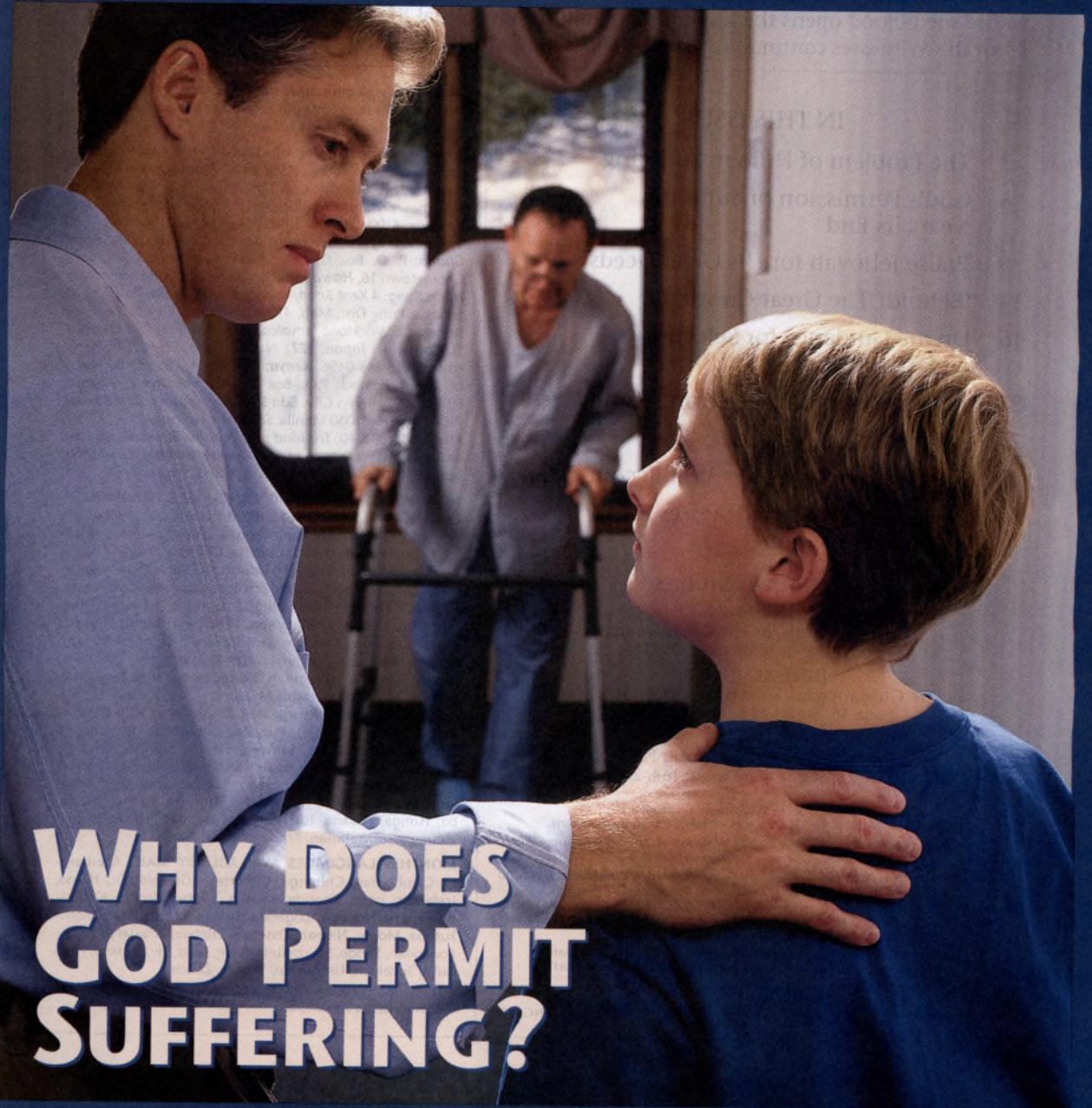


THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

MAY 15, 2001



**WHY DOES
GOD PERMIT
SUFFERING?**

THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

May 15, 2001

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

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THE PROBLEM OF HUMAN SUFFERING

“WHY GOD WHY?” That large headline appeared on the front page of a widely circulated newspaper after a devastating earthquake in Asia Minor. An accompanying picture showed a distraught father carrying his injured daughter out of their collapsed home.

Wars, famines, epidemics, and natural disasters have caused immeasurable pain, innumerable tears, and countless deaths. Add to this the suffering of victims of rape, child abuse, and other crimes. Consider the huge number of injuries and deaths resulting from accidents. And there is the anguish experienced by billions of people because of sickness, old age, and the death of loved ones.

The 20th century saw the worst suffering ever. From 1914 to 1918, World War I killed nearly ten million soldiers. Some historians say that it brought death to just as many civilians. In World War II, about 50 million combatants and civilians were killed, including millions of defenseless women, children, and elderly men. Throughout the last century, millions more were the victims of genocide, revolution, ethnic violence, hunger, and poverty. The *Historical Atlas of the Twentieth Century* estimates that over 180 million people died because of such “mass unpleasantness.”

The Spanish influenza of 1918/19 killed 20 million people. In the last two decades, about 19 million died from AIDS, and some 35 million now have the virus that causes it. Millions of children are left without parents—they died from AIDS. And untold numbers of babies are dying from AIDS, passed on to them when they were still in the womb.

More suffering is being inflicted on children in other ways. Citing information provided by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), at the end of 1995, England’s *Manchester Guardian Weekly* stated: “In the wars of the past decade, 2 million children have been killed, 4-5 million disabled, 12 million made homeless, more than 1 million orphaned or separated from their parents and 10 million psychologically traumatised.” Add to this an estimated 40 to 50 million abortions worldwide—every year!

What of the Future?

Many view the future with foreboding. A group of scientists stated: “Human activities . . . may so alter the living world

Top, wheelchair: UN/DH Photo 186410C by P.S. Sudhakaran; middle, starving children: WHO/OXFAM; bottom, emaciated man: FAO photo/B. Imewbare

that it will be unable to sustain life in the manner that we know." They added: "Even at this moment, one person in five lives in absolute poverty without enough to eat, and one in ten suffers serious malnutrition." The scientists took the occasion to "warn all humanity of what lies ahead" and said: "A

GOD'S PERMISSION OF SUFFERING NEARS ITS END

EVERYWHERE you look, there is suffering. Some people bring it on themselves. They contract sexually transmitted diseases or experience the effects of drug or alcohol abuse or of smoking. Or they may encounter health problems because of poor eating habits. However, much suffering results from factors or events beyond the control of the average person: war, ethnic violence, crime, poverty, famine, disease. Something else that humans basically cannot control is suffering related to aging and death.

The Bible assures us that "God is love." (1 John 4:8) Why, then, has a loving God allowed all this suffering to continue for

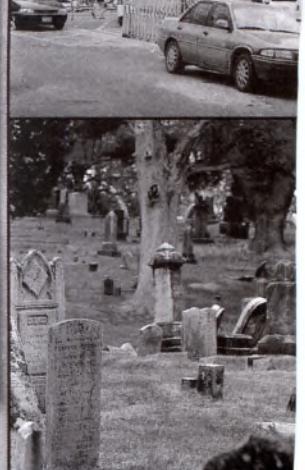
great change in our stewardship of the earth and the life on it is required, if vast human misery is to be avoided and our global home on this planet is not to be irretrievably mutilated."

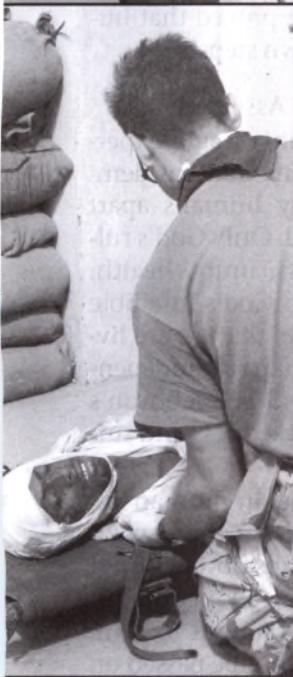
Why has God allowed so much suffering and wickedness? How does he purpose to remedy the situation? When?

so many centuries? When will he remedy the situation? To answer such questions, we need to examine God's purpose with regard to humans. This will help us to understand why God has allowed suffering and what he will do about it.

The Gift of Free Will

When God created the first human, he produced more than just a body with a brain. Further, God did not create Adam and Eve to be mindless robots. He implanted in them the faculty of free will. And that was a fine gift, for "God saw everything he had made and, look! it was very good." (Genesis 1:31) Yes, "perfect is his activity." (Deuteronomy 32:4) All of us appreciate this gift of free will





Third from top, mother and child: FAO photo/B. Imenbone; bottom, explosion: U.S. National Archives photo

because we do not want all our thoughts and actions dictated to us without ever having a choice in anything.

However, was the fine gift of free will to be used without limits? In directions given to early Christians, God's Word answers: "Be as free people, and yet holding your freedom, not as a blind for badness, but as slaves of God." (1 Peter 2:16) For the common good, there must be boundaries. Hence, free will was to be regulated by the rule of law. Otherwise, anarchy would result.

Whose Law?

Whose law was to determine the proper limits of freedom? The answer to this question has to do with the fundamental reason why God has permitted suffering. Since God created humans, he knows best what laws they need to obey for their own good and for the good of others. The Bible puts it this way: "I, Jehovah, am your God, the One teaching you to benefit yourself, the One causing you to tread in the way in which you should walk."—Isaiah 48:17.

Clearly, a vital point is this: Humans were not created to be independent of God. He made them in such a way that their success and happiness depend on obedience to his righteous laws. God's prophet Jeremiah said: "I well know, O Jehovah, that to earthling man his way does not belong. It does not be-

long to man who is walking even to direct his step."—Jeremiah 10:23.

God made mankind subject to his physical laws, such as the law of gravity. Similarly, he made humans to be subject to his moral laws, which are designed to result in a harmonious society. For good reason, then, God's Word urges: "Trust in Jehovah with all your heart and do not lean upon your own understanding."—Proverbs 3:5.

Thus, the human family could never be successful in regulating itself without God's rulership. Trying to be independent from him, people would devise social, economic, political, and religious systems that would conflict with one another, and 'man would dominate man to his injury.'—Ecclesiastes 8:9.

What Went Wrong?

God gave our first parents, Adam and Eve, a perfect start. They had perfect bodies and minds and a paradise garden for a home. If they had submitted to God's rule, they would have remained perfect and happy. In time, they would have been the parents of an entire perfect, happy human family living on a paradise earth. That was God's purpose for the human race.—Genesis 1:27-29; 2:15.

However, our original ancestors misused their free will. They wrongly thought that they could be successful independent of God. Of their own free will, they

stepped outside the boundaries of his laws. (Genesis, chapter 3) Because they rejected his rulership, he no longer was obligated to sustain them in perfection. ‘They acted ruinously on their own part, did not remain his children, and the defect was their own.’—Deuteronomy 32:5.

