

The WATCHTOWER

"God Is Not Partial"

Search for Truth

Always Rewarded

**How Humility Can Safeguard
You**

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

JUNE 15, 1976

The WATCHTOWER

June 15, 1976
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A watchtower enables a person to see far into the distance and announce to others what is coming. Can a magazine serve similarly in our day? Yes, from its first issue (July 1879) onward, *The Watchtower*, published by Jehovah's witnesses, has done just that.

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

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

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

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IN THIS ISSUE

"God Is Not Partial"	355
Why Jesus' Illustrations Helped People	357
Insight on the News	360
Search for Truth Always Rewarded	361
Ephesians: Unity Realized Through Christ	365
How You Can Strengthen Others	368
How Humility Can Safeguard You	374
'Unfit to Take Off Messiah's Sandals'	380
Tyre—A Treacherous City	381
Questions from Readers	383

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"GOD IS NOT PARTIAL"

"Jehovah your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the God great, mighty and fear-inspiring, who treats none with partiality." (Deut. 10:17) These reassuring words, spoken by the prophet Moses, have been repeatedly confirmed by the record of God's dealings with mankind.

Due to God's impartiality the opportunity of becoming his approved servants, with everlasting life in view, has not been restricted to just a few. God's "will is that all sorts of men should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, a man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a corresponding ransom for all." (1 Tim. 2:4-6) Since all humans, by reason of the ransom sacrifice, are the property of God and Christ, none are debarred from taking advantage of the opportunity to gain salvation. Race, social standing, abilities, outward appearance and the like simply have no bearing on the matter.

Consider the case of the nation of Israel. True, Jehovah God dealt exclusively with the Israelites as his name people for a time. But note that God's choosing them as his recognized people did not depend upon their greatness or numbers. Moses told them: "It was not because of your being the most populous of all the peoples

that Jehovah showed affection for you so that he chose you, for you were the least of all the peoples." (Deut. 7:7) "You continue to live, because [God] loved your forefathers so that he chose their seed after them and brought you out of Egypt." —Deut. 4:37.

Why can we say that this choosing of the Israelites did not result in partial treatment? Because, to the contrary, they had a more serious account to render before Jehovah God than peoples who did not know him. Their failure to obey his law, therefore, brought them under a special curse. This is evident from Deuteronomy 27:26: "Cursed is the one who will not put the words of this law in force by doing them."

The other nations were allowed to go ahead in their own ways and, despite this, they were permitted to benefit from God's bountiful provisions. Though possessing the power to withhold sunshine and rain, Jehovah only rarely used that power against humans and in these cases it was for the accomplishment of a particular purpose. (Ex. 10:23; Amos 4:7) The experience of the nations generally has been just as the apostle Paul described to the people of Lystra: "In the past generations [God] permitted all the nations to go on in their ways, although, indeed, he did not leave himself without witness in that he did good, giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts to the full with food and good cheer." (Acts 14:16, 17) Along with this, Jehovah God has been working out matters in a way that would result in His blessing all mankind through the Messiah and his associates, that is, through 'Abraham's seed.'—Gen. 22:18.

During the time that Jehovah God was using the Israelites, individuals in other nations still could receive his favorable attention. King Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple on Mount Mori-

ah bears this out. He petitioned Jehovah: "To the foreigner, who is no part of your people Israel and who actually comes from a distant land by reason of your name (for they shall hear of your great name and of your strong hand and of your stretched-out arm), and he actually comes and prays toward this house, may you yourself listen from the heavens, your established place of dwelling, and you must do according to all that for which the foreigner calls to you; in order that all the peoples of the earth may get to know your name so as to fear you the same as your people Israel."—1 Ki. 8:41-43.

NON-ISRAELITES BLESSED

The Bible records a number of cases where non-Israelites who exercised faith even received special blessings from Jehovah God.

There was a widow in Zarephath who showed consideration to Jehovah's prophet Elijah. As a consequence, her small supply of flour and oil was miraculously prevented from running out during a time of famine. An even grander miracle was the resurrection of her only son.—1 Ki. 17:8-24; Luke 4:25, 26.

The prostitute Rahab of Jericho abandoned her degrading occupation, exercised faith in Jehovah and took action in harmony with his use of Israel. She and her relatives, therefore, did not perish with the other inhabitants of Jericho. Additionally, unknown to herself, she was privileged to be brought into the family line leading to the Messiah when she entered into an honorable marriage with Salmon.—Ruth 4:20-22; Matt. 1:5, 6; Heb. 11:30, 31; Jas. 2:25.

Similarly, the Moabitess Ruth gained God's approval. She chose Jehovah as her God and willingly left her homeland to live among the Israelites, a people who recognized him as the true God. The Most

High, in turn, permitted her to become a link in the most important line of descent, the one leading to the Messiah.—Matt. 1:5.

With the coming of the Messiah, Jesus, the Israelites, on the basis of God's covenant with their forefather Abraham, were given the initial opportunity to become loyal disciples of that one. Then, in 36 C.E., the first group of uncircumcised non-Jews had the same privilege extended to them. Addressing this group, the apostle Peter said: "For a certainty I perceive that God is not partial, but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him."—Acts 10:34, 35.

IMITATE GOD'S IMPARTIALITY

Since God is impartial, all who desire his approval should want to be like him. This means avoiding any display of favoritism on the basis of a person's superior educational background, financial standing, prominence or the like. We judge no man by fleshly or imperfect human standards. What really counts is, not outward appearance, but what an individual is at heart.

God's impartiality places upon his servants the responsibility of helping their fellow humans to come to an accurate knowledge of the truth. No one should view someone as being unworthy to be aided in this way. People can be assisted to change their ways if that is really what they want to do. The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men kept for unnatural purposes, nor men who lie with men, nor thieves, nor greedy persons, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit God's kingdom. And yet that is what some of you were. But you have been washed clean." (1 Cor. 6:9-11) Accordingly, if individuals bring

their lives into conformity with God's will, they can become his clean, approved servants.

Our appreciating God's impartiality will also enable us to put in the right perspective what others may think of us. Our main concern will be to please, not men, who might be impressed by outward show, but Jehovah God, who sees what the heart is. We will follow the Scriptural admonition: "Whatever you are doing, work at it whole-souled as to Jehovah, and not to men, for you know that it is from Jehovah you will receive the due reward of the inheritance. Slave for the Master, Christ. Certainly the one that is doing

wrong will receive back what he wrongly did, and there is no partiality."—Col. 3:23-25.

Truly God's impartiality has resulted in marvelous benefits for humankind. The basis has been laid for all, not just a few, to choose to come into an approved standing before him, with the prospect of living forever. Appreciation of that fact should stir us to help as many as possible to gain an accurate knowledge of the truth. It should move us to shun favoritism and to avoid undue concern about what men may think of us. By doing everything as unto Jehovah, imitating his impartiality, we can be sure of receiving a rich reward.

WHY Jesus' Illustrations

HELPED PEOPLE

WHEN Jesus was on earth his objective was to help people. He took pity on people, especially the sick and the oppressed, because he saw that "they were skinned and thrown about like sheep without a shepherd." (Matt. 9:36) He performed many cures on these persons. When a leper entreated him on bended knee, saying: "If you just want to, you can make me clean," Jesus, moved with pity, stretched out his hand and said to him: "I want to. Be made clean."—Mark 1:40, 41.

But Jesus helped people in a much more beneficial and lasting way than by physical cures. In fact, Jesus' cures were by no means the major feature of his work. The

ones healed were comparatively few, but everyone in the land heard his teaching.

HOW ILLUSTRATIONS HELP

Illustrations or parables occupied a prominent part of Jesus' teaching to the crowds of people who heard him. The Bible record says: "Indeed, without an illustration he would not speak to them, but privately to his disciples he would explain all things." (Mark 4:34) How were his illustrations especially helpful to those who really sought the explanation? First, they made the spiritual things, the ways and the thinking of God, understandable to humans. Jesus used the everyday affairs and dealings of life to illustrate abstract and

deeper matters. One needs no 'higher education' to understand the principles that the parables convey. Jesus' illustrations are as applicable and fitting today as when he gave them.

For example, who cannot grasp, in the parable of the ungrateful slave, the principle that we must show mercy and forgiveness to one another? In this illustration Jesus told of a king to whom one of his slaves owed sixty million denarii. The king, moved by the pleas of the man, canceled the debt. But this slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him only a hundred denarii (one six-hundred-thousandth as much), and, grabbing him, began to choke him, saying: "Pay back whatever you owe." The king, hearing of this unmerciful act, was greatly angered, and put the ungrateful slave into jail. Jesus concluded the illustration, saying: "In like manner my heavenly Father will also deal with you if you do not forgive each one his brother from your hearts."—Matt. 18:23-35.

ILLUSTRATIONS REACH THE CONSCIENCE

But Jesus' parables are helpful not only because of their simplicity. Illustrations often reach the hearts and consciences of their hearers more effectively than a mere statement of fact, or an outright reproof. This is very clearly demonstrated in Jesus' training of his apostles and disciples.

Jesus saw in his disciples the many mistakes, faults and wrong leanings they had as imperfect sinners. But we do not find him accusing them of being proud, ambitious, greedy, unmerciful or lazy persons. This would have hurt them and made them feel condemned. They would have felt that he viewed them as that *kind* of persons. While they manifested some of these bad traits on occasion, they were not basically or characteristically greedy, proud, and so forth. Jesus wanted to help them, not condemn them. Therefore, rather than humili-

ate them openly, he gave them illustrations that caused them to think—to see the principles involved, and to apply them in their own hearts and consciences. They could see the mistake that they had made or the wrong attitude that they had manifested and then make corrections. This method was far more convincing than an outright rebuke and much more effective.

For instance, when the disciples were arguing among themselves over which one seemed to be the greatest, Jesus did not become angry at them or severely rebuke them. He did not call them haughty, selfish, greedy or ambitious. He pointed to the worldly leaders as an illustration of this bad attitude and its outcome, saying: "The kings of the nations lord it over them, and those having authority over them are called Benefactors. You, though, are not to be that way." The disciples well knew the bad results of that "superior" attitude. Then, in contrast, Jesus referred to his own example as a servant among them, though he was their leader.—Luke 22:24-27.

On another occasion Jesus set a young child in their midst, saying that each of them, in order to enter into the kingdom of God, would have to be humble as a child is. Furthermore, they must have great consideration for persons who, like a child, were of a guileless, faithful nature. In what other way could he have made his point so plain?—Matt. 18:1-6.

