considered in these two articles relate to

17, 18. (a) Review six covenants that we have considered and that relate to the Kingdom. (b) Why can we have unshakable faith in the Kingdom?

one or more vital aspects of the Kingdom. (See the chart “How God Will Accomplish His Purpose.”) This fact emphasizes that the Kingdom arrangement is solidly based on legal contracts. We thus have powerful reason to put our full trust in the Messianic Kingdom as the instrument that God is using to make his original purpose for the earth and mankind a reality.—Rev. 11:15.

¹⁸ Can there be any doubt that what the Kingdom accomplishes will result in lasting blessings for mankind? With complete confidence, we can firmly proclaim that God’s Kingdom is the only permanent solution to all man’s problems. May we zealously share that truth with others!—Matt. 24:14.

Milestones in My Life of Kingdom Service

AS TOLD BY
MILDRED OLSON



In 1947, Catholic priests in Santa Ana, El Salvador, tried to stir up trouble for the Witnesses. While the brothers were having their weekly *Watchtower* Study, boys threw large stones through the open door of the missionary home. Then came the procession led by priests. Some in the procession carried torches; others carried images. For two hours, they pelted the building with stones and chanted: “Long live the Virgin!” and, “May Jehovah die!” That was supposed to scare the missionaries out of town. I know, because I was one of them, and I attended that meeting 67 years ago.*

TWO years before the above event took place, Evelyn Trabert, who was my missionary companion, and I graduated from the fourth class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead, then located near Ithaca, New York. We were assigned to serve in Santa Ana. But before I continue with a brief account of my nearly 29 years of missionary service, let me tell you why I decided to take up that work.

MY SPIRITUAL HERITAGE

My parents, John and Eva Olson, were living in Spokane, Washington, U.S.A., in 1923, the year I

was born. They were Lutherans but did not accept the church teaching of hellfire, since they could not reconcile it with their belief in a God of love. (1 John 4:8) Father worked in a bakery, and one night a coworker assured him that the Bible does not teach that hell is a place of torment. Soon my parents began to study with Jehovah’s Witnesses and learned what the Bible *really* teaches about life after death.

I was only nine years old, but I remember listening to my parents’ enthusiastic expressions about their newfound Bible truths. Their enthusiasm grew even greater when they learned the name of the true God, Jehovah, and were freed

* See the 1981 *Yearbook of Jehovah’s Witnesses*, pages 45-46.

from the confusing Trinity doctrine. I began absorbing these wonderful Scriptural teachings like a sponge, learning ‘the truth that sets one free.’ (John 8:32) Hence, I never thought of Bible study as being boring, but I have always enjoyed examining God’s Word. Although I was shy, I accompanied my parents in the preaching work. They were baptized in 1934. In 1939, at the age of 16, I joined them as a baptized servant of Jehovah.

In the summer of 1940, my parents sold their home, and the three of us began the full-time ministry as pioneers in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho. We lived in a rented apartment above a car-repair shop. Our home also served as a meeting place. At that time, few congregations had Kingdom Halls, so they met in private homes or rented rooms.

In 1941 my parents and I attended the assembly in St. Louis, Missouri. Sunday was “Children’s Day,” and those between 5 and 18 years of age were seated right in front of the stage. At the climax of his talk, Brother Joseph F. Rutherford spoke to us young ones: “All of you . . . children . . . who have agreed to obey God and his King, please stand up!” We all stood up. Then, Brother Rutherford exclaimed: “Behold, more than 15,000 new witnesses to the Kingdom!” That moment helped cement my decision to make pioneering my life’s career.

OUR FAMILY’S ASSIGNMENTS

A few months after the St. Louis assembly, our family moved to southern California. There, in the city of Oxnard, our assignment was to start a congregation. We lived in a small trailer with only one bed. My “bed” had to be made up each night on top of our dining table—quite a change from when I had my own bedroom!

Just before we arrived in California, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, on December 7, 1941. The next day, the United States entered World War II. The authorities imposed a blackout, and we had to turn off all lights at night. Japanese submarines were patrolling the California

coast, and the total darkness was to help keep them from hitting targets on the mainland.

