

SEPTEMBER 15, 2010

# THE WATCHTOWER®

## ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

(Pages 7-11, 12-20, 21-29)

STUDY ARTICLES FOR THE  
WEEKS OF:

**October 25-31**

Earnestly Seek Jehovah's Blessing  
PAGE 7 SONGS TO BE USED: 95, 38

**November 1-7**

Unity Identifies True Worship  
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**November 8-14**

Christian Unity Glorifies God  
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"Your Leader Is One, the Christ"  
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**November 22-28**

Our Active Leader Today  
PAGE 25 SONGS TO BE USED: 120, 98

PURPOSE OF STUDY ARTICLES

**STUDY ARTICLE 1** PAGES 7-11

God's servants need his blessing in order to meet his righteous requirements. What sort of effort is needed? How can Jehovah's holy spirit help us to deal with any challenges that may confront us?

**STUDY ARTICLES 2, 3** PAGES 12-20

These articles will help us to appreciate how good and how pleasant it is to dwell together in unity with our brothers. We will see why only Jehovah can unite people from all nations. Then we will consider how each of us can promote the unity of the congregation, thus glorifying God.

**STUDY ARTICLES 4, 5** PAGES 21-29

These two articles will help us to be more aware of Christ, our heavenly King, in his role as our active Leader. He is attentive to what is going on in each congregation of his disciples on earth today.

# EARNESTLY SEEK JEHOVAH'S BLESSING

*"[God] becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him."*—HEB. 11:6.

**G**OD bless you!" In some lands, it is not uncommon to hear complete strangers say this when a person sneezes. The clergy of various religions can be found blessing people, animals, and inanimate objects. Travelers may be lured to some religious sites by the prospect of receiving a blessing. Politicians regularly invoke God's blessing on their nation. Do you think that such requests for a blessing are appropriate? Are they effective? Who really does receive God's blessing, and why?

<sup>2</sup> Jehovah foretold that in the last days, he would have a clean and peaceable people

1, 2. (a) How do many people seek divine blessings? (b) Why should we be particularly interested in obtaining Jehovah's blessing?

from all nations, who would preach the good news of the Kingdom to the ends of the earth despite hatred and opposition. (Isa. 2:2-4; Matt. 24:14; Rev. 7:9, 14) Those of us who have accepted the responsibility to live up to that inspired description want—and need—God's blessing, for without it we could never hope to succeed. (Ps. 127:1) But how can we obtain God's blessing?

## **Blessings Overtake Obedient Ones**

<sup>3</sup> *Read Proverbs 10:6, 7.* Just before the nation of Israel entered the Promised Land, Jehovah indicated that remarkable prosperity and protection would be theirs if they

3. If the Israelites had been obedient, what would have been the result?

obeyed his voice. (Deut. 28:1, 2) Jehovah's blessings would not just come upon God's people but would "overtake" them. For those obedient ones, the blessings would be absolutely certain.

<sup>4</sup> With what attitude were the Israelites to be obedient? God's Law stated that he would be displeased if his people failed to serve him "with rejoicing and joy of heart." (*Read Deuteronomy 28:45-47.*) Jehovah deserves more than mechanical obedience to specific orders, such as can be performed even by animals or demons. (Mark 1:27; Jas. 3:3) Genuine obedience to God is an expression of love. It is marked by joy that stems from faith that Jehovah's commandments are not burdensome and that "he becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him." —Heb. 11:6; 1 John 5:3.

<sup>5</sup> Consider how such trusting obedience might have been manifested by keeping the law stated at Deuteronomy 15:7, 8. (*Read.*) Begrudging compliance with that law might have resulted in some initial relief to the poor, but would it have engendered good relationships and an atmosphere of warmth among God's people? More important, would it have reflected faith in Jehovah's ability to provide for his servants and appreciation for the opportunity to mirror his generosity? Hardly! God took note of the heart condition of the truly generous person and promised to bless him in his every deed and every undertaking. (Deut. 15:10) Faith in that promise would give rise to action and would result in many rich blessings. —Prov. 28:20.

<sup>6</sup> In addition to having faith in Jehovah

4. What does true obedience involve?
5. How would trusting in Jehovah's promise have aided a person in obeying the law at Deuteronomy 15:7, 8?
6. Hebrews 11:6 should reassure us of what?

as the Rewarder, Hebrews 11:6 highlights another quality that is needed to receive God's blessing. Note that Jehovah rewards those "*earnestly seeking him.*" The original-language word used here implies intensity and concentrated effort. How that should assure us of the outworking of the blessing! Its source is the only true God, "who cannot lie." (Titus 1:2) He has shown over the millenniums that what he promises is absolutely trustworthy. His words never fail; they always come true. (Isa. 55:11) So we can be thoroughly confident that if we manifest true faith, he will in our case prove to be a Rewarder.

<sup>7</sup> Jesus Christ proved to be the primary part of Abraham's "seed." Anointed Christians form the secondary part of that foretold "seed." They have been commissioned to "declare abroad the excellencies of the one that called [them] out of darkness into his wonderful light." (Gal. 3:7-9, 14, 16, 26-29; 1 Pet. 2:9) We cannot hope to acquire a good relationship with Jehovah if we ignore those whom Jesus has appointed to care for his belongings. Without the assistance of "the faithful and discreet slave," we would neither understand the full import of what we read in God's Word nor know how to apply it. (Matt. 24:45-47) By putting into practice the things we are learning from the Scriptures, we can secure ourselves God's blessing.

### Keeping God's Will in Focus

<sup>8</sup> The idea of exerting strenuous effort to obtain God's blessing may well bring to mind the patriarch Jacob. He did not know how God's promise to Abraham would work out, but he believed that Jehovah would

7. How can we secure ourselves a blessing by means of Abraham's "seed"?
- 8, 9. How did the patriarch Jacob exert himself in harmony with his petitions?

greatly multiply the offspring of his grandfather, whose descendants would become a great nation. Thus, in 1781 B.C.E., Jacob traveled to Haran to find a wife. He was not merely interested in finding someone who would be a pleasant companion; rather, he sought a spiritually-minded woman who was a worshipper of Jehovah and who would be a good mother to his children.

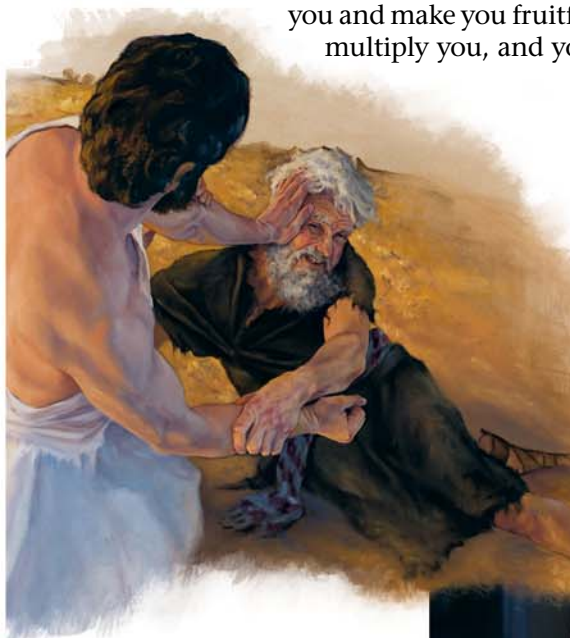
<sup>9</sup> We know that Jacob met his relative Rachel. He came to love Rachel and agreed to work for her father, Laban, for seven years in order to obtain her as his wife. This was no mere story of a memorable romance. Jacob certainly knew of the promise that Almighty God had made to his grandfather Abraham and had restated to his father, Isaac. (Gen. 18:18; 22:17, 18; 26:3-5, 24, 25) In turn, Isaac told his son Jacob: “God Almighty will bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, and you will

certainly become a congregation of peoples. And he will give to you the blessing of Abraham, to you and to your seed with you, that you may take possession of the land of your alien residences, which God has given to Abraham.” (Gen. 28:3, 4) So the effort Jacob put forth to find the right wife and produce a family reflected his confidence in what Jehovah had said.

