

JULY 1, 1979

THE WATCHTOWER
Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

1879

1979



**Keeping Watch
For 100 Years**

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For 100 years now, "The Watchtower" has served as herald of Christ's presence and in announcing Jehovah's kingdom. What grander mission could a magazine have? Humbly, we here set forth some of the highlights of our century-long history. Also, we ask your prayers that our God will continue to bless these pages in upholding Bible truth and illuminating the way to eternal life in happiness.

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A WATCHTOWER enables a person to look far into the distance and announce to others what is seen. Likewise, this magazine, published by Jehovah's Witnesses, aids the reader to see what the future holds. Since it began publication in 1879, "The Watchtower" has held faithfully to God's Word as its authority. It stays clear of all political involvement. It points to the Bible prophecies showing that Jesus Christ is God's means for restoring peace and harmony to this globe. It shows that this Son of God, on the basis of his shed blood, will release mankind from sin and death to enjoy eternal life in happiness on a paradise earth. Because Jehovah God will accomplish all this soon through his kingdom by Jesus Christ, "The Watchtower" announces that kingdom as the real hope for mankind.

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A Message to Our Readers

The first issue of **The Watchtower** was published in July of 1879. This means that the journal has been printed for a century (in its original English edition). And keen interest in you, our readers, has prompted us to publish this special issue.

The article starting on the next page tells the story of **The Watchtower** during these first 100 years. It reminisces on how the world was in this journal's early years, how the world changed, and how **The Watchtower** also adjusted to keep pace with advancing Bible enlightenment. The article quotes some of the significant passages that this magazine has published over the years and recounts how it triumphed over its critics and opposers.

Next, a picture-essay describes how **The Watchtower** is printed, translated and distributed.

An article beginning on page 13 discusses the truthfulness of some basic Bible doctrines, over which there has been controversy among many of the orthodox religions of Christendom.

Next, another article explains just what Jehovah's kingdom is. What will it do for mankind? Why is it so important to announce Jehovah's kingdom at this particular time?

In this special issue, two articles for study appear on pages 20 through 30. The first one, "Who Really Have the Truth?" identifies Jehovah as the God of truth, who wants the peoples of earth to walk in the ways of truth. It gives stirring examples of those who have walked with God, in both ancient and modern times. Also, it clearly identifies those who are walking in Jehovah's truth in our day.

The second study article comes to grips with the question, Just how does God guide his people? For example, How did the early Christians come to an accurate knowledge of the truth? Did they have wrong ideas at times? If so, how were these views corrected? And today, How is truth revealed to God's people? Is the Christian congregation infallible? Does it ever have mistaken ideas that need adjusting? And how does it differ from the religions of Christendom? These and other questions are answered.

We invite you to read and ponder over the contents of this special issue of **The Watchtower**. Also, we hope that you will enjoy future issues of this magazine as it enters its second century of publication.

Keeping Watch For 100 Years

WITH this issue, *The Watchtower* has a century of publication behind it. During those years there have been many changes in the world. This journal has undergone some changes itself. Yet, in some important respects, it has not changed at all. Consider now just how *The Watchtower* has been keeping watch for 100 years.

This journal came on the scene in July 1879. One of the main reasons for its coming into existence was a dispute over the ransom. This prompted Charles T. Russell to publish the *Watch Tower*, in which, as he later wrote, "the Ransom [should be] defended and the Good Tidings of great Joy proclaimed as extensively as possible."

The name "Watch Tower" was appropriate because in ancient times watchmen in towers often warned others of impending danger. This is also essential in spiritual matters, for God told his prophet Ezekiel:

"Son of man, a watchman is what I have made you to the house of Israel, and you must hear from my mouth speech and you must warn them from me." (Ezek. 3:17) This journal has diligently sought to live up to its name by keeping watch spiritually.

RELIANCE ON JEHOVAH

In the second issue of the *Watch Tower*, we expressed our confidence that it "has . . . JEHOVAH for its backer." The publishers of this magazine are grateful that for decades now it has been possible to bring its readers "comfort from the Scriptures" and the reliable guidance that only God's Word, the Bible, can provide. (Ps. 119:105; Rom. 15:4) Yet, for the spiritual aid that this journal has furnished, the publishers do not take credit. They seek to be "taught by Jehovah," the Most High.—John 6:45.

This reliance on Jehovah God has proved



to be a blessing, and there has been evidence of divine support. For the first issue of the *Watch Tower*, there were only 6,000 copies in one language, and the journal was published only once a month. Today, over 9,000,000 copies are printed twice a month. Also, *The Watchtower* now is published in 82 languages. This growth we attribute to God.—Zech. 4:6.

UPHOLDING GOD'S WORD

From its start, this journal has upheld the basic truths of the Bible. For instance, it stated in the issue of August 1882: "We confidently assert that the name *Jehovah* is never applied in Scripture to any but the Father." Acknowledging the role of God's Son, the first issue said that "merit toward God lies . . . in Christ's perfect sacrifice."

Through the years, *The Watchtower* has also presented such Scriptural truths as those relating to the condition of the dead, the hope of resurrection and the kingdom of God. (Eccl. 9:5, 10; Dan. 2:44; 7:13, 14;

Acts 24:15) Especially have the clergy of Christendom protested. Why? Because these truths contradicted many of their teachings, such as the immortality of the soul, purgatory, eternal torment and the Trinity.—Ezek. 18:4; John 14:28.

From the outset, the *Watch Tower* showed that at Christ's second coming his *parousia* would be an invisible presence as a mighty spirit person. (Matt. 24:3; 1 Pet. 3:18) Moreover, in keeping watch, this journal's early issues (March and June 1880) pointed to 1914 C.E. as a climactic year. It was to mark the close of the 2,520-year-long Gentile Times, during which non-Jewish nations would rule the earth without interference by any kingdom of God.—Luke 21:24, *Authorized Version*.

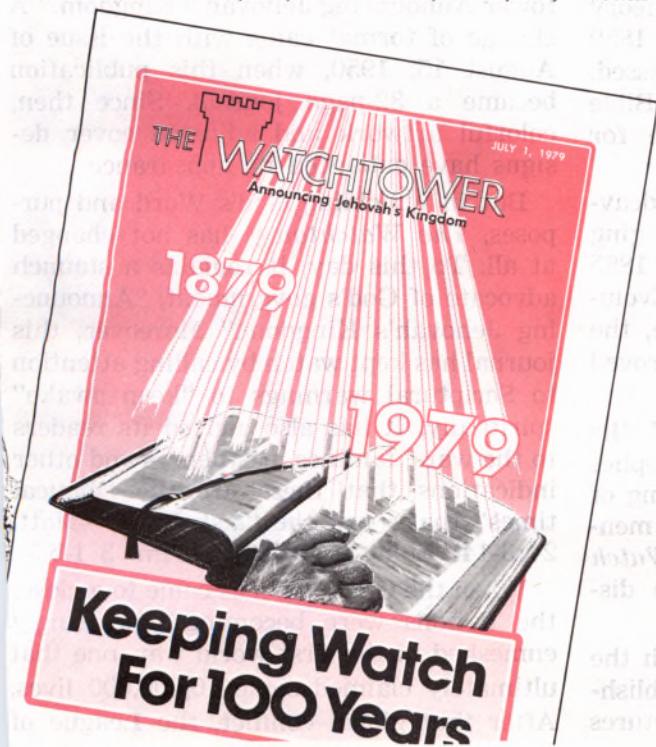
Of course, even though this magazine has published such enlightening material, we do not claim to be infallible. It is to Jehovah God that we look gratefully for spiritual instruction. (Ps. 119:169) For any

clarity of viewpoint, we have been dependent on the operation of his holy spirit, or active force. That spirit "searches into . . . the deep things of God."—1 Cor. 2:10.

THIS "GOOD NEWS" MUST BE DECLARED

Yet searching the Scriptures and learning the truth are not all there is to true Christianity. Jesus commissioned his followers to 'Go, make disciples,' and said that the "good news" had to be preached in all nations.—Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 13:10.

Appropriately, then, our April 1881 issue contained an article entitled "Wanted 1,000 Preachers." In time, a number responded to this call. Very pointedly, another issue of this



journal stated: "Are you preaching? We believe that none will be of the little flock [of Christ's anointed followers] except preachers. . . . Yes, we were called to suffer with him and to proclaim that *good news*."

MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGING ATTITUDES

Proclaimers of the "good news" certainly faced challenges in the late 19th century. True, there had been some changes in life-style in many lands. By the 1880's there were some telephones, electric lights and electric streetcars. The 1890's saw the appearance of a few "horseless carriages," or automobiles. But for declarers of the "good news," the challenge was coping with changing attitudes toward the Bible.

Charles Darwin had espoused the theory of man's evolution, doing so in his 1859 work *Origin of Species*. As time passed, evolution, higher criticism of the Bible and the like presented a challenge for champions of God's inspired Word.

The *Watch Tower* has always endeavored to meet the challenge of changing attitudes. For example, the March 1885 issue contained an article entitled "Evolution and the Brain Age." Of course, the evolution theory has often been proved false in the pages of this journal.

But what about other critics of the Bible? Some contended that the prophet Isaiah erred in naming Sargon as king of Assyria, since secular history had not mentioned him. (Isa. 20:1) But the *Watch Tower* of January 1886 pointed to discoveries proving the Bible right.

These are mere examples. Through the years, this journal has continued publishing information that proves the Scriptures

to be "the word of God." (1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17) Not unique literary style, but confidence in Jehovah and the Bible has enabled *The Watchtower* to meet the challenge of changing attitudes.

ADVOCATING THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Over the years, the *Watch Tower* itself has undergone some changes. For instance, its English edition, a 16-page journal, became semimonthly in 1892, and by 1908 circulation had risen to 30,000 copies an issue. Beginning in 1909, it was called "The Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence." Later, a very significant stride was taken with the issue of March 1, 1939, when this journal was named "The Watch-

tower Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom." A change of format came with the issue of August 15, 1950, when this publication became a 32-page journal. Since then, colorful artwork and adjusted cover designs have enhanced its appearance.

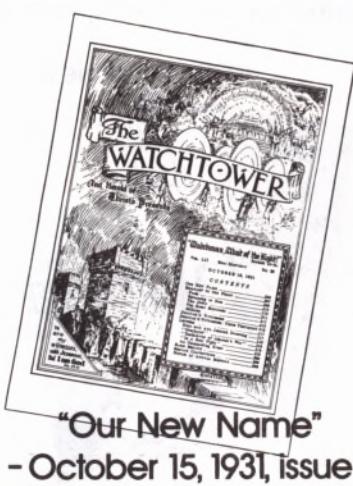
But in upholding God's Word and purposes, *The Watchtower* has not changed at all. To this day, it remains a staunch advocate of God's government, "Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom." Moreover, this journal has kept watch by calling attention to Scriptural warnings to "keep awake" spiritually. It has also alerted its readers to the wars, famines, pestilences and other indications that these are the "critical times" that mark the "last days."—Matt. 24:3-14; Luke 21:10-36; 2 Tim. 3:1-5.

