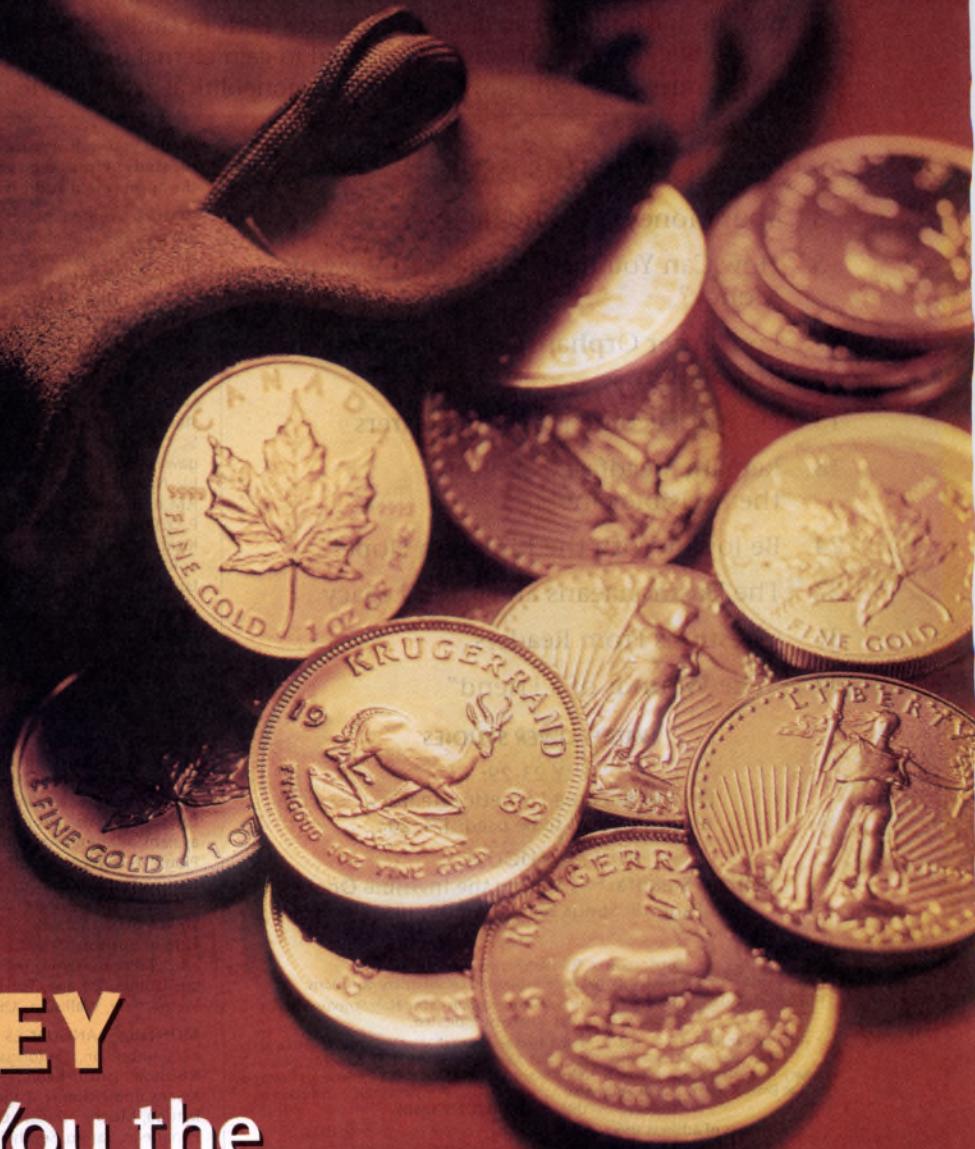


THE WATCHTOWER

JUNE 15, 2001

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



Can
MONEY
Bring You the
REAL LIFE?



THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

June 15, 2001

Average Printing Each Issue: 23,042,000

Vol. 122, No. 12

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

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Publication of *The Watchtower* is part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations. The Bible translation used is the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References*, unless otherwise indicated.

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, Wallkill, NY 12589.

Changes of address should reach us 30 days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label).

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Semimonthly

ENGLISH

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Your Money or Your Life?



You may have heard about bandits who waved guns in their victim's face, demanding: "Your money or your life!" Today, this legendary demand is echoed in a challenging dilemma facing all of us—especially those of us living in affluent lands. This time, however, it is no bandit that presses the demand. Rather, it is the increased emphasis that society places on money and material success.

SUCH emphasis has raised a whole new set of issues and concerns. At what cost should money and material things be pursued? Could we be content with less? Are people actually sacrificing "the real life" on the altar of materialism? Is money the ticket to a happy life?

Money Mania

Among human desires and passions—legitimate or otherwise—the love of money vies for the lead. Unlike the desire for sex and food, the mania for money can be constant and unending. Old age does not seem to assuage it. In many cases advancing years may actually increase a person's interest in or concern about money and what it can buy.

Greed seems to be escalating. The main character in one popular movie said: "Greed works. Greed is good." Although many referred to the 1980's as the Age of Greed, what came before and after shows that human reaction to money has changed little through the years.

What probably is new is that so many people see opportunities to satisfy instantly the desire for more. It seems that much of the world most of the time spends most of



its energy producing and acquiring more and more things. You may agree that having material possessions and spending money have become a passionate—and often most imaginative—endeavor in modern-day life.

But are people happier as a result? Answering that question, wise and very wealthy King Solomon wrote 3,000 years ago: "A mere lover of silver will not be satisfied with silver, neither any

lover of wealth with income. This too is vanity." (Ecclesiastes 5:10) Modern social studies provide similarly interesting conclusions.

Money and Happiness

One of the most surprising findings regarding human behavior is that the accumulation of money and material things does not necessarily provide a corresponding increase in satisfaction and happiness. What many researchers have come to realize is that once a person reaches a certain level of affluence, his sense of well-being is independent of how many material goods are available to him.

Thus, the unbridled pursuit of material goods and money leaves many wondering, 'We seem to enjoy each of the new things we



Material possessions do not bring lasting happiness

buy; yet, why is it, when all is said and done, that these pleasures do not add up to any greater sense of satisfaction?"

In his book *Happy People*, author Jonathan Freedman notes: "Once some minimal income is attained, the amount of money you have matters little in terms of bringing happiness. Above the poverty level, the relationship between income and happiness is remarkably small." Many have come to realize that what really matters for individual happiness is that one has spiritual assets, meaningful pursuits in life, and moral values. Also important are human relationships and freedom from the conflicts or constrictions that could prevent us from enjoying what we have.

Many see at the root of most of the present social ills the tendency to try to use material prosperity to solve what are really inner troubles. Some social commentators speak of a general mood of pessimism and discontent.

They also note the increased tendency of people in affluent societies to consult therapists or to seek meaning and inner harmony from gurus, cults, and quasi-therapeutic groups. This attests to the failure of material goods to add real meaning to life.

Power and Powerlessness of Money

Granted, money has power. It can buy fine homes, elegant wardrobes, and dazzling furnishings. It may also buy adulation, compliance, or flattery, even producing a few temporary and obliging friends. But that is about as far as the power of money goes. What we need most, money cannot buy—the love of one true human friend, peace of mind, a crumb of heartfelt solace in the hour of death. And for those who cherish their relationship with the Creator, money cannot buy God's approval.

King Solomon, who had all the good things that money could buy in his day, recognized that trusting in material possessions does not lead to lasting happiness. (Ecclesiastes 5:12-15) Money can be lost through bank failure or inflation. Real estate can be destroyed by severe storms. Insurance policies, while partially replacing material losses, do not make up for emotional losses. Stocks and bonds can become worthless overnight in a sudden economic crash. Even a well-paying job can be here today and gone tomorrow.

How, then, can we keep money in its place? What role should money or possessions play in our life? Please examine the matter further to see how you can possess something that is truly valuable—"the real life."



How Can You Keep a Balanced View of Money?

Love of money and a desire for possessions are not new; nor is the Bible silent about them, as if they were some recent phenomena. They are very old. In the Law, God instructed the Israelites: "You must not desire your fellowman's house . . . nor anything that belongs to your fellowman."—Exodus 20:17.

