

NOVEMBER 1, 1978

THE WATCHTOWER

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



Visiting where it happened

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A WATCHTOWER enables a person to look far into the distance and announce to others what is seen. Likewise, this magazine, published by Jehovah's Witnesses, aids the reader to see what the future holds. Since it began publication in 1879, "The Watchtower" has held faithfully to God's Word as its authority. It stays clear of all political involvement. It points to the Bible prophecies showing that Jesus Christ is God's means for restoring peace and harmony to this globe. It shows that this Son of God, on the basis of his shed blood, will release mankind from sin and death to enjoy eternal life in happiness on a paradise earth. Because Jehovah God will accomplish all this soon through his kingdom by Jesus Christ, "The Watchtower" announces that kingdom as the real hope for mankind.

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Visiting where it happened

ON THE morning of June 12, 1978, two young Arabs were helping a group of about 10 of us from Norway to travel to Bethlehem. As we waited at a bus stop in a Jerusalem suburb, there was a tremendous "bang!" It sounded like a bomb. The faces of the Arab youths immediately reflected alarm. But then relief, as a large truck swerved over to the side of the street—one of its big tires having blown out.

"If that had been a bomb," one of the youths said, "we would be in trouble." He explained that all Arabs in the vicinity of an explosion are taken into custody, and can be detained for some time. Thus was illustrated to us firsthand the tense situation that exists in Israel. Yet, contrary to the fears that some expressed earlier in the year, the consensus of recent travelers is that the country is quite safe for tourists.

We from Norway were part of a charter tour of Jehovah's Witnesses. Since early spring Witnesses had been arriving in Israel from around the world—2,400 from France, 1,500 from Germany, 1,200 from the Netherlands, 750 from the United States, and so forth. By July about 9,000 had come, and a total of some 15,000 was expected by the end of October.

Many on tour wore identification badges, and the touring buses were identified by a sign in the front window: JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES TOURING THE LAND OF THE BIBLE. In surprise, a Jewish woman from California, after returning from a visit to Israel, told a relative: "Everywhere we went we saw you Witnesses. I had no idea you would be so

interested in Israel." She wondered why we were.

PURPOSE OF VISIT

The reason is, basically, that Jehovah's Witnesses believe that the Bible is God's Word and so desire to know as much about it as possible. Since Israel is where most Bible events took place, we are interested in the country. There is real value in being familiar with places about which you read. To illustrate:

Say that you read in the newspaper about a notable happening near the place where you grew up. Say that specific landmarks such as a hill, a building, a river, and so forth, are mentioned in connection with the story. Now wouldn't you read about the happening with more interest and understanding than if you had never been to the place? Yes, for now you can visualize the setting. You can see in your mind's eye the lay of the country—the height of the hill, the width of the river and other geographical features that make the event come to life for you.

Yes, knowing the country helps a person better to understand the people of the Bible and the events involving them.

MODERN WITNESSES

Yet it is not only ancient servants of Jehovah in whom we are interested. At a special meeting for visiting Norwegian Witnesses at the Haifa Kingdom Hall, we were told about the five modern congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses in Israel and the some 260 Kingdom preachers associated with them. It was explained that there are congregations in Bethlehem and Ramallah, mostly made up of Arabic-speaking Witnesses. In the two congrega-

ISRAEL



tions in Tel Aviv, most are Jews. But of the 75 Witnesses in Haifa, about half are Jews and the other half are Arabic speaking.

For weeks these local Witnesses were kept busy arranging special meetings, where an interchange of spiritual encouragement was enjoyed with the visitors. Also, while our bus group from Norway was on a tour of Bethlehem June 11, we met a local Witness who took us to the fine, newly constructed Kingdom Hall. There he and another Witness answered many of our questions.

They told us that in Jerusalem, about 8 kilometers* to the north, there are only four Witnesses and none in Hebron some 24 kilometers to the south. "Bethlehem's 25 Kingdom publishers have a huge territory to cover," they noted. The following day some from our group joined Witnesses from Bethlehem in the door-to-door preaching in Jerusalem. Others of us, with two local Witnesses as guides, boarded an Arab bus from near our hotel in Jerusalem to go back to Bethlehem.

SOUTH OF JERUSALEM

In a few minutes we were entering Bethlehem. To us, the location is rich with significance. Yes, Jesus Christ was born here, and angels appeared to shepherds in one of those nearby fields to inform them of the birth.¹ The terrain is hilly, more so than we had expected, and it appears quite dry and arid. We were surprised to find the elevation of Bethlehem to be the same as that of Jerusalem. The surrounding countryside reminded us of many other Bible events.

This was the area near which Jacob was passing when his beloved Rachel died while giving birth to Benjamin.² It was the home of Boaz and Naomi. And the Moabitess Ruth came here from across

the rugged barren wilderness to the east and gleaned in Boaz' fields.³ Also, here the young shepherd David grew up and tended his father's sheep and, evidently, this was the home of his famous nephews Joab and Abishai as well.⁴

Soon we hired a car and started south toward Hebron. The elevation of Hebron is some 137 meters* above that of Jerusalem and of Bethlehem, being about 914 meters above sea level. As we headed south, the land began to change. It took on a more productive look. The area around Hebron has long been famous for its crops; it is from the nearby valley of Eshcol that the Israelite spies brought back to Moses the huge cluster of grapes that it took two men to carry.⁵ And today, too, the fertility of the land is evident.

Walking through the old narrow streets of Hebron, we felt transported back in time. Hebron is one of the world's oldest, still inhabited cities. It was near ancient Hebron that Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob and Leah were buried in the cave of Machpelah.⁶ We visited the reputed burial place; a Moslem mosque now stands over the cave. Evidently Abraham's principal place of residence was nearby at Mamre, where once big trees grew.⁷ He entertained the angels here prior to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.⁸ From a point near Hebron, he looked down some 1,220 meters and many kilometers away to see the thick smoke of that great destruction.⁹

As we considered the mountainous territory through which we had passed to reach Hebron, our appreciation of another Bible account grew. While dwelling at Hebron, Jacob told his 17-year-old son Joseph to go and check on the welfare of his 10 half brothers, who were pasturing the sheep at the family's former residence of Shechem (present-day Nablus).¹⁰ That meant, not only a hike of 35 kilometers or

* One kilometer equals about .6 mile.

* One meter equals about 3.3 feet.

In Coming Issues

- Where Jesus Grew Up
- Qualifying as Teachers in the Congregation
- Keep Free from Murmuring

so to near Jerusalem, but dozens of kilometers farther north through difficult terrain. Joseph finally caught up with his brothers *beyond* Shechem, at Dothan (just south of modern-day Jenin), some 130 kilometers or more from Hebron!

As we walked through Hebron's ancient streets, or observed the old marketplace, we thought that life must not have been much different when David lived here. We recalled that it was at Hebron that he was anointed king, and he ruled from here for seven and a half years before moving his capital north to Jerusalem.¹¹ But, of course, never far away are evidences of the present time—one being the Israeli soldiers with rifles ever at hand.

Hebron is an occupied city. It belongs to the area having nearly 700,000 Palestinian inhabitants and which is militarily controlled. This area, now called the "West Bank," lies between the Dead Sea and the Jordan River on the east and the Jewish coastal plain of the Mediterranean Sea on the west. This huge, 3,700-square-kilometer area of rolling hills and valleys was taken by Israel from Jordan in 1967 during the Six-Day War.

It was nearly midafternoon before we left Hebron and headed back toward Bethlehem. However, before getting there we turned off the main road where a sign pointed to the Pools of Solomon. We could hardly believe our eyes! How massive they were—there were three, the largest one

being 178 meters long, 54 meters wide and some 15 meters deep! These were apparently rebuilt in Roman times to supply water for Jerusalem, but possibly they had been used for the same purpose even as far back as Solomon's time.

Arriving back in Bethlehem, we wanted to see one more thing—Herodium. Here on a prominent, towering hill, a few kilometers southeast of Bethlehem, Herod the Great, who had tried to kill the babe Jesus,¹² built a fortress named after himself. On an earlier day we had seen Herod's spectacular palace-fortress at Masada farther southeast near the Dead Sea. There the Jews made their last stand against the Romans in 73 C.E. But, although not as large, in some ways Herodium was even more meaningful to us.

This is because of the magnificent view of the surrounding land, which, despite its barrenness, had an enchanting golden-brown beauty in the setting sun. To the east, we could see all the way to the Dead Sea. Here before us was the Judean wilderness where David successfully eluded his pursuer, Saul.¹³ Seeing the ruggedness of the territory, we understood how he could do so, especially since from his youth he must have been very familiar with the territory. We thought, too, that, while pasturing his sheep, David perhaps often climbed this very hill for the magnificent view we were enjoying.

SOUTH OF TEL AVIV-YAFO

During the first week in Israel we stayed near Tel Aviv in a hotel close to the Mediterranean. Tel Aviv, Israel's largest city, is of modern origin, but it adjoins the ancient city Joppa—so the cities are officially called Tel Aviv-Yafo.

It was at Joppa that the apostle Peter resurrected Dorcas,¹⁴ and it was here that he received a vision while staying at the house of Simon the tanner near the sea. Because of this vision Peter was prepared

to accompany messengers from Caesarea, who were sent by the Gentile Cornelius.¹⁵ As we had occasion to travel the main highway running from Tel Aviv north to Caesarea, we would think how this trip of about an hour by car took Peter and his companions two days.

