

THE WATCHTOWER

MARCH 1, 2007

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



**Does It Matter
WHICH RELIGION
YOU CHOOSE?**

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 It Matter WHICH RELIGION YOU CHOOSE?

MOST of us like to have a good selection to choose from when we go shopping. When a market offers a variety of fruits and vegetables, we can select the ones that we most enjoy and that are good for our family. If a clothing store offers many affordable styles and colors, we can choose what best suits us. Some of the choices we make in life are merely expressions of individual taste. Others, though, affect our well-being, for example, our choice of healthful food or wise friends. So, what about our choice of religion? Should our way of worship be merely an expression of personal taste? Or is it a matter that seriously affects our well-being?

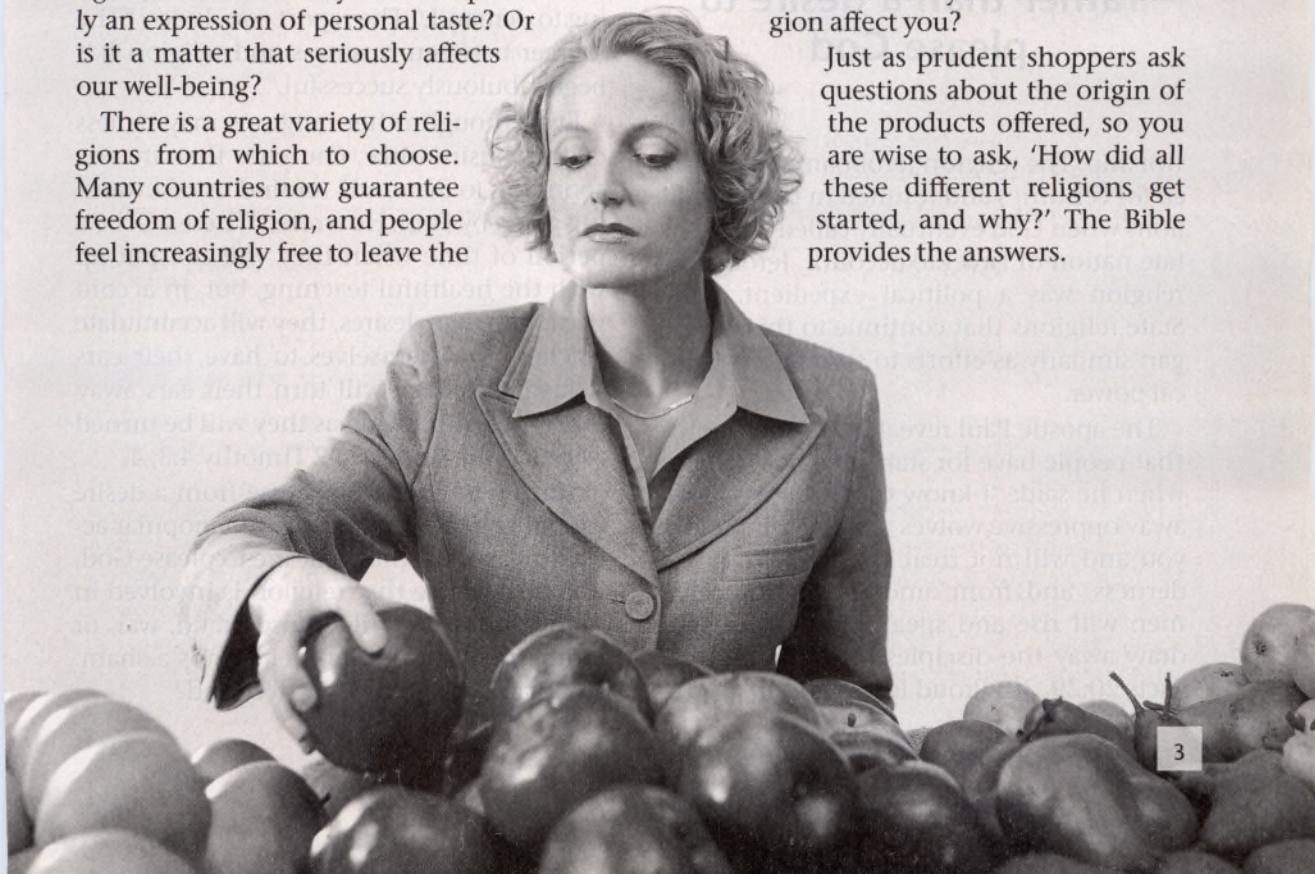
There is a great variety of religions from which to choose. Many countries now guarantee freedom of religion, and people feel increasingly free to leave the

religion of their parents. A poll in the United States found that 80 percent of Americans "believe that more than one faith can be a path to salvation." According to that same poll, "one out of five respondents said he had switched religions as an adult." A survey in Brazil revealed that nearly a quarter of all Brazilians have changed their religion.

In the past, people would furiously debate the doctrines that distinguish one religion from another. Now the popular view is, 'It does not matter which religion you choose.'

But does it? Can your choice of religion affect you?

Just as prudent shoppers ask questions about the origin of the products offered, so you are wise to ask, 'How did all these different religions get started, and why?' The Bible provides the answers.



How Do Religions Get Started?

In ancient Israel, King Jeroboam started a new religion almost a thousand years before Jesus came to earth. Jeroboam was the first king of the independent northern kingdom of Israel. He faced the challenge of rallying people to his cause. "The king took counsel and made two golden calves and said to the people: 'It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here is your God, O Israel.'" (1 Kings 12:28) Clearly, the king wanted to use religion to direct the people's loyalty away from Jerusalem, where they used to

Many religions arose from a desire for political power, prestige, and popular acceptance rather than a desire to please God

worship. The religion Jeroboam started lasted for centuries and resulted in ruin for millions when God eventually called that apostate nation of Israel to account. Jeroboam's religion was a political expedient. Some State religions that continue to this day began similarly as efforts to strengthen political power.

The apostle Paul revealed another motive that people have for starting a new religion when he said: "I know that after my going away oppressive wolves will enter in among you and will not treat the flock with tenderness, and from among you yourselves men will rise and speak twisted things to draw away the disciples after themselves." (Acts 20:29, 30) Proud leaders often start re-

ligious movements to draw attention to themselves. Churches that falsely claim to be Christian have been fragmented by numerous schisms.

Whom Do Religions Want to Please?

Response to popular demand may move some to start a new religion. For instance, the *Economist* magazine reported on so-called megachurches in the United States. The article notes that these churches are growing because they are "based on the same principle as all successful businesses: putting the customer first." Some feature "jazzed up services with videos, drama and contemporary music." Certain religious leaders in these churches claim to teach their members to be "rich, healthy and trouble free." Although such churches are criticized for being in the entertainment industry or in "the self-help trade," notes the same source, "they are simply responding to demand." The report concludes: "The merger between business and religion has been fabulously successful."

Even though other religions may be less overtly businesslike, churches that are "responding to demand" remind us of a warning given by Paul. He wrote: "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."—2 Timothy 4:3, 4.

Since many religions arose from a desire for political power, prestige, and popular acceptance rather than a desire to please God, it is no surprise that religion is involved in such badness as child abuse, fraud, war, or terrorism. All too often, religion is a sham. How can you avoid being deceived?

How to Identify TRUE WORSHIP

MOST religions claim that what they say comes from God. Therefore, we do well to heed the words of Jesus' apostle John, who wrote: "Beloved ones, do not believe every inspired expression, but test the inspired expressions to see whether they originate with God, because many false prophets have gone forth into the world." (1 John 4:1) How can we test something to see if it comes from God?

Everything that comes from God reflects his personality, especially his predominant quality, love. For example, our sense of smell, which enables us to delight in the aroma of herbs, flowers, or freshly baked bread, is an expression of God's love. Our ability to see a sunset, a butterfly, or the smile of a young child reflects God's love for us. The same is true of our ability to hear beautiful music, the sound of a bird, or the voice of a loved one. Even our human nature, imperfect as it is, reflects God's love. That is why we often experience the truth of Jesus' words: "There is more happiness in

Among ancient religious writings, only the Bible reveals God's love

giving than there is in receiving." (Acts 20:35) We enjoy expressing love because we are made "in God's image." (Genesis 1:27) Although Jehovah has many other qualities, love is the most outstanding aspect of his personality.

Writings that come from God should reflect his love. The world's religions have many ancient writings. How do such writings measure up in regard to reflecting God's love?

The truth is, most ancient religious texts explain little about how God loves us or how we can love God. Thus, millions of people receive no answer when they ask, "Why do we see evidence of God's love in creation while suffering and evil continue?" The Bible, on the other hand, is the only ancient religious writing that fully explains God's love. It also teaches us how to practice love.

The Book About Love

God's Word, the Bible, reveals Jehovah as "the God of love." (2 Corinthians 13:11) The Bible describes how love moved Jehovah to give to the first humans life free of sickness and death. But rebellion against God's authority introduced suffering to mankind. (Deuteronomy 32:4, 5; Romans 5:12) Jehovah acted to restore what was lost. God's Word says: "God loved the world 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) The Holy



Scriptures illuminate God's love still further when they describe how God has provided a perfect government in the hands of Jesus to restore peace to obedient mankind.—Daniel 7:13, 14; 2 Peter 3:13.

The Bible sums up man's obligation in these words: “‘You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. The second, like it, is this, ‘You must love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments the whole Law hangs.” (Matthew 22:37-40) The Bible claims to be inspired of God. Since it clearly does reflect his personality, we can be sure that it comes from “the God of love.”—2 Timothy 3:16.

By applying this one standard, we can identify which ancient writings are truly from God. Love also identifies true worshippers, for they imitate God in showing love.

How to Recognize People Who Love God

Those who truly love God stand out, particularly now that we live in what the Bible calls “the last days.” Increasingly, people are “lovers of themselves, lovers of money, . . . lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God.”—2 Timothy 3:1-4.

How can you recognize people who love God? The Bible says: “This is what the love of God means, that we observe his commandments.” (1 John 5:3) Love for God moves people to respect the Bible's moral standards. For instance, God's Word has laws on sex and marriage. Sexual relations are permitted only within marriage, and marriage is to be permanent. (Matthew 19:9; Hebrews 13:4) When a woman in Spain who studied theology attended a meeting where Jehovah's Witnesses were eagerly studying the Bible's moral laws, she

noted: “I left feeling upbuilt, not only by the enlightening Scriptural talks but also by the unity that exists among these people, their high morals, and their fine behavior.”