LOVE of money and possessions was common in Jesus' day. Consider this report of an exchange between Jesus and a "very rich" young man. "Jesus said to him: 'There is yet one thing lacking about you: Sell all the things you have and distribute to poor people, and you will have treasure in the heavens; and come be my follower.' When he heard this, he became deeply grieved, for he was very rich."—Luke 18:18-23.

A Proper View of Money

It would be wrong, however, to conclude that the Bible condemns money itself or any of its basic uses. The Bible shows that money provides a practical defense against poverty and its attendant troubles, enabling people to procure necessities. King Solomon wrote: "Wisdom is for a protection the same as money is for a protection." And: "Bread is for the laughter of the workers, and wine itself makes life rejoice; but money is what meets a response in all things."—Ecclesiastes 7:12; 10:19.

The proper use of money is approved by God. For example, Jesus said: "Make friends for yourselves by means of the unrighteous riches." (Luke 16:9) This includes contributing toward the advancement of the true worship of God, for we definitely should want

God as our Friend. Solomon himself, following the example of his father, David, contributed large amounts of money and valuables toward the building of Jehovah's temple. Another Christian mandate is to give material assistance to those in need. "Share with the holy ones according to their needs," said the apostle Paul. He added: "Follow the course of hospitality." (Romans 12:13) This often involves spending some money. However, what about the *love of money*?

'The Fondness of Silver'

Paul discussed extensively "the love of money"—or literally, "fondness of silver"—when he was writing to his younger fellow Christian Timothy. Paul's admonition can be found at 1 Timothy 6:6-19. He commented on "the love of money" as part of his broader consideration of material things. We do well to study carefully Paul's inspired comments, in view of the emphasis today's culture puts on money. Such an examination is definitely beneficial because it brings in the secret of how to "get a firm hold on the real life."

Paul warns: "The love of money is a root of all sorts of injurious things, and by reaching out for this love some have been led astray from the faith and have stabbed themselves

all over with many pains." (1 Timothy 6:10) This text does not say that money itself is evil—nor does any other scripture. Neither does the apostle say that money is the fundamental cause of "injurious things" or that money lies at the root of every problem. Rather, the love of money can be a cause—even if not the only cause—of all kinds of "injurious things."

Guard Against Greed

The fact that money itself is not condemned in the Scriptures should not blunt Paul's warning. Christians who begin to love money are vulnerable to all kinds of problems, the worst of which is that of straying from the faith. This truth is reinforced by what Paul said to the Christians in Colossae: "Deaden, therefore, your body members that are upon the earth as respects . . . hurtful desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry." (Colossians 3:5) How may covetousness, greed, or "love of money" amount to idolatry? Does this mean that it is wrong to want a bigger house, a newer car, a more profitable job? No, none of these things are evil in themselves. The question is: What is the heart attitude that makes one want any of these things, and are they really necessary?

The difference between normal desire and greed might be likened to the difference between the small campfire that cooks food and the blazing inferno that consumes a forest. Wholesome and well-placed desire can be constructive. It motivates us to work and to be productive. Proverbs 16:26 says: "The soul of the hard worker has worked hard for him, because his mouth has pressed him hard." But greed is dangerous and destructive. It is desire out of control.

Control is a core issue. Will the money we accumulate or the material things we want serve our needs, or will our needs serve money? That is why Paul says that being a "greedy person . . . means being an idolater." (Ephesians 5:5) To be greedy for something in reality means that we surrender our will to it—in ef-

fect, we make it our master, our god, the thing we serve. In contrast, God insists: "You must not have any other gods against my face." —Exodus 20:3.

Our being greedy also indicates that we do not trust that God will follow through on his promise to supply what we need. (Matthew 6: 33) Greed, then, amounts to a turning away from God. In this sense too, it is "idolatry." No wonder Paul warns so clearly against it!

Jesus also gave a direct warning against greed. He commanded us to guard against longing for something that we do not have: "Keep your eyes open and guard against every sort of covetousness, because even when a person has an abundance his life does not result from the things he possesses." (Luke 12:15) According to this passage and Jesus' subsequent illustration, greed is based on the foolish belief that what matters in life is how much one has. It may be money, status, power, or related things. It is possible to be greedy for anything that can be acquired. The idea is that having that thing will make us content. But according to the Bible and human experience, only God can—and will—satisfy our real needs, as Jesus reasoned with his followers.—Luke 12:22-31.

Today's consumer-oriented culture excels at kindling the fires of greed. Influenced in subtle yet powerful ways, many come to believe that whatever they have is not enough. They need more, bigger, and better things. While we cannot hope to change the world around us, how can we personally resist this trend?

Contentment Versus Greed

Paul offers the alternative to greed, which is contentment. He says: "So, having sustenance and covering, we shall be content with these things." (1 Timothy 6:8) This description of all that we really need—"sustenance and covering"—may sound rather simplistic or naive. Many people are entertained by television programs where viewers visit celebrities who

live in luxurious homes. That is no way to attain contentment.

Of course, servants of God are not required to live in self-imposed poverty. (Proverbs 30: 8, 9) However, Paul does remind us what poverty really is: lack of food, clothing, and shelter adequate for survival where one lives. On the other hand, if we have those things, we have the basis for contentment.

Could Paul be serious about such a description of contentment? Is it really possible to be satisfied with merely the basics—food, clothing, and shelter? Paul should know. He experienced firsthand the wealth and privileges of high rank in the Jewish community and of Roman citizenship. (Acts 22:28; 23:6; Philippians 3:5) Paul also suffered severe hardships in his missionary activities. (2 Corinthians 11:23-28) Through it all, he learned a secret that helped him to maintain contentment. What was that?

"I Have Learned the Secret"

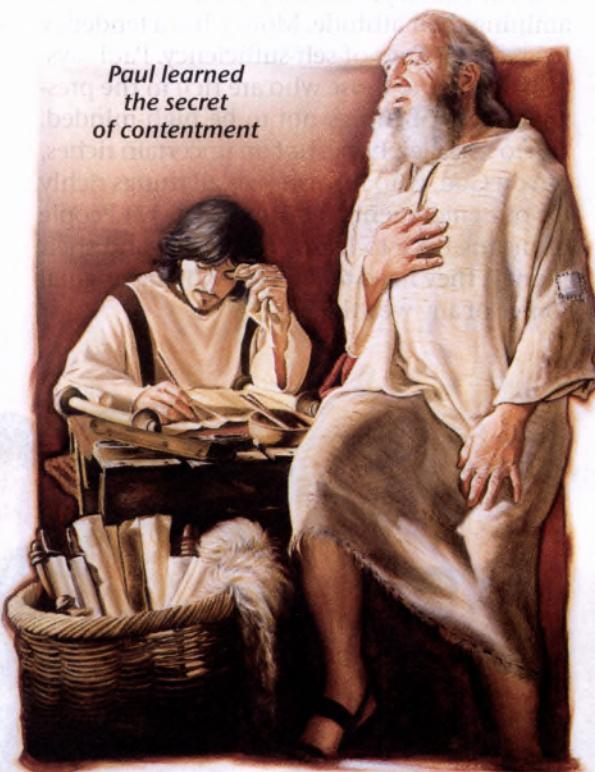
Paul explained in one of his letters: "I know indeed how to be low on provisions, I know indeed how to have an abundance. In everything and in all circumstances I have learned the secret of both how to be full and how to hunger, both how to have an abundance and how to suffer want." (Philippians 4:12) Paul sounds so confident, so optimistic! It would be easy to assume that his life was rosy when he wrote these words but not so. He was in prison in Rome!—Philippians 1:12-14.

Given that sobering fact, this passage speaks powerfully on the issue of contentment not only with material possessions but with circumstances as well. Extremes of wealth or hardship can test our priorities. Paul spoke of spiritual resources that enabled him to be content regardless of material circumstances: "For all things I have the strength by virtue of [God] who imparts power to me." (Philippians 4:13) Rather than looking to his possessions, many or few, or to his circumstances, good or

bad, Paul looked to God to satisfy his needs. The result was contentment.