On the day that we headed south, we went into the ancient Philistine territory. Since no bus tours were arranged that first week, we rented a car for excursions to places of Biblical interest. On the route south, we came first to Ashdod, where a modern Israeli city is being built on the Mediterranean. But we recalled that nearby there once stood a prominent Philistine city, and that Jehovah's ark of the covenant was brought there after being captured in battle. The Ashdodites were struck with painful piles, prompting them to send the Ark away.¹⁶

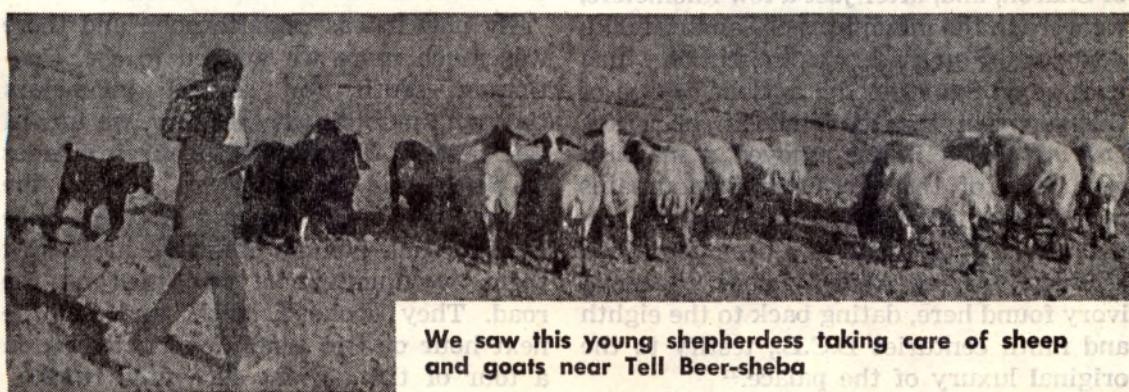
We continued south to Ashkelon, which is becoming a prominent tourist center, with delightful beaches. But this, too, was once a major Philistine city. Visiting the ancient ruins, we were pleased to see that a sign there incorporated the words of David's song regarding the death of Saul and Jonathan during warfare with the Philistines: "Publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph."¹⁷

Next we headed on toward Gaza and

the "Gaza Strip," the site of yet another principal Philistine city near the sea. All along we were impressed by the productivity of the land; it is a land of agriculture, which evidently contributed to the prosperity of ancient Philistia. But Gaza today bears the scars of war. Driving through its streets, we felt an atmosphere of depression and hopelessness.

The location made us remember the Israelite judge Samson, who knew Gaza well. One night he pulled out the doors of the city gate, "put them upon his shoulders and went carrying them up to the top of the mountain that is in front of Hebron."¹⁸ Now, after having been to these places, we appreciate more fully the miraculous strength involved in climbing up nearly 914 meters with such a load to a mountain over 50 kilometers away! And here in Gaza, too, Samson killed thousands of Philistines, as well as himself, when he pulled down the roof-supporting pillars of the building in which the Philistines were feasting.¹⁹

From Gaza we turned southeast, heading for Beer-sheba, some 50 kilometers away. The fine road carried us across wide open spaces, where we saw camels, sheep and goats, along with their Arab caretakers. As we saw their tents in the distance, we thought that life must not be much different from when Abraham and Isaac used to live in the area. In Beer-



We saw this young shepherdess taking care of sheep and goats near Tell Beer-sheba

sheba, which, for the most part, is quite a modern city, we visited the Bedouin market (open on Thursdays) and marveled at the fine produce—and how inexpensive! We bought two kilos of oranges (about a dozen of them) for the equivalent of 30 cents (U.S.).

Our main interest, however, was the tell, or ancient mound, outside of town, generally accepted as the Biblical Beer-sheba. This high mound dominates the surrounding area. We climbed it and were afforded a grand view of the vast low-lying countryside, beautifully painted in shadows and light by the disappearing sun. As we examined the excavations of the ancient ruins, we thought: 'What a fine place in which to live!' Abraham must have thought so too. He was staying here when God instructed him to take Isaac up to Mount Moriah (within Jerusalem's walls today) to offer him as a sacrifice. Abraham afterward returned to Beer-sheba.²⁰

As we headed back to the hotel that night, we felt exhilarated. Seeing these places—many even bearing the same Bible names—confirmed and provided depth of meaning to the Bible accounts that we had read from our youth.

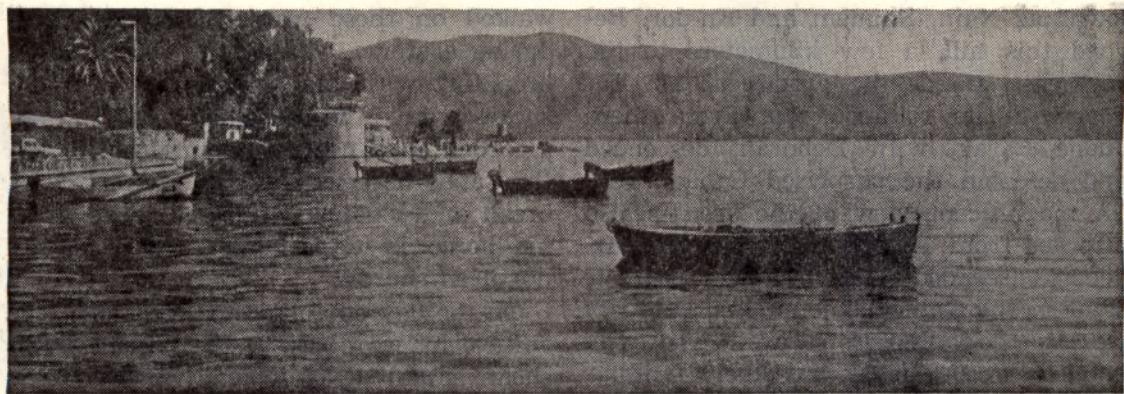
INTO SAMARIA

On another day we drove north along the Mediterranean, turning east at Netanya. This took us across the fertile Plain of Sharon, and, after just a few kilometers, we were in the mountains of Samaria. Suddenly, right beside us was the hill on which once stood Samaria, the ancient capital of the northern 10-tribe kingdom of Israel. Driving up to it, we enjoyed a magnificent view of the surrounding mountains and fertile valleys. At the top we saw the remains of what has been identified as Israelite King Ahab's palace. Pieces of ivory found here, dating back to the eighth and ninth centuries B.C.E., testify to the original luxury of the palace.²¹

Returning to the main road, we headed north to Dothan Valley, where young Joseph found his brothers and their flocks. Farmers in the fields harvesting grain, as well as flocks of sheep and goats, created pleasant pastoral scenes out of the past. Near Jenin (the ancient Levite city of En-gannim) we turned around and retraced our route, eventually coming to Nablus. Here, at the site of ancient Shechem, Mt. Ebal was above us to the north and Mt. Gerizim above to the south.²² At the foot of Gerizim stands Jacob's well, probably the very well at which Jesus met the Samaritan woman on his return from Jerusalem. Her words to Jesus, "Our forefathers worshiped in this mountain," evidently referred to Mt. Gerizim.²³

After descending from the top of historic Mt. Gerizim, we turned south again, traveling perhaps the same route Jesus followed on his way to and from Jerusalem. Suddenly we spotted the road sign "Shiloh." With excitement we turned east along a very narrow road, heading for the place where Jehovah's ark of the covenant was kept during the time of the judges.²⁴ A young Israeli soldier checked us, seemingly surprised at our coming to this remote place where not another person was in sight. Yet, for us, it was a memorable experience to contemplate that here, in this quiet hilly setting, Jephthah's daughter and later little Samuel once served at Jehovah's tabernacle.²⁵

By now it was midafternoon and there was much more we wanted to see. Continuing south for several kilometers through mountainous territory, we turned east a short distance to the Arab villages of Beitin and Deir Dibwan. Nearby the Bible cities of Bethel and Ai were once located. But having difficulty in finding them, we inquired of two men on the road. They spoke English, and for the next hour or two kindly conducted us on a tour of the ancient excavated ruins.



The beautiful Sea of Galilee as it appears today

How impressive it was to stand at this elevated place, some 914 meters above sea level, and, as the cool evening wind whipped at our hair and clothes, to view the surrounding countryside! Apparently it was here that Abraham invited Lot to choose the direction that he would go when separating from Abraham because of the quarrels between the caretakers of their animals. And, as the Bible says, "Lot raised his eyes and saw the whole District of the Jordan, that all of it was a well-watered region."²⁶

We were ready to leave, but one of the men insisted that we visit his home for tea and meet his family. What a pleasant time we enjoyed there! As darkness descended, we pulled ourselves away, delighted at experiencing this unexpected expression of hospitality from total strangers.

BEAUTIFUL GALILEE

Galilee to us was a highlight. Its physical features alone are inviting—the coastal Carmel mountain range, the rugged northern terrain, the blue, jewellike Sea of Galilee, and the beautifully green Jezreel Valley (also called Plain of Esdraelon) that separates Samaria to the south and the Galilean mountains to the north. But, of course, what made Galilee especially ap-

pealing to us is the fact that here Jesus spent most of his earthly life, and many important Bible events occurred here.²⁷

As our tour bus left Haifa and followed the Jezreel Valley, the Carmel range was to our right and the Kishon River, lined with purple flowers, was to our left. Looking up at the mountain range, we thought about Jehovah's miracle there, consuming Elijah's sacrifice in that famous fire test. Then Elijah had the 450 prophets of Baal brought down here to the Kishon, just a few meters to our left, and had them slaughtered.²⁷ Seeing the place where it happened added meaning to and appreciation for the event.

A few kilometers farther and we were at the ruins of ancient Megiddo, a city located at a truly strategic spot. What a marvelous view of the beautiful Jezreel Valley from here! Whoever held this well-fortified place could control the pass through the Carmel mountain range; indeed, decisive battles were fought here. How appropriate that the name Har-Magedon (meaning "Mountain of Megiddo") is associated in the Bible with God's victorious war over all political opposers!²⁸

From Megiddo we picked out features of this famous valley, or plain. There, near the center of the valley, is the hill of Moreh. On or near its slopes once lay such

towns as Nain, Shunem and En-dor. Beyond this hill, a few kilometers to the northeast, stands the prominent Mt. Tabor, with its rounded top. From there Judge Barak, with Deborah, descended and defeated the surprised Canaanites.²⁹ (A magnificent view of the area is also afforded from Tabor's top, which we earlier had ascended by car.) Hidden from our sight in the Galilean mountains, but very close to the valley, is Nazareth, the early home of Jesus. Jesus was likely familiar with the area before our eyes, since Nazareth is a relatively short walking distance from all these places.

