

# The WATCHTOWER



*Why*  
**"Love of Money"  
is Destructive**

MARCH 1, 1977

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

# The **WATCHTOWER**

March 1, 1977  
Vol. 98, Number 5

A watchtower enables a person to see far into the distance and announce to others what is coming. Can a magazine serve similarly in our day? Yes, from its first issue (July 1879) onward, *The Watchtower*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses, has done just that.

How can it benefit you? Consider: Do you long for a better world, one of true justice and free from sorrow, hatred and war? Do you want to live at a time when genuine peace and love prevail among people of all races? Then this magazine can aid you. Using God's Word, the Bible, as its authority, it points out the clear evidence that the present wicked system of things will soon end, destroyed by God. But it also announces the coming in of a righteous new order. There, under the rule of God's kingdom, his heavenly government, people will enjoy life forever in true peace, health and happiness on a paradise earth.

Faithfulness to the Word of God lifts *The Watchtower* above the contradicting religious teachings and philosophies of men. It stays strictly neutral as regards political affairs. It wholeheartedly upholds the highest moral standard—that of man's Maker, Jehovah God. From this source, it shows solutions to the problems of daily life.

We know that many sincere persons would appreciate a discussion of these things in their own home with a qualified person. One of Jehovah's Witnesses will be glad to call on you free of charge. To arrange for this, simply write the publishers of this magazine or contact Jehovah's Witnesses locally.

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# Why "Love of Money" is Destructive

**W**HY is "love of money" such a destructive force? For one thing, it can blunt natural affection among family members. It can rob a person of happiness, make his life needlessly austere or drive him to commit heartless acts against his fellowman.

The case of Henrietta Howland Green of the United States well illustrates the extremes to which love of money can lead. At her death in 1916 she left behind an estate valued at some \$95,000,000. In one bank alone her deposits exceeded \$31,400,000. Yet this wealthy woman denied urgent medical treatment to her son while she tried to find a free clinic. On account of resulting delays the son's leg had to be amputated. She subsisted on cold oatmeal, considering it a waste of money to warm it up. Finally, a heated argument over the benefits of skimmed milk led to her death from apoplexy. For this woman, money had indeed become a destructive force.

Had Henrietta Green known and followed the Bible's sound counsel about money, she could have been a blessing to

others instead of making life miserable for herself and her son. The Bible's counsel could help many other people right now from being ensnared, to their injury, by a love of money.

Calling attention to the destructive consequences springing from a love of money, the apostle Paul wrote: "The love of money is a root of all sorts of injurious things, and by reaching out for this love some . . . have stabbed themselves all over with many pains."—1 Tim. 6:10.

When a person develops a love for it, money becomes his god. All his mental powers and physical energies are devoted to making more money. There is no such thing as ever having enough. "A mere lover of silver," says the Bible, "will not be satisfied with silver, neither any lover of wealth with income." (Eccl. 5:10) This being the case, the individual may be willing to do almost anything to get more money. Service to God and doing good for others are often totally lost to sight.

Love of money, for example, may give rise to a host of dishonest practices, including the use of inferior building materials, adulteration of food and drink, deception in weighing, and the like. No concern is shown for the fact that poor construction materials may make a building unsafe and result in serious injuries and deaths, that adulterating food and drink may harm others' health and that cheating can bring great suffering, particularly to those who may have very little money.

Some people, in an attempt to get rich quick, resort to gambling. The more they gamble, the more they lose. But they continue to believe that soon they will win, regain all their losses and really strike it rich. Thus funds that could have been used for necessities are lost, and children suffer because there is not enough money to buy needed food and clothing.

How can one avoid becoming ensnared by a love of money, to one's own injury and that of others? The answer lies in maintaining a balanced view of material things. God's Word, the Bible, is most helpful in this regard.

Though encouraging industriousness, the Scriptures advise against trying to amass great wealth. They show that a person's working should not be solely for his own benefit. The apostle Paul urged the former stealer to "do hard work, doing with his hands what is good work, that *he may have something to distribute to someone in need.*" (Eph. 4:28) Such active concern for truly needy ones is a safeguard against becoming a self-centered lover of money.

The Scriptures also help a person to take a realistic view of material things, recognizing that riches have no permanence. Possessions can be lost, stolen or destroyed. Though people know that this is the case, they often continue to handle financial affairs in a way that ignores life's uncertainties.

Consider those who go to extremes in forgoing things that could make life more comfortable for themselves. They may do so with the idea that they are storing up for children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Of course, there is nothing wrong with the desire to leave behind an inheritance for children. But parents must be on guard that they do not go to the point of becoming afraid to spend something on themselves. They may even need to ask themselves if the concern they ex-

press for leaving behind an inheritance for children may not actually mask a love for money—an intense desire on their own part to accumulate riches.

It is good to keep in mind what wise King Solomon wrote about how disappointing and frustrating efforts to build up a fortune can be. Everything can quickly be lost at a time when it is likely to hurt most. We read: "There exists a grave calamity that I have seen under the sun: riches being kept for their grand owner to his calamity. And those riches have perished because of a calamitous occupation, and he has become father to a son when there is nothing at all in his hand."—Eccl. 5:13, 14.

Yes, it is sad when a man works hard and then some calamity—war, extended period of drought, fire, earthquake or storm—causes him to lose everything. Now if he did not even allow himself to enjoy the fruitage of his hard work, his life has certainly been empty, vain. The tragedy is still greater if he continued piling up riches and then after losing them now became a father to children.

Even if an inheritance is not lost through some calamity, this still does not mean that a materialistic way of life is worth while. At one's death all the riches in the world are of no benefit to that one. The Bible states frankly: "Just as one has come forth from his mother's belly, naked will one go away again, just as one came; and nothing at all can one carry away for his hard work." (Eccl. 5:15) How vain, then, is a life that has been fully spent in striving after material possessions!

Furthermore, there is no way to know just what will happen to an inheritance after a person's death. The heirs, because of not having worked hard for what they receive, may not appreciate the inheritance and may soon squander it. Should they manage it well, there is still no guarantee that some disaster will not eventually re-

sult in the loss of everything. Then, if no one really got any enjoyment from the fruitage of hard work, of what benefit will it have been?

Recognizing that life is filled with many uncertainties can help one to appreciate that the pursuit of riches is unsatisfying.

This can check any undue desire for money. At the same time a person avoids the trap of a needlessly austere life. He can enjoy the fruitage of his work in a wholesome way, benefiting himself and others. Thus he escapes the harm that the love of money can cause.

# A MAN with The COURAGE TO SPEAK UP

HOW many people have the courage to speak up for what is right when everyone around them is doing the wrong thing? Do you? Suppose the issue is religious or spiritual. Is there any advantage in speaking up?

Early in human history there lived a man with the courage to speak up on spiritual matters. He was Enoch, the son of Jared. Enoch was the seventh man in the genealogical line from Adam, the father of the human race.—Gen. 5:18; Jude 14.

## 'ENOCH WALKED WITH GOD'

What kind of person was Enoch? Though imperfect like all of us, "Enoch kept walking with the true God." (Gen. 5:24) He pursued a course of righteousness in accordance with God's revealed truth. His life harmonized with the will and purpose of Jehovah God. And, surely, Enoch had faith that great blessings would come through the seed of God's "woman." (Gen. 3:15) There is no stated indication that any other man 'walked with God' in

Enoch's day. At least he seems to have been singled out as unique in that respect.

## RELIGIOUS CLIMATE OF THAT DAY

The spiritual situation among mankind had deteriorated to a marked degree by the time of Enoch's birth in the year 3404 before the Common Era. As the years had passed, godless deeds had become more and more numerous. Adam's son Abel, as God's witness, had called upon the name of Jehovah, and had suffered martyrdom for his faithfulness. (Gen. 4:4-8; Heb. 11:4) More than a century later, Adam's son Seth fathered a boy named Enosh. What happened in the days of Enosh? We are told in Scripture: "At that time a start was made of calling on the name of Jehovah." (Gen. 4:25, 26; 5:3, 6) Was this a revival of true worship?

No, it was not. Hebrew scholars hold that this text should read "began profanely" to call on God's name, or, "then profanation began." The *Targum of Palestine* states: "That was the generation in

whose days they began to err, and to make themselves idols, and surnamed their idols by the name of the word of the Lord." Apparently this was a misuse of Jehovah's name. Possibly men applied it to themselves or to certain persons through whom they pretended to approach Jehovah in worship. Or they may have applied the divine name to idols.

In any event, that blasphemous "calling on the name of Jehovah" certainly did not result in a return to the pure worship of the true God. Those people were not walking with God. There is no record of any man walking with God until Enoch was born, 387 years after the birth of Enosh. By Enoch's day, shocking ungodly deeds were common and false worship prevailed. Despite the spiritual corruption that surrounded him, however, Enoch "went on walking with the true God."—Gen. 5:22.

#### **ENOCH SERVES AS GOD'S PROPHET**

Faithful Enoch did not remain silent about religious error and ungodly practices. As a man of outstanding faith, he was one of the "so great a cloud of witnesses" of Jehovah. (Heb. 11:5; 12:1) Enoch—a mere imperfect human standing as an isolated witness among wrongdoers—had the courage to speak up.

"Look!" declared Enoch, "Jehovah came with his holy myriads, to execute judgment against all, and to convict all the ungodly concerning all their ungodly deeds that they did in an ungodly way, and concerning all the shocking things that ungodly sinners spoke against him." (Jude 14, 15) Yes, Enoch spoke courageously as a faithful human prophet of God. In fact, Enoch's prophesying likely was made known by preaching, even as Noah later was a "preacher." (2 Pet. 2:5) However, Enoch was not a campaigner acting on his own initiative. He spoke as he was motivated by Jehovah's holy spirit or active force. So, while Enoch had the courage

to speak up, he did this in the strength that God imparts.—Phil. 4:13.

How the disciple Jude, who recorded Enoch's words in the first century C.E., knew about that prophecy is not revealed. It is not found in the writings of Moses, who compiled the Genesis account. Nevertheless, Jude wrote under divine inspiration, and therefore the inclusion of Enoch's prophecy in his letter establishes the genuineness of those words.

Jude was discussing certain "ungodly men" who had slipped into the Christian congregation. (Jude 4) With reference to them he cited Enoch's prophecy about Jehovah's coming to execute judgment against the ungodly. Surely those words had telling effect in the first century.