Paul's example was especially important to Timothy. The apostle urged that young man to pursue a life-style that put godly devotion and a close relationship with God before wealth. Paul said: "However, you, O man of God, flee from these things. But pursue righteousness,

*Paul learned
the secret
of contentment*



godly devotion, faith, love, endurance, mildness of temper." (1 Timothy 6:11) Those words may have been addressed to Timothy, but they apply to anyone who wants to honor God and to have a really happy life.

Timothy needed to watch out for greed just like any other Christian. Apparently, there were wealthy believers in the congregation in Ephesus, where he was when Paul wrote to him. (1 Timothy 1:3) Paul had entered this prosperous commercial center with the good

news of Christ, making many converts. No doubt, a number of these were wealthy people, as is true of some in the Christian congregation today.

The question, then, especially in the light of the teaching at 1 Timothy 6:6-10, is: What should people with more than the average amount of money do if they want to honor God? Paul says that they should start by examining their attitude. Money has a tendency to create feelings of self-sufficiency. Paul says: "Give orders to those who are rich in the present system of things not to be high-minded, and to rest their hope, not on uncertain riches, but on God, who furnishes us all things richly for our enjoyment." (1 Timothy 6:17) People of means have to learn to look beyond their money; they need to look to God, the original source of any wealth.

*We can be happy
and content with
what we have*



But attitude is only half the battle. Sooner or later, wealthy Christians need to use their wealth well. Paul admonishes: 'Work at good, be rich in fine works, be liberal, ready to share.'—1 Timothy 6:18.

"The Real Life"

The thrust of Paul's counsel is that we need to remind ourselves of the relative worth of material things. God's Word says: "The valuable things of the rich are his strong town, and they are like a protective wall in his imagination." (Proverbs 18:11) Yes, the security that riches can provide is in the end only imagined and is actually deceptive. It is wrong to center our lives on them rather than on gaining God's approval.

The uncertainty of material wealth makes it far too fragile to fix our hope on. Genuine hope must be moored to something strong, meaningful, and lasting. Christian hope is fixed on our Creator, Jehovah God, and his promise of everlasting life. While it is true that money cannot buy happiness, it is even more true that money cannot buy salvation. Only our faith in God can give us such hope.

So whether we are wealthy or poor, let us pursue a course in life that will make us "rich toward God." (Luke 12:21)

Nothing is more valuable than an approved standing with the Creator. All efforts to maintain it contribute to our 'treasuring up for ourselves a fine foundation for the future, in order that we may get a firm hold on the real life.'—1 Timothy 6:19.

Look After Orphans and Widows in Their Tribulation

It is not difficult to recognize that we live in an unloving world. Referring to the kind of people existing during "the last days," the apostle Paul wrote: "Critical times hard to deal with will be here. For men will be lovers of themselves, . . . having no natural affection." (2 Timothy 3:1-3) How true those words are!

THE moral environment of our times has contributed to a lack of compassion in the hearts of many. People are less and less interested in the welfare of others, in some cases even in that of members of their own family.

This adversely affects many who, because of various circumstances, become destitute. The number of widows and orphans steadily grows as a result of wars, natural disasters, and displacement of people seeking refuge. (Ecclesiastes 3:19) "More than 1 million [children] have been orphaned or separated from their families as a result of war," states a report from the United Nations Children's Fund. You also know of the large number of single, abandoned, or divorced mothers who face the harsh task of surviving and bringing up their families on their own. The situation is worsened by



the fact that some countries are confronting a serious economic crisis, which causes many of their citizens to live in extreme poverty.

In view of this, is there any hope for those experiencing tribulation? How can the suffering of widows and orphans be alleviated? Will this problem ever be eliminated?

Loving Care in Bible Times

Caring for the physical and spiritual needs of widows and orphans has always been an integral part of worshiping God. When harvesting their grain or fruits, the Israelites were not to gather what remained in the field, gleaning after themselves. The gleanings were to be left "for the alien resident, for the fatherless boy and for the widow." (Deuteronomy 24:19-21) The Law of Moses specified: "You people must not afflict any widow or fatherless boy." (Exodus 22:22, 23) The

widows and orphans spoken of in the Bible appropriately represented the poorer people, since upon the death of the husband and father or of both parents, the surviving family members might be left alone and destitute. The patriarch Job stated: "I would rescue the afflicted one crying for help, and the fatherless boy and anyone that had no helper."—Job 29:12.

During the early days of the Christian congregation, caring for those afflicted and truly needy as a result of the loss of parents or of a husband was a distinctive feature of true worship. With keen interest in the welfare of such ones, the disciple James wrote: "The form of worship that is clean and undefiled from the standpoint of our God and Father is this: to look after orphans and widows in their tribulation, and to keep oneself without spot from the world."—James 1:27.

Besides mentioning orphans and widows, James also showed deep concern for others who were poor and destitute. (James 2:5, 6, 15, 16) The apostle Paul displayed the same thoughtfulness. When he and Barnabas were given their preaching assignment, 'keeping the poor in mind' was among the instructions they received. "This very thing I have also earnestly endeavored to do," Paul could say in good conscience. (Galatians 2:9, 10) The account of the activities of the Christian congregation shortly after its establishment noted: "There was not one in need among them . . . In turn distribution would be made to each one, just as he would have the need." (Acts 4:34, 35) Yes, the arrangement established in ancient Israel of caring for or-

*True Christians
look after orphans
and widows
materially,
spiritually,
and emotionally*



phans, widows, and the destitute was carried over into the Christian congregation.

Of course, the aid provided was moderate and in harmony with the means of the individual congregations. Money was not wasted, and those assisted were really in need. No Christian was to take unfair advantage of this arrangement, and no unnecessary burden was to be placed upon the congregation. This was clearly evident in Paul's instructions set out at 1 Timothy 5:3-16. There we see that if the relatives of the needy were able to assist them, they were to shoulder that responsibility. Needy widows had to meet certain requirements in order to qualify for assistance. All of this reflects the wise arrangement Jehovah uses to care for those in need. Yet, it also shows that balance must be exercised so that no one presumes on the kindness shown.
—2 Thessalonians 3:10-12.

Caring for Orphans and Widows Today

The principles followed by servants of God in the past are still applied in the congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses when it comes to showing concern for and rendering help to those suffering tribulation. Brotherly love is a characterizing feature, just as Jesus stated: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves." (John 13:35) If some are suffering want or have become victims of a disaster or the effects of war or civil strife, the rest of the international brotherhood is eager to find ways to be of assistance spiritually and materially. Let us note some modern-day experiences that show what is being done in this regard.

Pedro does not recall much about his mother, who died when he was only a year and a half old. When Pedro was five, his father also died. So Pedro was left alone with his brothers. Jehovah's Witnesses had already been calling on their father, thus Pedro and his older brothers all started to receive a home Bible study.

Pedro relates: "The very next week, we started to attend the meetings. As we associated with the brothers, we could feel the love that they expressed toward us. The congregation was a refuge for me because the brothers and sisters showed me love and affection, just as if they were my parents." Pedro recalls that one of the Christian elders would invite him to his home. There Pedro shared with the family in conversation and relaxation. "These are memories that I cherish," says Pedro, who started to preach about his faith at the age of 11 and got baptized at 15. Aided by those in the congregation, his older brothers likewise made much progress in a spiritual way.

**"Let us love, neither in word
nor with the tongue, but in
deed and truth."**

1 John 3:18



There is also the case of David. He and his twin sister were abandoned when their parents separated. Their grandparents and an aunt raised them. "When we grew older and realized the situation we were in, we were overcome by a feeling of insecurity and sadness. We needed something to lean on. My aunt became one of Jehovah's Witnesses, and thanks to this, we were instructed in Bible truth. The brothers extended to us their affection and friendship. They were very fond of us and encouraged us to reach goals and to keep on working for Jehovah. When I was about ten years old, a ministerial servant would pick me up to share in the field ministry. Another brother took care of my expenses when I attended conventions. One even helped me so that I could make contributions at the Kingdom Hall."

David was baptized when he was 17 years old, and later he began serving at the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in Mexico. Even now he acknowledges: "There are several elders who contribute to my education and provide me with helpful counsel. In this way I am overcoming the feeling of insecurity and loneliness."

