

The

THE WATCHTOWER

JEHOVAH OUR GOD

-RIGHTEOUS AND JUST

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

*Generosity
is Rewarding*

JUNE 1, 1976

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

The WATCHTOWER

June 1, 1976
Vol. 97, Number 11

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.

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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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GENEROSITY

Is Rewarding

"THE generous soul will itself be made fat," is the assurance the Bible gives. (Prov. 11:25) The person practicing true generosity does not have to fear that he will thereby come to experience want.

To believe that this is so, however, takes faith. The Bible, in fact, associates generosity with faith. At James 2:14-17 we read: "Of what benefit is it, my brothers, if a certain one says he has faith but he does not have works? That faith cannot save him, can it? If a brother or a sister is in a naked state and lacking the food sufficient for the day, yet a certain one of you says to them: 'Go in peace, keep warm and well fed,' but you do not give them the necessities for their body, of what benefit is it? Thus, too, faith, if it does not have works, is dead in itself."

Now a person could reason, 'If I give generously of my belongings to help needy brothers and sisters, I may not have anything on which to fall back should I experience financial reverses. In that case, who would help me?' Such thinking could restrain a person from being generous with his assets. So it definitely takes faith to believe that generous giving will not injure one's security at some later time. Yes, it takes faith to believe that, should we ever come to be in real need, God's spirit operating upon the minds and hearts of fellow believers will move them to come to our aid.

Besides faith, a person must have the right motivation in showing generosity.

If, for example, he lacked love, his giving would have no value in the eyes of God. The apostle Paul made a strong point on this when he wrote: "If I give all my belongings to feed others, and if I hand over my body, that I may boast, but do not have love, I am not profited at all."—1 Cor. 13:3.

Those who give in order to receive plaudits of men may gain the flattering praises that they are seeking. But for them, giving brings no other reward. Jesus Christ made this plain when counseling against such giving. He said: "When you go making gifts of mercy, do not blow a trumpet ahead of you, just as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be glorified by men. Truly I say to you, They are having their reward in full. But you, when making gifts of mercy, do not let your left hand know what your right is doing, that your gifts of mercy may be in secret; then your Father who is looking on in secret will repay you."—Matt. 6:2-4.

There is no merit in anyone's giving of his time, assets and talents simply to impress others or to gain some personal advantage. Christian generosity should be totally unselfish. Jesus Christ stated: "If you lend without interest to those from whom you hope to receive, of what credit is it to you? Even sinners lend without interest to sinners that they may get back as much. To the contrary, continue . . . to lend without interest, not hoping for anything back; and your reward will be

great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind toward the unthankful and wicked.”—Luke 6:34, 35.

Those who heard Jesus' words were people obligated to observe the Mosaic law, which already commanded making interest-free loans to needy fellow countrymen. (Ex. 22:25) So even for one having a bad reputation, a ‘sinner,’ to make a loan without interest to someone able to make repayment, would not have been anything especially remarkable. Such lending by the ‘sinner’ might even be done with the intent of gaining some future favor from the borrower. The kind of generosity that Jesus Christ was encouraging, however, went beyond what a known ‘sinner’ might do. It called for imitating Jehovah’s generosity, a generosity that remarkably extends even to thankless, unappreciative persons. Accordingly, devoted followers of Jesus Christ should be willing to come to the aid of truly needy ones whose economic circumstances are such that they might never be able to make repayment. That indeed requires love and faith.

When giving is not properly motivated and faith is lacking, a person could become guilty of very serious sin. This is illustrated in the cases of Ananias and Sapphira. They saw how others voluntarily sold their possessions and put the proceeds at the disposal of the apostles, to be used for helping needy fellow believers. Evidently Ananias and Sapphira sought the praise of others for being generous. But they lacked faith in God's care. Though under no obligation to do so, they sold a field and then agreed to contribute only a part of the money received. However, they lyingly tried to make themselves appear more generous than they actually were by pretending that they were contributing the whole amount. Through the apostle Peter, God himself exposed their deliberate deceit and pronounced upon

them the judgment of death.—Acts 5: 1-11.

So, then, for expressions of generosity to be favorably looked upon by Jehovah they must be genuine. Jehovah will reward generous persons, blessing them and strengthening them to come through difficult times without losing their spiritual lives. Jehovah will not abandon his generous servants, leaving them in desperate straits. Though they may temporarily experience hard times, even a series of economic reverses, they will not succumb to despair and hopelessness. A Bible proverb says: “The righteous one may fall even seven times, and he will certainly get up.” (Prov. 24:16) The psalmist expressed his confidence as follows: “In God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me?”—Ps. 56:4.

Furthermore, when others see a very generous person come into real need, they will be far more inclined to help him than one who has been close-fisted. As to the Christian congregation, God’s spirit operating on the minds and hearts of those associated moves them to come to the aid of needy fellow believers. Thus, through fellow believers, Jehovah God rewards acts of generosity.

True generosity is really an expression of love. And there are times when love calls for restraint in generosity. For example, some people are irresponsible, lazy and unwilling to accept work although jobs that they could do are available. It would be to their injury if they were permitted to take advantage of others’ generosity. In the case of such persons, the Bible rule should apply: “If anyone does not want to work, neither let him eat.”—2 Thess. 3: 10.

Circumstances also can limit the extent to which a person can give to others. The responsibility to care for family members, for instance, comes first. That is why it would be wrong for a father to give to

others in a way that hinders his providing properly for his family.—1 Tim. 5:8.

Nevertheless, even the person who has little materially can be generous. He may have opportunities to spend time with those who are lonely. He may be able to encourage them by word. Or, he might be able to share with others in some upbuilding activity, even by simply taking a walk in a park or forest. Then, too, a person could give of his physical strength in doing personal, helpful things for others.

So while a person may have limitations, he can still enjoy the wholesome effect of being a "cheerful giver." (2 Cor. 9:7) If

he is generous with whatever he has and uses discernment when giving to others, he will be rewarded with an inward joy and satisfaction. He will be content, knowing that he has acted in harmony with God's will. Therefore, he can rest assured that he will continue to experience God's blessing, guidance and care.

Yes, when we are deeply concerned about the welfare of others, we will be moved to respond to their needs, generously giving of our time, strength and possessions. So doing, we will continue to experience rich rewards as God's approved servants.

GLORY—WHAT IS IT? HOW DOES IT AFFECT HUMANS?

WHEN you hear the words "glory," "glorious," or related terms, what thoughts come to mind? This matter should interest Bible students, for forms of the word "glory" occur more than 450 times in the Holy Bible. What does glory mean?

The Bible refers to glory in several different ways. In the Hebrew Scriptures the original language word most often translated glory is *ka-bhodh'*. Its basic meaning is "weight, burden." Thus, someone's glory may refer to material possessions, since these make the individual seem weighty or impressive.

GOD'S GLORY

Frequently the Bible mentions glory in connection with God. As to its meaning in these cases the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* states: "If in relation to man *ka-bhodh'* denotes that which makes him impressive and demands recognition, whether in terms of material possessions or striking [dignity or importance], in relation to God it implies that which makes God impressive to man."

In this sense the vast array of heavenly bodies in our universe is "declaring the glory of God." (Ps. 19:1) Fearsome manifestations that included "a devouring fire"

were evidence of "Jehovah's glory" on Mount Sinai at the time of giving the Mosaic law. (Ex. 24:16-18) The Scriptures state, too, that "Christ was raised up from the dead *through the glory* [do'xa, Greek equivalent of *ka-bhodh'*] of the Father." (Rom. 6:4) In all these cases glory means an impressive evidence of God's almighty power.

Another meaning of glory appears at Luke 2:9: "And suddenly Jehovah's angel stood by them, and Jehovah's glory gleamed around them, and they became very fearful." In this case glory means "brightness," "splendor." In the same vein the Bible speaks of the glory of the sun, the moon and the stars.—1 Cor. 15:40, 41.

GLORY AND JESUS CHRIST

The Word of God mentions glory many times in connection with Jesus Christ. Regarding Jesus' first miracle, the Bible states that "he made his glory manifest." (John 2:11) The glory in this case was an evidence of miraculous power identifying Jesus as the promised Messiah.

Jesus used the term in another sense when he prayed to God: "So now you, Father, glorify me alongside yourself with the glory that I had alongside you before the world was." (John 17:5) Here Jesus refers to the exalted state that he enjoyed in heaven before coming to earth. In answer to that prayer, God "glorified his Servant, Jesus," by resurrecting him and bringing him back into heaven. (Acts 3:13-15) But Jesus was to experience even greater glorification.

Luke's account of Jesus' transfiguration reads: "As he was praying the appearance of his face became different and his apparel became glitteringly white. Also, look! two men were conversing with him, who were Moses and Elijah. These appeared *with glory* and began talking about his departure that he was destined to fulfill at Jerusalem. Now Peter and those with him

were weighed down with sleep; but when they got fully awake *they saw his glory.*" (Luke 9:29-32) The apostle Peter explains that this vision had to do with a notable glory, or regal "magnificence," that Jesus was to receive at his invisible "presence" in Kingdom power.—2 Pet. 1:16.

And there is yet another way in which Jesus Christ will give evidence of glory. The Bible foretells for the generation that is alive during Jesus' presence a "great tribulation" that will feature a tremendous display of "the glory of his strength, at the time he comes to be glorified in connection with his holy ones."—Matt. 24:21, 22; 2 Thess. 1:9, 10.

GLORY THAT AFFECTS MANKIND

The Scriptures make reference to glory as regards its relationship to humankind. Note, for example, what the apostle Paul writes at Romans 3:23: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." How did that situation come about?

The Word of God relates that the first human pair, Adam and Eve, disobeyed God's command not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and bad. (Gen. 2:15-17; 3:1-6) By doing so they failed to reflect in due measure the perfect attributes of God in whose image man was created. (Gen. 1:26, 27) Since all of Adam's offspring inherit sin and its consequence, death, every member of the human family falls short of properly reflecting God's glory.—Rom. 5:12; 6:23.

In order to restore the human race to perfection, God has purposed to bless certain ones of mankind with heavenly glory. (Rom. 8:18, 19) According to the Bible, the Creator will bring into heaven 144,000 individuals who had lived as humans on earth. (Rev. 14:1-5) Along with Christ Jesus these will form a heavenly Kingdom body to rule over the earth.—Rev. 5:9, 10.

YOUR CONDUCT AND GOD'S GLORY

How should Christians conduct themselves while they await future blessings either in heaven or on earth? In this respect the inspired Bible writer counsels: "Therefore, whether you are eating or drinking or doing anything else, do all things for God's glory." (1 Cor. 10:31) In this instance glory is made manifest through the honor or praise that persons give to God. Showing that a Christian's conduct is truly significant in this respect, Jesus said: "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your fine works and give glory to your Father who is in the heavens."—Matt. 5:16.

