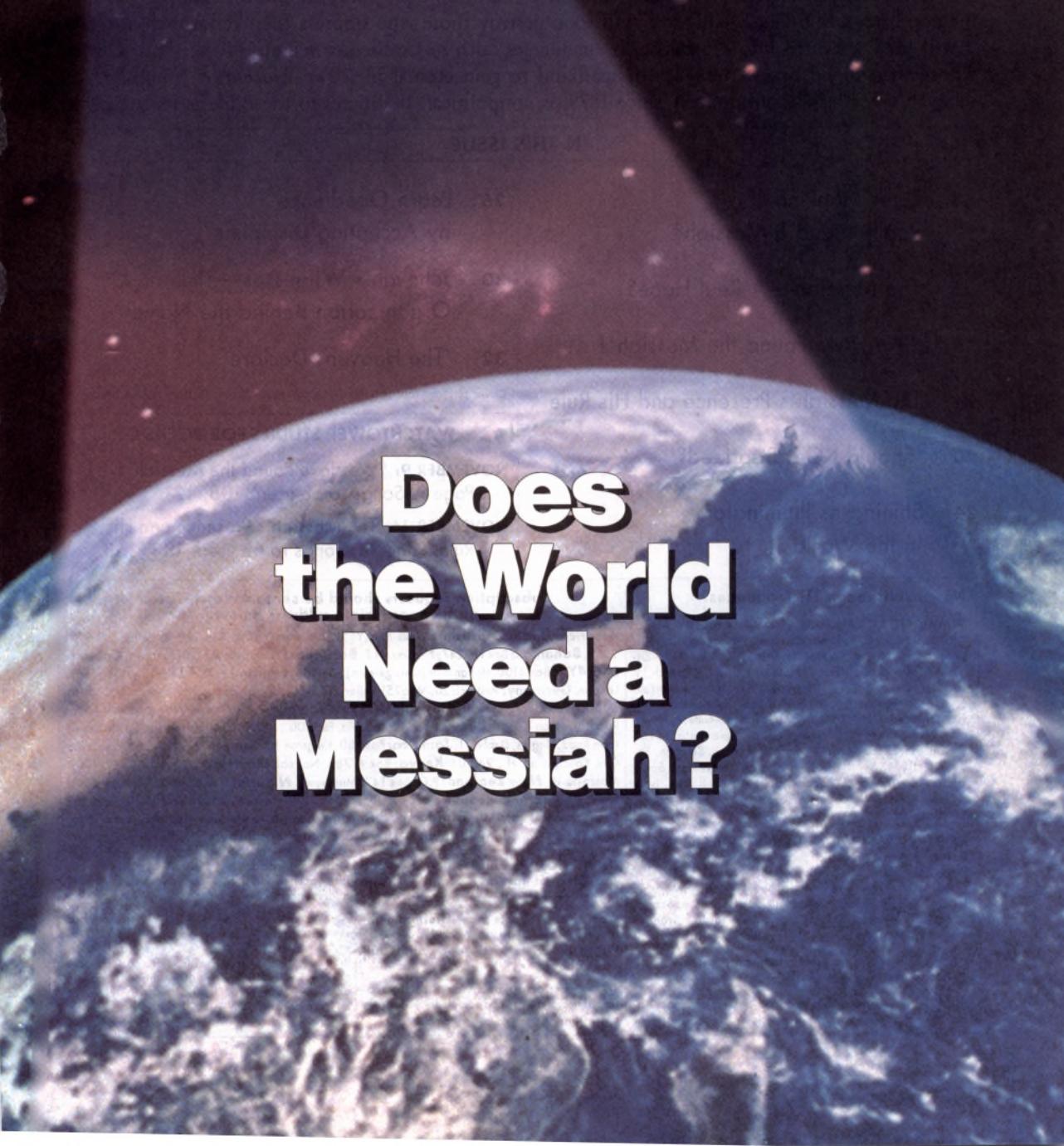


OCTOBER 1, 1992

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



Does
the World
Need a
Messiah?

THE WATCHTOWER[®]

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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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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Does Mankind Really Need a Messiah?

"WORLD IN NEED OF A MESSIAH, SAYS OFFICIAL"

That headline ran in *The Financial Post* of Toronto, Canada, in 1980. The official quoted was Aurelio Peccei, president and founder of a well-known think tank called Club of Rome. According to the *Post*, Peccei held that "a charismatic leader—scientific, political, or religious—would be the world's only salvation from the social and economic upheavals that threaten to destroy civilization." What do you think? Is this world really in such dire straits that mankind needs a Messiah? Consider just one of the problems this world faces—hunger.

TWO big, brown eyes stare at you from a picture in a newspaper or magazine. They are the eyes of a child, a little girl not even five years old. But these eyes do not make you smile. There is no childish luster to them, no happy sense of wonder, no innocent trust. They are filled instead with bewildered pain, dull aching, hopeless hunger. The child is starving. Pain and hunger are all she has ever known.

Perhaps, like many, you do not like to dwell on such pictures, so you quickly turn the page. It is not that you do not care, but you feel frustrated because you suspect that it is too late for this girl. The wasted limbs and bloated belly are signs that her body has already begun to devour itself. By the time you see her picture, she is probably already dead. Worse, you know that hers is far from an isolated case.

Just how extensive is the problem? Well, can you picture 14 million children? Most of



WHO photo by P. Almasy

us cannot; the number is simply too high to visualize. Imagine, then, a stadium that seats 40,000 people. Now imagine it filled to capacity with children—row upon row, tier upon tier, an ocean of faces. Even that is hard to picture. Yet, it would take 350 such stadiums filled with children to add up to 14 million. According to UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), that is

the appalling number of children under five who die of malnutrition and easily preventable diseases *each year* in developing lands. That amounts to nearly one stadium of children dying each day! Add to this the number of hungry adults, and you get a worldwide total of some one billion people who are chronically malnourished.

Why All the Hunger?

This planet currently produces more food than humans now consume, and it has the capacity to produce more. Yet, every minute, 26 children die from malnutrition and

disease. During that same minute, the world spends about \$2,000,000 on preparation for war. Can you imagine what all that money—or just a fraction of it—could do for those 26 children?

Clearly, world hunger cannot simply be blamed on a lack of food or money. The problem goes much deeper. As Jorge E. Hardoy, an Argentine professor, put it, "the world as a whole has a chronic incapacity to share comfort, power, time, resources and knowledge with those who need these things more." Yes, the problem lies, not with man's resources, but with man himself. Greed and selfishness seem to be dominating forces in human society. The wealthiest one fifth of the earth's population enjoys some 60 times more goods and services than does the poorest one fifth.

True, some are sincerely trying to get food to the hungry, but most of their efforts are hamstrung by factors beyond their control. Famine often afflicts countries that are torn by civil war or rebellion, and it is not uncommon for opposing forces to prevent relief supplies from reaching the needy. Both sides fear that by allowing food to reach the starv-

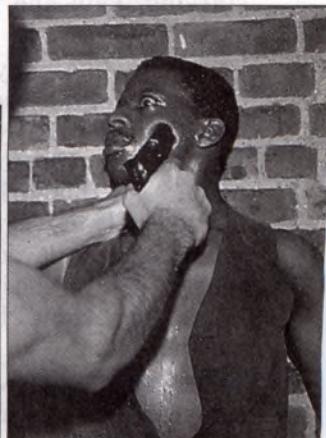
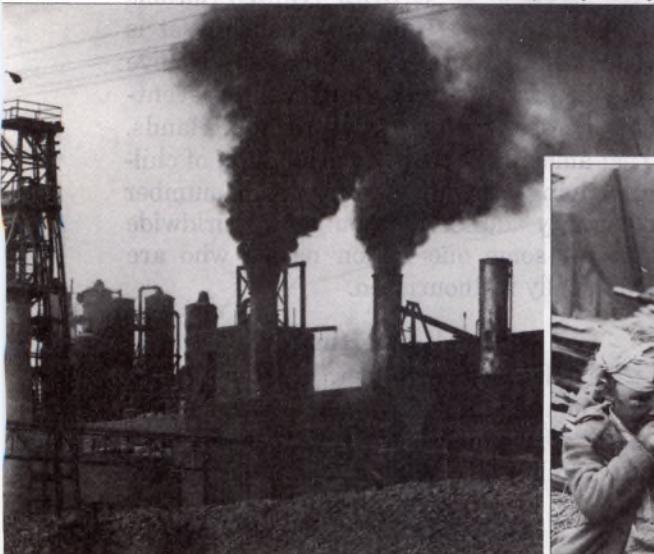
ing civilians in enemy territory, they will be feeding their enemies. Governments themselves are not above using starvation as a political weapon.

No Solution?

Unfortunately, the problem of starving millions is hardly the only crisis afflicting modern man. The rampant destruction and poisoning of the environment, the persistent plague of war that swallows millions of lives, the violent crime epidemics that breed fear and distrust everywhere, and the ever-degenerating moral climate that seems to lie at the root of many of these ills—all these global crises join hands, as it were, and affirm the same hard truth—man cannot govern himself successfully.

No doubt that is why many people have despaired of seeing a solution to the world's problems. Others feel as did Aurelio Peccei, the Italian scholar mentioned at the outset. If there is to be a solution, they reason, it must come from an extraordinary—perhaps even superhuman—source. Thus the concept of a messiah has a powerful appeal. But is it realistic to hope in a messiah? Or is such a hope only wishful thinking?

WHO photo by P. Almasy



◀ U.S. Navy photo

THE MESSIAH A Real Hope?

He called himself Moses. His real name, though, is lost to history. In the fifth century C.E., he traveled throughout the island of Crete, convincing the Jews there that he was the messiah they awaited. He told them that soon their oppression, their exile and captivity would be over. They believed. When their day of liberation came, the Jews followed "Moses" to a promontory overlooking the Mediterranean Sea. He told them that they had only to cast themselves into the sea and it would part before them. Many obeyed, plunging into a sea that was not inclined to part. A great many drowned; some were rescued by sailors and fishermen. Moses, however, was nowhere to be found. That messiah was gone.

WHAT is a messiah? The words "savior," "redeemer," and "leader" may come to mind. Many people think that a messiah is a figure who inspires hope and devotion in his followers, promising to lead them from oppression to freedom. Since human history is largely a history of oppression, it is not surprising that more than a few such messiahs have emerged over the centuries. (Compare Ecclesiastes 8:9.) But like the self-styled Moses of Crete, these messiahs have more often led their followers to disappointment and disaster than to liberation.