In addition to their love for God, true Christians are easily identified by the way they show love for their neighbors. Their most important work is speaking to others about mankind's only hope, the Kingdom of God. (Matthew 24:14) Nothing can bring more lasting benefits to their neighbors than to help them gain knowledge of God. (John 17:3) True Christians also show their love in other ways. They extend practical help to those who are suffering. For example, when an earthquake caused disaster in Italy, a local newspaper reported that Jehovah's Witnesses “operate in a practical way, extending a hand to those who suffer, without worrying about which religion they belong to.”

Besides loving God and neighbor, true Christians love one another. Jesus said: “I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves.”—John 13:34, 35.

Is the love that true Christians have for one another noticeably different? A housemaid named Ema thought so. She works in La Paz, Bolivia, where ethnic differences often separate the rich from the poor. She said: “The first time I went to a meeting of Jehovah's Witnesses, I saw a well-dressed gentleman sitting and conversing with an Indian lady. I had never seen that before. In that moment, I knew that these must be God's people.” Similarly, a young Brazilian woman named Miriam said: “I did not know how to be happy, not even in my family. The first time I saw love in action was

among Jehovah's Witnesses." In the United States, the news director for a television station wrote: "If more people lived the way your faith does, this nation wouldn't be in the shape it is in. I am one newsman who knows that your organization is founded on love and a strong faith in the Creator."

Seek True Worship

Love is a distinguishing feature of true worship. Jesus likened finding true worship to finding the right road and choosing to walk on it. It is the only road that leads to everlasting life. Jesus said: "Go in through the narrow gate; because broad and spacious is the road leading off into destruction, and many are the ones going in through it; whereas narrow is the gate and cramped the

road leading off into life, and few are the ones finding it." (Matthew 7:13, 14) Only one body of true Christians walks unitedly with God on the road of true worship. Therefore, it does matter which religion you choose. If you find that road and choose to walk on it, you will have found the best way of life, for it is the way of love.—Ephesians 4:1-4.

Imagine what joy can be yours as you walk on the road of true worship! It is like walking with God. From God you can learn wisdom and love so as to enjoy good relationships with others. From him you can learn about the purpose of life, and you can understand God's promises and have a hope for the future. You will never regret seeking true worship.

True Christians are recognizable because they practice love





AWAITING A KINGDOM THAT IS "NO PART OF THIS WORLD"

AS TOLD BY
NIKOLAI GUTSULYAK

For 41 days and nights, I had been caught in the middle of a prison uprising. Suddenly, I was jolted from sleep by cannon fire. Tanks and soldiers burst into the prison camp, attacking the prisoners. My life hung in the balance.

HOW did I come to be in this situation? Let me explain. This event happened in 1954. At the time, I was 30 years old. Like many of Jehovah's Witnesses living under the Soviet regime, I was incarcerated for remaining neutral in political issues and for telling others about the Kingdom of God. Our group of imprisoned Witnesses was made up of 46 men and 34 women. We were held in a labor camp near the village of Kengir in central Kazakhstan. There we lived in the midst of thousands of other prisoners.

Joseph Stalin, leader of the Soviet Union, had died the preceding year. Many prisoners hoped that the new regime in Moscow might listen to their complaints about the harsh prison conditions. Prisoner discontent eventually boiled over into open prison rebellion. During the ensuing confrontation, we Witnesses had to make our position clear to the agitated rebels and also explain our stand to the military guards. For us to take that neutral position required faith in God.

Revolt!

On May 16 the rebellion in the prison camp began. Two days later, more than 3,200 prisoners refused to go to work, demanding better camp conditions and concessions for political prisoners. Events unfolded quickly. First the rebels forced the guards out of the camp. Then they made openings in the surrounding fence. Next they broke down the walls separating the male and female wards, creating so-called family barracks. In the heady days that followed, some prisoners even married, with wedding services conducted by priests who were also imprisoned. In the three camp wards where the uprising occurred, most of the 14,000 prisoners participated in the rebellion.

The rebels organized a camp committee to negotiate with the military. Soon, however, arguments broke out among the committee members, and camp control ended up in the hands of the most extreme elements. The mood became ever more aggressive. The rebel leaders organized a security department, a military department, and a propaganda department to maintain "order." The leaders used loudspeakers that were mounted on poles around the camp to broadcast fiery messages, keeping the spirit of rebellion at a fever pitch. The rebels prevented others from escaping, punished those who opposed them, and declared their readiness to kill anyone who did not meet with their approval.

There were rumors that some prisoners had already been executed.

The labor camp in Kazakhstan where we were imprisoned

Since the rebels anticipated a military attack, they made careful preparations to defend themselves. To ensure that the greatest number of prisoners possible would be equipped to defend the camp, the leaders ordered all prisoners to arm themselves. To do so, prisoners stripped iron bars from windows and forged knives and other weapons from the metal. They even managed to get guns and explosives.

Pressured to Join

At that time, two rebels approached me. One held out a freshly sharpened knife. "Take this!" he ordered. "You'll be needing it for protection." Silently, I asked Jehovah to help me stay calm. I replied: "I am a Christian, one of Jehovah's Witnesses. Other Witnesses and I are serving time here because we fight, not against people, but against invisible spirit forces. Our weapons against them are our faith and our hope in God's Kingdom."—Ephesians 6:12.

To my surprise, the man nodded that he understood. However, the other man hit me hard.



Then they left. The rebels went from barracks to barracks, attempting to force the Witnesses to join the uprising. But all of our Christian brothers and sisters refused.

The neutral position of Jehovah's Witnesses was discussed at a meeting of the rebel committee. "Members of all faiths—Pentecostals, Adventists, Baptists, and everyone else—are joining the uprising. Only Jehovah's Witnesses have refused," they noted. "What will we do with them?" Someone suggested throwing one Witness into the prison oven to put some fear into us. But a former military official, a prisoner respected by the others, stood up and said: "That is unwise. We should put them all in one barracks right on the edge of the camp, next to the gate. That way, if the army attacks us with tanks, the Witnesses will be the first ones to be run over. And we will not be the ones guilty of killing them." The others accepted his suggestion.

Put in Harm's Way

Before long, prisoners walked around the camp shouting, "Jehovah's Witnesses, get out!" Then they herded all 80 of us toward a barracks at the edge of the camp. They dragged the bunk beds out of the barracks to make more room inside and ordered us to enter. That barracks became our prison within the prison.

To provide some privacy, the Christian sisters in our group stitched sheets together, and we used them to divide the barracks into two sections—one for the men and the other for the women. (Later, a Witness in Russia made a drawing of this barracks, which is shown below.) While living in those cramped quarters, we often prayed together, fervently asking Jehovah to give us wisdom and "power beyond what is normal."—2 Corinthians 4:7.

All that time, we were dangerously situated between the rebels and the Soviet

Drawing of the Witnesses' barracks, women's section



*With Christian brothers
upon our release*

army. None of us knew what either side might do next. "Don't keep trying to guess," urged an older, faithful Christian brother. "Jehovah will not abandon us."

Our dear Christian sisters—both young and old—showed exceptional endurance. One was about 80 years old and needed extra help. Others were sick and in need of medical attention. Throughout that time, the doors of the barracks had to remain open so that the rebels could monitor us constantly. At night, armed prisoners came into the barracks. Sometimes they were heard to say, "The Kingdom of God is asleep." During the day, when they allowed us to go to the camp mess hall, we always stayed together and prayed that Jehovah would protect us from violent men.

In the barracks, we tried to support one another spiritually. For instance, often a brother related an account from the Bible, just loud enough for us to hear. Then he applied the account to our circumstances. One elderly brother especially liked to talk about Gideon's army. "In Jehovah's name, 300 men with musical instruments in their hands fought against 135,000 armed soldiers," he reminded us. "All 300 returned unharmed." (Judges 7:16, 22; 8:10) This and other Bible examples gave us spiritual strength. I had only recently become a Witness, but seeing the strong faith of more experienced brothers and sisters greatly encouraged me. I felt that Jehovah was truly with us.



The Battle Begins

Weeks went by, and tensions in the camp were building. Negotiations between the rebels and the authorities grew more intense. The rebel leaders insisted that the central government in Moscow send a representative to meet with them. The authorities demanded that the rebels surrender, give up their weapons, and return to work. Each side refused to compromise. By then, the camp was encircled by military forces ready to storm it at the first command. The rebels too were ready to fight, having raised barricades and stockpiled weapons. Everyone expected the final showdown between the army and the prisoners to come at any moment.

On June 26 we were awakened by a deafening volley of cannon fire. Tanks crushed the fence and burst into the camp. They were followed by waves of assault troops firing machine guns. Prisoners—men and women—rushed toward the oncoming tanks, yelling "Hurrah!" and hurling rocks, homemade bombs, and anything else they could get their hands on. A fierce battle ensued, and we Witnesses were caught right in the middle. How would Jehovah answer our prayers for help?

Suddenly, soldiers dashed into our barracks. "Come on out, you holy ones!" they shouted. "Quick, get yourselves outside the fence!" The officer in charge ordered the soldiers not to shoot us but to stay with us and protect us. While the battle raged, we sat on the grassy steppe beyond the perimeter of the camp. For four hours we listened to explosions, shots, screams, and moans coming from inside the camp. Then, all fell silent. Later, in the morning light, we saw soldiers carrying the dead out of the camp. We learned that hundreds had been wounded or had perished.

Later that day, an officer whom I knew came up to us. "So, Nikolai," he proudly asked, "who saved you? Did we or did Jehovah?" We sincerely thanked him for saving our lives, adding, "We believe that our almighty God, Jehovah, moved you to spare us, as he moved others to deliver his servants in Bible times."—Ezra 1:1, 2.

The same officer also explained to us how the soldiers knew who we were and where we were located. He said that during one of the negotiation sessions between the military and the rebels, the military accused the rebels of killing prisoners who did not support them. In defense, the rebels replied that Jehovah's Witnesses did not participate in the uprising but were not killed. Instead, as a

punishment, all of the Witnesses were imprisoned in one barracks. The military officials took note of that statement.

We Stood Firm for the Kingdom

Well-known Russian author Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, in his book *The Gulag Archipelago*, mentions the prison rebellion that we experienced. Concerning that event, he writes that the rebellion started because, as he said, "we want freedom, of course, . . . but who can give it to us?" As Witnesses of Jehovah in the same prison camp, we too longed for freedom. However, not just freedom from prison but freedom that only God's Kingdom can provide. While in prison, we knew that we needed strength from God to stand firm on the side of his Kingdom. And Jehovah provided us with everything we needed. He gave us victory without the use of knives or grenades.—2 Corinthians 10:3.

