

THE WATCHTOWER

MARCH 15, 2004

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



AN OBSERVANCE
That Affects You



THE WATCHTOWER®

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

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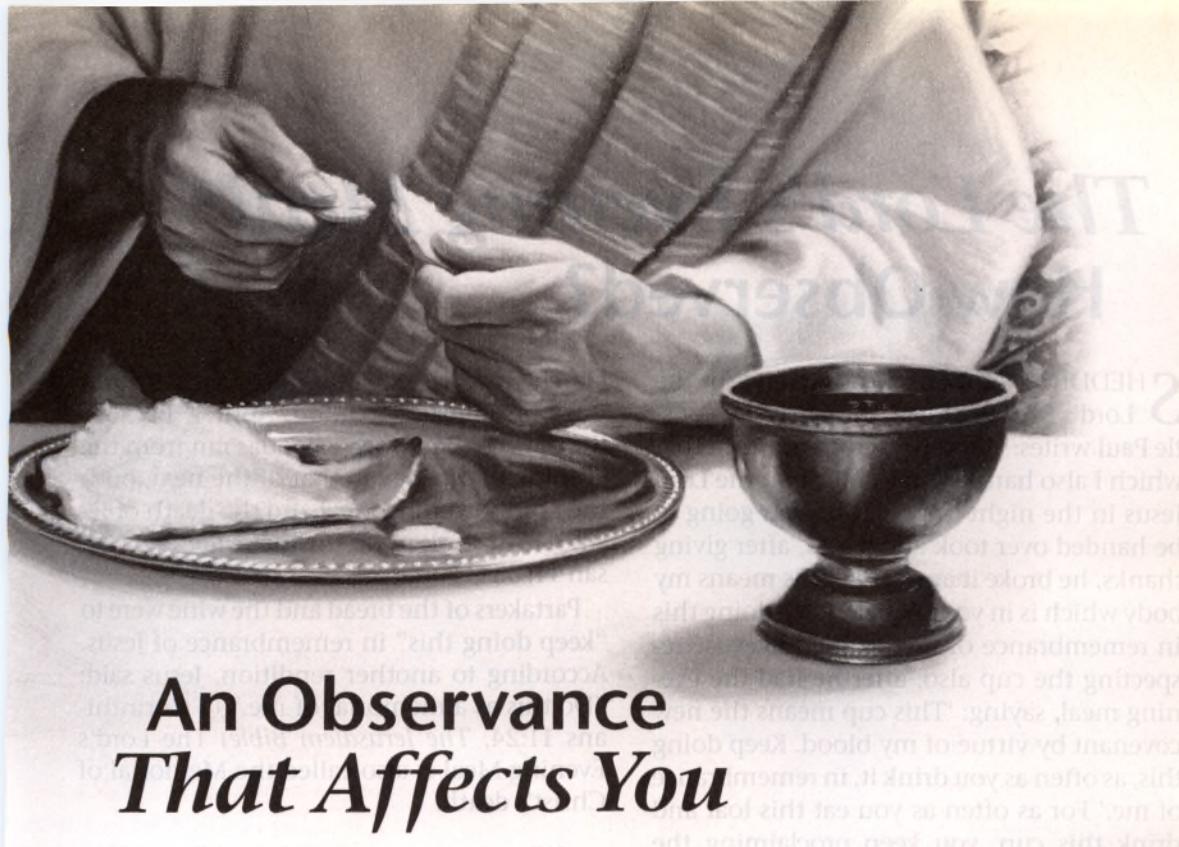
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An Observance That Affects You

WHEN on earth, Jesus Christ instituted an observance that honors God. This was the only religious ceremony he directly commanded his followers to observe. It was the Lord's Evening Meal, known also as the Last Supper.

Imagine that you are an unseen observer of the events leading up to that occasion. Jesus and his apostles have come together in an upper room in Jerusalem to celebrate the Jewish Passover. They have finished eating the customary Passover meal, consisting of roasted lamb, bitter greens, unleavened bread, and red wine. The disloyal apostle Judas Iscariot has been dismissed and will soon betray his Master. (Matthew 26:17-25; John 13:21, 26-30) Jesus is alone with his 11 faithful apostles. Matthew is one of them.

According to Matthew's eyewitness account, this is how Jesus institutes the Lord's Evening Meal: "Jesus took a loaf [of unleavened bread] and, after saying a blessing, he broke it and, giving it to the disciples, he said: 'Take, eat. This means my body.' Also, he took a cup [of wine] and, having given thanks, he gave it to them, saying: 'Drink out of it, all of you; for this means my 'blood of the covenant,' which is to be poured out in behalf of many for forgiveness of sins.'" —Matthew 26:26-28.

Why did Jesus institute the Lord's Evening Meal? When doing so, why did he use unleavened bread and red wine? Were all of Christ's followers to partake of these emblems? How often was this meal to be observed? And does it really have meaning for you?

The Lord's Evening Meal

How Observed?

SHEDDING light on the observance of the Lord's Evening Meal, the Christian apostle Paul writes: "I received from the Lord that which I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was going to be handed over took a loaf and, after giving thanks, he broke it and said: 'This means my body which is in your behalf. Keep doing this in remembrance of me.' He did likewise respecting the cup also, after he had the evening meal, saying: 'This cup means the new covenant by virtue of my blood. Keep doing this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For as often as you eat this loaf and drink this cup, you keep proclaiming the death of the Lord, until he arrives."—1 Corinthians 11:23-26.

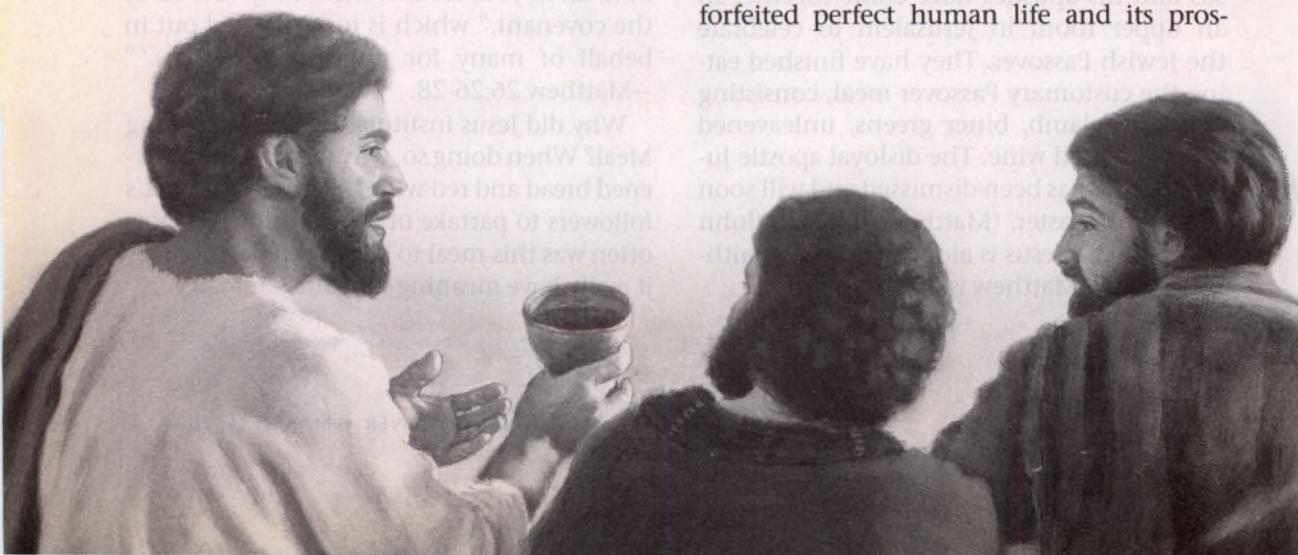
As Paul says, Jesus instituted the Lord's Evening Meal "in the night in which [Jesus] was going to be handed over" by Judas Iscariot to the Jewish religious leaders who pressured the Romans to impale Christ. That meal took place late on Thursday evening,

March 31, 33 C.E. Jesus died on a torture stake on Friday afternoon, April 1. Because the days of the Jewish calendar ran from the evening of one day to that of the next, both the Lord's Evening Meal and the death of Jesus Christ took place on the same day—Nisan 14, 33 C.E.

Partakers of the bread and the wine were to "keep doing this" in remembrance of Jesus. According to another rendition, Jesus said: "Do this as a memorial of me." (1 Corinthians 11:24, *The Jerusalem Bible*) The Lord's Evening Meal is also called the Memorial of Christ's death.

Why Commemorate Jesus' Death?

The answer lies in what that death is linked with. Jesus died as the foremost upholder of Jehovah's sovereignty. He thus proved Satan to be a liar for charging that humans serve God only with selfish motives. (Job 2:1-5; Proverbs 27:11) By means of his death as a perfect human, Jesus also 'gave his soul a ransom in exchange for many.' (Matthew 20:28) When Adam sinned against God, he forfeited perfect human life and its pros-



pects. But “God loved the world [of mankind] so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life.” (John 3: 16) Indeed, “the wages sin pays is death, but the gift God gives is everlasting life by Christ Jesus our Lord.”—Romans 6:23.

The death of Jesus Christ is thus linked with the two greatest expressions of love—the great love that Jehovah showed for mankind in giving his Son and the self-sacrificing love that Jesus showed for humankind by willingly giving up his human life. The Memorial of Jesus’ death magnifies these two expressions of love. Since we are recipients of this love, should we not show our gratitude for it? One way to do so is by being present for the observance of the Lord’s Evening Meal.

Significance of the Bread and the Wine

When instituting the Lord’s Evening Meal, Jesus used a loaf of bread and a cup of red wine as emblems, or symbols. Jesus took a loaf, and “after giving thanks, he broke it and said: ‘This [bread] means my body which is in your behalf.’” (1 Corinthians 11:24) The loaf had to be broken to be distributed and eaten because it was a relatively brittle loaf made of flour and water without leaven, or yeast. In the Scriptures, leaven symbolizes sin. (Matthew 16:11, 12; 1 Corinthians 5:6, 7) Jesus was not sinful. His perfect human body therefore served as a suitable ransom sacrifice for mankind. (1 John 2:1, 2) How appropriate that the bread used to represent Christ’s sinless fleshly body be unleavened!

