

FEBRUARY 2017

# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:  
APRIL 3-30, 2017

COVER IMAGE:  
**ETHIOPIA**

A brother uses the Bible to share the Kingdom message with two villagers in the central highlands of Ethiopia. The men wear the handwoven cotton shawls typical of the area

POPULATION  
**99,391,000**

PUBLISHERS  
**10,083**

MEMORIAL ATTENDANCE  
(2015)  
**25,323**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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**3** WEEK OF **APRIL 3-9**  
**Jehovah's Purpose Will Be Fulfilled!**

**8** WEEK OF **APRIL 10-16**  
**The Ransom—A "Perfect Present" From the Father**

Christ's ransom sacrifice is fundamental to our faith and to the outworking of Jehovah's original purpose for mankind. These two articles examine why the ransom became necessary, what it accomplished, and how we can show heartfelt gratitude for this most loving of all gifts from our heavenly Father.

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**18** WEEK OF **APRIL 17-23**  
**Jehovah Leads His People**

**23** WEEK OF **APRIL 24-30**  
**Who Is Leading God's People Today?**

For millennia, Jehovah has directed men to take the lead. Why can we conclude that Jehovah has been supporting these men, and how do we know that he is backing the faithful and discreet slave today? These articles will consider three lines of evidence that have always identified God's representatives.

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**13** LIFE STORY  
**We Experienced God's Undeserved Kindness in Many Ways**

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**29** QUESTIONS FROM READERS

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**31** FROM OUR ARCHIVES

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# Jehovah's Purpose Will Be Fulfilled!

*“I have spoken, and I will bring it about. I have purposed it, and I will also carry it out.”—ISA. 46:11.*

THE very first words of the Bible make this simple but profound statement: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” (Gen. 1:1) It is true that we have only a little understanding of the many things God created, such as space, light, and gravity, and we have seen only a small fraction of the universe. (Eccl. 3:11) Yet, Jehovah has revealed to us his purpose for the earth and for mankind. The earth was to be an ideal home for men and women created in God’s image. (Gen. 1:26) They would be his children, and Jehovah would be their Father.

<sup>2</sup> As explained in the third chapter of Genesis, Jehovah’s purpose encountered a challenge. (Gen. 3:1-7) However, that challenge was by no means insurmountable. No one can stand in Jehovah’s way. (Isa. 46:10, 11; 55:11) Therefore, we can be certain that Jehovah’s original purpose will be fulfilled exactly on time!

<sup>3</sup> No doubt, we are familiar with Bible truths about God’s

1, 2. (a) What has Jehovah revealed to us? (b) What assurance do we find at Isaiah 46:10, 11 and 55:11?

3. (a) What truths are fundamental to our understanding of the Bible’s message? (b) Why do we review such teachings now? (c) What questions will we consider?

SONGS: 25, 18

## HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

What is Jehovah’s purpose for mankind?

What rebellious actions did not defeat Jehovah’s purpose?

How will Jehovah’s purpose be fulfilled?



purpose for the earth and mankind and about the central role of Jesus Christ in the outworking of God's purpose. They are of fundamental importance and are likely among the first truths we learned when we began to study God's Word. We, in turn, want to help sincere people to become familiar with these vital teachings. Currently, as we are considering this article as a congregation, we are striving to invite as many people as possible to the Memorial of Christ's death. (Luke 22:19, 20) Those who attend will learn much regarding God's purpose. So in these last few days before the Memorial, it is timely that we think about specific questions that we can use to stimulate the interest of our Bible students and other sincere individuals in this important event. We will consider three questions: What was God's original purpose for the earth and mankind? What went wrong? And why is Jesus' ransom sacrifice the key that unlocks the door for God's purpose to be accomplished?

#### WHAT WAS THE CREATOR'S ORIGINAL PURPOSE?

<sup>4</sup> Jehovah is an awe-inspiring Creator. Everything he creates meets the highest standards. (Gen. 1:31; Jer. 10:12) What can we learn from the beauty and order that are evident in creation? When observing creation, we are impressed with the way all of Jehovah's creative works, small and large, serve a beneficial purpose. Who does not marvel at the intricacies of the human cell, the delicateness of a newborn baby, or the splendor of a gorgeous sunset? We admire these creations because we have a built-in

sense of what is truly beautiful.—**Read Psalm 19:1; 104:24.**

<sup>5</sup> As is evident in creation, Jehovah lovingly set boundaries. He made both natural laws and moral laws to ensure that everything functions harmoniously. (Ps. 19:7-9) Hence, all things in the universe have an assigned place and function according to their role in God's purpose. Jehovah sets the standard for how his creation should work together. Thus, the law of gravity holds the atmosphere close to the earth, regulates tides and oceans, and contributes to the physical order essential to life on earth. All creation, including humans, moves and functions within these boundaries. Clearly, the order in creation testifies that God has a purpose for earth and mankind. In our ministry, can we draw attention to the Cause of this impressive order?—Rev. 4:11.

<sup>6</sup> Jehovah's original purpose was for mankind to live forever here on earth. (Gen. 1:28; Ps. 37:29) He generously gave Adam and Eve a variety of precious gifts that enabled them to enjoy life. **(Read James 1:17.)** Jehovah gave them free will, the ability to reason, and the capacity to love and to enjoy friendship. The Creator spoke to Adam and instructed him on how to show his obedience. Adam also learned how to take care of his needs and how to care for the animals and the land. (Gen. 2:15-17, 19, 20) Jehovah also created Adam and Eve with the senses of taste, touch, sight, sound, and smell. Thus they could enjoy to the full the beauty and bounty of

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5. How does Jehovah ensure that all creation functions harmoniously?

6, 7. What are some gifts that Jehovah gave Adam and Eve?

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4. How does creation declare Jehovah's glory?

their Paradise home. For the first human pair, the possibilities for satisfying work, accomplishment, and discovery were endless.

<sup>7</sup> What else was part of God's purpose? Jehovah created Adam and Eve with the ability to have perfect children. God had in mind for their children to have children, until the human family filled the whole earth. He wanted Adam and Eve and all parents after them to love their children as Jehovah loved his first perfect human children. Earth, with all its resources, was to become their permanent home.—Ps. 115:16.

#### WHAT WENT WRONG?

<sup>8</sup> Things did not immediately work out as God had purposed. Why not? Jehovah gave Adam and Eve a simple law that served to test whether they recognized the limits of their freedom. He said: "From every tree of the garden you may eat to satisfaction. But as for the tree of the knowledge of good and bad, you must not eat from it, for in the day you eat from it you will certainly die." (Gen. 2:16, 17) It was not hard for Adam and Eve to understand this law; nor was it a hardship for them to obey it. After all, they had more food available than they could eat.

<sup>9</sup> Satan the Devil, using a serpent, fooled Eve into disobeying her Father, Jehovah. (**Read Genesis 3:1-5**; Rev. 12:9) Satan made an issue of the fact that God's human children were not allowed to eat "from every tree of the gar-

den." It was as if he were saying: "You mean you cannot do what you want?" Next, he told a blatant lie: "You certainly will not die." Then he tried to convince Eve that she need not listen to God, saying: "God knows that in the very day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened." Satan implied that Jehovah did not want them to eat the fruit because doing so would enlighten them. Further, Satan made this false promise: "You will be like God, knowing good and bad."

<sup>10</sup> Now Adam and Eve had to decide what to do. Would they obey Jehovah, or would they listen to the serpent? They decided to disobey God. By doing so, they joined Satan's rebellion. They rejected Jehovah as their Father and estranged themselves from the security of his protective rule.—Gen. 3:6-13.

<sup>11</sup> By rebelling against Jehovah, Adam and Eve lost their perfection. Moreover, their rebellion resulted in alienation from Jehovah because his "eyes are too pure to look on what is evil." Therefore, he "cannot tolerate wickedness." (Hab. 1:13) If he had tolerated it, the well-being of all living creatures—in heaven and on earth—would be threatened. Above all, had God done nothing about the sin committed in Eden, his own trustworthiness would have been called into question. But Jehovah is faithful to his own standards; he never violates them. (Ps. 119:142) Thus, having free will did not entitle Adam and Eve to disregard God's law. As a consequence of rebelling against Jehovah, they died and returned to the dust from which they had been created.—Gen. 3:19.

11. Why does Jehovah not tolerate rebellion?

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8. What purpose was served by the law found at Genesis 2:16, 17?

9, 10. (a) What accusation did Satan hurl against Jehovah? (b) What did Adam and Eve decide? (See opening image.)

<sup>12</sup> When Adam and Eve ate of that fruit, they put themselves in a position where they could no longer be accepted as members of God's universal family. God expelled them from Eden, and they had no hope of ever returning. (Gen. 3: 23, 24) In doing so, Jehovah justly made them face the consequences of their own decision. **(Read Deuteronomy 32: 4, 5.)** No longer perfect, man could not reflect God's qualities perfectly. Adam not only lost a marvelous future for himself but also handed down to his children imperfection, sin, and death. (Rom. 5:12) He deprived his offspring of the prospect of life without end. Furthermore, Adam and Eve could no longer have a perfect child; neither could any of their children have a perfect child. After turning Adam and Eve away from God, Satan the Devil has continued to mislead mankind until today. —John 8:44.