<sup>10</sup> Jacob was not seeking wealth to accommodate his family. His mind was on his heritage. His focus was on the outworking of Jehovah’s will. Jacob was determined to do everything in his power to obtain God’s blessing despite obstacles. He carried that attitude into his old age, and Jehovah blessed him for it.—*Read Genesis 32:24-29.*

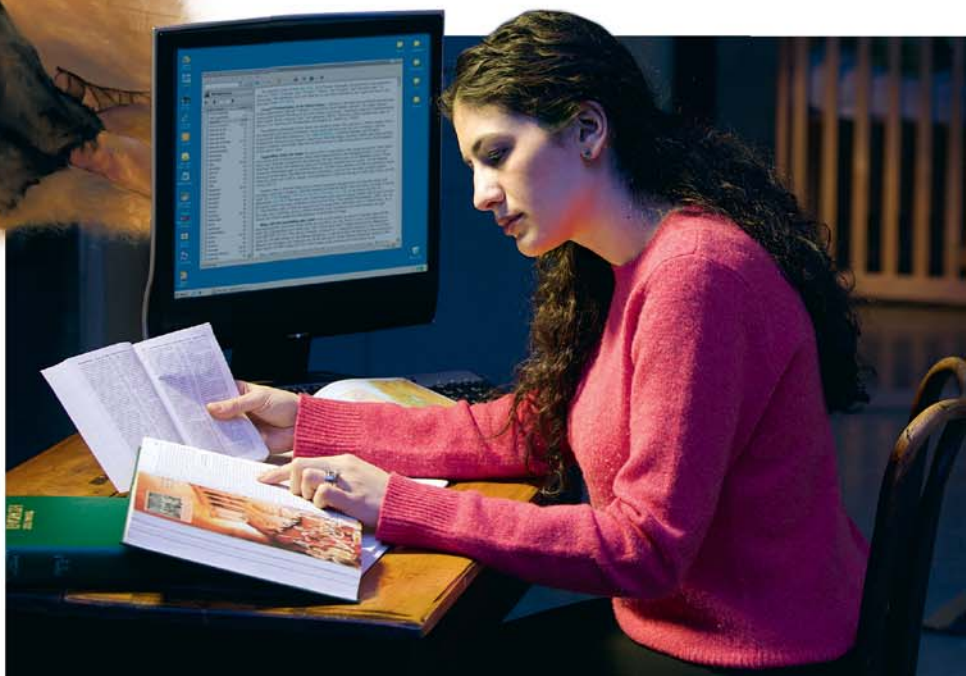
<sup>11</sup> Like Jacob, we do not know all the details of the outworking of Jehovah’s purpose. Yet, by studying God’s Word, we perceive a general outline of what to expect concerning “Jehovah’s day.” (2 Pet. 3:10, 17) For example, we do not know exactly when that day will come, but we know it is near. We believe God’s Word when it says that by giving a thorough witness in the

- 10. Why was Jehovah pleased to bless Jacob?
- 11. What effort should we make in harmony with God’s revealed will?



*Jacob grappled with an angel to get Jehovah’s blessing.*

*Do you similarly put forth earnest effort?*



*God's holy spirit equipped  
Bezalel and Oholiab to excel*

short time that remains, we will save both ourselves and those who listen to us.—1 Tim. 4:16.

<sup>12</sup> We recognize that the end could come at any time; Jehovah's timing is not contingent on our giving a personal witness to every individual on the planet. (Matt. 10:23) Moreover, we receive good direction on how to carry out our preaching work effectively. In faith, we participate in this work to the best of our ability, using whatever resources are at our disposal. Will we always preach in the most productive territory? Really, how could we know in advance? (*Read Ecclesiastes 11:5, 6.*) Our job is to preach, trusting that Jehovah will give us his blessing. (1 Cor. 3:6, 7) We can be certain that he sees our strenuous efforts, and by means of his holy spirit, he will provide whatever specific direction we need.—Ps. 32:8.

### Seeking Holy Spirit

<sup>13</sup> What if we feel inadequate to fulfill an assignment or to engage in the preaching work? We should ask Jehovah to give us his holy spirit to heighten whatever abilities we have in his service. (*Read Luke 11:13.*) God's spirit can qualify people for a work or a service privilege regardless of their previous circumstances or experience. For instance, right after the Exodus from Egypt, God's spirit enabled shepherds and slaves to vanquish their enemies in battle despite being inexperienced in warfare. (Ex. 17:8-13) Soon

12. Of what may we be certain?

13, 14. How has the capacity of God's holy spirit to qualify his servants been demonstrated?



thereafter, that same spirit equipped Bezalel and Oholiab to carry out the exquisite, divinely inspired architectural plans for the tabernacle.—Ex. 31:2-6; 35:30-35.

<sup>14</sup> That powerful spirit equipped modern-day servants of God to care for the needs of the organization when it became necessary to begin their own printing operation. In a letter, Brother R. J. Martin, the factory overseer at the time, explained what had been accomplished by 1927. "At the right time, the Lord opened the door; and the big rotary [press] came into our hands, came into the hands that knew nothing about its construction and operation. But the Lord knows how to quicken the minds of those who have committed their all to him. . . . In a very few weeks, we were able to make that press hum; and it is still humming, doing work that even its makers never knew it could do." Jehovah has continued to bless such earnest efforts to this day.

<sup>15</sup> Jehovah's spirit operates in a variety of ways. That spirit is available to all of God's servants, and it helps them to surmount formidable obstacles. What if we feel overwhelmed by temptation? We can draw strength from Paul's words found at Romans 7:21, 25 and 8:11. Yes, "the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead" can go to work in our behalf, empowering us to win the fight against fleshly desires. That passage was written to spirit-anointed Christians, yet the principle applies to all of God's servants. All of us gain life by exercising faith in Christ, by exerting ourselves to deaden improper desires, and by living in accord with the spirit's direction.

<sup>16</sup> Can we expect God to impart to us his active force without any effort on our part? No. Besides praying for it, we must diligently feed on God's inspired Word. (Prov. 2:1-6) In addition, God's spirit rests upon the Christian congregation. Our regular meeting attendance manifests our desire to "hear what the spirit says to the congregations." (Rev. 3:6) Moreover, we must humbly respond to what we learn. Proverbs 1:23 counsels us: "Turn back at my reproof. Then to you I will cause my spirit to bubble forth." Indeed, God gives his holy spirit "to those obeying him as ruler."—Acts 5:32.

<sup>17</sup> While earnest effort is needed to obtain God's blessing, remember that hard work alone cannot possibly account for the abundance of good things that Jehovah has showered upon his people. The effect of his blessing on our efforts can be compared to the way our bodies benefit from wholesome food. God fashioned our bodies in such a

15. How can Romans 8:11 be of encouragement to those facing temptation?

16. What must we do to receive God's holy spirit?

17. To what might we liken the effect of God's blessing on our efforts?

way that we enjoy food and derive vital nourishment from it. He also provides the food. We do not fully know how our food acquires its nutrients, nor can most of us explain how our bodies produce energy from the food that we eat. We just know that the process works and that we cooperate with it by eating. If we choose to eat nourishing food, the results are even better. In like manner, Jehovah sets the requirements for everlasting life, and he gives us the help we need to meet those requirements. Clearly, he does much of the work and deserves the praise. Still, we must cooperate with him, acting in harmony with God's will, to receive the blessing.—Hag. 2:18, 19.

