

THE WATCHTOWER

JANUARY 15, 2009

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

STUDY EDITION

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THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE, *The Watchtower*, is to honor Jehovah God, the Supreme Ruler of the universe. Just as watchtowers in ancient times enabled a person to observe developments from afar, so this magazine shows us the significance of world events in the light of Bible prophecies. It comforts people with the good news that God's Kingdom, which is a real government in heaven, will soon bring an end to all wickedness and transform the earth into a paradise. It promotes faith in Jesus Christ, who died so that we might gain everlasting life and who is now ruling as King of God's Kingdom. This magazine has been published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879 and is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

This publication is not for sale. It is provided as part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations. Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the modern-language *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References*.

PURPOSE OF STUDY ARTICLES

Study Articles 1-3 PAGES 3-16

What is involved in being a follower of Christ? It means imitating his outstanding qualities, such as his wisdom and his humility. It also requires that we be zealous in making disciples. And it includes showing heartfelt love for fellow believers. The articles discuss how you can imitate Christ in these three ways.

Study Articles 4, 5 PAGES 21-29

These two articles examine several prophecies found in the book of Isaiah that were fulfilled in Jesus Christ. A consideration of the prophecies will enhance our appreciation for all that Jehovah and Jesus accomplished in our behalf through Jesus' death and resurrection. Thus, the articles will help us to prepare our minds and hearts for the observance of the Memorial on the evening of April 9, 2009.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

"This Is the Way. Walk in It"

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"COME BE MY FOLLOWER"

"If anyone wants to come after me, let him disown himself and pick up his torture stake day after day and follow me."—LUKE 9:23.

TOWARD the end of his ministry, Jesus was witnessing in Perea, a region across the Jordan, northeast of Judea. He was approached by a young man who asked what he had to do to inherit everlasting life. Jesus, after ascertaining that the young man was faithfully observing the Mosaic Law, issued an outstanding invitation. He said: "Go, sell what things you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven, and come be my follower." (Mark 10:21) Just think—an invitation to follow Jesus, the Only-begotten Son of the Most High God!

² That young man rejected the invitation, but others accepted it. Earlier, Jesus had said to Philip: "Be my follower." (John 1:43) Philip accepted and later became an apostle. Jesus repeated the invitation to Matthew, and he too accepted it. (Matt. 9:9; 10:2-4) Indeed, Jesus offered the same invitation to all lovers of righteousness when he said: "If anyone wants to come after me, let him disown himself and pick up his torture stake day after day and follow me continually." (Luke 9:23) Hence, *anyone* can be Jesus' follower if he really wants to. Do you have that desire? Most of us have already responded positively to Jesus' kind invitation, and in the field ministry, we convey that invitation to others.

³ Sadly, though, some who have shown an interest in Bible truth do not continue. Rather, they slow down and eventually "drift away" from following Jesus. (Heb. 2:1) How

- 1, 2. (a) What kind invitation did Jesus offer? (b) How have you responded to Jesus' invitation?
3. How can we avoid drifting away from following Jesus?

can we avoid falling into that trap? It helps if we ask ourselves: 'Why did I choose to follow Jesus in the first place? What does it mean to follow him?' Bearing the answers to those two questions in mind will help us to strengthen our resolve to remain on the fine path we have chosen. It will also help us to encourage others to follow Jesus.

Why Follow Jesus?

⁴ The prophet Jeremiah stated: "I well know, O Jehovah, that to earthling man his way does not belong. It does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step." (Jer. 10:23) History has borne out the truth of Jeremiah's words. It has become increasingly evident that imperfect humans cannot successfully govern themselves. We accepted the invitation to follow Jesus because we learned that he is qualified to be our Leader in a way that no human could ever be. Consider some of Jesus' qualifications.

⁵ First, Jesus was chosen as Messiah the Leader by Jehovah himself. Who knows better than our Creator whom to appoint as a Leader for us? Second, Jesus has qualities that we can admire and imitate. (*Read Isaiah 11:2, 3.*) He is a perfect example. (1 Pet. 2:21) Third, Jesus deeply cares about those who follow him, as he showed when he laid down his life for them. (*Read John 10:14, 15.*) And he shows himself to be a caring shepherd as he guides us to a life that brings happiness now and leads to a glorious eternal future. (John 10:10, 11; Rev. 7:16, 17) For these and other reasons, we made a wise decision when

- 4, 5. Why is Jesus qualified to lead?

we chose to follow him. What, though, does such a course involve?

⁶ Being followers of Christ means more than just calling ourselves Christian. Some two billion people claim to be Christian today, but their actions reveal them to be "workers of lawlessness." (*Read Matthew 7:21-23.*) When individuals show an interest in the invitation to follow Jesus, we explain to them that true Christians pattern their entire way of life after his teachings and example—and they do so every day of their lives. To illustrate what this means, consider some of the things that we know about Jesus.

Imitate Jesus' Example of Wisdom

⁷ Jesus manifested many outstanding qualities, but we will focus on four: his wisdom, his humility, his zeal, and his love. First, consider his wisdom—his ability to put knowledge and understanding to work in a practical way. The apostle Paul wrote: "Carefully concealed in [Jesus] are all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge." (*Col. 2:3*) Where did Jesus get such wisdom? He himself said: "Just as the Father taught me I speak these things." (*John 8:28*) His wisdom originated with Jehovah, so we are not surprised at the soundness of Jesus' judgment.

⁸ For example, Jesus used good judgment in choosing his life course. He decided to keep his life simple, focusing on just one thing: the doing of God's will. He wisely devoted his time and energy to furthering Kingdom interests. We follow Jesus' example by striving to keep a 'simple eye' and thus avoid weighing ourselves down with unnecessary things that consume our energy and attention. (*Matt. 6:22*) Many Christians have taken steps to simplify their lifestyle so that they

6. What is involved in following Jesus?

7, 8. (a) What is wisdom, and why did Jesus possess it so abundantly? (b) How did Jesus demonstrate wisdom, and how can we imitate him?

can devote more time to the ministry. Some have been able to enter the pioneer service. If you are one of those, that is most commendable. "Seeking first the kingdom" brings great happiness and satisfaction.—*Matt. 6:33.*

Be Humble Like Jesus

⁹ The second aspect of Jesus' personality that we will consider is his humility. When imperfect humans are given authority, they often develop an inflated sense of their own importance. How different it was with Jesus! Despite his key position in the outworking of Jehovah's purpose, Jesus was free of even the slightest hint of haughtiness. And we are encouraged to imitate him in that. The apostle Paul wrote: "Keep this mental attitude in you that was also in Christ Jesus, who, although he was existing in God's form, gave no consideration to a seizure, namely, that he should be equal to God. No, but he emptied himself and took a slave's form and came to be in the likeness of men." (*Phil. 2:5-7*) What did that involve?

¹⁰ Jesus enjoyed the glorious privilege of dwelling in his Father's heavenly presence, but he willingly "emptied himself." His life was transferred to the womb of a Jewish vir-

9, 10. How did Jesus demonstrate his humility?

Jesus consented to come to earth and be born as a human baby. What quality did that require?



gin, there to develop for nine months until he was born as a helpless infant in the household of a lowly carpenter. In Joseph's house, Jesus gradually grew to be a toddler, a little boy, and then a teenager. He was sinless. Yet, throughout his youth he remained subject to parents who were imperfect sinners. (Luke 2: 51, 52) What extraordinary humility!

¹¹ We imitate Jesus' humility when we willingly accept assignments that might seem lowly. As an example, consider the assignment to preach the good news. Such work may appear lowly, especially when people respond with apathy, ridicule, or hostility. However, by persisting in the preaching work, we help others to respond to Jesus' invitation to follow him. Thus we help to save lives. (*Read 2 Timothy 4:1-5.*) Another example is the maintenance of our Kingdom Hall. That can involve such things as emptying trash cans, mopping floors, and cleaning washrooms—all humble tasks! Still, we recognize that maintaining our Kingdom Hall—the center of pure worship in the locality—is part of our sacred service. By willingly completing tasks that seem lowly, we show humility and thus follow in the footsteps of Christ.

Like Jesus, Be Zealous

¹² Consider Jesus' zeal in the ministry. Jesus did many things when he was on earth. In his early life, he likely worked with his adoptive father, Joseph, as a carpenter. During his ministry, Jesus performed miracles, including healing the sick and raising the dead. But his main work was that of preaching the good news and teaching those who had listening ears. (Matt. 4:23) As his followers, we have the same work to do. How can

11. In what ways can we imitate Jesus' humility?
- 12, 13. (a) How did Jesus demonstrate zeal, and what motivated him? (b) What will motivate us to be zealous in the ministry?

A PUBLICATION THAT HELPS US TO IMITATE CHRIST

During the 2007 district convention program, a 192-page book entitled "*Come Be My Follower*" was released. This publication is designed to assist Christians to focus on Jesus, especially on his qualities and actions. After two introductory chapters, the first section provides an overview of Jesus' outstanding qualities—his humility, his courage, his wisdom, his obedience, and his endurance.

Following this are sections on Jesus' activities as a teacher and as a preacher of the good news and on some of the ways that his great love was manifested. Throughout the book, information is presented to help a Christian to imitate Jesus.

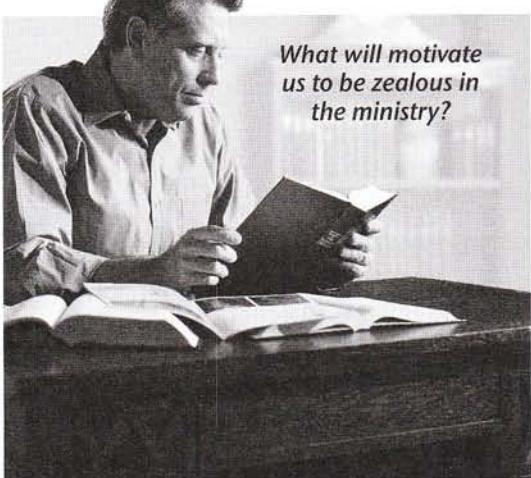
We are confident that this publication will move all of us to examine ourselves and ask: 'Am I *really* following Jesus? How can I follow him more closely?' It will also help "all those who [are] rightly disposed for everlasting life" to become followers of Christ.—Acts 13:48.



"COME BE MY FOLLOWER"

we follow his example? For one thing, we can cultivate motives like those of Jesus.

¹³ Above all, love for God motivated Jesus to preach and to teach. But Jesus also loved the truths he taught. To him, those truths were priceless treasures, and he was eager to share them with others. We as teachers, or 'public instructors,' feel the same way. Just think of some of the precious truths we have learned from God's Word! We know of the issue of universal sovereignty and how it will



be settled. We well understand what the Scriptures teach about the condition of the dead and the blessings to come in God's new world. Whether we learned such truths in recent times or long ago, they never fade in value. Old or new, such truths are, indeed, priceless treasures. (*Read Matthew 13:52*) By preaching with heartfelt enthusiasm, we convey to others our love for what Jehovah has taught us.