When the Gentile Times came to a close, the nations were becoming increasingly enmeshed in the first world war, one that ultimately claimed some 10,000,000 lives. After that global conflict, the League of



Nations was proposed, and among its enthusiastic supporters were the Church of England and Canadian churches. On December 18, 1918, the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America (composed of representatives of various Protestant denominations) sent United States President Woodrow Wilson its adopted Declaration stating: "Such a League is not a mere political expedient; it is rather the political expression of the Kingdom of God on earth." But from 1919 onward *The Watch Tower* boldly showed that the League of Nations would fail.

With the commencement of World War II in 1939, the League of Nations went into inactivity. That terrible conflict was raging with full force in 1942, when witnesses of Jehovah met in assembly and heard the thought-provoking public address "Peace—Can It Last?" "As the speech progressed," reported *The Watch Tower*, "the audience saw with mental vision a word-picture drawn according to Revelation chapter seventeen, and saw the identity of the scarlet beast that now 'is not' but saw it ready to ascend out of the bottomless pit to become the 'beast that was, and is not, and shall again be present', this time with the Babylonish religious harlot dangling her legs over its back. But only for 'one hour' in the future this, and then the harlot is unseated and destroyed, and 'the King of kings and Lord of lords' destroys this . . . 'peace beast' with its seven heads and ten horns." Even before the League reappeared as the United Nations in 1945, *The Watchtower* courageously declared that no such man-made organization, but God's kingdom alone, will establish lasting peace.



ADVERTISING THE KINGDOM

After World War I, the work of declaring the "good news" had gathered momentum. Especially was it given impetus in 1922 during a Christian convention at Cedar Point, Ohio, U.S.A. Picking up the call to action made at that gathering, *The Watch Tower* urged proclaimers of the "good news" to "advertise, advertise, advertise, the King and his kingdom."

The 1920's ended with the New York stock market crash that resulted in the Great Depression of the 1930's, when nearly every country in the world was affected by high unemployment and a major slump in business activity. However, despite hardships they may have been experiencing economically, dedicated Christians reached a milestone

in 1931. Assembled in convention, they enthusiastically adopted a resolution (soon published in *The Watchtower*), in which they declared: "We joyfully embrace and take the name which the mouth of the Lord God has named, and we desire to be known as and called by the name . . . Jehovah's witnesses."—Isa. 43: 10-12.

SPIRITUAL FOOD "AT THE PROPER TIME"

An objective of the *Watch Tower*, as stated in its very first issue, was "to give the 'meat in due season' to the 'household of faith.'" (Luke 12:42; Gal. 6:10, *Authorized Version*) We are grateful that through these pages it has been possible to direct attention to God's Word and thus provide spiritual food "at the proper time" to benefit not only anointed followers of Christ but also their associates of the "great crowd."—Matt. 24:45; Rev. 7:4-10.

By way of illustration, please consider

the years 1933 to 1945, when Adolf Hitler's "Third Reich" tried to exterminate Jehovah's Witnesses in the German Reich. Their activities were banned and 6,019 were arrested, several of them two, three or more times. Two thousand suffered in concentration camps. A total of 635 Witnesses died in prison, 203 being executed. But spiritual strength was maintained, in part by recalling previous *Watchtower* material and by smuggling into the camps and discussing the Scriptural information in new articles. A notable example of spiritual food "at the proper time" was the *Watchtower* article "Neutrality," first published late in 1939. It fortified Jehovah's Witnesses in their already chosen stand as Christian neutrals.—John 17:16.

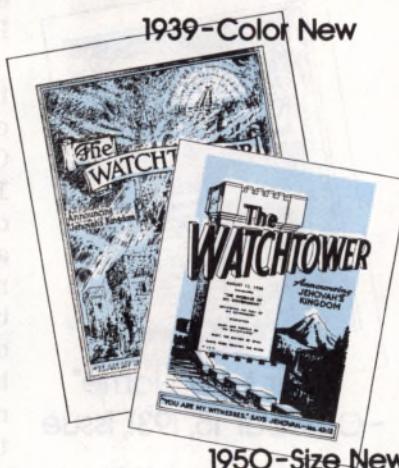
Prayer, reliance on Jehovah and appreciation for spiritual food strengthen faith. Hence, of numerous examples that might be cited, *The Watchtower* published these words from one concentration camp victim who wrote in his last letter: "In view of the fact that I maintained my objection, the death sentence was decreed. . . . I have such peace, such tranquillity, that you can't possibly imagine. . . . My dearest ones, fulfill this my wish: be faithful and strong, that we may soon see each other again forever."

During the same period, true Christians elsewhere also took advantage of spiritual food "at the proper time," as published in this journal. From 1933 to 1951, thousands of Witnesses were arrested in the United States, many of them because of their stand as Christian neutrals. Additionally, at least 1,500 mobbings of Witnesses occurred in that country. But in the courts they fought valiantly and often won,

thus making an indelible mark as fighters for civil liberties.

With the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, in 1945, the world had entered an era of fear and uncertainty. The Russians orbited the first man-made earth satellite in 1957 and the space age became a reality. During the 1960's, civil disturbances occurred in various places, and nationalism was on the rise.

Yet, over all these years, *The Watchtower* endeavored to provide timely spiritual food. In retrospect, a notable example of such 'food at the right time' seems to have been the 1962 *Watchtower* articles clarifying the Christian position of relative subjection to governmental "superior authorities."—Rom. 13:1-7.



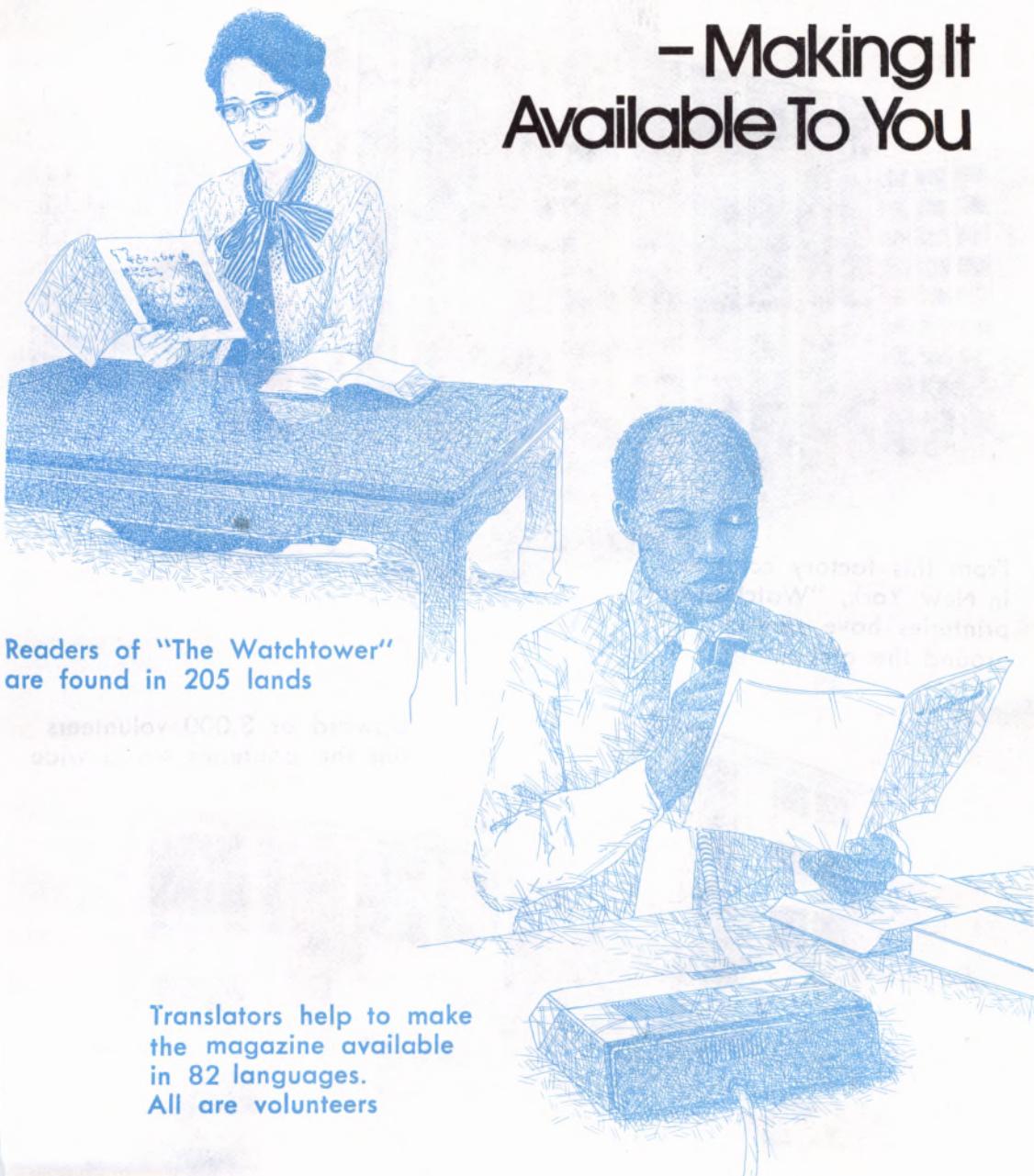
KEEP ON THE WATCH

Today we live in turbulent times. Pollution threatens health and life. In so many cases, there are evidences of man's inhumanity to man. Selfishness often prevails, people hunger, and they suffer in other ways. But Jehovah promises to "bring to ruin those ruining the earth." (Rev. 11:18) So, there is "good news" for those who will receive it with appreciation, and this magazine continues to present that heartening message.

For 100 years now *The Watchtower* has been keeping watch in a spiritual way. Jehovah willing, it will keep watching. We sincerely hope that you will keep on the watch with this journal, confidently awaiting the time when Jehovah God will bring about the deliverance of honest-hearted people into the full blessings of his promised "new heavens" and "new earth." —2 Pet. 3:11-13.