"My kingdom is no part of this world," Jesus Christ told Pilate. "If my kingdom were part of this world, my attendants would have fought." (John 18:36) As Christ's followers, therefore, we took no part in political struggles. We were happy that during and after the uprising, our loyalty to God's Kingdom was evident to others. Of our conduct during that time, Solzhenitsyn wrote: "Jehovah's Witnesses felt free to observe their rules strictly and refused to build fortifications or stand guard."

More than 50 years have passed since those turbulent events. However, I often look back on those times with gratitude because I learned enduring lessons, such as to wait on Jehovah and to trust fully in his mighty arm. Yes, like so many other dear Witnesses in the former Soviet Union, I have experienced that Jehovah truly gives freedom, protection, and deliverance to those who await a Kingdom that is "no part of this world."

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Look! The Light Is Wonderful!

Ancient Scribes and the Word of God

Angels—How They Affect Mankind

WESSEL GANSFORT

"A REFORMER BEFORE THE REFORMATION"

The names Luther, Tyndale, and Calvin are familiar to all students of the Protestant Reformation, which started in 1517. However, few people know the name Wessel Gansfort. He has been called "a Reformer before the Reformation." Would you like to know more about this man?

WESSEL was born in 1419 in the town of Groningen in Netherlands. In the 15th century, few people had the privilege of attending school, but Wessel did. Although he excelled at learning, he had to leave school at the age of nine because of the extreme poverty of his parents. Fortunately for him, when a rich widow heard of young Wessel's intelligence, she became his patroness and offered to pay his fees. Thus, he was able to continue his education. In time, he obtained a Master of Arts degree. It appears that later he also obtained the title doctor of theology.

Wessel had a tremendous thirst for knowledge. However, in his day, there were few libraries. Even though printing with movable type was invented in his lifetime, most books were still handwritten and were costly. Wessel belonged to a group of scholars who traveled from library to library and



from monastery to monastery in search of rare manuscripts and long-lost books. They then shared their discoveries with one another. He gathered a mass of knowledge and filled a personal notebook with quotations and excerpts from classical works. Other theologians were often suspicious because Wessel knew so many things that they had never heard of. Wessel was called *Magister Contradictionis*, or Master of Contradiction.

"Why Do You Not Lead Me to Christ?"

Some 50 years before the Reformation, Wessel met Thomas à Kempis (about 1379-1471), who is generally accepted as the author of the famous *De Imitatione Christi* (Imitation of Christ). Thomas à Kempis belonged to the Brethren of the Common Life, a movement that stressed the need to live a devout life. A biographer of Wessel states that Thomas à Kempis encouraged Wessel on several occasions to turn to Mary for

assistance. Wessel reacted by saying: "Why do you not lead me to Christ, who kindly invites all who are loaded down to come to him?"

Wessel was reportedly opposed to the idea of ordination to the priesthood. When asked why he declined the tonsure, or shaved patch on the head identifying one as a member of the clergy, he answered that he was not afraid of the gallows as long as he was in possession of all his thinking faculties. He was apparently referring to the fact that ordained priests could not be prosecuted, and it appears that the tonsure did indeed save many priests from the gallows! Wessel also took a stand against some common religious practices. For example, he was criticized for refusing to believe the miraculous events described in a popular book of his day, *Dialogus Miraculorum*. In response, he said: "It would be better to read from the Holy Scriptures."

"We Know Only As Much As We Ask"

Wessel studied Hebrew and Greek and acquired extensive knowledge of the writings of the early Church Fathers. His love for the

original languages of the Bible is particularly remarkable, since he lived before Erasmus and Reuchlin.* Before the Reformation, knowledge of Greek was rare. In Germany, only a handful of scholars were familiar with Greek, and there were no tools available to learn the language. After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, Wessel apparently came in contact with Greek monks who had fled to the West, and he learned from them the rudiments of Greek. In those days, Hebrew was restricted to the Jews, and it seems that Wessel learned basic Hebrew from converted Jews.

Wessel had a great love for the Bible. He viewed it as a book inspired by God and believed that all the books of the Bible are in complete harmony with one another. For Wessel, the interpretation of Bible verses had to be in harmony with the context and could not be twisted. Every forced explanation should be suspected of heresy. One of

* These men contributed greatly to the study of the original Bible languages. In 1506, Reuchlin published his Hebrew grammar, which led to a deeper study of the Hebrew Scriptures. Erasmus published a master Greek text of the Christian Greek Scriptures in 1516.

Manuscript: Universiteitsbibliotheek, Utrecht

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et ahaba. Sed iōm iheieh azer eieheb, sa;

WESSEL AND GOD'S NAME

In Wessel's writings, the name of God is generally rendered "Jovah." However, Wessel used "Jehovah" on at least two occasions. In discussing the views of Wessel, author H. A. Oberman concludes that Wessel felt that if Thomas Aquinas and others had known Hebrew, "they would have discovered that the name of God revealed to Moses does not mean 'I am who I am,' but 'I will be who I will be.' ** The *New World Translation* correctly gives the meaning "I shall prove to be what I shall prove to be." —Exodus 3:13, 14.

* Wessel Gansfort (1419-1489) and Northern Humanism, page 105.



*Wessel challenged the sale of indulgences,
approved by Pope Sixtus IV*

his favorite Bible verses was Matthew 7:7, which states: "Keep on seeking, and you will find." On the strength of that verse, Wessel firmly believed that it is beneficial to ask questions, reasoning that "we know only as much as we ask."

A Remarkable Request

In 1473, Wessel visited Rome. There he had an audience with Pope Sixtus IV, the first of six popes whose grossly immoral conduct finally led to the Protestant Reformation. Historian Barbara W. Tuchman points out that Sixtus IV introduced a period of "unabashed, unconcealed, relentless pursuit of personal gain and power politics." He shocked public opinion by his open nepotism. One historian writes that Sixtus may have wanted to make the papal office a family business. Few dared to condemn those abuses.

Wessel Gansfort, however, was different. One day Sixtus told him: "My son, ask what-

ever you want, and we will give it to you." Wessel promptly answered: "Holy father, . . . since you on earth occupy the place of the highest priest and shepherd, I ask . . . that you fulfill your elevated duty in such a way that when the Great Shepherd of the sheep . . . comes, he may say to you: 'Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Master.'" Sixtus replied that this was his responsibility and that Wessel should choose something for himself. Wessel answered: "Then I ask that you give me a Greek and Hebrew Bible from the Vatican Library." The pope granted his request but remarked that Wessel had acted foolishly and that he should have asked for a bishopric!

"A Lie and an Error"

Badly in need of funds for the building of the now famous Sistine Chapel, Sixtus resorted to the sale of indulgences for the dead. These indulgences were immensely popular. The book *Vicars of Christ—The Dark Side of*

the Papacy states: "Widows and widowers, bereaved parents spent their all trying to get their loved ones out of Purgatory." Indulgences were welcomed by the common people, who fully believed that the pope could guarantee that their dead loved ones would go to heaven.

Wessel, however, firmly held that the Catholic Church, the pope included, did not have the ability to forgive sins. Wessel openly called the sale of indulgences "a lie and an error." Nor did he believe that confession to priests was necessary to obtain forgiveness of sins.

Wessel also questioned the infallibility of the pope, saying that the foundations of the faith would be weak if people were expected always to believe the popes, since they committed errors. Wessel wrote: "If the prelates set aside the commands of God and enjoin their own man-made commands, . . . what they do and command is of no avail."

Wessel Prepares the Way for the Reformation

Wessel died in 1489. Although he had opposed some of the wrongs in the church, he remained a Catholic. Yet, he was never condemned by the church as a heretic. After his death, however, fanatic Catholic monks tried to destroy his writings because these were not considered pure. By the time of Luther, the name of Wessel had almost been forgotten, none of his works had been printed, and very few manuscripts had survived. The first edition of Wessel's works was finally published between 1520 and 1522. It included a letter penned by Luther in which he personally recommended Wessel's writings.

Although Wessel was not a Reformer, as Luther was, he openly condemned some of the wrongs that led to the Reformation. In fact, he is described by McClintock and Strong's *Cyclopedia* as "the most important

among the men of German extraction who helped to prepare the way for the Reformation."

Luther saw in Wessel an ally. Author C. Augustijn writes: "Luther compares his own age and fate to that of Elijah. Just as the prophet thought that only he had been left to fight God's battles, so Luther felt that he was quite alone in his struggles with the church. But on reading Wessel's works he realized that the Lord had saved a 'remnant in Israel.'" "Luther goes so far as to declare: 'If I had read his works earlier, my enemies might think that Luther had absorbed everything from Wessel, his spirit is so in accord with mine.'"^{*}

"You Will Find"

When the Reformation occurred, it was not a sudden turn of events. The stream of ideas that led to the Reformation had been flowing for some time. Wessel realized that the decadence of the popes would ultimately lead to the desire for reform. He once said to a student: "Studious boy, you will live to see the day when the teachings of . . . quarrelsome theologians will be rejected by all true Christian scholars."

Although Wessel discerned some of the wrongs and abuses of his day, he was unable to reveal the full light of Bible truth. Still, to him the Bible was a book that should be read and studied. According to the book *A History of Christianity*, Wessel "held that, being inspired by the Holy Spirit, the Bible is the final authority in matters of faith." In the modern world, true Christians believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of God. (2 Timothy 3:16) However, Bible truths are no longer obscure or difficult to find. Today, even more than in the past, the Bible principle holds true: "Keep on seeking, and you will find."—Matthew 7:7; Proverbs 2:1-6.

* Wessel Gansfort (1419-1489) and Northern Humanism, pages 9, 15.

Happy to Wait for Jehovah



HAVE you ever eaten unripe fruit? No doubt, you were disappointed with the taste. Fruit takes time to ripen, and waiting for that to happen is certainly worthwhile. There are other circumstances under which it is rewarding to wait. "Good it is that one should wait, even silently, for the salvation of Jehovah," says the Bible. (Lamentations 3:26; Titus 2:13) In what ways must Christians wait for Jehovah? How can we benefit from waiting for him?

Waiting for God —What Does It Involve?

As Christians, we are "awaiting and keeping close in mind the presence of the day of Jehovah." We look forward to relief when he causes the "destruction of the ungodly men." (2 Peter 3:7, 12) Jehovah himself is eager to end all evil, but he is exercising restraint so as to bring about the salvation of Christians in a way that will glorify his name. The Bible says: "God, although having the will to demonstrate his wrath and to make his power known, tolerated with much long-suffering vessels of wrath made fit for destruction, in order that he might make known the riches of his glory upon vessels of mercy." (Romans 9:22, 23) Just as he did in Noah's day, Jehovah knows the right time to save his people today. (1 Peter 3:20) Thus, waiting for God involves waiting for his time to act.