"This is the King Messiah!" That is how the esteemed rabbi Akiba ben Joseph greeted Simeon Bar Kokhba in the year 132 C.E. Bar Kokhba was a mighty man who commanded a powerful army. Here at last, thought many Jews, was the man to end their long oppression at the hands of the Roman World Power. Bar Kokhba failed; hundreds of thousands of his countrymen paid for that failure with their lives.

In the 12th century, another Jewish messiah emerged, this time in Yemen. When the caliph, or ruler, asked him for a sign of his messiahship, this messiah proposed that the caliph have him beheaded and let his swift

resurrection serve as the sign. The caliph agreed to the plan—and that was the end of the Yemen messiah. In that same century, a man named David Alroy told the Jews in the Middle East to prepare to follow him on the wings of angels back to the Holy Land. Many believed that he was the messiah. The Jews of Baghdad waited patiently on their rooftops, blissfully ignoring the thieves who plundered their belongings.

Sabbatai Zevi arose in the 17th century out of Smyrna. He proclaimed his messiahship to Jews throughout Europe. Christians, too, listened to him. Zevi offered his followers liberation—apparently by letting them practice sin without restraint. His closest followers carried out orgies, nudism, fornication, and incest, then punished themselves with whippings, by rolling about naked in the snow, and by burying themselves neck-deep in the cold earth. When he traveled to Turkey, Zevi was seized and told that he must either convert to Islam or die. He converted. Many of his devotees were shattered. Yet, for the next two centuries, Zevi was still called messiah in some quarters.

Christendom has produced her share of messiahs as well. In the 12th century, a man

named Tanchelm built up an army of adherents and dominated the town of Antwerp. This messiah called himself a god; he even sold his own bathwater for his followers to drink as a sacrament! Another "Christian" messiah was Thomas Müntzer of 16th-century Germany. He led an uprising against the local civil authorities, telling his followers that this was the battle of Armageddon. He promised that he would catch the enemies' cannonballs in his sleeves. Instead, his people were massacred, and Müntzer was beheaded. Many other such messiahs emerged in Christendom over the centuries.

Other religions, too, have their messianic figures. Islam points to the Mahdi, or rightly guided one, who will usher in an age of justice. In Hinduism, some have claimed to be avatars, or incarnations, of various gods. And, as *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica* notes, "even as unmessianic a religion as Buddhism has produced the belief, among Mahāyāna groups, in the future Buddha Maitreya who would descend from his heavenly abode and bring the faithful to paradise."

20th-Century Messiahs

In our own century, the need for a genuine messiah has become more urgent than ever; not surprisingly, then, many have claimed the title. In the African Congo of the 1920's, '30's, and '40's, Simon Kimbangu and his successor Andre "Jesus" Matswa were hailed as messiahs. They died, but their followers still expect them to return and usher in an African millennium.

This century has also seen the rise of "cargo cults" in New Guinea and Melanesia. Members expect a ship or an airplane to arrive, manned by messiahlike white men who will make them rich and usher in an age of happiness when even the dead will rise.

The industrialized nations have had their messiahs too. Some are religious leaders, such as Sun Myung Moon, a self-proclaimed successor to Jesus Christ who aims to purify the world by means of a united family of his devotees. Political leaders have also tried to assume messianic status, Adolf Hitler being the century's most horrendous example with his grandiose talk of a Thousand Year Reich.

Political philosophies and organizations have likewise achieved messianic status. For example, *The Encyclopedia Americana* notes that Marxist-Leninist political theory has messianic overtones. And the United Nations organization, widely hailed as the only hope for world peace, seems to have become a sort of messiah substitute in the minds of many.

A Messiah in Brooklyn?

Posters, billboards, and neon signs in Israel have recently proclaimed "Prepare for the coming of the Messiah." This \$400,000 publicity campaign has been mounted by the Lubavitchers, an ultraorthodox sect of Hassidic Jews. There is widespread belief among the 250,000-member group that their grand rabbi, Menachem Mendel Schneerson of Brooklyn, New York, is the Messiah. Why? Schneerson does teach that the Messiah will come in this generation. And according to *Newsweek* magazine, Lubavitcher officials insist that the 90-year-old rabbi will not die before the Messiah arrives. For centuries the sect has taught that each generation produces at least one man who qualifies to be Messiah. Schneerson seems such a man to his followers, and he has appointed no successor. Still, most Jews do not accept him as the Messiah, *Newsweek* says. According to the newspaper *Newsday*, 96-year-old rival rabbi Eliezer Schach has called him a "false messiah."

The belief that Moses of Crete was the messiah cost many people their lives

A Real Hope?

This brief overview makes it only too plain that the history of messianic movements is largely a history of delusion, of shattered hopes and misplaced dreams. It is hardly surprising, then, that many people today have become cynical about the hope for a messiah.

Before dismissing the messianic hope outright, though, we should first learn where it comes from. In fact, "messiah" is a Bible word. The Hebrew word is *ma-shi'ach*, or "anointed one." In Bible times, kings and priests were sometimes appointed to their positions by an anointing ceremony, wherein a fragrant oil was poured upon the head. Hence the term *ma-shi'ach* was rightly applied to them. There were also men who were anointed, or appointed to a special position, without any anointing ceremony. Moses is called "Christ," or "anointed one," at Hebrews 11:24-26, because he was chosen as God's prophet and representative.

This definition of messiah as an "anointed one" sets Biblical messiahs well apart from the false messiahs we have discussed. Bible messiahs were not self-appointed; nor were they chosen by a mass of adoring followers. No, their appointment originated from above, from Jehovah God himself.

While the Bible speaks of many messiahs, it does raise one far above the rest. (Psalm



45:7) This Messiah is the central figure in Bible prophecy, the key to the fulfillment of the Bible's most inspiring promises. And this Messiah really does grapple with the problems we face today.

The Savior of Mankind

The Bible Messiah addresses mankind's problems by going to their roots. When our first parents, Adam and Eve, rebelled against the Creator at the instigation of the

rebel spirit creature Satan, they were in effect arrogating to themselves the ultimate right of government. They wanted to be the ones to decide what was right and what was wrong. They thereby stepped out from under Jehovah's loving, protective government and plunged the human family into the chaos and misery of self-rule, imperfection, and death.—Romans 5:12.

How loving, then, that Jehovah God chose that dark moment in human history to provide all mankind with a glimmer of hope. In pronouncing sentence on the human rebels, God foretold that their offspring would have a rescuer. Referred to as the "seed," this Savior would come to undo the terrible work that Satan had done there in Eden; the Seed would bruise that "serpent," Satan, in the head, crushing him out of existence.—Genesis 3:14, 15.

From ancient times, the Jews saw this prophecy as Messianic. Several Targums, Jewish paraphrases of the Sacred Scriptures commonly used in the first century, explained that this prophecy would be fulfilled "in the day of King Messiah."

Little wonder, then, that from the very beginning, men of faith were thrilled with this promise of a coming Seed, or Savior. Just imagine Abraham's feelings when Jehovah told him that the Seed was to come through his own lineage, and that "all nations of the earth"—not just his own descendants—would "bless themselves" by means of that Seed.—Genesis 22:17, 18.

The Messiah and Government

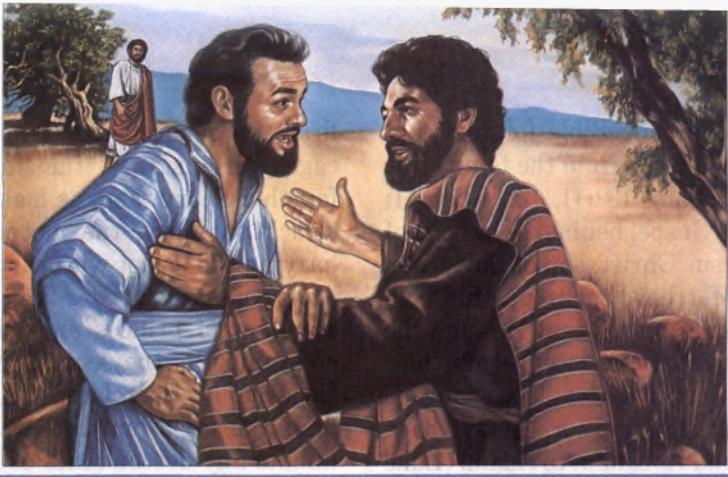
Later prophecies linked this hope with the prospect of good government. At Genesis 49:10, Abraham's great-grandson Judah was told: "The scepter will not turn aside from Judah, neither the commander's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to him the obedience of the peoples will be-

long." Clearly, this "Shiloh" was to govern—and he would govern not only the Jews but "peoples." (Compare Daniel 7:13, 14.) Shiloh was identified with the Messiah by ancient Jews; in fact, some of the Jewish Targums simply replaced the word "Shiloh" with "Messiah" or "the king Messiah."

As the light of inspired prophecy continued to brighten, more was revealed about the rule of this Messiah. (Proverbs 4:18) At 2 Samuel 7:12-16, King David, a descendant of Judah, was told that the Seed would come from his line. Furthermore, this Seed was to be an unusual King. His throne, or rulership, would last forever! Isaiah 9:6, 7 supports this point: "There has been a child born to us, there has been a son given to us; and the princely rule [“government,” *King James Version*] will come to be upon his shoulder. . . . To the abundance of the princely rule and to peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom in order to establish it firmly and to sustain it by means of justice and by means of righteousness, from now on and to time indefinite. The very zeal of Jehovah of armies will do this."

Can you imagine such a government? A just, righteous ruler who establishes peace and who rules forever. What a far cry from history's pathetic parade of false messiahs! Far from being a deluded, self-appointed leader, the Bible Messiah is a world ruler with all the power and authority necessary to change world conditions.

This prospect is deeply meaningful in our troubled times. Mankind has never been in more desperate need of such a hope. Since it is all too easy to latch onto false hopes, though, it is vital that each one of us make a careful study of this question: Was Jesus of Nazareth the foretold Messiah as so many believe? The following article will consider the matter.



"WE HAVE FOUND THE MESSIAH"!

"First [Andrew] found his own brother, Simon, and said to him: 'We have found the Messiah' (which means, when translated, Christ)."—JOHN 1:41.

ANDREW took a long, hard look at the Jewish man called Jesus of Nazareth. He did not have the appearance of a king, or a wise man, or a rabbi. He had no royal finery, nor gray hairs, nor soft hands and fair skin. Jesus was young—about 30 years old—with the callused hands and bronzed skin of a manual worker. So Andrew might not have been surprised to learn that he was a carpenter. Nevertheless, John the Baptizer said of this man: "See, the Lamb of God!" The day before, John had said something even more astounding: "This one is the Son of God." Could this be true? Andrew spent some time listening to Jesus that day. We do not know what Jesus said; we do know that his words changed Andrew's life. He hurried to find his brother, Simon, and exclaimed, "We have found the Messiah!"—John 1:34-41.