Abel, an elder in a congregation in Mexico where there are several widows who need assistance, relates: "I am convinced that the most compelling need that the widows have is emotional support. Sometimes they go through periods of depression; they feel lonely. Therefore, it is very important to be supportive, listening to them. We [the congregation elders] visit them frequently. It is good to take the time to pay attention to their problems. This contributes to their feeling spiritually comforted." However, economic assistance is sometimes needed as well. "We are now building a house for a sister who is a widow," Abel related a while ago. "We spend some Saturdays and some afternoons during the week working on her home."

About his own experience in providing help to orphans and widows, another congregation elder says: "I believe that orphans are even more deeply in need of Christian love than are widows. I have noticed that they are more likely to feel rejected than children and adolescents who have both of their parents. They need many expressions of brotherly af-

fection. It is good to look for them after the meetings to find out how they are. There is a married brother who was orphaned when a little boy. I always greet him warmly at the meeting, and he embraces me when he sees me. This strengthens the bonds of true brotherly love."

Jehovah "Will Deliver the Poor One"

Trust in Jehovah is fundamental to coping with the situation of widows and orphans. About him it is said: "Jehovah is guarding the alien residents; the fatherless boy and the widow he relieves." (Psalm 146:9) The complete solution to problems of this sort will come only through God's Kingdom in the hands of Jesus Christ. Prophetically describing that rulership by the Messiah, the psalmist wrote: "He will deliver the poor one crying for help, also the afflicted one and whoever has no helper. He will feel sorry for the lowly one and the poor one, and the souls of the poor ones he will save."—Psalm 72:12, 13.

As the end of the present system of things gets closer, the pressures that Christians in general face are certain to increase. (Matthew 24:9-13) There is a need every day for Christians to show more concern for one another and to "have intense love for one another." (1 Peter 4:7-10) Christian men, especially elders, need to display concern and compassion for those orphaned. And mature women in the congregation can offer much support to the widows and be a source of consolation. (Titus 2:3-5) In fact, everyone can contribute by actively displaying concern for others who are undergoing tribulation.

True Christians do not 'shut the door of their tender compassions' when they 'behold their brother having need.' They are keenly aware of heeding the apostle John's admonition: "Little children, let us love, neither in word nor with the tongue, but in deed and truth." (1 John 3:17, 18) So let us "look after orphans and widows in their tribulation." —James 1:27.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Why Study the Bible?

Rejoice in the Knowledge of Jehovah

Do Not Let Doubts Destroy Your Faith

DO NOT BECOME FORGETFUL HEARERS

"Become doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves with false reasoning." —JAMES 1:22.

“UNFORGETTABLE” would be a good word to describe the miracles performed by Jehovah in ancient Egypt. Each one of the Ten Plagues was undeniably awesome. Those blows were followed by the amazing deliverance of the people of Israel through the parted waters of the Red Sea. (Deuteronomy 34:10-12) If you had been an eyewitness of those events, hopefully you would never have forgotten the One responsible for them. Yet, the psalmist sang: “They [the Israelites] forgot God their Savior, the Doer of great things in Egypt, wonderful works in the land of Ham, fear-inspiring things at the Red Sea.”—Psalm 106:21, 22.

² After crossing the Red Sea, the Israelites “began to fear Jehovah and to put faith in Jehovah.” (Exodus 14:31) The men of Israel joined Moses in a victory song to Jehovah, and Miriam and other women responded by playing tambourines and dancing. (Exodus 15:1, 20) Yes, God’s people were impressed with Jehovah’s mighty acts. But their appreciation for the One who performed those acts was short-lived. Soon afterward many of them behaved as though they had suffered a major memory loss. They became murmurers and complainers against Jehovah. Some engaged in idolatry and sexual immorality. —Numbers 14:27; 25:1-9.

1. What miracles were the people of ancient Israel privileged to witness?
2. What shows that Israel’s appreciation for God’s mighty acts was short-lived?

What Could Make Us Forget?

³ Israel’s lack of appreciation is indeed perplexing. Still, the same thing could happen to us. True, we have not witnessed such divine miracles. In our relationship with God, however, there surely have been occasions that were unforgettable. Some of us may remember when we accepted the truth from the Bible. Other joyful times may include our prayer of dedication to Jehovah and our water baptism as true Christians. Many of us have experienced Jehovah’s helping hand at other points in our life. (Psalm 118:15) Above all, through the sacrificial death of God’s own Son, Jesus Christ, we have received the hope of salvation. (John 3:16) Nevertheless, because of our imperfect nature, when faced with wrong desires and the anxieties of life, we may too easily forget the good things that Jehovah has done for us.

⁴ In his letter to fellow Christians, Jesus’ half brother James warned about the danger of being forgetful hearers. He wrote: “Become doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves with false reasoning. For if anyone is a hearer of the word, and not a doer, this one is like a man looking at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself, and off he goes and immediately forgets what sort

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3. Because of our imperfect nature, what could we forget?
 - 4, 5. (a) How does James warn about the danger of being forgetful hearers? (b) How can we apply James’ illustration of the man and the mirror?

of man he is." (James 1:22-24) What did James mean by those words?

⁵ When we get up in the morning, we usually look in the mirror to see what adjustments we need to make to our appearance. As we engage in various activities and the mind focuses on other things, we stop thinking about what we saw in the mirror. This can happen in a spiritual sense too. As we look into the Word of God, we can compare what we are with what Jehovah expects us to be. Hence, we come face-to-face with our weaknesses. This knowledge should motivate us to make adjustments in our personality. But as we go about our daily activities and struggle with our problems, we can easily stop thinking about spiritual matters. (Matthew 5:3; Luke 21:34) It is as if we forget God's loving acts in our behalf. If this should happen, we become vulnerable to sinful inclinations.

⁶ In his first inspired letter to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul refers to the forgetful Israelites in the wilderness. Just as first-century Christians benefited from Paul's words, reviewing what he wrote can help us not to forget Jehovah's word. Let us therefore consider 1 Corinthians 10:1-12.

Repudiate Worldly Desires

⁷ What Paul says about the Israelites serves as a warning for Christians. In part, Paul writes: "I do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea and all got baptized into Moses by means of the cloud and of the sea." (1 Corinthians 10:1-4) The people of Israel in Moses' day had seen great manifestations of God's power, including God's miraculous pillar of cloud that led them by day and that helped them to escape through the Red Sea. (Exodus 13:21; 14:21, 22)

6. What Scriptural consideration can help us not to forget Jehovah's word?
7. What undeniable evidence of Jehovah's love did the Israelites receive?

Yes, those Israelites received undeniable evidence of Jehovah's love for them.

⁸ "Nevertheless," Paul continues, "on most of them God did not express his approval, for they were laid low in the wilderness." (1 Corinthians 10:5) How sad! Most of the Israelites who left Egypt disqualified themselves from entering the Promised Land. Disapproved by God for their lack of faith, they died in the wilderness. (Hebrews 3:16-19) What can we learn from this? Paul says: "These things became our examples, for us not to be persons desiring injurious things, even as they desired them." —1 Corinthians 10:6.

⁹ The Israelites had plenty to keep them spiritually focused while in the wilderness. They entered into a covenant with Jehovah and became a nation dedicated to him. Moreover, they were given a priesthood, a tabernacle as a center of worship, and a provision for offering sacrifices to Jehovah. Rather than rejoicing over these spiritual gifts, however, they allowed themselves to become dissatisfied with God's material provisions.—Numbers 11:4-6.

¹⁰ Unlike the Israelites in the wilderness, Jehovah's people today enjoy God's approval. As individuals, though, it is vital that we keep God in our thoughts. Doing so will help us to reject selfish cravings that could cloud our spiritual vision. We must be determined "to repudiate ungodliness and worldly desires and to live with soundness of mind and righteousness and godly devotion amid this present system of things." (Titus 2:12) Those of us who since infancy have been associated with the Christian congregation should never think that we are missing out on something good. Should such thoughts ever cross our minds, we do well to remember Jehovah and the won-

8. What were the consequences of Israel's spiritual forgetfulness?
9. How had Jehovah provided for his people, and how did Israel react?
10. Why should we always keep God in our thoughts?

derful blessings he has in store for us.—Hebrews 12:2, 3.