But just think about the effect of Enoch's prophetic words upon the ungodly men living in his own day! Would those wrongdoers enjoy hearing that 'Jehovah will come with his holy myriads to execute judgment against the ungodly'? Obviously not! It certainly took courage and the backing of Jehovah to speak up in the midst of those unrighteous practitioners of false religion. How they must have wanted to still Enoch's tongue!

#### **GOD STEPS IN**

Those ungodly persons must have desired to kill the one that God was using to denounce their false worship and "ungodly deeds." But any plans of that sort were thwarted. How? "Then," we are told, "[Enoch] was no more, for God took him." (Gen. 5:24) Jehovah did not permit Enoch's opposers to kill His loyal prophet. Rather, God "took him." Yet, what does that mean?

On this matter, the Christian apostle Paul wrote: "By faith Enoch was transferred so as not to see death, and he was nowhere to be found because God had transferred him; for before his transference he had the witness that he had

pleased God well." (Heb. 11:5) Dr. James Moffatt rendered the text this way: "It was by faith that Enoch was taken to heaven, so that he never died (*he was not overtaken by death, for God had taken him away*)." But how could that rendering be true? Psalm 89:48 asks: "What able-bodied man is there alive who will not see death?"

Enoch was an imperfect man. From his forefather Adam, he had inherited sin and death. "Through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin," wrote the apostle Paul, "and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned." (Rom. 5:12) Moreover, Jesus Christ declared: "No man has ascended into heaven but he that descended from heaven, the Son of man." (John 3:13) Hence, Enoch died, but God did not take him to heaven.

Instead, "God took him" by removing Enoch from the scene in a peaceful death when this faithful prophet was 365 years old. (Gen. 5:23, 24) That was far below the life-span of most of his contemporaries. Enoch did not die a violent death at the hands of his persecutors. Nor is there any Scriptural indication that he suffered the effects of failing health that so often leads to death. Therefore, Enoch apparently did not experience the *pangs* of death. In such case, he did not "see death" in that he was not aware of dying.

After this courageous prophet died in some undisclosed place, Jehovah disposed of his body in secret, even as was the case later with Moses' body. (Deut. 34:5-7) Enoch's foes never were able to find his body and subject it to any abuse.

#### ENOCH'S 'TRANSFERENCE'

In some way, then, "Enoch was transferred so as not to see death" after "he had the witness that he had pleased God well." (Heb. 11:5) The Greek word here rendered "transferred" means "transfer,"

"transport" or "change the place of." It is suggestive of what happened to the apostle Paul, who was transferred or caught away "to the third heaven," or "into paradise." In that state Paul apparently received from God a vision of the future spiritual paradise of the Christian congregation.—2 Cor. 12:1-4.

Since Enoch was a prophet, possibly God "took" him while Enoch was in a similar state of rapture. Jehovah may have put him to sleep in death while Enoch was in a prophetic trance, enjoying a vision of the paradise of God's new order wherein Jehovah "will actually swallow up death forever." (Isa. 25:8) In Enoch's case, the resurrection from the dead may bring with it a transition from entralling vision to marvelous reality.—Acts 24:15.

#### OF WHAT BENEFIT TODAY?

Godly persons of today can benefit greatly from the experiences and fine example of Enoch. Like him, they can 'walk with God' in faith, living in harmony with the divine will and purpose. Though imperfect like Enoch, they can be faithful witnesses of Jehovah, even as he was.

—Heb. 12:1.

Jehovah is not 'taking' godly persons off the scene today as he "took" Enoch. But by means of the holy spirit, God is sustaining his people as they face persecution for righteousness' sake. They are able to rejoice despite various trials, confident that God will not permit them to experience more than they can bear. (Matt. 5:10; 1 Cor. 10:13; 1 Pet. 1:6, 7) Yet, if they should die in faithfulness, like Enoch these godly ones have the resurrection hope.—John 5:28, 29.

Whereas Christians have not seen the future earthly paradise in vision, it is very real to them. They know that it will be established. (Luke 23:43) Even now they are enjoying a spiritual paradise.

In harmony with Enoch's prophetic

warning, Jehovah executed judgment against the ungodly during the flood of Noah's day. But that prophecy is also of encouragement to Christians today, for it shows that at the destruction of Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion, and during God's war at Har-Magedon, ungodly persons will be destroyed, cut off by God's holy myriads. The Lord Jesus Christ will be in charge

of that executional work.—Rev. 16:14-16; 18:1-24; 19:11-16.

Like Enoch, therefore, Christians today boldly declare God's message, whether it relates to divine judgments against the ungodly or has to do with His glorious purpose to bless mankind under the rule of the heavenly Kingdom. About such things Jehovah's Witnesses have the courage to speak up.

# Memorializing Christ's Death

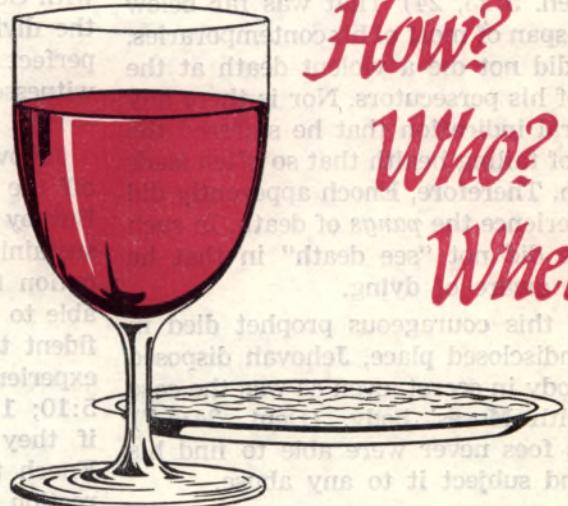
**A**MONG the many meaningful and truly touching incidents recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures is that of the patriarch Abraham proceeding to offer up his son Isaac.

What a test faced Abraham when he heard God say: "Take, please, your son, your only son whom you so love, Isaac, and . . . offer him up as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I shall designate to you"! (Gen. 22:2, 3) Because of his great faith, Abraham met that test, confident that God could resurrect Isaac so as to fulfill the divine promise regarding his offspring. (Gen. 12:2, 3; 21:12; Heb. 11:17-19) Thus Abraham made a fine picture of how Jehovah God would offer up his only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, whom he likewise loved so greatly.

—John 3:16; Gal. 3:16.

However, did you know that Isaac also successfully met a great test on that occasion? By now he most likely was a

**Why?**  
**When?**  
**How?**  
**Who?**  
**Where?**



strong young man. Had he wanted to, he could have easily resisted his father or run away. But no, he obediently submitted to his father. In doing so Isaac well pictured how Jesus Christ would submit to

his heavenly Father's will down to his death on the execution stake, saying: "Not as I will, but as you will."—Matt. 26:39; Phil. 2:5-8.

How much was accomplished by Jesus' obediently submitting to his heavenly Father's will! As can be seen from Job chapters 1 and 2 Satan the Devil had taunted Jehovah God that He could not put men on earth that would keep integrity to Him. Faithful men, such as Job, proved the Devil a liar. However, could another *perfect* man like the perfect Adam in Eden keep flawless integrity whereas Adam had failed to do so? Whose fault had this failure been? God's or man's? In that Jesus as a perfect man kept integrity perfectly, he proved that Jehovah God was just and right in making everlasting life for Adam dependent upon perfect obedience. Jesus proved that it was not God's fault, but man's, that Adam sinned. Jesus thereby vindicated his heavenly Father as rightful Sovereign. That is what he accomplished for his Father by keeping integrity until death.

And for humankind, what did Jesus accomplish? By his death he provided a propitiatory sacrifice that takes away the sin of the world and provides the basis for restoring humankind to perfection. (1 John 2:2) This restoration is to take place in an earthly paradise by means of God's kingdom. (Matt. 6:10; 20:28) As the great Teacher, Jesus also made his Father's will known to us, a fine example being his Sermon on the Mount. (Matt. 5:1-7:28) Moreover, he set a perfect pattern for his followers: "Christ suffered for you, leaving you a model for you to follow his steps closely."—1 Pet. 2:21.

## Why A Memorial?

There is no question about Jesus' having suffered a great deal. Thus, on one

occasion he said: "Indeed, I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and how I am being distressed until it is finished!" On occasion he even prayed to God "with strong outcries and tears." (Luke 12:50; Heb. 5:7) And what a tremendous burden rested upon Jesus that last night on earth as a man! He knew what his heavenly Father had purposed for him, but he also knew that he had to prove faithful under test. He could have failed. Had he done so, what a reproach it would have meant for his Father and what a loss to humankind! But he kept perfect integrity. Because of all that he accomplished thereby, both for Jehovah God and for humankind, it is indeed most fitting that his death be memorialized.

## How Often? When?

Some denominations in Christendom celebrate Christ's death daily, others weekly, others quarterly. But is it not usual to memorialize great and meaningful events annually? This was so with the passover that marked the deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage. It was celebrated once each year on the anniversary of the very day that it took place, namely, on the fourteenth day of the Biblical month Nisan. And it was on Nisan 14, 33 C.E., that Jesus instituted the memorial of his death, he dying later on that very day. It is therefore logical and fitting that his death be memorialized once each year and on that date. This year, Nisan 14 falls on Sunday, April 3, after sundown. Why after sundown? Because in ancient Bible times the day ran from sundown to sundown. So, even though the sun may set late in certain northern latitudes, the time of the actual passing of the Memorial bread and wine should be after sundown.

# *How Celebrated?*

In instituting the memorial of his death, Jesus took a loaf of bread (actually a large round waferlike loaf) and, breaking it, said: "Take, eat. This means my body." (Matt. 26:26) What body was Jesus here referring to? His own body of flesh and blood, for it was his fleshly body that he gave for the life of the world. The bread's being without leaven pictured Jesus' being without sin. Accordingly, the bread used at the Memorial should be unleavened, without yeast, and it should be free of any other ingredients except flour and water.—John 6:51; 1 Cor. 5:7, 8; 1 Pet. 2:22.

