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THE WATCHTOWER[®]

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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STUDY ARTICLES FOR THE
WEEKS OF:

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Righteousness

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PURPOSE OF STUDY ARTICLES

STUDY ARTICLES 1, 2 PAGES 8-16

Learn how Satan challenged God. Consider how Jesus upheld and magnified the righteousness of Jehovah's sovereignty. Reflect on the cost of Jesus' ransom sacrifice, and note how it can save you. Such points are discussed in these articles.

STUDY ARTICLE 3 PAGES 21-25

Learn what loving-kindness is and how it can affect the tongue. Reflect also on ways that this godly quality can be displayed in daily speech.

STUDY ARTICLE 4 PAGES 28-32

Foregleams of the Thousand Year Reign of God's Son, Jesus Christ, are provided in Psalm 72. Your heart will be warmed as you study this article and meditate on how Jehovah God will use the Greater Solomon to deliver those crying for help.

HOW JESUS MAGNIFIES GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS

"God set [Christ] forth as an offering for propitiation through faith in his blood. This was in order to exhibit his own righteousness."—ROM. 3:25.

THE Biblical account about rebellion in the garden of Eden is well-known. All of us feel the effects of Adam's sin as explained in these words: "Through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned." (Rom. 5:12) No matter how hard we try to do what is right, we make mistakes, for which we need God's forgiveness. Even the apostle Paul lamented: "The good that I wish I do not do, but the bad that I do not wish is what I practice. Miserable man that I am!"—Rom. 7:19, 24.

² Our sinful nature gives rise to these important questions: How was it possible for Jesus of Nazareth to be born free from inherited sin, and why was he baptized? How did Jesus' life course magnify Jehovah's righteousness? Most important, what did Christ's death accomplish?

God's Righteousness Challenged

³ Our first parents, Adam and Eve, foolishly rejected God's sovereignty in favor of being ruled by "the original serpent, the one called Devil and Satan." (Rev. 12:9) Consider how this happened. Satan questioned the righteousness of Jehovah God's way of ruling. He did so by asking Eve: "Is it really so that God said you must not eat from every

tree of the garden?" Eve repeated God's clear command that one specific tree was not to be touched, on pain of death. Satan then accused God of lying. "You positively will not die," said the Devil. He went on to deceive Eve into believing that God was withholding something good and that by eating the fruit, she would become like God, having moral independence.—Gen. 3:1-5.

⁴ Basically, Satan implied that mankind would be happier following a path of independence from God. Instead of upholding the righteousness of God's sovereignty, Adam listened to his wife and joined her in eating the forbidden fruit. Thus Adam forfeited his perfect standing with Jehovah and brought us under the cruel yoke of sin and death. At the same time, mankind came under the rival sovereignty of Satan, "the god of this world."—2 Cor. 4:4, *King James Version*; Rom. 7:14.

⁵ True to his infallible word, Jehovah passed the sentence of death on Adam and Eve. (Gen. 3:16-19) But that did not mean God's purpose had failed. Far from it! When sentencing Adam and Eve, Jehovah gave their future descendants a bright ray of hope. He did so by announcing his purpose to raise up a "seed" whom Satan would

1, 2. (a) What does the Bible teach us about mankind's condition? (b) What questions will this article consider?

3. How did Satan deceive Eve?

4. How did mankind come under Satan's rival sovereignty?

5. (a) How did Jehovah prove true to his word? (b) What hope did God give Adam and Eve's descendants?

bruise in the heel. That promised Seed, however, would recover from the heel wound and would “bruise [Satan] in the head.” (Gen. 3:15) The Bible elaborates on this theme by stating the following respecting Jesus Christ: “For this purpose the Son of God was made manifest, namely, to break up the works of the Devil.” (1 John 3:8) But how did Jesus’ conduct and death magnify God’s righteousness?

The Meaning of Jesus’ Baptism

⁶ As a full-grown man, Jesus was to be the exact equivalent of the once perfect Adam. (Rom. 5:14; 1 Cor. 15:45) This means that Jesus had to be born perfect. How was that possible? The angel Gabriel gave this clear

6. How do we know that Jesus did not inherit sin from Adam?

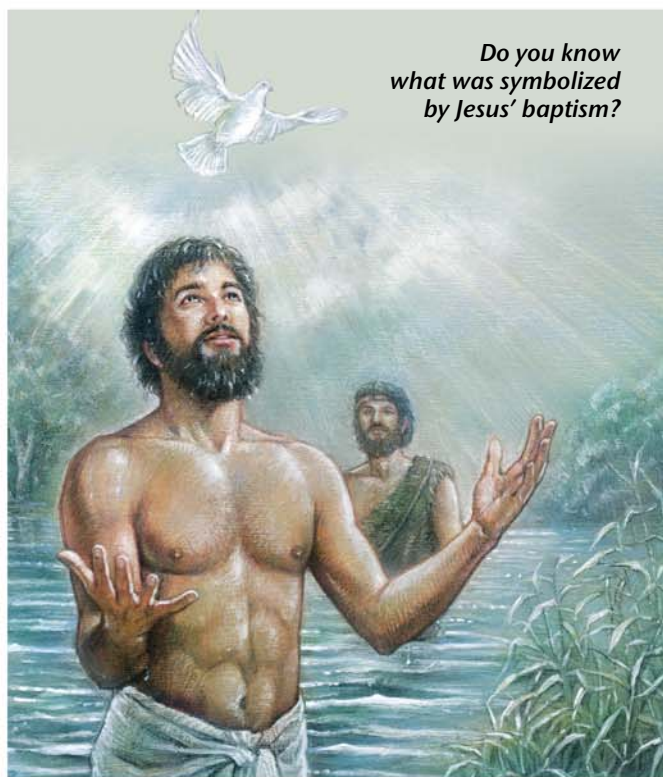
explanation to Jesus’ mother, Mary: “Holy spirit will come upon you, and power of the Most High will overshadow you. For that reason also what is born will be called holy, God’s Son.” (Luke 1:35) Early in Jesus’ life, Mary apparently disclosed to Jesus certain facts about his birth. Thus, on one occasion when Mary and Jesus’ adoptive father, Joseph, found Jesus in God’s temple, the young child asked: “Did you not know that I must be in the house of my Father?” (Luke 2:49) Evidently from an early age, Jesus knew that he was God’s Son. Magnifying God’s righteousness was therefore of great importance to him.