But there is a kind of glory that true worshipers of God wish to avoid. How so? Consider what the apostle John wrote concerning Jesus: "Many even of the rulers actually put faith in him, but because of the Pharisees they would not confess him, in order not to be expelled from the synagogue; for they loved the glory of men more than even the glory of God." (John 12:42, 43) Christians, especially overseers and those "reaching out" for such an office, should beware of seeking the plaudits of men. (1 Tim. 3:1) Instead, they must follow the perfect example of Jesus, who said: "I do not accept glory from men."—John 5:41; 1 Thess. 2:5, 6.

"FROM GLORY TO GLORY"

The Scriptures urge worshipers of God to make continual progress in reflecting God's glory. Regarding this, the apostle Paul drew upon Moses' experience when he descended from Mount Sinai after receiving for the second time two stone tablets inscribed with the Ten Commandments. On that occasion the face of Moses shone with rays of glory so brilliant that it was necessary for Moses to veil his face when speaking to the Israelites. (Ex. 34:29-35) Paul reasons: "If the code which administers death and which was engraved

in letters in stones came about in a glory, so that the sons of Israel could not gaze intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, a glory that was to be done away with, why should not the administering of the spirit be much more with glory? For if the code administering condemnation was glorious, much more does the administering of righteousness abound with glory."—2 Cor. 3:7-9.

In contrast to the literal glory that attended the giving of the Mosaic law code, the 144,000 who are in a "new covenant" foretold by Jeremiah must shine with a spiritual glory that reflects the qualities of God's personality in an unprecedented way. (Jer. 31:31-34) Since the new covenant provides both "forgiveness of sins" and a "royal priesthood" for the blessing of all mankind, it far exceeds the Law covenant in benefits. (Acts 5:31; 1 Pet. 2:9; Ex. 19:5, 6) Also, those in the new covenant worship God "with spirit." (John 4:23, 24) That is, their worship is spirited, motivated from within rather than by written legislation. (2 Cor. 3:3) Indeed, a superior glory, or manifestation of God's perfect personality, is here in evidence.

Contrasting the action of Moses, who veiled his face, with the activities of Christians in the "new covenant," Paul writes: "And all of us, while we with unveiled faces reflect like mirrors the glory of Jehovah, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, exactly as done by Jehovah the Spirit."—2 Cor. 3:18.

Christians must ever make progress in reflecting God's glory. An important way to do this is by speaking boldly about God's purpose to bless all mankind through the heavenly royal priesthood. Also, they heed the Biblical advice: "Clothe yourselves with the new personality, which through accurate knowledge is being made new according to the image of the One who created it." (Col. 3:10) As worshipers of God

couple zealous preaching of God's purposes with progressive conforming of their lives to Bible principles, they thereby progress "from glory to glory," and they increase their glorifying of God.

Do you look forward to the time when



'Like Slips of Olive Trees All Around My Table'

As told by Porfirio Caicedo, of Colombia

ACCORDING to the criterion expressed in the Bible's one hundred and twenty-eighth Psalm, verses three and four, I am a very blessed man. There it says: "Your wife will be like a fruit-bearing vine in the innermost parts of your house. Your sons will be like slips of olive trees all around your table. Look! That is how the able-bodied man will be blessed who fears Jehovah."

You see, I am the father of eighteen children. My dear wife Belén (Bethlehem), my "fruit-bearing vine," has borne me twelve sons and six daughters.

My own life began sixty-four years ago in the town of Libano, Tolima, Colombia. I was the youngest of twelve children. Because my father died when I was just a baby, at the age of twelve I was obliged to go to work in a foundry in order to help support my mother and youngest sister. Then when I was twenty-six I married Belén, and soon thereafter we moved to Bogotá, the capital.

By correspondence I improved my qualifications as a carpenter, specializing in wooden pattern molds for metal casting.

God will restore mankind to human perfection where they do not "fall short of the glory of God"? (Rom. 3:23) If so, do everything you can now to reflect God's glory by fine conduct that conforms to Bible principles.

So that I could have better oversight of my growing children, I opened my own little shop at home. However, until I became known in my profession, I had to look to another source for income. So, when there were no molds to make, I made guitars, mandolins and violins.

Learning has always fascinated me. That is one reason why, for as long as I can remember, I have been allergic to the world's religions. Their ritualistic hocus-pocus never satisfied my yen for learning.

In contrast, I discovered something of real value in two books that I obtained from one of Jehovah's Witnesses when he called at my shop one day in 1950. I wanted to learn; the Witnesses had something to teach me—clearly, simply, without any mysticism. By my study of the Bible with him I began to lay a foundation for properly bringing up my children.

'HAPPY IS THE MAN THAT HAS
FILLED HIS QUIVER WITH THEM'

: It is a joy to raise children. In spite of the work involved, the struggle, the anxieties, it is a joy. I am in complete accord

with the wise man Solomon, who said: "Look! Sons are an inheritance from Jehovah. . . . Happy is the able-bodied man that has filled his quiver with them." (Ps. 127:3-5) A person becomes so attached to youngsters that he misses them keenly when they are not around.

I love little children very much. I find a lot of joy in their peculiar ways. A young child has a certain grace that is hard to define. A small child is so innocent. And it is able to amuse itself with almost nothing. With a little piece of paper or string it is happy. Then, if the child loses its toy, it is sad. That is when I especially like to be with them, to help them.

Having a real love for our children, my wife and I were naturally concerned with giving them proper guidance, and even more so once we learned the truth from God's Word. This included both instruction and correction. The Bible itself shows that "the one holding back his rod is hating his son, but the one loving him is he that does look for him with discipline." (Prov. 13:24) We have always been zealous in disciplining our children. It is frightening to contemplate what the results might have been otherwise.

THE VALUE OF GOOD PARENTAL EXAMPLE

All of us know that children are born imitators. Be it language, manners, or customs—everything they copy with such ease. In particular, what their parents do becomes as a law to them. Because of this imitative instinct, I think the finest schooling that children can receive at home is a good parental example. Underscoring this is the Bible proverb: "The righteous is walking in his integrity. Happy are his sons after him." (Prov. 20:7) The upright, integrity-keeping parent will be imparting something of great value to his children that will indeed result in their future happiness.

In this respect, the knowledge that I

have gleaned from God's Word has been a great help. How so? In that it has taught me how I should live. In its pages I have learned the value of truth and obedience. I have learned the standard of conduct that I, as a husband and father, am obligated to observe before God and, hence, before my family. I am convinced that, if one knows God's unchangeable laws and lives by them, the rest with regard to life, including child training, is comparatively easy.

One of the greatest single influences for good in the lives of our offspring has been the very fine relationship existing between my wife and myself. We affectionately respect each other. It would hurt me even to raise my voice at my wife. It would be an injustice on my part ever to mistreat her. I am helped in this attitude because there is nothing in her manner that displeases me. She is very submissive, cooperative and gentle. She sets forth her ideas on any given matter but then leaves the decision to me, and respects it. If one of us is not in the best of humor, the other does what he can to eliminate the source of discontent. And, if one is correcting a child, instead of interfering, the other will help.

THE VALUE OF VIGILANCE

One way in which we have avoided unnecessary problems with the children is by keeping a loving eye on them, by being vigilant. Like any young plant, they need to be protected. We have always insisted on knowing where they were and what they were doing. If any of the young boys left the house, he was to be accompanied by an older member of the family or by a trustworthy person. The girls, no matter what their age, always were to be accompanied.

There is so much insecurity and so little respect for the person of others nowadays that I have always felt justified in being

protective of my daughters in particular. I have not denied them the privilege of having friends among those whom we know and of associating with them. But to allow them in the street alone—never—not in this city.

The danger being less in the case of the boys, they have been allowed more freedom than the girls. Yet, notwithstanding their age, as long as they are under my care, they have to be in the house by a certain hour. Very seldom has any one of them come home late, but if he has, he has found the door bolted. I leave him out in the cold night air for a while, then later open to him. Knowing the way I feel when this happens, they seldom let it happen a second time.

When one takes the precautionary measure of keeping a watchful eye on the children, the need to punish is often avoided. In other words, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." Parents who are lax in this matter of oversight may find themselves chastising their children for wrongdoing for which they themselves, by reason of their negligence, share some of the blame.

FINDING REST FOR MY SOUL

As important as good parental example and vigilance are in successfully raising children, more is definitely needed. When there is deliberate disobedience, the literal rod, appropriately applied, works wonders in children. That, in turn, produces a restful, pleasurable effect in parents, as suggested in Proverbs 29:17: "Chastise your son and he will bring you rest and give much pleasure to your soul."

If I ask my child to do something and he does not do it *pronto*, then I will remind him of it. Then, if he does not do it, on seeing that the disobedience is deliberate, I will chastise. Because I have consistently tried to follow this policy, hardly

ever do I have to speak twice to my children.

However, before using the literal rod, I will take the child and reason privately with him on the need for it. I want him to understand clearly why he is going to be punished. Moreover, I thereby avoid making him a plain and simple victim of my wrath.

Of course, other forms of discipline may prove to be just as effective. Each child is different; not all respond in the same way. A disapproving look may constitute a severe reproof for some. Others respond well when something they like very much is withheld.

I recall a form of punishment that worked effectively on Horacio, my fifth son, when the literal rod failed to do so. He was about eight years old. He was too insistent in associating with undesirable neighborhood boys. So I had him dressed in one of his sister's dresses. Not daring to be seen with that on, he stayed in the house and off the street.

Once, noting an impudent streak developing in my third and sixth sons, Efraín and Cicerón, I decided to send them to their grandfather's farm. The boys were about eighteen and fifteen years old at the time. As soon as they arrived, my father-in-law knew they were being punished. It was a source of joy for him to put his grandchildren to work. An energetic worker himself, a lazy or idle person vexed him no end. The boys had to get up every morning at five o'clock and then contend with snakes and wasps and blistered hands while working in the fields in the equatorial sun. A month of that served exceptionally well to enhance their appreciation of how they should act around home.

More recently I remember asking four of the boys to get their hair cut. To my way of thinking, it was too long. Efraín, the eldest of the four, was then about twenty. A few days later they still had not

gone, so I said to them: "Efrain, Rafael, Horacio, Cicerón, come on! You're going with me." "Very well, papa." They did not know what I had in mind—until we arrived at the barbershop. To the barber I said: "Please do me the favor of cutting the hair of these boys as if you were going to cut mine—short, good and short!"

SECULAR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

For economic reasons the schooling of my sons has been limited to the elementary level. Nevertheless, some have later taken specialized courses in certain subjects. I feared that, if I provided an advanced education for some, they might become puffed up and seek to lord it over their less-educated brothers. To avoid that possibility, what I could not provide for all, I provided for none.