Next, Jesus took the cup of wine and, after having given thanks, handed it to his disciples, saying: "Drink out of it, all of you; for this means my 'blood of the covenant,' which is to be poured out in behalf of many for forgiveness of sins." (Matt. 26:27, 28) From these words we understand that a twofold purpose is served by Jesus' shed blood. First, it serves for cleansing humans from sin. (1 John 1:7) And, secondly, it serves to make valid or operative the new covenant between God and the Christian congregation, even as the old Law covenant between God and the nation of Israel was made operative by Moses' sprinkling the shed blood of animals. (Heb. 9:19, 20) Just as Jesus used pure fermented red wine to represent his perfect human lifeblood, so today the wine used at the Memorial should be pure red wine, with nothing added either to fortify, sweeten or flavor it.

# *Who Partake?*

Who may appropriately partake of these emblems? Jesus instituted the Memorial when only his eleven faithful apostles were present. Thereafter he told them that he

was going away to prepare a place in the heavens for them. (John 14:1-3) And he also told them that he covenanted with them for a kingdom. (Luke 22:28-30) So it is only those who expect to share with Jesus in his heavenly Kingdom, and who are also in the new covenant, that are in line to partake of the Lord's Evening Meal, as it is also called.—Luke 12:32; Heb. 8:10-13; 1 Cor. 11:20.

Of these partaking, we read further: "The spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are God's children. If, then, we are children, we are also heirs: heirs indeed of God, but joint heirs with Christ, provided we suffer together that we may also be glorified together." (Rom. 8:16, 17) Writing to such Christians Paul gave instructions as to the proper observance of the Memorial. And regarding them he went on to say that in the resurrection they would be clothed with incorruption and immortality. (1 Cor. 11:20-34; 15:50-54) Thus it can be appreciated that only those who have this heavenly hope may properly partake of the Memorial bread and wine.

# *Who Else Benefit?*

There are two destinies for different ones of the followers of Jesus Christ. This is indicated by the fact that the Scriptures tell of both heavenly glory and earthly paradisaic conditions to be enjoyed by God's people. (Rev. 20:4, 6; 21:3, 4) Jesus spoke of these two classes as two folds that eventually become one flock. (John 10:16) Similarly we read of the human creation's eagerly expecting the revealing of the spiritual "sons of God." (Rom. 8:19-21) These sons are also spoken of as "first-fruits to God and to the Lamb," indicating that there are also other, later "fruits." (Rev. 14:1, 4) Further indication of this is found in the inspired words that Jesus

Christ "is a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins, yet not for ours only but also for the whole world's." (1 John 2:2) This distinction is to be seen also in that the Kingdom heirs are likened to Abraham's seed that is to bless all the families of the earth.—Gen. 22:17, 18; Gal. 3:29.

Therefore it is apparent that those with earthly hopes, the "great crowd" of "other sheep," who are not in the new covenant, are not to partake of the bread and wine at the Memorial. Is there any point, then, in their being present? Indeed there is! We might liken it, in a way, to a wedding anniversary celebration. Of course, it concerns chiefly the married couple, but they may well invite others, friends and relatives, to share in their happiness. (Compare Revelation 19:6, 7.) Those with the earthly hopes are keenly interested in that which concerns those with the heavenly hopes; happily they honor the occasion with their presence.

Surely all, regardless of their destiny, can profit greatly by attending. This occasion is always used to recount the grand quality of love that Jehovah God showed in giving his Son to be our ransomer. It also emphasizes the depth of Jesus' love in laying down his life for us, as well as the fine example he set for his followers. (John 15:12, 13; 1 Cor. 15:3) The Scriptures further indicate that the Lord's Evening Meal serves as an occasion for self-examination for all those attending.

And this would particularly be as to their love for one another, for on that occasion Jesus said: "I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves." Certainly this quality of love, so strikingly expressed by Jehovah God and Jesus Christ, is something that should identify all Christians regardless of what their hope may be.—John 13:34, 35.

## *Attend Where?*

The memorial of Christ's death is a time of rejoicing. For Jesus could tell his apostles at that memorable evening meal together: "I have conquered the world." (John 16:33) By keeping his integrity, Jesus proved the Devil a liar and God true, surely a cause for joy. Shortly, in upward of 40,000 congregations throughout the earth, Jehovah's Witnesses will rejoice to memorialize Jesus' death. Are you one who appreciates or who wants to know more about all that Jehovah God and Jesus Christ have done for you? Then you are welcome to come to one of the Kingdom Halls of Jehovah's Witnesses after sundown on Sunday, April 3, 1977, and join in observing this memorial of Christ's death, to the praise of Jehovah God and for your own spiritual well-being.

## *Why So Expensive?*

● The "genuine nard" poured by Mary, Lazarus' sister, upon the head and feet of Jesus Christ had a value of 300 denarii. (Mark 14:3-9; John 12:3-8) This was the equivalent of about a year's wages. (Matt. 20:2) It is generally believed that the source of the product that Mary used was the small aromatic spikenard plant (*Nardostachys jatamansi*) found in the Himalaya mountains. The fact that the "genuine nard" came from such a distant place, plus its rarity, would explain why it was so expensive.

# THE "GOOD NEWS" REACHES RECEPTIVE HEARTS



## IN EL SALVADOR

EL SALVADOR, a small country beautifully surrounded by lakes and volcanoes, is located right at the heart of Central America. This densely populated country with 203 persons per square kilometer (.4 of a square mile) is certainly receiving with great joy the "good news."

It had a small start back on February 24, 1945, thirty-two years ago, when the first two Watch Tower missionaries arrived in El Salvador. They were soon followed by others. Some of these are still serving here, joyfully and faithfully, and, indeed, the work in connection with God's kingdom has prospered. In the words of God's prophet: "The little one himself will become a thousand, and the small one a mighty nation. I myself, Jehovah, shall speed it up in its own time." (Isa. 60:22) Yes, the good news about his Kingdom has been extensively declared, and native Witnesses have also had a great share in

planting the seeds and seeing how Jehovah keeps "making it grow."  
—1 Cor. 3:6.

### GOD'S SERVICE PREFERRED TO POLITICS

Some persons formerly involved in politics have let their hearts be softened by the "good news" and have made it their purpose in life to serve Jehovah instead of 'serving men.' A number of these have turned out to be true "gifts in men." (Eph. 4:8, 11, 12; 6:6) Let us read about some of them.

Some years ago, a young engineer held a high position in government as a member of the cabinet. His wife was studying with a Watch Tower missionary. He had attended a postgraduate course at Harvard University, and, wanting to keep up his English, he asked the missionary to give him some private English lessons. He had no interest whatsoever in religion, as he had become disgusted with the political dabblings of the Catholic Church. However, since he was an unusually curious man and the missionary was very alert, they were soon talking in English about the Bible and the true religion. It interested him so much that he asked the missionary for a Bible study in Spanish, though as yet he was not convinced that Jehovah's Witnesses had the truth doctrinally.

In due course, he offered to build a new branch building for the Watch Tower Society, expressing his desire to design, build and follow through on all aspects of the building without any professional fees. While drawing up these plans, he also began to make good progress in Bible knowledge and formed a very close companionship with the missionaries. He admired them and wanted his children to

grow up to be like them. During a visit to the United States he was able to attend an assembly in Columbus, Ohio, and was baptized.

In recent years, he has been privileged to serve in various capacities as an elder. And now he serves as one of the elders on the Branch Committee of Jehovah's Witnesses for El Salvador. His family has also grown to maturity, his son being a member of the Bethel family at the New York headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses. He has left behind the world and the apparent benefits it could offer, in order to serve Jehovah willingly and wholeheartedly.

This former politician was closely observed by another member of the president's cabinet, who thought to himself, "This man has become insane." But now he believes that he must have been the insane one. Why so? Because eighteen years later, this engineer, ex-minister of public works and onetime candidate for mayor, has received the good news into his heart. He is also sharing the truth with others, conducting twelve Bible studies, and is a ministerial servant in the congregation. In 1975 he received the award as professional man of the year in El Salvador. In his acceptance speech he said that his desire had always been to construct a better world. But then, with the use of Bible references, he showed to all those present, including the president and his cabinet, that God's kingdom alone could accomplish this.

#### A SINCERE SEARCH REWARDED

Now, what made a young girl, the daughter of an ex-president of El Salvador, accept the truth of God's Word? Let her express herself:

"I grew up in a nonreligious atmosphere, where false religion had been exposed. Neither my mother nor my father had any

connection with the Catholic Church due to their previous personal experiences with the Church.

"My father assumed the presidency when I was thirteen years old, and I remember how the most prominent clergymen, like bishops and cardinals, desired to have a close relationship with the family. However, was it to help us spiritually? Well, my mother very frankly expressed that she would only attend church functions when they had to do with official State matters. The clergy never showed any interest in helping us spiritually. They only appeared on the scene when a political campaign was taking place or when a national problem arose.

"I had been trained to distrust everyone. It was proved to me that there was a reason for this mistrust, when one night there was an attempt to overthrow my father as president. I was the only member of the family at home with my father when the shooting started. I really experienced the fear of death as bullets almost hit me. I called for God's help, for I did believe in his existence. I faithfully promised that if I came out of this alive, I would search for him and try to find him."

She could not turn to the clergymen for guidance, as she had witnessed how they were so involved in politics. And now they became the mediators between the government and the rebels. This disappointed her deeply. Where could she turn for help? She associated briefly with various Protestant sects and with some Jews, but did not find God. Then she and her fiancé accepted a study with Jehovah's Witnesses. Today, as a happily married Christian couple, they are so thankful to be among Jehovah's people where they can serve God with their spiritual brothers and sisters in a climate of genuine trust.

#### ALL KINDS OF PERSONS ACCEPT TRUTH

These 1970's have found Jehovah's Witnesses very active in the entire country. There are now 118 congregations and 6,010 Witnesses compared to 1,300 six

years ago. The attendance at the Memorial of Christ's death in 1976 was 19,364. "This good news of the kingdom" is certainly penetrating to honest hearts throughout these territories.—Matt. 24:14.

Regardless of their social status, the Witnesses are busy in spreading the Word of God. Seeds of truth have taken root in the hearts of farmers, craftsmen, maids, executives, professional people, laborers, students and others. A woman doctor who is now a Witness remarked: "They cannot be stopped. They are everywhere and everybody is studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses." (Joel 2:9) Indeed, the number of persons associating with the Witnesses has increased greatly during the last three years.