THE WATCHTOWER

— Making It Available To You



Readers of "The Watchtower"
are found in 205 lands

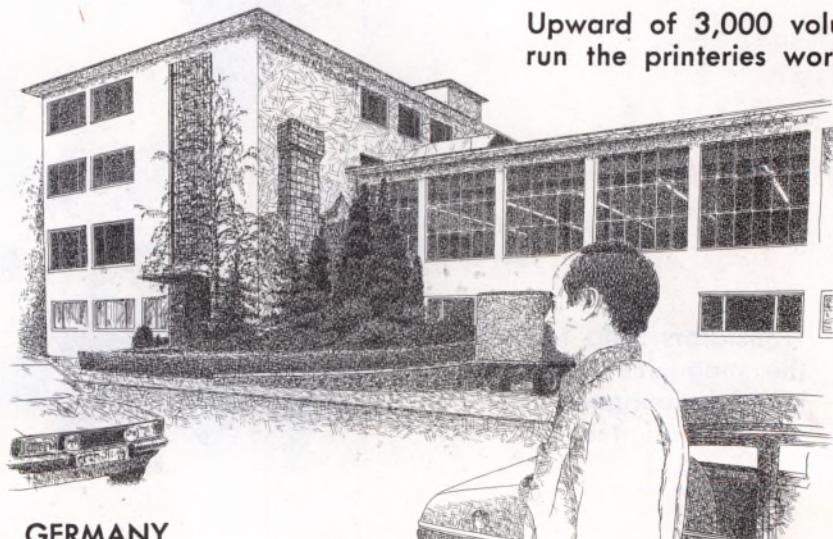
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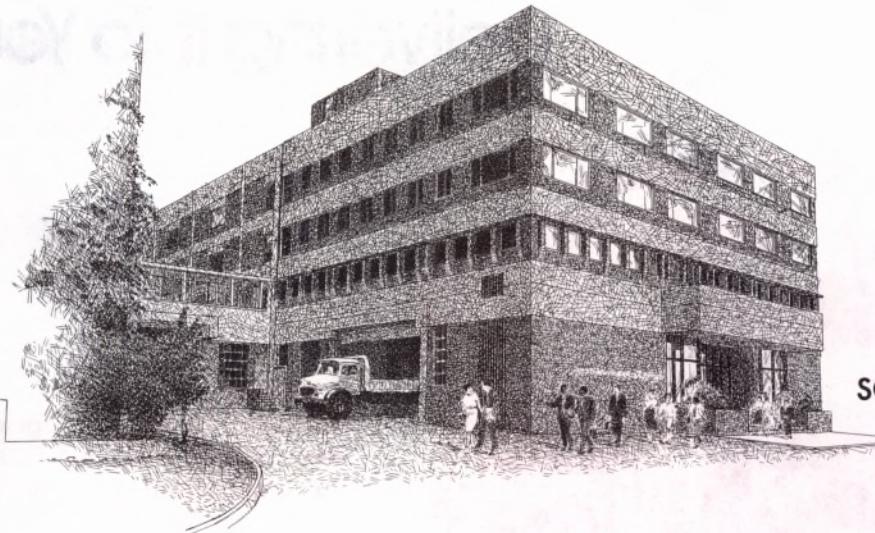


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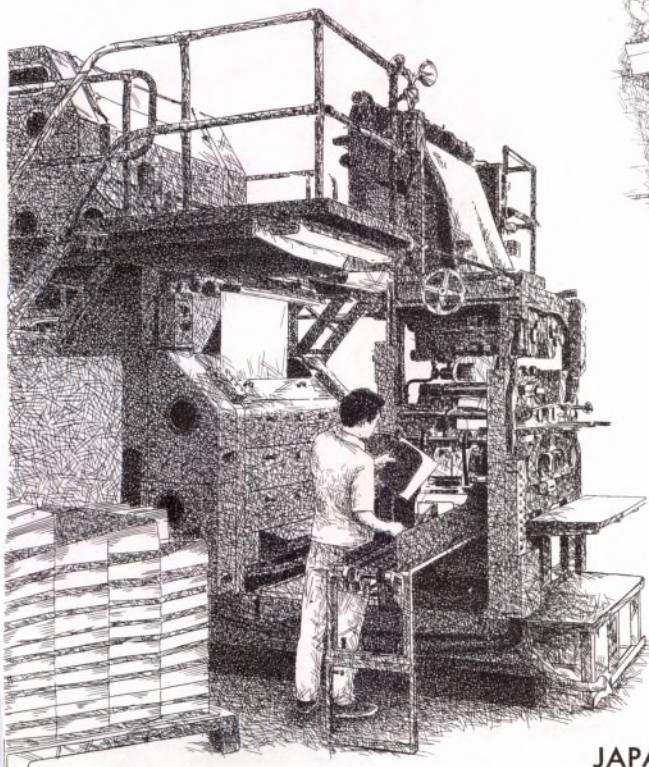


GERMANY

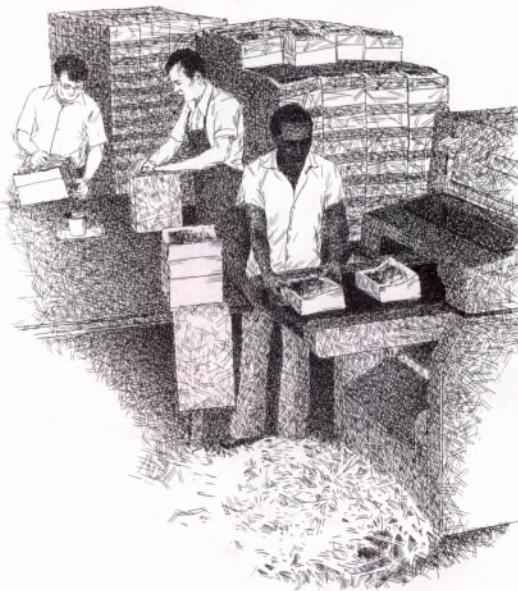


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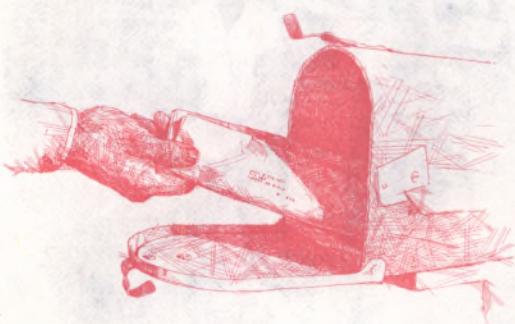


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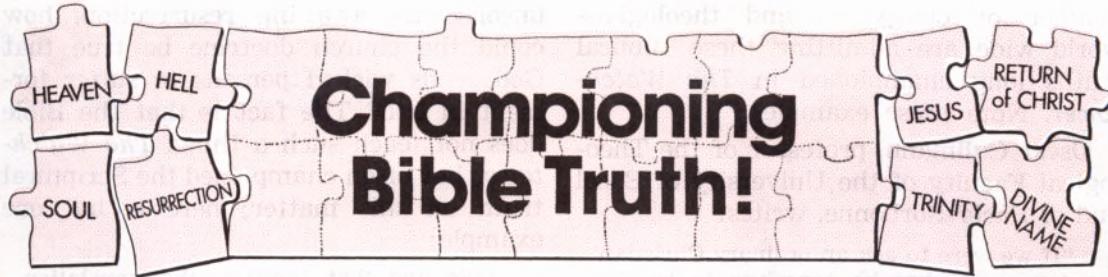
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AS HE traveled in his chariot southward, the official did what you probably have done on a train, a bus or an airplane. He read. He was reading the Bible and faced a problem that you may have had.

The account, found in the Bible book of Acts, says that the evangelist Philip approached and asked the Ethiopian traveler: "Do you actually know what you are reading?" The reply: "Really, how could I ever do so, unless someone guided me?" —Acts 8:27-31.

Most persons who read the Bible today have felt a need for guidance. This is intensified by the fact that churches using the Bible have so many conflicting doctrines. Surely not all these differing teachings can be Bible truth. (1 Cor. 14:33) But where can a person get valuable aid in finding and knowing Bible truth?

It was to provide just such needed help that the *Watch Tower* magazine began to be published in 1879. It would champion the vital truths of God's Word. The front page of its first issue clearly showed that it was devoted not to propagating conflicting church doctrines but to spreading truths from the Scriptures, which are beneficial "for correction, for instruction in righteousness." (2 Tim. 3:16, 17, *Authorized Version*) For example, there is the meaningful question:

ARE YOU IMMORTAL, OR NOT?

When it comes to what is in the Bible, most persons think first of all about what

it may say concerning them and their future. What often comes to mind is something they may have heard from childhood on, that each person has within him an immortal soul; most churches teach that. Thus many people hope that when they die their soul will go to heaven to be with God.

Would the *Watch Tower* endorse these popular beliefs? To the contrary, it championed the truth of God's Word on the matter. As early as April 1881, the article "The Resurrection" said:

"Any being is properly called a *soul* or person. This is the Scriptural sense and usage of the word *soul*. . . . We read of the creation of Adam—'And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life (*ruach*—the same breath said to be given to beasts, birds and fishes) and the man became a living *soul*,' (being.) Gen. 2:7."—P. 1.

With ample Biblical support the article showed that at death the soul—the person—dies. (Ps. 33:19; Isa. 53:10-12; Ezek. 18:4) Biblically, when a person (a soul) dies he is in an unconscious, sleeplike condition until the future time of resurrection. Through the miracle of resurrection one may be given immortal life in heaven, as occurred with Jesus, or the prospect of perfect life on a paradise earth.—Eccl. 9:5, 10; 1 Cor. 15:12-16, 50-53.

Some who have read such truths in the pages of this magazine over the last century may have been shocked, for their church leaders had not taught these things. But times are changing. An increasing

number of clergymen and theologians world wide are admitting these Biblical truths long championed in *The Watchtower*. Note these examples:

Oscar Cullmann, professor of the Theological Faculty of the University of Basel and of Paris' Sorbonne, writes:

"If we were to ask an ordinary Christian today . . . what he conceives to be the New Testament teaching concerning the fate of man after death, with few exceptions we should get the answer: 'The immortality of the soul.' Yet this widely accepted idea is one of the greatest misunderstandings of Christianity."—*Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead* (1958), p. 15.

Baptist theologian Dr. Robert Laurin explains:

"The New Testament does not teach immortality of the disembodied 'soul' of Platonic thought. The ultimate destiny of man is in a body in an earthly locale."—*The Expository Times*, February 1961, p. 132.

Robert Koch, Catholic professor of Old Testament in Rome, writes:

"The soul does not exist as an independent mass in the body, as though in a prison, from which it would be liberated at death. The 'soul' is the man in his totality. Man does not have a soul, he is a soul."—*Teologia della redenzione in Genesi 1-11* (1966), p. 69.