Certainly Christ's disciples took these things to heart and corrected their own wrong thinking. This is evident in their dealings with their Christian brothers when, after Christ's death and resurrection, they carried the load of responsibility for the Christian congregations. The letters of Peter, James and John reflect the fine, humble attitude that Christ had instilled in them.

Additionally, illustrations are effective in giving correction because they afford

the hearer opportunity to do his own thinking without its being beclouded or blinded by prejudice. In considering an illustration, which usually deals with persons other than the one being spoken to and not directly mentioning him, the individual will see that it fits his own circumstances or actions. Then he can arrive at his own conclusion or judgment. And he has no justifiable ground for anger, since the speaker did not accuse him directly of anything.

Such was the case with the man versed in the law of Moses who asked Jesus what was required to inherit everlasting life. Jesus pointed out that a person must love God with heart, soul, mind and strength, and love his neighbor as himself. Wanting to prove himself righteous, the man asked: "Who really is my neighbor?" Jesus was acquainted with the Jews' unneighborly attitude toward Samaritans, whom they despised. He then spoke the parable of the "good Samaritan." Had Jesus directly told the man that Samaritans were among those whom one should love as oneself, this prejudiced individual might never have admitted it.—Luke 10:25-37.

ILLUSTRATIONS REVEAL INNER ATTITUDE

Some of Jesus' illustrations served also to cause people to identify themselves as interested or disinterested or even opposed to him as God's prophet. On one occasion Jesus said that he spoke to such persons so that, 'hearing, they would by no means get the sense of it.' (Matt. 13:10-15) In this way the illustrations 'weeded out' those who were not interested in understanding his message, for they did not come to Jesus and ask for the explanation as did the truly interested ones.—Matt. 13:36.

Even more importantly, the illustrations helped the true disciples by keeping out from among them those who would be hypocritical and who would cause factions and

divisions. People would tend, when hearing the illustrations, to 'show their true colors.' When Jesus said: "He that feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has everlasting life," then "many of his disciples went off to the things behind and would no longer walk with him." His true disciples, on the other hand, stuck with him and came to understand the life-giving significance of those words.—John 6:54, 60-66.

Jesus' illustrations or parables are of invaluable help to Christians today, for, besides setting forth guiding principles, they are also prophetic, many of them having a major fulfillment in our time. They help us to realize that the kingdom of the heavens will soon take complete rule of this earth. They guide us in taking the right course in these critical times, so as to be on the right side, with a view to everlasting life.

Furthermore, Jesus' illustrations enable us to deal with others, particularly our Christian brothers, with kindness. Just as Jesus showed his disciples the badness of some of their acts and attitudes, without labeling them as "bad" persons, so we can help our brothers by pointing out the unwisdom, the badness or the wrongness of their acts, while not judging or condemning them as "haughty," "proud" or "bad" persons. We are against the *badness*, but *not against our Christian brothers* who at times may be overtaken in a fault and do bad things.—Jude 22, 23; Gal. 6:1.

The reason why Jesus' illustrations are so helpful is that they are wisdom from the Creator, who is thoroughly aware of our makeup. (John 5:19) They are not farfetched or impractical. They really teach. They fit human nature and human needs at all times and under all circumstances. A person who studies Jesus' illustrations can lay for himself a good foundation for teaching others.

Insight on the News

● For some time, West German clergymen have been faced with half-empty churches. In recent years, people in that land have found another

More Abandoning Churches reason to become part of a growing army of official non-believers. All West Germans who are officially listed as members of the churches are liable to a church tax collected from their pay. But when they officially leave the church, they no longer are liable for that tax.

Between 1969 and 1974 more than a million Protestants and 360,000 Catholics 'de-registered,' and 1975 was another record year. But it should not be surprising that people rebel against compulsory church contributions. Jesus Christ, the founder of Christianity, showed that giving under compulsion is not God's way. He said: "You received free, give free." (Matt. 10:8) The apostle Paul also stated: "Let each one do just as he has resolved in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion." (2 Cor. 9:7) Ignoring God's Word, the clergy are paying the penalty.

● In the book "Free to Be Good or Bad," Dr. Herbert Holt states that hedonism, the devotion to selfish pleasure, is 'sweeping mankind like a forest fire.' He says that the growing "new breed" of selfish people "would scare the daylights out of anyone who values the humanity of human beings." These people have lost belief in God and in their fellowman. Being unconcerned about the welfare of others, Holt says, they have entered an "emotional ice age."

Such persons are in all age groups. Some are married, some are parents. But all are committed "neither to marriage nor to parenthood, nor even to friendship. They have closed the door on all that as a delusion of the past, and they float in an erratic orbit of newly found freedom," Holt observes. He adds: "They are an end result of social change, change that has come at breakneck speed over the past two decades. . . . people who accept no role in society and no responsibility to anyone or for anyone but themselves."

Bible prophecy foretold that in these "last days" large numbers of people would be

'without natural affection, not open to any agreement, without self-control, without love of goodness, lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God.'—2 Tim. 3:1-4.

● A conservative Paris newspaper, "Le Figaro," charges the Catholic Church with meddling in politics. Calling such meddling 'a big mistake,' the publication observes: "Frankly, she is meddling in politics more actively than ever.

Meddling in Politics Alarmed at the thought of having chosen the wrong side, she now toys with the idea of throwing in her lot with the other side. How strange that the truth does not enlighten her and enable her to see that she should not take sides." "Le Figaro" also states: "It is very evident today that if religion wishes to meddle in politics, it is in danger of seeing politics meddle with religion."

God's Word shows that the religion that meddles in politics will indeed suffer meddling by politics. Describing the world's false religions as a spiritual harlot, Revelation 17:16 shows that the political powers will tire of her meddling and "will hate the harlot and will make her devastated and naked, and will eat up her fleshy parts and will completely burn her with fire." That is why sincere persons are warned: "Get out of her, my people, if you do not want to share with her in her sins, and if you do not want to receive part of her plagues."—Rev. 18:4.

● After decades of probing the spectacular mysteries of the universe, rocket expert Dr. Wernher von Braun states: "The grandeur of the cosmos serves only to confirm my belief in the certainty of a Creator. I just can't envision this whole universe coming into being without something like divine will. The natural laws of the universe are so precise that we have no difficulty building a spaceship to fly to the moon and can time the flight with the precision of a fraction of a second. These laws must have been set by somebody."

The Bible, at Isaiah 42:5, identifies that "somebody" as "the true God, Jehovah, . . . the Creator of the heavens."

SEARCH FOR TRUTH

Always Rewarded



IN THIS world, life sometimes seems like a "treadmill," with no one getting anywhere. Searchers for truth ask, What is the purpose of life? What is the end of it all? Is there not some happier way to spend our lives—a way with a purpose?

Jesus Christ said: "Keep on seeking, and you will find." (Matt. 7:7) And the apostle Peter said: "For a certainty I perceive that God is not partial, but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him."—Acts 10:34, 35.

It makes no difference where one lives. People who are searching today are finding the truth and are changing their outlook on life. Nowhere is this more evident than in the vast country of Brazil, South America, where, in a land of more than three million square miles (about 7,800,000 square kilometers), people live in nearly every circumstance—in large modern cities, in the torrid and the more temperate areas, in remote villages in the dense Amazon jungle, in the mountains, even in

leper colonies. Nevertheless, the Bible's good news is reaching them.

At this time, out of Brazil's population of 107 million, there are probably not more than 20 percent who have not been reached, in some measure, or who do not at least have access to the good news of God's kingdom and its coming righteous rule over the earth.

VISITING VILLAGES IN THE AMAZON VALLEY

In the Amazon area there are sparse populations and tremendous distances, but in some of even the most remote villages there are congregations or representatives of Jehovah's Witnesses. Despite the lack of roads, the danger from wild animals and snakes and torrential rains, great effort is put forth by the Witnesses to gather for their Bible meetings, as many of them live at considerable distances from the villages in which meetings are held.

The only means of transportation in the Amazon's dense jungle country are small boats and canoes. These people show real appreciation for the Bible truth that they learn. Whenever they can they reach out to untouched areas. On one occasion, two boatloads of these Christian men and women went out to call on the villages and isolated houses along the river banks. Since there is no electricity, they borrowed a portable generator to present a Bible talk, using slides. They stopped at the village of Botafogo and several other settlements near Lake Castanho, speaking to a total audience of 719 persons. At Jaiteua, where

four of Jehovah's Witnesses live, the pastor of the Assembly of God Church warned his flock not to attend the talk. Nevertheless, seventy-three turned out, including his own daughter!

FORMER VOODOO PRACTICERS SERVE GOD

Boa Vista, Roraima, about three degrees north of the equator, is on a large tributary of the Amazon. There one of the Witnesses called on a man and his wife, practitioners of voodoo for thirty-four years, and arranged for a Bible study. This couple saw that God condemns all voodoo and other spiritistic practices, and they immediately stopped their voodoo rites. (Deut. 18:10-12; Isa. 8:19) Then they read Acts 19:18, 19, which says of those to whom the apostle Paul preached in the Asian city of Ephesus: "Many of those who had become believers would come and confess and report their practices openly. Indeed, quite a number of those who practiced magical arts brought their books together and burned them up before everybody." Promptly this sincere man and his wife searched out all their voodoo objects and did just that.

It turned out just as in ancient Ephesus, concerning which the account goes on to read: "Thus in a mighty way the word of Jehovah kept growing and prevailing." Yes, the congregation in Boa Vista increased by twenty-one active proclaimers of the good news within the next six months.—Acts 19:20.

YOUNG PEOPLE SEEK AND FIND TRUTH

As in other parts of the earth, children in Brazil, particularly in more populated areas, are often quite unsettled and confused, many tending to be rebellious. They are looking for something that offers a hope and a satisfying purpose in life. Therefore, to schoolteachers it is refreshing and a relief to find children who give them respect and who want to learn. These

children are often able to help other disillusioned ones to find the truth and the incentive to make their lives productive.

In Rio de Janeiro a schoolteacher requested that one of Jehovah's Witnesses, a mother of two children aged six and seven, call at the teacher's home. For about two hours the teacher conversed with the mother about the fine behavior of her children and the parental training that they were receiving. The teacher remarked: "Their conduct is above reproach. They never share in riots or accuse their schoolmates. They do not lie or participate in festivities contrary to their conscience."

