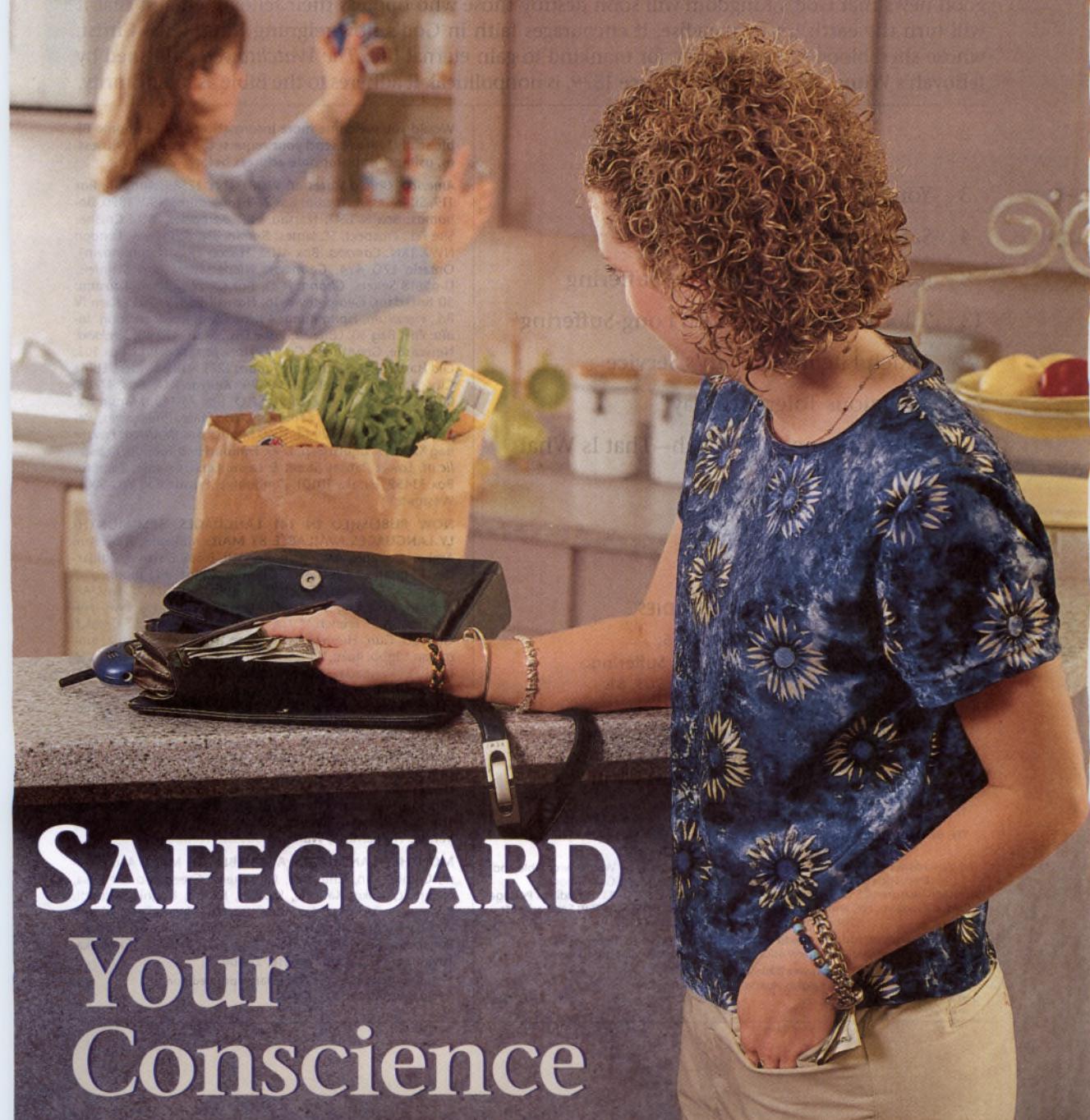


NOVEMBER 1, 2001

THE WATCHTOWER ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



SAFEGUARD Your Conscience

THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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THE PURPOSE OF *THE WATCHTOWER* is to exalt Jehovah God as Sovereign Lord of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as these fulfill Bible prophecy. It comforts all peoples with the good news that God's Kingdom will soon destroy those who oppress their fellowmen and that it will turn the earth into a paradise. It encourages faith in God's now-reigning King, Jesus Christ, whose shed blood opens the way for mankind to gain eternal life. *The Watchtower*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879, is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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You Need a Trained Conscience

It promised to be a memorable day for the passengers and crew aboard Air New Zealand Flight 901 to Antarctica. Cameras were at the ready, and a party atmosphere prevailed as the DC-10 approached the white continent for a magnificent, low-level aerial view.

THE captain, a pilot for 15 years, had accumulated over 11,000 hours of flying time. Prior to takeoff, he had carefully entered the flight plan into his onboard computer, unaware that the coordinates he had been given were incorrect. Flying through a cloud at just under 2,000 feet, the DC-10 slammed into the lower slopes of Mount Erebus, killing all 257 on board.

Just as airplanes today rely on computers to guide them through the skies, humans have been given a conscience to guide them on their path through life. And the terrible tragedy of Flight 901 can teach us some powerful lessons about our conscience. For instance, in the same way that flight safety depends on a properly functioning navigational system and precise points of reference, so our spiritual, moral, and even physical well-being depends on a responsive conscience guided by correct *moral* points of reference.

Unhappily, in today's world, such points of reference are quickly disappearing or are being ignored. "We hear a lot today about how Johnny can't read, how he can't write, and the trouble he is having finding France on a map," said an American educator. "It is also true that Johnny is having difficulty distinguishing right from wrong. Along with illiteracy and innumeracy, we must add deep moral confusion to the list of educational problems." She also observed that "today's

young people live in a moral haze. Ask one of them if there are such things as 'right and wrong,' and suddenly you are confronted with a confused, tongue-tied, nervous, and insecure individual. . . . This confusion gets worse rather than better once they go to college."

One cause of this confusion is moral relativism, a widespread view that standards vary according to personal or cultural preferences. Imagine what would happen if pilots were to navigate, not by fixed reference points, but by beacons that moved about unpredictably and sometimes disappeared altogether! Disasters like the one at Mount Erebus would undoubtedly be common. Similarly, having abandoned fixed moral standards, the world reaps a grim and growing harvest of misery and death as families are torn apart by infidelity and millions suffer because of AIDS or some other sexually transmitted disease.

Moral relativism may sound sophisticated, but in reality its followers are like the ancient Ninevites who did not know 'their right hand from their left.' Practicers of moral relativism resemble the apostate Israelites who said that "good is bad and bad is good."—Jonah 4:11; Isaiah 5:20.

So where can we turn for clear, unambiguous laws and principles with which to train our conscience to be a safe guide? Millions

have found that the Bible perfectly fills that need. From morality to work ethic and from the training of children to the worship of God, the Bible omits nothing important. (2 Timothy 3:16) It has proved completely reliable over the centuries. Because the Bible's moral standards were established by the very highest authority, our Creator, they are relevant

for all humans. Hence, we have no reason to live a life of moral uncertainty.

Nowadays, however, your conscience is under assault as never before. How is that possible? And how can you safeguard your conscience? A good way to begin is to get to know the source of the assault and his tactics. These will be discussed in the following article.

Safeguard Your Conscience

THE idea of flying in a plane with a wrongly programmed computer is frightening. Imagine, instead, that someone had tampered with the aircraft's guidance system or had deliberately falsified its data! Well, in a figurative sense, that is exactly what someone is trying to do to your conscience. He is out to sabotage your moral-guidance system. His objective is to put you on a collision course with God!—Job 2:2-5; John 8:44.

Who is this vicious saboteur? In the Bible, he is called “the original serpent, the one called Devil and Satan, who is *misleading the entire inhabited earth.*” (Revelation 12:9) He was seen in action in the garden of Eden when, by using specious reasoning, he persuaded Eve to ignore what she knew was right and to rebel against God. (Genesis 3:1-6, 16-19) Since then, Satan has masterminded the development of entire institutions of deception to lead people en masse into enmity with God. The most reprehensible of these institutions is false religion.—2 Corinthians 11:14, 15.

False Religion Corrupts the Conscience

In the Bible book of Revelation, false religion is seen as a symbolic harlot called Bab-

ylon the Great. Her teachings have distorted the moral sensibilities of many people and have caused them to hate and even act violently against those who have different beliefs. In fact, according to Revelation, God holds false religion primarily responsible for the blood “of all those who have been slaughtered on the earth,” including God’s own worshipers.—Revelation 17:1-6; 18:3, 24.

Jesus warned his disciples of the extent to which false religion would distort the moral compass of some when he said: “The hour is coming when everyone that kills you will imagine he has rendered a sacred service to God.” How morally blinded such violent individuals are! Jesus said: “They *have not come to know either the Father or me.*” (John 16: 2, 3) Not long after Jesus spoke those words, he himself was murdered at the behest of some religious leaders, who were able to reconcile their crime with their conscience. (John 11:47-50) In contrast, Jesus said that his true followers are identified by the love they have among themselves. But their love is still more expansive, for it reaches out even to their enemies.—Matthew 5:44-48; John 13:35.

In another way false religion has sabotaged the conscience of many is by pandering to

whatever morality, or lack thereof, that happens to be in vogue. Foretelling this, the apostle Paul said: "There will be a period of time when they will not put up with the healthful teaching, but, in accord with their own desires, they will accumulate teachers for themselves to have their ears tickled."—2 Timothy 4:3.

Nowadays, religious leaders tickle people's ears by saying that sex outside of marriage may be acceptable to God. Others condone homosexual acts. In fact, some clerics are themselves actively homosexual. An article in the British newspaper *The Times* stated that "thirteen openly gay clergy" have been elected to the General Synod of the Church of England. When church leaders abandon Bible morality and their churches do little about it, what standards should their parishioners adopt? It is little wonder that millions are thoroughly confused.

How much better it is to be guided by the beaconlike moral and spiritual truths taught in the Bible! (Psalm 43:3; John 17:17) For example, the Bible teaches that neither fornicators nor adulterers "will inherit God's kingdom." (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10) It tells us that males and females who change "the natural use of themselves into one contrary to nature" are "working what is obscene" in God's eyes. (Romans 1:26, 27, 32) These moral truths are not the fabrications of imperfect men; they are the inspired standards of God, which he has never repealed. (Galatians 1:8; 2 Timothy 3:16) But Satan has other ways to sabotage the conscience.