From the time they disobeyed God, Adam and Eve began to degenerate in body and mind. With Jehovah is the source of life. (Psalm 36:9) So because of cutting themselves off from Jehovah, the first human couple became imperfect and eventually died. (Genesis 3:19) Consistent with laws of genetic inheritance, their offspring could receive only what their parents themselves possessed. And what was that? It was imperfection and death. The apostle Paul therefore wrote: “Through one man [Adam] sin entered into the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned.”—Romans 5:12.

The Main Issue—Sovereignty

When Adam and Eve rebelled against God, they challenged his sovereignty, that is, his right to rule. Jehovah could have destroyed them and started over with another couple, but that would not have settled the issue of whose rulership is right and best for people. Granted time to develop their societies according to their own ideas, humans would demonstrate beyond any doubt whether rulership independent from God could ever be successful.

What do thousands of years of human history tell us? For all those centuries, people have tried many kinds of social, economic, political, and religious systems. However, wickedness and suffering have continued. In fact, ‘wicked men have advanced from bad to worse,’ especially in our time.—2 Timothy 3:13.

The 20th century saw a peak of scientific and industrial achievements. But it also saw the worst suffering in the entire history of the human race. And no matter what medical advances are made, the law of God still holds true: Humans separated from God—the source of life—get sick, grow old, and die. How clearly it has been proved that humans cannot ‘direct their own steps’!

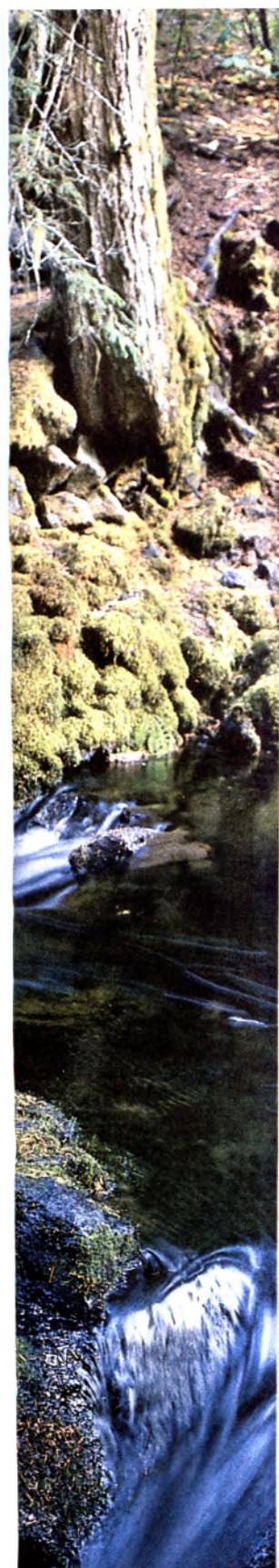
God’s Sovereignty Asserted

Once and for all time, this tragic experiment in independence from God has demonstrated that rulership by humans apart from him can never succeed. Only God’s rulership can bring happiness, unity, health, and life. Moreover, Jehovah God’s infallible Word, the Holy Bible, shows that we are living in “the last days” of human rule independent from God. (2 Timothy 3:1-5) Jehovah’s toleration of this and of wickedness and suffering is nearing its end.

God will soon intervene in human affairs. The Scriptures tell us: “In the days of those kings [human rulerships now existing] the God of heaven will set up a kingdom [in heaven] that will never be brought to ruin. And the kingdom itself will not be passed on to any other people [never again will humans rule the earth]. It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms [present rulerships], and it itself will stand to times indefinite.”—Daniel 2:44.

The vindication of Jehovah God’s sovereignty by means of the heavenly Kingdom is the Bible’s theme. Jesus made this his foremost teaching. He said: “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.”—Matthew 24:14.

When God’s rulership replaces man’s rule, who will survive and who will not? At Proverbs 2:21, 22, we are assured: “The upright



[who uphold God's rule] are the ones that will reside in the earth, and the blameless are the ones that will be left over in it. As regards the wicked [who do not uphold God's rule], they will be cut off from the very earth." The divinely inspired psalmist sang: "Just a little while longer, and the wicked one will be no more . . . But the meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace. The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it."—Psalm 37: 10, 11, 29.

A Marvelous New World

Under the rulership of God's Kingdom, survivors of the end of the present system of things will be ushered into an earth cleansed of wickedness and suffering. God-given instruction will be provided for mankind, and in time "the earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters are covering the very sea." (Isaiah 11:9) This upbuilding, positive teaching will result in a truly peaceful, harmonious human society. Thus, there will be no more war, murder, violence, rape, theft, or any other crime.

Marvelous physical benefits will flow to obedient humans living in God's new world. There will be a canceling out of all the bad consequences of rebellion against God's rule. Im-

perfection, sickness, old age, and death will be things of the past. The Bible assures us: "No resident will say: 'I am sick.'" Moreover, the Scriptures promise: "At that time the eyes of the blind ones will be opened, and the very ears of the deaf ones will be unstopped. At that time the lame one will climb up just as a stag does, and the tongue of the speechless one will cry out in gladness." (Isaiah 33:24; 35:5, 6) What a thrill it will be to enjoy vibrant health every day—forever!

Under God's loving direction, the inhabitants of that new world will use their energies and skills in building an earth-wide paradise. Gone forever will be poverty, hunger, and homelessness, for Isaiah's prophecy states: "They will certainly build houses and have occupancy; and they will certainly plant vineyards and eat their fruitage. They will not build and someone else have occupancy; they will not plant and someone else do the eating." (Isaiah 65:21, 22) Indeed, "they will actually sit, each one under his vine and under his fig tree, and there will be no one making them tremble."—Micah 4:4.

The earth will respond to the loving care of God and obedient humans. We have these Scriptural assurances: "The wilderness and the waterless region will exult, and the desert plain will be joyful and blossom as the saffron. . . . In the wilderness waters

will have burst out, and torrents in the desert plain." (Isaiah 35:1, 6) "There will come to be plenty of grain on the earth; on the top of the mountains there will be an overflow."

—Psalm 72:16.

What about the billions of people who have died? Those in God's memory will be brought back to life, for "there is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous." (Acts 24:15) Yes, the dead will

be restored to life. They will be taught the wonderful truths regarding God's rulership and be given the opportunity to live forever in Paradise.—John 5:28, 29.

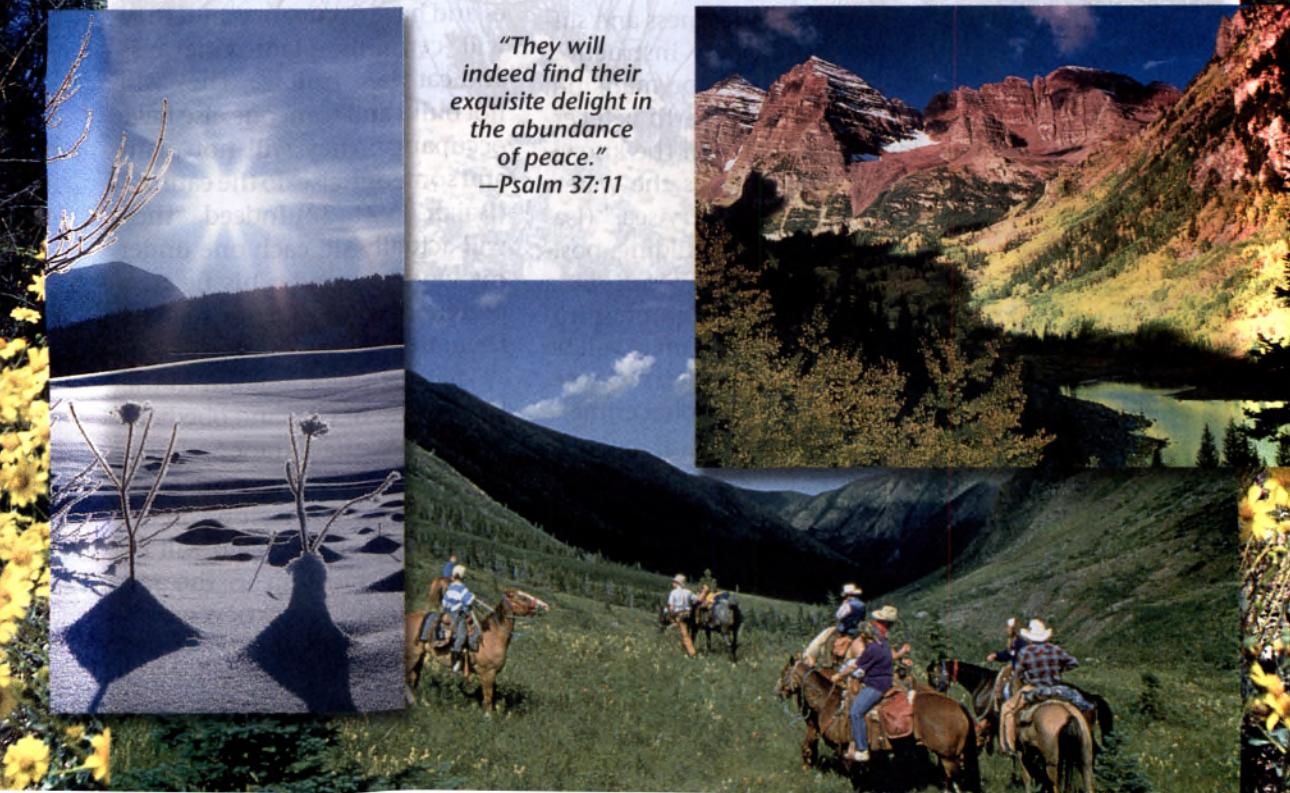
By these means, Jehovah God will completely reverse the awful condition of suffering, sickness, and death that has held mankind in its grip for thousands of years. No more sickness! No more disabilities! No more death! God "will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things [will] have passed away."—Revelation 21:3, 4.

That is how God will end suffering. He will destroy this corrupt world and usher in an entirely new system of things in which "righteousness is to dwell." (2 Peter 3:13) What good news this is! We desperately need that new world. And we will not have to wait long to see it. From the fulfillment of Bible prophecies, we know that the new world is at the door, and God's permission of suffering is nearing its end.—Matthew 24:3-14.

The Failure of Human Rule

Regarding human rulership, former German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt stated: "We humans . . . have always only partially governed the world, and most of the time very badly. . . . We have never governed it in total peace." *Human Development Report 1999* noted: "All countries report erosion of their social fabric, with social unrest, more crime, more violence in the home. . . . Global threats are increasing, outgrowing national abilities to tackle them, and outpacing international responses."

"They will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace."
—Psalm 37:11



PRAISE JEHOVAH FOR HIS GREAT DEEDS!

