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# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

## STUDY EDITION

STUDY ARTICLES FOR THE WEEKS OF:

**September 28—October 4**

Everlasting Life on Earth  
—A God-Given Hope

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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.

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## PURPOSE OF STUDY ARTICLES

### **Study Articles 1-3** PAGES 3-16

The Scriptural basis for the hope of everlasting life on earth is presented in these articles. They will bolster your faith in this hope that sets true Christians apart from Christendom. In turn, such faith can give you a joyful outlook and fill you with courage to speak about your hope.

### **Study Article 4** PAGES 18-22

This article discusses three ways in which we can keep ourselves in God's love. (Jude 21) We can do so (1) by loving those whom Jehovah loves, (2) by showing respect for authority, and (3) by striving to remain clean in Jehovah's eyes.

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# EVERLASTING LIFE ON EARTH —A GOD-GIVEN HOPE

*"The creation was subjected to futility . . . on the basis of hope."*—ROM. 8:20.

PERHAPS you recall the joy you felt when you first learned that in the near future, people will no longer grow old and die but will live forever on earth. (John 17:3; Rev. 21: 3, 4) You have probably enjoyed sharing that Scriptural hope with others. After all, the hope of everlasting life is an essential aspect of the good news that we preach. It molds our very outlook on life.

<sup>2</sup> For the most part, the religions of Christendom have ignored the hope of everlasting life on earth. Whereas the Bible teaches that the soul dies, the majority of churches teach the unscriptural doctrine that man has an immortal soul that survives death and lives on in the spirit realm. (Ezek. 18:20) Hence, many people are skeptical about everlasting life on earth. We might therefore ask: Does the Bible really support that hope? If so, when did God first reveal it to humans?

## **"Subjected to Futility . . . on the Basis of Hope"**

<sup>3</sup> Jehovah's purpose for mankind was made evident at the very beginning of human history. God clearly indicated that Adam would live forever if he was obedient. (Gen. 2:9, 17; 3:22) Adam's early descendants no doubt learned about man's fall from perfection, which was confirmed by visible evidence. The entrance to the garden

1, 2. (a) Why is the hope of everlasting life on earth important to us? (b) Why are many people skeptical about everlasting life on earth?

3. How was God's purpose for man evident from the start of human history?

of Eden was blocked, and people grew old and died. (Gen. 3:23, 24) With the passing of time, the human life span declined. Adam lived for 930 years. The Flood survivor Shem lived for only 600 years, and his son Arpachshad for 438 years. Abraham's father, Terah, lived for 205 years. The life span of Abraham was 175 years, that of his son Isaac was 180 years, and that of Jacob was 147 years. (Gen. 5:5; 11:10-13, 32; 25:7; 35:28; 47:28) Many people must have realized what this decline meant—the prospect of everlasting life had been lost! Did they have reason for hope in its restoration?

<sup>4</sup> God's Word says: "The [human] creation was subjected to futility . . . on the basis of hope." (Rom. 8:20) What hope? The very first prophecy of the Bible pointed to a "seed" that would 'bruise the serpent in the head.' (*Read Genesis 3:1-5, 15.*) To faithful humans, the promise of that Seed provided a basis for hope that God would not abandon his purpose for mankind. It gave men like Abel and Noah a reason to believe that God would restore the blessings that Adam had lost. These men may have realized that the 'bruising in the heel of the seed' would involve the shedding of blood.—Gen. 4:4; 8:20; Heb. 11:4.

<sup>5</sup> Consider Abraham. When being tested, Abraham "as good as offered up Isaac, . . . his

4. What basis did faithful men of old have for believing that God would restore the blessings that Adam had lost?

5. What shows that Abraham had faith in the resurrection?

only-begotten son.” (Heb. 11:17) Why was he willing to do this? (*Read Hebrews 11:19.*) He believed in the resurrection! Abraham had a basis for his belief in the resurrection. After all, Jehovah had brought back to life Abraham’s reproductive powers and had made it possible for him and his wife, Sarah, to produce a son in their old age. (Gen. 18:10-14; 21:1-3; Rom. 4:19-21) Abraham also had Jehovah’s word. God had said to him: “It is by means of Isaac that what will be called your seed will be.” (Gen. 21:12) Therefore, Abraham had sound reasons for expecting that God would resurrect Isaac.

<sup>6</sup> Because of Abraham’s outstanding faith, Jehovah made a covenant with him regarding his offspring, or “seed.” (*Read Genesis 22:18.*) The primary part of the “seed” proved to be Jesus Christ. (Gal. 3:16) Jehovah had told Abraham that his “seed” would be multiplied “like the stars of the heavens and like the grains of sand that are on the seashore”—a number unknown to Abraham. (Gen. 22:17) However, later that number was revealed. Jesus Christ and the 144,000, who will rule with him in his Kingdom, constitute the “seed.” (Gal. 3:29; Rev. 7:4; 14:1) The Messianic Kingdom is the means by which “all nations of the earth will . . . bless themselves.”

<sup>7</sup> Abraham could not possibly have understood the full significance of the covenant Jehovah made with him. Nevertheless, “he was awaiting the city having real foundations,” states the Bible. (Heb. 11:10) That city is God’s Kingdom. To receive blessings under that Kingdom, Abraham will have to live again. Everlasting life on earth will be possible for him through the resurrection. And life eternal will be possible for those who

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6, 7. (a) What covenant did Jehovah make with Abraham? (b) How did Jehovah’s promise to Abraham provide hope for mankind?

survive Armageddon or those who will be raised from the dead.—Rev. 7:9, 14; 20:12-14.

### “Spirit Has Brought Pressure Upon Me”

<sup>8</sup> During the time period between the lives of Abraham’s great-grandson Joseph and the prophet Moses, there lived a man named Job. The Bible book of Job, likely composed by Moses, explains why Jehovah allowed Job to suffer and how the matter turned out for him. However, the book of Job is not merely an account about one man’s trials; it centers on issues of universal importance. The book provides insight into Jehovah’s righteousness in exercising his sovereignty, and it reveals that the integrity and life prospects of all of God’s earthly servants are involved in the issue raised in Eden. Although Job did not understand this issue, he did not allow his three companions to make him think that he had failed as an integrity keeper. (Job 27:5) This should strengthen our faith and help us to realize that we can maintain our integrity and uphold Jehovah’s sovereignty.

<sup>9</sup> After Job’s three so-called comforters had finished speaking, “Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite proceeded to answer.” What moved him to speak? “I have become full of words,” he said. “Spirit has brought pressure upon me in my belly.” (Job 32:5, 6, 18) Although what Elihu spoke under inspiration was fulfilled in Job’s restoration, his words are also meaningful to others. They hold out hope for all integrity keepers.

<sup>10</sup> Jehovah sometimes gives a message to an individual that also has a broader application for mankind in general. This can

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8, 9. Why is the book of Job not merely an account of one man’s trials?

10. What shows that Jehovah’s message to an individual sometimes has a broader application to mankind in general?

be seen from Daniel's prophecy involving Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar's dream about the chopping down of an immense tree. (Dan. 4:10-27) While that dream had a fulfillment in connection with Nebuchadnezzar, it pointed to something far greater. It indicated that divine sovereignty toward the earth expressed by a kingdom in the line of King David would be manifested again after a period of 2,520 years, beginning in 607 B.C.E.\* God's sovereignty toward our globe began to be asserted anew with the installation of Jesus Christ as heavenly King in the year 1914. Just think of how Kingdom rule will soon fulfill the hopes of obedient mankind!

### **"Let Him Off From Going Down Into the Pit!"**

<sup>11</sup> In making a reply to Job, Elihu speaks of "a messenger, a spokesman, one out of a thousand, to tell to man his uprightness." What if this messenger makes "entreaty to

\* See chapter 6 of the book *Pay Attention to Daniel's Prophecy!*

11. Elihu's words indicated what about God?

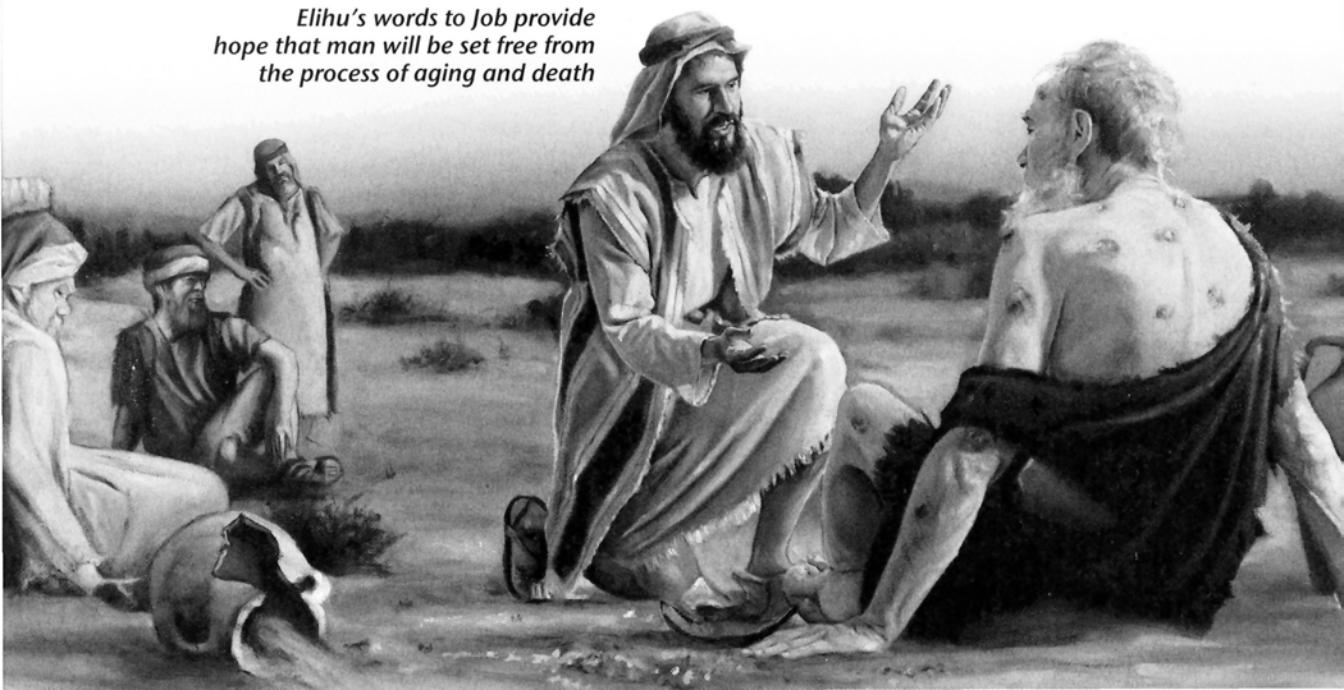
*Elihu's words to Job provide hope that man will be set free from the process of aging and death*

God that he may take pleasure in him"? Elihu says: "Then he [God] favors him and says, 'Let him off from going down into the pit! I have found a ransom! Let his flesh become fresher than in youth; let him return to the days of his youthful vigor.'" (Job 33:23-26) Those words indicated God's willingness to accept "a ransom," or "covering," in behalf of repentant humans.—Job 33:24, ftn.

