

# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



## STUDY ARTICLES

APRIL 29–MAY 5

### For Those Loving Jehovah, “There Is No Stumbling Block”

PAGE 3 • SONGS: 45, 32

MAY 6-12

### Do You Have “a Heart to Know” Jehovah?

PAGE 8 • SONGS: 62, 60

MAY 13-19

### Having “Come to Know God” —What Now?

PAGE 13 • SONGS: 81, 135

MAY 20-26

### Jehovah—Our Place of Dwelling

PAGE 19 • SONGS: 51, 95

MAY 27–JUNE 2

### Honor Jehovah’s Great Name

PAGE 24 • SONGS: 27, 101





## FINLAND

**COVER:** Finland has a long coastline dotted with many islands. There are also thousands of lakes, especially in central and eastern Finland. Some publishers who go to serve temporarily where the need is greater may use boats in their witnessing

POPULATION:

**5,375,276**

RATIO:

**1** Witness to  
**283** of the population

REGULAR PIONEERS:

**1,824**

## ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

18 Be Comforted—Comfort Others

29 Did Josephus Really Write It?

30 Never Give Up Hope!

## STUDY ARTICLES

### ■ For Those Loving Jehovah, “There Is No Stumbling Block”

All Christians are in a race for the prize of everlasting life. But because of inherited sin, we all stumble. This article will help us identify five stumbling blocks and will explain how to prevent them from hindering us from winning.

### ■ Do You Have “a Heart to Know” Jehovah?

The book of Jeremiah has much to tell us about the heart. This article will help us to see what an ‘uncircumcised heart’ is and how such may be a danger even for Christians. Also, how can we have “a heart to know” Jehovah?—Jer. 9:26; 24:7.

### ■ Having “Come to Know God”—What Now?

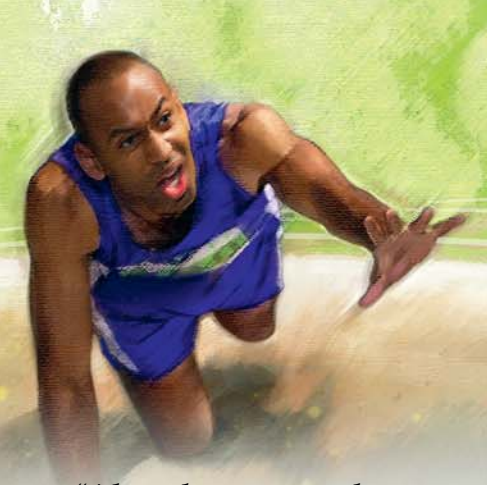
What steps are involved in coming to know God and being known by him? How and why does growth as a Christian continue after a person reaches spiritual maturity? This article will help you answer these questions.

### ■ Jehovah—Our Place of Dwelling

We live in a spiritually hostile world, yet we need not fear. This article shows how we have the most secure dwelling possible—Jehovah our God.

### ■ Honor Jehovah’s Great Name

What does it mean to be one of God’s name people? What does it mean to walk in that name? And how does God view those who disrespect his name? This article provides answers.



## FOR THOSE LOVING JEHOVAH, “THERE IS NO STUMBLING BLOCK”

*“Abundant peace belongs to those loving your law, and for them there is no stumbling block.”*

—PS. 119:165.

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### HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

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How are Christians in a race, and what is the prize?

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What stones could stumble a Christian?

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In what sense is there no stumbling block for those loving Jehovah’s law?

FROM her early teens, Mary Decker was renowned as a world-class runner. She was the favorite to win the gold medal in the 3,000-meter final at the 1984 Summer Olympics. However, her track shoes never crossed the finish line. She tripped on the leg of another runner and fell headlong off the course. Injured and in tears, she had to be carried off the track. Mary was no quitter, though. In less than a year, she was back in racing form and set a new world record for the women’s mile in 1985.

<sup>2</sup> As Christians, we are in a race—a symbolic foot-race. Our focus must be on running to win. Our race is not a sprint in which speed is the key to victory. And it definitely is not a mere jog with frequent idle moments. Rather, it can be likened to a marathon wherein endurance is necessary for victory. The apostle Paul used the metaphor of a runner in a race in his letter to Christians living in Corinth, a city renowned for athletic contests. He wrote: “Do you not know that the runners in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may attain it.”—1 Cor. 9:24.

<sup>3</sup> The Bible tells us to run in this figurative race. **(Read 1 Corinthians 9:25-27.)** The prize is everlasting life, either in heaven for anointed Christians or on earth for the rest of the participants. Unlike most athletic contests, this race allows for all who enter and who endure to the end to win the prize.

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1. How can the attitude of a certain runner illustrate our determination not to give up?
  2. In what sense are true Christians in a race, and on what must our focus be?
  3. How is it that all runners can win the race for everlasting life?





If you happen to fall,  
accept help and get up!

(Matt. 24:13) Contestants lose only if they fail to run according to the rules or do not cross the finish line. Furthermore, this is the only race that offers the prize of everlasting life.

<sup>4</sup> Crossing the finish line is not easy. It takes discipline and certainty of purpose. Only one person—Jesus Christ—has ever been able to cross the finish line without stumbling even once. But his disciple James wrote that followers of Christ “all stumble many times.” (Jas. 3:2) How true! All of us are subject to our own imperfections and those of others. So at times we may trip, then stagger and lose our momentum. We may even fall; but we get up and continue running. Some have fallen so hard that they had to be helped to get up and resume the race toward the finish line. Thus, it is possible that we could, momentarily or even repeatedly, stumble or fall down.—1 Ki. 8:46.

4. What makes our race to gain everlasting life challenging?

#### IF YOU STUMBLE, STAY IN THE RACE

<sup>5</sup> Perhaps you have used the words “stumble” and “fall” interchangeably to describe a spiritual condition. These Bible expressions can, but do not always, have the same sense. For instance, notice the wording of Proverbs 24:16: “The righteous one may fall even seven times, and he will certainly get up; but the wicked ones will be made to stumble by calamity.”

<sup>6</sup> Jehovah will not allow those trusting in him to stumble or to experience a fall—an adversity or a setback in their worship—from which they *cannot* recover. We are assured that Jehovah will help us “get up” so that we can continue giving him our utmost devotion. How comforting that is for all who love Jehovah deeply from the heart! The wicked do not have the same desire to get up. They do not seek the help of God’s

5, 6. (a) How is there “no stumbling block” for a Christian, and what will help him to “get up”? (b) Why do some not recover after stumbling?

holy spirit and his people, or they refuse such help when offered to them. In contrast, for those 'loving Jehovah's law,' no stumbling block exists that can permanently knock them out of the race for life.—*Read Psalm 119:165.*

<sup>7</sup> Some lapse into *minor* sin—even repeatedly—because of some weakness. But they are still righteous in Jehovah's eyes if they continue to "get up," that is, sincerely repent and strive to resume a course of loyal service. We can see that from the way God dealt with ancient Israel. (Isa. 41:9, 10) Proverbs 24:16, quoted earlier, rather than emphasizing the negative—our 'falling'—focuses on the positive, our 'getting up' with the help of our merciful God. (*Read Isaiah 55:7.*) Expressing their confidence in us, Jehovah God and Jesus Christ kindly encourage us to "get up."—Ps. 86:5; John 5:19.

<sup>8</sup> Even if a runner stumbles or falls in a marathon, he may have time to recover and finish the course if he acts with urgency. In our race for everlasting life, we do not know the "day and hour" when the end of the race will come. (Matt. 24:36) Still, the less we stumble, the more likely we are to keep a steady pace, stay in the race, and finish it successfully. So how can we avoid stumbling?

### **STUMBLING THAT IMPEDES PROGRESS**

<sup>9</sup> Let us consider five potential stumbling blocks—personal weaknesses, desires of the flesh, injustices on the part of fellow believers, tribulation or persecution, and the imperfections of others. Remember, though, if we have stumbled, Jehovah is very patient. He is not quick to label us as being disloyal.

**7, 8.** How can one "fall" and yet have God's favor?

**9.** What potential stumbling blocks will we discuss?

<sup>10</sup> *Personal weaknesses* may be likened to loose stones lying on a race-track. Looking at events in the lives of King David and the apostle Peter, we can note two such weaknesses—lack of self-control and fear of man.

<sup>11</sup> King David manifested a weakness as to exercising self-control, as was evidenced in his actions involving Bathsheba. And when faced with the insults of Nabal, David was about to react rashly. Yes, his self-control faltered, but he never gave up trying to please Jehovah. With the help of others, he was able to regain his spiritual balance.—1 Sam. 25:5-13, 32, 33; 2 Sam. 12:1-13.

<sup>12</sup> Peter manifested fear of man, stumbling badly at times; yet, he remained loyal to Jesus and Jehovah. For example, he publicly denied his Master, not just once, but three times. (Luke 22:54-62) Later, Peter failed to act in a Christian manner, treating Gentile believers as if they were somehow not as good as circumcised Jewish Christians. The apostle Paul, however, saw the matter clearly—there was no room for class distinctions in the congregation. Peter's attitude was wrong. Before Peter's conduct could sour the brotherhood, Paul acted by counseling Peter directly, face-to-face. (Gal. 2:11-14) Was Peter's pride so wounded that he quit the race for life? No. He seriously considered Paul's counsel, applied it, and kept on in the race.

<sup>13</sup> Sometimes a personal weakness is a health issue. This too can loom as a stumbling block. It may interfere with

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**10, 11.** With what personal weakness did David struggle?

**12.** How did Peter stay in the race despite stumbling?

**13.** How may physical weakness cause stumbling?

our spiritual pace and even cause us to stagger and tire out. For example, a Japanese sister suffered a health crisis 17 years after her baptism. She became preoccupied with her health to the point of becoming spiritually weak. In time, she became inactive. Two elders visited her. Encouraged by their kind words, she began attending meetings again. She reflects, "I was moved to tears because the brothers greeted me so warmly." Our sister is now back in the race.