Jesus also gave thanks for the cup of unadulterated red wine and said: “This cup means the new covenant by virtue of my



blood.” (1 Corinthians 11:25) The red wine in the cup represents Jesus’ blood. Even as the blood of sacrificed bulls and goats validated the Law covenant between God and the nation of Israel in 1513 B.C.E., so Jesus’ blood poured out in death made the new covenant valid.

The death of Jesus is linked with the two greatest expressions of love

Who Are to Partake?

To identify who properly partake of the Memorial emblems, we need to understand what the new covenant is about and who are party to it. The Bible states: “‘Look! There are days coming,’ is the utterance of Jehovah, ‘and I will conclude with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah a new covenant . . . I will put my law within them, in their heart I shall write it. And I will become their God, and they themselves will become my people. . . . I shall forgive their error, and their sin I shall remember no more.’”—Jeremiah 31:31-34.

The new covenant makes possible a special kind of relationship with Jehovah God. By means of this covenant, a certain group of individuals become his people and he becomes their God. Jehovah’s law is written within them, in their heart, and even those outside the fold of physically circumcised Jews can come into the new covenant relationship with God. (Romans 2:29) The Bible writer Luke speaks of God’s purpose to ‘turn His attention to the nations to take out of them a people for his name.’ (Acts 15:14) According to 1 Peter 2:10, they “were once not a people, but are now God’s people.” The Scriptures refer to them as “the Israel of God,” that is, spiritual Israel. (Galatians 6:16;

2 Corinthians 1:21) The new covenant, then, is a covenant between Jehovah God and spiritual Israel.

On his last night with his disciples, Jesus himself also made a different covenant with them. "I make a covenant with you," he told them, "just as my Father has made a covenant with me, for a kingdom." (Luke 22:29) This is the Kingdom covenant. The number of imperfect humans taken into the Kingdom covenant is 144,000. After being resurrected to heaven, they will rule with Christ as kings and priests. (Revelation 5:9, 10; 14:1-4) Thus, those in the new covenant with Jehovah God are also in the Kingdom covenant with Jesus Christ. They are the only ones who rightly partake of the emblems of the Lord's Evening Meal.

The unleavened bread and the wine are fitting symbols of Jesus' sinless body and his shed blood

How do those entitled to partake of the Memorial emblems know that they are in a unique relationship with God and are joint heirs with Christ? Paul explains: "The [holy] spirit itself bears witness with our spirit [our mental disposition] that we are God's children. If, then, we are children, we are also heirs: heirs indeed of God, but joint heirs with Christ, provided we suffer together that we may also be glorified together."—Romans 8:16, 17.

By means of his holy spirit, or active force, God anoints the joint heirs of Christ. This makes them certain that they are Kingdom heirs. It creates within anointed Christians a heavenly hope. They view as directed to them all that the Bible says about heavenly life. Moreover, they are willing to sacrifice



all earthly ties, including life on earth and all human relationships. Although spirit-anointed Christians realize that life in the earthly Paradise would be wonderful, this is not their hope. (Luke 23:43) Not because of false religious views but as a result of the action of God's spirit, they have an unchangeable heavenly hope and therefore rightly partake of the Memorial emblems.

Suppose a person is not absolutely sure that he is in the new covenant and the Kingdom covenant. What if he also lacks the witness of God's spirit that he is a joint heir with Christ? Then it would be wrong for him to partake of the Memorial emblems. Indeed, God would be displeased if a person knowingly represented himself as one called to be a heavenly king and priest when he did not really have such a calling.—Romans 9:16; Revelation 22:5.

Observe It How Often?

Should Jesus' death be commemorated weekly or perhaps even daily? Well, Christ instituted the Lord's Evening Meal and was unjustly put to death on Passover Day. Held only once a year, on Nisan 14,

the Passover commemorated Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage. (Exodus 12:6, 14; Leviticus 23:5) So the death of "Christ our passover" should be memorialized only once each year, not weekly or daily. (1 Corinthians 5:7) In observing the Lord's Evening Meal, Christians follow the same procedure as Jesus did when he instituted it.

What, then, is meant by Paul's words: "As often as you eat this loaf and drink this cup, you keep proclaiming the death of the Lord, until he arrives"? (1 Corinthians 11:26) In this text Paul used a word meaning "every time that," or "whenever." Thus, he was saying that whenever anointed Christians par-

took of the emblems, they would proclaim their faith in Jesus' ransom sacrifice.

Anointed Christians would commemorate Christ's death "until he arrives." This observance would continue until Jesus' arrival to receive his anointed followers into heaven by a resurrection to spirit life during his "presence." (1 Thessalonians 4:14-17) This harmonizes with Christ's words to the 11 loyal apostles: "If I go my way and prepare a place for you, I am coming again and will receive you home to myself, that where I am you also may be."—John 14:3.

What Meaning for You?

Is it necessary to partake of the Memorial emblems in order to be covered by Jesus' sacrifice and receive everlasting life on earth? No. Nothing in the Bible suggests that after they are resurrected on earth, such God-fearing people as Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, Joseph, Moses, and David will ever partake of these emblems. Yet, they and all others desiring endless life on the earth will have to exercise faith in God and Christ and in Jehovah's provision of Jesus' ransom sacrifice. (John 3:36; 14:1) For everlasting life, you too must exercise such faith. Your presence at the annual observance of Christ's death serves as a reminder of that great sacrifice and should deepen your gratitude for it.

The apostle John emphasized the importance of Jesus' sacrifice when he said: "I am writing you [fellow anointed ones] these things that you may not commit a sin. And yet, if anyone does commit a sin, we have a helper with the Father, Jesus Christ, a righteous one. And he is a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins, yet not for ours only but also for the whole world's." (1 John 2:1, 2) Anointed ones can say that Jesus' sacrifice is a propitiatory cover for their sins. But it is also a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, making everlasting life possible for obedient mankind!

Will you be present on April 4, 2004, to commemorate Jesus' death? This observance will be held worldwide by Jehovah's Witnesses at their meeting places. If you attend, you will benefit from listening to a very important Bible discourse. You will be reminded of how much Jehovah God and Jesus Christ have done for us. It will also be spiritually rewarding to assemble with those who have deep regard for God and Christ and for Jesus' ransom sacrifice. The occasion may well strengthen your desire to be a recipient of God's undeserved kindness, leading to life everlasting. Let nothing stand in your way. Be on hand for this heartwarming observance that honors and pleases our heavenly Father, Jehovah God.



'You Are More Majestic Than the Mountains'

OBSERVING the ascending of dawn from the top of Mount Fuji is an unforgettable experience. A flame-colored sun bursts over the horizon, illuminating the white snow and the gray lava rock. As another day begins, the mountain's sharp shadow quickly spreads for miles over hills and valleys.

Like Mount Fuji—once written in characters meaning “without equal”—majestic mountains never fail to amaze us. Why, we may be humbled by their sheer size! The majesty of mountains is such that many people have believed that the highest peaks, often veiled in mist and clouds, were the seats of gods.

The only God truly praised by mountain peaks is their masterful Creator, Jehovah. He alone is “the Former of the mountains.” (Amos 4:13) Almost one fourth of the earth is mountainous, and when God created our planet, he put in place forces that ultimately produced spectacular peaks and mountain ranges. (Psalm 95:4) For instance, it is believed that the massifs of the Himalayas and the Andes were formed by titanic upheavals deep within the earth and by the movement of sections of the earth’s crust.

We humans do not fully understand how and why mountains came to exist. Indeed, we are unable to answer these questions put to righteous Job: “Where did you happen to be when I [Jehovah] founded the earth? . . . Into what have its socket pedestals been sunk down?”—Job 38:4-6.

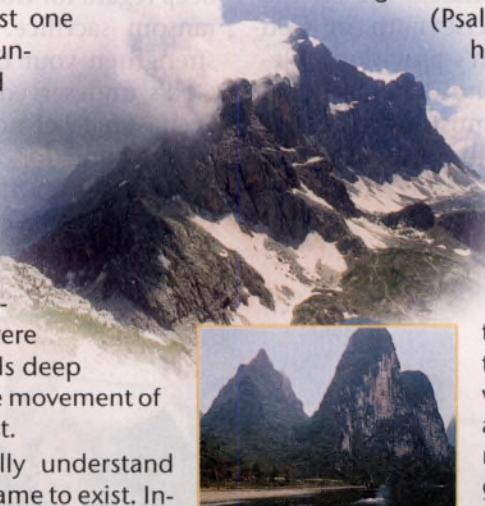
We do know, however, that our life depends on the mountains. They have been called nature’s water towers, since all major rivers are fed from mountain sources and half of the people on earth depend on mountains for water. (Psalm 104:13) According to the magazine *New Scientist*, “six of the world’s 20 major food plants originate in mountains.” Under ecologically balanced conditions in God’s promised new world, “there will come to be plenty of grain on the earth; on the top of the mountains there will be an overflow.”—Psalm 72:16; 2 Peter 3:13.

For many, the mention of mountains brings to mind the European Alps. These peaks, including Mount Civetta shown here, bear delightful testimony to their Creator. (Psalm 98:8) They praise Jehovah, the one “firmly establishing the mountains with his power.”—Psalm 65:6.*

Awe-inspiring indeed is the splendor of the Alps, with their icy crests and ridges, their snow-covered slopes, their valleys and lakes, and their meadows. King David identified Jehovah as “the One making the mountains to sprout green grass.”—Psalm 147:8.

Hilly ranges—like these hills in Guilin, China—might seem less spectacular than the Alps, but they are uniquely

* See the 2004 Calendar of Jehovah’s Witnesses, March/April.

