

THE WATCHTOWER

OCTOBER 15, 2008

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

STUDY EDITION

STUDY ARTICLES FOR THE WEEKS OF:

December 1-7

Jehovah's "Beaming Eyes" Examine All

PAGE 3 SONGS TO BE USED: 160, 34

December 8-14

Jehovah Watches Us for Our Good

PAGE 7 SONGS TO BE USED: 81, 80

December 15-21

Jehovah's Answer to a Heartfelt Prayer

PAGE 12 SONGS TO BE USED: 74, 90

December 22-28

Do You Take the Lead in Showing Honor?

PAGE 21 SONGS TO BE USED: 216, 155

December 29—January 4

What Will You Give to Keep Living?

PAGE 25 SONGS TO BE USED: 177, 212



THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE, *The Watchtower*, is to honor Jehovah God, the Supreme Ruler of the universe. Just as watchtowers in ancient times enabled a person to observe developments from afar, so this magazine shows us the significance of world events in the light of Bible prophecies. It comforts people with the good news that God's Kingdom, which is a real government in heaven, will soon bring an end to all wickedness and transform the earth into a paradise. It promotes faith in Jesus Christ, who died so that we might gain everlasting life and who is now ruling as King of God's Kingdom. This magazine has been published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879 and is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

Publication of *The Watchtower* is part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations. Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the modern-language *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References*.

PURPOSE OF STUDY ARTICLES

Study Articles 1, 2 PAGES 3-11

These two articles assure us that Jehovah is fully aware of everything that happens to us. He appreciates our endurance and knows our concerns. He is aware of all our hard work, and nothing that affects his servants can be hidden from him. That knowledge is very comforting.

Study Article 3 PAGES 12-16

Most of us are familiar with the words of Psalm 83:18. But what about the rest of that psalm? This article shows how Psalm 83 provides powerful encouragement for Christians today.

Study Article 4 PAGES 21-25

Paul said: "In showing honor to one another take the lead." What does it mean to show honor to others? Who should show honor, and who should receive it? What examples do we have in the Bible? This article provides a practical discussion of the subject.

Study Article 5 PAGES 25-29

One day, Jesus asked: "What will a man give in exchange for his soul?" How would you answer that question? What "soul" was Jesus referring to? What does your life reveal about the value you place on your soul? This article will help you meditate deeply on Jesus' thought-provoking question.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

"This Is Indeed God's Most Holy and Great Name"

PAGE 16

"Jehovah Is My Strength"

PAGE 17



Jehovah's Word Is Alive—Highlights From the Letters to Titus, to Philemon, and to the Hebrews

PAGE 30

The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) is published semimonthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; M. H. Larson, President; G. F. Simonis, Secretary-Treasurer; 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483. Periodicals Postage Paid at Brooklyn, NY, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Watchtower, 1000 Red Mills Road, Wallkill, NY 12589-3299.

© 2008 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A.

Semimonthly

ENGLISH

JEHOVAH'S "BEAMING EYES" EXAMINE ALL

"[Jehovah's] beaming eyes examine the sons of men."—PS. 11:4.

HOW do you feel about people who take a genuine interest in you? They offer an honest opinion when you invite them to do so. When you need help, they provide it generously. When you need counsel, they offer it in love. (Ps. 141:5; Gal. 6:1) Are you not drawn to such people? Well, Jehovah and his Son are just like that. In fact, their interest in you exceeds that of any human, and their motive is entirely unselfish; they want to help you to "get a firm hold on the real life." —1 Tim. 6:19; Rev. 3:19.

² The psalmist David expressed the depth of Jehovah's interest in us when he said: "[Jehovah's] own eyes behold, his own beaming eyes examine the sons of men." (Ps. 11:4) Yes, God does not simply *look* at us; he *examines* us. David also wrote: "You have examined my heart, you have made inspection by night . . . You will discover that I have not schemed." (Ps. 17:3) Clearly, David was aware of the depth of Jehovah's interest in him. He knew that he would hurt Jehovah and merit His displeasure if he nurtured sinful thoughts or developed a scheming heart. Is Jehovah as real to you as he was to David?

Jehovah Sees the Heart

³ Jehovah's primary interest is in the inner person—who we really are at heart. (Ps. 19:14; 26:2) Lovingly, he does not dwell on minor failings. For example, when Sarah, the

1. To what kind of people are we drawn?
2. To what extent is Jehovah interested in his servants?
3. How does Jehovah demonstrate a balanced attitude toward our imperfections?

wife of Abraham, spoke less than truthfully to a materialized angel, the angel evidently saw that she was afraid and embarrassed, so he simply gave her a mild reproof. (Gen. 18:12-15) When the patriarch Job declared "his own soul righteous rather than God," Jehovah did not withhold a blessing from him, aware that Job had suffered intensely at Satan's hand. (Job 32:2; 42:12) Likewise, Jehovah did not take offense at the frank words of the widow of Zarephath to the prophet Elijah. God understood that she was grief-stricken at the loss of her only child. —1 Ki. 17:8-24.

⁴ Because Jehovah examines the heart, he has shown consideration even toward unbelievers. Consider his dealings with Abimelech, king of the Philistine city of Gerar. Abimelech, not realizing that Abraham and Sarah were married, took Sarah to become his own wife. However, before Abimelech could go any further, Jehovah said to him in a dream: "I too have known that in the honesty of your heart you have done this, and I was also holding you back from sinning against me. That is why I did not allow you to touch her. But now return the man's wife, for he is a prophet, and he will make supplication for you. So keep living."—Gen. 20:1-7.

⁵ To be sure, Jehovah could have dealt harshly with Abimelech, a worshipper of false deities. But God saw that the man acted honestly on this occasion. Graciously acknowledging this, Jehovah told the king

- 4, 5. How did Jehovah show graciousness in the way he dealt with Abimelech?



How does Jehovah watch us like a caring parent?

wrote: "If errors were what you watch, O Jah, O Jehovah, who could stand?" (Ps. 130:3) The implied answer is, No one! (Eccl. 7:20) Rather, Jehovah watches us with the merciful, kind eyes of a caring parent who wants to protect his beloved children from harm. He often alerts us to our imperfections and weaknesses so that we can avoid harming ourselves.—Ps. 103:10-14; Matt. 26:41.

⁸ God's love is expressed through the instruction and discipline provided both in the Scriptures and in the spiritual food dispensed by "the faithful and discreet slave." (Matt. 24:45; Heb. 12:5, 6) Jehovah also extends help by way of the Christian congregation and its "gifts in men." (Eph. 4:8) What is more, Jehovah watches to see how we respond to his fatherly training, and he seeks to help us further. Says Psalm 32:8: "I shall make you have insight and instruct you in the way you should go. I will give advice with my eye upon you." How important it is, then, that we always listen to Jehovah! We need to keep ourselves humble before him, recognizing that he is our loving Teacher and Father.—*Read Matthew 18:4.*

⁹ Conversely, may we never become hardened by pride, by a lack of faith, or by "the deceptive power of sin." (Heb. 3:13; Jas. 4:6) Often, these traits begin when a person nurtures unwholesome thoughts or desires. He may even reach the point of rejecting appropriate Scriptural counsel. Worse still, he may become so set in his bad attitude or ways that he makes himself an enemy of God—a truly fearful situation! (Prov. 1:22-31) Consider the example of Cain, the firstborn of Adam and Eve.

how to gain forgiveness and "keep living." Is that not the kind of God that you want to worship?

⁶ Jesus perfectly imitated his Father, focusing on the good in his disciples and readily forgiving their errors. (Mark 10:35-45; 14:66-72; Luke 22:31, 32; John 15:15) Jesus' attitude harmonized with his words found at John 3:17: "God sent forth his Son into the world, not for him to judge the world, but for the world to be saved through him." Yes, the love that Jehovah and Jesus have for us is deep and constant. It is seen in their desire that we gain life. (Job 14:15) Such love explains why Jehovah examines us, how he views us, and how he acts on what he sees.
—*Read 1 John 4:8, 19.*

Examined Through the Eyes of Love

⁷ How wrong it is, then, to think of Jehovah as a celestial policeman who peers down from above in order to catch us in the act of sinning! Satan is the one with a cynical, accusing eye. (Rev. 12:10) He even attributes bad motives where there are none! (Job 1:9-11; 2:4, 5) Concerning God, the psalmist

6. In what ways did Jesus imitate his Father?
7. With what motive does Jehovah examine us?

8. How does Jehovah instruct and discipline his servants?
9. What traits should we avoid, and why?

Jehovah Sees All and Acts Accordingly

¹⁰ When Cain and Abel each brought an offering to Jehovah, He was interested not only in their gift but also in their motive. As a result, God expressed his approval of Abel's offering, rendered in faith, but his disapproval of Cain's, which in some way reflected a lack of faith. (Gen. 4:4, 5; Heb. 11:4) Rather than learn from the event and change his attitude, Cain became consumed with anger toward his brother.—Gen. 4:6.

¹¹ Jehovah observed this dangerous development and considerably spoke to Cain, pointing out that if he did good, he would have cause for exaltation. Sadly, Cain ignored his Creator's counsel and murdered his brother. Cain's bad heart was further reflected in the insolent manner in which he replied to God's question: "Where is Abel your brother?" Cain retorted: "I do not know. Am I my brother's guardian?" (Gen. 4:7-9) How treacherous the heart can be—even to the point of disregarding the direct counsel of God! (Jer. 17:9) Let us therefore learn from such accounts and be quick to reject wrong thoughts and desires. (*Read James 1:14, 15.*) If we receive Scriptural counsel, may we appreciate it and view it as an evidence of Jehovah's love.

There Is No Secret Sin

¹² Some may feel that if no one sees them do wrong, they will get away with it. (Ps. 19:12) In a sense, there is no such thing as a secret sin. "All things are naked and openly exposed to the eyes of him with whom we have an accounting." (Heb. 4:13) Jehovah is a Judge who examines our deepest motives,

10. Why did Jehovah disapprove of Cain's offering, and how did Cain respond?
11. How did Cain manifest a treacherous heart, and what is the lesson for us?
12. How does Jehovah respond to wrongdoing?

What lesson do we learn from the example of Ananias?

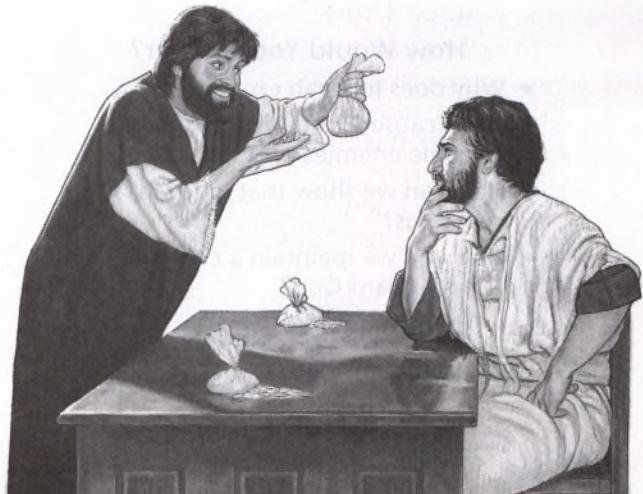
and he responds to wrongdoing in a way that reflects perfect justice. He is "a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness and truth." Yet, to the unrepentant, he will "by no means . . . give exemption from punishment" when individuals "practice sin willfully" or manifest a devious, scheming attitude. (Ex. 34:6, 7; Heb. 10:26) This fact was reflected in Jehovah's dealings with Achan and with Ananias and Sapphira.