Some months later, in September 1942, we attended the New World Theocratic Assembly in Cleveland, Ohio. There we listened as Brother Nathan H. Knorr gave the talk “Peace—Can It Last?” He discussed Revelation chapter 17, which describes a “wild beast” that “was, but is not, and yet is about to ascend out of the abyss.” (Rev. 17:8, 11) Brother Knorr explained that “the wild beast” was the League of Nations that ceased its activities in 1939. The Bible foretold that the League would be replaced, leading to a time of relative peace. And so it was that in 1945, World War II ended. After that, the “beast” reappeared as the United Nations. Jehovah’s Witnesses then expanded their global preaching work, and what a great increase there has been ever since!

That prophecy helped me to see what lay ahead. When it was announced that Gilead School would begin the next year, my desire to become a missionary was sparked. In 1943, I was assigned to pioneer in Portland, Oregon. In

With Mom and Dad at the 1941 assembly in St. Louis, Missouri



WATCHTOWER BIBLE COLLEGE OF GILEAD SOUTH LANSING, NEW YORK

HEREBY be it known that

Mildred E. Olson

an ordained minister of the gospel, has completed the full course of study and training of this college, with merit. She is therefore graduated as specially qualified to engage in educational work, promoting goodwill and making

My Gilead diploma



Five of us from my Gilead class who were sent to El Salvador. Left to right: Evelyn Trabert, Millie Brashier, Esther Mahan, me, and Leo Mahan

those days, we used a phonograph to play sermons for householders on their doorsteps, and then we would offer them Bible literature about God's Kingdom. All that year, I kept thinking about missionary service.

In 1944, I was thrilled to receive an invitation to Gilead with my dear friend Evelyn Trabert. For five months, our instructors showed us how to get joy from our study of the Bible. Their humility impressed us. At times, while we ate a meal, those brothers were the waiters. We graduated on January 22, 1945.

MY MISSIONARY ASSIGNMENT

Evelyn and I, along with Leo and Esther Mahan, arrived in our assignment in El Salvador in June 1946. We found that field "white for harvesting." (John 4:35) The incident mentioned at the beginning of this story shows how infuriated the clergy were. Just a week earlier, we had held our first circuit assembly in Santa Ana. We widely advertised the public talk and were overjoyed to have nearly 500 in attendance. Rather than being scared out of town, we felt even more determined to stay and help honesthearted ones. Even though the clergy had warned people not to read the Bible and few could afford to own a copy, many were hungry for the truth. They appreciated our efforts to learn Spanish so that we could teach them about the true God, Jehovah,

and about his precious promise of the restoration of Paradise on earth.

Rosa Ascencio was one of my early students. After she began studying the Bible, she separated from the man with whom she was living. Then he began to study the Bible. They got married, then baptized, and they became zealous Witnesses for Jehovah. Rosa was the first local pioneer in Santa Ana.*

Rosa owned a small grocery store. When she went out in the ministry, she would close her store and trust in Jehovah to provide for her needs. When she reopened her store after a few hours, customers flocked in to buy. She experienced firsthand the truth of Matthew 6:33 and was faithful until her death.

On one occasion, the local priest visited the man who rented a house to six of us missionaries and warned him that if he continued to rent to us, he and his wife would be excommunicated. The landlord, a prominent businessman, was already disgusted with the conduct of the clergy and did not yield to the pressure. He even told the priest that he would not mind being expelled from the church. He assured us that we were welcome to stay as long as we wanted.

A RESPECTED CITIZEN BECOMES A WITNESS

In the capital city, San Salvador, another mis-

* 1981 Yearbook, pages 41-42.



The first circuit assembly we attended in El Salvador



Brother F. W. Franz addresses missionaries at a convention

sionary was studying the Bible with the wife of an engineer named Baltasar Perla. That good-hearted man had lost faith in God after observing the hypocrisy of the religious leaders. When the time came to build a branch office, Baltasar, although not yet in the truth, offered to design and construct the facility without charging for his services.