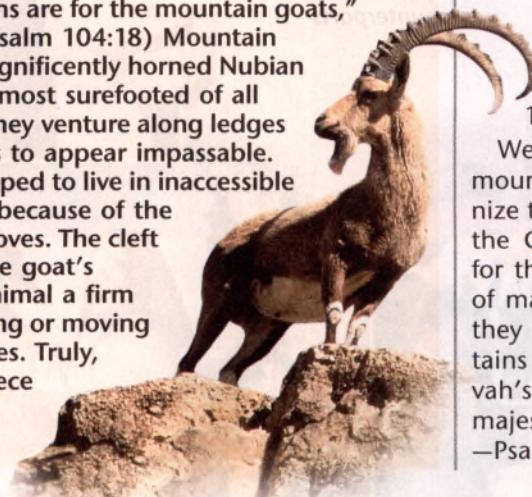




Mount Fuji, Honshu, Japan

Ten percent of the world's population live in mountainous areas. But that is not an insurmountable obstacle to those declaring the good news of God's Kingdom. These Christian ministers are very busy in many high-altitude regions. And "how comely upon the mountains are the feet of the one bringing good news, the one publishing peace, the one bringing good news of something better, the one publishing salvation!"—Isaiah 52:7.

"The high mountains are for the mountain goats," sang the psalmist. (Psalm 104:18) Mountain goats, such as the magnificently horned Nubian ibex, are among the most surefooted of all mountain dwellers. They venture along ledges that are so narrow as to appear impassable. The ibex is well-equipped to live in inaccessible places. This is partly because of the construction of its hooves. The cleft can expand under the goat's weight, giving the animal a firm grip when it is standing or moving on narrow rock shelves. Truly, the ibex is a masterpiece of design!



beautiful. Along the Li River, row upon row of jutting limestone pinnacles impress visitors with their beauty. Observing limpid waters flow through these misty hills may bring to one's mind the psalmist's words: "He [Jehovah] is sending springs into the torrent valleys; between the mountains they keep going on."—Psalm 104:10.

We are rightly impressed by mountains because we recognize them as a majestic part of the Creator's loving provision for the welfare and enjoyment of mankind. Awesome though they may be, however, mountains are no match for Jehovah's majesty. He truly is "more majestic than the mountains." —Psalm 76:4.

"DO THE WORK OF AN EVANGELIZER"

"Keep your senses in all things, . . . do the work of an evangelizer."—2 TIMOTHY 4:5.

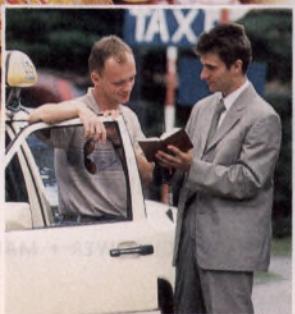
J EHOVAH'S name and purposes are being declared throughout the earth. This is because God's dedicated people have taken to heart the commission that Jesus Christ gave his followers when he said: "Go . . . and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit, teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you."—Matthew 28:19, 20.

² Jesus' first-century disciples took that commission seriously. For instance,

1. What commission did Jesus give his followers?
2. The overseer Timothy received what instruction, and what is one way for Christian overseers to accomplish their ministry?

apostle Paul urged his fellow Christian overseer Timothy: "Do the work of an evangelizer, fully accomplish your ministry." (2 Timothy 4:5) Today, one way an overseer accomplishes his ministry is by being a zealous Kingdom proclaimer, one who shares regularly in the field ministry. For example, the Congregation Book Study overseer has the rewarding privilege of taking the lead in the preaching work and training others. Paul fulfilled his personal responsibility to declare the good news, and he helped to train others for the ministry.—Acts 20:20; 1 Corinthians 9:16, 17.

Such evangelizers as Philip and his daughters have joyful modern-day counterparts



Zealous Evangelizers of the Past

³ The early Christians were known as zealous evangelizers. Consider the evangelizer Philip. He was one of the “seven certified men . . . full of spirit and wisdom” chosen to carry out the impartial daily distribution of food among the Greek-speaking and the Hebrew-speaking Christian widows in Jerusalem. (Acts 6:1-6) After that special service ended and persecution scattered all except the apostles, Philip went to Samaria. There he declared the good news and was empowered by holy spirit to cast out demons and cure lame and paralyzed individuals. Many Samaritans accepted the Kingdom message and were baptized. Hearing about this, the apostles in Jerusalem dispatched the apostles Peter and John to Samaria so that the newly baptized believers might receive holy spirit.

—Acts 8:4-17.

⁴ God’s spirit next led Philip to meet the Ethiopian eunuch on the road to Gaza. After Philip’s clear explanation of Isaiah’s prophecy, this “man in power under Candace queen of the Ethiopians” put faith in Jesus Christ and was baptized. (Acts 8:26-38) Philip thereafter went to Ashdod and then to Caesarea, “declaring the good news to all the cities” along the way. (Acts 8:39, 40) He surely set a fine example in doing the work of an evangelizer!

⁵ Philip was still active in the ministry in Caesarea some 20 years later. When Paul and Luke stayed in his home, he “had four daughters, virgins, that prophesied.” (Acts 21:8-10) They evidently had been well-trained spiritually, had zeal for the ministry, and were even privileged to engage in speaking prophetically. Parental zeal for the ministry can have a fine effect on sons and daugh-

3, 4. What experiences did Philip have as an evangelizer?

5. For what were Philip’s four daughters particularly known?

ters today, moving them to make zealous evangelizing their lifetime work.

Zealous Evangelizers Today

⁶ In his great prophecy pointing to our day and the time of the end, Jesus Christ declared: “In all the nations the good news has to be preached first.” (Mark 13:10) The end would come after the good news had been preached “in all the inhabited earth.” (Matthew 24:14) As Paul and other first-century evangelizers proclaimed the good news, many became believers, and congregations were formed in one place after another throughout the Roman Empire. Elders appointed to serve in these congregations participated with their brothers and sisters in the evangelizing work and extended the preaching activity far and wide. Jehovah’s word went on growing and prevailing in those days, just as it does today because millions of Jehovah’s Witnesses are doing the work of evangelizers. (Acts 19:20) Have you taken your stand as one of those happy praisers of Jehovah?

⁷ Many present-day Kingdom proclaimers are taking advantage of opportunities to enlarge their share in the evangelizing work. Thousands have entered the missionary field, and hundreds of thousands share in the full-time evangelizing activity as regular and auxiliary pioneers. And what fine work is being done by men, women, and children serving as zealous Kingdom publishers! Indeed, all of Jehovah’s people are enjoying his rich blessing as they serve him shoulder to shoulder as Christian evangelizers.—Zephaniah 3:9.

⁸ God has given Jesus’ anointed followers the responsibility to proclaim the good news throughout the earth. At their side in this

6. What success did first-century evangelizers have?
7. What are Kingdom proclaimers doing today?
8. What marking work is now being done, and by whom?

evangelizing work is the growing number of Christ's "other sheep." (John 10:16) Prophetically, this lifesaving work is likened to putting a mark on the foreheads of those sighing and groaning over the detestable things now taking place. Soon, the wicked will be destroyed. Meanwhile, what a privilege it is to carry lifesaving truths to earth's inhabitants! —Ezekiel 9:4-6, 11.

⁹ If we have been engaging in the evangelizing work for some time, very likely we can do something to help new ones in the congregation. On occasion, we may be able to have them accompany us in the ministry. Those who serve as elders will want to do all they can to build fellow believers up spiritually. The fine efforts of humble overseers can do much to help others to be zealous and fruitful evangelizers.—2 Peter 1:5-8.

Bearing Witness From House to House

¹⁰ Jesus Christ set his followers an excellent example as an evangelizer. Regarding the ministry of Christ and his apostles, God's Word states: "He went journeying from city to city and from village to village, preaching and declaring the good news of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with him." (Luke 8:1) What about the apostles themselves? After the outpouring of holy spirit at Pentecost of 33 C.E., "every day in the temple and from house to house they continued without letup teaching and declaring the good news about the Christ, Jesus." —Acts 5:42.

¹¹ Because of his zealous evangelizing work, the apostle Paul could tell Christian elders from Ephesus: "I did not hold back from telling you any of the things that were profitable nor from teaching you publicly and

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9. How can new ones be helped in the ministry?
 10. Christ and his early followers set what example in the ministry?
 11. According to Acts 20:20, 21, what did the apostle Paul do in his ministry?

from house to house." When Paul was 'teaching from house to house,' was he visiting the homes of fellow worshipers of Jehovah, making shepherding calls on believers? No, for he goes on to explain: "I thoroughly bore witness both to Jews and to Greeks about repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus." (Acts 20:20, 21) In general, those already dedicated to Jehovah would not need instruction about "repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus." Paul trained the Christian elders of Ephesus in the house-to-house ministry while he taught unbelievers about repentance and faith. In doing this, Paul was copying the method established by Jesus.

¹² The house-to-house ministry can be challenging. For example, some are offended when we come to their door with the Bible's message. It is not our desire to offend people. Yet, the house-to-house ministry is Scriptural, and love of God and neighbor motivates us to bear witness in this way. (Mark 12:28-31) To 'defend and legally establish' our right to preach from house to house, we have presented cases before the courts, including the Supreme Court of the United States. (Philippians 1:7) Almost invariably that court has decided in our favor. Typical is the following verdict:

¹³ "The hand distribution of religious tracts is an age-old form of missionary evangelism—as old as the history of printing presses. It has been a potent force in various religious movements down through the years. This form of evangelism is utilized today, on a large scale by various religious sects whose colporteurs carry the Gospel to thousands upon thousands of homes and seek through personal visitations to win adherents to their faith. . . . This form of religious activity occupies the same high estate under the

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- 12, 13. In harmony with Philippians 1:7, what have Jehovah's people done about *their* right to preach?

First Amendment [to the United States Constitution] as do worship in the churches and preaching from the pulpits."—*Murdock v. Pennsylvania*, 1943.

Why Keep On Preaching?

¹⁴ There are many reasons to witness from house to house. Each time we call on a householder, we try to plant a seed of Scriptural truth. By making return visits, we seek to water it. And there can be a fine cumulative effect, for Paul wrote: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God kept making it grow." (1 Corinthians 3:6) So let us keep on 'planting and watering,' confident that Jehovah 'will make it grow.'