My circumstances, though, have permitted me to follow the precedent of ancient Israelite parents. Besides teaching their children to read and write, they taught their sons a trade. It was their opinion that whoever failed to teach his son a trade was in effect teaching him to steal. For me, it has been a great joy to have all my sons, without exception, work at my side in the shop upon leaving primary school.

Not only have I been able to teach my sons a specialized art, a trade, but by having them at my side, I have also been able to teach them other important matters that have to do with daily living, such as how to work, how to overcome problems, how to stick to a job until it is done, how to reason and how to make decisions.

Our working together has, in addition, resulted in a oneness, a closeness, a communication that means a lot to them and to me. From the time they used to sit on my workbench to watch me work and to chat with me, my sons have felt confidence in approaching me with any problem whatsoever. They are my constant companions

and friends. I enjoy their respect and they enjoy mine. In our working relationship, orders on my part are not necessary. Kind suggestions bring the same results and contribute to a very wholesome atmosphere in the shop.

Knowing that "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," I am happy I have been able to share something with my children that has also served for their diversion. I have always liked music very much. While single, I studied it and learned to play the bandola, guitar and tiple (a small treble guitar). Several of the boys play the guitar well, and when we have get-togethers my daughters enjoy singing to our instrumental accompaniment.

THE EDUCATION THAT REALLY COUNTS

Aside from the secular education and practical training my children have received, they have received another kind that pays much higher dividends. Of course, I refer to their spiritual education.

Here again Belén and I have tried to provide our offspring with a worthy example. Our own study of God's Word has revealed to us what Jehovah expects of us in worship and obedience. Naturally, we try to live in accord with His will in all respects. Doing God's will is not a complicated ritual. It is, rather, the constant performance of certain basic, logical functions and living by His righteous standard of conduct.

One of those basic functions is regularly studying God's Word, both privately and in association with other true worshipers of Jehovah in Christian meetings. From the time I began attending the meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses, I have taken my wife and children with me. In time our home came to be used for the meetings, for the entire congregation or a part of it, and has been ever since. All in the family prepare for and participate in them. That is our custom, one that has contrib-

uted immeasurably to our spiritual welfare.—Heb. 10:25.

Unlike many families in this part of the world, we have another agreeable custom—eating together as a family unit. If my ‘olive tree slips’ were too numerous to sit around one table in the dining room, then some sat around a smaller one in the kitchen.

Eating together has definitely contributed toward our unity, affording us, for example, the opportunity to pray together. And it has enabled me to inculcate in my children the sayings of God ‘when sitting in my house,’ in harmony with His will that I do so. (Deut. 6:6, 7) It has also helped me to keep my finger on the pulse of the family, to observe attitudes or trends, and to apply whatever I perceived to be the remedy according to the spiritual needs of all of us.

Of course, not all is positive Bible instruction at mealtimes. It is a time for chitchat and humor, too, with possibly a little guitar strumming as a form of after-dinner relaxation.

Aware of the fact that my Christian love should extend beyond the confines of my own home, my wife and I have the custom of taking the good news of God’s kingdom to the homes of others. All my children are busy in this most worthwhile activity, five of them having devoted their full time to it at one time or another.

In this connection, I recall an incident involving my second son, Raúl, when he was about seventeen. One Sunday morning I said to him: “Well, son, let’s go in the service.” He replied: “No, I’m not going.” Surprised, I asked: “And why not?” “Because it’s not obligatory,” was his response. I answered: “True, it’s not obligatory. Very well.” I said nothing more to Raúl about it. Neither did I say anything to him about going with me the next Sunday. Nor was I angry or glum with him. I do not know what he felt within himself,

but the following Sunday he again went out, quietly, without saying anything.

Ever since that episode, Raúl has willingly and eagerly devoted himself to God’s Kingdom service, for which Jehovah has richly blessed him. He was privileged to attend the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead in New York city, then later to serve his Christian brothers throughout Colombia as their district overseer. Now he and his wife serve in the branch office of the Watch Tower Society in Barranquilla, where he helps to supervise the work of Jehovah’s Witnesses in Colombia.

REASON TO BE HAPPY

Even though I have more in a material way now than I had a few years ago, it is not for this reason that I am happy today. Material things in themselves never produce true happiness. But spiritual blessings—yes, they bring happiness! When there is harmony in the home, for example, and serious difficulties have not entered, then there is cause for happiness. And when I see the devotion of all my children to their Creator, and the four eldest sons serving as elders in the Christian congregation, my joy and satisfaction are indeed great.—Prov. 10:22.

Now that ten of my children are married, most of them with “slips” of their own, it makes me happy to see that they visit us frequently. They like to be with us. Their mother and I like to be with them too. That closeness is still there. Of course, we have that one very important ingredient in common, our love for our heavenly Father, Jehovah, ‘to whom our family owes its name,’ its very existence. To Him also we owe our hope that our family relationship may never have to end due to death, because “there are new heavens and a new earth that we are awaiting according to his promise, and in these righteousness is to dwell.”—2 Pet. 3:13; Eph. 3:14, 15.

PAUL URGES GALATIANS:

'Stand Fast In Christian Freedom'

THE Creator, the Sovereign Lord Jehovah, is a God of freedom. He created all his intelligent creatures free and purposed that they continue free. That is why we read: "Jehovah is the Spirit; and where the spirit of Jehovah is, there is freedom."—2 Cor. 3:17.

When Jesus, the Son of God, came to earth, he found God's people in a three-fold bondage. They were in bondage to inherited sin. This, in turn, held them in bondage to the Law, because they were unable to keep it fully. Further, their religious leaders put them in bondage by their traditions and arbitrary interpretations of the Law. Thus, included in the good news that Jesus preached was 'release to the captives.' As he told his followers: "If you remain in my word, you are really my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

—John 8:31-36; Matt. 23:4; Luke 4:17, 18.

As a fine imitator of Christ, the apostle Paul also preached the good news of freedom. He pointed out that, on the basis of Christ's sacrifice, Christians "were set free from sin" and that in God's due time all creation "will be set free from enslavement to corruption and have the glorious freedom of the children of God." (Rom. 6:18; 8:21) Among those to whom Paul had preached the good news of freedom were the congregations in the Roman province of Galatia, which congregations he himself established on his first missionary tour. Because certain Judaizers were bringing his spiritual "children" into bondage again by insisting that they must get

circumcised, Paul wrote them a powerful letter sometime between 50 and 52 C.E.—Gal. 4:19.

At the time, Paul quite likely was residing either in Corinth or in Antioch of Syria. That he did indeed write this letter is most certain. Not only does the letter itself mention Paul as the writer, but also the choice of words and the emotions expressed are distinctly his. It is one of the first of the Bible books he wrote, either shortly before or shortly after the two letters to the Christians in Thessalonica. Paul's strong feelings on the subject of Christian freedom pervade this letter throughout.

Paul begins his letter to the Galatians by stressing that he is an apostle, "neither from men nor through a man, but through Jesus Christ and God." At once he comes to the point: He marvels that they have so soon been turned away from the good news he preached to them. Then he declares that "if we or an angel out of heaven," or "whoever" it may be, brought to them a good news beyond what he had brought, "let him be accursed." The good news he brought them he did not get from any man, but "through revelation by Jesus Christ."—Gal. 1:1-12.

Lest they should think that Paul was a stranger to Judaism, he tells them, in a brief autobiographical sketch, of his great zeal for Jewish tradition and his progress therein, "to the point of excess . . . persecuting the congregation of God and devastating it." When God called him to declare the good news to the Gentiles,

he "did not go at once into conference with flesh and blood," that is, he did not at once consult other disciples of Jesus, but went off into Arabia. After three years he did go to Jerusalem for a brief visit but saw only Peter and Jesus' half brother James. (Gal. 1:13-19) Years later he went there again but only on the basis of a revelation. (Acts 15:2-21) At that time the "pillars" of the congregation saw how God was using Paul in preaching to the Gentiles and so agreed that he should continue to do so, whereas they would continue to preach to those circumcised, the Jews. But after that, when the apostle Peter compromised as to Christian freedom because of fear of man, Paul "resisted him face to face," and reproved him before them all.—Gal. 2:1-14.

Continuing, Paul reminds the Galatian Christians that they had been declared righteous, not because of their keeping the Law, but because of their faith in Jesus Christ. Now if works of the Law were required, Christ died in vain. Paul then becomes indignant with their having taken this backward step: "O senseless Galatians, . . . did you receive the spirit due to works of law or due to a hearing by faith?" Were they now able to do powerful works due to trying to keep the law of Moses or because they had received God's holy spirit by reason of their faith in Jesus Christ? He then appeals to the Hebrew Scriptures to make his point: 'Abraham put faith in God and it was counted to him as righteousness.' Yes, "the righteous one will live by reason of faith." On the other hand, those trying to keep the Law are under a curse, since they cannot completely avoid violations of it.—Gal. 3:1-14.

Jesus Christ brought freedom from the curse of the Law by dying on the execution stake, making it possible for those of the nations to receive the blessing promised through Abraham's seed. Still, Paul

goes on to show, the Law was not an evil. For one thing, it served "to make transgressions manifest," and it also served as a tutor leading the Jews to Christ. In Christ there is freedom, for 'there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor freeman, male nor female.'—Gal. 3:16-29.

Continuing his theme of freedom, Paul notes that before they became Christians they were as babes. They "continued enslaved by the elementary things belonging to the world." But now that Christ has come he has released those under the Law so that instead of being slaves they may be free. Why did they now want to go back into slavery and scrupulously observe days, months, seasons and years? And has he, Paul, become their enemy because he is telling them the truth?—Gal. 4:1-16.

To illustrate his point, Paul turns to Abraham and his two sons by Sarah and Hagar. The Law covenant entered into at Mount Sinai compares to Hagar, who was a servant girl and who "corresponds with the Jerusalem today, for she is in slavery with her children." On the other hand, the Abrahamic covenant compares to Sarah, and she corresponds to "the Jerusalem above [which] is free, and she is our mother," that is, the mother of anointed Christians.—Gal. 4:21-31.

After making this point Paul reaches what may be said to be the climax of his letter: "For such freedom Christ set us free. Therefore stand fast, and do not let yourselves be confined again in a yoke of slavery." If they get circumcised they not only become separated from Christ and fall from his undeserved kindness but are obligated to perform the whole Law. "You were running well," he tells them, and adds: "Who hindered you from keeping on obeying the truth?" The one guilty of that will bear his judgment, no matter who he may be. In fact, Paul feels so strongly about such perverters of the good news that he says: "I wish the men who are

trying to overturn you would even get themselves emasculated.”—Gal. 5:1-12.

