

## **Home Page**

### **Holidays**

#### **The Watchtower, October 15, 1982, p. 29**

“While Christian children do not celebrate certain holidays that have pagan origins, their parents often plan good times for them - outings, get-togethers or other wholesome family fun. They get gifts from time to time throughout the year.”

#### **The Watchtower, November 15, 1984, p. 31**

“But they feel it is incompatible with the family’s deep seated religious convictions for their children to engage in class work based on holidays that they do not celebrate...But Jehovah’s Witnesses feel conscientiously obliged to abstain from school activities that conflict with their Bible-based understanding of God’s will...So if the assignment called upon the students to share in unbiblical holiday activities. Witnesses would abstain even if this puzzled others with a different viewpoint.”

#### **Reasoning From the Scriptures, 1985 ed., p. 176**

“Is Christmas a celebration based on the Bible?”

#### **Reasoning From the Scriptures, 1985 ed., p. 179**

“What is the origin of Easter and the customs associated with it?”

#### **Reasoning From the Scriptures, 1985 ed., p. 180**

“Are New Year’s celebrations objectionable for Christians?”

#### **Reasoning From the Scriptures, 1985 ed., p. 180**

“What underlies holidays in memory of the ‘spirits of the dead’?”

(continued)

**Reasoning From the Scriptures, 1985 ed., p. 181**  
“What is the origin of Valentine’s Day?”

**Reasoning From the Scriptures, 1985 ed., p. 182**  
“What is the origin of the practice of setting aside a day to honor mothers?”

**Reasoning From the Scriptures, 1985 ed., p. 182**  
“What Bible principles explain the viewpoint of Christians toward ceremonies commemorating events in a nation’s political history?”

**The Watchtower, December 1, 1988, p. 17**  
“Then they can expect that their children will be able to resist the temptations and pressures of peers and schoolteachers to celebrate birthdays or holidays or to violate Scriptural principles in other ways.”

**The Watchtower, March 15, 1991, p. 17**  
“Do you persevere when criticized for taking a bold stand in giving the Kingdom witness, for being moral in your life-style? Are you standing firm when you are the target of pressure because of not accepting blood, not worshipping national emblems, not celebrating worldly holidays?”

**The Watchtower, September 1, 1992, p. 23**  
“The conduct of the children greatly improved. From their Bible study, they learned that celebrating birthdays and other religious holidays was not Christian; hence, they stopped observing them.”

(continued)

**The Watchtower, March 15, 1994, p. 3**

“Christmas, Easter, ‘saints’ days. Many holidays and feasts are celebrated by the churches of Christendom. But do you know how many celebrations Jesus Christ commanded his followers to observe? The answer is, Just one! None of the other feasts were authorized by the Founder of Christianity.”

(done)

ble says unbelieving husbands "may be won without a word through the conduct of their wives." If your unbelieving mate could be impressed by your good example, think of the effect your faithful application of godly principles could have on your children!—1 Peter 3:1, 2.

<sup>18</sup> Or you may be a single parent, having to rear your children alone. If so, acknowledge this problem to your children. Support one another. Let them see the difference between their life and that of other single-parent families they know. What a blessing they have to live in a home where drunkenness, alcoholism, fornication and other works of the flesh do not enter!—1 Corinthians 6:9, 10; Galatians 5:19-21.

#### Wholesome Activities

<sup>19</sup> Children need play. One of the happy conditions the Bible associates with the restoration of Jerusalem's temple was "boys and girls playing in her public squares." (Zechariah 8:5) Children also need your time. Only by spending time with them, letting them talk, and really

19, 20. (a) How can parents help fill their children's needs for communication and association? (b) With what results?

*listening* to what they have to say, can you have communication, learn of their problems and be of help. While Christian children do not celebrate certain holidays that have pagan origins, their parents often plan good times for them—outing, get-togethers or other wholesome family fun. They get gifts from time to time throughout the year. Some families have a celebration when grandparents visit. Parents encourage wholesome association with other young Christians. If the family is isolated, youngsters can have pen pals they meet at Christian assemblies.