¹⁵ We do the work of evangelizers because lives are at stake. By preaching we can save ourselves and those who listen to us. (1 Timothy 4:16) If we knew that a person's life was endangered, would we make only one feeble attempt to help him? Hardly! Since salvation is involved, we make repeated calls at the homes of people. Circumstances keep on changing. Someone who is too busy to listen on one occasion may be willing to hear the Bible's message at another time. A different member of the family may answer the door, and that could lead to a Scriptural discussion.

¹⁶ Not only their circumstances but also the attitude of householders can change. For instance, the painful loss of a loved one in death may move an individual to listen to the Kingdom message. We hope to comfort the person, make him conscious of his spiritual need, and show how it can be satisfied.—Matthew 5:3, 4.

¹⁷ Foremost among our reasons for witnessing from house to house or engaging in other forms of the Christian ministry is the desire

14. What can be the cumulative effect of our ministry?

15, 16. Why do we repeatedly call at people's homes?

17. What is the foremost reason for our preaching activity?

to have a share in making known Jehovah's name. (Exodus 9:16; Psalm 83:18) How rewarding it is when our evangelizing work helps lovers of truth and righteousness to become praisers of Jehovah! "You young men and also you virgins, you old men together with boys," sang the psalmist. "Let them praise the name of Jehovah, for his name alone is unreachably high. His dignity is above earth and heaven."—Psalm 148:12, 13.

Evangelizing Benefits Us Personally

¹⁸ Doing the work of an evangelizer benefits us personally in various ways. Going from house to house with the good news helps us to cultivate humility, particularly when we are not received in a kind manner. To be effective evangelizers, we need to be like Paul, who 'became all things to people of all sorts so that he might save some.' (1 Corinthians 9:19-23) Experience in the ministry helps us to be tactful. By relying on Jehovah and choosing our words well, we can apply Paul's counsel: "Let your utterance be always with graciousness, seasoned with salt, so as to know how you ought to give an answer to each one."—Colossians 4:6.

¹⁹ The evangelizing work also moves us to rely on God's holy spirit. (Zechariah 4:6) In turn, its fruitage—"love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control"—becomes evident in our ministry. (Galatians 5:22, 23) It affects our dealings with people, for yielding to the spirit's direction helps us to exercise love, to be joyful and peaceable, to be long-suffering and kind, to display goodness and faith, and to manifest mildness and self-control while declaring the good news.

²⁰ Another blessing that comes to us as

18. How do we benefit from doing the evangelizing work?

19. How are evangelizers helped by holy spirit?

20, 21. What are some blessings and benefits of keeping busy as evangelizers?

evangelizers is that we become more sympathetic. When people mention their problems—sickness, unemployment, domestic trials—we do not act as advisers, but we share encouraging and comforting scriptures with them. We are concerned about people who have been blinded spiritually but seem to have a love of righteousness. (2 Corinthians 4:4) And what a blessing it is to render spiritual help to those “rightly disposed for everlasting life”!—Acts 13:48.

²¹ Regular participation in the evangelizing work helps us to keep our mind focused on spiritual things. (Luke 11:34) That surely is beneficial, since we might otherwise yield to materialistic temptations so common in this world. The apostle John urged Christians: “Do not be loving either the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him; because everything in the world—the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the showy display of one’s means of life—does not originate with the Father, but originates with the world. Furthermore,



How do you benefit personally as you share the good news with others?

the world is passing away and so is its desire, but he that does the will of God remains forever.” (1 John 2:15-17) Keeping busy as evangelizers with plenty to do in the Lord’s work helps us not to love the world.—1 Corinthians 15:58.

Store Up Heavenly Treasures

²² Zealous Kingdom-preaching activity brings lasting benefits. Jesus showed this when he said: “Stop storing up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break in and steal. Rather, store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”—Matthew 6:19-21.

²³ May we keep on storing up treasures in heaven, aware that we could have no greater privilege than that of representing the Sovereign Lord Jehovah as his Witnesses. (Isaiah 43:10-12) As we carry out our commission as God’s ministers, we may well feel like a Christian woman in her 90’s who said this about her long life of service to God: “Through it all I thank Jehovah for putting up with me all these years, and I pray fervently that he will be my loving Father forever.” If we similarly cherish our relationship with God, surely we want to do the work of an evangelizer in a complete way. The next article will help us to see how we can fully accomplish our ministry.

22, 23. (a) What treasures are stored up by Christian evangelizers? (b) How will the following article help us?

"FULLY ACCOMPLISH YOUR MINISTRY"

"Do your service thoroughly."—2 TIMOTHY 4:5, Byington.

ARE you a Kingdom proclaimer? If so, thank Jehovah God for this wonderful privilege. Are you an elder in the congregation? That is an added privilege from Jehovah. But we must never forget that neither secular education nor ability to speak eloquently qualifies any of us for the ministry or for oversight in the congregation. Jehovah adequately qualifies us for the ministry, and it is because some men among us meet specific Scriptural requirements that they are privileged to serve as overseers.—2 Corinthians 3:5, 6; 1 Timothy 3:1-7.

² All dedicated Christians do the work of evangelizers, but especially do overseers, or elders, need to set a good example in the ministry. Elders “who work hard in speaking and teaching” are noted by God and Christ, as well as by fellow Witnesses of Jehovah. (1 Timothy 5:17; Ephesians 5:23; Hebrews 6:10-12) Under all circumstances, an elder’s teaching must be spiritually healthful, for the apostle Paul told the overseer Timothy: “There will be a period of time when they will not put up with the healthful teaching, but, in accord with their own desires, they will accumulate teachers for themselves to have their ears tickled; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, whereas they will be turned aside to false stories. You, though, keep your senses in all things, suffer evil, do the work of an evangelizer, fully accomplish your ministry.”—2 Timothy 4:3-5.

1, 2. Though all Christians are evangelizers, what is Scripturally required of elders?

³ To make sure that false teachings do not threaten the spirituality of the congregation, an overseer must comply with Paul’s counsel: “Be sober in every respect, . . . do your service thoroughly.” (2 Timothy 4:5, *Byington*) Yes, an elder needs to ‘accomplish his ministry fully.’ He must carry it out completely, in a thorough manner, or to a full degree. An elder who fully performs his ministry gives proper attention to all his responsibilities, leaving nothing neglected or only half done. Such a man is faithful even in little things.—Luke 12:48; 16:10.

⁴ Fully accomplishing our ministry does not always require more time, but it does call for time well spent. A steady pace can help all Christians to accomplish things in the ministry. To spend more time in the field service, an elder needs good personal organization to balance his schedule and to know what to delegate and how to do so. (Hebrews 13:17) Naturally, a respected elder also does his own share, like Nehemiah, who got personally involved in rebuilding Jerusalem’s walls. (Nehemiah 5:16) And all servants of Jehovah should share regularly in the Kingdom-preaching work.—1 Corinthians 9:16-18.

⁵ What a joyous commission we have as proclaimers of the established heavenly Kingdom! Surely we cherish our privilege of

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3. What needs to be done so that false teachings do not threaten the spirituality of the congregation?
 4. What can help us to accomplish the ministry fully?
 5. How should we feel about the ministry?



Christian elders teach in the congregation and help to train fellow believers in the ministry

having a share in preaching the good news in all the inhabited earth before the end comes. (Matthew 24:14) Although we are imperfect, we can take heart from Paul's words: "We have this treasure [of the ministry] in earthen vessels, that the power beyond what is normal may be God's and not that out of ourselves." (2 Corinthians 4:7) Yes, we can render acceptable service—but only with God-given strength and wisdom.—1 Corinthians 1:26-31.

Reflecting God's Glory

⁶ Referring to anointed Christians, Paul says that God has "adequately qualified us to be ministers of a new covenant." The apostle contrasts the new covenant made with spiritual Israel through Jesus Christ with the old Law covenant made with natural Israel through Moses. Paul adds that when Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the tablets containing the Ten Commandments, his face was so bright that the Israelites could not gaze intently at it. In time, though, something far more serious took place because "their mental powers were dulled" and a veil came to be upon their hearts. When there is a turning to Jehovah in whole-

6. What contrast developed between natural Israel and spiritual Israel?

hearted devotion, however, the veil is taken away. Referring next to the ministry given to those in the new covenant, Paul says: "All of us, . . . with unveiled faces reflect like mirrors the glory of Jehovah." (2 Corinthians 3:6-8, 14-18; Exodus 34:29-35) Jesus' "other sheep" of today are also privileged to reflect Jehovah's glory.—John 10:16.

⁷ How can sinful humans reflect God's glory, when no man can see his face and live? (Exodus 33:20) Well, besides Jehovah's personal glory, there is also his glorious purpose to vindicate his sovereignty by means of his Kingdom. Truths related to the Kingdom constitute part of "the magnificent things of God" that began to be proclaimed by those on whom the holy spirit was poured out at Pentecost 33 C.E. (Acts 2:11) With the spirit's guidance, they could fully accomplish the ministry entrusted to them.—Acts 1:8.

⁸ Paul was determined to let nothing prevent him from accomplishing his ministry fully. He wrote: "Since we have this ministry according to the mercy that was shown us, we do not give up; but we have renounced the underhanded things of which to be ashamed, not walking with cunning, neither adulterating the word of God, but by making the truth manifest recommending ourselves to every human conscience in the sight of God." (2 Corinthians 4:1, 2) By what Paul calls "this ministry," the truth is made manifest and spiritual light is spread abroad.

7. How can humans reflect God's glory?

8. As regards the ministry, what was Paul determined to do?

⁹ Regarding the Source of physical and spiritual light, Paul writes: "God is he who said: 'Let the light shine out of darkness,' and he has shone on our hearts to illuminate them with the glorious knowledge of God by the face of Christ." (2 Corinthians 4:6; Genesis 1:2-5) Since we have been granted the inestimable privilege of being God's ministers, let us keep ourselves clean so that we like mirrors can reflect Jehovah's glory.