At the end of the school term the teacher divided her students into groups. Each group was required to discuss a religion. One group brought along a priest to answer the questions prepared by the teacher. The teacher asked questions that dealt with the Christian stand on certain issues. These had come up in her discussion with the mother of the two children. The priest, unable to give clear-cut answers, felt very embarrassed, so that the class booed. Annoyed, he called for attention and said, "You are all naughty except for those two children who, as good Catholics, are well-behaved and do not disrespect a priest!" The teacher answered, "Those children are well-behaved because they are not Catholics but Jehovah's Witnesses." The class applauded, saying, "We want to be Jehovah's Witnesses." This occasion provided opportunity for later Bible discussion with many of the children.

In the city of Curitiba, about 445 kilometers (276 miles) from Argentina, a Portuguese language teacher gave his class an assignment to prepare a subject of their choice, to be presented orally. One of the students was a witness of Jehovah. He chose to speak on "The Origin of Man." The teacher allowed the students to bring along persons for interview, so the young Witness brought along a mature member

of the congregation. The time allowed was fifty minutes, but the discussion was so absorbing that two such periods were used. When the bell rang for an intermission, all the students stayed in their seats to ask questions. They wanted to know where the Witnesses got their answers. It was explained that the Bible had the answers, and that a book that they had, entitled "Did Man Get Here by Evolution or by Creation?" pointed to the Bible answers, besides giving logical and scientific arguments. Another period was used for discussion, and at the end forty-three out of the forty-six students accepted the fact that God created man, and they took many Bibles and books from the Witnesses. The young Witness relates: "Several Bible studies were started and at least one of the students present, who did not believe in creation before, does so today, for he has become one of Jehovah's Witnesses."

A young engineering student in Itajubá, in Minas Gerais State, was concerned with the symbolisms in the Bible book of Revelation (Apocalypse). Nobody was able to give him convincing answers, and he kept praying to God that someone would come to help him to understand the symbolisms. When home on vacation he was called on by Jehovah's Witnesses. They explained some points to him and helped him to recognize the need to know more about the entire Bible. He studied with the Witnesses, using the Bible study aid *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life* and is now witnessing to others.

TRUTH REACHES INTO PRISON

The truth of the good news is available even to those whose past life has been bad. The apostle Peter wrote to Christians: "The time that has passed by is sufficient for you to have worked out the will of the nations when you proceeded in deeds of loose conduct, lusts, excesses with wine, revelries, drinking matches, and illegal

idolatries." (1 Pet. 4:3) God will help persons who turn from their former course and take a right path under Bible direction.

This truth is well demonstrated at the State Prison in the city of São Jerônimo, Rio Grande do Sul, near the southeast coast. The prison director asked one of Jehovah's Witnesses to give a weekly Bible talk to selected groups of twenty-four to thirty inmates. A little later on, the director remarked on the noticeable change in three of the prisoners. One who had been the leader of revolts and organized escapes, after studying the Bible with the Witnesses, gained the complete confidence of the director. For that reason, the prison administrators requested that talks be given more often than once a week, if possible.

OPPOSITION RESULTS IN SPREAD OF GOOD NEWS

The apostle Paul said to Christians who were undergoing stiff opposition that the knowledge of God that they were spreading was like an 'odor of death' to opposers but 'a sweet odor of life' to those looking for the truth that leads to salvation.

—2 Cor. 2:14-16.

When one of Jehovah's Witnesses, a full-time preacher, moved to Mandaguacu, Paraná, there was only one family of Jehovah's Witnesses in the town. The increased proclamation of the good news infuriated the local priest. During Sunday Mass he showed the Witnesses' magazines from the pulpit and warned his parishioners not to listen to the people that preached from house to house. As a result, many persons asked the Witnesses, "Why did the priest do this? What is in the magazines?"

One such family, prominent in the community, was really desirous of knowing. They accepted a Bible study with the Witnesses. A little later, when they began to attend the meetings of the Witnesses, others took courage and were ready to study. The man invited some friends to the meet-

ings. One of them, a staunch Catholic, after seeing the slide talk "A Close Look at the Churches" went straight to the priest. "Look," he said, "I don't want you to deceive me. I want you to tell me the truth. Is God a trinity? Did Jesus die on a cross?" The priest replied: "Do you really want to know the truth? Then go and study with Jehovah's Witnesses. They'll show you the truth." As a result of the Bible interest stirred up in this small town the congregation has grown from four to sixteen active proclaimers of the truth.

PREACHING IN A LEPER COLONY

When Jesus Christ walked on earth he healed diseases of all kinds, including the dreaded leprosy. (Matt. 11:5) Those miracles were but a token of what he will do during his approaching thousand-year reign.—Rev. 21:3, 4.

This sure hope has penetrated the hearts of many in the country's leper colonies, like the one called Colônia Padre Damião, Minas Gerais State. Situated in a rural area surrounded by hills, the settlement has the appearance of a typical small town. At the entrance there are the sanatorium and other buildings for treatment. The colony has a population of about 800 persons, many of whom live a normal family life. Although they are there primarily for treatment, most of them do some work in the colony. Some tend a small plot of land, others make bricks,

and some work in the local bakery or in the hospital. Only in very advanced cases are the patients conspicuous by their deformed faces and hands.

The local congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses is a group of forty-two cheerful members, regularly speaking about the Bible to the others in the colony. An equal number of interested persons, additionally, attend the meetings in their Kingdom Hall. How greatly they value the knowledge that soon there will be no more sickness! (Isa. 33:24; 25:8) Many more are interested, for at one Bible talk 387 attended.

Some, on learning that they have leprosy, fall into a state of abject despair. The good news from the Bible has lifted some up from this depressed condition. One of the patients, a woman, was ready to commit suicide when one of Jehovah's Witnesses visited her and showed her from the Bible the glorious hope for the near future. The word took root in her heart, and now she tells others how to become spiritually well. Then there was the man nicknamed "the terror of the colony." Without hope, his day was filled with fights, troublemaking and immoral conduct. However, he accepted the truth, changed completely and now has a real purpose in life. He is serving as one of the elders of the local congregation, lovingly caring for the spiritual interests of others.

Thus it is clearly evident that wherever a person lives, whatever his background and present station in life, yes, even if under the most unfavorable circumstances of debilitating illness, those who search for truth do not go unrewarded. It is as we read in Acts 17:26, 27: "[God] made out of one man every nation of men, to dwell upon the entire surface of the earth, and he decreed the appointed times and the set limits of the dwelling of men, for them to seek God, if they might grope for him and really find him, although, in fact, he is not far off from each one of us."

IN COMING ISSUES

Shepherds of the Flock Under One Lord.

Keeping a Balanced View of Time.

A Look at Some Miracles of Jesus.

EPHESIANS:

Unity Realized Through Christ

AMONG the Christian congregations that the apostle Paul established on his missionary tours was the one at Ephesus. He preached there on at least two occasions. On the first occasion he came with his coworkers Aquila and Priscilla and his stay was rather brief. (Acts 18: 18-21) But when he returned he stayed much longer, even as he later told the elders of Ephesus: "For [some] three years, night and day, I did not quit admonishing each one with tears." (Acts 20:17-35) These loving labors that Paul bestowed bore fine fruit, for his letter to them does not contain any strong reproofs such as he felt it necessary to give to the congregations in Corinth and Galatia.

That Paul wrote this letter is clear beyond any reasonable doubt. The letter itself contains two references to him as the writer. (Eph. 1:1; 3:1) Also, it is marked by Paul's style of writing. And the testimony of the early 'church fathers' is that Paul wrote this letter. The weight of evidence is that he wrote it specifically to the Christians at Ephesus* while he was in prison in Rome and about the year 61 C.E.

Unity with and through Christ is the theme of this letter, even as can be seen from the fact that there are thirteen references to 'union with Christ' in this letter, more than in any other letter that

Paul wrote. He shows that unity is Jehovah's purpose and tells of the roles that Christ's sacrifice and the 'gifts in men' play to that end. Further, in this letter Paul counsels family members, slaves and masters so that these likewise may have unity among themselves.

GOD'S PURPOSE OF UNITY

In chapter one Paul stresses the union with Jesus Christ that his true followers enjoy as a result of God's undeserved kindness. In particular he calls attention to God's purpose to gather all things in heaven and on earth together again by means of "an administration," an administering of affairs. This unifying activity began at Pentecost when about 120 disciples of Christ received God's holy spirit, and it was extended to Gentiles when Cornelius and his household responded to the preaching of the apostle Peter and were baptized. In modern times the facts show that there has been a 'gathering of all things on earth,' beginning with the bringing together of a "great crowd" of "other sheep." This gathering work will continue until all those in the memorial tombs hear Jesus' voice and come forth.—John 5:28, 29; 10:16; Rev. 7:9.

Continuing, Paul thanks God for these Christians and prays that they may have the spirit of wisdom. His referring to their sense of appreciation or evaluation as their having 'the eyes of their heart enlightened' appropriately points to how God

* Some hold that this is the letter to the Laodicean congregation to which Paul refers at Colossians 4:16. But there is no historical evidence to support such a supposition.

makes them aware of something that has heart appeal. This may move them to be "made new in the force actuating [their] mind." (Eph. 4:23) By such spiritual insight Christians are convinced of the glorious hope that awaits them—made certain by God's mighty power as displayed by raising Jesus from the dead.

In chapter two Paul directs his attention to the Gentile Christians, who quite likely were in the majority there at Ephesus. They once walked according to the ruler of this world (Satan the Devil) and were conducting themselves in line with the desires of their fallen flesh and so did not have God's favor. As uncircumcised Gentiles they were ignorant of and excluded from God's covenant with Abraham. But now they have been brought into union with Jesus Christ. How so? Because Jesus' sacrifice fulfilled the patterns in the Law and put an end to it, the Law having been a barrier between Jew and Gentile. Having become Christians, these Ephesian Gentiles are now fellow citizens and members of God's household. All of this is due to no merit on their part but because of their exercising faith, which faith is a gift of God.

Next, prisoner Paul tells of the stewardship that God entrusted to him. Although less than the least of all the holy ones, he was entrusted with making known the sacred secret that Gentiles may also become partakers of the promises by coming into union with Christ. By means of Jesus Christ they can approach God with full confidence and freeness of speech.

Paul again prays for his Christian brothers, this time asking that God cause them to become strong and firmly established by faith and love upon a sure foundation. In closing this part of his letter he expresses the most encouraging thought that God can do superabundantly more than all we could ask or conceive.

GOD'S "GIFTS" AS AN AID TO UNITY

Paul begins the second half of his letter by counseling Christians to conduct themselves in a befitting manner, with complete humility and mildness. To what purpose? So that all may be united in the bond of peace. Yes, oneness is so important! "One body there is, and one spirit, . . . one hope . . . one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all." (Eph. 4:2-6) A sevenfold oneness! How far removed Christendom is from such oneness!