¹³ In direct violation of God's command, Achan took spoil from the city of Jericho and hid it in his tent, likely with the complicity of his family. When his sin was exposed, Achan showed that he realized the seriousness of what he had done, for he said: "I have sinned against Jehovah." (Josh. 7:20) Like Cain, Achan had developed a bad heart. In Achan's case, greed was a major factor, and it contributed to his becoming deceitful. Since the spoil from Jericho belonged to Jehovah, Achan in effect stole from God, and this cost him and his family dearly.—Josh. 7:25.

¹⁴ Ananias and his wife, Sapphira, were members of the early Christian congregation in Jerusalem. Following Pentecost of 33 C.E., a common fund was set up to care

13. How did wrong thinking evidently contribute to Achan's bad conduct?

14, 15. Why did Ananias and Sapphira merit God's disapproval, and what is the lesson for us?

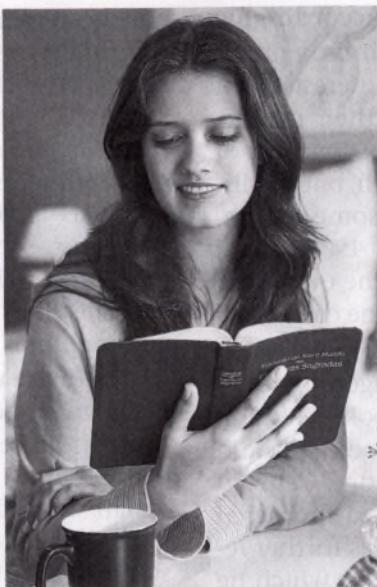


for the physical needs of the new believers from distant lands who still remained in Jerusalem. The fund was maintained by voluntary contributions. Ananias sold a field and donated part of the money to the fund. However, with his wife's full knowledge, he pretended that he had donated the entire proceeds. No doubt, this couple wanted to gain special honor within the congregation. But their act was deceitful. In a miraculous way, Jehovah revealed the fraud to the apostle Peter, who confronted Ananias with his error. At that, Ananias fell down and expired. Shortly thereafter, Sapphira also died.—Acts 5:1-11.

¹⁵ Ananias and Sapphira did not fall prey to a momentary weakness. They schemed and lied in an attempt to deceive the apostles. Worse still, they 'played false to the holy spirit and to God.' Jehovah's response demonstrates in no uncertain terms that he is prepared to protect the congregation from hypocrites. Truly, "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God!"—Heb. 10:31.

How Would You Answer?

- Why does Jehovah examine us?
- What caused certain individuals to become enemies of God?
- How can we show that Jehovah is real to us?
- How can we maintain a complete heart toward God?



What will help us to keep on serving Jehovah with a complete heart?

Maintain Integrity at All Times

¹⁶ Satan is doing all he can to corrupt us and make us lose Jehovah's approval. (Rev. 12:12, 17) The Devil's evil intentions are clearly reflected in the world, which is obsessed with immoral sex and violence. Pornography can now be easily accessed through computers or other electronic devices. May we never succumb to Satan's attacks. Rather, may our sentiments be like those of the psalmist David, who wrote: "I will act with discretion in a faultless way. . . . I shall walk about in the integrity of my heart inside

my house."—Ps. 101:2.

¹⁷ Today, Jehovah does not miraculously reveal gross sin and deceitful conduct as he sometimes did in the past. Still, he sees all and in his own time and way brings hidden things into the open. Paul said: "The sins of some men are publicly manifest, leading directly to judgment, but as for other men their sins also become manifest later." (1 Tim. 5:24) Jehovah's primary motive in bringing bad deeds into the light is love. He loves the congregation and wants to protect its purity. Moreover, he shows mercy to those who were overtaken by sin but who are now truly repentant. (Prov. 28:13) So let us strive to maintain a complete heart to-

16. (a) How is Satan trying to corrupt God's people? (b) What methods does the Devil employ to corrupt people in your area?

17. (a) Why does Jehovah eventually bring hidden sins into the open? (b) What should be our determination?

ward God and reject all corrupting influences.

Maintain a Complete Heart

¹⁸ To his son Solomon, King David said: "Know the God of your father and serve him with a complete heart and with a delightful soul; for all hearts Jehovah is searching, and every inclination of the thoughts he is discerning." (1 Chron. 28:9) David wanted his son to do more than merely believe in God. He wanted Solomon to appreciate the depth of Jehovah's interest in His servants. Do you appreciate Jehovah in that way?

¹⁹ Jehovah knows that rightly inclined

18. How did King David want his son to feel toward God?

19, 20. According to Psalm 19:7-11, what helped David to draw close to God, and how can we imitate David?

people will be drawn to him and that knowledge of his beautiful qualities will warm their heart. Hence, Jehovah wants us to get to know him and to become acquainted with his wonderful personality. How do we do so? By studying his Word and by experiencing his blessing in our lives.—Prov. 10:22; John 14:9.

²⁰ Do you read God's Word daily in an appreciative, prayerful frame of mind? Do you see the value of living by Bible principles? (*Read Psalm 19:7-11.*) If so, your faith in Jehovah and your love for him will continue to grow. And he, in turn, will draw ever closer to you, walking hand in hand with you, as it were. (Isa. 42:6; Jas. 4:8) Yes, Jehovah will prove his love for you by blessing you and protecting you spiritually as you walk along the cramped road to life.—Ps. 91:1, 2; Matt. 7:13, 14.

JEHOVAH WATCHES US FOR OUR GOOD

"[Jehovah's] eyes are roving about through all the earth to show his strength in behalf of those whose heart is complete toward him."—2 CHRON. 16:9.

JEHOVAH is the perfect Father. He knows us so well that he is aware even of the "inclination of [our] thoughts." (1 Chron. 28:9) However, he does not examine us merely in order to find fault. (Ps. 11:4; 130:3) Rather, he lovingly wants to protect us from anything that might damage our relationship with him or harm our prospects for gaining everlasting life.—Ps. 25:8-10, 12, 13.

² Jehovah is matchless in power and sees

1. Why does Jehovah examine us?

2. Jehovah shows his strength in behalf of whom?

all. For that reason, he can come to the aid of his loyal ones whenever they call on him, and he can support them during their trials. "[Jehovah's] eyes are roving about through all the earth to show his strength in behalf of those whose heart is complete toward him," says 2 Chronicles 16:9. Note that Jehovah uses his strength in behalf of those who serve him with a complete heart, a heart that is pure and sincere in motive. He shows no such concern for those who are deceitful or hypocritical.—Josh. 7:1, 20, 21, 25; Prov. 1:23-33.

Walk With God

³ To many, it is inconceivable that the Creator of our vast universe allows humans to walk with him in a spiritual sense. Yet, that is exactly what Jehovah wants us to do. In Bible times, Enoch and Noah ‘walked with God.’ (Gen. 5:24; 6:9) Moses “continued steadfast as seeing the One who is invisible.” (Heb. 11:27) King David found himself humbly walking alongside his heavenly Father. He said: “Because [Jehovah] is at my right hand, I shall not be made to totter.”—Ps. 16:8.

⁴ Of course, we cannot literally take Jehovah by the hand and walk with him. But we can do so in a figurative sense. How? The psalmist Asaph writes: “I am constantly with you; you have taken hold of my right hand. With your counsel you will lead me.” (Ps. 73:23, 24) Simply put, we walk with Jehovah when we closely follow his counsel, which we receive primarily through his written Word and through “the faithful and discreet slave.”—Matt. 24:45; 2 Tim. 3:16.

⁵ Because Jehovah cherishes those who walk with him, he keeps his fatherly eye upon them, caring for them, protecting them, and teaching them. “I shall make you have insight and instruct you in the way you should go,” God says. “I will give advice with my eye upon you.” (Ps. 32:8) Ask yourself: ‘Do I see myself walking hand in hand with Jehovah, as it were, listening to his wisdom and knowing that his loving eye is upon me? Does my awareness of his presence influence my thoughts, words, and deeds? And when I err, do I see Jehovah, not as a God who is aloof and stern, but as a warm, merciful Father who wants to help repentant ones back into his warm embrace?’—Ps. 51:17.

3, 4. What does it mean to ‘walk with God,’ and what Bible examples shed light on this matter?

5. How does Jehovah keep a fatherly eye upon his loyal ones, and how should we feel toward him?

⁶ At times, Jehovah may come to our aid even before we embark on a wrong course. For instance, he may observe that our potentially treacherous heart begins to desire things that are improper. (Jer. 17:9) In such a situation, he can act even sooner than human parents can because his “beaming eyes” have the ability to look deep inside us, to examine our inmost thoughts. (Ps. 11:4; 139:4; Jer. 17:10) Consider God’s response to a situation that developed in the life of Baruch, the prophet Jeremiah’s personal secretary and close friend.

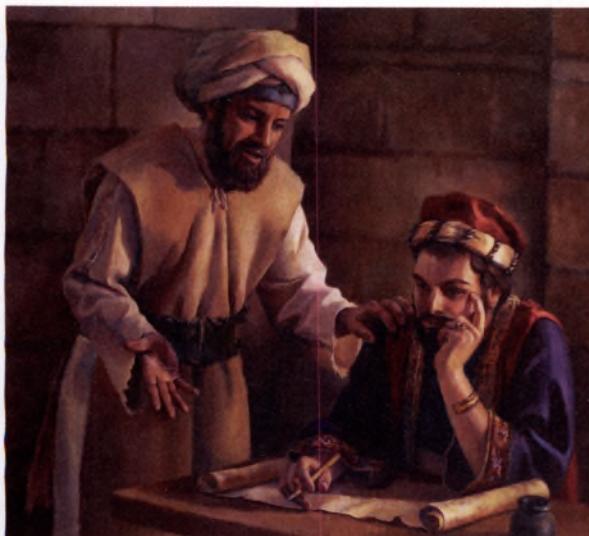
A True Father to Baruch

⁷ Baruch was a professional scribe who faithfully served alongside Jeremiah in what became a difficult assignment—proclaiming Jehovah’s judgments to Judah. (Jer. 1:18, 19) At some point, Baruch, who may have belonged to a prominent family, began to seek “great things” for himself. Perhaps he began to nurture personal ambitions or a desire for material prosperity. Whatever the case, Jehovah saw that this dangerous thinking was developing in Baruch’s heart. Speaking through Jeremiah, Jehovah promptly addressed the matter, saying to Baruch: “You have said: ‘Woe, now, to me, for Jehovah has added grief to my pain! I have grown weary because of my sighing, and no resting-place have I found.’” Then God said: “You keep seeking great things for yourself. Do not keep on seeking.”—Jer. 45:1-5.

⁸ Although he was firm with Baruch, Jehovah reacted, not with anger, but with genuine fatherly concern. Evidently, God saw that the man’s desires did not reflect a wicked or

6. What advantage does Jehovah have over a human parent?

7, 8. (a) Who was Baruch, and what unwholesome desires may have started to develop in his heart? (b) How did Jehovah demonstrate his fatherly concern for Baruch?



