

MARCH 15, 2010

THE WATCHTOWER[®]

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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STUDY ARTICLES FOR THE
WEEKS OF:

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Whom and What?

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PURPOSE OF STUDY ARTICLES

STUDY ARTICLES 1, 2 PAGES 10-18

These two articles will help us to understand the significance of being baptized "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit." (Matt. 28:19) You will find in them helpful ideas on how you can live up to your dedication.

STUDY ARTICLES 3, 4 PAGES 19-28

In Jesus' parable of the wheat and the weeds, he illustrated the future developments with regard to "the sons of the kingdom." What do the wheat and the weeds represent? How does this parable see its fulfillment in our day? Does this parable concern only the anointed?

BAPTIZED IN THE NAME OF WHOM AND WHAT?

“Go therefore and make disciples . . . , baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit.”—MATT. 28:19.

JERUSALEM was bustling with crowds from many lands. On the day of Pentecost 33 C.E., an important festival was in progress and many visitors were sharing in it. But something unusual occurred, after which the apostle Peter gave a stirring discourse that had an amazing effect. Some 3,000 Jews and proselytes were touched by his words, repented, and got baptized in water. Thus they were added to the newly formed Christian congregation. (Acts 2:41) The baptism of so many in the pools or reservoirs around Jerusalem must have caused considerable commotion!

² What led up to so many getting baptized? Earlier that day, “there occurred from

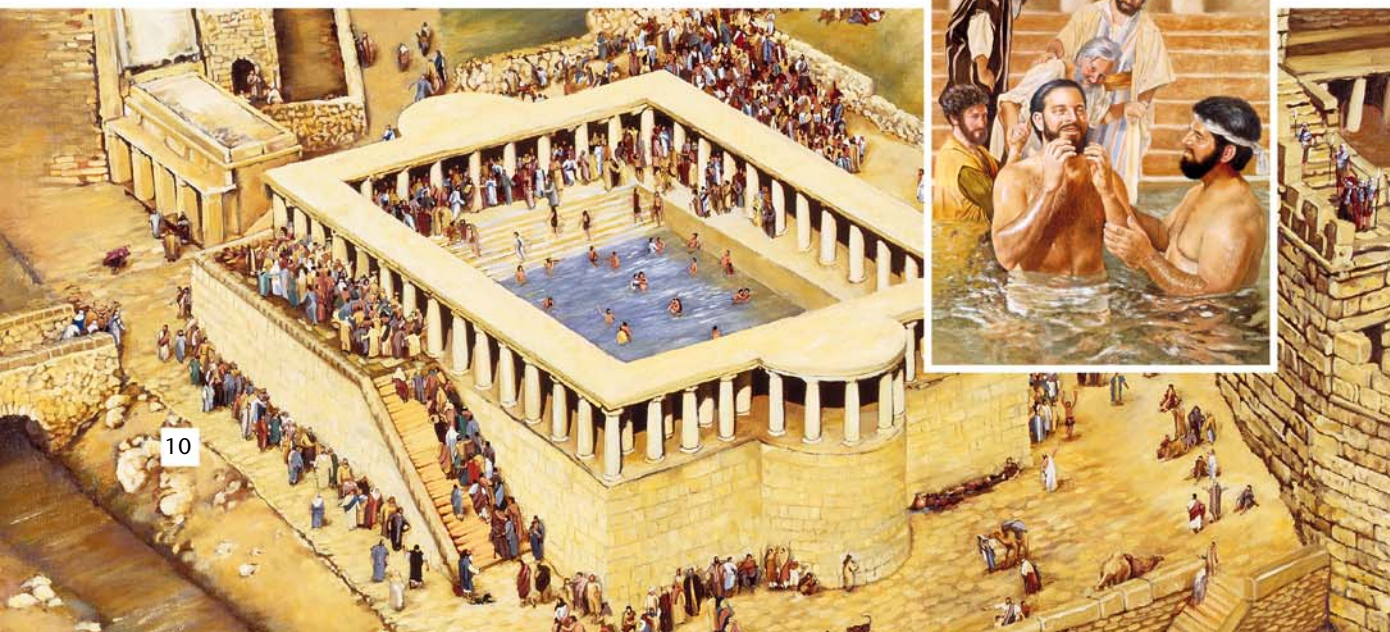
1, 2. (a) What took place in Jerusalem at Pentecost 33 C.E.? (b) Why were many in the crowd moved to get baptized?

heaven a noise just like that of a rushing stiff breeze.” In the upper chamber of a house, some 120 of Jesus’ disciples were filled with holy spirit. Thereafter, reverent men and women gathered and were intrigued to hear these disciples “speak with different tongues.” Upon listening to what Peter said, including his pointed comments about Jesus’ death, many “were stabbed to the heart.” What should they do? Peter answered: “Repent, and let each one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ . . . , and you will receive the free gift of the holy spirit.”—Acts 2:1-4, 36-38.

³ Think of the religious situation of those Jews and proselytes who heard Peter. They had already accepted Jehovah as their God.

3. On the day of Pentecost, what did repentant Jews and proselytes need to do?

After Pentecost 33 C.E., the new disciples came into what relationship with the Father?



And from the Hebrew Scriptures, they knew about the holy spirit, God's active force used during creation and thereafter. (Gen. 1:2; Judg. 14:5, 6; 1 Sam. 10:6; Ps. 33:6) But they needed something more. It was vital for them to understand and accept God's means of salvation—the Messiah, Jesus. Hence, Peter highlighted their need for being “baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.” Some days before, the resurrected Jesus commanded Peter and others to baptize people “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit.” (Matt. 28:19, 20) That had profound meaning in the first century, and it still does. What is it?

In the Name of the Father

⁴ As noted, those who responded to Peter's discourse worshipped Jehovah and had previously had a relationship with him. They had been trying to follow his Law, which was the reason those from other lands had come to Jerusalem. (Acts 2:5-11) However, God had just made a significant change in his dealings. He rejected the Jews as his special nation; their keeping the Law was no longer the means to obtain his approval. (Matt. 21:43; Col. 2:14) If those listeners wanted an ongoing relationship with Jehovah, they needed something else.

⁵ It certainly was not to turn away from Jehovah, their Life-Giver. (Acts 4:24) No, those responding to Peter's explanation could see now more than ever that Jehovah was a benevolent Father. He sent the Messiah to deliver them and was willing to forgive even those to whom Peter could say: “Let all the house of Israel know for a certainty that God made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you impaled.” Actually, those apply-

4. As to people having a relationship with Jehovah, what change had occurred?

5, 6. What did many first-century Jews and proselytes do in order to have a relationship with God?

ing Peter's words would now have even greater reason to appreciate what the Father had done for all who wanted a relationship with God!—*Read Acts 2:30-36.*

⁶ Indeed, those Jews and proselytes could now see that a relationship with Jehovah involved recognizing him as the Provider of salvation by means of Jesus. You can understand, then, why they repented of their sins, including that of knowingly or unknowingly sharing in killing Jesus. And it is equally understandable that during the following days “they continued devoting themselves to the teaching of the apostles.” (Acts 2:42) They could and would want to “approach with freeness of speech to the throne of undeserved kindness.”—Heb. 4:16.