¹⁴ Notice, too, *how* Jesus taught. He constantly directed his hearers to the Scriptures. He frequently introduced an important point by saying: "It is written." (Matt. 4:4; 21:13) In his recorded words, he quoted directly from or referred indirectly to over half of the books of the Hebrew Scriptures. Like Jesus, we rely heavily on the Bible in our ministry and endeavor to feature the Scriptures whenever possible. In that way, we help righthearted ones to see for themselves that we are teaching God's thoughts, not our own. How it delights us when someone agrees to read from the Bible and to discuss the value and meaning of God's Word! And when such ones accept the invitation to follow Jesus, our joy is boundless.

14. How can we imitate Jesus' manner of teaching?

Following Jesus Means Loving Others

¹⁵ The final aspect of Jesus' personality that we will discuss is most heartwarming—his love for fellow humans. The apostle Paul wrote: "The love the Christ has compels us." (2 Cor. 5:14) When we reflect on the love that Jesus has for mankind in general and for us as individuals, our hearts are touched and we feel compelled to follow his example.

¹⁶ How did Jesus show love for others? His willingness to surrender his soul in mankind's behalf was the ultimate expression of his love. (John 15:13) However, during his ministry, Jesus also showed love in other ways. For instance, he had fellow feeling for those who were suffering. When he saw Mary and those with her weeping over the death of Lazarus, he was greatly touched by their sorrow. Although he was about to resurrect Lazarus, Jesus was so moved that he "gave way to tears."—John 11:32-35.

¹⁷ Early in Jesus' ministry, a leper approached Jesus and said: "If you just want to, you can make me clean." How did Jesus respond? The record says: "He was moved with pity." He then did something extraor-

15. What was an outstanding quality of Jesus, and how can reflecting on it affect us?

16, 17. In what ways did Jesus show his love for others?

Can You Explain?

- How can we show wisdom, as Jesus did?
- In what ways can we demonstrate humility?
- How can we cultivate zeal for the ministry?
- In what ways can we imitate Jesus in showing love for others?

dinary. "He stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him: 'I want to. Be made clean.' And immediately the leprosy vanished from him, and he became clean." Under the Mosaic Law, lepers were unclean, and Jesus could certainly have healed the man without physical contact. Yet, as Jesus healed the leper, he allowed him to feel the touch of another human, perhaps for the first time in years. What a tender act of compassion!—Mark 1:40-42.

¹⁸ As followers of Christ, we are called on to demonstrate our love by showing "fellow feeling." (1 Pet. 3:8) It may not be easy to understand the feelings of a fellow believer who is suffering from a chronic illness or deep depression—especially if we have never experienced such things ourselves. Still, Je-

18. How can we demonstrate "fellow feeling"?

sus empathized with the sick even though he himself was never sick. How can we cultivate similar empathy? By patiently listening as suffering ones open up their hearts to us. We could also ask ourselves, 'If I were in their situation, how would I feel?' If we cultivate sensitivity to the feelings of others, we will be better able to "speak consolingly to the depressed souls." (1 Thess. 5:14) Thus we will be following Jesus.

¹⁹ What a thrilling field of study we find in the words and deeds of Jesus Christ! The more we learn about him, the more we want to be like him—and the more we want to help others to do the same. By all means, then, let us find delight in following the Messianic King—now and forever!

19. In what ways are we affected by the example of Jesus?

FIND JOY IN THE DISCIPLE-MAKING WORK

"Go therefore and make disciples."—MATT. 28:19.

"I HAVE been studying with a family from Pakistan for the past 11 weeks," wrote a sister who is serving with a Hindi-speaking group in the United States. "Needless to say," she continues, "we have become friends. Tears well up in my eyes as I think about this family going back to Pakistan soon. My tears are prompted not only by the sorrow I feel at the loss of their company but also by the joy I've experienced while teaching them about Jehovah."

1-3. (a) How do many feel about the opportunity to conduct Bible studies? (b) What questions will we consider?

² Have you, like this sister, ever experienced the joy that comes from studying the Bible with someone? Jesus and his first-century disciples found great joy in the disciple-making work. When the 70 disciples whom Jesus had trained returned with a joyful report, Jesus himself became "overjoyed in the holy spirit." (Luke 10:17-21) Similarly, many today find great joy in making disciples. In fact, in 2007, hard-working, happy publishers conducted an average of six and a half million Bible studies each month!

³ Some publishers, though, have not yet had the pleasure of conducting a Bible study.

Others may not have conducted one in recent years. What challenges might we face as we endeavor to conduct a Bible study? How might we overcome those challenges? And what rewards do we receive when we do all we can to obey Jesus' command: "Go therefore and make disciples"?—Matt. 28:19.

Challenges That Could Rob Us of Joy

⁴ In certain parts of the world, people eagerly accept our literature and are keen to study the Bible with us. One couple from Australia who were temporarily serving in Zambia wrote: "The stories are true. Zambia is a preaching paradise. Street witnessing is incredible! People approach us, some even asking for particular issues of the magazines." In one recent year, the brothers and sisters in Zambia conducted over 200,000 Bible studies—that is, on average, more than one Bible study per publisher.

⁵ In other places, however, publishers may find it difficult to place literature and to conduct Bible studies regularly. Why? Often, people are not at home when a publisher knocks on their door, while those who are at home might be apathetic about religion. They may have been raised in a nonreligious household or may be repulsed by the hypocrisy evident in false religion. Many people have been spiritually injured—skinned and thrown about by false shepherds. (Matt. 9:36) Understandably, such ones may be wary of becoming involved in discussions about the Bible.

⁶ Some faithful publishers face a different challenge that could rob them of joy. Although they were at one time very active in the disciple-making work, they are now hampered by ill health or the limitations of

4, 5. (a) How do many people respond in some parts of the world? (b) What challenges do publishers face in some other places?

6. With what limitations might some contend?

old age. Consider, too, some limitations that we might impose upon ourselves. For example, do you feel unqualified to conduct a Bible study? You may feel as Moses did when Jehovah commissioned him to talk to Pharaoh. Moses said: "Excuse me, Jehovah, but I am not a fluent speaker, neither since yesterday nor since before that." (Ex. 4:10) Closely related to feelings of inadequacy is a fear of failure. We might worry that a person will not become a disciple because we are not the perfect teacher. Rather than risking that outcome, we might forgo the opportunity to conduct a study. How can we deal with the challenges just mentioned?

Prepare Your Heart

⁷ A first step is to prepare our own heart. Jesus said: "Out of the heart's abundance [the] mouth speaks." (Luke 6:45) Jesus was motivated in his ministry by a heartfelt concern for the welfare of others. For example, when he observed the poor spiritual condition of fellow Jews, "he felt pity for them." He said to his disciples: "The harvest is great . . . Beg the Master of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest."—Matt. 9:36-38.

⁸ As we engage in the disciple-making work, we do well to think deeply about how much we have benefited because someone took the time to study the Bible with us. Think, too, of the people we will meet in the ministry and how they will benefit from hearing the message that we bear. One woman wrote to the branch office of the country in which she lives: "I would like to tell you how much I appreciate the Witnesses who teach me at my home. I know that sometimes they must get frustrated with me because I have so many questions and I always

7. What motivated Jesus in his ministry?

8. (a) What do we do well to think about? (b) What can we learn from the comments of one Bible student?

keep them overtime. But they are patient with me and eager to share what they have learned. I thank Jehovah and Jesus that these people have come into my life."

⁹ Of course, not everyone responded to Jesus' efforts to help them. (Matt. 23:37) Some followed him for a while but then objected to his teachings and "would no longer walk with him." (John 6:66) However, Jesus did not allow the unfavorable response of some to make him feel that his message was of no value. Although much of the seed he sowed bore no fruit, Jesus focused on the good he was doing. He saw that the fields were white for harvesting and derived great joy from helping in that harvest. (*Read John 4:35, 36.*) Rather than seeing only the barren ground between the stalks of grain, can we likewise

9. On what did Jesus focus, and how can we imitate him?

focus on the potential harvest in our assigned territory? Let us examine how we can maintain such a positive attitude.

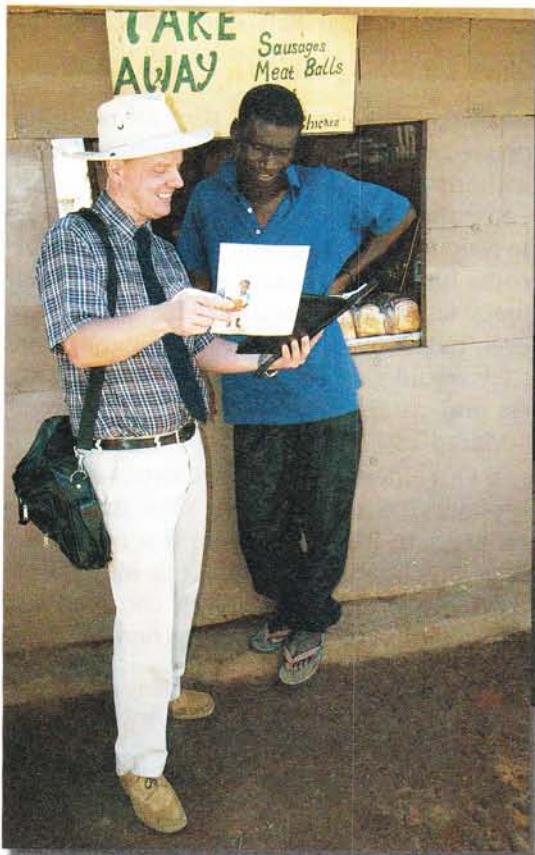
Sow With a View to Reaping

¹⁰ A farmer sows seed with a view to reaping a harvest. Similarly, we need to preach with a view to starting Bible studies. What, though, if you regularly spend time in the field ministry but find few people at home or seem unable to contact your return visits again? This can be frustrating. Should you give up on the door-to-door ministry? Certainly not! Many people are still contacted first via this time-tested method of preaching.

¹¹ To maintain your joy, however, can you expand your preaching methods, perhaps to include other ways of reaching people? For

10, 11. What can you do to maintain your joy?

Do you expand your preaching methods so as to find honesthearted individuals?



example, have you tried witnessing to people on the street or at their places of employment? Could you contact people by telephone or obtain the phone numbers of those with whom you have already shared the Kingdom message so that you can stay in touch with them? By showing perseverance and adaptability in your ministry, you will experience the joy of finding individuals who will favorably respond to the Kingdom message.