FREEDOM NOT TO BE ABUSED

Paul was fully aware of the implications and the risk that went with the good news of freedom, for he knew how fallen human nature would be prone to take selfish advantage of Christian freedom. He therefore at once warns: “You were, of course, called for freedom, brothers; only do not use this freedom as an inducement for the flesh, but through love slave for one another. For the entire Law stands fulfilled in one saying, namely: ‘You must love your neighbor as yourself.’”—Gal. 5:13, 14.

CONDUCT BEFITTING FREE CHRISTIANS

Paul shows Christians that they have an aid to help them not to abuse their freedom: “Keep walking by spirit and you will carry out no fleshly desire at all.” What are those fleshly desires? Paul calls them the “works of the flesh” and enumerates sixteen of them, including fornication, uncleanness and loose conduct, adding also “and things like these.” “Those who practice such things,” he warns, “will not inherit God’s kingdom.” In contrast to all such is the fruitage of the spirit, which includes “love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control.” Obviously, “against such things there is no law”; there is no limit to the amount of the Christian fruitage of the spirit we are permitted to bear!—Gal. 5:16-23.

Another thing that seems to weigh heavily on Paul’s mind is the need for Christians to watch their relations with one another. So, not content to remind them that they should love their neighbor as themselves, he warns: “If, though, you keep on biting and devouring one another, look out that you do not get annihilated by one another.” And further on he adds:

“Let us not become egotistical, stirring up competition with one another, envying one another.”—Gal. 5:14, 15, 26.

It is in this vein that Paul continues in the sixth chapter of his letter. If one makes a false step before he is aware of it, let those qualified to do so help him to get readjusted. Christians are to carry the burdens of one another and thus fulfill the law of Christ. Again and again he gives practical warning: “Do not be misled: God is not one to be mocked. For whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap . . . So let us not give up in doing what is fine, for in due season we shall reap if we do not tire out. Really, then, as long as we have time favorable for it, let us work what is good toward all, but especially toward those related to us in the faith.”—Gal. 6:7-10.

Before concluding his letter Paul once more feels compelled to return to the matter of bondage to the Law. He exposes the motives of those who would again bring the Galatian Christians into bondage to keeping its requirement of circumcision. They do it so as to have cause for boasting, to make a good appearance according to the flesh and to avoid persecution. But really, ‘neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything, but a new creation is.’ “And all those who will walk orderly by this rule of conduct, upon them be peace and mercy, even upon the [spiritual] Israel of God.”—Gal. 6:12-16.

Truly, in the letter to the Galatians we see Paul’s great concern for his spiritual “children,” his strong righteous indignation against those who would rob them of their freedom. To recover them he appeals to his own credentials, to reason and to the Scriptures and then gives them fine counsel as to their conduct so that they may inherit God’s kingdom. All of this is fine exposition of Bible truths and principles and powerful exhortation for Christians today.

Insight on the News

- What is believed to be "the first [observed] case of tool use in a social insect" is reported in a recent issue of "Science" magazine. Common woodland ants were observed using pieces of leaves, dried mud chunks and grains of sand to transport far more soft or liquid food than they could carry otherwise, much as a shopper might use a cart.

When researchers from the University of Maryland put out small portions of jelly as bait, ants that gathered would leave after a few seconds, returning to place pieces of leaf on the jelly. Other ants would tend the fragments for up to an hour, adjusting their position to cover these fragments with jelly. Then the coated leaves were carried back to the colony and the jelly was consumed there.

Without such "tools," soft or liquid foods have to be carried back between their mandibles or stored internally, to be regurgitated at the nest to feed others. But the experimenters found that ants who used the "tools" could carry ten times as much back to the colony. Truly, ants deserve to be classed among the "four things that are the smallest of the earth, but . . . instinctively wise: the ants are a people not strong, and yet in the summer they prepare their food."—Prov. 30:24.

- Atrocities committed against Jehovah's Witnesses in Malawi for refusal to purchase political cards are now well known world wide. As a result, a number of Presbyterian bodies in other nations are disavowing any organizational connection with Malawi's Presbyterians. Why?

A letter circulated to Presbyterian pastors in the U.S. admits that "it is true that the President, Dr. H. Kamuzu Banda is a Presbyterian. At one time he was an active Presbyterian lay person and it is reported that he served as an elder in the church. . . . to the best of our knowledge [he] is no longer an active Presbyterian." At any rate, says the letter, Presbyterians in Malawi are "the result of the mission of the Church of Scotland," not the U.S. Church. But the General

Dr. Banda

and

the Church

Secretary of the Church of Scotland's Overseas Council says that "final responsibility [for missionaries] was handed over to the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian."

However, when another Overseas Council official, J. W. Waddell, recently visited Malawi for a Church celebration, he was more friendly. The periodical "Life and Work—The Record of the Church of Scotland" reports that "Dr. Banda read the Old Testament lesson at the service," and clergyman Waddell called it "a magnificent tribute to Scottish missionaries." Banda himself later "recounted the history of the Mission, his debt to it, and his pride in it," notes the Church paper.

It is commendable that Presbyterian officials reject atrocities committed against an innocent religious minority in Malawi. But at times the actions and words of certain of these officials seem both contradictory and confusing.

- "The American public is continually warned about the hazards of drunk driving, smoking, cancer, narcotics, etc.," notes "Oasis," a magazine published for employees of the U.S. Social Security Administration.

"**A Loaded Gun**" continues, "have you ever seen a warning dealing with blood transfusions? There is ample information available on hazards of transfusions . . . in medical journals and such, but very few, if any, warnings. Sure, every transfusion may not result in a reaction or disease, but as one author stated on the subject, 'it is like playing liquid Russian roulette.' Every drunk driver does not cause a death or accident, everyone that smokes does not develop lung cancer, . . . not every loaded gun kills, but we are still warned about the potential dangers. . . . anyone who administers a blood transfusion should, like the Surgeon General warns about smoking, warn the participants that transfusions are dangerous to your health, as dangerous as a loaded gun."

The article notes that "Jehovah's Witnesses, a religious organization, have repeatedly refused to accept transfusions on Bible principles (Genesis 9:3-4; Leviticus 3:17; Acts 15:28, 29) and very obviously on other grounds as well."

Jehovah Our God

-RIGHTEOUS AND JUST

REGARDING Jehovah God, a Hebrew psalmist long ago sang: "He is a lover of righteousness and justice." And in another psalm we read: "I well know, O Jehovah, that your judicial decisions are righteousness." Though those expressions were made many centuries ago, do they not appeal to you? Is it not satisfying and reassuring to think of the Creator, the final authority in the universe, as "a lover of righteousness and justice"?—Ps. 33:5; 119:75.

² Undoubtedly one reason we respond in this way is that every one of us has been subjected to some forms of unrighteousness and injustice. Perhaps because of your national, racial or social background you have been treated unjustly. Or maybe at school, on your job or in the neighborhood you have been dealt with unfairly. And how often do we hear of unjust treatment from someone in authority!

³ Jesus realized how people feel at being dealt with in that manner, as evidenced by the description he gave in one of his illustrations. He told about a judge who evidently had been appointed by the Ro-

"A God of faithfulness, . . . righteous and upright is he."
—Deut. 32:4.

mans. What was the judge like? Rather than being a person to whom you could turn with confidence of receiving fair treatment, he was "unrighteous." In fact, the judge was described as finally giving justice to a Jewish widow only because she kept importuning him.—Luke 18:1-6.

⁴ How would you feel about such a judge? Here is a man who is supposed to render just decisions, but he hesitates to do so. What a refreshing contrast there is in the Judge who is described truthfully as "a lover of righteousness and justice"! But consider: While that is what the psalmist said about Jehovah, are you convinced that He is that way? You may be aware that some persons contend that God is not righteous and just. Have you been confronted with that claim? Does it affect your view of God? Could you give convincing reasons for agreeing with the psalmist?

⁵ Then, too, there are some persons who are interested in God's Word and purposes but who are disturbed by questions that throw a shadow of doubt on their confidence in Jehovah's righteousness and justice. For example, they may wonder how all

1, 2. (a) The Bible provides what description of Jehovah as Judge? (b) How might we respond to this, and why?

3, 4. How does this compare with the ways of many human judges, this leading to what questions?

5. What aspects of God's righteousness and justice have been of concern to some persons?

people will have opportunity to hear and accept or reject the Kingdom message in the short time before the "great tribulation" brings an end to this wicked system of things. (Matt. 24:21) Another area of concern is whether certain relatives, vile men of modern times and others will be raised from the dead in the New Order or not. Or there may be apprehension about what privileges God will bestow in the New Order, particularly regarding marriage and family affairs. In connection with such matters, are you disturbed or are you confident that Jehovah will do what is righteous and just?

⁶ What does it mean to be righteous and just? Without getting involved in lengthy, legalistic definitions, this can be said: A person who is "righteous" is one who is doing what is right and moral. He is virtuous, free from blame. Related to this, a "just" person is one who, in an impartial way, administers what is right and fair. Certainly, then, there is much meaning behind this description of Jehovah: "A God of faithfulness, with whom there is no injustice; righteous and upright is he." —Deut. 32:4.

CONSIDER THE TESTIMONY

⁷ A famous lawyer once said: "There is no such thing as justice—in or out of court." His experience in the legal profession, combined with the testimony of others, led him to that view. While that may be true, generally, in this world, what has "experience" shown about Jehovah? Let us consider some evidence, the testimony of persons who have had personal dealings with Him.

⁸ Even before the Bible began to be written, men of faith expressed themselves regarding God's righteousness and justice. Abraham is a case in point. At God's com-

mand he had left the Mesopotamian city of Ur and became a migratory resident in the land of Canaan. (Gen. 12:1-5; Heb. 11:8) His nephew Lot took up residence near the city of Sodom. Later Abraham was visited by an angel representing Jehovah. The angel said that he was going to make a judicial inspection of Sodom and Gomorrah because of the outcry over the sins of the inhabitants. (Gen. 18:20, 21) Note that the angel did not say that some definite judicial action had already been determined upon. Rather, he was going to "see whether they act altogether according to the outcry" and complaint. How did Abraham react to this information?

⁹ Being interested in the possibility that the inhabitants of Sodom, Lot included, might be spared, Abraham prayerfully inquired what might occur. The record at Genesis 18:23-25 quotes Abraham: "Will you really sweep away the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there are fifty righteous men in the midst of the city. Will you, then, sweep them away and not pardon the place for the sake of the fifty righteous who are inside it? It is unthinkable of you that you are acting in this manner to put to death the righteous man with the wicked one so that it has to occur with the righteous man as it does with the wicked! It is unthinkable of you. Is the Judge of all the earth not going to do what is right?" Then, trying to determine the minimum number of righteous ones in the city that would permit its being spared, Abraham asked, What if there are forty-five, or forty, or thirty, or twenty, or even ten righteous ones?—Gen. 18: 26-33.