⁷ Today, millions of people from various backgrounds have learned from the Bible the truth about Jehovah. (Isa. 2:2, 3) Some were atheists or deists,* but they became convinced of the existence of a Creator with whom they could have a meaningful relationship. Others worshipped a triune god or various idols. They learned that Jehovah alone is the almighty God, and they now address him by his personal name. That is in line with the fact that Jesus said his disciples should be baptized in the name of the Father.

⁸ They have also learned that they inherited sin from Adam. (Rom. 5:12) This was something new that they had to accept as true. Such ones can be likened to a sick man who was unaware of his illness. He may have had some symptoms, such as an occasional

* Those with deistic thoughts believe in the existence of God but do not think that he is interested in his creation.

7. How have many today changed their view of God and been baptized in the name of the Father?

8. What did those who had no concept of Adamic sin need to realize about the Father?

pain. Yet, having no diagnosis of a specific disease, he might have imagined that he was basically in good health. The facts proved otherwise, however. (Compare 1 Corinthians 4:4.) What if he got an accurate diagnosis of his illness? Would he not be wise to seek and accept a known, proven, and effective treatment? Similarly, upon learning the truth about inherited sin, many have accepted the Bible's "diagnosis" and have come to understand that God is offering the "cure." Yes, all who are alienated from the Father need to turn to the One who can "cure" them.—Eph. 4:17-19.

⁹ If you have already dedicated your life to Jehovah God and have become a baptized Christian, you know what a wonderful thing it is to have a relationship with him. You can now appreciate how loving your Father, Jehovah, is. (*Read Romans 5:8.*) Although Adam and Eve had sinned against him, God took the initiative so that their descendants—including us—could have a good relationship with him. In doing that, God had to face the pain of seeing his dear Son suffer and die. Does knowing this not help us to recognize God's authority and obey his commands out of love? If you have not yet done so, you have reasons to dedicate yourself to God and be baptized.

In the Name of the Son

¹⁰ Think again, though, about what Peter said to the crowd. He stressed accepting Jesus, which is directly linked to being baptized "in the name . . . of the Son." Why was that vital then, and why is it vital now? Well, accepting Jesus and being baptized in his name means recognizing his role in our relationship with the Creator. Jesus had to

9. What did Jehovah do to make a relationship with him possible?

10, 11. (a) How indebted are you to Jesus? (b) How do you feel about Jesus' dying as a ransom?

be hanged on a torture stake in order to remove the curse of the Law from the Jews; however, his death had a greater benefit. (Gal. 3:13) He provided the ransom sacrifice that all mankind needed. (Eph. 2:15, 16; Col. 1:20; 1 John 2:1, 2) To that end, Jesus endured injustice, reviling, torture, and finally death. How much do you appreciate his sacrifice? Imagine you were a 12-year-old boy traveling on the *Titanic*, the ship that struck an iceberg and sank in 1912. You try to jump into a lifeboat, but it is full. Then a man on the lifeboat kisses his wife, jumps back onto the deck, and puts you into the lifeboat. How do you feel? Certainly you are grateful to him! You can understand how one boy who really had that experience felt.* Yet, Jesus did much more for you. He died so that you can gain endless life.

¹¹ How did you feel upon learning what the Son of God did for you? (*Read 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15.*) Likely you felt deep gratitude. That helped to move you to dedicate your life to God and to 'live no longer for yourself, but for him who died for you.' Being baptized in the name of the Son means acknowledging what Jesus has done for you and accepting his authority as "the Chief Agent of life." (Acts 3:15; 5:31) Previously, you had no relationship with the Creator, and actually you had no valid hope. But by exercising faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ and being baptized, you now have a relationship with the Father. (Eph. 2:12, 13) "You who were once alienated and enemies because your minds were on the works that were wicked," wrote the apostle Paul, "[God] now has again reconciled by means of [Jesus'] fleshly body through his death, in order to present you holy and unblemished."—Col. 1:21, 22.

* See *Awake!* October 22, 1981, pages 3-8.

¹² Though you were baptized in the name of the Son, you are keenly aware of your own sinful inclinations. That awareness is helpful every day. For example, if someone offends you, do you bear in mind that both of you are sinners? You both need God's forgiveness, and you should both be forgiving. (Mark 11:25) To emphasize this need, Jesus gave an illustration: The master of a slave canceled his debt of ten thousand talents (60 million denarii). Later, that slave would not release his fellow slave who owed him 100 denarii. Jesus then made this point: Jehovah will not forgive the one who does not forgive his brother. (Matt. 18:23-35) Yes, being baptized in the name of the Son means recognizing Jesus' authority and striving to follow his example and teachings, including that of being willing to forgive others.—1 Pet. 2:21; 1 John 2:6.

¹³ Being imperfect, you are not able to imitate Jesus fully. Nevertheless, in line with your wholehearted dedication to God, you want to imitate Jesus to the best of your ability. This involves continuing to work at putting away the old personality and putting on the new. (*Read Ephesians 4:20-24.*) When you come to respect a friend, you likely try to learn from his example and good qualities. Likewise, you want to learn from Christ and imitate him.

¹⁴ There is another way you can show that you understand what is involved in having been baptized in the name of the Son. God "subjected all things under [Jesus'] feet, and made him head over all things to the congregation." (Eph. 1:22) Thus, you need to respect the way Jesus directs those dedicated

12, 13. (a) How should being baptized in the name of the Son affect your reaction if someone offends you? (b) As a Christian baptized in Jesus' name, what obligation do you have?

14. How can you show that you recognize Jesus' authority as heavenly King?

to Jehovah. Christ is using imperfect humans in the local congregation, particularly the spiritually older men, the appointed elders. The provision of having such men appointed is "with a view to the readjustment of the holy ones, . . . for the building up of the body of the Christ." (Eph. 4:11, 12) Even if an imperfect human makes a mistake, Jesus as King of the heavenly Kingdom is able to handle the matter in his time and way. Do you believe that?

¹⁵ Again, some have not yet dedicated themselves to Jehovah and been baptized. If you have not, can you see from the above that recognizing the Son is the reasonable and appreciative thing for you to do? Being baptized in the name of the Son will bring you in line to receive grand blessings.—*Read John 10:9-11.*

In the Name of the Holy Spirit

¹⁶ What does it mean to be baptized in the name of the holy spirit? As noted earlier, those hearing Peter on the day of Pentecost were aware of the holy spirit. In fact, they could see proof right before their eyes that

15. If you are yet to be baptized, what blessings can you look forward to after baptism?

16, 17. What does being baptized in the name of the holy spirit mean to you?

Do You Recall?

- What does being baptized in the name of the Father involve for you?
- What does it mean to be baptized in the name of the Son?
- How can you show that you appreciate the significance of getting baptized in the name of the Father and the Son?
- What does being baptized in the name of the holy spirit mean?