Coping With Apathy

¹² What if many in your territory are apathetic about religion? Can you adapt your approach to appeal to their interests? The apostle Paul wrote to fellow believers in Corinth: "To the Jews I became as a Jew . . . To those without law I became as without law, although I am not without law toward God." What was Paul's motive? "I have become all things to people of all sorts," he said, "that I might by all means save some." (1 Cor. 9:20-22) Can we likewise find common ground with those in our territory? Many nonreligious people want to improve the quality of their family relationships. They may also be searching for a purpose in life. Can we present the Kingdom message to such people in a way that will appeal to them?

¹³ A growing number of publishers have increased the joy they gain from the disciple-making work, even in areas where the majority of people seem apathetic. How? By learning a foreign language. One couple in their 60's discovered that thousands of Chinese students and their families were living in the congregation's assigned territory. "Because of this, we were encouraged to

12. What might we do if many in our territory seem apathetic?

13, 14. How may we be able to increase the joy we gain from the disciple-making work?

learn Chinese," says the husband. "Though this meant spending time each day studying the language," he continues, "it resulted in many Bible studies with Chinese people in our area."

¹⁴ Even if you are not able to learn a foreign language, you can make good use of the booklet *Good News for People of All Nations* when you meet those who speak another language. You can also usually obtain literature in the language of the people whom you meet. Granted, it requires extra time and effort to communicate with those of another language and culture. But do not overlook the principle found in God's Word: "He that sows bountifully will also reap bountifully." —2 Cor. 9:6.

The Entire Congregation Is Involved

¹⁵ However, making disciples is not dependent on the efforts of just one individual. Rather, it is a congregation effort. Why? Jesus said: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves." (John 13:35) And indeed, when Bible students attend meetings, they are often impressed with the loving atmosphere of our gatherings. One Bible student wrote: "I do so enjoy attending the meetings. The people are so welcoming!" Jesus said that those who become his followers may be opposed by their literal family. (*Read Matthew 10:35-37.*) However, he promised that in the congregation, they would gain numerous spiritual "brothers and sisters and mothers and children." —Mark 10:30.

¹⁶ Our elderly brothers and sisters especially play a vital role in helping Bible students to progress. In what way? Even if some elderly ones are unable to conduct a Bible study themselves, their upbuilding comments at congregation meetings strengthen the faith

15, 16. (a) Why is the disciple-making work a congregation effort? (b) What role do elderly ones play?

of all who hear them. Their record of walking “in the way of righteousness” adds beauty to the congregation and attracts honesthearted people to God’s organization.—Prov. 16:31.

Overcoming Our Fears

¹⁷ What if you struggle with feelings of inadequacy? Recall that Jehovah helped Moses by providing him with holy spirit and with a partner, his brother, Aaron. (Ex. 4:10-17) Jesus promised that God’s spirit would back our witnessing work. (Acts 1:8) Furthermore, Jesus sent workers out to preach in pairs. (Luke 10:1) Therefore, if you find it a challenge to conduct a Bible study, pray for God’s spirit to give you wisdom and then team up with a preaching companion who can give you confidence and whose experience may be of help to you. It is faith-strengthening to remember that Jehovah *chose* to use ordinary people—“the weak things of the world”—to accomplish this extraordinary work.—1 Cor. 1:26-29.

¹⁸ How can we overcome the fear of failure? We do well to remember that making a disciple is not like making a meal in which success or failure depends primarily on one person—the cook. Rather, making a disciple involves at least a three-way partnership. Jehovah does the most important part, drawing the individual to him. (John 6:44) We

17. What can we do to overcome feelings of inadequacy?
18. How can we overcome the fear of failure?

Do You Recall?

- What challenges might prevent some from conducting Bible studies?
- What might we do if many in our territory seem apathetic?
- What rewards do we receive from conducting a Bible study?

and others in the congregation do our best to use the art of teaching to help the student progress. (*Read 2 Timothy 2:15.*) And the student needs to act on what he learns. (Matt. 7:24-27) If a person discontinues his Bible study, we may be disappointed. We hope that Bible students make the right choice, but each individual must “render an account for himself to God.”—Rom. 14:12.

What Are the Rewards?

¹⁹ Conducting Bible studies keeps us focused on seeking first the Kingdom. It also impresses the truths of God’s Word deeper upon our mind and heart. Why so? A pioneer named Barak explains: “Conducting Bible studies forces you to be a better student of God’s Word. I find that I must strengthen my personal convictions before I can adequately teach someone else.”

²⁰ If you are not conducting a Bible study, does it mean that your service is of no value to God? Of course not! Jehovah deeply appreciates our efforts to praise him. All who engage in the preaching work are “God’s fellow workers.” However, conducting a Bible study brings added joy as we see how God makes the seed that we planted grow. (1 Cor. 3:6, 9) “As you see a Bible student progress,” says a pioneer named Amy, “you feel an overwhelming sense of gratitude to Jehovah for allowing you to be used to give that person a wonderful gift—the opportunity of knowing Jehovah and of receiving everlasting life.”

²¹ Doing our best to start and conduct Bible studies will help us to keep focused on serving God now and will strengthen our hope of surviving into the new world. With Jehovah’s backing, we may also help to save those who listen to us. (*Read 1 Timothy 4:16.*) What a cause for joy that would be!

19-21. (a) What benefits do we receive from conducting Bible studies? (b) How does Jehovah view all who engage in the preaching work?

ARE YOU A 'STEWARD OF GOD'S UNDESERVED KINDNESS'?

*"In brotherly love have tender affection for one another.
In showing honor to one another take the lead." —ROM. 12:10.*

GOD'S WORD repeatedly assures us that Jehovah will come to our aid when we are discouraged or brokenhearted. Note, for instance, these comforting words: "Jehovah is giving support to all who are falling, and is raising up all who are bowed down." "He is healing the brokenhearted ones, and is binding up their painful spots." (Ps. 145:14; 147:3) Moreover, our heavenly Father himself states: "I, Jehovah your God, am grasping your right hand, the One saying to you, 'Do not be afraid. I myself will help you.'" —Isa. 41:13.

² How, though, does Jehovah, who dwells in the invisible heavens, 'grasp our hand'? How does he 'raise us up when we are bowed down' by heartache? Jehovah God provides such support in various ways. For example, he gives his people "power beyond what is normal" by means of his holy spirit. (2 Cor. 4:7; John 14:16, 17) God's servants also feel the uplifting power that is exerted by the message found in God's inspired Word, the Bible. (Heb. 4:12) Is there still another way by which Jehovah fortifies us? We find an answer in the book of First Peter.

"God's Undeserved Kindness Expressed in Various Ways"

³ Addressing spirit-anointed believers, the

1. What assurances do we find in God's Word?
2. How does Jehovah provide support to his servants?
3. (a) What statement about trials is made by the apostle Peter? (b) What is discussed in the latter part of Peter's first letter?

apostle Peter writes that they have good reason to be joyful because a rich reward awaits them. Then he adds: "Though for a little while at present, if it must be, you have been grieved by various trials." (1 Pet. 1:1-6) Note the word "various." It suggests that trials will be varied. However, Peter does not stop there, leaving his brothers to wonder if they will be able to cope with such a diversity of tests. Instead, Peter points out that Christians can be sure that Jehovah will help them to cope with each trial they encounter, no matter what its nature may be. That assurance is given in the latter part of Peter's letter, where the apostle discusses matters related to "the end of all things." —1 Pet. 4:7.

⁴ Peter states: "In proportion as each one has received a gift, use it in ministering to one another as fine stewards of God's undeserved kindness expressed in various ways." (1 Pet. 4:10) Peter again uses the word "various." He, in effect, says, 'Trials come in many different forms, but God's expressions of undeserved kindness come in many different forms as well.' Why is that statement comforting? It implies that whatever the nature of our trial may be, there will always be an expression of God's undeserved kindness that will match it. Did you notice in Peter's statement, though, just how Jehovah's undeserved kindness is conveyed to us? By means of fellow Christians.

4. Why are the words of 1 Peter 4:10 comforting to us?



Do you use your "gift" to serve others or to please yourself?

"Ministering to One Another"

⁵ In speaking to all members of the Christian congregation, Peter says: "Above all things, have intense love for one another." He then adds: "In proportion as each one has received a gift, use it in ministering to one another." (1 Pet. 4:8, 10) Hence, each one in the congregation is to have a share in building fellow Christians up. We have been placed in charge of something valuable belonging to Jehovah, and we are responsible for distributing it to others. So, then, with what are we entrusted? Peter says that it is "a gift." What is the gift? How do we "use it in ministering to one another"?

⁶ God's Word states: "Every good gift and every perfect present is from above." (Jas. 1:17) Indeed, all gifts with which Jehovah entrusts his people are expressions of his undeserved kindness. One outstanding gift Jehovah imparts to us is the holy spirit. That gift enables us to cultivate such godly qualities as love, goodness, and mildness. Such qualities move us, in turn, to show fellow be-

5. (a) What should each Christian do? (b) What questions arise?

6. What are some of the gifts with which Christians are entrusted?

lievers heartfelt affection and give them willing support. True wisdom and knowledge are also among the good gifts that we acquire with the help of the holy spirit. (1 Cor. 2:10-16; Gal. 5:22, 23) In fact, all our energies, abilities, and talents may be viewed as gifts to be used to bring praise and honor to our heavenly Father. We have the God-given responsibility to use our abilities and qualities as a means of conveying expressions of God's undeserved kindness to our fellow believers.

"Use It in Ministering"—How?

⁷ Regarding gifts we have received, Peter also states: "*In proportion* as each one has received a gift, use it." The qualifying term "*in proportion*" indicates that qualities and abilities may vary not only in nature but also in extent. Even so, each one is urged to "use it [that is, any particular gift he has received] in ministering to one another." Moreover, the expression "*use it...as fine stewards*" is a command. Hence, we should ask ourselves: 'Do I, indeed, use the gifts with which I am

7. (a) What is indicated by the term "*in proportion*"? (b) What questions should we ask ourselves, and why?

entrusted to fortify my fellow believers?" (Compare 1 Timothy 5:9, 10.) 'Or do I use the abilities that I received from Jehovah mainly to benefit myself—perhaps to acquire riches or to attain social status?' (1 Cor. 4:7) If we use our gifts "in ministering to one another," we will be pleasing Jehovah.—Prov. 19:17; *read Hebrews 13:16.*

⁸ God's Word mentions various ways in which first-century Christians ministered to one another. (*Read Romans 15:25, 26; 2 Timothy 1:16-18.*) Similarly today, the command to use one's gift in behalf of fellow believers is wholeheartedly carried out by true Christians. Consider some of the ways in which that is being done.