¹⁰ Spiritually bedarkened individuals cannot see Jehovah's glory or its reflection from Jesus Christ, the Greater Moses. But as Jehovah's servants, we catch the glorious light from the Scriptures and reflect it to others. If those now in spiritual darkness are to escape destruction, they need light from God. With great joy and zeal, then, we obey the divine command to let light shine out of darkness to Jehovah's glory.

Let Your Light Shine at Home Bible Studies

¹¹ Jesus told his followers: "You are the light of the world. A city cannot be hid when situated upon a mountain. People light a lamp and set it, not under the measuring basket, but upon the lampstand, and it shines upon all those in the house. Likewise let your light shine before men, that they may see your fine works and give glory to your Father who is in the heavens." (Matthew 5:14-16) Our fine conduct can cause others to give glory to God. (1 Peter 2:12) And the various aspects of our evangelizing work afford us many opportunities to let our light shine. One of our main objectives is to reflect spiritual light from God's Word by conducting effective home Bible studies. This is a very important way to accomplish our ministry fully. What suggestions may help us to con-

9. How is it possible to reflect Jehovah's glory?
11. What did Jesus say about letting our light shine, and what is one way to do this in our ministry?

duct Bible studies that touch the hearts of truth seekers?

¹² Prayer to Jehovah in this regard demonstrates our keen desire to conduct Bible studies. It also shows that we see the importance of helping others to acquire the knowledge of God. (Ezekiel 33:7-9) Jehovah is certain to answer our prayers and to bless our conscientious efforts in the ministry. (1 John 5:14, 15) But we do not pray only to find someone with whom to conduct a home Bible study. After we have established a study, prayer and meditation regarding the Bible student's specific needs will help us to conduct each session in an effective manner.—Romans 12:12.

¹³ To conduct effective home Bible studies, we must prepare well for each session. If we feel somewhat inadequate, it may be quite helpful to observe how the Congregation Book Study overseer handles the coverage of each week's lesson. On occasion, we may be able to accompany Kingdom publishers who have had good results in conducting home Bible studies. Of course, the attitude and teaching methods of Jesus Christ especially merit our consideration.

¹⁴ Jesus delighted in doing his heavenly Father's will and in talking to others about God. (Psalm 40:8) He was mild-tempered and succeeded in reaching the hearts of those who listened to him. (Matthew 11:28-30) Let us therefore strive to reach the hearts of our Bible students. If we are to do so, we need to prepare for each study with the student's particular circumstances in mind. For instance, if he belongs to a culture that does not have a background in the Bible, we may have to convince him that the Bible is true. In that

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12. How is prayer related to the work of conducting home Bible studies?
13. What may help us to conduct effective home Bible studies?
14. How can we reach the heart of a Bible student?



Conducting effective home Bible studies is one way to let our light shine

case, we will obviously have to read many scriptures and explain them.

Help Students to Understand Illustrations

¹⁵ A Bible student may not be familiar with a particular illustration used in the Scriptures. For example, he may not understand what Jesus meant when he spoke of putting a lamp on a lampstand. (Mark 4:21, 22) Jesus was referring to an ancient oil lamp with a burning wick. Such a lamp was put on a special stand and could thus light up an area of a house. Research on the subjects "Lamp" and "Lampstand" in such a publication as *Insight on the Scriptures* may be required to make Jesus' illustration clear.* But how rewarding it is to come to the Bible study with an explanation that is understood and appreciated by the student!

¹⁶ A Bible study aid may use an illustration that is hard for a certain student to grasp. Take time to explain it, or use another illus-

* Published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

15, 16. (a) How might we help a student who does not understand an illustration used in the Bible? (b) What can we do if one of our publications uses an illustration that is difficult for a certain Bible student to understand?

tration that makes the same point. Perhaps a publication is emphasizing that a good partner and coordinated effort are important in a marriage. To illustrate this, reference may be made to a man who swings from a trapeze, lets go of it, and depends on another performer to catch him. As an alternative, likely the need for a good partner and coordination of effort could be illustrated by the way workers cooperate by handing boxes to one another when unloading a boat.

¹⁷ Using an alternative illustration may call for advance preparation. Yet, that is a way to show our personal interest in a Bible student. Jesus used simple illustrations to clarify difficult subjects. His Sermon on the Mount gives examples of this, and the Bible shows that his teaching had a good effect on his listeners. (Matthew 5:1-7:29) Jesus patiently explained things because he had a keen interest in others.—Matthew 16:5-12.

¹⁸ Our interest in others will motivate us to 'reason from the Scriptures.' (Acts 17:2, 3) This calls for prayerful study and wise use of publications made available through "the faithful steward." (Luke 12:42-44) For instance, the book *Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life* quotes many scriptures.* Because of space limitations, some are merely cited. During a Bible study, it is important to read and explain at least some of these cited scriptures. After all, our teaching is based on God's Word, and it has great power. (Hebrews 4:12) Refer to the Bible throughout each study, making liberal use of the scriptures found in the paragraphs. Help the student to see what the Bible says about a cer-

* Published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

17. What can we learn from Jesus about illustrations?

18. What is recommended regarding scriptures cited in our publications?

tain subject or course of action. Endeavor to show him how he will benefit from obedience to God.—Isaiah 48:17, 18.

Ask Thought-Provoking Questions

¹⁹ Jesus' skillful use of questions helped people to reason. (Matthew 17:24-27) If we ask viewpoint questions that do not embarrass a Bible student, his answers may reveal what he thinks about a certain subject. We may find that he still holds unscriptural views. For instance, he may believe in the Trinity. In chapter 3, the *Knowledge* book points out that the word "Trinity" does not appear in the Bible. The book quotes and cites scriptures showing that Jehovah is separate from Jesus and that the holy spirit is God's active force, not a person. Reading and discussing these Bible texts may be sufficient. But what if more is needed? Perhaps after the next regular study session, some time could be spent in a profitable discussion of this subject as covered in another publication of Jehovah's Witnesses, such as the brochure *Should You Believe in the Trinity?* Thereafter, we can resume the study using the *Knowledge* book.

²⁰ Suppose the student's answer to a viewpoint question is surprising or even disappointing. If smoking, or some other sensitive subject, is involved, we might suggest that we continue the study and discuss the matter at a later time. Knowing that the student is still smoking enables us to find published information that may help him to make spiritual progress. As we endeavor to reach the student's heart, we can pray that Jehovah help him to grow spiritually.

²¹ With good preparation and Jehovah's

19, 20. (a) Why use viewpoint questions when conducting a home Bible study? (b) What can be done if a particular subject requires further consideration?

21. What may happen if we adapt our teaching methods to a Bible student's specific needs?

help, we will doubtless be able to adapt our teaching methods to fit the specific needs of the Bible student. As time goes on, we may be able to help him to develop deep love for God. We may also succeed in building respect and appreciation for Jehovah's organization. And how gratifying it is when Bible students acknowledge that 'God is really among us'! (1 Corinthians 14:24, 25) May we therefore conduct effective Bible studies and do all we can to help others to become Jesus' disciples.

A Treasure to Be Cherished

²² To accomplish our ministry fully, we must rely on God-given strength. Referring to the ministry, Paul wrote fellow anointed Christians: "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the power beyond what is normal may be God's and not that out of ourselves."—2 Corinthians 4:7.

²³ Whether of the anointed or of the "other sheep," we are like frail earthen vessels. (John 10:16) Yet, Jehovah can give us the strength needed to fulfill our assignments regardless of the pressures brought against us. (John 16:13; Philippians 4:13) Let us therefore trust in Jehovah implicitly, cherish our treasure of service, and fully accomplish our ministry.

22, 23. What is needed if we are to accomplish our ministry fully?

How Would You Answer?

- What can elders do to accomplish their ministry fully?
- How can we improve the effectiveness of our home Bible studies?
- What would you do if a Bible student did not understand an illustration or needed further information on a certain subject?

The Peace of Westphalia

A Turning Point in Europe



FOR so many European heads of State to be gathered together as are gathered here today is certainly a rare event." Roman Herzog, former president of the Federal Republic of Germany, made that statement in October 1998. When he made that comment, his audience included four kings, four queens, two princes, a grand duke, and several presidents. The event, sponsored by the Council of Europe, was a highly important one in the 50-year history of the modern state of Germany. What was the occasion?

October 1998 was the 350th anniversary of the Peace Treaty of Westphalia. Peace agreements are often crossroads where history turns a corner, and in this respect the Treaty of Westphalia was something special. The signing of this agreement in 1648 brought to an end the Thirty Years' War and marked the birth of modern Europe as a continent of sovereign states.

An Old Order Is Shaken

During the Middle Ages, the most powerful institutions in Europe were the Roman Catholic Church and the Holy Roman Empire. The empire was made up of hundreds of estates of various sizes and covered an area now occupied by Austria, the Czech Republic, eastern France, Germany, Switzerland, the Low Countries, and parts of Italy. Since the German estates comprised its major part, the empire came to be known as the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. Each estate

was ruled semiautonomously by a prince. The emperor himself was a Roman Catholic of the Austrian Habsburg family. Therefore, with the papacy and the empire in power, Europe was firmly in Roman Catholic hands.

In the 16th and 17th centuries, however, the established order was shaken. Throughout Europe there was widespread dissatisfaction with the excesses of the Roman Catholic Church. Such religious reformers as Martin Luther and John Calvin spoke of a return to Biblical values. Luther and Calvin found widespread support, and out of this movement grew the Reformation and Protestant religions. The Reformation split the empire into three faiths—Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinist.

Catholics viewed Protestants with distrust, and Protestants held their Catholic rivals in disdain. This climate led to the formation of the Protestant Union and the Catholic League in the early 17th century. Some princes of the empire joined the Union, others the League. Europe—and the empire in particular—was a powder keg of suspicion that needed just one spark to send everything up in smoke. When that spark finally came, it started a conflict that lasted for the next 30 years.

A Deadly Spark Sets Europe Aflame

Protestant rulers tried to influence the Catholic Habsburgs to allow more freedom of worship. But concessions came grudging-

ly, and in 1617-18, two Lutheran churches in Bohemia (the Czech Republic) were forcibly closed. This offended Protestant gentry, who stormed into a palace in Prague, seized three Catholic officials, and threw them out of an upstairs window. This act was the spark that set Europe afame.