God continued to use the holy spirit. Peter was one of those who had been “filled with holy spirit and [who had] started to speak with different tongues.” (Acts 2:4, 8) The expression “in the name of” need not imply the name of a person. Today, many things are done “in the name of the government,” which is not a person. They are done by the authority of the government. Similarly, one who is baptized in the name of the holy spirit recognizes that the holy spirit is, not a person, but Jehovah’s active force. And such baptism means that one acknowledges the role the holy spirit plays in God’s purpose.

¹⁷ Have you not come to know about the holy spirit through studying the Bible? For example, you have come to appreciate that the Scriptures were written under the inspiration of holy spirit. (2 Tim. 3:16) As you made spiritual progress, you likely gained a deeper appreciation of the fact that ‘the Fa-

ther in heaven gives holy spirit to those asking him,’ including to you. (Luke 11:13) You have probably seen holy spirit working in your life. On the other hand, if you are yet to be baptized in the name of the holy spirit, Jesus’ assurance that the Father gives holy spirit means that you have real blessings ahead as you receive that spirit.

¹⁸ It is evident that today, too, Jehovah guides and leads the Christian congregation through his spirit. That spirit also helps us individually in our daily activities. Our having been baptized in the name of the holy spirit involves recognizing its role in our life and gratefully cooperating with that spirit. Some may wonder, though, how we can live up to a dedication made to Jehovah and how the holy spirit is involved. We will consider that next.

18. What blessings come to those being baptized in the name of the holy spirit?

WALK BY SPIRIT AND LIVE UP TO YOUR DEDICATION

“Keep walking by spirit and you will carry out no fleshly desire at all.”—GAL. 5:16.

WHEN Jesus’ followers spoke in tongues on the day of Pentecost 33 C.E., it was after they had been baptized with holy spirit. They manifested a miraculous gift of the spirit. (1 Cor. 12:4-10) What was the effect of this gift and the discourse that the apostle Peter gave? Many “were stabbed to the heart.” At Peter’s urging, they repented and were baptized. The historical record says: “Those who embraced his word heartily

1. What baptisms occurred on the day of Pentecost?

were baptized, and on that day about three thousand souls were added.” (Acts 2:22, 36-41) As Jesus had instructed, they would have been baptized in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the holy spirit.—Matt. 28:19.

² However, is there any difference between being baptized with holy spirit and

2, 3. (a) Explain the difference between being baptized with holy spirit and being baptized in the name of the holy spirit. (b) Why is water baptism expected of all who become true Christians today?

being baptized in the name of the holy spirit? Yes. Those who are baptized with holy spirit are born again as spirit-begotten sons of God. (John 3:3) They are anointed to be future associate kings and underpriests in God's heavenly Kingdom, and they are part of the spiritual body of Christ. (1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27; Rev. 20:6) So this baptism—being baptized with holy spirit—was what Jehovah performed when, on the day of Pentecost and thereafter, he chose individuals to become joint heirs with Christ. (Rom. 8:15-17) But what of water baptism in the name of the holy spirit, something that regularly occurs at assemblies and conventions of Jehovah's people in our day?

³ Water baptism is a step that true Christians undertake in symbol of their unreserved dedication to Jehovah God. That is so of those who received the heavenly calling. But water baptism is also a necessary step for millions of men and women in modern times who now have the hope of living forever on earth. Regardless of a person's hope, being baptized in water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit is a necessary step that one must take in order to be acceptable to God. All Christians who are thus baptized are expected to "keep walking by spirit." (*Read Galatians 5:16.*) Are you walking by spirit and thus living up to your dedication?

What "Walking by Spirit" Means

⁴ "Walking by spirit" involves accepting the action of the holy spirit upon you, allowing the holy spirit to influence you. You might say that it means to be governed by the holy spirit in your daily activities. Gala-

4. What does "walking by spirit" basically mean?

tians chapter 5 brings out the contrast between being under the influence of the holy spirit and that of the flesh.—*Read Galatians 5:17, 18.*

⁵ If you are under the influence of the holy spirit, you seek to refrain from the works of the flesh. Those include such things as "fornication, uncleanness, loose conduct, idolatry, practice of spiritism, enmities, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, contentions, divisions, sects, envies, drunken bouts, revelries." (Gal. 5:19-21) In a sense, you "put the practices of the body to death by the spirit." (Rom. 8:5, 13) It will help to set your mind on the things of the spirit and cooperate with its leadings, rather than let yourself be controlled by fleshly desires.

⁶ As holy spirit operates upon you, you manifest godly qualities, "the fruitage of the spirit." (Gal. 5:22, 23) You realize, though, that this calls for effort on your part. To illustrate: A farmer cultivates the land. Of course, sunshine and water are necessary; without such he cannot expect any harvest. We might compare holy spirit to sunshine. Holy spirit is needed for us to manifest the fruitage of the spirit. Yet, what would be

5. Being under the influence of the holy spirit involves refraining from what works?

6. Illustrate what is necessary in order to manifest the fruitage of the spirit.

Cultivating the soil of your heart calls for effort



produced without the farmer's hard work? (Prov. 10:4) Yes, how you cultivate the soil of your heart makes a difference in the quality and quantity of the fruitage of the holy spirit in you. So ask yourself, 'Am I permitting holy spirit to produce its fruitage by working along with it?'

⁷ To obtain a good harvest, farmers also need to water their crops. In order to cultivate the fruitage of the spirit, you need the waters of truth found in the Bible and available through the Christian congregation today. (Isa. 55:1) You have likely pointed out to many people that the Holy Scriptures are a product of holy spirit. (2 Tim. 3:16) Also, the faithful and discreet slave class provides much-needed understanding of the pure waters of Bible truth. (Matt. 24:45-47) The implication is clear. In order to come under the influence of the holy spirit, we must read and meditate on God's Word. If you are doing that, you are imitating the fine examples of the prophets who made "a diligent inquiry and a careful search" of information that was provided. It is noteworthy that even the angels have shown deep interest in spiritual truths regarding the promised Seed and the anointed Christian congregation. —*Read 1 Peter 1:10-12.*

Influenced by the Spirit—How?