<sup>14</sup> The *desires of the flesh* have stumbled many. When tempted in this way, we need to take strong action to keep mentally, morally, and spiritually clean. Recall Jesus' counsel to 'throw away' in the figurative sense anything that might stumble us, even our eye or our hand. Would that not include immoral thinking and actions that have caused some to drop out of the race?—*Read Matthew 5:29, 30.*

<sup>15</sup> One brother who was raised in a Christian household wrote that for as long as he could remember, he struggled with homosexual tendencies. He said: "I always felt awkward. It seemed that I didn't fit in anywhere." By age 20, he had become a regular pioneer and was a ministerial servant in the congregation. Then he stumbled badly, was Scripturally disciplined, and received help from the elders. By praying, studying God's Word, and focusing on helping others, he picked himself up and resumed his spiritual pace. Years later, he admits: "At times I still have those feelings, but I don't let them overtake me. I have learned that Jehovah will not let you be tempted beyond what you can handle. So I believe that God thinks I

can make it." This brother concludes: "All the struggles I have endured will pay off in the new world. I want that! Until then, I will continue to fight." He is determined to stay in the race.

<sup>16</sup> *Injustices on the part of fellow believers* can be stumbling blocks. In France, a former elder believed that he had been the victim of an injustice, and he became bitter. As a result, he stopped associating with the congregation and became inactive. Two elders visited him and listened sympathetically, without interrupting while he related his story, as he perceived it. They encouraged him to throw his burden on Jehovah and stressed that the most important thing was to please God. He responded well and soon was back in the race, active in congregation matters again.

<sup>17</sup> All Christians need to keep focused on the appointed Head of the congregation, Jesus Christ, not on imperfect humans. Jesus, whose eyes are "as a fiery flame," views everything in proper perspective and thus sees much more than we ever could. (Rev. 1:13-16) For example, he recognizes that what seems to be an injustice to us may be a misinterpretation or a misunderstanding on our part. Jesus will handle congregation needs perfectly and at the right time. Thus, we should not allow the actions or decisions of any fellow Christian to become stumbling blocks to us.

<sup>18</sup> Two other stumbling blocks are *tribulation or persecution* and the *imperfections of others in the congregation*. In his parable of the sower, Jesus said that

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**14, 15.** What strong action is needed when wrong desires arise? Illustrate.

**16, 17.** (a) What helped one brother who felt that he had suffered an injustice? (b) To avoid stumbling, on what do we need to be focused?

**18.** How can we withstand trials or troubling situations?

“tribulation or persecution” on account of the word would cause some individuals to stumble. Whatever the source of that persecution—family, neighbors, or governmental authorities—it may particularly affect one who “has no root in himself,” who lacks spiritual depth. (Matt. 13:21) However, if we maintain an upright heart condition, the Kingdom seed will help us develop deep stabilizing roots to our faith. When beset with trials, endeavor to meditate prayerfully on praiseworthy things. **(Read *Philippians* 4:6-9.)** In Jehovah’s strength, we will withstand trials, not allowing troubling situations to be stumbling blocks.

<sup>19</sup> Sadly, over the years some have let the imperfections of others knock them out of the race. Differences in viewpoints in matters of conscience have become stumbling blocks for them. (1 Cor. 8:12, 13) If someone offends us, will we allow this to become a major issue? The Bible admonishes Christians to stop judging, to forgive others, and to avoid insisting on personal rights. (Luke 6:37) When you face a possible stumbling stone, ask yourself: ‘Am I judging others based on my own preferences? Knowing that my brothers are imperfect, will I let someone’s lack of perfection take me out of the race for life?’ Love for Jehovah can help us be resolved not to allow anything another human does hinder us from crossing the finish line.

### RUN WITH ENDURANCE —AVOID STUMBLING

<sup>20</sup> Are you determined to “run the course to the finish”? (2 Tim. 4:7, 8) Then

**19.** How can we prevent an offense from becoming a stumbling block?

**20, 21.** What are you determined to do in the race for life?



Allow nothing to stop you from completing the race!

personal study is a must. Use the Bible and our theocratic publications to help you do research, meditate, and identify potential stumbling blocks. Beg for holy spirit to give you the spiritual stamina you need. Remember, no runner is doomed to fail in the race for life just because he stumbles or falls on occasion. He can get up and get back into the race. He may even use potential stumbling stones as stepping stones, learning valuable lessons from any challenge to his faith.

<sup>21</sup> The Bible describes participation in the race for everlasting life as active, not passive. It is not like getting on a bus that simply carries those on board to victory. We must *run* the race for life ourselves. As we do, “abundant peace” from Jehovah will be like wind at our back. (Ps. 119:165) We can be confident of his continued blessings now and unending blessings to come for all who finish the race.—Jas. 1:12.





## DO YOU HAVE “A HEART TO KNOW” JEHOVAH?

*“I will give them a heart to know me, that I am Jehovah; and they must become my people.”—JER. 24:7.*

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### HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

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How were many Jews in Jeremiah’s day “uncircumcised in heart”?

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Why should all of us examine our figurative heart?

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How can we have “a heart to know” Jehovah?

DO YOU enjoy eating figs, either fresh or dried? Many do, so edible figs are cultivated widely. Ancient Jews valued the fruit of fig trees. (Nah. 3:12; Luke 13: 6-9) Figs contain fiber, antioxidants, and minerals; hence, some say that they are good for the heart.

<sup>2</sup> Jehovah once linked figs to hearts. God was not describing the nutritional benefit of eating figs. He was speaking figuratively. What he said through the prophet Jeremiah has implications for your heart and the hearts of your loved ones. As we consider what he said, think about what this can mean for Christians.

<sup>3</sup> Let us first consider something God said in Jeremiah’s day about figs. In 617 B.C.E., the nation of Judah was in a bad spiritual state. God gave a vision about what the future held, illustrating it with two types of figs—“very good” figs and “very bad” ones. (*Read Jeremiah 24:1-3.*) The bad figs meant King Zedekiah and others like him who faced severe treatment by King Nebuchadnezzar and his troops. But what of Ezekiel, Daniel and his three companions already in Babylon, and some Jews soon to be taken there? They were like good figs. A remnant of them would return to rebuild Jerusalem and its temple. In time, that did occur.—Jer. 24:8-10; 25:11, 12; 29:10.

<sup>4</sup> Jehovah said of those represented by the good figs: “I will give them a heart to know me, that I am Jehovah; and they must become my people.” (Jer. 24:7) That is the theme text of this article, and how encouraging it is! God is willing to give individuals

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- 1, 2. Why might some be interested in figs?
  3. What did the figs spoken of in Jeremiah chapter 24 stand for?
  4. What encouragement can we draw from what God said about the good figs?



“a heart to know” him. In this case, the “heart” relates to one’s disposition. Certainly, you want to have such a heart and to be part of his people. Steps to that end include studying and applying his Word, repenting and turning around, dedicating your life to God, and being baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and holy spirit. (Matt. 28:19, 20; Acts 3:19) You may already have taken those steps, or you may be regularly associating with Jehovah’s Witnesses and be in the process of doing so.

<sup>5</sup> Whether we have taken some or all of those steps, we still need to give attention to our attitude and conduct. You can see why from what else Jeremiah wrote about the heart. Some chapters of the book of Jeremiah dealt with nations round about, yet its main focus was the nation of Judah during the reigns of five of its kings. (Jer. 1:15, 16) Yes, Jeremiah principally wrote about men, women, and children who were in a dedicated relationship with Jehovah. Their ancestors had voluntarily chosen to be a nation in that relationship. (Ex. 19:3-8) And in Jeremiah’s day, the people confirmed being dedicated to God. They said: “We have come to you, for you, O Jehovah, are our God.” (Jer. 3:22) However, what do you think the condition of their heart was?

### FIGURATIVE HEART SURGERY NEEDED?

<sup>6</sup> Modern physicians can use advanced technology to see what the condition of a heart is and how it is functioning. Jehovah, though, can do much more, as he did in Jeremiah’s day. God is outstandingly qualified, as we see from his words: “The heart is more treacher-

ous than anything else and is desperate. Who can know it? I, Jehovah, am searching the heart, . . . to give to each one according to his ways, according to the fruitage of his dealings.” (Jer. 17:9, 10) “Searching the heart” involves no medical exam of the literal heart, which in 70 or 80 years might beat some three billion times. Rather, Jehovah was speaking of the figurative heart. That “heart” refers to a person’s entire inner self, encompassing his desires, thoughts, disposition, attitudes, and goals. You have such a heart. God can examine it, and to a degree, you can do so too.

<sup>7</sup> To prepare for this examination, we might ask, ‘What was the condition of the figurative heart of most Jews in Jeremiah’s time?’ To answer, consider an unusual phrase that Jeremiah used: “All the house of Israel are *uncircumcised in heart*.” He was not referring to normal circumcision of Jewish males, for he had said: “‘Look! Days are coming,’ is the utterance of Jehovah, ‘and I will hold an accounting with everyone *circumcised but still in uncircumcision*.’” Thus even circumcised Jewish men were “uncircumcised in heart.” (Jer. 9:25, 26) What did this mean?

<sup>8</sup> We find a clue as to the meaning of “uncircumcised in heart” in what God urged the Jews to do: “Take away the foreskins of your hearts, you men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem; that my rage may not go forth . . . *on account of the badness of your dealings*.” But from where did their bad dealings originate? From inside, from their heart. (**Read Mark 7:20-23.**) Yes, through Jeremiah, God accurately diagnosed the source of

5. About whose heart did Jeremiah principally write?

6. Why should we be especially interested in what God said about the heart?

7. How did Jeremiah describe the heart of most Jews in his day?

8, 9. As regards their heart, what did most Jews need to do?



the Jews' bad dealings. Their heart was stubbornly rebellious. Their motives and thinking were displeasing to him. (**Read Jeremiah 5:23, 24; 7:24-26.**) God told them: "Get yourselves circumcised to Jehovah, and take away the foreskins of your hearts."—Jer. 4:4; 18:11, 12.