Be Selective in Entertainment

It is one thing to force someone to commit a bad act, but it is another thing to get him to *want* to commit such an act. This is the goal of "the ruler of the world," Satan. To imprint his debased thinking on the minds and hearts of the foolish or unsuspecting—espe-



Priest blessing troops: U.S. Army photo



False religion, described in the Bible as

*"Babylon the Great," is responsible
for dulling the conscience of many*

cially the most vulnerable, the young—he uses such avenues as questionable literature, movies, music, computer games, and pornography sites on the Internet.—John 14:30; Ephesians 2:2.

"Young people [in the United States] view an estimated 10 000 acts of violence each year," said a report in the journal *Pediatrics*, "with children's programming being the most violent." The report also revealed that "each year, teenagers view nearly 15 000 sexual references, innuendoes, and jokes." Even prime-time television, it stated, "contains more than 8 sexual incidents per hour, more than four times as much as in 1976." Not surprisingly, the study also found that "vulgar language is increasing dramatically as well." Yet, both the Bible and voluminous scientific studies warn that a diet of such material



**Viewing violence and immorality
will damage your conscience**

changes people for the worse. So if you truly want to please God and benefit yourself, heed Proverbs 4:23, which says: "Safeguard your heart, for out of it are the sources of life."—Isaiah 48:17.

Much popular music also corrupts the conscience. A singer whose songs have shot to the top of the charts in a number of Western lands makes "a special effort to shock," warns a report in the Australian newspaper *The Sunday Mail*. The article states that "his songs glorify drugs, incest and rape" and that he "sings about killing his wife and throwing her body in a lake." Other lyrics mentioned are too vile to be repeated here. Yet, his music earned him a prestigious award. Would you like to sow in your mind and heart such noxious thoughts as those mentioned above, even if they are sugarcoated with music? Hopefully not, for those who act in such a way defile their conscience and ultimately create within themselves "a wicked heart," turning them into enemies of God.—Hebrews 3:12; Matthew 12:33-35.

So be wise in your choice of entertainment. The Bible urges us: "Whatever things are true, whatever things are of serious concern, whatever things are righteous, whatever things are chaste, whatever things are lovable, whatever things are well spoken of, whatever virtue there is and whatever praiseworthy thing there is, continue considering these things."—Philippians 4:8.

Associations Affect Your Conscience

As children, Neil and Franz enjoyed wholesome association with sincere Christians.* But, in time, said Neil, "I began hanging out with the wrong crowd." The end result, much to his regret, was crime and prison. Franz' story is similar. "I thought that I could handle being around young people of the world without being affected by them," he lamented. "But as Galatians 6:7 says, 'God is not one to be mocked. For whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap.' I found out the hard way that I was wrong and Jehovah was right. I am faced with a life sentence for the wrong I have done."

People like Neil and Franz do not normally turn to crime overnight; at first, they would recoil at the thought. The slide tends to occur in stages, the first often being bad associations. (1 Corinthians 15:33) Drug or alcohol abuse may follow. The conscience, in fact, has aptly been described as that "part of the personality which is soluble in alcohol." From there, it is just a small step to crime or immorality.

Why, then, take that first step? Instead, as-

* The names have been changed.



sociate with wise people who truly love God. They will help you to fortify your conscience so that it will guide you properly, sparing you many pains. (Proverbs 13:20) Though still incarcerated, Neil and Franz now see their conscience as a divine gift to be properly trained and, yes, cherished. Furthermore, they are working hard to build a good relationship with their God, Jehovah. Be wise, and learn from their mistakes.—Proverbs 22:3.

Take Care of Your Conscience

We show that we want to take care of our conscience when we build up love for and faith in God, together with a wholesome fear of him. (Proverbs 8:13; 1 John 5:3) The Bible reveals that a conscience devoid of these influences often lacks moral stability. For instance, Psalm 14:1 speaks of those who say in their heart: "There is no Jehovah." How does this lack of faith affect their conduct? The verse continues: "They have acted ruinously, they have acted detestably in their dealing."

People without real faith in God also have no firm hope for a better future. Hence, they tend to live for the present, indulging their fleshly desires. Their philosophy is: "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we are to die." (1 Corinthians 15:32) On the other hand,

*Regular guidance from God's Word
will safeguard your conscience*

those whose eyes are on the prize of eternal life are not lured off course by the fleeting pleasures of the world. Like a precise navigational computer, their trained conscience keeps them right on the track of loyal obedience to God.—Philippians 3:8.

For your conscience to maintain its power and precision, it needs regular guidance from God's Word. The Bible tells us that such guidance is available when, in pictorial language, it says: "Your own ears will hear a word behind you saying: 'This is the way. Walk in it, you people,' in case you people should go to the right or in case you should go to the left." (Isaiah 30:21) So set aside time for daily Bible reading. This will strengthen and encourage you when you are struggling to do what is right or when the clouds of worry and anxiety hang over you. Be assured that Jehovah will guide you morally and spiritually if you place your full trust in him. Yes, imitate the psalmist who wrote: "I have placed Jehovah in front of me constantly. Because he is at my right hand, I shall not be made to totter." —Psalm 16:8; 55:22.

JEHOVAH IS A GOD OF LONG-SUFFERING

"Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness."—EXODUS 34:6.

THE people in Noah's day, the Israelites trekking through the wilderness with Moses, the Jews alive when Jesus walked on earth—all lived under different circumstances. But all benefited from the same kindly quality of Jehovah—long-suffering. For some, it meant their very lives. And Jehovah's long-suffering can mean our lives too.

² What is long-suffering? When does Jehovah show it, and why? "Long-suffering" has been defined as "the patient endurance of wrong or provocation, combined with a refusal to give up hope for improvement in the disturbed relationship." This quality, therefore, has a purpose. It looks particularly to the welfare of the one causing a disagreeable situation. Being long-suffering does not mean condoning wrong, however. When the purpose for long-suffering is accomplished or when there is no point in putting up with the situation any more, long-suffering ends.

³ While humans can be long-suffering, Jehovah is the supreme example of this quality. In the years since sin disturbed the relationship between Jehovah and his human creation, our Creator has shown patient endurance and has provided the means whereby repentant humans can improve their relationship with him. (2 Peter 3:9; 1 John 4:10) But when his long-suffering has achieved its

1. 2. (a) Who in the past benefited from Jehovah's long-suffering? (b) What does the word "long-suffering" mean?
3. What has been the purpose of Jehovah's long-suffering, and what is its limit?

purpose, God will take action against willful wrongdoers, bringing the present wicked system to an end.—2 Peter 3:7.

Consistent With God's Primary Attributes

⁴ In the Hebrew Scriptures, the notion of long-suffering is expressed by two Hebrew words that literally mean "length of nostrils" and are rendered "slow to anger" in the *New World Translation*.^{*} Speaking of God's long-suffering, the prophet Nahum said: "Jehovah is slow to anger and great in power, and by no means will Jehovah hold back from punishing." (Nahum 1:3) Hence, Jehovah's long-suffering is not a sign of weakness and is not without limits. The fact that the almighty God is at once slow to anger and great in power shows that his long-suffering is the result of purposeful restraint. He has the power to punish, but he deliberately refrains from immediately doing so in order to give the wrongdoer the opportunity to change. (Ezekiel 18:31, 32) Jehovah's long-suffering is, therefore, an expression of his love, and it demonstrates his wisdom in the use of his power.

^{*} In Hebrew, the word for "nose" or "nostril" (*aph*) is often used figuratively for anger. This is so because of the violent breathing or snorting of an enraged person.

4. (a) How is the idea of long-suffering expressed in the Hebrew Scriptures? (See also footnote.) (b) How does the prophet Nahum describe Jehovah, and what does this reveal about Jehovah's long-suffering?

⁵ Jehovah's long-suffering is also compatible with his justice and righteousness. He revealed himself to Moses as "a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger [“longsuffering,” *King James Version*] and abundant in loving-kindness and truth." (Exodus 34:6) Years later, Moses sang in praise of Jehovah: "All his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness, with whom there is no injustice; righteous and upright is he." (Deuteronomy 32:4) Yes, Jehovah's mercy, long-suffering, justice, and uprightness all work together harmoniously.

Jehovah's Long-Suffering Before the Flood

⁶ Adam and Eve's rebellion in Eden permanently severed their precious relationship with their loving Creator, Jehovah. (Genesis 3:8-13, 23, 24) This alienation affected their offspring, who inherited sin, imperfection, and death. (Romans 5:17-19) Although the

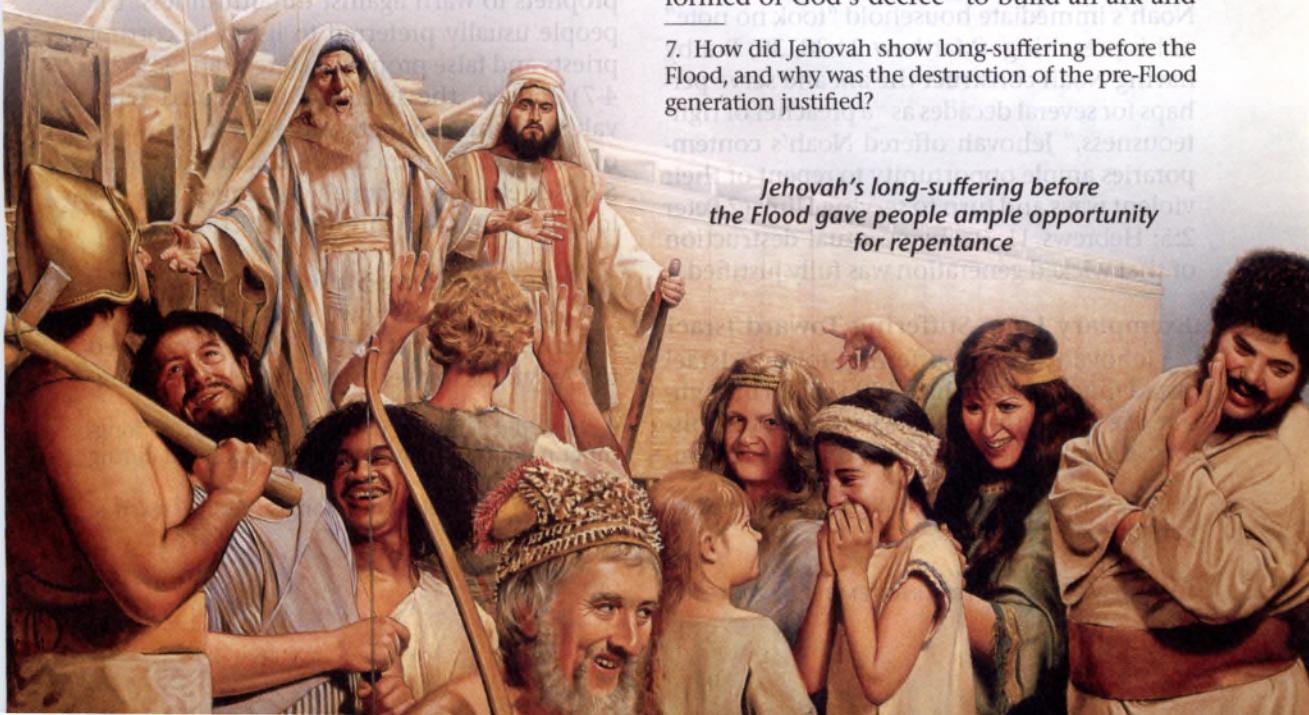
5. In what way is Jehovah's long-suffering compatible with his justice?
6. What remarkable evidence of long-suffering has Jehovah displayed toward the descendants of Adam and Eve?