As we await Jehovah's day, we may at times be upset to see the moral standards of the

world around us sink ever lower. At such moments, it is good to consider the words of God's prophet Micah, who wrote: "The loyal one has perished from the earth, and among mankind there is no upright one." Then he added: "As for me, it is for Jehovah that I shall keep on the lookout. I will show a waiting attitude for the God of my salvation." (Micah 7:2, 7) What is the "waiting attitude" that we should cultivate? Since having to wait is often frustrating, how can we find joy while waiting for God?

Happy While Waiting

We can learn the right attitude from Jehovah. He has never ceased being "the happy God." (1 Timothy 1:11) He is happy while he waits because he continues working toward the fulfillment of his purpose to uplift people who love him to the perfection that he intended for humans when he created them. (Romans 5:12; 6:23) From his work, he sees pleasing results—millions of people have been attracted to true worship. Jesus said: "My Father has kept working until now, and I keep working." (John 5:17) Doing things for others is fundamental to being happy. (Acts 20:35) Similarly, true Christians are not waiting idly. Rather, they keep working to help others learn of God's purpose for mankind.

Faithful people have always been content to praise God while waiting for his time to act. Take as an example the psalmist David. David was persecuted by his king, betrayed

by a close companion, and turned upon by his son. In each of these circumstances, could David be happy as he waited for relief to come in Jehovah's due time? Psalm 71, evidently written by David, says: "As for me, I shall wait constantly, and I will add to all your praise. My own mouth will recount your righteousness, all day long your salvation." (Psalm 71:14, 15) Rather than waiting in frustration, David expressed joy because he was busy praising Jehovah and strengthening others in true worship.—Psalm 71:23.

Waiting for Jehovah is not exasperating like waiting for a delayed bus. It is more like the joyful waiting of parents as their child develops into a grown-up they can be proud of. The years are filled with activity—training, instruction, and discipline—all aimed at achieving the desired result. Similarly, we who wait for Jehovah find happiness in helping others draw close to God. We too want to gain God's approval and, ultimately, salvation.

Not Giving Up Hope

Waiting for Jehovah implies continuing to love and serve him without giving up hope. This can be challenging. Many of God's ser-

vants today live in societies where people sneer at anyone leading a life based on faith in God's promises. Consider, though, the example of faithful Israelites who kept their hope alive during the 70-year exile in Babylon. What helped them to do so? No doubt, reading the psalms strengthened them. One encouraging psalm that may have been written by that time says: "For his word I have waited. My soul has waited for Jehovah more than watchmen for the morning, watching for the morning. Let Israel keep waiting for Jehovah."—Psalm 130:5-7.

The Jews who kept their hope alive by reading and speaking about it were rewarded when Babylon finally fell to invaders. Thousands of faithful Jews quickly headed for Jerusalem. Concerning that time, it is written: "When Jehovah gathered back the captive ones of Zion, . . . our mouth came to be filled with laughter." (Psalm 126:1, 2) Those Jews did not give up, but they continued nourishing their faith. And they never gave up singing Jehovah's praise.

In the same way, true Christians who wait for God during "the conclusion of the system of things" make constant efforts to

keep their faith alive. They study God's Word, encourage one another, and keep praising Jehovah by preaching the good news of his Kingdom.—Matthew 24:3, 14.

Waiting to Benefit From Discipline

God's prophet Jeremiah wrote: "Good it is that one should wait, even silently, for the salvation of Jehovah." (Lamentations 3:26) Jeremiah meant that it would be good for God's people not to complain about the way Jehovah had disciplined them when he al-



People who are busy praising God find joy in waiting for Jehovah

lowed Jerusalem to be destroyed. Rather, they should benefit from the experience by contemplating their disobedience and their need for a change of attitude.—Lamentations 3:40, 42.

The way discipline from Jehovah benefits us might be likened to the way fruit grows to maturity. Concerning discipline from God, the Bible says: “To those who have been trained by it it yields peaceable fruit, namely, righteousness.” (Hebrews 12:11) Just as fruit needs time to ripen, so time is needed for us to change our attitudes in response to the training that God provides. For example, if misconduct on our part should cause us to lose some privilege in the congregation, our willingness to wait for God will prevent us from getting discouraged and giving up. In such circumstances, the inspired words of David are encouraging: “Being under [God’s] anger is for a moment, being under his goodwill is for a lifetime. In the evening weeping may take up lodging, but in the morning there is a joyful cry.” (Psalm 30:5) If we cultivate a waiting attitude and apply the counsel we receive from God’s Word and organization, our time for “a joyful cry” will come.

Growing to Maturity Takes Time

If you are young or recently baptized, you may be eager to assume some responsibilities in the Christian congregation. But it takes time to develop the spiritual maturity needed to shoulder such responsibilities. Therefore, take advantage of your early years to grow as a spiritual person. For example, youth is a good time to read the entire Bible, to develop Christian qualities, and to learn the art of making disciples. (Ecclesiastes 12:1) If you humbly display a waiting attitude, Jehovah’s time for you to have more responsibility will come.

The disciple-making work also requires patience. Just as the farmer must continue wa-

tering until God makes the seed grow, so it is with the work of making disciples. (1 Corinthians 3:7; James 5:7) Cultivating faith and appreciation for Jehovah in the hearts of others takes months or even years of patient Bible study. Waiting for Jehovah involves persevering, even if at first, students do not respond to what they learn. If they at least show some appreciation, that may be a sign that they are responding to Jehovah’s spirit. With patience, you may have the joy of seeing Jehovah make your student grow into a disciple of Christ.—Matthew 28:20.

Expressing Love by Waiting

As an example of how waiting can be an expression of love and confidence, consider the situation of an elderly grandmother who lives in a desert region of the Andes, in South America. She and a spiritual sister are the only Witnesses of Jehovah in their village. Can you imagine how eagerly they wait for the visit of fellow Christians? Once, a traveling overseer was on his way to make his first visit to them when he got lost. He had to retrace his steps and was delayed several hours. It was long past midnight when he finally caught sight of the village in the distance. Since there was no electricity in the area, he was surprised to see a light shining. How happy he was when he finally arrived at the entrance to the village and saw that the light came from an oil lamp held aloft by the grandmother! She was certain that he would come, so she was waiting.

With similar patience, we are happy to wait for Jehovah. We are certain that he will keep his promises. And like that traveling overseer, we appreciate those who lovingly wait for us. It is not surprising, therefore, that God appreciates those who wait for him. The Bible says: “Jehovah is finding pleasure . . . in those waiting for his loving-kindness.”—Psalm 147:11.

LET US EXALT JEHOVAH'S NAME TOGETHER

*"O magnify Jehovah with me, you people,
and let us exalt his name together."*—PSALM 34:3.

ON THE night of Nisan 14, 33 C.E., Jesus and his apostles sang Jehovah's praises together in an upper room of a house in Jerusalem. (Matthew 26:30) It was the last time that the man Jesus would do that with his apostles. However, it was fitting that he would conclude his meeting with them in that way. From the beginning of his earthly ministry to the end, Jesus praised his Father and zealously made His name known. (Matthew 4:10; 6:9; 22:37, 38; John 12:28; 17:6) In effect, he echoed the warm invitation of the psalmist: "O magnify Jehovah with me, you people, and let us exalt his name together." (Psalm 34:3) What a fine example for us to follow!

² A few hours after singing praises with Jesus, the apostle John was witness to a very different event. He saw his Master and two criminals being put to death on torture stakes. Roman soldiers broke the legs of the two criminals to hasten their deaths. However, John reports that they did not break Jesus' legs. When the soldiers came to Jesus, he was already dead. In his Gospel, John identified that development as a fulfillment of another part of Psalm 34: "Not a bone of his will be crushed."—John 19:32-36; Psalm 34:20, *Septuagint*.

³ Psalm 34 has many other points of inter-

1. What fine example did Jesus set during his earthly ministry?
- 2, 3. (a) How do we know that Psalm 34 has prophetic significance? (b) What will we consider in this article and the one following?

est to Christians. Hence, in this article and the one following, we will review the circumstances under which David wrote the psalm and then consider the encouraging contents of the psalm itself.

David's Flight From Saul

⁴ When David was young, Saul was king in Israel. However, Saul became disobedient and lost Jehovah's favor. For that reason, the prophet Samuel told him: "Jehovah has ripped away the royal rule of Israel from off you today, and he will certainly give it to a fellowman of yours who is better than you." (1 Samuel 15:28) Later, Jehovah directed Samuel to anoint David, the youngest son of Jesse, to be Israel's next king. Meanwhile, bereft of God's spirit, King Saul suffered dark moods. David, a skilled musician, was brought to Gibeah to serve the king, and David's music brought relief to Saul, who "got to loving him very much."—1 Samuel 16:11, 13, 21, 23.

⁵ As time went by, Jehovah proved to be with David. Jehovah helped him to conquer the Philistine giant Goliath and supported David as he came to be celebrated in Israel for his military prowess. However, Jehovah's blessing on David made Saul jealous, and he grew to hate David. Twice while David was

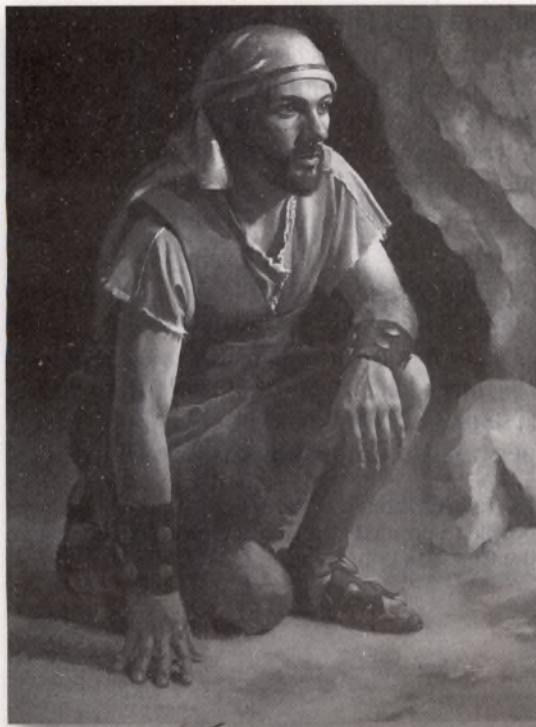
4. (a) Why was David anointed as Israel's future king? (b) Why did Saul 'get to love' David very much?
5. Why did Saul's attitude toward David change, and what was David forced to do?

playing his harp before Saul, the king hurled his spear at him. Both times, David managed to dodge the spear. When Saul made a third attempt to kill him, Israel's future king realized that he had to flee for his life. Eventually, because of Saul's continued efforts to capture and kill him, David determined to seek refuge outside the territory of Israel.—1 Samuel 18:11; 19:9, 10.