<sup>9</sup> Hence, Jews in Jeremiah's day needed figurative heart surgery—'circumcision of the heart'—even as those in Moses' time did. (Deut. 10:16; 30:6) To 'take away the foreskin of their heart' meant getting rid of what made their heart unresponsive—their thinking, affections, or motives that were in conflict with God's. —Acts 7:51.

#### **"A HEART TO KNOW" HIM TODAY**

<sup>10</sup> How thankful we can be that God offers us insight into the figurative heart! 'But why,' some might wonder, 'would this be of concern to Jehovah's Witnesses today?' It is not that many Christians in the congregations are walking in badness or becoming "bad figs," as were many Jews back then. On the contrary, God's servants today are a devoted, clean people. Still, reflect on the plea

**10.** As exemplified by David, what should we want to do?

that David made to Jehovah: "Search through me, O God, and *know my heart*. Examine me, and know my disquieting thoughts, and see whether there is in me any painful way."—Ps. 17:3; 139:23, 24.

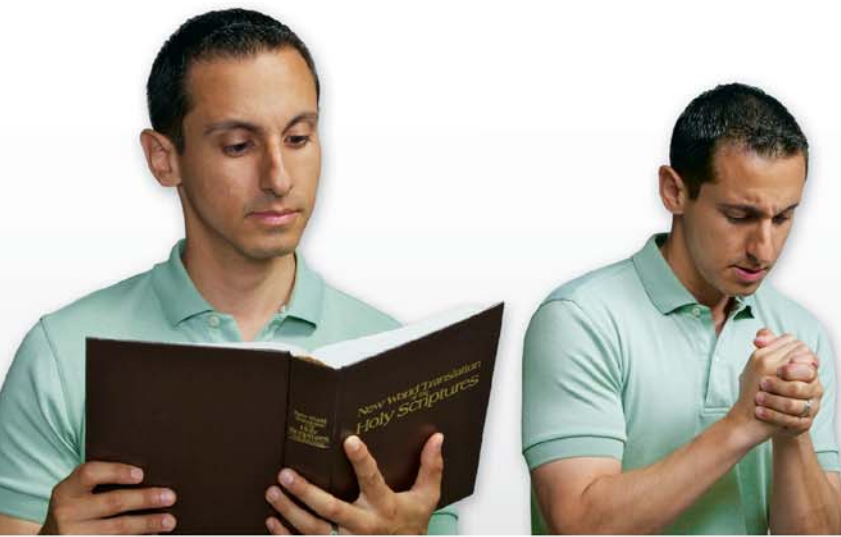
<sup>11</sup> Jehovah wants each of us to come into and remain in a condition acceptable to him. Concerning the righteous one, Jeremiah acknowledged: "You, O Jehovah of armies, are examining the righteous one; you are seeing the kidneys and the heart." (Jer. 20:12) If the Almighty is examining the heart of even the righteous one, should not we ourselves do some honest self-inspection? (**Read Psalm 11:5.**) As we do so, we might discern an attitude, a goal, or a deep feeling that needs attention. We could recognize something that is making our heart less sensitive, some 'fore-skin of our heart,' as it were, which we realize ought to be removed. That would be figurative heart surgery. If you agree that it would be good to examine your figurative heart, what might you look for? And how might you make any needed adjustments?—Jer. 4:4.

<sup>12</sup> One thing is certain: We should not expect Jehovah to force us to change. He said of "the good figs" that he would "*give them* a heart to know" him. He did not say that he would force a change of heart on them. They needed to desire a sensitive heart that reflected their knowing God. Would we not need the same?

<sup>13</sup> Jesus stated: "Out of the heart come wicked reasonings, murders, adulteries, fornications, thieveries, false testimonies, blasphemies." (Matt. 15:19) Clearly, if a brother's insensitive heart moved him to commit adultery or fornication

**11, 12.** (a) Why should each of us examine his own heart? (b) What will God not do?

**13, 14.** In what sense might a Christian's heart be harming him?



## Examining the heart and correcting improper desires will lead to blessings

and he remained unrepentant, he could lose God's favor permanently. Yet, even a person who has not committed such a wrong might be allowing an improper desire to grow in his heart. (**Read Matthew 5:27, 28.**) This is where making a personal examination of the heart may help. If you scrutinized your heart, would you find an improper feeling toward someone of the opposite sex, secret longings that God would not condone and that need to be removed?

<sup>14</sup> Or a brother who has not actually committed "murders" might let rancor fester in his heart to the point of hating a fellow Christian. (Lev. 19:17) Will he put forth effort to rid himself of such emotions that could make his heart unresponsive?—Matt. 5:21, 22.

<sup>15</sup> Happily, most Christians do not have such a 'heart problem.' Yet, Jesus also spoke of "wicked reasonings." These are views or attitudes that can taint many aspects of life. For example, a person could have a distorted sense of loyalty to his relatives. Of course, Chris-

tians want to have "natural affection" for relatives, not being like many who lack such affection in these "last days." (2 Tim. 3:1, 3) It is possible, though, to go to extremes in showing that affection. Many feel that "blood is thicker than water." Thus, they might defend or side with relatives at all costs, taking it personally if a relative is offended. Think of what strong feelings of that kind led Dinah's brothers to do. (Gen. 34:13, 25-30) And imagine what was in Absalom's heart, leading him to murder his half brother Amnon. (2 Sam. 13:1-30) Were not "wicked reasonings" behind those cases?

<sup>16</sup> Understandably, true Christians do not murder. However, might they harbor strong negative feelings toward a brother or a sister who slighted one of their relatives or who they *think* did so? They may turn down hospitality from the fellow believer who they feel mistreated one of their relatives, or they may never show hospitality to him or her. (Heb. 13:1, 2) Such strong negative feelings and lack of hospitality reflect a lack of love and are not to be excused casually. Yes, the Examiner of hearts might diagnose it as 'uncircumcision of the heart.' (Jer. 9:

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**15, 16.** (a) Give an example of how a Christian might be "uncircumcised in heart." (b) Why do you think an 'uncircumcised heart' would be displeasing to Jehovah?



25, 26) Remember those whom Jehovah urged: “Take away the foreskins of your hearts.”—Jer. 4:4.

### GAINING AND MAINTAINING “A HEART TO KNOW” GOD

<sup>17</sup> What if you examined your figurative heart and found that it was not as sensitive to Jehovah’s counsel as it could be and that it was to some extent “uncircumcised”? Maybe you detected a fear of man, a longing for prominence or luxury, or even an inclination toward stubbornness or independence. You would not be the first to experience such. (Jer. 7:24; 11:8) Jeremiah wrote that unfaithful Jews in his day had “a stubborn and rebellious heart.” He added: “They have not said in their heart: ‘Let us, now, fear Jehovah our God, the One who is giving the downpour and the autumn rain.’” (Jer. 5:23, 24) Does that not suggest that an aid in taking away ‘the foreskin of the heart’ is that of developing a greater fear of and appreciation for Jehovah? Such healthy fear can help each of us to have a heart more sensitive to what God desires us to be.

17. How can fearing Jehovah help us to have a more sensitive heart?

<sup>18</sup> And we can work with Jehovah as he gives us “a heart to know” him. In fact, that is what he promised to do for anointed ones in the new covenant: “I will put my law within them, and in their heart I shall write it. And I will become their God, and they themselves will become my people.” What about truly knowing him? He added: “They will no more teach each one his companion and each one his brother, saying, ‘Know Jehovah!’ for they will all of them know me, from the least one of them even to the greatest one of them . . . For I shall forgive their error, and their sin I shall remember no more.”—Jer. 31:31-34.\*

<sup>19</sup> Whether you look forward to benefiting forever from that new covenant in heaven or on earth, you should want to know Jehovah and to be part of his people. A prerequisite to receiving such benefits is having your sins forgiven on the basis of Christ’s ransom. The very fact that you can be forgiven should move you to be forgiving toward others, even those who might be the object of hard feelings. Your being willing to rid your heart of any ill will that you may have will be good for your heart. You will thus show not only that you want to serve Jehovah but also that you are coming to know him better. You will be like those of whom Jehovah said through Jeremiah: “You will actually seek me and find me, for you will search for me with all your heart. And I will let myself be found by you.”—Jer. 29:13, 14.

\* The new covenant is discussed in chapter 14 of the book *God’s Word for Us Through Jeremiah*.

18. Jehovah made what promise to those in the new covenant?

19. True Christians have what wonderful prospect?





## HAVING “COME TO KNOW GOD” —WHAT NOW?

*“You have come to know God.”—GAL. 4:9.*

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### WHAT IS YOUR ANSWER?

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Why is it helpful to go over a spiritual checklist periodically?

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Why should a mature Christian continue to grow spiritually?

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Why should we reflect on our faith and our dedication to Jehovah?

PILOTS who fly one of the most successful aircraft ever built have a preflight inspection checklist consisting of more than 30 items. If they do not carefully follow the checklist each time before takeoff, the pilots increase the possibility of a tragic accident. Do you know what type of pilot is especially urged to complete the checklist every time? It is the very experienced pilot! The seasoned pilot could easily become complacent and fail to carry out the preflight inspection in every detail.

<sup>2</sup> Like a safety-minded pilot, you can use a type of checklist to make sure that your faith will not falter when you need it most. Whether you are newly baptized or you have been serving God for many years, regularly checking the depth of your faith and devotion to Jehovah God is essential. Failure to check on this regularly and diligently can lead to spiritual ruin. The Bible warns us: “Let him that thinks he is standing beware that he does not fall.”—1 Cor. 10:12.