Like Jeremiah with Baruch, Christian elders today reflect Jehovah's concern

devious heart. Jehovah also knew that Jerusalem and Judah were in their last days, and he did not want Baruch to stumble at that critical time. Hence, to bring his servant back to reality, God reminded him that He was "bringing in a calamity upon all flesh," adding that if Baruch acted wisely, he would live. (Jer. 45:5) In effect, God said: 'Be realistic, Baruch. Keep in mind what will soon happen to sinful Judah and Jerusalem. Remain faithful and live! I will protect you.' Jehovah evidently reached Baruch's heart, for he responded positively and survived the destruction of Jerusalem, which occurred 17 years later.

⁹ As you reflect on the account about Baruch, consider the following questions and scriptures: What does God's way of dealing with Baruch reveal about Jehovah and his feelings toward his servants? (*Read Hebrews 12:9.*) In view of the critical times in which we live, what can we learn from God's counsel to Baruch and from Baruch's response? (*Read Luke 21:34-36.*) In imitation of Jeremiah, how can Christian elders reflect Jehovah's concern for His servants?—*Read Galatians 6:1.*

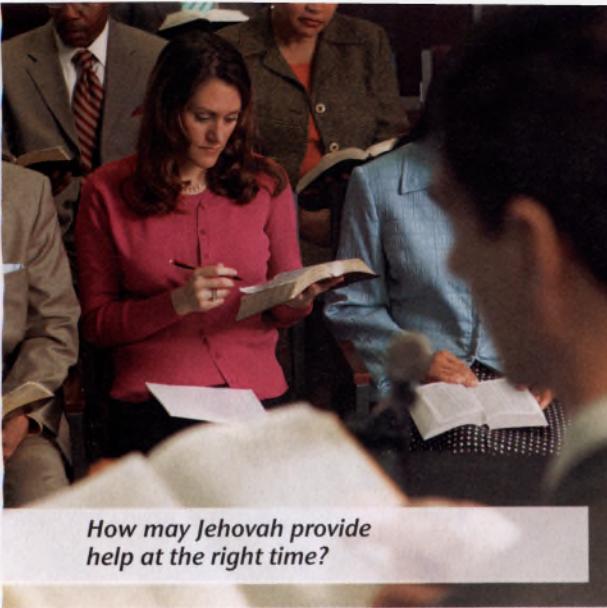
9. How would you answer the questions raised in the paragraph?

The Father's Love Reflected in the Son

¹⁰ During the pre-Christian era, Jehovah's love for his people was revealed through his prophets and other faithful servants. Nowadays, it is seen, above all, in the Head of the Christian congregation, Jesus Christ. (Eph. 1:22, 23) Thus, in the book of Revelation, Jesus is depicted as a lamb with "seven eyes, which eyes mean the seven spirits of God that have been sent forth into the whole earth." (Rev. 5:6) Yes, empowered with the fullness of God's holy spirit, Jesus has perfect discernment. He too sees what we are on the inside, and nothing escapes his notice.

¹¹ Like Jehovah, though, Jesus is no celestial policeman. He examines us through the eyes of love. One of Jesus' titles, "Eternal Father," reminds us of the role he will play in the granting of everlasting life to all who exercise faith in him. (Isa. 9:6) Moreover, as

10. How is Jesus equipped to handle his position as Head of the Christian congregation?
11. What role does Christ play, and how does his attitude toward us reflect that of his Father?



How may Jehovah provide help at the right time?

Head of the Christian congregation, Christ can move willing, spiritually mature Christians, especially elders, to provide comfort or counsel to those in need.—1 Thess. 5:14; 2 Tim. 4:1, 2.

¹² Christ's deep interest in the flock is reflected in the letters to the elders of the seven congregations in Asia Minor. (Rev. 2:1-3:22) Therein, Jesus indicated both his awareness of what was happening in each congregation and the depth of his concern for his followers. The same applies today—only more so—since the Revelation vision is fulfilled during “the Lord's Day.”* (Rev. 1:10) Christ's love is often expressed through the elders, who serve as spiritual shepherds of the congregation. He can move these “gifts in men” to give comfort, encouragement, or counsel when needed. (Eph. 4:8; Acts 20:28; *read Isaiah 32:1, 2.*) Do you view their efforts as an expression of Christ's interest in you personally?

* Although the letters apply primarily to Christ's anointed followers, in principle they apply to all of God's servants.

12. (a) What do the letters to the seven congregations in Asia Minor reveal about Jesus? (b) How do elders reflect Christ's attitude toward God's flock?

Help at the Right Time

¹³ Have you ever prayed intensely for help and received an answer in the form of an encouraging visit from a spiritually mature Christian? (Jas. 5:14-16) Or perhaps the help came in the form of a talk at a Christian meeting or information in one of our publications. Jehovah often answers prayers in these ways. For example, after giving a talk, an elder was approached by a sister who in the weeks prior to the talk had been the victim of a gross injustice. Instead of complaining about her problem, she expressed deep appreciation for certain scriptural points made in the talk. They applied to her situation and gave her much comfort. How glad she was that she had attended that meeting!

¹⁴ Regarding help received through prayer, consider the example of three prison inmates who came to a knowledge of Bible truth while incarcerated and became unbaptized publishers. Because of a violent incident, a number of privileges were taken away from all the prisoners in the facility. That sparked a protest. The prisoners decided that after breakfast the next morning, as an act of defiance, they would refuse to return their plates. The three unbaptized publishers were now in a dilemma. If they joined in the revolt, they would be violating Jehovah's counsel found at Romans 13:1. If they did not join in, they could expect reprisals from angry inmates.

¹⁵ Unable to communicate with one another, the three men prayed for wisdom. The following morning, all three found that they had decided on exactly the same solution—they simply would decline breakfast. When the guards later came to collect the plates, the three men had none to return.

13-15. How may God choose to answer our prayers? Give examples.

How glad they were that the “Hearer of prayer” was near!—Ps. 65:2.

Facing the Future With Confidence

¹⁶ The worldwide preaching work is yet another evidence of Jehovah’s concern for honesthearted individuals, wherever they may live. (Gen. 18:25) Jehovah, often by using angelic direction, can guide his servants to sheeplike ones—even if these live in areas not yet reached by the good news. (Rev. 14:6, 7) For example, by means of an angel, God directed Philip, an evangelizer of the first century, to intercept an Ethiopian official and open up the Scriptures to him. The result? The man accepted the good news and became a baptized follower of Jesus.*—John 10:14; Acts 8:26-39.

¹⁷ As the present system of things moves toward its end, the foretold “pangs of distress” will continue. (Matt. 24:8) For ex-

* Another example of heavenly direction can be found at Acts 16:6-10. There, we read that Paul and his companions “were forbidden by the holy spirit” to preach in Asia and Bithynia. Instead, they were summoned to work in Macedonia, where many meek individuals responded to their evangelizing.

16. How does the preaching work show Jehovah’s concern for sheeplike ones?

17. Why should we not become overly anxious about the future?

Can You Explain?

- How can we show that we are ‘walking with God’?
- How did Jehovah demonstrate his love for Baruch?
- As Head of the Christian congregation, how does Jesus reflect his Father’s qualities?
- In what ways can we show that we trust in God during these critical times?

ample, food prices may rise considerably because of increasing demand, extreme weather, or economic instability. Employment may become harder to find, and employees may come under increased pressure to work longer hours. Whatever happens, all who keep spiritual interests in first place and maintain a ‘simple eye’ need not be overly anxious. They know that God loves them and will care for them. (Matt. 6:22-34) Consider, for example, how Jehovah provided for Jeremiah at the time of Jerusalem’s turbulent end in 607 B.C.E.

¹⁸ During the latter part of the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem, Jeremiah was imprisoned in the Courtyard of the Guard. How would he obtain food? Had he been free, he could have searched for it. Instead, he was totally dependent on those around him, most of whom hated him! Still, Jeremiah trusted not in men but in God, who promised to care for him. Did Jehovah live up to his word? Absolutely! He saw to it that Jeremiah daily received “a round loaf of bread . . . until all the bread was exhausted from the city.” (Jer. 37:21) Jeremiah, as well as Baruch, Ebed-melech, and others, survived that time of famine, disease, and death.—Jer. 38:2; 39:15-18.

¹⁹ Yes, “the eyes of Jehovah are upon the righteous ones, and his ears are toward their supplication.” (1 Pet. 3:12) Do you rejoice in your heavenly Father’s watchfulness? Do you feel safe and secure in knowing that his eyes are upon you for your good? Be determined, then, to continue walking with God—no matter what the future may hold. We can be sure that Jehovah will always keep a close, fatherly eye upon all his loyal ones.—Ps. 32:8; read Isaiah 41:13.

18. How did Jehovah prove his love for Jeremiah during the siege of Jerusalem?

19. As we face the future, what should be our resolve?

JEHOVAH'S ANSWER TO A HEARTFELT PRAYER

"That people may know that you, whose name is Jehovah, you alone are the Most High over all the earth." —PS. 83:18.

SOME years ago, a woman was deeply disturbed by a tragedy that occurred in her neighborhood. Born into a Roman Catholic family, she went to the local priest for help, but he was unwilling even to speak with her. So she prayed to God: "I don't know who you are . . . , but I know you're there. Please let me know you!" A short while later, Jehovah's Witnesses visited her and gave her the comfort and knowledge she had sought. Among many other things, they taught her that God has a personal name, Jehovah. Learning that was a very emotional experience for her. "Imagine," she said, "this was the God I had longed to know since I was a child!"

² Many have had a similar experience. Often, they first saw Jehovah's name when they read Psalm 83:18 in the Bible. In the *New World Translation*, that verse reads: "That people may know that you, whose name is Jehovah, you alone are the Most High over

all the earth." Have you ever wondered, though, why Psalm 83 was written? What events would force *everyone* to acknowledge that Jehovah is the only true God? What message does this psalm have for us today? We will consider those questions in this article.*

A Conspiracy Against Jehovah's People

³ According to the superscription, Psalm 83 is "a melody of Asaph." The composer of the psalm was likely a descendant of the Levite Asaph, a prominent musician during the reign of King David. In the psalm, the psalmist begs Jehovah to take action so as to uphold His sovereignty and make His name known. The psalm must have been composed some time after Solomon's death. Why? Because during the reigns of David and Solomon, Tyre's king was friendly toward Israel. By the time Psalm 83 was composed, the inhabitants of Tyre had turned against Israel and had sided with its enemies.

⁴ The psalmist names ten nations that were conspiring to destroy God's people. Those enemies were situated all around Israel and are listed as follows: "The tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites, Moab and the Hagrites, Gebal and Ammon and Amalek,

* Before considering this article, you would benefit from reading Psalm 83 in order to familiarize yourself with its contents.

3, 4. By whom was Psalm 83 composed, and what threat does he describe?

What moved one psalmist to compose a heartfelt prayer?



Philistia together with the inhabitants of Tyre. Also, Assyria itself has become joined with them." (Ps. 83:6-8) To what historical event does the psalm refer? Some suggest that the psalm refers to the attack on Israel by the coalition of Ammon, Moab, and the inhabitants of Mount Seir in the days of Jehoshaphat. (2 Chron. 20:1-26) Others believe that it speaks of the general hostility Israel experienced from its neighbors throughout its history.