"Friar" Pierre Pascal writes in France's *La Vie Catholique*:

"The Bible teaches that when a man dies, his entire person dies. However, he does have the promise of emerging from death's nothingness and of being restored to life at the end of time by a resurrection."—July 1975, p. 37.

Some persons may be surprised that clergymen admit such things. However, these are Biblical truths that this magazine has championed for 100 years.

HOW IT HAS A BEARING ON HELL

Let us take the matter a step farther. If the soul is not immortal and the dead are

unconscious, awaiting resurrection, how could the church doctrine be true that God sends wicked persons to suffer torment in hell? The fact is that the Bible does not teach such a thing. *The Watchtower* has often championed the Scriptural truth on this matter; here is but one example:

"We find that [hell] is the translation of the Hebrew word *sheol*, which simply means *the state or condition of death*. There is not in it the remotest idea of either life or torment; . . . But still [the clergy] go on preaching this false idea of hell, which is nothing short of a slander against the character of God."—November 1883, p. 4.

Do clergymen now accept the Biblical position about hell? Though some may be reluctant to say it directly, when leaders admit what the Bible says about "soul," they are showing that "hellfire" is without Scriptural foundation. For example, Danish pastor Kai Jensen acknowledged the resulting situation:

"The talk of everlasting perdition is crazy. It is not Christianity. It was only in times past that there were hell preachers who from the pulpit thundered about the devil and the inextinguishable fire. But that time is over."—*Hvor gaar vi hen* (Where Do We Go?), p. 119.

Though most persons may not hear much about hellfire at their church anymore, likely neither do they learn there what the Bible says on the matter. Many are like the secretary of a Presbyterian Church official in Australia who said: "We steer clear of heaven and hell as it upsets too many people. In fact, I wouldn't mind talking to someone myself to get it straight in my own mind."

WHOM DO YOU WORSHIP?

Another Bible truth championed in *The Watchtower* has to do with the identity of the true God whom we worship. Millions have repeated what is called the "Lord's

Prayer," taught by Jesus. (Matt. 6:9-13) But have they thought about the meaning of the phrase, "Hallowed be thy name," or noted the importance that Jesus put on honoring God's name? (John 12:28; 17:6) Or is that name unknown to them because the clergy avoid it and translators substitute "Lord" and "God" for it?

Many scholars now admit the name's importance. Catholic theologian John L. McKenzie writes in the *Bible Dictionary* (1965):

"The God of Israel is called by His personal name more frequently than by all other titles combined; the name not only identified the person, but revealed his character."—P. 316.

J. A. Motyer, principal of Trinity College, England, adds:

"Much is lost in Bible reading if we forget to look beyond the substitute word [Lord or God] to the personal, intimate name of God himself. By telling his people his name, God intended to reveal to them his inmost character."—*The Lion Handbook to the Bible* (1973), p. 157.

The Watchtower has consistently used the Divine Name. For example, after explaining that the Hebrew word *el* means "god," the issue of October 1881 (p. 9) went on to state:

"Jehovah is the chief 'el' and ruleth over all other *el*—powerful ones. And it should be known to all, that JEHOVAH is the name applied to none other than the Supreme Being—our Father, and him whom Jesus called Father and God."

And the January 1, 1926, issue developed the important theme "Who Will Honor Jehovah?" This championing of God's Name continues. Since the appearance of the *New World Translation* (1950-1961), it has been the version most often quoted herein, for it uses God's name even in the "New Testament" where evidence favors that. Professor G. Howard recently discussed using God's name in the "New Testament." Interestingly, he pointed out:

"It is reasonable to believe that the N[ew] T[estament] writers, when quoting from Scripture, preserved the Tetragram [God's name in Hebrew] within the Biblical text."—*Journal of Biblical Literature*, 1977, pp. 63-83.

The Watchtower had made this very point years before.

Professor Howard also said that when later God's name was removed and "Lord" substituted it likely created confusion in distinguishing between the Lord Jesus and the Lord Jehovah; this contributed to the now widely believed doctrine of the Trinity.

A TRIUNE GOD?

The formula "God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit" easily rolls off the tongue of many. It summarizes their view that there are three coequal and coeternal persons in God.

Yet for a century *The Watchtower* has urged readers to examine what God's Word actually says on the matter, such as that Jesus repeatedly is shown to be, not equal to his Father, but a lesser one subject to Jehovah. (John 14:28; 17:3; 1 Cor. 11:3) As an example, this appeared, along with supporting texts, in 1882:

"We believe then in one God and Father, and also in one Lord Jesus Christ. . . . But these are two and not one being. . . . We reject as totally unscriptural, the teaching that [Jehovah, Jesus and God's spirit or active force] are three Gods in one person, . . . The doctrine of the Trinity had its rise in the third century."

That the Trinity is not set out in the Bible but is a later church development is being admitted more and more. In Switzerland the *Vocabulaire biblique* (1954, p. 72) stated: "No New Testament writings supply explicit assurance of a triune God." Ian Henderson, University of Glasgow, writes in the *Encyclopedia International* (1969):

"The doctrine of the Trinity did not form part of the apostles' preaching, as this is reported in the New Testament."—P. 226.

Then the London *Observer* reported on December 3, 1978:

"One of Britain's leading Anglican theologians, the Rev. Dr Geoffrey Lampe, . . . has come out with a strong challenge to the historic Christian doctrine of the Trinity. . . . He said the Trinity doctrine—God consisting of three 'Persons'—has 'not much' future."

When theologians confine themselves to what the Bible, rather than later church doctrine, says about God and Christ, often the result is what this magazine has long been championing. From Berlin, Germany, Doctor of Theology J. Schneider writes:

"Jesus Christ does not usurp the place of God. His oneness with the Father does not mean absolute identity of being. Although the Son of God in his preexistent being was in the form of God, he resisted the temptation to be equal with God (Phil. 2:6). . . . Although completely co-ordinated with God, he remains subordinate to him."

—*Theologisches Begriffslexikon zum Neuen Testament* (1965), Vol. 2, p. 606.

THE VITAL RETURN OF CHRIST

Tied in with God's resurrecting Jesus is an event of the greatest importance to all Christians. That is Christ's return, or second coming. Jesus kept this vital subject before his followers, and they eagerly awaited this return. Shortly before his death, they implored: "Tell us, When will these things be, and what will be the sign of your presence [Greek, *parousia*] and of the conclusion of the system of things?" (Matt. 24:3; Acts 1:6) The Bible concludes with Jesus' exciting words: "Yes; I am coming quickly," to which the apostle John fervently responded: "Come, Lord Jesus."—Rev. 22:20; 1:7.

A Lutheran encyclopedia mentioned how vital this teaching is:

"All expectations for the future were dominated by the certainty that the Lord would return and be forever with his congregation, . . . This hope gave the early Christians the unshakable confidence that all powers and all changes in this world

are only temporary: Christ is coming!"

—*The Encyclopedia of the Lutheran Church*, Vol. III, p. 2149.

What a shocking contrast there is, though, in the influential beliefs of modern theologians! For example, recently Dr. A. C. Thiselton, of the University of Sheffield, England, summarized the main ones:

Catholic theologian Teilhard de Chardin "has little to say about the parousia [or, presence]." Paul Tillich provides "a theology of the future in which the parousia plays virtually no part." Rudolf Bultmann "regards the parousia as eschatological myth." And J. A. T. Robinson claims that "Jesus himself did not expect that there should be a second coming."—*Tyndale Bulletin*, 1976, pp. 27-53.

Because of the clergy's deemphasizing Christ's return, this major truth has little meaning in the lives of most churchgoers. As just one example of the seriousness of this, consider: The return of Christ involves the ultimate triumph of righteousness over wickedness, so what happens to people's concern for righteousness when spiritual leaders imply that Jesus may never return?

However, consistent with the Scriptures and the pattern of the early Christians, from its first issue in 1879 *Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence* (as it was originally named) has heralded and championed the return and presence of Christ.

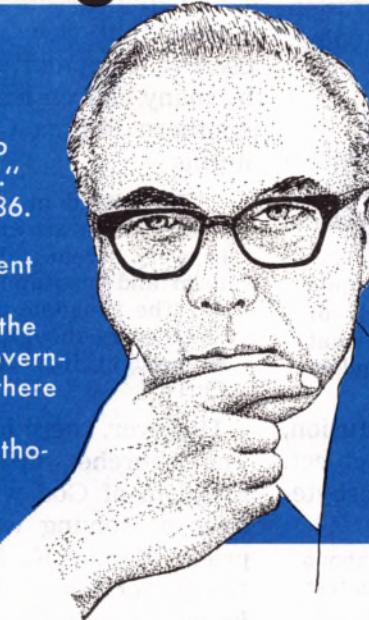
Furthermore, what we have seen in our lifetime—wars, famine, earthquakes, lawlessness on a global scale—is ample proof that we NOW are witnessing the 'sign of Christ's presence' that Jesus prophesied. (Matt. 24:3-14) That means that the end of the system of things is near. Certainly this and other Bible truths that we have considered deserve to be championed. That is especially so because Jesus said that those who please God "must worship with spirit and truth."—John 4:24.

God's Kingdom—The Only Hope

BIBLE VIEWS

"My kingdom is no part of this world."
—Jesus, John 18:36.

"And the government shall be upon his shoulder . . . Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end."
—Isa. 9:6, 7, "Authorized Version."



CHURCH VIEWS

"God's kingdom is to come by . . . working for the restoration of all human institutions in Christ."
—A Catholic Priest

"The Kingdom of God is the reign of God in the heart and life of the individual."
—Southern Baptist Conv.

ALL sorts of troubles plague mankind. But there is a solution. What is needed is a righteous world government that will administer earth's affairs in a loving, considerate way for the benefit of all. Would you not expect that solution to be the theme of Jesus' teaching?

It was. "The Kingdom was the dominant theme of his teaching," notes the religious journal *Christianity and Crisis*, and it adds: "No other subject was so much on his mind or so central to his message. It is mentioned over a hundred times in the Gospel narratives." Yes, Jesus said: "I must declare the good news of the kingdom of God, because for this I was sent forth." (Luke 4:43) He taught his followers to pray for God's kingdom to come. —Matt. 6:9, 10.

What is God's kingdom? How will it come to solve world troubles?

A VITAL BIBLE TRUTH

Most people know that a king is a ruler, and that a king's kingdom includes the

domain or realm over which he rules. So it should not be difficult to comprehend that God's kingdom will be a rule or government over the whole earth, administered by his own Son, Jesus Christ. This kingdom of God will replace all governments on earth.

For 100 years this Bible truth about the Kingdom has been emphasized in *The Watchtower*. In fact, since 1939 the magazine's official name has been "The Watchtower Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom." The December 1881 issue said: "The setting up of this kingdom will, of course, involve the overthrow of all the kingdoms of earth, as they are all—even the best of them—founded on injustice and unequal rights and the oppression of many and favor of the few—as we read: 'It shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms and it shall stand forever.'" —Dan. 2:44.