<sup>3</sup> Christians in Galatia needed to check on the depth of their faith and to appreciate their spiritual freedom. By means of his sacrifice, Jesus had opened the way for those exercising faith in him to come to know God in a most extraordinary way—they could become sons of God! (Gal. 4:9) To remain in that most blessed relationship, the Galatians would have to reject the teachings of Judaizers, who were insisting that they observe the Mosaic Law. Why, uncircumcised Gentiles in the congregations had never even been under the Law! Jews and Gentiles alike needed to make spiritual progress.

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1. Why does a pilot follow a checklist before takeoff?
  2. What checklist is recommended for Christians?
  3. The Christians in Galatia needed to do what?

This involved recognizing that they could not establish their righteousness through the Mosaic Law arrangement.

### INITIAL STEPS TO KNOW GOD

<sup>4</sup> The apostle Paul's counsel to the Galatians was recorded for a purpose: to prevent true Christians in any period from turning their backs on the riches of Bible truth and returning to the things behind. Jehovah inspired the apostle to encourage not only those in the congregations in Galatia but *all* His worshippers to remain steadfast.

<sup>5</sup> All of us do well to recall how we were freed from spiritual slavery and became one of Jehovah's Witnesses. To do this, consider these two questions: Do you recall the steps you took to qualify as a baptismal candidate? Do you remember how you came to know and to be known by God and thus enjoy the feeling of real spiritual freedom?

<sup>6</sup> Basically, we all followed nine steps. Those steps, like a spiritual checklist, are set out in the box "Steps That Lead to Baptism and Continued Growth." Regularly reminding ourselves of these nine steps will strengthen us to resist turning back to the things of the world. Just as the experienced yet cautious pilot continues to fly safely by first reviewing a preflight checklist, so you will be helped to persist in faithful service by reviewing a spiritual checklist.

### THOSE KNOWN BY GOD CONTINUE GROWING SPIRITUALLY

<sup>7</sup> A pilot's checklist reminds him that there is a routine for him to follow

carefully before every flight. We too can regularly check, or examine, ourselves and the routine we have been following since our baptism. Paul wrote to Timothy: "Keep holding the pattern of healthful words that you heard from me with the faith and love that are in connection with Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. 1: 13) Those "healthful words" are found in God's Word. (1 Tim. 6:3) Just as an artist's sketch provides us with a general picture, 'the pattern of truth' provides a broad outline for us to perceive and follow what Jehovah requires of us. So let us look now at steps that led to our baptism to see how closely we are conforming to the pattern of truth.

<sup>8</sup> First on our checklist is the need to take in *knowledge*. Then, we can develop *faith*. But we should continue to grow in both respects. (2 Thess. 1:3) Growth involves a progressive series of changes. "To grow" means to increase, to enlarge. Thus, after baptism, we need to continue to develop our spirituality so that our growth does not become stunted.

<sup>9</sup> We can compare our spiritual growth to the physical growth of a tree. A tree may grow to an amazing size, especially when its root system is deep or extensive. For example, some of the majestic cedars of Lebanon can reach the height of a 12-story building and have strong, penetrating roots and a trunk circumference of up to 40 feet (12 m). (Song of Sol. 5:15) After the initial growth spurt of such a tree stops, the tree still grows but not as noticeably. Year after year, the trunk widens and the roots go deeper and spread far-

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4, 5. What counsel did Paul give to the Galatians, and how is this pertinent for us?

6. What checklist will we consider?

7. We need to follow what pattern, and why?

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8, 9. (a) Why should we go on growing in knowledge and faith? (b) Illustrate the value of spiritual growth and why it is a continuing process.

ther, producing a more stable tree. The same can be said of a Christian's spiritual growth. During our initial period of Bible study, we may quickly grow spiritually and then get baptized. Those in the congregation happily notice our progress. We may even qualify as a pioneer or receive other privileges. In the following years, our continued spiritual growth may not be as noticeable. Nevertheless, we still need to grow in faith and knowledge "to a full-grown man, to the measure of stature that belongs to the fullness of the Christ." (Eph. 4:13) Thus, we progress, as it were, from a tiny sprout to a mature Christian, a sturdy and well-developed tree.

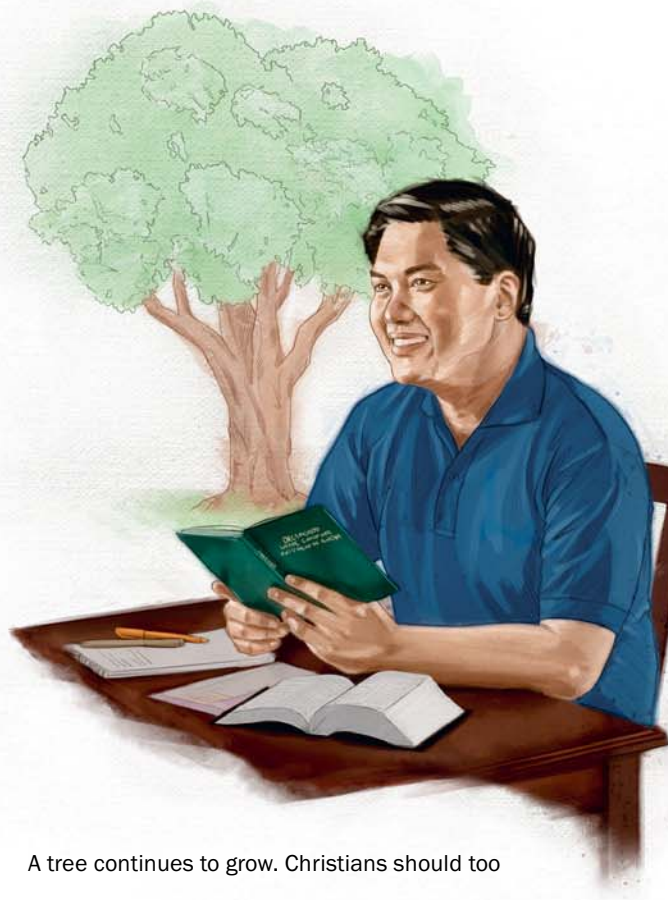
<sup>10</sup> But our growth should not stop there. Our knowledge needs to broaden and our faith needs to deepen. Thus we become ever more anchored in the soil of God's Word. (Prov. 12:3) In the Christian congregation, there are many brothers and sisters who have done that. For instance, one brother who has been an elder for more than three decades noted that he is still growing spiritually. He says: "My appreciation for the Bible has grown immensely. I constantly find new opportunities to apply Bible principles and laws in various ways. My appreciation for the ministry continues to grow too."

### GROW IN FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD

<sup>11</sup> Our growth also involves drawing closer to Jehovah as our Friend and Father. He wants us to feel accepted. He wants us to know that we are loved and safe just as a child feels loved and safe

**10.** Why is growth necessary even for mature Christians?

**11.** How can we come to know Jehovah better over time?



A tree continues to grow. Christians should too

when he is in the embrace of a caring parent or as we do when in the company of a true and loyal friend. As you can appreciate, this intimacy with Jehovah does not develop overnight. Time must pass for us to come to know and love him. So in coming to know the Person of Jehovah better, be determined to set aside time to read his Word daily. And read each issue of *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* as well as other Bible-based publications.

<sup>12</sup> God's friends grow spiritually through their sincere *prayers* and good *association*. (**Read Malachi 3:16.**)

**12.** What is necessary for us to be known by Jehovah?

Jehovah's "ears are toward their supplication." (1 Pet. 3:12) Like a loving parent, Jehovah is attentive to our prayerful cries for help. Hence, we need to "persevere in prayer." (Rom. 12:12) We cannot remain a full-grown Christian unless we have the help of God. The pressures of this system are too great to resist and overcome by ourselves. If we cease to persist in prayer, we cut ourselves off from the constant fund of strength that God is willing and able to supply. Are you satisfied with the quality of your prayers, or do you see the need to make further progress in that area?—Jer. 16:19.

<sup>13</sup> Jehovah is pleased with all those "seeking refuge in him"; hence, even after our coming to know God, we want to continue regularly associating with the congregation of others who know him. (Nah. 1:7) In a world filled with discouragement, we are wise to surround ourselves with our encouraging brothers and sisters. What are the benefits? You will find in the congregation individuals who will incite you "to love and fine works." (Heb. 10:24, 25) The mutual love Paul wrote about to the Hebrews calls for a brotherhood, a community of like-minded worshippers, a congregation. Displaying this kind of love involves interacting with other Christians. Regularly mark meeting attendance and participation on your checklist.

<sup>14</sup> Our initially becoming a Christian depended on *repentance* and on *turning around*, or turning away from our sins. Repentance, however, is an ongoing process. As imperfect humans, we still

13. Why is association with fellow Christians vital for spiritual growth?

14. How are repentance and turning around an ongoing process?

have sin lurking within us like a coiled snake ready to strike. (Rom. 3:9, 10; 6:12-14) Let us remain sharp-eyed, not ignoring our faults. Happily, Jehovah is patient with us while we earnestly struggle to resist our weaknesses and make needed changes. (Phil. 2:12; 2 Pet. 3:9) A great help is to take control of our use of time and resources, turning away from selfish pursuits. One sister writes: "I was raised in the truth, yet I grew up with a different view of Jehovah than most. He was to be very much feared, and I felt that I surely would never be able to please him." In time, the sister found herself "spiritually floundering" because of several personal setbacks. "It was not because I didn't love Jehovah," she continues, "but because I didn't truly know him. However, after many intense prayers, I began a turnaround." She added: "I found that Jehovah led me along like a child, helping me over one obstacle at a time, ever so gently, showing me what I needed to do."

<sup>15</sup> "Keep on speaking to the people" about the good news. God's angel spoke these words to Peter and the other apostles after they experienced a miraculous release from prison. (Acts 5:19-21) Yes, our weekly participation in the field ministry is another item on our checklist. Jesus and his Father take note of both our faith and our ministry. (Rev. 2:19) As the elder quoted in an earlier paragraph points out: "The field ministry is what we are about."