1. What did John the Baptizer testify about Jesus of Nazareth, and what did Andrew conclude about him?

² Andrew and Simon (whom Jesus renamed Peter) later became apostles of Jesus. After more than two years as his disciple, Peter said to Jesus: "You are the Christ [Messiah], the Son of the living God." (Matthew 16:16) The faithful apostles and disciples ultimately proved willing to stake their lives on that belief. Today, millions of sincere people are equally devoted. But on what evidence? Evidence, after all, makes the difference between faith and mere credulity. (See Hebrews 11:1.) So let us consider three general lines of evidence that prove that Jesus was indeed the Messiah.

Jesus' Lineage

³ Jesus' lineage is the first evidence the Christian Greek Scriptures give in support

2. Why is it important to consider the evidence as to whether Jesus was the promised Messiah?
3. What do the Gospels of Matthew and Luke detail about Jesus' lineage?

of his Messiahship. The Bible foretold that the Messiah would come from the family line of King David. (Psalm 132:11, 12; Isaiah 11:1, 10) Matthew's Gospel begins: "The book of the history of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham." Matthew backs up this bold claim by tracing Jesus' descent through the line of his adoptive father, Joseph. (Matthew 1:1-16) Luke's Gospel traces Jesus' lineage through his natural mother, Mary, back through David and Abraham to Adam. (Luke 3:23-38)* Thus the Gospel writers thoroughly document their claim that Jesus was an heir of David, both in a legal and in a natural sense.

⁴ Even the most skeptical opponent of Jesus' Messiahship cannot deny Jesus' claim to be a son of David. Why? There are two reasons. One, that claim was widely repeated in Jerusalem for decades before the city was destroyed in 70 C.E. (Compare Matthew 21:9; Acts 4:27; 5:27, 28.) If the claim was false, any of Jesus' opponents—and he had many—could have proved Jesus a fraud simply by checking his lineage in the genealogies in the public archives.[#] But history has no record of anyone challenging Jesus' descent from King David. Evidently, the claim was unassailable. No doubt Matthew and Luke copied the salient names for their accounts directly from the public records.

⁵ Second, sources outside the Bible con-

* When Luke 3:23 says: "Joseph, son of Heli," it evidently means "son" in the sense of "son-in-law," as Heli was Mary's natural father.—*Insight on the Scriptures*, Volume 1, pages 913-17.

[#] Jewish historian Josephus, in presenting his own lineage, makes it clear that such records were available before 70 C.E. These records were apparently destroyed with the city of Jerusalem, making all subsequent claims to Messiahship unprovable.

4, 5. (a) Did Jesus' contemporaries challenge his descent from David, and why is this significant? (b) How do non-Biblical references support Jesus' lineage?

firm the general acceptance of Jesus' lineage. For instance, the Talmud records a fourth-century rabbi as making a scurrilous attack on Mary, the mother of Jesus, for 'playing the harlot with carpenters'; but the same passage concedes that "she was the descendant of princes and rulers." An earlier example is the second-century historian Hegesippus. He related that when the Roman Caesar Domitian wanted to exterminate any descendants of David, some enemies of the early Christians denounced the grandsons of Jude, Jesus' half brother, "as being of the family of David." If Jude was a known descendant of David, was not Jesus as well? Undeniably!—Galatians 1:19; Jude 1.

Messianic Prophecies

⁶ Another line of evidence that Jesus was the Messiah is fulfilled prophecy. Prophecies that apply to the Messiah are abundant in the Hebrew Scriptures. In his work *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Alfred Edersheim tallied up 456 passages in the Hebrew Scriptures that ancient rabbis viewed as messianic. However, the rabbis had many wrong ideas about the Messiah; many of the passages they pointed to are not messianic at all. Still, at the very least there are scores of prophecies that identify Jesus as the Messiah.—Compare Revelation 19:10.

⁷ Among them: the town of his birth (Micah 5:2; Luke 2:4-11); the tragedy of mass infanticide that took place after his birth (Jeremiah 31:15; Matthew 2:16-18); he would be called out of Egypt (Hosea 11:1; Matthew 2:15); rulers of the nations would unite to destroy him (Psalm 2:1, 2; Acts 4:25-28); his betrayal for 30 pieces of silver (Zechariah

6. How abundant are Messianic prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures?
7. What are some of the prophecies that Jesus fulfilled during his sojourn on earth?

11:12; Matthew 26:15); even the manner of his death.—Psalm 22:16, footnote; John 19:18, 23; 20:25, 27.*

His Arrival Prophesied

⁸ Let us focus on just one prophecy. At Daniel 9:25, the Jews were told when the Messiah would come. It reads: “You should know and have the insight that from the going forth of the word to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Leader, there will be seven weeks, also sixty-two weeks.” At first glance this prophecy may seem cryptic. But in a broad sense, it asks us to find only two pieces of information: a starting point and a span of time. To illustrate, if you had a map that pointed to a treasure lying buried “50 rods east of the well in the town park,” you might find the directions puzzling—especially if you did not know where this well was, or how long a ‘rod’ was. Would you not seek out those two facts so that you could locate the treasure? Well, Daniel’s prophecy is much the same, except that we are identifying a starting time and measuring the period that follows.

⁹ First, we need our starting point, the date when ‘the word went forth to restore and rebuild Jerusalem.’ Next, we need to know the distance from that point, just how long these 69 (7 plus 62) weeks were. Neither piece of information is hard to come by. Nehemiah quite explicitly tells us that the word went forth to rebuild the wall around Jerusalem, making it at last a restored city, “in

* See *Insight on the Scriptures*, Volume 2, page 387.

8. (a) What prophecy pinpoints when the Messiah would arrive? (b) What two factors must be known in order to understand this prophecy?
- 9, 10. (a) What is the starting point from which the 69 weeks are measured? (b) How long were the 69 weeks, and how do we know this?

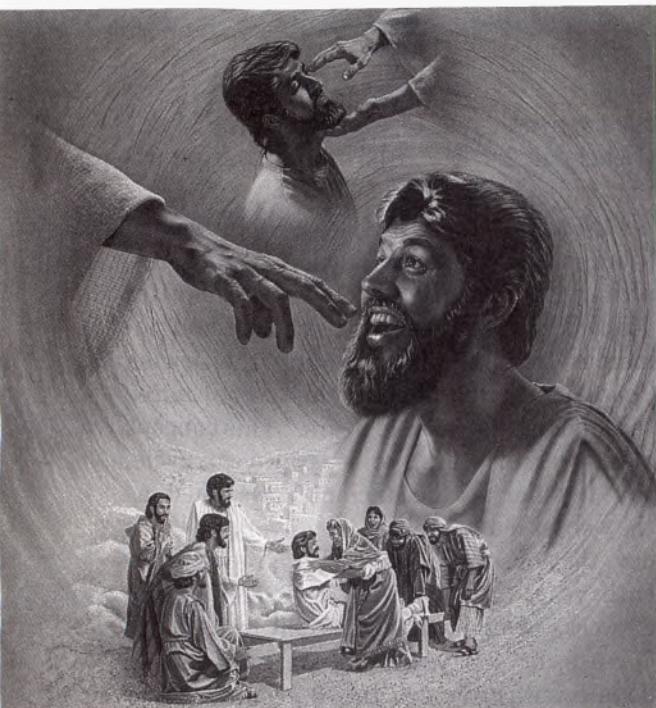
the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king.” (Nehemiah 2:1, 5, 7, 8) That puts our starting point at 455 B.C.E.*

¹⁰ Now as to these 69 weeks, could they be literal weeks of seven days? No, for Messiah did not appear just over a year after 455 B.C.E. Thus most Bible scholars and numerous translations (including the Jewish *Tanakh* in a footnote to this verse) agree that these are weeks “of years.” This concept of a ‘week of years,’ or a seven-year cycle, was familiar to the ancient Jews. Just as they observed a sabbath day every seventh day, they observed a sabbath year every seventh year. (Exodus 20:8-11; 23:10, 11) So 69 weeks of years would amount to 69 times 7 years, or 483 years. All we have left to do is count. From 455 B.C.E., counting 483 years takes us to the year 29 C.E.—the very year when Jesus was baptized and became *ma-shi'ach*, the Messiah!—See “Seventy Weeks,” *Insight on the Scriptures*, Volume 2, page 899.

¹¹ Some might object that this is merely a modern way of interpreting the prophecy to fit history. If so, why were the people in Jesus’ day *expecting* the Messiah to appear at that time? Christian historian Luke, Roman historians Tacitus and Suetonius, Jewish historian Josephus, and Jewish philosopher Philo all lived near this time and testified to this state of expectation. (Luke 3:15) Some scholars today insist that it was Roman oppression that made the Jews long for and expect the Messiah in those days. Why, though, did the Jews expect the Messiah then

* There is solid evidence from ancient Greek, Babylonian, and Persian sources indicating that Artaxerxes’ first regnal year was 474 B.C.E. See *Insight on the Scriptures*, Volume 2, pages 614-16, 900.

11. How might we answer those who say that this is only a modern way of interpreting Daniel’s prophecy?



Each of Jesus' many miracles furnished further proof of his Messiahship

occasions, Jehovah spoke directly to Jesus from heaven, thereby indicating His approval: once, before three of Jesus' apostles, and another time, before a crowd of onlookers. (Matthew 17:1-5; John 12:28, 29) Furthermore, angels were sent from above to confirm Jesus' status as Christ, or Messiah. —Luke 2:10, 11.

¹³ Jehovah showed his approval of his anointed one by empowering him to accomplish great works. For example, Jesus uttered prophecies that detailed history in advance—some extending to our own day.* He also performed miracles, such as feeding hungry crowds and healing the sick. He even resurrected the dead. Did his followers simply invent stories of these mighty acts after the fact? Well, Jesus performed many of his miracles in front of eyewitnesses, sometimes thousands of people at a time. Even Jesus' enemies could not deny that he actually did these things. (Mark 6:2; John 11:47) Besides, if Jesus' followers were inclined to invent such accounts, then why would they be so frank when it came to their own failings? Really, would they have been willing to die for a faith based on mere myths that they had personally invented? No. Jesus' miracles are facts of history.

¹⁴ God's testimony about Jesus as the Messiah went further. Through holy spirit he saw to it that evidence of Jesus' Messiahship was written down and became part of the most widely translated and distributed book in all history.

* In one such prophecy, he predicted that false messiahs would arise from his day onward. (Matthew 24:23-26) See the preceding article.