⁷ Jesus showed his keen interest in spiritual things by regularly attending meetings for worship. With his perfect mind, he must have absorbed everything he heard and read in the Hebrew Scriptures. (Luke 4:16) He also had another precious possession—a perfect human body that could be sacrificed in behalf of mankind. When he was baptized, Jesus was praying and may have been thinking about the prophetic words of Psalm 40:6-8.—Luke 3:21; *read Hebrews 10:5-10.**

⁸ John the Baptizer initially wanted to prevent Jesus from getting baptized. Why? Because John was immersing Jews in symbol of their repentance over sin against the Law. As a close relative, John

* The apostle Paul here quotes from Psalm 40:6-8 according to the Greek Septuagint translation, which includes the words “you prepared a body for me.” This phrase is not found in available manuscripts of the ancient Hebrew Scriptures.

7. Jesus had what precious possessions?
8. Why did John the Baptizer try to prevent Jesus from getting baptized?



*Do you know
what was symbolized
by Jesus’ baptism?*

must have known that Jesus was righteous and therefore in no need of repentance. Jesus assured John that it was fitting for Him to be baptized. “In that way,” Jesus explained, “it is suitable for us to carry out all that is righteous.”—Matt. 3:15.

⁹ As a perfect human, Jesus could have concluded that he, like Adam, had the potential for fathering a perfect race. However, Jesus never desired such a future because it was not Jehovah’s will for him. God had sent Jesus to the earth to fulfill the role of the promised Seed, or Messiah. This included Jesus’ sacrificing his perfect human life. (Read Isaiah 53:5, 6, 12.) Of course, Jesus’ baptism did not have the same meaning as ours does. It did not involve *dedication* to Jehovah, since Jesus was already part of God’s dedicated nation of Israel. Rather, Jesus’ baptism symbolized the *presentation* of himself to do God’s will as outlined in the Scriptures for the Messiah.

¹⁰ Jehovah’s will for Jesus involved preaching the good news of God’s Kingdom, making disciples, and preparing them for future disciple-making work. Jesus’ presentation of himself also included his willingness to endure persecution and a cruel death in support of Jehovah God’s righteous sovereignty. Because Jesus truly loved his heavenly Father, he was delighted to do God’s will and found it deeply satisfying to present his body as a sacrifice. (John 14:31) It also pleased him to know that the value of his perfect life could be offered to God as a ransom to buy us back from slavery to sin and death. Did God approve of Jesus’ presentation of himself to shoulder these great responsibilities? He did indeed!

9. What did Jesus’ baptism symbolize?

10. What did the doing of God’s will as the Messiah include, and how did Jesus feel about this?

¹¹ All four Gospel writers testify to Jehovah God’s clear expression of approval as Jesus came up from the waters of the Jordan River. “I viewed the spirit coming down as a dove out of heaven,” testified John the Baptizer, “and it remained upon [Jesus] . . . And I have seen it, and I have borne witness that this one is the Son of God.” (John 1:32-34) Moreover, on that occasion Jehovah declared: “This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved.”—Matt. 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22.

Faithful Till Death

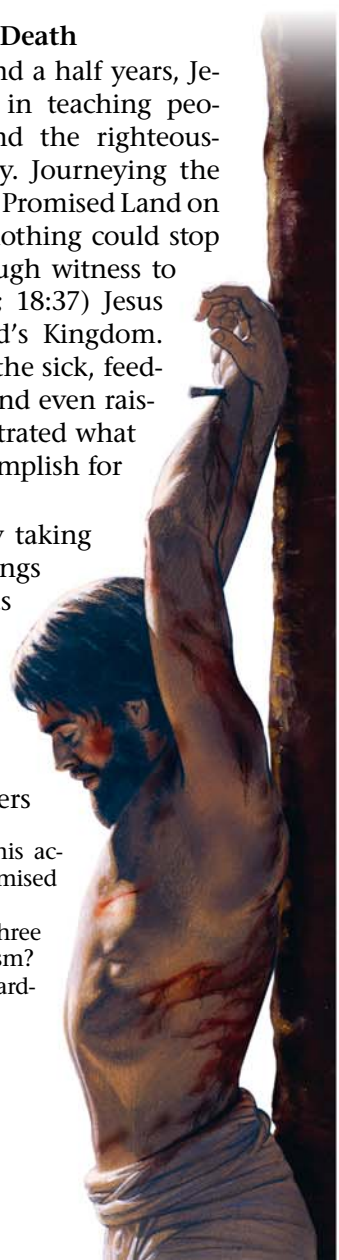
¹² For the next three and a half years, Jesus poured himself out in teaching people about his Father and the righteousness of God’s sovereignty. Journeying the length and breadth of the Promised Land on foot tired him out, but nothing could stop him from bearing thorough witness to the truth. (John 4:6, 34; 18:37) Jesus taught others about God’s Kingdom. By miraculously healing the sick, feeding the hungry crowds, and even raising the dead, he demonstrated what the Kingdom would accomplish for mankind.—Matt. 11:4, 5.

¹³ Instead of personally taking the credit for his teachings and works of healing, Jesus set an outstanding example by humbly directing all praise to Jehovah. (John 5:19; 11:41-44) Jesus also made known the most important matters

11. How did Jehovah show his acceptance of Jesus as the promised Messiah, or Christ?

12. What did Jesus do for three and a half years after his baptism?

13. What did Jesus teach regarding prayer?



about which we should pray. Our prayers should include requests that God's name, Jehovah, "be treated as holy" and that God's righteous sovereignty replace Satan's wicked rule so that His "will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth." (Matt. 6:9, 10; ftn.) Jesus also urged us to act in harmony with such prayers by "seeking first the kingdom and [God's] righteousness."—Matt. 6:33.

¹⁴ As the time for his sacrificial death drew near, Jesus became increasingly aware of the weighty responsibility he bore. His Father's purpose and reputation depended upon Jesus' enduring an unjust trial and a cruel death. Five days before his death, Jesus prayed: "Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me out of this hour. Nevertheless, this is why I have come to this hour." After expressing these natural human feelings, Jesus unselfishly switched his focus to the matter of greater importance and prayed: "Father, glorify your name." Jehovah immediately responded: "I both glorified it and will glorify it again." (John 12:27, 28) Yes, Jesus was willing to go through the greatest test of integrity any human has ever had to face. But hearing those words of his heavenly Father undoubtedly gave Jesus strong confidence that he would succeed in magnifying and vindicating Jehovah's sovereignty. And succeed he did!