We looked to the other side of the valley, far to the southeast, toward Mt. Gilboa. Near its foot is the well, or spring, of Harod. There Gideon faced 135,000 Midianites who were camped across at the hill of Moreh. We recalled how Jehovah directed Gideon to reduce his forces to a mere 300, and yet, with only these, gave Gideon the victory.³⁰ Later, in a similar battle confrontation, the Philistines were apparently near the hill of Moreh and the Israelites again at the well of Harod. At this time the Philistines routed the Israelites, and Saul and Jonathan were killed.³¹ Seeing these locations helped us to visualize so much better such Bible events.

But perhaps the most beautiful sight of all was our first view of the Sea of Galilee. At the time, we were descending from the mountains to the north of the sea. There below us, set like a jewel in a deep basin, was the 21-kilometer-long, 12-kilometer-wide body of blue water. But it seemed much smaller, because from our elevation we had a bird's-eye view. Surprisingly, the lake is nearly 213 meters below sea level, with hills and mountains practically surrounding it.

As we spent time on the lake's shores, traversing it by boat or viewing it from elevated vantage points, we thought of many events that occurred here. Jesus

walked on these waters,³² calmed them during a storm,³³ had a post-resurrection breakfast with his disciples on Galilee's shores,³⁴ gave the best-known speech ever recorded on a nearby mountainside,³⁵ fed thousands here with just a few loaves of bread and a couple of fishes,³⁶ and made his home in Capernaum, a city on its northern shore.³⁷

On the day our bus tour left Galilee for Jerusalem, we came to the city of Beth-shean, situated strategically between the Jezreel and Jordan valleys. The tell, or ruins of the ancient city, is on a mound that rises to a height of some 80 meters. What an excellent view is afforded from the top looking up the Jezreel Valley toward Mt. Gilboa and Megiddo, and down the Jordan Valley toward Jericho! Here at Beth-shean the Philistines fastened Saul's corpse on the city wall after his death in battle at Mt. Gilboa.³⁸

JERICHO AND JERUSALEM

We followed the Jordan Valley down about 80 kilometers to Jericho. The area was hot and arid, but we realized that in the spring of the year it would be cooler. So we wondered if Jesus and his family might not have taken this easier-to-travel, but longer, route on their annual trips to Jerusalem for the Passover, rather than going through mountainous Samaria.³⁹

How impressive it was to come upon Jericho with its many palm trees!⁴⁰ Getting out of the air-conditioned bus, we felt the sun's intense heat. It helped us to appreciate more fully Jesus' commendation of those who would give "only a cup of cold water" to his disciples.⁴¹ We climbed the mound where the ruins of ancient Jericho have been excavated. The area is relatively small, helping us to appreciate how it was possible for Joshua and his army to march around the city seven times in one day.⁴²

Our last four days in Israel were spent

in Jerusalem, the principal city of the Bible. It was indeed meaningful to get a firsthand view of the places about which we had read so much. Standing on the Mount of Olives, we recalled that Judas betrayed Jesus to his enemies in the Garden of Gethsemane somewhere in this vicinity.⁴³ Looking across the Kidron Valley, we saw the Moslem Dome of the Rock, but realized that in Jesus' day he saw the temple standing there. With the temple in view, he gave his famous prophecy about the "conclusion of the system of things."⁴⁴

From our position on the Mount of Olives, we could see the actual location of the "city of David," and its relation to the enlarged Jerusalem of later years, which lay toward the north and west. The original "city of David," or "Mount Zion," was captured from the Jebusites.⁴⁵ It is outside the present-day walls of Jerusalem, being located south of the Dome of the Rock. On another day we saw more clearly why the actual location of the original city is so certain.

We walked down into the Kidron Valley to the spring of Gihon, just below the hill on which the "city of David" was built. This spring, hidden in a cave, is vital to the location of the city, since a protected water supply was necessary in ancient times. It was apparently through a shaft,

which the Jebusites had made down to this spring outside the city's walls, that Joab and his men ascended to reach the inside of the city high above. Thus from inside, they led the attack that won the city for David and the Israelites.⁴⁶ Years later King Hezekiah had a 533-meter-long tunnel built from Gihon to the pool of Siloam, which in Hezekiah's time was inside the city—truly an engineering masterpiece.⁴⁷ This ensured Jerusalem a water supply during any possible siege.

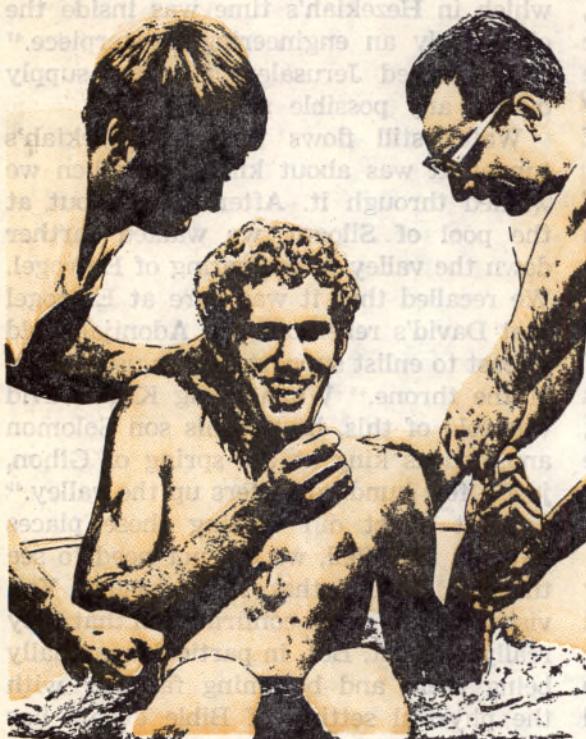
Water still flows through Hezekiah's tunnel. It was about knee-deep when we walked through it. After coming out at the pool of Siloam, we walked farther down the valley to the spring of En-rogel. We recalled that it was here at En-rogel that David's rebellious son Adonijah held a feast to enlist support for his usurpation of the throne.⁴⁸ When dying King David was told of this, he had his son Solomon anointed as king at the spring of Gihon, just a few hundred meters up the valley.⁴⁹

What effect did visiting these places have on us? Well, we did not need to see them to believe that they existed. Yet, visiting them *was* a confirmation that they really do exist. But, in particular, actually being there and becoming familiar with the physical setting of Bible events has added a depth of meaning to and appreciation for these happenings.

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| 17 | 2 Samuel 1:20, AV. | 49 | 1 Kings 1:33-41. |
| 18 | Judges 16:3. | | |
| | | 32 | Matthew 14:23-32. |

OUR CHOICE TO WORK



ALL day long the prophets and priests of Baal had been hobbling around an altar upon which lay a sacrifice. Imploring their god Baal to make himself known by consuming the offering by fire, they even went to the length of gashing themselves with knives. But all to no avail!

² Then it was the turn of Elijah the prophet, the spokesman of Jehovah God. After building an altar, laying wood and a slain animal upon it, he had this drenched with water, after which he prayed to his God Jehovah. The result? Fire came down from heaven and con-

1, 2. What choice did Elijah cause his people of Israel to make, and by what means?

sumed, not only the wood and the sacrifice, but even the very stones of the altar. At that the Israelite onlookers cried out: "Jehovah is the true God! Jehovah is the true God!" For years they had been "limping upon two different opinions," but now they chose to recognize Jehovah the true God as their God.—1 Ki. 18:21-40.

³ Man's ability to choose between right and wrong, between serving the true God Jehovah or serving self and false gods shows him to be a free moral agent, created in the image and likeness of Jehovah God. (Gen. 1:27) The animals have no such ability. You can teach a dog not to take something, but you cannot reason with him as to why it is wrong to steal. Unfortunately, for some six thousand years, men have abused their moral freedom, and that is why the world is in its present mess.—Compare Deuteronomy 32:5.

⁴ The first one to abuse this ability and freedom of choice was none other than the one who became Satan the Devil. He chose to follow selfish desire; this gave birth to the sin of rebellion, which will lead eventually to his destruction, annihilation. (John 8:44; Jas. 1:14, 15) Adam and Eve, the antediluvians in the days of Noah, the angels that did not keep their original position, Nimrod and his crowd after the Flood, the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah and a host of others through the centuries down to our day—these have chosen to follow the example of Satan the Devil.

3. Why can man be termed a "free moral agent," and why uniquely so?

4. (a) Who was the first one to abuse this freedom, and why did he do so? (b) Who were among those that followed his example?

WITH JEHOVAH GOD

il by making selfish, wrong and bad choices.

THOSE WHO MADE THE RIGHT CHOICE

⁵ On the other hand, there was Abel who chose to serve Jehovah God, and who did so at the cost of his life. After him came Enoch, Noah and the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. From the apostle Paul's words at Hebrews 11:13-16, we can see that these patriarchs made the right choice. Then there was Moses. Reared in the palace of Pharaoh, educated in all the wisdom and learning of Egypt, a man of fame, power and wealth, he found himself at the age of 40 faced with the need to make a choice. What kind of choice did he make? He chose "to be ill-treated with the people of God rather than to have the temporary enjoyment of sin, because he esteemed the reproach of the Christ as riches greater than the treasures of Egypt." (Heb. 11:25; Acts 7:20-29) Would you have done likewise?

⁶ Toward the end of his long career as Jehovah's prophet and leader of His people, Moses put the matter of choice squarely before His people: "I do take the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you today, that I have put life and death before you, the blessing and the malediction; and you must choose life in order that you may keep alive, you and your offspring, by loving Jehovah your God, by listening to his voice and by sticking to him." (Deut. 30:19, 20) Moses' successor, Joshua, put a like choice before the people of Israel at the end of his long career. He himself made the right choice,

"Choose for yourselves today whom you will serve... But as for me and my household, we shall serve Jehovah."
-Josh. 24:15.

as did the prophet Elijah centuries later.
—Josh. 24:15; 1 Ki. 19:10.

⁷ The man Jesus Christ had to make a choice when Satan the Devil offered him all the kingdoms of the world in return for one act of worship. Jesus made the right choice. (Matt. 4:10) Similarly, Jesus' first disciples made the right choice; they recognized him as the Messiah, the Son of God, and accepted him as their Leader and King. (John 1:49) And so did Saul of Tarsus. When he was on his way to Damascus to persecute Christians, Jesus Christ miraculously appeared to him. Saul asked, "What shall I do, Lord?" Upon receiving an answer, he chose to accept and follow the direction given, becoming a baptized Christian.—Acts 22:10.