<sup>20</sup> One father often asks his children: "Do you feel deprived in any way because of your faith?" The answer: "Definitely not!" A youth, comparing his life with that of his schoolmates, said: "The only thing I've missed out on is a lot of trouble."

#### Outside Help

<sup>21</sup> The responsibility of teaching our children is our *own* responsibility. The Bible shows that the father is to take the lead, and the mother is to help. It says:

21. While realizing that the training of children is the parents' responsibility, how can others help?



parents can assist his spiritual advancement

ing during the summer months. Be quick to respond to your parents' efforts to train you.

Youths, have you been sowing to the

flesh or to the spirit? Be honest with yourselves. Set spiritual goals and 'sow with a view to the spirit' now. Do so while there is still time to reap everlasting life!

## Questions From Readers

■ Why do children of Jehovah's Witnesses not do holiday-oriented classwork, since other students carry out such assignments regardless of their religion?

Jehovah's Witnesses encourage their children to be diligent and cooperative students in school. But they feel it is incompatible with the family's deep-seated religious convictions for their children to engage in classwork based on holidays that they do not celebrate.

Public schools are open to all children, regardless of whether their families worship at a church, synagogue or temple, or have no religion. Sometimes class assignments are linked to a religious or national holiday that most people in the community celebrate. For instance, in many lands classwork during December incorporates Christmas music or art. Students from Jewish, Hindu or other non-Christian families may not celebrate Christmas at home. Still, some of them feel that they can sing holiday songs or draw pictures of Santa Claus, Christmas trees, and the like. They might reason that they do so objectively, while not celebrating Christmas.

Other students ask to be excused from such holiday work. Jewish students might do so because of what Jehovah God commanded ancient Israel. "When you enter the land that the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not learn to imitate the abhorrent

practices of those nations." "Do not inquire about their gods, saying, 'How did those nations worship their gods?' I too will follow those practices. You shall not act thus toward the LORD your God."<sup>\*</sup>

As a specific example (which has been misapplied to decorating a Christmas tree but actually refers to making an idol), Jehovah said: "It is the work of a craftsman's hands. He cuts down a tree in the forest with an ax, he adorns it with silver and gold, he fastens it with nails and hammer." That was not to be viewed as a mere artistic effort. Jehovah pointedly commanded: "Do not learn to go the way of the nations."<sup>\*</sup>

Children of Jehovah's Witnesses go to school because they want to obtain a reasonable education. A teacher, perhaps as an art exercise in the winter, might ask all students to draw a scene or work on some other project involving deer, snow and fir trees. If this was simply an art exercise and was not connected with Christmas, few Witness parents would probably object. But Jehovah's Witnesses feel conscientiously obliged to abstain from school activities that conflict with their Bible-based understanding of God's will.

<sup>\*</sup> Deuteronomy 18:9; 12:30, 31; Jeremiah 10:2-4, *The Holy Scriptures, A New Translation*, by The Jewish Publication Society of America.

They seek to apply in their lives what Jesus said: "God is a Spirit, and those worshiping him must worship with spirit and truth." (John 4:24) So if the assignment called upon the students to share in unbiblical holiday activities, Witnesses would abstain even if this puzzled others with a different viewpoint. But, in accord with freedom of religion and their desire to be good students, Jehovah's Witnesses may ask to do an alternative exercise that would not have religious aspects.—Compare 1 Peter 4:3, 4.

Many considerate schoolteachers have appreciated receiving the clear explanation of such matters presented in the brochure *School and Jehovah's Witnesses*. In part, this helpful publication says: "Jehovah's Witnesses for conscientious reasons do not take any part in these holiday activities—whether it be singing, playing music, acting in plays, marching in parades, drawing pictures, attending parties, eating and drinking, and so forth. Yet, at the same time, we do not object to others celebrating such holidays nor try to hinder them. We appreciate it very much when teachers kindly excuse our children from participation in all activities that in any way commemorate these holidays."—Page 21.