⁵ Whatever the case, it is evident that Jehovah God inspired the writing of this prayerful song at a time when his nation was in danger. The psalm also provides encouragement for God's servants today, who throughout their history have faced one attack after another by enemies determined to destroy them. And it will surely strengthen us in the near future when Gog of Magog marshals his forces in one final attempt to destroy all who worship God in spirit and truth.—*Read Ezekiel 38:2, 8, 9, 16.*

A Matter of Primary Concern

⁶ Listen as the psalmist pours out his feelings in prayer: "O God, let there be no silence on your part; do not keep speechless, and do not stay quiet, O Divine One. For, look! your very enemies are in an uproar; and the very ones intensely hating you have raised their head. Against your people they cunningly carry on their confidential talk . . . For with the heart they have unitedly exchanged counsel; against you they proceeded to conclude even a covenant."—Ps. 83:1-3, 5.

⁷ What was the psalmist's foremost concern? Of course, he must have been very worried about his own personal safety and

5. What benefit do Christians today gain from Psalm 83?

6, 7. (a) What does the psalmist pray for in the opening words of Psalm 83? (b) What was the psalmist's foremost concern?

that of his family. Yet, the subject of his prayer was the reproach being brought on Jehovah's name and the threats against the nation that bore that name. May we all keep a similar, balanced viewpoint as we endure the difficult final days of this old world.—*Read Matthew 6:9, 10.*

⁸ The psalmist quotes Israel's enemies as saying: "Come and let us efface them from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be remembered no more." (Ps. 83:4) What hatred those nations had for God's chosen people! But they had another motive for their conspiracy. They coveted Israel's land and boasted: "Let us take possession of the abiding places of God for ourselves." (Ps. 83:12) Has something similar been true in our day? Yes!

"Your Holy Abiding Place"

⁹ In ancient times, the Promised Land was referred to as God's holy abiding place. Recall the victory song that the Israelites sang after being delivered from Egypt: "You in your loving-kindness have led the people whom you have recovered; you in your strength will certainly conduct them to your holy abiding place." (Ex. 15:13) Later, that "abiding place" contained a temple with its priesthood and a capital city, Jerusalem, with a line of kings who descended from David and sat on Jehovah's throne. (1 Chron. 29:23) Not without reason, Jesus called Jerusalem "the city of the great King."—Matt. 5:35.

¹⁰ What about in our day? In 33 C.E., a new nation, "the Israel of God," was born. (Gal. 6:16) That nation, made up of anointed brothers of Jesus Christ, fulfilled the task that fleshly Israel ultimately failed in, that of

8. What was the objective of the nations in conspiring against Israel?

9, 10. (a) In ancient times, what was God's holy abiding place? (b) What blessings are enjoyed today by the anointed remnant and the "other sheep"?

being witnesses to God's name. (Isa. 43:10; 1 Pet. 2:9) To them, Jehovah made the same promise that he made to ancient Israel: "I shall be their God, and they will be my people." (2 Cor. 6:16; Lev. 26:12) In 1919, Jehovah brought the remaining ones of "the Israel of God" into a favored position, and at that time, they took possession of a "land," a spiritual realm of activity wherein they have enjoyed a spiritual paradise. (Isa. 66:8) Since the 1930's, millions of "other sheep" have flocked to their side. (John 10:16) The happiness and spiritual prosperity of these modern-day Christians furnishes powerful evidence of the rightness of Jehovah's sovereignty. (*Read Psalm 91:1, 2.*) How that infuriates Satan!

¹¹ Throughout the time of the end, Satan has incited his earthly agents to oppose the anointed remnant and their other sheep companions. That happened in Western Europe under the Nazis and in Eastern Europe under the Communist government of the Soviet Union. It also happened in many other lands, and it will happen again, especially during the final attack of Gog of Magog. In that attack, opposers may greedily seize the property and possessions of Jehovah's people, as enemies have done in the past. Satan's main goal, however, has always been to break

11. What continues to be the main goal of God's enemies?

Can You Explain?

- What situation faced Israel when Psalm 83 was written?
- What was the primary concern of the writer of Psalm 83?
- Who have been the object of Satan's enmity today?
- How will Jehovah finally answer the prayer expressed in Psalm 83:18?

us up as a people so that our God-given name will be remembered no more. How does Jehovah react to such defiance of his sovereignty? Look back at the words of the psalmist.

A Pattern for Jehovah's Victory

¹² Note the psalmist's strong faith in Jehovah's ability to frustrate the plans of enemy nations. He weaves together two decisive victories of Israel over its enemies near the ancient city of Megiddo, which dominated a valley plain of the same name. During the summer, the dry bed of the Kishon River can be seen winding through the valley plain. After a winter downpour, the river floods the plain. Perhaps for that reason, the river is also called "the waters of Megiddo."—Judg. 4:13; 5:19.

¹³ About ten miles across the valley from Megiddo lies the hill of Moreh where in the days of Judge Gideon, the combined troops of Midianites, Amalekites, and Easterners gathered to wage war. (Judg. 7:1, 12) Gideon's small force finally numbered only 300 men, but with Jehovah's help, they routed the large enemy force. How? Following God's direction, they surrounded the enemy camp at night holding jars that concealed flaming torches. When Gideon gave the signal, his men smashed the jars and the hidden torches were suddenly revealed. At the same time, they blew their horns and shouted: "Jehovah's sword and Gideon's!" The enemy were thrown into confusion, and they turned to killing one another; survivors fled across the Jordan River. Meanwhile, more Israelites joined in pursuit of the enemy. Altogether, 120,000 enemy soldiers were slaughtered.—Judg. 7:19-25; 8:10.

¹⁴ Some four miles beyond the hill of Moreh, across the valley from Megiddo, lies

12-14. What two historic victories near the city of Megiddo does the psalmist call to mind?

Mount Tabor. There, Judge Barak had earlier gathered 10,000 Israelite troops to confront the army of Jabin, the Canaanite king of Hazor, under the command of his military chief Sisera. This Canaanite army had 900 war chariots equipped with deadly long blades of iron that turned with the wheels. As Israel's poorly equipped troops assembled on Mount Tabor, Sisera's army was lured into the valley. Then, "Jehovah began to throw Sisera and all his war chariots and all the camp into confusion." Likely, a sudden downpour of rain caused the chariots to get bogged down because of the overflowing Kishon River. The entire army was slaughtered by the Israelites.—Judg. 4:13-16; 5:19-21.

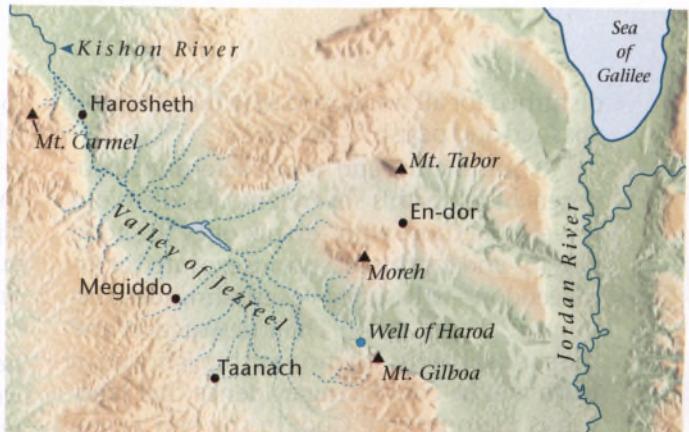
¹⁵ The psalmist begs Jehovah to do something similar to the nations who threaten Israel's existence in his day. He prays: "Do to them as to Midian, as to Sisera, as to Jabin at the torrent valley of Kishon. They were annihilated at En-dor; they became manure for the ground." (Ps. 83:9, 10) Significantly, God's final war against Satan's world is called Har-Magedon (meaning "Mountain of Megiddo"), or Armageddon. That name reminds us of the dramatic battles that took place near Megiddo. Jehovah's victory in those ancient wars assures us of his certain triumph in the battle of Armageddon.—Rev. 16:13-16.

Pray for Jehovah's Vindication

¹⁶ Throughout these "last days," Jehovah has thwarted all efforts to eliminate his people. (2 Tim. 3:1) As a result, opposers have been shamed. Psalm 83:16 foreshad-

15. (a) What does the psalmist pray that Jehovah will do? (b) Of what does the name of God's final battle remind us?

16. How have the faces of opposers been 'filled with dishonor' today?



How do the battles fought near ancient Megiddo relate to our future?

owed this when it said: "Fill their faces with dishonor, that people may search for your name, O Jehovah." In country after country, opposers have failed miserably in their effort to silence Jehovah's Witnesses. In those lands, the steadfastness and endurance of worshippers of the one true God have served as a witness to righthearted ones, and many have 'searched for Jehovah's name.' In a number of lands where Jehovah's Witnesses were once viciously persecuted, there are now tens of thousands, even hundreds of thousands, of happy praisers of Jehovah. What a triumph for Jehovah! And how embarrassing for his enemies!—*Read Jeremiah 1:19.*

¹⁷ We know, of course, that the battle is not over. And we continue to preach the good news—even to opposers. (Matt. 24:14, 21) However, the opportunity now open to such opposers to repent and gain salvation will soon come to an end. The sanctification of Jehovah's name is far more important than human salvation. (*Read Ezekiel 38:23.*) When the nations combine in the foretold earth-wide effort to destroy God's people, we will remember these words of the psalmist's prayer: "O may they be ashamed and be

17. What critical situation faces mankind, and what words will we soon remember?

disturbed for all times, and may they become abashed and perish.”—Ps. 83:17.

¹⁸ A humiliating end awaits determined opposers of Jehovah’s sovereignty. God’s Word reveals that those who “do not obey the good news”—and for this reason are executed at Armageddon—will suffer “everlasting destruction.” (2 Thess. 1:7-9) Their destruction and the survival of those who worship Jehovah in truth will be convincing evidence that Jehovah is the only true God. In the new world, that great victory will not be forgotten. Those who come back in the “resurrection of . . . the

^{18, 19.} (a) What awaits determined opposers of Jehovah’s sovereignty? (b) How does the approaching final vindication of Jehovah’s sovereignty affect you?

righteous and the unrighteous” will learn of Jehovah’s great act. (Acts 24:15) In the new world, they will see convincing evidence of the wisdom of living under Jehovah’s sovereignty. And meek ones among them will quickly be convinced that Jehovah is the only true God.

¹⁹ What a marvelous future our loving heavenly Father has prepared for his faithful worshippers! Are you not moved to pray that Jehovah will soon provide a final answer to the psalmist’s prayer to Jehovah: “May [your enemies] become abashed and perish; that people may know that you, whose name is Jehovah, you alone are the Most High over all the earth”?—Ps. 83:17, 18.

“This Is Indeed God’s Most Holy and Great Name”

Nicholas of Cusa made that statement in a sermon he gave in the year 1430.* He was a man of many interests, focusing his attention, for instance, on the study of Greek, Hebrew, philosophy, theology, mathematics, and astronomy. At the age of 22, he became a doctor of Roman Catholic canon law. In 1448 he was appointed cardinal.