<sup>18</sup> So pour your heart into every assignment. Always look to Jehovah for success. (Mark 11:23, 24) As you do, be assured that "everyone seeking finds." (Matt. 7:8) Spirit-anointed ones will be blessed with "the crown of life" in the heavens. (Jas. 1:12) Christ's "other sheep," who are striving to receive a blessing for themselves by means of Abraham's seed, will delight to hear Him say: "Come, you who have been blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the founding of the world." (John 10:16; Matt. 25:34) Yes, "those being blessed by [God] will themselves possess the earth, . . . and they will reside forever upon it."—Ps. 37:22, 29.

18. What is your determination, and why?

### Can You Explain?

- What is involved in true obedience?
- What is required to obtain God's blessing?
- How may we receive God's holy spirit, and how can it work in our behalf?

# UNITY IDENTIFIES TRUE WORSHIP

*“In unity I shall set them, like a flock in the pen.”—MIC. 2:12.*

**A** PSALMIST exclaimed: “How many your works are, O Jehovah! All of them in wisdom you have made. The earth is full of your productions.” (Ps. 104:24) God’s wisdom is evident in the interdependence of the millions of varieties of plants, insects, animals, and bacteria in earth’s amazingly complex web of life. Also, in your body, thousands of different mechanisms, from large organs to tiny molecular machines in your cells, all work together to make you a whole and healthy person.

<sup>2</sup> Jehovah created mankind to be interdependent. The human race exhibits a wide variety of looks, personalities, and skills. Additionally, he endowed the first humans with godly qualities that would enable them to cooperate with each other and to depend on each other. (Gen. 1:27; 2:18) Nevertheless, the world of mankind in general is now alienated from God and has never, as a whole, been able to act in unity. (1 John 5:19) Therefore, considering that the first-century Christian congregation was composed of people as diverse as Ephesian slaves, prominent Greek women, educated Jewish men, and former idol worshippers, their unity must have seemed miraculous. —Acts 13:1; 17:4; 1 Thess. 1:9; 1 Tim. 6:1.

<sup>3</sup> True worship enables people to cooper-

1. How does creation provide evidence of God’s wisdom?
2. As depicted on page 13, why must the unity among Christians have seemed miraculous?
3. How does the Bible describe the unity of Christians, and what will we consider in this study?

ate as harmoniously as the members of our own body. (Read 1 Corinthians 12:12, 13.) Some aspects we will examine in this article are: How does true worship unite people? Why is Jehovah the only one who can unify millions of people from all nations? What obstacles to unity does Jehovah help us to surmount? And as respects unity, how does true Christianity differ from Christendom?

## How Does True Worship Unite People?

<sup>4</sup> People who practice true worship recognize that because Jehovah created all things, he is the rightful Sovereign of the universe. (Rev. 4:11) So although genuine Christians live in many societies and under different circumstances, they all obey the same laws of God and live by the same Bible principles. All true worshippers properly address Jehovah as “Father.” (Isa. 64:8; Matt. 6:9) Thus, they are all spiritual brothers and can enjoy the beautiful unity described by the psalmist: “Look! How good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!”—Ps. 133:1.

<sup>5</sup> Though true Christians are imperfect, they worship together in unity because they have learned to love one another. Jehovah teaches them to love as no one else can. (Read 1 John 4:7, 8.) His Word says: “Clothe yourselves with the tender affections of

4. How does true worship unite people?
5. What quality contributes to the unity of true worshippers?



compassion, kindness, lowliness of mind, mildness, and long-suffering. Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely if anyone has a cause for complaint against another. Even as Jehovah freely forgave you, so do you also. But, besides all these things, clothe yourselves with love, for it is a perfect bond of union.” (Col. 3:12-14) This perfect bond of union—love—is the quality that principally identifies true Christians. From personal experience, have you not seen that this unity is a distinguishing feature of true worship?—John 13:35.

<sup>6</sup> True worshippers are also united because they look to God’s Kingdom as the only hope for mankind. They know that God’s Kingdom will shortly replace human governments and bless obedient mankind with genuine, lasting peace. (Isa. 11:4-9; Dan. 2:44) Thus, Christians heed what Jesus said about his followers: “They are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world.” (John 17:16) True Christians remain neutral in conflicts of the world; hence, they are able to enjoy unity even when those around them are at war.

### **The One Source of Spiritual Instruction**

<sup>7</sup> First-century Christians enjoyed unity because they all received encouragement from the same source. They recognized that Jesus was teaching and directing the congregation through a governing body, composed of the apostles and older men in Jerusalem. These devoted men based their decisions on God’s Word and had traveling overseers communicate their instructions to the congregations in many lands. Con-

6. How does the Kingdom hope help us to enjoy unity?

7, 8. In what way does Biblical instruction contribute to our unity?

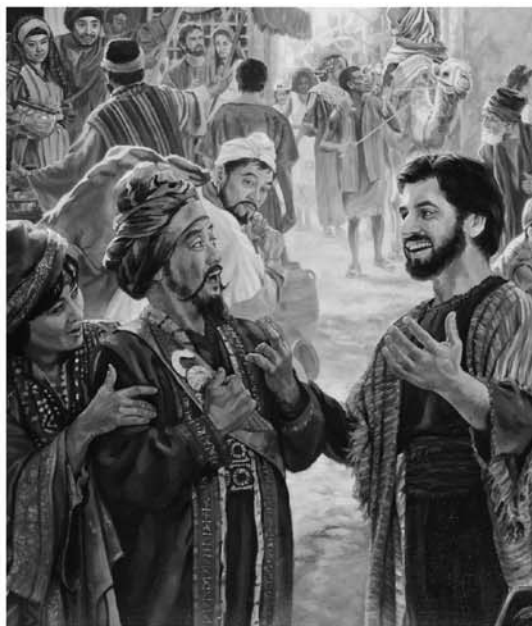
cerning some such overseers, the Bible says: “As they traveled on through the cities they would deliver to those there for observance the decrees that had been decided upon by the apostles and older men who were in Jerusalem.”—Acts 15:6, 19-22; 16:4.

<sup>8</sup> Similarly today, a Governing Body composed of spirit-anointed Christians contributes to the unity of the worldwide congregation. The Governing Body publishes spiritually encouraging literature in many languages. This spiritual food is based on God’s Word. Thus, what is taught is not from men but from Jehovah.—Isa. 54:13.

<sup>9</sup> Christian overseers also promote unity by taking the lead in preaching. The spirit of companionship that unites those who work together in God’s service is far stronger than the spirit that unites others in the

9. How does our God-given work help us to be united?

### ***First-century Christians came from many backgrounds***





world who merely socialize together. The Christian congregation was founded, not to function as a social club, but to honor Jehovah and to get a job done—the work of preaching the good news, making disciples, and building up the congregation. (Rom. 1: 11, 12; 1 Thess. 5:11; Heb. 10:24, 25) Thus, the apostle Paul could say of Christians: “You are standing firm in one spirit, with one soul striving side by side for the faith of the good news.”—Phil. 1:27.

<sup>10</sup> Accordingly, as Jehovah’s people, we are united because we accept Jehovah’s sovereignty, love our brothers, hope in God’s Kingdom, and respect the ones God uses to take the lead among us. Jehovah helps us to overcome certain attitudes that because of our imperfection could otherwise threaten our unity.—Rom. 12:2.

### Overcoming Pride and Jealousy

<sup>11</sup> Pride separates people. A proud person likes to consider himself superior and usually gets selfish pleasure from boasting. But this often stands in the way of unity; those who hear the boasting may become jealous. The disciple James tells us frankly: “All such taking of pride is wicked.” (Jas. 4:16) It is unloving to treat others as inferior. Remarkably, Jehovah is an example of humility in

10. What are some ways in which we are united as God’s people?

11. Why is pride divisive, and how does Jehovah help us overcome it?

#### How Would You Answer?

- How does true worship unite people?
- How can we prevent jealousy from spoiling our unity?
- Why does nationalism not divide true worshippers?

that he deals with imperfect people like us. David wrote: “It is your [God’s] humility that makes me great.” (2 Sam. 22:36) God’s Word helps us to conquer pride by teaching us to reason properly. Paul was inspired to ask: “Who makes you to differ from another? Indeed, what do you have that you did not receive? If, now, you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as though you did not receive it?”—1 Cor. 4:7.