⁹ Many brothers spend hours each month preparing meeting parts. At the meetings, when they convey some of the spiritual gems they have found during their Bible study, their insightful words motivate all in the congregation to endure. (1 Tim. 5:17) Numerous brothers and sisters are known for their warmth and compassion toward fellow believers. (Rom. 12:15) Some regularly visit those who are depressed and pray with them. (1 Thess. 5:14) Others thoughtfully write some heartfelt words of encouragement to fellow Christians who are coping with a trial. Still others kindly help those with physical limitations to attend the congregation meetings. Thousands of Witnesses share in relief work, helping fellow believers rebuild homes that have been struck by disasters. The tender affection and practical assistance rendered by such caring brothers and sisters are all manifestations of "God's undeserved kindness expressed in various ways."—*Read 1 Peter 4:11.*

8, 9. (a) What are some ways in which Christians worldwide serve in behalf of fellow believers? (b) How do the brothers and sisters in your congregation help one another?

Which Is More Important?

¹⁰ God's servants are entrusted not only with a gift to be used in behalf of their fellow believers but also with a message to be shared with their fellow man. The apostle Paul recognized these two aspects of his service to Jehovah. He wrote to the congregation in Ephesus regarding "the stewardship of the undeserved kindness of God" that was given to him for their benefit. (Eph. 3:2) Yet, he also stated: "We have been proved by God as fit to be entrusted with the good news." (1 Thess. 2:4) Like Paul, we too recognize that we are entrusted with the assignment of serving as preachers of God's Kingdom. By sharing zealously in the preaching work, we strive to imitate the example that Paul set as an untiring proclaimer of the good news. (Acts 20:20, 21; 1 Cor. 11:1) We know that preaching the Kingdom message can save lives. At the same time, however, we also strive to imitate Paul by looking for opportunities to "impart some spiritual gift" to fellow believers.—*Read Romans 1:11, 12; 10:13-15.*

¹¹ Which of these two Christian activities is more important? Asking a question like that is somewhat similar to asking about a bird, Which of his two wings is more important? The answer is obvious. A bird needs to use both wings in order to fly properly. Similarly, we need to share in both aspects of our service to God in order to be complete as Christians. Thus, instead of regarding our assignments to preach the good news and to build up fellow believers as unrelated, we view them just as the apostles Peter and Paul did—as responsibilities that complement each other. In what way?

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10. (a) Paul was concerned with what two aspects of his service to God? (b) How do we imitate Paul today?
 11. How should we view our assignments to preach and to build up our brothers?

¹² As evangelizers, we employ whatever teaching skills we may have in trying to touch the hearts of our fellow men with the uplifting message of God's Kingdom. In that way, we hope to help them to *become* Christ's disciples. However, we also use whatever abilities and other gifts we may have in trying to warm the hearts of our fellow believers with uplifting words and helpful deeds—expressions of God's undeserved kindness. (Prov. 3:27; 12:25) In that way, we hope to help them to *remain* Christ's disciples. In both activities—preaching to the public and "ministering to one another"—we have the wonderful privilege of serving as an instrument in Jehovah's hand.

—Gal. 6:10.

"Have Tender Affection for One Another"

¹³ Paul urged his fellow believers: "In brotherly love have tender affection for one another. In showing honor to one another

12. How do we serve as an instrument in Jehovah's hand?

13. What would happen if we held back in "ministering to one another"?

We preach the good news to others and support fellow Christians



take the lead." (Rom. 12:10) Indeed, having affection for our brothers impels us to serve wholeheartedly as stewards of God's undeserved kindness. We realize that if Satan succeeded in holding us back from "ministering to one another," he would weaken our unity. (Col. 3:14) In turn, a lack of unity would lead to a lack of zeal in the preaching work. Satan well knows that he needs to harm only one of our wings, so to speak, in order to ground us.

¹⁴ "Ministering to one another" benefits not only those who receive God's undeserved kindness but also those who convey it. (Prov. 11:25) Take, for example, Ryan and Roni, a couple in Illinois, U.S.A. When they learned that Hurricane Katrina had destroyed hundreds of homes of fellow Witnesses, brotherly love moved them to quit their jobs, give up their apartment, buy a secondhand trailer, fix it up, and travel 900 miles to Louisiana. There they lived for over a year while giving of their time, strength, and resources to help their

14. Who benefit from our "ministering to one another"? Give an example.





Relief workers deserve commendation for their self-sacrificing spirit

brothers. "Sharing in relief work drew me closer to God," says Ryan, age 29. "I saw how Jehovah takes care of his people." Ryan adds: "Working with older brothers taught me much about how to care for the brothers. I also learned that there is much for us younger ones to do in Jehovah's organization." Roni, age 25, notes: "I am grateful for having had a share in helping others. I feel happier than I have ever felt in my life. I know that in years to come, I will continue to reap benefits from this wonderful experience."

¹⁵ Indeed, obeying God's commands to preach the good news and to build up fellow believers brings blessings to all. The ones we help are spiritually strengthened, while we experience the heartfelt joy that only giving can bring. (Acts 20:35) The congregation as a whole grows in warmth as each member takes a loving interest in others. Furthermore, the love and affection that we show

15. What good reasons do we have to continue to serve as stewards of God's undeserved kindness?

for one another clearly identifies us as true Christians. Jesus said: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves." (John 13:35) Above all, honor goes to our caring Father, Jehovah, as his desire to strengthen those in need is reflected in his earthly servants. What good reasons we have, therefore, to use our gift "in ministering to one another as fine stewards of God's undeserved kindness"! Will you continue to do so?—Read Hebrews 6:10.

Do You Remember?

- In what ways does Jehovah strengthen his servants?
- With what are we entrusted?
- What are some ways in which we can serve our fellow believers?
- What will move us to continue to use our gift "in ministering to one another"?

"THIS IS THE WAY. WALK IN IT"

THE STORY OF EMILIA PEDERSON
AS TOLD BY RUTH E. PAPPAS



Emilia Pederson

MY MOTHER, Emilia Pederson, was born in 1878. Although she became a schoolteacher, she really wanted to use her life helping people draw close to God. Evidence of Mother's desire was a large trunk sitting in our home in the small town of Jasper, Minnesota, U.S.A. She had obtained it to transport her belongings to China, where she wanted to serve as a missionary. However, when her mother died, she had to forgo her plans and stay at home to care for her younger siblings. In 1907 she married Theodore Holien. I was born on December 2, 1925—the last of seven children.

Mother had Bible questions to which she earnestly sought answers. One question was regarding the teaching that hell is a place of fiery torment for the wicked. She asked a visiting supervisor of the Lutheran Church where she could find Bible support for this teaching. He, in effect, told her that it does not matter what the Bible says—a hell of fiery torment needs to be taught.

Her Spiritual Hunger Satisfied

Shortly after 1900, Mother's sister, Emma, went to Northfield, Minnesota, to study music. She stayed at the home of Milius Christianson, her teacher, whose wife was a Bible

Student, as Jehovah's Witnesses were then called. Emma mentioned that she had a sister who was a devout Bible reader. Before long, Mrs. Christianson wrote Mother a letter with answers to her Bible questions.

One day, a Bible Student named Lora Oathout came by train from Sioux Falls, South Dakota, to preach in Jasper. Mom studied the Bible literature she received, and in 1915, she began sharing Bible truths with others, distributing the literature that Lora provided.

In 1916, Mom heard that Charles Taze Russell would be at a convention in Sioux City, Iowa. She wanted to attend. By this time, Mom had five children, and Marvin, the youngest, was only five months old. Nevertheless, children in tow, she made the train journey of some 100 miles to Sioux City to attend the convention. She heard Brother Russell's talks, saw the "Photo-Drama of Creation," and was baptized. Upon returning home, she wrote an article about the convention, which was published in the *Jasper Journal*.

In 1922, Mom was among the some 18,000 who attended the convention at Cedar Point, Ohio. After that convention, she never let up in advertising God's Kingdom. In

1916: Mom, Dad (holding Marvin); bottom, from left to right: Orlen, Ester, Lilian, Mildred

effect, she would urge us to heed the admonition: "This is the way. Walk in it."—Isa. 30:21.

Fruitage of the Kingdom Ministry

In the early 1920's, my parents moved into a house outside Jasper. Dad had a successful business and a big family to support. He did not study the Bible as much as Mom did, but he wholeheartedly supported the preaching work and opened our home to traveling ministers, then known as pilgrims. Often, when one of the traveling brothers gave a talk in our home, a hundred or so attended—packed into our living room, dining room, and bedroom.

When I was about seven years old, my aunt Lettie phoned and said that her neighbors, Ed Larson and his wife, wanted to study the Bible. They readily accepted Bible truths and later invited another neighbor, Martha Van Daalen, a mother of eight children, to join in the study. Martha and her whole family also became Bible Students.*

About that time, Gordon Kammerud, a young man who lived a few miles away from us, began to work with Dad. Gordon had been warned: "Be careful with the boss's daughters. They have a strange religion." However, Gordon began studying the Bible and was soon convinced that he had found the truth. Three months later, he was baptized. His parents also became believers, and our families—the Holiens, the Kammeruds, and the Van Daalens—became close friends.

Strengthened by Conventions

Mom had been so encouraged by the Cedar Point convention that she never wanted to miss another convention. So my early



memories are of making long trips to attend those gatherings. The one in Columbus, Ohio, in 1931 was momentous because it was then that the name Jehovah's Witnesses was adopted. (Isa. 43:10-12) I also well remember the convention in Washington, D.C., in 1935, where a historic talk identified the "great multitude," or the "great crowd," spoken of in Revelation. (Rev. 7:9; King James Version) My sisters Lilian and Eunice were among the more than 800 who were baptized there.

Our family traveled to conventions in Columbus, Ohio, in 1937; Seattle, Washington, in 1938; and New York City in 1939. The Van Daalen and Kammerud families and others accompanied us, and we camped along the way. Eunice married Leo Van Daalen in 1940, and they became pioneers. That same year, Lilian married Gordon Kammerud, and they too became pioneers.

* See *The Watchtower*, June 15, 1983, pages 27-30, for the life story of Emil H. Van Daalen.

The convention in 1941 held in St. Louis, Missouri, was special. There, thousands of young people received the book *Children*. That convention was a turning point for me. Shortly afterward, on September 1, 1941, along with my brother Marvin and his wife, Joyce, I became a pioneer. I was 15.

In our farming community, it was difficult for all the brothers to attend the conventions because these were often held during harvesttime. So after the conventions, we had convention reviews in our backyard for the benefit of those who had not been able to attend. These were happy gatherings.

Gilead and Foreign Assignments

In February 1943, Gilead School was established for the training of pioneers for missionary service. The first class included six members of the Van Daalen family—the brothers Emil, Arthur, Homer, and Leo; their cousin Donald; and Leo's wife, my sister Eunice. We said our farewells with mixed emotions, since we did not know when we would see them again. After graduation, all six were assigned to Puerto Rico, where there were fewer than a dozen Witnesses at the time.