<sup>12</sup> Elihu probably did not understand the full significance of the ransom, even as prophets did not completely comprehend everything they wrote. (Dan. 12:8; 1 Pet. 1:10-12) Still, Elihu's words reflect the hope that God would one day accept a ransom and set man free from the process of aging and from death. Elihu's words presented the wonderful prospect of everlasting life. The book of Job also shows that there will be a resurrection.—Job 14:14, 15.

<sup>13</sup> Today, Elihu's words continue to have meaning for millions of Christians who hope to survive the destruction of the

12. The words of Elihu provide what hope for mankind in general?  
13. Christians find what meaning in Elihu's words?



present system of things. Elderly ones among the survivors will return to the days of their youthful vigor. (Rev. 7:9, 10, 14-17) Moreover, the prospect of seeing resurrected ones restored to the days of their youth continues to delight faithful people. Of course, both immortality in heaven for anointed Christians and everlasting life on earth for Jesus' "other sheep" depend on the exercising of faith in Christ's ransom sacrifice.—John 10:16; Rom. 6:23.

### Death Swallowed Up From the Earth

<sup>14</sup> The offspring of Abraham became an independent nation when they entered into a covenant relationship with God. When giving them the Law, Jehovah stated: "You must keep my statutes and my judicial decisions, which if a man will do, he must also live by means of them." (Lev. 18:5) Since they could not live up to the Law's perfect standards, however, the Israelites were condemned by the Law and needed a release from that condemnation.—Gal. 3:13.

<sup>15</sup> After Moses, Jehovah inspired other Bi-

14. What shows that something more than the Mosaic Law was needed in order for the Israelites to entertain the hope of everlasting life?
15. About what future blessing was David inspired to write?

### Can You Explain?

- The human creation was "subjected to futility" on the basis of what hope?
- What shows that Abraham had faith in the resurrection?
- What hope do Elihu's words to Job hold out for mankind?
- How do the Hebrew Scriptures stress the hope of a resurrection and everlasting life on earth?



*Daniel was assured that 'he would stand up for his lot at the end of the days'*

ble writers to mention the hope of everlasting life. (Ps. 21:4; 37:29) For example, the psalmist David concluded a psalm about the unity of true worshippers at Zion with the words: "There Jehovah commanded the blessing to be, even life to time indefinite." —Ps. 133:3.

<sup>16</sup> Jehovah inspired Isaiah to prophesy about everlasting life on earth. (*Read Isaiah 25:7, 8.*) Like a suffocating "envelopment"—a blanket—sin and death have weighed heavily on mankind. Jehovah assures his people that sin and death will be swallowed up, or removed, "from all the earth."

<sup>17</sup> Consider also the procedure stipulated in the Mosaic Law concerning the goat for Azazel. Once a year, on Atonement Day, the high priest 'laid both his hands upon the

16. Through Isaiah, what did Jehovah promise about the future of "all the earth"?
17. What prophetic role of the Messiah opens the way to everlasting life?

head of the live goat and confessed over it all the errors of the sons of Israel, and he put them upon the head of the goat and the goat carried upon itself all their errors into a desert land.' (Lev. 16:7-10, 21, 22) Isaiah foretold the coming of the Messiah, who would play a similar role and carry away "sicknesses," "pains," and "the very sin of many people," thus opening the way to everlasting life.—*Read Isaiah 53:4-6, 12.*

<sup>18</sup> Through Isaiah, Jehovah told his people Israel: "Your dead ones will live. A corpse of mine ["my killed ones," ftn.]—they will rise up. Awake and cry out joyfully, you residents in the dust! For your dew is as the dew

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18, 19. What hope is highlighted at Isaiah 26:19 and Daniel 12:13?

of mallows, and the earth itself will let even those impotent in death drop in birth." (Isa. 26:19) The Hebrew Scriptures clearly set forth the hope of a resurrection and life on earth. When Daniel was almost 100 years old, for example, Jehovah assured him: "You will rest, but you will stand up for your lot at the end of the days."—Dan. 12:13.

<sup>19</sup> Because of the resurrection hope, Martha could say to Jesus concerning her dead brother: "I know he will rise in the resurrection on the last day." (John 11:24) Did the teachings of Jesus and the inspired writings of his disciples change this hope? Is everlasting life on earth still the hope that Jehovah offers to mankind? We will consider the answers to these questions in the next article.

## EVERLASTING LIFE ON EARTH —A CHRISTIAN HOPE?

*"[God] will wipe out every tear from their eyes,  
and death will be no more."*—REV. 21:4.

A RICH and prominent young man ran up to Jesus, fell upon his knees before him, and asked: "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit everlasting life?" (Mark 10:17) The young man was asking about inheriting everlasting life—but where? As we discussed in the preceding article, centuries earlier God had given the Jews the hope of a resurrection and everlasting life on earth. That hope prevailed among many first-century Jews.

<sup>2</sup> Jesus' friend Martha apparently had in

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1, 2. How do we know that many first-century Jews had the hope of everlasting life on earth?

mind restoration to life on earth when she said of her deceased brother: "I know he will rise in the resurrection on the last day." (John 11:24) True, the Sadducees of the time denied the resurrection. (Mark 12:18) However, in his book *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era*, George Foot Moore says: "Writings . . . of the second or first centuries before our era attest the belief that at the expected turning-point in the history of the world the dead of former generations would be brought to life again on earth." The rich man who approached Jesus wanted to gain eternal life on earth.

<sup>3</sup> Today, many religions and Bible scholars deny that the hope of living forever on earth is a Christian teaching. Most people hope for an afterlife in the spirit realm. So when readers of the Christian Greek Scriptures come across the expression “everlasting life,” many think that it always refers to life in heaven. Is that true? What did Jesus mean when he spoke of everlasting life? What did his disciples believe? Do the Christian Greek Scriptures hold out the hope of everlasting life on earth?

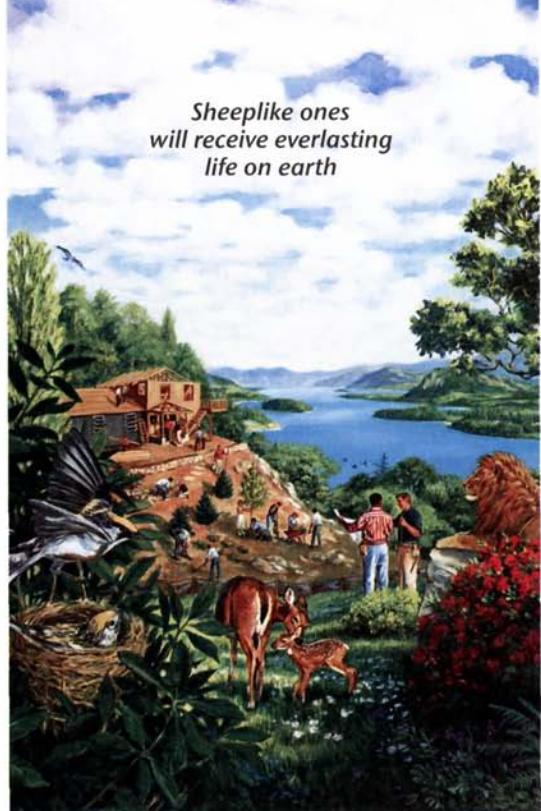
### **Everlasting Life “in the Re-Creation”**

<sup>4</sup> The Bible teaches that anointed Christians will be resurrected to rule over the earth from heaven. (Luke 12:32; Rev. 5:9, 10; 14:1-3) When Jesus spoke about everlasting life, however, he did not always have only that group in mind. Consider what he said to his disciples after the rich young man turned away grieved at the invitation to leave all his belongings behind and become a follower of Christ. (*Read Matthew 19:28, 29.*) Jesus told his apostles that they would be among those who would rule as kings and judge “the twelve tribes of Israel,” that is, the world of mankind outside that heavenly ruling class. (1 Cor. 6:2) He also spoke of a reward for “everyone” who follows him. Such individuals too “will inherit everlasting life.” All of this is to take place “in the re-creation.”

<sup>5</sup> What did Jesus mean by “the re-creation”? The term is translated “the new world” in *The Bible—An American Translation*. It is rendered “when all is made new” in *The Jerusalem Bible* and “the renewal of all things” in *The Holy Bible—New Interna-*

3. What questions will be considered in this article?
4. What is to take place “in the re-creation”?
5. How would you define “the re-creation”?

*Sheeplike ones  
will receive everlasting  
life on earth*



*tional Version.* Since Jesus used the term without explanation, he evidently referred to what had been the Jewish hope for centuries. There was to be a re-creation of conditions on earth, so that things would be as they were in the garden of Eden before Adam and Eve sinned. The re-creation will fulfill God’s promise of “creating new heavens and a new earth.”—Isa. 65:17.

<sup>6</sup> Jesus again spoke of everlasting life in his discourse about the conclusion of the system of things. (Matt. 24:1-3) “When the Son of man arrives in his glory, and all the angels with him,” he said, “then he will sit down on his glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep

6. The illustration of the sheep and the goats teaches us what about the hope of everlasting life?

from the goats.” Those receiving an adverse judgment “will depart into everlasting cutting-off, but the righteous ones into everlasting life.” “The righteous ones” who receive everlasting life are those who loyally support Christ’s spirit-anointed “brothers.” (Matt. 25:31-34, 40, 41, 45, 46) Since the anointed are chosen to be rulers in the heavenly Kingdom, “the righteous ones” must be the earthly subjects of that Kingdom. The Bible foretold: “[Jehovah’s King] will have subjects from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.” (Ps. 72:8) These subjects will enjoy everlasting life on earth.

### What Does the Gospel of John Show?

<sup>7</sup> As recorded in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Jesus uses the term “everlasting life” on the aforementioned occasions. The Gospel according to John quotes Jesus’ words about living forever some 17 times. Let us examine some of those occurrences to see what Jesus said about the hope of everlasting life on earth.

<sup>8</sup> According to John, Jesus first spoke about everlasting life to a Pharisee named Nicodemus. He told Nicodemus: “Unless anyone is born from water and spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” Those entering the Kingdom of the heavens must be “born again.” (John 3:3-5) Jesus did not stop with that. He then spoke of the hope that is open to the whole world. (*Read John 3:16.*) Jesus was referring to the hope of everlasting life for his anointed followers in heaven and for others on earth.

<sup>9</sup> After speaking to Nicodemus in Jerusa-

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7, 8. Concerning what two different hopes did Jesus speak to Nicodemus?

9. About what hope did Jesus speak to a Samaritan woman?

lem, Jesus traveled north toward Galilee. On the way, he met a woman at Jacob’s fountain near the city of Sychar in Samaria. He told her: “Whoever drinks from the water that I will give him will never get thirsty at all, but the water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water bubbling up to impart everlasting life.” (John 4:5, 6, 14) This water represents God’s provisions for the restoration of all mankind to everlasting life, including those who will live on earth. In the book of Revelation, God himself is portrayed as saying: “To anyone thirsting I will give from the fountain of the water of life free.” (Rev. 21:5, 6; 22:17) Thus, Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman about everlasting life not only for the anointed Kingdom heirs but also for believing mankind having an earthly hope.