About 550 years ago, Nicholas of Cusa founded a nursing home for the elderly in Kues, now known as Bernkastel-Kues, a town located about 80 miles south of Bonn, in Germany. This same building now houses Cusa’s library of more than 310 manuscripts. One of them is the Codex Cusanus 220 in which Cusa’s sermon of 1430 can be found. In that sermon,

In principio erat verbum (In the Beginning Was the Word), Nicholas of Cusa used the Latin spelling *Iehoua* for Jehovah.* Folio 56 contains the following statement regarding God’s name: “It is God-given. It is the Tetragrammaton, i.e., the name composed of four letters. . . . This is indeed God’s most holy and great name.” Nicholas of Cusa’s statement agrees with the fact that God’s name appears in the original text of the Hebrew Scriptures.—Ex. 6:3.

This codex from the early 15th century is one of the oldest extant documents in which the Tetragrammaton is rendered “*Iehoua*.” This written testimony is further evidence that forms of God’s name similar to “Jehovah” have been the most common literary transcription of God’s name for centuries.

* Nicholas of Cusa was also known as Nikolaus Cryfts (Krebs), Nicolaus Cusanus, and Nikolaus von Kues. Kues was the name of the German town where he was born.



Cusa’s Library

"JEHOVAH IS MY STRENGTH"

AS TOLD BY
JOAN COVILLE



I was born in July 1925 in Huddersfield, England. I was an only child and in poor health. In fact, my father used to say, "Whenever the wind blows on you, you get sick." And that seemed to be true!

WHEN I was a child, clergymen prayed fervently for peace, but when the second world war broke out, they prayed for victory. This puzzled me and raised doubts in my mind. Just at that time, along came Annie Ratcliffe, the only Witness of Jehovah living in our area.

Contact With the Truth

Annie left the book *Salvation* with us and invited Mother to attend a Bible discussion that would be held in Annie's home.* My mother asked me to go along. I still remember that first discussion. It was about the ransom, and to my surprise, the discussion was not boring at all. It answered many of my questions. The following week, we attended again. That time, Jesus' prophecy on the sign of the last days was explained. Looking at the sad conditions in the world, Mom and I immediately recognized the ring of truth. That same day, we were invited to go to the Kingdom Hall.

* *Salvation* was published in 1939. It is now out of print.

In the hall, I met some young pioneers, and among them was Joyce Barber (now Ellis), who still serves with her husband, Peter, at London Bethel. I got the impression that pioneering was something everyone did. So right away I began preaching 60 hours every month, even though I still attended school.

Five months later, on February 11, 1940, Mother and I were baptized at a zone assembly (now called a circuit assembly) in Bradford. Father was tolerant of our newfound faith, but he never took a stand for the truth. About the time I was baptized, street-corner witnessing was introduced. I participated, carrying a magazine bag and placards. One Saturday, I was assigned to stand at the busiest part of a shopping area. I still had a fear of man, and sure enough, it seemed as though all my schoolmates passed the corner where I was standing!

In 1940 the company (as a congregation was then called) to which we belonged needed to be divided. After that took place, nearly all my peers were in the other company. I complained about this to the company



*With my missionary partner,
Astrid Anderson (at right)*



In the traveling work with my husband, 1956

servant (now called presiding overseer). He said, "If you want young companions, go out and find them in the field." And that is exactly what I did! Before long, I met Elsie Noble. She accepted the truth and then became a lifelong friend.

Pioneer Service and Its Blessings

After finishing school, I worked for an accountant. However, as I observed the joy that full-time servants had, my desire to serve Jehovah as a pioneer increased. In May 1945, I had the joy of starting to serve as a special pioneer. During my first day of pioneering, it poured all day. Yet, I was so glad to be out in the preaching work that I could not have cared less about the rain. Actually, being outside every day and getting regular exercise on my bicycle in the ministry had a good effect on my health. Although I have never weighed more than 90 pounds, I have not at any point had to interrupt my pioneer service. Over the years, I have experienced in a very literal sense that "Jehovah is my strength."—Ps. 28:7.

With the goal of starting new congregations, I was as a special pioneer sent to towns where there were no Witnesses. First I served three years in England and then three years in Ireland. While pioneering in Lisburn, Ireland, I studied with a man who was an assistant pastor in a Protestant church. As he learned the truth about basic Bible doctrines, he shared his newly acquired knowledge

with his congregation. Some of them complained to the church authorities, and he was, of course, asked to explain. He said that he felt it was his Christian duty to tell the flock that he had taught them many falsehoods. Although his family severely opposed him, he dedicated his life to Jehovah and served him faithfully until his death.

In Larne, my second pioneer assignment in Ireland, I served alone for six weeks, since my pioneer partner was attending the Theocracy's Increase Assembly in New York, in 1950. That was a hard time for me. I longed to be at the assembly. Yet, during those weeks, I had several encouraging experiences in the field service. I met an elderly man who had accepted one of our publications more than 20 years earlier. Over the years, he had read it so many times that he knew it almost by heart. Together with his son and daughter, he accepted the truth.

Receiving Training at Gilead School

In 1951, along with ten other pioneers from England, I was invited to attend the 17th class of Gilead School in South Lansing, New York. Oh, how I enjoyed the Bible instruction we received during those months! At that time, sisters were not yet enrolled in the Theocratic Ministry School in the local congregations, but at Gilead we sisters received assignments to give student talks and reports. Were we nervous! Throughout my first talk, my hand holding my notes was

shaking. The instructor, Brother Maxwell Friend, humorously said: "Not only were you nervous in the beginning, as all good speakers are, but you were nervous right to the end." During the course, we all improved in our ability to express ourselves in front of the class. All too quickly, our training was finished, and we graduates were assigned to a number of foreign lands. My assignment was Thailand!

"The Land of Smiles"

I consider it to be a gift from Jehovah that Astrid Anderson was assigned to be my missionary partner in Thailand. It took us seven weeks on a cargo ship to get there. When we arrived in the capital, Bangkok, we found a city with hectic marketplaces and a network of canals that served as its thoroughfares. In 1952, there were fewer than 150 Kingdom publishers in Thailand.

When we first saw *The Watchtower* in Thai, we wondered, 'How will we ever be able to speak *that* language?' It was especially challenging to say the words in the right tone. For example, the word *khaiù* spoken with a tone starting high and then dropping means "rice," but the same word spoken with a deep tone means "news." So when we were out in field service, we at first were busy telling people, "I bring you good rice" instead of "good news"! But gradually—and after many laughs—we succeeded.

The Thai people are very friendly. Appropriately, Thailand is called the Land of Smiles. Our first assignment was the city of Khorat (now called Nakhon Ratchasima), where we served for two years. Later, we were assigned to the city of Chiang Mai. Most Thai are Buddhist and are not familiar with the Bible. In Khorat, I studied with the postmaster. We discussed the patriarch Abraham. As the man had heard the name Abraham before, he nodded enthusiastically. I soon

found out, though, that we were not speaking about the same Abraham. The postmaster had in mind Abraham Lincoln, former president of the United States!

We enjoyed teaching honesthearted Thai the Bible, but at the same time, the Thai people taught us how to be happy living a simple life. That lesson was valuable, for in the first missionary home in Khorat, we had no electricity or running water. In such assignments, we "learned the secret of both . . . how to have an abundance and how to suffer want." Like the apostle Paul, we experienced what it means to "have the strength by virtue of him who imparts power."—Phil. 4: 12, 13.

A New Partner and a New Assignment

Back in 1945, I visited London. During that visit, I went to the British Museum together with some other pioneers and Bethelites. One of them was Allan Coville, who shortly thereafter attended the 11th class of Gilead. He was assigned to France and then to Belgium.* Later, while I was still serving as a missionary in Thailand, he asked me to marry him, and I accepted his proposal.

We got married in Brussels, Belgium, on July 9, 1955. I had always dreamed of going to Paris on my honeymoon, so Allan arranged that we would attend an assembly there the following week. However, upon our arrival, Allan was immediately asked to help out as an interpreter during the entire assembly. Every day, he had to leave early in the morning, and we returned to our place of lodging late at night. So I did spend my honeymoon in Paris, but I mostly saw Allan from a distance—on the platform! Even so, I was glad to see my new husband being used to serve his brothers and sisters, and there was no doubt in my mind that if Jehovah was

* Brother Coville's life story appeared in *The Watchtower* of March 15, 1961.

central in our marriage, we would be truly happy.

Marriage also brought me to a new preaching territory—Belgium. Almost all I knew of Belgium was that it had served as a battlefield in several wars, but I soon learned that most Belgians really are peace loving. My assignment also meant that I had to learn French, which is spoken in the southern part of the country.

In 1955 there were some 4,500 publishers in Belgium. For almost 50 years, Allan and I served at Bethel and in the traveling work. The first two and a half years, we traveled by bicycle, up and down the hills, rain or shine. Over the years, we stayed overnight in more than 2,000 different homes of fellow Witnesses! I often met brothers and sisters who were not physically strong but who served Jehovah with all the strength they had. Their example encouraged me not to give up in my service. At the end of each week spent visiting a congregation, we always felt built up. (Rom. 1:11, 12) Allan proved to be a true companion. How truthful are the words at Ecclesiastes 4:9, 10: "Two are better than one, . . . for if one of them should fall, the other one can raise his partner up"!

Blessings From a Life of Serving in 'Jehovah's Strength'

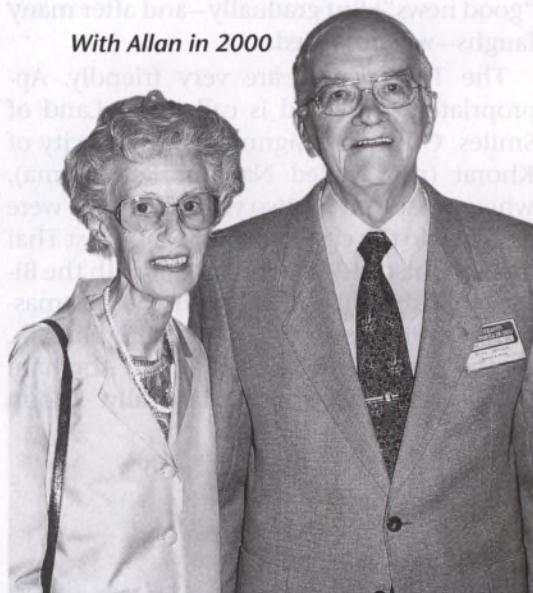
Over the years, Allan and I had many happy experiences in helping others to serve Jehovah. For instance, in 1983 we visited the French congregation in Antwerp, where we stayed with a family who also hosted Benjamin Bandiwila, a young brother from Zaire (now Democratic Republic of Congo). Benjamin had moved to Belgium to pursue a higher education. He told us, "I really envy you the life you have, completely devoted to Jehovah's service." Allan responded: "You say that you envy us; yet you are pursuing a worldly career. Don't you think that is con-

tradictory?" That straightforward comment made Benjamin think about his life. Later back in Zaire, he started pioneering, and he presently serves as a member of the Branch Committee.

In 1999, I underwent surgery to remove an ulcer from my esophagus. Since then, I have weighed only 65 pounds. I really am a fragile 'earthen vessel.' Yet, I am grateful that Jehovah has given me "the power beyond what is normal." After my surgery, he made it possible for me to accompany Allan again in the traveling work. (2 Cor. 4:7) Then, in March 2004, Allan died in his sleep. I miss him very much, but knowing that he is in Jehovah's memory comforts me.