Total Obedience to Jehovah

¹¹ Paul gives us another word of caution when he writes: "Neither become idolaters, as some of them did; just as it is written: 'The people sat down to eat and drink, and they got up to have a good time.'" (1 Corinthians 10:7) Paul is referring to the occasion when the Israelites prevailed upon Aaron to make a golden calf. (Exodus 32:1-4) Although it is unlikely that we would turn to outright idol worship, we could become idolaters by allowing our own selfish desires to distract us from worshiping Jehovah whole-souled.—Colossians 3:5.

¹² On another occasion, Paul wrote about some who were concerned mainly with material things rather than with spiritual matters. Concerning those "walking as the enemies of the torture stake of the Christ," he wrote: "Their finish is destruction, and their god is their belly." (Philippians 3:18, 19) The object of their idolatry was not a carved image. It was their desire for physical things. Of course, not

11, 12. How could a person become guilty of idolatry without engaging in the veneration of images?

all desires are wrong. Jehovah created us with human needs and the ability to enjoy various pleasures. But those who place the pursuit of pleasure above their relationship with God do, indeed, become idolaters.—2 Timothy 3:1-5.

¹³ After they left Egypt, the Israelites made a golden calf to worship. In addition to the warning against idolatry, there is another important lesson in this account. The Israelites disobeyed clear direction from Jehovah. (Exodus 20:4-6) Yet, they did not intend to reject Jehovah as their God. They made sacrifices to the molten calf and called the occasion "a festival to Jehovah." Somehow they deceived themselves into thinking that God would ignore their disobedience. This was an insult to Jehovah, and it angered him greatly.—Exodus 32:5, 7-10; Psalm 106:19, 20.

¹⁴ It would be very unusual for one of Jehovah's Witnesses to join a false religion. While remaining in the congregation, however, some might reject Jehovah's direction in other ways. The people of Israel had no excuse for

13. What can we learn from the account of the golden calf?

14, 15. (a) Why did the Israelites have no excuse for becoming forgetful hearers? (b) If we are determined not to become forgetful hearers, what will we do with regard to Jehovah's commandments?

The Israelites forgot Jehovah's mighty deeds in their behalf



**Jehovah's people
are determined to maintain
high moral standards**

becoming forgetful hearers. They heard the Ten Commandments and were present when Moses gave them God's command: "You must not make along with me gods of silver, and you must not make gods of gold for yourselves." (Exodus 20:18, 19, 22, 23) Still, the Israelites worshiped the golden calf.

¹⁵ We too would have no valid excuse if we were to become forgetful hearers. In the Scriptures, we have direction from God regarding many areas of life. For example, Jehovah's Word specifically condemns the practice of borrowing and not paying back. (Psalm 37:21) Children are commanded to be obedient to their parents, and fathers are expected to bring up their children in the "mental-regulating of Jehovah." (Ephesians 6:1-4) Single Christians are instructed to marry "only in the Lord," and married servants of God are told: "Let marriage be honorable among all, and the marriage bed be without defilement, for God will judge fornicators and adulterers." (1 Corinthians 7:39; Hebrews 13:4) If we are determined not to become forgetful hearers, we will take these and other directives from God very seriously and will comply with them.

¹⁶ Jehovah did not accept the Israelites' attempt to worship him on their own terms. Rather, 3,000 were destroyed, probably for the prominent role they played in the rebellious

16. What were the consequences of worshiping the golden calf?

action of worshiping the golden calf. Other wrongdoers suffered a plague from Jehovah. (Exodus 32:28, 35) What a lesson for any who read God's Word but choose for themselves what they want to obey!

"Flee From Fornication"

¹⁷ One area wherein fleshly desires can induce spiritual forgetfulness is brought up by Paul when he says: "Neither let us practice fornication, as some of them committed fornication, only to fall, twenty-three thousand of them in one day." (1 Corinthians 10:8) Here Paul refers to an incident on the Plains of Moab at the end of Israel's 40-year trek through the wilderness. The Israelites had recently received Jehovah's help in conquering lands east of the Jordan, but many proved to be forgetful and unappreciative. At the border

17. To what event was 1 Corinthians 10:8 referring?



of the Promised Land, they were enticed into sexual immorality and the unclean worship of the Baal of Peor. Some 24,000 were destroyed, 1,000 of whom were ringleaders.—Numbers 25:9.

¹⁸ Jehovah's people today are well-known for their high moral standards. But when tempted with sexual immorality, some Christians have stopped thinking about God and his principles. They have become forgetful hearers. At first, the temptation may not involve an act of fornication. It may be an inclination to delve into pornography, to indulge in improper jesting or flirting, or to pursue close association with morally weak individuals. All of these things have led Christians into sinful conduct.—1 Corinthians 15:33; James 4:4.

¹⁹ If tempted to engage in immoral conduct, we must not stop thinking about Jehovah. Rather, we must observe the reminders in his Word. (Psalm 119:1, 2) As Christians, most of us do our utmost to remain morally clean, but doing what is right in God's eyes calls for continuous effort. (1 Corinthians 9:27) To Christians in Rome, Paul wrote: "Your obedience has come to the notice of all. I therefore rejoice over you. But I want you to be wise as to what is good, but innocent as to what is evil." (Romans 16:19) Just as the 24,000 Israelites were executed for their sins, fornicators and other wrongdoers will soon experience Jehovah's adverse judgment. (Ephesians 5:3-6) Instead of becoming forgetful hearers, then, we must continue to "flee from fornication."—1 Corinthians 6:18.

Always Appreciate Jehovah's Provisions

²⁰ The vast majority of Christians never succumb to sexual immorality. Yet, we need to be

18. What kind of conduct can lead to sexual immorality?
19. What Scriptural counsel helps us to "flee from fornication"?
20. How did the Israelites put Jehovah to the test, and what was the result?

careful that we do not allow ourselves to pursue a course that leads to a pattern of murmuring that could result in divine disapproval. Paul admonishes us: "Neither let us put Jehovah to the test, as some of [the Israelites] put him to the test, only to perish by the serpents. Neither be murmurers, just as some of them murmured, only to perish by the destroyer." (1 Corinthians 10:9, 10) The Israelites murmured against Moses and Aaron—yes, even against God himself—complaining about the miraculously provided manna. (Numbers 16:41; 21:5) Was Jehovah less offended by their murmuring than by their fornication? The Bible account shows that many murmurers were killed by serpents. (Numbers 21:6) On an earlier occasion, more than 14,700 rebellious murmurers were destroyed. (Numbers 16:49) So let us not put Jehovah's patience to the test by treating his provisions with disrespect.

²¹ In writing to fellow Christians, Paul concludes the list of warnings with the exhortation: "Now these things went on befalling them as examples, and they were written for a warning to us upon whom the ends of the systems of things have arrived. Consequently let him that thinks he is standing beware that he does not fall." (1 Corinthians 10:11, 12) Like

21. (a) What exhortation was Paul inspired to write? (b) According to James 1:25, how can we be truly happy?

How Would You Answer?

- What could make us forgetful hearers?
- Why is total obedience to God essential?
- How can we "flee from fornication"?
- What should be our attitude toward Jehovah's provisions?

the Israelites, we have received many blessings from Jehovah. Unlike them, however, may we never forget and fail to appreciate the good things God is doing for us. When life's anxieties weigh us down, let us reflect on the wonderful promises found in his Word. May we remember our precious relationship with Jehovah and continue to do the Kingdom-work.

REMAIN STEADFAST AS SEEING THE INVISIBLE ONE!

"[Moses] continued steadfast as seeing the One who is invisible."—HEBREWS 11:27.

JEHOVAH is the invisible God. When Moses asked to see His glory, Jehovah responded: "You are not able to see my face, because no man may see me and yet live." (Exodus 33:20) And the apostle John wrote: "No man has seen God at any time." (John 1:18) When Jesus Christ was a man on earth, not even he

1. What remarkable statement about God did Jesus make in his Sermon on the Mount?

Moses, not intimidated by Pharaoh, acted as if he could see Jehovah, the invisible God

preaching work that has been entrusted to us. (Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20) Such a course is sure to bring us true happiness, for the Scriptures promise: "He who peers into the perfect law that belongs to freedom and who persists in it, this man, because he has become, not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, will be happy in his doing it."—James 1:25.

the God whom ancient people knew through their various religions. This is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This is the God of Moses, David, and Solomon. This is the God of the prophets. This is the God of the apostles. This is the God of the saints. This is the God of the righteous.

Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Word made flesh, the Lamb of God, the King of Glory, the Lord of lords, the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

He is the God of all creation, the God of all life, the God of all death, the God of all judgment, the God of all salvation.

He is the God of all power, the God of all wisdom, the God of all knowledge, the God of all truth.

He is the God of all love, the God of all compassion, the God of all mercy, the God of all grace.

He is the God of all holiness, the God of all purity, the God of all righteousness, the God of all justice.

2. Why are we unable to see God with our physical eyes?



ing that we humans could actually see Jehovah with our physical eyes. True, anointed Christians will see Jehovah God in heaven after they are resurrected as spirit creatures. But humans who are “pure in heart” and have the hope of living forever on earth are also able to “see” God. How is this possible?

³ We learn something about Jehovah by carefully observing the things he created. We may thus be impressed by his power and be moved to acknowledge him as God the Creator. (Hebrews 11:3; Revelation 4:11) In this regard, the apostle Paul wrote: “[God’s] invisible qualities are clearly seen from the world’s creation onward, because they are perceived by the things made, even his eternal power and Godship.” (Romans 1:20) So Jesus’ words about seeing God include the ability to perceive some of Jehovah’s qualities. Such seeing is based on accurate knowledge and is perceived spiritually with ‘the eyes of the heart.’ (Ephesians 1:18) The words and deeds of Jesus also reveal much about God. Hence, Jesus said: “He that has seen me has seen the Father also.” (John 14:9) Jesus perfectly reflected Jehovah’s personality. Thus, knowledge of Jesus’ life and teachings can help us to see, or perceive, some of God’s qualities.

Spirituality Is Vital

⁴ Today, faith and true spirituality are rare indeed. “Faith is not a possession of all people,” said Paul. (2 Thessalonians 3:2) Many are completely engrossed in their personal pursuits and have no faith in God. Their sinful conduct and lack of spirituality prevent them from seeing him with eyes of understanding, for the apostle John wrote: “He that does bad has not seen God.” (3 John 11) Be-

3. How can humans perceive some of God’s qualities?
4. How is lack of spirituality manifested by many today?

cause such individuals do not see God with their physical eyes, they act as if he does not see what they are doing. (Ezekiel 9:9) They look down on spiritual things, so they cannot acquire “the very knowledge of God.” (Proverbs 2:5) Fittingly, then, Paul wrote: “A physical man does not receive the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot get to know them, because they are examined spiritually.”—1 Corinthians 2:14.

⁵ If we are spiritually-minded, however, we will constantly be aware that although Jehovah is not a fault-finding God, he does know when we act on bad thoughts and desires. Indeed, “the ways of man are in front of the eyes of Jehovah, and he is contemplating all his tracks.” (Proverbs 5:21) If sin should overtake us, we are moved to repent and seek Jehovah’s forgiveness because we love him and do not want to pain him.—Psalm 78:41; 130:3.

What Makes Us Steadfast?

⁶ Although Jehovah is invisible to our eyes, let us always remember that we are visible to him. Awareness of his existence and conviction that he is near to all those calling upon him will help make us steadfast—firm and unmovable in our faithfulness to him. (Psalm 145:18) We can be like Moses, of whom Paul wrote: “By faith he left Egypt, but not fearing the anger of the king, for he continued steadfast as seeing the One who is invisible.”—Hebrews 11:27.

⁷ In carrying out his God-given commission to lead the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage, Moses often appeared before tyrannical Pharaoh in a royal court teeming

5. Spiritually-minded people are aware of what fact?
6. What does it mean to be steadfast?
7. 8. What accounted for Moses’ courage before Pharaoh?

with religious and military magnates. Likely, the palace walls were lined with idols. But Jehovah, though invisible, was real to Moses, unlike all the idols representing the lifeless gods of Egypt. No wonder Moses was not intimidated by Pharaoh!

⁸ What gave Moses the courage to appear before Pharaoh repeatedly? The Scriptures tell us that "the man Moses was by far the meekest of all the men who were upon the surface of the ground." (Numbers 12:3) Clearly, his strong spirituality and the conviction that God was with him gave Moses the strength needed to represent 'the invisible One' before Egypt's ruthless king. What are some ways in which those who "see" the invisible God manifest their faith in him today?

⁹ One way to manifest faith and continue steadfast as seeing the One who is invisible is by preaching courageously despite persecution. Jesus warned his disciples: "You will be objects of hatred by all people because of my name." (Luke 21:17) He also told them: "A slave is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you also." (John 15:20) True to Jesus' words, soon after his death, his followers suffered persecution in the form of threats, arrests, and beatings. (Acts 4:1-3, 18-21; 5:17, 18, 40) Although there was a wave of persecution, Jesus' apostles and other disciples kept on preaching the good news with boldness.—Acts 4:29-31.

¹⁰ Like Moses, Jesus' early followers were not intimidated by their many visible enemies. Jesus' disciples had faith in God, and as a result, they were able to endure the severe persecution they experienced. Yes, they continued steadfast as seeing the One who is invisible. Today, a constant awareness of Jehovah's protective care emboldens us, giving

9. What is one way that we can continue steadfast?
10. How does our confidence in Jehovah's protective care help us in the ministry?

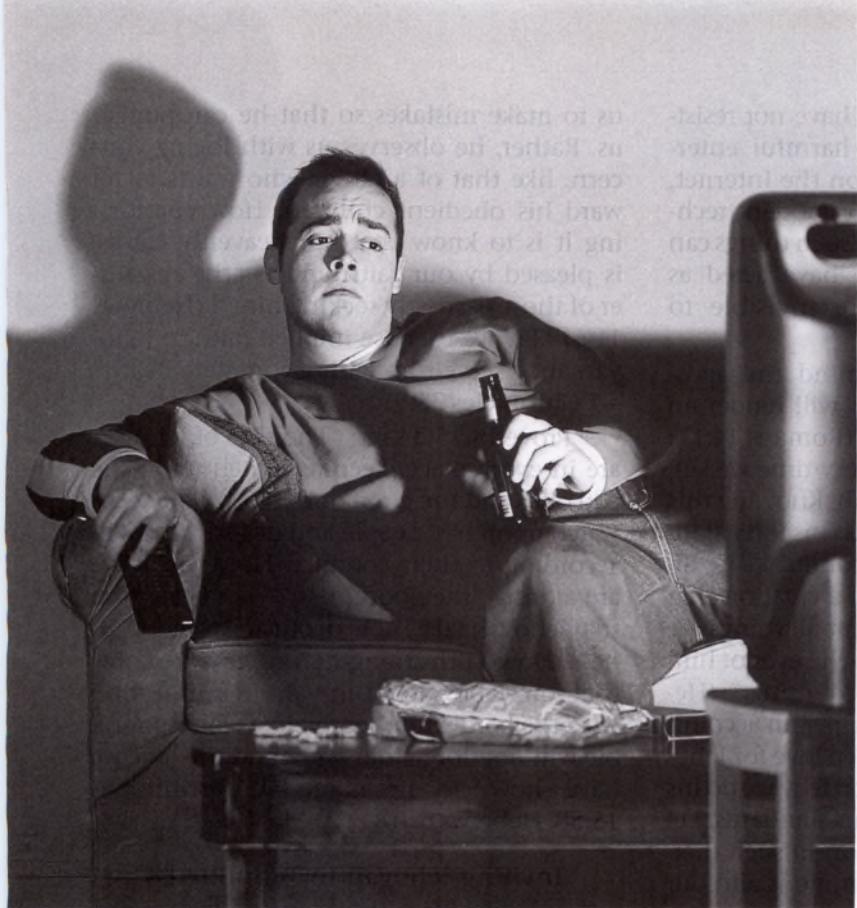
us courage and fearlessness in our Kingdom-preaching work. God's Word says that "trembling at men is what lays a snare, but he that is trusting in Jehovah will be protected." (Proverbs 29:25) Consequently, we do not shrink back in fear of persecution; neither are we ashamed of our ministry. Our faith motivates us to witness courageously to neighbors, workmates, schoolmates, and others.
—Romans 1:14-16.