A traveling overseer of Jehovah's Witnesses relates the following: The first time that he visited a bricklayer and his family, they lived very poorly in a little *bahareque* house (built from mud and sticks). It was almost falling apart. Now, four years later, they still live in the same little house, but it has been repaired, painted and is gradually being converted into a brick house. The surroundings are now clean. The newly acquired physical cleanliness of this family is a reflection of their spiritual condition. The husband now serves as a ministerial servant in one of the local congregations. Though a bricklayer's wages are small in this country, he has achieved much through leading a well-balanced Christian life.

A young married couple who had used drugs extensively were being bothered by demons. On one occasion after the use of drugs the wife felt as if she were going to die. Her whole life flashed through her mind, and she made a promise that if she lived she would serve God. Previously she had studied the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses, and she remembered something

of what it taught about the demons. Therefore, she again got in contact with the Witnesses, and this time her husband also joined in the study. He had been a national race-car champion, but soon he left his worldly associations, as well as giving up the use of drugs. Their lives began to change. Now they are both baptized, and they are sharing joyfully in the wholesome work of telling others about the Word of God.

A socially prominent woman had a hobby of collecting archaeological objects. She had many costly relics from churches, some made of silver and gold, besides a collection of antiquities. On learning the good news she realized that she could be opening herself up to demon influence by the presence of these false religious objects. (Deut. 7:25, 26) So she proceeded to throw these things away. This, after having had only two Bible studies with Jehovah's Witnesses! Now she is participating in telling the good news to others of her community, many of whom had been inaccessible to the Kingdom message for a long time.

An executive noted the excellent conduct of two young men who were working in his office. So he asked them: "What is it that you have that I do not have, being that I am also a hardworking man?" They could explain that, as witnesses of Jehovah, they modeled their lives on Bible principles. As a result, this executive consented to having a Bible study and now he is a Witness himself.

#### "GOOD NEWS" SOLVES STUDENTS' PROBLEMS

A Witness attending the university in El Salvador tells the following: "I had the privilege of knowing the truth since my childhood, but growing from child-

hood to adulthood was not easy. This was something I had to face during my high school years and only with Jehovah's help was I able to overcome all the obstacles that were hurled at me to break my integrity to Jehovah. In time I had to make the decision of whether or not to go on to the university for further studies. Finally I decided to attend the university. But as the days went by I found that the university was full of politics. There was much hypocrisy.

"This rude awakening made me realize more fully that Jehovah alone has the way out of this deathly system of things and that mankind's problems will be solved only through his kingdom. So I decided to serve Jehovah wholeheartedly. I took every opportunity to witness to my fellow students. The result is that some are attending the meetings, and two of them have already been baptized."

The experience of one of these students is as follows:

"My life up to nine months ago was a worldly life engaging in sexual relations just to satisfy the desires of the flesh. For seven years I daily smoked marijuana and used other kinds of drugs like LSD, hashish and cocaine, and I drank heavily.

"Nevertheless, my life was completely empty and I felt like a boat in the middle of a storm. About a year ago, I thought I was in love with a girl, but this resulted in disillusionment that only made my situation worse. Life became hopeless—I ceased to take anything seriously. During this same time I had sexual relations with another girl for about two years, and as a result she became pregnant. Abortion was the solution to that problem. I will never forget those days. They left a terrible scar on my life.

"I had always rejected all religious ideas and believed in material and worldly philosophies. But suddenly I had a desire to know God. I was acquainted with one of Jehovah's Witnesses who went to the university. So I approached him and asked him what the Bible taught and what he did as

a Witness. He immediately invited me to the Kingdom Hall. As I watched those people I knew there must be a God. Their behavior was different from others in the world and in so-called Christian religions. I started to study the Bible with the help of the book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*.

"I changed my bad habits and each day learned more about the truth. After a month I was going from house to house telling others about God's kingdom. In six months I was baptized at the 'Divine Sovereignty' District Assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses. This indeed was the happiest and most important day of my life. At last I feel that I am doing what is right in Jehovah's eyes. I am now enjoying the privilege of being an 'auxiliary pioneer' and intend to continue doing so. I am conducting many Bible studies with other newly interested persons. I thank Jehovah for his great undeserved kindness toward me and others."

#### GRAND BLESSINGS AHEAD

No matter where we turn, we see zealous Witnesses proclaiming the Word of God to all kinds of people. This has proved to be wonderful good news for many honest persons in El Salvador. And soon all people who let the good news reach their hearts will rejoice to see the fulfillment of Jehovah's promise at Revelation 21:3, 4: "Look! The tent of God is with mankind, and he will reside with them, and they will be his peoples. And God himself will be with them. And he will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away." This will be accomplished under the thousand-year Kingdom reign of Jehovah's Son, Christ Jesus.

In the meantime, El Salvador is proving to be a fruitful field for gathering in those of the "great crowd" that will survive to enjoy those blessings.—Rev. 7:9, 14-17.

# Insight on the News

- When the Nobel Prize-winning biologist George Wald addressed the National Science Teachers Association recently, he made some startling admissions about "scientific" thinking. "**Don't Think About a Designer**" living in a quite particular universe," he began, "one that seems designed for the great deal of variation and development [necessary for life]."

But the Seattle "Times" report notes that "just as Wald seemed to be approaching the conclusion that the 'quite particular' universe was the work of a Creator, he abruptly turned away." Why?

"Scientists are reluctant to recognize a design," Wald said, "because they are eager to avoid the idea of a Designer, with a capital D. I, myself, don't like to think about a Designer."

Does this kind of thinking remind you of the popular image of three monkeys, each one with its hands over its eyes, ears or mouth? How similar to the religious leaders of Jesus' day, of whom he said: "They look without seeing, and listen without hearing or understanding!"—Matt. 13:13, "New English Bible."

- A major church is changing its story on a fundamental "Christian" doctrine—the immortality of the soul. The German Lutheran "Evangelischer Erwachsenenkatechismus" (Evangelical Catechism for Grown-ups) admits that the source of this teaching is the "Greek philosopher Plato (427-347 B.C.) [who] contended emphatically that there was a difference between body and soul."

This new Lutheran catechism states: "Evangelical theologians of modern times challenge this combination of Greek and Biblical concepts. . . . They reject the separation of man into body and soul. Since man as a whole is a sinner, therefore at death he dies completely with body and soul (full death). The resurrection of the dead therefore has no connection with man, it is a completely new creation by God. Between death and resur-

rection there is a gap; the individual continues his existence at best in God's memory."—Pp. 189, 532, 533.

For decades Jehovah's Witnesses have been considered heretics for teaching this about the soul. It did not take them centuries to realize what Evangelical theologians are just now admitting. Their study of the Bible itself rather than human philosophy revealed that "the soul that sins shall die," and that the "dead know nothing" until the resurrection.—Ezek. 18:4, 20; Eccl. 9:5, 10, "Revised Standard Version."

But if the immortal soul doctrine is founded on Platonic philosophy, how much more of what is passed off as "Christian" to unsuspecting church members is also rooted in similar falsehoods?

- "Science" magazine reports that now penicillin-resistant gonorrhea "is being transmitted world wide in a kind of great international exchange that nobody needs."

**Coming VD "Panic"?** Also noting the continued epidemic spread of ordinary gonorrhea, "Science" says that "health officials really do not know what to do about it. Reasoning that they cannot stop its spread, because they cannot stop people from having sex, they are feeling something that could develop into panic if they had to cope with large numbers of resistant cases."

Thus, because of the world's sick moral climate, scientists and even clergymen reject as impractical the obvious remedy to the spread of venereal diseases. But the Bible's advice to "flee from fornication" and to keep the 'marriage bed without defilement' remains the only truly practical way to be free of these loathsome afflictions.

"Science" also reports that sexually transmitted diseases differ from other infectious diseases in that "people do not develop any effective natural immunity to the disease after they have had it once. No one is certain why this is so." Certainly this "abnormal" bodily reaction further supports the Bible's observation that a person who "practices fornication is sinning against his own body."—1 Cor. 6:18; Heb. 13:4.

# What Did The WISE MAN Mean?

**'That They May See  
that They Are Beasts'**

Men may pride themselves in their abilities and knowledge. Yet as regards the way life comes to its end, men are no better off than unreasoning beasts. Wise King Solomon called attention to this, saying: "I, even I, have said in my heart with regard to the sons of mankind that the true God is going to select them, that they may see that they themselves are beasts. For there is an eventuality as respects the sons of mankind and an eventuality as respects the beast, and they have the same eventuality. As the one dies, so the other dies; and they all have but one spirit, so that there is no superiority of the man over the beast, for everything is vanity. All are going to one place. They have all come to be from the dust, and they are all returning to the dust."—Eccl. 3:18-20.

Just before introducing this thought, Solomon wrote: "The true God will judge both the righteous one and the wicked one, for there is a time for every affair and concerning every work there." (Eccl. 3:17) So, in verse 18, Solomon's speaking of God's 'selecting' or 'sifting' humans may mean that what he affords them in

the way of opportunities, as well as the things he allows them to experience, including problems and uncertainties, will in time reveal whether they are righteous or wicked. The fact that life is filled with difficulties and uncertainties and finally terminates in death should bring home to men that, as far as their own power goes, in the end they are like beasts. The same spirit or life force, sustained by breathing, animates both man and beast. After dying both man and beast return to the lifeless dust.—Eccl. 9:4-6.

Based solely on human observation, no one can answer the question next raised by Solomon: "Who is there knowing the spirit of the sons of mankind, whether it is ascending upward; and the spirit of the beast, whether it is descending downward to the earth?"—Eccl. 3:21.

Since death ends all of a human's activities just as in the case of a mere beast, Solomon concludes: "I have seen that there is nothing better than that the man should rejoice in his works, for that is his portion; because who will bring him in to look on what is going to be after him?" (Eccl. 3:22) Wisdom dictates getting wholesome enjoyment from one's hard work. After a person is dead, he ceases to have any further share in human activities. As a lifeless corpse, he cannot even look upon what is taking place among humankind.—Eccl. 9:5, 10.

Our remembering that death can reduce a person to nothingness just like an unreasoning beast should have a sobering effect upon us. It should make us mindful of the importance of using our life for good despite uncertainties and problems. We should also be moved to turn to God, recognizing that any future life prospects after death rest with him.