6 On his way to the border of Israel, David stopped at the city of Nob, where Jehovah's tabernacle was situated. Evidently, David was accompanied in his flight by an escort of young men, and David sought refreshments for them and for himself. Saul learned that the high priest had given David and his men some food and the sword that David had taken from the dead Goliath. In anger, Saul had all the city's inhabitants, including 85 priests, killed.—1 Samuel 21:1, 2; 22:12, 13, 18, 19; Matthew 12:3, 4.

6. Why did Saul order the killing of the inhabitants of Nob?

*Even as a fugitive,
David exalted Jehovah's name*

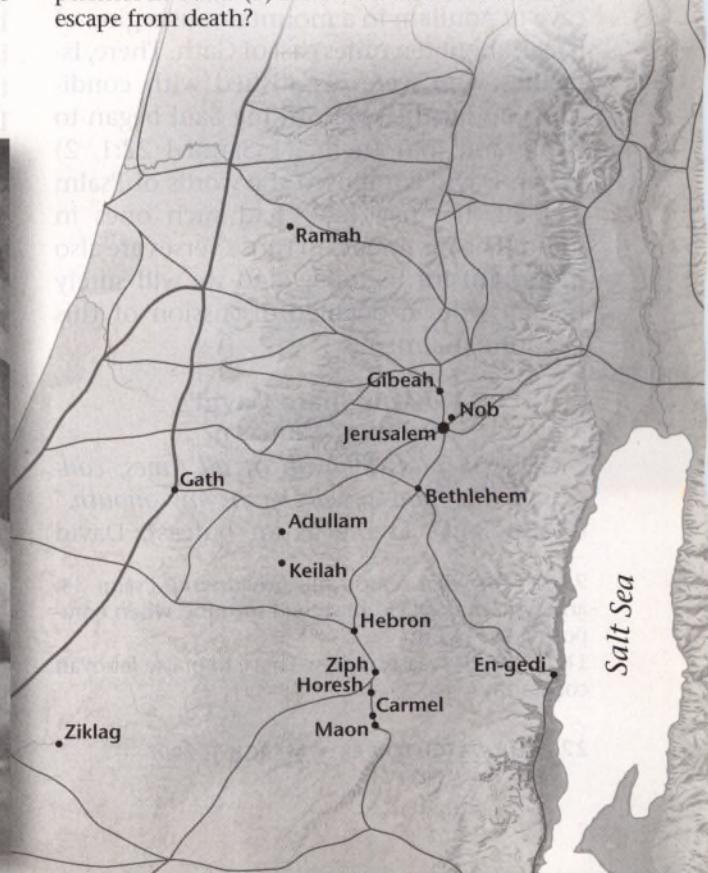


Another Escape From Death

7 From Nob, David fled about 25 miles west into Philistine territory and sought refuge with King Achish in Goliath's hometown, Gath. Perhaps David reasoned that Gath would be the last place that Saul would look for him. Soon, though, servants of Gath's king recognized David. When David overheard that he had been identified, "he became very much afraid on account of Achish the king of Gath."—1 Samuel 21:10-12.

8 The Philistines then laid hold of David. It may have been at this time that David composed the heartfelt psalm in which he appealed to Jehovah: "Do put my tears in your skin bottle." (Psalm 56:8 and superscription) He thus expressed his confidence that Jehovah would not forget his grief but would

7. Why was Gath not a safe hiding place for David?
8. (a) What does Psalm 56 tell us about David's experience in Gath? (b) How did David have a narrow escape from death?



Map: Based on map copyrighted by Pictorial Archive (Near Eastern History) Est. and Survey of Israel

lovingly care for him and protect him. David also thought out a strategy for deceiving the Philistine king. He acted as if he were insane. Seeing this, King Achish rebuked his servants for bringing a "crazy" man before him. Clearly, Jehovah blessed David's strategy. David was driven from the city, having experienced another narrow escape from death.

—1 Samuel 21:13-15.

⁹ The Bible does not say whether David's supporters fled into Gath with him or kept watch for him in nearby villages of Israel. Whatever the case, a happy reunion must have taken place when David reported to them how Jehovah had again delivered him. That event laid the basis for Psalm 34, as shown by the superscription. In the first seven verses of the psalm, David praises God for delivering him and invites his supporters to join him in exalting Jehovah as the Great Rescuer of His people.—Psalm 34:3, 4, 7.

¹⁰ David and his men found safety in the cave of Adullam in a mountainous region of Israel, about ten miles east of Gath. There, Israelites who were dissatisfied with conditions under the rule of King Saul began to come and join them. (1 Samuel 22:1, 2) When David composed the words of Psalm 34:8-22, he may have had such ones in mind. The reminders in those verses are also important for us today, and we will surely benefit from a detailed discussion of this beautiful psalm.

Do You Share David's Primary Concern?

¹¹ "*I will bless Jehovah at all times; constantly his praise will be in my mouth.*" (Psalm 34:1) Living as an outcast, David

9, 10. For what reason did David write Psalm 34, and who may David have had in mind when composing the psalm?

11, 12. What reasons do we have to praise Jehovah constantly?

must have had many material concerns, but as these words show, his daily cares did not overshadow his determination to praise Jehovah. What a fine example for us when we face hardships! Whether we are at school, at work, with fellow Christians, or in the public ministry, our uppermost desire should be to praise Jehovah. Just think of the countless reasons we have to do so! For example, there is no end to what we can discover and enjoy in Jehovah's marvelous works of creation. And consider what he has accomplished by means of the earthly part of his organization! Although they are imperfect, Jehovah has used faithful humans mightily in modern times. How do God's works compare with those of men who are idolized by the world? Do you not agree with David, who also wrote: "There is none like you among the gods, O Jehovah, neither are there any works like yours"?—Psalm 86:8.

¹² Like David, we feel impelled to praise Jehovah constantly because of his incomparable works. Moreover, we are thrilled to know that God's Kingdom is now in the hands of David's permanent Heir, Jesus Christ. (Revelation 11:15) This means that the end of this system of things is close. The everlasting future of over six billion humans is at stake. Never before has there been such a need to tell others about God's Kingdom and what it will soon do for mankind and to help them praise Jehovah with us. Surely our priority in life should be to use every opportunity to encourage others to accept this "good news" before it is too late.—Matthew 24:14.

¹³ "*In Jehovah my soul will make its boast; the meek ones will hear and will rejoice.*" (Psalm 34:2) David did not here boast of any personal accomplishments. For example, he

13. (a) In whom did David boast, and what kind of people responded? (b) How are meek ones drawn to the Christian congregation today?



Our faith is strengthened as we listen to upbuilding experiences related at our Christian gatherings

did not brag about the way he deceived the king of Gath. He realized that Jehovah protected him when he was in Gath and that he escaped with Jehovah's help. (Proverbs 21:1) Hence, David boasted, not in himself, but in Jehovah. Because of this, meek ones were drawn to Jehovah. Jesus likewise magnified the name of Jehovah, and this drew humble, teachable people to Him. Today, meek ones of all nations are drawn to the international congregation of anointed Christians, of which Jesus is the Head. (Colossians 1:18) The hearts of such meek ones are touched when they hear God's name glorified by his humble servants and when they hear the Bible's message, which God's holy spirit enables them to grasp.—John 6:44; Acts 16:14.

Meetings Strengthen Our Faith

¹⁴ “*O magnify Jehovah with me, you people, and let us exalt his name together.*” (Psalm 34:3) David was not content to praise Jehovah only in private. He warmly invited his companions to join him in exalting God's

14. (a) Was David content to praise Jehovah only in private? (b) What example did Jesus set regarding meetings for worship?

name. Similarly, Jesus Christ, the Greater David, took delight in praising Jehovah publicly—at the local synagogue, at festivals at God's temple in Jerusalem, and in company with his followers. (Luke 2:49; 4:16-19; 10:21; John 18:20) What a joyful privilege it is to follow Jesus' example in praising Jehovah on every possible occasion together with fellow believers, especially now as we “behold the day drawing near”!—Hebrews 10:24, 25.

¹⁵ *“I inquired of Jehovah, and he answered me, and out of all my frights he delivered me.”* (Psalm 34:4) This experience was important to David. Hence, he went on to say: “*This afflicted one called, and Jehovah himself heard. And out of all his distresses He saved him.*” (Psalm 34:6) When associating with fellow believers, we have many opportunities to relate upbuilding experiences of how Jehovah has helped us to endure difficult circumstances. This strengthens the faith of our fellow believers, just as David's expressions strengthened the faith of his supporters. In

15. (a) What effect did David's experience have on his men? (b) How do we benefit from attending our meetings?

David's case, his companions "looked to [Jehovah] and became radiant, and their very faces could not possibly be ashamed." (Psalm 34:5) Though on the run from King Saul, they did not feel ashamed. They were confident that God was backing David, and their faces were radiant. In a similar way, newly interested ones as well as those who have been true Christians for a long time look to Jehovah for support. Since they have personally experienced his help, their radiant faces reflect their determination to remain faithful.

Be Grateful for Angelic Help

¹⁶ "The angel of Jehovah is camping all around those fearing him, and he rescues them." (Psalm 34:7) David did not view his rescue by Jehovah as something that could happen only to him. True, David was Jehovah's anointed, Israel's future king; but he knew that Jehovah uses his angels to watch over all of his faithful worshippers, regardless of whether they are prominent or lowly. In our modern day, true worshippers have also experienced the protection that Jehovah provides. In Nazi Germany—as well as in Angola, Malawi, Mozambique, and many other lands—authorities have waged cam-

16. How has Jehovah used his angels to come to our rescue?

How Would You Answer?

- What trials did David endure as a young man?
- Like David, about what are we primarily concerned?
- How do we view Christian meetings?
- How does Jehovah use his angels to help us?