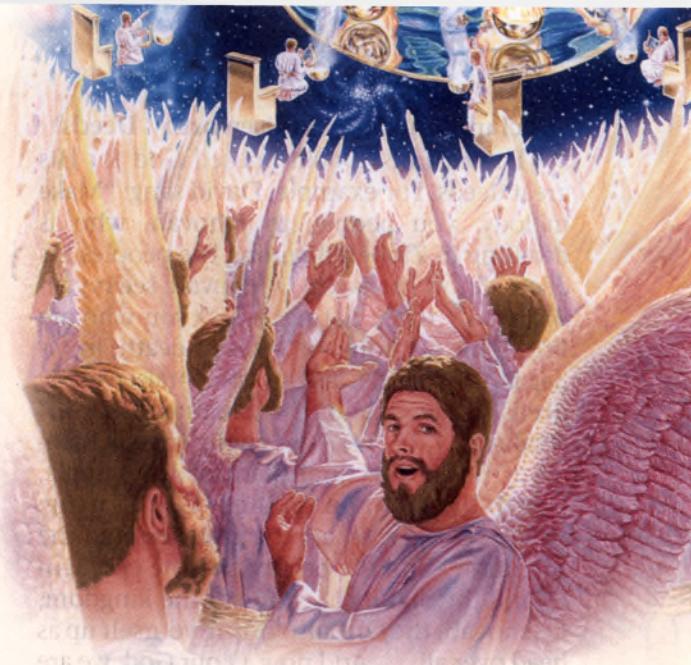
"My soul magnifies Jehovah . . . because the powerful One has done great deeds for me." —LUKE 1:46-49.

JEHOVAH deserves to be praised for his great deeds. When the prophet Moses recounted Israel's deliverance from Egypt, he declared: "Your eyes were the ones seeing all the great deeds of Jehovah." (Deuteronomy 11:1-7) Similarly, when the angel Gabriel announced the coming birth of Jesus to the virgin girl Mary, she said: "My soul magnifies Jehovah . . . because the powerful One has done great deeds for me." (Luke 1:46-49) As Jehovah's Witnesses, we laud him for such great deeds as the freeing of Israel from Egyptian bondage and the miraculous conception of his dear Son.

² Many of Jehovah's great deeds have been associated with his "eternal purpose" to bless obedient mankind by means of the Messiah and his Kingdom rule. (Ephesians 3:8-13) That purpose was developing progressively when the aged apostle John was allowed to peer through a visionary opened door in heaven. He heard a trumpetlike voice say: "Come on up here, and I shall show you the things that must take place." (Revelation 4:1)

While banished by the Roman government to the isle of

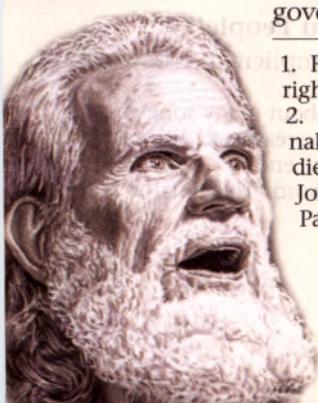
1. For what great deeds do we rightly praise Jehovah?
2. (a) What does God's "eternal purpose" mean for obedient mankind? (b) What did John experience on the isle of Patmos?



Patmos "for speaking about God and bearing witness to Jesus," John received "a revelation by Jesus Christ." What the apostle saw and heard revealed much about God's eternal purpose, thus providing spiritual enlightenment and timely encouragement for all true Christians.—Revelation 1:1, 9, 10.

³ Through that opened door in heaven, John saw 24 elders, enthroned and crowned like kings. They fell down before God and said: "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." (Revelation 4:11) Those elders represent all the resurrected anointed Christians in the exalted position God promised them. They are moved to praise Jehovah because of his great deeds associated with creation. We too marvel at the evidence of Jehovah's "eternal power and Godship." (Romans 1:20) And the more we learn about Jehovah, the more reason we have to laud him for his great deeds.

3. Who are represented by the 24 elders seen by John in vision?



Declare Jehovah's Praiseworthy Deeds!

⁴ The psalmist David praised God for His great deeds. For example, David sang: "Make melody, you people, to Jehovah, who is dwelling in Zion; tell among the peoples his deeds. Show me favor, O Jehovah; see my affliction by those hating me, O you who are lifting me up from the gates of death, in order that I may declare all your praiseworthy deeds in the gates of the daughter of Zion." (Psalm 9:11, 13, 14) After giving his son Solomon the architectural plan for the temple, David blessed and praised God, saying: "Yours, O Jehovah, are the greatness and the mightiness and the beauty and the excellency and the dignity . . . Yours is the kingdom, O Jehovah, the One also lifting yourself up as head over all. . . . And now, O our God, we are thanking you and praising your beauteous name."—1 Chronicles 29:10-13.

⁵ The Scriptures repeatedly invite—yes, urge—us to praise God, as David did. The book of Psalms contains many expressions of praise to God, and about half of these songs are attributed to David. He constantly praised and thanked Jehovah. (Psalm 69:30) Moreover, since early times, divinely inspired compositions of David and others have been used to praise Jehovah.

⁶ How useful the Psalms are to Jehovah's worshipers! When we want to thank God for all his great deeds in our behalf, our minds may well turn to beautiful words found in the Psalms. Upon awakening to a new day, for instance, we may be moved to make expressions similar to these: "It is good to give thanks to Jehovah and to make melody to your name, O Most High; to tell in the morning about your loving-kindness and about your faithfulness during the nights, . . . for you have made me rejoice, O Jehovah, because of your activity; because of the works of your hands I cry out joyfully." (Psalm 92:1-4)

-
- 4, 5. Give examples of how David praised Jehovah.
 6. How do the inspired Psalms prove useful to us?



Do you wholeheartedly join in songs of praise to Jehovah?

When we overcome an obstacle to our spiritual progress, we may be inclined to express joy and gratitude in prayer, even as the psalmist did when he sang: "O come let us cry out joyfully to Jehovah! Let us shout in triumph to our Rock of salvation. Let us come before his person with thanksgiving; let us with melodies shout in triumph to him."

—Psalm 95:1, 2.

⁷ We often raise our voices in songs of praise to Jehovah at congregation meetings, assemblies, and conventions. It is noteworthy that many of these songs are based on inspired thoughts from the book of Psalms. How happy we are to have a modern-day collection of heartwarming songs of praise to Jehovah! Singing praises to God is one very good reason to arrive early at our meetings and to be present to the end, thus sharing with fellow worshipers in praising Jehovah with song and prayer.

"Praise Jah, You People!"

⁸ Praising Jehovah is implicit in the word

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7. (a) What is noteworthy about many songs sung by Christians? (b) What is one reason to arrive early at meetings and remain to the end?
 8. What is implicit in the word "Hallelujah," and how is it usually rendered?

"Hallelujah," a transliteration of a Hebrew expression almost always rendered "Praise Jah, you people." For example, at Psalm 135: 1-3, we find this warm, emphatic invitation: "Praise Jah, you people! Praise the name of Jehovah, offer praise, O servants of Jehovah, you who are standing in the house of Jehovah, in the courtyards of the house of our God. Praise Jah, for Jehovah is good. Make melody to his name, for it is pleasant."

⁹ As we contemplate God's marvelous works of creation and all his deeds in our behalf, heartfelt appreciation moves us to praise him. When we reflect on the miraculous things Jehovah did for his people in times past, our hearts motivate us to laud him. And as we meditate on the promises of great things Jehovah will yet do, we search for ways to express praise and gratitude.

¹⁰ Our very existence gives us just cause to praise Jah. David sang: "I shall laud you [Jehovah] because in a fear-inspiring way I am wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful, as my soul is very well aware." (Psalm 139:14) Yes, we are "wonderfully made" and have such precious gifts as sight, hearing, and thinking ability. Should we not, therefore, direct our life in such a way as to praise our Maker? Paul said as much when he wrote: "Whether you are eating or drinking or doing anything else, do all things for God's glory."—1 Corinthians 10:31.

¹¹ We will do all things for Jehovah's glory if we truly love him. Jesus said that the first commandment is: "You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind and with your whole strength." (Mark 12:30; Deuteronomy 6:5) We certainly should love Jehovah and praise him as our Maker and the Giver of "every good gift and every perfect

9. What motivates us to praise Jehovah?

10, 11. How does our very existence give us reason to praise God?

present." (James 1:17; Isaiah 51:13; Acts 17:28) After all, our reasoning faculties, our spiritual capacity, and our physical strength—all our attributes and abilities—come from Jehovah. As our Creator, he is worthy of our love and praise.

¹² The great deeds of Jehovah give us innumerable reasons to love and praise him! "Many things you yourself have done, O Jehovah my God, even your wonderful works and your thoughts toward us," sang David. "There is none to be compared to you. Were I inclined to tell and speak of them, they have become more numerous than I can recount." (Psalm 40:5) David could not recount all of Jehovah's wonderful works, and neither can we. But let us always praise God when any of his great deeds are brought to our attention.

Deeds Linked With God's Eternal Purpose

¹³ Our hope for the future is bound up with the great and praiseworthy deeds associated with God's eternal purpose. After the rebellion in Eden, Jehovah gave the hope-filled first prophecy. Pronouncing sentence upon the serpent, God said: "I shall put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed. He will bruise you in the head and you will bruise him in the heel." (Genesis 3:15) Hope in the promised Seed of the woman lived on in the hearts of faithful humans after Jehovah performed a great deed by preserving Noah and his family through the global Deluge that wiped out a wicked world. (2 Peter 2:5) Prophetic promises to such men of faith as Abraham and David gave further insight into what Jehovah would accomplish through that Seed.—Genesis 22:15-18; 2 Samuel 7:12.

12. How do you feel about Jehovah's great deeds and the words of Psalm 40:5?

13. How is our hope bound up with God's great deeds?

¹⁴ The superlative manifestation of Jehovah as the one performing great deeds in behalf of mankind took place when he gave his only-begotten Son—the promised Seed, Jesus Christ—as a ransom sacrifice. (John 3:16; Acts 2:29-36) The ransom provided the basis for reconciliation with God. (Matthew 20:28; Romans 5:11) Jehovah brought the first reconciled ones together in the Christian congregation, established at Pentecost 33 C.E. With the help of the holy spirit, they preached the good news far and wide, showing how Jesus' death and resurrection opens the way for obedient mankind to experience eternal blessings under the rule of God's heavenly Kingdom.

¹⁵ In our day, Jehovah has acted in a wonderful way to gather the last anointed Christians. The winds of destruction have been held back to allow for the sealing of the remaining ones of the 144,000, who will rule with Christ in heaven. (Revelation 7:1-4; 20:6) God has seen to it that anointed Christians were delivered from spiritual bondage to "Babylon the Great," the world empire of false religion. (Revelation 17:1-5) That deliverance in 1919 and the divine protection they experienced since then have allowed the anointed remnant to do what? To shine forth in giving a final witness before Jehovah brings an end to Satan's wicked system of things in the rapidly approaching "great tribulation."—Matthew 24:21; Daniel 12:3; Revelation 7:14.

¹⁶ Jehovah's anointed Witnesses have zealously spearheaded a worldwide Kingdom-preaching work. As a result, an increasing number of "other sheep" are now becoming

14. What is the superlative example of Jehovah's great deeds in behalf of mankind?
15. How has Jehovah acted in a wonderful way in our day?
16. What is taking place as a result of the present-day worldwide Kingdom-preaching work?

worshippers of Jehovah. (John 10:16) We rejoice that the opportunity is still open for meek ones of the earth to join us in praising Jehovah. Those who respond to the invitation to "come" are in line for preservation through the great tribulation, with the prospect of praising Jehovah throughout eternity.—Revelation 22:17.