⁸ Today, as the result of the preaching of "this good news of the kingdom," a choice faces all who hear. What is it? It is whether to set out on a course of righteousness and to serve Jehovah God, the Creator of the universe, as well as its Sustainer and Sovereign, or to continue in a course of selfishness under the dominance of Satan the Devil, the "god of this system of things." This opportunity to make a choice will not continue indefinitely, for we are living in the 'conclusion of this system of things,' in 'the critical hard

7. (a) What choice did Jesus make when tempted by the Devil? (b) What choice did his disciples make?

8. (a) The preaching of the "good news" of God's kingdom requires people to make what kind of choice?

(b) Why is there an urgency about it?

5. Who were among those who made the right choice?
6. What choice did (a) Moses, (b) Joshua, present to the people?

times of the last days,' as fulfillment of Bible prophecy clearly shows. Yes, we are involved. The choice is there to be made and we cannot avoid it.—Matt. 24:14; 2 Cor. 4:4; Matt. 13:39; 2 Tim. 3:1.

WHY CHOOSE TO WORK WITH JEHOVAH GOD?

⁹ By giving heed to the preaching of the "good news" of God's kingdom, an individual gains an accurate knowledge of God's Word and help in applying it in his life. This, in turn, can result in sincere repentance of whatever wrong course a person may have been taking, followed by a turning around or converting to take a course that is pleasing to Jehovah God. As the apostle Peter told the Jews of his day: "Repent, therefore, and turn around so as to get your sins blotted out."—Acts 3:19.

¹⁰ Taking these two steps should logically lead a person in making the choice to do God's will, to work with Him and to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. Such a choice must be a distinct formal step, a step that Jesus himself took at the age of 30, at which time he is prophetically pictured as saying: "Look! I am come (in the roll of the book it is written about me) to do your will, O God." (Heb. 10:7; Ps. 40:7, 8) To follow Jesus' example in this means to dedicate oneself to do God's will and to symbolize such a dedication by water baptism. Taking this step is the truly wise, the truly right and the truly loving thing to do.

¹¹ The truly wise thing to do? Yes, Jehovah God knows what is best for us. His Word abundantly shows the folly of pursuing a selfish, unrighteous course. That is why we read that "godly devotion is beneficial for all things, as it holds promise of the life now and that which is to come." (1 Tim. 4:8) As Jehovah

through his ancient prophet expressed it: "I, Jehovah, am your God, the One teaching you to benefit yourself." (Isa. 48:17) To help us to benefit ourselves we have the "holy writings," the inspired Scriptures. (2 Tim. 3:15-17) They remind us that "whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap." (Gal. 6:7) Yes, "the blessing of Jehovah—that is what makes rich, and he adds no pain with it." (Prov. 10:22) Truly, then, making the choice to work with Jehovah God is the course of wisdom.

¹² To choose to dedicate ourselves to do Jehovah's will is also the just, the right thing to do. In fact, we owe it to God to do his will. Why? Because Jehovah God, by reason of his having created all things, owns this earth and all things and creatures on it. He made us not merely to enjoy our own pleasure but also to serve his purpose, to do his will. Not only did he create all things in the first place but he also keeps sustaining all things, providing the sunshine and the rain. That is why we read: "You are worthy, Jehovah, even our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power, because you created all things, and because of your will they existed and were created."—Rev. 4:11.

¹³ Additionally, to dedicate ourselves to do Jehovah's will and be baptized in symbol thereof is the loving, the grateful thing to do. When we think of all the love that Jehovah God has showered on humankind to make life possible and a joy (Acts 14:17), when we think of his patience in dealing with humankind for the past 6,000 years (2 Pet. 3:8, 9), and when we think of his loving us so much as to give his only-begotten Son to be our Savior and Redeemer (John 3:16)—what must we conclude? The least that we can do to keep self-respect is to dedicate ourselves to our loving heavenly Father to do his will, and then to symbolize that dedication by water baptism.

^{9, 10.} Giving heed to the preaching of the "good news" should result in an individual's taking what steps?
^{11-13.} Why is taking the steps of dedication and baptism (a) truly wise? (b) truly right and just? (c) truly loving and an evidence of gratitude?

DEDICATION AND BAPTISM IMPERATIVE

¹⁴ But could we not please Jehovah God and gain the reward of everlasting life by merely leading a clean life? believing in God and Jesus Christ? associating with God's people? telling others about the "good news"? without formally dedicating ourselves to do God's will and getting baptized? Apparently there are some persons who think so, because, while they do these other things, they stop short of dedicating themselves and getting baptized. But in this they are mistaken.

¹⁵ For Jehovah God to reward us we must exercise faith in him and love him to the extent of dedicating ourselves to do God's will and to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. For example: At Mount Sinai, Jehovah God set before the nation of Israel his laws and the rewards that they would get from obeying his laws. The Israelites formally agreed to do God's will so that they might receive God's guidance, protection and blessing. Likewise, his servants today must make such a commitment. (Ex. 19:3-8) They must heed Jesus' command that those who would observe his commandments must begin by getting baptized.—Matt. 28:19, 20.

¹⁶ We might illustrate the matter in this way: A certain man walking along a road in the country sees a great many people helping to harvest a crop. He feels impelled to join them and so helps them for days until the crop is fully harvested. However, when the time comes for the workers to receive their pay, can he rightly expect any wages to be paid him? No, because he was not hired. He made no contract with the master of the harvest for payment. He did not come under the

normal arrangement for a worker to get paid. The situation is similar with those who become God's servants. That is why Romans 10:9, 10 does not apply to just any public declaration, but has particular application to a formal public declaration such as that made at the time one who has dedicated himself to do God's will gets baptized. "For if you publicly declare that 'word in your own mouth,' that Jesus is Lord, and exercise faith in your heart that God raised him up from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one exercises faith for righteousness, but with the mouth one makes public declaration for salvation." That public declaration gives notice to all that a person has made the choice to work with Jehovah God. Yes, we cannot expect God to reward us with everlasting life if, as it were, we do not sign up to work for him.

¹⁷ Or, to use another illustration: A young man keeps calling on a young lady. He protests that he loves her very much. He takes her out to dine, to the theater, and buys gifts for her. Others think he is courting her, but he studiously avoids the subject of marriage. Can he be said to love the young lady? What she most likely has in mind is getting married. However, he does not want to lose his freedom, he does not want to be "tied down" to her. So all his protestations of loving her are empty, insincere. It is similar with any person who professes that he loves Jehovah God and that he appreciates all that God has done for him. If within a reasonable period of time he does not dedicate himself to do God's will, following in Jesus' footsteps, his professions have a hollow ring, betray a lack of love, trust and faith in Jehovah God and may actually be insincere.

¹⁸ Furthermore, baptism is essential for gaining a good conscience toward God. The

14, 15. (a) What questions might some raise as to the need of dedication and baptism? (b) What Scriptural illustration shows the need of formally dedicating ourselves to do God's will?

16, 17. (a) Illustrate the inconsistency of those who want to serve God without being baptized. (b) How may Romans 10:9, 10 be applied in this regard? (c) How might the lack of sincerity of some persons delaying baptism be illustrated?

18. What does 1 Peter 3:21 show as to the need for a person's getting baptized?

apostle Peter makes this point clear at 1 Peter 3:21: "That which corresponds to this [that is, the flood of Noah's day] is also now saving you, namely, baptism, (not [merely] the putting away of the filth of the flesh [important as that is], but the request made to God for a good conscience,) through the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

¹⁹ Baptism is a most fitting symbol of our having made our choice to work with Jehovah God by dedicating ourselves to do his will as footstep followers of Jesus Christ. By going down into the water, being covered by it, we are, as it were, buried. We die as to our former course of action; it marks the death of our selfish course, our choosing to do as WE please.

19. (a) How fitting is the symbol of baptism? (b) What practical aspects does it have?

Being raised up out of the water well pictures our being made alive to the doing of God's will, so as to walk 'in newness of life.' Water baptism might also be said to have a very practical aspect, as a person might easily forget that he orally agreed to do God's will, or even forget that he once signed a paper to that effect; for how many things we forget that we have said or even written down! But can one forget that once, after hearing a discourse on baptism and joining in prayer, he changed his clothes to a bathing suit and got baptized in the presence of many witnesses? Hardly! Having taken such a step, one has the obligation of following through by being a co-worker with Jehovah God. What all this involves will be considered in the succeeding article.

DOING JEHOVAH'S W

"Let us, then, as many of us as are mature, be of this mental attitude; and...to what extent we have made progress, let us go on walking orderly in this same routine." -Phil. 3:15, 16.

WHAT is Jehovah's work for those who have dedicated themselves to do his will and to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ his Son? It is a twofold work that was both foretold and commanded by Jesus Christ.

² He prophesied: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come."

1, 2. What twofold activity is required of dedicated Christians today, as shown by what scriptures?

(Matt. 24:14) So, to share in preaching this good news of the Kingdom is certainly an important part of doing Jehovah's work today. Jesus further commanded his early disciples: "Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit, teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you." (Matt. 28:19, 20) Christians not only must preach, but also must teach people what they themselves have been taught. They should help others to do the things Jesus himself commanded his original apostles and disciples to do.

³ How is Jehovah God's work to be done? Is each Christian to do this work as he

3. What do the Scriptures show as to how God's work is to be done?



WORK IN JEHOVAH'S WAY

feels like doing it or thinks it should be done? Not at all. Rather, God's Word commands *how* we should do it. This principle was illustrated as far back as the days of Moses, for at Deuteronomy 12:8 we read: "You must not do according to all that we are doing here today, each one whatever is right in his own eyes." On the contrary, we are to do as commanded at Deuteronomy 6:18: "You must do what is right and good in Jehovah's eyes, in order that it may go well with you." The apostle Paul shows that these principles also apply to the Christian congregation: "Now I exhort you, brothers, . . . that you should all speak in agreement, and that there should not be divisions among you, but that you may be fitly united in the same mind and in the

same line of thought." (1 Cor. 1:10) And, at Philippians 3:15, 16, Paul shows that to think, speak and work harmoniously is a mark of mature Christians. This unity of purpose and action is essential in doing Jehovah God's work in his way.