<sup>12</sup> Jealousy is another common obstacle to unity. Because of inherited imperfection, we all have “a tendency to envy,” and even longtime Christians may occasionally feel jealous of the circumstances, possessions, privileges, or abilities of others. (Jas. 4:5) For example, a brother with a family might feel jealous of the privileges that a full-time minister enjoys, without realizing that the full-time minister may feel a bit jealous of the family man who has children. How can we prevent such jealousy from disrupting our unity?

<sup>13</sup> To help us avoid jealousy, recall that the Bible compares anointed members of the Christian congregation to parts of the human body. (*Read 1 Corinthians 12:14-18.*) Although your eye, for example, may be more prominent than your heart, are not both valuable to you? Similarly, Jehovah values all members of the congregation even though some for a time may be more prominent than others. So let us adopt Jehovah’s view of our brothers. Rather than being jealous of others, we can show concern and personal interest in them. By doing so, we contribute to the difference between true Christians and those in the churches of Christendom.

12, 13. (a) Why is it easy to become jealous? (b) What results from adopting Jehovah’s view of others?

## Christendom —Marked by Division

<sup>14</sup> The unity of true Christians stands in contrast to the strife that exists among the churches of Christendom. By the fourth century, apostate Christianity was so widespread that a pagan emperor of Rome took control of it, contributing to the development of Christendom. Then, in successive schisms, many kingdoms split from Rome and formed their own State churches.

<sup>15</sup> Many of those kingdoms warred against one another for centuries. During the 17th and 18th centuries, people in Britain, France, and the United States promoted devotion to their State, so that nationalism, in effect, became like a religion. During the 19th and 20th centuries, nationalism began to dominate the thinking of most of mankind. Eventually, Christendom's churches splintered into numerous sects, most of which tolerate nationalism. Churchgoers have even gone to war against fellow believers of another nation. Today, Christendom is divided by both sectarian beliefs and nationalism.

14, 15. How did apostate Christianity become dis-united?

<sup>16</sup> In the 20th century, some of Christendom's hundreds of sects initiated the ecumenical movement in a push for unity. But after many decades of effort, few churches have amalgamated into one, and churchgoers are still divided on such questions as evolution, abortion, homosexuality, and the ordination of women. In some parts of Christendom, church leaders try to bring people from different sects together by downplaying previously divisive doctrines. However, downplaying doctrines leaves people with a shallow faith and certainly does not unite the divided house of Christendom.

## Rising Above Nationalism

<sup>17</sup> Although mankind is now more horribly divided than ever, unity continues to distinguish true worshippers. God's prophet Micah foretold: "In unity I shall set them, like a flock in the pen." (Mic. 2:12) Micah foretold the elevation of true worship above all other forms of worship, whether of false gods or of the State as a god. He wrote: "It must occur in the final part of the days that the mountain of the house of Jehovah will become firmly established above the top of the mountains, and it will certainly be lifted up above the hills; and to it peoples must stream. For all the peoples, for their part, will walk each one in the name of its god; but we, for our part, shall walk in the name of Jehovah our God."—Mic. 4:1, 5.

16. What sort of issues divide those in Christendom?

17. How was true worship foretold to unite people "in the final part of the days"?

*How does your helping on Kingdom Hall projects contribute to unity?*



<sup>18</sup> Micah also described how true worship would unite former enemies. “[People from] many nations will certainly go and say: ‘Come, you people, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will instruct us about his ways, and we will walk in his paths.’ . . . And they will have to beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning shears. They will not lift up sword, nation against nation, neither will they learn war anymore.” (Mic. 4:2, 3) Those leaving the worship of man-made gods or of nations to embrace the worship of Jehovah enjoy global unity. God instructs them in the ways of love.

18. True worship has helped us to make what changes?

<sup>19</sup> The global unity of true Christians today is unique and is clear evidence that Jehovah continues to guide his people by means of his spirit. Individuals from all nations are being united on a scale never before seen in human history. This is in remarkable fulfillment of what is implied by Revelation 7:9, 14, and it indicates that God’s angels will soon release the “winds” that will destroy the present wicked system of things. (*Read Revelation 7:1-4, 9, 10, 14.*) Is it not a privilege to be united in the worldwide brotherhood? How can each of us contribute to that unity? This will be considered in the next article.

19. The unifying of millions of people in true worship is clear evidence of what?

## CHRISTIAN UNITY GLORIFIES GOD

*‘Earnestly endeavor to observe the oneness of the spirit.’—EPH. 4:3.*

**T**HE unity of the Christian congregation in ancient Ephesus glorified the true God, Jehovah. In that prosperous trading center, some Christian brothers evidently were wealthy slave owners, while others were slaves and probably very poor. (Eph. 6: 5, 9) Some were Jews who learned the truth during the three months that the apostle Paul spoke in their synagogue. Others previously worshipped Artemis and had practiced magical arts. (Acts 19:8, 19, 26) Clearly, true Christianity drew together people from many backgrounds. Paul recognized that Je-

1. How did the first-century Christians in Ephesus bring glory to God?

hovah was glorified by means of the congregation’s unity. The apostle wrote: “To him be the glory by means of the congregation.” —Eph. 3:21.

<sup>2</sup> However, the blessed unity of the Ephesian congregation was threatened. Paul warned the elders: “From among you yourselves men will rise and speak twisted things to draw away the disciples after themselves.” (Acts 20:30) Also, some brothers had not completely left behind the divisive spirit that, Paul warned, “operates in the sons of disobedience.”—Eph. 2:2; 4:22.

2. What threatened the unity of Christians in Ephesus?

## A Letter That Highlights Unity

<sup>3</sup> Paul realized that if Christians are to continue cooperating in harmony, each of them must make an earnest effort to promote unity. God inspired Paul to write a letter to the Ephesians in which unity was a theme. For example, Paul wrote about God's purpose "to gather all things together again in the Christ." (Eph. 1:10) He also likened Christians to the different stones that make up a building. "The whole building, being harmoniously joined together, is growing into a holy temple for Jehovah." (Eph. 2:20, 21) Furthermore, Paul highlighted the unity of Jewish and Gentile Christians and also reminded the brothers of their common origin. He referred to Jehovah as "the Father, to whom every family in heaven and on earth owes its name."—Eph. 3:5, 6, 14, 15.

<sup>4</sup> As we examine chapter 4 of Ephesians, we will see why unity requires effort, how Jehovah helps us to unite, and what attitudes will help us to remain united. Why not read the entire chapter so that you will benefit from the study even more?

### Why Oneness Requires Earnest Effort

<sup>5</sup> Paul entreated his Ephesian brothers 'to endeavor to observe the oneness of the spirit.' (Eph. 4:3) To understand the need for effort in this regard, consider the case of God's angels. No two living things on earth are

3, 4. How does Paul's letter to the Ephesians emphasize unity?

5. Why can God's angels serve in unity, but why may unity be more challenging for us?



*Those from many backgrounds are united*

completely alike, so we can reasonably conclude that Jehovah has blessed each one of his millions of angels with uniqueness. (Dan. 7:10) Yet, they can serve Jehovah in unity because they all listen to him and do his will. (Read Psalm 103:20, 21.) While faithful angels have diverse attributes, Christians in addition have various defects. This can make unity more challenging.