# JUDGING with Righteousness, Wisdom and Mercy

JUDGING is something wherein we humans often make mistakes. This is basically due to our imperfections. Have you ever had someone misjudge your motives or condemn you on the basis of wrong information? Did you feel that mercy was withheld? On the other hand, has not your own judgment been one-sided at times because of your failing to consider impartially all the facts where others are concerned? Were you, also, remiss in not being merciful? Honesty compels us to admit how far short we all come in this regard.

For judging to be done with righteousness, wisdom and mercy, a standard higher than any set by humans must be observed. That standard is provided by God. We should not only be interested in that standard but be guided by it. Why? Because Jehovah God, the "Judge of all," will use it when we must stand before his judgment seat. (Heb. 12:23; Rom. 14:10) Should we not, therefore, be governed by what he says is right? That would be the loving and wise course to follow. Any actions or decisions on our part will have lasting benefits only if we are influenced by God's view of judging matters.

Where can consistent judging according to God's righteous standards be found today? It is acknowledged that there are

still some persons, in official and ordinary walks of life, who are capable of handing down impartial judgments. However, today those who are acquainted with God's Word and the facts are convinced that, as a whole, this world

is not governed by righteous standards. It lies in the power of the wicked one; yes, is misled by him. (1 John 5:19; Rev. 12:9) This includes Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion, which the Bible describes as an unclean woman. (Rev. 17:3-5; 18:2-4) God's people who have come out of her are grateful that they are no longer victims of her perverted judgment on matters of faith and morals. Their confidence is in the arrangement that Jehovah God has restored within the true Christian congregation where faithful appointed elders perform judicial functions as foretold at Isaiah 1:26: "And I will bring back again judges for you as at the first, and counselors for you as at the start. After this you will be called City of Righteousness, Faithful Town."

In the history of God's ancient people, judges were first appointed on a large scale shortly after Israel left Egypt in 1513 B.C.E. In trying to handle all the cases requiring the decisions of the true God according to his laws, Moses was in danger of wearing himself out. His father-in-law, Jethro, advised that some of the responsibility be distributed so that better attention could be given to the multitude being led in the wilderness. Thousands of capable men were selected to assist Moses. They were to handle ordinary problems or questions that arose. Moses would con-

It is recommended that the reader review this article before studying the following two articles.

tinue to bear the primary responsibility of acquainting the people with God's law and regulations, and of making known to them the way in which they should walk and the work that they should do. A very orderly arrangement was recommended: "But you yourself should select out of all the people capable men, fearing God, trustworthy men, hating unjust profit; and you must set these over them as chiefs over thousands, chiefs over hundreds, chiefs over fifties and chiefs over tens. And they must judge the people on every proper occasion; and it must occur that every big case they will bring to you, but every small case they themselves will handle as judges. So make it lighter for yourself, and they must carry the load with you. If you do this very thing, and God has commanded you, you will then certainly be able to stand it and, besides, this people will all come to their own place in peace."—Ex. 18:13-23.

Later, after they had settled in the land of Canaan, Jehovah raised up judges, not just to hear cases involving violations of law, but to deliver his people from the hands of oppressors. (Judg. 2:18) These judges were appointed as leaders and they also helped the people to know and apply God's law. They included men like Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah and Samuel, who performed notable exploits and also "effected righteousness," according to the record at Hebrews 11:32, 33. Other judges in ancient Israel, who served as older men in the community, not only handled legal cases, but shared in administrative duties.—1 Chron. 26:29; 2 Chron. 19:4-7.

Even the kings of Israel were required to read the book of the law, learning to fear Jehovah and observe his word. (Deut. 17:19, 20) They were called upon to judge matters accordingly, if they expected to prosper and have God's favor.—2 Chron. 1:9-12.

#### ELDERS AS JUDGES TODAY

What is the arrangement in effect for judging matters among God's people today? Jehovah has raised up elders who are in a position to serve as judges and counselors. These men must meet the divine requirements set out at 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Their responsibility not only involves handling judicial matters. They also teach and make clear what God requires and encourage the rendering of whole-souled service to God and faithful obedience to his righteous principles.—Col. 3:23; 1 Thess. 5:21; 1 Pet. 1:22.

What is our view of this arrangement as found in the local congregation with which we may associate? We do not want to be like some in the first-century Corinthian congregation who instigated lawsuits against one another before unbelievers. The apostle Paul reproved them, saying: "I am speaking to move you to shame. Is it true that there is not one wise man among you that will be able to judge between his brothers, but brother goes to court with brother, and that before unbelievers?" (1 Cor. 6:5, 6) By resorting to worldly courts to settle matters that could have been handled within the Christian congregation, they were suffering a spiritual setback or defeat. None of us want to be put to shame or suffer regret for failing to view properly the arrangement for judging in harmony with Scriptural procedures today. Rather, we should be moved to express heartfelt appreciation for these theocratic provisions. By heeding the counsel and good judgment coming from those who 'speak the word of God to us,' we demonstrate our desire to work closely with the "faithful and discreet slave" class, in subjection to Christ.—Heb. 13:7, 17; Eph. 5:24; Matt. 24:45-47.

With Jehovah's judgments now being made manifest, we are learning to appreciate the high standards by which we must live. We are being helped properly to de-

cide personal, as well as congregational, matters, even though we are still imperfect. We are being drawn closer to Jehovah and being provided a foretaste of his righteous new order. In anticipation of

that glorious time, we can say confidently to Jehovah: "When there are judgments from you for the earth, righteousness is what the inhabitants of the productive land will certainly learn."—Isa. 26:9.

## RIGHT QUALITIES NEEDED IN JUDGE

"When having a hearing between your brothers, you must judge with righteousness between a man and his brother or his alien resident."—Deut. 1:16.

JUDGING matters that affect people's lives and relationships is a serious responsibility. Within the Christian congregation, elders especially should examine how they are discharging this responsibility. In giving counsel or rendering decisions it is one thing to express an opinion; it is quite another matter to judge in *righteousness*. To observe God's standard for judging, elders should keep in mind what Moses commanded judges in his day: "When having a hearing between your brothers, you must judge with righteousness between a man and his brother or his alien resident. You must not be partial in judgment. You should hear the little one the same as the great one. You must not become frightened because of a man, for the judgment belongs to God." (Deut. 1:16, 17) Whether the case involves someone seemingly great due to his material means, educational background or major accomplishments to his credit, or whether

it involves one of "little means" in these respects, elders must be impartial. Their aim should be to do what is right, not in their own eyes, but according to God's view of matters. (Prov. 21:2, 3) Thus the judgment will truly belong to Jehovah, as expressed through his Word and earthly channel.

Elders cannot properly decide matters on the basis of limited knowledge. They need to have the complete picture when hearing a matter. To isolate main points and to see how a problem developed or why something was done, elders must ask pertinent, discreet questions. Those involved in a case should cooperate with them by giving all the facts rather than a partial presentation of what they know. This enables elders to relate Bible laws to the issues raised or the charges being considered. Solomon requested wisdom to fulfill the responsibility placed upon him. (1 Ki. 3:9, 12) Elders, too, need *heavenly*

1. What stands out in the requirements for judging that Moses expressed at Deuteronomy 1:16, 17?

2. Why is wisdom essential in judging, and what results therefrom?

wisdom in making proper application of what God's Word says regarding situations that they are called on to handle. This results in producing righteous fruits within the congregation.—Jas. 3:17, 18.

<sup>3</sup> Another quality that elders must exercise in matters of judgment is *mercy*. (Jas. 2:13) They are to imitate Jehovah, about whom the psalmist wrote: "As a father shows mercy to his sons, Jehovah has shown mercy to those fearing him." (Ps. 103:13) When Israel strayed, how did Jehovah respond to their right heart attitude in seeking his favor? He expressed compassion, not just in a negative way to soften his judgment, but in a positive way to cover transgressions. His indignation was momentary in comparison with the lasting extension of his mercies. (Isa. 54:7, 8) As for those who were at a disadvantage, the inspired writer praises Jehovah as "guarding the alien residents; the fatherless boy and the widow he relieves."—Ps. 146:9.

<sup>4</sup> Likewise, the elders are to bring relief, not just to repentant wrongdoers, but to all disadvantaged ones. We have the sick, handicapped, aged, timid and poverty-stricken in our midst. (Jas. 1:27) So elders are to practice mercy, not only by exercising restraint in judicial matters where repentance is manifest, but by expressing kind consideration and pity in behalf of all those in need, whether due to having slipped into transgression, spiritual weakness or because of physical disadvantages.

#### EXERCISING GODLY QUALITIES IN JUDGING

<sup>5</sup> In their everyday dealings with brothers elders should look for the good in them, note their progress and be ready to com-

mend. This encourages a desire to do even better. In areas of personal taste, they should not try to impose their personal ideas on others. Where Bible principles are not set aside they recognize that there is room for diversity in likes and dislikes. This is true in the field of recreation, in our eating and drinking habits and in customs of dress and grooming. When observing trends, rather than counteract something not desirable through rigid rules, discerning elders should be constructive, encouraging what is desirable. Of course, where some are no longer moderate but go to extremes or begin to violate God's Word, then something needs to be said or done to help them.—Rom. 14:19-23; Titus 2:2-5.

<sup>6</sup> Take, for example, the matter of apparel. Although *The Watchtower* has commented on this matter from time to time, some have difficulty in weighing the Scriptural principles involved. Or, they look for ways to circumvent them, stretching a statement out of proportion to given situations. By considering basic questions and reasoning matters out, their thinking can be adjusted. Is the clothing neat and clean? Is it well arranged and modest, befitting those who reverence God? Is the apparel of the quiet and mild spirit being emphasized or is the extreme physical appearance getting most of the attention? (1 Tim. 2:9, 10; 1 Pet. 3:3-5) Will others be unpleasantly affected by what one wears? Does it detract from the dignity of the occasion, especially if it is at a place of worship? (2 Cor. 6:3, 4) What is the responsibility of the father or husband who exercises family headship? (Col. 3:18-21) If what is worn raises questions or reflects unfavorably on the congregation, what is the course recommended in the

3, 4. (a) In what ways should elders imitate Jehovah in showing mercy? (b) Who else besides wrongdoers are to be shown mercy in a positive way?

5. (a) How does due commendation affect persons? (b) How may elders deal with unfavorable trends, and why should we be concerned about moderation in all things?