⁸ It is not a matter of simply studying the Scriptures and meditating. You need to keep asking for Jehovah's help and guidance. He can "do more than superabundantly beyond all the things we ask or conceive." (Eph. 3:20; Luke 11:13) How would you answer, though, if someone inquired, "Why should I continue to ask if God already

7. Why are study and meditation so important if you want to cultivate the fruitage of the holy spirit?

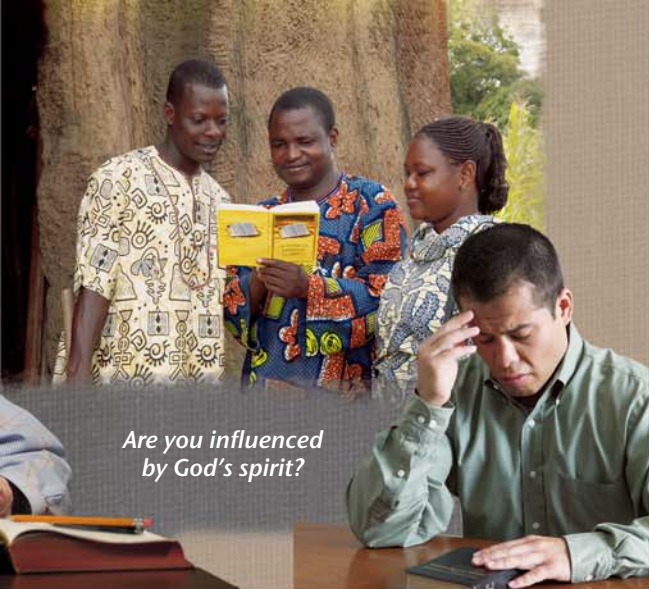
8. Why is it vital for you to ask Jehovah for his spirit?



knows 'what things I am needing before ever I ask him?'" (Matt. 6:8) Well, for one thing, by praying for holy spirit, you acknowledge your reliance on Jehovah. For example, if someone came to you for aid, you would do whatever you could to help him, one reason being that he asked you to assist him, showing trust in you. (Compare Proverbs 3:27.) Likewise, Jehovah finds pleasure in your asking him for his spirit, and he will give it to you.—Prov. 15:8.

⁹ You can well appreciate that another way to come under the influence of God's spirit involves our meetings, assemblies, and conventions. Making an effort to be in attendance and paying attention to the program is very important. Doing so helps you to understand "the deep things of God." (1 Cor. 2:10) There are also benefits from regularly making comments. Think back on the meetings you attended in the last four weeks. How often did you raise your hand, offering to answer, to make an expression of your faith? Do you see room for improvement in this area? If you do, resolve what you will do in the weeks ahead. Jehovah will see your willingness to participate and will

9. How can attending Christian meetings help you to come under the influence of God's spirit?



Are you influenced
by God's spirit?

provide his holy spirit, which will help you to get even more out of the meetings you attend.

¹⁰ Walking by spirit includes responding to the invitation we read at Revelation 22:17: "The spirit and the bride keep on saying: 'Come!' And let anyone hearing say: 'Come!' And let anyone thirsting come; let anyone that wishes take life's water free." The spirit, working through the anointed bride class, is extending this invitation regarding life's water. If you have accepted the call to "come!" are you determined to say, "Come!?" What a privilege it is to be able to share in this lifesaving work!

¹¹ This vital work is now being accomplished under the guidance of holy spirit. We read how the holy spirit was involved in the first century in opening up new territories for missionaries. The apostle Paul and his companions were "forbidden by the holy spirit to speak the word in the district of Asia"; nor were they permitted to go into Bithynia. We do not know exactly how the spirit prevented their going into those

10. Walking by spirit involves extending what invitation to others?

11, 12. How is holy spirit involved in the preaching work?

places, yet it is clear that the spirit led Paul into the vast field of Europe. He received a vision of a Macedonian man pleading for help.—Acts 16:6-10.

¹² Today, Jehovah's spirit is likewise directing the worldwide preaching. No miraculous visions are being used to give direction; instead, Jehovah guides the anointed by holy spirit. And the spirit motivates brothers and sisters to do all they can in preaching and teaching. You no doubt have been participating in this vital work. Can you increase your joy in this exciting activity?

¹³ You can submit to the direction of holy spirit by applying the information provided for God's people. Consider young Mihoko from Japan. As a new pioneer, she felt unqualified to make return visits; she felt that she did not know how to capture the householder's interest. About that time, practical suggestions on how to make brief return visits were provided in *Our Kingdom Ministry*. Then the brochure *A Satisfying Life—How to Attain It* was published. It proved to be especially useful in the Japanese field. Mihoko applied the suggestions given on how to use the brochure, especially on how to make brief return visits. Soon she was starting Bible studies with those who might previously have declined a study. She says, "I had so many studies—as many as 12 at one time—that I had to put some on a waiting list!" Indeed, when you walk by spirit, applying the direction given to Jehovah's servants, you can reap bountifully.

Rely on God's Spirit

¹⁴ As an ordained minister, you have a

13. How can you submit to the direction of the holy spirit? Illustrate.

14, 15. (a) How is it possible for imperfect humans to live up to their dedication? (b) How can you find the best friends?

ministry to perform. (Rom. 10:14) You may not feel fully qualified to shoulder such a responsibility. But, as is the case of the anointed, it is God who qualifies you. (*Read 2 Corinthians 3:5.*) You can live up to your dedication by doing your best and relying on God's spirit.

¹⁵ Granted, it is not easy for us imperfect humans to live up to our dedication to our perfect God, Jehovah. One complication is that some with whom you once associated may be puzzled at your new way of life and may 'speak abusively of you.' (1 Pet. 4:4) Yet, do not overlook the fact that you have since cultivated new friendships, the most important being with Jehovah and Jesus Christ. (*Read James 2:21-23.*) It is also vital to get to know the brothers and sisters in your local congregation, part of "the whole association of brothers" throughout the world. (1 Pet. 2:17; Prov. 17:17) Jehovah through his spirit will help you to have friends who will continue to be a good influence on you.

¹⁶ Even with helpful friends around you in the congregation, you may still find it difficult to cope with daily challenges. What you have to contend with may at times leave you feeling lost, as if you were in a long tunnel of problems. That is especially a time for you to turn to Jehovah, asking for his holy spirit. "When I am weak," wrote the apostle Paul, "then I am powerful." (*Read 2 Corin-*

16. Why can you, like Paul, "take pleasure in weaknesses"?

Do You Recall?

- What does "walking by spirit" mean?
- What can help you to "keep walking by spirit"?
- How can you live up to your dedication?

thians 4:7-10; 12:10.) Paul knew that God's spirit can make up for human weaknesses, regardless of their nature. Thus, God's active force can strengthen you whenever you feel weak and in need of help. Paul wrote that he could "take pleasure in weaknesses." It was when he was weak that he felt holy spirit operating on him. You can experience the same feeling!—Rom. 15:13.

¹⁷ We need God's spirit so that we can lead a life dedicated to him. Think of yourself as the skipper of a sailboat. Your goal is to serve Jehovah forever. Holy spirit is like the wind that you want to catch so as to arrive at your destination safe and sound. You do not want to be carried hither and thither by the spirit of Satan's world. (1 Cor. 2:12) You have to identify, as it were, the right wind and catch it. That is the holy spirit. Through God's Word and his spirit-directed organization, holy spirit will move you in the right direction.

¹⁸ If you have been studying with Jehovah's Witnesses, enjoying spiritual association with them, but you have yet to take the vital steps of dedication and baptism, ask yourself, 'Why should I hesitate?' If you recognize the holy spirit's role in accomplishing Jehovah's will today and appreciate its operation, then take the steps you have learned to be right. Jehovah will richly bless you. He will generously provide his holy spirit for you. If you were baptized years or decades ago, surely you have experienced the influence of the holy spirit. You have seen and felt how God can strengthen you with his spirit. That can continue to be the case—yes, into the endless future. Thus, be determined to keep on walking by holy spirit.