<sup>6</sup> When imperfect people try to cooperate, they can easily have difficulties. For example, what if a mild-tempered brother who often arrives late serves Jehovah along with a brother who is punctual but easily loses his temper? Each might feel that the other's conduct is lacking something but might forget that aspects of his own conduct are equally inappropriate. How could two such brothers serve together in harmony? Note how the attitudes recommended in Paul's next words would help them. Then reflect on how we can promote

6. What attitudes will help us to enjoy cooperating with brothers who have defects different from ours?

unity by cultivating those attitudes. Paul wrote: “[I] entreat you to walk worthily . . . with complete lowliness of mind and mildness, with long-suffering, putting up with one another in love, earnestly endeavoring to observe the oneness of the spirit in the uniting bond of peace.”—Eph. 4:1-3.

<sup>7</sup> Learning to serve God in unity with other imperfect people is vital because there is only one body of true worshippers. “One body there is, and one spirit, even as you were called in the one hope to which you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all persons.” (Eph. 4:4-6) Jehovah’s spirit and blessings are linked to the one association of brothers that God is using. Even if someone in the congregation upsets us, where else can we turn? Nowhere else can we hear the sayings of everlasting life.—John 6:68.

#### “Gifts in Men” Promote Unity

<sup>8</sup> Paul used a common practice among soldiers of ancient times to illustrate how Jesus has provided “gifts in men” to help unify the congregation. A victorious soldier might bring a foreign captive home as a slave to provide his wife help with chores. (Ps. 68:1, 12, 18) Similarly, Jesus’ victory over the world provided him with many willing slaves. (Read *Ephesians 4:7, 8*.) How did he use those captives, so to speak? “He gave

7. Why is it vital to work toward being united with other imperfect Christians?

8. What does Christ use to help strengthen us against divisive influences?



*Do you understand the dangers of flirting?*

some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelizers, some as shepherds and teachers, with a view to the readjustment of the holy ones, for ministerial work, for the building up of the body of the Christ, until we all attain to the oneness in the faith.”—Eph. 4:11-13.

<sup>9</sup> As loving shepherds, these “gifts in men” help to maintain our unity. For example, if a congregation elder notices two brothers “stirring up competition with one another,” he can contribute powerfully to the unity of the congregation by offering private counsel “to readjust [them] in a spirit of mildness.” (Gal. 5:26-6:1) As teachers, these “gifts in men” help us to build firm faith based on Bible teachings. Thus they promote unity and help us advance to Christian maturity. Paul wrote that this is “in or—

9. (a) How do “gifts in men” help to maintain our unity? (b) Why should every member of the congregation contribute to its unity?



der that we should no longer be babes, tossed about as by waves and carried hither and thither by every wind of teaching by means of the trickery of men, by means of cunning in contriving error." (Eph. 4:13, 14) Every Christian should contribute to the unity of the brotherhood, just as every member of our physical body builds up the others by helping to supply what is needed. —Read *Ephesians 4:15, 16*.

### Cultivate New Attitudes

<sup>10</sup> Did you notice that the fourth chapter of Paul's letter to the Ephesians shows that practicing love is the key to attaining unity as mature Christians? Next, it shows what love involves. For one thing, following the way of love rules out fornication and loose conduct. Paul urged his brothers not to "go on walking just as the nations also walk." Those people were "past all moral sense," and "they gave themselves over to loose conduct." (Eph. 4:17-19) The immoral world in which we live threatens our unity. People joke about fornication, sing about it, watch it for entertainment, and practice it either in secret or openly. Yet, even flirting, which may involve acting as though you are sexually attracted to someone you have no intention of marrying, can move you away from Jehovah and the congregation. Why? Because it so easily leads to fornication. Also, flirting that leads a married person into adultery can cruelly separate children from parents and innocent partners from marriage mates. Divisive indeed! No wonder Paul wrote: "You did not learn the Christ to be so!"—Eph. 4:20, 21.

<sup>11</sup> Paul stressed that we should drop disruptive ways of thinking and instead culti-

10. How can immoral conduct threaten our unity?  
11. The Bible encourages Christians to make what change?

vate attitudes that enable us to live in harmony with others. He said: "You should put away the old personality which conforms to your former course of conduct and which is being corrupted according to his [the old personality's] deceptive desires; . . . you should be made new in the force actuating your mind, and should put on the new personality which was created according to God's will in true righteousness and loyalty." (Eph. 4:22-24) How can we 'be made new in the force actuating our mind'? If we appreciatively contemplate what we learn both from God's Word and from the fine example of mature Christians, with effort we can acquire the new personality "created according to God's will."

### Cultivate New Ways of Speaking

<sup>12</sup> Speaking the truth is vital for those who belong to one another in a family or in a congregation. Frank, open, kind speech can draw people together. (John 15:15) But what if a person lies to his brother? When his brother realizes it, the bond of trust between them will be weakened. You can understand why Paul wrote: "Speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, because we are members belonging to one another." (Eph. 4:25) A person who is accustomed to

12. How does speaking the truth promote unity, and why is it difficult for some to be truthful?

### How Would You Answer?

- What *attitudes* promote unity among Christians?
- How can our *conduct* promote unity in the congregation?
- How can our *speech* help us in cooperating with others?

lying, perhaps having started when he was a child, may find it hard to start speaking truth. But Jehovah will appreciate his effort to change and will help him.

<sup>13</sup> Jehovah teaches us to promote respect and unity in both the congregation and the family by setting firm limits on the way we speak. “Let a rotten saying not proceed out of your mouth . . . Let all malicious bitterness and anger and wrath and screaming and abusive speech be taken away from you along with all badness.” (Eph. 4:29, 31) One way to avoid offensive speech is to cultivate a more respectful attitude toward others. For example, a man who speaks abusively to his wife should strive to change his attitude toward her, especially as he learns how Jehovah honors women. God even anoints some women with holy spirit, giving them the prospect of ruling as kings with Christ. (Gal. 3:28; 1 Pet. 3:7) Similarly, a woman who habitually screams at her husband should be moved to change as she learns how Jesus restrained himself when provoked.—1 Pet. 2: 21-23.

<sup>14</sup> Closely related to abusive speech is failure to control anger. This too can separate people who belong to one another. Anger is like a fire. It can easily get out of control and cause disaster. (Prov. 29:22) One who is justified in expressing his displeasure must carefully control his anger to avoid damaging valuable relationships. Christians should work at being forgiving, not holding a grudge and not talking about the matter again. (Ps. 37:8; 103:8, 9; Prov. 17:9) Paul advised the Ephesians: “Be wrathful, and yet do not sin; let the sun not set with you in a provoked state, neither allow place for the Devil.” (Eph. 4:26, 27) Failure to control

13. What is involved in putting away abusive speech?

14. Why is expressing anger dangerous?

one’s anger would give the Devil an opportunity to sow disunity and even conflict in the congregation.

<sup>15</sup> Showing respect for the property of others contributes to the unity of the congregation. We read: “Let the stealer steal no more.” (Eph. 4:28) A general sense of trust has developed among Jehovah’s people. If a Christian were to abuse that trust by taking what is not his, he would damage that happy unity.

### Love for God Unites Us

<sup>16</sup> The unity of the Christian congregation is the result of all being moved by love for God to treat others with love. Appreciation for Jehovah’s kindness motivates us to make an earnest effort to apply the counsel: “[Speak] whatever saying is good for building up as the need may be, that it may impart what is favorable to the hearers. . . . Become kind to one another, tenderly compassionate, freely forgiving one another just as God also by Christ freely forgave you.” (Eph. 4:29, 32) Jehovah kindly forgives imperfect people like us. Should we not likewise forgive others when we see their imperfections?

<sup>17</sup> The unity of God’s people glorifies Jehovah. His spirit moves us in different ways to promote unity. We surely would not want to resist the spirit’s leading. Paul wrote: “Do not be grieving God’s holy spirit.” (Eph. 4: 30) Unity is a treasure worth protecting. It brings joy to all those who share in it and glory to Jehovah. “Therefore, become imitators of God, as beloved children, and go on walking in love.”—Eph. 5:1, 2.