After associating with Jehovah's people on the construction project, Baltasar became convinced that he had found the true religion. He was baptized on July 22, 1955, and his wife, Paulina, soon thereafter. Both their children are serving Jehovah faithfully. His son, Baltasar, Jr., has served for 49 years at Brooklyn Bethel, where he supports the ever-growing worldwide preaching work and now serves on the United States Branch Committee.*

When we began to hold conventions in San Salvador, Brother Perla helped us to get the use of a large gymnasium. At first, we used only a few sections of seats; but with Jehovah's blessing, our ranks kept increasing year by year until we filled the gymnasium and even outgrew it! At those joyful events, I got to see those with whom I had studied the Bible. Imagine how I felt when my former students introduced me to my "grandchildren"—newly baptized ones with whom *they* had studied!

* 1981 Yearbook, pages 66-67, 74-75.

At one assembly, a brother came up to me and said that he wanted to make a confession. I did not recognize him and was curious. He said, "I was one of the boys who threw stones at you in Santa Ana." Now he was serving Jehovah with me! My heart swelled with joy. That conversation confirmed for me that the full-time ministry is the most rewarding career anyone could choose.

SATISFYING CHOICES

For nearly 29 years, I continued in the missionary work in El Salvador, first in the city of Santa Ana, then Sonsonate, next Santa Tecla, and

Branch office built in 1955



finally San Salvador. In 1975, after much prayerful thought, I decided to leave my missionary assignment and return to Spokane. My faithful, aging parents needed my assistance.

After Father died in 1979, I cared for Mother, who became progressively more frail and helpless. She lived for eight more years, dying at the age of 94. During that difficult time, I became physically and emotionally exhausted. The stress brought on a painful case of shingles. But with prayer and Jehovah's loving arms around me to buoy me up, I was able to endure that test of endurance. It is as Jehovah said, "until your hair is gray . . . , I will carry you and bear you and rescue you."—Isa. 46:4.

In 1990, I moved to Omak, Washington. There I again felt useful in the Spanish-language field, and several of my Bible students got baptized. By November 2007, I could no longer care for my home in Omak, so I moved into an apartment in the nearby town of Chelan, Washington. The Spanish congregation here has been taking good care of me ever since, for which I am most grateful. Since I am the only elderly Witness here, the

brothers and sisters have kindly "adopted" me as their "grandmother."

Even though I chose not to marry and have a family so that I could serve more fully in the ministry "without distraction," I have many spiritual children. (1 Cor. 7:34, 35) I reasoned that in this present life, I cannot have everything. So I have put first things first—my dedication to serve Jehovah wholeheartedly. In the new world, there will be plenty of time to enjoy all manner of other wholesome activities. My favorite scripture is Psalm 145:16, which assures us that Jehovah will "satisfy the desire of every living thing."

At age 91, I still have fairly good health, so I continue to pioneer. The pioneer service helps keep me young at heart and gives me a purpose in life. When I first arrived in El Salvador, the preaching work was just getting started. Despite Satan's unrelenting opposition, there are now over 39,000 publishers in that country. This has truly strengthened my faith. Clearly, there is no doubt that Jehovah's holy spirit is backing the efforts of his people!



Pioneer service keeps me young at heart



Cherish Your Privilege of Working With Jehovah!

"We are God's fellow workers."

—1 COR. 3:9.

JEHOVAH is a worker who takes pleasure in what he does. (Ps. 135:6; John 5:17) To allow his intelligent creatures to experience a similar joyful and gratifying feeling of accomplishment, Jehovah has assigned them pleasant and satisfying work. For example, he involved his firstborn Son in His creative work. **(Read Colossians 1:15, 16.)** The Bible tells us that during his prehuman existence, Jesus was beside God in heaven "as a master worker."—Prov. 8:30.

² From beginning to end, the Bible contains examples showing that Jehovah has always assigned work to his spirit sons. After Adam and Eve sinned and were ejected from their Paradise home, God "posted at the east of the garden of Eden the cherubs and the flaming blade of a sword that was turning continuously to guard the way to the tree of life." (Gen. 3:24) And Revelation 22:6 reveals that Jehovah "sent his angel to show his slaves the things that must shortly take place."