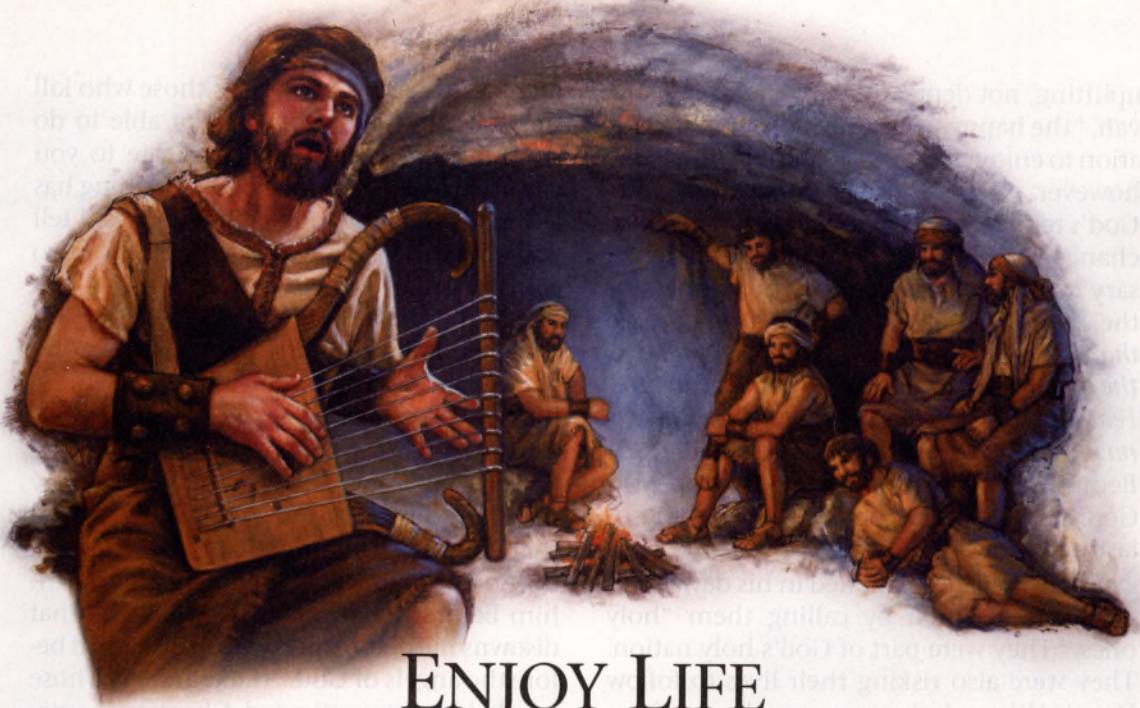
paigns to wipe out Jehovah's Witnesses. Their efforts have been in vain. Instead, Jehovah's people in those lands continue to thrive as they exalt God's name together. Why? Because Jehovah uses his holy angels to protect and guide his people.—Hebrews 1:14.

¹⁷ In addition, Jehovah's angels can maneuver matters so that any who cause others to stumble are removed from among Jehovah's people. (Matthew 13:41; 18:6, 10) And even though we may be unaware of it at the time, angels remove obstacles that could hinder our service to God, and they protect us from things that could endanger our relationship with Jehovah. Most important, they guide us in the work of declaring "everlasting good news" to all mankind, including in places where the preaching work is carried out under dangerous circumstances. (Revelation 14:6) Proof of angelic help has often been related in Bible literature published by Jehovah's Witnesses.* Such experiences are far too numerous to be dismissed as coincidence.

¹⁸ To continue benefiting from angelic guidance and protection, we must keep on exalting Jehovah's name even in the face of opposition. Remember, God's angel encamps only "around those fearing [Jehovah]." What does that imply? What is the fear of God, and how can we cultivate it? Why would a loving God want us to fear him? These questions will be discussed in the following article.

* See *Jehovah's Witnesses—Proclaimers of God's Kingdom*, page 550; *2005 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses*, pages 53-4; *The Watchtower*, March 1, 2000, pages 5-6; January 1, 1991, page 27; and February 15, 1991, page 26.

17. In what ways do God's angels help us?
18. (a) What is required for us to benefit from angelic help? (b) What will be considered in the next article?



ENJOY LIFE IN THE FEAR OF JEHOVAH

"Fear Jehovah, you holy ones of his, for there is no lack to those fearing him." —PSALM 34:9.

PREACHERS in Christendom who teach the fear of God frequently do so on the basis of the unscriptural teaching that God punishes sinners eternally in hellfire. Such a doctrine is contrary to what the Bible teaches about Jehovah as a God of love and justice. (Genesis 3:19; Deuteronomy 32:4; Romans 6:23; 1 John 4:8) Other ministers of Christendom take the opposite approach. They never mention the fear of God. Instead, they teach that God is permissive and accepts almost anyone regardless of the kind of life he lives. That too is not what the Bible teaches.—Galatians 5:19-21.

1, 2. (a) In what different ways has Christendom viewed the fear of God? (b) What questions will we now examine?

² In fact, the Bible encourages us to fear God. (Revelation 14:7) That truth raises questions. Why does a loving God want us to fear him? What kind of fear does God require? How can fearing God benefit us? We will consider these questions as we continue our discussion of the 34th Psalm.

Why Fear God

³ As Creator and Sovereign Ruler of the universe, Jehovah deserves to be feared. (1 Peter 2:17) However, such fear is not abject terror of a cruel god. It is reverential awe because of who Jehovah is. It is also the fear of displeasing him. Godly fear is noble and

3. (a) How do you view the command to fear God? (b) Why are fearers of Jehovah happy?

uplifting, not depressing or terrifying. Jehovah, "the happy God," wants his human creation to enjoy life. (1 Timothy 1:11) To do so, however, we have to live in harmony with God's requirements. For many, that means a change in lifestyle. All who make the necessary change experience the truthfulness of the psalmist David's words: "*Taste and see that Jehovah is good, O you people; happy is the able-bodied man that takes refuge in him. Fear Jehovah, you holy ones of his, for there is no lack to those fearing him.*" (Psalm 34:8, 9) Because they have a good relationship with God, all who fear Jehovah lack nothing of lasting value.

⁴ Notice that as it applied in his day, David dignified his men by calling them "holy ones." They were part of God's holy nation. They were also risking their lives to follow David. Although they were on the run from King Saul, David was confident that Jehovah would continue supplying their basic needs. David wrote: "*The maned young lions themselves have had little on hand and gone hungry; but as for those seeking Jehovah, they will not lack anything good.*" (Psalm 34:10) Jesus gave similar assurance to his followers.

—Matthew 6:33.

⁵ Many of those who listened to Jesus were from the disadvantaged, lowly class of Jews. Thus, Jesus "felt pity for them, because they were skinned and thrown about like sheep without a shepherd." (Matthew 9:36) Would such lowly ones have the courage to follow Jesus? To do so, they would need to cultivate the fear of Jehovah, not of

4. What assurance did both David and Jesus give?

5. (a) What was the background of many followers of Jesus? (b) What counsel did Jesus give on the matter of fear?

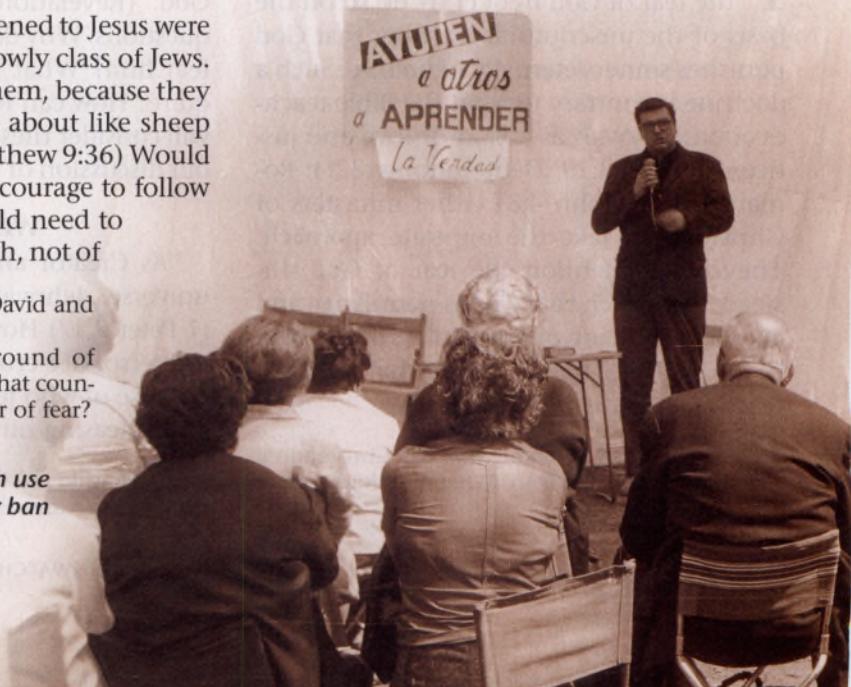
ANSWER ON PAGE 26

Fearers of Jehovah use discretion when under ban

men. Jesus said: "Do not fear those who kill the body and after this are not able to do anything more. But I will indicate to you whom to fear: Fear him who after killing has authority to throw into Gehenna. Yes, I tell you, fear this One. Five sparrows sell for two coins of small value, do they not? Yet not one of them goes forgotten before God. But even the hairs of your heads are all numbered. Have no fear; you are worth more than many sparrows." —Luke 12:4-7.

⁶ When fearers of Jehovah are pressured by their enemies to stop serving God, they may call to mind Jesus' counsel: "Everyone that confesses union with me before men, the Son of man will also confess union with him before the angels of God. But he that disowns me before men will be disowned before the angels of God." (Luke 12:8, 9) Those words have strengthened Christians, especially in lands where true worship is banned. Such ones keep on praising Jehovah discreetly at Christian meetings and in their

6. (a) What words of Jesus have strengthened Christians? (b) Why is Jesus the best example of displaying godly fear?



public ministry. (Acts 5:29) Jesus sets the best example in displaying "godly fear." (Hebrews 5:7) Speaking of him, the prophetic Word foretold: "Upon him the spirit of Jehovah must settle down, the spirit . . . of the fear of Jehovah; and there will be enjoyment by him in the fear of Jehovah." (Isaiah 11:2, 3) Hence, Jesus is eminently qualified to teach us the benefits of godly fear.

⁷ All who follow Jesus' example and who obey his teachings are, in effect, responding to an invitation similar to one that David extended: "*Come, you sons, listen to me; the fear of Jehovah is what I shall teach you.*" (Psalm 34:11) It was natural for David to address his men as "sons" because they looked to him as their leader. For his part, David gave spiritual help to his followers so that they could be united and enjoy God's favor. What a fine example that is for Christian parents! Jehovah has given them authority regarding their sons and daughters to "go on bringing them up in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah." (Ephesians 6:4) By daily discussing spiritual matters with their children and by conducting a regular Bible study with them, parents help their young ones to enjoy life in the fear of Jehovah.
—Deuteronomy 6:6, 7.