### THE RANSOM HEALS A RIFT

<sup>13</sup> God's love for humans, however, endures. Despite Adam and Eve's rebellion, Jehovah wants mankind to enjoy a good relationship with him. He does not desire any to die. (2 Pet. 3:9) So right after the rebellion, God made arrangements to enable humans to restore their friendship with him while he at the same time maintained his own righteous standards. How did Jehovah accomplish this?

<sup>14</sup> **Read John 3:16.** Many whom we

12. What happened to Adam's children?

13. What does Jehovah want for mankind?

14. (a) According to John 3:16, what provision did God make to restore mankind?  
(b) What question might we consider with interested ones?

invite to the Memorial will know this verse by heart. But the question is, *How does Jesus' sacrifice make everlasting life possible?* The Memorial campaign, the Memorial itself, and the calls we later make on those who attended may provide us with the opportunity to help sincere truth-seekers to understand the answer to that important question. Such ones may be impressed when they begin to understand to a fuller degree how Jehovah's love and wisdom are expressed by the ransom provision. What points about the ransom could we highlight?

<sup>15</sup> *Jehovah provided a perfect man who could become the ransomer.* That perfect man would need to be loyal to Jehovah and be willing to give his life in exchange for doomed humanity. (Rom. 5: 17-19) Jehovah transferred the life of his very first creation from heaven to earth. (John 1:14) Jesus thus became a perfect human, just as Adam had been. But unlike Adam, Jesus lived up to the standard Jehovah expected from a perfect man. Even under the most extreme tests, Jesus never sinned nor broke any of God's laws.

<sup>16</sup> *As a perfect man, Jesus could save humankind from sin and death by dying in their behalf.* He corresponded exactly to all that Adam should have been—a perfect man, absolutely loyal and obedient to God. (1 Tim. 2:6) Jesus became the ransom sacrifice that opened the way to endless life “for many”—men, women, and children. (Matt. 20:28) Indeed, the ransom is the key that unlocks the door to the fulfillment of God's original pur-

15. How did the man Jesus differ from the man Adam?

16. Why is the ransom such a precious gift?

pose. (2 Cor. 1:19, 20) The ransom gives all faithful humans the prospect of everlasting life.

### JEHOVAH OPENED THE DOOR FOR US TO RETURN

<sup>17</sup> Jehovah provided the ransom at great cost to himself. (1 Pet. 1:19) He values humanity so highly that he was willing to let his only-begotten Son die in our behalf. (1 John 4:9, 10) In a sense, Jesus takes the place of our original human father, Adam. (1 Cor. 15:45) By doing so, Jesus restores more than life; he gives us the opportunity to return eventually to God's family. Yes, on the basis of Jesus' sacrifice, Jehovah can accept humans back into his family without compromising his righteousness. Is it not heartwarming to think of a time when all faithful humans will be brought to perfection? There will be complete unity between the heavenly and earthly parts of his family. In the fullest sense, we will all be children of God.—Rom. 8:21.

<sup>18</sup> Satan's rebellion did not stop Jehovah from extending his love to mankind, nor can it prevent even imperfect humans from being loyal to Jehovah. Through his provision of the ransom, Jehovah will help all of his children to become completely righteous. Imagine what life will be like when everyone "who recognizes the Son and exercises faith" will have everlasting life. (John 6:40) With great love and wisdom, Jehovah will bring the human family to perfection, according to his original purpose. Jehovah, our Father, will

17. What does the ransom make possible?

18. When will Jehovah become "all things to everyone"?



## Let Us Keep Searching Out Deserving Ones

THE Memorial invitation is one of the most widely circulated publications that we print. Last year, we produced some 440,000,000 copies in more than 530 languages. Do you still have some printed copies of this year's invitation that you could distribute before the Memorial? One of the remaining invitations that you have might help a deserving one to make the decision to attend the Memorial. Who knows?—Matt. 10:11.

then become "all things to everyone."  
—1 Cor. 15:28.

<sup>19</sup> Gratitude for the ransom should motivate us to do all we can to make others aware that they can benefit from that priceless gift. People need to know that the ransom is the means by which Jehovah lovingly offers all mankind the prospect of everlasting life. Still, the ransom accomplished even more than that. The next article will consider how Jesus' sacrifice also addresses the moral issues that were raised by Satan back in the garden of Eden.

19. (a) Gratitude for the ransom should move us to do what? (See the box "Let Us Keep Searching Out Deserving Ones.") (b) What aspect of the ransom will we consider next?





# The Ransom

## A “Perfect Present” From the Father

*“Every good gift and every perfect present is from . . . the Father.”—JAS. 1:17.*

SONGS: 20, 15

### WHAT ROLE DOES THE RANSOM PLAY IN . . .

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the sanctification of  
Jehovah’s name?

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the rule of God’s Kingdom?

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the accomplishment of  
God’s purpose?

MANY are the blessings made possible by the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The ransom arrangement opens the door for all those of Adam’s children who love righteousness eventually to become part of God’s family. The ransom also makes it possible for us to have the opportunity to live forever in happiness. Still, Christ’s ransom does more than provide a blessed future for obedient mankind. Jesus’ willingness to die while upholding Jehovah’s righteousness addresses matters of universal importance.—Heb. 1:8, 9.

<sup>2</sup> Some two years before Jesus died and provided the ransom sacrifice, he taught his disciples to pray: “Our Father in the heavens, let your *name* be sanctified. Let your *Kingdom* come. Let your *will* take place, as in heaven, also on earth.” (Matt. 6:9, 10) To heighten our appreciation for the ransom,

1. The ransom arrangement makes possible what blessings?
2. (a) What matters of universal importance are found in Jesus’ prayer? (See opening image.) (b) What will we consider in this article?



let us consider how it relates to the sanctification of God's name, the rule of God's Kingdom, and the accomplishment of God's purpose.

### **"LET YOUR NAME BE SANCTIFIED"**

<sup>3</sup> Jesus mentioned the sanctification of God's name as the first request in his model prayer. Jehovah's name embraces the full scope of His excellence, majesty, and holiness. In another prayer, Jesus addressed Jehovah as "Holy Father." (John 17:11) Since Jehovah is holy, all principles and laws that originate with him are holy. In spite of this, in the garden of Eden, Satan slyly questioned God's right to set standards for humans. By lying about Jehovah, Satan slandered God's sacred name.—Gen. 3:1-5.

<sup>4</sup> Jesus, on the other hand, truly loved the name of Jehovah. (John 17:25, 26) Jesus contributed to the sanctification of the divine name. **(Read Psalm 40:8-10.)** By his perfect life course on earth, Jesus proved that it is reasonable and righteous for Jehovah to set standards for his intelligent creatures. Even when Satan subjected Jesus to an agonizing death, Jesus remained completely loyal to his heavenly Father. By being loyal, Jesus proved that a perfect human could maintain perfect obedience to God's righteous standards.

<sup>5</sup> How can we show that we love Jehovah's name? By our conduct. Jehovah

requires that we be holy. **(Read 1 Peter 1:15, 16.)** This means that we worship only Jehovah and that we obey him with our whole heart. Even when we are persecuted, we do our best to live according to his righteous principles and laws. By performing righteous deeds, we let our light shine and thus bring glory to Jehovah's name. (Matt. 5:14-16) As holy people, we prove by the way we live our lives that Jehovah's laws are good and that Satan's accusations are false. When we make mistakes, as we all do, we genuinely repent and turn away from practices that dishonor Jehovah.—Ps. 79:9.

<sup>6</sup> On the basis of Christ's sacrifice, Jehovah forgives the sins of those who exercise faith. He accepts as his worshipers those who dedicate themselves to him. Jehovah declares anointed Christians righteous as his sons and those of the "other sheep" righteous as his friends. (John 10:16; Rom. 5:1, 2; Jas. 2:21-25) So even now, the ransom enables us to have a righteous standing with our Father and to share in the sanctification of his name.

### **"LET YOUR KINGDOM COME"**

<sup>7</sup> In the model prayer, Jesus next petitioned God: "Let your Kingdom come." How does the ransom relate to the Kingdom of God? The ransom makes possible the gathering of 144,000 to serve as kings and priests with Christ in heaven. (Rev. 5:9, 10; 14:1) Jesus and his

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3. What does Jehovah's name embrace, and how did Satan slander that sacred name?

4. How did Jesus contribute to the sanctification of God's name?

5. How can we share in sanctifying God's name?

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6. Why can Jehovah view us as righteous, even though we are imperfect?

7. What blessings under Kingdom rule does the ransom make possible?

corulers, who together make up God's Kingdom, will administer the benefits of the ransom to obedient mankind over a period of a thousand years. The earth will be transformed into a paradise, and all faithful humans will be lifted to perfection, fully uniting the heavenly and earthly parts of God's family. (Rev. 5:13; 20:6) Jesus will crush the serpent's head and erase from the universe all traces of Satan's rebellion.—Gen. 3:15.

<sup>8</sup> While on earth, Jesus helped his disciples to see the importance of God's Kingdom. Immediately after his baptism, Jesus proclaimed "the good news of the Kingdom of God" far and wide. (Luke 4:43) In his last words to his disciples before he returned to heaven, Jesus instructed them to be witnesses of him "to the most distant part of the earth." (Acts 1:6-8) By means of the Kingdom-preaching work, people throughout the earth would have an opportunity to learn about the ransom and become subjects of God's Kingdom. Today, we show our support for the Kingdom by assisting Christ's brothers on earth in carrying out the commission to preach the good news of the Kingdom worldwide.—Matt. 24:14; 25:40.