What Jesus' Death Accomplished

¹⁵ As Jesus hung on the torture stake about to take his last agonizing breath, he said: "It has been accomplished!" (John 19:30) What great things Jesus was able to accomplish with God's help during the three and a half years from his baptism until his death! When Jesus died, there was a violent

14. Although Jesus was perfect, why did it require effort for him to fulfill his role in God's purpose?

15. Just before he died, why did Jesus say: "It has been accomplished"?

earthquake, and the Roman army officer in charge of the execution was moved to say: "Certainly this was God's Son." (Matt. 27:54) The officer had apparently seen Jesus being mocked for claiming to be God's Son. Despite everything that he suffered, Jesus maintained his integrity and proved Satan to be a monstrous liar. Regarding all who support God's sovereignty, Satan had made this challenge: "A person will give up everything he has to save his life." (Job 2:4, *Complete Jewish Bible*) By his faithfulness, Jesus showed that Adam and Eve could have proved faithful under their much easier test. Most important of all, Jesus' life and death upheld and magnified the righteousness of Jehovah's sovereignty. (*Read Proverbs 27:11.*) Has Jesus' death accomplished anything more? Indeed it has!

¹⁶ Many servants of Jehovah lived before Jesus came to the earth. They enjoyed a righteous standing with God and were given the hope of a resurrection. (Isa. 25:8; Dan. 12:13) But on what legal basis could the holy God, Jehovah, bless sinful humans in such a wonderful way? The Bible explains: "God set [Jesus Christ] forth as an offering for propitiation through faith in his blood. This was in order to exhibit his own righteousness, because he was forgiving the

16, 17. (a) Why was it possible for pre-Christian witnesses of Jehovah to have a righteous standing with him? (b) How did Jehovah reward the faithfulness of his Son, and what does the Lord Jesus Christ continue to do?

How Would You Answer?

- How was God's righteousness challenged?
- What did Jesus' baptism symbolize?
- What did Jesus' death accomplish?

sins that occurred in the past while God was exercising forbearance; so as to exhibit his own righteousness in this present season, that he might be righteous even when declaring righteous the man that has faith in Jesus.”—Rom. 3:25, 26.*

¹⁷ Jehovah rewarded Jesus with a resurrection to a position superior to the one he had before coming to the earth. Jesus now enjoys immortality as a glorious spirit creature. (Heb. 1:3) As High Priest and King, the Lord Jesus Christ continues to help his followers to magnify God’s righteousness. And how thankful we are that our heavenly Father, Je-

* See “Questions From Readers” on pages 6 and 7.

hovah, is the Rewarder of all who do this and loyally serve him in imitation of his Son! —*Read Psalm 34:3; Hebrews 11:6.*

¹⁸ Faithful humans all the way back to Abel enjoyed a close relationship with Jehovah because they exercised faith and had confidence in the promised Seed. Jehovah knew that his Son would be an integrity keeper and that his death would provide a perfect covering for “the sin of the world.” (John 1:29) Jesus’ death also benefits people living today. (Rom. 3:26) So, what blessings can Christ’s ransom bring you? That will be the subject of the next study article.

18. What will be the focus of the next study article?

HOW THE RANSOM SAVES US

“He that exercises faith in the Son has everlasting life; he that disobeys the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God remains upon him.”—JOHN 3:36.

“NO CAREFUL student of the Bible can fail to be impressed with the stress that is laid on the death of Christ,” stated the fourth issue of this magazine back in October 1879. That article concluded on this serious note: “Let us beware of anything that belittles, or sets aside the death of Christ, as the offering and propitiation for sin.”—*Read 1 John 2:1, 2.*

² One of the reasons why *Zion’s Watch Tower* was first published in July 1879 was to defend the Bible teaching of the ransom. Its pages provided “food at the proper time,” for in the late 1800’s, a growing number of professed Christians began to question how

1, 2. What was one reason why *Zion’s Watch Tower* was originally published?

Jesus’ death could be a ransom for our sins. (Matt. 24:45) At that time, many were falling victim to the theory of evolution, an idea that conflicts with the fact that man has fallen from a perfect state. Evolutionists teach that man is naturally improving and has no need for a ransom. Especially appropriate, then, is the apostle Paul’s counsel to Timothy: “Guard what is laid up in trust with you, turning away from the empty speeches that violate what is holy and from the contradictions of the falsely called ‘knowledge.’ For making a show of such knowledge some have deviated from the faith.”—1 Tim. 6:20, 21.

³ No doubt you are determined not to ‘de-
3. What questions will we now consider?

viate from the faith.’ To that end, it would be good to consider these questions: Why do I need the ransom? What did it cost? How can I benefit from this precious provision that can save me from God’s wrath?

Saved From God’s Wrath

⁴ The Bible and the hard facts of history show that ever since Adam’s fall into sin, God’s wrath ‘has remained upon’ the human race. (John 3:36) This is evident in that no human has been able to escape eventual death. Satan’s rival sovereignty has been totally unable to protect mankind from ongoing calamities, and no human government has been capable of fulfilling the basic needs of all its citizens. (1 John 5:19) So mankind continues to be plagued by war, crime, and poverty.

⁵ Clearly, then, Jehovah’s blessing is not upon the present wicked system of things. Paul said that “God’s wrath is being revealed from heaven against all ungodliness.” (Rom. 1:18-20) Therefore, those who unrepentant—

4, 5. What proves that God’s wrath remains upon the present wicked system of things?

*The door to reconciliation with
Jehovah is wide open*



ly live ungodly lives will not escape the consequences of their conduct. Today, God’s wrath is being made known in the judgment messages that are being poured out like plagues upon Satan’s world, and such information appears in many of our Bible-based publications.—Rev. 16:1.

⁶ Does this mean that it is too late for individuals to break free from Satan’s domination and come into God’s favor? No, for the door leading to reconciliation with Jehovah is still wide open. Anointed Christians, who are “ambassadors substituting for Christ,” are spearheading a public ministry by means of which people of all nations are being entreated: “Become reconciled to God.”—2 Cor. 5:20, 21.

⁷ The apostle Paul said that Jesus “delivers us from the wrath which is coming.” (1 Thess. 1:10) That final expression of Jehovah’s anger will result in the everlasting destruction of unrepentant sinners. (2 Thess. 1:6-9) Who will escape? The Bible states: “He that exercises faith in the Son has everlasting life; he that disobeys the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God remains upon him.” (John 3:36) Yes, all who are alive and who are exercising faith in Jesus and the ransom when this system reaches its end will escape the consequences of God’s final day of wrath.

How the Ransom Works

⁸ Adam and Eve were created perfect. If they had remained obedient to God, the earth would now be full of their happy offspring living together with them in Paradise. Sadly, however, our first parents willfully

6, 7. What work is being spearheaded by anointed Christians, and what opportunity is still open to individuals who are part of Satan’s world?