1. How does Jehovah feel about work, causing him to do what?
2. What indicates that spirit creatures have always had important and gratifying work?

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

What privilege have servants of Jehovah always had?

What work should we especially cherish now?

What happy prospect do we have for the future?

WHAT ABOUT HUMANS?

³ While on earth as a perfect human, Jesus joyfully performed the work Jehovah had given him to do. Following his Father's example, Jesus also assigned important work to his disciples. Arousing in them eager expectation for what they could accomplish, he said: "Most truly I say to you, whoever exercises faith in me will also do the works that I do; and he will do works greater than these, because I am going my way to the Father." (John 14:12) To stress the urgency of such works, Jesus explained: "We must do the works of the One who sent me while it is day; the night is coming when no man can work."—John 9:4.

⁴ Even prior to Jesus' day, humans were given fulfilling work to do. Although Adam and Eve failed to perform the assignment they were given, others did as God directed. (Gen. 1:28) Noah was given specific instructions on how to build an ark to preserve life through the great Deluge. He carefully carried out what Jehovah asked of him. Thanks to his conscientiousness, we are here today!—Gen. 6:14-16, 22; 2 Pet. 2:5.

⁵ Moses was given specific instructions for building the tabernacle and organizing the priesthood, which he followed closely. (Ex. 39:32; 40:12-16) Even today, we benefit from his faithfulness in fulfilling that assignment. How so? The apostle Paul explained that those features of the Law were illustrative of "good things to come."—Heb. 9:1-5, 9; 10:1.

⁶ The work God gives his servants dif-

3. While on earth, how did Jesus follow his Father's example?

4-6. (a) Why can we be thankful that Noah and Moses fulfilled their assignments from Jehovah? (b) What do all of God's work assignments for humans have in common?

fers from time to time according to the progressive outworking of his purpose. Still, the work they have been assigned has always glorified Jehovah and benefited believing mankind. This certainly applies to the things Jesus accomplished, both during his prehuman existence and later while he was here on earth. (John 4:34; 17:4) Similarly, the work assigned to us today glorifies Jehovah. (Matt. 5:16; **read 1 Corinthians 15:58.**) Why is that the case?

MAINTAINING A POSITIVE VIEW OF WORK ASSIGNMENTS

⁷ You will agree that it is amazing that Jehovah has invited imperfect humans to have the honor of serving as his fellow workers. (1 Cor. 3:9) Those who are involved in building Assembly Halls, Kingdom Halls, and branch facilities are taking part in a physical building program, as did Noah and Moses. Whether you are working to renovate a local Kingdom Hall or to build our world headquarters at Warwick, New York, cherish your privilege to serve in this way. (See opening image for artist's rendering.) It is sacred service. However, for the most part, Christians are invited to engage in a spiritual building program. It too is designed to glorify Jehovah and to benefit obedient humans. (Acts 13:47-49) Appropriate direction on how best to do this work is provided through God's organization. This may at times mean being given new assignments of work.

⁸ Faithful servants of Jehovah have always been eager to submit to theocratic direction. (**Read Hebrews 13:7, 17.**) We may initially lack full understanding of the reasons for carrying out our as-

7, 8. (a) Describe the work that Christians today are privileged to do. (b) How should we respond to Jehovah's direction?

signed work in a particular way. Nevertheless, we are fully aware of the benefits of cooperating with Jehovah in any adjustments that he sees fit to make.

⁹ A strong desire to accomplish Jehovah's will is seen in the way the elders take the lead in the congregation. (2 Cor. 1:24; 1 Thess. 5:12, 13) They manifest a willingness to work hard and to keep in step with changing circumstances. They eagerly adjust to new ways in which our work of preaching God's established Kingdom is to be done. Although some may at first have been hesitant about organizing telephone witnessing, harbor witnessing, or public witnessing, they soon saw good results. For example, four pioneers in Germany decided to work business territory that had been neglected. Michael reports: "We had not engaged in this form of service for several years, so we had butterflies in our stomach. Jehovah must have known this, for he gave us an unforgettably pleasant morning of service. How happy we were that we followed the direction given in *Our Kingdom Ministry* and relied on Jehovah for support!" Are you eager to try new witnessing initiatives that are developed in your territory?