Today, at age 83, I look back on more than 63 years of full-time service. I am still active in the ministry, conducting a Bible study at home and using daily opportunities to speak about Jehovah's wonderful purpose. At times, I wonder, 'What would my life have been like had I not started pioneering in 1945?' Back then, my poor health seemed a valid reason not to do so. How grateful I am, though, that I took up the pioneer service when I was young! I have been privileged to experience personally that if we put Jehovah first, he will be our strength.

With Allan in 2000



DO YOU TAKE THE LEAD IN SHOWING HONOR?

"In showing honor to one another take the lead."—ROM. 12:10.

IN SOME parts of the world, it is the custom for young children to honor adults by kneeling respectfully when in their company. In this way, they do not stand taller than those who are older. In these communities, it is also viewed as an act of disrespect for a child to turn his or her back to an adult. Although respect is shown in different ways in various cultures, such displays of respect remind us of the Mosaic Law. This included the command: "Before gray hair you should rise up [in respect], and you must show consideration for the person of an old man." (Lev. 19:32) Sadly, in many places it is no longer common to show honor to others. In fact, disrespect is the order of the day.

² God's Word puts a high value on showing honor. It tells us to honor Jehovah and Jesus. (John 5:23) We are also commanded to show honor to family members and fellow believers as well as to some outside the congregation. (Rom. 12:10; Eph. 6:1, 2; 1 Pet. 2:17) What are some ways in which we show that we honor Jehovah? How do we show honor, or deep respect, to our Christian brothers and sisters? Let us consider these and some related questions.

Honor Jehovah and His Name

³ One important way to honor Jehovah is by showing proper respect for his name. Af-

1. What is no longer common in many parts of the world?
2. God's Word tells us to honor whom?
3. What is one important way to honor Jehovah?

ter all, we are "a people for his name." (Acts 15:14) It is truly an honor to bear the name of the almighty God, Jehovah. The prophet Micah said: "All the peoples, for their part, will walk each one in the name of its god; but we, for our part, shall walk in the name of Jehovah our God to time indefinite, even forever." (Mic. 4:5) We "walk in the name of Jehovah" by striving to live each day in a way that reflects well on the name we bear. As Paul reminded the Christians in Rome, if we do not live in harmony with the good news we preach, the name of God is "blasphemed," brought into disrepute.—Rom. 2:21-24.

⁴ We also honor Jehovah by our witnessing work. In the past, Jehovah invited members of the nation of Israel to be his witnesses, but they failed to fulfill that role. (Isa. 43:1-12) They often turned their backs on Jehovah and "pained even the Holy One of Israel." (Ps. 78:40, 41) Eventually, the nation lost Jehovah's favor completely. We today, though, are grateful for the privilege of bearing witness to Jehovah and making his name known. We do so because we love him and long for his name to be sanctified. How could we refrain from preaching when we know the truth about our heavenly Father and his purposes? We feel as did the apostle Paul when he said: "Necessity is laid upon me. Really, woe is me if I did not declare the good news!"—1 Cor. 9:16.

4. How do you view the privilege of bearing witness to Jehovah?

⁵ The psalmist David stated: "Those knowing your name will trust in you, for you will certainly not leave those looking for you, O Jehovah." (Ps. 9:10) If we truly know Jehovah and look to his name with respect for what it stands for, we will trust in him just as did his faithful servants of old. Having this trust and faith in Jehovah is yet another way to show him honor. Note how God's Word makes a connection between trusting in Jehovah and respecting him. When ancient Israel failed to trust in Him, Jehovah asked Moses: "How long will this people treat me *without respect*, and how long will they *not put faith* in me for all the signs that I performed in among them?" (Num. 14:11) The opposite also holds true. By trusting in Jehovah to protect and sustain us even during trials, we show that we respect him.

⁶ Jesus indicated that respect for Jehovah must come from the inner person. Speaking to those whose worship was not sincere, Jesus quoted Jehovah as saying: "This people honors me with their lips, yet their heart is far removed from me." (Matt. 15:8) Sincere respect for Jehovah springs from heartfelt love for him. (1 John 5:3) And we also keep in mind Jehovah's promise: "Those honoring me I shall honor."—1 Sam. 2:30.

Those Taking the Lead Show Respect for Others

⁷ The apostle Paul admonished fellow believers: "In showing honor to one another take the lead." (Rom. 12:10) Brothers who hold responsible positions in the congregation should set the example—"take the

5. How is having faith in Jehovah related to having respect for him?
6. What moves us to show deep respect for Jehovah?
7. (a) Why should brothers holding responsible positions show honor to those under their oversight? (b) How did Paul show respect for fellow believers?

lead"—in showing honor to those under their oversight. In that regard, ones with weighty responsibilities do well to follow the example set by Paul. (*Read 1 Thessalonians 2:7, 8.*) The brothers in the congregations Paul visited knew that he would never ask them to do things that he himself was unwilling to do. Paul showed respect for fellow believers, and in turn he earned their respect. When Paul said: "I entreat you, therefore, become imitators of me," we can be sure that many willingly responded because of his fine example.—1 Cor. 4:16.

⁸ Another way in which a responsible brother shows respect for those under his oversight is by giving them reasons for the requests he makes or the directions he gives. By doing so, he imitates Jesus. For instance, when telling his disciples to pray for more workers to be sent into the harvest, Jesus told them why. He said: "The harvest is great, but the workers are few. *Therefore*, beg the Master of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest." (Matt. 9:37, 38) Similarly, when he told his disciples to "keep on the watch," he gave them a reason. He said: "*Because* you do not know on what day your Lord is coming." (Matt. 24:42) Time and again, Jesus told his disciples not only what they should do but also why they should do it. In that way, he showed them respect and dignified them. What a fine example for Christian overseers to follow!

Respect Jehovah's Congregation and Its Direction

⁹ To honor Jehovah, we also need to honor the worldwide Christian congregation, along with its representatives. When we heed Scrip-

8. (a) What is one important way in which Jesus showed respect for his disciples? (b) How can overseers today follow Jesus' example?
9. Of what is respect for the worldwide Christian congregation and its representatives a reflection? Explain.

tural counsel from the faithful slave class, we show respect for Jehovah's arrangement. In the first-century Christian congregation, the apostle John saw the need to censure those who showed a lack of respect for appointed ones. (*Read 3 John 9-11.*) John's words show that there was a lack of respect not only for the individual overseers but also for their teaching and direction. Happily, most Christians were not like that. While the apostles were alive, the brotherhood as a whole evidently showed deep respect for those taking the lead.—Phil. 2:12.

¹⁰ Some have reasoned that since Jesus told his disciples "all you are brothers," there should be no positions of authority in the Christian congregation. (Matt. 23:8) However, both the Hebrew and the Greek Scriptures have numerous examples of men who exercised authority given to them by God. The history of the patriarchs, judges, and kings among the ancient Hebrews provides ample evidence that Jehovah gives direction through human representatives. When the people did not properly honor the appointed individuals, they were disciplined by Jehovah.—2 Ki. 1:2-17; 2:19, 23, 24.

¹¹ In a similar way, first-century Christians acknowledged the authority of the apostles. (Acts 2:42) Paul, for example, gave direction to his brothers. (1 Cor.

16:1; 1 Thess. 4:2) Nevertheless, he also willingly submitted to those who had authority over him. (Acts 15:22; Gal. 2:9, 10) Indeed, Paul had the proper view of authority in the Christian congregation.

10, 11. Explain from the Scriptures why it is proper that some have a measure of authority in the Christian congregation.

¹² The lesson we learn is twofold. First, it is Scriptural for "the faithful and discreet slave" through its Governing Body to appoint men to positions of responsibility, and some men are appointed to exercise authority over other appointed men. (Matt. 24:45-47; 1 Pet. 5:1-3) Second, all of us, including appointed men, should honor those who have authority over us. What, then, are some practical ways in which we can honor those who hold positions of oversight in the worldwide Christian congregation?

Showing Respect for Traveling Overseers

¹³ Paul stated: "We request you, brothers, to have regard for those who are working hard among you and presiding over you in the Lord and admonishing you; and to give them more than extraordinary consideration in love because of their work. Be peaceable with one another." (1 Thess. 5:12, 13) Traveling overseers are certainly to be counted among "those who are working hard." Therefore, let us give them "more than extraordinary consideration." One way to do so is by responding wholeheartedly to their

12. What twofold lesson regarding authority can we learn from Biblical examples?

13. How can we show respect for modern-day representatives of the Christian congregation?

First-century Christians respected the oversight of the governing body





Elders in every land honor traveling overseers, who are appointed by the Governing Body

counsel and encouragement. When such an overseer conveys to us direction from the faithful slave class, the "wisdom from above" will move us to be "ready to obey."—Jas. 3:17.

¹⁴ What, though, if we are directed to do things in a way that is different from what we are used to? Showing respect may at times require that we fight the urge to object, "We don't do things that way here" or, "That may work in other places but not in our congregation." Instead, we strive to comply. Keeping closely in mind that the congregation belongs to Jehovah and that Jesus is its Head will help us to do so. When direction from a traveling overseer is received with joy and is implemented by the congregation, it is evidence of heartfelt respect. The apostle Paul commended the brothers in Corinth for the respectful obedience they showed toward the direction that was given by the visiting elder, Titus. (2 Cor. 7:13-16) Today, we can likewise be sure that the willingness with which we apply the

14. How does the congregation give evidence of heartfelt respect for traveling overseers, and what is the result?

guidance received from traveling overseers contributes greatly to the joy we experience in our preaching work.—*Read 2 Corinthians 13:11.*

"Honor Men of All Sorts"

¹⁵ Paul wrote: "Do not severely criticize an older man. To the contrary, entreat him as a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters with all chasteness. Honor widows that are actually widows." (1 Tim. 5:1-3)

Yes, God's Word admonishes us to honor everyone in the Christian congregation. What, though, if there is a personal difference between you and your brother or sister? Will that hinder you from carrying out your obligation to respect your fellow Christian? Or could you adjust your attitude by recognizing the spiritual qualities of that servant of God? Those with authority especially should maintain a respectful view of their brothers—never "lording it over . . . the flock." (1 Pet. 5:3) Indeed, in the Christian congregation, which is identified by the heartfelt love that exists among its members,

15. What are some ways in which we show respect for fellow believers?

How Would You Answer?

How can you show proper respect for:

- Jehovah?
- Congregation elders and traveling overseers?
- Each member of the congregation?
- Those to whom you preach?

we have numerous opportunities to honor one another.—*Read John 13:34, 35.*

¹⁶ Of course, we do not limit our respect to those who are part of the Christian congregation. Paul wrote to Christians in his day: “As long as we have time favorable for it, let us work what is good toward all.” (Gal. 6:10) Granted, applying that principle can be a challenge if a workmate or a schoolmate treats us unkindly. At such moments, we need to remember the words: “Do not show yourself heated up because of the evildoers.”

16, 17. (a) Why is it important to have respect not only for those to whom we preach but also for opposers? (b) How do we “honor men of all sorts”?

(Ps. 37:1) Applying that counsel will help us to respond respectfully even to opposers. Similarly, while we engage in the public ministry, a humble view of ourselves can help us to respond to all with “a mild temper and deep respect.” (1 Pet. 3:15) Even our appearance and dress can indicate that we respect those to whom we preach.