Continuing, Paul notes that God gave gifts in men, such as apostles, prophets, evangelizers, shepherds and teachers. Why? Again, for the purpose of oneness: "Until we all attain to the *oneness* in the faith and in the accurate knowledge of the Son of God," no longer being babes but becoming spiritually full grown, able to stand firm and united as one body, where each joint and member contributes to the body's well-being and usefulness.—Eph. 4: 11-16.

CHRISTIAN QUALITIES ESSENTIAL TO UNITY

To this end Christians must strip off the old personality with its selfish desires and practices and "put on the new personality which was created according to God's will in true righteousness and loyalty." —Eph. 4:22-24.

For Christian unity to be maintained they must speak truth with one another, not continuing angry with one another, not stealing from one another. Neither are they to use foul language but, rather, are to be saying what is good for building up as the need may be. Far from being angry and screaming at one another, Christians are to be kind, tenderly compassionate, freely forgiving one another, thus becoming imitators of God, who also freely forgives.—Eph. 4:25-32.

Next Paul warns against sexual immorality, which certainly can also act as a divisive force. Christians are to avoid for-

nication, uncleanness, shameful conduct, obscene jesting. Instead of associating with those who practice such things and sharing therein, they are to "keep on making sure of what is acceptable to the Lord" and keep reproofing those who practice such wicked things. Yes, we must 'keep strict watch that how we walk is not as unwise but as wise persons, buying out the opportune time' for fruitful works, 'for the days are wicked.' (Eph. 5:10, 15, 16) Rather than get drunk with alcoholic beverages, Christians should get filled with God's spirit; as an aid toward this it will help if we speak to one another with psalms, praises to God, spiritual songs, making music in our hearts.

SUBJECTION AIDS TO UNITY

Paul next notes the principle of subjection, so essential to Christian unity. All Christians are to be in subjection to one another. Wives are to be in subjection to their husbands. This certainly should not prove irksome, if husbands, as Paul next counsels, love their wives as their own bodies—in fact, even more than themselves, for they are to love their wives as Christ loved the congregation. How much did he love it? So much that he laid down his life for it. Truly where a husband has such love for his wife and his wife is fully in subjection, they will have, as God purposed in the beginning, a oneness together as "one flesh." For Christlike family oneness, children must be obedient to their parents, and fathers must be careful not to irritate their children unduly but to bring them up in the discipline of Jehovah.—Eph. 5:21 to 6:4.

Carrying the principle of oneness into still another sphere of human relations, Paul counsels slaves to be obedient to their masters and to serve them with good inclinations. After all, God will reward right-doing regardless of whether human masters do or not. At the same time, human

masters, in dealing with their slaves, should bear in mind that they have a Master to whom they are accountable, in the heavens.—Eph. 6:5-9.

SPIRITUAL ARMOR ESSENTIAL

Ephesus was a city famous not only for its great temple of Artemis but also for its magical arts. (Acts 19:11-20) Most fittingly, Paul urges Christians to put on the complete suit of armor from God, so as to be able to take a firm stand against "the world rulers of this darkness, against the wicked spirit forces in the heavenly places." (Eph. 6:11-13) Of what does this armor consist? It includes the truth of God's Word and a breastplate of righteousness for the heart. Also, there is the equipment of the good news of peace, the large shield of faith, the hope of salvation as a helmet, and as a weapon the sword of the spirit, which is God's word.—Eph. 6:14-17.

However, together with this complete suit of armor something else is needed. What is that? Prayer, to get help from God. So Paul continues: "While with every form of prayer and supplication you carry on prayer on every occasion in spirit . . . in behalf of all the holy ones." Humbly Paul asks that they also pray for him, that he may speak the good news "with boldness."—Eph. 6:18-20.

In conclusion Paul writes that the beloved brother Tychicus will tell the congregation there at Ephesus how Paul is faring. From this it appears that he brought Paul's letter to them from Rome. And, as Paul does in all his letters, he concludes by praying that they may have God's undeserved kindness.

What an abundance of fine teaching and exhortation regarding oneness for us today the apostle has provided in his letter to the Ephesians! May we become ever more familiar with it, making it our own, and bring our lives more closely in harmony with it!

HOW YOU CAN **STRENGTHEN OTHERS**

"When once you have returned, strengthen your brothers." —Luke 22:32.

THREE is surely a need to be of help to others. At no other time in history have so many people been disheartened by the wretched conditions in the world—the prejudices, the injustices, the poor housing, overcrowding, and so forth. Others feel dejected because of bitter disappointment, ill health, a sense of personal failure, or the suspicion that they are unwanted.

² Servants of God, too, may unexpectedly find themselves very depressed, and may be surprised and confused when they are subject to such feelings. At times Christians have been known to ask in despair: "Why is this happening to me? What have I done? I should be strengthening others, but I cannot strengthen myself. Have I committed the unforgivable sin? Has God abandoned me?"

³ However, such a Christian should not be altogether surprised, as if his feelings were unique. Other servants of God have felt similarly, and were thus in need of strengthening. For example, the Bible psalmist, feeling sad and abandoned, wrote: "I will say to God my crag: 'Why have you forgotten me? Why do I walk sad because of the oppression of the enemy?'" (Ps. 42:9) Elkanah's beloved wife

1, 2. (a) Why is there a special need today to be of help to others? (b) Do servants of God ever get depressed and need strengthening?

3, 4. (a) What examples are there of pre-Christian servants of God who were in need of strengthening aid? (b) What evidence is there that first-century Christians were also in need of strengthening?

Hannah was so disappointed over barrenness and so vexed by a rival wife that "she would weep and not eat."—1 Sam. 1:5-7.

⁴ There were also first-century Christians who were in need of strengthening, causing the apostle Paul to exhort the Thessalonian congregation: "Speak consolingly to the depressed souls, support the weak." (1 Thess. 5:14) Following the death of Jesus Christ, Cleopas and his companion became very depressed. On the road to Emmaus, they "stood still with sad faces" and poured out their disappointment, for they had hoped that Jesus was destined to deliver Israel. And who does not remember how, after denying Christ the third time, Peter "went outside and wept bitterly"? He felt so terrible for having allowed fear of men to cause him to deny his Master.—Luke 24:13-21; 22:62.

⁵ However, Jesus knew beforehand, due to his divine foreknowledge, that Peter was going to deny him. In fact, just a few hours before, Jesus had spoken to Peter about this, saying: "I have made supplication for you that your faith may not give out; and you, when once you have returned, strengthen your brothers." (Luke 22:32) As a result of his terrible experience, Peter fully appreciated how it felt to be depressed, and in need of

5. What command did Jesus give to Peter, and why was it appropriately given to him?

strengthening. How appropriate, therefore, that it was to Peter that Jesus had given the command: "STRENGTHEN YOUR BROTHERS"!

CAN YOU STRENGTHEN OTHERS?

Under the circumstances Jesus' command was meant for Peter. However, it is appropriate for all true Christians. Jesus frequently spoke to one person or just a few, using them as a sounding board, as it were, to convey his instructions to others. On another occasion he told Peter directly, "Shepherd my little sheep." Similar instruction became applicable to the other apostles present, and was repeated for all Christian shepherds. (1 Pet. 5:1, 2; Acts 20:28) And while it was only to his initial followers that Jesus gave the command, "Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations," this command applies to all true Christians.

—John 21:15-17; Matt. 28:19.

So if it is your desire to do so and you yourself are strong, you can strengthen others. Jesus never asks of his followers anything that they cannot accomplish. But what did Jesus mean by the command, "Strengthen your brothers"?

What kind of strengthening did he have in mind that we

6. Why can it be said that this command was also appropriate for all true Christians?

7. What questions are here raised?

Jesus' command to "strengthen your brothers" was meant for all Christians. Do you strengthen others?

should provide our Christian brothers?

⁸ Jesus did not mean, in particular, to provide physical aid which, in the form of food, can strengthen the body. (Acts 9:19) No, but he had in mind that we should provide our brothers with what they need to strengthen them mentally and spiritually. He meant for us to speak or act so as to increase the confidence

8, 9. (a) What did Jesus mean by his command to "strengthen your brothers"? (b) How do the original Greek words translated "strengthen" and "strengthening" verify this?



and hope of fellow Christians, to comfort them, to fix or establish them in the Christian way. The original Greek words that are translated "strengthen" or "strengthening" in the Bible carry this idea.

⁹ For example, when Jesus told Peter to "strengthen your brothers," he used the Greek word *stērizō*, which carries the meaning "to firmly set, to fix firmly, make fast, prop, support." Thus this Greek word is also translated in the *New World Translation* 'make firm.' (Rom. 1:11; 16:25; 2 Thess. 2:17; 1 Pet. 5:10) Other Greek words translated "strengthen" and "strengthening" in the Scriptures convey the meaning "to invigorate, to support or confirm, and to give consolation," as we will see. But first, let us note why Peter came to be in need of spiritual strengthening. Such an examination may help us to avoid making similar mistakes.

PETER'S FAILURE

¹⁰ Turn your attention to the events just prior to Peter's denying of Christ. When Jesus told his apostles during their last evening together prior to his execution, "All of you will be stumbled in connection with me on this night," Peter boasted: "Although all the others are stumbled in connection with you, never will I be stumbled!" (Matt. 26:31-35) According to Luke's record of the proceedings, Jesus warned Peter in the hearing of the other apostles: "Simon, Simon, look! Satan has demanded to have you men to sift you as wheat." But Peter asserted: "Lord, I am ready to go with you both into prison and into death." However, Jesus answered: "I tell you, Peter, A cock will not crow today until you have three times denied knowing me." (Luke 22:31-34) It is interesting to note how Jesus' words were fulfilled that very night.

10. How did Peter reveal that he was overconfident regarding his spiritual strength, but what did Jesus foretell?

¹¹ After a lengthy prayer, Jesus and his apostles left the upper room where they had celebrated the Passover, and went out to the garden of Gethsemane. (John 16:33-18:1) There, before leaving them in order that he might pray privately, Jesus told Peter and two others of his apostles: "Stay here and keep on the watch." But did they? The Bible record says: "He came and found them sleeping." Jesus then turned to Peter and said: "Simon, are you sleeping? Did you not have strength to keep on the watch one hour? Men, keep on the watch and praying, in order that you do not come into temptation."—Mark 14:32-38.