Thousands Striving to True Worship

¹⁷ Jehovah is now performing great and praiseworthy deeds in connection with our preaching activity. (Mark 13:10) In recent years, he has 'opened large doors leading to activity.' (1 Corinthians 16:9) This has made it possible for the good news to be proclaimed throughout vast territories where enemies of the truth formerly stood in the way. Many who once lived in spiritual darkness are now responding to the invitation to worship Jehovah. They are fulfilling these prophetic words: "This is what Jehovah of armies has said, 'It will be in those days that ten men out of all the languages of the nations will take hold, yes, they will actually take hold of the skirt of a man who is a Jew, saying: "We will go with you people, for we

17. (a) How is Jehovah performing great deeds in connection with our preaching activity? (b) How is Zechariah 8:23 being fulfilled?

How Would You Answer?

- What are some of Jehovah's praiseworthy deeds?
- Why do you feel impelled to praise Jehovah?
- How is our hope linked with God's great deeds?
- How is Jehovah performing praiseworthy deeds in connection with the Kingdom-preaching work?

have heard that God is with you people."'" (Zechariah 8:23) These "people" are spiritual Jews, the present-day remnant of anointed Christians. Since ten can represent completeness of an earthly kind, the "ten men" stand for the "great crowd," brought into association with "the Israel of God," with whom they form "one flock." (Revelation 7:9, 10; Galatians 6:16) What a joy it is to see so many now rendering sacred service together as worshipers of Jehovah God!

¹⁸ We are thrilled that tens of thousands—indeed, hundreds of thousands—are embracing true worship in lands once so dominated by false religion that it seemed as though the people would never accept the good news. Consult the current *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses*, and note the lands now reporting from 100,000 to nearly 1,000,000 Kingdom publishers. This is powerful proof that the Kingdom-preaching work is being blessed by Jehovah.—Proverbs 10:22.

¹⁹ As Jehovah's people, we praise and thank our heavenly Father for giving us real purpose in life, rewarding work in his service, and a bright outlook for the future. We live in eager expectation of the fulfillment of all divine promises and are determined to 'keep

18, 19. What evidence is there that Jehovah is blessing the preaching work?

We rejoice that the opportunity is still open for meek ones to join us in praising Jehovah

ourselves in God's love, with everlasting life in view.' (Jude 20, 21) How delighted we are to see that the great crowd praising God now numbers some 6,000,000! With Jehovah's evident blessing, the anointed remnant together with their other sheep companions are organized into some 91,000 congregations in 235 lands. All of us are well-fed spiritually through the tireless efforts of "the faithful and discreet slave." (Matthew 24:45) A progressive theocratic organization with loving oversight is administering Kingdom activity through 110 branch offices of Jehovah's Witnesses. We are thankful that Jehovah has moved the hearts of his people to 'honor him with their valuable things.' (Proverbs 3:9, 10) Consequently, our worldwide preaching work continues, with printing facilities, Bethel and missionary homes, Kingdom Halls, and Assembly Halls being built as needed.

²⁰ It is impossible for us to mention all the great and praiseworthy deeds of our heavenly Father. But can anyone of upright heart refrain from joining the throng of Jehovah's praisers? Of course not! Therefore, let all lovers of God joyfully cry out: "Praise Jah, you people! Praise Jehovah from the heavens, praise him in the heights. Praise him, all you his angels . . . , you young men and also you virgins, you old men together with boys. Let them praise the name of Jehovah, for his name alone is unreachably high. His dignity is above earth and heaven." (Psalm 148:1, 2, 12, 13) Yes, now and forever, let us praise Jehovah for his great deeds!

20. How should reflecting on Jehovah's great and praiseworthy deeds affect us?



'Behold! The Great Crowd!'

IT WAS a question that had puzzled Jehovah's servants for decades. An effort had long been made to resolve it Scripturally. The subject had resulted in many discussions. But the Biblical answer was finally found, and it virtually electrified a convention audience in Washington, D.C., in the year 1935.

Behind all the discussion was a common issue: What is the identity of the "great multitude" (*King James Version*), or "great crowd" (*New World Translation*), mentioned at Revelation 7:9? Would this group of believers live in heaven?

A Long-Standing Question

From the time of the apostle John until our day, Christians had been puzzled about the identity of the "great multitude." The Bible Students regarded the great crowd as a secondary heavenly class, a group that had knowledge of Bible truth but did little about spreading it.

There were, however, certain associates of the anointed Christians who became very zealous in the preaching work. They had no aspirations of going to heaven. Indeed, their hope was in line with the public talk "Millions

Now Living Will Never Die," featured by Jehovah's people from 1918 to 1922. Such individuals would be blessed with everlasting life on earth.

The Watch Tower of October 15, 1923, discussed Jesus' parable of the sheep and the goats and said: "Sheep represent all the peoples of the nations, not spirit-begotten but disposed toward righteousness, who mentally acknowledge Jesus Christ

as the Lord and who are looking for and hoping for a better time under his reign."—Matthew 25:31-46.

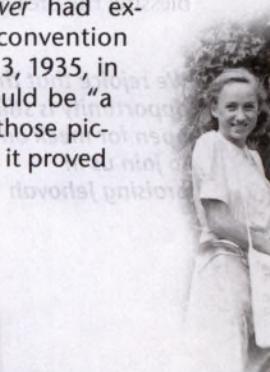
More Rays of Light

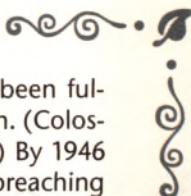
In the year 1931, *Vindication*, Book One, discussed Ezekiel chapter 9 and identified those marked on the forehead for preservation at the world's end as the sheep of Jesus' parable. *Vindication*, Book Three (published in 1932), described the upright heart attitude of the non-Israelite man Jehonadab, who got into the chariot of Israel's anointed King Jehu and went along to see Jehu's zeal in executing false worshipers. (2 Kings 10:15-28) The book said: "Jehonadab represented or foreshadowed that class of people now on the earth [who] are out of harmony with Satan's organization, who take their stand on the side of righteousness, and are the ones whom the Lord will preserve during the time of Armageddon, take them through that trouble, and give them everlasting life on the earth. These constitute the 'sheep' class."

In 1934, *The Watchtower* made it clear that Christians with an earthly hope should make a dedication to Jehovah and be baptized. The light regarding this earthly class was indeed shining ever more brightly!—Proverbs 4:18.

A Brilliant Flash of Understanding

The understanding of Revelation 7:9-17 was about to shine forth in sparkling brilliance. (Psalm 97:11) *The Watchtower* had expressed the hope that a convention scheduled for May 30 to June 3, 1935, in Washington, D.C., U.S.A., would be "a real comfort and benefit" to those pictured by Jehonadab. And that it proved to be!





In a stirring talk on "The Great Multitude," delivered to about 20,000 conventioners, J. F. Rutherford presented Scriptural proof that the modern-day "other sheep" are identical with that "great crowd" of Revelation 7:9. (John 10:16) At the climax of this talk, the speaker asked: "Will all those who have the hope of living forever on the earth please stand?" As a large part of the audience stood up, Rutherford declared: "Behold! The great multitude!" There was a hush, followed by loud cheering. On the following day, 840 new Witnesses of Jehovah were baptized, most of these professing to be of the great crowd.

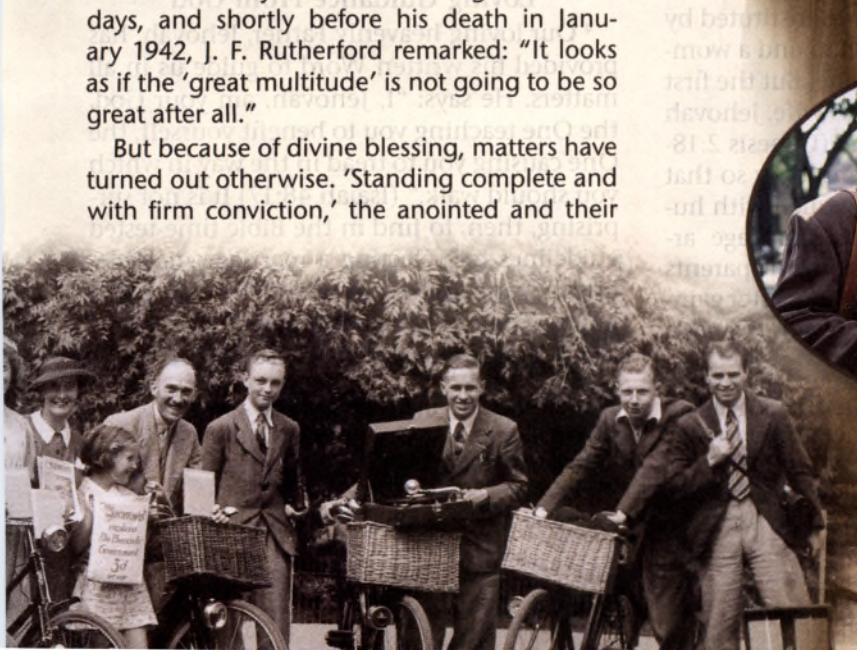
A Remarkable Presence

Prior to 1935, an increasing number of those who responded to the Bible's message and showed zeal in preaching the good news manifested an interest in living forever on the Paradise earth. They had no desire to go to heaven, for God had not given them the hope of heavenly life. Their identifying themselves with the great crowd of other sheep indicated that by 1935 the calling of the 144,000 anointed Christians was virtually complete.—Revelation 7:4.

When World War II broke out, Satan the Devil put forth bitter efforts to stop the ingathering of those who would make up the great crowd. The Kingdom-preaching work was restricted in many countries. During those dark days, and shortly before his death in January 1942, J. F. Rutherford remarked: "It looks as if the 'great multitude' is not going to be so great after all."

But because of divine blessing, matters have turned out otherwise. 'Standing complete and with firm conviction,' the anointed and their

companions, the other sheep, have been fulfilling the disciple-making commission. (Colossians 4:12; Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20) By 1946 the number of Jehovah's Witnesses preaching worldwide was 176,456—most of these being of the great crowd. In 2000, more than 6,000,000 Witnesses were serving Jehovah faithfully in 235 lands—truly a great crowd! And the number keeps on increasing.



DIVINE GUIDANCE FOR SELECTING A MARRIAGE MATE

*"I shall make you have insight and instruct you in the way you should go.
I will give advice with my eye upon you."*—PSALM 32:8.

AN AERIALIST catapults from his swinging trapeze, doubles up, and deftly somersaults in the air. Snapping out of his spin, he extends his arms and is caught by an upside-down trapeze artist from the opposite side. An ice-skating couple glide smoothly together in a rink. Suddenly, the man lifts his partner and thrusts her into the air. She spins, lands gracefully on one skate, and continues circling with him on the ice. Both performances seem almost effortless. Yet, who would even attempt them without practice, a capable partner, and particularly the right kind of guidance or instruction. Similarly, a good marriage may seemingly just happen. However, it too depends on a good partner, on coordinated effort, and especially on wise counsel. Indeed, proper guidance is essential.