¹⁰ Abraham did not know, as we do now, that there were not even that many inhabitants who were "righteous" in the

6. What does it mean to be "righteous" and "just"?
7. An examination of what testimony is fitting?

8, 9. (a) How was Abraham involved in a divine judicial matter? (b) How did he react to the situation?

10, 11. Did Abraham believe that Jehovah was going to do wrong?

sense that they were trying to do what was moral, virtuous and upright. But when Abraham said, "Is the Judge of all the earth not going to do what is right?" did he mean that he seriously questioned God's righteousness and feared that He would act unjustly?

¹¹ Not at all. On the contrary, the evidence is that, in view of what Abraham knew about the personality of Jehovah, he simply could not imagine that the Creator would destroy the wicked *and* the righteous. To Abraham, that was "unthinkable"; it was inconceivable. Abraham knew God better than to think that. As the apostle Paul indicates in Hebrews chapter 11, Abraham knew Jehovah to be a "rewarder of those earnestly seeking him." He was confident that God would not treat those wanting to do what is right.

in the same manner as the wicked. But how could he know that?

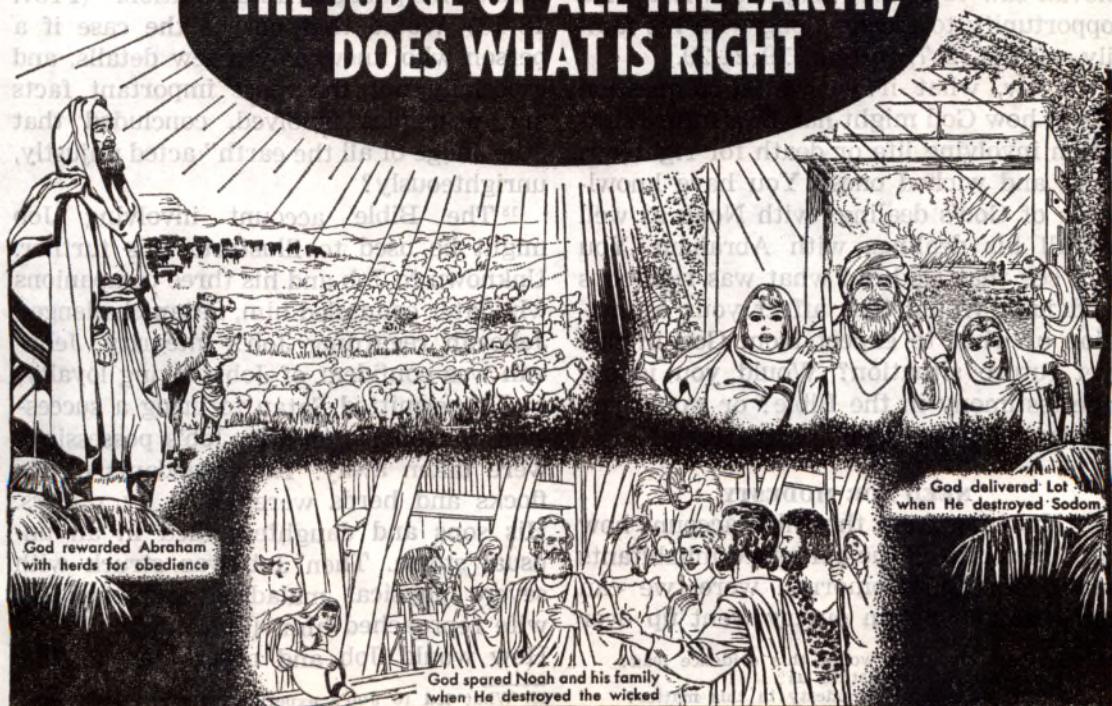
¹² For one thing, Abraham knew what Jehovah had done in his own case. Acting in faith, Abraham had obeyed in leaving Ur. Had God ignored that? No, he had blessed and prospered Abraham. (Gen. 12:16; 13:2) In Egypt Jehovah had protected Abraham's wife from being violated by Pharaoh. (Gen. 12:17-20) Later, with God's help, Abraham had been able to gain the victory over four kings who had 'kidnapped' his nephew Lot. (Gen. 14:14-20) Yes, he knew about God from experience.

¹³ Abraham, however, had yet other reasons to believe Jehovah to be righteous and just. There were God's dealings

12. Why could Abraham be confident as to Jehovah's dealings?

13. How would God's past dealings come into the picture?

JEHOVAH, THE JUDGE OF ALL THE EARTH, DOES WHAT IS RIGHT



with persons who lived before Abraham's time. For example, prior to the flood, Abraham's ancestor Noah lived with his family amid a world of people the 'inclination of the thoughts of whose heart was only bad all the time.' (Gen. 6:5-7, 11, 12) When God brought that violent world to an end, what happened to Noah, a man who "proved himself faultless among his contemporaries"? (Gen. 6:9, 13) Did God sweep away righteous Noah and his family, wiping them out with the wicked? He certainly did not, and Abraham knew that! —2 Pet. 2:5.

¹⁴ So when Abraham was faced with this seemingly undetermined situation, as to whether God would treat both the righteous and the wicked in Sodom in the same way, he had much by which to guide his thinking. Was he correct in concluding that it was "unthinkable" for the righteous Judge to treat both classes of people the same? He certainly was! Sodom and surrounding cities were destroyed. But Jehovah saw to it that "righteous Lot" had opportunity to escape along with his family.—2 Pet. 2:7, 8; Gen. 19:21-29.

¹⁵ Now, what if you faced a question about how God might handle a future situation involving life or death for righteous ones and wicked ones? You have knowledge of God's dealings with Noah as well as all his dealings with Abraham. You can see that God did what was righteous and just. Would that affect your estimation of what to expect from God in this yet future situation? Would you ignore the testimony in the Bible? or would you let it mold your thinking correctly?

NEED FOR MODESTY

¹⁶ Knowing from the Bible account how utterly depraved the perverted inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah were, we can understand why an outcry went up over

14. To what conclusion would this evidence lead?

15. Why is this of interest to us?

16, 17. Why do we need modesty in this matter?

their sins. And we can agree that God was acting in righteousness and justice in bringing them to an end. (Gen. 19:4-11; Rom. 1:26-28, 32) But what if someone did not have all the facts, and perhaps thought that the inhabitants were normal and seemingly innocent people? If, then, he were told that God destroyed the cities with fire and sulphur, he might reach a hasty and incorrect conclusion about the Creator.

¹⁷ This should highlight the need for modesty in regard to our reaching conclusions about God's dealings. Proverbs 11:2 says that "wisdom is with the modest ones," and that is certainly true in this matter. Would it be wise for a mere human who probably lacks knowledge of essential facts about some of God's dealings in the past to set himself up as judge and jury and then proceed to condemn "the Judge of all the earth"? Another proverb states: "When anyone is replying to a matter before he hears it, that is foolishness on his part and a humiliation." (Prov. 18:13) Would that not be the case if a person who knew only a few details, and especially not the most important facts and principles involved, concluded that "the Judge of all the earth" acted unjustly, unrighteously?

¹⁸ The Bible account involving Job might be used to illustrate this further. Unknown to Job and his three companions who later counseled him, Satan challenged Jehovah regarding Job's integrity. Jehovah was confident of Job's loving loyalty, so He permitted Satan to bring a succession of troubles on Job. Job's possessions were taken away. The attendants of his flocks and herds were killed by raiders. His sons and daughters died in an unusual storm. Then Job was struck with severe physical maladies, and even his wife reproached him. (Job 1:6-19; 2:1-9) How would Job and others react? How

18. What led to Job's experiencing severe troubles?

would you have reacted? What would you have concluded about God?

¹⁹ Though determined to be loyal to God, Job did not understand why he suffered. In defense of his own righteousness he spoke of God as having the right to afflict the righteous as well as the wicked. (Job 32:2; 10:7; 16:17; 23:11; 33:8-12) Of course, we now know that in this Job was 'speaking without knowledge,' for it was Satan, not Jehovah, that was afflicting him. (Job 34:35) What position did Job's companions take? They immodestly and foolishly answered without knowing the facts either. They charged that God is not interested in man's integrity. (Job 4:17-19; 15:15, 16) Also, in effect, they condemned Job's sons as being sinful and claimed that Jehovah had killed them.

(Job 8:3, 4, 20)

Yes, the Bible correctly says that the effect of the arguments of Job's companions was "to pronounce God wicked."—Job 32:3.

²⁰ Today, we are able to study the complete account, and we have no trouble in seeing how wrong those companions were in their views as to God's manner of dealing. But what of other Bible accounts about which we may not have so much information? When, for instance, we read in the Bible that Jehovah or persons under his direction executed some wicked people, cities or nations, will we copy Job's companions and proceed "to pronounce God wicked"? (Deut. 9:1-5) How much

19. How did Job react? But what about his three companions?

20. (a) How should this example affect our reaction to certain Bible accounts? (b) What should our reaction be?

wiser and more modest it would be to conclude that even though we do not know all the facts or issues involved, what took place must have been consistent with Jehovah's being a "lover of righteousness and justice." (Deut. 7:2, 23-26; Lev. 18:21-27) That was the conviction of Elihu, a young man who corrected Job and his companions. Elihu proclaimed: "Far be it from the true God to act wickedly, and the Almighty to act unjustly! Yes, for a fact, God himself does not act wickedly, and the Almighty himself does not pervert judgment."—Job 34:10, 12.

RIGHTEOUS AND JUST TO ALL

²¹ How all-encompassing are Jehovah's righteousness and justice? Can they be



Elihu corrected Job and his companions, saying: "Far be it from the true God to act wickedly, and the Almighty to act unjustly!"

expected to apply equally to all persons and at all times? We can well be concerned about this, for when humans have authority or high office, the way a person is treated often depends on "who you are." A rich, important individual who does wrong may be "winked at," pardoned or given a light punishment, whereas a poor or insignificant person is more likely to be punished with severity. Have you not observed that? But what of Jehovah?

21, 22. Jehovah's righteousness and justice differ in what significant way from how many humans act?

²² Elihu's comments give us the answer. Notice that Elihu, in describing Jehovah, did not limit his remarks to God's dealings with Job. He made the all-encompassing declaration: "God himself does not act wickedly, and the Almighty himself does not pervert justice." Then Elihu added that Jehovah "has not shown partiality to princes and has not given more consideration to the noble one than to the lowly one, for all of them are the work of his hands."—Job 34:19.

²³ This fact can be backed up by noting one aspect of the law that Jehovah gave to the Israelites. In making provision for human judges to deal with the problems and possible misconduct of individuals, Jehovah commanded the judges: "You must not be partial in judgment. You should hear the little one the same as the great one." (Deut. 1:17; 16:18-20) Was that required simply to avoid a cause of unrest? No, it was expected because in that way these judges would properly reflect the characteristics of their God. We read: "It is not for man that you judge but it is for Jehovah; and he is with you in the matter of judgment. . . . For with Jehovah our God there is no unrighteousness or partiality or taking of a bribe." —2 Chron. 19:6, 7; Ex. 23:6, 7.