¹⁰ At times, organizational adjustments need to be made. In recent years, a number of branch offices have been merged with others. Though such changes require that the brothers and sisters serving at these branches make adjustments, before long the advantages of the changes become clear to all involved. (Eccl. 7:8) What a joy it is for such willing workers to play a part in the ongoing history of Jehovah's people!

9. What example regarding work do the elders set for the congregation?

10. What organizational adjustments have been made in recent times?

¹¹ We can learn valuable lessons from those who were directly involved in branch mergers. Some had served full-time in their respective Bethel homes for decades. A couple who served in a small Bethel family in Central America were asked to join a Bethel family almost 30 times as large in Mexico. "Leaving family and friends was very hard," Rogelio says. Juan, another brother who was asked to move to Mexico, says: "It is almost like being born a second time; you must form new bonds. It requires adjusting to new customs and ways of thinking."

¹² Bethelites who were asked to move to the branch office in Germany from other European countries likewise faced challenges. Anyone who enjoys mountain scenery can appreciate that it was difficult for those moving from Switzerland to leave behind their majestic Alpine surroundings. And those from Austria at first missed the more relaxed lifestyle enjoyed there.

¹³ For those moving to another country, this meant getting used to new living accommodations, working with brothers and sisters they did not know, and possibly having to learn to do a different type of work. It meant adjusting to a new congregation and preaching in a new territory, perhaps even in another language. Making such changes can be difficult. Yet, many Bethelites have accepted the challenge. Why have they done so?

¹⁴ Grethel says: "I accepted the invitation because it was my way of showing

11-13. What challenges have some faced because of organizational adjustments?

14, 15. (a) How have many shown that they cherish the privilege of working with Jehovah, whatever that work may be? (b) In what respect are they a fine example for all of us?



Jehovah that my love for him went beyond a country, a building, or a certain privilege.” Dayska says: “When I remembered that the invitation came from Jehovah, I accepted it gladly.” André and Gabriela agree, saying: “In this we saw a further opportunity of serving Jehovah by pushing personal desires into the background. We told ourselves, ‘When faced with Jehovah’s winds of change, it is better to set your sails than to build barriers.’”

¹⁵ Because of branch mergers, some Bethelites are reassigned to serve in the pioneer work. This was true of several Bethelites when the branches in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden were merged to form the Scandinavia branch office. Among them were Florian and Anja, who said: “We view our new assignment as an exciting challenge. For us, it is wonderful to be used by Jehovah no matter where we serve. We can honestly say that we feel richly blessed!” Even though most of us may never have

to make such adjustments, can we not imitate the willingness of these brothers and sisters to put Kingdom interests first? (Isa. 6:8) Jehovah always blesses those who cherish their privilege of working with him, wherever that work may be.

CONTINUE ENJOYING YOUR PRIVILEGE OF WORKING WITH JEHOVAH!

¹⁶ Imperfect humans tend to make comparisons, but God’s Word tells us to focus on what we personally are able to do. **(Read Galatians 6:4.)** Most of us have no position of authority within the organization. Also, not all of us can be pioneers or missionaries or serve at Bethel. These are fine privileges, to be sure! But we must never forget that the greatest privilege any human can have is one that all of us share. It is that of being a fellow worker with Jehovah in

- 16.** (a) What does Galatians 6:4 tell us to do?
(b) What is the greatest privilege any human can have?



**Do you cherish your
privilege to serve?**
(See paragraphs 16-18)

the Christian ministry. This is a privilege to be cherished!

¹⁷ As long as Satan's world exists, our possibilities of service to Jehovah may be limited. We may have no control over our family responsibilities, health, or other circumstances. But that is no reason to be unduly discouraged. Never underestimate your potential for working with God by bearing witness to his name and making known his Kingdom at every opportunity. Of prime importance is that you are working with him to the extent possible for you personally and that you are praying for his blessing to be with your brothers who are able to do more than you can. Remember, every person who praises Jehovah's name is precious in his eyes!