A year later, Lilian and Gordon as well as Marvin and Joyce attended the third class of Gilead. They too were sent to Puerto Rico. Then, in September 1944, at the age of 18, I attended Gilead's fourth class. After graduating in February 1945, I joined my siblings in Puerto Rico. What an interesting world opened up to me! Although learning Spanish was a challenge, soon some of us were conducting more than 20 Bible studies each. Jehovah blessed the work. Today, there are about 25,000 Witnesses in Puerto Rico!

Tragedies Strike Our Family

Leo and Eunice remained in Puerto Rico after the birth of their son, Mark, in 1950. In 1952 they planned to take a vacation to visit

relatives back home. On April 11, they left by airplane. Tragically, shortly after takeoff, the plane crashed into the ocean. Leo and Eunice died. Two-year-old Mark was found floating in the ocean. He was tossed into a life raft by a survivor and was given artificial respiration—and he lived.*

Five years later, on March 7, 1957, Mom and Dad were driving to the Kingdom Hall when they had a flat tire. While changing the tire by the side of the road, Dad was hit by a passing car and died instantly. Some 600 attended the funeral talk, and a fine witness was given to the community, where Father was well-respected.

New Assignments

Just before Dad's death, I had received an assignment to serve in Argentina. In August 1957, I arrived in the city of Mendoza in the foothills of the Andes Mountains. In 1958, George Pappas, a graduate of the 30th class of Gilead, was assigned to Argentina. George and I became good friends, and we were married in April 1960. In 1961, Mom died at the age of 83. She had walked

* See *Awake!* June 22, 1952, pages 3-4.

Leo and Eunice, shortly before their death





1950: From left to right, top: Ester, Mildred, Lilian, Eunice, Ruth; bottom: Orlen, Mom, Dad, and Marvin

faithfully in the way of true worship and had helped many, many others to do the same.

For ten years George and I served together with other missionaries in various missionary homes. Then we spent seven years in the circuit work. In 1975 we returned to the United States to assist family members who were ill. In 1980 my husband was invited to do circuit work in the Spanish-language field. There were then about 600 Spanish-speaking congregations in the United States. For 26 years, we visited many of them and saw the number of congregations increase to well over 3,000.

They Have Walked in "the Way"

Mom also had the joy of seeing younger members of her family take up the full-time ministry. For instance, Carol, a daughter of my eldest sister, Ester, began pioneering in 1953. She married Dennis Trumbore, and they have shared in the full-time ministry ever since. Ester's other daughter, Lois, married Wendell Jensen. They attended the 41st class of Gilead and served for 15 years as missionaries in Nigeria. Mark, whose parents died in the plane crash, was adopted and raised by Leo's sister, Ruth La Londe, and her husband, Curtiss. Mark and his wife, Lavonne, pioneered for years and reared their four children in "the way."—Isa. 30:21.

Orlen, my only sibling still alive, is in his mid-90's. He is still faithfully serving Jehovah. George and I joyfully continue in the full-time ministry.

What Mom Left

I now have one of Mom's prized possessions —her desk. It was a wedding gift to her from my

father. In one of the drawers is her old scrapbook, which contains letters and published newspaper articles that she wrote and that gave a fine Kingdom witness. Some of these date back to the early 1900's. The desk also holds treasured letters from Mom's missionary children. How I enjoy reading them over and over again! And her letters to us were always so encouraging, filled with positive thoughts. Mom never fulfilled her desire to be a missionary. However, she had a zeal for missionary service that moved the hearts of others for generations after her. How I look forward to a big family reunion with Mom and Dad in the paradise earth!—Rev. 21:3, 4.

George and Ruth Pappas
in the circuit work, 2001



LOOK! JEHOVAH'S APPROVED SERVANT

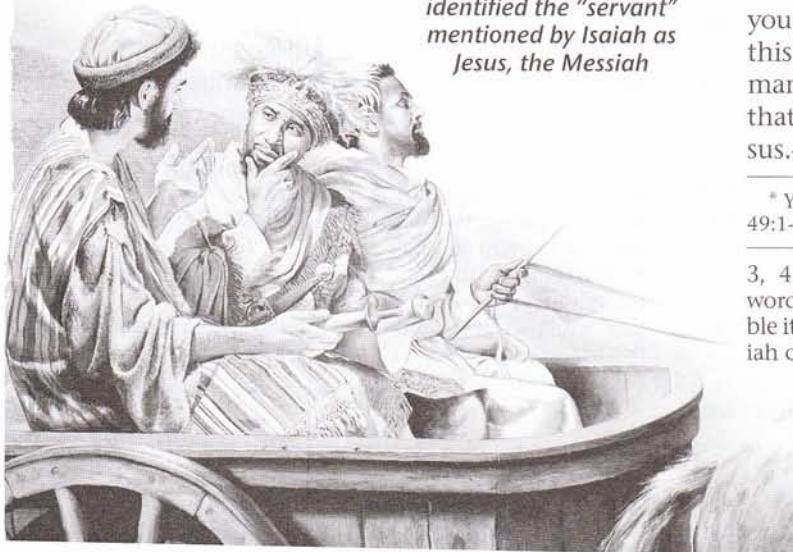
"Look! My servant, . . . whom my soul has approved!"—ISA. 42:1.

AS THE time to commemorate Christ's death approaches, God's people do well to follow the apostle Paul's counsel to "look intently at the Chief Agent and Perfecter of our faith, Jesus." Paul added: "Indeed, consider closely the one who has endured such contrary talk by sinners against their own interests, that you may not get tired and give out in your souls." (Heb. 12:2, 3) Looking closely at Christ's course of faithfulness, which culminated in his sacrifice, will help both anointed Christians and their other sheep companions to continue serving Jehovah faithfully and to avoid 'giving out in their souls.'—Compare Galatians 6:9.

² Through the prophet Isaiah, Jehovah inspired a series of prophecies directly related to his Son. These prophecies will help us to "look intently at the Chief Agent and Perfect-

1. What are Jehovah's people encouraged to do, particularly as the Memorial approaches, and why?
2. What can we learn from the prophecies of Isaiah that relate to God's Son?

Philip clearly identified the "servant" mentioned by Isaiah as Jesus, the Messiah



er of our faith," Christ Jesus.* They shed light on his personality, his sufferings, and his exaltation as our King and Redeemer. They will enhance our understanding of the Memorial, which we will be commemorating this year on Thursday, April 9, after sundown.

The Servant Identified

³ The word "servant" occurs many times in the book of Isaiah. It occasionally designates the prophet himself. (Isa. 20:3; 44:26) Sometimes it is applied to the whole nation of Israel, or Jacob. (Isa. 41:8, 9; 44:1, 2, 21) But what of the outstanding prophecies regarding the Servant recorded in Isaiah chapters 42, 49, 50, 52, and 53? The Christian Greek Scriptures leave us in no doubt as to the identity of the Servant of Jehovah described in those chapters. Interestingly, the Ethiopian official mentioned in the book of Acts was reading one of these prophecies when Philip the evangelizer was directed by the spirit to approach him. The official, having read the Bible passage that we now find at Isaiah 53:7, 8, asked Philip: "I beg you, About whom does the prophet say this? About himself or about some other man?" Philip lost no time in explaining that Isaiah spoke about the Messiah, Jesus.—Acts 8:26-35.

* You can find these prophecies at Isaiah 42:1-7; 49:1-12; 50:4-9; and 52:13-53:12.

3, 4. (a) In the book of Isaiah, what does the word "servant" designate? (b) How does the Bible itself identify the Servant mentioned in Isaiah chapters 42, 49, 50, 52, and 53?

⁴ While Jesus was yet a babe, a righteous man named Simeon declared under the power of the holy spirit that “the young child Jesus” would become “a light for removing the veil from the nations,” as foretold at Isaiah 42:6 and 49:6. (Luke 2:25-32) Furthermore, the humiliating treatment meted out to Jesus on the night of his trial was foretold in the prophecy of Isaiah 50:6-9. (Matt. 26:67; Luke 22:63) After Pentecost 33 C.E., the apostle Peter clearly identified Jesus as Jehovah’s “Servant.” (Isa. 52:13; 53:11; *read Acts 3:13, 26.*) What can we learn from these Messianic prophecies?

Jehovah Trains His Servant

⁵ One of Isaiah’s prophecies about God’s Servant sheds light on the intimate relationship between Jehovah and his firstborn Son during the Son’s prehuman existence. (*Read Isaiah 50:4-9.*) The Servant himself reveals that Jehovah continually trained him, saying: “He awakens my ear to hear like the taught ones [“disciples,” ftn.].” (Isa. 50:4) During all that time, Jehovah’s Servant listened to his Father and learned from him, becoming a submissive disciple. What a unique privilege to be taught by the Creator of the universe!

⁶ In this prophecy, the Servant speaks of his Father as “the Sovereign Lord Jehovah.” This shows that the Servant had learned the fundamental truth of Jehovah’s universal sovereignty. Indicating his perfect submission to his Father, he stated: “The Sovereign Lord Jehovah himself has opened my ear, and I, for my part, was not rebellious. I did not turn in the opposite direction.” (Isa. 50:5) He “came to be beside [Jehovah] as a master worker” in the creation of the material universe and man. This “master worker”

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5. What training did the Servant receive?
 6. How did the Servant indicate his perfect submission to his Father?

was “glad before [Jehovah] all the time, being glad at the productive land of his earth, and the things [God’s Son] was fond of were with the sons of men.”—Prov. 8:22-31.

⁷ This training received by the Servant and his fondness for mankind stood him in good stead when he came to earth and faced severe opposition. He continued to delight to do his Father’s will, even in the face of bitter persecution. (Ps. 40:8; Matt. 26:42; John 6:38) Throughout his trials on earth, Jesus was confident of his Father’s approval and support. As was foretold in Isaiah’s prophecy, Jesus was able to say: “The One declaring me righteous is near. Who can contend with me? . . . Look! The Sovereign Lord Jehovah himself will help me.” (Isa. 50:8, 9) Jehovah certainly did help his faithful Servant throughout his ministry on earth, as another prophecy of Isaiah shows.

The Servant’s Ministry on Earth

⁸ The Bible record tells what happened when Jesus was baptized in 29 C.E.: “The holy spirit . . . came down upon him, and a voice came out of heaven: ‘You are my Son, the beloved; I have approved you.’” (Luke 3:21, 22) Jehovah thus clearly identified his “chosen one,” mentioned in Isaiah’s prophecy. (*Read Isaiah 42:1-7.*) During his earthly ministry, Jesus fulfilled this prophecy in a remarkable way. In his Gospel account, Matthew quoted the words found at Isaiah 42:1-4 and applied them to Jesus.—Matt. 12:15-21.