## Holidays

**Definition:** Days usually marked by time off from secular work and school for commemoration of an event. Such days may also be occasions for family or community festivities. Participants may view them as being religious or as being largely social or secular affairs.

### Is Christmas a celebration based on the Bible?

#### ***Date of the celebration***

McIntock and Strong's *Cyclopaedia* says: "The observance of Christmas is not of divine appointment, nor is it of [New] Testament origin. The day of Christ's birth cannot be ascertained from the [New] Testament], or, indeed, from any other source."—(New York, 1871), Vol. II, p. 276.

Luke 2:8-11 shows that shepherds were in the fields at night at the time of Jesus' birth. The book *Daily Life in the Time of Jesus* states: "The flocks . . . passed the winter under cover; and from this alone it may be seen that the traditional date for Christmas, in the winter, is unlikely to be right, since the Gospel says that the shepherds were in the fields."—(New York, 1962), Henri Daniel-Rops, p. 228.

*The Encyclopedia Americana* informs us: "The reason for establishing December 25 as Christmas is somewhat obscure, but it is usually held that the day was chosen to correspond to pagan festivals that took place around the time of the winter solstice, when the days begin to lengthen, to celebrate the 'rebirth of the sun' . . . The Roman Saturnalia (a festival dedicated to Saturn, the god of agriculture, and to the renewed power of the sun), also took place at this time, and some Christmas customs are thought to be rooted in this ancient pagan celebration."—(1977), Vol. 6, p. 666.

The *New Catholic Encyclopedia* acknowledges: "The date of Christ's birth is not known. The Gospels indicate neither the day nor the month. . . . According to the hypothesis suggested by H. Usener . . . and accepted by most scholars today, the birth of Christ was assigned the date of

## HOLIDAYS

177

the winter solstice (December 25 in the Julian calendar, January 6 in the Egyptian), because on this day, as the sun began its return to northern skies, the pagan devotees of Mithra celebrated the *dies natalis Solis Invicti* (birthday of the invincible sun). On Dec. 25, 274, Aurelian had proclaimed the sun-god principal patron of the empire and dedicated a temple to him in the Campus Martius. Christmas originated at a time when the cult of the sun was particularly strong at Rome."—(1967), Vol. III, p. 656.

### ***Wise men, or Magi, led by a star***

Those Magi were actually astrologers from the east. (Matt. 2:1, 2, *NIV, NE*) Although astrology is popular among many people today, the practice is strongly disapproved in the Bible. (See pages 144, 145, under the main heading "Fate.") Would God have led to the newborn Jesus persons whose practices He condemned?

Matthew 2:1-16 shows that the star led the astrologers first to King Herod and then to Jesus and that Herod then sought to have Jesus killed. No mention is made that anyone other than the astrologers saw the "star." After they left, Jehovah's angel warned Joseph to flee to Egypt to safeguard the child. Was that "star" a sign from God or was it from someone who was seeking to have God's Son destroyed?

Note that the Bible account does not say that they found the babe Jesus in a manger, as customarily depicted in Christmas art. When the astrologers arrived, Jesus and his parents were living in a house. As to Jesus' age at that time, remember that, based on what Herod had learned from the astrologers, he decreed that all the boys in the district of Bethlehem two years of age and under were to be destroyed.—Matt. 2:1, 11, 16.

### ***Gift giving as part of the celebration; stories about Santa Claus, Father Christmas, etc.***

The practice of Christmas gift giving is not based on what was done by the Magi. As shown above, they did not arrive at the time of Jesus' birth. Furthermore, they gave gifts, not to one another, but to the child Jesus, in accord with what was then customary when visiting notable persons.