The Invisible One Directs His People

¹¹ Faith helps us to see Jehovah as the one directing his earthly organization. We thus avoid having a critical attitude toward those shouldering responsibility in the congregation. Both the apostle Peter and Jesus' half brother Jude warned of certain ones who were so bereft of spirituality that they spoke abusively of men taking the lead among Christians. (2 Peter 2:9-12; Jude 8) Would such faultfinders have spoken in that way in the presence of Jehovah if he had been physically visible to them? Hardly! But because God is invisible, those fleshly men failed to consider their accountability to him.

¹² True, the Christian congregation is made up of imperfect humans. Those who serve as elders make mistakes that at times may affect us personally. Nevertheless, Jehovah is using such men as shepherds of his flock. (1 Peter 5:1, 2) Spiritually-minded men and women recognize that this is one means by which Jehovah directs his people. Therefore, as Christians, we avoid a critical, complaining spirit and show respect for God's theocratic arrangements. By being obedient to those taking the lead among us, we show that we see the One who is invisible.—Hebrews 13:17.

11. According to Peter and Jude, how did some who were associated with the Christian congregation manifest a lack of spirituality?
12. What attitude should we display toward those who take the lead in the congregation?



Seeing God as Our Grand Instructor

¹³ There is another area that requires spiritual perception. Isaiah prophesied: "Your eyes must become eyes seeing your Grand Instructor." (Isaiah 30:20) It takes faith to recognize that Jehovah is the one teaching us through his earthly organization. (Matthew 24:45-47) Seeing God as our Grand Instructor means more than maintaining good Bible-study habits and attending Christian meetings regularly. It means taking full advantage of God's spiritual provisions. For instance, we need to pay more than the usual attention to the guidance that Jehovah provides through Jesus so that we do not drift away spiritually.

—Hebrews 2:1.

13, 14. What does seeing Jehovah as the Grand Instructor mean to you?

**Let us never act
as if Jehovah cannot
see what we do**

¹⁴ Sometimes it takes special effort to derive full benefit from spiritual food. For example, we may tend to skim over certain Bible accounts that we find difficult to understand. When reading the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines, perhaps we even skip certain articles because the subject matter is not of particular interest to us. Or we may allow our minds to wander at Christian meetings. However, we can remain alert if we reason carefully on the points under consideration. Our deep appreciation for the spiritual instruction we receive shows that we recognize Jehovah as our Grand Instructor.

We Must Render an Account

¹⁵ Especially because wickedness is so prevalent in this "time of the end," faith in the One who is invisible is vital. (Daniel 12:4) Dishonesty and sexual immorality run rampant. Of course, it is wise to remember that Jehovah observes our actions even when humans are unable to see us. Some have lost awareness of this fact. When others do not see them, they may engage in unscriptural

15. How have some acted as though they were invisible to Jehovah?

conduct. For instance, some have not resisted the temptation to view harmful entertainment and pornography on the Internet, television, and other forms of modern technology. Since involvement in such things can take place in private, some have acted as though their conduct were invisible to Jehovah.

¹⁶ It is good to bear in mind the apostle Paul's words: "Each of us will render an account for himself to God." (Romans 14:12) We need to be aware that every time we sin, we are sinning against Jehovah. Knowing this should help us to comply with his lofty standards and to avoid unclean conduct. The Bible reminds us: "There is not a creation that is not manifest to his sight, but all things are naked and openly exposed to the eyes of him with whom we have an accounting." (Hebrews 4:13) True, we must render an account to God, but surely it is our deep love for Jehovah that is the principal reason why we do his will and abide by his righteous standards. Let us therefore exercise discretion in such matters as our choice of entertainment and our conduct with the opposite sex.

¹⁷ Jehovah is keenly interested in us, but that does not mean that he is waiting for

16. What should help us to comply with Jehovah's lofty standards?

17. With what kind of interest does Jehovah observe us?

How Would You Answer?

- How is it possible for humans to see God?
- If Jehovah is real to us, how will we act when persecuted?
- What does it mean to see Jehovah as our Grand Instructor?
- Why should we desire that Jehovah examine us?

us to make mistakes so that he can punish us. Rather, he observes us with loving concern, like that of a father who wants to reward his obedient children. How comforting it is to know that our heavenly Father is pleased by our faith and is "the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him"! (Hebrews 11:6) May we exercise implicit faith in Jehovah and "serve him with a complete heart."—1 Chronicles 28:9.

¹⁸ Proverbs 15:3 says: "The eyes of Jehovah are in every place, keeping watch upon the bad ones and the good ones." Yes, God keeps watch upon bad people and deals with them according to their conduct. However, if we are among "the good ones," we can be sure that Jehovah takes note of our acts of faithfulness. How faith-strengthening it is to know that 'our labor is not in vain in connection with the Lord' and that the one who is invisible will not 'forget our work and the love we have shown for his name'!—1 Corinthians 15:58; Hebrews 6:10.

Inviting Jehovah to Examine Us

¹⁹ As Jehovah's faithful servants, we are precious to him. (Matthew 10:29-31) Although he is invisible, he can be real to us, and we can cherish our precious relationship with him. Having such an attitude toward our heavenly Father brings us many benefits. Our strong faith helps us to have a clean heart and a good conscience before Jehovah. Faith without hypocrisy also prevents us from leading a double life. (1 Timothy 1:5, 18, 19) Our unwavering faith in God sets a good example and can have a positive effect on those around us. (1 Timothy 4:12) Moreover, such faith promotes godly conduct, making Jehovah's heart rejoice.—Proverbs 27:11.

18. Because Jehovah observes us and notes our faithfulness, what assurance do we receive from the Scriptures?

19. What are some of the benefits resulting from strong faith in Jehovah?



We earnestly seek knowledge of God because we see him as our Grand Instructor

²⁰ If we are truly wise, we are glad to have Jehovah keep watch over us. Not only do we want him to see us but we also desire that he make a thorough examination of our thoughts and actions. In prayer, we do well to invite Jehovah to search through us and discern whether we have any improper inclinations. He can certainly help us to cope with our problems and to make any needed adjustments. Appropriately, the psalmist David sang: "Search through me, O God, and know my heart. Examine me, and know my disquieting thoughts, and see whether there is in me any painful way, and lead me in the way of time indefinite."—Psalm 139:23, 24.

²¹ David pleaded that Jehovah search through him to see if there was any "pain-

20, 21. (a) Why is it desirable to have Jehovah's watchful eye upon us? (b) How may we apply Psalm 139:23, 24 to ourselves?

ful way" in him. Like the psalmist, do we not yearn for God to search our hearts and see whether we have improper motives? In faith, then, let us ask Jehovah to examine us. But what if we are troubled by anxiety over some error or there is something hurtful within us? Then let us continue to pray earnestly

to our loving God, Jehovah, and humbly submit to the direction of his holy spirit and the counsel of his Word. We can be confident that he will come to our assistance and will help us to pursue a course that will lead to everlasting life.—Psalm 40:11-13.

²² Yes, Jehovah will bless us with eternal life if we meet his requirements. Of course, we must acknowledge his power and authority, even as the apostle Paul did when he wrote: "To the King of eternity, incorruptible, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen." (1 Timothy 1:17) May we always display such heartfelt reverence for Jehovah. And come what may, let us never waver in our determination to continue steadfast as seeing the One who is invisible.

22. What should be our determination with respect to the One who is invisible?

Be Joyful With the Kingdom Hope!



IT WAS a joyful occasion that brought together the audience of 5,784 assembled on March 10, 2001, at the three complexes in New York State used by the large Bethel family. The occasion was the graduation of the 110th class of the Gilead missionary school. *One hundred*

Carey Barber, a member of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses, welcomed all and opened the program, stating: "It makes us glad to know that 110 classes of Gilead students have now been trained as missionaries and assigned to territories all around the globe." *Visions*

How to Remain Joyful

Following Brother Barber's opening remarks, Don Adams addressed the audience, including the 48 graduating students, on the subject "The Blessing of Jehovah Makes Us Rich." Basing his talk on Proverbs 10:22, he reminded the audience that Jehovah sustains and blesses his servants when they put Kingdom interests first in their lives. He encouraged the students to accept their new assignments with the same willing spirit that the apostle Paul displayed when he was invited to "step over into Macedonia and help." (Acts 16:9) Although there were difficulties to overcome, Paul's willingness to preach where he was directed resulted in many joyful blessings.