GIVING GOD'S WORK THE FIRST PLACE

⁴ Now what are some of the things included in doing Jehovah's work in Jehovah's way? For one thing, we need to give it priority in our lives. As Jesus urged: "Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness." (Matt. 6:33) We have only so much time, so much physical and mental strength or energy and only so much of this world's goods.

4. (a) What place should God's work have in our lives?
(b) What things rightfully may make demands on our assets?

There are so many things that rightfully make demands on our time. For example: a father must provide for his family, not only spiritually but also materially, and arrange for a certain amount of recreation for them. All these things are required of him.—Compare 1 Timothy 5:8.

⁵ However, even in regard to such obligations there are areas wherein Christians may be able to choose. For example, in order to put God's kingdom first in our lives, we may be able to take the kind of employment that will leave us the most possible time for sharing in the preaching and discipling work and in caring for the spiritual interests of our families. One father working as a laboratory technician quit that job and became self-employed, doing all manner of odd jobs, so that he could devote more time to caring for the spiritual interests of his four sons and daughter. The result? The children also grew up to be fine Christian workers.

⁶ Then there is the matter of our leisure time. We all need recreation, but how much? Does it come first in our lives? Do we intensely pursue our favorite form of recreation so much that our spiritual interests suffer? Or, do we first take care of our spiritual needs and then, as time is available, engage in some recreation? Often it is a case of choosing, for usually it is not this AND that, but this OR that. Do we regard God's work of living and spreading the "good news" as the cream, so to speak, of our lives and the other things as the skim milk? Or, do we thoughtlessly make pleasure the cream of our time, energies and means, and God's work the skim milk? Are we laying ourselves open to the charge of being "lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God"?—2 Tim. 3:4.

5. (a) How can a Christian put Jehovah's work first with regard to his secular job? (b) How was one father rewarded for doing so?

6. What choice must we make as to the use of our leisure time?

BALANCE AND TIMING

⁷ Jesus said that he did nothing of his own originality. He followed closely the direction given by his Father. (John 14:10) So we do well to study carefully his example and carry on the preaching of the "good news" in the ways that he did. In this way we will be doing Jehovah's work in Jehovah's way. Jesus did not wait for people to come to him, nor did he limit his preaching of the "good news" to persons with whom he was already acquainted. He went "from city to city and from village to village, preaching and declaring the good news of the kingdom of God." (Luke 8:1) Imitating his example, his disciples took the initiative to approach other people with the "good news"; they witnessed to groups in marketplaces and other locations where people congregated. (Acts 16:13-15; 17:17-21) Today, Jehovah's Witnesses follow the same principles. They take the initiative in sharing the "good news" with others, whether these are acquaintances or strangers. As they go about the affairs of daily life, they have contacts with relatives and neighbors, in business and in school; and they endeavor to use these contacts to share Bible truth in appropriate ways. But not everyone would hear the "good news" if we limited our activity to this. There are some who would never be met if we did not call personally at their homes. Having the kind of love that reaches out to include all sorts of persons, Jehovah's Witnesses put forth the effort to reach everyone with the Kingdom message. Does your personal share in this activity reflect this balanced Christian outlook?—Matt. 5:46-48; 1 Tim. 2:3, 4.

⁸ Closely related to balance is the matter of timing. There is indeed 'an appointed time for every affair under heaven.' (Eccl.

7, 8. (a) What does doing Jehovah's work in Jehovah's way require of us as to the ways in which we share the "good news" with others? (b) As to timing?

3:1-8) In keeping with this principle, when we are at a congregation meeting and a Christian minister is giving a talk, that is not the time to be dozing, whispering or reading something not related to the subject being discussed. Also, the evenings when meetings are held are not the time to make return visits or to engage in other Christian activities that could just as well be taken care of at some other time. It seems that elders especially need to exercise care in this matter of timing. Often they may be tempted to take care of congregation matters right during meetings. With a little better planning, however, these things could well be cared for at some other time.

DOING GOD'S WORK PEACEABLY, JOYFULLY

⁹ Jesus counseled his apostles: "Keep peace between one another." (Mark 9:50) After all, is not Jehovah the "God of peace," and his Son the "Prince of Peace"? (Phil. 4:9; Isa. 9:6) And did not Jesus pronounce happy the peaceable, that is, the peacemakers? (Matt. 5:9, *Kingdom Interlinear Translation*) This means that we should be concerned and put forth efforts to have peace among ourselves.

¹⁰ Why does working together peaceably sometimes present a problem? One reason doubtless is that we all have different personalities. So should we not be willing to make allowances for different ways of thinking and acting, being understanding rather than critical? Another reason why keeping the peace presents a problem at times is that we have a keen desire to see God's work done in the best possible manner, and we naturally think our way is the best. Sometimes that may be so. But often there is more than one acceptable way to do something. When that is so, it is far more important that we work peaceably together than that something be done in absolutely the most efficient manner.

9, 10. (a) Why should we do Jehovah's work peaceably? (b) Why is this sometimes a problem?

¹¹ In particular do elders, when coming together to consider matters relating to the congregation, need to keep in mind the importance of maintaining peace. Where there is no compelling principle involved, and the question is only a matter of taste or a little more or less expense, in the interest of peace the wise one will yield to the one who feels strongly about the matter. If we keep insisting on having our way, we may cause hard feelings and even cause our brothers to be estranged. Then would the victory have been worth it? Of course not! So doing Jehovah's work in his way also means striving to do it peaceably, calling to mind Psalm 133:1: "Look! How good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!"

¹² Still another important aspect of doing Jehovah's work is that we do it joyfully. Even as an unhappy housewife reflects unfavorably on her husband so would our serving God without joy reflect on him. Most fittingly, the apostle Paul commands: "Always rejoice in the Lord. Once more I will say, Rejoice!" (Phil. 4:4) And how many reasons Christians have today to be joyful! The 'truth has indeed set them free' (John 8:32); they have forgiveness of sins (Acts 13:38); they see the knowledge of truth becoming ever more abundant (Dan. 12:4); they have fine association with one another (Rom. 1:11, 12); they experience the greater happiness that comes from giving (Acts 20:35); they are enjoying the blessings of a spiritual paradise (2 Cor. 12:4); and by keeping integrity they know that they make even the heart of their great God Jehovah glad.—Prov. 27:11.

DOING GOD'S WORK WITH CLEAN HANDS

¹³ One aspect of doing Jehovah's work

11. In the interest of peace, what should an elder be willing to do?

12. Why is doing Jehovah's work with joy a most reasonable requirement?

13. In what certain respect did ancient Israel often come short, causing Jehovah to command them to do what?



A well-organized, loving service to God, placing Kingdom interests first at all times, can result in much joy now and in the days ahead

in his way is that of doing it with clean hands, that is, virtuously. In this, not a few have fallen short. We may be as busy as possible in Jehovah's work, but unless we live by the Bible's moral principles it is all in vain. Jehovah God made that point in connection with his ancient people Israel. He told them that he found their various kinds of formal worship detestable and then said: "Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the badness of your dealings from in front of my eyes; cease to do bad."—Isa. 1:13-16.

¹⁴ Jehovah God is holy, pure and righteous, and he commands that his servants be likewise holy and pure. "You must be holy, because I am holy." (1 Pet. 1:16) We are all imperfect and, therefore, we have a real struggle to keep holy and pure. At times we may feel as did the apostle Paul when he wrote that the things he wanted to do he did not do, and the things that he did not want to do he did.

14. How did Paul show himself exemplary as to conduct, in keeping with what ancient command?

(Rom. 7:19) But he never quit striving against inherited weaknesses, for he wrote: "I pummel my body and lead it as a slave, that, after I have preached to others, I myself should not become disapproved somehow." (1 Cor. 9:27) The Jews returning from ancient Babylon were commanded: "Keep yourselves clean, you who are carrying the utensils of Jehovah." While this command may have had primary reference to religious cleanliness, the principle also applies to moral cleanliness.—Isa. 52:11.

¹⁵ It is most fitting that we keep clean, not only because of the clean message we bear, but also in order not to stumble others. Jesus warned that it is an extremely serious matter to stumble one of his little ones. (Luke 17:1, 2) Paul was careful in this regard, as is evident from his words: "In no way are we giving any cause for stumbling, that our ministry might not be found fault with; but in every

15. What added reason is there for watching our conduct?

way we recommend ourselves as God's ministers, by the endurance of much, . . . by purity, . . . by love free from hypocrisy." Truly doing Jehovah's work in Jehovah's way means our being careful that we do Jehovah's work with clean hands, lest we bring reproach on Jehovah and his congregation and lest we stumble others.

—2 Cor. 6:3-10.

DOING JEHOVAH'S WORK UNSELFISHLY

¹⁶ And above all, doing Jehovah's work will profit us absolutely nothing unless we do it out of love, unselfishly, out of a pure heart. King David appreciated the importance of this, and that is why he prayed: "Instruct me, O Jehovah, about your way. I shall walk in your truth. Unify my heart to fear your name." (Ps. 86:11) To serve with a divided heart would mean to let selfishness enter. It would indicate an ulterior motive. That is why we are commanded to love Jehovah God with our whole heart, soul, mind and strength.

—Mark 12:29-31.

¹⁷ This is not an easy thing to do. The Israelites continually were falling short in this regard. Why? Because imperfect human hearts are exceedingly deceitful, treacherous, even as we read at Jeremiah 17:9. And, as Jeremiah goes on to show, only Jehovah God can fully understand the heart. That is why a study of his Word will help us to discern our selfish tendencies or schemings, and to war against them successfully. Yes, the fallen inclinations of our hearts are ever out to vitiate or spoil our good works. Selfish or ulterior motives were the cause of the trouble with the religious leaders in Jesus' day, for which reason they so opposed Jesus. It is the same with Christendom's clergy today. Ostensibly they are serving God, but ac-

tually they are concerned chiefly with their own interests.—Matt. 23:13-33.