¹⁸ Despite our weaknesses and im-

17. What reality will continue as long as Satan's world exists, but why should this not unduly discourage us?

18. What should we be willing to postpone, and why?

perfections, Jehovah is pleased to use us as his fellow workers. How we cherish our privilege of working with our God in these last days! Thus, we should be willing to postpone the pursuit of many of our personal interests, knowing that in his new world, Jehovah will allow us to enjoy "the real life"—everlasting life in happy, peaceful conditions.—1 Tim. 6: 18, 19.

¹⁹ Standing as we are on the threshold of the new world, think of what Moses told the Israelites shortly before they entered the Promised Land: "Jehovah your God will make you abundantly prosperous in all the work of your hands." (Deut. 30:9) Once Armageddon is past, those who have been busy working with God will take possession of the land that he has promised them. Then, we will direct our attention to a new work assignment—making the earth a beautiful paradise!

19. What future prospect does Jehovah hold out for us?



“Keep Your Minds Fixed on the Things Above”

“Keep your minds fixed on the things above, not on the things on the earth.”—COL. 3:2.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

How did Abraham and Sarah demonstrate their faith in Jehovah?

How do we know that Moses was focused on doing God’s will?

In what ways can we keep our minds fixed on the things above?

THE first-century Christian congregation in Colossae was under attack! Some within the congregation were creating divisions by promoting adherence to the Mosaic Law. Others were advocating the pagan philosophy of asceticism, which involved extreme self-denial. In counteracting these false teachings, the apostle Paul wrote an encouraging letter, cautioning the Colossians: “Look out that no one takes you captive by means of the philosophy and empty deception according to human tradition, according to the elementary things of the world and not according to Christ.”—Col. 2:8.

² If those anointed Christians focused their minds on “the elementary things of the world,” they would be turning their backs on Jehovah’s provision for salvation. (Col. 2:20-23) In order to help them safeguard their precious relationship with God, Paul admonished them: “Keep your minds fixed on the things above, not on the things on the earth.” (Col. 3:2) Yes, Christ’s brothers were to keep in mind their hope

1, 2. (a) What shows that the first-century congregation in Colossae was under attack? (b) What counsel was provided to help the brothers in Colossae remain steadfast?

of receiving the incorruptible inheritance that was ‘reserved for them in the heavens.’—Col. 1:4, 5.

³ Today, anointed Christians likewise keep their minds fixed on God’s heavenly Kingdom and on their hope of being “joint heirs with Christ.” (Rom. 8:14-17) But what about those who have an earthly hope? How do Paul’s words apply to them? In what way can the “other sheep” keep in mind “the things above”? (John 10:16) And how can all of us benefit by considering the examples of such faithful men of old as Abraham and Moses who despite personal hardships kept their minds fixed on the things above?

WHAT IT MEANS TO FIX OUR MINDS ON THE THINGS ABOVE

⁴ Although the other sheep do not have a heavenly hope, they too can keep in mind the things above. How? By putting Jehovah God and Kingdom interests first in their lives. (Luke 10:25-27) To that end, we look to Christ as our model. (1 Pet. 2:21) Like our first-century brothers, we encounter false reasonings, worldly philosophies, and materialistic attitudes in Satan’s system of things. (**Read 2 Corinthians 10:5.**) As imitators of Jesus, we need to be vigilant in guarding against such attacks on our spirituality.

⁵ Has the world’s view of material pursuits made inroads into our lives? The things we love are usually evident by our thoughts and actions. Jesus said:

3. (a) What hope do anointed Christians keep in mind? (b) What questions will we consider in this article?

4. How can the other sheep keep their minds fixed on the things above?

5. How can we examine our thinking about materialistic pursuits?

“Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matt. 6:21) To determine where our heart is leading us, it is good to examine ourselves from time to time. Ask yourself: ‘How much time do I spend thinking about money matters? Do concerns over business prospects, investments, or reaching out for a more comfortable lifestyle occupy large blocks of my time? Or do I strive to maintain an eye that is focused on spiritual matters?’ (Matt. 6:22) Jesus indicated that those who place primary emphasis on ‘storing up treasures on the earth’ put themselves in grave spiritual danger.—Matt. 6:19, 20, 24.