6. (a) To make proper decisions with regard to dress and grooming, what Scriptural principles should we consider? (b) Keeping in mind points made in the inspired Proverbs, we should seek to find favor in whose eyes, and how can we do so?

Bible? (1 Cor. 10:31-33) Is one humble enough to submerge one's own preferences in order to avoid offending sensitive consciences? (Rom. 14:21) By considering such questions and the principles involved, elders can lay stress on God's Word rather than be pressured into laying down rules. They will encourage what is right in God's eyes, aiding individuals to make a Bible-based decision rather than leaning upon their own understanding or letting sentiments sway them.—Prov. 3:5-7; 12:15; 16:2.

<sup>7</sup> Sometimes individuals err, committing minor trespasses. It is not a requisite to go to elders about every minor offense in order to 'get right again with God.' What should be done, for example, if disparaging speech was used against someone in an isolated case? Or, perhaps one lost his temper on occasion. Maybe there was a run-in with a brother and a slight altercation ensued that was shortly thereafter regretted. Such incidents could be mentioned to an elder, if one desires to do that. Keep in mind, however, that elders are not 'father confessors' having to be approached over every minor infraction of some principle. An elder who is approached about such things would endeavor to be helpful. But his counseling you would not, in itself, make the matter right for you. One gains forgiveness by going directly to Jehovah in prayer, confessing the wrong, repenting and then leaving the wrong course.—1 John 1:9; Heb. 4:14-16.

<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, brothers who are spiritually disturbed over some problem should feel free to approach elders. If serious sins have been committed, that is an evidence of some weakness that needs

7. (a) If a person commits minor trespasses, what course is open to him? (b) What do the Scriptures state in showing the only way to gain forgiveness? 8. If a person feels condemned at heart due to committing sins, how can older men, if approached, aid him?

to be rectified. A person may reach a point where his own prayers seem to be hindered or lack effectiveness; he may feel condemned in his heart, losing confidence and freeness of speech. (1 John 5:14; 4:17, 18) In such cases one is urged to approach the older men, confess one's sins, and benefit from their counsel and prayers.—Jas. 5:14-16.

<sup>9</sup> Some cases call for long-suffering and restraint on the part of elders. Imperfection has deeply ingrained itself in the human family. This may be more pronounced in the actions of some who say or do things that are annoying. Without realizing it a person may make a "nuisance" of himself by repeatedly approaching the elders about some pet peeve or fancied wrong. Others may be overly critical of elders and how they do things. How should an elder react? He can follow Paul's advice at 2 Timothy 2:24, 25, to "be gentle toward all, qualified to teach, *keeping himself restrained under evil*," and also to be "*instructing with mildness those not favorably disposed*," as he copes with and corrects matters.

<sup>10</sup> It is not the course of wisdom hastily to impute bad motives to people. Some wrongdoing is done in ignorance. Where this is so, mercy will be appreciated by the one who erred. Paul, who committed wrongdoing in ignorance prior to his conversion, was grateful for the mercy extended to him. (1 Tim. 1:12-15) After becoming dedicated servants of God, what if individuals take a false step before they are aware of it? Elders have a responsibility in such cases to counsel and strive to readjust such erring ones in a merciful way.—Gal. 6:1.

9. How can those who may become a source of annoyance be dealt with Scripturally? 10. Where ignorance is a factor or one is overreached in a moment of weakness, how may wisdom and mercy be exercised by elders?

#### ATTENDING TO MORE SERIOUS OFFENSES

<sup>11</sup> Cases of serious wrongdoing require attention by the elders to determine what is needed to preserve the spiritual health of all. These would include sins that the apostle Paul names at 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10 and Galatians 5:19-21, and which sins a person committed after baptism. A person who has committed a grave violation of God's law may come forward to confess his sin. Or it may happen that an accusation of a serious nature is brought against a member of the congregation. In such cases, elders serving in a judicial capacity must weigh matters carefully, knowing that certain factors may distinguish one situation from another. Instead of looking to rigid rules for guidance, they need to think in terms of principles and judge each case on its own merits.

<sup>12</sup> Knowing what God's righteous standards call for, the judicial committee is obligated to get all the facts before rendering a decision. (Prov. 18:13) If the wrongdoer, or the one accused, does not openly make confession of a serious offense, then witnesses must be heard to establish whether a matter is true or not. (Deut. 19:15; 1 Tim. 5:19) The elders also look into the circumstances surrounding the case. Was previous counsel disregarded? Does the evidence indicate that the act was willful or that a practice of sin is involved? These factors have a bearing on the way the matter is handled. By prayerfully considering all the facts and circumstances and deliberating upon God's law, the elders can usually make a firm decision.

<sup>13</sup> Even though the wrongdoer is guilty

of a serious offense, elders realize that their aim is to help one who has fallen into a wrong course wherever possible. If he 'listens to them,' showing true repentance, it may result in his being 'gained' as a brother and thus spared from being disfellowshiped. (Matt. 18:15-17) Otherwise, they cannot continue to deal with him in mercy, for this would show a disregard for God's standard of righteousness and holiness. Such an unrepentant wrongdoer, if permitted to remain among God's people, would be a bad influence on the spirit of the congregation. (1 Cor. 5: 3-6) In such cases disfellowshipping action clears away reproach and maintains the purity of the Christian congregation.

<sup>14</sup> There may be times, however, when aspects of a certain case need clarification. Rather than hastily making a determination, what can be done to ensure that a righteous decision is rendered? Consulting other qualified congregation elders may help in reaching a sound conclusion, especially if the elders dealing with the problem are less experienced. (Prov. 13:10) If the matter still cannot be resolved, other experienced elders in the area or the traveling overseer, if he is visiting, can be called upon to aid with their observations. Such ones may have dealt with a similar problem and would be able to contribute valuable counsel.

<sup>15</sup> Many of those who have at one time been disfellowshiped are now back in good standing with Jehovah's people. As repentant erring ones they were shown mercy, straightened out their lives and returned to Jehovah. (Isa. 55:7) God's blessing has been evident in the case of those who accepted the action of Jehovah into a hum-

11. What are some of the serious offenses that may require a judicial hearing, and how do these usually come to the attention of elders?

12. In judging a matter in righteousness, what are some things a judicial committee will do?

13. (a) A judicial committee's efforts should be directed toward what objective, and how does Matthew 18:17 indicate that the wrongdoer's response has a bearing on the outcome in his case? (b) Why is disfellowshipping action necessary at times?

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14. Why is consultation with other qualified elders, at times, a wise course, as supported by Proverbs 13:10?

15. Why are onetime disfellowshiped persons now back in good standing with Jehovah's people, in harmony with the cited scriptures in this paragraph?

bled heart. Others who are in a disfellowshiped state because of judicial action by the congregation may now have come to their senses, and yearn to return to Jehovah.—Luke 15:17, 18.

<sup>16</sup> In hearing pleas for reinstatement, elders need to be balanced. It is not just a matter of accepting a person back simply because of his request. There must be a Scriptural basis for restoring such a one who had gone wrong and brought reproach upon Jehovah's name and the congregation. So before making any decision the elders must determine whether the wrongdoer is truly repentant. Has he produced works that befit repentance? (Acts 26:20) Obviously, this means more than words. Deeds must be in evidence. How has he been conducting himself? For how long? What does his heart attitude show? Has he been diligently studying God's Word and endeavoring to apply it in correcting his way of life? (Jer. 10:23, 24) Does he really appreciate that his wrong was against Jehovah? Has he made appreciable changes for the better, showing that he has been moved by godly sorrow and not just regret for having been found out? These are questions that the elders have in mind when talking with the person. Then they are in a much better position to decide whether there are grounds for reinstatement at the time or not.

16. What does a judicial committee look for when disfellowshiped persons seek reinstatement, having in mind what questions?

<sup>17</sup> In some cases a certain amount of conflicting testimony may have been involved when charges against a person were originally heard. Elders will guard against going to extremes by trying to exact a point-by-point admission of sins that may not have been clearly proved. Consider the overall pattern, whether the person is repentant over wrongdoing that he really was guilty of and for which clear evidence existed. Where business transactions were involved or debts are still outstanding, it may not be necessary to insist on restitution as a prior basis for reinstatement in each and every case, as, for example, where a measure of fraud was involved. Elders, though, if all agree, can help in establishing what is reasonable to effect a settlement. Good judgment and a sense of righteousness must wisely be balanced with mercy. (Jas. 2:13) Thus, elders can expect mercy to be extended to them if they are judged at some future time.

#### BENEFITING NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

<sup>18</sup> All of us have good reasons to be thankful for the arrangement that Jehovah has restored among his people in these last days. Elders, as judges and counselors, are assigned the responsibility of aiding us to conform to the divine standard of righteousness. We, in turn, have an obligation to show proper respect for those judging with godly qualities. How can we best do so? By our ready response to Scriptural counsel and willing submission to theocratic order. (Heb. 13:17) This works for our spiritual protection and welfare now, amid a lawless world. It demonstrates, too, our earnest desire to measure up to what God requires as we seek divine approval and prepare for life in the New Order.

17. (a) How may elders act in order to judge in a just, wise and merciful way? (b) With what benefit to themselves?

18. What can we all do in observing God's standard of righteousness, and how will this benefit us now and in the future?

### IN COMING ISSUES

- The Sure Promise of a Secure New Order.
- How Can You Find Real Security?
- Maintaining Marriage in Honor Before God and Men.

# CONGREGATION ELDERS

## "Preside In A Fine Way!"

"Let the older men who preside in a fine way be reckoned worthy of double honor."—1 Tim. 5:17.

PEOPLE who unite together for some noble purpose or work usually have someone preside over their affairs. When this is done in a fine way, proper direction can be given to them, resulting in progress and getting things done. Otherwise, they will flounder and fall. Proverbs 11:14 puts it this way: "When there is no skillful direction, the people fall; but there is salvation in the multitude of counselors." As an organized people with a divine purpose and work, Jehovah's Witnesses appreciate receiving direction and counsel from faithful elders who preside over them.

There are now over 40,000 congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses world wide. While each congregation has an appointed "presiding overseer," does he have the sole prerogative to preside? What about the other elders who make up the body of older men? All of them should recognize what God's Word at 1 Timothy 5:17 enjoins upon them: "Let the older men who preside in a fine way be reckoned worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard in speaking and teaching." Where a congregation has several appointed elders, each has a share in presiding over its various activities.