¹² Did Peter and the other apostles obey? The Bible record continues: "He went away again and prayed, saying the same word. And again he came and found them sleeping." They did not listen! Before departing to pray again, Jesus no doubt was even more urgent in his encouragement for them to keep awake and to pray. However, Jesus "came the third time and said to them: 'At such a time as this you are sleeping and taking your rest! It is enough! The hour has come! Look! The Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.'"—Mark 14:39-41.

¹³ Shortly afterward, Peter showed himself to be very much awake. He pulled a sword, and chopped off the ear of Malchus, a slave of the high priest, who was with those coming to arrest Jesus. (John 18:10, 11) Jesus was seized and taken away, and the apostles fled. However, Peter followed at a distance, apparently torn between fear for his own life and his deep concern as to what would happen to Jesus. They came to the high priest's residence, and it was while in the courtyard that Peter, on three different occasions, denied

11, 12. How did Peter and the other apostles repeatedly fail to obey Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane?

13. (a) When Jesus was arrested and taken away, what did Peter do? (b) Under what circumstances was it that Peter denied Christ, and what were Peter's feelings afterward about what he had done?

even knowing Jesus, even wishing that he himself might be cursed or damned if he knew Jesus. At that moment a cock crowed, and Jesus turned and looked upon Peter, and he went outside and wept bitterly.—Luke 22:47-62; Mark 14:71, 72, *The Jerusalem Bible*.

LESSONS WE SHOULD LEARN

¹⁴ Peter had been so sure of his spiritual strength, yet he stumbled, failing to maintain a faithful Christian course. How his experience underscores the importance of the warning: “Let him that thinks he is standing beware that he does not fall”! (1 Cor. 10:12) Yes, a lesson that we should all learn from this is that none of us should ever become overconfident regarding our spiritual strength, believing that there is no possibility that we could fall. We can fall. Peter learned this, and so he later wrote to fellow Christians: “Keep your senses, be watchful. Your adversary, the Devil, walks about like a roaring lion, seeking to devour someone.”

—1 Pet. 5:8.

¹⁵ Another lesson we should learn from what occurred that night is that we all need strengthening aid. While in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus endeavored to provide that needed aid by urging his disciples to pray. They especially needed the help that God can provide. As the apostle Paul said, God “can make you firm,” that is, he can strengthen or firmly set us to withstand any pressures. (Rom. 16:25) Even Jesus Christ needed this strengthening, as shown by what happened out there in the garden while his apostles were sleeping.

¹⁶ Jesus himself, as we have noted, was

14. (a) What Bible warning is underscored by Peter's failure, emphasizing what lesson? (b) What evidence do we have that Peter learned this lesson?

15. (a) What other lesson should we all learn from this? (b) What is the principal source of strengthening aid?

16, 17. (a) What happened while Jesus was praying to God in the garden? (b) How did the angel evidently strengthen Jesus?

praying. The Bible account says that he “bent his knees and began to pray, saying: ‘Father, if you wish, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, let, not my will, but yours take place.’ Then an angel from heaven appeared to him and STRENGTHENED [eniskhúō] HIM.” (Luke 22:41-43) Yes, Jehovah God provided angelic help out there in the garden at that most critical moment in Jesus’ life!

¹⁷ The angel evidently spoke to Jesus, providing information that invigorated him, infusing in him new strength. This is indicated by the Greek word *eniskhúō* here translated “strengthened.” In its only other occurrence in the Bible, at Acts 9:19, the apostle Paul is said to have “gained strength” from eating food. But Jesus, on the other hand, was strengthened, not by physical food, but by the angel’s presence, and no doubt by the angel’s encouraging words. The apostles, however, were sleeping, and thus were in no position to receive such strengthening.

¹⁸ What about you? Are you awake to receive spiritual provisions to strengthen you? Remember, the Bible says: “Man must live, not on bread alone, but on every utterance coming forth through Jehovah’s mouth.” (Matt. 4:4) These strengthening utterances of God are not usually provided by means of an angel, as they were to Jesus. Rather, they are found in God’s Word the Bible, which is regularly reviewed and discussed at Christian meetings of Jehovah’s Witnesses. Are you alert and attentive when present at these meetings? On such occasions are you receiving the spiritual strength you need from what is said? Our very life depends on the strength we derive from this spiritual food.

18. (a) What do we need in order to have spiritual strength, and where can we receive it? (b) What are some good questions to ask ourselves?

HOW PETER REGAINED STRENGTH

¹⁹ By his repeated denials, Peter, in effect, abandoned, not only Jesus, but Jehovah God as well. But Jesus was confident that Peter would return. He knew that Peter basically had a good heart, but had simply been overcome by fear of men. So what did Jesus do? Did he expect Peter to return by himself, without any aid or encouragement?

²⁰ No, Jesus did what he could to help Peter. First, he made supplication in Peter's behalf, praying that his faith might not give out completely. (Luke 22:32) But more than that, some time after his resurrection Jesus made a special appearance to Peter, the disciples excitedly reporting: "For a fact the Lord was raised up and he appeared to Simon!" (Luke 24:34) From what the apostle Paul also said, this was evidently one of Jesus' earlier post-resurrection appearances. (1 Cor. 15:4-8) Why did Jesus give such special attention to Peter, the one who had denied him so vehemently?

²¹ It was to strengthen him, to assure Peter that he still loved him and wanted him as his disciple. Are we not moved by this merciful consideration for Peter? Jesus' action reminds us of the father of the prodigal, who welcomed back with open arms his repentant son. (Luke 15: 11-32) What effect do you think Jesus' action had on Peter? How would you have been affected? Peter was strengthened; he became spiritually stronger than ever. He returned. And do you remember what Jesus wanted the returned Peter, as well as all of us, to do? "STRENGTHEN YOUR BROTHERS," Jesus said. In other words, help firmly to fix or establish them in the faith. How can we do this?

19, 20. (a) By his denials, in what position had Peter placed himself? (b) What action did Jesus take in connection with Peter's return?

21. (a) What was the purpose of Jesus' paying special attention to Peter? (b) How should this affect us?

EXAMPLES TO IMITATE

²² The best way is by following the example of Jesus, imitating the way he treated Peter and others who needed strengthening. And as we can see, Jesus was merciful and forgiving. We can strengthen our brothers, firmly fixing them in the faith, by dealing with them in a similar way. We need to heed the Bible counsel: "Become kind to one another, tenderly compassionate, freely forgiving one another just as God also by Christ freely forgave you."—Eph. 4:32.

²³ Elders in the Christian congregation are particularly responsible to give strengthening aid to their brothers, and so need carefully to examine Jesus' example. He was altogether different from the religious Pharisees who bound "heavy loads and put them upon the shoulders of men." Jesus said, "My yoke is kindly and my load is light." (Matt. 23:4; 11: 28, 30) So, elders, imitate him by not hemming in your brothers with rules that reflect personal views regarding matters, and which could be like "heavy loads" to weaken them. Rather, cultivate in your brothers a genuine appreciation for Jehovah so that they are motivated from the heart to want to please Him. This is what will fix them firmly in the faith.

²⁴ Peter was successful in strengthening his brothers. For instance, his fine example of boldness and fearlessness in preaching in the face of ridicule and opposition was a source of encouragement to them. (Acts 2:14-5:42) How strengthening, too, were his upbuilding letters, the first of which was written "to give encouragement"! (1 Pet. 5:12) Other first-century elders also strengthened their brothers by giving encouragement, the Bible saying of Paul and Barnabas: "They returned to

22. How can we best strengthen our brothers?

23. (a) What should elders in particular note in connection with Jesus' example? (b) How can elders show that they are imitating Jesus' example?

24. (a) How was Peter strengthening to his brothers? (b) How did other Christians strengthen their brothers?

Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to remain in the faith." Also, Judas and Silas "encouraged the brothers with many a discourse and strengthened them." Later Paul "went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the congregations."—Acts 14:21, 22; 15:32, 41.

²⁵ The Greek word *epistērizō* (an enlarged form of *stērizō*) translated "strengthened" and "strengthening" here in Acts carries the thought of confirming or giving support to. Steven Byington's *The Bible in Living English* renders Acts 14:22: "Fortifying the converts' souls." *The Jerusalem Bible* reads: "They put fresh heart into the disciples." You elders will want to imitate this example. By your zealous example in field service, by your fearlessness in the face of opposition, by the encouragement you give and by your stirring discourses, you will fortify your brothers, putting fresh heart into them and making them firm in the faith.

²⁶ But not only elders should strengthen their brothers. Every Christian should endeavor to do the same. How can you? Principally by setting a fine example in your obedience to Jehovah's requirements; for instance, by regularly attending Christian meetings. While there, a mere friendly smile or a cheery greeting can strengthen a depressed brother. Especially upbuilding to others can be your answers given during congregational meetings. If these are spoken from your heart, regardless of how insignificant you may feel they are, they can touch the hearts of your brothers, strengthening them. (Heb. 10:23-25) Also, by being active in preaching the good news of God's kingdom in spite of

such obstacles as bad weather or physical infirmities, you may well encourage others to imitate your good example.

²⁷ Even those firmly fixed in the faith may need strengthening, as was true of Jesus himself. (Luke 22:43) We can follow the example of Aristarchus, Justus and Mark in providing such aid. The apostle Paul, imprisoned in Rome, wrote of them: "These very ones have become a strengthening aid to me." (Col. 4:10, 11) Yes, they were of real assistance to Paul. How? Well, the Greek word *parēgoria*, here translated "strengthening aid," denotes a soothing or solace. "A verbal form of the word signifies medicines which allay irritation," notes *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* by W. E. Vine. So by sticking with Paul, by comforting and encouraging him, these men were a strengthening aid to him.

²⁸ Similarly today, by consoling and comforting those depressed or those undergoing trial, you will prove to be a strengthening aid to them. Just letting them know that you care, that you love them, will build them up. Often a person feels the need of someone to talk to, a friend to whom he can unburden himself. Thus by simply being a sympathetic listener you may be able to strengthen your brothers. Since everyone can benefit from encouragement, would it not be good for us frequently to ask ourselves: "Can I remember to extend at least one loving act to someone today—perhaps a kind word, sympathetic thought to someone who is upset, depressed or needing encouragement?" Yes, how vital it is that we do as the Bible says, "Keep comforting one another and building one another up."

—1 Thess. 5:11.

25. (a) What thought is carried by these words "strengthened" and "strengthening"? (b) So how can modern-day elders strengthen their brothers?

26. How can every member of the Christian congregation strengthen his brothers?

27. How were the apostle Paul's three companions a strengthening aid to him, as indicated by the Greek word here used?

28. In keeping with this Bible example, what are some ways in which we can strengthen our brothers?

STRENGTHEN YOUR BROTHERS NOW!