²⁴ Is not this testimony regarding Jehovah's impartial righteousness and justice reassuring, giving us evidence of how He will deal with us? We should also see it as an indication that even regarding matters that are yet future we can be sure that He will act in accord with the standards He has set and followed in the past.

OUR SENSE OF

RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUSTICE

²⁵ Another avenue that can be considered with regard to God's righteousness

and justice involves an internal sense that we have. The Bible says that man was made in God's image. (Gen. 1:27) That does not mean His bodily form, for He is spirit and we are flesh. Rather, as Colossians 3:10 shows, this "image" involves personality or qualities. God created Adam with qualities that He himself has, including love, justice, righteousness and wisdom. Though we are imperfect and far removed from perfect Adam, most humans reflect to some extent these godly qualities, even as humans earth wide manifest a degree of conscience or moral sense. (Rom. 2:14, 15) This being so, our own sense of justice and righteousness should be reason for us to have confidence in God's having and manifesting these qualities, but in a way far superior to us humans.

²⁶ As an illustration of the response of this "sense," consider the reaction on the part of many people—perhaps our own reaction, also—to the teaching of hellfire. Especially in the past, many churches taught that the souls of the wicked are tormented forever in hell. The Bible does not uphold such an idea, for it states that the dead are unconscious and that most of the dead will yet live again by means of a resurrection. (Eccl. 9:5, 10; Ezek. 18:4; John 5:28, 29; 11:11-14) But even without knowing what the Bible says, many persons are repelled by the hellfire doctrine. They cannot accept it even if their own church teaches it. It 'goes against their grain.' They cannot believe that a God of love, justice and righteousness would take someone who was bad for, say, sixty years and torment him with excruciating suffering forever. And many persons have been relieved to learn that their sense of justice and righteousness is borne out by God's Word.

²⁷ The very fact that we humans, who

23. How does the Mosaic law bear out this fact?
24. Of what, then, can we be confident?
25. Our own internal "sense" bears what testimony about Jehovah?

26, 27. How can this be illustrated with the hellfire teaching?

only imperfectly reflect the "image" of God, have a compelling desire to see done what is righteous and just, should increase our assurance that Jehovah himself is guided by such qualities.

²⁸ On the other hand, the fact that we are admittedly imperfect should recommend that we take care that this "sense" does not get distorted and lead us to incorrect conclusions. If someone's sense of what is righteous and just became exaggerated by imperfection, it might be like a man looking through a wavy pane of glass. Much as he wants to see clearly what is on the other side, the image reaching his eyes is affected by the imperfect glass.

²⁹ That a similar thing might develop with regard to our view of the righteousness and justice of God's dealings can be recognized in what some persons have come to believe. Moved by their own sense of compassion, righteousness and justice, and convinced that if they feel this way God must surely feel even more this way, they have taught the doctrine of universal salvation. They reason that it would be unjust or unrighteous for God to let imperfect humans perish eternally. So they conclude that, based on Christ's sacrifice, God will forgive every human who has ever lived. Why, they go so far as to say that God will forgive even Satan the Devil!

³⁰ While that doctrine might 'strike a responsive chord' in the emotions or feelings of some individuals, it simply does not harmonize with what Jehovah himself says in his Word. The Bible enables us to see clearly *His* view, which is undistorted by human imperfection. Thus, the Bible says about a person who sins and blasphemes against the holy spirit: "It will

not be forgiven him, no, not in this system of things nor in that to come." (Matt. 12: 32) Also, the apostle Paul wrote to Hebrew Christians: "If we practice sin willfully after having received the accurate knowledge of the truth, there is no longer any sacrifice for sins left, but there is a certain fearful expectation of judgment." (Heb. 10:26, 27) Yes, the Scriptures plainly show that some humans will not gain eternal salvation. As Jesus expressed it: "He that exercises faith in the Son has everlasting life; he that disobeys the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God remains upon him."—John 3:36; Rom. 2: 7, 8.

³¹ Hence, we can appreciate that mere human thinking based on our own "sense" of righteousness and justice needs to be balanced and guided by what Jehovah himself says. How thankful we can be that there is abundant testimony and evidence bearing out that God "is a lover of righteousness and justice"! (Ps. 33:5) And that thankfulness should be increased by the knowledge that his exercise of these qualities cannot be distorted by imperfection. In all ways, at all times and with all persons, He does what is perfect and in accord with his abundant knowledge, wisdom and love. We will always be able to say: "I well know, O Jehovah, that your judicial decisions are righteousness."—Ps. 119:75; Rom. 11:33-36.

³² Confidence in this certainly should influence our thinking on questions about God's future dealings, such as in the matters already mentioned with regard to the extent of the Kingdom preaching, the resurrection and marriage in the New Order. In the following article, then, let us consider these matters in the light of the Bible and with full assurance that our God is righteous and just.

28. Why do we still need to exercise caution as to what we feel is the right course?

29, 30. (a) What have some persons concluded about salvation? (b) What, though, does the Bible teach?

31. In addition to our own "sense," what else is needed and why?

32. What areas, then, can we consider?

Look Forward

with **CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS**

SUPPOSE a group of people on your job, at your school or in your neighborhood decide to go to an immoral motion picture. Then someone mentions you, wondering if you might want to join the group. How do you think those who know you would react? Would they respond: 'Oh, there's no sense in inviting him (or her). He's not interested in such things; that's just not his way.' Certainly that should be the assessment of a Christian's interests and pursuits.—2 Tim. 2:19.

² What, though, led these acquaintances to react in that way? Being aware of your principles and having observed how you have acted in the past, they could be confident as to how you would respond in this situation.

⁸ If observant humans could know what course a Christian would follow, how much more can we be sure of what course Jehovah God will take in certain situations. In Eden a moral issue was raised as to Jehovah's universal sovereignty and the righteousness of his way of dealing with mankind. That issue must be settled. The pages of Bible history record progressive steps in Jehovah's dealings as he has moved toward the final settlement of that issue. And that very record provides us with ample reason to be confident that He will always do what is righteous and just. Also, the record assures us that the course Jehovah follows will always be in the lasting best interest of humans, as well as being righteous and just.

1, 2. Why might acquaintances not invite you to share in some improper activity?
3. What basis do we have for assurance that God's course will always be righteous and just?

AND JUSTICE

⁴ The apostle Paul wrote: "For the creation [mankind descending from Adam and Eve] was subjected to futility [being born in sin and faced with death], not by its own will [we humans have no control over Adam's sin having brought sin and imperfection upon us] but through him [God] that subjected it [by allowing Adam to produce offspring], on the basis of hope that the creation itself also will be set free from enslavement to corruption and have the glorious freedom of the children of God." (Rom. 8:20, 21) Yes, God's allowing humans to be born, even though they would experience pain and problems in life, was by no means unrighteous or unjust. For in due course God also set before them the opportunity to have perfect life in paradise forever.

⁵ We today are particularly favored, for we stand at the threshold of God's new order in which obedient mankind will "be set free from enslavement to corruption." The fulfillment of Bible prophecy proves that since 1914 we have been in the "generation" that will see God wipe out wickedness on earth and establish a paradise earth wide. So Jehovah's Witnesses are busily proclaiming the "good news of the kingdom," which will bring to humans loyal to Jehovah "the glorious freedom of the children of God."—Matt. 24:3-14, 21, 34.

4. Is a lack of righteousness and justice manifested in Jehovah's allowing mankind to experience suffering?
5. How are we today particularly favored with respect to mankind's "enslavement to corruption"?

PREACHING TO ALL PEOPLES—HOW?

⁶ Jesus said: "In all the nations the good news has to be preached first." (Mark 13:10) Despite the strenuous efforts of Jehovah's Witnesses, it seems that there are yet hundreds of millions of persons who have not received a personal witness. Even in lands where the Witnesses are active, there are some persons who have not been reached. And there are millions more who live where there are few if any Witnesses. Can the vital Kingdom message reach all these people in time? If so, how? Should we 'just leave that to God,' or are we involved in some way? What will God's judgment be?

⁷ If the preaching work were of men, there might be reason for concern. The job would appear to be far too big in view of the political barriers that now retard the preaching work in some lands, as well as the fact that the "population explosion" results in millions more persons each year who have not heard the message. But, happily, the One to determine to what extent the witness is to be given to the nations is not any man or group of men; it is Jehovah God! What he will do will be in full harmony with what he is—a wise, just, loving and compassionate God. Why can we be sure?

⁸ Jehovah sent his Son to earth as a "corresponding ransom for all." (1 Tim. 2:6; John 3:16) God assures us that he does not desire any to lose their lives through disobedience. As 2 Peter 3:9 says: "Jehovah is not slow respecting his promise, . . . but he is patient with you because he does not desire any to be destroyed but desires all to attain to repentance." Because He "desires all men to be saved and to attain the knowledge of the Truth," the Creator has given individuals time to

hear about salvation and to repent. (1 Tim. 2:4, Moffatt) That Jehovah has had his Witnesses proclaim the "good news" in over 200 lands and islands of the sea is an evidence that he cares; Jehovah wants individuals to become obedient and to gain the blessing of eternal life. —Rom. 6:23; Heb. 5:9; compare Isaiah 55:6, 7; Malachi 3:7.

⁹ On how much greater a scale the witnessing work is yet to be done, we simply do not know. We should not overlook the fact that Jehovah is responsible for this work and is using angels in heaven to oversee it. (Rev. 14:6, 7) Look what occurred on a single day in the year 33 C.E.! (Acts 2:37-42) Or, in modern times, think about what has happened in the Soviet Union. Not too many years ago it might have seemed impossible to imagine the "good news" being preached throughout that Communist land. But it is now being preached, even in remote Siberia. In *The Kremlin's Human Dilemma*, Maurice Hindus writes about Jehovah's Witnesses:

"There is no stopping them. Suppressed in one place, they bob up in another, now in European Russia, now in Siberia. . . . They appear as indestructible as the Soviet police that is determined to sweep them off the Soviet scene."—P. 304.

Also, in many lands Kingdom Halls are being filled to an extent that is astonishing to those who shared in the preaching work before the mid-1960's. Yes, Jehovah is having his message preached.

¹⁰ Since we are assured that our all-powerful and righteous God will decide when the preaching is done to the extent he purposes, we can with singleness of mind concentrate on what we have to do. He has not told us to determine when sufficient preaching has been done, but has told us to keep on declaring the good

6. What questions might arise regarding Jesus' words at Mark 13:10?

7. Why can we be confident that Mark 13:10 will be fulfilled?

8. What is Jehovah's view about humans' gaining eternal life?

9. (a) How is it possible that the preaching work could yet be done on a vaster scale? (b) What examples bear this out?