first human couple were willful sinners, Jehovah allowed them to produce children. Later, he lovingly provided the means whereby the descendants of Adam and Eve could be reconciled with him. (John 3:16, 36) The apostle Paul explained: "God recommends his own love to us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more, therefore, since we have been declared righteous now by his blood, shall we be saved through him from wrath. For if, when we were enemies, we became reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, now that we have become reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."—Romans 5:8-10.

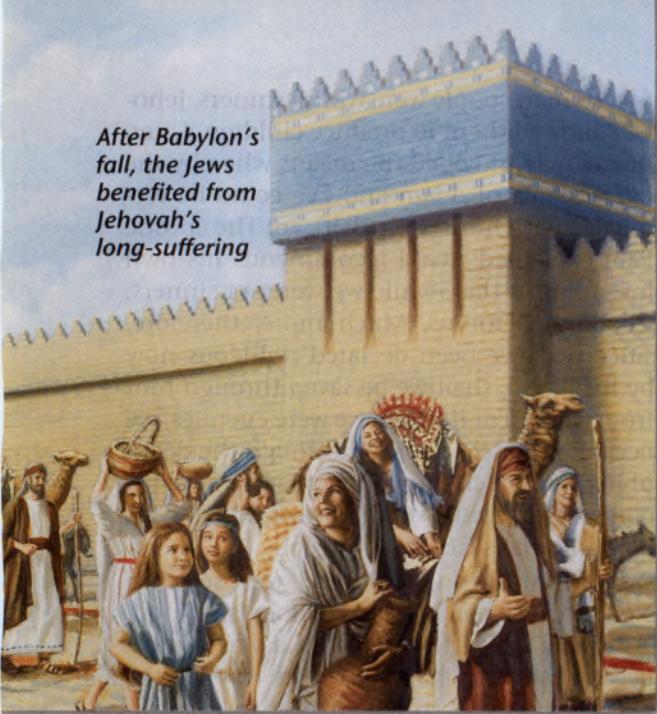
⁷ Jehovah's long-suffering was seen in Noah's day. Over a century before the Flood, "God saw the earth and, look! it was ruined, because all flesh had ruined its way on the earth." (Genesis 6:12) Still, for a limited time, Jehovah showed long-suffering toward mankind. He said: "My spirit shall not act toward man indefinitely in that he is also flesh. Accordingly his days shall amount to a hundred and twenty years." (Genesis 6:3) Those 120 years allowed faithful Noah time to produce a family and—when informed of God's decree—to build an ark and

7. How did Jehovah show long-suffering before the Flood, and why was the destruction of the pre-Flood generation justified?

Jehovah's long-suffering before the Flood gave people ample opportunity for repentance



After Babylon's fall, the Jews benefited from Jehovah's long-suffering



of convincing goat herds to move, or by warn his contemporaries of the coming Flood. The apostle Peter wrote: "The patience [a quality related to long-suffering] of God was waiting in Noah's days, while the ark was being constructed, in which a few people, that is, eight souls, were carried safely through the water." (1 Peter 3:20) True, those outside Noah's immediate household "took no note" of his preaching. (Matthew 24:38, 39) But by having Noah construct the ark and serve perhaps for several decades as "a preacher of righteousness," Jehovah offered Noah's contemporaries ample opportunity to repent of their violent ways and turn to serving Him. (2 Peter 2:5; Hebrews 11:7) The eventual destruction of that wicked generation was fully justified.

Exemplary Long-Suffering Toward Israel

⁸ Jehovah's long-suffering toward Israel lasted much longer than 120 years. Throughout the more than 1,500 years of their history as God's chosen people, there were com-

8. How was Jehovah's long-suffering manifested toward the nation of Israel?

paratively few periods when the Israelites did not try God's long-suffering to the limit. Only weeks after their miraculous deliverance from Egypt, they turned to idol worship, showing gross disrespect for their Savior. (Exodus 32:4; Psalm 106:21) During the succeeding decades, the Israelites complained about the food Jehovah miraculously supplied in the desert, murmured against Moses and Aaron, spoke against Jehovah, and committed fornication with pagans, even sharing in Baal worship. (Numbers 11:4-6; 14:2-4; 21:5; 25:1-3; 1 Corinthians 10:6-11) Jehovah could justifiably have exterminated his people, but instead he exercised long-suffering.—Numbers 14:11-21.

⁹ During the time of the Judges, the Israelites repeatedly fell away to idolatry. When they did so, Jehovah abandoned them to their enemies. But when they repented and called on him for help, he exercised long-suffering and raised up judges to deliver them. (Judges 2:17, 18) During the long period of the monarchy, few kings showed exclusive devotion to Jehovah. And even under the faithful kings, the people often mixed true worship with false. When Jehovah raised up prophets to warn against unfaithfulness, the people usually preferred to listen to corrupt priests and false prophets. (Jeremiah 5:31; 25:4-7) Indeed, the Israelites persecuted Jehovah's faithful prophets and even killed some of them. (2 Chronicles 24:20, 21; Acts 7:51, 52) Nonetheless, Jehovah continued to show long-suffering.—2 Chronicles 36:15.

Jehovah's Long-Suffering Not Lost

¹⁰ History shows, however, that God's long-suffering has a limit. In 740 B.C.E., he allowed the Assyrians to overthrow the ten-tribe king-

9. How did Jehovah prove to be a God of long-suffering during the time of the Judges and during the monarchy?
10. When did Jehovah's long-suffering reach a limit?

dom of Israel and lead its inhabitants into exile. (2 Kings 17:5, 6) And at the end of the following century, he permitted the Babylonians to invade the two-tribe kingdom of Judah and destroy Jerusalem with its temple.—2 Chronicles 36:16-19.

¹¹ Even while executing his judgments against Israel and Judah, however, Jehovah did not forget to be long-suffering. By means of his prophet Jeremiah, Jehovah foretold a restoration of his chosen people. He said: "In accord with the fulfilling of seventy years at Babylon I shall turn my attention to you people, and I will establish toward you my good word in bringing you back to this place. And I will let myself be found by you . . . And I will gather your body of captives and collect you together out of all the nations and out of all the places to which I have dispersed you."—Jeremiah 29:10, 14.

¹² A remnant from among the exiled Jews did indeed return to Judah and revive the worship of Jehovah at the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem. In the outworking of Jehovah's purposes, this remnant would become like "dew from Jehovah," which brings refreshment and prosperity. They would also be courageous and strong like "a lion among the beasts of a forest." (Micah 5:7, 8) This latter expression may have been fulfilled during the Maccabean period when the Jews under the family of the Maccabees expelled their enemies from the Promised Land and rededicated the temple, which had been defiled. Thus the land and the temple were preserved so that another faithful remnant would be able to welcome the Son of God when he appeared there as the Messiah.—Daniel 9:25; Luke 1:13-17, 67-79; 3:15, 21, 22.

11. How did Jehovah make room for long-suffering even when he was executing judgment?

12. How did the return of a Jewish remnant to Judah prove to be providential with respect to the coming of the Messiah?

¹³ Even after the Jews had slain his Son, Jehovah continued to show them long-suffering for a period of three and a half more years, granting them the exclusive opportunity of being called to become a part of the spiritual seed of Abraham. (Daniel 9:27)* Before and after the year 36 C.E., some Jews accepted this call, and thus, as Paul later put it, "a remnant has turned up according to a choosing due to undeserved kindness."—Romans 11:5.

¹⁴ In 36 C.E., the privilege of becoming a part of Abraham's spiritual seed was extended for the first time to those who were neither Jews nor proselytes. Any who responded

* For a further explanation of this prophecy, see the book *Pay Attention to Daniel's Prophecy!*, pages 191-4, published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

13. Even after the Jews had killed his Son, how did Jehovah continue to show them long-suffering?

14. (a) In 36 C.E., to whom was the privilege of becoming a part of Abraham's spiritual seed extended? (b) How did Paul express his feelings about the way Jehovah chooses members of spiritual Israel?

In the first century, both Jews and non-Jews benefited from Jehovah's long-suffering





Christians today make good use of Jehovah's long-suffering

also became recipients of Jehovah's undeserved kindness and long-suffering. (Galatians 3:26-29; Ephesians 2:4-7) Expressing deep appreciation for the wisdom and purpose behind Jehovah's merciful long-suffering, through which he produces the total number of those called to complete spiritual Israel, Paul exclaimed: "O the depth of God's riches and wisdom and knowledge! How unsearchable his judgments are and past tracing out his ways are!"—Romans 11:25, 26, 33; Galatians 6:15, 16.

Can You Explain?

- What is meant in the Bible by the word "long-suffering"?
- How did Jehovah show his long-suffering before the Flood, after the Babylonian captivity, and in the first century C.E.?
- For what important reasons has Jehovah displayed long-suffering?
- How should we view Jehovah's long-suffering?