<sup>16</sup> Reflect on your *dedication*. The most precious possession we have is our personal relationship with Jehovah. He knows those who belong to him. (**Read**

15. What do Jesus and his Father observe?

16. Why is it good to reflect on our dedication to Jehovah?



*Isaiah 44:5*.) Prayerfully examine the quality and the depth of your relationship with him. Related to that, remember the important date of your *baptism*. This too will help remind you that your baptism symbolizes the most significant decision you have ever made.

### STAY CLOSE TO JEHOVAH BY ENDURANCE

<sup>17</sup> In writing to the Galatians, Paul stressed the need for endurance. (Gal. 6:9) That is vital for a Christian today too. You will face trials, but Jehovah will help you. Keep praying for holy spirit. You will feel relief as he replaces grief with joy, anguish with peace. (Matt. 7: 7-11) Think about this: If Jehovah cares for the birds, how much more so does he care for you who love him and have given yourself to him? (Matt. 10:29-31) No matter what pressures confront you, never go back, never give up. What wonderful riches are ours because we are known by Jehovah!

<sup>18</sup> Therefore, if you have recently come to know God and got baptized, what now? Continue to get to know Jehovah better, growing to spiritual maturity. And if you have been baptized for many years, what now? You too must continue to deepen and broaden your knowledge of Jehovah. May we never become complacent in our relationship with him. Instead, we should all review our spiritual checklist from time to time to ensure that we are continuing to grow in our relationship with our loving Father, Friend, and God—Jehovah.—**Read 2 Corinthians 13:5, 6.**

<sup>17</sup>. Why is endurance needed for us to stay close to Jehovah?

<sup>18</sup>. Having “come to know God,” what do you want to do now?

## STEPS THAT LEAD TO BAPTISM AND CONTINUED GROWTH

- 1 We start with “taking in *knowledge*” of Jehovah and his Son, Jesus Christ.—John 17:3
- 2 Our *faith* increases as our knowledge grows.—John 3:16
- 3 We regularly call on Jehovah in *prayer*.—Acts 2:21
- 4 We appreciate the need to *associate* regularly with others of like faith.—Heb. 10:24, 25
- 5 We *repent* of our sins.—Acts 17:30
- 6 We *turn around*, rejecting bad practices.—Acts 3:19
- 7 Our faith moves us to *speak* publicly to others.—2 Cor. 4:13
- 8 We *dedicate* ourselves to Jehovah in order to follow Jesus properly.—1 Pet. 4:2
- 9 We symbolize our dedication by water *baptism*.—1 Pet. 3:21

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# Be Comforted—Comfort Others

Being imperfect humans, all of us have experienced illness, some even grave illness. When we face such difficulties, how do we cope?

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One valuable aid in coping is the comfort we receive from family, friends, and fellow believers.

A friend's kind, loving words can be like a soothing balm that heals and refreshes us. (Prov. 16:24; 18:24; 25:11) But true Christians are concerned with more than just receiving comfort. They reach out "to comfort those in any sort of tribulation through the comfort with which [they themselves] are being comforted by God." (2 Cor. 1:4; Luke 6:31) Antonio, a district overseer in Mexico, learned this firsthand.

When he was diagnosed with lymphoma, a type of cancer of the blood, Antonio was overcome with anguish. Still, he strove to control his negative emotions. How? He would try to remember Kingdom songs and sing them so as to hear and meditate on the words. Praying out loud as well as reading the Bible also proved to be of great comfort.

Antonio now recognizes, however, that one of his biggest helps came from his fellow believers. He says: "When my wife and I felt weighed down, we would ask a relative who is a congregation elder to come over and pray with us. This comforted us and calmed us. In fact," he adds, "thanks to the support of our family and our spiritual brothers, we were able to overcome the negative emotions in a relatively short time." How grateful he was to have such loving and caring friends!

Another help during times of distress is the promised holy spirit. The apostle Peter said that God's holy spirit is a "free gift." (Acts 2:38) That certainly proved to be true with the anointing of many at Pentecost 33 C.E. But by extension, the holy spirit is a gift available to all of us. There is an endless supply of this gift, so why not ask to have it in abundance?—Isa. 40:28-31.

## SHOW DEEP INTEREST IN THOSE WHO SUFFER

The apostle Paul endured much hardship, even facing death on occasion. (2 Cor. 1:8-10) Yet, Paul had no morbid fear for his life. He found comfort in knowing that he had God's backing. He wrote: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of tender mercies and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation." (2 Cor. 1:3, 4) Paul did not wallow in self-pity. Rather, the trials he endured helped him to cultivate fellow feeling, so that he was better equipped to comfort others during their time of need.

After recovering from his illness, Antonio was able to return to the traveling work. He had regularly shown interest in his fellow believers, but then he and his wife made a special effort to visit and encourage sick ones. For example, after visiting one Christian who was battling a serious illness, Antonio learned that this brother did not want to go to the meetings. "It was not that he did not love Jehovah or the brothers," explains Antonio, "but the illness had affected his emotions to such an extent that he felt useless."

One thing that Antonio did to encourage the sick brother was ask him to offer the prayer at a recent gathering. Though the brother felt inadequate, he accepted the invitation. Antonio relates: "He gave such a beautiful prayer, and afterward, he was like another person. He felt useful again."

Yes, to a greater or lesser extent, we all have had the experience of bearing up under some type of suffering. But as Paul said, this can equip us to comfort others during their time of need. Therefore, let us be sensitive to the suffering of fellow Christians and imitate our God, Jehovah, by being a source of comfort to others.



# JEHOVAH —OUR PLACE OF DWELLING

*“O Jehovah, you yourself have proved to be a real dwelling for us during generation after generation.”—Ps. 90:1.*

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## HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

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How did Jehovah prove to be “a real dwelling” for the faithful men of old?

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What can we learn from Abraham’s faithful course?

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How can we show that Jehovah is our “real dwelling”?

DO YOU feel at home in the present world? If not, you are in good company! Throughout the ages, all who have truly loved Jehovah have felt like strangers, or aliens, in this system of things. For example, while moving from encampment to encampment in the land of Canaan, faithful worshippers of God “publicly declared that they were strangers and temporary residents.”—Heb. 11:13.

<sup>2</sup> Likewise, Christ’s anointed followers, whose “citizenship exists in the heavens,” view themselves as “aliens and temporary residents” in the present system of things. (Phil. 3:20; 1 Pet. 2:11) Christ’s “other sheep” are also “no part of the world, just as [Jesus was] no part of the world.” (John 10:16; 17:16) Nevertheless, God’s people are not without a “home.” In fact, we enjoy the protection of the most secure and loving home imaginable, one that is discerned through eyes of faith. Moses wrote: “O Jehovah, *you yourself* have proved to be a real dwelling for us during generation after generation.”\* (Ps. 90:1) How did Jehovah prove to be “a real dwelling” for his loyal servants in ancient times? How is he “a real dwelling” for his name people today? And how will he prove to be the only secure dwelling in the future?

## JEHOVAH—“A REAL DWELLING” FOR HIS SERVANTS OF OLD

<sup>3</sup> Like many word pictures in the Bible, Psalm 90:1 has a topic, an image, and a point of similarity. The

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\* The *Contemporary English Version* renders Psalm 90:1: “Our Lord, in all generations you have been our home.”

1, 2. How have God’s servants felt toward the present system of things, and in what sense do they have a home?

3. What topic, image, and point of similarity do we find at Psalm 90:1?



“I am not going to leave you”

topic is Jehovah. The image is that of a dwelling, or place of habitation. Jehovah has much in common with such a place. For example, Jehovah provides protection for his people. This is in harmony with the fact that he is the very personification of love. (1 John 4:8) He is also a God of peace, who makes his loyal ones “dwell in security.” (Ps. 4:8) Consider, for instance, his dealings with faithful patriarchs, beginning with Abraham.

<sup>4</sup> We can only imagine how Abraham, then Abram, felt when Jehovah told him: “Go your way out of your country and from your relatives . . . to the country that I shall show you.” If Abraham felt any anxiety, it no doubt melted away with Jehovah’s next words: “I shall make

a great nation out of you and I shall bless you and I will make your name great . . . And I will bless those who bless you, and him that calls down evil upon you I shall curse.”—Gen. 12:1-3.

<sup>5</sup> With those words, Jehovah took it upon himself to become a secure dwelling for Abraham and for his descendants. (Gen. 26:1-6) Jehovah fulfilled his promise. For example, he prevented Pharaoh of Egypt and King Abimelech of Gerar from violating Sarah and doing away with Abraham. He protected Isaac and Rebekah in a similar manner. (Gen. 12:14-20; 20:1-14; 26:6-11) We read: “[Jehovah] did not allow any human to defraud them, but on their account he reproved kings, saying: ‘Do not you men touch my anointed ones, and to my prophets do nothing bad.’”—Ps. 105:14, 15.

<sup>6</sup> Those prophets included Abraham’s grandson Jacob. When the time came for Jacob to take a wife for himself, Isaac, his father, said to him: “You must not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. Get up, go to Paddan-aram to the house of Bethuel the father of your mother and from there take yourself a wife from the daughters of Laban.” (Gen. 28:1, 2) Jacob promptly obeyed Isaac. Jacob left the security of his immediate family, who were living in Canaan, to travel, evidently alone, hundreds of miles to the area of Haran. (Gen. 28:10) Perhaps he wondered: ‘How long will I be away? Will my uncle warmly welcome me and grant me a God-fearing wife?’ If Jacob had such anxieties, these no doubt melted away when he reached Luz, some 60 miles (100 km) from Beer-sheba. What happened at Luz?

4, 5. How did God prove to be “a real dwelling” for Abraham?

6. What did Isaac tell Jacob to do, and how may Jacob have felt?



<sup>7</sup> At Luz, Jehovah appeared to Jacob in a dream, saying: "Here I am with you and I will keep you in all the way you are going and I will return you to this ground, because *I am not going to leave you* until I have actually done what I have spoken to you." (Gen. 28:15) How those kind words must have reassured and comforted Jacob! Can you picture him thereafter striding along, eager to see how God would fulfill His word? If you have left home, perhaps to serve in a foreign land, you likely understand Jacob's range of emotions. No doubt, though, you have seen evidence of Jehovah's care for you.