17. How can holy spirit help you as you move toward your destination?

18. What is your determination now, and why?

“THE RIGHTEOUS ONES WILL SHINE AS BRIGHTLY AS THE SUN”

“At that time the righteous ones will shine as brightly as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”—MATT. 13:43.

JESUS CHRIST used many illustrations, or parables, to explain different aspects of the Kingdom. He “spoke to the crowds by illustrations. Indeed, without an illustration he would not speak to them.” (Matt. 13:34) In illustrations about sowing the seed of Kingdom truth, Jesus emphasized the role of a person’s heart condition in accepting the message, as well as the role that Jehovah plays in causing spiritual growth. (Mark 4: 3-9, 26-29) Jesus also illustrated the outstanding growth of Kingdom interests here on earth even if that growth is not always at first discernible. (Matt. 13:31-33) Additionally, he highlighted that not all who respond to the Kingdom message are necessarily suitable subjects of that Kingdom.—Matt. 13:47-50.*

² However, one of Jesus’ illustrations focuses on the gathering of those who will rule with Jesus in his Kingdom. This is often called the parable of the wheat and the weeds and is recorded in Matthew chapter 13. Whereas in another illustration, Jesus tells us that the seed that is sown is “the word of the kingdom,” in this illustration, he tells us that the fine seed represents something different—“the *sons* of the king-

* For a detailed discussion of these illustrations, see *The Watchtower*, July 15, 2008, pages 12-21.

1. Jesus used illustrations to explain what different aspects of the Kingdom?
2. In Jesus’ illustration of the wheat and the weeds, what does the fine seed represent?

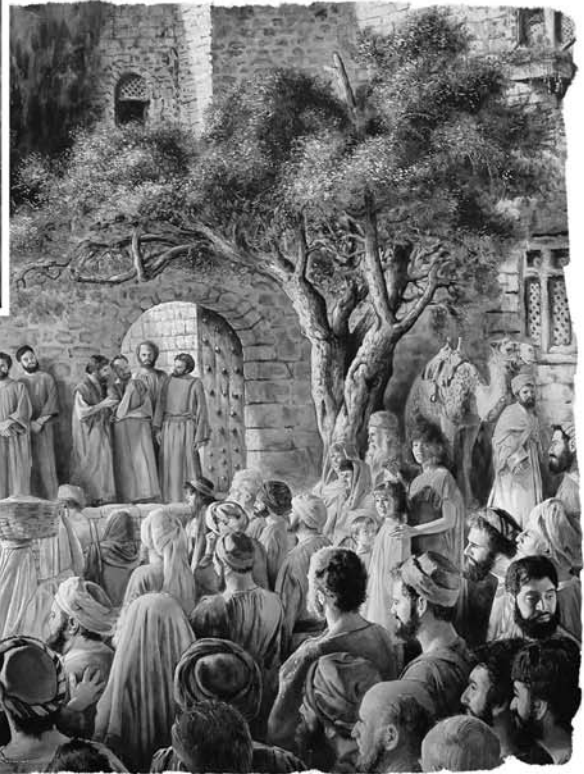
dom.” (Matt. 13:19, 38) These are not subjects of the Kingdom but, rather, “sons,” or heirs, of the Kingdom.—Rom. 8:14-17; read *Galatians 4:6, 7*.

The Illustration of the Wheat and the Weeds

³ This is the illustration: “The kingdom of the heavens has become like a man that sowed fine seed in his field. While men were sleeping, his enemy came and oversowed weeds in among the wheat, and left. When the blade sprouted and produced fruit, then the weeds appeared also. So the slaves of the householder came up and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow fine seed in your field? How, then, does it come to have weeds?’ He said to them, ‘An enemy, a man, did this.’ They said to him, ‘Do you want us, then, to go out and collect them?’ He said, ‘No; that by no chance, while collecting the weeds, you uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest; and in the harvest season I will tell the reapers, First collect the weeds and bind them in bundles to burn them up, then go to gathering the wheat into my storehouse.’”—Matt. 13:24-30.

⁴ Who is the man who sowed the fine

3. Explain the problem that faces the man in the illustration and how he decides to handle this problem.
4. (a) Who is the man in the illustration? (b) When and how did Jesus start to engage in the sowing of this seed?



Pentecost 33 C.E. marked the start of sowing the fine seed

seed in his field? Jesus provides the answer later when he explains to his disciples: “The sower of the fine seed is the Son of man.” (Matt. 13:37) Jesus, the “Son of man,” prepared the field for planting during the three and a half years of his earthly ministry. (Matt. 8:20; 25:31; 26:64) Then from Pentecost 33 C.E. onward, he started to sow the fine seed—“the sons of the kingdom.” This sowing evidently took place when Jesus, as Jehovah’s representative, began to pour out holy spirit upon the disciples, thereby anointing them as God’s sons.* (Acts 2:33)

* In this parable, the sowing does not represent the work of preaching and disciple making, which would bring in new ones who would become anointed Christians. Regarding the fine seed that is sown in the field, Jesus said: “These are [not “will become”] the sons of the kingdom.” The sowing refers to the anointing of these sons of the Kingdom in the world field.

The fine seed developed into mature wheat. So the objective in sowing the fine seed was eventually to gather the full number of those who would become joint heirs and rulers with Jesus in his Kingdom.

⁵ Who is the enemy, and who are the weeds? Jesus tells us that the enemy “is the Devil.” The weeds are described as “the sons of the wicked one.” (Matt. 13:25, 38, 39) In a literal sense, the weeds that Jesus referred to were probably the bearded darnel. This poisonous plant closely resembles wheat in its early stages before it reaches maturity. What a fitting picture of imitation Christians, those who claim to be sons of the Kingdom but do not produce genuine fruitage! These

5. Who is the enemy in the illustration, and who are pictured by the weeds?

hypocritical Christians who claim to be followers of Christ are really part of the “seed” of Satan the Devil.—Gen. 3:15.

⁶ When did these weedlike Christians appear? “While men were sleeping,” says Jesus. (Matt. 13:25) When was this? We find the answer in the apostle Paul’s words to the Ephesian elders: “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) He went on to admonish those elders to keep awake spiritually. After the apostles, who acted as “a restraint” against the apostasy, began falling asleep in death, many Christians fell asleep spiritually. (*Read 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 6-8.*) That is when the great apostasy started.

⁷ Jesus did not say that the wheat would become weeds but that weeds were sown among the wheat. So this illustration does not portray genuine Christians who fall away from the truth. Rather, it points to a deliberate effort on the part of Satan to corrupt the Christian congregation by introducing wicked people into it. By the time that the last apostle, John, was old, this apostasy was clearly evident.—2 Pet. 2:1-3; 1 John 2:18.