Although they supposedly were followers of the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ, members of opposing religions were now at one another's throats. (Isaiah 9:6) In the Battle of White Mountain, the League inflicted a crushing defeat on the Union, which disintegrated. Protestant noblemen were executed in Prague's marketplace. All over Bohemia, the property of Protestants who would not recant was confiscated and shared among Catholics. The book *1648—Krieg und Frieden in Europa* (1648—War and Peace in Europe) describes this confiscation as "one of the greatest shifts in ownership ever in central Europe."

What started as a religious conflict in Bohemia escalated into an international power struggle. Over the next 30 years, Denmark,

France, the Netherlands, Spain, and Sweden were drawn into the fray. Catholic and Protestant rulers, often driven by greed and the urge for power, jockeyed for political supremacy and commercial gain. The Thirty Years' War has been divided into stages, each named after the emperor's major opponents. Several reference works cite four such stages: the Bohemian and Palatine War, the Danish-Lower Saxony War, the Swedish War, and the French-Swedish War. Most of the fighting took place on imperial territory.

Weapons of the time included pistols, muskets, mortars, and cannons, with Sweden as a major supplier of arms. Catholics and Protestants were locked in conflict. Soldiers went into battle crying either "Santa Maria" or "God is with us." Troops pillaged and plundered their way across German estates, treating opponents and civilians like animals. The war degenerated into barbarity. What a contrast to the Bible prophecy: "They will not lift up sword, nation against nation, neither will they learn war anymore!"—Micah 4:3.

A generation of Germans grew up knowing nothing but war, and the weary population longed for peace. Apparently, peace would have been possible were it not for the conflicting political interests of the rulers. Politics came more and more to the fore as the war lost its religious character and became increasingly secular. Ironically, one man who promoted this change was a high official of the Catholic Church.

Cardinal Richelieu Wields the Scepter

The official title of Armand-Jean du Plessis was Cardinal de Richelieu. He was also the



Cardinal Richelieu

What started as a conflict between Catholics and Protestants ended with Catholics fighting alongside Protestants against other Catholics

prime minister of France from 1624 to 1642. Richelieu aimed to make France the major power in Europe. To that end, he tried to erode the power of his fellow Catholics, the Habsburgs. How did he do this? By financing the Protestant armies of the German estates, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Sweden, all of which were fighting against the Habsburgs.

In 1635, Richelieu sent French troops into the war for the first time. The book *vivat pax—Es lebe der Friede!* (Long Live the Peace!) explains that in its final stage, "the Thirty Years' War ceased to be a conflict between religious parties.... The war became a struggle for political supremacy in Europe." What started as a religious conflict between Catholics and Protestants ended with Catholics fighting alongside Protestants against other Catholics. The Catholic League, already weakened in the early 1630's, was disbanded in 1635.

Peace Conference in Westphalia

Europe was ravaged by plunder, murder, rape, and disease. Gradually, a yearning for peace was intensified by a realization that this was a war that no one could win. The book *vivat pax—Es lebe der Friede!* remarks that "toward the end of the 1630's, the responsible princes finally recognized that military power would no longer help them to achieve their goal." But if peace was what everyone wanted, how was it to be achieved?

Emperor Ferdinand III of the Holy Roman Empire, King Louis XIII of France, and Queen Christina of Sweden agreed that a conference should be held where all parties to the war should assemble and negotiate peace terms. Two sites were selected for the talks—the towns of Osnabrück and Münster in the German province of Westphalia. They were chosen because they were midway between the capitals of Sweden and France. Starting in 1643, about 150 delega-

tions—some with large teams of advisers—descended on the two towns, Catholic envoys gathering in Münster, Protestant delegates in Osnabrück.

First, a code of behavior was laid down to establish such matters as title and rank of the envoys, seating order, and procedures. Then peace talks began, with proposals being passed from one delegation to the next through mediators. After almost five years—while the war continued—peace terms were agreed upon. The Treaty of Westphalia consisted of more than one document. One agreement was signed in Osnabrück between Emperor Ferdinand III and Sweden, another in Münster between the emperor and France.

As news of the treaty spread, celebrations got under way. What began with a deadly spark ended with literal fireworks. They lit up the sky in various cities. Church bells rang,

Soldiers went into battle crying either "Santa Maria" or "God is with us"

cannons roared in salute, and people sang in the streets. Could Europe now expect lasting peace?

Is Lasting Peace Possible?

The Treaty of Westphalia recognized the principle of sovereignty. This meant that each party to the treaty agreed to respect the territorial rights of all other parties and not to interfere in their internal affairs. Modern Europe as a continent of sovereign states was thus born. Among those states, some gained more from the treaty than did others.

France was established as a major power, and the Netherlands and Switzerland each attained independence. For the German estates, many of which had been ruined by the



Sixteenth-century drawing depicting the struggle between Luther, Calvin, and the pope

war, the treaty had its drawbacks. Germany's destiny was to a degree decided by other nations. *The New Encyclopædia Britannica* reports: "The gains and losses of the German princes were determined by the convenience of the principal powers: France, Sweden, and Austria." Instead of being drawn together and united into one nation, the German estates were divided just as before. Moreover, some territory was handed over to the control of foreign rulers, as were sections of Germany's main rivers—the Rhine, the Elbe, and the Oder.

Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinist religions were granted equal recognition. This did not please everyone. Pope Innocent X was vehemently against the treaty, declaring it null and void. Nevertheless, the religious frontiers that were drawn up remained largely unchanged for three centuries. Although religious freedom for the individual had not yet arrived, it came one step closer.

The treaty concluded the Thirty Years' War, and with it most of the hostilities ended. This was the last major religious war in Europe.



Wars did not cease, but their underlying cause shifted from religion to politics or commerce. That is not to say that religion lost all influence in European hostilities. In World Wars I and II, German soldiers wore on their belt buckle an inscription with a familiar ring: "God Is With Us." During those horrendous conflicts, Catholics and Protestants once again lined up on one side to fight against Catholics and Protestants on the opposing side.

Clearly, the Treaty of Westphalia did not bring lasting peace. However, such peace will soon be experienced by obedient mankind. Jehovah God will bring everlasting peace to mankind through the Messianic Kingdom of his Son, Jesus Christ. Under that government, the one true religion will be a force for unity, not division. No one will go to war for any reason, religious or otherwise. What a relief it will be when Kingdom rule holds sway over the earth and "to peace there will be no end"!—Isaiah 9:6, 7.

Jehovah's Word Is Alive

Highlights From the Book of Exodus

IT IS a true story of the deliverance of those who were made to "slave under tyranny." (Exodus 1:13) It is also an exciting account of the birth of a nation. Astounding miracles, superb legislation, and the construction of the tabernacle are among its absorbing features. In essence, this is what the Bible book of Exodus contains.

Written by the Hebrew prophet Moses, Exodus relates the experiences of the Israelites over a period of 145 years—from Joseph's death in 1657 B.C.E. to the completion of the tabernacle in 1512 B.C.E. Yet, the account is of more than mere historical interest. It is a part of God's word, or message, to mankind. As such, it "is alive and exerts power." (Hebrews 4:12) Exodus, then, has real meaning for us.

"GOD HEARD THEIR GROANING"

(Exodus 1:1–4:31)

Jacob's descendants living in Egypt increase so rapidly that by royal mandate they are made to suffer as slaves. Pharaoh even decrees death for all Israelite male infants. Escaping such an end is a three-month-old baby, Moses, who is adopted by Pharaoh's daughter. Although he is brought up in the royal household, at the age of 40, Moses sides with his own people and kills an Egyptian. (Acts 7:23, 24) Forced to flee, he goes to Midian. There he gets married and lives as a shepherd. At a miraculously burning bush, Jehovah commissions Moses to return to Egypt to lead the Israelites out of slavery. His brother, Aaron, is appointed to be his spokesman.

Scriptural Questions Answered:

3:1—What kind of priest was Jethro? In patriarchal times the family head served as a priest for his family. Jethro was evidently the patriarchal head of a tribe of Midianites. Since the Midianites were Abraham's descendants by Keturah, they were perhaps exposed to the worship of Jehovah.—Genesis 25:1, 2.

4:11—In what sense does Jehovah 'appoint the speechless, the deaf, and the blind'? Although Jehovah has on occasion caused blindness and muteness, he is not responsible for every case of such disabilities. (Genesis 19:11; Luke 1:20-22, 62-64) These are the result of inherited sin. (Job 14:4; Romans 5:12) Since God has allowed this situation to exist, however, he could speak of himself as 'appointing' the speechless, the deaf, and the blind.

4:16—How was Moses to "serve as God" to Aaron? Moses was a representative of God. Hence, Moses became "as God" to Aaron, who spoke representatively for Moses.

Lessons for Us:

1:7, 14. Jehovah supported his people when they were oppressed in Egypt. He simi-

Jehovah commissioned the meek man Moses to lead the Israelites out of slavery



larly sustains his modern-day Witnesses, even in the face of intense persecution.

1:17-21. Jehovah remembers us “for good.”—Nehemiah 13:31.

3:7-10. Jehovah is sensitive to the outcry of his people.

3:14. Jehovah unfailingly carries out his purposes. We can therefore be confident that he will turn our Bible-based hopes into reality.

4:10, 13. Moses displayed so much lack of confidence in his ability to speak that even when assured of divine backing, he begged God to send someone else to speak to Pharaoh. Still, Jehovah used Moses and gave him the wisdom and strength needed to carry out his assignment. Instead of focusing on our inadequacies, may we rely on Jehovah and faithfully fulfill our commission to preach and to teach.—Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20.

ASTOUNDING MIRACLES BRING DELIVERANCE (Exodus 5:1–15:21)

Moses and Aaron appear before Pharaoh, asking that the Israelites be permitted to celebrate a festival to Jehovah in the wilderness. The Egyptian ruler defiantly refuses. Jehovah uses Moses to bring about one telling blow after another. Only after the tenth plague does Pharaoh let the Israelites go. Soon, however, he and his military forces are in hot pursuit. But Jehovah opens an escape corridor through the Red Sea and delivers his people. The pursuing Egyptians drown as the sea closes in on them.