² It is natural for a young unmarried man or woman to think about a marriage mate—a partner in life. Ever since it was instituted by Jehovah God, marriage of a man and a woman has been a normal way of life. But the first man, Adam, did not choose his wife. Jehovah lovingly provided her for him. (Genesis 2:18-24) The first couple were to multiply so that the earth would ultimately be filled with humans. After that first union, marriage arrangements were usually made by the parents of the bride and groom, sometimes after gaining the consent of those involved. (Genesis

1. What factors are necessary for a good marriage?
2. (a) Who instituted the marital arrangement, and for what purpose? (b) How have some marriage arrangements been made?

21:21; 24:2-4, 58; 38:6; Joshua 15:16, 17) While arranged marriages are still common in some lands and cultures, many today select their own marriage mate.

³ How should a marriage mate be selected? Some are influenced by appearance—what they find pleasing and desirable to the eye. Others look for material benefits, for someone who will take good care of them and who will cater to their needs and wants. But will either of these approaches alone lead to a happy and satisfying relationship? "Charm may be false, and prettiness may be vain," says Proverbs 31:30, "but the woman that fears Jehovah is the one that procures praise for herself." And therein lies an important point: Take Jehovah into consideration when selecting a mate.

Loving Guidance From God

⁴ Our loving heavenly Father, Jehovah, has provided his written Word to guide us in all matters. He says: "I, Jehovah, am your God, the One teaching you to benefit yourself, the One causing you to tread in the way in which you should walk." (Isaiah 48:17) It is not surprising, then, to find in the Bible time-tested guidelines for selecting a marriage mate. Jehovah wants our marriages to be lasting and happy. Therefore, he has provided help for us to understand and apply these guidelines. Is

3. How should a marriage mate be selected?
4. What help does God provide with regard to selecting a marriage mate?



Applying God's counsel in selecting your mate can result in much happiness

that not what we would expect of our loving Creator?—Psalm 19:8.

⁵ When Jehovah instituted the marital arrangement, he intended it to be a binding tie. (Mark 10:6-12; 1 Corinthians 7:10, 11) That is why “he has hated a divorcing,” allowing it only on the grounds of “fornication.” (Malachi 2:13-16; Matthew 19:9) Therefore, selecting a marriage mate is one of the most serious steps we can take and is not to be viewed lightly. Few decisions have as much potential for happiness or for sadness. While a good selection can enrich one’s life and make it satisfying, a poor choice can bring no end of sorrow. (Proverbs 21:19; 26:21) For happiness to continue, it is vital to choose wisely and be willing to make a lasting commitment, for God instituted marriage as a partnership that would thrive on harmony and cooperation.—Matthew 19:6.

⁶ Young men and women especially need to be careful that physical attraction and strong

5. What is vital for lasting happiness in marriage?
6. Why do young men and women especially need to be careful when choosing a mate, and how can they make the wisest decision?

impulses do not distort their judgment when they select a mate. Indeed, a relationship founded solely on such factors can quickly erode into disdain or even hatred. (2 Samuel 13:15) On the other hand, enduring love can be cultivated as we get to know our mate and as we better understand ourselves as well. We also need to realize that what is best for us may not be what our heart initially desires. (Jeremiah 17:9) That is why the divine guidance found in the Bible is so important. It helps us to discern how we can make the wisest decisions in life. The psalmist represented Jehovah as saying: “I shall make you have insight and instruct you in the way you should go. I will give advice with my eye upon you.” (Psalm 32:8; Hebrews 4:12) While marriage can satisfy our inborn need for love and companionship, it also presents challenges requiring maturity and discernment.

7. It is the course of wisdom to heed what the Originator of marriage has to say on the matter of selecting a mate. Yet, we may balk
7. Why do some not accept Bible-based counsel about selecting a mate, yet to what could this course lead?



Rich blessings come from 'marrying only in the Lord'

when Bible-based counsel is received from parents or from Christian elders. We may feel that they do not fully understand us, and strong emotional desires may push us to follow the inclination of the heart. As reality sets in, however, we may regret that we did not heed the wise counsel offered for our good. (Proverbs 23:19; 28:26) We may find ourselves in a loveless marriage, with children we have difficulty caring for and perhaps even with an unbelieving mate. How sad it would be if an arrangement that could have brought us great happiness becomes a source of much distress!

Godly Devotion—A Key Factor

⁸ Admittedly, mutual attraction helps to solidify a marriage. But values held in common are even more important for a marital union to endure and to produce happiness. Mutu-

8. How does godly devotion help a marriage to endure and to bring happiness?

al devotion to Jehovah God fashions a lasting bond and promotes unity in a way that no other factor does. (Ecclesiastes 4:12) When a Christian couple center their lives on the true worship of Jehovah, they are united spiritually, mentally, and morally. They study God's Word together. They pray together, and that unifies their hearts. They accompany each other to Christian meetings and work together in the field ministry. All of this helps to forge a spiritual bond that draws them closer to each other. Even more important, it results in Jehovah's blessing.

⁹ Because of his godly devotion, the faithful patriarch Abraham sought to please God when it came time to select a wife for his son Isaac. To his trusted household servant, Abraham said: "I must have you swear by Jehovah, the God of the heavens and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for

9. What did Abraham do with regard to finding a wife for Isaac, and with what result?

my son from the daughters of the Canaanites in among whom I am dwelling, but you will go to my country and to my relatives, and you will certainly take a wife for my son, for Isaac. . . . [Jehovah] will send his angel ahead of you, and you will certainly take a wife for my son from there." Rebekah proved to be an outstanding wife, whom Isaac dearly loved.—Genesis 24:3, 4, 7, 14-21, 67.

¹⁰ If we are unmarried Christians, godly devotion will help us to develop qualities that will enable us to meet the Scriptural requirements of marriage. Among the obligations of husbands and wives are these cited by the apostle Paul: "Let wives be in subjection to their husbands as to the Lord . . . Husbands, continue loving your wives, just as the Christ also loved the congregation and delivered up himself for it . . . Husbands ought to be loving their wives as their own bodies. . . . Let each one of you individually so love his wife as he does himself; on the other hand, the wife should have deep respect for her husband." (Ephesians 5:22-33) As we can see, Paul's inspired words emphasize the need for love and respect. Complying with this counsel involves reverential fear of Jehovah. It requires a wholehearted commitment through both good times and bad. Christians who contemplate marriage should be able to assume this responsibility.

Deciding When to Marry

¹¹ Knowing when we are ready to marry is vital. Since this varies from one individual to another, the Scriptures do not stipulate an age. They do show, however, that it is better to wait until we are "past the bloom of youth," when strong sexual impulses can distort good judgment. (1 Corinthians 7:36) "When I saw

10. What Scriptural obligations are placed upon husbands and wives?
11. (a) What counsel about when to marry is given in the Scriptures? (b) What example shows the wisdom of following the Bible's counsel recorded at 1 Corinthians 7:36?

my friends dating and marrying, many in their teen years, it was at times difficult to apply this counsel," says Michelle. "But I realized that the counsel is from Jehovah, and he tells us only what is for our benefit. By waiting to marry, I was able to focus on my relationship with Jehovah and to gain some experience in life, which you cannot possibly have in your teenage years. Some years later, I was better prepared to handle the responsibilities as well as the problems that arise in marriage."

¹² Those who hasten to marry while still quite young often find that their needs and desires change as they mature. They then realize that the things they initially found desirable are no longer so important. One young Christian had her heart set on getting married when she was 16. Her grandmother got married at that age, as did her mother. When a young man she was interested in declined to marry her at that time, she chose someone else who was willing to do so. Later on in life, though, she greatly lamented her rash decision.

¹³ When contemplating marriage, it is important to have a mature understanding of all that is involved. Premature marriage can bring a host of problems that a youthful couple are likely ill-prepared to handle. They may lack the experience and maturity necessary to deal with the stresses of marriage and the rearing of children. Marriage should be undertaken only when we are physically, mentally, and spiritually ready to take on an enduring partnership.

¹⁴ Paul wrote that those who marry "will have tribulation in their flesh." (1 Corinthians 7:28) Problems will arise because there

12. Why is it wise not to rush into marriage while young?
13. Those who marry prematurely are often lacking in what respect?
14. What is needed to handle stressful situations in marriage?

are two distinct personalities, and viewpoints will vary. Because of human imperfection, it may be difficult to fulfill our Scriptural role in the marriage arrangement. (1 Corinthians 11:3; Colossians 3:18, 19; Titus 2:4, 5; 1 Peter 3:1, 2, 7) It takes maturity and spiritual stability to seek and follow divine guidance so as to settle stressful situations lovingly.

¹⁵ Parents can prepare their children for marriage by helping them to understand the importance of following divine guidance. By skillful use of the Scriptures and Christian publications, parents can help their offspring to determine whether they or their prospective mates are ready to make the commitment of marriage.* Eighteen-year-old Blossom thought that she was in love with a young man in her congregation. He was a full-time pioneer minister, and they wanted to get married. But her parents asked her to wait one year, feeling that she was still too young. Blossom later wrote: "I am so thankful that I listened to that wise advice. Within the year, I matured some and began to see that this young man did not have the qualities that would make for a good marriage mate. He eventually left the organization, and I escaped what would have been a disaster in my

* See *The Watchtower* of February 15, 1999, pages 4-8.

15. What role can parents play in preparing their children for marriage? Illustrate.

How Would You Answer?

- Why is divine guidance needed to select a good marriage mate?
- How will godly devotion help strengthen the marriage bond?
- How can parents prepare their children for marriage?
- Why is it important to 'marry only in the Lord'?

life. How wonderful to have wise parents whose judgment can be relied on!"

'Marry Only in the Lord'

¹⁶ Jehovah's direction for Christians is very clear: 'Marry only in the Lord.' (1 Corinthians 7:39) Christian parents and their children may be tested in this regard. How so? Young people may wish to get married, but available partners may be lacking within the congregation. At least that is how it seems. There may be fewer available men than women in a certain locality, or there may be no one deemed suitable in the area. A young man who is not a dedicated member of the congregation may show interest in a young Christian woman (or vice versa), and there is pressure to compromise on the standards that Jehovah has set. Under such circumstances, it would be good to reflect on the example of Abraham. One way that he maintained his fine relationship with God was by seeing to it that his son Isaac married a true worshiper of Jehovah. Isaac did the same in the case of his son Jacob. This took effort by all involved, but it pleased God and resulted in his blessing.—Genesis 28:1-4.

¹⁷ In a few cases, the unbeliever eventually became a Christian. However, marriages to unbelievers have often proved disastrous. Those unevenly yoked do not share the same beliefs, standards, or goals. (2 Corinthians 6:14) This can have a detrimental effect on communication and on marital happiness. For instance, one Christian woman greatly bemoaned the fact that after an upbuilding meeting, she could not go home and discuss spiritual things with her unbelieving mate. More important, of course, 'marrying in the Lord' is a matter of loyalty to Jehovah. When

16. (a) How may Christians be tested as to 'marrying in the Lord'? (b) When tempted to marry an unbeliever, on what should Christians reflect?

17. Why is marrying an unbeliever likely to be disastrous, and what is the most important reason to 'marry only in the Lord'?

we comply with God's Word, our hearts do not condemn us, for we are doing what is "pleasing in his eyes."—1 John 3:21, 22.