12. How did Jehovah identify Jesus as the Messiah?
13, 14. How did Jehovah demonstrate his approval of Jesus as Messiah?

rather than during the brutal Greek persecution centuries earlier? Why did Tacitus say that it was "mysterious prophecies" that led the Jews to expect powerful rulers to come from Judea and "acquire universal empire"? Abba Hillel Silver, in his book *A History of Messianic Speculation in Israel*, acknowledges that "the Messiah was expected around the second quarter of the first century C.E." not because of Roman persecution, but because of "*the popular chronology of that day*," derived in part from the book of Daniel.

Identified From Above

¹² The third type of evidence of Jesus' Messiahship is the testimony of God himself. According to Luke 3:21, 22, after Jesus was baptized, he was anointed with the most sacred and powerful force in the universe, Jehovah God's own holy spirit. And with his own voice, Jehovah acknowledged that he had approved his Son, Jesus. On two other

12. How did Jehovah identify Jesus as the Messiah?
13, 14. How did Jehovah demonstrate his approval of Jesus as Messiah?

Why Did the Jews Not Accept Jesus?

¹⁵ In all, then, these three categories of evidence include literally hundreds of facts that identify Jesus as the Messiah. Is that not enough? Just imagine applying for a driver's license or a credit card and being told that three pieces of identification were not sufficient—you must bring hundreds. How unreasonable! Surely, then, Jesus is amply identified in the Bible. Why, though, did many of Jesus' own people deny all this evidence that he was the Messiah? Because evidence, important as it is to genuine faith, does not guarantee faith. Sadly, many people believe what they want to believe, even in the face of overwhelming evidence. When it came to the Messiah, most Jews had very definite ideas about what they wanted. They wanted a political messiah, one who would end Roman oppression and restore Israel to a glory resembling in a materialistic way that of the days of Solomon. How, then, could they accept this humble son of a carpenter, this Nazarene who showed no interest in politics or riches? How, especially, could he be Messiah after he suffered and died ignominiously on a torture stake?

¹⁶ Jesus' own disciples were shaken by his death. After his glorious resurrection, they evidently hoped that he would 'restore the kingdom to Israel' right away. (Acts 1:6) But they did not reject Jesus as Messiah simply because this personal hope was not realized. They exercised faith in him based on the ample evidence at hand, and their understanding gradually grew; mysteries cleared up. They came to see that the Messiah could not

15. (a) How extensive are Jesus' credentials identifying him as Messiah? (b) What expectations of the Jews led many of them to reject Jesus as the Messiah?

16. Why did Jesus' followers have to adjust their own expectations as to the Messiah?

fulfill all the prophecies about him during his brief time as a man on this earth. Why, one prophecy spoke of his arriving humbly, riding upon the colt of an ass, while another spoke of his coming in glory upon the clouds! How could both be true? Obviously he would have to come a second time.—Daniel 7:13; Zechariah 9:9.

Why the Messiah Had to Die

¹⁷ Furthermore, the Messianic prophecies made it clear that the Messiah had to die. For instance, the very prophecy that foretold when the Messiah would arrive foretold in the next verse: "After the sixty-two weeks [which followed the seven weeks] Messiah will be cut off." (Daniel 9:26) The Hebrew word *ka-rath'* used here for "cut off" is the same word used for the death sentence under the Mosaic Law. Without a doubt the Messiah had to die. Why? Verse 24 gives us the answer: "To finish off sin, and to make atonement for error, and to bring in righteousness for times indefinite." The Jews knew well that only a sacrifice, a

17. How did Daniel's prophecy make it clear that the Messiah would have to die, and for what reason would he die?

How Would You Answer?

- Why examine evidence as to whether Jesus is the promised Messiah?
- How does Jesus' lineage support his Messiahship?
- How do Bible prophecies help to prove that Jesus was the Messiah?
- In what ways did Jehovah personally confirm Jesus' identity as the Messiah?
- Why did so many Jews reject Jesus as the Messiah, and why were these reasons unsound?

death, could make atonement for error.—Leviticus 17:11; compare Hebrews 9:22.

¹⁸ Isaiah chapter 53 speaks of the Messiah as a special Servant of Jehovah who would have to suffer and die to cover the sins of others. Verse 5 says: “He was being pierced for our transgression; he was being crushed for our errors.” The same prophecy, after telling us that this Messiah must die as “a guilt offering,” reveals that this same One “will prolong his days, and in his hand what is the delight of Jehovah will succeed.” (Verse 10) Is that not a paradox? How could the Messiah die, and then “prolong his days”? How could he be offered up as a sacrifice and afterward make ‘what is the delight of Jehovah succeed’? How, indeed, could he die and remain dead without fulfilling the most important prophecies about him, namely that he would reign forever as

18. (a) How does Isaiah chapter 53 show that the Messiah must suffer and die? (b) What seeming paradox does this prophecy raise?

King and bring peace and happiness to the entire world?—Isaiah 9:6, 7.

¹⁹ This seeming paradox was solved by a single, spectacular miracle. Jesus was resurrected. Hundreds of honesthearted Jews became eyewitnesses to this glorious reality. (1 Corinthians 15:6) The apostle Paul later wrote: “This man [Jesus Christ] offered one sacrifice for sins perpetually and sat down at the right hand of God, from then on awaiting until his enemies should be placed as a stool for his feet.” (Hebrews 10:10, 12, 13) Yes, it was after Jesus was resurrected to heavenly life, and after a period of “awaiting,” that he would finally be enthroned as King and act against the enemies of his Father, Jehovah. In his role as heavenly King, Jesus the Messiah touches the life of every person now living. In what way? Our next article will consider this.

19. How does the resurrection of Jesus reconcile the seemingly contradictory prophecies about the Messiah?

THE MESSIAH'S PRESENCE AND HIS RULE

“This Jesus who was received up from you into the sky will come thus in the same manner as you have beheld him going into the sky.”—ACTS 1:11.

ELEVEN men stood on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, staring up into the sky. Just moments ago Jesus Christ had risen up from among them, his form fading away until it was obscured

1, 2. (a) How did two angels comfort Jesus' apostles when he ascended to heaven? (b) What questions are raised by the prospect of Christ's return?

by a cloud. In their years with him, these men had seen Jesus give abundant proof that he was the Messiah; they had even lived through the heartbreak of his death and the ecstasy of his resurrection. Now he was gone.

² Two angels appeared suddenly and spoke these comforting words: “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This



The hope that Jesus would return meant much to his faithful apostles

is a widely held belief that Christ's return will be openly visible, literally seen by everyone on the planet. To support this notion, many point to Revelation 1:7, which reads: "Look! He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, and those who pierced him." But is this verse meant to be taken literally?

⁴ Remember, the book of Revelation is presented "in signs." (Revelation 1:1) This passage, then, must be symbolic; after all, how could "those who pierced him" see Christ return? They have been dead nearly 20 centuries! Furthermore, the angels said that Christ would return "in the same manner" as he departed. Well, how did he leave? With millions watching? No, just a few faithful ones beheld the event. And when the angels spoke to them, were the apostles literally watching Christ's journey all the way to heaven? No, a cloud cover had obscured Jesus from view. Sometime thereafter, he must have entered the spirit heavens as a spirit being, invisible to human eyes. (1 Corinthians 15:50) So, at most, the apostles saw only the beginning of Jesus' journey; they could not watch its ending, his return to the heavenly presence of his Father, Jehovah. This they could only discern with their eyes of faith.—John 20:17.

⁵ The Bible teaches that Jesus returns in much the same way. Jesus himself said shortly before his death: "A little longer and the world will behold me no more." (John 14:19) He also said that "the kingdom of God is not coming with striking observability." (Luke 17:20) In what sense, then, will 'every eye see him'? To answer, we first need a clear

4, 5. (a) How do we know that Revelation 1:7 is not meant in a literal sense? (b) How do Jesus' own words confirm this understanding?

Jesus who was received up from you into the sky will come thus in the same manner as you have beheld him going into the sky." (Acts 1:11) How reassuring—Jesus' ascension to heaven did not mean that he was finished with the earth and mankind! On the contrary, Jesus would be back. No doubt these words filled the apostles with hope. Millions of people today also attach great importance to the promise of Christ's return. Some speak of it as the "Second Coming" or "Advent." Most, though, seem confused about what Christ's return really means. In what way does Christ return? When? And how does this affect our lives today?

The Manner of Christ's Return

³ According to the book *An Evangelical Christology*, "the second coming or return of Christ (*parousia*) establishes the kingdom of God, finally, openly, and for all eternity." It

3. What do many people believe about Christ's return?

understanding of the word Jesus and his followers used in connection with his return.

⁶ The fact is, Christ does much more than simply "return." That word, like "coming," "arrival," or "advent," implies a single event in a brief moment of time. But the Greek word that Jesus and his followers used means much more. The word is *pa·rou·si'a*, literally meaning a "being alongside" or a "presence." Most scholars agree that this word incorporates not only an arrival but also a subsequent presence—as in a State visit from a royal personage. This presence is not a momentary event; it is a special era, a marked period of time. At Matthew 24:37-39, Jesus said that "the presence [*pa·rou·si'a*] of the Son of man" would be like "the days of Noah" which culminated in the Flood. Noah was building the ark and warning the wicked for decades before the Flood arrived and wiped out that corrupt world system. Likewise, then, Christ's invisible presence lasts over a period of some decades before it too culminates in a great destruction.

⁷ Undoubtedly, the *pa·rou·si'a* is not literally visible to human eyes. If it were, why would Jesus spend so much time, as we shall see, giving his followers a sign to help them to discern this presence?* However, when Christ comes to destroy Satan's world system, the fact of his presence will be over-

* Back in 1864 theologian R. Govett put it this way: "This seems to me very decisive. The giving a sign of the Presence shows that it is secret. We need no signal to make known to us the presence of what we see."

6. (a) Why are words such as "return," "arrival," "advent," and "coming" not adequate translations of the Greek word *pa·rou·si'a*? (b) What shows that the *pa·rou·si'a*, or "presence," lasts much longer than any mere momentary event?

7. (a) What proves that the *pa·rou·si'a* is not visible to human eyes? (b) How and when will scriptures that describe Christ's return as visible to "every eye" be fulfilled?

whelmingly manifest to all. It is then that "every eye will see him." Even Jesus' opponents will be able to discern, to their dismay, that Christ's reign is real.—See Matthew 24:30; 2 Thessalonians 2:8; Revelation 1:5, 6.

When Does It Begin?