### **"LET YOUR WILL TAKE PLACE"**

<sup>9</sup> What did Jesus mean when he next said: "Let your will take place"? Jehovah is the Creator. Once he gives the word for something to happen, it is as good as done. (Isa. 55:11) He will not al-

low Satan's rebellion to derail His purpose for mankind. From the beginning, it was Jehovah's will for the earth to be filled with the perfect children of Adam and Eve. (Gen. 1:28) Had Adam and Eve died childless, God's purpose to fill the earth with their offspring would have come to nothing. Thus, after Adam and Eve sinned, Jehovah allowed them to have children. Through the ransom, God gives all who exercise faith the opportunity to reach perfection and live forever. Jehovah loves people, and it is his will that obedient humans live the way he intended.

<sup>10</sup> What about the billions of people who died without ever having an opportunity to know and serve Jehovah? The ransom makes possible the resurrection of the dead. Our loving heavenly Father will bring them back to life and give them an opportunity to learn about his purpose and to gain everlasting life. (Acts 24:15) Jehovah wants people to live, not die. As the Source of life, he becomes the Father of everyone who is resurrected. (Ps. 36:9) How appropriate, therefore, that Jesus taught us to pray: "Our *Father* in the heavens." (Matt. 6:9) Jehovah has given Jesus an important share in resurrecting the dead. (John 6:40, 44) In Paradise, Jesus will fulfill his role as "the resurrection and the life."—John 11:25.

<sup>11</sup> Jehovah's generosity is not limited to a few privileged people, for Jesus said: "*Whoever* does the will of God, this one is my brother and sister and mother." (Mark 3:35) It is God's will that a

8. (a) How did Jesus help his disciples to see the importance of God's Kingdom? (b) How do we show our support for the Kingdom today?

9. Why can we be confident that Jehovah will fulfill his purpose for mankind?

10. How does the ransom benefit humans who have died?

11. What is God's will for the "great crowd"?

numberless “great crowd” from all nations and tribes and tongues become his worshippers. Those who exercise faith in Christ’s ransom and who do the will of God can be among those who shout: “Salvation we owe to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb.” —Rev. 7:9, 10.

<sup>12</sup> Jehovah’s purpose for obedient mankind is reflected in the petitions found in Jesus’ model prayer. In harmony with this prayer, we want to do our utmost to sanctify, or treat as holy, Jehovah’s name. (Isa. 8:13) Jesus’ own name means “Jehovah Is Salvation,” and our salvation by means of the ransom brings honor and glory to Jehovah’s name. God’s Kingdom will be used to apply the benefits of the ransom to obedient mankind. Indeed, the model prayer assures us that nothing can stop the will of God from taking place.—Ps. 135:6; Isa. 46:9, 10.

### SHOW YOUR GRATITUDE FOR THE RANSOM

<sup>13</sup> One important way in which we show gratitude for the ransom is by dedicating ourselves to Jehovah on the basis of our faith in the ransom and getting baptized. Our baptism shows that “we belong to Jehovah.” (Rom. 14:8) It represents our request to God for a good conscience. (1 Pet. 3:21) Jehovah responds to that request by applying the cleansing blood of Christ’s sacrifice to us. We are fully confident that he will give us all that he has promised.—Rom. 8:32.

12. How is Jehovah’s purpose for obedient mankind reflected in the model prayer?

13. What do we show by our baptism?



In what ways do we show our gratitude for the ransom?  
(See paragraphs 13, 14)



<sup>14</sup> What is yet another way to show our gratitude for the ransom? Since everything Jehovah does is influenced by love, it is his will that all his worshippers display love as their dominant quality. (1 John 4:8-11) We prove that we desire to be “sons of [our] Father who is in the heavens” by loving our neighbor. (Matt. 5:43-48) The command to love our neighbor is second only to the command to love Jehovah. (Matt. 22:37-40) One important way that we show such love for neighbor is by obeying the command to preach the good news of God’s Kingdom. As we show love for fellow humans, we reflect God’s glory. In fact, love for God is “made perfect in us” when we obey the command to love others, especially our brothers.—1 John 4:12, 20.

**THE RANSOM BRINGS  
“SEASONS OF REFRESHING”  
FROM JEHOVAH**

<sup>15</sup> The door to complete forgiveness opens to us when we exercise faith in the ransom. God’s Word assures us that our sins can be “blotted out.” (**Read Acts 3:19-21.**) As we considered earlier, on the basis of the ransom, Jehovah adopts his spirit-anointed servants as his children. (Rom. 8:15-17) As to those of us who are of the “other sheep,” it is as though Jehovah has drawn up an adoption certificate with our name on it. After we have reached perfection and have passed the final test, Jehovah will be delighted to sign the certificate, as it

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14. Why are we commanded to love our neighbor?

15. (a) What blessings do we now receive from Jehovah? (b) What blessings await us?

were, and adopt us as his beloved earthly children. (Rom. 8:20, 21; Rev. 20:7-9) Jehovah’s love for his precious children is everlasting. The benefits of the ransom last forever. (Heb. 9:12) This gift will never lose its value. No person or power can take it away from us.

<sup>16</sup> There is nothing that the Devil can do to prevent all who genuinely repent from eventually becoming part of Jehovah’s family. Jesus came to earth and died “once for all time.” Thus the ransom has been paid permanently. (Heb. 9:24-26) It completely cancels the condemnation inherited from Adam. Thanks to Christ’s sacrifice, we are free from enslavement to this world under Satan’s control, and we no longer live in fear of death.—Heb. 2:14, 15.

<sup>17</sup> God’s promises are absolutely reliable. Just as his laws of creation never fail, Jehovah will never fail us. He does not change. (Mal. 3:6) Jehovah gives us far more than just the gift of life. He gives us his love. “We have come to know and believe the love that God has for us. God is love.” (1 John 4:16) The whole earth will be made a paradise of exquisite delight, and everyone on earth will reflect God’s love. May we join our voices with those of God’s faithful heavenly creatures in saying: “Let the praise and the glory and the wisdom and the thanksgiving and the honor and the power and the strength be to our God forever and ever. Amen.” —Rev. 7:12.

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16. How does the ransom enable us to be truly free?

17. What does Jehovah’s love mean to you?



# We Experienced God's Undeserved Kindness in Many Ways

AS TOLD BY DOUGLAS GUEST

AS A God-fearing young man, my father, Arthur, hoped to become a Methodist minister. However, his plans changed when he read the literature of the Bible Students and began to associate with them. He was baptized in 1914 at 17 years of age. World War I was then raging, and he received a call for military service. Because he would not bear arms, he was sentenced to a ten-month term in the Kingston Penitentiary in Ontario, Canada. After his release, Father entered the full-time ministry as a colporteur (pioneer).

In 1926, Arthur Guest married Hazel Wilkinson, whose mother had learned the truth in 1908. I was born on April 24, 1931, the second of their four children. Our family life centered on the worship of Jehovah, and Father's deep respect for the Bible nurtured in us a lifelong apprecia-

tion for God's Word. We regularly engaged in the house-to-house ministry as a family.—Acts 20:20.

## MAINTAINING NEUTRALITY AND PIONEERING LIKE DAD

World War II broke out in 1939, and the next year the activity of Jehovah's Witnesses in Canada was banned. Public schools held patriotic ceremonies that included saluting the flag and singing the national anthem. My eldest sister, Dorothy, and I were dismissed from the classroom during these sessions. To my surprise, one day my teacher tried to shame me by saying that I was a coward. After school, several classmates assaulted me and knocked me to the ground. But that attack actually strengthened my resolve to "obey God as ruler rather than men."—Acts 5:29.



**1918-1919**

Father was imprisoned because he would not bear arms



**1926**

My parents got married

**1940's**

Pioneering as a youth



**1949**

My first public talk



In July 1942, at the age of 11, I was baptized in a water tank on a farm. I enjoyed serving as a vacation pioneer (now called an auxiliary pioneer) during yearly school breaks. One year I joined three other brothers in witnessing to loggers living in unassigned territory in northern Ontario.

On May 1, 1949, I became a regular pioneer. Since the branch was doing construction work, I was invited to help and became a member of the Canada Bethel family on December 1. I was assigned to the printery and learned to operate the flatbed press. I was on the night shift for several weeks, printing a tract related to the persecution that Jehovah's people were experiencing in Canada.

Later, while working in the Service Department, I interviewed pioneers who were visiting the branch office on their way to serve in Quebec, then a hotbed of opposition. One of the visitors was Mary Zazula from Edmonton, Alberta. Because she and her elder brother, Joe, refused to stop studying the Bible, they were expelled from home by zealous Orthodox parents. In June 1951, both were baptized, and six months later, they began pioneering. During the interview, I was impressed by Mary's spiritual attitude. I said to myself, 'Unless something negative

turns up, this looks like the girl I will marry.' We got married nine months later—on January 30, 1954. One week later, we were invited to receive training for circuit work, and for the next two years, we served a circuit in northern Ontario.

As the worldwide preaching work mushroomed, a call went out for missionaries. We thought that if we could take Canada's ice-cold winters and the annoying mosquitoes in the summer, we should be able to survive adverse circumstances in any assignment. We graduated from the 27th class of Gilead School in July 1956, and by November we were in our assignment—Brazil.