¹⁸ When marriage is considered, the virtue and spirituality of the prospective mate should be of primary concern. A Christian personality, along with love for God and whole-souled devotion to him, is of far greater

18. When contemplating marriage, to what important matters should attention be given, and why?

value than physical attractiveness. Divine approval is enjoyed by those who appreciate and fulfill their obligation to be spiritually strong marriage partners. And the greatest strength a couple can achieve comes from mutual devotion to the Creator and full acceptance of his guidance. In this way Jehovah is honored, and the marriage begins on a solid spiritual footing that will contribute to an enduring union.

BUILDING A SPIRITUALLY STRONG FAMILY

"Go on bringing them up in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah."

—EPHESIANS 6:4.

BE FRUITFUL and become many and fill the earth." (Genesis 1:28) With those words to Adam and Eve, Jehovah God instituted the family arrangement. (Ephesians 3:14, 15) Looking ahead, that first couple could envision an earth filled with their progeny—an extended family of perfect individuals living joyfully on a paradise earth and unitedly worshiping their Grand Creator. But Adam and Eve fell into sin, and the earth did not become filled with righteous, God-fearing people. (Romans 5:12) Instead, family life quickly deteriorated, and hatred, violence, and a

lack of "natural affection" have prevailed, especially in these "last days."—2 Timothy 3:1-5; Genesis 4:8, 23; 6:5, 11, 12.



² Adam and Eve were created in God's image. Though now a sinner, Adam was permitted by Jehovah to have children. (Genesis 1:27; 5:1-4) Like their father, Adam's offspring had moral capacity and could learn to distinguish between right and wrong. They could be instructed about how to worship their Creator and the importance of loving him with their whole heart, soul, mind,

1. What was God's purpose for the family, but what happened instead?

2. Adam's offspring had what abilities, but what would be needed to build a spiritually strong family?

and strength. (Mark 12:30; John 4:24; James 1:27) Furthermore, they could be trained "to exercise justice and to love kindness and to be modest in walking with... God." (Micah 6:8) As sinners, however, they would need to pay considerable attention in order to build a spiritually strong family.

Buy Out the Time

³ In these complicated, critical times, great effort must be expended so that children become "lovers of Jehovah" who truly "hate what is bad." (Psalm 97:10) Wise parents will 'buy out time' to meet this challenge. (Ephesians 5:15-17) If you are a parent, how can you do this? First, establish priorities, giving attention to "the more important things," including the teaching and training of your children. (Philippians 1:10, 11) Second, simplify your life-style. You may have to put aside activities that are not really necessary. Or you may need to divest yourself of unnecessary possessions that take time to maintain. As a Christian parent, you will never regret that you made the effort needed to raise God-fearing children.—Proverbs 29:15, 17.

⁴ Spending time with your children, especially when centered on spiritual matters, is well worth the effort and is one of the best ways to keep a family united. But do not leave this to chance. Schedule certain times you will spend together. This does not mean just being in the same house, each one doing his own thing. Children flourish best with daily personal attention. Love and concern need to be displayed unstintingly. Even before they decide to have children, married couples must seriously consider this important responsibility. (Luke 14:28) Then they

3. How can parents 'buy out time' to rear Christian children?
4. How can a family be kept united?

will not regard the rearing of children as a chore. Instead, they will view it as a blessed privilege.—Genesis 33:5; Psalm 127:3.

Teach by Word and Example

⁵ Teaching your children to love Jehovah begins with your own love for him. A strong love for God will move you to follow all his instructions faithfully. This includes bringing children up "in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah." (Ephesians 6:4) God counsels parents to set the example for their children, to communicate with them, and to teach them. Deuteronomy 6:5-7 states: "You must love Jehovah your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your vital force. And these words that I am commanding you today must prove to be on your heart; and you must inculcate them in your son and speak of them when you sit in your house and when you walk on the road and when you lie down and when you get up." By frequent admonition and repetition, you can inculcate God's commandments in your children. Thus, your offspring will sense the love you have for Jehovah and, in turn, will be influenced to develop a closeness to him as well.—Proverbs 20:7.

⁶ Children are eager to learn. They are keen listeners and observers and are quick to imitate your example. When they see that you are not materialistic, this helps them to learn how to follow Jesus' counsel. You teach them not to be anxious about material things but to 'seek first God's kingdom.' (Matthew 6:25-33) By engaging in wholesome, upbuilding conversation about Bible truth, God's congregation, and the appoint-

5. (a) With what does teaching children to love Jehovah start? (b) What counsel is given parents at Deuteronomy 6:5-7?
6. How can parents take advantage of the fact that children learn by example?

ed elders, you teach your children to respect Jehovah and to appreciate his spiritual provisions. Since children are quick to note inconsistencies, oral instruction must be backed up by conduct and attitude that demonstrate your own deep appreciation for spiritual things. What a blessing it is when parents see that their good example has produced in their children wholehearted love for Jehovah!—Proverbs 23:24, 25.

⁷ The value of training children from an early age can be seen in an example from Venezuela. (2 Timothy 3:15) It involves a young married couple, Félix and Mayerlín. They are pioneer ministers. When their son Felito was born, they were eager to do their utmost in raising him as a true worshiper of Jehovah. Mayerlín began reading aloud to Felito from *My Book of Bible Stories*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses. At an early age, Felito seemed to recognize Moses and other people depicted in this book.

⁸ While still quite young, Felito began witnessing on his own. He fulfilled his desire to be a Kingdom publisher, and later he was baptized. In time, Felito became a regular pioneer. His parents comment: "As we watch our son's progress, we realize that we owe it to Jehovah and his instruction."

Help Children to Grow Spiritually

⁹ There are dozens of magazines, hundreds of books, and thousands of Internet Web sites offering advice on how to rear children. Very often "the information conflicts," says a *Newsweek* special issue on children. "Even more disconcerting is when information you think you can trust turns out to be

^{7, 8}. What example shows the value of training children from an early age, and to whom is the credit for success due?

⁹. Why should we be thankful for the spiritual instruction we receive through the faithful and discreet slave class?

just plain wrong." How thankful we are that Jehovah has provided abundantly for the instruction and spiritual development of families! Do you take full advantage of all the provisions made through the faithful and discreet slave class?—Matthew 24:45-47.

¹⁰ One very important need is a regular, consistent family Bible study that is held in a relaxed atmosphere. To make it instructive, enjoyable, and encouraging, good preparation is required. By drawing their children out, parents can learn what is in their hearts and minds. One way to determine the effectiveness of a family study is by noting if all members of the household look forward to it.

¹¹ Scriptural goals likewise contribute to a spiritually strong family, and parents should help their children establish these. Appropriate goals include reading the Bible daily, becoming a regular publisher of the good news, and progressing to dedication and baptism. Other goals may include full-time service as a pioneer, at Bethel, or as a missionary. While in elementary school, a Japanese girl named Ayumi made it her goal to witness to everyone in her class. To arouse the interest of her teacher and classmates, she obtained permission to place several Bible publications in the library. As a result, 13 Bible studies were arranged for during her six years in elementary school. One of those Bible students and others in the student's family became baptized Christians.

¹² Also necessary for strong spiritual health is regular meeting attendance. The apostle Paul admonished fellow believers

10. How is an effective family Bible study of benefit to both parents and children?
11. (a) What goals can parents help their children to establish? (b) What resulted when a certain Japanese girl pursued her goal?
12. How can children derive the greatest benefit from Christian meetings?



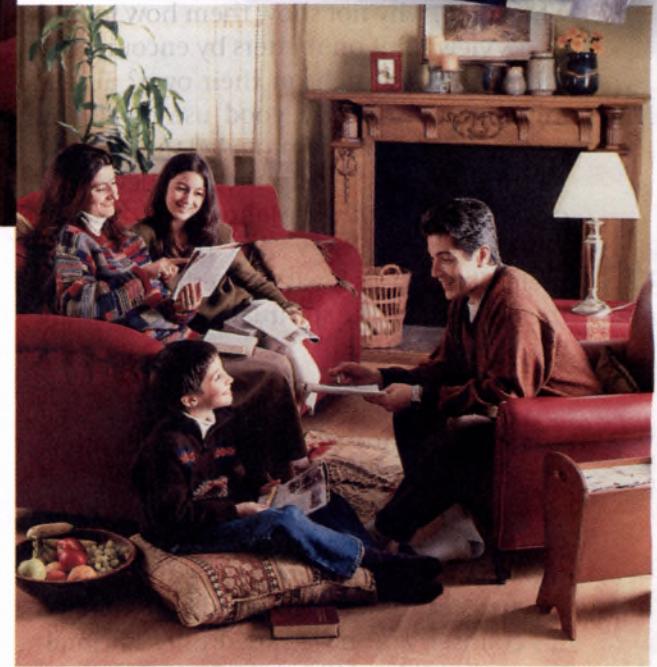
Spiritually strong families regularly study God's Word, attend Christian meetings, and engage in the ministry together

'not to forsake the gathering of themselves together, as some had the custom.' Let that not become our custom, for young and old alike benefit greatly from regular presence at Christian meetings. (Hebrews 10:24, 25; Deuteronomy 31:12) Children should be taught to listen attentively. Preparation for meetings is vital too, for the greatest benefit comes from having an active part by commenting. While a young child may start by saying a couple of words or reading a small portion of a paragraph, it will be most beneficial if children are trained to search out answers and to phrase them in their own words. Do you parents set the example by making regular, meaningful comments yourselves? It is also good for each member of the family to have a Bible, a songbook,

and a copy of the publication being used for the Scriptural discussion.

¹³ Wise parents will direct the youthful energy of their children toward serving Jehovah, helping them to make preaching an important part of their lives. (Hebrews 13:15) Only by working with their children in the ministry can parents make sure that their young ones will get the training needed to become ministers "with nothing to be ashamed of, handling the word of the truth aright." (2 Timothy 2:15) So, then, what about you? If you are a parent, do you help your children to prepare for field service? Doing this will help to make the

^{13, 14. (a)} Why should parents work with their children in the ministry? (b) What will help make field service beneficial and joyful for children?



ministry joyful, meaningful, and productive for them.

¹⁴ Why is it beneficial for parents and their children to work together in the ministry? In this way, children can note and copy the good example of their parents. At the same time, parents can observe the attitude, deportment, and ability of their children. Make sure to take your children with you in various features of the ministry. If possible, let each child have his own witnessing case, and teach him or her to keep it neat and presentable. By consistent training and encouragement, true appreciation for the ministry will be built up, and children will see the preaching work as a means of showing love for God and neighbor.—Matthew 22:37-39; 28:19, 20.

Maintain Spirituality

¹⁵ Maintaining the spirituality of the family is essential. (Psalm 119:93) One means of doing this is to discuss spiritual things with

15. Since maintaining a family's spirituality is so important, what are some ways to do this?

your family at every opportunity. Do you discuss the day's Bible text with them? Is it your custom to share field service experiences or points from the latest *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines "when you walk on the road"? Do you remember to thank Jehovah in prayer for each day of life and for his bountiful provisions "when you lie down and when you get up"? (Deuteronomy 6:6-9) When your children see love for God reflected in everything you do, this will help them to make the truth their own.