Long-Suffering for the Sake of His Name

¹⁵ Why does Jehovah exercise long-suffering? Primarily in order to magnify his holy name and vindicate his sovereignty. (1 Samuel 12:20-22) The moral issue raised by Satan over the way Jehovah uses

His sovereignty required time to be settled satisfactorily before all creation. (Job 1:9-11; 42:2, 5, 6) Hence, when his people were being oppressed in Egypt, Jehovah told Pharaoh: "For this cause I have kept you in existence, for the sake of showing you my power and in order to have my name declared in all the earth."—Exodus 9:16.

¹⁶ Jehovah's words to Pharaoh were quoted when the apostle Paul explained the role of God's long-suffering in the glorification of His holy name. And then Paul wrote: "If, now, God, although having the will to demonstrate his wrath and to make his power known, tolerated with much long-suffering vessels of wrath made fit for destruction, in order that he might make known the riches of his glory upon vessels of mercy, which he prepared beforehand for glory, namely, us, whom he called not only from among Jews but also from among nations, what of it? It is as he says also in Hosea: 'Those not my people I will call "my people."'" (Romans 9:17, 22-25) Because Jehovah exercised long-suffering, he was able to take out of the nations "a people for his name." (Acts 15:14) Under their Head, Jesus Christ, these "holy ones" are heirs

15. What is the primary reason for divine long-suffering, and what issue required time for settlement?

16. (a) How did Jehovah's long-suffering make possible the preparing of a people for his name? (b) How will Jehovah's name be sanctified and his sovereignty be vindicated?

of the Kingdom that Jehovah will use to sanctify His great name and to vindicate His sovereignty.—Daniel 2:44; 7:13, 14, 27; Revelation 4:9-11; 5:9, 10.

Jehovah's Long-Suffering Works for Salvation

¹⁷ From mankind's original calamitous fall into sin up until now, Jehovah has shown himself to be a long-suffering God. His long-suffering before the Flood allowed time for due warning to be given and a means of salvation to be built. But his patience reached a limit, and the Flood came. Similarly today, Jehovah is showing great long-suffering, and this is lasting longer than some may have anticipated. However, that is no reason to give up. To do so would be tantamount to criticizing God for being long-suffering. Paul asked: "Do you despise the riches of his kindness and forbearance and long-suffering, because you do not know that the kindly quality of

17, 18. (a) By doing what could we unwittingly be criticizing Jehovah for his exercise of long-suffering? (b) How are we encouraged to view Jehovah's long-suffering?

'CLOTHE YOURSELVES WITH LONG-SUFFERING'

"Clothe yourselves with the tender affections of compassion . . . and long-suffering."

—COLOSSIANS 3:12.

RÉGIS, who lives in southwestern France, became a baptized Witness of Jehovah in 1952. For years his wife did all she could to hinder his efforts to serve Jehovah. She tried to puncture the tires of his vehicle to prevent him from attending meetings, and on one occa-

1. Recount a fine example of long-suffering.

God is trying to lead you to repentance?"—Romans 2:4.

¹⁸ None of us can know the full extent to which we need God's long-suffering to make sure that we have his approval for salvation. Paul counsels us to "keep working out [our] own salvation with fear and trembling." (Philippians 2:12) The apostle Peter wrote to fellow Christians: "Jehovah is not slow respecting his promise, as some people consider slowness, but he is patient *with you* because he does not desire any to be destroyed but desires all to attain to repentance."—2 Peter 3:9.

¹⁹ Hence, let us not be impatient with Jehovah's way of handling matters. Rather, let us follow Peter's further counsel and "consider the patience of our Lord as salvation." Whose salvation? Ours and, by extension, that of countless others who still need to hear the "good news of the kingdom." (2 Peter 3:15; Matthew 24:14) This will help us to appreciate the rich generosity of Jehovah's long-suffering and move us to be long-suffering in our dealings with others.

19. In what way can we take advantage of Jehovah's long-suffering?

casion she even followed him as he preached the Bible message from door to door, making fun of him as he spoke to householders about the good news of the Kingdom. In spite of this constant opposition, Régis continued to be long-suffering. Thus, Régis is a fine example for all Christians, since Jehovah requires

all his worshipers to be long-suffering in their dealings with others.

² The Greek word for “long-suffering” literally means “longness of spirit.” The English *New World Translation* ten times renders this word “long-suffering,” three times “patience,” and once “exercising of patience.” Both the Hebrew and Greek expressions translated “long-suffering” include the thought of patience, forbearance, and slowness to anger.

³ Long-suffering was not viewed as a virtue by the Greeks of the first century. The word itself was never used by the Stoic philosophers. According to Bible scholar William Barclay, long-suffering “is the very opposite of Greek virtue,” which vaunted among other things “the refusal to tolerate any insult or injury.” He states: “To the Greek the big man was the man who went all out for vengeance. To the Christian the big man is the man who, even when he can, refuses to do so.” The Greeks may have considered long-suffering to be a sign of weakness, but here, as in other cases, “a foolish thing of God is wiser than men, and a weak thing of God is stronger than men.”—1 Corinthians 1:25.

Christ’s Example of Long-Suffering

⁴ Second only to Jehovah, Christ Jesus set a fine example of long-suffering. When under duress, Jesus showed astonishing restraint. Of him it was prophesied: “He was hard pressed, and he was letting himself be afflicted; yet he would not open his mouth. He was being brought just like a sheep to the slaughtering; and like a ewe that before her shearers has become mute, he also would not open his mouth.”—Isaiah 53:7.

2. What is the literal meaning of the Greek word for “long-suffering,” and what does the word denote?
3. How did the Christian view of long-suffering differ from that of first-century Greeks?
4. 5. What wonderful example of long-suffering did Jesus provide?

⁵ What remarkable long-suffering Jesus showed throughout his ministry on earth! He endured the treacherous questions of his enemies and the insults of opposers. (Matthew 22:15-46; 1 Peter 2:23) He was patient with his disciples, even when they continually quarreled over who was the greatest. (Mark 9:33-37; 10:35-45; Luke 22:24-27) And what admirable restraint Jesus showed on the night of his betrayal when Peter and John fell asleep after being told to “keep on the watch”!—Matthew 26:36-41.

⁶ After his death and resurrection, Jesus continued to be long-suffering. The apostle Paul was particularly conscious of this, since he had formerly been a persecutor of Christians. Paul wrote: “Faithful and deserving of full acceptance is the saying that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Of these I am foremost. Nevertheless, the reason why I was shown mercy was that by means of me as the foremost case Christ Jesus might demonstrate all his long-suffering for a sample of those who are going to rest their faith on him for everlasting life.” (1 Timothy 1:15, 16) Whatever our past, if we rest our faith on Jesus, he will be long-suffering with us—while, of course, expecting us to produce “works that befit repentance.” (Acts 26:20; Romans 2:4) The messages that Christ sent to the seven congregations in Asia Minor show that while he is long-suffering, he does expect progress.—Revelation, chapters 2 and 3.

A Fruit of the Spirit

⁷ In the 5th chapter of his letter to the Galatians, Paul contrasts works of the flesh with the fruitage of the spirit. (Galatians 5:19-23) Since long-suffering is one of Jehovah’s attributes, this quality originates with him and is a fruit of his spirit. (Exodus 34:6, 7) In-

6. How did Paul benefit from Jesus’ long-suffering, and what do we learn from this?
7. What is the relationship between long-suffering and holy spirit?

deed, long-suffering is listed fourth in Paul's description of the fruitage of the spirit, along with "love, joy, peace, . . . kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control." (Galatians 5: 22, 23) Therefore, when God's servants manifest godly patience, or long-suffering, they do so under the influence of the holy spirit.

⁸ This does not mean, however, that Jehovah imposes his spirit upon a person. We must willingly yield to its influence. (2 Corinthians 3:17; Ephesians 4:30) We allow the spirit to act in our lives by cultivating its fruits in all we do. After enumerating the works of the flesh and the fruitage of the spirit, Paul added: "If we are living by spirit, let us go on walking orderly also by spirit. Do not be misled: God is not one to be mocked. For whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap; because he who is sowing with a view to his flesh will reap corruption from his flesh, but he who is sowing with a view to the spirit will reap everlasting life from the spirit." (Galatians 5:25; 6:7, 8) If we are to be successful in cultivating long-suffering, we must also cultivate the rest of the fruitage produced in Christians by holy spirit.

"Love Is Long-Suffering"

⁹ Paul showed that a special relationship exists between love and long-suffering when he stated: "Love is long-suffering." (1 Corinthians 13:4) One Bible scholar, Albert Barnes, suggests that Paul emphasized this in view of the contention and strife that existed in the Christian congregation in Corinth. (1 Corinthians 1:11, 12) Barnes points out: "The word here used [for long-suffering] is opposed to *haste*: to passionate

8. What will enable us to cultivate the fruitage of the spirit, including long-suffering?

9. Why, possibly, did Paul tell the Corinthians that "love is long-suffering"?

expressions and thoughts, and to irritability. It denotes the state of mind which can BEAR LONG when oppressed, provoked." Love and long-suffering still contribute greatly to the peace of the Christian congregation.

¹⁰ "Love is long-suffering and kind. Love . . . does not look for its own interests, does not become provoked." Hence, in many ways, love helps us to be long-suffering.* (1 Corinthians 13:4, 5) Love enables us patiently to put up with one another and remember that we are all imperfect and have faults and failings. It helps us to be considerate and

* Commenting on Paul's statement that "Love is long-suffering and kind," Bible scholar Gordon D. Fee writes: "In Pauline theology they [long-suffering and kindness] represent the two sides of the divine attitude toward humankind (cf. Rom. 2:4). On the one hand, God's loving forbearance is demonstrated by his holding back his wrath toward human rebellion; on the other hand, his kindness is found in the thousandfold expressions of his mercy. Thus Paul's description of love begins with this twofold description of God, who through Christ has shown himself forbearing and kind toward those who deserve divine judgment."

10. (a) In what way does love help us to be long-suffering, and what counsel does the apostle Paul give in this regard? (b) What comment did a Bible scholar make on God's long-suffering and kindness? (See footnote.)

Even when under great pressure, Jesus was patient with his disciples





Christian overseers are urged to set a good example of long-suffering in dealing with their brothers

forgiving. The apostle Paul encourages us to walk “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.”—Ephesians 4:1-3.