¹⁷ Indeed, whether we are dealing with our fellow believers or with those outside the congregation, we want to strive to apply the admonition: “Honor men of all sorts, have love for the whole association of brothers, be in fear of God, have honor for the king.” —1 Pet. 2:17.

WHAT WILL YOU GIVE TO KEEP LIVING?

“What will a man give in exchange for his soul?”—MATT. 16:26.

THE apostle Peter could not believe his ears. His beloved Leader, Jesus Christ, was saying “with outspokenness” that He was soon to suffer and die! In response, Peter—doubtless with the best of intentions—rebuked Jesus, saying: “Be kind to yourself, Lord; you will not have this destiny at all.” Jesus turned his back on Peter and looked at the other disciples. Likely they too shared this mistaken opinion. Then he said to Peter: “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me, because you think, not God’s thoughts, but those of men.”—Mark 8:32, 33; Matt. 16:21-23.

² Jesus’ next words may have helped Peter to see the reason for Jesus’ strong reaction to

1. Why did Jesus reject Peter’s rebuke?
2. How did Jesus define the requirements of true discipleship?

his rebuke. Jesus “called the crowd to him with his disciples” and said: “If anyone wants to come after me, let him disown himself and pick up his torture stake and follow me continually. For whoever wants to save his soul will lose it; but whoever loses his soul for the sake of me and the good news will save it.” (Mark 8:34, 35) Jesus here used the word “soul” to mean “life.” Clearly, not only was he about to sacrifice his life but he also expected that those who followed him would have to be ready to sacrifice their lives in God’s service. If they did so, they would receive a rich reward.—*Read Matthew 16:27.*

³ On that same occasion, Jesus asked two thought-provoking questions: “Of what

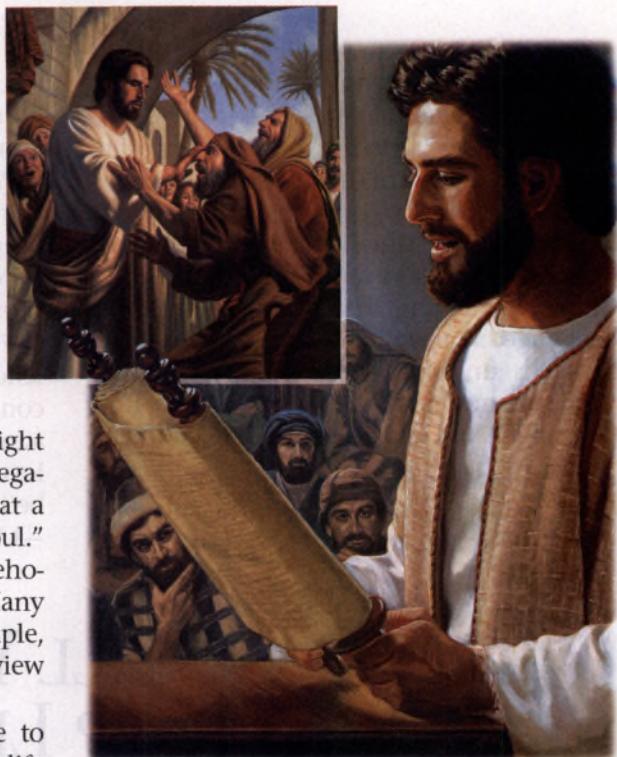
3. (a) What questions did Jesus ask his listeners?
- (b) Of what might Jesus’ second question have reminded his listeners?

benefit is it for a man to gain the whole world and to forfeit his soul?" and, "What, really, would a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark 8:36, 37) The answer to the first question is obvious from a human standpoint. It is of no benefit for a man to gain the whole world if he loses his life, his soul. Possessions are useful only if one is alive to enjoy them. Jesus' second question: "What, really, would a man give in exchange for his soul?" might have reminded his listeners of Satan's allegation in the days of Job: "Everything that a man has he will give in behalf of his soul." (Job 2:4) For some who do not worship Jehovah, Satan's words might be true. Many would do anything, abandon any principle, just to stay alive. Christians, though, view things differently.

⁴ We know that Jesus did not come to earth to give us health, wealth, and a long life in this world. He came to open up the opportunity of living forever in the new world, and the prospect of that life is what we value highly. (John 3:16) A Christian would understand Jesus' first question to mean, "Of what benefit is it for a man to gain the whole world and to forfeit his hope of everlasting life?" The answer is, Of no benefit at all. (1 John 2: 15-17) To help us answer Jesus' second question, we might well ask ourselves, 'How much am I willing to sacrifice now to make my hope of life in the new world sure?' Our answer to that question, as seen in our life course, reveals the strength of that hope in our hearts.—Compare John 12:25.

⁵ Of course, Jesus was not saying that everlasting life can be earned. Life—even our relatively brief life in this system of things—is a gift. We cannot purchase it or do anything to

4. Why do Jesus' questions have deeper meaning for Christians?
5. How can we receive the gift of everlasting life?



Jesus always did the things that pleased God

deserve it. The only way we can receive the gift of everlasting life is to "put our faith in Christ Jesus" and in Jehovah, "the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him." (Gal. 2: 16; Heb. 11:6) Nevertheless, faith must be demonstrated by actions, since "faith without works is dead." (Jas. 2:26) Hence, when we further meditate on Jesus' question, we would do well to consider seriously how much we are willing to give up in this system of things and what we are willing to do in Jehovah's service to demonstrate that our faith is truly alive.

"Christ Did Not Please Himself"

6. Instead of setting his sights on what the world of his day had to offer, Jesus focused on the important things and rejected the temptation of material self-interest. His life
6. What was Jesus' priority?

was one of sacrifice and obedience to God. Rather than please himself, he said: "I always do the things pleasing to [God]." (John 8:29) How far did Jesus go in order to please God?

⁷ On one occasion, Jesus said to his disciples: "The Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his soul a ransom in exchange for many." (Matt. 20:28) Earlier, when Jesus began to warn his followers that he would soon have to "give his soul," Peter urged him to be kind to himself. Still, Jesus was not swayed. He willingly gave up his soul, his perfect human life, for mankind. As a result of his unselfish course, Jesus' own future was secure. He was resurrected and "exalted to the right hand of God." (Acts 2:32, 33) He thus became a wonderful example for us.

⁸ The apostle Paul counseled Christians in Rome "not to be pleasing" themselves and reminded them that "even the Christ did not please himself." (Rom. 15:1-3) So, then, to what extent will we apply that apostolic counsel and give of ourselves in imitation of Christ?

Jehovah Desires Our Best

⁹ In ancient Israel, the Mosaic Law stipulated that Hebrew slaves were to be freed either in the seventh year of servitude or during the Jubilee year. However, they had another option. If a slave came to love his owner, he could choose to remain a slave in the household for the rest of his life. (*Read Deuteronomy 15:12, 16, 17.*) We make a similar choice when we dedicate ourselves to God. We voluntarily agree to do God's will, not follow our own inclinations. In doing so, we demon-

7, 8. (a) What sacrifice did Jesus make, and how was he rewarded? (b) What question should we ask ourselves?

9. What does a Christian actually do when he dedicates himself to God?

strate our deep love for Jehovah and our desire to serve him forever.

¹⁰ If you are currently studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses, sharing in preaching the good news, and attending Christian meetings, you are to be commended. We hope that soon you will feel moved to dedicate yourself to Jehovah and ask the question that the Ethiopian asked Philip: "What prevents me from getting baptized?" (Acts 8:35, 36) Your relationship with God will then be like that of those Christians to whom Paul wrote: "You do not belong to yourselves, for you were bought with a price." (1 Cor. 6:19, 20) Whether our hope is heavenly or earthly, if we have dedicated ourselves to Jehovah, he is our Owner. How important, then, to suppress selfish desires and "stop becoming slaves of men"! (1 Cor. 7:23) What a privilege it is to be a loyal servant for Jehovah to use as he pleases!

¹¹ Paul admonished fellow believers: "Present your bodies a sacrifice living, holy, acceptable to God, a sacred service with your power of reason." (Rom. 12:1) Those words may have reminded Jewish Christians of the sacrifices that were a feature of their worship before they became followers of Jesus. They would have known that under the Mosaic Law, animals offered on Jehovah's altar had to be the best available. Anything inferior was unacceptable. (Mal. 1:8, 13) The same is true when we present our bodies 'a living sacrifice.' We give Jehovah our best, not merely what is left after we have satisfied all our personal desires. When we dedicate ourselves to God, we unreservedly give him our "souls," our lives—including our strength, assets, and abilities. (Col. 3:23) What does that mean in a practical way?

10. In what way are we God's property, and how should that fact affect our thoughts and actions?

11. What sacrifice are Christians urged to offer, and what does that really mean, as illustrated by the sacrifices under the Mosaic Law?

Use Your Time Wisely

¹² One way to give Jehovah our best is to use our time wisely. (*Read Ephesians 5:15, 16.*) That calls for self-control. Influences from the world along with inherited imperfection incline us to use time purely for our own enjoyment or personal benefit. True, “for everything there is an appointed time,” including pleasurable relaxation and secular employment to enable us to fulfill our Christian obligations. (Eccl. 3:1) However, a dedicated Christian needs to stay balanced and use his time wisely.

¹³ When Paul visited Athens, he noted that “all Athenians and the foreigners sojourning there would spend their leisure time at nothing but telling something or listening to something new.” (Acts 17:21) Today, many similarly waste their time. Modern distractions include watching television, playing video games, and surfing the Internet. More and more distractions increasingly compete

12, 13. What is one way that we can give our best to Jehovah?

Appreciative Israelites gave their best to support true worship



for our time. If we give in to them, we may neglect our spiritual needs. We might even come to believe that we are too busy to care for “the more important things”—matters related to serving Jehovah.—Phil. 1:9, 10.

¹⁴ Therefore, as a dedicated servant of Jehovah, ask yourself, ‘Does my daily schedule include time for Bible reading, meditation, and prayer?’ (Ps. 77:12; 119:97; 1 Thess. 5:17) ‘Do I set aside time for preparing for Christian meetings? Do I encourage others by giving comments during the meetings?’ (Ps. 122:1; Heb. 2:12) God’s Word states that Paul and Barnabas spent “considerable time speaking with boldness by the authority of Jehovah.” (Acts 14:3) Could you adjust your circumstances in order to spend more time, even “considerable time,” in the preaching work, perhaps serving as a pioneer?—*Read Hebrews 13:15.*

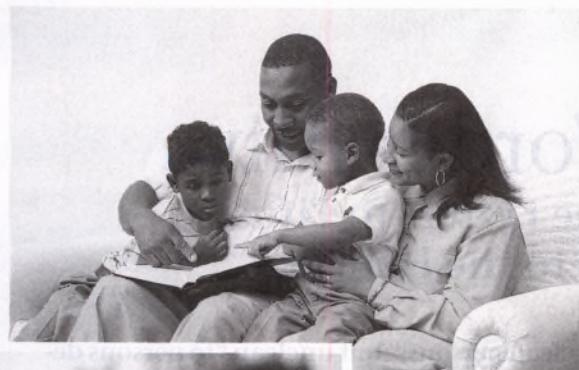
¹⁵ When the apostle Paul and Barnabas visited the Christian congregation in Antioch, “they spent not a little time with the disciples” in order to encourage them. (Acts 14:28) Loving elders today likewise use much of their time to strengthen others. In addition to their field ministry, elders work hard to shepherd the flock, search for lost sheep, assist the sick, and care for many other responsibilities within the congregation. If you are a baptized brother, do your circumstances allow you to reach out for these additional privileges of service?