*The Encyclopedia Americana* states: "During the Saturnalia . . . feasting prevailed, and gifts were exchanged." (1977, Vol. 24, p. 299) In many instances that represents the spirit of Christmas giving—an *exchanging* of gifts. The spirit reflected in such gift giving does not bring real happiness, because it violates Christian principles such as those found at Matthew 6:3, 4 and 2 Corinthians 9:7. Surely a Christian can give gifts to others as an expression of love at other times during the year, doing so as often as he wants to.

Depending on where they live, children are told that gifts are brought by Santa Claus, St. Nicholas, Father Christmas, Père Noël, Knecht Ruprecht, the Magi, the elf Julkonnen (or Julnissen), or a witch known as La Befana. (*The World Book Encyclopedia*, 1984, Vol. 3, p. 414) Of course, none of these stories are actually true. Does the telling of such stories build in children a respect for truth, and does such a practice honor Jesus Christ, who taught that God must be worshiped with truth?—John 4:23, 24.

**Is there any objection to sharing in celebrations that may have unchristian roots as long as it is not done for religious reasons?**

Eph. 5:10, 11: "Keep on making sure of what is acceptable to the Lord; and quit sharing with them in the unfruitful works that belong to the darkness, but, rather, even be reproving them."

2 Cor. 6:14-18: "What fellowship do righteousness and lawlessness have? Or what sharing does light have with darkness? Further, what harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what portion does a faithful person have with an unbeliever? And what agreement does God's temple have with idols? . . . "Therefore get out from among them, and separate yourselves," says Jehovah, "and quit touching the unclean thing"; "and I will take you in, . . . and you will be sons and daughters to me," says Jehovah the Almighty." (Genuine love for Jehovah and a strong desire to be pleasing to him will help a person to break free from unchristian practices that may have had emotional appeal. A person who

really knows and loves Jehovah does not feel that by shunning practices that honor false gods or that promote falsehood he is in any way deprived of happiness. Genuine love causes him to rejoice, not over unrighteousness, but with the truth. See 1 Corinthians 13:6.)

Compare Exodus 32:4-10. Notice that the Israelites adopted an Egyptian religious practice but gave it a new name, "a festival to Jehovah." But Jehovah severely punished them for this. Today we see only 20th-century practices associated with holidays. Some may appear harmless. But Jehovah observed firsthand the pagan religious practices from which these originated. Should not his view be what matters to us?

*Illustration:* Suppose a crowd come to a gentleman's home saying they are there to celebrate his birthday. He does not favor the celebration of birthdays. He does not like to see people overeat or get drunk or engage in loose conduct. But some of them do all those things, and they bring presents for everyone there except him! On top of all that, they pick the birthday of one of the man's enemies as the date for the celebration. How would the man feel? Would you want to be a party to it? This is exactly what is being done by Christmas celebrations.

**What is the origin of Easter and the customs associated with it?**

*The Encyclopedia Britannica* comments: "There is no indication of the observance of the Easter festival in the New Testament, or in the writings of the apostolic Fathers. The sanctity of special times was an idea absent from the minds of the first Christians."—(1910), Vol. VIII, p. 828.

*The Catholic Encyclopedia* tells us: "A great many pagan customs, celebrating the return of spring, gravitated to Easter. The egg is the emblem of the germinating life of early spring. . . . The rabbit is a pagan symbol and has always been an emblem of fertility."—(1913), Vol. V, p. 227.

In the book *The Two Babylons*, by Alexander Hislop, we read: "What means the term Easter itself? It is not a

Christian name. It bears its Chaldean origin on its very forehead. Easter is nothing else than Astarte, one of the titles of Beltis, the queen of heaven, whose name, . . . as found by Layard on the Assyrian monuments, is Ishtar. . . . Such is the history of Easter. The popular observances that still attend the period of its celebration amply confirm the testimony of history as to its Babylonian character. The hot cross buns of Good Friday, and the dyed eggs of Pasch or Easter Sunday, figured in the Chaldean rites just as they do now."—(New York, 1943, pp. 103, 107, 108; compare Jeremiah 7:18.