However, to most persons, including professed Christians, this Bible truth is unknown. Check it out. As you have oc-

casion, ask people: 'What is God's kingdom, and how will it come?' You may be surprised that there is so much confusion on the subject, and so little understanding. Why is this?

RELIGIOUS LEADERS TO BLAME

It is because religious leaders themselves are confused about the Kingdom. An editorial in *The Church Quarterly Review* admits:

"We have been in danger for some time of being swamped by the rising tide of theories and counter-theories as to what the really essential idea of the Kingdom is."

Due largely to the religious confusion, churches have said little on the subject. Francis P. Miller, a prominent Presbyterian, lamented:

"The silence of most Christians about the Kingdom of God is one of the greatest tragedies of our time." So he wrote in conclusion: "As a layman I plead with our theologians and with our clergy: Tell us about the Kingdom of God; explain to us what it is and how it is to be related to the world of our time . . . The need is urgent. Our theologians and clergy must speak in words laymen can understand about the Kingdom of God that is at hand."—*Christianity and Crisis*, June 13, 1960.

But have they? The ignorance and confusion of most persons regarding God's kingdom reveals that they have not. Think for a moment about the ideas that you may have heard people express about the Kingdom. Do they reflect the following viewpoints the churches have taught?

CHURCH VIEWS

For a long time it was taught that the Roman Catholic Church was, in effect, the kingdom of God on earth. But during the early part of this century, *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (1910) said under "Kingdom of God":

"The 'kingdom' means not so much a goal to be attained or a place . . . it is rather a tone of mind (Luke, xviii, 20-21),

it stands for an influence which must permeate men's minds if they would be one with Him and attain to His ideals."

Does that view sound familiar? It has been very popular and has been expressed by many church leaders. For example, the Southern Baptist Convention of 1925 put it this way:

"The Kingdom of God is the reign of God in the heart and life of the individual in every human relationship, and in every form and institution of organized society. . . . The Kingdom of God will be complete when every thought and will of man shall be brought into captivity to the will of Christ."

However, there is another popular view. The churches also have identified the kingdom of God with human political efforts at solving world troubles. Catholic priest Martin K. Hopkins, in discussing the prayer Jesus taught, writes: "*Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven*. This explains how God's kingdom is to come eventually. It demands looking beyond the present day and working for the restoration of all human institutions in Christ."

What about these various ideas? Does the Kingdom in any way depend on human efforts to Christianize institutions and peoples? Is the Kingdom a "reign of God in the heart and life of the individual"?

VIEWS INCORRECT

The above views regarding the kingdom of God, which are held by many people, are incorrect. They are not in accord with the Bible. And in recent times this has been admitted by church leaders themselves. *The Dictionary of the Apostolic Church*, edited by James Hastings, states:

"There is hardly any trace in the Epistles of the mediæval idea that the Church on earth was the Kingdom of God. And the idea of some modern theological writers, that this world as we know it will develop under Christian influence until it becomes the Kingdom, is quite alien to their thought."

Although church leaders commonly used to refer to the Kingdom as being a ‘tone of mind,’ or ‘rule in one’s heart,’ this view is now generally rejected, as *The Church Quarterly Review* notes:

“Some of us can remember the days when this question involved no difficulty at all. The Kingdom was simply the rule of God in the individual heart and life . . . Today that simplicity has become no more than the note of an outmoded journalism or of platform politics.”

In contrast with the church’s incorrect views, however, the Kingdom message proclaimed through the columns of *The Watchtower* has proved to be in harmony with the Bible. Yes, the Scriptures clearly show that *God’s kingdom is a reign by God exercised through his Son, Jesus Christ.* This rule was foretold in the Bible in these words: “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder . . . Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.” (Isa. 9:6, 7, *Authorized Version*) God’s heavenly Kingdom government is at hand. Soon, it will overthrow and replace all human governments.—Dan. 2:44.

THE CHRISTIAN POSITION

So, what is the proper Christian position toward this system, which God’s kingdom is to replace? The Bible explains that the present world is under the rule of Satan. (Matt. 4:9; John 12:31; 14:30; 2 Cor. 4:4) Long ago, drawing attention to this truth, the December 1882 issue of the *Watchtower* magazine explained:

“If we see clearly that present governments are those of the ‘prince of this world’ and must all be shattered and give place to the Kingdom of God for which we pray, ‘Thy kingdom come,’ then we

shall have no further desire to be mixed up with them in any way.”

In contrast with Christendom’s churches, *The Watchtower* has for the past 100 years shown its readers the proper Christian position, as stated by Jesus: “You are no part of the world.” It has repeatedly emphasized Jesus’ teaching: “My kingdom is no part of this world.” (John 15:19; 18:36) So, rather than getting mixed up in this world’s political affairs, true Christians have been wholehearted supporters of God’s Kingdom government.—John 6:15.

God’s heavenly Kingdom government is at hand. Soon it will overthrow and replace all human governments

WHAT GOD’S KINGDOM WILL BRING

What would you expect from a government by God?

First of all, you would surely expect its ruler to be just, kind and sympathetic. And Jesus Christ has proved himself to be such a person. (Matt. 11:28-30) Under God’s direction, Christ has selected persons with the same qualities to rule in heaven with him. (Luke 22:28-30; Rev. 5:9, 10; 20:6) One of these men wrote to another who shared this same hope: “If we go on enduring, we shall also rule together as kings.”—2 Tim. 2:12.

Certainly we would expect the reign of these kings to be one of righteousness and peace, bringing happiness and health to all mankind—its subjects on earth. Christ demonstrated his God-given power to cure all forms of sickness when he was on earth; he even raised the dead! Under Kingdom rule he will again exercise these miraculous powers to the blessing and benefit of every person on earth! In time, the entire earth will be transformed into a beautiful paradise.—Luke 23:43; Rev. 21:4.

Surely God’s kingdom is the only hope for realizing the blessings for which we all so earnestly long!

*"Make me walk in your truth and teach me,
for you are my God of salvation." - Ps. 25:5.*



Who Really Have The Truth?

THE word *truth* is defined as that which conforms to the facts, to reality. It signifies that which is right and genuine. The source, or foundation, of truth is the Almighty Creator of the universe, Jehovah God. He knows the truth about every aspect of his creation. He knows what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is bad. He knows the truth about what has happened in the past and why, as well as the meaning of present world conditions. He also knows the truth about the future, since he al-

ready has determined what it will be.
—Isa. 14:24.

For such reasons the psalmist describes the Creator as "Jehovah the God of truth." (Ps. 31:5) So when God speaks, his words are always trustworthy: "Your word is truth." (John 17:17) When he issues instructions for human behavior, these are always right: "All your commandments are truth." (Ps. 119:151) When he promises something, we can rely on it: "Not a promise failed out of all the good promise that Jehovah had made . . . it all came true." (Josh. 21:45) Thus, the Bible de-

1. What is the meaning of the word *truth*, and why can it be said that Jehovah is the foundation of truth?

2. How does the Bible describe Jehovah's truthfulness?

clares of God: "Righteous and true are your ways, King of eternity."—Rev. 15:3.

WALKING IN THE TRUTH

³ It is logical that the God of truth would want his human creation to walk in the truth. How is this to be done? By getting an accurate knowledge of who God is and what his purposes are; then by learning what he wants us to do, and doing it. (John 17:3; 1 John 2:3, 4) This really means that walking in the truth becomes a way of life, "The Way," as the Bible puts it.—Acts 9:2.

⁴ One reason why God wants humans to walk in the truth is that it brings glory and joy to the Creator when his human creation reflects his fine qualities. (Compare Genesis 1:26, 27; Proverbs 23:24, 25.) Another is that, since God made humans, he knows what is best for them. Therefore, those who follow his instructions bring the greatest benefits, even eternal benefits, to themselves and to others. (Isa. 48:17) An additional reason is that by walking in the truth, humans can be privileged to be associated with the people that God uses to inform truth seekers about his purposes. It is like the Bible times of which Amos wrote: "The Sovereign Lord Jehovah will not do a thing unless he has revealed his confidential matter to his servants the prophets."—Amos 3:7.

⁵ There is another vital reason for walking in the truth. A person who does so goes on record as upholding the rightfulness of Jehovah's universal rulership. That has been challenged by the spirit creature who turned rebel, Satan the Devil. (Gen. 3:1-4; Rev. 12:9) Included in his challenge was the taunt that God could not produce persons who would stay loyal to him and his truths. (Job 1:6-12) So standing firm for the truth under any pressure

3, 4. (a) How does a person walk in the truth? (b) Why does Jehovah want humans to walk in the truth?

5. What other vital reason is there for walking in the truth?

shows that there are people of integrity who will not compromise what is right. (Prov. 27:11) On the other hand, a person who does not walk in the truth does much more than merely walk in error. Intentionally or unintentionally he allows himself to become aligned with Satan, the "father of the lie," "the god of this system of things" who has "blinded the minds of the unbelievers."—John 8:44; 2 Cor. 4:4.

⁶ However, the God of truth has set a time limit for the permission of untruth and its resultant wickedness. (Prov. 12:19; Eccl. 3:1) God has purposed that, when the time limit expires, he will crush this Satanic system out of existence, along with those who promote it and prefer it. (Dan. 2:44; Rev. 19:17-21) "Every plant that my heavenly Father did not plant will be uprooted," Jesus foretold. (Matt. 15:13) This will pave the way for God's new system 'in which righteousness is to dwell.' (2 Pet. 3:13) That will mean an earthly society founded on truth, an earth inhabited only by truth-loving people!

⁷ Therefore, if we love what is right and want to live in God's new order, it is imperative that we walk in the truth. We should have the attitude of the psalmist who prayed: "Make me know your own ways, O Jehovah; teach me your own paths. Make me walk in your truth and teach me." (Ps. 25:4, 5) Similarly, we should heed the prophet Samuel's counsel to ancient Israel: "You must not turn aside to follow the unrealities that are of no benefit and that do not deliver, . . . Only fear Jehovah, and you must serve him in truth with all your heart."—1 Sam. 12:21, 24.