15. Taking what does not belong to us can have what effect?

16. How can we use upbuilding speech to strengthen our unity?

17. Why should we earnestly endeavor to promote unity?



# “YOUR LEADER IS ONE, THE CHRIST”

*“Do not . . . be called ‘leaders,’ for your Leader is one,  
the Christ.”—MATT. 23:9, 10.*

**C**HRISTENDOM’S churches have human leaders, such as the pope of Rome, the patriarchs and metropolitans of the Eastern Orthodox churches, and the heads of other religions. Jehovah’s Witnesses recognize no human as their leader. They are not disciples or followers of any man. This is in line with Jehovah’s prophetic utterance concerning his Son: “Look! As a witness to the national groups I have given him, as a leader and commander to the national groups.” (Isa. 55:4) The international congregation of anointed Christians and their “other sheep” companions want no leader other than the

1. Whom do Jehovah’s Witnesses recognize as Leader, and why?

one Jehovah has given them. (John 10:16) They subscribe to Jesus’ statement: “Your Leader is one, the Christ.”—Matt. 23:10.

## Spiritual Prince of Israel

<sup>2</sup> Centuries before the founding of the Christian congregation, Jehovah had an angelic leader over his people Israel. After bringing the Israelites out of Egypt, Jehovah told them: “Here I am sending an angel ahead of you to keep you on the road and to bring you into the place that I have prepared. Watch yourself because of him and obey his voice. Do not behave rebelliously against him, for he will not pardon your transgression; because my name is within him.” (Ex. 23:20, 21) It is reasonable to believe that this angel, who had ‘Jehovah’s name within him,’ was God’s first-born Son.

<sup>3</sup> Prior to his birth as a human, God’s Son apparently had the name Michael. In the book of Daniel, Michael is called “the prince of [Daniel’s] people,” Israel. (Dan. 10:21) The disciple Jude indicates that Michael was involved in the affairs of Israel long before Daniel’s day. After Moses’ death, Satan apparently intended to use the corpse to

2, 3. What active role did God’s Son play in Israel?

*“I am sending  
an angel ahead  
of you”*

further his own interests in some way, possibly by inciting Israel to commit idolatry. Michael stepped in to prevent this. Jude relates: “When Michael the archangel had a difference with the Devil and was disputing about Moses’ body, he did not dare to bring a judgment against him in abusive terms, but said: ‘May Jehovah rebuke you.’” (Jude 9) A little later, before the siege of Jericho, it was doubtless Michael, the “prince of the army of Jehovah,” who appeared to Joshua to reassure him of divine backing. (*Read Joshua 5:13-15.*) When a demon prince tried to prevent an angel from delivering an important message to the prophet Daniel, the archangel Michael came to that angel’s assistance.—Dan. 10:5-7, 12-14.

### The Foretold Leader Comes

<sup>4</sup> Previous to this incident, Jehovah had sent his angel Gabriel to the prophet Daniel to convey to him a prophecy concerning the coming of “Messiah the Leader.” (Dan. 9:21-25)\* Exactly on time, in the fall of 29 C.E., Jesus was baptized by John. Holy spirit was poured out upon Jesus, making him the Anointed One—Christ, the Messiah. (Matt. 3:13-17; John 1:29-34; Gal. 4:4) As such, he was to become an incomparable Leader.

<sup>5</sup> From the beginning of his ministry on earth, Jesus proved himself to be “Messiah the Leader.” Within a few days, he began gathering disciples, and he performed his first miracle. (John 1:35–2:11) His disciples followed him as he traveled the length and breadth of the land, preaching the good news of the Kingdom. (Luke 8:1) He trained

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\* For a discussion of this prophecy, see chapter 11 of *Pay Attention to Daniel’s Prophecy!*

4. What prophecy was given concerning the coming of the Messiah?
5. How did Christ act as Leader during his earthly ministry?

them in the preaching work and took the lead in preaching and teaching, setting a fine example. (Luke 9:1-6) Christian elders today do well to imitate him in this respect.

<sup>6</sup> Jesus pointed to another aspect of his leadership by comparing himself to a loving shepherd. Oriental shepherds literally lead their flocks. In *The Land and the Book*, W. M. Thomson wrote: “The shepherd goes before, not merely to point out the way, but to see that it is practicable and safe. . . . With [his] staff he rules and guides the flock to their green pastures, and defends them from their enemies.” Showing that he is a true Shepherd and Leader, Jesus declared: “I am the fine shepherd; the fine shepherd surrenders his soul in behalf of the sheep. My sheep listen to my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.” (John 10:11, 27) True to his word, Jesus died a sacrificial death in behalf of his sheep, but Jehovah “raised him up to be leader and Saviour.”—Acts 5:31, *New Jerusalem Bible*; Heb. 13:20.

### Overseer of the Christian Congregation

<sup>7</sup> Shortly before ascending to heaven, the resurrected Jesus told his disciples: “All authority has been given me in heaven and on the earth.” (Matt. 28:18) Jehovah had Jesus pass on holy spirit to strengthen his disciples in Christian truth. (John 15:26) Jesus poured out this spirit upon the early Christians at Pentecost 33 C.E. (Acts 2:33) That outpouring of the holy spirit marked the founding of the Christian congregation. Jehovah invested his Son with the heavenly leadership of the congregation on earth. (*Read Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:13, 18.*) Jesus guides the Christian congregation by means of Je-

6. In what way did Christ prove to be a Shepherd and Leader?
7. By means of what does Jesus oversee the Christian congregation?



*As in the past, Christ uses “gifts in men” to shepherd his flock*

hovah’s holy spirit, and he has at his service angels who were “made subject to him.” —1 Pet. 3:22.

<sup>8</sup> Also by means of holy spirit, Christ gave “gifts in men,” some “as shepherds and teachers” in the congregation. (Eph. 4:8, 11) The apostle Paul urged Christian overseers: “Pay attention to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the holy spirit has appointed you overseers, to shepherd the congregation of God.” (Acts 20:28) When the Christian congregation began, all these overseers were spirit-anointed men. The apostles and the elders of the Jerusalem congregation acted as a governing body. Christ used this instrument to lead the entire group of his anointed “brothers” on earth. (Heb. 2:11; Acts 16:4, 5) In this time of the end, Christ has committed “all his belongings”—all the earthly interests of the Kingdom—to his “faithful and discreet slave” and its representative Governing Body, a group

8. What earthly instrument did Christ use in the first century to lead his disciples, and whom is he using today?

of anointed Christian men. (Matt. 24:45-47) The anointed and their other sheep companions recognize that by following the lead of the modern-day Governing Body, they are in fact following their Leader, Christ.

### **Christ Initiates the Preaching Work**

<sup>9</sup> Right from the start, Jesus personally directed the worldwide preaching and teaching activity. He established the order in which the good news of the Kingdom was to be transmitted to the inhabitants of the earth. During his ministry, he instructed his

apostles: “Do not go off into the road of the nations, and do not enter into a Samaritan city; but, instead, go continually to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of the heavens has drawn near.’” (Matt. 10:5-7) They did this zealously among Jews and proselytes, especially after Pentecost 33 C.E.—Acts 2:4, 5, 10, 11; 5:42; 6:7.

<sup>10</sup> Later, by means of holy spirit, Jesus extended the Kingdom-preaching work to the Samaritans and then to other non-Jews. (Acts 8:5, 6, 14-17; 10:19-22, 44, 45) With a view to promoting the spread of the good news among the nations, Jesus acted personally to move Saul of Tarsus to become a Christian. Jesus instructed his disciple Ananias: “Rise, go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man named Saul, from Tarsus. . . . Be on your way, because this man is a chosen vessel to me to bear my name to the nations as well as to kings and the sons of Israel.” (Acts 9:3-6, 10,

9, 10. How did Christ direct matters with regard to spreading the good news of the Kingdom?

11, 15) “This man” became the apostle Paul.—1 Tim. 2:7.