¹¹ Long-suffering on the part of their members contributes to the peace and happiness of Christian communities, whether congregations, Bethel homes, missionary homes, construction teams, or schools. Because of differences in personality, tastes, upbringing, standards of politeness, even hygiene, trying situations can arise from time to time. This is also true of families. Being slow to anger is vital. (Proverbs 14:29; 15:18; 19:11) Long-suffering—patient endurance, in the hope of a change for the better—is needed on the part of all.—Romans 15:1-6.

11. Why is it particularly important to be long-suffering in Christian communities?

Long-Suffering Helps Us to Endure

¹² Long-suffering helps us to endure trying situations that seem endless or without any quick solution. This was true of Régis, mentioned at the outset. For years, his wife opposed his efforts to serve Jehovah. However, one day she came to him in tears and said: “I know it’s the truth. Help me. I want a Bible study.” She was eventually baptized as a Witness. Régis says: “This proved that Jehovah blessed those years of struggle, patience, and endurance.” His long-suffering was rewarded.

¹³ Back in the first century C.E., the apostle Paul was a fine example of long-suffering. (2 Corinthians 6:3-10; 1 Timothy 1:16) Toward the end of his life when he was giving counsel to his younger companion Timothy, Paul warned him that all Christians would face trials. Paul cited his own example and recommended basic Christian qualities that are necessary for endurance. He wrote: “You have closely followed my teaching, my course of life, my purpose, my faith, my long-suffering, my love, my endurance, my persecutions, my sufferings, the sort of things that happened to me in Antioch, in Iconium, in Lystra, the sort of persecutions I have borne; and yet out of them all the Lord delivered me. In fact, all those desiring to live with godly devotion in association with Christ Jesus will also be persecuted.” (2 Timothy 3:10-12; Acts 13:49-51; 14:19-22) In order to endure, we all need faith, love, and long-suffering.

Clothed With Long-Suffering

¹⁴ The apostle Paul likened long-suffering

12. Why is long-suffering important during trying circumstances?
13. What enabled Paul to endure, and how can his example help us to endure?
14. To what did Paul liken such godly qualities as long-suffering, and what counsel did he give to Colossian Christians?

and other godly qualities to garments that the Christian should put on after stripping off practices characteristic of "the old personality." (Colossians 3:5-10) He wrote: "As God's chosen ones, holy and loved, clothe yourselves with the tender affections of 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."—Colossians 3:12-14.

¹⁵ When members of a congregation 'clothe themselves' with compassion, kindness, lowliness of mind, mildness, long-suffering, and love, they are able to resolve problems and go forward unitedly in Jehovah's service. Christian overseers in particular need to be long-suffering. There may be times when they need to reprove another Christian, but there are different ways of doing this. Paul described the best attitude when he wrote to Timothy: "Reprove, reprimand, exhort, with all long-suffering and art of teaching." (2 Timothy 4:2) Yes, Jehovah's sheep should *always* be treated with long-suffering, dignity, and tenderness.—Matthew 7:12; 11:28; Acts 20:28, 29; Romans 12:10.

"Long-Suffering Toward All"

¹⁶ Jehovah's long-suffering toward mankind places us under a moral obligation to "be long-suffering toward all." (1 Thessalonians 5:14) This means being patient with non-Witness family members, neighbors, colleagues at work, classmates. Many preju-

15. What results when Christians 'clothe themselves' with long-suffering and other godly qualities?

16. What may result when we are "long-suffering toward all"?

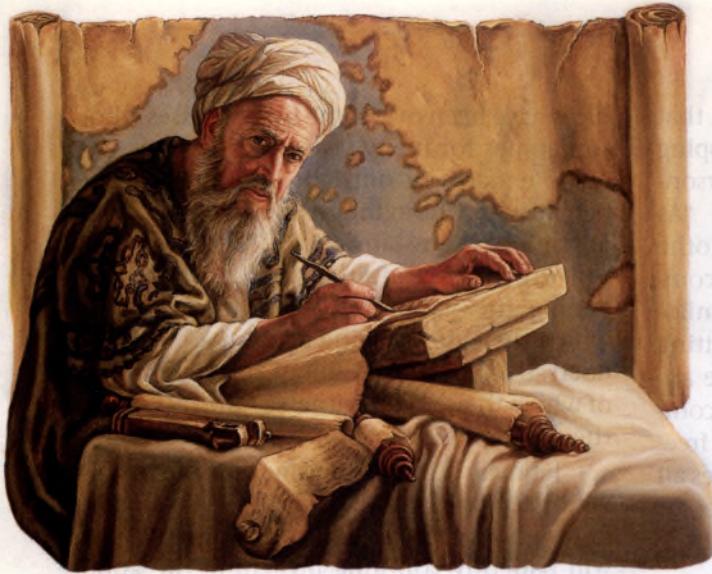
dices have been overcome by Witnesses who, sometimes for many years, put up with sarcastic remarks or outright opposition from people with whom they associated at work or at school. (Colossians 4:5, 6) The apostle Peter wrote: "Maintain your conduct fine among the nations, that, in the thing in which they are speaking against you as evildoers, they may as a result of your fine works of which they are eyewitnesses glorify God in the day for his inspection."—1 Peter 2:12.

¹⁷ Jehovah's long-suffering will mean salvation for millions. (2 Peter 3:9, 15) If we imitate Jehovah's love and long-suffering, we will patiently continue preaching the good news of God's Kingdom and teaching others to submit to Christ's Kingdom rule. (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 13:10) If we were to stop

17. How can we imitate Jehovah's love and long-suffering, and why should we do so?

If we imitate Jehovah's love and long-suffering, we will continue preaching the good news





Paul prayed that Christians "be long-suffering with joy"

preaching, it would be as if we wanted to limit Jehovah's long-suffering and failed to recognize its purpose, which is to bring people to repentance.—Romans 2:4.

¹⁸ In his letter to Christians in Colossae, Asia Minor, Paul wrote: "That is also why we, from the day we heard of it, have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the accurate knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual comprehension, in order to walk worthily of Jehovah to the end of fully pleasing him as you go on bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the accurate knowledge of God, being made powerful with all power to the extent of his glorious might so as to endure fully and be long-suffering with joy."—Colossians 1:9-11.

¹⁹ Jehovah's continued long-suffering, or patience, will not be a test to us if we are "filled with the accurate knowledge of his will," which is that "all sorts of men should

18. What was Paul's prayer for the Colossians?

19, 20. (a) How can we avoid viewing Jehovah's continued long-suffering as a test? (b) What benefits will come from our being long-suffering?

be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth." (1 Timothy 2:4) We will "go on bearing fruit in every good work," particularly that of preaching "this good news of the kingdom." (Matthew 24:14) If we faithfully continue to do this, Jehovah will make us "powerful with all power," enabling us "to endure fully and be long-suffering with joy." So doing, we will "walk worthily of Jehovah," and we will have the peace that comes from knowing that we are "fully pleasing him."

²⁰ May we be thoroughly convinced of the wisdom of Jehovah's long-suffering. It works for our salvation and for the salvation of those who listen to our preaching and teaching. (1 Timothy 4:16) Cultivating the fruitage of the spirit—love, kindness, goodness, mildness, and self-control—will enable us to be joyfully long-suffering. We will be better able to live at peace with members of our family as well as with our brothers and sisters within the congregation. Long-suffering will also help us to be patient with our workmates or schoolmates. And our long-suffering will have a purpose, that of saving wrongdoers and of glorifying the God of long-suffering, Jehovah.

Can You Explain?

- In what ways is Christ a wonderful example of long-suffering?
- What will help us to cultivate long-suffering?
- How does long-suffering help families, Christian communities, and elders?
- How will our being long-suffering bring benefits to ourselves and to others?



A RICH LIFE IN JEHOVAH'S SERVICE

AS TOLD BY
RUSSELL KURZEN

I came into the world on September 22, 1907,

seven years before the remarkable era that began with the outbreak of the first world war. Our family was rich in the most important way.

After you hear a few details of our history, I think you will agree.

AS a little girl, Grandmother Kurzen was already looking for the truth about God. Before she became a teenager, she visited several different churches in her picturesque hometown of Spiez, Switzerland. In 1887, some years after she was married, the Kurzen family joined the wave of immigrants reaching the shores of the United States.

The family settled in Ohio, where, about the year 1900, Grandmother located the treasure for which she had been searching. It was found within the pages of Charles Taze Russell's book *The Time Is at Hand*, in the German language. She quickly discerned that

what she read there contained the light of Bible truth. Though Grandmother could barely read English, she subscribed to the English *Watchtower* magazine. Thus she learned further Bible truths and, at the same time, the English language. Grandfather never took the same interest in spiritual matters that his wife did.

Of Grandmother Kurzen's 11 children, 2 of her sons, John and Adolph, appreciated the spiritual treasure she had found. John was my father, and he was baptized in 1904 at the St. Louis, Missouri, convention of the Bible Students, as Jehovah's Witnesses were



From left to right: my father with my brother, John, on his lap, Esther, me, and my mother

then known. Since most Bible Students were of modest means, the convention was scheduled at the same time as the World's Fair in St. Louis so that they could take advantage of special train fares. Later, in 1907, my uncle Adolph was baptized at a convention in Niagara Falls, New York. My father and my uncle zealously preached what they had learned from the Bible, and both eventually became full-time ministers (now called pioneers).

Hence, by the time I came along in 1907, my family was already wealthy, spiritually speaking. (Proverbs 10:22) I was just a baby in 1908 when my parents, John and Ida, took me to the "On to Victory" convention at Put-in-Bay, Ohio. There Joseph F. Rutherford, then a traveling minister, was the convention chairman. A few weeks earlier, he had been to Dalton, Ohio, where he visited our home and gave talks to the local Bible Students.

Of course, I do not personally remember those events, but I do remember the convention in Mountain Lake Park, Maryland, in 1911. There my younger sister, Esther, and I met Charles Taze Russell, who had oversight

of the worldwide preaching activities of the Bible Students.

On June 28, 1914, the day the world was plunged into war by the assassination in Sarajevo of Archduke Ferdinand and his wife, I attended with my family a peaceful convention in Columbus, Ohio. Since those early years, I've had the privilege of being at many conventions of Jehovah's people. Some were gatherings of only a hundred or so. Others were massive gatherings in some of the world's largest stadiums.