### **Are New Year's celebrations objectionable for Christians?**

According to *The World Book Encyclopedia*, "The Roman ruler Julius Caesar established January 1 as New Year's Day in 46 B.C. The Romans dedicated this day to Janus, the god of gates, doors, and beginnings. The month of January was named after Janus, who had two faces—one looking forward and the other looking backward."—(1984), Vol. 14, p. 237.

Both the date and the customs associated with New Year's celebrations vary from one country to another. In many places revelry and drinking are part of the festivities. However, Romans 13:13 counsels: "As in the daytime let us walk decently, not in revelries and drunken bouts, not in illicit intercourse and loose conduct, not in strife and jealousy." (See also 1 Peter 4:3, 4; Galatians 5:19-21.)

### **What underlies holidays in memory of the "spirits of the dead"?**

The 1910 edition of *The Encyclopedia Britannica* states: "All Souls' Day . . . the day set apart in the Roman Catholic Church for the commemoration of the faithful departed. The celebration is based on the doctrine that the souls of the faithful which at death have not been cleansed from venial sins, or have not atoned for past transgressions, cannot attain the Beatific Vision, and that they may be helped to do so by prayer and by the sacrifice of the mass. . . . Certain popular beliefs connected with All Souls' Day are of pagan

origin and immemorial antiquity. Thus the dead are believed by the peasantry of many Catholic countries to return to their former homes on All Souls' night and partake of the food of the living."—Vol. I, p. 709.

*The Encyclopedia Americana* says: "Elements of the customs connected with Halloween can be traced to a Druid ceremony in pre-Christian times. The Celts had festivals for two major gods—a sun god and a god of the dead (called Samhain), whose festival was held on November 1, the beginning of the Celtic New Year. The festival of the dead was gradually incorporated into Christian ritual."—(1977), Vol. 13, p. 725.

The book *The Worship of the Dead* points to this origin: "The mythologies of all the ancient nations are interwoven with the events of the Deluge. . . . The force of this argument is illustrated by the fact of the observance of a great festival of the dead in commemoration of the event, not only by nations more or less in communication with each other, but by others widely separated, both by the ocean and by centuries of time. This festival is, moreover, held by all on or about the very day on which, according to the Mosaic account, the Deluge took place, viz., the *seventeenth day of the second month*—the month nearly corresponding with our November." (London, 1904, Colonel J. Garnier, p. 4) Thus these celebrations actually began with an honoring of people whom God had destroyed because of their badness in Noah's day.—Gen. 6:5-7; 7:11.

Such holidays honoring "spirits of the dead" as if they were alive in another realm are contrary to the Bible's description of death as a state of complete unconsciousness.—Eccl. 9:5, 10; Ps. 146:4.

Regarding the origin of belief in immortality of the human soul, see pages 101, 102, under the main heading "Death," and pages 379, 380, under "Soul."

### **What is the origin of Valentine's Day?**

*The World Book Encyclopedia* informs us: "Valentine's Day comes on the feast day of two different Christian martyrs named Valentine. But the customs connected with the

day . . . probably come from an ancient Roman festival called *Lupercalia* which took place every February 15. The festival honored Juno, the Roman goddess of women and marriage, and Pan, the god of nature."—(1973), Vol. 20, p. 204.

### **What is the origin of the practice of setting aside a day to honor mothers?**

The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* says: "A festival derived from the custom of mother worship in ancient Greece. Formal mother worship, with ceremonies to Cybele, or Rhea, the Great Mother of the Gods, were performed on the Ides of March throughout Asia Minor."—(1959), Vol. 15, p. 849.

### **What Bible principles explain the viewpoint of Christians toward ceremonies commemorating events in a nation's political history?**

John 18:36: "Jesus answered [the Roman governor]: 'My kingdom is no part of this world.'"

John 15:19: "If you [Jesus' followers] were part of the world, the world would be fond of what is its own. Now because you are no part of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, on this account the world hates you."