<sup>10</sup> The following year, Jesus was again in Jerusalem. There he restored a sick man to health at the pool of Bethzatha. To the Jews who criticized what he did, Jesus explained that “the Son cannot do a single thing of his own initiative, but only what he beholds the Father doing.” After telling them that the Father “has committed all the judging to the Son,” Jesus said: “He that hears my word and believes him that sent me has everlasting life.” Jesus also said: “The hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear [the Son of man’s] voice and come out, those who did good things to a resurrection of life, those who practiced vile things to a resurrection of judgment.” (John 5:1-9, 19, 22, 24-29) Jesus was telling the persecuting Jews that he was the one appointed by God to fulfill the Jewish hope of everlasting life on earth and that he would do so by raising the dead.

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10. After curing a man at the pool of Bethzatha, what did Jesus tell religious opposers about everlasting life?

<sup>11</sup> In Galilee, thousands of people who wanted bread miraculously provided by Jesus began following him. Jesus spoke to them about another type of bread—"the bread of life." (*Read John 6:40, 48-51.*) "The bread that I shall give is my flesh," he said. Jesus gave his life not only for those who would rule with him in his heavenly Kingdom but also "in behalf of the life of the world" of redeemable mankind. "If anyone eats of this bread," that is, exercises faith in the redeeming power of Jesus' sacrifice, he will be in line for everlasting life. Indeed, the reference to 'living forever' included the long-held Jewish hope of everlasting life on earth during the Messiah's reign.

<sup>12</sup> Later, at the Festival of Dedication in Jerusalem, Jesus told his opposers: "You do not believe, because you are none of my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give them everlasting life." (*John 10:26-28*) Was

11. How do we know that the hope of everlasting life on earth is included in what Jesus said as recorded at John 6:48-51?

12. Jesus was referring to what hope when he told opposers that 'he will give everlasting life to his sheep'?

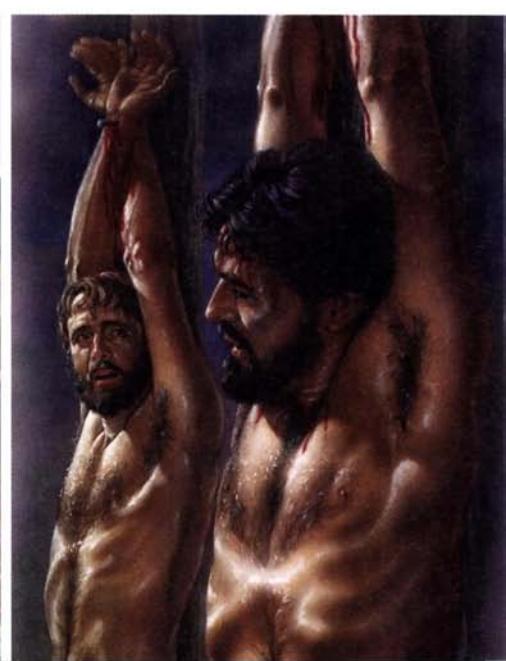
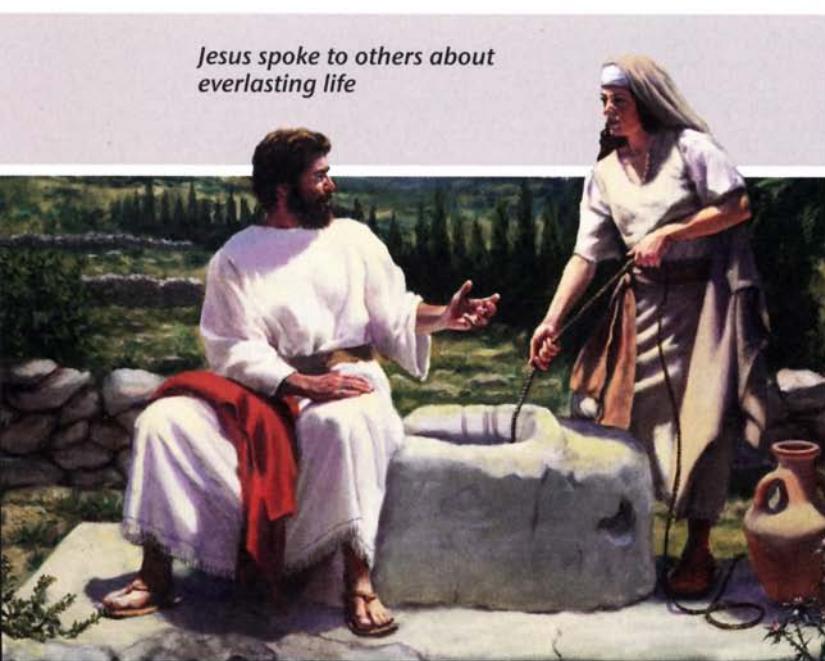
Jesus speaking only of life in heaven, or did he also have in mind eternal life in an earthly paradise? Jesus had recently comforted his followers with the words: "Have no fear, little flock, because your Father has approved of giving you the kingdom." (*Luke 12:32*) At the time of this same Festival of Dedication, however, Jesus said: "I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; those also I must bring." (*John 10:16*) Hence, when Jesus spoke to those opposers, his words included both the hope of heavenly life for the "little flock" and the hope of everlasting life on earth for millions of "other sheep."

#### A Hope That Required No Explanation

<sup>13</sup> During his agony on the torture stake, Jesus provided irrefutable confirmation of mankind's hope. An evildoer impaled alongside him said: "Jesus, remember me when you get into your kingdom." Jesus promised him: "Truly I tell you today, You will be with me in Paradise." (*Luke 23:42, 43*) Since this man evidently was a Jew, he

13. What did Jesus mean when he said: "You will be with me in Paradise"?

*Jesus spoke to others about everlasting life*



needed no explanation about Paradise. He knew about the hope of everlasting life on earth in a world to come.

<sup>14</sup> What did require an explanation, however, was Jesus' reference to the heavenly hope. When he spoke to his disciples about his going to heaven to prepare a place for them, they did not understand what he meant. (*Read John 14:2-5.*) "I have many things yet to say to you," he later told them, "but you are not able to bear them at present. However, when that one arrives, the spirit of the truth, he will guide you into all the truth." (John 16:12, 13) Only after Pentecost of 33 C.E. when they were anointed by God's spirit to be future kings did Jesus' followers discern that their thrones would be in heaven. (1 Cor. 15:49; Col. 1:5; 1 Pet. 1: 3, 4) The hope of a heavenly inheritance was a revelation, and it became the focus of the inspired letters in the Christian Greek Scriptures. But do these letters reaffirm mankind's hope of everlasting life on earth?

### What Do the Inspired Letters Say?

<sup>15</sup> In his letter to the Hebrews, the apostle Paul addressed his fellow believers as "holy brothers, partakers of the heavenly calling." However, he also stated that God has subjected to Jesus "the inhabited earth to come." (Heb. 2:3, 5; 3:1) In the Christian Greek Scriptures, the original word for "inhabited earth" always refers to earth populated by humans. Hence, "the inhabited earth to come" is the future system of things on earth under the rulership of Jesus Christ.

14. (a) What shows that the reference to a heavenly hope was difficult for the apostles to understand? (b) When did Jesus' followers gain a clear understanding of the heavenly hope?

15, 16. How do the inspired letter to the Hebrews and the words of Peter point to the hope of everlasting life on earth?

Jesus will then fulfill God's promise: "The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it."—Ps. 37:29.

<sup>16</sup> The apostle Peter was also inspired to write about the future of mankind. He wrote: "The heavens and the earth that are now are stored up for fire and are being reserved to the day of judgment and of destruction of the ungodly men." (2 Pet. 3:7) What will replace the governmental heavens and the wicked human society that are present now? (*Read 2 Peter 3:13.*) They will be replaced by "new heavens"—God's Messianic Kingdom—and "a new earth"—a righteous human society of true worshippers.

<sup>17</sup> The last book of the Bible stirs our hearts with its vision of mankind lifted to perfection. (*Read Revelation 21:1-4.*) This has been the hope of believing mankind ever since human perfection was lost in the garden of Eden. Upright people will live in Paradise on earth endlessly without aging. This hope is solidly based on both the Hebrew Scriptures and the Christian Greek Scriptures, and it continues to strengthen faithful servants of Jehovah to this day.—Rev. 22:1, 2.

17. How is mankind's hope described at Revelation 21:1-4?

### Can You Explain?

- What did Jesus mean by "the re-creation"?
- Concerning what did Jesus speak to Nicodemus?
- What promise did Jesus make to the evildoer impaled near him?
- How do the letter to the Hebrews and the words of Peter confirm the hope of everlasting life on earth?

# EVERLASTING LIFE ON EARTH —A HOPE REDISCOVERED

*“O Daniel, make secret the words . . . until the time of the end. Many will rove about, and the true knowledge will become abundant.”*—DAN. 12:4.

**M**ILLIONS of people today clearly understand the Scriptural basis for the hope of living forever in an earthly paradise. (Rev. 7:9, 17) At the beginning of human history, God revealed that man was made, not to live a few years and then die, but to live forever.—Gen. 1:26-28.

<sup>2</sup> The lifting of mankind to the perfection that Adam lost was part of the hope of Israel. The Christian Greek Scriptures explain by what means God will make possible everlasting life for mankind in Paradise on earth. So why did man’s hope have to be rediscovered? How was it brought to light and made known to millions?

## A Hope Obscured

<sup>3</sup> Jesus foretold that false prophets would corrupt his teachings and that most people would be misled. (Matt. 24:11) The apostle Peter warned Christians: “There will also be false teachers among you.” (2 Pet. 2:1) The apostle Paul spoke of “a period of time when [people would] not put up with the healthful teaching, but, in accord with their own desires, they [would] accumulate teachers for themselves to have their ears tickled.” (2 Tim. 4:3, 4) Satan is involved in misleading people and has used apostate Christianity to obscure the heart-

1, 2. What questions will be considered in this article?

3. Why is it not surprising that mankind’s hope of everlasting life on earth was obscured?

warming truth about God’s purpose for man and the earth.—Read 2 Corinthians 4:3, 4.

<sup>4</sup> The Scriptures explain that the Kingdom of God is a government in heaven that will crush and put an end to all man-made rulerships. (Dan. 2:44) During Christ’s rule of a thousand years, Satan will be confined to an abyss, the dead will be resurrected, and mankind will be elevated to perfection on earth. (Rev. 20:1-3, 6, 12; 21:1-4) However, apostate religious leaders of Christendom have embraced other ideas. For example, third-century Church Father Origen of Alexandria condemned believers in the earthly blessings of the Millennium. Catholic theologian Augustine of Hippo (354-430 C.E.) “held to the conviction that there will be no millennium,” says *The Catholic Encyclopedia*.\*

<sup>5</sup> Why did Origen and Augustine oppose millennialism? Origen was a pupil of Clement of Alexandria, who borrowed the idea of an immortal soul from Greek tradition. Being strongly influenced by Plato’s ideas about the soul, Origen “built into Christian doctrine the whole cosmic drama of the

\* Augustine claimed that the Thousand Year Reign of God’s Kingdom was not future but had already begun with the founding of the church.