¹⁶ At times, children will need guidance to deal successfully with problems or situations that arise. Rather than always telling them what to do, why not show them how to find God's viewpoint on matters by encouraging them to do research on their own? Teaching children to make good use of all the tools and publications provided through the 'faithful slave' will help them to develop a close relationship with Jehovah. (1 Samuel 2:21b) And when they share the benefits of their Bible research with other members of the household, the spirituality of the family is further enhanced.

Rely Fully on Jehovah

¹⁷ What about single-parent families? These face additional challenges when it comes to rearing children. But single parents, do not lose heart! Success is possible, as shown by the many single parents who have trusted in God, have obediently applied his counsel, and have raised fine, spiritually strong children. (Proverbs 22:6) Of course, Christians who are single parents need to rely fully on Jehovah. They must have faith that he will provide help.—Psalm 121:1-3.

16. Of what value is it to encourage children to do their own research?

17. Why should single parents not despair when it comes to rearing their children as Christians?

¹⁸ Wise parents realize that 'there is a time to laugh and a time to skip about.' (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 4) Essential to building a child's mind and body are leisure time and balanced, wholesome recreation. Upbuilding music and especially singing songs of praise to God will help a child to develop a healthy attitude that can play an important role in strengthening his relationship with Jehovah. (Colossians 3:16) Youth is also the time to prepare to be a God-fearing adult, so that enjoyment of life can continue forever on a paradise earth.—Galatians 6:8.

¹⁹ Jehovah wants all Christian families to succeed as strong spiritual units. If we truly love God and do our best to obey his Word, he will bless our efforts and will supply us with the strength needed to follow his inspired direction. (Isaiah 48:17; Philippians 4:13) Remember that the opportunity you now have to teach and train your children is limited and will not be repeated. Do your very best to apply the counsel of God's Word, and Jehovah will bless your efforts to build a spiritually strong family.

18. To what mental and physical needs of their children should parents give attention, but on what should emphasis be placed?

19. Why can parents be confident of Jehovah's blessing on their child-rearing efforts?

What Did We Learn?

- Why is buying out time so important when training children?
- Why is a good parental example necessary?
- What are some important ways to help children grow spiritually?
- How can a family's spirituality be maintained?

Questions From Readers

When was “the Holy of Holies” anointed, as foretold at Daniel 9:24?

Daniel 9:24-27 is a prophecy concerning the appearance of “Messiah the Leader”—the Christ. The foretold anointing of “the Holy of Holies,” then, does not refer to the anointing of the Most Holy compartment of the temple in Jerusalem. Rather, the expression “Holy of Holies” refers to the heavenly sanctuary of God—the heavenly Most Holy—in the great spiritual temple of Jehovah.*—Hebrews 8:1-5; 9:2-10, 23.

When did God’s spiritual temple begin to operate? Well, consider what took place when Jesus presented himself for baptism in 29 C.E. From that point on in his life, Jesus fulfilled the words of Psalm 40:6-8. The apostle Paul later indicated that Jesus had prayed to God: “Sacrifice and offering you did not want, but you prepared a body for me.” (Hebrews 10:5) Jesus knew that God “did not want” animal sacrifices to continue to be offered at Jerusalem’s temple. Instead, Jehovah had prepared a perfect

* For a discussion of various features of God’s spiritual temple, see pages 14-19 of *The Watchtower* of July 1, 1996.

human body for Jesus to offer as a sacrifice. Expressing his heartfelt desire, Jesus continued: “Look! I am come (in the roll of the book it is written about me) to do your will, O God.” (Hebrews 10:7) And what was Jehovah’s response?

The Gospel of Matthew states: “After being baptized Jesus immediately came up from the water; and, look! the heavens were opened up, and he saw descending like a dove God’s spirit coming upon him. Look! Also, there was a voice from the heavens that said: ‘This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved.’”—Matthew 3:16, 17.

Jehovah God’s acceptance of the presentation of Jesus’ body for sacrifice meant that an altar greater than the literal altar in Jerusalem’s temple had come into existence. This was an altar of God’s “will,” or arrangement for accepting Jesus’ human life as a sacrifice. (Hebrews 10:10) The anointing of Jesus with holy spirit meant that God had now brought forth his entire spiritual temple arrangement.*

Hence, at the time of Jesus’ baptism, God’s heavenly abode was anointed, or set apart, as “the Holy of Holies” in the great spiritual temple arrangement.

* This was alluded to on page 195 of the book *Pay Attention to Daniel’s Prophecy!*

**“The Holy of Holies”
was anointed when
Jesus was baptized**



'By Wisdom Our Days Will Become Many'

WHOMO would deny that wisdom is indispensable when it comes to dealing with life's problems? True wisdom is the ability to put knowledge and understanding to proper use. It is the very opposite of foolishness, stupidity, and madness. So the Scriptures exhort us to acquire wisdom. (Proverbs 4:7) In fact, the Bible book of Proverbs was primarily written to impart wisdom and discipline. Its opening words read: "The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, the king of Israel, for one to know wisdom and discipline."—Proverbs 1:1, 2.

Just consider the solid teachings of the first few chapters of Proverbs. Like a loving father urging his son, Solomon entreats his readers to accept discipline and pay attention to wisdom. (Chapters 1 and 2) He shows us how to cultivate intimacy with Jehovah and how to safeguard our heart. (Chapters 3 and 4) We are admonished to remain morally chaste. (Chapters 5 and 6) Yes, invaluable to us is the exposé of the method of operation of an immoral person. (Chapter 7) And how attractive to everyone is the appeal of personified wisdom! (Chapter 8) Before moving on to the concise individual proverbs in later chapters, King Solomon presents a stimulating summary of what he has discussed so far.—Chapter 9.

'Come, Eat My Bread and Drink My Wine'

The conclusion of the first portion of Proverbs is not a dry summary that merely outlines the previously mentioned advice. Rather, it is presented as an exciting and beautiful

illustration, motivating the reader to pursue wisdom.

The 9th chapter of the Bible book of Proverbs opens with the words: "*True wisdom has built its house; it has hewn out its seven pillars.*" (Proverbs 9:1) The term "seven pillars," suggests one scholar, is "indicative of a mansion built around a court-yard, the structure being supported by three pillars on each side and one in the centre on the third side facing the open space which was the entrance." In any case, true wisdom has built a sturdy house for the reception of many guests.

Everything is ready for a feast. The meat is there, as is the wine. Wisdom has given personal attention to the preparation of the meal and to the setting of the table. "*It has organized its meat slaughtering; it has mixed its wine; more than that, it has set in order its table.*" (Proverbs 9:2) Spiritually enlightening food for thought is evidently available on this figurative table.—Isaiah 55:1, 2.

Who are invited to the feast prepared by true wisdom? "*It has sent forth its lady attendants, that it may call out on top of the heights of the town: 'Whoever is inexperienced, let him turn aside here.' Whoever is in want of heart—she has said to him: 'Come, feed yourselves with my bread and share in drinking the wine that I have mixed. Leave the inexperienced ones and keep living, and walk straight in the way of understanding.'*"—Proverbs 9:3-6.

Wisdom has sent out its maidens to issue an invitation. They have gone to public places from where they can call out to the largest number of people. All are invited

—those “in want of heart,” or those lacking understanding, as well as those lacking experience. (Proverbs 9:4) And a promise of life is held out to them. Wisdom contained in God’s Word, including that in the book of Proverbs, is certainly available to nearly everyone. Today, as the messengers of true wisdom, Jehovah’s Witnesses are busy inviting people, wherever they are found, to study the Bible. Taking in this knowledge, indeed, can lead to everlasting life.—John 17:3.

Christians must humbly accept wisdom’s discipline. This is particularly true of young ones and those who have recently started to learn about Jehovah. Because of limited experience in God’s ways, they may be “in want of heart.” It is not that all of their motives are bad, but it takes time and effort to bring the heart into a condition that really pleases Jehovah God. This calls for bringing thoughts, desires, affections, and goals into harmony with what God approves. How vital that they “form a longing for the unadulterated milk belonging to the word.”—1 Peter 2:2.

In fact, should not all of us go beyond “the primary doctrine”? Surely we need to develop an interest in “the deep things of God” and draw nourishment from the solid food that belongs to mature people. (Hebrews 5:12–6:1; 1 Corinthians 2:10) “The faithful and discreet slave,” whom Jesus Christ directly supervises, diligently provides timely spiritual food for all. (Matthew 24:45–47) May we feast at wisdom’s table by diligently studying God’s Word and the Bible-based publications provided by the slave class.

“Do Not Reprove a Ridiculer”

The teachings of wisdom also include correction and reproof. This feature of wisdom is not welcomed by all. Hence, the closing of the first section of the book of Proverbs contains a warning: “*He that is correcting the ridiculer is taking to himself dishonor, and he that*

is giving a reproof to someone wicked—a defect in him. Do not reprove a ridiculer, that he may not hate you.”—Proverbs 9:7, 8a.

A ridiculer builds up resentment and hatred for the one trying to help make his path straight. A wicked person lacks appreciation for the value of reproof. How unwise to try to teach the beautiful truth of God’s Word to someone who hates the truth or is simply seeking to ridicule it! When the apostle Paul was preaching in Antioch, he encountered a group of Jews who had no love for the truth. They tried to embroil him in an argument by blasphemously contradicting him, but Paul simply stated: “Since you are thrusting [the word of God] away from you and do not judge yourselves worthy of everlasting life, look! we turn to the nations.”—Acts 13:45, 46.

In our endeavor to reach honesthearted ones with the Kingdom good news, may we be careful not to get involved in debates and arguments with ridiculers. Christ Jesus instructed his disciples: “When you are entering into the house, greet the household; and if the house is deserving, let the peace you wish it come upon it; but if it is not deserving, let the peace from you return upon you. Wherever anyone does not take you in or listen to your words, on going out of that house or that city shake the dust off your feet.”—Matthew 10:12–14.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Strengthen Your Trust in Jehovah

Moving Ahead to Final Victory!

Confession That Leads to Healing

A wise person's response to reproof is opposite to that of a ridiculer. Solomon states: "*Give a reproof to a wise person and he will love you. Give to a wise person and he will become still wiser.*" (Proverbs 9:8b, 9a) A wise person knows that "no discipline seems for the present to be joyous, but grievous; yet afterward to those who have been trained by it it yields peaceable fruit, namely, righteousness." (Hebrews 12:11) Although the counsel may seem painful, why should we retaliate or be defensive if accepting it is going to make us wiser?

"Impart knowledge to someone righteous and he will increase in learning," continues the wise king. (Proverbs 9:9b) No one is too wise or too old to keep learning. What a delight it is to see even those in their twilight years accept the truth and make a dedication to Jehovah! May we also endeavor to retain the will to learn and keep the mind active.

"To You Years of Life Will Be Added"

Underscoring the main point of the subject under consideration, Solomon includes the essential prerequisite for wisdom. He writes: "*The fear of Jehovah is the start of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Most Holy One is what understanding is.*" (Proverbs 9:10) There can be no godly wisdom without profound, reverential awe for the true God. A person may have a mind well stocked with knowledge, but if he lacks the fear of Jehovah, he will fail to use that knowledge in a way that honors the Creator. He may even draw wrong conclusions from known facts, making himself look foolish. Moreover, the knowledge of Jehovah, the Most Holy One, is essential for gaining understanding, a notable characteristic of wisdom.