¹⁸ How plain does the apostle Paul make the importance of right motive: "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels but do not have love, I have become a sounding piece of brass or a clashing cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophesying and am acquainted with all the sacred secrets and all knowledge, and if I have all the faith so as to transplant mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my belongings to feed others, and if I hand over my body, that I may boast, but do not have love, I am not profited at all!"—1 Cor. 13:1-3.

¹⁹ Most fittingly, therefore, Paul counsels us: "Let all your affairs take place with love." (1 Cor. 16:14) But does Paul let it go at that? No, appreciating how treacherous our fallen hearts are, he says: "Let your love be without hypocrisy." (Rom. 12:9) How easy it is to make expressions of love that do not really stem from a rightly motivated heart! That is why Paul made it a point to recommend himself as one of God's ministers by his "love free from hypocrisy." (2 Cor. 6:6) Yes, our love needs to be "love out of a clean heart"; and, as the apostle Peter expressed it, ours must be an "unhypocritical brotherly love."—1 Tim. 1:5; 1 Pet. 1:22.

²⁰ What a wide field doing Jehovah's work in Jehovah's way covers! To give it first place in our lives, to be doing it wisely, peacefully, joyously, with clean hands and pure heart, is what Jehovah God requires of us. Doing so, we can have much joy now and win his approval and endless life in the new system of things so near at hand.

16. What did King David pray that God should do for him, meaning what?

17. Why is the matter of watching one's motives not an easy one?

18. How does the apostle Paul drive home the point of our needing to serve Jehovah God unselfishly?

19. What further counsel do the Scriptures give as to the kind of love we must manifest?

20. To sum up, doing Jehovah's work in Jehovah's way requires what of us, resulting in what for us?

THE
SERMON
ON THE
MOUNT

"Keep on Asking"



AFTER counseling his hearers to avoid adverse judging of their fellowman, Jesus said: "Keep on asking, and it will be given you; keep on seeking, and you will find; keep on knocking, and it will be opened to you."—Matt. 7:7.*

With these words, the Son of God urged his disciples to persevere in prayer. There was a pressing need for this. The Sermon on the Mount had shown clearly that righteousness in God's eyes was not simply a matter of performing religious and charitable deeds. (Matt. 5:20; 6:1) To be meaningful, acts of worship must spring from proper heart motivations, including forgiveness, chasteness, truthfulness and love. (Matt. 5:22, 27, 28, 33-37, 43-48) Since these qualities run counter to sinful human nature, the disciples would have to petition God regularly for assistance in meeting his requirements for true worship.

Hence, they were to "keep on asking" for needed strength and wisdom to live a godly life. (2 Cor. 4:7; 2 Pet. 1:3) They should "keep on seeking" this as they would hid treasure. (Compare Matthew 13:44.) They must "keep on knocking" to secure full admittance into the blessings that God has in store for those who meet his approval.—Note Luke 13:24, 25.

Persons who earnestly pray for such blessings and work in harmony with their prayers can draw encouragement from Jesus' further words: "*Everyone asking receives, and everyone seeking finds, and to*

everyone knocking it will be opened." (Matt. 7:8) This does not mean that people can pray for anything that they want and receive an answer. Proper prayer must always be in harmony with God's will. (1 John 5:14) However, disciples of Jesus could be confident that God would answer their prayers for help in carrying on true worship.

In this regard, the Son of God gave an illustration: "*Indeed, who is the man among you whom his son asks for bread—he will not hand him a stone, will he? Or, perhaps, he will ask for a fish—he will not hand him a serpent, will he?*"—Matt. 7:9, 10.

In Palestine, during the first century C.E., bread was baked in the form of flat cakes that resembled certain stones. Some small serpents looked like the fish that often were eaten with bread. (See John 6:9.) If a youth asked his father for bread, the parent would not deceive and vex his offspring by giving him a stone. If the son asked for a fish to eat with bread, his father would not hand him a serpent. The natural affection between father and son would preclude the father's doing so.

"Therefore," continued Jesus, "if you, although being wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much

* Jesus' words at Matthew 7:7-11 appear also at Luke 11:9-13 in a setting that took place in Judea about a year and a half after the Sermon on the Mount. Evidently Jesus saw fit to repeat the counsel.

more so will your Father who is in the heavens give good things to those asking him?"—Matt. 7:11.

Fathers on earth, though "being wicked" due to inherited sin, do not give to their children harmful items that only look like the things requested. Instead, human parents endeavor to provide "good gifts" for their offspring. "How much more so" will God, whose love is perfect, answer the prayers of his devoted worshipers. (1 John 4:8) He will grant his servants "good things," especially holy spirit, that can strengthen them to continue rendering sacred service that meets God's requirements. (Compare Luke 11:13.) The Most High will do this, however, only for persons who persist in "asking him."

Next, Jesus added a rule of conduct that has achieved considerable fame: "*All things, therefore, that you want men to do to you, you also must likewise do to them; this, in fact, is what the Law and the Prophets mean.*"—Matt. 7:12.

God displays a fatherly disposition toward his servants by answering their prayers. "Therefore," they, in turn, must treat fellow humans properly. Only in this way can they prove themselves to be sons of God, that is, persons who imitate his benevolent disposition and whose prayers the heavenly Father readily answers. —Compare Matthew 5:44-48; 1 Peter 3:7.

Concerning this "golden rule," the book *A Pattern for Life* states:

"Parallels to the Rule can be found in both Jewish and Gentile sources, as though to prove that God had not left men without knowledge of the highest morality before the coming of Christ. In Tob[it], a book of the Apocryphal 4:15 we read: 'What thou hatest do to no man.' Hillel [a rabbi who lived about the time of Jesus] said: 'What is hateful to thee do not to anyone else.' The Stoics had a maxim: 'Do not to another what you do not wish to happen.'

to yourself.' In Confucius we find: 'Do not to others what you would not wish done to yourself.'

These sayings, however, are all negative, encouraging people *not* to mete out treatment that they would *not* want to receive back.

Persons who would heed the Son of God, however, were to go beyond mere avoidance of mistreating others. They must take the initiative to do good things to their fellowman, yes, 'all things that they want men to do to them.' Comparing this counsel with the similar statements of a negative type in non-Biblical writings, A. B. Bruce observes in *The Expositor's Greek Testament*:

"The negative confines us to the region of *justice*; the positive takes us into the region of *generosity* or *grace*, and so embraces both law *and* prophets. We wish much more than we can claim—to be helped in need, encouraged in struggles, defended when misrepresented, and befriended when our back is at the wall. Christ would have us do all that in a magnanimous, benignant way; to be not merely [righteous] but [good]."—See Romans 5:7.

"The Law and the Prophets" designate vital inspired Hebrew Scriptures. When persons treat others in the way that they would have others treat them, they are acting in harmony with the real spirit behind God's law. "Do not you people be owing anybody a single thing," writes the apostle Paul, "except to love one another; for he that loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. For the law code, 'You must not commit adultery, You must not murder, You must not steal, You must not covet,' and whatever other commandment there is, is summed up in this word, namely, 'You must love your neighbor as yourself.' Love does not work evil to one's neighbor; therefore love is the law's fulfillment."—Rom. 13:8-10; compare Matthew 22:37-40.

INSIGHT ON THE NEWS

- "The love of money is a root of all sorts of injurious things," says the Bible, adding that some who pursue riches "have stabbed themselves all over with many pains." —1 Tim. 6:10.

'Stabbed with Many Pains' An evidence of this comes from the wealthiest county in the state of California. In this county incomes are very high, homes are large and expensive, the natural surroundings beautiful, and the people have every mechanical convenience and recreational activity that money can buy, with much leisure time.

However, this county has the highest divorce rate in the United States; about 90 percent of all real-estate transactions in some areas there are the result of broken marriages. The county has twice as many suicides as the national average. Its alcoholism rate is one of the highest in the nation, and teen-age drinking is a huge problem.

Another evidence that wealth does not buy happiness: there are more psychiatrists and other mental therapists in this county, per capita, than anywhere else in the United States.

Of course, poverty is not conducive to happiness either. So, logically, the Bible writer asked: "Give me neither poverty nor riches." —Prov. 30:8.

- At a conference of child-care experts in Canada, Dr. John Bowlby, the keynote speaker, stated: "A lot of children are frankly neglected by parents who give them too much freedom and independence."

Parental Care Vital He noted that such things as children's camps, day-care centers and baby-sitters only served to put more of a gulf between children and parents. All of this, Bowlby said, produced "conditions unfavorable to family living," and has had disastrous consequences for many children.

A Chicago study of teen-agers and their families also demonstrated the vital part parental care plays in the development of children. In this study teen-agers were observed over a five-year period, from the age of 12 to 17. At the end, the evidence proved to be

"overwhelming" that the 17-year-olds who were friendly, more balanced, effective and valued by others were those whose parents had spent the most time with them.

- Historian and author Will Durant, aged 92, summarized what he has learned in a lifetime of studying history by these three simple words: "**'Love One Another'**"

"Love one another." He observed: "My final lesson of history is the same as that of Jesus," that "love is the most practical thing in the world."

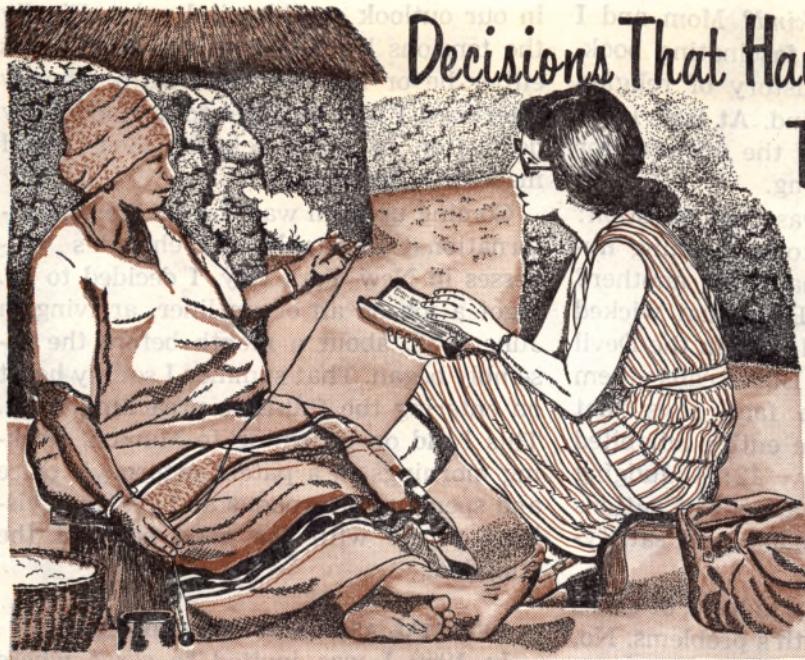
In all Western civilization, stated Durant, the person who stands out above all others is Jesus Christ. "He undoubtedly was the most permanent influence on our thoughts," the historian said. However, he noted that the actions of people in the West "are very seldom Christian."