10. Regarding this preaching, on what should we concentrate?

news. Lives are involved. That realization, combined with the awareness that God has commissioned us to preach, should move us to action!

¹¹ We can draw a lesson from what Jehovah God told Ezekiel as to his responsibility with regard to an impending destruction:

"A watchman is what I have made you to the house of Israel, and at my mouth you must hear the word and give them warning from me. When I say to someone wicked, 'O wicked one, you will positively die!' but you actually do not speak out to warn the wicked one from his way, he himself as a wicked one will die in his own error, but his blood I shall ask back at your own hand. But as regards you, in case you actually warn someone wicked from his way for him to turn back from it but he actually does not turn back from his way, he himself will die in his own error, whereas you yourself will certainly deliver your own soul."—Ezek. 33:7-9.

Jehovah spoke those words prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in 607 B.C.E. But they also have meaning for Christians today who have a message that is both a warning and an invitation for persons to 'turn back from their sins and carry on justice and righteousness.' (Ezek. 33:14) Our concern should be like that of the apostle Paul:

"Paul began to be intensely occupied with the word, witnessing to the Jews to prove that Jesus is the Christ. But after they kept on opposing and speaking abusively, he shook out his garments and said to them: 'Let your blood be upon your own heads. I am clean.'"—Acts 18:5, 6.

With so much evidence available that the conclusion of this wicked system of things is near, we too ought to be "intensely occupied with the word, witnessing." Doing so, we can be "clean from the blood of all men," and we can wait on God for the decision as to when the preaching work is done to his satisfaction.—Acts 20:26.

11. (a) What lesson can we learn from Jehovah's words at Ezekiel 33:7-9? (b) Like Paul, what concern should we have about the preaching?

WHAT WILL HIS JUDGMENT BE?

¹² Related to the question of the extent to which the good news of the Kingdom will yet be preached is a certain uneasiness on the part of some persons about what Jehovah's judgment will be at the conclusion of the system of things. They are somewhat concerned as to whether Jehovah's judgment will be just and righteous.

¹³ But, really, is there any reason to be concerned, in view of the fact that Jehovah will be responsible for the outcome? Long ago the prophet Isaiah wrote about Jehovah God: "With whom did he consult together that one might make him understand, or who teaches him in the path of justice, or teaches him knowledge, or makes him know the very way of real understanding?" (Isa. 40:14) Is it not true that no human has ever needed to teach God justice and righteousness? When some Israelites said, "The way of Jehovah is not adjusted right," with whom was the lack? It was not with Jehovah, but on the part of those imperfect men with their imperfect view of what is right. As Ezekiel recorded, "As for them, it is their way that is not adjusted right." (Ezek. 33:17) We can be absolutely confident that Jehovah's judgment at the conclusion of the system of things will be righteous, just, loving and merciful.

¹⁴ An illustration that Jesus gave provides some information about that judgment. The apostles had asked Christ what would be 'the sign of his presence and of the conclusion of the system of things.' (Matt. 24:3) The final part of his reply was the parable of the sheep and the goats. (Matt. 25:31-46) This illustration applies now, for in 1914 C.E. his "presence" in Kingdom power in heaven began; then 'the

12, 13. (a) Is there reason to be concerned about what will be Jehovah's judgment at the conclusion of the system of things? (b) How is this borne out by what we read at Ezekiel 33:17?

14. When does the illustration of the sheep and the goats apply?

Son of man arrived in his glory and sat down on his glorious throne.' (Matt. 25:31; Dan. 7:13, 14) Also confirming its application to this period between the start of his "presence" and the destruction of the system of things is the fact that Jesus spoke of his spiritual brothers, the remaining ones of the 144,000, as being mistreated and imprisoned; this is something being done to them now, not something that will occur in the New Order.—Rev. 12:17.

¹⁵ In the illustration, Jesus said that during this period, "all the nations will be gathered before him [as the enthroned King], and he will separate people one from another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats." (Matt. 25:32) This is no mere temporary handling of matters, but involves decisive judgments rendered by the one appointed by Jehovah to "judge the living and the dead." (2 Tim. 4:1; John 5:26, 27) Well, then, can we conclude that during this period the attitude and actions of some individuals will result in their meriting eternal destruction? While some persons might hesitate to reach such a firm conclusion, note what Jesus said about those who *now* prove themselves "goats": "Be on your way from me, you who have been cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels." (Matt. 25:41, 46; 2 Thess. 1:6-9) So this is a time when eternal lives of such individuals are in the balance; it is a time of judgment.

¹⁶ Observe, however, that Jesus did not leave it up to humans to determine who are the "sheep" and who are the "goats." How fine that is! For, if we humans were responsible to judge, how could we properly evaluate factors such as: How much of an opportunity did a person have to hear

and accept the good news? Did his genetic, family or religious background affect his response? What is his heart condition—does he love righteousness? If he is a child or was born mentally retarded, how much bearing should family or community responsibility have on the matter?—1 Cor. 7:14; Deut. 30:19.

¹⁷ Unquestionably, not one of us is qualified to weigh these, and perhaps many other, vital factors and principles. We could not reach judgments that are 'perfect, righteous and upright.' (Deut. 32:4) Hence, why should any of us become needlessly involved with trying to decide who will survive and who will not? If we say, 'I think these people in this certain situation are "goats" and will perish eternally, but those in that other category will live,' are we not making ourselves judges? (Jas. 4:12) Rather than trying to decide whether a certain person, family or group of persons fits the description of the "goats" or not, we can be content to leave the matter in the hands of "the Judge of all the earth."—Gen. 18:25.

¹⁸ God's judgments are not merely a matter of applying strict, unfeeling justice. His mercy, compassion and love are involved. As the psalmist David put it: "He has not done to us even according to our sins; nor according to our errors has he brought upon us what we deserve." (Ps. 103:10) Actually the only wages that imperfect, sinful humans deserve is death. (Rom. 6:23) Yet, in his mercy and compassion Jehovah has purposed that the message of salvation be spread extensively so that humans might gain life. He *wants* them to do so. (Ezek. 33:11; Isa. 55:6, 7) If God's mercy, love and compassion have been displayed so consistently down to this time, and we have benefited from them, cannot we be absolutely certain that they will come into play, too, in the judgment

15. Why can we conclude that this is a time of judgment?

16, 17. (a) Why are humans not in position to render judgments involving the "goats"? (b) What should we do about such matters?

18. (a) Does God follow merely strict justice? (b) Why can we be certain that his judgments will be righteous and just?

at the conclusion of the system of things? Yes, the survivors will be absolutely right when they proclaim, "Jehovah God, the Almighty, true and righteous are your judicial decisions."—Rev. 16:5-7; 19:1, 2.¹⁹

RESURRECTION—OF WHOM?

²⁰ We have seen that there is good reason for us to be confident in God's justice and righteousness as regards the preaching of the "good news of the kingdom" and his judgment at the conclusion of the system of things. We have just as much reason for confidence respecting what Jehovah will do in resurrecting individuals.

²¹ In his Word he assures us that "there is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous." (Acts 24:15) The Scriptural testimony is that all those who have died and gone to Sheol or Hades, the common grave of dead mankind, will be raised. (Rev. 20:13) Hence, millions upon millions of individuals who have died in the past will have opportunity in the New Order to follow Jehovah's righteous ways and gain eternal life. But the Bible also shows that not everyone will be resurrected. As we have seen, this would be because some persons have sinned against the holy spirit and were judged by Jehovah as meritless everlasting destruction, being assigned to Gehenna.—Mark 3:28, 29; Heb. 6:4-6; Matt. 23:33.

²² Some persons have wondered: "Will this certain relative of mine be resurrected? Or what about this acquaintance, or this particular ruler who persecuted true Christians?" Such questions might arise. Yet, is any one of us in position to come to definite conclusions? If the Bible itself does not specifically state either that a certain person went to Hades at death or that he was assigned to everlasting destruction, we simply cannot be dogmatic

19, 20. What does the Bible teach about a future resurrection?

21. Are we in position to know who will be raised from the dead? Why?

on just what will occur. We do not have all the facts about that individual's life. Furthermore, can we read that person's heart? No, we cannot. But Jehovah possesses all the facts and can read hearts. We read: "I, Jehovah, am searching the heart, . . . even to give to each one according to his ways, according to the fruitage of his dealings." (Jer. 17:9, 10; 1 Sam. 16:7) Hence, rather than trying ourselves to determine who will and who will not be resurrected, with good reason we can be confident that Jehovah and Jesus will do what is righteous and just.—John 5:30; Rom. 9:14.

CONFIDENCE IN WHAT HE PROVIDES

²² The Bible does not provide full details about the resurrection. It does not, for example, say with whom resurrected ones will live or where. So it is wisdom on our part not to speculate on such matters and perhaps disturb ourselves and others. Rather, we can, with confidence in God, simply wait and see.

²³ The Bible, though, makes some comment on the question of marriage. Once some Jewish religious leaders, who knew nothing about a resurrection to life in heaven, posed a question about a Jewish woman under the Mosaic law who had had seven husbands. They asked whose wife she would be in the resurrection. Jesus replied:

"The children of this system of things marry and are given in marriage, but those who have been counted worthy of gaining that system of things and the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage. In fact, neither can they die anymore, for they are like the angels, and they are God's children by being children of the resurrection. But that the dead are raised up even Moses disclosed, in the ac-

22. Does the Bible give complete details about what God will provide for resurrected ones?

23. (a) Jewish religious leaders asked Jesus what question about the resurrection? (b) To whom does Jesus' answer apply?

count about the thornbush, when he calls Jehovah 'the God of Abraham and God of Isaac and God of Jacob.' He is a God, not of the dead, but of the living, for they are all living to him."—Luke 20:34-38; Matt. 22:29-32.

Was Jesus talking about the heavenly resurrection? No, Jesus did not leave unanswered their question about the earthly resurrection; he answered it. He spoke of the resurrection to life on earth, such as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will receive. Such faithful ones will not receive immortality, but will be like the angels. How so? In that the angels are mortal, but by remaining loyal to Jehovah they will never die. Being rewarded with the right to everlasting life, they cannot have their life taken away from them by anyone else without authorization from God. Endless life on earth is a blessing that only Jehovah can provide, and he will provide it and preserve it!

²⁴ In giving that answer Jesus indicated that death dissolves the marriage bond, a fact that Paul later confirmed. (Rom. 7:3; 1 Cor. 7:39) So if a woman's husband died, would she need to feel obliged to remain without a husband or a father for her children? No. And why do we know that? Because Jehovah kindly included this information in the Bible. Even though he was not attempting to provide us with full details about family arrangements in the New Order, he was thus helping to eliminate a possible problem for Christians yet in this system of things. Does not the fact that he would show such understanding and compassion add to our confidence that whatever arrangements He will make for us in the New Order will also reflect his love, compassion and wisdom?