What fruitage does wisdom bear? (Proverbs 8:12-21, 35) The king of Israel says: "*By me your days will become many, and to you years of life will be added.*" (Proverbs 9:11) Length of days and years of life are the result

of keeping company with wisdom. Yes, "wisdom itself preserves alive its owners."—Ecclesiastes 7:12.

Putting forth effort to gain wisdom is our personal responsibility. Emphasizing this fact, Solomon states: "*If you have become wise, you have become wise in your own behalf; and if you have ridiculed, you will bear it, just you alone.*" (Proverbs 9:12) The wise one is wise to his own benefit, and the ridiculer alone is to blame for his own suffering. Indeed, we reap what we sow. May we, then, "pay attention to wisdom."—Proverbs 2:2.

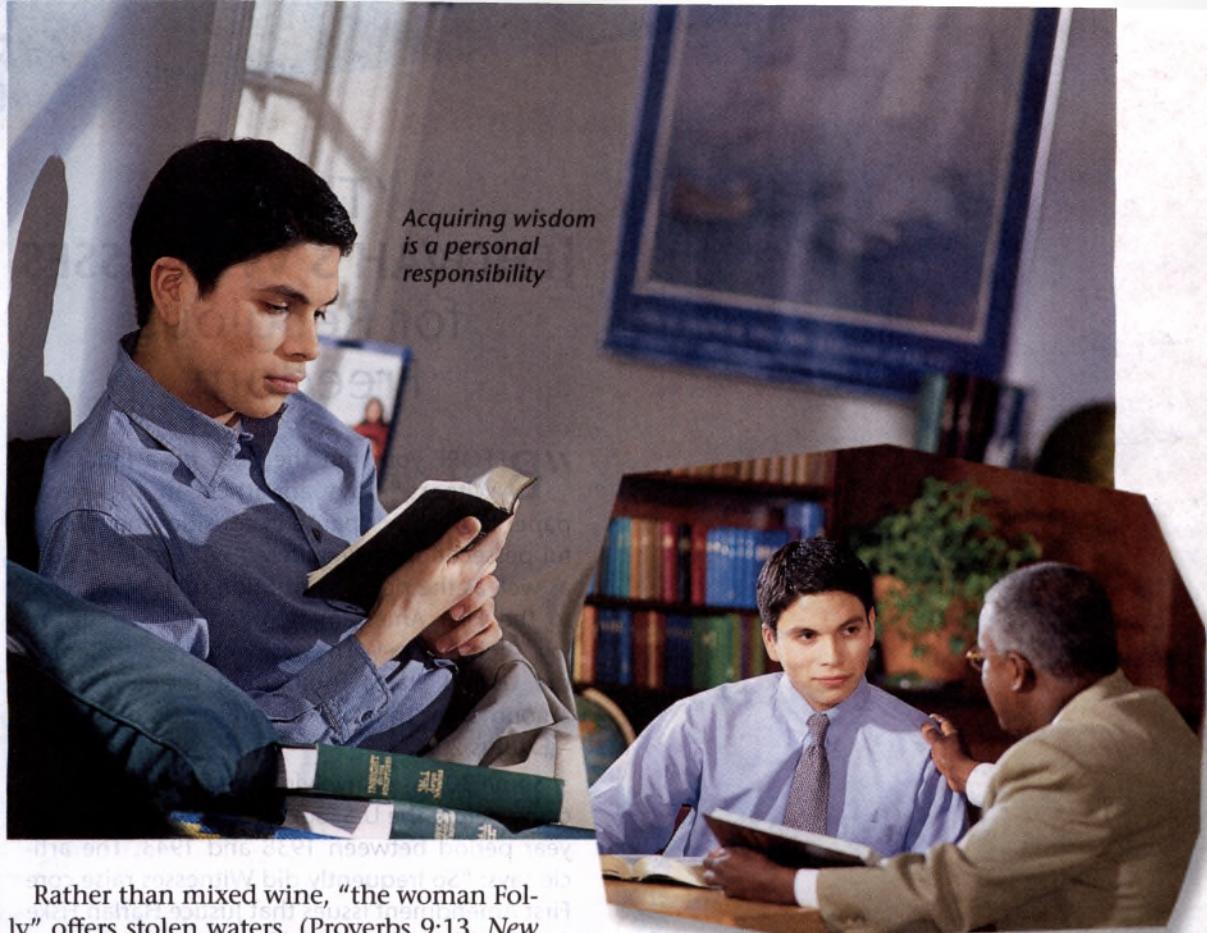
"A Woman of Stupidity Is Boisterous"

By way of contrast, Solomon next says: "*A woman of stupidity is boisterous. She is simple-mindedness itself and has come to know nothing whatever. And she has seated herself at the entrance of her house, upon a seat, in the high places of the town, to call out to those passing along the way, those who are going straight ahead on their paths: 'Whoever is inexperienced, let him turn aside here.'*"—Proverbs 9:13-16a.

Stupidity is portrayed as a loud, undisciplined, and ignorant woman. She too has built a house. And she has taken upon herself the task of calling out to whoever is inexperienced. So the passersby have a choice. Will they accept wisdom's invitation or that of stupidity?

"Stolen Waters Themselves Are Sweet"

Both wisdom and stupidity invite listeners to "turn aside here." The appeal, however, is different. Wisdom invites people to a feast of wine, meat, and bread. The attraction that stupidity holds out reminds us of the ways of a loose woman. Solomon says: "*Whoever is in want of heart—she has also said to him: 'Stolen waters themselves are sweet, and bread eaten in secrecy—it is pleasant.'*"—Proverbs 9:16b, 17.



*Acquiring wisdom
is a personal
responsibility*

Rather than mixed wine, "the woman Folly" offers stolen waters. (Proverbs 9:13, New International Version) In the Scriptures, experiencing sexual enjoyment with a beloved wife is likened to drinking refreshing water. (Proverbs 5:15-17) Stolen waters, then, represent immoral sexual relations carried out in secret. Such waters are made to appear sweet—better than wine—because they are stolen and carry the idea of getting away with something. The clandestine bread is given the appearance of being more delicious than the bread and meat of wisdom strictly because it is gained by unjust means. To view what is forbidden and secret as attractive is a mark of stupidity.

While wisdom's invitation includes the promise of life, a woman of stupidity makes no reference to the consequences of following her ways. But Solomon warns: "He has

A wise person welcomes correction

not come to know that those impotent in death are there, that those called in by her are in the low places of Sheol." (Proverbs 9:18) "Lady Folly's house is not a home but a mausoleum," writes one scholar. "If you enter it you will not leave it alive." Following an immoral life-style is not wise; it is death dealing.

Jesus Christ said: "Go in through the narrow gate; because broad and spacious is the road leading off into destruction, and many are the ones going in through it; whereas narrow is the gate and cramped the road leading off into life, and few are the ones finding it." (Matthew 7:13, 14) May we always feed at wisdom's table and be among those who are on the road leading off into life.

Congress of the begin and held at the Wednesday the Fourth of March, one

THE Convention of a number of the States, in exercise of its powers, that further declaratory and restrictive clauses should be added; And as soon as possible after such an amendment shall be proposed by the Senate and House of Representatives, and concurred in by two thirds of both Houses, it shall be referred to the Legislatures of the several States, to be ratified by them, in the same manner as the Constitution was ratified; and if it be so ratified by the Legislatures of three fourths of the said States, and the ratification be certified to the President of the United States by the Vice-President and the Secretary of State, and the President shall sign the same, and it shall be published in the public papers, it shall become part of the Constitution.

RESOLVED by the Senate and House of Representatives, that the following Articles be proposed to the Legislatures of the several States, as amendments to the Constitution; viz:

ARTICLE I In addition to, and annexed to the several States, pursuant to the fifth Article of the original Constitution:

the first... After the first enumeration required by the first Article of the Constitution, there shall be an enumeration and representation of every free person, of both sexes, in each state, in such manner as the proportion shall be so regulated by Congress, that there shall not be less than one Representative for every thirty thousand persons.

to the second... At least, varying the compensation for the services of the Senators and Representatives,

the third... Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, and to prohibit the government from interfering with the right of the people to peaceably assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

the fourth... A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.

the fifth... No soldier shall be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner, nor in time of peace, but in case of imminent danger, in which case, the right of the people to peaceably assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances, shall not be infringed.

the sixth... If a person shall commit treason against the United States, he shall be tried by a military commission, and if found guilty, shall be punished according to law.

the seventh... If a person shall commit treason against the United States, he shall be tried by a military commission, and if found guilty, shall be punished according to law.

the eighth... In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation, to be confronted with the witnesses against him, to have compulsory process for witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.

the ninth... In suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be maintained.

the tenth... No excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

the eleventh... An act of Congress can only be passed over the signature of the President and the Vice-President.

the twelfth... An act of Congress can only be passed over the signature of the President and the Vice-President.

the thirteenth... An act of Congress can only be passed over the signature of the President and the Vice-President.

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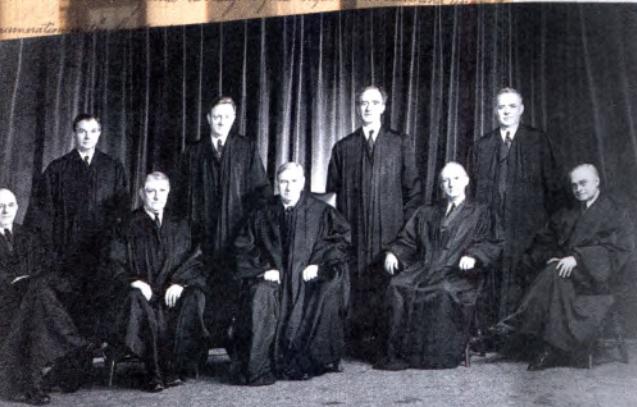
the nineteenth... An act of Congress can only be passed over the signature of the President and the Vice-President.

'Thank JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES for Religious Freedom'

"BEFORE you shut the door on a Jehovah's Witness," says an article in the newspaper USA Today, "pause to consider the shameful persecution they suffered not too long ago, as well as the rich contribution they have made to the First Amendment freedoms we all enjoy." Jehovah's Witnesses were persecuted in the United States throughout the 1940's for, among other things, refusing to salute the flag. —Exodus 20:4, 5.

Some 30 cases involving Jehovah's Witnesses came before the U.S. Supreme Court in the five-year period between 1938 and 1943. The article says: "So frequently did Witnesses raise core First Amendment issues that Justice Harlan Fiske Stone wrote, 'The Jehovah's Witnesses ought to have an endowment in view of the aid which they give in solving the legal problems of civil liberties.'"

Thus, near its conclusion the article states: "All religions have the Jehovah's Witnesses to thank for the expansion of [religious] freedom."



Background, building: Photo by Josh Mathes, Collection of the Supreme Court of the United States; lower left, justices: Collection of the Supreme Court of the United States

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