<sup>11</sup> When the time came to expand the work of Kingdom preaching among the non-Jewish nations, heaven directed Paul on missionary journeys in Asia Minor and on into Europe. Luke’s account in Acts states: “As they [Christian prophets and teachers in the congregation in Syrian Antioch] were publicly ministering to Jehovah and fasting, the holy spirit said: ‘Of all persons set Barnabas and Saul apart for me for the work to which I have called them.’ Then they fasted and prayed and laid their hands upon them and let them go.” (Acts 13:2, 3) Jesus had personally called Saul of Tarsus to be His “chosen vessel” to bear His name to the nations; hence, this new impetus to the witnessing work came from Christ, the Leader of the congregation. Jesus’ use of the holy spirit to direct the work became unmistakably clear during Paul’s second missionary trip. The account states that “the spirit of Jesus,” that is, Jesus by means of holy spirit, guided Paul and his traveling companions in the choice of their itinerary, and a vision led them to move on into Europe.—*Read Acts 16:6-10.*

11. How did Christ by means of holy spirit expand the preaching work?

### By Way of Review

- How did God’s Son prove to be an active Leader in Israel?
- By what means does Christ lead his congregation on earth?
- How has Christ directed the spread of the good news?
- What shows that Christ follows closely the spiritual condition of each congregation?

### Jesus’ Leadership Over His Congregation

<sup>12</sup> Jesus followed closely what was going on within the congregations of his anointed followers in the first century C.E. He had intimate knowledge of the spiritual condition of each congregation. This becomes apparent when we read Revelation chapters 2 and 3. He names seven congregations, all located in Asia Minor. (Rev. 1:11) We have every reason to believe that he was just as familiar with the spiritual condition of the other congregations of his followers on earth at that time.—*Read Revelation 2:23.*

<sup>13</sup> Jesus commended some of the congregations for their endurance, faithfulness under trial, loyalty to his word, and rejection of apostates. (Rev. 2:2, 9, 13, 19; 3:8) On the other hand, he gave firm counsel to several congregations because their love for him had cooled off, they countenanced idolatry and fornication, and they tolerated sectarianism. (Rev. 2:4, 14, 15, 20; 3:15, 16) As a loving spiritual overseer—even to those to whom he gave strong admonition—Jesus stated: “All those for whom I have affection I reprove and discipline. Therefore be zealous and repent.” (Rev. 3:19) Although in heaven, Jesus was leading the congregations of his disciples on earth by means of holy spirit. At the end of the messages to those congregations, he declared: “Let the one who has an ear hear what the spirit says to the congregations.”—Rev. 3:22.

<sup>14</sup> We have seen that Michael (Jesus)

12, 13. How does the book of Revelation show that Christ follows closely what goes on in each congregation?

14-16. (a) How has Jesus proved to be a courageous Leader of Jehovah’s people on earth? (b) What has resulted from Jesus’ being “with” his disciples “all the days until the conclusion of the system of things”? (c) What will we consider in the following article?

proved to be a valiant angelic Leader of Israel. Later, Jesus was a courageous Leader and a loving Shepherd of his early disciples. During his earthly ministry, he took the lead in the preaching work. And after his resurrection, he exercised close oversight of the spreading of the Kingdom good news.

<sup>15</sup> By means of holy spirit, Jesus would eventually extend the witnessing work to the ends of the earth. Before ascending to heaven, Jesus told his disciples: “You will receive power when the holy spirit arrives upon you, and you will be witnesses of me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the most distant part of the

earth.” (Acts 1:8; *read 1 Peter 1:12.*) Under Christ’s direction, a tremendous witness was given in the first century.—Col. 1:23.

<sup>16</sup> But Jesus himself indicated that this work would continue into the time of the end. After commissioning his followers to preach and to make disciples among all the nations, Jesus promised them: “I am with you all the days until the conclusion of the system of things.” (Matt. 28:19, 20) Since being invested with kingly power in 1914, Christ is more than ever “with” his disciples and active as their Leader. His intense activity since 1914 will be examined in the following article.

## OUR ACTIVE LEADER TODAY

*“He went forth conquering and to complete his conquest.”—REV. 6:2.*

**C**HRIST was enthroned as King of Jehovah’s Messianic Kingdom in 1914. How do we imagine him now in our mind’s eye? As a contemplative king sitting on his throne, glancing down to earth from time to time to see how his congregation is faring? If so, we should revise our opinion. The Psalms and the book of Revelation depict him as an energetic king on horseback, riding forth “conquering and to complete his conquest,” continuing to ultimate “success.”—Rev. 6:2; Ps. 2:6-9; 45:1-4.

<sup>2</sup> Christ’s first kingly action after his enthronement was his victory over “the dragon and its angels.” As the archangel Michael in command of his angels, Christ hurled Sa-

tan and his demons out of the holy heavens and confined them to the vicinity of the earth. (Rev. 12:7-9) Then, in his role as Jehovah’s “messenger of the covenant,” Jesus came with his Father to carry out an inspection of the spiritual temple. (Mal. 3:1) He judged Christendom, the most reprehensible part of “Babylon the Great,” finding her guilty of bloodshed and of spiritual adultery with the political system of this world.—Rev. 18:2, 3, 24.

### Cleansing His Earthly Slave

<sup>3</sup> The inspection by Jehovah and his “messenger” also revealed in the earthly courtyard of that spiritual temple the presence of

3, 4. (a) What work did Christ accomplish as Jehovah’s “messenger”? (b) The temple inspection revealed what, and as Head of the congregation, what appointment did Jesus make?

1, 2. (a) How is Christ’s kingly activity since 1914 depicted in the Bible? (b) What actions has Christ undertaken since his enthronement?

a group of true Christians, who were not part of Christendom's churches. However, even these anointed Christians, or "sons of Levi," needed to undergo cleansing. It was as the prophet Malachi had foretold: "He [Jehovah] 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. 3:3) Jehovah used his "messenger of the covenant," Christ Jesus, to cleanse these spiritual Israelites.

<sup>4</sup> Still, Christ found these same faithful anointed Christians doing their utmost to provide timely spiritual food for the household of faith. From 1879 onward, through thick and thin, they had been publishing Biblical truths about God's Kingdom in the pages of this magazine. Jesus had prophesied that "on arriving" to inspect his domestics during "the conclusion of the system of things," he would find a slave providing them "food at the proper time." He would pronounce that slave happy and would "appoint him over all his belongings" on earth. (Matt. 24:3, 45-47) As Head of the Christian congregation, Christ has used this "faithful and discreet slave" to administer His Kingdom interests on earth. He has provided direction for the anointed "domestics" and their "other sheep" companions by means of a Governing Body.—John 10:16.

### Harvesting the Earth

<sup>5</sup> The apostle John had a vision of something else that

5. What kingly activity did the apostle John see in vision?

the Messianic King would do in "the Lord's day," after He was enthroned in 1914. John wrote: "I saw, and, look! a white cloud, and upon the cloud someone seated like a son of man, with a golden crown on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand." (Rev. 1:10; 14:14) John heard an angel from Jehovah tell this Harvester to thrust in his sickle because "the harvest of the earth is thoroughly ripe." —Rev. 14:15, 16.

<sup>6</sup> This "harvest of the earth" reminds us of Jesus' parable of the wheat and the weeds. Jesus likened himself to a man who sowed his field with wheat seed with a view to harvesting a full crop of fine wheat, representing "the sons of the kingdom," true Christians anointed to be associated with him in his Kingdom. But under the cover of night, an enemy, "the Devil," oversowed the field with weeds, "the sons of the wicked one." The sower instructed his workers to let the wheat and the weeds grow together until harvesttime, at "the conclusion of the system of things." At that time, he would send in his angels to separate the wheat from the weeds.—Matt. 13:24-30, 36-41.