### MISSIONARY ACTIVITY IN BRAZIL

When we arrived at the branch in Brazil, we were introduced to the Portuguese language. After learning basic forms of address and memorizing a one-minute magazine presentation, we were invited to begin engaging in the field service. If a householder showed interest, it was suggested that we read scriptures describing life under God's Kingdom. On our first day in the field ministry, one lady listened attentively, so I read Revelation 21:3, 4—and then I fainted! My body had not adjusted to the hot, humid weather, and this was to be an ongoing challenge.

Warner Photographic Ltd.



**1950's**

Bethel service  
in Canada



**1954**

Our wedding day



**1956**

Gilead graduation



**CANADA**

Our missionary assignment was the city of Campos, where there are now 15 congregations. When we arrived, there was only one isolated group in the city as well as a missionary home with four sisters: Esther Tracy, Ramona Bauer, Luiza Schwarz, and Lorraine Brookes (now Wallen). My assignment in the home was to help with the laundry and to obtain wood for cooking meals. After our *Watchtower* Study one Monday night, we had an unexpected visitor. My wife had stretched out on a sofa to rest while we were talking about the day's activity. When she raised her head from the pillow to get up, out came a snake that caused quite a commotion until I killed it!

After studying Portuguese for a year, I was appointed to be a circuit overseer. We led a simple life in rural areas—doing without electricity, sleeping on mats, and traveling by horse and buggy. During a witnessing campaign in unassigned territory, we traveled by train to a town in the mountains and rented a room in a boarding-house. The branch office sent us 800 magazines to use in the ministry. We had to make many trips to the post office to pick up the boxes of magazines and carry them to our accommodations.

In 1962, the Kingdom Ministry School was held throughout Brazil for brothers and missionary

sisters. For six months, I was assigned to travel to one school after another—but without Mary. I taught classes in Manaus, Belém, Fortaleza, Recife, and Salvador. I organized a district convention in the famous opera house in Manaus. Heavy rains contaminated much of the drinking water and left us without a decent cafeteria area for the convention. (In those days, meals were served at conventions.) I contacted the military, and a kind officer gladly arranged to supply drinking water for the entire convention and sent soldiers to erect two large tents for our kitchen and cafeteria.

While I was away, Mary witnessed in a Portuguese commercial district, where making money was the only subject of interest. She was unable to start a Bible conversation with anyone, so she said to some Bethelites, “The last place on earth I would want to live is Portugal.” Surprise! Shortly thereafter, we received a letter inviting us to serve in Portugal. At that time, our preaching work was under ban there, but we accepted the assignment despite Mary’s initial shock.

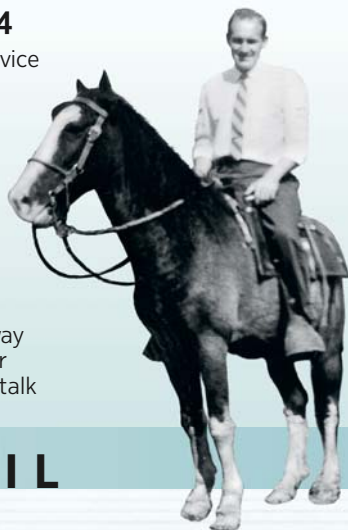
### OUR ASSIGNMENT IN PORTUGAL

We arrived in Lisbon, Portugal, in August of 1964. Our brothers were the target of much

#### 1956-1964

Missionary service  
in Brazil

On my way  
to deliver  
a public talk



Releasing one of our  
publications on television





persecution by the Portuguese secret police (PIDE). In view of this, it was best that we arrive without any welcome and avoid contact with the local Witnesses. We stayed in a boarding-house while awaiting residence authorization. After we obtained our visas, we rented an apartment. In January 1965, contact was finally made with the branch office. What a happy day it was when we attended our first meeting in five months!

We learned that the police were making daily raids on the homes of our brothers. Because Kingdom Halls were being closed, congregation meetings were held in private homes. Hundreds of Witnesses ended up at police stations for identification and questioning. Brothers were particularly mistreated in an attempt to get them to reveal the names of those conducting meetings. As a result, the brothers adopted the practice of identifying one another by their given names, such as José or Paulo, rather than by their surnames. So we did the same.

Providing our brothers with spiritual food was of utmost concern. Mary's assignment was to type *Watchtower* study articles and other literature on stencils that served to produce mimeographed copies.

## DEFENDING THE GOOD NEWS IN COURT

In June 1966, an outstanding court case was held in Lisbon. All 49 members of the Feijó Congregation were brought to trial for attending an illegal meeting in a private home. I prepared them for the trial and cross-examination by pretending to be the prosecuting attorney. We knew that we would lose the case, but we realized that a great witness would result. Our lawyer concluded his defense by courageously quoting Gamaliel of the first century. (Acts 5:33-39) News of the case hit the press, and the 49 brothers and sisters served terms ranging from 45 days to five and a half months. We are happy to say that our courageous lawyer accepted a Bible study and was attending meetings before he died.

In December 1966, I was appointed branch overseer and spent much time on legal matters. A solid record for the right of Jehovah's Witnesses to enjoy freedom of worship was established. (Phil. 1:7) Legal recognition was finally granted on December 18, 1974. Brothers Nathan Knorr and Frederick Franz, from world headquarters, visited Portugal to share our joy at a historic meeting in Oporto and Lisbon with a combined attendance of 46,870.

### 1964

Start of missionary work in Portugal

Brother Knorr visited during the ban



### 1966

During the court case in Lisbon, many brothers waited outside to show their support



### 1974

Thousands gathered when the ban was lifted





Jehovah had opened the door for expansion in several islands in which Portuguese is spoken, including the Azores, Cape Verde, Madeira, and São Tomé and Príncipe. Our resulting need for larger branch facilities was met in 1988. On April 23 of that year, Brother Milton Henschel presided at the dedication of the new facilities in the presence of an enthusiastic audience of 45,522. It was heartwarming to have 20 brothers and sisters who had served as missionaries in Portugal return for that historic event.

### WE BENEFITED FROM FAITHFUL EXAMPLES

Over the years, association with faithful brothers has greatly enriched our lives. I learned a valuable lesson assisting Brother Theodore Jaracz on a zone visit. The branch being visited was facing a serious situation, and the members of the Branch Committee had done all they reasonably could. Putting them at ease, Brother Jaracz said: “Now it is time to leave some space for holy spirit to work.” During a visit to Brooklyn several decades ago, my wife, Mary, and I spent an evening with Brother Franz and a few others. When asked to close the evening by saying something about his many years in Jehovah’s service, Brother Franz commented: “My recommenda-

tion is: Stay with Jehovah’s visible organization through thick and thin. It is the only one doing the work Jesus commanded his disciples to do —preach the good news of God’s Kingdom!”

My wife and I have found real enjoyment doing just that. We treasure the memories of zone visits to branches. These visits gave us the opportunity to show appreciation for the faithful service of young and old alike and to encourage them to continue in their special privilege of serving Jehovah.

The years have rolled by, and both of us are in our 80’s. Mary struggles with numerous health problems. (2 Cor. 12:9) Trials have served to refine our faith and strengthen our determination to maintain integrity. When reflecting on our life course, we readily admit that we have experienced Jehovah’s undeserved kindness in many, many ways.\*

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\* While this article was being prepared for publication, Douglas Guest died faithful to Jehovah on October 25, 2015.

Brothers Knorr and Franz attended a historic meeting in Oporto and Lisbon



We treasure our memories of over 60 years in Jehovah’s service





# Jehovah Leads His People

*“Jehovah will always lead you.”—ISA. 58:11.*

SONGS: 3, 4

## CAN YOU EXPLAIN?

How did the leaders of God’s ancient people and Jesus Christ give evidence that they were . . .

empowered by holy spirit?

assisted by angels?

guided by God’s Word?

“WHO is your leader?” That is a question often put to Jehovah’s Witnesses. And no wonder! In many religions, one man or one woman acts as leader, or chief. In contrast, we are proud to tell those who inquire that our Leader is not an imperfect human. Rather, we follow the lead of the resurrected Christ, who in turn follows the lead of his Father, Jehovah.—Matt. 23:10.

<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, there is a visible group of men, “the faithful and discreet slave,” who take the lead among God’s people today. (Matt. 24:45) So how do we know that it really is Jehovah who is leading us by means of his invisible Son? In this article and the next, we will examine how for millenniums Jehovah has directed certain humans to take the lead. Both articles will consider three lines of evidence that Jehovah has indeed been behind those men, proving that he was—and still is—the true Leader of his people.—Isa. 58:11.

## EMPOWERED BY HOLY SPIRIT

<sup>3</sup> *Holy spirit empowered God’s representatives.* Consider Moses, who was commissioned to be the leader of the Israelites.

1, 2. (a) How do those taking the lead among Jehovah’s Witnesses differ from those doing so in other religions? (b) What will we consider in this article and the next?

3. What empowered Moses to lead Israel?

What equipped him to care for that weighty assignment? Jehovah “put within him His holy spirit.” (**Read Isaiah 63:11-14.**) By empowering Moses with holy spirit, Jehovah continued to lead His people.