8. (a) What grand prospect lay before Adam and Eve? (b) How did Jehovah prove to be a God of perfect justice?

broke God's command. As a result, they were sentenced to eternal death and were expelled from the original Paradise. By the time that Adam and Eve had children, sin had affected humankind, and the first man and woman eventually grew old and died. This proves that Jehovah is true to his word. Moreover, he is a God of perfect justice. Jehovah had warned Adam that partaking of the forbidden fruit would result in death—and it did.

⁹ As descendants of Adam, we have inherited an imperfect body prone to sin and eventual death. When Adam sinned, we were in his loins, so to speak. So the sentence of death included us. If Jehovah were to reverse the death process without the payment of a ransom, he would be untrue to his word. In effect, Paul spoke for all of us when he said: "We know that the Law is spiritual; but I am fleshly, sold under sin. Miserable man that I am! Who will rescue me from the body undergoing this death?"—Rom. 7:14, 24.

¹⁰ Only Jehovah God could provide the legal basis whereby he could justly forgive us our sins and free us from the penalty of eternal death. This he did by sending his beloved Son from heaven to be born as a perfect human, who could give his life as a ransom for us. Unlike Adam, Jesus remained perfect. Indeed, "he committed no sin." (1 Pet. 2:22) Jesus thus had the potential for fathering a perfect human race. Instead, however, he allowed God's enemies to put him to death so that he could adopt Adam's sinful descendants and make it possible for those exercising faith in him to receive everlasting life. The Scriptures explain: "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, a man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a corresponding ransom for all."—1 Tim. 2:5, 6.

9, 10. (a) Why do Adam's descendants die? (b) How can we escape eternal death?

¹¹ How the ransom works can be illustrated by the situation of people who have been defrauded of all their savings by a corrupt bank and thus fell into debt. The owners of the bank are justly sentenced to years in prison. But what about the innocent victims? Reduced to poverty, they have no way out of their circumstances unless a kind and wealthy man takes over the bank and restores to the victims all their savings, relieving them of debt. In like manner, Jehovah God and his beloved Son have purchased Adam's offspring and canceled their debt of sin on the basis of Jesus' shed blood. That is why John the Baptizer could say of Jesus: "See, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29) The world of mankind whose sins are taken away includes not only the living but also the dead.

What the Ransom Cost

¹² It is impossible for us to grasp exactly how much the ransom cost our heavenly Father and his beloved Son. But the Bible relates experiences that can help us to meditate on this matter. For instance, imagine how Abraham must have felt as he made a three-day journey to Moriah in obedience to God's command: "Take, please, your son, your only son whom you so love, Isaac, and make a trip to the land of Moriah and there offer him up as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I shall designate to you."—Gen. 22:2-4.

¹³ Abraham finally arrived at the place designated. Think about how heartrending it must have been for him to bind Isaac's hands and feet and have him lie on the altar that Abraham himself had built. How pain-

11. (a) How can the benefits of the ransom be illustrated? (b) How far-reaching are the benefits of the ransom?

12, 13. What can we learn from Abraham's willingness to offer up Isaac?



Meditating on these incidents involving Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob can help us to appreciate the great cost of the ransom

ful it must have been for Abraham to lift the knife with which he was to kill his son! Imagine Isaac's feelings as he lay on the altar, awaiting the sharp, piercing pain that would lead to his death. Jehovah's angel stopped Abraham just in time. What Abraham and Isaac did on that occasion helps us to understand what it must have cost Jehovah to allow Satan's agents to murder His Son. Isaac's cooperation with Abraham well illustrates Jesus' willingness to suffer and to die for us.—Heb. 11:17-19.

¹⁴ The cost of the ransom can also be illustrated by an incident in the life of Jacob. Of all his sons, the one Jacob loved most was Joseph. Sadly, Joseph's brothers envied and hated him. Yet, Joseph was willing to be sent by his father to see how his brothers were faring. At the time, they were shepherding Jacob's flock some 60 miles north of their home in Hebron. Imagine how Jacob felt

14. What incident in the life of Jacob helps us to appreciate the cost of the ransom?

when his sons returned with Joseph's garment covered with blood! "It is my son's long garment!" he exclaimed. "A vicious wild beast must have devoured him! Joseph is surely torn to pieces!" All of this had a great impact on Jacob, who mourned over Joseph for many days. (Gen. 37:33, 34) Jehovah does not react to situations exactly as imperfect humans do. Yet, meditating on this incident in the life of Jacob may help us to grasp, to some extent, how God must have felt when his beloved Son was mistreated and cruelly put to death as a man on earth.

Benefiting From the Ransom

¹⁵ Jehovah God resurrected his faithful Son with a glorious spirit body. (1 Pet. 3:18) For 40 days, the resurrected Jesus appeared to his disciples, strengthening their faith

15, 16. (a) How did Jehovah show his acceptance of the ransom? (b) How have you benefited from the ransom?

and preparing them for a great evangelizing work ahead. Then he ascended to heaven. There he offered to God the value of his shed blood, to be used in behalf of his true followers, who exercise faith in the value of his ransom sacrifice. Jehovah God showed his acceptance of Christ's ransom by assigning Jesus to pour out holy spirit upon his disciples who were gathered together in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost 33 C.E.—Acts 2:33.

¹⁶ These anointed followers of Christ immediately began to urge their fellow men to escape God's wrath by getting baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for forgiveness of their sins. (*Read Acts 2:38-40.*) From that historic day until now, millions of people from all nations have been drawn into a relationship with God on the basis of faith in Jesus' ransom sacrifice. (John 6:44) Having come this far, we need to consider two more questions: Were any of us given the hope of everlasting life because of our own good works? Once having received this wonderful hope, could we possibly lose it?

¹⁷ The ransom is totally undeserved. But by exercising faith in it, millions today have become friends of God, with the hope of everlasting life on a paradise earth. Becoming Jehovah's friends, however, is not an assurance that we will remain in such a relationship

17. How should you view the wonderful blessing of being a friend of God?

How Would You Answer?

- Why do we need the ransom?
- What was the cost of the ransom?
- What benefits come from the ransom?
- How do we exercise faith in Jesus' ransom sacrifice?

with him. To escape God's future day of wrath, we must keep on showing our deep appreciation for "the ransom paid by Christ Jesus."—Rom. 3:24; *read Philippians 2:12.*

Keep On Exercising Faith in the Ransom

¹⁸ The theme text of this article, John 3:36, shows that exercising faith in the Lord Jesus Christ includes being obedient to him. Appreciation for the ransom should move us to live in harmony with Jesus' teachings, including what he taught about morals. (Mark 7:21-23) "The wrath of God is coming" upon all who unrepentantly engage in such practices as fornication, obscene jesting, and "uncleanness of every sort," which would encompass the persistent viewing of pornography.—Eph. 5:3-6.