²⁹ It is especially vital now that we be conscious of strengthening one another. Why so? Because, even as in the first century Peter and the other apostles suddenly were subjected to severe trials, so we today may well face even greater tests of our faith as we draw ever closer to the end of this system of things. Thus it has never been more important that we give strengthening aid to our brothers and receive the same from them. Be conscious, then, of those in the congregation who do well in building up and strengthening others, and copy their example. But particularly, consider the example of Jehovah God and his Son.

³⁰ What stands out when we consider their examples is how unselfish love can

29. Why is it especially vital now that we strengthen our brothers?

30, 31. (a) How do Jehovah God and his Son set such fine examples for us in strengthening others? (b) What should it be your determination to do, and what result can you expect for yourself?

have such a strengthening effect on others. And notice how God takes the initiative in showing his love. In fact, the Bible says: "God recommends his own love to us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:8) Yes, while we were still doing hateful things against God, perhaps even denying his existence and breaking his laws in a most flagrant way, God loved us and made provision for us to enjoy everlasting life. (John 3:16) And his Son acts the same way toward humankind. For example, even while Peter was denying him, Jesus did not cease loving Peter. Later, as we have noted, he made a special post-resurrection appearance to him, which would reassure him of his love.

³¹ So then, be like Jehovah God and his Son. Strengthen your brothers. Love them intensely from the heart. Take the initiative in doing so. As a result, you will, in turn, be loved and strengthened by them. How fine that will be!

How humility *Can Safeguard You*

HAVE you noted the inclination of humans to attach undue importance to themselves? Many have the tendency to be assertive, and to draw attention to themselves by their personal bearing, their speech or their style of living. Their ambitious, overconfident attitude may eventually lead to their ex-

"Gird yourselves with lowliness of mind toward one another, . . . Keep your senses, be watchful." —1 Pet. 5:5-8.

periencing an unpleasant letdown, even as the ancient Bible proverb observes: "Before a crash the heart of a man is lofty." —Prov. 18:12.

1. What inclination do many humans have, and to what can it lead?

² On one occasion when Jesus Christ accepted a Pharisee's invitation to a banquet, he noted that the guests had this lofty heart attitude. The Bible says: "He marked how they were choosing the most prominent places for themselves." (Luke 14:1, 7) So Jesus made use of the occasion to teach a lesson in humility. He gave the guests the following illustration:

³ "When you are invited by someone to a marriage feast, do not lie down in the most prominent place. Perhaps someone more distinguished than you may at the time have been invited by him, and he that invited you and him will come and say to you, 'Let this man have the place.' And then you will start off with shame to occupy the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and recline in the lowest place, that when the man that has invited you comes he will say to you, 'Friend, go on up higher.' Then you will have honor in front of all your fellow guests. *For everyone that exalts himself will be humbled and he that humbles himself will be exalted.*"—Luke 14:8-11.

⁴ In what clear and simple terms Jesus showed how humility can safeguard a person! (Prov. 16:18) But not only can it save you from suffering possible embarrassment before humans, it will save you from the adverse judgment of God, of whom it is said: "God opposes the haughty ones, but he gives undeserved kindness to the humble ones." (Jas. 4:6; Luke 20: 45-47) Jesus indicated God's estimation of self-exalted, self-important ones when, on another occasion, he was speaking to "some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and who considered the rest as nothing." (Luke 18:9) To these persons, he gave an illustration about a Pharisee and a tax collector, explaining:

2, 3. (a) What did Jesus observe while attending a banquet? (b) How did Jesus teach a lesson on humility on that occasion?

4, 5. (a) From what can humility safeguard you? (b) What illustration did Jesus give to persons who trusted in themselves that they were righteous?

⁵ "The Pharisee stood and began to pray these things to himself: 'O God, I thank you I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unrighteous, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week, I give the tenth of all things I acquire.' But the tax collector standing at a distance was not willing even to raise his eyes heavenward, but kept beating his breast, saying: 'O God, be gracious to me a sinner.' I tell you, This man went down to his home proved more righteous than that man; because *everyone that exalts himself will be humbled, but he that humbles himself will be exalted.*"—Luke 18:9-14.

⁶ As we read the Bible, it is remarkable to note how often Jesus encountered persons who thought they were superior to others, and how often he warned such ones about the danger of their I-am-more-important-than-others attitude. Again he did so when speaking to the crowds and his apostles in Jerusalem just a few days before his execution. He said: "Do not you be called Rabbi, for one is your teacher, whereas all you are brothers. . . . Neither be called 'leaders,' for your Leader is one, the Christ. But the greatest one among you must be your minister. *Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.*" (Matt. 23:1-12) But for whose benefit particularly did Jesus again emphasize the need of humility? Whom was he especially trying to help and safeguard?

ATTITUDE OF THE APOSTLES

⁷ It is important to note that, due to inherited imperfections, humans are inclined to be selfish and to think more of themselves than they ought to think. (Ps. 51:5; Rom. 12:3) In addition, the world tries to cultivate in us the view that our

6. (a) What attitude did Jesus frequently encounter? (b) What questions does this raise?

7. Why should it not be surprising that people are inclined to be proud and to seek prominence?

family, race or nationality is better than that of others. It also encourages us to try to get ahead, and to outshine others, regardless of the methods used. So it should not be surprising that people are disposed to seek position and prestige. Oh, persons may deny such a quest. "I don't want power," they may say. But what do their actions show? Did Peter, James, John or any of the other apostles, for example, manifest a desire to have a position of prominence? Well, what happened one day when, together with Jesus, they were traveling home to Capernaum?

⁹This is how Mark recorded what occurred: "Now when [Jesus] was inside the house he put the question to them: 'What were you arguing over on the road?' They kept silent, for on the road *they had argued among themselves who is greater.*" Luke also recorded this incident, but evidently neither he nor Mark was present. (Mark 9:33-37; Luke 9:46-48) However, the apostle Matthew was there, and no doubt he was put to shame because of his having taken part in the argument. Though Matthew omits mentioning the argument, he describes how Jesus, on that occasion, taught them a lesson in humility, explaining:

⁹"So, calling a young child to him, he set it in their midst and said: 'Truly I say to you, Unless you turn around and become as young children, you will by no means enter into the kingdom of the heavens. Therefore, *whoever will humble himself like this young child is the one that is the greatest in the kingdom of the heavens.*'" (Matt. 18:2-4) What a fine way to impress upon his disciples the value of humility! Little children naturally look up to their elders and consider them superior. The apostles needed to

8, 9. (a) What argument did Jesus' apostles get into on the road to Capernaum? (b) How did Jesus on that occasion teach his apostles that they had a wrong attitude?

turn around and become like that. Did they? Did their attitude change?

¹⁰It was not long afterward that the apostles accompanied Jesus to Jerusalem for the eventful final week of his life. On their way to the city, Mark records what happened: "James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, stepped up to him and said to him: 'Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever it is we ask you for.' He said to them: 'What do you want me to do for you?' They said to him: 'Grant us to sit down, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.'" Perhaps this request reminds you of the dinner guests at the banquet who were choosing the best seats for themselves. "Well, when the ten others heard about it, they started to be indignant at James and John." The other apostles did not approve of this behind-the-back attempt of James and John to secure a superior position in Christ's government.—Mark 10:35-41.

¹¹James and John, as well as the rest of the apostles, were viewing matters from an erroneous worldly standpoint. Perhaps they thought back to when Israelite kings of the Davidic line ruled hundreds of years before. They may have assumed that the Messianic king Jesus Christ also would have an earthly government with men of high position and rank. They perhaps had personal ambitions to serve in such high official capacities. In any case, they had not learned the lesson in humility. Therefore Jesus tried to straighten out their thinking, telling them: "You know that those who appear to be ruling the nations lord it over them and their great ones wield authority over them. This is not the way among you; but *whoever wants to become great among you must be your minister, and whoever*

10. Later, what request did James and John make of Jesus, and what was the reaction of the other ten apostles?

11. (a) What wrong viewpoint did the apostles have? (b) How did Jesus try to straighten out their thinking?

wants to be first among you must be the slave of all.”—Mark 10:42-44; Matt. 20: 20-28.

¹² In view of this thinking of Jesus' apostles, we can be sure that he particularly had them in mind when he told the people in Jerusalem a few days later that they should be humble, and not set themselves up as ‘teachers’ or ‘leaders.’ (Matt. 23:8-12) Because of the apostles’ repeated bickering, Jesus may have determined to emphasize even more strongly their need of humility. The opportunity presented itself two days later when the twelve gathered in an upper room in Jerusalem to celebrate their last Passover together.

¹³ As the apostles were not guests, but merely had the use of the room, no servants were there to wash their feet. In Eastern lands, where people generally wore sandals or went barefooted, it was an act of hospitality on the part of the host to have the feet of visitors washed when they entered his house. The task was generally assigned to the lowest servant of the household. Thus, the young woman Abigail showed true humility when she addressed the servants of David: “Here is your slave girl as a maid-servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord.” (1 Sam. 25:41; Luke 7:44; 1 Tim. 5:10) The apostles, therefore, had a fine opportunity humbly to provide this needful service, but apparently the spirit of rivalry was so strong in their hearts that not one of them volunteered. As a result, they proceeded to eat the meal, contrary to custom, with unwashed feet.

¹⁴ The apostle John recorded what then occurred: Jesus “got up from the evening

12. Whom did Jesus particularly have in mind when he urged the people to be humble and not to be called ‘leader’?

13. (a) In Eastern lands, how did a host customarily show his guests hospitality? (b) So, what opportunity did this give the apostles when they assembled for their last Passover together?

14, 15. (a) What meaningful service did Jesus perform for his apostles? (b) What lesson was Jesus thereby inculcating, but what shows whether the apostles then got the point of it?

meal and laid aside his outer garments. And, taking a towel, he girded himself. After that he put water into a basin and started to wash the feet of the disciples and to dry them off with the towel with which he was girded. . . . When, now, he had washed their feet and had put his outer garments on and laid himself down at the table again, he said to them: ‘Do you know what I have done to you? You address me, “Teacher,” and, “Lord,” and you speak rightly, for I am such. Therefore, if I, although Lord and Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash the feet of one another.’”—John 13:1-14.