“Let Both Grow Together Until the Harvest”

⁸ The Master’s slaves inform him of the problem and ask: “Do you want us, then, to go out and collect [the weeds]?” (Matt. 13:

6. When did the weeds start to appear, and how were men “sleeping” at the time?

7. Did some of the wheat turn into weeds? Explain.

8, 9. (a) Why would the Master’s instructions to his slaves have made sense to Jesus’ listeners? (b) In the fulfillment, how did the wheat and the weeds grow together?

27, 28) His answer may seem surprising. He tells them to allow the wheat and the weeds to grow together until the time of the harvest. That command would make sense to Jesus’ disciples. They would realize just how difficult it is to distinguish wheat from darnel weed. Those with some agricultural experience would also realize that the bearded darnel’s root system usually intertwines with that of the wheat.* No wonder the Master instructs them to wait!

⁹ In a similar way, down through the centuries, the various sects of Christendom have produced a bumper crop of weeds—first among the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches and later among the numerous Protestant groups that sprang up. At the same time, a few seeds of the genuine wheat were sown in the world field. The householder in the illustration waited patiently during the extended growing time until the relatively shorter harvesttime would arrive.

The Long-Anticipated Harvesttime

¹⁰ Jesus tells us: “The harvest is a conclusion of a system of things, and the reapers are angels.” (Matt. 13:39) During the last days of this wicked system of things, a separating takes place—the sons of the Kingdom are to be gathered and separated from any weedlike ones. Regarding this, the apostle Peter tells us: “It is the appointed time for the judgment to start with the house of God. Now if it starts first with us, what will the end be of those who are not obedient to the good news of God?”—1 Pet. 4:17.

* The roots of the bearded darnel become so intertwined with the roots of the wheat that to uproot them before harvest would result in a loss of wheat.—See *Insight on the Scriptures*, Volume 1, page 1178.

10, 11. (a) When is the time for the harvest? (b) How is the symbolic wheat being brought into Jehovah’s storehouse?

¹¹ Shortly after the beginning of the last days, or the “conclusion of a system of things,” the judgment started for those who claimed to be genuine Christians—whether they were actually “sons of the kingdom” or “sons of the wicked one.” “First” Babylon the Great fell, and “then” the sons of the Kingdom were gathered together at the start of the harvest. (Matt. 13:30) But how is the symbolic wheat now being brought into Jehovah’s storehouse? These harvested ones were either brought into the restored Christian congregation, where they have God’s favor and protection, or they received their heavenly reward.

¹² How long does the judgment last? Jesus referred to the harvest as a “season,” so it continues over a period of time. (Rev. 14:15, 16) The judgment of the individual members of the anointed continues throughout the time of the end. It will last until they are finally sealed.—Rev. 7:1-4.

¹³ Who will be collected out from the

12. For how long does the harvest continue?

13. In what way do the weeds cause stumbling, and how are they doing lawlessness?

Do You Remember?

In Jesus’ illustration of the wheat and the weeds, what do these parts of the illustration mean?

- The fine seed
- The man who sowed the seed
- The sowing of the seed
- The enemy
- The weeds
- The harvest season
- The storehouse
- The weeping and gnashing of teeth
- The fiery furnace

Kingdom, and how do they cause stumbling and do lawlessness? (Matt. 13:41) The weedlike clergy of Christendom have misled millions for centuries. They have done this by means of God-dishonoring teachings, “things that cause stumbling,” such as the doctrine of eternal punishment in hellfire and the confusing and mysterious Trinity. Many religious leaders have set a bad example for their flocks by their adulterous friendship with this world and in some cases by their flagrant immoral conduct. (Jas. 4:4) Additionally, Christendom has become increasingly tolerant of immorality among its members. (*Read Jude 4.*) Despite all of this, they continue to maintain an outward show of piety and godliness. How happy the sons of the Kingdom are to be separated from such weedlike influences and corrupt teachings that cause stumbling!

¹⁴ How do the weedlike ones weep and gnash their teeth? (Matt. 13:42) “The sons of the wicked one” are tormented by the fact that “the sons of the kingdom” have exposed the spiritually poisonous condition of these weedlike ones. They also bemoan the diminishing support they receive from their church members, as well as their loss of control over the laity.—*Read Isaiah 65: 13, 14.*

¹⁵ In what sense are the weeds collected and burned with fire? (Matt. 13:40) This refers to the final outcome for the weeds. Their being thrown symbolically into the fiery furnace indicates that they are headed for eternal destruction. (Rev. 20:14; 21:8) The imitation, weedlike Christians, the impostors, will be eradicated during the “great tribulation.”—Matt. 24:21.

14. How do the weedlike ones weep and gnash their teeth?

15. In what sense are the weedlike ones burned with fire?

They “Will Shine as Brightly as the Sun”

¹⁶ At what time do the wheatlike ones “shine as brightly as the sun”? (Matt. 13:43) Concerning the cleansing of God’s temple, Malachi prophesied: “‘Suddenly there will come to His temple the true Lord, whom you people are seeking, and the messenger of the covenant in whom you are delighting. Look! He will certainly come,’ Jehovah of armies has said. ‘But who will be putting up with the day of his coming, and who will be the one standing when he appears? For he will be like the fire of a refiner and like the lye of laundrymen. And he must sit as a refiner and cleanser of silver and must cleanse the sons of Levi; and he must clarify them like gold and like silver, and they will certainly become to Jehovah people presenting a gift offering in righteousness.’”—Mal. 3:1-3.

¹⁷ In modern times, this prophecy evidently started to be fulfilled in 1918 when Jehovah, along with “the messenger of the covenant,” Jesus Christ, inspected the spiritual temple. Malachi tells us what happens once this cleansing is completed: “You people will again certainly see the distinction between a righteous one and a wicked one, between one serving God and one who has not served him.” (Mal. 3:18) The surge in activity on the part of the reinvigorated true Christians points to that period as the beginning of the harvesttime.

¹⁸ The prophet Daniel spoke of our day

16, 17. What did Malachi prophesy concerning God’s temple, and how did this start to be fulfilled?

18. What did Daniel prophesy would happen in our day?



The symbolic wheat is now being brought into Jehovah’s storehouse

when he foretold: “The ones having insight will shine like the brightness of the expanse; and those who are bringing the many to righteousness, like the stars to time indefinite, even forever.” (Dan. 12:3) Who are these ones who shine so brightly? Why, none other than anointed Christians, the genuine wheat that Jesus referred to in his illustration of the wheat and the weeds!

The ‘collecting out’ of the weedlike imitation Christians has been clearly recognized by an ever-increasing great crowd of sheeplike ones. In attaching themselves to the remnant of spiritual Israel, these prospective subjects of the Kingdom likewise let their light shine in this bedarkened world.—Zech. 8:23; Matt. 5:14-16; Phil. 2:15.

¹⁹ Today, “the sons of the kingdom” eagerly await their glorious, heavenly reward. (Rom. 8:18, 19; 1 Cor. 15:53; Phil. 1:21-24) Until that time, though, they must remain faithful, continuing to shine brightly, standing out as different from “the sons of the wicked one.” (Matt. 13:38; Rev. 2:10) How happy we all can be that we have had the privilege of seeing the results of this symbolic ‘collecting out’ of the weeds in our time!