⁹ The common people among the Jews were despised by the Jewish religious leaders. (John 7:47-49) The people were treated

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7. What shows that the Servant had confidence in his Father’s support during his trials?
 8. What proves that Jesus was Jehovah’s “chosen one,” as foretold at Isaiah 42:1?
 - 9, 10. (a) How did Jesus fulfill Isaiah 42:3 during his ministry? (b) How did Christ “bring forth justice” while on earth, and when is it that he “sets justice in the earth”?

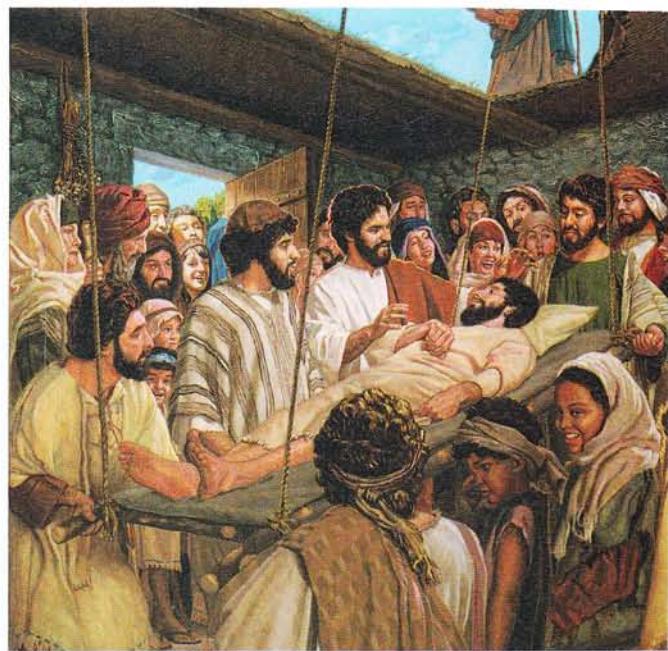
roughly and could be compared to ‘crushed reeds’ or ‘flaxen wicks’ when they are at their last flicker. Jesus, however, showed compassion for the poor and afflicted. (Matt. 9:35, 36) He offered such ones a kind invitation, saying: “Come to me, all you who are toiling and loaded down, and I will refresh you.” (Matt. 11:28) Furthermore, Jesus ‘brought forth justice’ by teaching Jehovah’s standards of right and wrong. (Isa. 42:3) He further showed that God’s Law needed to be applied with reasonableness and mercy. (Matt. 23:23) Jesus also displayed justice by preaching without prejudice to both rich and poor.—Matt. 11:5; Luke 18:18-23.

¹⁰ Isaiah’s prophecy also predicts that Jehovah’s “chosen one” “sets justice in the earth.” (Isa. 42:4) This he will shortly do when as King of the Messianic Kingdom, he destroys all political kingdoms and replaces them with his own righteous rule. He will usher in a new world, where “righteousness is to dwell.”—2 Pet. 3:13; Dan. 2:44.

“A Light” and “a Covenant”

¹¹ In fulfillment of Isaiah 42:6, Jesus did indeed prove to be “a light of the nations.” During his earthly ministry, he brought spiritual light primarily to the Jews. (Matt. 15:24; Acts 3:26) But Jesus stated: “I am the light of the world.” (John 8:12) He became a light both to the Jews and to the nations not only by bringing spiritual enlightenment but also by offering his perfect human life as a ransom for all mankind. (Matt. 20:28) After his resurrection, he commissioned his disciples to be witnesses of him “to the most distant part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8) During their ministry, Paul and Barnabas quoted the expression “light of the nations” and applied it to the preaching work they were accomplish-

11. In what sense was Jesus “a light of the nations” in the first century, and how is he such up to the present day?



As Jehovah’s chosen Servant, Jesus showed compassion for the poor and afflicted

ing among non-Jews. (Acts 13:46-48; compare Isaiah 49:6.) That work is still being pursued as Jesus’ anointed brothers on earth and their companions spread spiritual light and help people to put faith in Jesus, the “light of the nations.”

¹² In that same prophecy, Jehovah told his chosen Servant: “I shall safeguard you and give you as a covenant of the people.” (Isa. 42:6) Satan put forth persistent efforts to destroy Jesus and prevent Jesus from completing his ministry on earth, but Jehovah safeguarded him until the appointed time for him to die. (Matt. 2:13; John 7:30) Then Jehovah resurrected Jesus and gave him as “a covenant,” or pledge, to people on earth. That solemn promise provided assurance that God’s faithful Servant would continue as “a light of the nations,” liberating those in spiritual darkness.—Read *Isaiah 49:8, 9.**

* For a discussion of the prophecy at Isaiah 49:1-12, see *Isaiah’s Prophecy—Light for All Mankind II*, pages 136-145.

12. How has Jehovah given his Servant “as a covenant of the people”?



Jesus was exalted by his Father and enthroned as King of the Messianic Kingdom

¹³ In harmony with this pledge, Jehovah's chosen Servant would "open the blind eyes," "bring forth out of the dungeon the prisoner," and deliver "those sitting in darkness." (Isa. 42:7) During his earthly ministry, Jesus did this by exposing false religious traditions and preaching the good news of the Kingdom. (Matt. 15:3; Luke 8:1) He thus delivered from spiritual bondage Jews who became his disciples. (John 8:31, 32) In a similar way, Jesus has brought spiritual deliverance to millions of non-Jews. He has commissioned his followers to "go . . . and make disciples of people of all the nations," promising that he will be with his followers "until the conclusion of the system of things." (Matt. 28:19)

13. In what way did Jesus deliver "those sitting in darkness" during his earthly ministry, and how does he continue to do so?

20) From his heavenly position, Christ Jesus is overseeing the global preaching work.

Jehovah Elevated the "Servant"

¹⁴ In yet another prophecy regarding his Messianic Servant, Jehovah states: "Look! My servant will act with insight. He will be in high station and will certainly be elevated and exalted very much." (Isa. 52:13) In view of his Son's loyal submission to His sovereignty and his faithfulness under the most extreme test, Jehovah elevated him.

¹⁵ The apostle Peter wrote of Jesus: "He is at God's right hand, for he went his way to heaven; and angels and authorities and powers were made subject to him." (1 Pet. 3:22) Similarly, the apostle Paul wrote: "He humbled himself and became obedient as far as death, yes, death on a torture stake. For this very reason also God exalted him to a superior position and kindly gave him the name that is above every other name, so that in the name of Jesus every knee should bend of those in heaven and those on earth and those under the ground, and every tongue should openly acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."—Phil. 2:8-11.

¹⁶ In 1914, Jehovah elevated Jesus even fur-

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14, 15. Why and how did Jehovah elevate his Servant?

16. How was Jesus "exalted very much" in 1914, and what has he accomplished since then?

By Way of Review

- Who is the "servant" mentioned in Isaiah's prophecies, and how do we know?
- What training did the Servant receive from Jehovah?
- How is Jesus "a light of the nations"?
- How was the Servant elevated?

ther. He was “exalted very much” when Jehovah enthroned him as King of the Messanic Kingdom. (Ps. 2:6; Dan. 7:13, 14) Since then, Christ has gone forth “subduing in the midst of [his] enemies.” (Ps. 110:2) He first subdued Satan and his demons, hurling them down to the vicinity of the earth. (Rev. 12:7-12) Then, acting as the Greater Cyrus, Christ delivered the remnant of his anointed brothers on earth from the grip of “Babylon the Great.” (Rev. 18:2; Isa. 44:28) He has headed a worldwide preaching work that has resulted in the ingathering of “the remaining ones” of his spiritual brothers and then of millions of “other sheep,” the loyal companions of the “little flock.”—Rev. 12:17; John 10:16; Luke 12:32.

¹⁷ The study of these remarkable prophecies in the book of Isaiah has surely increased our appreciation for our King and Redeemer, Christ Jesus. His filial submission during his earthly ministry reflected the training he received at his Father’s side before coming to earth. He has proved himself to be the “light of the nations” by his own ministry and by the preaching work he has overseen up until this very day. As we shall next see, another prophecy regarding the Messianic Servant reveals that he would suffer and pour out his life for our benefit, matters we should “consider closely” as the Memorial of his death approaches.—Heb. 12:2, 3.

17. What have we learned thus far by studying Isaiah’s prophecies regarding the “servant”?

JEHOVAH’S SERVANT—“PIERCED FOR OUR TRANSGRESSION”

“He was being pierced for our transgression; he was being crushed for our errors. . . . Because of his wounds there has been a healing for us.”—ISA. 53:5.

WE OBSERVE the Memorial to commemorate Christ’s death and to remember all that his death and resurrection have accomplished. The Memorial reminds us of the vindication of Jehovah’s sovereignty, the sanctification of his name, and the fulfillment of his purpose, including the salvation of mankind. Perhaps no other prophecy in the Bible better depicts Christ’s sacrifice and what it has accomplished than the one recorded at Isaiah 53:3-12. Isaiah foretold the Servant’s sufferings and provided

1. What should we keep in mind when we observe the Memorial, and what prophecy will help us to do so?

specific details about Christ’s death and about the blessings his death would result in for his anointed brothers and his “other sheep.”—John 10:16.

² Seven centuries before Jesus’ birth on earth, Jehovah inspired Isaiah to prophesy that His chosen Servant would be faithful even when tested to the limit. This very fact is proof of Jehovah’s absolute confidence in his Son’s loyalty. As we examine this prophecy, our hearts will be warmed and our faith will be strengthened.

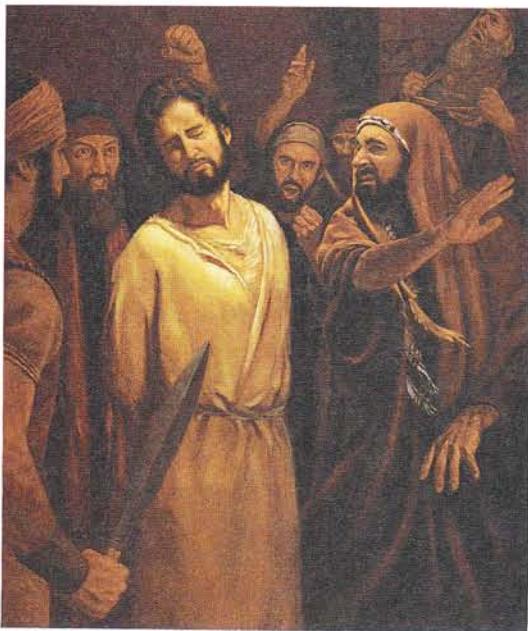
2. Of what is Isaiah’s prophecy a proof, and what effect will it have on us?