²⁵ Satan claimed that humans serve Jehovah only for what they can selfishly

24. Why would information about the effect of death on the marriage bond be included in the Bible?
25. Why are we pleased to serve Jehovah?

get out of it. But true Christians are not serving God primarily because of the blessings they receive now or because of what they expect to be given in the New Order. They are serving him out of genuine love and because of their privilege of sanctifying his name, and they are pleased to serve Jehovah both now and forever because of what he is. He is our Creator to whom we are grateful for life. (Ps. 100:3-5) He is also a God deserving our worship because of his very qualities and ways, "A God of faithfulness, with whom there is no injustice; righteous and upright is he."—Deut. 32:4.

²⁶ Jehovah will never disappoint us. His righteous acts will move us to be ever grateful that He is our God. And the millennial rule by his Son, who "is the reflection of his glory and the exact representation of his very being," will be marked by the same righteousness and justice. (Heb. 1:3) The Bible describes his rule in this way: "To the abundance of the princely rule and to peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom in order to establish it firmly and to sustain it by means of justice and by means of righteousness, from now on and to time indefinite. The very zeal of Jehovah of armies will do this." (Isa. 9:7; 11:2-5) We can with full confidence look forward to such blessings from Jehovah God and his Son.

26. Our knowing Jehovah and Jesus gives us what view of the future?

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

■ **How You Can Strengthen Others.**

■ **"God Is Not Partial."**

■ **Search for Truth Always Rewarded.**

What Does the Proverb Mean?

Mind Your Own Business

The spirit-inspired writer, in the Bible book of Proverbs, said: "As one grabbing hold of the ears of a dog is anyone passing by that is becoming furious at the quarrel that is not his."—Prov. 26:17.

If a man sees a quarrel or a dispute between persons he may be able to bring peace, especially if he has the authority to do so and if the disputants are agreeable to listen and to reason on his counsel. (Gal. 6:1; 2 Tim. 2:24-26) But the proverb speaks of the man who becomes involved in the controversy that is not his. He may have started out to mediate but he becomes emotionally stirred up and takes sides. He is like a man who has grabbed a strange dog by the ears. If he lets go, the dog will leap at him and do him injury. If he holds on, he has both hands full and can do nothing else. Likewise, if the person getting mixed up in affairs not his own tries to extricate himself from the quarrel, he is likely to have trouble from both parties. If he holds on he cannot attend to his own rightful responsibilities, and, besides, he only makes the controversy worse. The thing he should really be attending to—his own business—he cannot get done. He will have cause to regret his involving himself in other people's business.—1 Pet. 4:15.

Avoid Difficulty by Living the Simple Life

Another proverb reads: "The ransom for a man's soul is his riches, but the one of little means has not heard rebuke [is immune from threats, *New English Bible*]."—Prov. 13:8.

There are certain advantages in being rich, but having riches is not an 'unalloyed' blessing. Particularly in troublous times such as the world is experiencing today, the rich, and men in high political station, often find themselves and their families in danger of being kidnapped and held for ransom. In the more fortunate cases, the rich man can buy his life or that of family members. But often the kidnapped one is murdered. Such threat is always hanging over the head of the rich.

On the other hand, while the man who has little may not have the many conveniences and material things that the rich enjoy, he is more free from being a target of kidnappers and political terrorists. Much more so does this apply to the Christian, whose wants are simple, and who does not spend his time and effort to amass wealth or to gain fame or power. He does not become embroiled in efforts to exert political influence or become involved deeply in the commercial schemes of the world that today are riddled with factions and strife.—2 Tim. 2:4.

his witnesses for this day is a twofold work: first, proclaiming the good news of God's kingdom along with his judgment messages to people of all nations and, secondly, teaching those who respond favorably, making disciples of them.—Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20.

Normally, a person contemplating baptism would have begun doing God's will already by telling the good news to others, thus manifesting his desire to share in this twofold work. After making a dedication to Jehovah to do his will, a person would want to be baptized at the first opportunity thereafter, which could be a few weeks or several months later. In line with his dedication, it is reasonable to believe that he would be busy in the preaching and teaching work, perhaps having someone train him therein, at least during this period while he awaits baptism, if not before.



- Is it advisable that one engage in preaching the good news before being baptized?

Baptism is a symbol of one's dedication to Jehovah and signifies that henceforth the baptized one will follow Jesus continually in doing God's will. (Mark 8:34) It is good to keep in mind that an important part of Jehovah's will for this time is that people everywhere be given the opportunity to hear the good news. The special assignment that Jehovah has given

According to Jesus' words cited above, 'making disciples' precedes "baptizing them." And what is a disciple? He is more than just a learner. He is one who comes to appreciate and spread the doctrines taught by his teacher. Especially after he makes his dedication to God and is awaiting baptism, he should not hold back from this. The public declaration of the truth is to become a large part of his life henceforth, so why not get started?

However, what about the many examples in the Scriptures of persons who were baptized apparently before they engaged in preaching the good news about Christ? It is to be noted that many of these were Jews and proselytes who were already a part of Jehovah's dedicated people, under obligation to be his witnesses even before their baptism in the name of Jesus Christ. (Isa. 43:10-12) For the most part, they had been serving God zealously, even before their baptism, according to their understanding of God's requirements for his people under the law of Moses.

Those Jews who responded to Peter's preaching at Pentecost, and were baptized, had shown zeal for their God in coming from distant countries to share in the feasts of the Jews. (Acts 2:5, 38-41) Like many other Jews, Paul had exhibited a zeal for God, "but not according to accurate knowledge." In due course, after his baptism, he became most zealous in preaching Christ. (Gal. 1:14; Rom. 10:2) The Ethiopian eunuch was evidently a keen student of the Hebrew Scriptures, and had converted to the worship of Jehovah; when he heard "the good news about Jesus," he was quick to seize the opportunity of receiving baptism and no doubt he was just as zealous in sharing the good news with others from that day when he gained understanding of it. (Acts 8:27-31, 35-39) Lydia, probably a Jewish proselyte, was already a zealous "worshiper of God" before she and her household were baptized by Paul, and there is no question but that she continued to serve God wholeheartedly, as well as becoming an outstanding example of hospitality. (Acts 16: 14, 15) When Paul preached in Corinth, Crispus, who had served Jehovah as "the presiding officer of the synagogue," became a believer along with his household and was among many Corinthians that were baptized. We can appreciate that he would continue to serve zealously as a Christian.—Acts 18:8.

Then, there were non-Jewish converts to

Christianity. The record shows that Cornelius was "a devout man and one fearing God," and that he and his household, on receiving the holy spirit, were heard "glorifying God." So Peter had them baptized. Unquestionably, they continued to glorify God. But in their case, as with other non-Jewish converts to Christianity, such as the jailer at Philippi and his household, and Dionysius and Damaris at Athens, it appears that publicly declaring the good news was from baptism onward.—Acts 10:1, 2, 44-48; 16:27-34; 17:32-34.

In view of these examples, should a record of preaching be required today before baptism? There is no such requirement. No rules are laid down in this respect. However, in order to be baptized as one of Jehovah's Witnesses, a person is required to meet with elders in his congregation and to show in discussion with them that he really understands and appreciates the fundamental teachings in the Bible. Scriptures covering these teachings are set out on pages 19 to 52 of the book *Organization for Kingdom-preaching and Disciple-making*.

At the same time, there are very strong reasons why it is advisable for a person to commence public proclamation of the good news before baptism. It is not baptism that results in a person's salvation, since baptism is merely an outward symbol of something that must have taken place already in the person's heart, his offering himself in dedication to Jehovah God. Hence, Romans 10:9, 10 states: "If you publicly declare that 'word in your own mouth,' that Jesus is Lord, and exercise faith in your heart that God raised him up from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one exercises faith for righteousness, but with the mouth one makes public declaration for salvation." Accordingly, the individual will be wise to start making this public declaration whenever his study of the Bible has brought him to the point of exercising faith in the good news, and without waiting for baptism.

Those who heard Peter's preaching on the day of Pentecost were conscience-stricken and moved to receive baptism in Jesus' name. Thereafter, "they continued devoting themselves to the teaching of the apostles," in order to learn what to believe and what to preach. Doubtless the congregation in Rome was established by those "sojourners from Rome" who returned there. (Acts 2:10, 42) So, it was not only their baptism in Jesus' name,

but also their wholeheartedly praising God by proclaiming the good news that brought them His blessing.

New ones preparing for baptism today may share in this joyful service as soon as they appreciate the privilege, provided they have separated themselves from all worldly uncleanness. There are benefits to be derived from preaching the Kingdom from door to door even before baptism. This will acquaint them with the work of public declaration, showing them just what is involved in going to other people with the good news. It will start them on the road toward Christian maturity. (Heb. 5:13-6:2; 13:15) Certainly it is a requirement for them to make this public declaration from baptism onward, and so it is well for them to get acquainted with this work even before baptism.

The Bible examples of Christian baptism indicate that those who were baptized became very zealous advocates of God's kingdom. So vigorous was their preaching that their opposers declared they had "overturned the inhabited earth" by their witnessing. In the space of less than thirty years it could be said that

those who heard Peter's preaching no longer had to "resist" those who contradicted him. Instead, they "had turned the world upside down." (Acts 17:6) Those who witnessed Paul's preaching in Rome were soon "turning the world upside down." (Acts 19:20) Paul's converts were soon "turning the world upside down" in Asia Minor. (Acts 19:20) Those who witnessed John the Baptist's preaching in Judea were soon "turning the world upside down" in Galilee. (Matt. 4:17)

the "good news . . . was preached in all creation that is under heaven." (Acts 17:6; Col. 1:23) Whether they started their service before or after baptism, they 'made their advancement manifest to all persons' and thus became a fine example to all who make a dedication today to God and symbolize it by water baptism. —1 Tim. 4:15, 16.

Although there is no requirement that a person *must* start to make public declaration of the good news before baptism, yet it is strongly recommended that all who come to exercise faith in the "glorious good news" of the Kingdom start proclaiming it from house to house without delay. Especially should they be doing this from the time of their dedication, and up to and following their baptism.—2 Cor. 4:4; 1 Tim. 1:11.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

July 4: Jehovah Our God—Righteous and Just.

Page 337. Songs to Be Used: 22, 30.

July 11: Look Forward with Confidence in God's Righteousness and Justice. Page 344. Songs to Be Used: 50, 59.

July 18: Jehovah Our God—Righteous and Just. Page 337. Songs to Be Used: 22, 30.

July 25: Jehovah Our God—Righteous and Just. Page 337. Songs to Be Used: 22, 30.