4. What hope for mankind have apostate religious leaders rejected?

5, 6. Why did Origen and Augustine oppose millennialism?

soul, which he took from Plato," observes theologian Werner Jaeger. Consequently, Origen shifted the earthly blessings of the Millennium to the spiritual realm.

<sup>6</sup> Before converting to "Christianity" at the age of 33, Augustine had become a Neoplatonist—an adherent of a version of Plato's philosophy developed by Plotinus in the third century. After Augustine's conversion, his thinking remained Neoplatonic. "His mind was the crucible in which the religion of the New Testament was most completely fused with the Platonic tradition of Greek philosophy," states *The New Encyclopædia Britannica*. Augustine explained the Thousand Year Reign depicted in Revelation chapter 20 by giving "an allegorical explanation of [it]," states *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. It adds: "This explanation . . . was adopted by succeeding Western theologians, and millenarianism in its earlier shape no longer received support."

<sup>7</sup> Mankind's hope of everlasting life on earth was undermined by an idea that prevailed in ancient Babylon and spread worldwide—the idea that man has an immortal soul or spirit that merely inhabits a physical body. When Christendom adopted that idea, theologians twisted the Scriptures to make texts that describe the heavenly hope appear to teach that all good people go to heaven. According to this view, a person's life on earth is intended to be transitory—a test to determine if he is worthy of life in heaven. Something similar happened to the early Jewish hope of everlasting life on earth. As the Jews gradually adopted the Greek idea of inherent immortality, their original hope of life on earth faded. How different this is from the way man is present-

ed in the Bible! Man is a physical creature, not a spirit. Jehovah said to the first man: "Dust you are." (Gen. 3:19) The earth, not heaven, is man's everlasting home.—Read *Psalm 104:5; 115:16*.

### Truth Flashes Up in the Darkness

<sup>8</sup> Although most religions that claim to be Christian deny the hope of everlasting life on earth, Satan did not always succeed in obscuring the truth. Down through the ages, a few careful Bible readers saw flashes of truth as they understood some aspects of how God will restore mankind to perfection. (Ps. 97:11; Matt. 7:13, 14; 13:37-39) By the 1600's, Bible translation and printing had made the Holy Scriptures more widely available. In 1651, one scholar wrote that since through Adam men "have forfeited Paradise, and Eternall Life on Earth," so in the Christ "all men shall be made to live

8. What did some scholars of the 1600's say about man's hope?

*The poet John Milton (left) and the mathematician Isaac Newton (right) knew about the hope of everlasting life on earth*



7. What false belief has undermined man's hope of everlasting life on earth, and how?

on Earth; for else the comparison were not proper." (*Read 1 Corinthians 15:21, 22.*) One of the English-speaking world's famous poets, John Milton (1608-1674), wrote *Paradise Lost* and its sequel *Paradise Regained*. In his works, Milton referred to the reward that the faithful will receive in an earthly paradise. Although Milton dedicated much of his life to Bible study, he recognized that Scriptural truth would not be pieced together until Christ's presence.

<sup>9</sup> The famous mathematician Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727) also had a keen interest in the Bible. He understood that the holy ones will be raised to heavenly life and will rule invisibly with Christ. (Rev. 5:9, 10) As for the subjects of the Kingdom, he wrote: "The earth shall continue to be inhabited by mortals after the day of judgment and that not only for a 1000 years but even for ever."

<sup>10</sup> Newton considered Christ's presence to be centuries away. "One reason why Newton saw the Kingdom of God so far in the future was because he was profoundly pessimistic about the deep Trinitarian apostasy he saw around him," said historian Stephen Snobelen. The good news was still veiled. And Newton saw no Christian movement that could preach it. He wrote: "These prophecies of Daniel and John [the latter recorded in the book of Revelation] should not be understood till the time of the end." Newton explained: "'Then,' saith Daniel, 'many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.' For the Gospel must be preached in all nations before the great tribulation, and end of the world. The palm-bearing multitude, which come out of this great tribulation, cannot be innumerable out of all nations, unless they be made so

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9, 10. (a) What did Isaac Newton write about mankind's hope? (b) Why did the time for Christ's presence seem distant to Newton?

by the preaching of the Gospel before it comes."—Dan. 12:4; Matt. 24:14; Rev. 7:9, 10.

<sup>11</sup> In the days of Milton and Newton, to express ideas contrary to official doctrine of the church was dangerous. Therefore, much of their Bible scholarship remained unpublished until after their deaths. The Reformation of the 16th century failed to reform the teaching about inherent immortality, and mainstream Protestant churches continued to teach Augustine's idea that the Millennium was past, not future. Has knowledge increased in the time of the end?

### "The True Knowledge Will Become Abundant"

<sup>12</sup> As regards "the time of the end," Daniel foretold a very positive development. (*Read Daniel 12:3, 4, 9, 10.*) "At that time the righteous ones will shine as brightly as the sun," said Jesus. (Matt. 13:43) How did the true knowledge become abundant in the time of the end? Consider some historical developments in the decades prior to 1914, the year when the time of the end began.

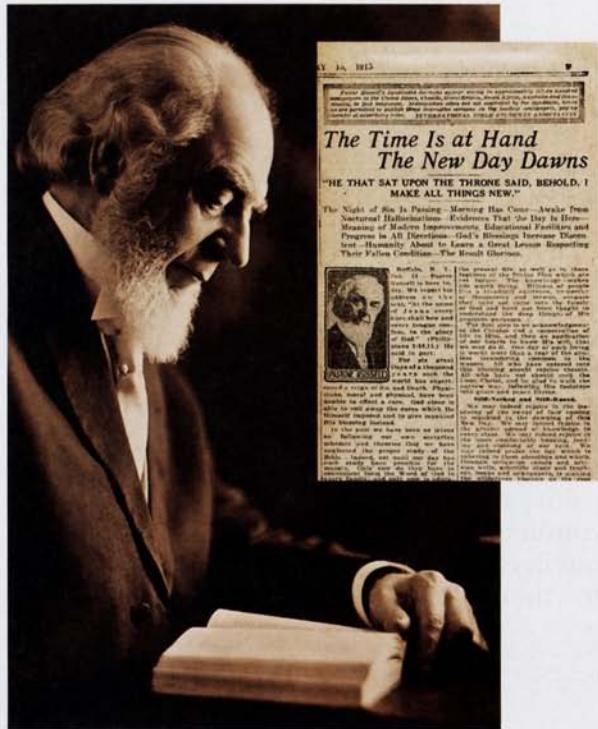
<sup>13</sup> In the late 1800's, a number of sincere individuals were searching for an understanding of "the pattern of healthful words." (2 Tim. 1:13) One such person was Charles Taze Russell. In 1870 he and a few other truth-seekers formed a class for Bible study. In 1872 they examined the subject of restitution. Later, Russell wrote: "Up to that time we had failed to see clearly the great distinction between the reward of the church now on trial and the reward of the faithful of the world." The reward of the latter will be "restoration to the perfection of

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11. Why did mankind's hope remain obscure for most people in the days of Milton and Newton?

12. When was the true knowledge to become abundant?

13. What did Charles Taze Russell write after examining the subject of restitution?



*The early Bible Students discerned from the Scriptures that it was time to make mankind's true hope known worldwide*

human nature once enjoyed in Eden by their progenitor and head, Adam." Russell acknowledged that he had been helped in his study of the Bible by others. Who were these?

<sup>14</sup> Henry Dunn was one of them. He had written about the "restoration of all things of which God spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets of old time." (Acts 3:21) Dunn knew that this restoration included the elevation of mankind to perfection on earth during the Thousand Year Reign of Christ. Dunn also examined a question that had puzzled many, Who will live forever on earth? He explained that millions will be resurrected, taught the truth, and have the opportunity to exercise faith in Christ.

14. (a) How did Henry Dunn understand Acts 3:21? (b) Who did Dunn say will live forever on earth?

<sup>15</sup> In 1870, George Storrs also came to the conclusion that the unrighteous will be resurrected to an opportunity of everlasting life. He also discerned from the Scriptures that a resurrected one who fails to respond to this opportunity "will end in death, even if the 'sinner be a hundred years old.'" (Isa. 65:20) Storrs lived in Brooklyn, New York, and edited a magazine called the *Bible Examiner*.

<sup>16</sup> Russell discerned from the Bible that the time had come to make the good news widely known. So in 1879, he started publishing *Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence*, now called *The Watchtower Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom*. Previously, the truth about mankind's hope was understood by very few people, but now groups of Bible Students in many countries were receiving and studying *The Watchtower*. The belief that only a few will go to heaven, whereas millions will be given perfect human life on earth, set the Bible Students apart from most of Christendom.

<sup>17</sup> The foretold "time of the end" began in 1914. Did true knowledge about the hope of mankind become plentiful? (Dan. 12:4)

15. What did George Storrs discern about the resurrection?

16. What set the Bible Students apart from Christendom?

17. How did true knowledge become plentiful?

### Can You Explain?

- How did mankind's hope of life on earth become obscured?
- What understanding did some Bible readers gain in the 1600's?
- How did mankind's true hope become clearer as 1914 approached?
- How has knowledge about the earthly hope become abundant?

By 1913, Russell's sermons were printed in 2,000 newspapers with a combined readership of 15,000,000. By the end of 1914, over 9,000,000 people on three continents had seen the "Photo-Drama of Creation"—a program including motion pictures and slides that explained Christ's Millennial Reign. From 1918 until 1925, the talk "Millions Now Living Will Never Die," which explained the hope of everlasting life on earth, was presented by Jehovah's servants in over 30 languages worldwide. By 1934, Jehovah's Witnesses realized that those hoping to live forever on earth should be baptized. This understanding filled them with renewed zeal for preaching the good news of the Kingdom. Today, the prospect of living forever on earth fills the hearts of millions with gratitude toward Jehovah.

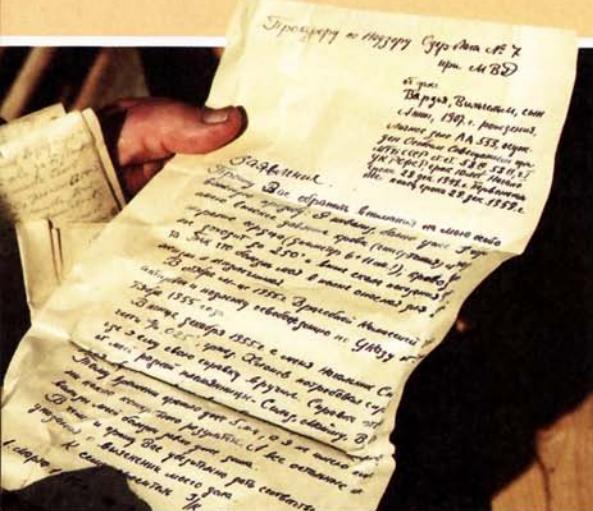
### "Glorious Freedom" Ahead!

<sup>18</sup> The prophet Isaiah was inspired to write about the kind of life that God's people will enjoy on earth. (*Read Isaiah 65:21-25.*) Certain trees that were alive some 2,700 years ago when Isaiah wrote those words are evidently still alive today. Can you imagine yourself living that long with strength and good health?