"Despised" and Held "as of No Account"

³ Read *Isaiah 53:3*. Just imagine what it must have meant for the only-begotten Son of God to forgo the joy of serving at his Father's side and come to earth to give his life in sacrifice to save mankind from sin and death! (Phil. 2:5-8) His sacrifice was to accomplish real forgiveness of sins, which the offering of animal sacrifices under the Mosaic Law only foreshadowed. (Heb. 10:1-4) Should he not have been welcomed and honored, at least by the Jews, who were awaiting the promised Messiah? (John 6:14) Instead, the Christ was "despised" by the Jews, and they "held him as of no account," as Isaiah had prophesied. The apostle John wrote: "He came to his own home, but his own people did not take him in." (John 1:11) The apostle Peter told the Jews: "The God of our forefathers . . . has glorified his Servant, Jesus, whom you, for your part, delivered up and disowned before Pilate's face, when he had decided to release him. Yes, you disowned that holy and righteous one."—Acts 3:13, 14.

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3. Why should the Jews have welcomed Jesus, but how did they receive him?

"He was despised, and we held him as of no account"



⁴ Isaiah also prophesied that Jesus was meant to have "acquaintance with sickness." During his ministry, Jesus certainly got tired on occasion, but there is no indication that he got sick. (John 4:6) He did, however, become acquainted with the sicknesses of those to whom he preached. He felt pity for them and healed many. (Mark 1:32-34) Jesus thus fulfilled the prophecy that states: "Truly our sicknesses were what he himself carried; and as for our pains, he bore them."—Isa. 53:4a; Matt. 8:16, 17.

As if "Stricken by God"

⁵ Read *Isaiah 53:4b*. Many of Jesus' contemporaries did not understand the reason for his suffering and death. They believed that God was punishing him, as if plaguing him with a loathsome disease. (Matt. 27:38-44) The Jews charged Jesus with blasphemy. (Mark 14:61-64; John 10:33) Of course, Jesus was neither a sinner nor a blasphemer. But in view of his great love for his Father, the very idea that he was to die accused of blasphemy must have added to his suffering as Jehovah's Servant. Nevertheless, he was willing to submit to Jehovah's will.—Matt. 26:39.

⁶ It is one thing for Isaiah's prophecy to state that others would account Christ as "stricken by God" but quite another for the prophecy to foretell: "Jehovah himself took delight in crushing him." (Isa. 53:10) Since Jehovah had also stated: "Look! My servant, . . . my chosen one, whom my soul has approved," how could Jehovah possibly take "delight in crushing him"? (Isa. 42:1) In what sense can it be said that this brought Jehovah joy?

⁷ To understand this part of the prophecy,

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4. How did Jesus become acquainted with sickness?
 5. How did many of the Jews view Jesus' death, and why did this add to his suffering?
 - 6, 7. In what sense did Jehovah 'crush' his faithful Servant, and why did this bring God "delight"?

we should remember that in challenging Jehovah's sovereignty, Satan cast doubt on the loyalty of all of God's servants in heaven and on earth. (Job 1:9-11; 2:3-5) Jesus, by remaining faithful to death, provided the perfect answer to Satan's challenge. Thus, while Jehovah permitted Christ to be killed by his enemies, there can be no doubt that Jehovah suffered when he saw his chosen Servant being put to death. However, observing his Son's absolute faithfulness brought Jehovah much delight. (Prov. 27:11) Furthermore, knowing the benefits that his Son's death would bring to repentant humans brought Jehovah great joy.—Luke 15:7.

"Pierced for Our Transgression"

⁸ *Read Isaiah 53:6.* Like lost sheep, sinful humans have wandered about, seeking deliverance from the sickness and death inherited from Adam. (1 Pet. 2:25) Being imperfect, not one of Adam's descendants could buy back what Adam had forfeited. (Ps. 49:7) In his great love, however, "Jehovah himself has caused the error of us all to meet up with that one," his dear Son and chosen Servant. By consenting to be "pierced for our transgression" and "crushed for our errors," Christ carried our sins upon the stake and died in our place.

⁹ The apostle Peter wrote: "To this course you were called, because even Christ suffered for you, leaving you a model for you to follow his steps closely. He himself bore our sins in his own body upon the stake, in order that we might be done with sins and live to righteousness." Then, quoting from Isaiah's prophecy, Peter added: "And 'by his stripes you were healed.'" (1 Pet. 2:21, 24; Isa. 53:5) This opened the way for sinners to become reconciled to God, as Peter further stated: "Christ died once for all time concern-

8, 9. (a) How was Jesus "pierced for our transgression"? (b) How did Peter confirm this?

ing sins, a righteous person for unrighteous ones, that he might lead you to God."—1 Pet. 3:18.

"Brought Just Like a Lamb to the Slaughtering"

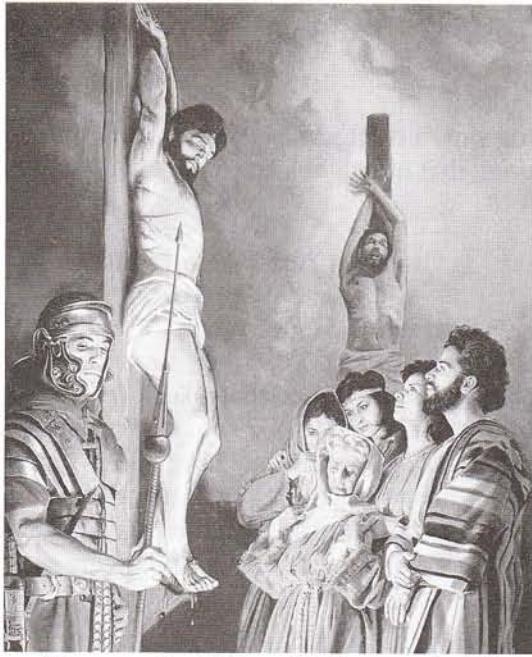
¹⁰ *Read Isaiah 53:7, 8.* When John the Baptizer saw Jesus approaching, he exclaimed: "See, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29) In speaking of Jesus as a Lamb, John may have had in mind the words of Isaiah: "He was being brought just like a lamb to the slaughtering." (Isa. 53:7, ftn.) "He poured out his soul to the very death," prophesied Isaiah. (Isa. 53:12) Interestingly, on the night when Jesus instituted the Memorial of his death, he gave a cup of wine to the 11 faithful apostles and stated: "This means my 'blood of the covenant,' which is to be poured out in behalf of many for forgiveness of sins."—Matt. 26:28.

¹¹ Like Isaac of old, Jesus was willing to be offered up as a sacrifice on the altar of Jehovah's will for him. (Gen. 22:1, 2, 9-13; Heb. 10:5-10) While Isaac willingly consented to being sacrificed, it was Abraham who attempted to offer the sacrifice. (Heb. 11:17) Similarly, Jesus willingly accepted that he was to die, but it was Jehovah who was the Author of the ransom arrangement. The sacrifice of his Son was an expression of God's deep love for mankind.

¹² Jesus himself stated: "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 apostle Paul wrote: "God recommends his own

10. (a) How did John the Baptizer describe Jesus? (b) Why did John's words prove to be fitting?

11, 12. (a) What does Isaac's willingness to be offered up illustrate about Christ's sacrifice? (b) What should we keep in mind about the Greater Abraham, Jehovah, when we observe the Memorial?



"He poured out his soul to the very death"

love to us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:8) Therefore, while honoring Christ by commemorating his death, we should never forget that the one who made the sacrificial arrangement possible was the Greater Abraham, Jehovah. We observe the Memorial to his praise.

The Servant Brings "a Righteous Standing to Many"

¹³ Read *Isaiah 53:11, 12*. Of his chosen Servant, Jehovah stated: "The righteous one, my servant, will bring a righteous standing to many people." In what way? The end of verse 12 gives us a clue to the answer. "And for the transgressors he [the Servant] proceeded to interpose." All of Adam's descendants are born sinners, "transgressors," and therefore receive "the wages sin pays," namely, death. (Rom. 5:12; 6:23) Reconciliation between Jehovah and sinful man is necessary. Chapter 53 of Isaiah's prophecy describes beautifully how Jesus 'interposed,' or interceded, on behalf of sinful mankind,

13, 14. How has Jehovah's Servant brought "a righteous standing to many"?

stating: "The chastisement meant for our peace was upon him, and because of his wounds there has been a healing for us." —Isa. 53:5.

¹⁴ By taking our sins upon himself and dying for us, Christ brought "a righteous standing to many people." Paul wrote: "God saw good for all fullness to dwell in him [Christ], and through him to reconcile again to himself all other things by making peace through the blood he shed on the torture stake, no matter whether they are the things upon the earth or the things in the heavens." —Col. 1:19, 20.

¹⁵ "The things in the heavens" that are reconciled to Jehovah by means of Christ's shed blood are the anointed Christians, called to reign with Christ in the heavens. Christians who are "partakers of the heavenly calling" are declared "righteous for life." (Heb. 3:1; Rom. 5:1, 18) Jehovah then begets them as spiritual sons. The holy spirit bears witness to them that they are "joint heirs with Christ," called to become kings and priests in his heavenly Kingdom. (Rom. 8:15-17; Rev. 5:9, 10) They become part of spiritual Israel, "the Israel of God," and they are taken into the "new covenant." (Jer. 31:31-34; Gal. 6:16) As members of the new covenant, they are entitled to partake of the Memorial emblems, including the cup of red wine, of which Jesus stated: "This cup means the new covenant by virtue of my blood, which is to be poured out in your behalf."—Luke 22:20.

¹⁶ "The things upon the earth" are Christ's other sheep, who have the hope of living forever on earth. To these also Jehovah's chosen Servant brings a righteous standing be-

15. (a) Who are "the things in the heavens" mentioned by Paul? (b) Who alone are entitled to partake of the Memorial emblems, and why?

16. What are "the things upon the earth," and in what way are they given a righteous standing before Jehovah?



The "other sheep" attend the Memorial as respectful observers

onstrated what he will do as Messianic King in the new system of things when "he sets justice in the earth." (Isa. 42:4) The zeal he showed in preaching the Kingdom, as "a light of the nations," is a reminder to his followers to preach the good news zealously throughout the earth.—Isa. 42:6.

¹⁸ Isaiah's prophecy also enhances our understanding of the great sacrifice

Jehovah made when he sent his dear Son to earth to suffer and die for us. Jehovah delighted, not in seeing his Son suffer, but in observing Jesus' absolute faithfulness to the very death. We should share Jehovah's delight, recognizing all that Jesus did to prove Satan a liar and sanctify Jehovah's name, thus vindicating the rightfulness of His sovereignty. In addition, Christ took our sins upon himself and died in our behalf. In that way, he made it possible for the little flock of his anointed brothers and for the other sheep to have a righteous standing before Jehovah. As we gather together for the Memorial, may our hearts be filled with gratitude to Jehovah and to his faithful Servant.