Scriptural Questions Answered:

6:3—In what way had God’s name not been made known to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? These patriarchs used the divine name and received promises from Jehovah. Yet, they did not know or experience Jehovah

The Ten Plagues demonstrated the Creator’s control over water, sunlight, insects, animals, and humans



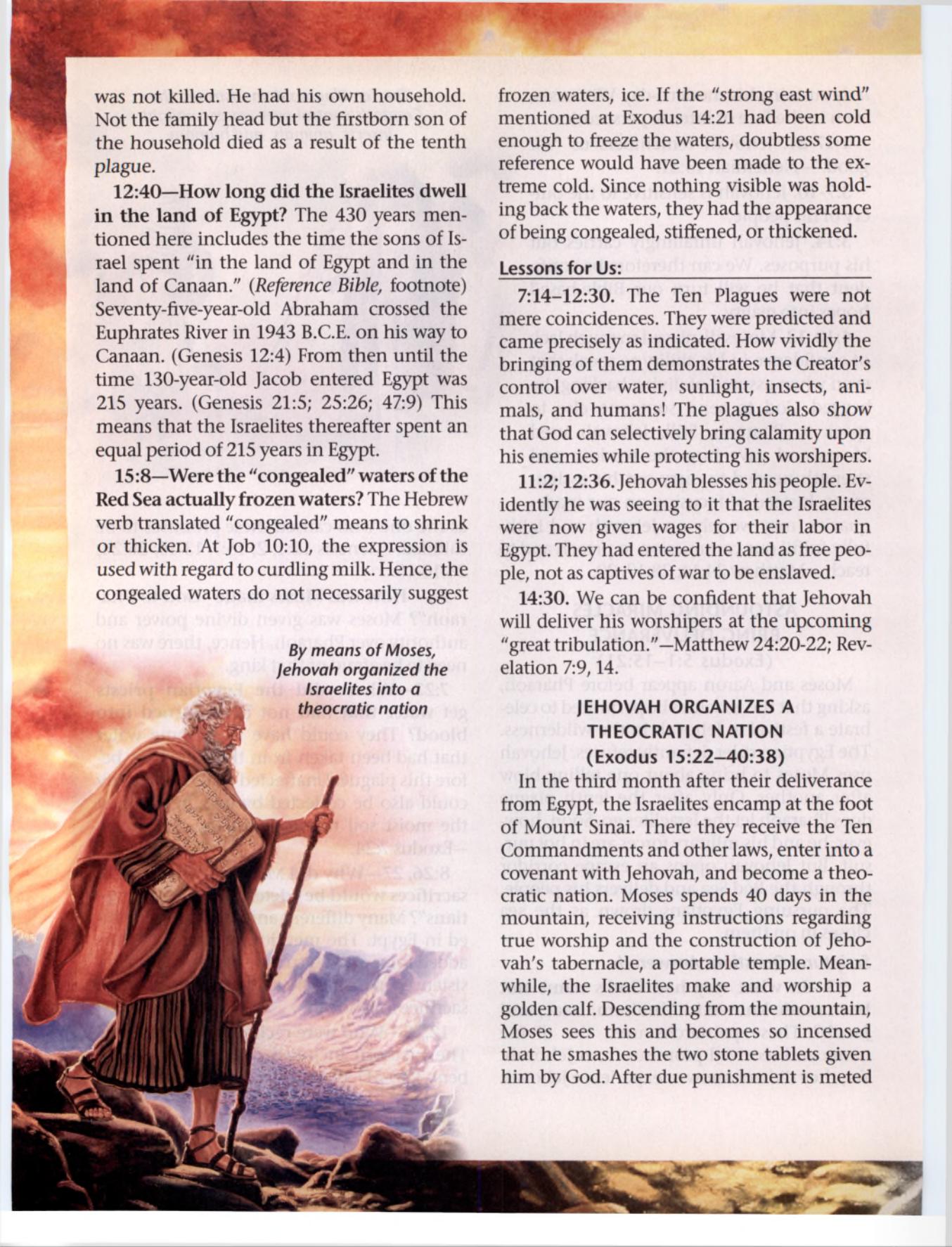
as the one who caused these promises to be fulfilled.—Genesis 12:1, 2; 15:7, 13-16; 26:24; 28:10-15.

7:1—How was Moses made “God to Pharaoh”? Moses was given divine power and authority over Pharaoh. Hence, there was no need to be afraid of that king.

7:22—Where did the Egyptian priests get water that had not been turned into blood? They could have used some water that had been taken from the Nile River before this plague. Unaffected water apparently could also be collected by digging wells in the moist soil round about the Nile River.—Exodus 7:24.

8:26, 27—Why did Moses say that Israel’s sacrifices would be “detestable to the Egyptians”? Many different animals were venerated in Egypt. The mention of sacrifices thus added force and persuasiveness to Moses’ insistence that Israel be allowed to go away to sacrifice to Jehovah.

12:29—Who were reckoned as firstborn? The firstborn included only males. (Numbers 3:40-51) Pharaoh, himself a firstborn,



was not killed. He had his own household. Not the family head but the firstborn son of the household died as a result of the tenth plague.

12:40—How long did the Israelites dwell in the land of Egypt? The 430 years mentioned here includes the time the sons of Israel spent “in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan.” (*Reference Bible*, footnote) Seventy-five-year-old Abraham crossed the Euphrates River in 1943 B.C.E. on his way to Canaan. (Genesis 12:4) From then until the time 130-year-old Jacob entered Egypt was 215 years. (Genesis 21:5; 25:26; 47:9) This means that the Israelites thereafter spent an equal period of 215 years in Egypt.

15:8—Were the “congealed” waters of the Red Sea actually frozen waters? The Hebrew verb translated “congealed” means to shrink or thicken. At Job 10:10, the expression is used with regard to curdling milk. Hence, the congealed waters do not necessarily suggest

*By means of Moses,
Jehovah organized the
Israelites into a
theocratic nation*

frozen waters, ice. If the “strong east wind” mentioned at Exodus 14:21 had been cold enough to freeze the waters, doubtless some reference would have been made to the extreme cold. Since nothing visible was holding back the waters, they had the appearance of being congealed, stiffened, or thickened.

Lessons for Us:

7:14–12:30. The Ten Plagues were not mere coincidences. They were predicted and came precisely as indicated. How vividly the bringing of them demonstrates the Creator’s control over water, sunlight, insects, animals, and humans! The plagues also show that God can selectively bring calamity upon his enemies while protecting his worshipers.

11:2; 12:36. Jehovah blesses his people. Evidently he was seeing to it that the Israelites were now given wages for their labor in Egypt. They had entered the land as free people, not as captives of war to be enslaved.

14:30. We can be confident that Jehovah will deliver his worshipers at the upcoming “great tribulation.”—Matthew 24:20-22; Revelation 7:9, 14.

JEHOVAH ORGANIZES A THEOCRATIC NATION (Exodus 15:22–40:38)

In the third month after their deliverance from Egypt, the Israelites encamp at the foot of Mount Sinai. There they receive the Ten Commandments and other laws, enter into a covenant with Jehovah, and become a theocratic nation. Moses spends 40 days in the mountain, receiving instructions regarding true worship and the construction of Jehovah’s tabernacle, a portable temple. Meanwhile, the Israelites make and worship a golden calf. Descending from the mountain, Moses sees this and becomes so incensed that he smashes the two stone tablets given him by God. After due punishment is meted

out to the wrongdoers, he again ascends the mountain and receives another set of tablets. Upon Moses' return, tabernacle construction begins. By the end of Israel's first year of freedom, this marvelous tent and all its furnishings are completed and set up. Then Jehovah fills the tent with his glory.

Scriptural Questions Answered:

20:5—How is it that Jehovah brings “punishment for the error of fathers” upon future generations? After reaching an age of responsibility, each individual is judged on the basis of his own conduct and attitude. But when the nation of Israel turned to idolatry, it suffered the consequences of this for generations thereafter. Even the faithful Israelites felt its effects in that the nation's religious delinquency made staying on a course of integrity difficult for them.

23:19; 34:26—What was the significance of the command not to boil a kid in its mother's milk? Boiling a kid (the young of a goat or other animal) in its mother's milk reportedly was a pagan ritual thought to produce rain. Moreover, since the mother's milk is for nourishing her young, boiling her offspring in it would be an act of cruelty. This law helped to show God's people that they should be compassionate.

23:20-23—Who was the angel mentioned here, and how was it that Jehovah's name was “within him”? Likely, this angel was Jesus in his prehuman form. He was used to guide the Israelites on their way to the Promised Land. (1 Corinthians 10:1-4) Jehovah's name is “within him” in that Jesus is the principal one who upholds and sanctifies his Father's name.

32:1-8, 25-35—Why was Aaron not punished for making the golden calf? Aaron was not in heartfelt sympathy with the idolatry. Later, he apparently joined fellow Levites in taking a stand for God and against those who resisted Moses. After the guilty were

slain, Moses reminded the people that they had sinned greatly, indicating that others besides Aaron also received Jehovah's mercy.

33:11, 20—How did God speak to Moses “face to face”? This expression denotes intimate two-way conversation. Moses talked with God's representative and orally received instruction from Jehovah through him. But Moses did not see Jehovah, since ‘no man can see God and yet live.’ In fact, Jehovah did not personally speak to Moses. The Law “was transmitted through angels by the hand of a mediator,” states Galatians 3:19.

Lessons for Us:

15:25; 16:12. Jehovah provides for his people.

18:21. The men chosen for responsible positions in the Christian congregation must also be capable, God-fearing, trustworthy, and unselfish.

20:1-23; 33. Jehovah is the supreme Lawgiver. When obeyed, his laws enabled the Israelites to worship him in an orderly and joyful way. Jehovah has a theocratic organization today. Cooperating with it leads to our happiness and security.