⁸ The Messiah's presence begins with an event that fulfills a recurring theme of the Messianic prophecies. He is crowned as King in heaven. (2 Samuel 7:12-16; Isaiah 9:6, 7; Ezekiel 21:26, 27) Jesus himself showed that his presence would be tied to his kingship. In several illustrations, he likened himself to a master who leaves his household and slaves behind, traveling for a long time to a "distant land" where he receives "kingly power." He gave one such illustration as part of his answer to his apostles' question about when his *pa·rou·si'a* would begin; another he gave because "they were imagining that the kingdom of God was going to display itself instantly." (Luke 19:11, 12, 15; Matthew 24:3; 25:14, 19) So during his time on earth as a man, his coronation was still a long time away, to occur in the "distant land" of heaven. When would it happen?

⁹ When Jesus' disciples asked him: "What will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things?" Jesus responded by giving them a detailed description of that future time. (Matthew, chapter 24; Mark, chapter 13; Luke, chapter 21; see also 2 Timothy 3:1-5; Revelation, chapter 6.) This sign amounts to a detailed portrait of a troubled era. It is a time marked by international wars, rising crime, deteriorating family life, disease epidemics, famines, and earthquakes—not as local-

8. What event marks the beginning of Christ's presence, and where did this happen?

9, 10. What evidence is there that Christ is currently ruling in heaven, and when did he begin his rule?

**Ruling from heaven,
Jesus will perform
miracles on a
global scale**

ized problems but as globe-embracing crises. Does this sound familiar? Every passing day confirms that the 20th century perfectly fits Jesus' description.

¹⁰ Historians agree that 1914 was a turning point in human history, a pivotal year after which many of these problems began to get out of control, escalating on a global scale. Yes, physical world events in fulfillment of Bible prophecy all point to 1914 as the year when Jesus began to rule as King in heaven. Furthermore, a prophecy in Daniel chapter 4 provides chronological evidence that leads us to the very same year—1914—as the time when Jehovah's appointed King would begin his rule.*

Why a Time of Troubles?

¹¹ Some wonder, though, 'Why is the world so troubled if the Messiah is ruling in heaven? Is his rule ineffective?' An illustration may help. A country is run by an evil president. He has set up a corrupt system with tentacles extending into every corner of the land. But an election is held; a good man wins. Now what? As is the case in some democratic lands, a transition period of some months ensues before the new president is

* For details, see the book "Let Your Kingdom Come," pages 133-9.

11, 12. (a) Why is it hard for some to believe that Christ is ruling in heaven right now? (b) How might we illustrate what took place after Jesus was crowned as King?



Earth: Based on NASA photo

inaugurated. How would these two men act during such a period? Will the good man immediately attack and dismantle all the evils his predecessor has wrought throughout the country? Would he not, rather, concentrate on the capital city first, setting up a new cabinet and serving notice on the former president's crooked cronies and henchmen? That way, when he comes into full authority, he can operate from a clean, efficient seat of power. As for the corrupt president, would he not take advantage of the short time he has left to extract from the land all the ill-gotten gains that he can before he loses all power?

¹² In effect, it is similar with Christ's *parousia*. Revelation 12:7-12 shows that when Christ was made King in heaven, he first hurled Satan and the demons out of heaven, thus cleaning up the location of His government. Having suffered this long-awaited defeat, how does Satan behave during the "short period of time" before Christ exerts his full authority here on the earth? Like that corrupt president, he tries to get everything he can out of this old system. He is not

after money; he is after human lives. He wants to alienate as many people from Jehovah and His reigning King as he possibly can.

¹³ No wonder, then, that the beginning of Messiah's rule means a time of "woe for the earth." (Revelation 12:12) Similarly, Psalm 110:1, 2, 6 shows that the Messiah begins his rule 'in the midst of his enemies.' Only later does he completely crush "the nations," along with every facet of Satan's corrupt system, into oblivion!

When Messiah Rules the Earth

¹⁴ After he destroys Satan's system and all who support it, the Messianic King, Jesus Christ, will at long last be in a position to fulfill marvelous Bible prophecies that describe his Millennial Reign. Isaiah 11:1-10 helps us to see just what kind of ruler Messiah will be. Verse 2 tells us that he will have "the spirit of Jehovah . . . , the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of mightiness."

¹⁵ Consider what 'the spirit of mightiness' will mean in Jesus' rule. When he was on the earth, he had a degree of mightiness from Jehovah, enabling him to perform miracles. And he showed a heartfelt desire to help people, saying, "I want to." (Matthew 8:3) But his miracles of those days were just a foregleam of what he would do when ruling from heaven. Jesus will work miracles on a global scale! Sick, blind, deaf, maimed, and lame people will be healed for all time. (Isaiah 35:5, 6) An abundance of food, fairly distributed, will end hunger forever. (Psalm 72:16) What of those countless millions in the

13. How do the Scriptures show that the beginning of Christ's rule would be a troubled time here on earth?

14. What will the Messiah be able to do after he destroys Satan's wicked system of things?

15. What will the 'spirit of mightiness' mean in the Messianic rule?

graves that God is pleased to remember? Jesus' "mightiness" will include the power to resurrect them, giving each the opportunity to live forever in Paradise! (John 5:28, 29) Yet, even with all this mightiness, the Messianic King will always be profoundly humble. He finds "enjoyment . . . in the fear of Jehovah."—Isaiah 11:3.

¹⁶ This King will also be a perfect Judge. He "will not judge by any mere appearance to his eyes, nor reprove simply according to the thing heard by his ears." What human judge, past or present, could be described that way? Even a very judicious man can judge only by what he sees and hears, using whatever wisdom or discernment he may possess. Thus, judges and juries of this old world may be swayed or confused by clever sophistry, courtroom antics, or conflicting evidence. Often it is only the wealthy and powerful who can afford an effective defense, in actuality buying justice. Not so under the Messianic Judge! He reads hearts. Nothing will escape his notice. Justice, tempered by love and mercy, will not be for sale. It will always prevail.—Isaiah 11:3-5.

16. What kind of Judge will the Messianic King be, and how will that contrast with the record of human judges?

How Would You Answer?

- In what manner does Christ return?
- How do we know that Christ's pa·rou·si'a is invisible and lasts over a considerable period of time?
- When does Christ's presence begin, and how do we know this?
- What kind of heavenly Ruler is the Messiah?
- In what ways does Christ's rule affect the lives of its subjects?

How His Rule Affects You

¹⁷ Understandably, the Messiah's rule has a profound influence on its subjects. It changes people. Isaiah 11:6-9 shows just how extensive such changes are. This prophecy paints a touching picture of dangerous, predatory animals—bears, wolves, leopards, lions, cobras—in the company of harmless domestic animals and even children. But the predators pose no danger! Why? Verse 9 answers: "They will not do any harm or cause any ruin in all my holy mountain; because the earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters are covering the very sea."

¹⁸ Of course, "knowledge of Jehovah" could have no effect on literal animals; thus these verses must primarily apply to people. The Messiah's rule sponsors a global education program, teaching people about Jehovah and his ways, teaching all to treat their fellowman with love, respect, and dignity. In the coming Paradise, the Messiah will miraculously raise mankind to physical and moral perfection. The predatory, animalistic traits that mar imperfect human nature will be gone. In a literal sense, also, mankind will come to be at peace with the animals—at last!—Compare Genesis 1:28.

¹⁹ Remember, though, the Messiah is ruling *now*. Even now, the subjects of his Kingdom are learning to live peaceably together, fulfilling Isaiah 11:6-9 in one sense. Moreover, for almost 80 years, Jesus has been fulfilling Isaiah 11:10: "It must occur in that day that there will be the root of Jesse that will be standing up as a signal for the peo-

17, 18. (a) What glowing picture of mankind's future is painted at Isaiah 11:6-9? (b) To whom does this prophecy primarily apply, and why so? (c) How will this prophecy have a literal fulfillment?

19. How does the rule of the Messiah affect the lives of people in these last days?

ples. To him even the nations will turn inquiringly, and his resting-place must become glorious." People of every nation are turning to the Messiah. Why? Because ever since he began ruling, he has been "standing up as a signal." He has been making his presence known worldwide by means of the vast educational program described above. In fact, Jesus foretold that a global preaching work would be an outstanding sign of his presence before the end of this old system.—Matthew 24:14.

²⁰ So Christ's presence in Kingly power is not a remote, theoretical affair, merely a subject of intellectual debate among theologians. His rule touches and changes lives here on the earth, just as Isaiah foretold it would. Jesus has drawn millions of subjects for his Kingdom out of this corrupt world system. Are you such a subject? Then serve with all the enthusiasm and joy that our Ruler deserves! Granted, it is all too easy to tire out, to join in the world's cynical cry: "Where is this promised presence of his?" (2 Peter 3:4) But as Jesus himself said, "he that has endured to the end is the one that will be saved."—Matthew 24:13.

²¹ Every passing day draws us closer to the great day when Jehovah will direct His Son to make his presence manifest to the whole world. Never let your hope in that day grow dim. Meditate on Jesus' Messiahship and on his qualities as reigning King. Think deeply, too, about Jehovah God, the author and mastermind of the great Messianic hope outlined in the Bible. As you do, no doubt you will feel more and more as the apostle Paul did when he wrote: "O the depth of God's riches and wisdom and knowledge!"—Romans 11:33.

20. What attitude should all subjects of the Messiah's rule avoid, and why?
21. How might all of us enhance our appreciation for the Messianic hope?

'Should I Get Baptized?'

OF ALL the decisions that we are called upon to make in life, perhaps not one is more important than this: 'Should I get baptized?' Why is that so important? Because our decision with regard to this question has a direct bearing not only on our course of life now but also on our eternal welfare.

Are you faced with this decision? Perhaps you have been studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses for some time. Or your parents may have been teaching you the Scriptures from infancy. Now you have reached the point where you must make up your mind about what you should do. In order for you to make the right decision, you will need to understand what baptism involves and who should get baptized.

What Baptism Involves

Somewhat like a wedding, baptism is a ceremony that solemnizes a relationship. In the case of a wedding, the man and the woman involved have already developed a close relationship. The wedding ceremony merely makes public what has been agreed upon in private, namely, that the two of them are now entering into the actual marriage union. It also opens up privileges to be enjoyed by the couple and brings responsibilities that they must live up to in their life together.

The situation is quite similar with baptism. As we study the Bible, we learn of the loving things Jehovah has done for us. He has given us not only our life and everything we need to sustain it but also his only begotten Son to open up the way for sinful mankind to come into a relationship with Him

and to gain eternal life on a paradise earth. When we think about all of this, are we not moved to action?