Our Home in a Strategic Place

From about 1908 to 1918, our home in Dalton—located midway between Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and Cleveland, Ohio—accommodated the meetings of a small congregation of Bible Students. Our home became a sort of hospitality center for many traveling speakers. They tied up their horses and buggies behind our barn and related exciting experiences and other spiritual gems to those assembled. What encouraging times those were!

Father was a schoolteacher, but his heart was in the greatest teaching work of all, the Christian ministry. He made sure to teach his family about Jehovah, and every evening we prayed together as a family. In the spring of 1919, Father sold our horse and buggy, and for \$175 he bought a 1914 Ford so that he could reach more people in the preaching work. In 1919 and 1922, that car carried our family to the noteworthy conventions of the Bible Students in Cedar Point, Ohio.

Our whole family—Mom; Dad; Esther; my younger brother, John; and I—all shared in the public preaching activity. I remember well the first time a householder asked me a Bible question. I was about seven years old. "Little boy, what is Armageddon?" the man asked. With a little help from my father, I was able to give him the Bible's answer.

Entering the Full-Time Ministry

In 1931 our family attended the Columbus, Ohio, convention, where we were thrilled to share in adopting the new name, Jehovah's Witnesses. John was so excited that he decided that he and I should enter the pioneer work.* We did, and so did Mother, Father, and Esther. What a treasure we had—a family united in the joyful work of preaching the good news of God's Kingdom! I never tire of thanking Jehovah for this blessing. As happy as we were, though, more joys awaited us.

In February of 1934, I began serving at the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses (called Bethel) in Brooklyn, New York. John joined me there a few weeks later. We roomed together until he married his dear wife, Jessie, in 1953.

After John and I went to Bethel, our parents accepted pioneer assignments in various parts of the country and Esther and her hus-

* I was baptized on March 8, 1932. So I was actually baptized after it was decided that I should pioneer.

band, George Read, accompanied them. Our parents continued pioneering until they finished their earthly course in 1963. Esther and her husband raised a fine family, and I am blessed with a number of nieces and nephews, whom I dearly love.

Work and Association at Bethel

John put his technical skills to work at Bethel and collaborated with other Bethelites on such projects as producing portable phonographs. Thousands of Jehovah's Witnesses used these in their house-to-house ministry. John also helped design and build machines for wrapping and labeling magazines that were mailed to individual subscribers.

I started my Bethel service in the book bindery. Working in the factory at that time were other young men who are still serving faithfully at Bethel. These include Carney Barber and Robert Hatzfeld. Among other such ones whom I remember fondly, but who have since died, are Nathan Knorr, Karl Klein, Lyman Swingle, Klaus Jensen, Grant Suiter, George Gangas, Orin Hibbard, John Sioras, Robert Payne, Charles Fekel, Benno Burczyk, and John Perry. They stayed on the job year after year, never complaining or expecting a "promotion." Still, for a number of these loyal, spirit-anointed Christians, greater responsibilities came as the organization grew. Some even served on the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Working with these self-sacrificing brothers taught me an important lesson. In secular jobs workers are paid a monetary salary for their labor. That is their reward. Serving at Bethel yields rich spiritual blessings, and only spiritual men and women appreciate such rewards.—1 Corinthians 2:6-16.

Nathan Knorr, who came to Bethel as a teenager in 1923, was the factory overseer in the 1930's. He walked through the factory every day and greeted each of the workers.

Those of us who were new at Bethel appreciated such personal interest. In 1936 we received a new printing press from Germany, and some of the young brothers had a hard time putting it together. So Brother Knorr put on a pair of overalls and worked with them for over a month till they got it running.

Brother Knorr was such a hard worker that most of us could not keep up with him. But he also knew how to enjoy recreation. Even after he had received oversight of the worldwide preaching activities of Jehovah's Witnesses in January 1942, he sometimes played baseball with members of the Bethel family and students of the Gilead missionary school at the campus near South Lansing, New York.

In April 1950, the Bethel family moved into the newly constructed ten-story section of our residence building located at 124 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, New York. The new dining room allowed all of us to be seated together for our meals. During the some three years of construction of this residence, we were not able to have our morning worship program. What a happy time it was when that program could be resumed! Brother Knorr assigned me to sit with him at the chairman's table so that I could help him remember the names of newer members of our family. For 50 years I sat in the same seat for morning worship and breakfast. Then, on August 4, 2000, that dining room was closed, and I was assigned to one of the renovated dining rooms in the former Towers Hotel.

For a while in the 1950's, I worked in the factory on a Linotype machine, preparing slugs of type that were assembled into pages as part of the process of making printing plates. That job was not one of my favorites, but William Peterson, who had charge of the machines, was so nice to me that I enjoyed my time there anyway. Then, in 1960, volunteers were needed to paint the newly con-

structed residence at 107 Columbia Heights. I was delighted to offer my services to help prepare these new facilities for our growing Bethel family.

Not long after the painting of the 107 Columbia Heights building was completed, I was pleasantly surprised to be assigned the job of welcoming visitors to Bethel. The last 40 years that I served as a receptionist were as wonderful as any I've spent at Bethel. Whether it was visitors or new members of the Bethel family who came through the doors, it was thrilling to reflect on the results of our collective efforts to work for Kingdom increase.

Keen Students of the Bible

Our Bethel family is spiritually prosperous because its members love the Bible. When I first came to Bethel, I asked Emma Hamilton, who worked as a proofreader, how many times she had read the Bible. "Thirty-five times," she replied, "and then I lost count." Anton Koerber, another stalwart Christian who served at Bethel about the same time, used to say: "Never have a Bible more than an arm's reach away."

Following Brother Russell's death in 1916, Joseph F. Rutherford took on the organizational responsibilities that Russell had shouldered. Rutherford was a powerful, accomplished public speaker, who as a lawyer argued cases on behalf of Jehovah's Witnesses before the Supreme Court of the United States. After Rutherford's death in 1942, Brother Knorr took his place and worked very hard to develop his skill in public speaking. Since I lived in a room near his, I often heard him practicing his talks over and over again. In time, through such diligent efforts, he became a fine public speaker.

In February 1942, Brother Knorr helped institute a program to assist all of us brothers at Bethel to improve our teaching and speaking



Teaching a Gilead class in 1945

Above right: Gilead School instructors Eduardo Keller, Fred Franz, me, and Albert Schroeder

ability. The school focused on Bible research and public speaking. In the beginning, each of us was assigned to give short talks about Bible characters. My first talk was about the man Moses. In 1943 a similar school was begun in the congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses, and it has continued to this day. The emphasis at Bethel is still on acquiring Bible knowledge and developing effective teaching methods.

In February 1943 the first class of the Gilead missionary school began. Now, the 111th class of Gilead has just graduated! In its more than 58 years of operation, the school has provided training for over 7,000 persons to serve as missionaries through-

out the world. Significantly, in 1943 when the school began, there were just over 100,000 of Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide. Now, there are more than 6,000,000 who share in preaching the good news of God's Kingdom!

Appreciating My Spiritual Heritage

Just prior to the establishment of Gilead, three of us from Bethel were assigned to visit congregations throughout the United States. We stayed for a day, a few days, or even a week in an effort to strengthen these congregations spiritually. We were called servants to the brethren, a designation later changed to circuit servant, or circuit overseer. Soon after Gilead School opened, however, I was asked to return to teach some courses. I served as a regular instructor for classes 2 through 5, and I also substituted for one of the regular instructors and taught the 14th class. Being able to review with the students the remarkable early events in the modern-day history of Jehovah's organization—many of which I could relate from personal experience—made



Reflecting on my rich life in Jehovah's service

me appreciate more fully my rich spiritual heritage.

Another privilege I have enjoyed through the years is that of attending international conventions of Jehovah's people. In 1963, I traveled around the world along with over 500 other delegates to the "Everlasting Good News" conventions. Other history-making conventions I attended were the ones held in Warsaw, Poland, in 1989; Berlin, Germany, in 1990; and Moscow, Russia, in 1993. At each convention, I had the opportunity to meet some of our dear brothers and sisters who endured decades of persecution under the Nazi regime, the Communist regime, or both. What faith-strengthening experiences those were!

My life in Jehovah's service has indeed been rich! The supply of spiritual blessings never ends. And, unlike material riches, the more we share these precious things, the more our wealth increases. I occasionally hear some say that they wish that they had not been raised as Jehovah's Witnesses. They say that they feel they would have appreciated Bible truths more if they had first experienced life outside God's organization.

It always disturbs me when I hear young ones say such things because they are really saying that it is best not to be brought up with a knowledge of Jehovah's ways. Yet, think of all the bad habits and corrupt thinking that people have to unlearn when they find Bible truth later in life. I have always been deeply grateful that my par-

ents raised their three children in the way of righteousness. John remained a faithful servant of Jehovah until his death in July 1980, and Esther to this day remains a faithful Witness.

I look back with deep fondness on the many fine friendships I've enjoyed with faithful Christian brothers and sisters. I have now had over 67 wonderful years at Bethel. Though I never married, I have many spiritual sons and daughters, as well as spiritual grandchildren. And I rejoice to think of all the dear new members of our worldwide spiritual family I've yet to meet, each one precious. How true are the words: "The blessing of Jehovah—that is what makes rich"! —Proverbs 10:22.

"Religious Tolerance Day"



INTRIGUED by a discussion she had had with Jehovah's Witnesses, the headmistress of a school in Poland set aside a "Religious Tolerance Day" for her school. She suggested that volunteers among the students—Catholics, Buddhists, and Jehovah's Witnesses—prepare short presentations to acquaint other students with their beliefs and practices. Three teenage Witnesses of Jehovah volunteered immediately.

When the day arrived, the first to speak was 15-year-old Malwina. In part, she stated: "Many of you knew us before we started attending this school because we had called on you in your homes. You probably wonder why we keep doing that. It is because we follow the example of Jesus Christ, the Founder of Christianity. He preached the good news of God's Kingdom wherever people could be found. The apostles and other early Christians did the same. In many places, Jehovah's

Witnesses endure difficult trials of faith, but we are happy that in our school we enjoy peace, to which all of you contribute. We thank you for that!"