Real Meaning for Us

What does the book of Exodus reveal about Jehovah? It presents him as the loving Provider, the incomparable Deliverer, and the Fulfiler of his purposes. He is the God of theocratic organization.

As you do the weekly Bible reading in preparation for the Theocratic Ministry School, no doubt you will be deeply moved by what you learn from Exodus. When you consider what is stated in the section “Scriptural Questions Answered,” you will gain greater insight into certain Scriptural passages. The comments under “Lessons for Us” will show you how you can benefit from the Bible reading for the week.

Questions From Readers

What occurred during the incident recorded at Exodus 4:24-26, and whose life was in danger?

Moses was on his way to Egypt with his wife, Zipporah, and his sons, Gershom and Eliezer, when the following incident occurred: "It came about on the road at the lodging place that Jehovah got to meet him and kept looking for a way to put him to death. Finally Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin and caused it to touch his feet and said: 'It is because you are a bridegroom of blood to me.' Consequently he let go of him. At that time she said: 'A bridegroom of blood,' because of the circumcision." (Exodus 4:20, 24-26) Though this passage is obscure and it is not possible to be certain about its meaning, the Scriptures do shed some light on these verses.

The account does not explicitly state whose life was in danger. However, we can reasonably conclude that it was not Moses' life, for he had just received a divine commission to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. (Exodus 3:10) It seems unlikely that on his way to fulfill that assignment, Moses' life would have been threatened by God's angel. It therefore would be the life of one of his sons. The law given earlier to Abraham regarding circumcision stated: "An uncircumcised male who will not get the flesh of his foreskin circumcised, even that soul must be cut off from his people. He has broken my covenant." (Genesis 17:14) Moses had apparently neglected to circumcise his son, and thus the boy's life was threatened by Jehovah's angel.

Whose feet were touched when Zipporah cut off her son's foreskin in an attempt to set

matters straight? It was the angel of Jehovah who had the power to put the uncircumcised son to death. Logically, then, Zipporah would have caused the foreskin to touch the angel's feet, presenting it to him as evidence that she had complied with the covenant.

Zipporah's expression "you are a bridegroom of blood to me" is an unusual one. What does it indicate about her? By her compliance with the requirements of the circumcision covenant, Zipporah acknowledged a covenant relationship with Jehovah. The Law covenant later made with the Israelites showed that in a covenant relationship, Jehovah can be thought of as a husband and the other party as a wife. (Jeremiah 31:32) Hence, in addressing Jehovah (through his representative angel) as "a bridegroom of blood," Zipporah appears to have been acknowledging her own submission to the terms of that covenant. It was as if she had accepted a wifely position in the circumcision covenant, with Jehovah God as the husband. In any case, because of her decisive act of obedience to God's requirement, the life of her son was no longer in danger.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Identifying the Wild Beast
and Its Mark

Resist the Spirit of a Changing World

Are You Focusing on the Reward?

EHUD *Breaks the* OPPRESSOR'S YOKE

THIS is a true story of courage and intrigue. It happened some 3,000 years ago. The Scriptural account begins with the words: "Once again the sons of Israel went doing what was bad in Jehovah's eyes. At that Jehovah let Eglon the king of Moab grow strong against Israel, because they did what was bad in Jehovah's eyes. Furthermore, he gathered against them the sons of Ammon and Amalek. Then they went and struck Israel and took possession of the city of palm trees. And the sons of Israel continued to serve Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years."—Judges 3:12-14.

The territory of the Moabites lay to the east of the Jordan River and the Dead Sea. But they had crossed the river and had occupied the area around Jericho, "the city of the palm trees," reducing the Israelites to servitude. (Deuteronomy 34:3) The Moabite king, Eglon, "a very fat man," had extorted a burdensome and humiliating tribute from Israel for nearly two decades. (Judges 3:17) His demands for tribute, however, provided an opportunity to eliminate the tyrant.

The record states: "The sons of Israel began to call to Jehovah for aid. So Jehovah raised up for them a savior, Ehud the son of Gera, a Benjamite, a left-handed man. In time the sons of Israel sent tribute by his hand to Eglon the king of Moab." (Judges 3:15) Jehovah must have made certain that

Ehud was selected to present the tribute. Whether he had ever performed that duty before is not stated. However, the way that Ehud carefully prepared for the meeting and the tactics he used suggest that he may have had a certain familiarity with Eglon's palace and what he could expect there. In all of this, his being left-handed was significant.

A Disabled Man or a Warrior?

Literally, the term "left-handed" means 'shut, lamed, or bound in the right hand.' Does this mean that Ehud was disabled, perhaps with a deformed right hand? Consider what the Bible says about the left-handed "seven hundred chosen men" out of the tribe of Benjamin. "Every one of these was a slinger of stones to a hairbreadth and would not miss," states Judges 20:16. Very likely they were selected for their prowess in battle. According to some Bible scholars, "left-handed" denotes one "who used the left hand as well as the right," that is, an ambidextrous person.—Judges 3:15, *The Douay Version*.

The tribe of Benjamin, in fact, was renowned for its left-handed men. First Chronicles 12:1, 2 tells of Benjamite "mighty men, the helpers in the warfare, armed with the bow, using the right hand and using the left hand with stones or with arrows in the bow." This ability could have

been achieved, says one reference work, "by binding the right arms of young children—hence 'bound as to his right hand'—and inculcating dexterity with the left." Israel's foes would normally be trained to meet right-handed warriors. Hence, much of an enemy's training could be nullified if he unexpectedly met a left-handed soldier.

"A Secret Word" for the King

Ehud's first step was to prepare "a sword for himself"—a doubled-edged sword that was short enough to be concealed under his clothes. He may have expected to be searched. Swords were normally worn on the left side of the body, where right-handers could quickly draw them. Being left-handed, Ehud hid his weapon "underneath his garment upon his right thigh," where the king's guards were less likely to search. Without hindrance, therefore, "he proceeded to present the tribute to Eglon the king of Moab."—Judges 3:16, 17.

The details of the initial events in Eglon's court are not provided. The Bible simply says: "It came about that when [Ehud] had finished presenting the tribute, he at once sent the people away, the bearers of the tribute." (Judges 3:18) Ehud presented the tribute, accompanied the bearers of the tribute to a safe distance from Eglon's residence, and returned after dismissing them. Why? Did he have those men with him for protection, because of mere protocol, or perhaps simply as porters for the tribute? And did he want them out of the way for safety before carrying out his plan? Whatever his thinking was, Ehud bravely retraced his steps alone.

"[Ehud] turned back at the quarries that were at Gilgal, and he proceeded to say: 'I have a secret word for you, O king.'" How he managed to regain entry to Eglon's presence

is not explained in the Scriptures. Should not the guards have been suspicious? Did they think that a single Israelite presented no threat to their lord? Did Ehud's coming alone create the impression that he was betraying his countrymen? Whatever the case, Ehud sought a private audience with the king, and he got it.—Judges 3:19.

The inspired account continues: "Ehud came to [Eglon] as he was sitting in his cool roof chamber that he had to himself. And Ehud went on to say: 'A word of God I have for you.'" Ehud was not referring to a verbal message from God. What Ehud had in mind was using his sword. Perhaps expecting to hear some message from his god Chemosh, the king "rose up from his throne." Quick as a flash, Ehud drew his weapon and plunged it into Eglon's belly. The sword apparently had no crosspiece. Hence, "the handle kept going in also after the blade so that the fat closed in over the blade, . . . and the fecal matter began to come out," either through the wound or because of an involuntary discharge from Eglon's bowels.—Judges 3:20-22.

A Smooth Escape

Without taking time to retrieve his sword, "Ehud proceeded to go out through the air hole, but he closed the doors of the roof chamber behind him and locked them. And he himself went out. And [Eglon's] servants came and began looking, and there the doors of the roof chamber were locked. So they said: 'He is just easing nature in the cool interior room.'"—Judges 3:23, 24.

What was "the air hole" through which Ehud left? "The precise meaning [of the Hebrew word] is unknown," says one reference work, but "'colonnade,' 'vestibule,' have been suggested." Did Ehud lock the doors on the inside and then leave

by some other route? Or did he lock the doors on the outside with a key taken from the dead king? Did he then casually walk out past the guards as if nothing had happened? The Scriptures do not say. Whatever method Ehud used, however, Eglon's servants did not immediately suspect anything upon finding the doors locked. They simply thought that the king was "just easing nature."

While the king's servants were lingering, Ehud escaped. Then he summoned his countrymen and said: "Follow me, because Jehovah has given your enemies, the Moabites, into your hand." By seizing the strategic fords of the Jordan, Ehud's men cut off the flight of the leaderless Moabites to their homeland. Thus, "at that time [the Israelites] went striking down Moab, about ten thousand men, every one robust and every one a valiant man; and not a single one escaped. And Moab came to be subdued on that day under Israel's hand; and the land

had no further disturbance for eighty years."
—Judges 3:25-30.

Lessons We Can Learn

What happened in the days of Ehud teaches us that there are dire consequences when we do what is bad in Jehovah's eyes. On the other hand, Jehovah helps those who repentantly turn to him.

Ehud's plans succeeded, not because of any cleverness on his part, nor because of any incompetence on the part of the enemy. The outworking of divine purposes does not depend on human factors. The primary reason for Ehud's success was that he had God's backing as he acted in harmony with His invincible will to liberate His people. God had raised up Ehud, "and when Jehovah did raise up judges for [his people], Jehovah proved to be with the judge."—Judges 2:18; 3:15.



A DAY TO REMEMBER

THE evening before he died, Jesus Christ passed a loaf of unleavened bread and a cup of red wine to his apostles and instructed them to eat and to drink. He also told them: "Keep doing this in remembrance of me."—Luke 22:19.

This year the anniversary of this event falls on Sunday, April 4,

after sundown. Jehovah's Witnesses around the world will be gathered on this night to observe this Memorial occasion in the manner Jesus commanded. You are most warmly invited to join them. Please check with Jehovah's Witnesses locally for the exact time and place of this special meeting.

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