Although Durant expressed disappointment at the general lack of love in Christendom, are there no people who make it the guiding force in their lives? There are such people. And they can be identified by the rule Jesus gave: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves." (John 13:35) They believe what Jesus said nearly 2,000 years ago when he summarized the two greatest commandments: "You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind," and "you must love your neighbor as yourself."—Matt. 22:37, 39.

- A Gallup poll taken at the direction of the National Council of Churches in America concluded that some of the results "were ominous for the future of organized religion."

'Ominous Future' The poll found that Americans place less importance on religion in their lives than they did in the two previous decades. Those who go to church and those who do not generally find that the churches and synagogues fail to give spiritual direction. The majority agreed that "most churches and synagogues have lost the real spiritual part of religion."

Gallup said that such results represent "a severe indictment of organized religion."



Decisions That Have Contributed To a Happy Life

as told by
Margarita König

available, and Munich began to rebuild. Now, as a teen-ager, I became deeply involved in sports, the theater, opera and other social activities.

On graduation from high school, as part of a student-exchange program, I received a scholarship to attend a college in the United States. Everyone there was friendly to me, and I could see that, basically, people everywhere want peace. Why, then, I wondered, did there seem to be a force pushing people to distrust and hate one another?

Back home again I took up chemistry at the Technical University of Munich. I became involved in student government, but I was disappointed in the methods proposed. How could true peace ever come if people put their personal interests first? I began to wonder if the Bible had answers. Is the Bible really the Word of God? I went to a large library in Munich to do some research.

SATISFYING ANSWERS

There was much contradictory criticism of the Bible. I wanted to find out the truth. Then, about this time, two of Jehovah's Witnesses called at our home. We obtained from them the book *What Has*

MY FATHER was called to the German army in 1939, at the beginning of World War II. For six long years, I rarely saw him. Meanwhile I had a lot to think about.

Why, I wondered, did the radio present killing as a victory when in former years a fatal accident was a sad event? When we wanted to listen to certain stations, we turned the sound down low because it was illegal to listen to them. Bombed and burning houses became a frequent sight. My own brother was killed in the war.

I attended Catholic church services in our hometown of Munich. There, prayer was said after each Mass for the fighting men and for Führer Adolf Hitler. Once, I remember, mother sent me to school with a letter to the parish priest, requesting that prayers in behalf of the war be stopped. She couldn't see how God would be pleased with them.

When the war ended in 1945, my father came back from a prison camp. Gradually hardships lessened as more food became

Religion Done for Mankind? Mom and I took turns reading this fascinating book, which deals with the history of religion and its effects on mankind. At last, I felt as though I was finding the answers for which I had been groping.

For example, there was that question: What is it that seems to be pushing humans to distrust and hate one another? I was shown from the Bible that wicked spirit forces are involved—Satan the Devil and his demons. The Bible calls them “world rulers,” and, in fact, says that Satan “is misleading the entire inhabited earth.” (Eph. 6:12; Rev. 12:9) Judging by the ungodly, devilish actions of nations and peoples, how reasonable and satisfying this answer was!

It brought me great joy to learn of God’s provision for solving earth’s problems. No, it will not be by means of some human ideology or administration, as proposed by worldly educators. Rather, the Bible shows that a new heavenly government will take charge of earth’s affairs. It will get rid of the present wicked world rulership. Jesus Christ taught his followers to pray: “Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth.” (Matt. 6:10) I began to see that this kingdom is a real government and that only by means of it will genuine, worldwide peace be achieved.

DECISIONS THAT CHANGED MY LIFE

As I learned of these purposes of God, I began telling others about them. In time, I decided that I wanted to copy Jesus and the early Christians and serve God whole-souled. But there was someone with whom I longed to share this newfound life purpose.

This was a fellow student who worked in the same laboratory. We intended to marry soon. But he became very unhappy with my decision to serve God. It caused me much heartache to see the difference

in our outlook on this vital point. Finally the tensions led to an ultimatum: It was either he or my newfound faith. Shortly afterward I was baptized to symbolize my dedication to serve Jehovah God. I had made my decision.

Coming up soon was the Divine Will International Assembly of Jehovah’s Witnesses in New York city. I decided to go. I got a job on an ocean liner, arriving in June 1958, about a month before the assembly began. That summer I set my heart on entering the full-time preaching work. This I did on returning to Munich, working mornings in a patent attorney’s office and spending afternoons and evenings visiting people with the good news of the Kingdom.

SPECIAL ASSIGNMENTS AND GILEAD

In 1959 I was invited to serve where there was a special need for Kingdom preachers. My partner, Gerda, and I were sent to the small villages in the Steiger Forest, Franconia. There, up and down the hills of the territory, we started to announce God’s Word on foot, by bicycle and, later, on small motorbikes. In this area, most of the people were devout Catholics. Several times stones were thrown at us, and the church bells were rung as an alarm when we two girls arrived preaching the Bible. Even so, some meek people eventually came to accept the truth of God’s Word.

Gerda and I were very happy and felt like the first-century Christians searching for the Lord’s “sheep.” Often, on our way back home at night, we marveled at the calm starry sky framed in the high trees. Or, on a sunny day, when we rested at lunchtime near a creek or in a meadow, how we appreciated God’s promise of a paradise earth! After three years we were given assignments in different places. Yet Gerda is still like another daughter to my mother, and like a sister to me.

For nearly 16 years now, my new companion, Gisela, and I have been together. In the fall of 1962, we received an assignment in Paris, France. Then there were fewer than 20,000 Jehovah's Witnesses in the country, as compared with over 67,000 now. It was thrilling to find interested ones and to teach them God's Word. I was happy every day for my decision to take up the full-time preaching work.

In 1965, Gisela and I received an invitation to the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead for missionary training. This school is located at the international headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in New York, where then a family of over 1,000 lived and worked. Now the family numbers nearly 2,000. For me, our six-month stay was like a continuous international assembly, with Bible instruction and harmonious cooperation. When our 41st class was graduated, tears were shed at the prospect of leaving our friends there.

Our new assignment was Madagascar, the big island in the Indian Ocean off the coast of Africa. What would people there be like? Would we be able to reach their hearts with Bible truth and make friends with them?

LIFE IN MADAGASCAR

When our plane began to descend over the capital city, Tananarive, we eagerly took in the sight of endless hills and valleys covered with rice terraces. At the airport there were some 20 friends to greet us. We felt at home. That night when we came back from a Christian meeting the bright stars seemed different. And the appearance of the starry heavens was different! This was because we were now in the southern hemisphere. We found, however, that our Christian brothers and sisters here were just as loving and kind as in every other country.

Before heading south to serve in the provincial city of Fianarantsoa, we had a

four-week language course in the Malagasy language for 11 hours a day. Its roots are so different from any European language that we wondered if people would ever understand what we said. However, we could not have asked for a more patient and polite audience. A visit to the homes of people to explain the Bible is met with great appreciation and hospitality. Often several family members gather and listen attentively.

Gradually we also picked up their customs. For example, a foreigner is supposed to sit near the entrance, unless he is asked to come farther into the house. In the friendly and peaceful atmosphere, almost unconsciously we began to imitate the custom of bowing and extending the right hand with the left hand placed under the right hand's wrist. If you didn't know yet how to act, everyone would see that you were learning, and a friendly smile went a long way.

We found people to be quite cultured. Even old grandmothers out in the villages like to read the Bible and Bible literature. In order to obtain books, they love to trade. Children came running behind us bartering rice for Watchtower and Awake! magazines.

Many people in Fianarantsoa told us they were Norwegians, which at the beginning came as a real surprise. It meant, however, that they adhered to the Norwegian Lutheran Church. Others were Catholics. But all still practiced the main belief of Madagascar, ancestor worship. Quite a few houses have nearby subterranean grave chambers covered by a little house. Before we acquired discernment, we occasionally knocked at a grave while preaching from door to door. One religious custom was to take the bones out of the grave every few years and to wrap them in a special new cloth, this act being accompanied by a big festival.

Religious leaders became angry about

our helping people to understand the difference between Jesus Christ's teachings and their own philosophies and practices. One day, like lightning out of a clear sky, we were summoned to Tananarive and told that we missionaries would have to leave the country immediately. Our hearts were heavy thinking about having to say farewell to our dear brothers and Bible students.

Our eyes filled with tears as, for the last time, we drove through the rocky landscape. Eucalyptus, mimosa and bamboo trees, rice paddies and red clay houses painted an inerasable picture in our minds. After more than four years, this island had become home to us. Waving good-bye to the Malagasy friends and admiring once more the flaming island sunset, we took off in our plane.

SERVING IN OTHER COUNTRIES

We landed in the middle of the night at Nairobi, Kenya, in East Africa. Many friends were there to greet us. Now we were given a four weeks' language course in Swahili. Then we were driven along the smooth highway to our new assignment, Nakuru. This is a small agricultural town of Western-style houses nestled on the slopes of extinct Menengai crater. It is not far from Lake Nakuru with its clouds of pink flamingos. Here we found a fine congregation of brothers and sisters.

A major undertaking was the building of a beautiful Kingdom Hall for our meetings. The people of the city were amazed to see men, women and children of all tribes and different races working together—carrying stones, mixing cement, cutting wood and nailing and painting. Just a few years earlier, in the time of the Mau-Mau movement, peoples of these tribes had been killing one another. It gave us many opportunities to explain how this peaceful unity came about.