⁶ Our imperfect flesh inclines us toward indulging in things that are pleasing to our senses. (**Read Romans 7:21-25.**) Without God’s holy spirit operating in our lives, we may give in to “the works belonging to darkness.” This could include such acts as “wild parties and drunkenness . . . immoral intercourse and brazen conduct.” (Rom. 13:12, 13) To win the battle against “the things on the earth”—things that appeal to the flesh—we must keep our minds fixed on the things above. Doing this requires effort. That is why the apostle Paul said: “I pummel my body and lead it as a slave.” (1 Cor. 9:27) Without a doubt, we cannot be easy on ourselves if we are to remain in the race for life! Let us consider what two faithful men of old did “to please God well.”—Heb. 11:6.

ABRAHAM “PUT FAITH IN JEHOVAH”

⁷ When Jehovah directed Abraham

6. How do we win the battle against fleshly tendencies?

7, 8. (a) What problems did Abraham and Sarah face? (b) On what did Abraham focus his mind?

to move his household to the land of Canaan, he willingly complied. Because of Abraham's faith and obedience, Jehovah established a covenant with him, saying: "I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you." (Gen. 12:2) Years later, however, Abraham and his wife, Sarah, were still childless. Had Jehovah forgotten the promise that he had made to Abraham? Moreover, life in Canaan was not easy. Abraham and his household had left behind their home and relatives in Ur, a prosperous city in Mesopotamia. They traveled over 1,000 miles (1,600 km) to reach Canaan, where they lived in tents, endured famine, and faced marauders. (Gen. 12:5, 10; 13:18; 14:10-16) Yet, they had no desire to return to the comforts in Ur!—**Read Hebrews 11:8-12, 15.**

⁸ Rather than focus on "the things on the earth," Abraham "put faith in Jehovah." (Gen. 15:6) Yes, he fixed his mind on the things above in that he concentrated on God's promises. As a result, Abraham's faith was rewarded when the Most High God appeared to him and said: "'Look up, please, to the heavens and count the stars, if you are able to do so.' Then he said to him: 'So your offspring will become.'" (Gen. 15:5) How reassuring that must have been! Every time Abraham gazed up at the starry heavens, he would be reminded of Jehovah's promise to multiply his offspring. And in God's due time, Abraham did produce an heir, just as was promised.—Gen. 21:1, 2.

⁹ Like Abraham, we too are awaiting the fulfillment of God's promises. (2 Pet. 3:13) If we do not keep our minds

9. How will following Abraham's example encourage us to keep busy in God's service?

fixed on the things above, the fulfillment of these promises could appear to be delayed and we might slow down in our spiritual activities. For example, did you make sacrifices in the past in order to engage in the pioneer ministry or in some other form of expanded service? If so, you are to be commended. What about now? Remember, Abraham kept in mind "the city having real foundations." (Heb. 11:10) He "put faith in Jehovah, and it was counted to him as righteousness."—Rom. 4:3.

MOSES SAW "THE ONE WHO IS INVISIBLE"

¹⁰ Another man who kept his mind fixed on the things above was Moses. As a youth, he was "instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." This was no ordinary education. Not only was Egypt the preeminent power at the time but Moses was living in Pharaoh's household. Little wonder that with this advanced education, Moses became "powerful in his words and deeds." (Acts 7:22) Imagine the possibilities this would have opened up for him! Yet, Moses had his mind set on more lofty matters—on doing God's will.

¹¹ Early in his life, Moses' own mother, Jochebed, had surely taught him about the God of the Hebrews. Moses highly esteemed the knowledge of Jehovah and considered it to be of greater value than any other riches. He thereby forfeited the privileges and opportunities that would likely have come to him because he lived in Pharaoh's household. (**Read Hebrews 11:24-27.**) Indeed,

10. What kind of life did Moses have as a youth?

11, 12. What education did Moses highly esteem, and how do we know?

Moses' spiritual education and his faith in Jehovah moved him to fix his mind on the things above.