<sup>4</sup> Since holy spirit is an invisible force, how could the Israelites discern that it was operating on Moses? Holy spirit enabled Moses to perform miracles and to declare God’s name to Pharaoh. (Ex. 7: 1-3) Holy spirit also produced in Moses beautiful qualities, such as love, meekness, and patience, that qualified him to lead the Israelites. What a contrast to the harsh and self-centered leaders of other lands! (Ex. 5:2, 6-9) The evidence was clear: Jehovah had selected Moses to be the leader of His people.

<sup>5</sup> Later, Jehovah’s holy spirit empowered other men whom he appointed to lead his people. “Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom.” (Deut. 34:9) “Jehovah’s spirit came upon Gideon.” (Judg. 6:34) And “the spirit of Jehovah began to empower David.” (1 Sam. 16:13) All those men relied on God’s spirit to help them, and that spirit empowered them to perform feats that they could not have done in their own strength. (Josh. 11:16, 17; Judg. 7:7, 22; 1 Sam. 17:37, 50) As a result, Jehovah rightly received praise for those mighty acts.

<sup>6</sup> How should the Israelites have responded to clear evidence that those men were empowered by holy spirit?

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4. How could the Israelites discern that Moses had God’s spirit? (See opening image.)

5. Explain how Jehovah empowered other Israelite men to lead his people.

6. Why did God want his people to respect the leaders in Israel?

When the people complained about Moses’ leadership, Jehovah asked: “How much longer will this people treat *me* without respect?” (Num. 14:2, 11) Indeed, *Jehovah* chose Moses, Joshua, Gideon, and David to represent him as Leader. When the people obeyed these men, they were actually following Jehovah as Leader.

### ASSISTED BY ANGELS

<sup>7</sup> *Angels assisted God’s representatives.* (**Read Hebrews 1:7, 14.**) Jehovah employed angels to commission, equip, and guide Moses. God sent Moses “as both ruler and deliverer by means of the angel who appeared to him in the thornbush.” (Acts 7:35) Jehovah “transmitted through angels” the Law, which Moses used to instruct the Israelites. (Gal. 3:19) And Jehovah told him: “Lead the people to the place about which I have spoken to you. Look! My angel will go ahead of you.” (Ex. 32:34) The Bible does not report that the Israelites saw a materialized angel perform those duties. However, the way Moses instructed and guided the people made it clear that he had superhuman help.

<sup>8</sup> After Moses’ time, his successor, Joshua, was strengthened by “the prince of Jehovah’s army” to lead God’s people into battle against the Canaanites; and the Israelites won the victory. (Josh. 5:13-15; 6:2, 21) Later, King Hezekiah faced an overwhelming force of Assyrian soldiers who threatened to invade Jerusalem. In one night, “the angel of Jehovah went out and struck down 185,000 men.”—2 Ki. 19:35.

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7. How did angels assist Moses?

8. What help did angels give to Joshua and Hezekiah?

<sup>9</sup> Of course, while the angels are perfect, the men whom they assisted were not. Moses once failed to sanctify Jehovah. (Num. 20:12) Joshua neglected to seek God's guidance before concluding a covenant with the Gibeonites. (Josh. 9:14, 15) For a brief period, Hezekiah's "heart became haughty." (2 Chron. 32:25, 26) Nevertheless, despite the imperfections of these men, the Israelites were expected to follow their lead. Jehovah was supporting those men with his superhuman agents. Yes, Jehovah was leading his people.

### GUIDED BY GOD'S WORD

<sup>10</sup> *God's Word guided his representatives.* The Bible refers to the Law given to Israel as "the Law of Moses." (1 Ki. 2:3) Nevertheless, the Scriptures identify Jehovah as the actual Lawgiver, and Moses himself was subject to that Law. (2 Chron. 34:14) After Jehovah had given instructions on how to set up the tabernacle, "Moses did according to all that Jehovah had commanded him. He did just so."—Ex. 40:1-16.

<sup>11</sup> From the beginning of his leadership, Joshua had a written record of God's Word. "You must read it in an undertone day and night," he was told, "in order to observe carefully all that is written in it." (Josh. 1:8) Later, the kings who ruled God's people followed a similar routine. They were obligated to read the Law daily, write a copy of it,

and "observe all the words of this Law and these regulations by carrying them out."—**Read Deuteronomy 17:18-20.**

<sup>12</sup> What effect did God's Word have on the men who took the lead? Consider the example of King Josiah. After a document containing the Mosaic Law was found, Josiah's secretary began to read it to him.\* How did the king react? "As soon as the king heard the words of the book of the Law, he ripped his garments apart." But he did more. Guided by God's Word, Josiah began a vigorous campaign against idolatry and arranged an unprecedented celebration of the Passover. (2 Ki. 22:11; 23:1-23) Because Josiah and other faithful leaders were guided by God's Word, they were willing to adjust and clarify the direction they gave to God's people. Those changes brought God's ancient people into harmony with his will.

<sup>13</sup> How different those faithful kings were from the leaders of other nations, men who were guided by human wisdom and shortsighted strategy! Under Canaanite leadership, people did detestable things, which included incest, homosexuality, bestiality, child sacrifice, and gross idolatry. (Lev. 18:6, 21-25) Moreover, Babylonian and Egyptian leaders did not follow the scientifically sound practices on hygiene that God gave to Israel. (Num. 19:13) In contrast, God's ancient people saw how their faithful leaders promoted spiritual, moral, and physical cleanness. Clearly, Jehovah was leading them.

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\* This may have been the original document written by Moses.

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9. Did the imperfections of God's representatives excuse the Israelites from following their lead? Explain.

10. How was Moses guided by God's Law?

11, 12. (a) What were Joshua and the kings who ruled God's people required to do? (b) How did God's Word affect the leaders of God's people?

13. What contrast existed between the leaders of God's people and those of pagan nations?



<sup>14</sup> Not all the kings who ruled God's ancient people followed God's instructions. Those who did not obey Jehovah refused to accept the guidance of God's holy spirit, his angels, and his Word. In some cases, Jehovah disciplined or replaced those leaders. (1 Sam. 13:13, 14) In his own due time, he appointed someone who would be superior to any of the men he had used thus far.

### JEHOVAH APPOINTS A PERFECT LEADER

<sup>15</sup> For centuries, Jehovah prophesied that he would appoint a uniquely qualified leader for his people. "Jehovah your God will raise up for you from among your brothers a prophet like me," Moses told the Israelites. "You must listen to him." (Deut. 18:15) Isaiah foretold that this One would become "a leader and commander." (Isa. 55:4) And Daniel was inspired to write about the coming of "Messiah the Leader." (Dan. 9:25) Finally, Jesus Christ identified himself as "the Leader" of God's people. **(Read Matthew 23:10.)** Jesus' disciples followed him willingly, and they affirmed that he was Jehovah's choice. (John 6:68, 69) What convinced them that Jesus Christ was the one through whom Jehovah was leading his people?

<sup>16</sup> *Holy spirit empowered Jesus.* At Jesus' baptism, John the Baptizer saw "the heavens being parted and, like a dove, the spirit coming down upon

14. Why did Jehovah discipline some of the leaders of his people?

15. (a) How did the prophets indicate that a unique leader was coming? (b) Who was the prophesied leader?

16. What proved that Jesus was empowered by holy spirit?



How did angels assist Jesus shortly after his baptism?  
(See paragraph 17)

him." Thereafter, "the spirit impelled him to go into the wilderness." (Mark 1:10-12) For the rest of Jesus' earthly ministry, God's holy spirit empowered Jesus to perform miracles and to speak with divine authority. (Acts 10:38) In addition, holy spirit produced in Jesus perfect fruitage, including love, joy, and stalwart faith. (John 15:9; Heb. 12:2) No other leader provided such convincing evidence. Jesus was Jehovah's choice.

<sup>17</sup> *Angels assisted Jesus.* Shortly after Jesus was baptized, "angels came and began to minister to him." (Matt. 4:11) Hours before his death, "an angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him." (Luke 22:43) Jesus was confident that Jehovah would send angelic help whenever he needed it to accomplish God's will.—Matt. 26:53.

17. What did angels do to assist Jesus?

<sup>18</sup> *God's Word guided Jesus.* From the beginning of his ministry, Jesus allowed the Scriptures to direct him. (Matt. 4:4) In fact, his obedience to God's Word went as far as submitting to death on a torture stake. Even his final words before he died included quotations of Messianic prophecies. (Matt. 27:46; Luke 23:46) In contrast, the religious leaders of that time disregarded God's Word whenever it contradicted their own traditions. Quoting Jehovah's words through the prophet Isaiah, Jesus said about them: "This people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far removed from me. It is in vain that they keep worshipping me, for they teach commands of men as doctrines." (Matt. 15:7-9) Could Jehovah really choose any of those men to lead his people?

<sup>19</sup> Jesus allowed God's Word to guide not only his actions but also his teaching. When confronted with religious controversies, he appealed neither to his vast wisdom nor to his unparalleled experience. Instead, he held up the Scriptures as the final authority. (Matt. 22:33-40) And rather than regale his listeners with personal stories about life in heaven or the creation of the universe, "he opened up their minds fully to grasp the meaning of the Scriptures." (Luke 24:32, 45) Jesus loved God's Word, and he was eager to share it with others.

<sup>20</sup> Although Jesus amazed his listen-

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18, 19. How did God's Word guide Jesus' life and teaching?