What can we do? God's Son, Jesus Christ, tells us: "If anyone wants to come after me, let him disown himself and pick up his torture stake and continually follow me." (Matthew 16:24) Yes, we can become disciples of Jesus Christ, following his example in serving the interests of his Father, Jehovah. To do so, however, requires our 'disowning' ourselves, that is, voluntarily resolving to put God's will ahead of our own; this involves offering, or dedicating, our life to the doing of his will. To make known this voluntary and private decision, a public ceremony is held. Water baptism is that ceremony to symbolize publicly our dedication to God.

Who Should Be Baptized?

Jesus Christ instructed his followers to '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 he had commanded them.' (Matthew 28:19, 20) Clearly, a degree of maturity of mind and heart is required of those who are to be baptized. Through their personal study of the Word of God, they have come to appreciate the need to 'repent and turn around' from their former course of life. (Acts 3:19) Then, they have seen the need to take up the evangelizing work done by Jesus Christ, becoming his disciples. All of this has taken place before the step of baptism.

Have you come to this stage in your spiritual development? Do you desire to serve

God? If so, consider prayerfully the Bible account of the Ethiopian eunuch, as recorded in Acts chapter 8. When the prophecies about Jesus the Messiah were explained to this man, he searched his mind and heart and then asked: "What prevents me from getting baptized?" Apparently there was nothing preventing him; so he was baptized. —Acts 8:26-38.

Today many are asking the same question: "What prevents me from getting baptized?" As a result, 300,945 newly dedicated ones were baptized in 1991. This brought great joy to all of Jehovah's people, and the elders in the congregations are happy to assist other righthearted ones to progress and meet the qualifications for baptism.

It may be, however, that the elders in your congregation suggest that you wait. Or, if you are a youth, your parents may direct you to wait. What then? Do not be discouraged. Bear in mind that entering into a personal relationship with the Most High is a very serious matter. High standards must be met and maintained. So listen to the suggestions offered and apply them wholeheartedly. If you do not fully understand the reasons given, do not be shy, but ask questions until you really do understand what preparation you need to make.

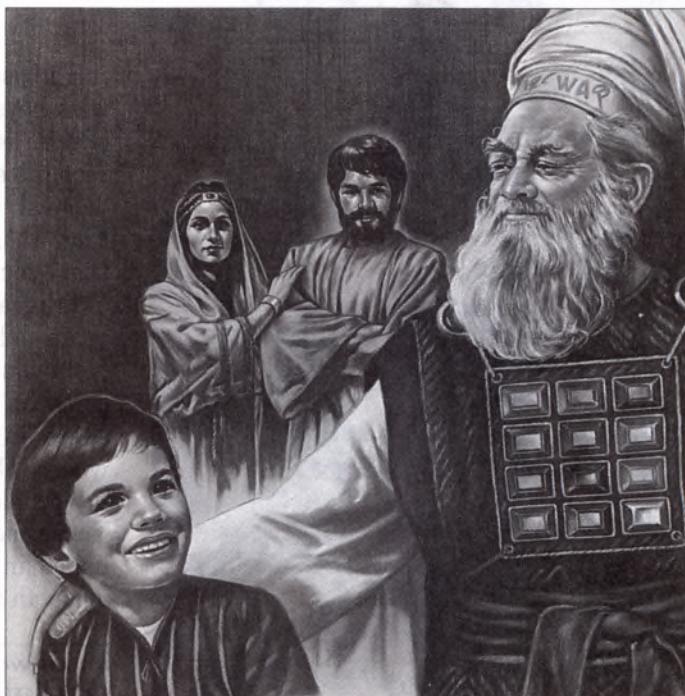
On the other hand, some people may hesitate to take the big step, as they call it. Are you one of them? Of course, there may

be definite reasons why you must put off dedication and baptism. But if you are qualified and still are holding back, it is good to ask yourself: "What prevents me from getting baptized?" Prayerfully analyze your situation and see if there really is a valid reason for you to put off responding to Jehovah's invitation to enter into a personal relationship with him.

'I Am Still Young'

If you are a young person, you might be thinking, 'I am still young.' It is true that as long as young people remain obedient and responsive to their Christian parents and apply the Scriptures to the best of their ability, they can have confidence that Jehovah views them as "holy." In fact, the Bible tells us that divine approval of righteous parents extends to dependent children. (1 Corinthians 7:14) However, no age limit is given in

As a boy, Samuel ministered before Jehovah



the Bible as to when this dependency period ends. Therefore, it is important for Christian youths to consider seriously the question: 'Should I get baptized?'

The Bible encourages youths to 'remember their Grand Creator in the days of their young manhood.' (Ecclesiastes 12:1) In this regard, we have the example of young Samuel, who "was ministering before Jehovah, as a boy." There is also the example of Timothy, who from infancy took to heart the truth his mother and his grandmother taught him.—1 Samuel 2:18; 2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14, 15.

Likewise today, many young ones have dedicated their lives to serve Jehovah. Aki-fusa, a 15-year-old, said that a part on the Service Meeting helped him to make his decision to get baptized. Ayumi got baptized

when she was ten years old. She wanted to serve Jehovah because she really came to love him. Now she is 13 and just had the experience of seeing her Bible student, who has also come to love Jehovah, get baptized at the age of 12. Ayumi's younger brother Hikaru was also baptized at the age of ten. "Some said I was too young," he recalls, "but Jehovah knew how I felt. I was determined to get baptized once I decided to dedicate my life to serve him with all I had."

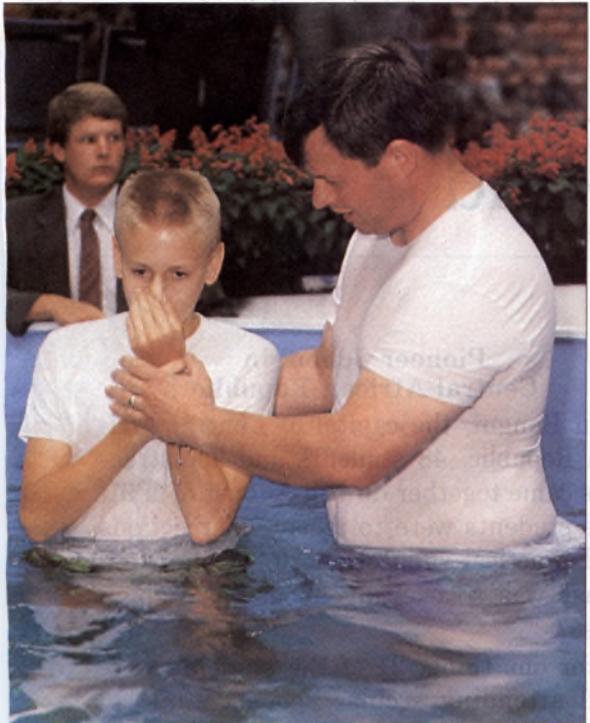
Parental example is also a factor, as can be seen from the experience of one young sister. Her father prohibited her mother from studying the Bible with her and her brother and sister. He would beat them and burn their books. But because of the mother's endurance and faith, the children could see the importance of serving Jehovah God. This young girl was baptized at age 13, and her younger brother and sister have followed her example.

'I Am Too Old'

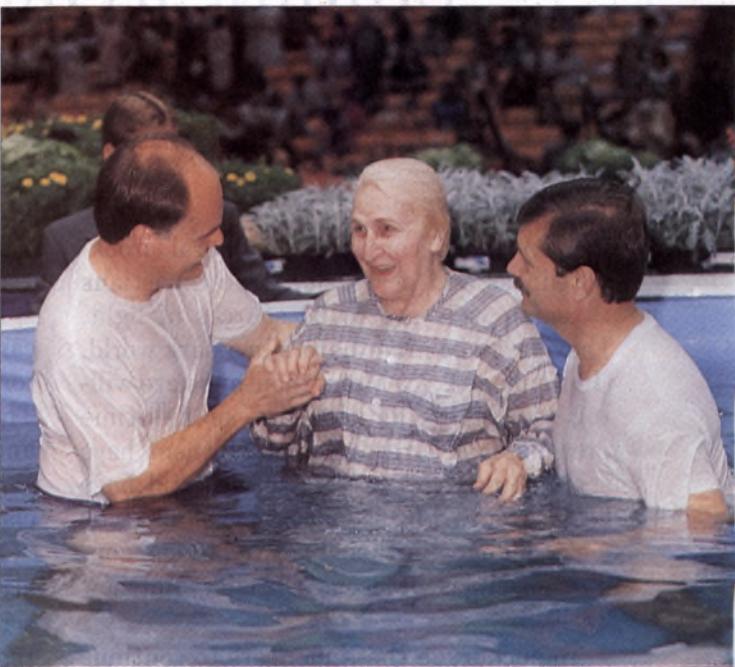
The psalmist said: "You old men together with boys . . . praise the name of Jehovah." (Psalm 148:12, 13) Yes, older ones must also recognize the need of taking their stand on Jehovah's side. Some older people, however, tend to avoid making changes. They feel that "you can't teach an old dog new tricks." Yet, recall that faithful Abraham was 75 years old when Jehovah told him: "Go out from your land and from your relatives and come on into the land I shall show you." (Acts 7:3; Genesis 12:1, 4) Moses was 80 when Jehovah commissioned him: "Bring my people . . . out of Egypt." (Exodus 3:10) These men and others all were well established in their way of life when asked by Jehovah to demonstrate their love and ded-



Moses was 80 when he was commissioned by Jehovah



Today both young and old who get baptized can look forward to endless blessings in God's new system



ication to him. They did not hesitate to respond to Jehovah's call.

What about today? Shizumu had been a Buddhist for 78 years when he began a study of the Bible. His family opposed him, not even allowing him to study in his own home. After only one year, he saw the need to dedicate himself to Jehovah, and he got baptized. Why did he make the change? He said: "For many years I had been fooled by false religion, and I wanted to continue receiving the truth from Jehovah forever."

'That Is Now Saving You'

Time is running out. Lives, including yours, are at stake. It is urgent that you consider seriously the matter of dedication to Jehovah and symbolizing it by water bap-

tism. The apostle Peter emphasized this by saying: "That . . . is also now saving you, namely, baptism." He further explained that baptism is "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh" (a person would already have done that before being qualified for baptism) "but the request made to God for a good conscience."—1 Peter 3:21.

Having measured up to Jehovah's requirements, the baptized disciple comes into possession of a good conscience. By continuing to do his best in serving Jehovah, he enjoys peace of mind and contentment. (James 1:25) Above all, he can confidently look forward to endless blessings from Jehovah in the new system to come. May that be your portion as you respond positively to the question: 'Should I get baptized?'

Shining as Illuminators in the World

IN A world corrupted by moral crookedness and perversity, true Christians earth wide are to be sources of light. They are to be illuminators in a dark world. (Philippians 2:15) Many thousands are willing to do this as pioneers, or full-time preachers. A large number of them have spent long years in this service and have been rewarded by seeing people of all kinds make changes in their lives to become genuine disciples of Jesus Christ.—Matthew 28:19.