18. Why does Isaiah's prophecy fill our hearts with gratitude to Jehovah and to his faithful Servant?

By Way of Review

- In what sense did Jehovah 'take delight' in his Son's being 'crushed'?
- How was Jesus "pierced for our transgression"?
- How did the Servant "bring a righteous standing to many"?
- How has a study of the prophecies regarding the Servant prepared your mind and heart for the Memorial?

fore Jehovah. Because they have faith in Christ's ransom sacrifice and thus "have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," Jehovah declares them righteous, not as spiritual sons, but as his friends, giving them the wonderful prospect of surviving "the great tribulation." (Rev. 7:9, 10, 14; Jas. 2:23) Not being in the new covenant and therefore not having the hope of living in heaven, these other sheep do not partake of the Memorial emblems but attend as respectful observers.

All Thanks to Jehovah and His Approved Servant!

¹⁷ The examination of the prophecies in Isaiah that center on the Servant has been a fine way to prepare our minds for the Memorial of Christ's death. It has enabled us to "look intently at the Chief Agent and Perfecter of our faith." (Heb. 12:2) We have learned that God's Son is not rebellious. Unlike Satan, he delights in being taught by Jehovah, recognizing him as the Sovereign Lord. We have seen that during Jesus' earthly ministry, he showed compassion for the people to whom he preached, healing many of them both physically and spiritually. He thus dem-

17. How has a study of the prophecies in Isaiah that center on the Servant helped us to prepare our minds for the Memorial?

that the title “the First and the Last” there applies to Jesus Christ. He was the first human to be resurrected to immortal spirit life and the last one to be so resurrected by Jehovah personally.—Col. 1:18.

2:7—What is “the paradise of God”? Since these words are addressed to anointed Christians, the paradise here must refer to the paradisaic heavenly realm—the very presence of God himself. The faithful anointed will be rewarded with eating “of the tree of life.” They will receive immortality.—1 Cor. 15:53.

3:7—When did Jesus receive “the key of David,” and how has he been using that key? Upon his baptism in 29 C.E., Jesus became King-Designate in the line of David. However, Jesus did not receive the key of David until 33 C.E. when he was exalted to the right hand of God in heaven. There he inherited all the rights of the Davidic Kingdom. Since then, Jesus has been using the key to open up opportunities and privileges related to the Kingdom. In 1919, Jesus placed “the key of the house of David” upon the shoulder of “the faithful and discreet slave” by appointing that slave class “over all his belongings.”—Isa. 22:22; Matt. 24:45, 47.

3:12—What is the “new name” of Jesus? This name has to do with Jesus’ new office and privileges. (Phil. 2:9-11) While no one else gets to know that name in the way that Jesus does, Jesus writes it on his faithful brothers in the heavenly realm, bringing them into a close relationship with him. (Rev. 19:12) He even shares his privileges with them.

Lessons for Us:

1:3. Because “the appointed time [for the execution of God’s judgments upon Satan’s world] is near,” there is an urgent need to understand the message of the book of Revelation and to act on it.

3:17, 18. To be rich spiritually, we need to buy from Jesus “gold refined by fire.” That is, we should strive to be rich in fine works. (1 Tim. 6:17-19) We also need to put on “white outer garments,” which proclaim our identity as followers of Christ, and use “eye-salve,” such as counsel published in the *Watchtower* magazine, to gain spiritual discernment.—Rev. 19:8.

7:13, 14. The 24 elders represent the 144,000 in their heavenly glory, where they serve not only as kings but also as priests. They were pictured by the priests in ancient Israel, whom King David organized in 24 divisions. One of the elders reveals to John the identity of the great crowd. Therefore, the resurrection of anointed Christians must have begun sometime before 1935. Why? Because in that year the correct identity of the great crowd was made known to God’s anointed servants on earth.—Luke 22:28-30; Rev. 4:4; 7:9.

THE OPENING OF THE SEVENTH SEAL LEADS TO SEVEN TRUMPET BLASTS

(Rev. 8:1-12:17)

The Lamb opens the seventh seal. Seven angels receive seven trumpets. Six of the angels blow their trumpets, heralding judgment messages on “a third” of mankind—Christendom. (Rev. 8:1, 2, 7-12; 9:15, 18) This is what John sees in the fifth vision. Participating in the vision that follows, John eats the little scroll and measures the temple sanctuary. After the blowing of the seventh trumpet, loud voices announce: “The kingdom of the world did become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ.”—Rev. 10:10; 11:1, 15.

The seventh vision enlarges on what is stated at Revelation 11:15, 17. A great sign is seen in heaven. The heavenly woman gives birth to a son, a male. The Devil is ousted from heaven. Being wrathful at the heavenly woman, he goes off “to wage war with the

Jehovah's Word Is Alive

Highlights From the Book of Revelation—I

WHILE imprisoned on the island of Patmos, the aged apostle John receives a series of 16 visions. He beholds in them what Jehovah God and Jesus Christ accomplish during the Lord's day—the period that stretches from the establishment of God's Kingdom in 1914 to the end of Christ's Millennial Reign. The book of Revelation, written by John in about the year 96 C.E., is an exciting account of these visions.

Let us now consider highlights of Revelation 1:1–12:17, covering the first seven visions received by John. These visions are of interest to us because they pertain to what is happening on the world scene now and show how Jehovah will take action in the near future. Those who read the account of these visions with faith are indeed comforted and encouraged.—Heb. 4:12.

"THE LAMB" OPENS SIX OF THE SEVEN SEALS (Rev. 1:1–7:17)

First, John beholds the glorified Jesus Christ and receives a series of messages that he is to 'write in a scroll and send to the seven congregations.' (Rev. 1:10, 11) The vision of a throne in its position in heaven follows. In the right hand of the One seated upon the throne is a scroll sealed with seven seals. The one deemed "worthy to open the scroll" is none other than "the Lion that is of the tribe of Judah," or "a lamb . . . having seven horns and seven eyes."—Rev. 4:2; 5:1, 2, 5, 6.

The third vision reveals what happens as "the Lamb" opens the first six seals, one after another. With the opening of the sixth seal, a great earthquake occurs and the great day of

wrath arrives. (Rev. 6:1, 12, 17) But the next vision shows 'four angels holding tight the four winds of the earth' until the sealing of the 144,000 is completed. "A great crowd" of those not sealed is seen "standing before the throne and before the Lamb."—Rev. 7:1, 9.

Scriptural Questions Answered:

1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6—What is indicated by the expression "the seven spirits"? The number seven signifies completeness from God's standpoint. Thus, the message to "the seven congregations" ultimately applies to all of God's people gathered together in more than 100,000 congregations earth wide. (Rev. 1:11, 20) Since holy spirit is given according to what its operation needs to accomplish, the expression "the seven spirits" denotes the fullness of its operation in giving understanding and bringing blessings to those who pay attention to the prophecy. The book of Revelation seems to progress on the basis of a series of sevens. The number seven here represents completeness, and indeed, the book deals with bringing "to a finish," or completion, "the sacred secret of God."—Rev. 10:7.

1:8, 17—To whom do the titles "the Alpha and the Omega" and "the First and the Last" refer? The title "the Alpha and the Omega" applies to Jehovah, stressing that there was no almighty God before him and that there will be none after him. He is "the beginning and the end." (Rev. 21:6; 22:13) Although Jehovah is referred to as "the first and the last" at Revelation 22:13, in that there is none before or after him, the context in the first chapter of Revelation shows

remaining ones of her seed."—Rev. 12:1, 5, 9, 17.

Scriptural Questions Answered:

8:1-5—Why did a silence occur in heaven, and what was subsequently hurled to the earth? A symbolic silence occurred in heaven so that "the prayers of the holy ones" on earth could be heard. This was at the end of the first world war. Anointed Christians did not ascend to heaven at the end of the Gentile Times, as many had expected they would. They experienced difficult times during the war. So now they prayed fervently for guidance. In response to their prayers, the angel hurled to the earth a symbolic fire that set the anointed Christians afire spiritually. Though few in number, they began a worldwide preaching campaign that made God's Kingdom a burning issue, thus lighting a fire in Christendom. Thunderous warnings from the Bible were sounded forth, flashes of Scriptural truth were made known, and the realm of false religion was shaken to its foundation, just as buildings are shaken by an earthquake.

8:6-12; 9:1, 13; 11:15—When did the seven angels prepare to blow their trumpets, and when and how were the trumpet blasts sounded? Preparation to blow the seven trumpets included giving direction to the revitalized members of the John class on earth from 1919 to 1922. Such anointed ones were then getting busy in reorganizing the public ministry and building up publishing facilities. (Rev. 12:13, 14) The sounding of the trumpets represents fearless proclamations of Jehovah's judgments against Satan's world by God's people in cooperation with the angels. Notably, this began with the Cedar Point, Ohio, convention in 1922 and lasts all the way down to the great tribulation.

8:13; 9:12; 11:14—In what way are the final three trumpet blasts "woes"? Whereas the first four trumpet blasts are proclama-

tions exposing the spiritually dead condition of Christendom, the last three are woes in that they have to do with specific events. The fifth blast is related to the release of God's people from "the abyss" of inactivity in 1919 and to their relentless witnessing work, which became like a tormenting plague on Christendom. (Rev. 9:1) The sixth is about the greatest cavalry charge in history and the worldwide preaching campaign that began in 1922. The final blast has to do with the birth of the Messianic Kingdom.

Lessons for Us:

9:10, 19. The authoritative Bible-based statements in the publications of "the faithful and discreet slave" contain a stinging message. (Matt. 24:45) This message corresponds to the locusts' tails that have "stings like scorpions" and the horses of a cavalry, whose "tails are like serpents." Why? Because these publications warn of the "day of [Jehovah's] vengeance." (Isa. 61:2) Let us be courageous and zealous in distributing them.

9:20, 21. Many meek people who live in so-called non-Christian nations have responded well to the message we proclaim. However, we are not expecting a mass conversion of people outside the realm of Christendom, who are referred to as "the rest of the men." Nevertheless, we persevere in the ministry.

12:15, 16. "The earth"—elements within Satan's own system, or the ruling powers in various lands—upheld freedom of worship. Starting in the 1940's, those powers "swallowed up the river [of persecution] that the dragon disgorged from its mouth." Indeed, when Jehovah chooses to do so, he can influence governmental authorities to accomplish his will. Fittingly, therefore, Proverbs 21:1 states: "A king's heart is as streams of water in the hand of Jehovah. Everywhere that he delights to, he turns it." This should strengthen our faith in God.