How to Practice Godly Fear

⁸ As noted earlier, fearing Jehovah does not deprive us of joy. David asked: "*Who is the man that is delighting in life, that is loving enough days to see what is good?*" (Psalm 34:12) Clearly, the fear of Jehovah is the key to enjoying a long life and seeing good. However, it is easy to make the claim, "I fear God." It is another matter to prove it by our con-

7. (a) How do Christians, in effect, respond to an invitation similar to one that David extended? (b) How can parents follow David's good example?
- 8, 9. (a) What makes a God-fearing lifestyle so appealing? (b) What is involved in safeguarding our tongue?

duct. Hence, David proceeds to explain how we can show godly fear.

⁹ "*Safeguard your tongue against what is bad, and your lips against speaking deception.*" (Psalm 34:13) The apostle Peter was inspired to quote this part of Psalm 34 after he counseled Christians to treat one another with brotherly affection. (1 Peter 3:8-12) Safeguarding our tongue from what is bad means that we will avoid spreading harmful gossip. Instead, we will always strive to be upbuilding when we talk to others. Further, we will strive to be courageous and speak the truth.
—Ephesians 4:25, 29, 31; James 5:16.

¹⁰ "*Turn away from what is bad, and do what is good; seek to find peace, and pursue it.*" (Psalm 34:14) We avoid things that God condemns, such as sexual immorality, pornography, theft, spiritism, violence, drunkenness, and drug abuse. We also reject entertainment that features such disgusting things. (Ephesians 5:10-12) Instead, we use our time to do what is good. The greatest good that we can do is to share regularly in the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making work, helping others to gain salvation. (Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20) Doing good also includes preparing for and attending Christian meetings, contributing to the worldwide work, caring for our Kingdom Hall, and being concerned about the needs of disadvantaged Christians.

¹¹ David set a good example in pursuing peace. Twice he had the opportunity to kill Saul. On both occasions, he refrained from violence and later spoke respectfully to the king, hoping to restore peace. (1 Samuel 24:8-11; 26:17-20) What can be done today

10. (a) Explain what it means to turn away from what is bad. (b) What is involved in doing what is good?
11. (a) How did David practice what he preached about peace? (b) What can you do to 'pursue peace' in the congregation?

when a situation threatens to disturb the peace of the congregation? We should "seek to find peace, and pursue it." Thus, if we sense that relations between us and a fellow believer are strained, we obey Jesus' counsel: "First make your peace with your brother." Then we continue with other aspects of true worship.—Matthew 5:23, 24; Ephesians 4:26.

Fearing God Brings Rich Rewards

¹² "*The eyes of Jehovah are toward the righteous ones, and his ears are toward their cry for help.*" (Psalm 34:15) The record of God's dealings with David proves that those words are true. Today, we experience deep joy and inner peace because we know that Jehovah is watching over us. We are confident that he will always respond to our needs, even when we are under great stress. We know that soon all true worshippers will face the foretold attack of Gog of Magog and the "fear-inspiring day of Jehovah." (Joel 2:11, 31; Ezekiel 38:14-18, 21-23) Whatever situation we then have to face, David's words will be true in our case: "*They cried out, and Jehovah himself heard, and out of all their distresses he delivered them.*"—Psalm 34:17.

¹³ How thrilling it will be at that time to see Jehovah magnify his great name! Our hearts will be filled with greater awe and reverence than ever before, and all opposers will meet a humiliating end. "*The face of Jehovah is against those doing what is bad, to cut off the mention of them from the very earth.*" (Psalm 34:16) What a rich reward it will be to experience that grand deliverance into God's righteous new world!

Promises That Help Us Endure

¹⁴ Meanwhile, to continue obeying Jehovah in a corrupt and hostile world requires

12, 13. (a) What present benefits do fearers of God enjoy? (b) What grand reward will faithful worshippers shortly enjoy?

14. What will help us to endure despite calamities?



The greatest good we can do for our neighbors is to share with them the good news of the Kingdom

endurance. Godly fear is a great aid as we cultivate obedience. Because of the critical times in which we live, some servants of Jehovah experience extreme hardships that break their heart and crush their spirit, as it were. However, they can be absolutely sure that if they look to Jehovah, he will help them to endure. David's words convey true comfort: "*Jehovah is near to those that are broken at heart; and those who are crushed in spirit he saves.*" (Psalm 34:18) Encouragingly, David went on to say: "*Many are the calamities of the righteous one, but out of them all Jehovah delivers him.*" (Psalm 34:19) No matter how many calamities befall us, Jehovah is strong enough to deliver us.

¹⁵ Soon after composing Psalm 34, David heard of the calamity that had befallen the inhabitants of Nob, when Saul massacred them and most of the priests. How distressed he must have been to recall that it was his visit to Nob that provoked Saul's wrath! (1 Samuel 22:13, 18-21) David no doubt turned to Jehovah for help, and he surely took comfort in the prospect of a future resurrection of "the righteous."—Acts 24:15.

¹⁶ Today, the resurrection hope strengthens us too. We know that nothing our enemies do can cause us lasting harm. (Matthew 10:28) David expressed similar conviction in these words: "*He is guarding all the bones of [the righteous] one; not one of them has been broken.*" (Psalm 34:20) That verse had a literal fulfillment in the case of Jesus. Though Jesus was cruelly put to death, not one of his bones was "crushed." (John 19:36) In an extended application, Psalm 34:20 assures us that no matter what trials anointed Christians and their "other sheep" companions face, they will never be permanently disadvantaged. Their bones will never be crushed, figuratively speaking.—John 10:16.

¹⁷ For the wicked, the situation is different. Soon they will reap the bad they have sown. "*Calamity will put the wicked one himself to death; and the very ones hating the righteous one will be held guilty.*" (Psalm 34:21) All who continue to oppose God's people face the worst possible calamity. At the revelation of Jesus Christ, they "will undergo the judicial punishment of everlasting destruction."

—2 Thessalonians 1:9.

¹⁸ David's psalm concludes with these re-

15, 16. (a) What calamity did David learn of soon after composing Psalm 34? (b) What will help us endure trials?

17. What calamity awaits unrepentant haters of Jehovah's people?

18. In what sense are the "great crowd" already redeemed, and what will they experience in the future?

assuring words: "*Jehovah is redeeming the soul of his servants; and none of those taking refuge in him will be held guilty.*" (Psalm 34:22) Near the end of his 40-year reign, King David said: "[God] redeemed my soul out of all distress." (1 Kings 1:29) Like David, fearers of Jehovah will soon be able to look back and rejoice at being redeemed from any guilt because of sin and rescued from all their trials. Already, most anointed Christians have received their heavenly reward. "A great crowd" from all nations are now joining the remaining ones of Jesus' brothers in serving God and as a result enjoy a clean standing before Jehovah. This is because they exercise faith in the redeeming power of Jesus' shed blood. During the coming Thousand Year Reign of Christ, the full benefits of the ransom sacrifice will be applied to them, raising them to human perfection.

—Revelation 7:9, 14, 17; 21:3-5.

¹⁹ Why will all these blessings come to the "great crowd" of God's worshippers? Because they are determined to continue fearing Jehovah, serving him with awe-filled wonder and reverential obedience. Indeed, the fear of Jehovah makes life enjoyable now and helps us "get a firm hold on the real life"—everlasting life in God's new world.
—1 Timothy 6:12, 18, 19; Revelation 15:3, 4.

19. What are members of the "great crowd" determined to do?

Do You Remember?

- Why should we fear God, and what does fearing him mean?
- What effect should godly fear have on our conduct?
- What rewards come from being God-fearing?
- What promises help us to endure?

2007 "FOLLOW THE CHRIST!" DISTRICT CONVENTION LOCATIONS

Amarillo, TX Cal Farley Coliseum, Civic Center, 401 S. Buchanan St.

English July 13-15

Spanish July 27-29, August 3-5

Amherst, MA The Mullins Center, University of Massachusetts, Commonwealth Ave.

English June 15-17, June 22-24, June 29-July 1, July 13-15, July 20-22, July 27-29

Spanish July 6-8

Anchorage, AK George M. Sullivan Arena, 1600 Gambell St.

English June 29-July 1

Bakersfield, CA Rabobank Arena, 1001 Truxtun Ave.

English August 10-12, August 17-19, August 24-26

Spanish May 25-27, July 27-29

Belton, TX Bell County Expo Center Arena, 301 W. Loop 121

English July 13-15, August 3-5, August 10-12

Spanish July 20-22, July 27-29

Billings, MT MetraPark Arena, 308 6th Ave. N.

English June 1-3

Birmingham, AL BJCC Arena, 19th St. & 9th Ave. N.

English June 22-24

Bismarck, ND Civic Center Arena, 601 E. Sweet Ave.

English July 6-8

Bloomington, IL U.S. Cellular Coliseum, 101 S. Madison St.

English May 25-27

Spanish June 29-July 1, July 6-8, July 27-29

Bossier City, LA CenturyTel Center Arena, 2000 CenturyTel Center Dr.

English June 8-10

Brooklyn, NY Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 973 Flatbush Ave.

English June 1-3, June 15-17, June 29-July 1, July 6-8, July 13-15, August 17-19, August 31-September 2, September 14-16

Korean August 3-5

Russian July 27-29

Spanish June 8-10, June 22-24, July 20-22, August 10-12, August 24-26, September 7-9

Charleston, WV Civic Center Coliseum, 200 Civic Center Dr.

English June 15-17

Cleveland, OH Wolstein Center, Cleveland State University, Prospect Ave. & E. 21st St.

English July 6-8, July 13-15, July 27-29, August 3-5

Columbia, MO Mizzou Arena, One Champions Dr.

English August 10-12

Columbia, SC The Colonial Center, 801 Lincoln St.

English June 15-17, June 22-24, June 29-July 1

Columbus, GA Civic Center Arena, 400 4th St.

English July 6-8, July 13-15

Coronaopolis, PA Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 1630 Spring Run Rd. Ext.

Greek June 29-July 1

Corpus Christi, TX AmericanBank Center Arena, 1901 N. Shoreline Blvd.

English August 10-12

Spanish August 24-26

Cypress, TX Richard E. Berry Center Arena, 8877 Barker Cypress Rd.

English June 8-10, June 15-17, June 22-24

Dayton, OH Ervin J. Nutter Center, Wright State University, 3640 Colonel Glenn Hwy.

English June 22-24, June 29-July 1, July 6-8, July 13-15

De Kalb, IL Convocation Center, Northern Illinois University, 1525 W. Lincoln Hwy.