¹⁶ Many have found joy in helping to provide relief to those who have suffered loss through man-made or natural disasters. For instance, one sister in her 60’s who serves at Bethel traveled long distances on several occasions to volunteer as a relief worker. Why

14. What questions deserve our serious consideration?

15. How do elders use their time wisely?

16. What are some ways that we can “work what is good toward . . . those related to us in the faith”?



We please
God through
wise use of
our time



did she use her vacation time in that way? She says: "Although I have no special skills, it was a privilege to do whatever was needed. I gained so much encouragement seeing the strong faith of my brothers and sisters who had suffered severe material losses." Furthermore, thousands worldwide help to construct Kingdom Halls and Assembly Halls. By having a share in such activities, we unselfishly "work what is good toward . . . those related to us in the faith."—Gal. 6:10.

"I Am With You All the Days"

¹⁷ Human society alienated from God is about to pass away. We do not know exactly when that will happen. Still, we do know that "the time left is reduced" and "the scene of this world is changing." (*Read 1 Corinthians 7:29-31.*) That gives added meaning to Jesus' question: "What, really, would a man give in exchange for his soul?" We will surely

17. What would you personally give in exchange for everlasting life?

make whatever sacrifices Jehovah asks of us in order to gain "the real life." (1 Tim. 6:19) Indeed, it is imperative to heed Jesus' admonition to 'follow him continually' and to 'seek first the kingdom.'—Matt. 6:31-33; 24:13.

¹⁸ Granted, following Jesus is not always easy, and true to Jesus' warning, it has cost some their lives in this system of things. Nevertheless, like Jesus, we avoid the temptation to 'be kind to ourselves.' We have faith in the assurance that he gave to his first-century anointed followers: "I am with you all the days until the conclusion

of the system of things." (Matt. 28:20) Let us, then, to the fullest extent possible, use our time and abilities in sacred service. As we do so, we demonstrate our confidence that Jehovah will preserve us through the great tribulation or restore us to life in the new world. (Heb. 6:10) Thus we will have shown how highly we value the gift of life.

18. What confidence can we have, and why?

What Are Your Answers?

- How did Jesus display outstanding willingness to serve God and man?
- Why should one disown oneself, and how is this done?
- In ancient Israel, only what kind of sacrifices were acceptable to Jehovah, and how does that guide us today?
- In what ways can we make wise use of our time?

Jehovah's Word Is Alive

Highlights From the Letters to Titus, to Philemon, and to the Hebrews

SOME time after being released from his first imprisonment in Rome in 61 C.E., the apostle Paul visits the island of Crete. Noting the spiritual condition of the congregations there, he leaves Titus behind to strengthen them. Later, likely from Macedonia, Paul writes a letter to Titus to guide him in his duties and to give apostolic backing to his work.

Earlier, shortly before his release from prison in 61 C.E., Paul wrote a letter to Philemon, a Christian brother living in Colossae. It is a personal plea to a friend.

In about 61 C.E., Paul also wrote a letter to the Hebrew believers in Judea, which shows the superiority of Christianity over the Jewish system. All three letters contain valuable counsel for us.—Heb. 4:12.

REMAIN SPIRITUALLY HEALTHY (Titus 1:1–3:15)

After providing guidance for the making of “appointments of older men in city after city,” Paul counsels Titus to “keep on reproofing [the unruly] with severity, that they may be healthy in the faith.” He admonishes all in the congregations in Crete “to repudiate ungodliness . . . and to live with soundness of mind.”—Titus 1:5, 10-13; 2:12.

Paul gives further counsel to help the brothers in Crete to remain spiritually healthy. He instructs Titus to “shun foolish questionings . . . and fights over the Law.”—Titus 3:9.

Scriptural Questions Answered:

1:15—How can “all things” be “clean to

clean persons,” but unclean “to persons defiled and faithless”? The answer lies in understanding what Paul meant by “all things.” He was speaking, not of things directly condemned in God’s written Word, but of matters in which the Scriptures allow varying responses from believers. To a person whose thinking is in harmony with God’s standards, such things are clean. It is the opposite with someone whose thinking is distorted and whose conscience is defiled.*

3:5—How are anointed Christians ‘saved through a bath’ and ‘made new by holy spirit’? They are ‘saved through a bath’ in that God has bathed, or cleansed, them with the blood of Jesus on the merit of the ransom sacrifice. They are ‘made new by holy spirit’ because they have become “a new creation” as spirit-begotten sons of God.—2 Cor. 5:17.

Lessons for Us:

1:10-13; 2:15. Christian overseers must display courage in correcting what is defective in the congregation.

2:3-5. As in the first century, mature Christian sisters today need to “be reverent in behavior, not slanderous, neither enslaved to a lot of wine, teachers of what is good.” In that way, they can be effective in privately instructing “the young women” in the congregation.

3:8, 14. Keeping our “minds on maintaining fine works” is “fine and beneficial” because it helps us to be fruitful in God’s service and keeps us separate from the wicked world.

* See *The Watchtower*, October 15, 2007, pages 26-27.

EXHORT "ON THE BASIS OF LOVE" (Philem. 1-25)

Philemon is commended for being an example in "love and faith." His being a source of refreshment to fellow Christians has given Paul "much joy and comfort."—Philem. 4, 5, 7.

Setting an example for all overseers, Paul handles the sensitive matter about Onesimus by giving, not an order, but exhortation "on the basis of love." He tells Philemon: "Trusting in your compliance, I am writing you, knowing you will even do more than the things I say."—Philem. 8, 9, 21.

Scriptural Questions Answered:

10, 11, 18—How did formerly "useless" Onesimus become "useful"? Onesimus was an unwilling slave who escaped from the household of Philemon in Colossae and fled to Rome. Likely, Onesimus also stole from his master to finance this 900-mile journey. Indeed, he was useless to Philemon. In Rome, though, Onesimus was helped by Paul to become a Christian. Now a spiritual brother, this formerly "useless" slave became "useful."

15, 16—Why did Paul not ask Philemon to grant freedom to Onesimus? Paul desired to stick strictly to his commission to 'preach the kingdom of God and teach the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ.' Therefore, he chose to stay away from involvement in social issues, such as those concerning slavery.—Acts 28:31.

Lessons for Us:

2. Philemon made his home available for Christian meetings. It is a privilege to have a meeting for field service in our home.—Rom. 16:5; Col. 4:15.

4-7. We should take the initiative to commend fellow believers who are exemplary in faith and love.

15, 16. Unfavorable developments in life should not be allowed to cause us undue anxiety. The results can turn out to be beneficial, as in the case of Onesimus.

21. Paul expected Philemon to forgive Onesimus. We are likewise expected to be forgiving toward a brother who may have offended us.—Matt. 6:14.

"PRESS ON TO MATURITY" (Heb. 1:1-13:25)

To prove that faith in Jesus' sacrifice is superior to works of Law, Paul highlights the excellency of Christianity's Founder, his priesthood, his sacrifice, and the new covenant. (Heb. 3:1-3; 7:1-3, 22; 8:6; 9:11-14, 25, 26) This knowledge certainly must have helped Hebrew Christians to deal with the persecution that they suffered at the hands of the Jews. Paul urges his Hebrew fellow believers to "press on to maturity."—Heb. 6:1.

How important is faith under the Christian arrangement? "Without faith it is impossible to please [God] well," writes Paul. He encourages the Hebrews: "Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us," doing so in faith.—Heb. 11:6; 12:1.

Scriptural Questions Answered:

2:14, 15—Does Satan's "having the means to cause death" indicate that he can cause the premature death of anyone he chooses? No, it does not. However, from the start of Satan's course of wickedness in Eden, his lies have caused death because Adam sinned and passed sin and death on to the human family. (Rom. 5:12) Furthermore, Satan's earthly agents have persecuted servants of God to the point of death, even as they did Jesus. But that does not mean that Satan has limitless power to kill anyone he wants. If that were so, he would no doubt have wiped out Jehovah's worshippers long ago. Jehovah protects his people as a group and does not

allow Satan to exterminate them. Even if God permits some of us to die under Satan's attacks, we can be confident that God will undo whatever harm is brought upon us.

4:9-11—How do we “enter into [God’s] rest”? At the end of the six days of creation, God rested from his creative works, confident that his purpose regarding the earth and mankind would be fulfilled. (Gen. 1:28; 2:2, 3) We “enter into that rest” by desisting from doing works of self-justification and by accepting God’s provision for our salvation. When we exercise faith in Jehovah and obediently follow his Son rather than pursue selfish interests, we enjoy refreshing and restful blessings every day.—Matt. 11:28-30.

9:16—Who is “the human covenanter” of the new covenant? Jehovah is the Maker of the new covenant, while Jesus is “the human covenanter.” Jesus is the Mediator of that covenant, and by his death, he provided the sacrifice needed to validate it.—Luke 22:20; Heb. 9:15.

11:10, 13-16—What “city” was Abraham awaiting? This was not a literal city but a symbolic one. Abraham was awaiting “heavenly Jerusalem,” composed of Christ Jesus and his 144,000 co-rulers. These rulers in their heavenly glory are also spoken of as “the holy city, New Jerusalem.” (Heb. 12:22; Rev. 14:1; 21:2) Abraham was looking forward to life under the rule of God’s Kingdom.

12:2—What was “the joy that was set before [Jesus]” for which “he endured a torture stake”? It was the joy of seeing what his ministry would accomplish—including the sanctification of Jehovah’s name, the vindication of God’s sovereignty, and the ransoming of the human family from death. Jesus also looked ahead to the reward of ruling as King and serving as High Priest to the benefit of mankind.

13:20—Why is the new covenant spoken of as being “everlasting”? For three reasons: (1) It will never be replaced, (2) its results are permanent, and (3) the “other sheep” will continue to benefit from the new covenant arrangement after Armageddon.—John 10:16.

Lessons for Us:

5:14. We should be diligent students of God’s Word, the Bible, and apply what we learn from it. There is no other way to have our “perceptive powers trained to distinguish both right and wrong.”—1 Cor. 2:10.

6:17-19. Having our hope solidly based on God’s promise and his oath will help us not to deviate from walking in the way of the truth.

12:3, 4. Rather than ‘getting tired and giving out in our souls’ because of minor trials or opposition that we may encounter, we should make progress toward maturity and improve our ability to endure trials. We should be determined to resist “as far as blood,” that is, to the point of dying.—Heb. 10:36-39.

12:13-15. We should not allow a “poisonous root,” or any in the congregation who find fault with the way things are done, to prevent us from ‘making straight paths for our feet.’

12:26-28. The “things that have been made” by hands other than God’s—the entire present system of things, even the wicked “heaven”—are to be shaken out of existence. When that happens, only “the things not being shaken,” that is, the Kingdom and its supporters, will remain. How vital that we zealously proclaim the Kingdom and live by its principles!

13:7, 17. Keeping in focus this admonition to be obedient and submissive to the overseers in the congregations will help us to manifest a cooperative spirit.