<sup>19</sup> Instead of being a short walk from the cradle to the grave, life will present endless opportunities to build, plant, and learn. Think of the friendships you will be able to cultivate. Those loving relationships will continue to grow indefinitely. What "glorious freedom" will then be enjoyed on earth by "the children of God"!—Rom. 8:21.

18, 19. What quality of life is foretold at Isaiah 65:21-25?

## Discovering Hidden Treasures



HAVE you ever discovered a hidden treasure in an unlikely place? That happened on March 27, 2005, to Ivo Laud, one of Jehovah's Witnesses in Estonia. He was helping Alma Vardja, an elderly fellow Witness, demolish an old shed. As they removed the outside wall, they noticed a board covering one side of a pillar. Upon removing the board, they found a groove about 4 inches wide, 50 inches long, and 4 inches deep, covered with a matching piece of wood. (1) A cache of hidden treasures! What were the treasures? Who hid them there?

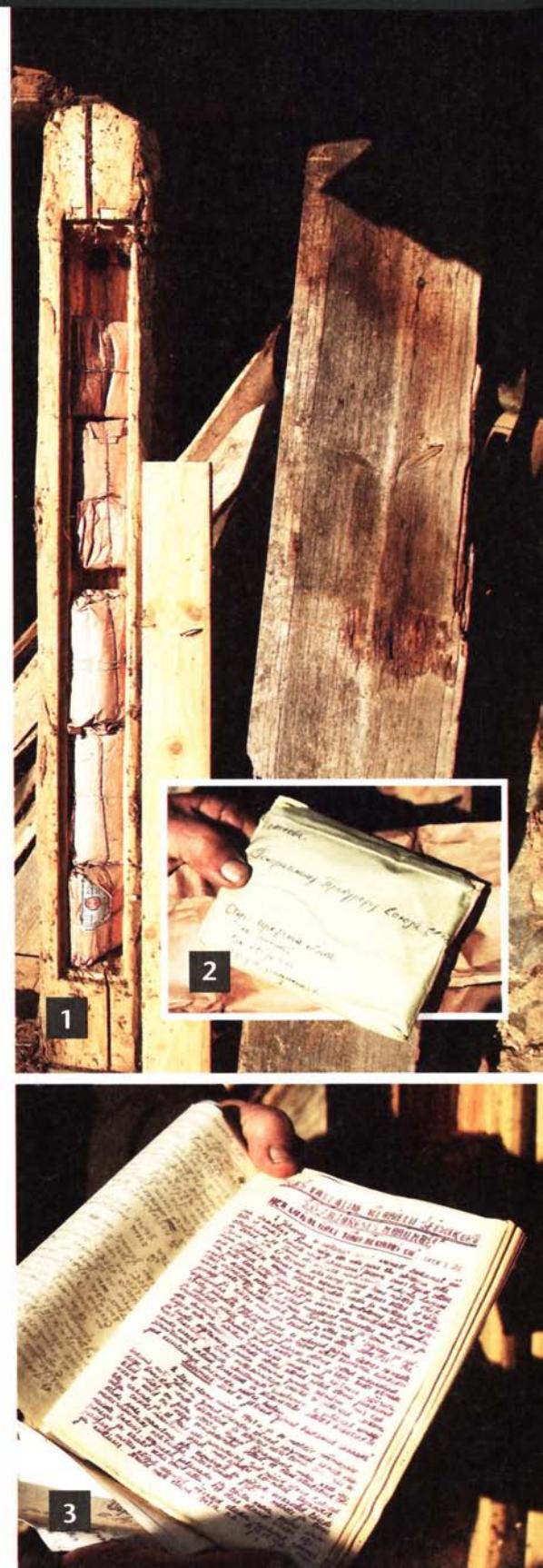
Out of the cache came several packets carefully wrapped in heavy paper. (2) The packets contained

literature of Jehovah's Witnesses, mostly *Watchtower* study articles, including some from 1947. (3) They were carefully handwritten in Estonian. Some of the packets contained clues as to who hid the material there. Those were records of interrogations of Alma's husband, Villem Vardja. Also among the findings was information about the years he spent in prison. Why had he been imprisoned?

Villem Vardja served as a responsible servant among the Witnesses in the Tartu Congregation and later in the Otepää Congregation in Estonia, one of the former Soviet Socialist Republics. He apparently learned Bible truth sometime prior to World War II. A few years later, on December 24, 1948, the Communist regime had Brother Vardja arrested for his religious activity. He was interrogated and mistreated by the secret police as they tried to force him to give them the names of his fellow believers. After being denied the opportunity to defend himself in court, he was sentenced to a ten-year prison term in Russian camps.

Villem Vardja proved himself faithful to Jehovah until his death on March 6, 1990. His wife had no idea that the literature supply existed. He must have wanted to protect her in case of an interrogation. Why did he have to hide the literature? He hid it because the Soviet State Security Committee, the KGB, would often unexpectedly search the homes of Jehovah's Witnesses, looking for religious publications. Brother Vardja likely hid the literature to make sure that a supply of spiritual food was on hand for fellow believers in case everything else was taken away by the KGB. Other caches of literature were found earlier, in the summer of 1990. One was discovered in Tartu, southern Estonia. It too had been hidden by Villem Vardja.

Why do we call these documents treasures? Because these painstakingly handwritten and carefully hidden copies speak eloquently of the appreciation the Witnesses had for the spiritual food available at that time. (Matt. 24:45) Do you appreciate the spiritual provisions you are now able to receive in your locality? Among them is *The Watchtower* in Estonian and over 170 other languages.



# "KEEP YOURSELVES IN GOD'S LOVE"

*"Keep yourselves in God's love, while you are waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ with everlasting life in view."—JUDE 21.*

JEHOVAH GOD has shown his love for us in countless ways. Without question, though, the greatest proof of Jehovah's love is the provision of the ransom sacrifice. His love for mankind is so immense that he even sent his beloved Son here to earth to die in our behalf. (John 3:16) Jehovah did this because he wants us to live forever, and he also wants us to benefit from his love forever!

<sup>2</sup> Can we assume, however, that Jehovah will automatically keep us in his love no matter what we choose to do? No. For at Jude verse 21, we read this exhortation:

1, 2. How has Jehovah shown his love for us, and how do we know that he does not automatically keep us in his love?

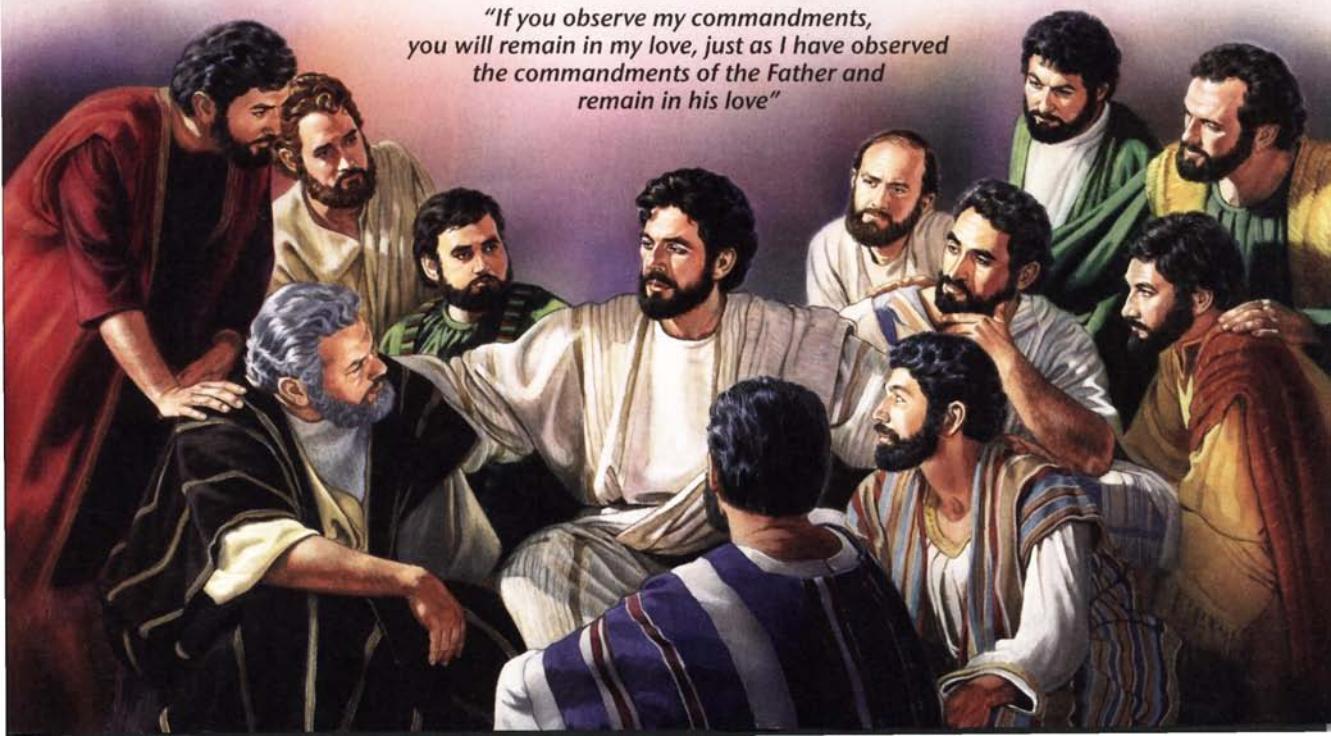
"Keep yourselves in God's love, while you are waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ with everlasting life in view." The expression "*keep yourselves in God's love*" implies that some action is required on our part. What, then, do we need to do in order to remain in God's love?

## How Can We Remain in God's Love?

<sup>3</sup> We find the answer to that question in Jesus' own words, spoken on the final night of his life here on earth. He said: "If you observe my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have observed the commandments of the Father and remain in his

3. What did Jesus say was essential for him to remain in his Father's love?

*"If you observe my commandments,  
you will remain in my love, just as I have observed  
the commandments of the Father and  
remain in his love"*



love." (John 15:10) Clearly, Jesus felt that observing Jehovah's commandments was essential to keeping a good standing with his Father. Now, if that was true of the perfect Son of God, would it not be true of us also?

<sup>4</sup> Primarily, we show that we love Jehovah by *obeying* him. The apostle John expressed it this way: "This is what the love of God means, that we observe his commandments; and yet his commandments are not burdensome." (1 John 5:3) Granted, the notion of obedience is not always a popular one in today's world. Notice, though, the phrase: "Yet his commandments are not burdensome." Jehovah is not asking us to do something that is too hard for us.

<sup>5</sup> To illustrate: Would you ask a dear friend to carry something that you know is too heavy for him to lift? Of course not! Jehovah is far kinder than we are and far more perceptive as to our limitations. The Bible assures us that Jehovah 'remembers that we are dust.' (Ps. 103:14) He would never ask more of us than we can handle. So we have no reason to recoil at the thought of obeying Jehovah's commandments. On the contrary, we embrace obedience for what it is—a marvelous opportunity to show our heavenly Father that we truly do love him and want to remain in his love.

### A Special Gift From Jehovah

<sup>6</sup> In the complex world in which we live, many decisions need to be made that involve our obedience to God. How can we be sure that these decisions are in harmony with God's will? Jehovah has given us a gift that can help us greatly in this matter of obe-

4, 5. (a) What is the primary way we can show that we love Jehovah? (b) Why do we not have any reason to recoil at the thought of obeying Jehovah's commandments?