To encourage these pioneers to continue in this sacred service and to improve in their teaching skills, Jehovah's Witnesses have organized the Pioneer Service School. It is a ten-day Bible-based course designed to help pioneers in three areas: walking with Jehovah as followers of Jesus Christ; abounding in love for the whole association of brothers; shining as illuminators in the world.

**Twenty-one
pioneer-school students
still in high school**

Pioneer School in Central African Republic

In Bangui, the capital of Central African Republic, 48 students and 2 instructors came together during August of 1991. The students were to receive instructions and practical suggestions for their work. What was so exciting about the Bangui class?

For one thing, 21 of the students were still attending secular school. While in school, they were able to make room for the regular pioneer service. They used their vacation months, their free weekends, and afternoons to preach and to teach.



These two boys had to leave home because of the truth

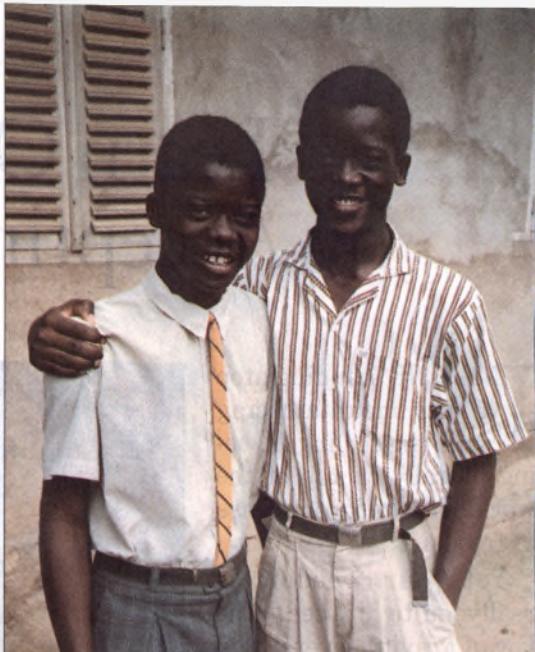
These young people have seen the importance of serving their Creator now. (Ecclesiastes 12:1; compare 1 Corinthians 7:29.) Noteworthy was the fact that 12 of them had unbelieving parents. At home they were alone in the truth. Two young boys, fleshly brothers, were forced by their father to leave home because of their faith. A young couple in the congregation opened their home to these two boys.

The case was different for Michée and Sulamithe Kaleb. Both of them are pioneers and they also go to school, but their parents are Jehovah's Witnesses. In fact, their father was a student in the same class!

The congregations in Bangui participated in the school too, only in a different way. They cared for the material necessities, such as the food. Money, as well as chickens, sugar, rice, and manioc were contributed to feed the class.

Kitchen crews were organized by the nearby congregations to prepare simple but delicious meals. The Central African Republic is famous for *ngunza*, a dish everybody appreciates. The recipe? Manioc leaves, palm oil, onions, lots of garlic, chunks of peanut butter, and patience to let it cook thoroughly. Each crew had its own special way of preparing it. It was a great success; nobody could resist it.

Outside of Bangui two other classes were held, one in Bouar and one in Bambari, bringing the total number of students to 68. During the past two years, the Central African Republic has seen an increase in the number of pioneers. During January 1992 there were 149 regular pioneers



and 17 special pioneers along with 78 auxiliary pioneers. This has resulted in increased activity in the entire country with new peaks in publishers, hours, return visits, and Bible studies. When there are more workers, the harvest is increased.—Isaiah 60:21, 22; Matthew 9:37, 38.

Our thanks go to Jehovah God for these provisions and to his earthly organization for arranging these classes. They help students and instructors alike to shine as illuminators in this dark world.

In Our Next Issue

Family Distress

—A Sign of the Times

Work to Preserve Your Family Into
God's New World

Elders—Delegate!

Learn Obedience by Accepting Discipline

IMAGINE standing atop a lofty mountain crag with the feeling of being literally on top of the world. What a joyous sense of freedom!

Yet your freedom is really quite limited. The law of gravity severely restricts your every move; a single misstep could spell disaster. On the other hand, how gratifying to know that the very same law of gravity prevents you from helplessly drifting off into outer space. So the law is obviously for your own good. Accepting the limits it places on your movement up there on that mountain peak is beneficial, even life-saving.

Yes, at times laws and obedience to them may limit our freedom, but does this make obedience undesirable?

How God Views Obedience

As the "Grand Creator," Jehovah is "the source of life." For this reason all of his creatures rightly owe him obedience. Displaying the proper attitude, the psalmist wrote: "Let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before Jehovah our Maker. For he is our God, and we are the people of his pas-



turage and the sheep of his hand."—Ecclesiastes 12:1; Psalm 36:9; 95:6, 7.

From the beginning Jehovah has required obedience from his creatures. The continued existence of Adam and Eve in Paradise was dependent upon obedience. (Genesis 2:16, 17) Obedience was likewise expected of the angels, even though they are a higher form of life than humans. Because some of these spirit creatures were "*disobedient* when the patience of God was waiting in Noah's days," they were punished by being delivered into "pits of dense darkness to be reserved for judgment."—1 Peter 3:19, 20; 2 Peter 2:4.

Plainly stated, God views obedience as a requirement for gaining his approval. We read: "Does Jehovah have as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? Look! To obey is better than a sacrifice, to pay attention than the fat of rams."—1 Samuel 15:22.

It Must Be Learned —Why and How

Obedience leads to a righteous standing with God, so how imperative that we learn

it! Like learning a foreign language, the habit of obedience can be learned when we are young. That is why the Bible emphasizes the training of children from their infancy.—Joshua 8:35.

Some moderns contradict the Bible's view, saying that requiring obedience of children is tantamount to mental rape. They argue that children should be allowed to develop their own personal ideas and standards by which to live without outside adult interference.

But in the 1960's when many parents held this view, Wilhelm Hansen, lecturer, editor, and professor of psychology, disagreed. He wrote: "For a child in its primary stage, at a time when its relationship to its parents is still decisive, 'bad' is what the parents forbid and 'good' is what they recommend or praise. *Obedience* alone, therefore, guides the child in the way of morality and of the cardinal virtues upon existence of which his relationship to moral order depends."—Compare Proverbs 22:15.

God's Word emphasizes the need to learn obedience. We read: "I know, O LORD, that man's ways are not of his own choosing; nor is it for a man to determine his course in life." (Jeremiah 10:23, *The New English Bible*) History is full of instances where humans have charted their own life course according to personal standards and have run into serious difficulties for having done so. Why does this happen so often? Because humans lack the knowledge, wisdom, and understanding to chart their life course unaided. Worse than that, they have an inherited tendency to make wrong decisions. Immediately after the Flood, Jehovah said of man: "The inclina-

tion of the heart of man is bad from his youth up."—Genesis 8:21.

Hence, no one inherits the tendency to obey Jehovah. We have to inculcate it in our children and go on learning it throughout our lives. Each of us needs to cultivate the heart condition of King David, who wrote: "Make me know your own ways, O Jehovah; teach me your own paths. Make me walk in your truth and teach me, for you are my God of salvation. In you I have hoped all day long."—Psalm 25:4, 5.

Teach Obedience by Being Obedient

Jesus' mother and adoptive father well knew the circumstances surrounding Jesus' birth. They therefore realized that he was to play an important part in the fulfillment of Jehovah's purposes. (Compare Luke 1: 35, 46, 47.) In their case the words "Look! Sons are an inheritance from Jehovah" had a unique meaning. (Psalm 127:3) They fully recognized their tremendous responsibility and were thus prompt to obey divine directions, such as when they were told to flee to Egypt or later to go to Galilee.—Matthew 2: 1-23.

Jesus' parents also recognized their responsibility as regards discipline. True, during his prehuman existence, Jesus had always been obedient. But while on earth, he learned to be obedient under entirely new circumstances. For one thing, he had to obey imperfect parents because even a perfect child needs discipline in the form of instruction and education. This his parents provided. Discipline in the form of punishment, on the other hand, was unnecessary. Jesus always obeyed; he never had to be told twice. We read: "Then he went home with them [his parents] to Nazareth and was obedient to them."—Luke 2:51, *Phillips*.



**"The reproofs of discipline are
the way of life"**

Joseph and Mary also knew how to teach Jesus by way of example. We read, for instance, that "his parents were accustomed to go from year to year to Jerusalem for the festival of the passover." (Luke 2:41) By arranging to take his family along, Joseph showed that he was interested in their spiritual welfare and that he took Jehovah's worship seriously. In similar ways, parents by their own obedience in matters of worship can teach obedience to their children today.

Because of the fine disciplining in righteousness on the part of Joseph and Mary, "Jesus went on progressing in wisdom and in physical growth and in favor with God and men." What a fine example for Christian parents to follow today!—Luke 2:52.

"Obedient . . . in Everything"

"You children, be obedient to your parents in everything, for this is well-pleasing in the Lord." (Colossians 3:20) Jesus could be obedient to his parents in everything because

their obedience to Jehovah precluded their demanding of Jesus—or of his half brothers and sisters—anything contrary to Jehovah's will.

Many parents today are also successfully teaching their children to be obedient in everything. Listen to three fathers, who, with their child-rearing days now behind them, presently serve in a branch of the Watch Tower Society.

Theo speaks about how he and his wife reared five sons. He says: "It is important to let children know from the very start that we grown-ups also make mistakes. Sadly, we even repeat them and constantly have to ask our heavenly Father for forgiveness and help. We deliberately allowed our children to see that just as they were struggling with the anxieties of youth, we were struggling with the anxieties of adults."

If a child is to learn obedience, a loving relationship between him and his parents is vital. Hermann says of his wife: "She was not only the boys' mother but also their friend. This they appreciated, so it was not difficult for them to be obedient." Then adding a practical tip on how to better the parent-child relationship, he says: "We deliberately did without a dishwasher for several years, so that the dishes had to be washed and dried by hand. Our sons were assigned to do the drying, taking turns. There was no better time for casual communication."

A loving parent-child relationship serves as a model for the relationship a Christian

must have with Jehovah. Rudolf explains how he and his wife went about helping their two boys set up such a relationship: "Our basis was a regular family study. We assigned the children a number of appropriate topics for research. We also did our Bible reading together and then discussed the material. Our sons could see that Jehovah expects obedience from parents, not just from children."

Christian parents realize that the inspired text "The reproofs of discipline are the way of life" applies to them as well as to their children. So while children have the obligation to be obedient to their parents in everything, parents must also be obedient in everything Jehovah requires of them. Besides strengthening the parent-child relationship, parents and children will want to strengthen their relationship with God.—Proverbs 6:23.