At the conclusion of her presentation, Malwina stated: "There is another reason why we call at your home. We care about you. The Bible says that mankind will soon experience world-shaking events. So the next time we knock on your door, please take time to listen. We would like to tell you how we can live together forever in a paradise on earth."

The next speaker was Mateusz, also 15. Mateusz told his audience that over the years, Jehovah's Witnesses have used various methods to spread the good news. For example, in 1914—during the era of silent movies—the Witnesses were showing the "Photo-Drama of Creation," a motion picture and slide presentation that included synchronized sound.

Mateusz discussed the role of radio in spreading the Kingdom message and then described the unique computerized multi-language electronic phototypesetting system (MEPS) developed by Jehovah's Witnesses. He also related how Jehovah's Witnesses have helped to inform doctors about bloodless treatment techniques. "Now, eminent Polish physicians comment favorably on our stand and emphasize that each year more and more non-Witness patients are being operated on without blood," he said.

Mateusz concluded by telling about the construction of Kingdom Halls and said: "Would you like to visit ours? Admission is free, and there is no money collection." Speaking about the convention center in Sosnowiec, Mateusz said: "You should see this large and functional structure. Why don't we go there together? We have an idea, and our friend Katarzyna is going to tell you about it."

Next, 15-year-old Katarzyna said enthusiastically: "You are welcome to come to Sos-

Katarzyna choosing scriptures for the presentation



Malwina preparing the presentation a few days before giving it at school

wiec for the district convention of Jehovah's Witnesses. Subjects that concern young people will be discussed." Katarzyna also referred to the principal observance for Christians—the Memorial of Jesus Christ's death. She encouraged her listeners: "Last year over 14 million people worldwide attended that observance. Why don't you join us next time?"

After their presentations, Malwina, Mateusz, and Katarzyna presented the teachers with the book *Jehovah's Witnesses—Proclaimers of God's Kingdom* along with two videocassettes that discuss the beliefs and activities of Jehovah's Witnesses.* The teachers accepted them appreciatively and promised to use them in history classes.

At the end of the session, 12-year-old Martyna played for all assembled the song entitled "We Thank You, Jehovah." These young Witnesses 'mustered up boldness by means of their God' and gave a fine witness. (1 Thessalonians 2:2) What an excellent example for young Witnesses everywhere!

* Published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Jesus Saves—How?

Jehovah Is Our Refuge

Noah's Faith Condemns the World

"The Blessing of Jehovah—That Is What Makes Rich"

ALL of us want to be blessed. *The American Heritage College Dictionary* says that blessings promote "happiness, well-being, or prosperity." Since Jehovah is the Giver of "every good gift and every perfect present," every real, lasting blessing originates with our loving Creator. (James 1:17) He showers blessings upon all mankind, even upon those who do not know him. Jesus said of his Father: "He makes his sun rise upon wicked people and good and makes it rain upon righteous people and unrighteous." (Matthew 5:45) However, Jehovah shows special concern for those who love him.—Deuteronomy 28:1-14; Job 1:1; 42:12.

The psalmist wrote: "Jehovah himself will not hold back anything good from those walking in faultlessness." (Psalm 84:11) Yes, those who serve Jehovah have rich, meaningful lives. They know that "the blessing of Jehovah—that is what makes rich, and he adds no pain with it." The Bible also says: "Those being blessed by [Jehovah] will themselves possess the earth." (Proverbs 10:22; Psalm 37:22, 29) What a blessing that will be!

How can we receive Jehovah's blessing? For one thing, we need to cultivate qualities that are pleasing to him. (Deuteronomy 30:16, 19, 20; Micah 6:8) We see this in the example of three of Jehovah's servants in ancient times.

Jehovah Blesses His Servants

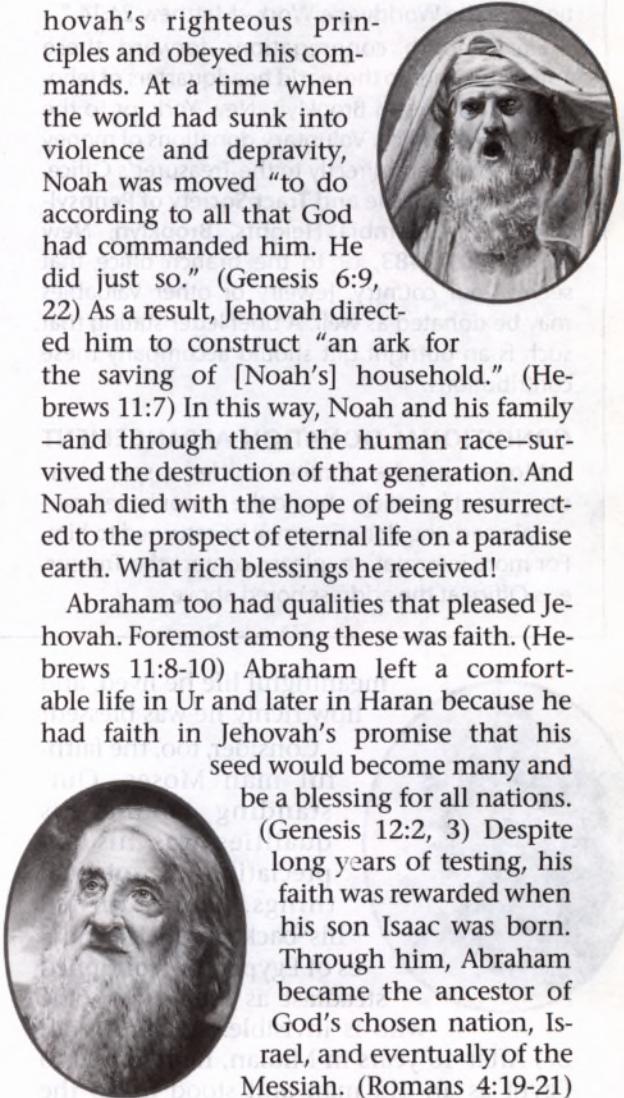
Noah was an outstanding servant of God. At Genesis 6:8, we read: "Noah found favor in the eyes of Jehovah." Why? Because Noah was obedient. The account says: "Noah walked with the true God." Noah upheld Je-

hovah's righteous principles and obeyed his commands. At a time when the world had sunk into violence and depravity, Noah was moved "to do according to all that God had commanded him. He did just so." (Genesis 6:9, 22) As a result, Jehovah directed him to construct "an ark for the saving of [Noah's] household." (Hebrews 11:7) In this way, Noah and his family—and through them the human race—survived the destruction of that generation. And Noah died with the hope of being resurrected to the prospect of eternal life on a paradise earth. What rich blessings he received!

Abraham too had qualities that pleased Jehovah. Foremost among these was faith. (Hebrews 11:8-10) Abraham left a comfortable life in Ur and later in Haran because he had faith in Jehovah's promise that his seed would become many and be a blessing for all nations.

(Genesis 12:2, 3) Despite long years of testing, his faith was rewarded when his son Isaac was born. Through him, Abraham became the ancestor of God's chosen nation, Israel, and eventually of the Messiah. (Romans 4:19-21)

Moreover, he is "the father of all those having faith," and he came to be called "Jehovah's friend." (Romans 4:11; James 2:23; Galatians 3:7, 29) What a



Ways in Which Some Choose to Give

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE WORLDWIDE WORK

Many set aside, or budget, an amount that they place in the contribution boxes labeled "Contributions for the Worldwide Work—Matthew 24:14."

Each month congregations forward these amounts either to the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in Brooklyn, New York, or to the local branch office. Voluntary donations of money may also be sent directly to the Treasurer's Office, **Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, New York 11201-2483**, or to the branch office that serves your country. Jewelry or other valuables may be donated as well. A brief letter stating that such is an outright gift should accompany these contributions.

CONDITIONAL-DONATION ARRANGEMENT

Money may be donated under a special arrangement in which, should the donor have a personal need, the donation may be returned to him. For more information, please contact the Treasurer's Office at the address noted above.

CHARITABLE PLANNING

In addition to outright gifts of money and conditional donations of money, there are other methods of giving to benefit Kingdom service worldwide. These include:

Insurance: The Watch Tower Society may be named as the beneficiary of a life insurance policy or in a retirement/pension plan.

Bank Accounts: Bank accounts, certificates of deposit, or individual retirement accounts may be placed *in trust for* or made *payable on death to* the Watch Tower Society, in accord with local bank requirements.

Stocks and Bonds: Stocks and bonds may be donated to the Watch Tower Society as an outright gift.

Real Estate: Salable real estate may be donated to the Watch Tower Society either by making an outright gift or by reserving a life estate to the donor, who can continue to live therein during his or her lifetime. Contact the branch of-

meaningful life he lived, and how richly he was blessed!

Consider, too, the faithful man Moses. Outstanding among his qualities was his appreciation of spiritual things. Moses turned his back on all the riches of Egypt and "continued steadfast as seeing the One who is invisible." (Hebrews 11:27) After 40 years in Midian, he returned to Egypt as an old man and stood up to the greatest power of the time, Pharaoh, to demand freedom for his brothers. (Exodus 7:1-7) He saw the ten plagues, the parting of the Red Sea, and the destruction of Pharaoh's



armies. Jehovah used him to give the Law to Israel and to mediate His covenant with the new nation. For 40 years, Moses led the nation of Israel in the wilderness. His life had a real purpose, and he enjoyed wonderfully rich blessings of service.

Present-Day Blessings

These accounts demonstrate that the lives of those who serve God are truly meaningful. As Jehovah's people develop such qualities as obedience, faith, and appreciation of spiritual things, they are richly blessed.

How are we blessed? Well, while millions within Christendom suffer from spiritual famine, we can be "radiant over the goodness of Jehovah." (Jeremiah 31:12) Through Jesus Christ and "the faithful and discreet slave,"

fice in your country before deeding any real estate.

Gift Annuity: A gift annuity is an arrangement whereby one transfers money or securities to the Watchtower Society. In exchange, the donor, or the individuals designated by the donor, receives a specified annuity payment every year for life. The donor receives an income-tax deduction the year the gift annuity is established.

Wills and Trusts: Property or money may be bequeathed to the Watch Tower Society by means of a legally executed will, or the Watch Tower Society may be named as a beneficiary of a trust agreement. A trust benefiting a religious organization may provide certain tax advantages.