6, 7. (a) What is the conscience? (b) Illustrate how the conscience can help us to remain in God's love.

dience. It is the conscience. What is the conscience? It is a special kind of self-awareness. It acts like an internal judge, enabling us to look at the choices we face in life or to reflect on the actions we have already taken and to evaluate them as to good or bad, right or wrong.—*Read Romans 2:14, 15.*

<sup>7</sup> How can we make good use of the conscience? Consider an illustration. A hiker treks across a vast wilderness. There are no trails, no roads, no signposts. Yet, he steadily makes his way toward his destination. How? He has a compass. It has a fixed dial marked with the four primary directions and a magnetic needle that points reliably northward. Without his compass, this hiker would be hopelessly lost. Similarly, a human without a conscience would often be hopelessly lost when trying to make moral, ethical, and righteous choices in life.

<sup>8</sup> Like a compass, though, the conscience has its limitations. If the hiker were to put a magnet near his compass, the needle would point away from north. Likewise, if we were to give the desires of our heart too much prominence, what would happen? Our selfish tendencies might well distort the conscience. The Bible warns us that "the heart is more treacherous than anything else and is desperate." (Jer. 17:9; Prov. 4:23) Furthermore, if the hiker did not have an accurate, reliable map, his compass would do him little or no good. Similarly, if we do not rely on the sure, unchanging guidance of God's Word, the Bible, our conscience might be nearly useless. (Ps. 119:105) Sadly, many people in this world give undue prominence to the desires of the heart while paying little or no attention to the standards set out in God's Word. (*Read Ephesians 4:17-19.*) That is why so many people,

8, 9. (a) What limitations of our conscience do we need to keep in mind? (b) What can we do to make sure that our conscience is truly useful to us?

## A PUBLICATION THAT PROMOTES GOOD CONDUCT

During the 2008/2009 district convention program, a 224-page book entitled "Keep Yourselves in God's Love" was released. What is the purpose of this new book? It is designed to help Christians to come to know and love Jehovah's standards, focusing primarily on Christian conduct. A careful study of "Keep Yourselves in God's Love" will deepen our conviction that living in harmony with Jehovah's standards is the best way to live now and leads to everlasting life in the future.

More than that, this book is designed to help us see that obedience to Jehovah is not a burden.



"KEEP YOURSELVES IN  
GOD'S LOVE"

On the contrary, it is a way of showing Jehovah just how much we love him. Hence, this book will move us to ask ourselves, 'Why do I obey Jehovah?'

When some make the sad mistake of leaving Jehovah's love, the problem generally involves conduct, not doctrine. How vital, then, that we strengthen our love and appreciation for Jehovah's laws and principles that guide us in our daily life! We are confident that this new publication will help Jehovah's sheep worldwide to stand firm for what is right, to prove Satan a liar, and above all to remain in God's love!—Jude 21.

though endowed with a conscience, do terrible things.—1 Tim. 4:2.

<sup>9</sup> We should be determined never to be like that! Rather, let us continue to let God's Word educate and train our conscience so that it can be truly useful to us. We need to listen to our Bible-trained conscience instead of letting our selfish inclinations overwhelm it. At the same time, we should endeavor to respect the consciences of our beloved spiritual brothers and sisters. We make every effort to avoid stumbling them, keeping in mind that our brother's conscience may be more sensitive or restrictive than our own.—1 Cor. 8:12; 2 Cor. 4:2; 1 Pet. 3:16.

<sup>10</sup> Let us now consider three areas of life in which we can demonstrate our love for Jehovah by means of obedience. In each of them,

10. What three areas of life will we now discuss?

of course, the conscience will come into play, but it needs to be guided, first and foremost, by the Bible's inspired standards of conduct. The three ways in which we can lovingly obey Jehovah are: (1) We love those whom Jehovah loves, (2) we show respect for authority, and (3) we strive to remain clean in God's eyes.

### Love Those Whom Jehovah Loves

<sup>11</sup> First, *we must love those whom Jehovah loves*. When it comes to associations, people are like sponges. We tend to absorb whatever is around us. Our Creator well knows how dangerous—and how helpful—associations can be for imperfect humans. Therefore, he gives us this wise counsel: "He that is walking with wise persons will become wise, but he that is having dealings with the stupid

11. Why should we love those whom Jehovah loves?

ones will fare badly." (Prov. 13:20; 1 Cor. 15:33) None of us want to "fare badly." Each of us wants to "become wise." Jehovah cannot be made any wiser than he is, nor can he ever be corrupted by anyone. Yet, he sets a beautiful example for us when it comes to associations. Think of it—which imperfect humans does Jehovah choose as his friends?

<sup>12</sup> Jehovah referred to the patriarch Abraham as "my friend." (Isa. 41:8) This man was outstandingly faithful, righteous, and obedient—a man of faith. (Jas. 2:21-23) That is the kind of friend Jehovah chooses. He befriends such people today. If Jehovah chooses such friends, is it not vital that we likewise choose well, that we walk with wise ones and become wise?

<sup>13</sup> What can help you to make good choices in this regard? Studying Bible examples can prove motivating. Consider the friendship between Ruth and her mother-in-law Naomi, the one between David and Jonathan, or the one between Timothy and Paul. (Ruth 1:16, 17; 1 Sam. 23:16-18; Phil. 2:19-22) These friendships thrived for one reason above all others: They were based on genuine love for Jehovah. Can you find friends who love Jehovah as much as you do? Be assured that the Christian congregation is rich with potential for finding friends of that kind. Such friends will not lead you to fare badly in a spiritual sense. Rather, they will help you to obey Jehovah, to grow spiritually, and to sow with a view to the spirit. (*Read Galatians 6:7, 8.*) They will help you to remain in God's love.

### Respect Authority

<sup>14</sup> The second way we demonstrate our

- 
12. What type of friends does Jehovah choose?
  13. When it comes to selecting friends, what can help us to make good choices?
  14. What factors often make it difficult for us to show respect for authority?

love for Jehovah involves authority. *We must show respect for authority.* Why is this so difficult for us to do at times? For one thing, humans in positions of authority are imperfect. In addition, we ourselves are imperfect. We struggle with an inborn tendency to rebel.

<sup>15</sup> You might wonder, then, 'If it is such a challenge for us to respect authority, why do we need to do it?' The answer comes down to the issue of sovereignty. Whom will you choose as your sovereign, your ruler? If we choose Jehovah as our Sovereign, we need to respect his authority. If we do not, can we truthfully call him our Ruler? Furthermore, Jehovah usually exercises his authority through imperfect humans whom he entrusts with responsibility to care for his people. If we were to rebel against those humans, how would Jehovah view our actions? —*Read 1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13.*

<sup>16</sup> For example, when the Israelites murmured and rebelled against Moses, Jehovah took their rebellious actions personally, as directed against him. (Num. 14:26, 27) God has not changed. If we were ever to rebel against those he has put in positions of authority, we would be rebelling against him!

<sup>17</sup> The apostle Paul reveals the right attitude to cultivate toward those who have positions of responsibility in the Christian congregation. He wrote: "Be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you and be submissive, for they are keeping watch over your souls as those who will render an account; that they may do this with joy and

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15, 16. (a) Why is it important for us to respect those whom Jehovah has entrusted with the responsibility to care for his people? (b) What valuable lesson do we learn from how Jehovah viewed the rebellion of the Israelites against Moses?

17. What right attitude should we endeavor to cultivate toward those having positions of authority in the congregation?

not with sighing, for this would be damaging to you." (Heb. 13:17) Granted, it takes real effort on our part to develop such an obedient and submissive spirit. Remember, though, that we are working to remain in God's love. Is that goal not worth our every effort?

### Remain Clean in Jehovah's Eyes

<sup>18</sup> The third way we demonstrate our love for Jehovah is that *we strive to remain clean in his eyes*. Parents usually work hard to make sure that their children are clean. Why? For one thing, being clean is essential to the child's health and well-being. Furthermore, a clean child reflects well on the family, revealing the love and attention of the parents. For similar reasons, Jehovah wants us to be clean. He knows that cleanliness is essential to our well-being. He also knows that our cleanliness reflects on him, our heavenly Father. That is of great importance, for people may be drawn to the God we serve because they notice how we stand out as different from the crowd in this defiled world.

<sup>19</sup> In what ways do we need to remain clean? Really, in all respects. In ancient Israel, Jehovah made it clear to his people that physical cleanliness was essential. (Lev. 15:

18. Why does Jehovah want us to remain clean?
19. How do we know that physical cleanliness is important?

### Do You Remember?

- How can our conscience help us to remain in God's love?
- Why should we love those whom Jehovah loves?
- Why is it vital to respect authority?
- Of what importance is cleanliness to God's people?

31) The Mosaic Law touched on such matters as the disposal of waste, the cleansing of vessels, and the washing of hands, feet, and clothing. (Ex. 30:17-21; Lev. 11:32; Num. 19:17-20; Deut. 23:13, 14) The Israelites were reminded that their God, Jehovah, is holy—which means "clean," "pure," and "sacred." Servants of the holy God need to be holy as well.—*Read Leviticus 11:44, 45.*

<sup>20</sup> We need, then, to be clean on the inside as well as on the outside. We strive to keep our thoughts clean. We adhere faithfully to Jehovah's standards of moral cleanliness, regardless of the sexual degradation of the world around us. Most important, we insist on keeping our worship clean, avoiding any contamination from false religion. We keep ever in mind the inspired warning recorded at Isaiah 52:11: "Turn away, turn away, get out of there, touch nothing unclean; get out from the midst of her, keep yourselves clean." Today, we stay spiritually clean by refraining from even touching what our heavenly Father views as unclean in a religious sense. That is why, for example, we carefully avoid the false religious celebrations and holidays so popular in today's world. True, it is a challenge to remain clean. But Jehovah's people strive to do so because this helps them remain in God's love.

<sup>21</sup> Jehovah wants us to remain in his love forever. But all of us individually need to make sure that we do our very best to remain in God's love. This we can do by following Jesus' example and proving our love for Jehovah by obeying His commands. If we do so, we can be certain that nothing "will be able to separate us from God's love that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."—Rom. 8:38, 39.

20. In what ways do we need to remain clean?
21. How can we be sure that we will remain in God's love?

# Do You Remember?

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Have you appreciated reading the recent issues of *The Watchtower*?

Well, see if you can answer the following questions:

- **Is a resurrection possible if a developing child dies before it is born?**

Life begins at conception. Jehovah can resurrect individuals of whatever stage of life because “all things are possible with God.” (Mark 10:27) But the Bible does not directly say whether he will resurrect unborn children who died in the womb.—4/15, pages 12, 13.

- **Why can we benefit from noting ants, rock badgers, locusts, and gecko lizards?**

These four illustrate instinctive wisdom. Thus, they magnify God’s wisdom. (Prov. 30:24-28)—4/15, pages 16-19.

- **Of what is the year 2009 a centennial for Jehovah’s Witnesses?**

In 1909 the headquarters of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, the legal arm of the publishing organization used by Jehovah’s Witnesses, was moved from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to Brooklyn, New York, where it continues active.—5/1, pages 22-24.