<sup>8</sup> When Jacob reached Haran, his uncle Laban extended a warm welcome to him and later gave him Leah and Rachel as wives. In time, though, Laban tried to exploit Jacob, changing his wages ten times! (Gen. 31:41, 42) Yet, Jacob endured these injustices, confident that Jehovah would continue to care for him—and He did! Indeed, by the time God told Jacob to return to Canaan, the patriarch possessed "great flocks and maid-servants and menservants and camels and asses." (Gen. 30:43) Deeply appreciative, Jacob prayed: "I am unworthy of all the loving-kindnesses and of all the faithfulness that you have exercised toward your servant, for with but my staff I crossed this Jordan and now I have become two camps."—Gen. 32:10.

<sup>9</sup> Yes, how true was Moses' prayer of reflection: "O Jehovah, you yourself have proved to be a real dwelling for us during generation after generation"! (Ps. 90:1) Those words apply equally today, for Je-

hovah, with whom "there is not a variation of the turning of the shadow," continues to be a warm and secure dwelling for his loyal ones. (Jas. 1:17) Let us consider how.

## JEHOVAH

### —OUR "REAL DWELLING" TODAY

<sup>10</sup> Imagine this: You are testifying in court against a global criminal organization. Its leader is a very intelligent, powerful, and ruthless liar and murderer. How would you feel when you stepped outside the court at day's end? Safe? Hardly! Indeed, you would have good reason for requesting protection. This scenario illustrates the situation of Jehovah's servants, who boldly testify for Jehovah and fearlessly expose his vicious archenemy, Satan! (***Read Revelation 12:17.***) But has Satan been able to silence God's people? No! In fact, we continue to thrive spiritually—a reality that can have only one explanation: Jehovah is still our refuge, "a real dwelling" for us, especially during these last days. (***Read Isaiah 54:14, 17.***) That said, however, Jehovah cannot be a secure dwelling for us if we allow Satan to lure us away from our dwelling place.

<sup>11</sup> Once again, let us learn a lesson from the patriarchs. Although they lived in the land of Canaan, they remained separate from the people of the land, whose wicked, immoral ways they hated. (Gen. 27:46) They were men of principle who did not depend on a long list of dos and don'ts to guide them. What they knew about Jehovah and his personality was sufficient for them. Because

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7. By means of a dream, how did God reassure Jacob?

8, 9. In what ways did Jehovah prove to be "a real dwelling" for Jacob, and what can we learn from this?

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10. Why can we be certain that Jehovah continues to be a secure dwelling for his servants?

11. What lesson can we learn from the patriarchs?



God's angels support and protect his servants

he was their dwelling, they did not want to get as close to the world as they could. Rather, they stayed as far away from it as possible. What a fine example they set for us! Do you strive to imitate the faithful patriarchs as to your choice of associates and entertainment? Sadly, some within the Christian congregation give evidence that, at least to a degree, they feel comfortable in Satan's world. If you feel that way even a little, pray about the matter. Remember, this world is Satan's. It reflects his cold, self-serving spirit. —2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:1, 2.

<sup>12</sup> In order to resist Satan's machina-

**12.** (a) How does Jehovah provide for his spiritual household? (b) How do you feel about these provisions?

tions, we need to take full advantage of the spiritual provisions that Jehovah makes for his household of faith, for those who make him their dwelling. These provisions include Christian meetings, family worship, and "gifts in men"—shepherds appointed by God to comfort and support us as we struggle with life's challenges. (Eph. 4:8-12) Brother George Gangas, who was a member of the Governing Body for a number of years, wrote: "When I am among [God's people] I feel at home with my family, in a spiritual paradise." Do you feel the same way?

<sup>13</sup> Another quality of the patriarchs that is worthy of imitation is their willingness to stand out as different from the people around them. As noted in paragraph 1, they "*publicly* declared that they were strangers and temporary residents in the land." (Heb. 11:13) Are you resolved to stand out as being different? Granted, doing so is not always easy. But with God's help and with support from your fellow Christians, you can succeed. Remember, you are not alone. *All* who want to serve Jehovah have a fight on their hands! (Eph. 6:12) Still, it is a fight we can win if we trust in Jehovah and make him our secure dwelling.

<sup>14</sup> Also important is this: Imitate Abraham by keeping your eyes on the prize. (2 Cor. 4:18) The apostle Paul wrote that Abraham "was awaiting the city having real foundations, the builder and maker of which city is God." (Heb. 11:10) That "city" proved to be the Messianic Kingdom. Abraham, of course, had to await that "city." In a sense, we do

**13.** What important lesson can we draw from Hebrews 11:13?

**14.** Jehovah's servants awaited what "city"?

not. It is now ruling in heaven. What is more, mounting evidence indicates that it will soon take full control of the earth. Is that Kingdom real to you? Does it influence your outlook on life, your view of the present world, and your priorities?—*Read 2 Peter 3:11, 12.*

### OUR “REAL DWELLING” AS THE END APPROACHES

<sup>15</sup> As Satan’s world nears its end, its “pangs of distress” will get worse. (Matt. 24:7, 8) Things will definitely get worse during the great tribulation. Infrastructures will collapse, and people will fear for their very lives. (Hab. 3:16, 17) Out of sheer desperation, they will, as it were, seek refuge “in the caves and in the rock-masses of the mountains.” (Rev. 6:15-17) But neither literal caves nor mountain-like political and commercial organizations will afford any protection.

<sup>16</sup> Jehovah’s people, however, will continue to enjoy the safety of their “real dwelling,” Jehovah God. Like the prophet Habakkuk, they “will exult in Jehovah himself.” They “will be joyful in the God of [their] salvation.” (Hab. 3:18) In what ways will Jehovah prove to be “a real dwelling” during that tumultuous time? We will have to wait and see. But of this we can be sure: Like the Israelites at the time of the Exodus, the “great crowd” will remain organized, ever alert to divine direction. (Rev. 7:9; *read Exodus 13:18.*) That direction will come theocratically, probably by means of the congregation arrangement. Indeed, the many thousands of congregations around the world appear to be

linked to the protective “interior rooms” foretold at **Isaiah 26:20. (Read.)** Do you value the congregation meetings? Do you act promptly on the direction Jehovah provides through the congregation arrangement?—Heb. 13:17.

<sup>17</sup> Even those who might die faithful before the great tribulation begins remain secure with Jehovah, their “real dwelling.” How so? Long after the faithful patriarchs had died, Jehovah said to Moses: “I am the God of . . . Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.” (Ex. 3:6) After quoting these words, Jesus added: “He is a God, not of the dead, but of the living, for they are all living to him.” (Luke 20:38) Yes, to Jehovah, his loyal ones who have died faithful to him are as good as alive; their resurrection is a certainty.—Eccl. 7:1.

<sup>18</sup> In the new world just ahead, Jehovah will become “a real dwelling” for his people in yet another sense. Says Revelation 21:3: “Look! The tent of God is with mankind, and he will reside with them.” Initially, Jehovah will reside with his earthly subjects representatively by means of Christ Jesus. At the end of the thousand years, Jesus will hand the Kingdom over to his Father, having fully accomplished God’s purpose for the earth. (1 Cor. 15:28) Thereafter, perfected mankind will no longer need Jesus as an intercessor; Jehovah will be with them. What a wonderful prospect lies before us! In the meantime, then, let us strive to imitate the faithful generations of old by making Jehovah our “real dwelling.”

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<sup>15.</sup> What future awaits those who trust in the present world?

<sup>16.</sup> How should we view the Christian congregation, and why?

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<sup>17.</sup> In what way is Jehovah “a real dwelling” even for his loyal servants who have died?

<sup>18.</sup> In the new world, how will Jehovah prove to be “a real dwelling” for his people in a special way?

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## HONOR JEHOVAH'S GREAT NAME

*"I will glorify  
your name to time  
indefinite."*—PS. 86:12.

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### CAN YOU EXPLAIN?

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What does it mean to know  
God's name?

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How has Jehovah progressively  
revealed his name?

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What does it mean to walk in  
Jehovah's name?

BY AND LARGE, Christendom's churches have distanced themselves from God's name. For example, the *Revised Standard Version* states in its preface: "The use of any proper name for the one and only God . . . is entirely inappropriate for the universal faith of the Christian Church."

<sup>2</sup> Jehovah's Witnesses, on the other hand, are proud to bear God's name and to glorify it. (***Read Psalm 86:12; Isaiah 43:10.***) Furthermore, we count it a privilege to understand the meaning of that name and the universal issue involving its sanctification. (Matt. 6:9) That, though, is a privilege that we must never take for granted. Accordingly, let us consider three important questions: What does it mean to know God's name? How has Jehovah lived up to his great name, thus adding to its glory? And how can we walk in Jehovah's name?

### WHAT IT MEANS TO KNOW GOD'S NAME

<sup>3</sup> To know God's name involves much more than merely being acquainted with the word "Jehovah." It includes knowing Jehovah's reputation, as well as his qualities, purpose, and activities as revealed in the Bible, such as his dealings with his servants. Of course, Jehovah grants this insight progressively, according to the outworking of his purpose. (Prov. 4:18) Jehovah revealed his name to the first human pair; thus, Eve used it after giving birth to Cain. (Gen. 4:1) The faithful patriarchs Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob knew God's name. Moreover, their appreciation for it grew as Jehovah blessed them, cared for them, and revealed aspects of his purpose to them. Moses was granted special insight into God's name.

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**1, 2.** In contrast with the churches of Christendom, how do Jehovah's Witnesses view God's name?