In the light of Proverbs 11:14, what value is there in having elders preside among God's people?

What questions arise about who presides in a congregation, and how does 1 Timothy 5:17 clarify the matter?

<sup>3</sup> In what sense, though, do the elders "preside in a fine way"? Not with the same authority as fathers preside over their households. Family heads are at times called upon to make final decisions on various matters that influence and govern their wives and children. However, individual elders do not wield such authority. They do not exercise headship, either individually or as a body, over the congregation. The position of headship as far as the congregation is concerned belongs to Jesus Christ. (Col. 1:18) He is also referred to at 1 Corinthians 11:3 as the "head of every man," while "the head of a woman is the man." So there is a difference between presiding over a congregation of God's people and exercising headship within the family.

<sup>4</sup> The Greek word for "preside" means more than being a chairman. "To preside" literally means "to stand before," hence, to lead, conduct, direct, to care for others. How fittingly this applies to elders whom we view as "taking the lead" among us by their conducting and teaching at our meetings and directing our service activity (Heb. 13:7, 13); shepherding or caring for our spiritual welfare (1 Pet. 5:2, 3); and protecting us from anything that

3. In what respects does an elder presiding in a congregation differ from a father presiding over his household?

4. In view of their Scriptural responsibilities, why is it fitting for elders to "preside" in a congregation?

would endanger our relationship with the congregation and, above all, with Jehovah God! (John 10:11-15) In all of this they endeavor to follow the counsel and example of the "fine shepherd," Jesus Christ.

#### ATTITUDE TOWARD PRESIDING AT MEETINGS

<sup>5</sup> What is the attitude that each elder should cultivate so as to fulfill properly his responsibility? At Romans 12:8 Paul exhorts: "He that presides, let him do it in real earnest," so as to instruct, enlighten, encourage or help his brothers. He shows concern about the way in which he carries out such duties and does well to ask himself: 'What can I do to preside earnestly and in a fine way?' *Brood nicht an.*

<sup>6</sup> To be "earnest" means not only to be sincere but to be intent about what one is doing. For example, one caring for the Theocratic School knows that he cannot go about his assignment in a perfunctory way. He must take an interest in each student, giving attention to his particular needs. Why? Because he wants the student to progress. Many new ones now share in the School and they need personal help. Some are slow or timid; others lack education or good reading ability, or they have other problems. By doing his work "in real earnest" the Theocratic School overseer will see advancement in the students as they respond to counsel and direction. This will be reflected in their comments at meetings and in more effective service in the field.

<sup>7</sup> Those who preside as *Watchtower* study and congregation book study conductors should have these same principles

5. How should Paul's exhortation at Romans 12:8 affect an elder's attitude toward presiding?
6. (a) To show that he presides "in real earnest," what must the Theocratic School overseer do? (b) What benefits do the individual students receive?
7. (a) When one conducts the *Watchtower* study or congregation book study, what does presiding involve? (b) Understanding what Psalm 25:4, 5 and Proverbs 16:9 say helps an elder toward what objectives when teaching?

in mind. They are not merely conductors in the sense that they just ask questions and call on those in the audience for answers. Their presiding in a meaningful way calls for keeping the study interesting and alive, emphasizing key scriptures, seeing that proper application of such texts is made and aiding everyone to see the practical value of important points covered. If some are hesitant about participating, a personal word of encouragement may be sufficient to start them commenting at meetings. Those who preside should strive to become more effective teachers, aiming to reach hearts, thus motivating the brothers to walk in Jehovah's ways and providing Scriptural direction to that end.—Ps. 25:4, 5; Prov. 16:9.

#### PRESIDING WITH HUMILITY

<sup>8</sup> Right after counseling older men to shepherd the flock, the apostle Peter touched on something that we all need to work on. "All of you gird yourselves with lowliness of mind toward one another. . . . Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." (1 Pet. 5:5, 6) Humility helps elders especially in their communication and dealings with one another. Each elder should determine whether he presents truly vital information when matters come up for attention. Men who consult with one another are respected by their fellows and the whole congregation. Frequent communication and "confidential talk" regarding the interests of the flock bring practical results. Otherwise, what might be initially planned may not work out so well if elders do not 'keep in touch' to see how matters are progressing toward accomplishment. This is emphasized at Proverbs 15:22: "There is a frustrating of plans where there is no confidential

8. (a) What do all of us need to work on in cultivating humility? (b) How do humility and "confidential talk" help elders?

talk, but in the multitude of counselors there is accomplishment." Humility paves the way for closer ties among elders and smoother relationships with all in the congregation.

<sup>9</sup> The presiding overseer who serves as chairman particularly must keep a balanced view. He should see that what is decided upon by the body of elders is followed through on. It is not just at elders' meetings that communication should be encouraged. There should be a natural desire to keep one another up-to-date on vital matters affecting the brothers and the work as a whole. This requires the presiding overseer to handle all correspondence with the branch office, convention committees, traveling overseers or elders in other congregations. After reading such, he will see that matters directed to the entire body of elders are conveyed as soon as possible. Information addressed to the congregation should be passed on in full. In this he cannot afford to be careless or negligent. It is impossible for him to do everything himself, and so he enlists the aid of others so that the necessary things get done. Each elder has his assigned work, but all cooperate together. Where major matters are concerned the presiding overseer does not act unilaterally but he consults with other elders either formally or informally. (Prov. 18:1) This makes for good order, resulting in proper attention's being given to the spirituality of the brothers and the Kingdom work generally.

<sup>10</sup> Occasionally, there may be someone in the body of elders who wants to project himself above others. If a competitive

spirit develops or exists it indicates a lack of humility. One elder may feel strongly about personal ideas that lack merit according to the judgment of the body of elders. If he seeks support for such ideas by stirring up sympathy among others, the congregation's unity is likely to be sacrificed. (Gal. 5:15, 25, 26) In order to avoid any such tendencies each elder should constantly examine himself, being careful "not to think more of himself than it is necessary to think." (Rom. 12:3, 10) To preside in a fine way all elders want to "work hard," but they should take care to do so with a right motive, an earnest desire to help the flock in all humility. —Phil. 2:5-8, 14-18; Eph. 4:1-3.

#### HUMILITY HELPS TO RESOLVE DIFFERENCES

<sup>11</sup> There are times when matters come up on which there are divided opinions. People have varying backgrounds and experiences and so naturally will draw different conclusions. Different opinions can provide a stimulating basis for examining one's own viewpoints to test their soundness. A person may feel that his personal presentation of a matter sounds plausible and right, and yet, as Proverbs 18:17 reminds us, "his fellow comes in and certainly searches him through," by means of a more objective approach and Scriptural argument. This would certainly apply to a discussion among elders where such process is required to resolve some question or problem affecting the spiritual welfare of our brothers. So it is expected that elders can have honest differences of opinion where there is no clear principle or guideline provided. At their meetings they should freely express themselves, but apart from wrangling, "wrath and debates."—1 Tim. 2:8.

9. (a) How does the presiding overseer's handling of correspondence affect communication with the elders? With the congregation? (b) What results when the presiding overseer properly fulfills his role in this regard?

10. (a) How could the congregation's unity be sacrificed, even as Paul warned at Galatians 5:15, 25, 26? (b) As shown in Romans chapter 12, Philippians chapter 2 and Ephesians chapter 4, what qualities should elders be careful to cultivate?

11. (a) Explain how varying opinions can be helpful at times. (b) At their meetings, how should elders feel about expressing themselves, but what do they avoid?

<sup>12</sup> We can learn much about the value of humility and the factors that serve to resolve disputes by considering what happened at a meeting of apostles and older men in the first century. The record is found in Acts chapter 15. It was at Antioch in Syria that Paul and Barnabas "had been entrusted to the undeserved kindness of God for the work they had fully performed." (Acts 14:26) But on returning there from that first missionary journey, they encountered a problem: "Certain men came down from Judea and began to teach the brothers: 'Unless you get circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.' But when there had occurred no little dissension and disputing by Paul and Barnabas with them, they arranged for Paul and Barnabas and some others of them to go up to the apostles and older men in Jerusalem regarding this dispute." (Acts 15:1, 2) Here was a major doctrinal matter causing considerable disturbance to the brothers. It had to be resolved.

<sup>13</sup> Appropriately, the problem was brought to the attention of the responsible elders at Jerusalem. The Bible record tells us what took place. Though there were differences of viewpoint initially, they finally reached "unanimous accord." (Acts 15:25) But in view of what Acts 15:7 says, was there not "much disputing" at the meeting? The Greek term for "disputing" is related to the verb meaning "to seek" (*Kingdom Interlinear Translation*); it thus indicates that to find the truth, or the best manner of doing something, diligent effort is required in searching out a matter—questioning, discussing things and thus arriving at a right con-

clusion. With this thought in mind we can read the account with interest, noting how developments were guided by holy spirit.

<sup>14</sup> After "much disputing," Peter related his experience in being used by Jehovah to open the way for Gentiles to hear the good news. He raised a question as to whether it was reasonable to impose burdens on such Gentile believers since it is God's undeserved kindness through Jesus Christ that makes salvation possible. Next, note the respectful silence mentioned in verse twelve as Paul and Barnabas added their testimony. These traveling apostles ("sent forth ones" from the Antioch congregation) had received evidence of God's blessing by "many signs and portents" as they preached among the nations. This supported Peter's recommendation of what should be done.—Acts 15:7-12.

<sup>15</sup> Then James requested to be heard. He drew on the words of the prophets, such as at Amos 9:11, 12, which agreed with what Peter had related and confirmed what God's spirit had accomplished through Paul and Barnabas. James thus had the support of the Scriptures and backing of God's spirit for his decision. From that strong position he proposed that they write to those believers from the nations who were turning to God, telling them what God's requirements really were for them. The apostles and older men had come to a unanimous accord. A controversial matter had been resolved in all humility.—Acts 15:13-29.

<sup>16</sup> If "unanimous accord" is not possible in a body of elders, one with a different view should not take exception to what has been decided by showing a spirit of animosity. He will want to continue to

12. (a) In considering the account at Acts chapter 15, what are some things to look for and learn? (b) What was the nature and magnitude of the problem described at Acts 15:1, 2?