¹⁹ Our appreciation for the ransom should keep us busy with "deeds of godly devotion." (2 Pet. 3:11) Let us set aside ample time for regular and earnest prayer, personal Bible study, meeting attendance, family worship, and zealous Kingdom-preaching activity. And may we "not forget the doing of good and the sharing of things with others, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."—Heb. 13:15, 16.

²⁰ When Jehovah's wrath breaks out upon this wicked system of things, how happy we will be that we have exercised faith in the ransom and have shown an ongoing appreciation for it! And in God's promised new world, we will be eternally grateful for this wonderful provision that saved us from God's wrath.—*Read John 3:16; Revelation 7:9, 10, 13, 14.*

18. What does exercising faith in the ransom include?

19. In what positive ways can we show our faith in the ransom?

20. All who continue to exercise faith in the ransom can expect what future blessing?

LET “THE LAW OF LOVING-KINDNESS” SAFEGUARD YOUR TONGUE

“Her mouth she has opened in wisdom, and the law of loving-kindness is upon her tongue.”—PROV. 31:26.

THE weighty message that King Lemuel of ancient times received from his mother included an important qualification of a good wife. “Her mouth she has opened in wisdom,” he was informed, “and the law of loving-kindness is upon her tongue.” (Prov. 31:1, 10, 26) Loving-kindness is desirable upon the tongue of a wise woman as well as all others who want to please Jehovah God. (*Read Proverbs 19:22.*) Loving-kindness should be evident in the speech of all true worshippers.

² What is loving-kindness? Toward whom is it to be displayed? What will help us to put “the law of loving-kindness” upon our tongue? How will doing so affect our communication with family members and fellow Christians?

When Kindness Is Motivated by Loyal Love

³ As the very term suggests, loving-kindness includes the traits of love and kindness. It involves kindness, that is, taking a personal interest in others and showing that concern by helpful deeds and thoughtful words. Since love is also a factor, displaying

1, 2. (a) What quality are Jehovah’s worshippers encouraged to cultivate? (b) What will be discussed in this article?

3, 4. (a) What is loving-kindness? (b) How does loving-kindness differ from general kindness, or human kindness?

loving-kindness calls for taking an interest in the welfare of others out of love for them. However, the original-language word for loving-kindness means more than kindness stemming from love. Loving-kindness is the kindness that willingly and loyally attaches itself to someone until its purpose regarding that person comes to fruition.

⁴ Loving-kindness differs from kindness in yet another sense. General kindness, or human kindness, can be expressed even toward strangers. The apostle Paul and 275 others who were shipwrecked with him were shown this type of kindness by the inhabitants of the island of Malta—people they had never even met. (Acts 27:37–28:2) On the other hand, loving-kindness has to do with the loyal attachment between individuals who have already developed a relationship.* This was what the Kenites showed to “all the sons of Israel at the time of their coming up out of Egypt.”—1 Sam. 15:6.

Meditation and Prayer Essential

⁵ Reflecting loving-kindness in our speech is by no means easy. Referring to the tongue, the disciple James wrote: “Not one of mankind can get it tamed. An unruly injurious

* For further discussion of how loving-kindness differs from loyalty, love, and kindness, see the May 15, 2002, issue of *The Watchtower*, pages 12-13, 18-19.

5. What will help us to bridle our tongue?

thing, it is full of death-dealing poison.” (Jas. 3:8) What can help us to bridle this body member that is so difficult to control? Jesus’ words to the religious leaders of his day give us insight. He said: “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.” (Matt. 12:34) To have loving-kindness safeguard our tongue, we need to implant that quality in our heart—our inner person. Let us see how meditation and prayer help us to do just that.

⁶ Jehovah God is “abundant in loving-kindness,” states the Bible. (Ex. 34:6) “Your loving-kindness, O Jehovah,” sang the psalmist, “has filled the earth.” (Ps. 119:64) The Scriptures contain numerous accounts of how Jehovah showed loving-kindness to his worshippers. Taking time to meditate appreciatively on ‘Jehovah’s dealings’ can instill in us the desire to cultivate this godly quality.—*Read Psalm 77:12.*

⁷ For example, think about how Jehovah delivered Abraham’s nephew Lot and his family when He brought about the destruction of Sodom, the city where they lived. As that time drew closer, the angels who had come to Lot urged him to take his family and quickly leave the city. “When he kept lingering,” says the Bible, “then in the compassion of Jehovah upon him, the [angels] seized hold of his hand and of the hand of his wife and of the hands of his two daughters and they proceeded to bring him out and to station him outside the city.” Are not our hearts touched when we reflect on this saving act, and are we not moved to acknowledge that it was an expression of God’s loving-kindness? —Gen. 19:16, 19.

6. Why should we appreciatively meditate on Jehovah’s acts of loving-kindness?

7, 8. (a) What act of loving-kindness did Jehovah perform toward Lot and his family? (b) How did David feel about being a recipient of God’s loving-kindness?

⁸ Consider also the example of King David of ancient Israel, who sang: “[Jehovah] is forgiving all your error, [he] is healing all your maladies.” How David must have appreciated being shown forgiveness for his sin with Bath-sheba! He extolled Jehovah, saying: “As the heavens are higher than the earth, his loving-kindness is superior toward those fearing him.” (Ps. 103:3, 11) Meditating on these and other Scriptural accounts fills our hearts with gratitude for Jehovah’s loving-kindness, and we are moved to praise and thank him. The more grateful we are at heart, the more inclined we are to become imitators of the true God.—Eph. 5:1.

⁹ Scriptural examples show that Jehovah extends his loving-kindness—his loyal love—to those who already have an approved relationship with him. What about those who lack such a bond with the living God? Is Jehovah harsh or unkind toward them? Not at all. “[God] is kind toward the unthankful and wicked,” states Luke 6:35. “He makes his sun rise upon wicked people and good and makes it rain upon righteous people and unrighteous.” (Matt. 5:45) Before learning the truth and acting on it, we were recipients of God’s kindness, or general kindness. As his worshippers, however, we have become the objects of his loyal love—his steadfast loving-kindness. (*Read Isaiah 54:10.*) How thankful we can be for that! And what a powerful reason that is for displaying loving-kindness in our speech as well as in other aspects of our daily life!

¹⁰ An invaluable aid in our cultivating loving-kindness is the privilege of prayer. This is because love and kindness—elements of loving-kindness—are aspects of the fruit—

9. What powerful reason is there for Jehovah’s worshippers to display loving-kindness in their daily life?

10. Why is prayer an invaluable aid in making loving-kindness a part of our personality?



David extolled Jehovah's loving-kindness

earned by loyal love does not expose the faults of his wife in public or speak disparagingly of her. He is happy to praise her. (Prov. 31:28) If for some reason friction arises in the relationship, loving-kindness moves the husband to restrain his tongue from humiliating his wife.