As was to be expected, not everybody

was happy with the good news of God's kingdom that we preached. Some people, evidently religious leaders, misrepresented our activity to the Kenyan government. One day we got word that our work would be banned in Kenya, and we missionaries had to leave the country. Crowds of brothers and sisters came to the Nairobi airport to see us off, assuring us of their love and strong faith in Jehovah. Happily, the government of Kenya has since realized that Jehovah's Witnesses are truly law abiding and the ban has been lifted.

The next assignment for Gisela and myself was Dahomey (now called Benin) in West Africa. Waving coconut trees beside long stretches of white sand and blue ocean, along with the colorful traditional dress of the local people, created a pleasant first impression. But our greatest impression was of the happy group of friends greeting us at the airport in the capital city of Cotonou. The beautiful branch building included a missionary home, a Kingdom Hall and a garden. But we were invited to move to Parakou, a small city one day's ride by train to the north.

The train conductor, one of Jehovah's Witnesses, looked after us, even letting us ride a short distance with him at the head of the train. As we moved north, the landscape turned drier, though there were many trees such as teak, cashew, karite and baobab. Shortly after night had fallen we reached our destination, the whistle and horn announcing our arrival as the event of the day. How would we recognize our brothers in the crowded station? But sure enough, smiling faces that we had never seen before appeared right away at the carriage window. They had spotted us!

The small congregation at Parakou was composed of members of different tribes and languages. The meetings were held in French. While we were there, a fine Kingdom Hall was built. Many people with whom we studied the Bible helped with

the work. Among them was a woman of the nomadic tribe of the Peulh of the inland regions of West Africa. A little later she became a publisher of the "good news," preaching in the many languages that she knew.

Local tradition was still very strong in Parakou. When the king died, the market-place, the center of activity, was closed for four months. Big rallies on horseback were held by his followers and those of the new king. The nights were filled with the sounds of the drums that accompanied related ceremonies.

The antireligious ideology of Marx and Lenin finally came to dominate the population. Progressively, the people, especially schoolchildren, were forced to repeat such slogans as 'Glory to the people, all power to the people.' After we had served in Parakou for over a year, the authorities insisted that we cease the house-to-house preaching activity. Some arrests of the brothers occurred, and a few months later we were transferred to Cononou, leaving the local Witnesses to continue the preaching more inconspicuously.

As government restrictions increased, the brothers repeatedly stressed the points in *The Watchtower* dealing with persecution in order to prepare themselves. In time, some were viciously beaten when they would not shout the revolutionary slogans.

One day Gisela and I came back from town to find the branch building in Cotonou surrounded by armed members of the revolutionary committee. We were permitted to enter the house, where we were held with the others. The next day uniformed men with machine guns searched our house and luggage carefully. Two of them pondered over the names Elijah and Elisha that they found in one of my notebooks. Finally we made them understand that these were prophets of God who lived over 2,500 years ago!

We were taken to the National Security headquarters where we were told that the following day we would be put out of the country. "Since you are Christians, we trust you," an officer said, "so you can stay in your home tonight." The next day we watched as most of the missionaries were taken away to Nigeria. That afternoon a policeman accompanied us to the Togo border. After he left, the chauffeur drove us all the way to the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in Lomé.

How comforting it was to be with the brothers in Togo! And how we enjoyed being able again to go from house to house with the Kingdom message! After enjoying several weeks in Togo, it was time to go to our new assignment.

In May 1976, we were driven up to Upper Volta. The two days' ride took us through some beautiful country, ending successfully at the Ouagadougou missionary home. We soon finished a language course in Moore, and began preaching to the people of the area in French and this local language. I am very glad to be here helping to take care of the numerous people who are interested in Bible truth.

WORLDWIDE FAMILY OF FRIENDS

I have never regretted the decision to use my life in Jehovah's service. Having a degree in chemistry, I could have pursued a materially rewarding career, but I hold this as nothing to compare with the privilege of helping people in Germany, France, Madagascar, Kenya, Benin, and now here in Upper Volta to learn the truth about God's grand purposes. I could not imagine a more satisfying, rewarding life filled with so much excitement and new experiences.

Recently I visited my dear mother, now near 80, yet who still carries on with strong faith there in Munich, helping others to learn God's truth. She is happy to

have me in the missionary field. The trip there and back to Upper Volta made Gisela and me think how blessed we are.

We were met at the airport in Paris by friends with whom we served years before. Our enjoyable exchange of memories and news was cut short around midnight only by the need for rest. Then during a short stopover in Niamey, Republic of Niger, several African friends, whom we had known in Benin, came to meet us at the airport. Our animated greetings and conversation caused an airport official to inquire as to

what kind of group we were, blacks and whites socializing so freely.

Finally, our airplane came to a standstill near the airport building of Ouagadougou. The smiling faces of our friends waving from the observation deck reflected our own feeling of joy at being together with those here again. Truly, there is a deep, satisfying joy in being part of a worldwide family of genuine brothers and sisters. May you, too, make the decisions in life that will bring you such heartwarming blessings.

Gilead's 65th Class Encouraged to Remain Faithful

September 10, 1978, was the graduation day for the 29 students of the 65th class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead. They had successfully completed their five-month training in Brooklyn, New York, and were assigned to missionary service in parts of Africa, South America and Eurasia and on islands of the South Pacific. All had looked forward with keen anticipation to their training. One couple had waited for 10 years until there was an opening for them to attend the school. Others had waited at least three years. None of the students were novices in providing spiritual aid to their fellow humans. On the average, they had devoted about 10 years to this vital work.

The graduation program featured two distinct parts. The morning was devoted to parting admonition to the class, and the afternoon witnessed a program presented by the graduates to an audience of nearly 1,900 friends and relatives.

F. W. Franz, the school's president, made the graduates mindful of the need to pay attention to themselves so that they might remain faithful to God. For his discussion, he drew on Mark

chapter 4. After emphasizing the importance of giving undivided attention and profound respect to Jesus Christ in his capacity as a teacher, Franz cautioned the graduates against involvement with bad associates inside and outside the Christian congregation.

He made the following points: By taking up a new assignment as missionaries, the graduates were, in effect, being transplanted. They would find themselves in new soil, that is, a new environment. How would they react? Would they continue to develop their capacities and fine attitudes and qualities? When the harvesttime comes, that is, when there is no further opportunity to develop their Christian personality, in what condition would they be found? This would depend largely on what they had allowed to influence them.

Hence, Franz urged the graduates to exercise care not to come under worldly influence. Instead, they should put God's kingdom first in their lives and strive to cultivate the fruitage of his spirit. Then, with the coming of the day of judgment, they would pass through it successfully.

Earlier, other speakers, including the school's two instructors, also gave upbuilding admonition to remain faithful. They highlighted such aspects as the importance of patience, preserving a wholesome attitude, not judging people by outward appearances, finding joy in humbly serving and maintaining deep love for God and trusting in his love.

Even the program presented by the students served as an encouragement to faithfulness. After illustrating the development of music used by Jehovah's Witnesses at their meetings, the students staged two Bible dramas. The first demonstrated the need for watching tendencies that could cause a person to lose out on seeing the fulfillment of God's promises. Events from

QUESTIONS from READERS

- Did Jehovah God speak to Adam directly or through an angel?

Likely God spoke to Adam through his Son, who later became Jesus.

The Bible reveals that often when God spoke to humans it was through an angel, who might even be spoken of as if he were Jehovah. (Gen. 16:7-11; Judg. 2:14; 6:11-16; 13:15-22; compare Exodus 3:2-4 with Acts 7:30, 35.) The Scriptures pointedly say that God transmitted the Law to Moses through angels. —Gal. 3:19; Heb. 2:2, 3.

God's chief spokesman was his only-begotten Son, called "the Word." God often used him to communicate with humans. (John 1:1) Through him God created all other things. (John 1:3; Col. 1:16) The Word, then, would be the one to whom Jehovah said: "Let us make man in our image." The creation account adds that God "said to [Adam and Eve]: 'Be fruitful and become many.'" Logically, God said this and other things to Adam and Eve through "the Word" who was so involved with humans. —Gen. 1:26-28; 2:16; 3:8-13; Prov. 8:31.

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the reign of Judean King Jehoshaphat were enacted in the second drama. Especially the deliverance of Judah from the combined forces of Moab, Ammon and those of Mount Seir in the time of Jehoshaphat revealed that faithful reliance on God does lead to blessings.

Of course, not just the graduates of Gilead's 65th class but all disciples of Jesus Christ should think seriously about remaining faithful to God. Only by faithful endurance to the end of one's life as a Christian or until the execution of divine judgment can one be among those to enjoy everlasting blessings as part of the "new heavens and a new earth" of God's making. —2 Pet. 3:13.

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39 U.S.C. 3626 provides in pertinent part: "No person who would have been entitled to mail matter under former section 4239 of this title may mail matter which is not provided for under this section unless he files annually with the Postal Service a written request for permission to mail matter at such rates." In accordance with the provisions of this statute, I hereby request permission to mail the publication named in Item 1 at the postage rates presently authorized by 39 U.S.C. 3626.			
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(See instructions on reverse)

Jehovah Reveals His Judgments

Jehovah God does not leave people in ignorance of his judgments. The Bible book of Amos informs us: "The Sovereign Lord Jehovah will not do a thing unless he has revealed his confidential matter to his servants the prophets. There is a lion that has roared! Who will not be afraid? The Sovereign Lord Jehovah himself has spoken! Who will not prophesy?"—Amos 3:7, 8.

An examination of the Biblical record makes it clear that God's servants were the first to know what he had in mind doing. Noah was the first to learn that the ungodly would be destroyed in a global flood, Abraham was told about Jehovah's view of Sodom and surrounding cities, and Israel's prophets were repeatedly informed as to what would happen in the future.

This put the prophets in a position to sound the warning, appealing to the Israelites to abandon their lawless ways.

A lion's roar is a sound of warning, prompting fear in those hearing it. Likewise, when Jehovah spoke, revealing his judgments to his prophets, this caused a reaction in them. They were impelled to prophesy, to declare what had been made known to them.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

December 10: Our Choice to Work with Jehovah God. Page 12. Songs to Be Used: 60, 76.
December 17: Doing Jehovah's Work in Jehovah's Way. Page 16. Songs to Be Used: 103, 51.