6. What did Jesus say would develop over time?





<sup>7</sup> In fulfillment of the vision given to John, Jesus has been conducting a worldwide harvest work. “The harvest of the earth” began with the gathering of the remaining ones of the 144,000 “sons of the kingdom,” “the wheat” of Jesus’ parable. The distinction between true and false Christians became ever more apparent after World War I, so much so that it has contributed to the second part of “the harvest of the earth”—the ingathering of the other sheep. These are not “the sons of the kingdom” but, rather, “a great crowd” of willing subjects of that Kingdom. They are harvested from among all “peoples, national groups and languages.” They submit to the Messianic Kingdom, made up of Christ Jesus and the 144,000 “holy ones” who will be associated with him in that heavenly government.—Rev. 7:9, 10; Dan. 7:13, 14, 18.

### Leadership of the Congregations

<sup>8</sup> We saw in the preceding article how closely Christ observed the spiritual condition of individual congregations in the first century C.E. In our day, as reigning King invested with “all authority . . . in heaven and on the earth,” Christ our Leader exercises active headship over the congregations worldwide and their overseers. (Matt. 28:18; Col. 1:18) Jehovah has “made him head over all things to the congregation” of anointed ones. (Eph. 1:22) As such, nothing that occurs within the more than 100,000 individual congregations of Jehovah’s Witnesses escapes his notice.

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7. How is Christ carrying out “the harvest of the earth”?

8, 9. (a) What shows that Christ observes not only the conduct of the entire congregation but also the lifestyle of its individual members? (b) As depicted on page 26, what “deep things of Satan” should we avoid?

<sup>9</sup> To the ancient congregation of Thyatira, Jesus sent this message: “These are the things that the Son of God says, he who has his eyes like a fiery flame, . . . ‘I know your deeds.’” (Rev. 2:18, 19) He rebuked members of that congregation for their immoral, self-indulgent lifestyle, telling them: “I am he who searches the kidneys and hearts, and I will give to you individually according to your deeds.” (Rev. 2:23) That statement indicates that Christ observes not only the collective conduct of each congregation but also the lifestyle of its individual members. Jesus commended Christians in Thyatira “who did not get to know the ‘deep things of Satan.’” (Rev. 2:24) Today, he likewise approves of those, young or old, who refrain from delving into the “deep things of Satan” by means of the Internet or violent video games or by indulging in permissive human reasonings. How happy he is to observe the efforts and the sacrifices of the many Christians today who do their utmost to follow his lead in all aspects of their lives!

<sup>10</sup> Christ provides loving oversight of his congregations on earth by means of appointed elders. (Eph. 4:8, 11, 12) In the first century, all the overseers were spirit-begotten. They were depicted in Revelation as stars in Christ’s right hand. (Rev. 1:16, 20) Today, most congregation elders are of the other sheep. They are appointed after prayer and under the guidance of the holy spirit, so they too can be regarded as under Christ’s direction, or guiding hand. (Acts 20:28) They recognize, however, that Christ is using a small group of anointed Christian men as a Governing Body to lead and direct his disciples on earth.—*Read Acts 15:6, 28-30.*

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10. How is Christ’s direction of congregation elders symbolized, but what arrangement needs to be recognized?



## “Come, Lord Jesus”

<sup>11</sup> In the revelation given to the apostle John, several times Jesus said that he was coming quickly. (Rev. 2:16; 3:11; 22:7, 20) Doubtless, he was referring to his coming to execute judgment upon Babylon the Great and the rest of Satan’s wicked system of things. (2 Thess. 1:7, 8) Eager to see the fulfillment of all the wonderful events that were foretold, the aged apostle John exclaimed: “Amen! Come, Lord Jesus.” We who are living at the time of the end of this wicked system of things also long to see our Leader and King come in Kingdom power to sanctify his Father’s name and vindicate His sovereignty.

<sup>12</sup> Before Jesus comes against Satan’s visible organization, the last of the 144,000 members of spiritual Israel will receive the final sealing. The Bible states clearly that the winds of destruction upon Satan’s system will not be released before this sealing of the 144,000 is completed.—Rev. 7:1-4.

<sup>13</sup> Christ’s “presence” since 1914 has gone unnoticed by most of earth’s inhabitants. (2 Pet. 3:3, 4) Soon, however, he will

11. Why are we eager to see our Leader come quickly?

12. What work will Christ complete before the winds of destruction are unleashed?

13. How will Christ make his presence manifest during the first phase of the “great tribulation”?

### By Way of Review

- What action did Christ take after being enthroned?
- What visible instruments is Christ using to lead the congregations?
- In what ways is Christ our Leader yet to come?
- How will Christ continue to lead us in the new world?

make his presence manifest by executing Jehovah’s judgments on the various elements of Satan’s system of things. The destruction of “the man of lawlessness,” the clergy of Christendom, will be an unmistakable “manifestation of his presence.” (Read 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 8.) It will furnish concrete proof that Christ has moved into action as Jehovah’s appointed Judge. (Read 2 Timothy 4:1.) The annihilation of the most reprehensible part of Babylon the Great will serve as a prelude to the total destruction of that wicked world empire of false religion. Jehovah will put it into the hearts of political leaders to devastate this spiritual harlot. (Rev. 17:15-18) That will be the first part of the “great tribulation.”—Matt. 24:21.

<sup>14</sup> Jesus stated that the days of that tribulation would be cut short “on account of the chosen ones,” the remnant of anointed Christians still on earth. (Matt. 24:22) Jehovah will not allow this destructive attack on false religion to wipe out anointed Christians and their other sheep companions. Jesus added that “after the tribulation of those days,” there will be signs in sun, moon, and stars, “and then the sign of the Son of man will appear in heaven.” This will cause the nations of the earth to “beat themselves in lamentation.” Not so the anointed, who have a heavenly hope, and their companions, who have an earthly hope. They will ‘raise themselves erect and lift up their heads because their deliverance is getting near.’—Matt. 24:29, 30; Luke 21:25-28.

<sup>15</sup> Before completing his conquest, the Son of man comes in yet another way. He

14. (a) Why will the first part of the great tribulation be cut short? (b) What will “the sign of the Son of man” mean for Jehovah’s people?

15. What work will Christ do when he comes?

prophesied: “When the Son of man arrives in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit down on his glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will put the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left.” (Matt. 25:31-33) This refers to Christ’s coming as Judge to separate people of “all the nations” into two categories: “the sheep,” those who will have actively supported his spiritual brothers (anointed Christians on earth) and “the goats,” those “who do not obey the good news about our Lord Jesus.” (2 Thess. 1:7, 8) The sheep, described as “righteous ones,” will receive “everlasting life” on earth, but the goats “will depart into everlasting cutting-off,” or destruction.—Matt. 25:34, 40, 41, 45, 46.

### Jesus Completes His Conquest

<sup>16</sup> With the total number of his king-priest associates sealed and the sheep identified

16. How will Christ our Leader complete his conquest?

and placed on his right hand for salvation, Christ can go on to “complete his conquest.” (Rev. 5:9, 10; 6:2) At the head of an army of powerful angels and, no doubt, his resurrected brothers, he will destroy Satan’s entire political, military, and commercial system on earth. (Rev. 2:26, 27; 19:11-21) Christ’s conquest will be complete when he destroys Satan’s wicked system. Then he will abyss Satan and the demons for a thousand years.—Rev. 20:1-3.

<sup>17</sup> Speaking of the “great crowd” of other sheep, who will survive the great tribulation, the apostle John prophesied that “the Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, will shepherd them, and will guide them to fountains of waters of life.” (Rev. 7:9, 17) Yes, throughout his Thousand Year Reign, Christ will continue to lead the other sheep, who truly listen to his voice, and guide them to everlasting life. (*Read John 10:16, 26-28.*) May we faithfully follow our royal Leader—now and on into Jehovah’s promised new world!

17. To what will Christ lead his other sheep during the Thousand Year Reign, and what should be our determination?