¹⁵ What a fine way to instruct his apostles in humility! You would think that they would have gotten the point. He was teaching them an attitude of mind—one of humility, one that would make them disposed to perform the lowliest of tasks in behalf of others. Yet what happened? As the evening progressed, Luke explains: “*There also arose a heated dispute among them over which one of them seemed to be greatest.*” (Luke 22:24) Can you imagine that! After all these efforts of Jesus to teach them humility, they still did not get out of their mind the idea of rank, and of some having positions superior to others. Their whole culture, dominated by the proud Pharisees and Sadducees, evidently had contributed to warping their attitude so much that they could not appreciate that all of them were brothers, equal in station.

¹⁶ Jesus’ references to God’s kingdom that night doubtless laid the basis for this argument about who seemed to be greatest. (Luke 22:16-18) It is truly an outstanding evidence of Jesus’ patience and forbearance that he did not get angry with his apostles and strongly reprimand them for their selfish desire for distinction, and

16. (a) What comments of Jesus doubtless laid the basis for the argument? (b) How did Jesus patiently continue to try to help his apostles?

to have the most prominent places with him in his Kingdom glory. Rather, he again patiently told them, no doubt with an appealing tone to his voice: "The kings of the nations lord it over them, and those having authority over them are called Benefactors. *You, though, are not to be that way.* But let him that is the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the one acting as chief as the one ministering."—Luke 22:25-27.

VITAL TO LEARN THE LESSON

¹⁷ It was so vital that they learn this lesson of humility. Their very lives were at stake, as well as the lives of the Christian flock. How so? Well, consider to what their attitude contributed that night. Jesus warned them: "All of you will be stumbled in connection with me." But the apostles protested that this would never happen. They felt ready for any eventuality, and so each said: 'Even if we should die, we will never disown you.' And in Peter's retort, we catch a strong hint of the rivalry that existed among them: "Although *all the others* are stumbled in connection with you, never will *I* be stumbled!"—Matt. 26:31-35.

¹⁸ Well, we recall what happened. All the apostles failed their Master miserably. They were inattentive, neglecting to listen to his repeated instructions. And finally they fled in fear, leaving Jesus to face the mob that came to arrest him. And Peter denied three different times even knowing his Master! Peter had, in effect, said: 'All the others may have weaknesses in their faith, but not I—I will never fail you, Lord.' But his overconfident, I-am-more-faithful-than-they-are attitude contributed to a terrible crash for Peter. How vital it

17, 18. (a) Why was it vital that the apostles learn humility? (b) The overconfident attitude of the apostles contributed that night to what?

is to learn humility! Did the apostles eventually learn?

¹⁹ Yes, they did. Jesus' loving patience with them was richly rewarded. An evidence of this is the forthright, honest way in which they recorded Jesus' teachings on humility. We can just imagine how badly they must have felt when they thought back on how they had acted. Nevertheless, they wanted others to benefit from their mistakes and particularly from the fine instruction that Jesus provided them. Further evidence that they learned the lesson well is their own counsel encouraging humility. For example, the apostle Peter later wrote: "All of you be like-minded . . . *humble in mind.*"—1 Pet. 3:8.

²⁰ Still other evidence that they finally learned humility is found in the Bible book of Acts. From reading it we can see how the apostles worked together in unity to build up the Christian congregation. None of them ambitiously sought prominence or prestige, nor did any act as though he were chief among them, trying to make his word law. Rather, evidently a *body of men*, including even other elders besides the apostles, decided on important matters affecting the Christian congregation. The disciple James, half brother of Jesus, who was not an apostle, apparently presided when the decision was made regarding circumcision. (Acts 15:6-29; 12:1, 2) This suggests that there may have been a rotation of presiding elders, with one acting as chairman on one occasion and another at another time. A spirit of true humility developed among the apostles.

THE LESSON EMPHASIZED—WHY?

²¹ The apostle Peter, years later, felt the need to emphasize the importance of

19, 20. (a) What evidence is there that the apostles learned humility? (b) How, evidently, was the early Christian congregation presided over, and what does this indicate as to the attitude of the apostles?

21. How did the apostle Peter emphasize the importance of humility?

humility, and did so in the first of his inspired letters preserved in the Bible canon. In chapter four he mentions the sufferings that Christians can expect to undergo for their faithfulness to God, and then says: "Therefore, to the older men among you I give this exhortation . . . Shepherd the flock of God in your care, not under compulsion, but willingly . . . neither as lording it over those who are God's inheritance, but becoming examples to the flock. . . . But all of you gird yourselves with lowliness of mind toward one another, because God opposes the haughty ones, but he gives undeserved kindness to the humble ones. Humble yourselves, therefore . . . Keep your senses, be watchful. Your adversary, the Devil, walks about like a roaring lion, seeking to devour someone."—1 Pet. 5:1-8.

²² Why did Peter, after mentioning the sufferings of Christians, say, "*Therefore, to the older men among you I give this exhortation*"? It is for the reason that if elders lack humility, this attitude can add to the suffering and burdens under which Christian brothers may already be laboring. But the humble attitude of elders is refreshing, and makes it easier for brothers to show endurance. (Isa. 32:1, 2) So Peter admonishes elders 'not to lord it over those who are God's inheritance, but to become examples to the flock.'

²³ Evidently Peter recalled Jesus' comments about worldly rulers who "lord it over them," and who "wield authority over them," and that he said: "You, though, are not to be that way." (Mark 10:42-44; Luke 22:25-27) No, Christian elders should not be like the proud Phari-

22. Why, after mentioning the sufferings of Christians, did Peter use the word "therefore" in prefacing his exhortation to elders?

23. (a) What comments of Jesus may have influenced Peter to exhort elders not to lord it over the flock? (b) With what quality should elders be girded, and with what results?

sees who told others what to do, but then were unwilling to lift one finger to do these things themselves. (Matt. 23:3, 4) Rather, they should set the example; they themselves should be willing to do whatever they ask others to do. They should, along with all other Christians, 'gird themselves with lowliness of mind.' In keeping with the meaning of the Greek word *enkombōomai*, translated at 1 Peter 5:5 "gird yourselves," they should securely 'tie upon themselves as by knots' this humility. As a result, they will never consider themselves above menial tasks, such as cleaning the Kingdom Hall, or above sharing in all features of the Christian congregation's preaching activities.

²⁴ At the same time, those who gird themselves with humility will not arrogate special comforts or privileges to themselves, as though they deserve better things than those received by others. At Christian assemblies, for instance, could it not be, in effect, lording it over their brothers if elders secure for themselves special meals and the best work assignments, while allocating to their brothers what is inferior? Or would it be setting the example for the flock if they went to the head of the cafeteria line and obtained their meals ahead of those who had been waiting longer? True, there may be emergencies, due to urgent work assignments, when it may be necessary to go to the head of the cafeteria line or to eat at a different time or place than others do. Yet these are matters to think about seriously. Why?

²⁵ For one reason, when a person receives authority, he may especially be inclined to think that he is a better, more deserving person than others. But is he?

24. In what ways might elders lord it over the flock?

25. (a) Are those with special abilities or privileges of service superior persons? (b) What counsel, then, is it vital for Christians to heed?

He may have certain abilities that qualify him as a Christian elder and to handle an assembly operation, but these abilities do not make him a superior person. (1 Tim. 3:1-7) Jehovah God does not consider the elder, or any other human with special abilities, to be superior to his brothers. How vital it is, therefore, that the person should be heeding God's counsel to exhibit "*lowliness of mind considering that the others are superior*"! (Phil. 2:3) This humble frame of mind will safeguard a Christian from the terrible crash that pride can bring.—Prov. 16:18; 18:12.

²⁶ Also, this humble attitude of the Christian elder will protect the flock. The "sheep" can easily be stumbled and turned away from the Christian congregation if the elders arrogate to themselves special privileges, seek prestige or prominence, or in other ways show a proud, haughty spirit. God's Word urges: "In showing honor to one another take the lead." (Rom. 12:10) But if the flock see the elders, who are supposed to serve as examples, honoring themselves with the best of things and acting in a high-handed, arrogant way, how will the flock be affected? They are bound to be hurt. The sufferings that they endure because of being Christians will be increased, and this could lead to disaster.

26. How can lack of humility on the part of the elders endanger the flock?

²⁷ Is it any wonder, then, that the apostle Peter warned: "Keep your senses, be watchful. Your adversary, the Devil, walks about like a roaring lion, seeking to devour someone"? If a Christian elder cultivates a proud, haughty spirit, he may open the way for the Devil to succeed in devouring him, and also members of the flock. So elders, seek to avoid even the appearance of being high-minded or superior. Gird yourselves with humility. Be approachable, kind, tender and compassionate, as when a nursing mother cherishes her own children. (Eph. 4:32; 1 Thess. 2:7, 8) Always look to the example and teachings of Jesus Christ, and do your best to imitate him.—Phil. 2:5-8.

²⁸ Just think how fine it will be when all persons living exhibit lowliness of mind and consider that others are superior to them. What refreshment and peace there will be! Even now, within the Christian congregation, we are receiving a foretaste of this blessing of being associated with humble, unselfish men, women and children. Are we not encouraged, then, to gird ourselves with humility? It can safeguard us, preventing us from being devoured by the Devil, and assist us to survive the "great tribulation" and to live eternally in God's fast-approaching righteous new order.—Ps. 133:1-3; Rev. 7:9-14.

27. How can elders keep their senses and keep the Devil from devouring them and the flock?

28. What fine prospect is there for the future, and where do we get a foretaste of this?

'Unfit to Take Off Messiah's Sandals'

With reference to the Messiah, John the Baptist said: "The one coming after me is stronger than I am, whose sandals I am not fit to take off." (Matt. 3:11) In the first century C.E., it was common for people to take off their sandals upon entering a home and then to put them back on when leaving. The service of taking off a person's sandals was viewed as very menial, to be performed by the lowest slave. Therefore, in saying what he did, John expressed great humility, representing himself as unworthy of being even a slave of the Messiah.

TYRE

-A TREACHEROUS CITY

FEW cities of the ancient world were as treacherous as Tyre. The cities of Israel's neighbors did not claim any friendly relations toward those who worshiped Jehovah God. At least for a time, Tyre, however, was very different.

Hiram the king of Tyre, for example, enjoyed friendly relations with the Judean kings David and Solomon. He assisted Solomon with materials and manpower in building the magnificent temple to Jehovah at Jerusalem. (1 Ki. 5:2-6; 2 Chron. 2:3-10) Later, Hiram and Solomon shared in an extensive shipping enterprise. At Ezion-geber on the Gulf of Aqabah, Solomon had built a fleet of ships. These ships were then jointly manned by servants of Solomon and skilled seamen sent by Hiram.—1 Ki. 9:26-28.