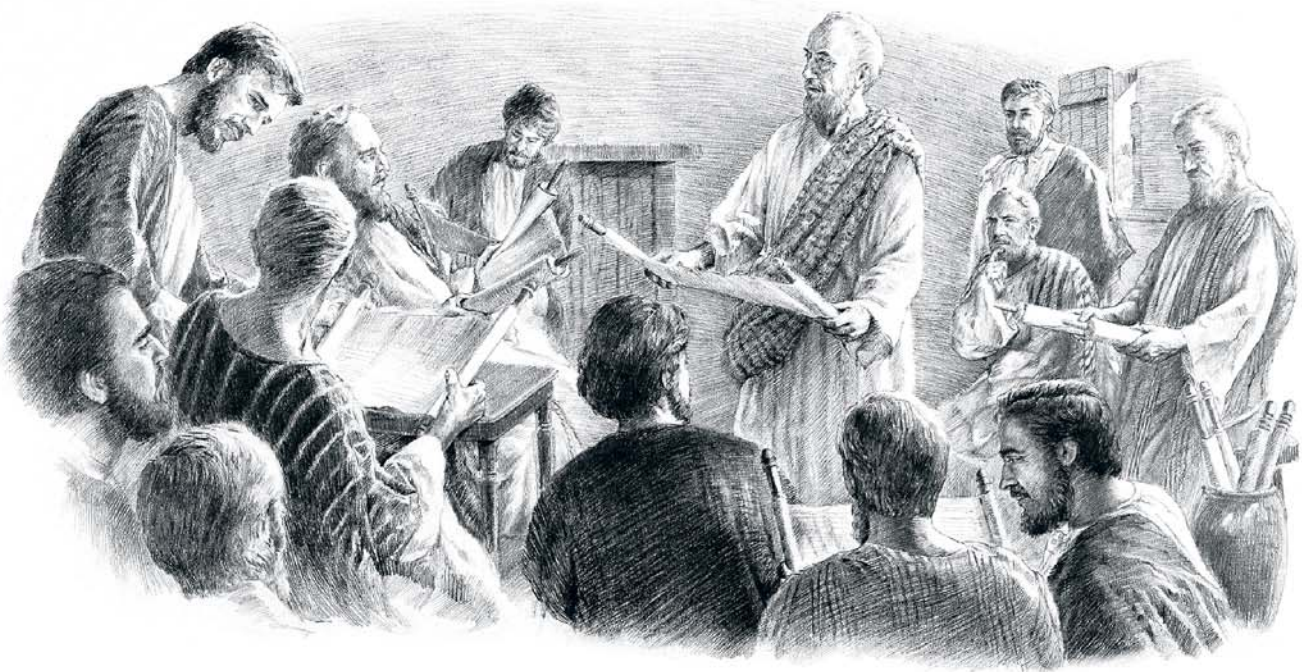
20. (a) How did Jesus acknowledge his submission to God? (b) What does the contrast between Jesus and Herod Agrippa I teach us about Jehovah's choice of a leader?

ers with "gracious words," he gave credit to *his* Teacher, Jehovah. (Luke 4:22) When a rich man tried to glorify Jesus with the title "Good Teacher," Jesus modestly replied: "Why do you call me good? Nobody is good except one, God." (Mark 10:17, 18) What a contrast to Herod Agrippa I, who became king, or leader, of Judea about eight years later! At a diplomatic function, Herod clothed himself "with royal raiment." His adoring crowd shouted: "A god's voice, and not a man's!" Herod evidently basked in the praise. What happened next? "Instantly the angel of Jehovah struck him, because he did not give the glory to God, and he was eaten up with worms and died." (Acts 12:21-23) Surely, no objective observer could conclude that Herod was chosen by Jehovah to be leader. Jesus, on the other hand, gave convincing evidence of being appointed by God, and he constantly glorified Jehovah as the Supreme Leader of his people.

<sup>21</sup> Jesus' leadership was not meant to last only a few years. "All authority has been given me in heaven and on the earth," he declared after his resurrection. "And look! I am with you all the days until the conclusion of the system of things." (Matt. 28:18-20) But as an invisible spirit in heaven, how would Jesus lead God's people on earth? Whom would Jehovah use to work under Christ's leadership and take the lead among His people? And how would Christians be able to recognize his representatives? The next article will consider the answers to those questions.

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21. What will we discuss in the next article?



## Who Is Leading God's People Today?

*“Remember those who are taking the lead among you.”*

—HEB. 13:7.

JESUS' apostles stood on the Mount of Olives, gazing at the sky. They had just seen their master and friend, Jesus, lifted up and obscured by a cloud. (Acts 1:9, 10) For some two years, Jesus had taught, encouraged, and led them. Now he was gone. What would they do?

<sup>2</sup> Jesus had given his followers a commission: “You will be witnesses of me in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the most distant part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8) How could they possibly complete that assignment? True, Jesus had assured them that they would soon receive holy spirit. (Acts 1:5) Still, an international preaching campaign required direction and organization. To direct and organize his people in ancient times, Jehovah used visible representatives. Hence, the apostles might have wondered, ‘Will Jehovah now appoint a new leader?’

1, 2. After Jesus' ascension to heaven, what might his apostles have wondered?

SONGS: 123, 126

### CAN YOU EXPLAIN?

In the first century and today, how have those taking the lead among God's people been . . .

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empowered by holy spirit?

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assisted by angels?

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guided by God's Word?

<sup>3</sup> Less than two weeks later, Jesus' disciples consulted the Scriptures, prayed for divine direction, and chose Matthias to replace Judas Iscariot as the 12th apostle. (Acts 1:15-26) Why was this selection so important to them and to Jehovah? Matthias filled a vital organizational need.\* Jesus had selected his apostles not merely to accompany him in his ministry but to play a crucial role among God's people. What was that role, and how did Jehovah through Jesus equip them to fill it? What similar arrangement exists among God's people today? And how can we "remember those who are taking the lead" among us, especially those who make up "the faithful and discreet slave"?—Heb. 13:7; Matt. 24:45.

#### A VISIBLE BODY UNDER AN INVISIBLE LEADER

<sup>4</sup> At Pentecost 33 C.E., the apostles began to take the lead in the Christian congregation. On that occasion, "Peter stood up with the Eleven" and shared lifesaving truths with a large crowd of Jews and proselytes. (Acts 2:14, 15) Many of them became believers. Thereafter, these new Christians "continued devoting themselves to the teaching of the apostles." (Acts 2:42) The apostles managed the financial resources of the congregation. (Acts 4:34, 35)

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\* Evidently, Jehovah purposed to have 12 apostles form the future "12 foundation stones" of New Jerusalem. (Rev. 21:14) Thus, there was no need to replace any *faithful* apostle who later finished his earthly course.

3. (a) After Jesus' ascension to heaven, what important decision did the faithful apostles make? (b) What will we consider in this article?
4. What role did the apostles and other elders in Jerusalem play in the first century?

They cared for the spiritual needs of God's people, stating: "We will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." (Acts 6:4) And they assigned experienced Christians to advance the evangelizing work in new territories. (Acts 8:14, 15) In time, other anointed elders joined the apostles in administering the affairs of the congregations. As a governing body, they gave direction to all the congregations.—Acts 15:2.

<sup>5</sup> Christians in the first century recognized that the governing body was directed by Jehovah God through their Leader, Jesus. How could they be sure of this? First, *holy spirit* empowered the governing body. (John 16:13) Holy spirit was poured out on all anointed Christians, but it specifically enabled the apostles and other elders in Jerusalem to fulfill their role as overseers. For example, in 49 C.E., holy spirit guided the governing body to make a decision regarding the issue of circumcision. The congregations followed their direction and "continued to be made firm in the faith and to increase in number day by day." (Acts 16:4, 5) The letter conveying that decision also reveals that the governing body manifested the fruitage of God's spirit, including love and faith.—Acts 15:11, 25-29; Gal. 5:22, 23.

<sup>6</sup> Second, *angels* assisted the governing body. Before Cornelius was baptized as the first uncircumcised Gentile Christian, an angel directed him to send for the apostle Peter. After

- 5, 6. (a) How did holy spirit empower the governing body? (See opening image.) (b) How did angels assist the governing body? (c) How did God's Word guide the governing body?



Peter preached to Cornelius and his relatives, holy spirit was poured out on them, although the men had not been circumcised. This prompted the apostles and other brothers to submit to God's will and accept uncircumcised Gentiles into the Christian congregation. (Acts 11:13-18) Moreover, angels actively promoted and accelerated the preaching work that the governing body was overseeing. (Acts 5:19, 20) Third, *God's Word* guided the governing body. Whether they were settling doctrinal issues or they were giving organizational direction, those spirit-anointed elders were led by the Scriptures.—Acts 1:20-22; 15:15-20.

<sup>7</sup> Although that governing body had authority in the early congregation, they acknowledged that their Leader was Jesus. “He [Christ] gave some as apostles,” wrote the apostle Paul. “Let us by love grow up in all things into him who is the head, Christ.” (Eph. 4:11, 15) Instead of naming themselves after a prominent apostle, “the disciples were by divine providence called Christians.” (Acts 11:26) True, Paul acknowledged the importance of “holding fast the traditions,” or Scripturally based practices, given by the apostles and other men who took the lead. Nevertheless, he added: “But I want you to know that the head of every man [including every member of the governing body] is the Christ; . . . in turn, the head of the Christ is God.” (1 Cor. 11:2, 3) Yes, under his Head, Jehovah God, the invisible and glorified Christ Jesus was leading the congregation.