1 John 5:19: "The whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one." (Compare John 14:30; Revelation 13:1, 2; Daniel 2:44.)

### **Other local and national holidays**

There are many. Not all can be discussed here. But the historical information provided above gives indications as to what to look for in connection with any holiday, and the Bible principles already discussed supply ample guidance for those whose foremost desire is to do what is pleasing to Jehovah God.

## **Images**

**Definition:** Usually, visible representations of persons or things. An image that is an object of worship is an idol. Those who perform acts of worship before images often say that their worship actually is directed to the spirit being represented by the image. Such use of images is customary in many non-Christian religions. Regarding Roman Catholic practice, the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (1967, Vol. VIII, p. 372) says: "Since the worship given to an image reaches and terminates in the person represented, the same type of worship due the person can be rendered to the image as representing the person." *Not a Bible teaching.*

### **What does God's Word say about the making of images used as objects of worship?**

Ex. 20:4, 5, *JB*: "You shall not make yourself a carved image or any likeness of anything in heaven or on earth beneath or in the waters under the earth: you shall not bow down to them or serve them [bow down before them or worship them, *NABJ*]. For I, Yahweh your God, am a jealous God" (Italics added.) (Notice that the prohibition was against *making* images and *bowing down* before them.)

Lev. 26:1, *JB*: "You must make no idols; you must set up neither carved image nor standing-stone [“sacred pillar,” *NWJ*], set up no sculptured stone in your land, to prostrate yourselves in front of it; for it is I, Yahweh, who am your God." (No image before which people might bow in worship was ever to be set up.)

2 Cor. 6:16, *JB*: "The temple of God has no common ground with idols, and that is what we are—the temple of the living God."

1 John 5:21, *NAB*: "My little children, be on your guard against idols [“idols,” *Dy, CC*; “false gods,” *JB*]."

### **May images be used simply as aids in worship of the true God?**

John 4:23, 24, *JB*: "True worshippers will worship the



**Daniel and his companions  
learned to say no**

<sup>8</sup> There is a lesson in this for all servants of Jehovah God today. Those Hebrew youths might have reasoned that the dietary restrictions of the Mosaic Law were not so important, at least not when compared with the Ten Commandments or the laws concerning sacrifices or the annual festivals. But no, the loyal Hebrews were concerned with living up to all features of God's Law. This calls to mind the principle that Jesus stated, as recorded at Luke 16:10: "The person faithful in what is least is faithful also in much, and the person unrighteous in what is least is unrighteous also in much."—Compare Matthew 23:23.

<sup>9</sup> Many times Jehovah's Witnesses display similar faith and courage, such as

8. What lesson is there in this for Jehovah's servants today?
9. How have some Witnesses displayed similar courage today?

when it comes to asking their employers for time off to attend a district convention. And time and again, an exception is made in their case. Witnesses wanting to enter the pioneer ranks or to become auxiliary pioneers have pressed their desire for part-time employment and repeatedly have been granted this privilege.

<sup>10</sup> What a fine lesson God-fearing parents of today can learn from the evident training of the four Hebrew youths! When Christian parents really have the spiritual interests of their children at heart, they will put these first in their own lives, in keeping with Matthew 6:33. Then they can expect that their children will be able to resist the temptations and pressures of peers and schoolteachers to celebrate birthdays or holidays or to violate Scriptural principles in other ways. These God-fearing parents thereby prove Proverbs 22:6 to be true.