But friendly relations between Tyre and God's covenant people Israel did not continue. Treacherously, Tyre eventually allied herself with Israel's enemies. The inspired psalmist wrote: "Against your [God's] people they plot craftily; they conspire against those whom you protect. They say, 'Come, let us destroy their nation; let the name of Israel be remembered no more!' Yes, they consult together with one mind, and against you they are allied: The tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites, Moab and the people of Hagar, Gebal and Ammon and Amalek, Philistia

with the inhabitants of Tyre."—Ps. 83:4-8, *New American Bible*.

The treachery of Tyre went to the point where her slave markets were selling Israelites to the Greeks and the Edomites. There being no Scriptural reference to any direct warfare between Tyre and Israel, those sold may have been taken as captives by other peoples, thereafter coming into the hands of Tyrian slave traders. Or, it may be that the Tyrians made slaves of fleeing Israelites who sought refuge in Tyre and its vicinity.

On account of Tyre's treachery, Jehovah, by means of his prophets, declared calamity for the city and her inhabitants. We read: "I shall pay back your treatment upon your heads. Because . . . the sons of Judah and the sons of Jerusalem you have sold to the sons of the Greeks." (Joel 3:4-6) "This is what Jehovah has said, 'On account of three revolts of Tyre, and on account of four, I shall not turn it back, on account of their handing over a complete body of exiles to Edom, and because they did not remember the covenant of brothers. And I will send a fire onto the wall of Tyre, and it must devour her dwelling towers.'" (Amos 1:9, 10) These prophetic words were progressively fulfilled with the passing of centuries.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S SIEGE

Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar began the siege of Tyre sometime after destroying Jerusalem and her glorious temple. According to the first-century Jewish historian Josephus, the siege dragged on for thirteen years. During the long, exhaust-

ing siege, the heads of the soldiers were "made bald" from the chafing of their helmets, and their shoulders were "rubbed bare" from carrying materials used in constructing siegeworks. Yet, despite all this effort, Ezekiel 29:18 reports: "As for wages, there proved to be none for [Nebuchadnezzar] and his military force from Tyre for the service that he had performed against her."

Secular history gives no indication as to how thorough or effective the Babylonian siege proved to be. From the prophetic description contained in the book of Ezekiel, however, we learn that the Tyrians sustained great loss in lives and property. (Ezek. 26:7-12) Evidently, then, the Babylonians received 'no wages' for their strenuous efforts in that they did not get what they had hoped to receive. Whatever spoils they took must have fallen far short of their expectations. This may have been because only the mainland city suffered calamity, whereas the island city, a short distance off the coast, escaped.

The indications are that Tyre recovered from the blow meted out to her by the Babylonians. When the Israelites returned to Judah and Jerusalem from Babylonian exile, the Tyrians supplied cedar timber from Lebanon for rebuilding the temple of Jehovah at Jerusalem. (Ezra 3:7) Years later, in the time of Nehemiah, Tyrian traders lived in Jerusalem and sold fish and a great variety of other merchandise in the city.—Neh. 13:16.

ALEXANDER THE GREAT'S SIEGE

But the prophetic word directed against Tyre was not dead. The city was yet to be stripped of all her glory. Emphasizing that Tyre had not experienced the final fulfillment of the prophecies directed against her, Jehovah God moved his prophet Zechariah to declare: "Jehovah

himself will dispossess [Tyre], and into the sea he will certainly strike down her military force; and in the fire she herself will be devoured." (Zech. 9:4) This and earlier prophecies witnessed a startling fulfillment in the year 332 B.C.E.

It was then that Alexander the Great of Macedonia, invading the Middle East, demanded that the cities of Phoenicia, including Tyre, submit to him. While the other cities gave their allegiance to Alexander, Tyre refused to open her gates to him. At the time the city was located on an island about half a mile (0.8 kilometer) from the mainland and protected by massive fortifications. The portion of the wall facing the mainland reached a height of not less than 150 feet (46 meters).

Faced with Tyre's stubborn refusal to submit to him, Alexander began his siege of the city. Having no fleet, he ordered that old mainland Tyre be torn down and the debris used for building a mole or causeway to the island city. At the farther end of the causeway, measuring some 200 feet (61 meters) in width, he set up war engines and erected towers. Using fire ships, the Tyrians managed to destroy these towers and also damaged the mole. Undaunted, Alexander had the towers rebuilt and widened the mole. Realizing that he could not attain certain success without ships, Alexander got together a tremendous fleet from Sidon, Rhodes, Mallus, Soli, Lycia, Macedonia and Cyprus. Thus the inhabitants of Tyre lost free access to the sea. The fall of the city was sure.

Not wanting to drag out the siege, Alexander ordered the construction of floating siege equipment on which battering rams were mounted. His forces then pushed their way into Tyre's two harbors and scaled her fortifications.

After having been besieged for seven months, Tyre fell. Confronted with des-

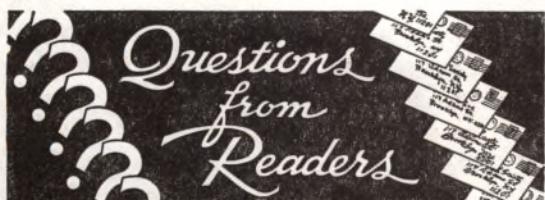
perate resistance even after the city was taken, Alexander's men put Tyre to the flames. Besides the 8,000 Tyrians who were slaughtered in battle, 2,000 were later killed as a reprisal, and 30,000 were sold into slavery.

END OF TYRE'S GLORY

While Tyre experienced a number of revivals thereafter, Bible prophecy was fulfilled upon her. Today the former glory of Tyre is no more. Ruins and a small seaport, called Souro, mark the site. Regarding the place, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1971) notes that it "is of no particular significance; it had an estimated population of 16,483 in 1961." (Vol. 22, p. 452) Thus the history of Tyre to the present day testifies to the correctness of the prophetic word:

"I [Jehovah] am against you, O Tyre, and I will bring up against you many nations, just as the sea brings up its waves. And they will certainly bring the walls of Tyre to ruin and tear down her towers, and I will scrape her dust away from her and make her a shining, bare surface of a crag. A drying yard for dragnets is what she will become in the midst of the sea."—Ezek. 26:3-5.

The fate of Tyre clearly demonstrates that Jehovah God does not view treacherous action lightly. This should impress upon us the importance of knowing God's will and sticking loyally to him. Just as he will not leave treachery unpunished, so, too, he will not fail to reward his loyal servants. "God is not unrighteous," wrote the apostle Paul to fellow believers, "so as to forget your work and the love you showed for his name."—Heb. 6:10.



- If some anointed Christians survive into the New Order, will they grow old and die, or how will their earthly life end?

Frankly, the Bible does not say. In whatever way it is to occur, the earthly life of these spirit-anointed Christians will have to come to an end so that they may receive their reward of life in heaven.—1 Cor. 15:35-38.

Jesus' illustration of the wheat and the weeds shows that some "sons of the kingdom" will be alive on earth at the 'conclusion of the system of things.' (Matt. 13:24-30, 37-43) Also, certain Biblical patterns suggest that some of these anointed ones may survive the destructive "great tribulation." (Matt. 24:21) Consider a few of these patterns.

Ezekiel chapter 9 describes a "man" with a secretary's inkhorn who was to "mark" indi-

viduals who were to survive Jerusalem's destruction in 607 B.C.E. It is understood that this represents in our time the marking work in which the collective body of anointed "sons of the kingdom" are taking the lead. Ezekiel's account indicates that it was after the executional work in Jerusalem was done that the "man" who completed the marking turned in his report to Jehovah. That suggests that some of the anointed class will survive on earth the executional work to come upon this generation. (Ezek. 9:4, 8, 11) A related indication of this same thing is the fact that the prophet Ezekiel himself kept on living in Babylonia after the destruction of ancient Jerusalem.

Additionally, Noah's wife (who pictures the class of anointed ones espoused to the Greater Noah, Jesus) survived the flood. (Matt. 24:37-42; Eph. 5:25-30) Consider also Elisha, who lived through the destructive work carried out by Jehu, as the remnant of the anointed today hope to survive the destructive work of the Greater Jehu, Jesus Christ. (See "New Heavens and a New Earth," pages 95 and 321, and "Let Your Name Be Sanctified," pages 351-365.) Consequently, the remnant of

anointed Christians may live on earth beyond the end of this wicked system of things to complete their preaching and teaching to the earthly generation, perhaps even to some of the resurrected ones.—Ps. 71:18; 91:16.

If this understanding is correct, the anointed Christians on earth in the New Order will have to come to an end of their earthly life to take their place in the "heavenly kingdom."—2 Tim. 4:18.

Many Christians feel that it would be unlikely for such anointed ones in the New Order to continue to age and finally die as do many persons today. Those reasoning this way think it would be inappropriate for this to occur to Christ's spiritual brothers at a time when surviving mankind is advancing toward bodily perfection. So they have wondered whether God might miraculously cut short the earthly lives of the anointed ones, as he evidently did with Enoch so that Enoch did not experience any pangs of death. (Gen. 5:24; Heb. 11:5) God, of course, could do that. But there simply is no

clear-cut Scriptural statement that this is how things will occur. Nor does the Bible suggest any other answer to the question.

Consequently, we must trust in God. There is no point in speculating as to details. If Jehovah felt that such information was necessary, he certainly could have included it in his Word. Yet he did not. Whenever and in whatever way the anointed ones end their earthly life, they will instantly be resurrected with an immortal spirit body. That will be a victory over death. (1 Cor. 15:51-57) They will thus be able to join the rest of the "bride" of Christ, reigning with him in his rulership of one thousand years.—Rev. 20:6.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

July 18: How You Can Strengthen Others. Page 368. Songs to Be Used: 63, 66.

July 25: How Humility Can Safeguard You. Page 374. Songs to Be Used: 42, 106.



• If some nations Christians turn into the
New Order, will they stop being able to work
with others unless they turn into the

Fathers like the Bible does not say. In most cases
they are not of course the exception. This is because
of the fact that they may receive their reward

in life in heaven.—1 Cor. 15:32-33.

Jesus' illustration of the parable
means towards first some to the kingdom."

Will ed this no easily to the organization of the
governor of judges. (Matt. 18:31-30, 31-33) And,

Jesus' parable teaches that some of
these nations are not ready to receive the designation

"Master dispenses". (Matt. 31:31) Consider a
well to these batters.

Evening papers & dealers a "new" with a
secretary, important who was of "many" indi-