7. Why can we say that Jesus led the early Christians?

### “THIS IS NOT MAN'S WORK”

<sup>8</sup> In the late 19th century, Charles Taze Russell and some of his associates endeavored to reestablish true Christian worship. To help them disseminate Bible truth in various languages, Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society was legally incorporated in 1884, with Brother Russell as president.\* He was an outstanding student of the Bible, and he fearlessly exposed as false such doctrines as the Trinity and the immortality of the soul. He discerned that Christ would return invisibly and that “the appointed times of the nations” would end in 1914. (Luke 21:24) Brother Russell devoted his time, energy, and money unsparingly to share these truths with others. Clearly, at that pivotal time, Brother Russell was used by Jehovah and the head of the congregation.

<sup>9</sup> Brother Russell did not seek glory from humans. In 1896, he wrote: “We want no homage, no reverence, for ourselves or our writings; nor do we wish to be called Reverend or Rabbi. Nor do we wish that any should be called by our name.” He later stated: “This is not man's work.”

<sup>10</sup> In 1919, three years after Brother Russell's death, Jesus appointed “the faithful and discreet slave.” For what purpose? To give his domestics “food at the proper time.” (Matt. 24:

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\* Since 1955, that corporation has been known as the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania.

8, 9. Beginning in the late 19th century, what important role did Brother Russell play?

10. (a) When did Jesus appoint “the faithful and discreet slave”? (b) Relate how the Governing Body has been progressively distinguished from the Watch Tower Society.

45) Even in those early years, a small group of anointed brothers who served at headquarters in Brooklyn, New York, prepared and distributed spiritual food to Jesus' followers. The expression "governing body" began appearing in our publications in the 1940's, when it was understood to be closely connected with the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. However, in 1971, the Governing Body was distinguished from the Watch Tower Society—a legal instrument rather than a Scriptural entity—and its directors. The Governing Body henceforth included anointed brothers who were not Society directors. In recent years, responsible brothers of the "other sheep" have served as directors of the legal Society and of other corporations used by God's people, thus allowing the Governing Body to focus on providing spiritual instruction and direction. (John 10:16; Acts 6:4) The July 15, 2013, issue of *The Watchtower* explained that "the faithful and discreet slave" is a small group of anointed brothers who make up the Governing Body.

<sup>11</sup> The Governing Body makes important decisions collectively. How so? The members meet weekly, which fosters close communication and unity. (Prov. 20:18) Each year, they rotate chairmanship at those meetings, since no member of the Governing Body is considered to be more important than the other members. (1 Pet. 5:1) Each of the six committees of the Governing Body rotate chairmanship in the same way. And each member of that body views himself, not as the leader of his

fellow brothers, but as one of the "domestics," fed by the faithful slave and subject to its oversight.

### "WHO REALLY IS THE FAITHFUL AND DISCREET SLAVE?"

<sup>12</sup> The Governing Body is neither inspired nor infallible. Therefore, it can err in doctrinal matters or in organizational direction. In fact, the *Watch Tower Publications Index* includes the heading "Beliefs Clarified," which lists adjustments in our Scriptural understanding since 1870. Of course, Jesus did not tell us that his faithful slave would produce perfect spiritual food. So how can we answer Jesus' question: "Who really is the faithful and discreet slave?" (Matt. 24:45) What evidence is there that the Governing Body is filling that role? Let us consider the same three factors that directed the governing body in the first century.

<sup>13</sup> *Evidence of holy spirit.* The holy spirit it has helped the Governing Body to grasp Scriptural truths not previously understood. For example, reflect on the list of beliefs clarified that was referred to in the preceding paragraph. Surely, no human deserves credit for discovering and explaining these "deep things of God"! (**Read 1 Corinthians 2:10.**) The Governing Body echoes the apostle Paul, who wrote: "These things we also speak, not with words taught by human wisdom, but with those taught by the spirit." (1 Cor. 2:13) After centuries of apostasy and spiritual darkness, can anything other than holy spirit explain

12. Since the Governing Body is neither inspired nor infallible, what questions arise?

13. How has holy spirit helped the Governing Body?

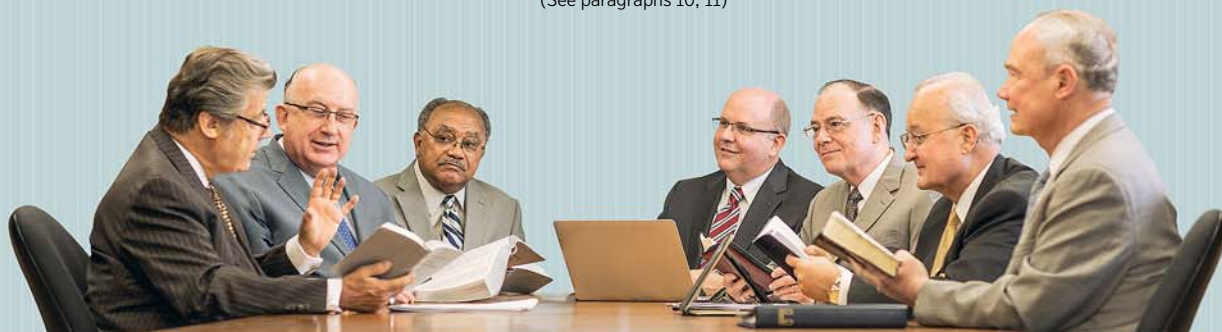
11. How does the Governing Body function?



The governing body, 1950's



Since its appointment in 1919, the faithful slave has prepared spiritual food for God's people  
(See paragraphs 10, 11)



the rapid increase in spiritual understanding since 1919?

<sup>14</sup> *Evidence of angelic assistance.* The Governing Body today has the colossal task of overseeing an international preaching work involving over eight million evangelizers. Why has that work been so successful? For one, angels are involved. **(Read Revelation 14: 6, 7.)** In many cases, publishers have called on individuals who had just been praying for help!\* The overall growth of the preaching and disciple-making work

\* See "Bearing Thorough Witness" About God's Kingdom, pp. 58-59.

14. According to Revelation 14:6, 7, how do angels assist God's people today?

despite fierce opposition in some lands has likewise been possible only with superhuman assistance.

<sup>15</sup> *Reliance on God's Word.* **(Read John 17:17.)** Consider what occurred in 1973. The June 1 issue of *The Watchtower* asked the question: "Do . . . persons who have not broken their addiction to tobacco qualify for baptism?" The answer was: "The Scriptural evidence points to the conclusion that they do not." After citing several relevant scriptures, *The Watchtower* explained why an unrepentant smoker should be disfellowshipped. (1 Cor. 5:7; 2 Cor. 7:1)

15. What contrast exists between the Governing Body and Christendom's leaders? Give an example.

It said: “This represents no effort to act in an arbitrary, dictatorial manner. The strictness really proceeds from God, who expresses himself *through his written Word*.” Has any other religious organization been willing to rely fully on God’s Word, even when doing so presents a real challenge to some of its members? A recent book on religion in the United States notes: “Christian leaders have regularly revised their teachings to match the beliefs and opinions gaining support among their members and in the larger society.” If those of the Governing Body allow God’s Word rather than popular opinion to guide their decisions, who is really leading God’s people today?

**“REMEMBER THOSE  
WHO ARE TAKING THE LEAD”**

**16 Read Hebrews 13:7.** The word rendered “remember” can also be translated “mention.” Therefore, one way you can “remember those who are taking the lead” is by mentioning the Governing Body in your prayers. (Eph. 6:18) Reflect on their responsibility to supply spiritual food, to oversee the global preaching work, and to manage donated funds. Surely they need our persistent petitions in their behalf!

**17** Of course, remembering the Governing Body involves not just words but also cooperation with its direction. The Governing Body provides the direction given in our publications and at our meetings, assemblies, and conventions.

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16. What is one way to remember the Governing Body?

17, 18. (a) How do we cooperate with the Governing Body? (b) How does our preaching support the faithful slave and Jesus?

In addition, it appoints circuit overseers, who in turn appoint congregation elders. Circuit overseers and elders remember the Governing Body by sticking closely to guidelines given to them. All of us show respect for our Leader, Jesus, by being obedient and submissive to the men he is using to direct us. —Heb. 13:17.

**18** Another way that we remember the Governing Body is by exerting ourselves in the preaching work. After all, Paul urged Christians to imitate the faith of those taking the lead among them. The faithful slave has exercised outstanding faith by zealously promoting and spreading the Kingdom good news. Are you one of the other sheep who supports the anointed in this vital work? How happy you will feel when your Leader, Jesus, says: “To the extent that you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.”—Matt. 25:34-40.

**19** When Jesus returned to heaven, he did not abandon his followers. (Matt. 28:20) He knew firsthand how much the holy spirit, the angels, and God’s Word helped him to take the lead when he was on earth. Therefore, he has supplied the faithful slave today with the same assistance. As anointed Christians, the members of that slave “keep following the Lamb no matter where he goes.” (Rev. 14:4) As we follow their direction, therefore, we follow our Leader, Jesus. Soon, he will lead us to everlasting life. (Rev. 7:14-17) And no human leader can promise that!