#### **Fearlessly Interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's Dreams**

<sup>11</sup> The second chapter of Daniel gives us another example of faith and courage. When Daniel heard of the king's edict to destroy all the wise men of Babylon because they could not tell him his dream and its meaning, did Daniel and his three companions become panicky? Absolutely not! Rather, with supreme faith that Jehovah would give him the information the king wanted, Daniel appeared before that monarch and asked for time to provide the answer. This request was granted. Then Daniel and his three friends made the matter a subject of earnest prayer. Jehovah rewarded their faith by giving the information needed. Thereupon, Daniel offered a heartfelt prayer of thanksgiving to

10. What lesson is there for Witness parents in all of this?
11. How may we today follow the examples of Daniel and his three friends?

who through use have their perceptive powers trained to distinguish both right and wrong.” (Hebrews 5:13, 14) Yes, making spiritual progress is a vital part of keeping the pace God’s organization sets.

### Not Deterred by Indifference

<sup>16</sup> Ezekiel also set a fine example by being obedient and not allowing himself to be deterred by indifference or ridicule. Similarly, by keeping up with the development of the pure language, we are attuned to the direction taken by the royal Chariot Rider. Thus we are equipped to respond to his commands, strengthened to be undeterred by the indifference or ridicule of those to whom we speak Jehovah’s judgment message. As with Ezekiel, God has forewarned us that some people would actively oppose, being hardheaded and hardhearted. Others would not hear because they do not want to listen to Jehovah. (Ezekiel 3:7-9) Still others would be hypocrites, as Ezekiel 33:31, 32 states: “They will come in to you, like the coming in of people, and sit before you as my people; and they will certainly hear your words but these they will not do, for with their mouth they are expressing lustful desires and after their unjust gain is where their heart is going. And, look! you are to them like a song of sensuous loves, like one with a pretty voice and playing a stringed instrument well. And they will certainly hear your words, but there are none doing them.”

<sup>17</sup> What would be the outcome? Verse 33 adds: “And when it comes true—look! it must come true—they will also have to know that a prophet himself had proved to be in the midst of them.” Those words reveal that Ezekiel did not give up because of lack of response. The apathy of others

16, 17. How did Ezekiel deal with indifference, ridicule, and lack of response?

did not make him apathetic. Whether people listened or not, he obeyed God and fulfilled his commission.

<sup>18</sup> Jehovah’s visible organization is now intensifying the proclamation that all should fear God and give him glory. Do you persevere when criticized for taking a bold stand in giving the Kingdom witness, for being moral in your life-style? Are you standing firm when you are the target of pressure because of not accepting blood, not worshiping national emblems, not celebrating worldly holidays?—Matthew 5: 11, 12; 1 Peter 4:4, 5.

<sup>19</sup> This course is not an easy one, but those who endure to the end will be saved. (Matthew 24:13) With Jehovah’s help, we will not let people of the world make us like them and thus get us out of pace with Jehovah’s celestial chariot. (Ezekiel 2:8; Romans 12:21) If we are keeping pace with the chariotlike angelic organization, we will promptly comply with direction and instructions received through God’s visible organization. Jehovah provides what we need to meet attacks on our faith, to maintain our grip on the Word of life, and to keep our eyes fixed on the spiritual realities that center on the Royal Rider of the celestial chariot.

### Motivated to Keep Pace

<sup>20</sup> Ezekiel’s visions should motivate us to keep pace. He not only declared God’s judgments on Israel but also recorded prophecies of restoration. Ezekiel pointed to the One who would have the legal right to rule on Jehovah’s throne at the appointed time. (Ezekiel 21:27) That Royal Servant, “David,” would regather God’s

18. What questions might you ask yourself?

19. As to direction, what will we do if we are keeping pace with Jehovah’s celestial chariot?

20. What are some things recorded by Ezekiel that should motivate us to keep pace?

# KINGDOM PROCLAIMERS REPORT

## Jesus' Sheep Listen to His Voice

AS THE preaching work expands to all parts of the earth, Jehovah through his angels directs his servants to the sheeplike ones. They hear Jesus' voice and learn to serve him with everlasting life in view. Jesus said at John 10:27, 28: "My sheep listen to my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give them everlasting life." Notice how honesthearted ones in Madagascar listened to Jesus' voice.

One of Jehovah's Witnesses gave copies of the books *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth* and *Your Youth—Getting the Best Out Of It* to the physician who came to check on his sick father.