**3.** What does it mean to know God's name?



<sup>4</sup> **Read Exodus 3:10-15.** When Moses was 80 years of age, God gave him a weighty command: “You bring my people the sons of Israel out of Egypt.” Moses responded respectfully with a question, one of profound significance. In effect, Moses asked: ‘What is your name?’ Considering that God’s name was long known, what was the point of Moses’ question? Evidently, he wanted to know more about *the person represented by the name*—facts that would convince God’s people that He really would deliver them. Moses’ concern was warranted, for the Israelites had been slaves for some time. They would likely wonder whether the God of their forefathers *could* deliver them. Indeed, some Israelites had even taken up the worship of Egyptian gods!—Ezek. 20:7, 8.

<sup>5</sup> How did Jehovah reply to Moses’ question? In part, he said: “This is what you are to say to the sons of Israel, ‘I SHALL PROVE TO BE has sent me to you.’”<sup>\*</sup> Then he added: “Jehovah the God of your forefathers . . . has sent me to you.” God revealed that he will become whatever he chooses to become so as to accomplish his purpose, that he will *always* prove true to his word. Hence, in verse 15 we read that Jehovah himself said: “This is my name to time indefinite, and this is the memorial of me to generation after generation.” How that revelation must have strengthened Moses’ faith and filled him with awe!

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<sup>\*</sup> God’s name is a form of a Hebrew verb meaning “to become.” Thus, “Jehovah” means “He Causes to Become.”—Gen. 2:4, ftn.

4. Why did Moses ask God about his name, and why were Moses’ concerns understandable?

5. How did Jehovah shed more light on the meaning of his name in his reply to Moses?



Moses knew the meaning of God’s name, and that strengthened his faith

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### JEHOVAH LIVED UP TO HIS NAME

<sup>6</sup> Shortly after commissioning Moses, Jehovah fully lived up to his name by ‘proving to be’ Israel’s Deliverer. He humiliated Egypt with ten devastating plagues, at the same time exposing the Egyptian gods—including Pharaoh—as impotent. (Ex. 12:12) Then Jehovah opened up the Red Sea, led Israel through it, and drowned Pharaoh and his military force. (Ps. 136:13-15) In the “great and fear-inspiring wilderness,” Jehovah proved to be a Preserver of life as he provided food and water for his people, perhaps numbering from two to three million or more! He even caused

6, 7. How did Jehovah fully live up to his great name?

their garments and their sandals not to wear out. (Deut. 1:19; 29:5) Yes, nothing can stop Jehovah from proving true to his incomparable name. He later stated to Isaiah: “I—I am Jehovah, and besides me there is no savior.”—Isa. 43:11.

<sup>7</sup> Moses’ successor, Joshua, also witnessed Jehovah’s fear-inspiring deeds in Egypt and in the wilderness. Hence, near the end of his life, Joshua could with heartfelt conviction say to his fellow Israelites: “You well know with all your hearts and with all your souls that not one word out of all the good words that Jehovah your God has spoken to you has failed. They have all come true for you. Not one word of them has failed.” (Josh. 23:14) Yes, in no uncertain terms, Jehovah fulfilled his word—he ‘proved to be.’

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Pharaoh refused to recognize Jehovah as God



<sup>8</sup> Likewise today, Jehovah is ‘proving to be.’ By means of his Son, he foretold that during the last days, the Kingdom message would be preached “in all the inhabited earth.” (Matt. 24:14) Who else but God Almighty could foretell such a work, see that it is done, and use many “unlettered and ordinary” people to accomplish it? (Acts 4:13) Hence, when we share in this work, we actually share in the fulfillment of Bible prophecy. We honor our Father and show that we really mean it when we pray: “Let your name be sanctified. Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth.”—Matt. 6:9, 10.

### HIS NAME IS GREAT

<sup>9</sup> Shortly after Israel’s Exodus, Jehovah became something new to his people. By means of the Law covenant, he became their “husbandly owner,” willingly taking on all the responsibilities associated therewith. (Jer. 3:14) The Israelites, in turn, became his figurative wife, his name people. (Isa. 54:5, 6) As they willingly submitted to him and kept his commandments, he would prove to be the perfect ‘Husband.’ He would bless them, keep them, and assign peace to them. (Num. 6:22-27) Jehovah’s great name would thus be glorified among the nations. (*Read Deuteronomy 4:5-8; Psalm 86:7-10.*) Indeed, throughout Israel’s history, many foreigners were drawn to true worship. They, in effect, said what the Moabitess Ruth said to Naomi: “Your people will be my people, and your God my God.”—Ruth 1:16.

<sup>10</sup> For some 1,500 years, Jehovah’s

8. How is Jehovah living up to his name in our time?

9, 10. By his dealings with Israel, how did Jehovah continue to add meaning to his name, and with what results?

dealings with Israel revealed many new facets of his personality. Despite the nation's waywardness, over and over Jehovah proved to be "a God merciful" and "slow to anger." He was a God of extraordinary patience and long-suffering. (Ex. 34:5-7) Jehovah's patience, nevertheless, did have a limit, and that limit was reached when the Jewish nation rejected and killed his Son. (Matt. 23:37, 38) The fleshly descendants of Israel ceased to be God's name people. In the main, they became spiritually dead, like a withered tree. (Luke 23:31) How did this affect their attitude toward the divine name?

<sup>11</sup> History indicates that, in time, the Jews developed a superstitious attitude toward God's name, viewing it as something that they should not pronounce. (Ex. 20:7) God's name gradually became disassociated from Judaism. It no doubt hurt Jehovah to see his name treated so disrespectfully. (Ps. 78:40, 41) However, God, "whose name is Jealous," clearly would not forever attach it to a people who had disowned him and whom he had disowned. (Ex. 34:14) This fact should impress upon us the importance of treating our Creator's name with great respect.

### A NEW PEOPLE CALLED BY GOD'S NAME

<sup>12</sup> Through Jeremiah, Jehovah revealed his purpose to establish "a new covenant" with a new nation, spiritual Israel. All its members, "from the least one of them even to the greatest one of them," Jeremiah foretold, would

**11.** How did God's name come to be disassociated from the Jewish nation?

**12.** How did Jehovah produce the foretold name people?

"know Jehovah." (Jer. 31:31, 33, 34) That prophecy began to be fulfilled at Pentecost 33 C.E. when God established the new covenant. The new nation, "the Israel of God," which included Jews and non-Jews, became "a people for [God's] name," or "people who are called by my name," said Jehovah.—Gal. 6:16; *read Acts 15:14-17*; Matt. 21:43.

<sup>13</sup> As "people who are called by [God's] name," the members of that spiritual nation used the divine name, certainly doing so when quoting from the Hebrew Scriptures.\* Thus, when the apostle Peter addressed an international audience of Jews and proselytes at Pentecost 33 C.E., he used God's name a number of times. (Acts 2:14, 20, 21, 25, 34) The early Christians honored Jehovah, so he, in turn, blessed their efforts in the preaching work. Likewise today, Jehovah blesses our ministry when we proudly proclaim his name and show it to interested ones, in their own Bibles if possible. We thus introduce them to the true God. What a privilege—for them and for us! That introduction may in some cases be the beginning of a wonderful relationship with Jehovah that will grow ever stronger and last forever.

<sup>14</sup> Apostasy later began to infect the early Christian congregation, especially after the death of the apostles. (2 Thess. 2:3-7) False teachers even adopted the

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\* The Hebrew text used by the early Christians contained the Tetragrammaton. Evidence points to the conclusion that the same was true of early copies of the *Septuagint*, a Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures.

**13.** (a) Did the early Christians use God's name? Explain. (b) How do you view the privilege of using Jehovah's name in your ministry?

**14, 15.** Despite the spread of apostasy, what has Jehovah done about his memorial name?



Jewish tradition of not using God's name. But would Jehovah allow his memorial name to be erased? Never! Granted, its exact pronunciation cannot now be determined, but the name has endured. Over time, it has appeared in various translations of the Bible, as well as in the writings of Bible scholars. For example, in 1757, Charles Peters wrote that "Jehovah," in contrast with God's many titles, "seems to be the most expressive of his essence." In a 1797 book on the worship of God, Hopton Haynes began chapter 7: "JEHOVAH the proper name of GOD among the Jews; whom alone they worshipped; as also did Christ and his Apostles." Henry Grew (1781-1862) not only used God's name but also recognized that it had been reproached and must be sanctified. Likewise, George Storrs (1796-1879), a close associate of Charles T. Russell, used God's name, as did Russell himself.

<sup>15</sup> The year 1931 was particularly noteworthy, for in that year the International Bible Students, as God's people were then called, adopted the Scriptural name Jehovah's Witnesses. (Isa. 43:10-12) They thus announced to the world that they were proud to be servants of the only true God, to be "a people for his name," praising that name. (Acts 15:14) These developments call to mind Jehovah's words found at Malachi 1:11: "From the sun's rising even to its setting my name will be great among the nations."

### WALK IN JEHOVAH'S NAME

<sup>16</sup> The prophet Micah wrote: "All the peoples, for their part, will walk each one in the name of its god; but we, for

our part, shall walk in the name of Jehovah our God to time indefinite, even forever." (Mic. 4:5) That Jehovah allowed the Bible Students to adopt his name was more than just a great honor. It was also a reassuring indication of his approval. (**Read Malachi 3:16-18.**) What, though, about you personally? Are you making every effort to "walk in the name of Jehovah"? Do you appreciate what that involves?

<sup>17</sup> Walking in God's name involves at least three things. First, we must proclaim that name to others, recognizing that only those who 'call on the name of Jehovah will be saved.' (Rom. 10:13) Second, we need to reflect Jehovah's qualities, especially his love. And third, we walk in God's name when we joyfully submit to his righteous standards, lest we bring reproach on our Father's holy name. (1 John 4:8; 5:3) Are you determined to "walk in the name of Jehovah our God to time indefinite"?