²⁰ But what is the relationship between these sons of the Kingdom and the ever-expanding great crowd of those who hope to live forever on earth as subjects of the Kingdom? The next article will answer this question.

19, 20. What do “the sons of the kingdom” eagerly await, and what will we discuss in the next article?

ONE FLOCK, ONE SHEPHERD

“You who have followed me will also yourselves sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”—MATT. 19:28.

JEHOVAH loved Abraham, so He showed loyal love to Abraham’s descendants. For over 15 centuries, he viewed the nation of Israel, which descended from Abraham, as his chosen people, his “special property.” (Read *Deuteronomy 7:6*.) Did that mean that Jehovah totally disregarded people of other nations? No. During that time, non-Israelites who desired to worship Jehovah were allowed to attach themselves to his special nation. These converts, or proselytes, were viewed as part of the nation. They were to be treated as brothers. (Lev. 19:33, 34) And they were required to obey all of Jehovah’s laws.—Lev. 24:22.

² However, Jesus made this startling declaration to the Jews of his day: “The kingdom of God will be taken from you and be given to a nation producing its fruits.” (Matt. 21:43) Who would make up this new nation, and how are we today affected by this change?

The New Nation

³ The apostle Peter clearly identified this new nation. He wrote the following to his fellow Christians: “You are ‘a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for special possession, that you should declare abroad the excellencies’ of the one that

1. How did Jehovah deal with Abraham’s descendants, and why does this not mean that he totally disregarded all other people?

2. What startling declaration did Jesus make, leading to what questions?

3, 4. (a) How did the apostle Peter identify the new nation? (b) Who make up this new nation?

called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” (1 Pet. 2:9) As foretold, natural Jews who accepted Jesus as the Messiah were the first members of that new nation. (Dan. 9:27a; Matt. 10:6) Later, many non-Israelites were also included in this nation, for Peter went on to say: “You were once not a people, but are now God’s people.”—1 Pet. 2:10.

⁴ To whom was Peter here speaking? In the beginning of his letter, he says: “[God] gave us a new birth to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an incorruptible and undefiled and unfading inheritance. It is reserved in the heavens for you.” (1 Pet. 1:3, 4) So this new nation is made up of anointed Christians, who have the heavenly hope. They are “the Israel of God.” (Gal. 6:16) In a vision, the apostle John saw that these spiritual Israelites number 144,000. They are “bought from among mankind as firstfruits to God and to the Lamb” to serve as “priests” and to “rule as kings with [Jesus] for the thousand years.”—Rev. 5:10; 7:4; 14:1, 4; 20:6; Jas. 1:18.

Are Others Also Included?

⁵ Clearly, then, the phrase “Israel of God” at Galatians 6:16 refers exclusively to anointed Christians. However, are there instances when Jehovah uses the nation of Israel as a picture, or illustration, that includes Christians other than the anointed? The answer can be found in these words of Jesus to his faithful apostles: “I make a cove-

5. (a) To whom does the expression “Israel of God” refer? (b) Why is the term “Israel” not always limited in its meaning?

nant with you, just as my Father has made a covenant with me, for a kingdom, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and *sit on thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel.*" (Luke 22:28-30) This will take place during "the re-creation," or time of regeneration, during Christ's Millennial Rule.—*Read Matthew 19:28; ftn.*

⁶ The 144,000 will serve as heavenly kings, priests, and judges during the Thousand Year Reign. (Rev. 20:4) Whom will they judge, and over whom will they rule? At Matthew 19:28 and Luke 22:30, we are told that they will judge "the twelve tribes of Israel." Whom do "the twelve tribes of Israel" picture in this context? They represent all those with an earthly hope—those who put faith in Jesus' sacrifice but are not included in the royal priestly class. (The tribe of Levi was not included in the listing of the 12 tribes of natural Israel.) Those pictured in this context by the 12 tribes of Israel are the ones who will gain spiritual benefits from the priestly services of the 144,000. These nonpriestly beneficiaries are also God's people, and he loves and accepts them. It is appropriate that they are likened to his people of ancient times.

⁷ Fittingly, after the apostle John saw the 144,000 spiritual Israelites being permanently sealed before the great tribulation, he also observed a numberless "great crowd," who come "out of all nations." (Rev. 7:9) These will survive the great tribulation into Christ's Millennial Reign. There they will be joined by billions of resurrected ones. (John 5:28, 29; Rev. 20:13) All of

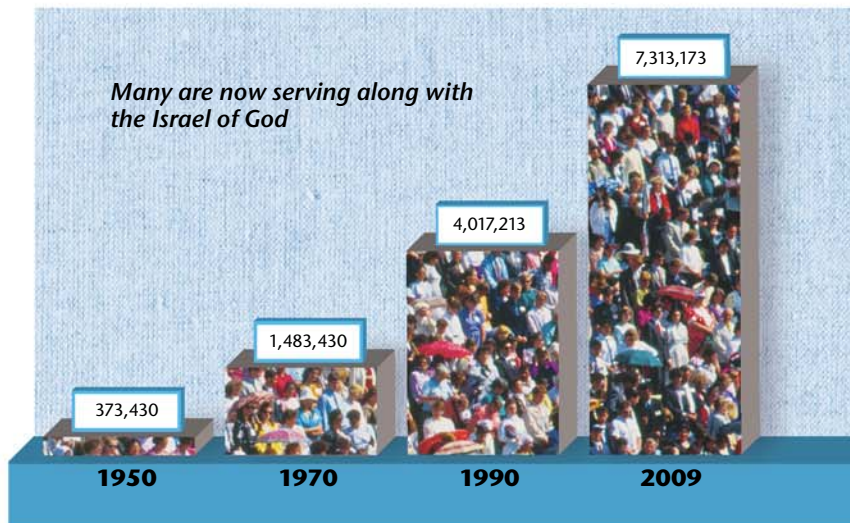
6, 7. To whom does the expression "the twelve tribes of Israel" refer in the context of Matthew 19:28 and Luke 22:30?

these will make up the symbolic "twelve tribes of Israel," who will be judged by Jesus and his 144,000 corulers.—Acts 17:31; 24:15; Rev. 20:12.

⁸ This relationship between the 144,000 and the rest of mankind was foreshadowed in the events of the annual Atonement Day. (Lev. 16:6-10) The high priest was required, first of all, to sacrifice a bull as a sin offering "in behalf of himself and his house." Thus, Jesus' sacrifice is applied first to his household of underpriests, those who will serve with him in heaven. Also on the ancient Atonement Day, two goats were provided for the sins of the other Israelites. In this setting, where the priestly tribe pictures the 144,000, the rest of Israel pictures all those with an earthly hope. This application shows that the term "the twelve tribes of Israel" at Matthew 19:28 refers, not to Jesus' spirit-begotten underpriests, but to all others who put faith in Jesus' sacrifice.*

* Similarly, the anointed are primarily spoken of as "the congregation." (Heb. 12:23) However, the word "congregation" can have another meaning, referring to all Christians, no matter what hope they have.—See *The Watchtower*, April 15, 2007, pages 21-23.