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19. Why are you determined to follow our Leader, Jesus?



*The apostle Paul wrote that Jehovah “will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear.” (1 Cor. 10:13) Does this mean that Jehovah assesses in advance what we can bear and then chooses the trials we will face?*

■ Consider the implications of such a view. One brother whose son committed suicide asked: ‘Did Jehovah assess in advance that my wife and I would be capable of enduring our son’s suicide? Did it happen because God had determined that we could endure it?’ Is there sound reason to believe that Jehovah maneuvers the events of our lives in such specific ways?

A further consideration of Paul’s words recorded at 1 Corinthians 10:13 leads us to this conclusion: There is no Scriptural reason to believe that Jehovah assesses in advance what we can bear and then, based on such an assessment, chooses which trials will befall us. Let us consider four reasons why we may draw that conclusion.

*First, Jehovah gave humans the gift of free will.* He wants us to choose our own course in life. (Deut. 30:19, 20; Josh. 24:15) If we choose the right course, we can look to Jehovah to guide

our steps. (Prov. 16:9) But if we choose a wrong course, we will have to face the consequences. (Gal. 6:7) Were Jehovah to choose which trials would come upon us, would he not, in effect, be diminishing the gift of free will?

*Second, Jehovah does not shield us from “time and unexpected events.”* (Eccl. 9:11) Tragic accidents—perhaps with dire consequences—may occur because we are in the wrong place at the wrong time. Jesus spoke of a tragedy involving 18 people who were killed when a tower fell on them, and he indicated that those fatalities were not as a result of God’s will. (Luke 13:1-5) Is it not unreasonable to think that God would determine in advance who lives and who dies as a result of random events?

*Third, each one of us is personally involved in the issue of integrity.* Recall that Satan has challenged the integrity of all those serving Jehovah, claiming that we would not remain loyal to Jehovah

Jehovah “comforts us in all our trials”



when exposed to trials. (Job 1:9-11; 2:4; Rev. 12:10) If Jehovah prevented us from facing certain trials because he deemed them to be more than we could bear, would that not add weight to Satan's charge that we serve God out of self-interest?

*Fourth, Jehovah does not have to foreknow everything that happens to us.* The idea that God chooses beforehand which trials we will face implies that he must know everything about our future. But such a view is not Scriptural. God certainly *can* foreknow the future. (Isa. 46:10) But the Bible shows that he is selective when it comes to foreknowing future events. (Gen. 18:20, 21; 22:12) He thus balances his power of foreknowledge with his respect for our free will. Is that not what we would expect from the God who values our freedom and who always exercises his attributes in perfect balance?—Deut. 32:4; 2 Cor. 3:17.

How, then, are we to understand Paul's words: "God . . . will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear"? Paul here describes what Jehovah does, not *before*, but *during* trials.\* The apostle's words assure us that no matter what trials may arise in our life, Jehovah will sustain us if we trust in him. (Ps. 55:22) Paul's comforting words are based on two fundamental truths.

First, *the trials we face are "common to men."* Our trials, then, are common to human experience. Such trials are not beyond our capacity to bear—provided we rely on God. (1 Pet. 5:8, 9) In the context of 1 Corinthians 10:13, Paul refers to the tests that Israel faced in the wilderness. (1 Cor. 10:6-11) None of those trials were beyond human experience or above the ability of faithful Israelites to bear. Paul four times says that "some of them" disobeyed. Sadly, some Israelites gave in to wrong desires because they failed to rely on God.

Second, *"God is faithful."* The record of God's dealings with his people demonstrates that he

gives his loyal love to "those who love him and keep his commandments." (Deut. 7:9) That record also shows that God always keeps his promises. (Josh. 23:14) In view of his past record of faithfulness, those who love him and obey him can trust that he will keep this twofold promise regarding trials they may face: (1) He will not allow any trial to develop to a point that would make it impossible to bear, and (2) "he will . . . make the way out" for them.

How does Jehovah make the way out for those who rely on him in the face of trials? Of course, if it be his will, he can simply remove a trial. But recall Paul's words: "He [Jehovah] will also make the way out *so that you may be able to endure it.*" Hence, in many cases, he makes "the way out" by providing what we need so that we can endure trials successfully. Consider some of the ways that Jehovah may make the way out for us:

- He "comforts us in all our trials." (2 Cor. 1:3, 4) Jehovah can soothe our mind, our heart, and our emotions by means of his Word, his holy spirit, and the spiritual food dispensed by the faithful slave.—Matt. 24:45; John 14:16, *ftn.*, Rom. 15:4.
- He may guide us by means of holy spirit. (John 14:26) When trials arise, the spirit can help us to remember Bible accounts and principles and then discern the wise steps to take.
- He can use his angels in our behalf.—Heb. 1:14.
- He can help us through fellow worshippers who by their words and deeds can be "a strengthening aid" to us.—Col. 4:11, *ftn.*

What, then, may we conclude about the meaning of Paul's words recorded at 1 Corinthians 10:13? Jehovah does not pick and choose the trials we face. But when trials do arise in our life, we can be certain of this: If we fully trust in Jehovah, he will never allow our trials to go beyond the limit of human endurance; he will always make a way out so that we can endure them. What a comforting thought that is!

\* The Greek word rendered "temptation" may denote "test, trial."



# “No Road Too Rough or Too Long”

ON MARCH 26, 1937, two travel-weary men slowly drove their dusty truck into Sydney, Australia. Since leaving the city a year earlier, they had traveled more than 12,000 miles (19,300 km) through some of the most remote and rugged regions of the continent. The men were not explorers or adventurers. Arthur Willis and Bill Newlands were just two of the zealous pioneers determined to take the good news of God’s Kingdom to the vast Australian outback.

Up until the late 1920’s, the small number of Bible Students\* in Australia had preached mostly in and around the coastal cities and towns. Inland lay the sparsely populated outback, an arid region over half the size of the United States. The brothers, however, were keenly aware that Jesus’ followers were to bear witness about him “to the most distant part of the earth,” including the remote Australian outback. (Acts 1:8) But how could they accomplish such an enormous task? With full faith that Jehovah would bless

\* The Bible Students adopted the name Jehovah’s Witnesses in 1931.—Isa. 43:10.

their efforts, they were determined to do their best.

## PIONEERS PAVE THE WAY

In 1929, congregations in Queensland and Western Australia built several well-equipped motor vans to cover their inland regions. The vans were manned by hardy pioneers who could handle the rough conditions and repair the vehicles when they broke down. These pioneers visited many places that had never before received a witness.

Pioneers who could not afford a vehicle headed into the outback on bicycle. For example, in 1932, 23-year-old Bennett Brickell set out from Rockhampton, Queensland, on a five-month preaching trip through the remote northern part of that state. On his heavy-laden bicycle, he carried blankets, clothing, food, and a large number of books. When his bicycle tires wore out, he pressed on, confident that Jehovah would guide him. He pushed his bicycle the final 200 miles (320 km) through areas where men had previously perished from thirst. Over the

Pioneers George Rollston and Arthur Willis stop to fill up their car’s radiator.—Northern Territory, 1933





Arthur Willis is getting ready to leave on a preaching trip in the vast Australian outback.  
—Perth, Western Australia, 1936

next 30 years, Brother Brickell traveled hundreds of thousands of miles throughout Australia by bicycle, motorcycle, and car. He opened up the preaching work among the Aborigines and helped to establish new congregations, becoming well-known and respected throughout the outback.

### OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

Australia has one of the lowest population densities in the world, and especially is the outback sparsely populated. Thus, Jehovah's people have shown determination to find individuals in remote parts of the continent.

Pioneers Stuart Keltie and William Torrington demonstrated that sort of determination. In 1933, they crossed the Simpson Desert, a vast sand dune desert, to preach in the town of Alice Springs, in the heart of the continent. When their small car broke down and had to be abandoned, Brother Keltie—who had a wooden leg—continued his preaching trip, but now using a camel! The pioneers' efforts bore fruit when they met a hotelkeeper at William Creek, a remote railway stop. The hotelkeeper, Charles Bernhardt, later accepted the truth, sold his hotel, and pioneered alone for 15 years in some of the driest and most isolated parts of Australia.

The early pioneers certainly needed courage and tenacity to overcome the many challenges

they faced. On their preaching expedition in the Australian outback, Arthur Willis and Bill Newlands, mentioned in the introduction, once labored for two weeks to travel 20 miles (32 km) because heavy rains had turned the desert into a sea of mud. At times, sweating and straining in blazing heat to push their truck over huge dunes, they went through rocky valleys and across sandy riverbeds. When their truck broke down, which happened often, they walked or cycled for days to the nearest town and then waited for weeks for replacement parts to arrive. Despite such adversities, a positive spirit was maintained. Arthur Willis, in paraphrasing a statement once made in *The Golden Age* magazine, later declared: "No road too rough or too long for His witnesses."

Longtime pioneer Charles Harris explained that the isolation and physical hardships of the outback actually drew him closer to Jehovah. He added: "Life is far better traversed with as little baggage as possible. If Jesus was willing to sleep under the stars when necessary, then we should be happy to do the same if our assignment requires it." And that is what many pioneers did. Thanks to their tireless efforts, the good news penetrated every corner of the continent, helping countless individuals to take their stand for God's Kingdom.



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