View Obedience Positively

How grateful we can be that God's Word provides such practical counsel about rearing children! (See box.) Children who learn obedience from parents who discipline them in righteousness are a real source of joy for the entire Christian brotherhood.

Since obedience to God means life, we should avoid toying with the idea of suspending the restrictions God's commands place on our personal freedom—even momentarily. Imagine, for example, that we could briefly suspend the law of gravity. How we would thrill to the exhilaration of soaring from a mountain peak up into the sky with nothing to hinder our freedom! But what would happen once things got back to normal? Think of the fall that would await us!

Learning obedience by accepting discipline contributes to the development of

PARENTS, TEACH OBEDIENCE BY DISCIPLINING IN RIGHTEOUSNESS

1. Discipline on the basis of Scriptural laws and principles.
2. Discipline not simply by demanding obedience but by explaining why obedience is the course of wisdom.—Matthew 11:19b.
3. Discipline neither in anger nor with screaming.—Ephesians 4:31, 32.
4. Discipline within the warmth of a loving and caring relationship.—Colossians 3:21; 1 Thessalonians 2:7, 8; Hebrews 12:5-8.
5. Discipline children from infancy.—2 Timothy 3:14, 15.
6. Discipline repeatedly and with consistency.—Deuteronomy 6:6-9; 1 Thessalonians 2:11, 12.
7. Discipline yourself first and thus teach by example.—John 13:15; compare Matthew 23:2, 3.
8. Discipline with full reliance on Jehovah, petitioning his help in prayer.—Judges 13:8-10.

a balanced personality and helps us know our limitations. It helps us avoid being demanding and insensitive to the rights and needs of others. It helps us avoid bouts of uncertainty. In short, it makes for happiness.

So whether you are an adult or a child, learn obedience by accepting discipline so that "it may go well with you" and that "you may endure a long time on the earth." (Ephesians 6:1-3) Who wants to jeopardize his prospect of living forever by failing to learn obedience by not accepting discipline?—John 11:26.

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

The Organization Behind the Name

ON OCTOBER 6, 1990, the crowd of almost 5,000 gathered in the Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses in Jersey City, New Jersey, U.S.A., for the annual meeting of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society were about to get a surprise. The chairman, John E. Barr, informed the audience of the release of a 55-minute video entitled *Jehovah's Witnesses—The Organization Behind the Name*. This was the first video ever produced by the Society, but certainly not the last.

The video shows how Jehovah's people are organized to witness to the divine name and publish the "good news of the kingdom." (Matthew 24:14) The headquarters at Brooklyn, New York, and the facilities at Watchtower Farms are highlighted. More than 500,000 copies in English have been produced, and it is now (or will soon be) available in 26 other languages.*

What Has Been the Response?

How have people who are not Jehovah's Witnesses responded to the video? One business man wrote:

"I found the tape to be of excellent quality. I was particularly taken by the brightness

* American sign language, Arabic, Basque, Cantonese, Catalan, Croatian, Czech (Bohemian), Danish, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese (Brazil), Portuguese (Europe), Romanian, Slovak, Spanish, Swedish.

and professional composition of the images. I had the tendency to forget that it was a tape and thought of it more as a movie. This tape should be exceptionally useful in explaining the purpose of your New York headquarters. Congratulations on this outstanding piece."—J. J.

Those who study the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses have benefited by viewing the video. The following explains why:

"I study the Bible with a young man who is 20 years old and who attends the local university. He has been concerned about the worsening world situation. But after viewing the tape and seeing all those fine young Bethel brothers with a real purpose in life, his entire attitude has changed. He attended our Special Assembly Day and asked to study the Bible twice a week. Another Bible student, a high-school teacher, borrowed the video to show to her relatives. They thought Jehovah's Witnesses were just some weak, unpopular, *small* organization. They were stunned at the global nature of our work and the difference we are making, thanks to Jehovah."—J. B.

"Words cannot express the joy I felt when a woman with whom I study the Bible burst into tears of joy and appreciation after seeing this video. She said tearfully: 'How can anyone not see that this *is* the organization of the true God, Jehovah? I never knew that

such people existed.' And then she said: 'I want to get baptized.'"—C. D.

"We have had a lot of success using the video with Bible students. Last night the husband of one of my wife's Bible students came over. He had been very opposed. He watched the video. Afterward he asked questions and left here with a Bible and the Bible-study book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*. Previously he had burned all his wife's Bible literature!"—D. H.

Young people have also found the video to be absorbing, as the following comments show:

"I am six and a half. I liked the part about the Bibles and when the boxes went fast."—K. W.

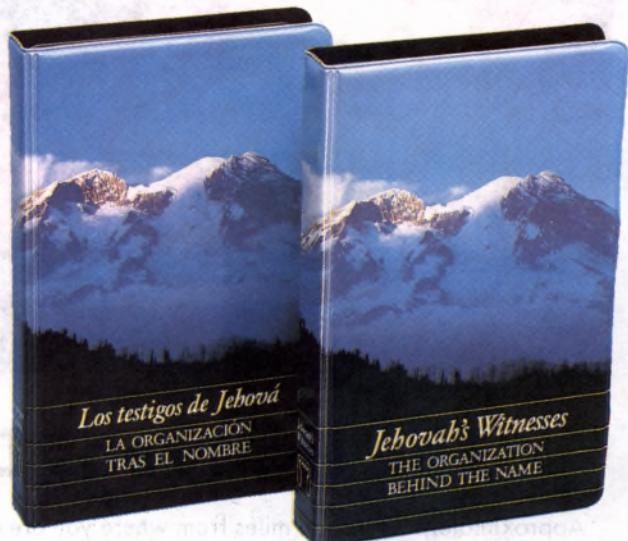
"Our young children said it was better than any program they've seen on TV."—R. C.

"After viewing the video for the second time, our five-year-old son, who paid close attention throughout, asked, 'Can we see this every day?' Our three-year-old daughter chimed in with, 'I want to go to Bethel and make books!'"—M. E.

"My children, Robin and Shannan, 12 and 9 years old, keep playing this tape over and over. My youngest daughter after seeing the tape declared, 'I love going out in the field service. It is a lot of fun.' We feel that this video has had a direct effect on our family life. How refreshing to turn on a television program that you feel safe in watching!"—N. B.

"I am 13 ½ years old. The new video made me realize how much I take for granted the wonderful provisions from Jehovah. It is a privilege to be one of God's people."—K. W.

"I am 16 years old, and this video has helped reinforce in my mind that this is a global work being done."—A. M.



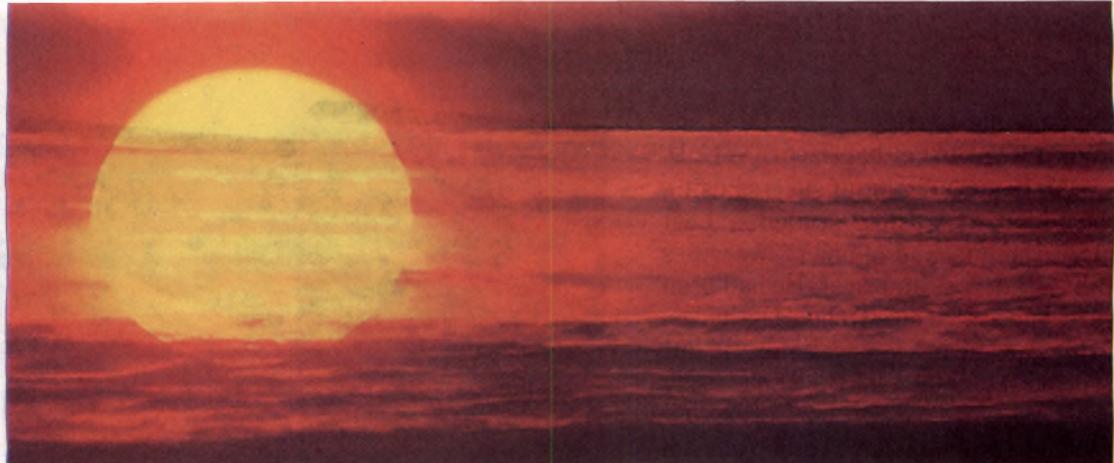
"Our children remarked that regular TV lost something in their eyes as a result of seeing what real theocratic entertainment could be like. It has also strengthened their desire to enter full-time service."—L. M.

Even those who have been Jehovah's Witnesses for many years have been moved by what they saw.

"If the video leaves such an impact on us as Jehovah's people, how much more will it affect others? When this system gets to be too much to handle, I take an hour of my time and visit Bethel in the comfort of my living room!"—K. B.

"After I had seen the care and precision that goes into every piece of work, I felt like going into my room and hugging my Bible literature."—L. P.

We encourage you, too, to take the time to see the video *Jehovah's Witnesses—The Organization Behind the Name*. It will give you a different perspective on life and help you to have confidence in a secure future.



'The Heavens Declare . . .'

Approximately 93 million miles from where you are right now, the sun shines with fiery brilliance in the sky. Worshiped as a god for thousands of years, our glorious celestial neighbor is, rather, a testimony to the power of its Creator, "the Maker of heaven and earth." (Psalm 115:15) Its brightness and warmth are essential for life on earth. And the facts scientists have learned about it fill us with wonder.

We are told that the sun produces vast amounts of energy. Did you realize that less than half a billionth of the heat and light that it generates are intercepted by the earth? Yet, that fraction amounts to a colossal 240,000,000,000,000 horsepower!

How does the sun make all that energy? By means of a vast nuclear furnace in its core that produces energy by consuming about four million short tons of hydrogen every second. Happily for mankind, there is enough fuel in the sun to keep this process going for billions of years.

Some things scientists have discovered raise further questions. For example, the sun is constantly vibrating, like a metal sheet hit with a hammer. Why? Also, consider this: The blazing core of the sun is its hottest part and the farther a layer is from the core, the cooler it is. But when we come to the outer layer of the sun's atmosphere, the corona, that changes. The corona is hotter than layers closer to the burning core. Why?

Further, while—like the earth—the sun rotates, different parts rotate at different speeds. For example, the surface rotates faster than the layers inside. Why? And how is that possible? Then there are the sunspots. These blemishes on the sun's surface come and go in a regular cycle over a period of 11 years. Why do they change in such a regular way?

Although there is much yet to be learned about the sun, what we already know makes us look with awe upon its Creator, Jehovah. Every time we see the sun, we are reminded that "the heavens are declaring the glory of God; and of the work of his hands the expanse is telling."—Psalm 19:1.