8. How do the events of the annual Atonement Day foreshadow the relationship between the 144,000 and the rest of mankind?



⁹ Consider another example. The prophet Ezekiel was given an extensive vision of Jehovah's temple. (Ezek., chaps. 40-48) In that visionary setting, the priests worked in the temple, providing instruction and receiving Jehovah's counsel and correction. (Ezek. 44:23-31) In the same setting, members of the various tribes came to worship and offer sacrifices. (Ezek. 45:16, 17) In this context, then, the priests picture the anointed, while Israelites from the nonpriestly tribes picture those with an earthly hope. The vision emphasizes that the two groups work together harmoniously, with the priestly class taking the lead in pure worship.

¹⁰ Jesus spoke of "other sheep," who would not be of the same "fold" as the "little flock" of his anointed followers. (John 10:16; Luke 12:32) He said: "Those also I must bring, and they will listen to my voice, and they will become one flock, one shep-

9. Whom do the priests in Ezekiel's temple vision represent, and whom do the nonpriestly Israelites represent?

10, 11. (a) What faith-strengthening fulfillment of Jesus' words have we seen? (b) What question arises about the other sheep?

herd." How faith-strengthening it has been to see the fulfillment of those words! Two groups of people have been joined together—the small group of anointed ones and the great crowd of other sheep. (*Read Zechariah 8:23.*) Although the other sheep do not symbolically serve in the inner courtyard of the spiritual temple, they do serve in the outer courtyard of that temple.

¹¹ But if Jehovah sometimes uses the non-priestly members of ancient Israel to picture these other sheep, should those with an earthly hope also partake of the Memorial emblems? We will now consider the answer to this question.

The New Covenant

¹² Jehovah foretold a new arrangement for his people when he said: "This is the covenant that I shall conclude with the house of Israel after those days. . . . I will put my law within them, and in their heart I shall write it. And I will become their God, and they themselves will become my people." (Jer. 31:31-33) By means of this new covenant, Jehovah's promise to Abraham was to have a glorious and lasting fulfillment.

—*Read Genesis 22:18.*

¹³ Jesus referred to this new covenant on the night before his death when he said: "This cup means the new covenant by virtue of my blood, which is to be poured out in your behalf." (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25) Are all Christians included in this new covenant? No. Some, like the apostles who

12. What new arrangement did Jehovah foretell?

13, 14. (a) Who are participants in the new covenant? (b) Who are beneficiaries, and how do they 'lay hold' of this new covenant?



drank of that cup that evening, are *participants* in the new covenant.* Jesus made another covenant with them to rule together with him in his Kingdom. (Luke 22:28-30) They will share with Jesus in his Kingdom. —Luke 22:15, 16.

¹⁴ What of those who will live on earth under his Kingdom? They are *beneficiaries* of the new covenant. (Gal. 3:8, 9) Although not participants, they ‘lay hold’ of this covenant by submitting to its requirements, just as was foretold by the prophet Isaiah: “The *foreigners* that have joined themselves to Jehovah to minister to him and to love the name of Jehovah, in order to become servants to him, all those keeping the sabbath in order not to profane it and laying hold of my covenant, I will also bring them to my holy mountain and make them rejoice inside my house of prayer.” Jehovah then says: “For my own house will be called even a house of prayer for all the peoples.” —Isa. 56:6, 7.

Who Should Partake?

¹⁵ Those in the new covenant “have boldness for the way of entry into the holy place.” (*Read Hebrews 10:15-20.*) These are the ones who are “to receive a kingdom that cannot be shaken.” (Heb. 12:28) So, then, only those who will be kings and priests in heaven with Jesus Christ should drink from the “cup” that represents the new covenant. These participants in the new covenant are the ones promised in marriage to the Lamb. (2 Cor. 11:2; Rev. 21:2, 9) All others who attend the annual Memorial are respectful observers, who do not partake of the emblems.

* Jesus is the Mediator of that covenant, not a participant. As the Mediator, he evidently did not partake of the emblems.

15, 16. (a) To what does the apostle Paul link the new covenant? (b) Why should those with an earthly hope not partake of the Memorial emblems?

¹⁶ Paul also helps us to understand that those with an earthly hope do not partake of the Memorial emblems. He said to anointed Christians: “For as often as you eat this loaf and drink this cup, you keep proclaiming the death of the Lord, *until he arrives.*” (1 Cor. 11:26) When does the Lord ‘arrive’? When he comes to take the last of his anointed bride class to their heavenly home. (John 14:2, 3) Clearly, the annual observance of the Lord’s Evening Meal is not to continue endlessly. “The remaining ones” of the woman’s seed yet on earth will continue to partake of this meal until all of them have received their heavenly reward. (Rev. 12:17) If, though, those who will live forever on earth were entitled to partake of the emblems, then this Memorial meal would need to continue forever.

“They Will Actually Become My People”

¹⁷ Jehovah foretold the unity of his people in these words: “I will conclude with them a covenant of peace; an indefinitely lasting covenant is what there will come to be with them. And I will place them and multiply them and place my sanctuary in the midst of them to time indefinite. And my tabernacle will actually prove to be over them, and I

^{17, 18.} How has the prophecy recorded at Ezekiel 37:26, 27 been fulfilled?

Do You Remember?

- Who are “the twelve tribes of Israel” that the 144,000 will judge?
- What is the relationship of the anointed and of the other sheep to the new covenant?
- Should all Christians partake of the Memorial emblems?
- What unity was foretold for our day?

shall certainly become their God, and they themselves will become my people.”—Ezek. 37:26, 27.

¹⁸ All of God’s people are privileged to benefit from the fulfillment of this marvelous promise, this covenant for Christian peace. Yes, Jehovah has guaranteed peace for all of his obedient servants. The fruitage of his spirit is evident among them. His sanctuary, here picturing pure Christian worship, is among them. They have truly become his people, for they have abandoned all forms of idolatry and have made Jehovah the only God whom they worship.

¹⁹ How thrilling it has been to witness this unifying of two groups in our time! Although the ever-growing great crowd do not have the heavenly hope, they are proud to

19, 20. Who are included in those whom Jehovah calls “my people,” and what does the new covenant make possible?

be associated with those who do. They have attached themselves to the Israel of God. By doing this, they are included among those whom Jehovah calls “my people.” In them we find the fulfillment of this prophecy: “Many nations will certainly become joined to Jehovah in that day, and *they will actually become my people*; and I will reside in the midst of you.”—Zech. 2:11; 8:21; *read Isaiah 65:22; Revelation 21:3, 4.*

²⁰ By means of the new covenant, Jehovah has made all of this possible. Millions of spiritual foreigners have become part of Jehovah’s favored nation. (Mic. 4:1-5) They are determined to continue to lay hold of that covenant by accepting its provisions and obeying its requirements. (Isa. 56:6, 7) In so doing, along with the Israel of God, they enjoy the rich blessings of continued peace. May that be your blessed lot—now and for all time to come!