PATTERNS' FOR OUR TIME

⁸ God's dealings with people in the past

6. How will truth become firmly established earth wide? Read Proverbs 12:19.

7. If we love the truth, what should our attitude be?

8, 9. (a) In contrast to surrounding nations, how did Israel benefit by walking in the truth? (b) What happened when Israel failed to continue walking in the truth?

provide 'patterns,' or examples, for us. From these we learn how God actually deals with those who walk in the truth and those who do not. (1 Cor. 10:11; Rom. 15:4) One pattern that we can learn from is that of ancient Israel. That nation was favored by being given God's laws. As long as the Israelites walked in his truths, they were richly blessed. For example, they did not fall prey to enemy nations. (Deut. 28:7) Their crops and flocks were abundant. (Deut. 11:8-15) Their social system was so orderly and highly developed that there was no need for prisons. (Ex. 22: 1-15) Disease epidemics that struck ungodly nations did not come on them. (Deut. 7:15) And if they continued to walk in the truth—"the most blessed of all the peoples you will become," Jehovah promised them. (Deut. 7:14) In contrast, note the debased condition of the surrounding Canaanite nations, as the *Bible Handbook* by Henry H. Halley observes:

"Canaanites worshipped, by immoral indulgence, as a religious rite, in the presence of their gods; and then, by murdering their first-born children, as a sacrifice to these same gods.

"It seems that, in large measure, the land of Canaan had become a sort of Sodom and Gomorrah on a national scale . . . Did a civilization of such abominable filth and brutality have any right longer to exist? . . .

"Archaeologists who dig in the ruins of Canaanite cities wonder that God did not destroy them sooner than he did."

⁹ However, Israel failed to keep walking in the truth. As a result, God withdrew his backing from the nation. That is why Jesus at the temple said to Israel: "Look! Your house is abandoned to you." (Matt. 23:38) He also declared: "The kingdom of God will be taken from you and be given to a nation producing its fruits." (Matt. 21:43) No longer would they be God's favored nation, his witnesses.

¹⁰ In the first century of our Common Era, God developed a new spiritual nation. This was the Christian congregation, an organization made up of people of many different nationalities. (Acts 10:34, 35; 13:46) God's appointed spokesman, Jesus, laid the foundation for it, saying: "I am the way and the truth and the life." (John 14:6) By what he taught and accomplished, he proved that he really had the truth, and had God's backing. (Matt. 3:16, 17; 15:30, 31; Acts 2:22) The first-century Christians proved the same, being identified clearly as God's Christian witnesses. (Acts 1:8; 2:1-4, 43) Of the truths that now flowed through those Christians, the apostle Paul said: "It is to us God has revealed them through his spirit." In contrast, he noted: "This wisdom not one of the rulers of this system of things came to know." (1 Cor. 2:8, 10) It had come to pass just as Jesus said: "You [God] have hidden these things from the wise and intellectual ones and have revealed them to babes."—Matt. 11:25.

¹¹ By the end of that first century, God had accomplished something else. He had finished the inspired written record that would later be used as the basis for determining the truth. (2 Tim. 3:16, 17) Included in the completed Scriptures were many prophecies, history written in advance. (2 Pet. 1:21) Those prophecies showed that after the death of the apostles a period of falling away from the truth would set in. (Acts 20:29) But they also showed that later, during the "final part of the days" just before this system's end, there would be a restoration of true worship. (Isa. 2:1-4; Mic. 3:12 through 4:5) Jesus noted that people would be gathered into two groups: those who do good to

10. How did a new spiritual nation manifest itself in the first century?

11, 12. (a) How did the Bible foretell the restoration of true worship in our time? (b) For what purposes was this restoration?

Christ's brothers who walk in the truth would be rewarded with "everlasting life"; those not doing so would go into "everlasting cutting-off."—Matt. 25:31-46; 2 John 4; 3 John 3, 4.

¹² The gathering and reorganizing of the Christian congregation in modern times would be for several purposes. This congregation would, for one thing, receive unified instruction from God: "He will instruct us about his ways, and we will walk in his paths," says the prophecy of Isaiah 2:3 (also, Mic. 4:2). By walking in the truth, these servants of God would uphold the rightfulness of his universal rule, bringing glory and pleasure to him, and many benefits to themselves. (Prov. 12:22) In turn, God would use them as his modern-day witnesses, equipping them to deliver his message to this present generation.

¹³ Would God use more than one organization to dispense his truths in these "last days"? Well, has God ever used more than one during any other period of judgment? In Noah's day, did any other boats with people in them, aside from Noah's ark, have God's protection and survive the flood? No, only the ark and its occupants did. (1 Pet. 3:20) Were there two Christian organizations in the first century? No, God dealt with just the one. So, too, in our day, there is still "one Lord, one faith, one baptism." (Eph. 4:5) That there could be only one united congregation is made clear from Paul's words that "you should all speak in agreement, and . . . there should not be divisions among you." —1 Cor. 1:10.

"BY THEIR FRUITS"

¹⁴ How can we determine who really has the truth today, thus qualifying to be used by God as his witnesses in the earth? A

13. Has Jehovah ever used more than one organization on earth at any one time?

14. How can a person determine who really has the truth today?

basic principle in determining the true from the false was laid down by Jesus when he said: "By their fruits you will recognize them. . . . Every good tree produces fine fruit, but every rotten tree produces worthless fruit." (Matt. 7:16, 17) Yes, there would have to be "fruitage," or evidence that God's powerful holy spirit was indeed backing this people. And what kind of fruitage would that power of God produce in his servants? His Word answers: "The fruitage of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control."—Gal. 5:22, 23.

¹⁵ Note, especially, the "fruit" listed first, that of *love*. One way that God's true servants must manifest this is as Jesus stated: "You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind." (Matt. 22:37) Love for God is shown in a number of ways. One of these ways is in loving the name of God. (Heb. 6:10; Ps. 69:36; 119:132) Indeed, those Christians taken out from this world must become "a people for his *name*." (Acts 15:14-18) Who are they today who uphold God's name (Jehovah, in English) and make it known through the earth?—Isa. 43:10-12.

¹⁶ Love for God would also mean believing in, and talking about, his incoming government for all the earth, his heavenly Kingdom. Jesus taught us to pray: "Let your *kingdom* come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth." (Matt. 6:9, 10) Who among mankind today make God's kingdom the central doctrine of their teaching and preaching as did Jesus? Who call on people in their homes to tell them what God's kingdom will accomplish on earth? Who fulfill the com-

15. Love for God is connected with his name in what way?

16. How is love for God displayed in connection with Kingdom interests?

mission Jesus mentioned when he foretold: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come"?—Matt. 24:14.

¹⁷ Love for God is manifest in still another way—by obeying all of his laws. (1 John 5:3) When there is a conflict between God's laws and the laws of men, the Bible rule for those who really have the truth is: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men." (Acts 5:29) Only those who do this get the backing of "the holy spirit, which God has given to those obeying him as ruler." (Acts 5:32) For example, in obeying God's laws, Christians today are "no part of the world," being neutral in this world's political affairs, as Jesus and the first-century Christians were. (Luke 4:5-8; John 6:15; 15:19; 17:14-16) Who are the ones who in our day maintain this separateness from the world, with its political corruption, its violence and its immorality, being willing even to suffer imprisonment or death because of following in Jesus' footsteps?—1 Pet. 2:21; see also Hebrews chapter 13.

¹⁸ There is another aspect of this "fruit" of the spirit, love. Jesus said: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves." (John 13:35) Many other scriptures show also that such love would be a clear identifying mark of God's true servants. For example:

"The children of God and the children of the Devil are evident by this fact: Everyone who does not carry on righteousness does not originate with God, neither does he who does not love his brother. . . . we should have love for one another; not like Cain, who originated with the wicked one and slaughtered his brother." —1 John 3:10-12.

"If anyone makes the statement: 'I love God,' and yet is hating his brother, he is

17. In what other way does love for God manifest itself?
18. Give another clear identifying mark of those who really have the truth.

a liar. For he who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot be loving God, whom he has not seen."—1 John 4:20, 21.

What international group of people demonstrates this type of love for one another, not just by words, but by deeds? Over the past century, what group has refrained, in time of war, from slaughtering fellow believers of other nations, and from allowing racial, nationalistic, cultural or economic prejudices to come between them?

WHO REALLY HAVE THE TRUTH TODAY?

¹⁹ What does the evidence show regarding this vital fruit of God's spirit, love? Who measure up? Where do we see a great crowd of people of all different nationalities and races united together in Jehovah's name to serve him loyally and to tell others about his kingdom? Yes, where do we find a genuine worldwide brotherhood bonded by love? (Rev. 7:9, 10; Col. 3:14) The religious publication *Interpretation*, in a chapter entitled "The Bible and Modern Religions, Jehovah's Witnesses," observes the following:

"In their organization and witnessing work, they [Jehovah's Witnesses] come as close as any group to approximating the primitive Christian community.

"Their aloofness from the world, urgency in witnessing, and imperviousness to the attacks of the world are such as come to those who firmly believe that they are among the elect and who have given their allegiance without reservation to God.

"Few other groups make as extensive a use of Scripture in their messages, both oral and written, as they do. Few other groups get from what we call the laity as much service in carrying forward the work of the organization as they do."

²⁰ An impartial investigation of God's Word, comparing it to the teachings and practices of Jehovah's Witnesses, will pro-

19. Who really have the truth today, and why would you say so?

20. What should all persons do who have a love for the truth?

vide the evidence that God's spirit is indeed backing them, and that he is using them as his instrument for proclaiming truth today. However, all persons who have a love for the truth are invited to examine this claim that Jehovah's Witnesses really do have the truth. In doing so, they should

imitate what those persons in the first century did who listened to the preaching of the apostles: "They received the word with the greatest eagerness of mind, *carefully examining the Scriptures daily* as to whether these things were so."—Acts 17:11.

How Jehovah Guides His People

*"For this God is our God to time indefinite,
even forever. He himself will guide us
until we die." —Ps. 48:14.*

THROUGHOUT the centuries, Jehovah has guided those who love him and who want to serve him. The psalmist was one of these, for he asked of God: "Send out your light and your truth. May these themselves lead me." (Ps. 43:3) The prophet Daniel knew that "there exists a God in the heavens who is a Revealer of secrets," and foretold that in our time, this "time of the end," "the true knowledge will become abundant." (Dan. 2:28; 12:4) Isaiah also prophesied that in this "final part of the days" true worship would "become firmly established" and that Jehovah would guide his people: "He will instruct us about his ways, and we will walk in his paths." Thus, the invitation that is extended to people today is: "Come and let us walk in the light of Jehovah."—Isa. 2:2-5.