<sup>18</sup> Soon all who ignore or defy Jehovah will be forced to recognize him. (Ezek. 38:23) That includes individuals who are like Pharaoh, who said: "Who is Jehovah, so that I should obey his voice?" How quickly he found out! (Ex. 5:1, 2; 9:16; 12:29) We, though, have willingly come to know Jehovah. We are proud to bear his name and to be his obedient name people. Hence, we look to the future with confidence in the promise recorded at Psalm 9:10: "Those *knowing your name* will trust in you, for you will certainly not leave those looking for you, O Jehovah."

<sup>17</sup> What is involved in walking in God's name?

<sup>18</sup> Why can all who honor Jehovah's great name look to the future with confidence?

<sup>16</sup> Why should we view it as an honor to walk in Jehovah's name?



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# Did Josephus Really Write It?

In Book XX of his *Jewish Antiquities*, first-century historian Flavius Josephus refers to the death of “James, the brother of Jesus who was called the Christ.” Many scholars consider this declaration to be authentic. However, some doubt the genuineness of another statement in the same work concerning Jesus. This passage, known as the *Testimonium Flavianum*, reads:

“Now, there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works—a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.”—*Josephus—The Complete Works*, translated by William Whiston.

Since the end of the 16th century, a heated debate has raged between those who believe that this text is authentic and those who doubt that Josephus wrote it. Serge Bardet, French historian and specialist in classical literature, has sought to untangle the threads of this debate that have become so knotted over the past four centuries. He published his research in a book entitled *Le Testimonium Flavianum—Examen historique considérations historiographiques* (The Testimonium Flavianum—A Historical Study With Historical Considerations).

Josephus was not a Christian author. He was a Jewish historian; hence, much of the controversy centers on the designation of Jesus as being “the Christ.” On analysis, Bardet asserted that this title corresponds “in every respect to the

Greek usage of employing the [definite] article for the names of people.” Bardet added that from a Judeo-Christian perspective, “not only is the use of the term *Christos* by Josephus not an impossibility” but it is a clue that “critics have in general been greatly wrong to overlook.”

Could it be that the text was embellished by a later forger imitating Josephus’ style? Drawing on historical and textual evidence, Bardet concluded that such an imitation would be almost miraculous. It would require a forger with “a talent for imitation hardly without equal in all antiquity,” in other words, one who was “as Josephus as Josephus.”

So why all the fuss? Identifying the heart of the problem, Bardet specified that “there are doubts about the *Testimonium*—in contrast with the majority of ancient texts—simply because questions have been raised about the *Testimonium*.” He goes on to say that the positions adopted over the centuries are based more on “ulterior motives” than on deductive analysis of the text, which leans heavily in favor of its authenticity.

Whether Bardet’s analysis will change the opinion of scholars on the *Testimonium Flavianum* remains to be seen. It has convinced one eminent specialist of Hellenistic Judaism and primitive Christianity, Pierre Geoltrain. He had long considered the *Testimonium* to be an interpolation, even poking fun at those who believed in its authenticity. But he changed his opinion. He has concluded that Bardet’s work is the reason for that change. Geoltrain has now declared that “nobody should henceforth dare to speak of the ‘implausible testimony’ of Josephus.”

Of course, Jehovah’s Witnesses have even more convincing reason for accepting Jesus as the Christ—that found in the Bible itself.—2 Tim. 3:16.



Almost 40 years after first meeting the Witnesses, Georgina saw her husband get baptized



## Never Give Up Hope!

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Have you for many years been one of Jehovah's Witnesses who would love to have your marriage mate join you in worshipping Jehovah?

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Or have you felt discouraged when your Bible student, who seemed so promising at first, failed to take a stand for the truth?

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The letter that Stella received from Alice reads: "I'm sure you will be thrilled to know that your Bible student from 1974 was baptized at the recent district convention"



A few experiences from Britain will help you to see why you should never give up hope. You will also see what you might do to “send out your bread upon the surface of the waters,” so to speak, in order to help those who have not yet responded to the truth.—Eccl. 11:1.

### PERSEVERANCE—A VITAL FACTOR

One vital factor on your part is perseverance. You need to stick to the truth and cling to Jehovah. (Deut. 10:20) That was what Georgina did. When she began to study the Bible with Jehovah’s Witnesses in 1970, her husband, Kyriacos, was furious. He tried to stop her study, would not let Witnesses in the house, and took away any publications of Jehovah’s Witnesses that he found.

When Georgina started to attend congregation meetings, Kyriacos got even angrier. One day he went to the Kingdom Hall to start an argument. Upon realizing that Kyriacos spoke better Greek than English, a sister phoned a Greek brother in another congregation to come and help. Kyriacos responded well to the brother’s kindly manner, and for a few months, they even studied the Bible together. But then Kyriacos stopped studying.

For three more years, Georgina continued to face opposition. Kyriacos said that he would leave her if she ever got baptized. On the day of her baptism, Georgina prayed fervently to Jehovah that Kyriacos would not leave her. When the Witnesses arrived to take her to the assembly, Kyriacos told them: “You go on ahead. We’ll follow you in our car.” He attended the morning session and watched his wife get baptized!

Afterward Kyriacos’ opposition lessened, and he gradually made major changes. Almost 40 years after first meeting the Witnesses, Georgina saw her husband get baptized! What helped Kyriacos? He says: “I was very pleased with Georgina because she was so determined.” Georgina declares: “Despite my husband’s opposition, I was not going to stop worshipping my God. All the while, I kept praying to Jehovah, and I never lost hope.”

### THE VALUE OF THE NEW PERSONALITY

Another factor in helping your mate is your cultivating the Christian personality. The apostle Peter admonished Christian wives: “Be in subjection to your own husbands, in order that, if any are not obedient to the word, they may be won without a word through the conduct of their wives.” (1 Pet. 3:1) Christine lived by that advice, though it took many years to win her husband over. When she became a Witness more than 20 years ago, her husband, John, felt no need for God in his life. John did not want to get involved in religion, yet he could see how much Christine’s new faith meant to her. “I could see that it made her happy,” he says. “She developed real strength of character and reliability, and this helped me through a lot of difficult situations.”

Christine never pushed her religion on her husband, who acknowledges: “Christine realized from the outset that I was best left alone, and she patiently let me learn at my own pace and in my own way.” When Christine saw articles in *The Watchtower* or *Awake!* on a subject that she knew John would find interesting, such as on science and nature, she pointed these out to him, saying, “I think you will enjoy reading this.”

In time, John retired and took on some gardening work. With his mind freer to think about the deeper questions of life, he began pondering, ‘Are we here because of a series of accidents, or were we created for a purpose?’ One day, a brother with whom John was chatting asked him, “What about a study?” “Now that I had started to believe in God,” says John, “I accepted his offer.”

How important it was that Christine never gave up hope! After she had prayed for 20 years that John might accept the truth, he was baptized. Now they zealously serve Jehovah together. John notes: “Two things particularly won me over—the kindness and the friendliness of the Witnesses. And when you are married to one of Jehovah’s Witnesses, you have a loyal, reliable, and self-sacrificing spouse.” Yes, Christine put into practice the words at 1 Peter 3:1, and it worked!



## SEEDS BEAR FRUIT YEARS LATER

What about Bible students who for one reason or another may lose their initial interest? “In the morning sow your seed and until the evening do not let your hand rest,” wrote King Solomon, “for you are not knowing where this will have success, either here or there, or whether both of them will alike be good.” (Eccl. 11:6) Sometimes the seeds of truth take many years to germinate. Even so, a person may eventually come to realize the importance of drawing close to God. (Jas. 4:8) Yes, one day you might have a delightful surprise.

Consider Alice, who moved from India to England. In 1974 she began to study the Bible. She spoke Hindi but wanted to improve her English. The study continued for some years, and Alice attended a few meetings in an English-speaking congregation. She knew that what she was studying was the truth but treated it as a hobby. Besides, she was quite focused on money and loved to go to parties. Eventually, Alice stopped her study.

Nearly 30 years later, Stella, who used to conduct the study with Alice, received a letter from her. It read: “I’m sure you will be thrilled to know that your Bible student from 1974 was baptized at the recent district convention. You have played a very important role in my life. You planted the seed of truth in me, and although I wasn’t then ready to dedicate myself to God, I kept that seed of truth in my mind and heart.”

What had happened? Alice explains that she became very depressed after her husband’s death in 1997. She prayed to God. Within ten minutes, two Punjabi-speaking Witnesses called at her home and left her the tract *What Hope for Dead Loved Ones?* Alice felt that her prayer was answered and decided that she should associate with Jehovah’s Witnesses. But where could they be found? She came across an old diary con-

taining the contact address that Stella had given her for the Punjabi congregation. Alice visited the Kingdom Hall and was warmly welcomed by Punjabi-speaking brothers and sisters. “The warm feeling continued with me and helped me find relief from my depression,” says Alice.

She began attending meetings regularly and resumed her Bible study, learning to speak and read Punjabi fluently. In 2003 she was baptized. Her letter to Stella concluded this way, “Thank you very much for planting those seeds 29 years ago and for setting a good example for me to follow.”

What can you learn from these experiences? It may take longer than you expect, but if a person

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“Thank you very much for planting  
those seeds 29 years ago and for  
setting a good example for me to  
follow.”—Alice

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is spiritually hungry, honest, and humble, Jehovah will allow the truth to grow in his or her heart. Recall the comment in Jesus’ illustration: “The seed sprouts and grows tall, just how [the sower] does not know. Of its own self the ground bears fruit gradually, first the grass-blade, then the stalk head, finally the full grain in the head.” (Mark 4:27, 28) Such growth is gradual and occurs “of its own self.” In principle, each individual Kingdom proclaimer does not know how this may take place. So continue to sow bountifully. You may yet reap bountifully.

And do not forget the importance of prayer. Georgina and Christine kept praying to Jehovah. If you “persevere in prayer” and never give up hope, “in the course of many days,” you may well find again “bread” that you have sent out upon the surface of the waters.—Rom. 12:12; Eccl. 11:1.