The doctor was Protestant and very much opposed to the Witnesses, but he read the book and checked the scriptures in his own Bible. His wife, a Catholic and also a doctor, read the *Youth* book several times because she said it seemed to have been written especially for her. The Society's Bible-based explanation of the significance of 1914 impressed them both. The husband got in touch with the Witness who gave him the books. The Witness gave him *Life—How Did It Get Here? By Evolution or by Creation?* and made arrangements to visit him and his wife to answer their questions. When he visited them, he started a regular Bible study with the couple and their three children. Progress in Bible understanding was rapid.

After the first study, the whole family started attending the meetings at the Kingdom Hall and soon thereafter enrolled in the Theocratic Ministry School. The conduct of the children greatly improved. From their Bible study, they learned that celebrating birthdays and other religious holidays was not Christian; hence, they stopped observing them. The husband refused to give his blood to a relative, even though the subject had not yet been discussed in the Bible study. Soon his karate uniform disappeared from his wardrobe; he sent it to the tailor to have clothes made out of it for his children. He burned all his magazines and books on horoscopes. Just three months after they started studying, both the husband and his wife resigned from their respective churches and expressed their desire to share in the preaching work. They are now baptized.

□ A woman in Thailand was seeking the truth. Although a Buddhist, she had never been devoted to her religion because she had seen too much hypocrisy and greed. Besides, there were various customs that she found offensive. She felt tired of it all.

Then, a neighbor recommended that she try the Christians and took her to a Pentecostal church. During the service, however, the woman had a strong desire to leave and go home because of the noise, as all present were praying with a loud voice. That was the last time she attended that church.

Later, she tried a Roman Catholic church. However, after attending a number of times, she again became aware of hypocrisy and greed, as well as the luxurious life-style of the priest. She became disgusted and stopped going there. The priest was curious as to why she left. After learning the reason, he said in a mocking way: "If you wish to join a really strict people, go to Jehovah's Witnesses." She asked: "Where are they?" The priest replied: "They are near the waterworks." The next day she looked for them without success. Disappointed, she nevertheless constantly thought of Jehovah's Witnesses.

One day she overheard one of her neighbors mockingly say to another: "Soon you will become one of Jehovah's Witnesses!" Upon hearing that, the woman rushed over to the neighbor and asked: "Are there Jehovah's Witnesses around here?" "Yes," was the answer. "Some will come to the neighborhood preaching from house to house. You will recognize them by their clean and neat way of dressing." At that she ran out to look for them. At first she did not find them, but when walking back to her house, she noticed a couple of neatly dressed women conversing with somebody. She approached and asked if they were Jehovah's Witnesses. When they said they were, she pleaded: "Please come to my house. I want to talk to you."

A Bible study was started, and in spite of opposition and ridicule from family members, this lady has started to attend meetings and to witness to her relatives.

Jesus truly does know his sheep and is gathering them into his organization for survival into his new world of righteousness.



## The Lord's Evening Meal

### *How Often Should It Be Observed?*

**C**HRISTMAS, Easter, "saints" days. Many holidays and feasts are celebrated by the churches of Christendom. But do you know how many celebrations Jesus Christ commanded his followers to observe? The answer is, Just one! None of the other feasts were authorized by the Founder of Christianity.

Clearly, if Jesus instituted only *one* celebration, it is very important. Christians should observe it exactly as Jesus commanded. What was this unique observance?

#### **The One Celebration**

This observance was introduced by Jesus the day he died. He had commemorated the Jewish feast of the Passover with his apostles. Then he passed some of the unleavened Passover bread to them, saying: "This means my body which is to be given in your behalf." Next, Jesus passed a cup of wine, saying: "This cup means the new covenant by virtue of my blood, which is to be poured out in your behalf." He also said: "Keep doing this in remembrance of me." (Luke 22:19, 20; 1 Corinthians 11:24-26) This