Just how does Jehovah guide his people in his truths? For one thing, he takes into account that he created humans with a

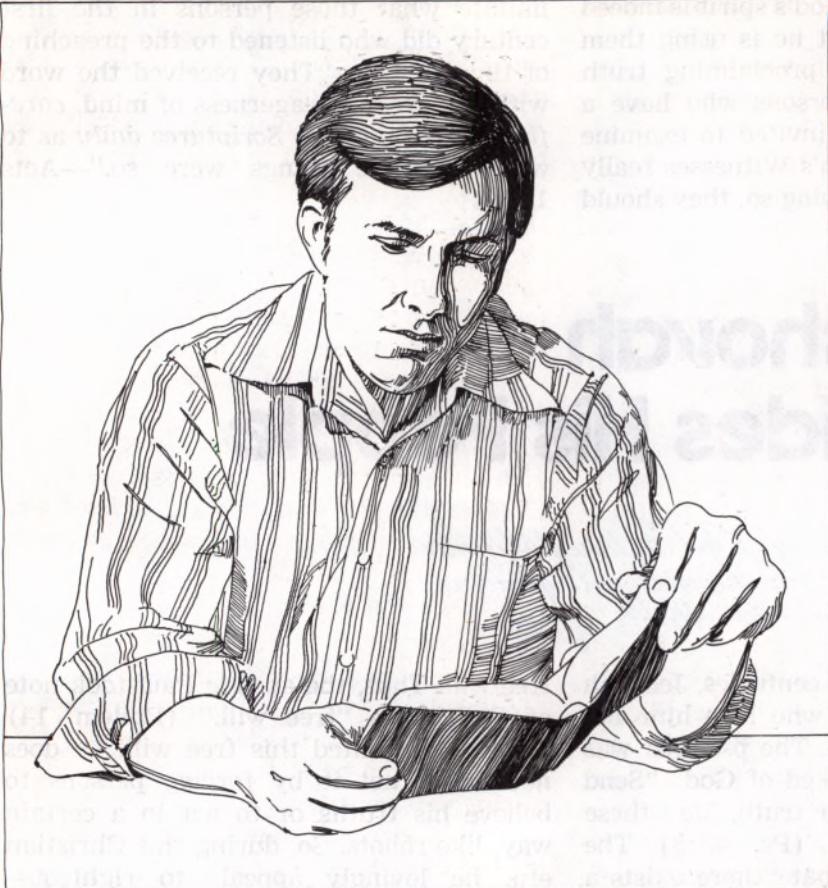
free will. Thus, the apostle Paul took note of Philemon's "free will." (Philem. 14) Since God created this free will, he does not counteract it by *forcing* persons to believe his truths or to act in a certain way, like robots. So, during this Christian era, he lovingly appeals to righteous-hearted persons to come and associate with his approved organization, and then guides them gently by means of holy spirit, his inspired Word and his truth-dispensing organization on earth.

³ Another consideration relative to God's guidance of his people is that God gives the understanding of his truths *in his own time*, and *in his own way*. (Dan. 12:9) Too, Jehovah leads his people progressively in the truth. Having created the human mind, Jehovah knows that too little spiritual "food" will not sustain it properly, but too much at one time may be more than humans can absorb. At John 16:12 Jesus said to his faithful apostles: "I have many things yet to say to you, but you

1. How does the Bible show that Jehovah guides those who love him?

2. What does Jehovah take into consideration when guiding his people in his truths?

3. What is it especially important to keep in mind as to how Jehovah guides his people?



are not able to bear them at present." To illustrate: When a person emerges from a long period of confinement in a dark room, it is best if he is exposed to light gradually. Too much light too soon can be shocking, perhaps even damaging. Similar is the need for progressive enlightenment with God's truths. It corresponds with what the wise man says: "The road the righteous travel is like the sunrise, getting brighter and brighter until daylight has come." —Prov. 4:18, *Today's English Version*.

⁴ Jesus well knew that it was Jehovah's way to make plain his truths progressively. He told his apostles that later God's holy

4. (a) What did Jesus indicate as to the need for progressive clarification of the truth? (b) Because Jehovah's truths are clarified gradually, what must his servants be willing to do?

spirit would guide them into all the truth. (John 16:12, 13) And because previously established truths would be clarified step by step, there would be the corresponding need for God's servants to correct and adjust their viewpoint on various Scriptural matters as time went on.

GUIDANCE REGARDING KINGDOM TRUTHS

⁵ In guiding the first-century Christians, Jehovah did not make clear to them at one time all the truths related to his purposes. As an example, consider the Bible's central doctrine, God's kingdom. Jesus taught his followers to pray: "Let your kingdom come." (Matt. 6:10) He urged: "Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness." (Matt. 6:33) But during those years that he was on earth, did his followers understand all the details about Kingdom rule? Could they accurately answer questions about it, such as: What is God's kingdom? Who will rule in it, and how many rulers will there be? When will it come? What will it do for the earth and for humans?

⁶ That those who talked with Jesus did not have all this knowledge is evidenced by

5, 6. Regarding God's kingdom, what shows that the disciples of Jesus had incorrect views?

the question that they asked him after his resurrection: "Lord, are you restoring the kingdom to Israel at this time?" (Acts 1:6) Instead of answering by telling them about every aspect of Kingdom rule, Jesus declared: "It does not belong to you to get knowledge of the times or seasons which the Father has placed in his own jurisdiction." (Acts 1:7) Why did Jesus handle the matter in this way? Because the disciples held deep-seated but erroneous views of the Kingdom. They believed that the Kingdom would be an earthly rule that would throw off Roman domination. Yet the truth was that the Kingdom was to be heavenly, and that those chosen to rule with Christ would be taken from the earth to heaven. (Rev. 5:9, 10; 14:3; 20:4) Further, their question shows that they expected the Kingdom to be established immediately. But that was not to be, for many centuries would pass instead.

⁷ Although his disciples held incorrect views, Jesus did not condemn them and cast them off. He knew that their gaining understanding of God's truths would be gradual, and that holy spirit would progressively guide his followers so that they would get clear understanding in due time. Ultimately, complete knowledge concerning the Kingdom rule would be theirs. But, in the meantime, Jesus inculcated in those early followers a profound interest and zeal for seeking the Kingdom first, and a willingness to make adjustments in their views about it. So although limited in accurate knowledge about Kingdom truths, what they did know enabled them, as they waited, to 'keep close in mind the presence of the day of Jehovah.' (2 Pet. 3:12) Today, our knowledge of God's Kingdom rule, what it is and what it will accomplish, is far more advanced, but still not entirely complete.

7. (a) Despite their incorrect views about the Kingdom, what was Jesus' attitude toward those disciples? (b) Do we understand everything about the rule of God's kingdom?

TRUTHS ABOUT THE GENTILES

⁸ Another issue that demonstrates how the understanding of God's truth is progressive has to do with how the non-Jewish, or Gentile, converts from 36 C.E. onward were viewed by some Jewish converts to Christianity. For instance, should they be circumcised, as the natural Jews were? Was the matter even raised in 33 C.E. when God's holy spirit was poured out at Pentecost? (Acts 2:1-4) No, for while that outpouring established that God was with those disciples and would henceforth guide them, it did not miraculously give them knowledge about every detail of God's truths. This can be seen from the fact that the issue of circumcision was not set forth in decrees decided upon by the apostles and older men who were in Jerusalem until 16 years after Pentecost, in the year 49 C.E.—Acts 16:4.

⁹ During all those years Jehovah allowed his people to experience how he was actually dealing with the Gentiles. In this way, their appreciation and understanding of the matter was deepened. Thus, when an issue arose that required decisive action, his servants had become well equipped to handle it with wisdom and insight. Take, for example, the adjustment that Peter had to make in his viewpoint. Over three years after Pentecost, the apostle Peter was guided by holy spirit to correct his view of the Gentiles, whom he had regarded as defiled, unclean.

¹⁰ In a vision, Peter was told to eat foods considered unclean under the Mosaic law. When he replied in astonishment that he did not eat such foods, a voice from heaven told him that what God calls clean can no longer be considered unclean. And at that very moment messengers came

8. What problem was there in connection with the Gentiles, and was this even raised at Pentecost?
9-11. (a) After following Jehovah's guidance over the years, why were his servants better able to handle a problem over circumcision? (b) How did the vision given to Peter help in adjusting to the proper understanding of the truth?

from the Gentile Cornelius. Cornelius had sent them to ask Peter to come to his home to tell him about God's purposes. But Peter had just expressed horror at eating unclean foods, and now he was being asked to go into the home of a Gentile, whom he also considered unclean! What should he do? Holy spirit directed the answer: "Rise, go downstairs and be on your way with them, not doubting at all, because I have dispatched them."—Acts 10:9-20.

¹¹ Peter got the point. The vision about Jehovah's making something clean that was formerly regarded as unclean was not merely about food, but, more importantly, it was about Peter's attitude toward Gentiles. Showing that he understood, Peter later told Cornelius and his household: "Hence I came, really without objection, when I was sent for." Then the holy spirit was poured out on that Gentile household, and they were baptized. Holy spirit had shown that God would now favor the Gentiles without their being circumcised.

—Acts 10:21-48.

¹² However, did this satisfy all Christianized Jews regarding the Gentiles? No, because 13 more years passed, and an issue as to whether Gentiles had to be circumcised was raised by some circumcised Jews who came to Antioch, Syria. (Acts 15:1, 2) So in the year 49 C.E. a meeting was arranged with the central body of apostles and other elders at Jerusalem. At that gathering, Peter, Paul and Barnabas related what God had accomplished among the uncircumcised Gentiles to whom they had preached. After examining how Jehovah had actually dealt with these Gentiles for many years, they unanimously confirmed the testimony of the Holy Scriptures, fortifying the truth that the Gentiles did not have to be circumcised.

12. (a) What further problem arose with regard to the Gentiles, and when? (b) On what basis could the central body give a decisive answer?

¹³ Not all of Christ's followers were willing to correct outdated views. Some would take clarifications as an excuse to abandon the truth, instead of viewing them as evidence of Jehovah's progressive guidance of his people. For instance, when Jesus introduced the illustration regarding the symbolic eating of his flesh and the drinking of his blood, the Bible record states that, "owing to this many of his disciples went off to the things behind and would no longer walk with him." (John 6:53-66) How shortsighted that was! What a lack of appreciation as to how Jehovah leads his people! Thirty-eight years later likely some of them paid a heavy price, as those who did not continue walking in the advancing understanding of truth also doubtless may have rejected Jesus' instructions to flee Jerusalem before it was destroyed. That cost them their lives, whereas those who continued to let Jehovah guide them fled and were spared.

—Luke 21:20-24.

GUIDANCE IN OUR DAY

¹⁴ When we look at what has been published by Jehovah's organization through the pages of *The Watchtower* and other publications for the past century, we find wholesome spiritual food in abundance. Early in this period, basic Bible truths were made clear, and they remain clear until this day. Our viewpoint on hell, Trinity, purgatory, the soul, where the dead are, the ransom, the resurrection, earth's destiny, the Kingdom and other key doctrines has undergone very little change during 100 years. The truth has always been truth, though, at times, our understanding of it has required adjustment.—Compare John 16:13.