- **Why does the Bible speak favorably of silence?**

It shows that silence can be a mark of respect, an aid to meditation, and an evidence of discretion and discernment. (Ps. 37:7; 63:6; Prov. 11:12)—5/15, pages 3-5.

- **What do John Wycliffe, William Tyndale, Robert Morrison, and Adoniram Judson have in common?**

All of them loved God’s Word and translated it into languages that common people could read. The first two did so into English, Morrison into Chinese, and Judson into Burmese (Myanmar).—6/1, pages 8-11.

- **How many Judean kings showed outstanding zeal for God’s house?**

Nineteen kings ruled over the southern king-

dom of Judah, and four were noteworthy for such zeal—Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah.—6/15, pages 7-11.

- **Do all anointed Christians on earth share in providing spiritual food?**

No. All who are anointed with God’s spirit are part of the faithful and discreet slave class, but those making up the Governing Body oversee the spiritual feeding.—6/15, pages 22-24.

- **Why did Roman soldiers view Jesus’ inner garment as desirable?**

The soldiers at Jesus’ execution did not divide his garment into pieces. Usually, such a tunic was made by sewing together two pieces of fabric, but Jesus’ garment was seamless, making it more valuable.—7/1, page 22.

- **Why can it be said that love was a key difference between Jesus’ approach and that of the religious leaders?**

Rather than loving the common people, those leaders despised them. Moreover, they did not love God. Jesus loved his Father and was moved with pity for the people. (Matt. 9:36) He was warm, sympathetic, and kind toward them.—7/15, page 15.

- **Why can managing money be a challenge in marriage, and what can help couples to succeed?**

Disagreements over money are often about trust or fear, and marriage mates may have different backgrounds. Four keys to success are: Learn to talk calmly about money, agree on how income will be viewed, write down a family budget, and decide who will do what.—8/1, pages 10-12.

# 'Jehovah Has Made His Face Shine Toward Them'



THERE are over 30 muscles in the human face. It takes 14 muscles working together just to make you smile! Imagine what your conversations would be like without these muscles. Appealing? Hardly. For those who are deaf, though, the facial muscles do much more than animate conversations. When combined with physical gestures, they are a significant means of conveying thoughts and ideas. Many people have marveled at how sign language is able to express even complex thoughts along with every nuance.

In recent times, deaf people worldwide have come to see a face that is richer in expression and color than any human face. Figuratively speaking, they have come to see "the face of Jehovah." (Lam. 2:19) This has not been by chance. Jehovah has long shown great love for those who are deaf. He did so even as far back as in the ancient nation of Israel. (Lev. 19:14) In modern times, his love for the deaf has also been very evident. "[God's] will is that all sorts of men should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth." (1 Tim. 2:4) By gaining accurate knowledge of the truth about God, many of the deaf have, in effect, come to see his face. How has this happened without the advantage of the spoken word? Before answering that question, let us consider why sign language is important to deaf people.

## Seeing Is Hearing

There are many misconceptions concerning deaf people and sign language. Let us clear up some of them. Deaf people can drive automobiles. Lipreading is extremely difficult for them. Sign language has nothing in common with Braille, and it is not simply pantomime. There is not one universal sign language. Moreover, deaf people do have regional accents when signing.

Can deaf people read? While some read well, the truth is that the vast majority of the deaf struggle with reading. Why? Because what is on the printed page originates from a spoken language. Consider how a child with the ability to hear learns a language. From the moment the child is born, he is surrounded by people who speak the local tongue. In a short time, he is able to string words together and form sentences. This comes naturally just from *hearing* the language spoken. Thus, when hearing children begin to read, it is a matter of learning that the black marks on the page correspond to the sounds and words they already know.

Now imagine yourself in a foreign country in a soundproof room made of glass. You have never heard the local language spoken. Each day, the local people come to you and try to speak to you through the glass. You cannot hear what they are saying. You see only that their lips are moving. Realizing



*There are over  
1,100 sign-language  
congregations worldwide*

that you do not understand them, they write those same words on a piece of paper and show you through the glass what they have written. They think that you must be able to understand it. How well do you think you would do? You would find communication nearly impossible in this situation. Why? Because what is written represents a language that you have never heard spoken. This is precisely the situation in which most deaf people find themselves.

Sign language is a perfect vehicle for deaf people. A person uses signs to set up concepts in the space surrounding his body. His movements in that space along with his facial expressions follow the rules of grammar of sign language. Thus emerges a visual language that makes it possible to convey information to the eyes.

In fact, almost every move a deaf person makes with his hands, body, and face while signing has meaning. Facial expressions are not made just for the sake of dramatic impact. They are an integral part of the grammar of sign language. To illustrate: Asking a question with the eyebrows raised could indicate either a rhetorical question or one that elicits a yes or no answer. If eyebrows are lowered, this could indicate a who, what, where, when, why, or how question. Certain mouth movements may suggest the size of an object or the intensity of an action. The

way a deaf person moves his head, lifts his shoulders, twitches his cheeks, and blinks his eyes all add subtle shades of meaning to the thought being conveyed.

These elements combine to create a linguistic feast for the eyes. Using this rich form of expression, deaf people who know sign language well are equipped to convey any concept—from poetic to technical, from romantic to humorous, from concrete to abstract.

### **Sign-Language Publications Make a Difference**

When the knowledge of Jehovah is expressed visually in sign language, a deaf person is, in effect, able to hear the message and “put faith” in the Originator of the message. Hence, Jehovah’s Witnesses have made a diligent effort to preach to deaf people worldwide and to provide material for their benefit. (Rom. 10:14) Currently, there are 58 sign-language translation teams around the world, and sign-language publications on DVD are now available in 40 sign languages. Has all this work been worthwhile?

Jeremy, whose parents are both deaf, says: “I can remember my father spending hours in his bedroom poring over just a few paragraphs of an article in *The Watchtower*, trying to understand them. Suddenly he burst out of the room and excitedly signed: ‘I got it! I

gregations where meetings are conducted entirely in sign language. Currently, there are over 1,100 sign-language congregations worldwide. The deaf audience is addressed in their language, and Bible truths are presented in the way a deaf person thinks—in his language. They are conveyed in a way that shows respect for his culture and life experience.

Has the formation of sign-language congregations been of value? Consider the experience of Cyril, who was baptized as one of Jehovah's Witnesses in 1955. For years he studied written publications as best he could and attended Christian meetings faithfully. Sometimes interpreters were available and sometimes not. When there were none, he relied on Witnesses who lovingly tried to help by writing notes about what was being said from the platform. It was not until 1989, when he had been a Witness for some 34 years, that the first sign-language congregation in the United States was formed in New York City. As a member of that congregation, how did Cyril feel? "It was like coming out of the forest, out of a dark tunnel into the light. A meeting in my language!"

Sign-language congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses are places where deaf people can come together regularly to learn about God and worship him. They are places where God's people can thrive emotionally. Amid a world where deaf people may be linguistically and socially isolated, these congregations are havens of communication and association. In that environment, deaf people can learn, grow, and reach out in their service to Jehovah. Many deaf Witnesses have been able to serve as full-time evangelizers. Some have moved to other countries to help the deaf learn about Jehovah. Christian men who are deaf learn to be effective teachers, organizers, and shepherds, and many are then able to qualify to care for responsibilities in the congregation.

In the United States, there are over 100 sign-language congregations and about 80 groups. In Brazil, there are approximately 300 sign-language congregations and over 400 groups. There are close to 300 sign-language congregations in Mexico. Russia has over 30 sign-language congregations and 113 groups. These are but a few examples of the growth taking place worldwide.

Jehovah's Witnesses also hold assemblies and conventions in sign language. Last year, over 120 conventions were held around the world in many different sign languages. These events enable deaf Witnesses to see that they are part of a worldwide Christian brotherhood benefiting from timely spiritual food.

Leonard is deaf and has been one of Jehovah's Witnesses for over 25 years. He relates: "I have always known that Jehovah is the true God. Still, I never clearly understood why he has allowed suffering. At times, this caused me to feel angry with him. But during one particular talk at a sign-language district convention, I finally understood the issues involved. When the talk was over, my wife elbowed me and asked, 'Are you satisfied?' I could honestly say yes! After 25 years, I am thankful that I never left Jehovah. I always loved him but could not fully understand him. Today I do!"

### **Grateful at Heart**

What "expressions" on Jehovah's face are deaf people seeing upon learning about him? Love, compassion, justice, loyalty, loving-kindness—and many more.

The international deaf community of Witnesses is seeing the face of Jehovah and will continue to do so even more clearly. With love in his heart for the deaf, 'Jehovah has made his face shine toward them.' (Num. 6:25) How grateful such deaf ones are that they have come to know Jehovah!

# Avoid Distractions in This “Day of Good News”

THE four lepers reviewed their options. No one had given them alms at the city gate. The besieging Syrians were starving out Samaria. It was no use entering the city; the price of food was exorbitant. A case of cannibalism had already been reported.—2 Ki. 6:24-29.

‘Why not go to the Syrian camp?’ the lepers thought. ‘We have nothing to lose.’ Under cover of darkness, they started out that evening. When they arrived at the camp, it was silent. There were no sentries. Horses and asses were tied, but there were no soldiers. The four gazed inside a tent. No one was there, but food and drink were available in abundance. They helped themselves. The lepers also spotted gold, silver, garments, and other valuable things. They carried them off, hid them, and came back for more. The whole camp had been abandoned. Jehovah had miraculously caused the Syrians to hear the sound of a military force. Concluding that they were being attacked, the Syrians fled on foot. Everything was left there for the taking!

The lepers were stashing away the valuable items. However, the thought of neighboring Samaria starving began to prick their conscience. They began to say to one another: “It is not right what we are doing. This day is a day of good news!” The lepers scurried back to Samaria and reported the good news of their discovery.—2 Ki. 7:1-11.

We too are living in what may be termed “a day of good news.” Pointing to an outstanding feature of “the sign . . . of the conclusion of the system of things,” Jesus said: “This good news of the kingdom will be

preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come.” (Matt. 24:3, 14) How should that affect us?

## Personal Concerns Can Weigh Us Down

Overjoyed at their discovery, the lepers temporarily forgot Samaria. They focused on what they could get. Can something similar happen to us? “Food shortages” form part of the composite sign marking the time of the conclusion of the system of things. (Luke 21:7, 11) Jesus warned his disciples: “Pay attention to yourselves that your hearts never become weighed down with overeating and heavy drinking and anxieties of life.” (Luke 21:34) As Christians, we should be careful that we do not allow personal concerns over day-to-day life to cause us to lose sight of the fact that we are living in “a day of good news.”

A Christian named Blessing did not allow personal interests to weigh her down. She served as a pioneer, completed a period of schooling, eventually married a Bethelite, and was accepted as a member of the Benin Bethel family. She says: “I am a housekeeper, and I really enjoy my assignment.” Blessing



Blessing did not permit personal interests to interfere with her full-time service

can now happily look back on 12 years in full-time service and be glad that she has kept her focus on the “day of good news” that we are living in right now.