¹² Moses was given the best secular education that was available in his day, but did he use it to advance his career in Egypt, make a name for himself, or acquire material possessions? No. Had he done so, he would not have "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing to be mistreated with the people of God rather than to have the temporary enjoyment of sin." Clearly, Moses used his spiritual education to advance Jehovah's purpose.

¹³ Moses was keenly interested in Jehovah and His people. At 40 years of age, Moses thought that he was ready to help liberate God's people from Egyptian bondage. (Acts 7:23-25) However, before Jehovah could give him that assignment, Moses needed something more. He needed to cultivate such qualities as humility, patience, mildness, and self-control. (Prov. 15:33) Moses needed training that would prepare him to endure the trials and hardships that lay ahead. A few decades as a shepherd would provide the training he needed to cultivate these godly qualities.

¹⁴ Did Moses learn from the practical training he received as a shepherd? Indeed he did! God's Word says that Moses became "by far the meekest of all the men on the face of the earth." (Num. 12:3) He had cultivated humility, which helped him to deal patiently with a variety of people and their difficult problems. (Ex. 18:26) Likewise, we may need to cultivate spiritual qualities that will

help us to pass through "the great tribulation" into God's righteous new world. (Rev. 7:14) Are we able to get along with people, including those whom we consider to be temperamental or overly sensitive? We do well to heed the words of the apostle Peter, who urged fellow believers: "Honor men of all sorts, have love for the whole association of brothers."—1 Pet. 2:17.

KEEPING OUR MINDS FIXED ON THE THINGS ABOVE

¹⁵ We live in "critical times hard to deal with." (2 Tim. 3:1) So in order to remain spiritually alert, we must keep our minds fixed on the right things. (1 Thess. 5:6-9) Consider how we can do so in three aspects of our lives.

¹⁶ **Our conduct:** Peter recognized the importance of good conduct. He said: "Maintain your conduct fine among the nations, so that . . . they may be eye-witnesses of your fine works and, as a result, glorify God." (1 Pet. 2:12) Whether we are at home, at work, at school, at play, or in the ministry, we make every effort to bring glory to Jehovah through our fine conduct. True, as imperfect humans, we all make mistakes. (Rom. 3:23) But by continuing to "fight the fine fight of the faith," we can successfully win the battle against our imperfect flesh.—1 Tim. 6:12.

¹⁷ **Our attitude:** Closely associated with maintaining fine conduct is having the right attitude. The apostle Paul said: "Keep this mental attitude in you

13, 14. (a) What helped Moses to qualify for the assignment that Jehovah would give him? (b) Like Moses, what may we need to do?

15, 16. (a) Why is it vital that we keep our minds fixed on the right things? (b) Why is it important for Christians to maintain good conduct?

17. How can we imitate the mental attitude that Christ Jesus had? (See opening image.)



Preaching the good news of God's Kingdom was foremost in Jesus' mind (See paragraph 17)

that was also in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 2:5) What sort of disposition did Jesus have? He was humble. Humility moved him to be self-sacrificing in his ministry. Preaching to others about the good news of God’s Kingdom was foremost in his mind. (Mark 1:38; 13:10) Jesus viewed God’s Word as the final authority. (John 7:16; 8:28) He diligently studied the Holy Scriptures so that he could quote them, defend them, and explain them. By being humble and zealous in our ministry and personal Bible study, we will be more Christlike in our thinking.

18 Our support: Jehovah has purposed that “in the name of Jesus every knee should bend—of those in heaven

18. In what important way can we support Jehovah’s work?

and those on earth.” (Phil. 2:9-11) Even in his exalted position, Jesus will humbly submit to his Father’s will, and so should we. (1 Cor. 15:28) How so? By giving our wholehearted support to the work that we have been instructed to do, that is, to “make disciples of people of all the nations.” (Matt. 28:19) Also, we want to “work what is good toward all,” doing good to our neighbor and to our brothers.—Gal. 6:10.

19 How grateful we are that Jehovah reminds us to keep our minds fixed on the things above! To that end, we need to “run with endurance the race that is set before us.” (Heb. 12:1) May all of us work “whole-souled as for Jehovah,” and our heavenly Father will reward our earnest efforts.—Col. 3:23, 24.

19. What should we be determined to do?