¹² The law of loving-kindness should also govern the tongue of the wife. Her speech should not be influenced by the spirit of the world. Having “deep respect for her husband,” she speaks well of him in public and increases the respect others may already have for him. (Eph. 5:33) Not wanting to diminish the respect the children have for their father, she refrains from disagreeing with him or questioning his opinion in front of them. She resolves such matters in private. “The truly wise woman has built up her house,” says the Bible. (Prov. 14:1) Her home is a pleasant and comfortable place for the entire family.

¹³ Even in the privacy of their home, marriage mates must continue to use their tongues in a way that shows that they have respect for each other. “Put them all away from you,” wrote Paul, “wrath, anger, badness, abusive speech, and obscene talk out of your mouth.” He added: “Clothe yourselves with the tender affections of compassion, kindness, lowliness of mind, mildness, and long-suffering. . . . Clothe yourselves with love, for it is a perfect bond of union.” (Col. 3:8, 12-14) When children are accustomed to hearing loving and kind speech in the home, not only will they thrive but they will

age of Jehovah’s holy spirit. (Gal. 5:22) We can instill loving-kindness in our hearts by coming under the influence of that spirit. The most direct way to receive Jehovah’s holy spirit is to ask for it in prayer. (Luke 11:13) It is appropriate that we repeatedly pray for God’s spirit and accept its guidance. Yes, meditation and prayer are essential if we are to have the law of loving-kindness upon our tongues.

Upon the Tongues of Marriage Mates

¹¹ The apostle Paul exhorts husbands: “Continue loving your wives, just as the Christ also loved the congregation and delivered up himself for it.” (Eph. 5:25) Paul also reminds them of what Jehovah told Adam and Eve. The apostle writes: “A man will leave his father and his mother and he will stick to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” (Eph. 5:31) Clearly, Jehovah expects husbands to stick loyally to their wives, always showing them loving-kindness. A husband whose tongue is gov-

11. (a) How do we know that Jehovah expects husbands to show their wives loving-kindness? (b) In what way can the law of loving-kindness help a husband safeguard his tongue?

12. How can a wife’s speech show that the law of loving-kindness governs her tongue?

13. Where in particular should the law of loving-kindness rule, and how can it do so?



*Do you have a regular
Family Worship evening?*

be more likely to imitate their parents' way of speaking.

¹⁴ The psalmist wrote of Jehovah: "May your loving-kindness serve, please, to *comfort me*." (Ps. 119:76) An outstanding way in which Jehovah comforts his people is by giving them exhortation and guidance. (Ps. 119:105) How can family heads benefit from the example of our heavenly Father and use their tongue to comfort those under their care? They can do so by providing needed direction and encouragement. What a fine opportunity the Family Worship evening provides to discover spiritual treasures!—Prov. 24:4.

Show Loyal Love to Fellow Believers

¹⁵ "Let your loving-kindness and your trueness themselves constantly safeguard me," prayed King David. (Ps. 40:11) How may Christian elders and other spiritually mature ones in the congregation imitate Jehovah in this regard? Using our tongue to direct attention to Scriptural informa-

14. In what way can family heads use their tongue to comfort those under their care?

15. How may elders and other spiritually mature ones use their tongue to safeguard others in the congregation?

tion certainly is an act of loving-kindness.—Prov. 17:17.

¹⁶ What should we do if we observe a Christian heading in a direction that conflicts with Bible principles? Would not loving-kindness move us to use our tongue to try to correct him? (Ps. 141:5) If we come to know of a serious sin committed by a fellow believer, loyal love moves us to encourage the wrongdoer to "call the older men of the congregation to him" so that they can "pray over him, greasing him with oil in the name of Jehovah." (Jas. 5:14) If the wrongdoer fails to contact the elders, our not reporting the matter is neither loving nor kind. Some among us may be discouraged, lonely, afflicted with feelings of unworthiness, or overwhelmed by disappointments. A fine way for us to demonstrate that the law of loving-kindness is upon our tongue is that we "speak consolingly to the depressed souls."—1 Thess. 5:14.

¹⁷ How should we respond when rumors about fellow believers are circulated by God's enemies? Rather than questioning the integrity of our brothers, we ought to dismiss such talk silently or ask the accuser, if he is reasonable, whether he is really sure

16, 17. What are some ways in which we can show that our speech is governed by the law of loving-kindness?

Can You Explain?

- How would you define loving-kindness?
- What will help us to have the law of loving-kindness upon our tongue?
- How may marriage mates show loyal love in their speech?
- What shows that the law of loving-kindness is upon our tongue in our dealings with fellow believers?

that there is a basis for his remarks. If enemies of God's people seek to know the whereabouts of our Christian brothers in order to bring them harm, loyal love for our brothers dictates that we not provide the information.—Prov. 18:24.

The Man of “Loving-Kindness Will Find Life”

¹⁸ Loyal love should be evident in all our dealings with fellow worshippers of Jehovah. Even under difficult circumstances, the law of loving-kindness should not de-

18, 19. Why should the law of loving-kindness not depart from our tongue in dealings with fellow worshippers?

part from our tongue. When the loving-kindness of the sons of Israel became “like the dew that early goes away,” Jehovah was displeased. (Hos. 6:4, 6) On the other hand, Jehovah takes pleasure in a regular pattern of loving-kindness. Consider how he blesses those who pursue it.

¹⁹ Proverbs 21:21 states: “He that is pursuing righteousness and loving-kindness will find life, righteousness and glory.” Among the blessings such a person will experience is that he will find life—not a brief existence but life without end. Jehovah helps him to “get a firm hold on the real life.” (1 Tim. 6:12, 19) By all means, then, let us “carry on with one another loving-kindness.”—Zech. 7:9.

WHO CAN DELIVER THOSE CRYING FOR HELP?

“O God, give your own judicial decisions to the king . . . For he will deliver the poor one crying for help.”—PS. 72:1, 12.

HOW heartwarming are those words, apparently penned by King David of ancient Israel! Years before writing them, he experienced remorse after committing adultery with Bath-sheba. At that time, David begged God: “According to the abundance of your mercies wipe out my transgressions. . . . My sin is in front of me constantly. . . . Look! With error I was brought forth with birth pains, and in sin my mother conceived me.” (Ps. 51:1-5) Mercifully, Jehovah takes into account our inherited sinful condition.