### Beware of Time-Consuming Distractions

When sending out 70 disciples, Jesus said: “The harvest, indeed, is great, but the workers are few. Therefore beg the Master of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest.” (Luke 10:2) Just as delay at harvesttime could lead to the wasting of crops, neglect in carrying out the preaching work could result in the loss of lives. So Jesus added: “Do not embrace anybody in greeting along the road.” (Luke 10:4) The original-language word for “greeting” may mean more than a mere “hello” or “good-day.” It can also include the embraces and long conversation that may take place when we meet a friend. Jesus thus instructed his followers to avoid unnecessary distractions and make the most of their time. The message that they were to preach was urgent.

Think of the amount of time that distractions can consume. For years, television has ruled as the top time-waster in many areas. What, though, about mobile phones and personal computers? A survey of 1,000 adults in Britain found that “the average Briton spends 88 minutes a day on a landline telephone, a further 62 minutes on a mobile telephone, 53 minutes e-mailing and 22 minutes text messaging.” The total amounts to more than twice as much time as an auxiliary pioneer devotes to the ministry each day! How do your communication habits measure up?

Ernst and Hildegard Seliger were mindful of how they used their time. Between them, they spent more than 40 years in Nazi concentration camps and Communist prisons. After they were released, they served as



*The Seligers were mindful of how they used their time*

pioneers until they finished their earthly course.

Many wanted to correspond with the Seligers. The couple could have spent most of their waking hours reading and writing letters. However, spiritual matters took top priority in their lives.

Of course, all of us cherish maintaining some communication with our loved ones, and there is nothing wrong with that. Well-chosen variation in our daily routine is beneficial. Nevertheless, we are wise to be alert to curb time-consuming distractions during this day for preaching the good news.

### Thoroughly Preach the Good News

What a blessing it is to be living in “a day of good news.” Let us not become sidetracked as the four lepers were at first. Remember that they concluded: “It is not right what we are doing.” Likewise, it is not right for us to allow personal pursuits or time-consuming distractions to prevent us from having a full share in the ministry.

In this regard, we have an excellent example to follow. Reflecting back on the first 20 years of his ministry, the apostle Paul wrote: “I have thoroughly preached the good news about the Christ.” (Rom. 15:19) Paul allowed nothing to dampen his zeal. Let us be as zealous as he was as we declare the Kingdom message in this “day of good news.”

# Did You Once Serve? Can You Serve Again?

**D**ID you once serve in a responsible position in the Christian congregation? Perhaps you were a ministerial servant or an elder. You may have been in some avenue of full-time service. No doubt you found joy and deep satisfaction in your assignments, but then for some reason you had to give them up.

Perhaps you relinquished your privilege in order to care for family members. On the other hand, age or poor health may have been a factor. Such decisions are not a mark of failure. (1 Tim. 5:8) In the first century, Philip served as a missionary, but he later settled in Caesarea, where he cared for his family. (Acts 21:8, 9) In his old age, King David of ancient Israel arranged for his son Solomon to succeed him on the throne. (1 Ki. 1:1, 32-35) Yet, both Philip and David were still loved and appreciated by Jehovah and are respected to this day.

It may be, however, that you were relieved of a privilege of service. Was unwise conduct a factor? Or were family problems involved? (1 Tim. 3:2, 4, 10, 12) You may even have disagreed with the need for this action, and a feeling of resentment may linger to this day.

## You Can Reach Out to Serve Again

Is the loss of a privilege of service irreversible? Not in most cases. In order to serve again, though, you must want to reach out. (1 Tim. 3:1) But why desire this? For the same reason that you dedicated yourself to God—love for Jehovah and for those who serve him. If you are willing to show that love by serving again, this will allow Jeho-

vah to make use of the experience you have had both before and after the loss of your privilege.

Recall the assurance Jehovah gave Israel after that nation had deservedly lost privileges of service. His Word says: "I am Jehovah; I have not changed. And you are sons of Jacob; you have not come to your finish." (Mal. 3:6) Jehovah loved the Israelites and desired to use them further. His interest in you is just as forward-looking. What can you do in your present circumstances? Serving theocratic interests depends more on spiritual health than on natural ability. Hence, while you do not have additional responsibilities in the congregation, concentrate on strengthening your spirituality.

To "grow mighty" in the faith, you must "search for Jehovah and his strength." (1 Cor. 16:13; Ps. 105:4) One way you can do

## Grow mighty in the faith through heartfelt prayer

this is through heartfelt prayer. When you describe your situation to Jehovah, express your feelings to him and ask for his spirit. By doing this, you will draw closer to Jehovah, and this will make you firm. (Ps. 62:8; Phil. 4:6, 13) Another way to strengthen your spirituality is by improved study of God's Word. With fewer responsibilities for the time being, you may be able to do more with regard to personal and family study, perhaps restoring a routine that had been difficult to maintain.

Of course, you still represent Jehovah as one of his Witnesses. (Isa. 43:10-12) The finest privilege any of us can have is to be one of "God's fellow workers." (1 Cor. 3:9) Increased activity in the field service is a splendid way to deepen your own spirituality and that of your companions in the ministry.

### Coping With Your Feelings

Losing a privilege of service may evoke in you a feeling of shame or regret. You may have a tendency to justify your actions. However, what if responsible brothers listened to your defense but still felt that you should not retain a certain privilege? Negative feelings may linger, hindering you from reaching out or even making it difficult for you to learn from the experience. Let us consider how the experiences of Job, Manasseh, and Joseph can help one to cope with negative feelings.

Job had represented others before Jehovah and had sat as an elder and judge in a patriarchal society. (Job 1:5; 29:7-17, 21-25) Then, at a crucial time in his life, Job lost his wealth, his children, and his health. With these, he also lost his standing in the eyes of others. "They have laughed at me," Job said, "those younger in days than I am."—Job 30:1.

Job felt entirely innocent and wanted to defend himself before God. (Job 13:15) Yet, Job was willing to wait on Jehovah, and this bore good fruit. He learned that he did need correction, particularly for his reactions to the test he underwent. (Job 40:6-8; 42:3, 6) Job's humility eventually re-

*Increased activity in the field service is a splendid way to deepen your own spirituality*

sulted in his being blessed abundantly by God.—Job 42:10-13.

If your loss of a privilege was due to wrongdoing on your part, you may wonder whether Jehovah and your Christian brothers will ever truly forgive and forget. Well, consider the case of King Manasseh of Judah. He "did on a large scale what was bad in Jehovah's eyes, to offend him." (2 Ki. 21:6) Yet, Manasseh died a faithful man, ruling as king. How did this happen?

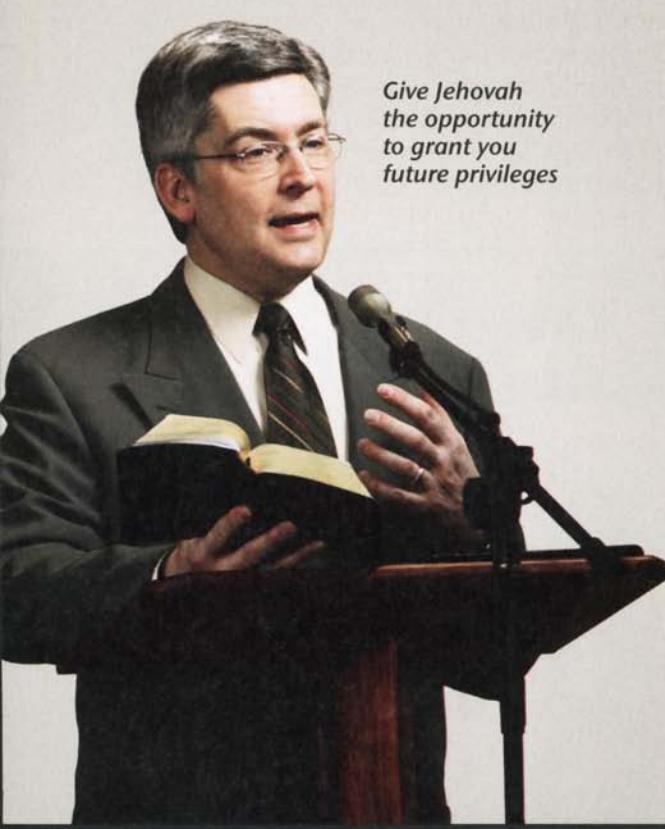
Manasseh eventually responded to discipline. After he had ignored warnings, Jehovah brought against him the Assyrians, who fettered him and exiled him to distant Babylon. There, Manasseh "softened the face of Jehovah his God and kept humbling himself greatly because of the God of his forefathers. And he kept praying to Him." Repentance from the heart produced fruitage in deeds, and Manasseh was forgiven. —2 Chron. 33:12, 13.

Lost privileges are seldom restored all at once. With time, however, certain limited responsibilities may come your way. Accepting these and doing your best will often lead to further assignments. This is not to say that the road is easy. There may be setbacks. Nevertheless, willingness and perseverance bring fine fruitage.



Take Jacob's son Joseph as an example. At the age of 17, Joseph was unjustly sold into slavery by his brothers. (Gen. 37:2, 26-28) This was certainly not the kind of treatment that he expected from the sons of his father. However, he was willing to work with these circumstances, and with Jehovah's blessing he "came to be over the house of his master." (Gen. 39:2) Later, Joseph was thrown into prison. But he proved himself faithful, and Jehovah was with him, so that he eventually was entrusted with prison affairs. —Gen. 39:21-23.

Joseph did not know that all of this would serve a purpose. He simply continued to do what he could. Jehovah was thus able to use him to preserve the line leading to the promised Seed. (Gen. 3:15; 45:5-8) While none of us can expect to play as central a role as Joseph did, the inspired account shows that Jehovah's hand is involved in privileges that His servants receive. Keep the way open by imitating Joseph.



*Give Jehovah  
the opportunity  
to grant you  
future privileges*

## Learning From Difficult Experiences

Job, Manasseh, and Joseph went through disheartening experiences. All three men accepted what Jehovah allowed, and each of them learned valuable lessons. What might you learn?

*Look for what Jehovah may be trying to teach you.* In his struggle with despair, Job became self-centered and lost sight of larger issues. With Jehovah's loving correction, however, he regained balance, admitting: "I talked, but I was not understanding." (Job 42:3) If you feel hurt by a loss of privileges, 'do not think more of yourself than it is necessary to think, but think so as to have a sound mind.' (Rom. 12:3) Jehovah may be trying to adjust you in a way that you do not yet fully comprehend.

*Accept discipline.* Manasseh may initially have felt that he did not deserve quite so severe a reproof as he received. Yet, he accepted it, repented, and abandoned his wrong course. Regardless of how you feel about the discipline you received, 'humble yourself in the eyes of Jehovah, and he will exalt you.'

—1 Pet. 5:6; Jas. 4:10.

*Be patient and willing.* Joseph's experiences could easily have led him to nurse feelings of hatred and revenge. Instead, he developed insight and mercy. (Gen. 50:15-21) If you have been disappointed, be patient. Be willing to be trained by Jehovah.

Did you once serve in a responsible position in the Christian congregation? Give Jehovah the opportunity to confer future privileges on you. Strengthen your spirituality. Temper your feelings with patience and humility. Willingly accept whatever assignments may be open to you. Be assured that "Jehovah himself will not hold back anything good from those walking in faultlessness." —Ps. 84:11.