13. At Acts 15:7, how are we to understand the use of the expression "much disputing"?

14, 15. (a) What did Peter, then Paul and Barnabas and finally James contribute to that historic council's discussion? (b) What factors led to the "unanimous accord" reached on that occasion?

16. Even though one may hold a different view on some point, what spirit should prevail among elders and in the congregation?

"work hard" with the whole body. The congregation will thus retain confidence in them, knowing that all are working in unity. Walking with "complete lowliness of mind" elders will be strengthening the bond of peace.—Eph. 4:2, 3.

<sup>17</sup> When elders meet together younger men especially should listen carefully to those older in years and more experienced in Christian living, realizing what Proverbs 16:31 says: "Gray-headedness is a crown of beauty when it is found in the way of righteousness." On the other hand, older men should recognize that a younger man may have the correct viewpoint about a certain matter. So the merit is to be found in the sound wisdom expressed, not necessarily in the age of the speaker. In expressing themselves, however, younger ones should be respectful of age, even as Timothy no doubt showed respect for Paul and his counsel, and as Elihu exercised restraint, biding his time to speak, out of regard for age.—1 Tim. 5:1, 19; Job 32:6-9.

<sup>18</sup> While elders may spend much time at some meetings with problems connected with the Kingdom Hall or other "neces-

sary business," they should keep these matters incidental to the more important things that affect the spirituality of the flock. (Acts 6:1-6; Phil. 1:9, 10) In this way they will preside in a fine way.

<sup>19</sup> Looking at the deplorable confusion in this world, how thankful we are for elders in Jehovah's congregation earth wide who preside in a fine way! Mankind gropes for a way out of its problems, its rulers 'lording it over them' rather than leading in a loving, helpful, refreshing way. (Matt. 20:25-27) Among us we have spiritually mature men who are examples to the flock, and we have regard for them as they preside over us. (1 Thess. 5:12, 13) Not any one man in the congregation, city, country or section of the world does this, but all elders, within their assigned sphere, have the responsibility to preside. With the loving help and direction provided by this multitude of counselors, the work of Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making moves forward to a successful completion. The congregation is unified in its efforts under elders who preside in a fine way. We are thus brought into closer alignment with Jesus Christ's headship, all to the glory of Jehovah.

<sup>17</sup> What sound counsel should younger men and those older in years have in mind when there is a meeting of elders, and why?

<sup>18</sup> Though the apostles gave attention to "necessary business," as indicated at Acts 6:1-6, what received greater emphasis?

<sup>19</sup> (a) In contrast with the way worldly rulers deal with people, what is the arrangement among us, in line with the counsel of Jesus and of Paul? (b) What are the benefits of having elders who preside in a fine way?

## **THE SPIRITUAL MAN** **—Why Not "Examined by Any Man"**

◆ The apostle Paul wrote to Christians at Corinth: "The spiritual man examines indeed all things, but he himself is not examined by any man." (1 Cor. 2:15) How is this so? With the help of God's spirit, the spiritual man can properly evaluate matters. He himself, however, cannot be examined or rightly appraised by those who have no spiritual insight. Proceeding on the wrong basis, unspiritual persons will come up with wrong conclusions about him. They did this in the case of Christ Jesus, as Isaiah 53:3, 4 foretold. Hence, the spiritual man simply cannot be "examined by any man," that is, any unspiritual man.

# THE "HIRED RAZOR"

-The Real Threat

DURING the course of human history the unexpected has often happened. In a few short years nations that once filled others with dread have themselves become powerless. Such events of the past would have been hard to predict. Jehovah God, however, has at times, through his prophets, revealed beforehand the way things would work out. Today the fulfillments of many of these prophecies are a matter of historical record and serve to strengthen our faith that still other prophecies will surely be fulfilled.

The amazing thing about Bible prophecies is that they may point to events that appear to be completely contrary to existing trends. A remarkable illustration of this is the word of Jehovah directed to Judean King Ahaz through the prophet Isaiah. At that particular time, in the eighth century B.C.E., the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel formed an alliance with

Syria. This Syro-Israelite combine was determined to depose the Judean king, replacing him with a man not of the royal line of David. (Isa. 7:1, 2, 6) Yet, through the prophet Isaiah, the divine revelation came that this would fail and that the real threat would come from another direction.

—Isa. 7:7-9, 17.

In the book of Isaiah we read: "By means of a hired razor in the region of the River [Euphrates], even by means of the king of Assyria, Jehovah will shave the head and the hair of the feet, and it will sweep away even the beard itself." (Isa. 7:20) Lack-

ing faith in Jehovah's word through Isaiah, Ahaz appealed to Assyria for help against the Syro-Israelite alliance. He did not believe that the king of Assyria, acting like a razor, would bring ruin to the kingdom of Judah, shaving off all its hair as of a man stripped naked.

The devastation that the Assyrians would cause in the land of Judah would even affect the people's diet. Isaiah's prophecy continues: "It must occur in that day that an individual will preserve alive a young cow of the herd and two sheep. And it must occur that, due to the abundance of the producing of milk, he will eat butter; because butter and honey are what everyone left remaining in the midst of the land will eat. . . . And all the mountains that used to be cleared of troublesome plants with a hoe—you will not come there for fear of thornbushes and weeds; and it will certainly become a place for letting bulls loose and a trampling ground of sheep."—Isa. 7:21, 22, 25.

As a result of the Assyrian invasion, formerly cultivated land would become choked with thornbushes and weeds. The

remaining population would, therefore, have to depend for food largely upon dairy products and wild honey. Since there would be ample pasturage in view of the devastation, the animals that had been preserved alive would produce abundantly for the greatly reduced population.

Additionally, wild animals would take up dwelling in former vineyards. Evidently with reference to a need for protection from such, the prophecy of Isaiah states: "It must occur in that day that every place where there used to be a thousand vines, worth a thousand pieces of silver, will come to be—for the thornbushes and for the weeds it will come to be. With arrows and the bow he will come there, because all the land will become mere thornbushes and weeds." (Isa. 7:23, 24) Yes, a person would have to be prepared to defend himself with bow and arrows against wild beasts that might be lurking in the desolated vineyards.

Did the Assyrians share in bringing the land of Judah to a state of ruin? Yes, during the reign of Ahaz' son Hezekiah, the

Assyrian monarch Sennacherib invaded Judah, capturing one fortified city after another. (Isa. 36:1) His extant annals report: "As to Hezekiah, the Jew, he did not submit to my yoke, I laid siege to 46 of his strong cities, walled forts and to the countless small villages in their vicinity, and conquered (them) . . . I drove out (of them) 200,150 people, young and old, male and female, horses, mules, donkeys, camels, big and small cattle beyond counting." (*Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, edited by J. B. Pritchard, p. 288) While Sennacherib's statement may be exaggerated, we nevertheless get a glimpse of a devastation that fits the prophetic word.

The prophecy about the "hired razor" is but one of many contained in the Holy Scriptures. It, along with the others, provides strong evidence that the Bible's message is not of human origin but is inspired of God. So we should pay attention to it. This can result in the best way of life now and holds promise of life everlasting in a righteous new order of God's making.  
—2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:3-5.



- What did Jesus mean when he told his apostles that some of them would see him coming in his kingdom before they died?

Today, in the northernmost part of the Golan Heights is the village of Baniyas. That is the location of ancient Caesarea Philippi, where Jesus was when he made a comment that evidently referred to the transfiguration, occurring some days later.

Jesus said: "Truly I say to you that there

are some of those standing here that will not taste death at all until first they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom."—Matt. 16:28.

Fulfillment of Bible prophecy in our day indicates that Jesus' presence in Kingdom power began in 1914 C.E. (Matt. 24:3-14; 25:31-33) Obviously, Matthew 16:28 could not refer to this event, for Jesus there spoke of something that would take place before the apostles all died. Then what could that have been?

The Hebrew Scriptures had foretold that the Messiah was to be an everlasting king. (Gen. 49:10; 2 Sam. 7:12-16; Isa. 9:6, 7) Daniel's vision in particular gave Jews reason to expect the Messiah's reign to be glorious, powerful, magnificent. (Dan. 2:44; 7:13, 14) But just who was to be this Messianic king, and would he rule from an earthly throne? Even Jesus'

disciples who accepted him as the Messiah could benefit from assurance that he would reign from heaven with power and glory.—Matt. 16: 16-22; Acts 1:6.

Accordingly, less than a year before he died Jesus explained that some of the apostles would “see the Son of man coming in his kingdom,” or, as Mark phrased it, “see the kingdom of God already come in power.” (Matt. 16:28; Mark 9:1) After Jesus was no longer among them, the disciples would be able to draw strength from their having been eyewitnesses of his future heavenly presence in Kingdom power.

But how were Jesus’ words in Matthew 16: 28 fulfilled? Often the meaning of a verse is suggested by its context. In this case, all three Gospel accounts of Jesus’ promise about seeing him in his kingdom lead immediately into the record of the transfiguration.

About a week after saying what he did at Matthew 16:28, Jesus took “some of” the apostles (Peter, James and John) up on a lofty mountain, likely Mount Hermon. There

he was transfigured to appear in a vision with Moses and Elijah. And God said: “This is my Son, the one that has been chosen. Listen to him.”—Luke 9:28-35; Matt. 17:1-5; Mark 9:2-6.

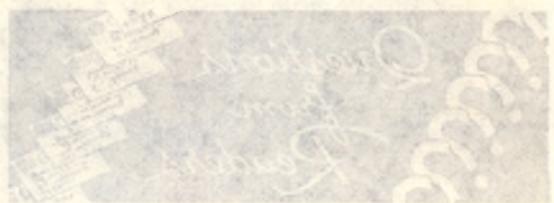
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The transfiguration was a vision of Jesus in Kingdom power and heavenly glory, as Peter later confirmed. Referring to the transfiguration, Peter explained that they had thus “become eyewitnesses of his magnificence.” He added that in the transfiguration Jesus had “received from God the Father honor and glory.” (2 Pet. 1:16-18) So, it appears that when Jesus said that before they died some of the apostles would see him in his kingdom, he was referring to the transfiguration scene that some of them witnessed shortly afterward.

#### “WATCHTOWER” STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

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April 10: Congregation Elders—“Preside in a Fine Way”! Page 153. Songs to Be Used: 14, 89.



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