1. In the case of David, what do we learn about God’s mercy?

² Jehovah understands our lamentable situation. As foretold, however, God’s anointed King “will deliver the poor one crying for help, also the afflicted one and whoever has no helper. He will feel sorry for the lowly one and the poor one, and the souls of the poor ones he will save.” (Ps. 72:12, 13) How will relief be provided? Psalm 72 tells us. Composed regarding the kingship of David’s son Solomon, this song provides foregleams of how the rule of God’s Son, Jesus Christ, will relieve mankind of distress.

2. How can Psalm 72 help us?

A Preview of Christ's Rule

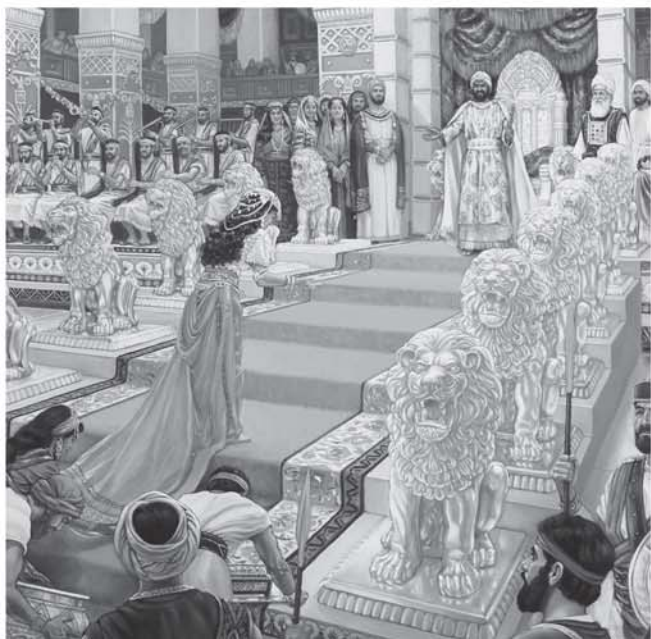
³ After directing that Solomon be made king, elderly David gave him specific instructions that Solomon faithfully carried out. (1 Ki. 1:32-35; 2:1-3) Jehovah later appeared to Solomon in a dream and said: "Request what I should give you." Solomon made only one request: "You must give to your servant an obedient heart to judge your people, to discern between good and bad." As a result of Solomon's humble request, God gave him what he asked for and more.—1 Ki. 3:5, 9-13.

⁴ With Jehovah's blessing, the reign of Solomon resulted in the most remarkable period of peace and prosperity ever realized under any government on earth. (1 Ki. 4:25) Among those who came to see what Solomon's rule was like was the queen of Sheba, along with her large entourage. She told Solomon: "True has the word proved to be that I heard in my own land . . . I had not been told the half. You have surpassed in wisdom and prosperity the things heard." (1 Ki. 10:1,

3. What did Solomon ask for, and what did God give him?

4. How was Solomon's reign described by a contemporary ruler?

What was foreshadowed by the prosperity enjoyed during Solomon's reign?



6, 7) Yet, far greater wisdom was displayed by Jesus, who could rightly say with reference to himself: "Look! something more than Solomon is here."—Matt. 12:42.

Relief Under the Greater Solomon

⁵ Let us now examine features of the 72nd Psalm with a view to learning about blessings under the rule of Jesus Christ, the Greater Solomon. (*Read Psalm 72:1-4.*) This psalm reveals how Jehovah feels about "the princely rule" of his Son, the "Prince of Peace," Jesus Christ. (Isa. 9:6, 7) Under God's direction, the Greater Solomon will 'plead the cause of the afflicted ones and save the sons of the poor one.' His rule will be one of peace and righteousness. While on earth, Jesus provided a preview of what his coming Thousand Year Reign will accomplish.—Rev. 20:4.

⁶ Consider some of the activities of Jesus Christ that give us a glimpse of what he will do for mankind in fulfillment of Psalm 72. We are rightly impressed with his great compassion for those who were suffering. (Matt. 9:35, 36; 15:29-31) For instance, a man afflicted with leprosy approached Jesus and pleaded: "If you just want to, you can make me clean." Jesus replied: "I want to. Be made clean." And the man was healed! (Mark 1:40-42) Later, Jesus met a widow whose only son had died. "Moved with pity," Jesus said, "Get up!" and her son did so. He was alive again!—Luke 7:11-15.

⁷ Jehovah empowered Jesus to perform miracles. This was illustrated in the case of "a woman subject to a flow of blood twelve years." Although "she had been put to many

5. What does Psalm 72 reveal, and what preview does it provide?

6. Jesus gave what glimpses of blessings under Kingdom rule?

7, 8. What were some demonstrations of Jesus' healing power?

pains by many physicians and had spent all her resources,” she actually got worse. The woman entered a crowd and touched Jesus—a violation of the Law for one with a ‘running discharge of blood.’ (Lev. 15:19, 25) Jesus perceived that power had gone out of him and therefore asked who touched him. “Frightened and trembling,” the woman “fell down before him and told him the whole truth.” Realizing that Jehovah had healed the woman, Jesus treated her kindly and said: “Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be in good health from your grievous sickness.”—Mark 5:25-27, 30, 33, 34.

⁸ Jesus’ God-given healing powers cured the sick but must also have had a dramatic effect on observers. For instance, many undoubtedly were impressed when they saw Jesus heal people before his famous Sermon on the Mount. (Luke 6:17-19) When John the Baptist sent two messengers to seek confirmation that Jesus was the Messiah, they found Him ‘curing many of sicknesses and grievous diseases and wicked spirits and granting many blind persons the favor of seeing.’ Jesus then told the two: “Report to John what you saw and heard: the blind are receiving sight, the lame are walking, the lepers are being cleansed and the deaf are hearing, the dead are being raised up, the poor are being told the good news.” (Luke 7:19-22) How that message must have encouraged John!

⁹ True, the relief from suffering that Jesus provided during his earthly ministry was only temporary. Those whom he healed or resurrected later died. Yet, the miracles that Jesus performed while on earth were foregleams of the lasting relief humankind will enjoy under his Messianic rule.

9. Jesus’ miracles were foregleams of what?

An Earth-Wide Paradise Ahead!

¹⁰ Try to imagine what life will be like in Paradise on earth. (*Read Psalm 72:5-9.*) Worshipers of the only true God will be able to enjoy life in Paradise for as long as the sun and the moon exist—yes, forever! The King Jesus Christ will prove to be refreshing, ‘like rain upon mown grass and copious showers that wet the earth.’