As the term "charitable planning" implies, these types of donations typically require some planning on the part of the donor. To assist individuals desiring to benefit the worldwide work of Jehovah's Witnesses through some form of charitable planning, a brochure has been prepared in English and Spanish entitled *Charitable Planning to Benefit Kingdom Service Worldwide*. The brochure was written in response to the many inquiries received regarding gifts, wills, and trusts. It also contains additional useful information on es-

tate, financial, and tax planning. And it is designed to help individuals in the United States who are planning to make a special gift now or to leave a bequest at death to select the most advantageous and efficient method in the light of their family and personal circumstances. This brochure may be obtained by requesting a copy directly from the Charitable Planning Office.

After reading the brochure and conferring with the Charitable Planning Office, many have been able to assist Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide and at the same time, maximize the tax benefits of doing so. The Charitable Planning Office should be informed of and receive a copy of any relevant document pertaining to any of these arrangements. If you are interested in any of these charitable planning arrangements, you should contact the Charitable Planning Office, either in writing or by telephone, at the address listed below or at the office of Jehovah's Witnesses that serves your country.

CHARITABLE PLANNING OFFICE

Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society
of Pennsylvania

100 Watchtower Drive,
Patterson, New York 12563-9204
Telephone: (845) 306-0707

Jehovah has provided a bountiful supply of spiritual food that helps us to remain on "the road leading off into life." (Matthew 7:13, 14; 24:45; John 17:3) Association with our Christian brotherhood is another rich blessing. At meetings and on other occasions, being with fellow worshipers who demonstrate love and who earnestly endeavor to put on "the new personality" is a source of great happiness. (Colossians 3:8-10; Psalm 133:1) However, our greatest blessing is the precious privilege of having a personal relationship with Jehovah God and of following in the footsteps of his Son, Christ Jesus.—Romans 5:1, 8; Philippians 3:8.

Reflecting on such blessings, we realize how precious our service to God really is. Perhaps we think of Jesus' parable of a traveling

merchant who sought out fine pearls. Jesus said of this man: "Upon finding one pearl of high value, away he went and promptly sold all the things he had and bought it." (Matthew 13:46) Surely that is how we feel about our relationship with God, our privilege of serving him, our Christian association, our Christian hope, and all the other blessings related to our faith. There is nothing more precious in our lives.

Give Back to Jehovah

Because we recognize Jehovah as the Giver of every good gift, our hearts are stirred to express appreciation for the blessings we receive. How can we do that? One way is by helping others to enjoy these same blessings. (Matthew 28:19) In over 230 lands, Jehovah's

Witnesses are busy visiting their neighbors to do just that. As they do so, they expend their limited personal resources—time, energy, and material possessions—to assist others to “come to an accurate knowledge of truth.”—1 Timothy 2:4.

Consider the pioneers living in Glendale, California, U.S.A. Every Saturday morning, they travel about 65 miles round-trip to visit a federal detention center. Even though they can spend no more than a few hours on each visit with the prisoners, they are not discouraged. One of them says: “It is so rewarding to serve in this unique territory. We are doing it with much joy. We have so many interested ones that it is hard to keep up. Presently, we are studying with five people, and four others have requested a Bible study.”

Zealous Christian ministers are happy to offer their services free of charge to perform this lifesaving work. They reflect the attitude of Jesus, who said: “You received free, give free.” (Matthew 10:8) Millions around the world are engaged in similar unselfish service, and as a result, crowds of honesthearted ones are responding and are becoming disciples. In the last five years alone, nearly 1.7 million have dedicated their lives to Jehovah. Caring for the needs of this ongoing expansion requires the production of Bibles and Bible-based publications as well as the building of new Kingdom Halls and other meeting places. Where does the money to supply these needs come from? Entirely from voluntary donations.

Because of the poor economic conditions in some parts of the world, many struggle to provide the bare necessities of life for their families. According to the magazine *New Scientist*, one billion people spend at least 70 percent of their household income on food. Many of our Christian brothers and sisters are in that situation. Without help from fellow believers, they simply could not afford

such things as Christian publications or suitable Kingdom Halls.

Of course, that does not mean that such ones are content to let others carry their load. But they need assistance. Moses, when encouraging the Israelites to make material contributions as a way of thanking Jehovah for their blessings, said: “The gift of each one’s hand should be in proportion to the blessing of Jehovah your God that he has given you.” (Deuteronomy 16:17) Hence, when Jesus saw a widow contribute “two small coins of very little value” in the temple, he praised her to his disciples. She did what she could. (Luke 21:2, 3) Similarly, Christians in poorer circumstances do what they can. And if there is a deficiency, it can be supplied by contributions from fellow Christians who are not so materially poor.—2 Corinthians 8:13-15.

When we give back to God in such ways, it is important that we have the right motive. (2 Corinthians 8:12) Paul said: “Let each one do just as he has resolved in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” (2 Corinthians 9:7) By giving freely from the heart, we both support the theocratic expansion that is now taking place and increase our own joy.—Acts 20:35.

Sharing in the preaching work and making voluntary contributions are two ways that we can give to Jehovah in return for the blessings he has given us. And how encouraging it is to know that Jehovah wishes to bestow his blessing upon many more sincere ones, who presently may not know him! (2 Peter 3:9) Let us, therefore, continue to use our resources in God’s service so as to find honesthearted ones and assist them to develop such qualities as obedience, faith, and appreciation. That way, we will have the joy of helping them to “taste and see that Jehovah is good.”—Psalm 34:8.

Questions From Readers

Did Jehovah make his covenant with Abraham in Ur or in Haran?

The earliest account of Jehovah's covenant with Abraham is found at Genesis 12:1-3, which says: "Jehovah proceeded to say to Abram: 'Go your way out of your country and from your relatives and from the house of your father to the country that I shall show you; and I shall make a great nation out of you . . . And all the families of the ground will certainly bless themselves by means of you.'"* Jehovah may well have made this covenant with Abraham while the latter was in Ur and reaffirmed it when Abraham was in Haran.

In the first century, Stephen referred to Jehovah's command that Abraham should move to Canaan. Addressing the Sanhedrin, he said: "The God of glory appeared to our forefather Abraham while he was in Mesopotamia, before he took up residence in Haran, and he said to him, 'Go out from your land and from your relatives and come on into the land I shall show you.'" (Acts 7:2, 3) Abraham was originally from Ur, and as Stephen indicated, that was where he first heard the command to go to Canaan. (Genesis 15:7; Nehemiah 9:7) Stephen did not mention God's covenant with Abraham, but at Genesis 12:1-3, that covenant is linked to the command to go to Canaan. So it is reasonable to believe that Jehovah made the covenant with Abraham in Ur.

However, a careful reading of the Genesis account suggests that Jehovah restated his covenant to Abraham in Haran, just as he repeated and enlarged on aspects of it on a number of occasions in Canaan. (Genesis 15:5; 17:1-5; 18:18; 22:16-18) According to Genesis 11:31, 32, Abraham's father, Terah, left Ur for Canaan, accompanied by Abraham, Sarah, and Lot. They came to Haran and stayed there until Terah's death.

* Jehovah changed Abram's name to Abraham in Canaan when Abraham was 99 years old.—Genesis 17:1, 5.

Abraham was in Haran long enough to acquire considerable wealth. (Genesis 12:5) And at some point, Nahor, Abraham's brother, also moved there.

After recording Terah's death, the Bible reports Jehovah's words to Abraham and continues: "At that Abram went just as Jehovah had spoken to him." (Genesis 12:4) Hence, Genesis 11:31-12:4 gives the strong impression that Jehovah spoke the words recorded at Genesis 12:1-3 after Terah's death. If that is so, Abraham left Haran and moved to the land that Jehovah indicated in response to a command he had just heard, as well as the one he had heard years earlier in Ur.

According to Genesis 12:1, Jehovah commanded Abraham: "Go your way out of your country and from your relatives and from the house of your father." At one time Abraham's "country" was Ur, and his father's "house" was there. However, Abraham's father moved his household to Haran, and Abraham came to call that place his land. When, after many years in Canaan, he sent his steward to 'his country and his relatives' to find a wife for Isaac, the steward went to "the city of Nahor" (either Haran or somewhere nearby). (Genesis 24:4, 10) There the steward found Rebekah among Abraham's relatives, the large family of Nahor.—Genesis 22:20-24; 24:15, 24, 29; 27:42, 43.

In his speech to the Sanhedrin, Stephen said of Abraham: "After his father died, God caused him to change his residence to this land in which you now dwell." (Acts 7:4) This indicates that Jehovah communicated with Abraham in Haran. It is reasonable to believe that on that occasion Jehovah reiterated his covenant with Abraham as reported at Genesis 12:1-3, since the covenant went into effect when Abraham moved into Canaan. Thus, a consideration of all the facts leads to the conclusion that Jehovah may well have made his covenant with Abraham in Ur and reaffirmed it in Haran.



Destroyers of Trees

In Bible times, trees were regarded as valuable commodities. For example, when Abraham purchased a burial place for his beloved wife, Sarah, trees were listed in the contract for the transfer of property.—Genesis 23:15-18.

Likewise today, trees are highly valued, and much international attention is focused on the preservation of forests. The book *State of the World 1998* says: "While many people in northern countries look at tropical forests with concern, they may be unaware that the temperate forests in their own backyards are the most fragmented and disturbed of all forest types." What threatens the health of forests in those northern countries of Europe and North America? Many people point to deforestation, but there are other forces that subtly destroy trees, leaf by leaf or needle by needle, so to speak. What are they? Air pollution and acid rain. These pollutants can slowly weaken trees, making them vulnerable to pests and disease.

For decades, environmentalists and other concerned citizens have warned of the need to protect the earth's ecosystem. In the 1980's, after scientists in Germany studied the effects of air pollution and acid rain on the environment, they concluded: 'If nothing is done, about the year 2000, people will be left to admire forests only in old photos and in movies.' Happily, the earth's regenerative power is such that so far it has withstood much of the foretold damage.

In the long term, though, it is God who will do most to preserve our ecosystem. "He is watering the mountains from his upper chambers" and "making green grass sprout for the beasts, and vegetation for the service of mankind." And he has promised "to bring to ruin those ruining the earth." (Psalm 104: 13, 14; Revelation 11:18) How wonderful it will be when the earth's inhabitants will be able to enjoy a pollution-free world forever! —Psalm 37:9-11.