English June 8-10, June 29-July 1, July 20-22, July 27-29, August 3-5, August 10-12, August 17-19

Duluth, GA The Arena at Gwinnett Center, 6400 Sugarloaf Pkwy.

English June 8-10, June 15-17, June 22-24, June 29-July 1

Evansville, IN Roberts Stadium, 2600 Division St.

English June 29-July 1, July 6-8

Fort Worth, TX Convention Center, 1111 Houston St.

English June 1-3, June 8-10, June 29-July 1

Spanish June 15-17, June 22-24, July 6-8

Fremont, CA Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 43400 Osgood Rd.

Chinese July 13-15

Russian July 20-22

Vietnamese July 6-8

Gainesville, FL Stephen C. O'Connell Center Arena, University of Florida, North South Dr. & University Ave.

English June 29-July 1, July 27-29

Glendale, AZ Jobing.com Arena, 6520 N. 91st Ave.

English June 22-24, July 27-29

Spanish July 20-22

Green Bay, WI Resch Center, 1901 S. Oneida St.

English May 25-27

Hampton, VA Coliseum, 1000 Coliseum Dr.

English June 29-July 1, July 13-15

Huntsville, AL Von Braun Center Arena, 700 Monroe St. SW

English June 22-24, June 29-July 1

Spanish July 6-8

Jackson, MS Mississippi Coliseum, 1207 Mississippi St.

English June 15-17, June 22-24

Jersey City, NJ Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 2932 Kennedy Blvd.

American Sign Language July 6-8

English May 25-27, June 8-10, June 22-24, August 3-5, August 17-19, August 24-26

French July 13-15, July 20-22

Japanese (Annex 2nd floor) August 10-12

Portuguese July 27-29

Spanish June 1-3, June 15-17, June 29-July 1, August 10-12

Johnson City, TN Freedom Hall Civic Center Arena, 1320 Pactolas Rd.

English June 15-17, June 22-24

Kansas City, MO Kemper Arena, 1800 Genesee St.

English June 1-3

Spanish June 8-10

Katy, TX Leonard E. Merrell Center, 6301 S. Stadium Ln.

Spanish June 29-July 1, July 6-8, July 13-15, July 20-22

Kennewick, WA Toyota Center, 7100 W. Quinault Ave.

English June 29-July 1, July 6-8, July 13-15

Spanish July 20-22, August 3-5, August 10-12

Kissimmee, FL Silver Spurs Arena, 1875 Silver Spur Ln.

English July 20-22, July 27-29, August 24-26, August 31-September 2

Spanish August 3-5, August 10-12, August 17-19

Lincoln, NE Bob Devaney Sports Center, University of Nebraska, 16th St. & Military Rd.

English July 6-8

Long Beach, CA Convention Center Arena, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.

English June 8-10, June 15-17, July 20-22, August 31-September 2, September 7-9

Japanese (Seaside Ballroom) July 13-15

Spanish June 22-24, July 6-8, July 13-15, August 3-5, August 10-12, August 17-19, August 24-26

Macon, GA Centrepex Coliseum, 200 Coliseum Dr.

English July 6-8

Spanish June 15-17, June 22-24

McAllen, TX Convention Center Arena, 29th St. & Ware Rd.

Spanish June 1-3, July 13-15, July 27-29

Mira Loma, CA Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 3300 Cornerstone Dr.

Korean July 13-15

Tagalog July 6-8

Mobile, AL Civic Center Arena, 401 Civic Center Dr.

English July 6-8, August 3-5, August 10-12

Newburgh, NY Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 23 Unity Pl.

English June 15-17, June 29-July 1, July 13-15, July 20-22, July 27-29, August 3-5, August 10-12, August 17-19, August 24-26

Spanish June 22-24, July 6-8

Norco, CA Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 1001 Parkridge Ave. American Sign Language July 13-15 Arabic July 27-29 Armenian July 20-22	St. Charles, MO The Family Arena, 2002 Arena Pkwy. English August 3-5, August 10-12	Chilliwack, BC Prospera Centre, 45323 Hodgins Ave. English July 6-8, July 13-15, July 20-22, July 27-29
Norman, OK Lloyd Noble Center Arena, University of Oklahoma, 2900 Jenkins Ave. English June 29-July 1	St. Louis, MO Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 953 Laredo Ave. Korean August 17-19	Cornwall, ON Ed Lumley Arena, Cornwall Civic Complex, 100 Water St. E. English June 8-10, June 15-17 French June 22-24, June 29-July 1
Ogden, UT Dee Events Center, 4450 S. Harrison Blvd. English June 29-July 1 Spanish July 6-8	San Angelo, TX Convention Center Coliseum, 50 E. 43rd St. Spanish July 6-8	Dartmouth, NS Dartmouth Sportsplex, 110 Wyse Rd. English June 22-24
Pine Bluff, AR Convention Center Arena, 500 E. 8th Ave. English June 15-17, June 22-24, June 29-July 1	San Diego, CA Qualcomm Stadium, 9449 Friars Rd. English June 8-10 Spanish June 15-17	Edmonton, AB Rexall Place, Northlands Park, 7424 118th Ave. English June 29-July 1 (<i>American Sign Language also</i>)
Plant City, FL Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 1904 N. Frontage Rd. American Sign Language July 20-22 Portuguese August 10-12	San Francisco, CA Cow Palace, 2600 Geneva Ave. English June 1-3, June 8-10, June 29-July 1, July 6-8, July 20-22 (<i>Portuguese sessions also</i>), July 27-29 Spanish June 15-17, June 22-24, July 13-15	Grande Prairie, AB Canada Games Arena, 10017 99th Ave. English June 22-24
Portland, ME Cumberland County Civic Center, 1 Civic Center Sq. English May 25-27, June 1-3	Tacoma, WA Tacoma Dome, 2727 East D St. English June 22-24, June 29-July 1	Hamilton, ON Copps Coliseum, 101 York Blvd. English July 6-8, July 13-15
Portland, OR Memorial Coliseum Arena, One Center Ct. English June 22-24, June 29-July 1, July 6-8, July 20-22	Toledo, OH Seagate Convention Centre Arena, 401 Jefferson Ave. English June 22-24, June 29-July 1, July 6-8, July 20-22, July 27-29 Spanish July 13-15	Kamloops, BC Interior Savings Centre, 300 Lorne St. English July 6-8
Pueblo, CO Colorado State Fair Events Center, 1001 Beulah Ave. English May 25-27, June 8-10, June 15-17, August 10-12	Tucson, AZ Convention Center, 260 S. Church St. English July 6-8 Spanish July 13-15, July 20-22	Kitchener, ON Kitchener Memorial Auditorium Complex, 400 East Ave. English June 22-24, June 29-July 1 Spanish July 6-8
Queens, NY Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 44-17 Greenpoint Ave. Chinese July 27-29 English June 8-10, June 15-17, June 29-July 1, July 13-15, August 3-5, August 17-19, August 24-26 Spanish June 22-24, July 6-8, July 20-22, August 10-12	Tulsa, OK Convention Center, 100 Civic Center English June 1-3, June 8-10	Moncton, NB Coliseum Agrena, 377 Killam Dr. English June 15-17
Raleigh, NC RBC Center, 1400 Edwards Mill Rd. English August 3-5, August 10-12	Turnersville, NJ Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 300 Sovereign Way Spanish July 20-22, July 27-29 Tagalog July 13-15	Montreal, QC Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 12700, boul. Métropolitain Est, Pointe-aux-Trembles Arabic July 13-15
Reading, PA Sovereign Center Arena, 700 Penn St. English June 22-24, July 6-8, July 20-22, July 27-29, August 3-5, August 10-12, August 24-26, August 31-September 2	West Palm Beach, FL Christian Convention Center of Jehovah's Witnesses, 1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd. English May 25-27, June 1-3, June 8-10, July 13-15, July 20-22, July 27-29 French July 6-8 Spanish June 15-17, June 22-24, June 29-July 1, August 3-5, August 10-12, August 17-19, August 24-26	Mount Pearl, NL Mount Pearl Glacier, Olympic Dr. English July 6-8
Richmond, VA Coliseum, 601 E. Leigh St. English June 29-July 1, July 6-8, July 20-22, July 27-29	Wilkes-Barre, PA Wachovia Arena at Casey Plaza, 255 Highland Park Blvd. English June 22-24, July 6-8 Spanish August 24-26, August 31-September 2	Nanaimo, BC Frank Crane Arena, Beban Park Recreation Centre, 2300 Bowen Rd. English June 8-10, June 22-24
Rio Rancho, NM Santa Ana Star Center, 3001 Civic Center Dr. English July 6-8, July 13-15	Winston-Salem, NC Lawrence Joel Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 2825 University Pkwy. English June 22-24, June 29-July 1 Spanish July 6-8, July 13-15	North Bay, ON Memorial Gardens Sports Arena, 100 Chippewa St. E. English June 8-10
Roanoke, VA Civic Center Coliseum, 710 Williamson Rd. NE English July 6-8	CANADA	Prince George, BC CN Centre, 2187 Ospika Blvd. English June 8-10
Rochester, MN Taylor Arena, Mayo Civic Center, 30 Civic Center Dr. SE English July 20-22, July 27-29, August 3-5, August 10-12	Belleville, ON Belleville Yardmen Arena, 265 Cannifton Rd. English June 8-10	Quebec City, QC Colisée Pepsi, 250, boul. Wilfrid-Hamel French and Quebec Sign Language June 29-July 1
Romeoville, IL Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 800 N. Schmidt Rd. Polish July 20-22	Brampton, ON Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 2594 Bovaird Dr. W. Chinese July 20-22 Italian July 27-29 Portuguese July 13-15	Saskatoon, SK Credit Union Centre, 3515 Thatch Ave. English June 29-July 1
Saginaw, MI The Dow Events Center Arena, 303 Johnson St. English June 29-July 1, July 6-8, July 13-15	Calgary, AB Pengrowth Saddledome, 555 Saddledome Rise SE English June 15-17	Selkirk, MB Selkirk Recreation Complex, 180 Easton Dr. English June 8-10, June 15-17



An Event to Remember! Monday, April 2

It was Nisan 14 of the year 33 C.E. Jesus was sharing a cup of wine and a loaf of unleavened bread with his apostles. His instruction? “Keep doing this in remembrance of me.”—Luke 22:19.

So, once a year, Jehovah’s Witnesses around the world gather to memorialize Jesus’ death in the way he instructed on the night he made that statement. This year, Nisan 14 begins on **Monday, April 2**, at sundown. You are cordially invited to join us in this remembrance meeting on that evening. Please check with Jehovah’s Witnesses locally for the exact time and place of the meeting.