¹⁵ Jehovah has continued to guide his

13. How did some show a lack of appreciation for the way Jehovah guides his people, and likely with what results?

14. To what extent has our viewpoint on basic truths been corrected during the past century?

15. Has there been a need for Jehovah's present-day servants to make adjustments in their views?

people step by step to a fuller appreciation of his truths, and this in his own time and in his own way. Because of this, Jehovah's Witnesses from earliest times in the past century have understood that they must be willing to modify and correct their views of doctrine, practice and organizational procedure when it became apparent that Jehovah's spirit was directing them toward such adjustments. As acknowledged by Bryan Wilson in the magazine *New Society*, Jehovah's Witnesses have "always maintained that continued study of the Bible might lead to fuller knowledge, and on previous occasions errors in prophetic interpretation have been admitted."

¹⁶ Perhaps the area in which it truly requires willingness to readjust is the field of Bible prophecy. Most prophecies are given only in general outline. Therefore, faith is required to await the outworking of the details. (Heb. 11:1) An example of this has to do with the Bible's prophecies showing that this present wicked system under Satan will be destroyed and replaced by "new heavens and a new earth." (2 Pet. 3:13) However, enough aspects of the overall "sign" of the impending end are given in the Bible to mark clearly the present time as the "last days," "the time of the end." (2 Tim. 3:1; Dan. 12:4) This has incited God's servants to intensify the work of fulfilling Jesus' words: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come." (Matt. 24:14) They have had success in doing this and in surviving as an organization, also in prospering spiritually despite enormous persecution, likewise in putting on and displaying the new personality in this degraded world. All of this is testimony to the fact that Jehovah has indeed backed them up.—Isa. 54:17.

16. (a) Why is Bible prophecy an area that particularly requires a willingness to readjust views? (b) How have Jehovah's servants responded to the information about the "last days," and how have they been backed?

¹⁷ However, during these "last days," have erroneous views about this system's end or *telos* (Greek) been held in advance by some of Jehovah's servants? Yes, they have. Some of these views involve the length of time it would take for the end to come. Out of zeal and enthusiasm for the vindication of Jehovah's name, Word and purposes, and the desire for the new system, some of his servants have at times been premature in their expectations. This is similar to the view that the disciples had as to the imminence of God's kingdom in their day. (Acts 1:6) But because expectations have at times been premature and so have not been fulfilled, does this mean that God has somehow changed his purpose? Not at all. "My own counsel will stand, and everything that is my delight I shall do," says Jehovah. (Isa. 46:10) Hence, Jehovah's purposes, and time, for establishing a righteous new order are firmly fixed.

¹⁸ This certainly impresses on us our need to weigh carefully all Scriptural factors, not emphasizing some to the point of overshadowing others. As Jesus himself stated so plainly: "Concerning that day and hour nobody knows." (Matt. 24:36) Always there is the need to pay strict attention to the apostle Paul's counsel: "Do not go beyond the things that are written."—1 Cor. 4:6.

¹⁹ Although many of Jehovah's Witnesses have had to adjust their views in this matter, can we deny that we are in the "time of the end"? Surely the evidence of the impending end of this system grows daily, as we see the deepening breakdown of institutions such as marriage, family, government and worldly religion, as well as increasing crime and violence, and growing disrespect for God.—2 Tim. 3:1-5.

17. Does the nonfulfillment of our own premature expectations mean that Jehovah has altered his purposes?

18. Why is it important to stay with "the things that are written"?

19. Although views have been readjusted, how does the evidence confirm the near end of this system?

²⁰ While an undetermined length of time yet remains of these "last days," one thing is certain. Those who continue to walk in Jehovah's advancing light, and are willing to be readjusted, will be part of the anointed remnant and the "great crowd" who "come out of the great tribulation" into God's righteous new order. "The Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, will shepherd them [the great crowd], and will guide them to fountains of waters of life. And God will wipe out every tear from their eyes."—2 Pet. 3:14, 15; Rev. 7:9-17.

²¹ Thus, those who look to Jehovah for guidance can look forward confidently to the establishing of a new system in which "the righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon

20, 21. How will those who continue to walk in Jehovah's advancing light be rewarded?

it." There, "the wicked one will be no more." But in his place, the meek and teachable will "find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace."—Ps. 37:10, 11, 29.

²² So, as has been the case for the past 100 years with the modern organization of Jehovah's people, we today are confident it will also be during the remainder of these last days that, "God is our God to time indefinite, even forever. He himself will guide us until we die." (Ps. 48:14) And then, in his new order, we can with equal confidence look forward to Jehovah's continued guidance of his servants throughout eternity, without their having to die at all, because "he that does the will of God remains forever."—1 John 2:17.

22. What confidence can Jehovah's servants have now and for the future?

QUESTIONS from READERS

- To what does "the crown of life" mentioned at James 1:12 refer, and who can be said to gain this crown?

James 1:12 reads: "Happy is the man that keeps on enduring trial, because on becoming approved he will receive the crown of life, which Jehovah promised to those who continue loving him."

The expression "the crown of life" has been explained to mean the highest form of life, immortal life, such as Christ's anointed footstep followers receive at the first resurrection. (1 Cor. 15:53, 54; Rev. 20:4, 6) There is no doubt that such life will be a crown to those possessing it and that it is the highest form of life. But did James, in using the word "crown," mean such superlative form of life?

It does not seem that we must attach the thought of something superlative to the term "crown of life." The Greek word is *stephanos*.

It is taken from a root meaning "to encircle," and so it is used to refer to a crown, wreath, prize or reward that a victor in a race receives. Thus the apostle Paul at 2 Timothy 4:7, 8 writes: "I have run the course to the finish. . . . From this time on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me as a reward in that day." He was not referring to superlative righteousness, but to the prize, the reward of righteousness that he would receive. (Compare Philippians 4:1; 1 Thessalonians 2:19, 20.) And so at James 1:12, "the crown of life" is the prize or gift of life received because of enduring tribulations. It can be said of the "great crowd" of tribulation survivors that, if enduring faithfully, they will gain "the crown of life," theirs being eternal life on earth.—Rev. 7:9, 10.

At Revelation 2:10 we have a similar expression that refers to the prize of life. Those receiving it are persons who have endured faithfully until death. In this instance, though, the ones being addressed are the anointed Christians who can gain immortal life in the heavens. (Rev. 2:26, 27) The words at James 1:12 might be said to state a general principle rather than referring to a specific class of people as does Revelation 2:10.

'We Really Appreciate It'

FROM many parts of the world we receive letters from readers of "The Watchtower." Frequently these are expressions of appreciation, and we would like to share a few of them with you.

A couple in England recently wrote: "We have always read and loved the Bible and realized that it was God's Word. However, like so many others, we did not properly understand it. Then, when we received "The Watchtower," the key to the Bible's message came into our hands. It has meant so much to us."

Some readers especially comment on the articles relating to prophecy. A university student in Japan writes: "What particularly strengthens my faith are the clear explanations of Bible prophecies. I have been amazed by the stupendous depth of God's wisdom which I have perceived through these wonderful articles." A Canadian reader adds: "The big impact that "The Watchtower" has made on me is in understanding prophecy, particularly those prophecies about the Kingdom rule under Christ Jesus."

Frequently, those who write to us have in mind the wholesome direction that "The Watchtower" has supplied in their own lives. A woman in England says: "The truths from God's Word that I have absorbed over the years have aided me to change my outlook on the future completely. Instead of uncertainty, I now have complete trust and confidence in Jehovah and his purpose to establish true peace and security through his Son, Jesus Christ." And a man in Germany who has been reading the magazine for 40 years reflected: "Without the stimulation from "The Watchtower" I would never have experienced all the deep emotions of true satisfaction that spring from doing God's will. I would have overlooked the treasures offered from Jehovah's hand and wasted my strength."

Among those treasures that large numbers of our readers have perceived is the guidance that God's Word offers regarding family life. They write: "'The Watchtower' has helped me to have a happy marriage. My wife and I are continually reminded to show consideration for each other, to be modest, to face problems mildly and with trust in Jehovah.' (Germany) 'It helped me to understand from the Bible that polygamy is not acceptable among Christians and it strengthened me to send away my extra wives and settle down with my first wife. As a result, I am now living happily with my family and have the joy of rendering acceptable service to Jehovah.' (Nigeria) 'For twenty years "The Watchtower" has enabled me to teach my children what is good and what is bad, and to be confident that what I was saying was right, that it was God's viewpoint. Because we used the Bible, along with "The Watchtower," to handle problems, we have

never experienced a rupture in the parent-child relationship.' (Japan)

Not a few of our readers began to enjoy "The Watchtower" when they were quite young. One in England writes: "When first introduced to "The Watchtower," I was a disillusioned teen-ager. I felt insecure, had little communication with my parents, and was desperately in need of guidance. "The Watchtower" filled that need. In its faithfully sticking to the Bible, "The Watchtower" has often published searching and sometimes (to me personally) searing articles about applying Bible principles to our own personality. I thank Jehovah for the help."

The magazine also fills the needs of those in the later years of life. A widow asked: "What in the world would I do without it? I mean "The Watchtower," of course. It has never failed to bring me timely counsel on my current problems. In the very month that my husband died, an article appeared entitled "You Are Never Alone." What comfort and strength I drew from that article and the scripture it highlighted, Psalm 46! Subsequently, "The Watchtower" has been a great help in aiding me to build a new life as a single person. Through its counsel I have found that in trying to ease the loneliness of others, my own has disappeared."

What many "Watchtower" readers feel goes far beyond gratitude for the help received in coping with a certain problem. A man in Spain put it this way: "In this "enlightened" 20th century, it is often very difficult to see things from God's point of view, from the vantage point of the Sovereign Lord of the universe, Jehovah. Yet "The Watchtower" has faithfully helped me to do just that over the past 30 years." An Italian reader concluded: "The way it has upheld and defended before the whole world the name of Jehovah, the authenticity of his Word, his right to rule—all of this shows me that it has been an instrument used by Jehovah to dispense spiritual light." And another one wrote: "The day "The Watchtower" first came to my home, I read it, and immediately a window was opened toward a wonderful future. I had always been taught such things as immortality of the soul, fiery hell and Trinity. But after reading "The Watchtower" for an hour, I cried out, "I have found the truth," and I have never left it."

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

- August 12: Who Really Have the Truth? Page 20. Songs to Be Used: 65, 62.
August 19: How Jehovah Guides His People. Page 25. Songs to Be Used: 18, 83.