¹¹ As you envision the fulfillment of this psalm, is not your heart stirred by the hope of living forever in an earthly paradise? Surely the impaled evildoer was thrilled when Jesus told him: “You will be with me in Paradise.” (Luke 23:43) During Jesus’ Thousand Year Reign, that man will be restored to life. If he submits to Christ’s rulership, he will be able to live on earth forever in perfect health and happiness.

¹² Under the rule of the Greater Solomon, Jesus Christ, “the righteous one will sprout,” that is, flourish or prosper. (Ps. 72:7) Christ’s love and tender care will then be abundant, just as they were when he was on the earth. In God’s promised new world, even “the unrighteous” who are resurrected will be given a loving opportunity to conform to Jehovah’s standards and live. (Acts 24:15) Of course, those who refuse to act in harmony with divine requirements will not be allowed to continue living and mar the peace and tranquillity of the new world.

¹³ The earth-wide extent of the Greater Solomon’s rule is indicated by these words:

10, 11. (a) How long will Kingdom blessings last, and what will Jesus’ rule be like? (b) Who will be with Christ in Paradise, and how will he be able to live forever?

12. During Christ’s Millennial Rule, what opportunity will be open for resurrected unrighteous ones?

13. How extensive will Kingdom rule be, and why will its peace never be disrupted?

“He will have subjects from sea to sea and from the River [Euphrates] to the ends of the earth. Before him the inhabitants of waterless regions will bow down, and his very enemies will lick the dust itself.” (Ps. 72:8, 9) Yes, Jesus Christ will rule over the entire earth. (Zech. 9:9, 10) Those who appreciate his rulership and its blessings will “bow down” in willing submission. On the other hand, unrepentant sinners will be cut off, as it were, at “a hundred years of age.” (Isa. 65:20) They “will lick the dust itself.”

Sympathetic Concern for Us

¹⁴ Sinful humankind is in a pitiable state and is desperately in need of help. But there is hope for us. (*Read Psalm 72:12-14.*) Jesus, the Greater Solomon, has sympathy for us because he understands our imperfect condition. Moreover, Jesus suffered for righteousness’ sake, and God allowed him to face trials on his own. Why, Jesus suffered so much emotional distress that “his sweat became as drops of blood falling to the ground”! (Luke 22:44) Later, on the torture stake, he cried out: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matt. 27:45, 46) Despite everything he suffered, and although Satan made an all-out effort to turn him away from Jehovah, Jesus proved faithful to Jehovah God.

¹⁵ We can be sure that Jesus sees our pain and “will deliver the poor one crying for help, also the afflicted one and whoever has no helper.” With loving concern like that of his Father, Jesus will ‘listen to the poor ones’ and will ‘heal the brokenhearted ones, binding up their painful spots.’ (Ps. 69:33; 147:3) Jesus can “sympathize with

14, 15. How do we know that Jesus understands human feelings and “will deliver the poor one crying for help”?

our weaknesses,” for he “has been tested in all respects like ourselves.” (Heb. 4:15) How good it is to know that the King Jesus Christ is now ruling in heaven and is eager to bring suffering humans relief!

¹⁶ Because he had wisdom and insight, Solomon undoubtedly did “feel sorry for the lowly one.” Besides, his life was marked by sad and traumatic events. His brother Amnon raped his sister Tamar, and Solomon’s brother Absalom had Amnon killed for the crime. (2 Sam. 13:1, 14, 28, 29) Absalom usurped David’s throne, but his coup failed, and he was killed by Joab. (2 Sam. 15:10, 14; 18:9, 14) Later, Solomon’s brother Adonijah attempted to seize the kingship. If he had been successful, this would undoubtedly have meant death for Solomon. (1 Ki. 1:5) That Solomon understood human suffering seems evident because of what he said in prayer at the inauguration of the temple of Jehovah. With regard to his subjects, the king prayed: “They know each one his own plague and his own pain . . . You [Jehovah] must forgive and give to each one according to all his ways.”—2 Chron. 6:29, 30.

¹⁷ ‘Our own pain’ may result from the effects of certain past experiences in life.

16. Why was Solomon able to sympathize with his subjects?

17, 18. What pain have some of God’s servants had to cope with, and what has helped them to do so?

How Would You Respond?

- Psalm 72 prophetically provided a preview of what?
- Who is the Greater Solomon, and how extensive will his rulership be?
- What do you personally find appealing about the blessings foretold in the 72nd Psalm?



It is worth every effort to attain life in Paradise under the rule of the Greater Solomon

Mary,* a Witness of Jehovah in her 30's, writes: "I have every reason to be happy, but often my past brings up feelings of shame and disgust. Deep sadness results, and I tend to cry, as though everything happened yesterday. Ingrained memories still produce overwhelming feelings of worthlessness and guilt."

¹⁸ Many of God's servants can identify with these feelings, but what can help to give them the strength needed in order to endure? "Genuine friends and a spiritual family now bring me happiness," Mary says. "I also try to focus on what Jehovah promises for the future, and I have confidence that my cries for help will be turned into cries of joy." (Ps. 126:5) We need to place our hope in God's provision of his Son, his appointed Ruler. Concerning him, it was foretold: "He will feel sorry for the lowly one and the poor one, and the souls of the poor ones he will save. From oppression and from violence he will redeem their soul, and their blood will be precious in his eyes." (Ps. 72:13, 14) How reassuring that is!

* Name has been changed.

A New World of Plenty Awaits Us

¹⁹ Try again to visualize the future of upright humans in God's new world under the rule of the Greater Solomon. "There will come to be plenty of grain on the earth," we are promised. "On the top of the mountains there will be an overflow." (Ps. 72:16) Since grain is not ordinarily produced on mountain tops, these words emphasize how productive the earth will become. Its produce

"will be as in Lebanon," a region that produced abundantly at the time of Solomon's reign. Just think! No more food shortages, no one undernourished, nobody starving! All will then enjoy "a banquet of well-oiled dishes."—Isa. 25:6-8; 35:1, 2.

²⁰ To whom will credit go for all these blessings? Primarily to the Eternal King and Universal Ruler, Jehovah God. In effect, all of us will then joyfully add our voices to the concluding portion of this beautiful and heartwarming song: "Let his name [that of the King Jesus Christ] prove to be to time indefinite; before the sun let his name have increase, and by means of him let them bless themselves; let all nations pronounce him happy. Blessed be Jehovah God, Israel's God, who alone is doing wonderful works. And blessed be his glorious name to time indefinite, and let his glory fill the whole earth. Amen and Amen."—Ps. 72:17-19.

19, 20. (a) As indicated in Psalm 72, what problem will be solved by Kingdom rule? (b) To whom should primary credit go for Christ's rule, and how do you feel about what it will accomplish?