The members of the graduating class had finished their five-month study of the Bible and training in preparation for missionary work. Still, Daniel Sydlik, a member of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses, encouraged them to continue to be learners. Speaking on the theme "Be True Disciples," he remarked: "Discipleship means constantly obeying the words of Jesus. It involves our willingness always to listen to his words, to his message, to his teaching." He pointed out that disciples of Christ do not make decisions without listening to the voice of the Master; the wisdom of God is bound up in the life of Christ. (Colossians 2:3) None of us can hear the words of Jesus once and then conclude that we know all

about him, so Brother Sydlik encouraged the graduates to continue learning, applying, and teaching Christian truth, which results in freedom.

—John 8:31, 32.

To remain joyful in God's service, one must be willing to accept discipline and correction. "Will Your Kidneys Correct You?" was the question posed by Gilead instructor Lawrence Bowen. He showed that in the Bible the figurative kidneys are associated with one's deepest thoughts and emotions. They can serve to correct one if inspired advice from God's Word has penetrated the innermost aspects of one's per-

CLASS STATISTICS

Number of countries represented: 8

Number of countries assigned to: 18

Total number of students: 48

Average age: 34

Average years in truth: 18

Average years in full-time ministry: 13



110th Graduating Class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead

In the list below, rows are numbered from front to back, and names are listed from left to right in each row.

- (1) Vacek, E.; Madelin, L.; Evans, G.; Watanabe, K. (2) Trafford, P.; Turfa, J.; Wilson, P.; Williams, R.; Weber, A. (3) Johnson, T.; Hanau, K.; Mourlhou, F.; Charpentier, F.; Peckham, R.; Androsoff, P. (4) Seegers, T.; Seegers, D.; Bailey, P.; Bailey, M.; Madelin, K.; Lippold, E.; Lippold, T. (5) Evans, N.; Gold, R.; Bollmann, I.; Vacek, R.; Oundjian, J.; Wilson, N. (6) Turfa, J.; Zuidema, L.; Zuidema, R.; Bengtsson, C.; Bengtsson, J.; Galano, M.; Galano, L. (7) Peckham, T.; Mourlhou, J.; Charpentier, C.; Gold, M.; Bollmann, R.; Oundjian, F. (8) Weber, R.; Johnson, B.; Hanau, D.; Watanabe, Y.; Williams, R.; Trafford, G.; Androsoff, T.

sonality. (Psalm 16:7; Jeremiah 17:10) One's faithful course can even touch Jehovah in a profound way. After reading Proverbs 23:15, 16, the speaker asked: "Will your kidneys correct you?" He added: "We pray that they do, and thus you will cause Jehovah to experience the deepest pleasure within himself. You will stir his deepest emotions. Yes, you will make God's kidneys exult as you loyally stick to your assignments."

The final talk on this part of the program was delivered by Mark Noumair, who served as a missionary in Kenya before becoming a Gilead instructor. His talk entitled "Better Is the Seeing by the Eyes" highlighted the importance of cultivating contentment. In harmony with Ecclesiastes 6:9, Brother Noumair

recommended: "Face reality. That's 'seeing by the eyes.' Instead of fantasizing about something you want to do but are not doing, concentrate on making the most of your present circumstances. Living in a dream world, having unreasonable expectations, or dwelling on the negative factors of your assignment will only make you dissatisfied and discontent." Yes, no matter where we may be or whatever the circumstances, cultivating godly contentment in our own circumstances makes for a joyful spirit in serving our Grand Creator.

Joyful Experiences in Kingdom Service and at Gilead

After such practical counsel from those discourses, the students recounted some

experiences they had enjoyed while engaging in the public ministry during their five-month course. Under the direction of Wallace Liverance, Gilead School registrar, the graduating students told how they had recommended themselves as God's ministers. (2 Corinthians 4:2) They had been able to appeal to the God-given conscience of some. The students' experiences showed how Bible studies were started with sincere individuals they met on the street, in the house-to-house ministry, and in other settings. On different occasions, interested people said that the Bible-based publications of Jehovah's organization had the ring of truth. One householder responded very positively to a particular Bible verse. She is now studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses.

Next, Joel Adams interviewed Gilead graduates from years gone by. His theme was "Never Stop Learning, Never Stop Serving Jehovah." Those interviewed had timely advice for the new missionaries. Recalling his days as a member of the 26th class of Gilead, Harry Johnson said: "We were taught that Jehovah has always led his people and will lead his people. That confidence has been an encouragement throughout the years." William Nonkes, a member of the 53rd class of Gilead, advised the graduates: "Above all, keep in mind Bible principles, and apply them to all the decisions you have to make in life now and forever. As a result, you will be able to stick to your assignment, and Jehovah's rich blessing will be with you."

"Fortified to Carry Out Jehovah's Will" was the theme Richard Rian had chosen for his part on the program. One of those he interviewed was John Kurtz, a graduate of the 30th class, who spent over 41 years in Spain as a missionary. When asked about the Gilead curriculum, Brother Kurtz stated: "The main textbook is the Bible. And then we have Bible study aids to help us understand the Bible. Those are available to all. There is no secret in-

formation dispensed at Gilead. I never cease to emphasize this because all have right at their fingertips the information that is provided at Gilead."

Brother Gerrit Lösch, a member of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses, rounded out the spiritual program by speaking on the subject "On and Under Jehovah's Wings." He explained how God's protection and support of his faithful servants are illustrated Biblically by the wings of the eagle. (Deuteronomy 32:11, 12; Psalm 91:4) The adult eagle sometimes spreads out its wings for hours in order to shield its offspring. At times, a mother eagle may even wrap her wings around her offspring to protect them from cold winds. In a similar way and in harmony with his purpose, Jehovah can come to the aid of his faithful servants, particularly when they face spiritual trials. Jehovah does not allow his servants to be tempted beyond what they can bear but makes the way out for them to be able to endure it. (1 Corinthians 10:13) Brother Lösch concluded by saying: "In order to remain spiritually protected, we must remain under the wings of Jehovah. This means that we must not develop a spirit of independence. Let us always stay close to Jehovah and his motherlike organization, not separating ourselves from their direction and loving counsel."

The chairman read telegrams and greetings from well-wishers around the globe. Then came the presentation of the diplomas. When Gilead School was established, it was with a view to having only a limited number of classes over a five-year period. But for 58 years Jehovah God has kept the school operating. As Brother Barber said in his opening remarks: "What a truly wonderful record the Gilead graduates have built up since 1943, when Gilead was inaugurated! Their combined efforts have resulted in adding literally hundreds of thousands of meek ones of the earth to Jehovah's glorious organization." Yes, this missionary school has contributed to millions' being joyful with the Kingdom hope.

THE HASMONAEANS and Their Legacy

WHEN Jesus was on earth, Judaism was divided into factions, all competing for influence over the people. That is the picture presented in the Gospel accounts as well as in the writings of first-century Jewish historian Josephus.

The Pharisees and the Sadducees appear on this scene as important voices, capable of swaying public opinion even to the point of rejecting Jesus as the Messiah. (Matthew 15:1, 2; 16:1; John 11:47, 48; 12:42, 43) However, there is no mention of these two influential groups anywhere in the Hebrew Scriptures.

Josephus first mentions the Sadducees and the Pharisees in the context of the second century B.C.E. During this period many Jews were succumbing to the appeal of Hellenism, that is, Greek culture and philosophy. The tension between Hellenism and Judaism peaked when the Seleucid rulers defiled the temple in Jerusalem, dedicating it to Zeus. A dynamic Jewish leader, Judah Maccabee, of a family known as the Hasmonaeans, led a rebel army that freed the temple from Greek hands.*

* See the article "Who Were the Maccabees?" in *The Watchtower* of November 15, 1998.

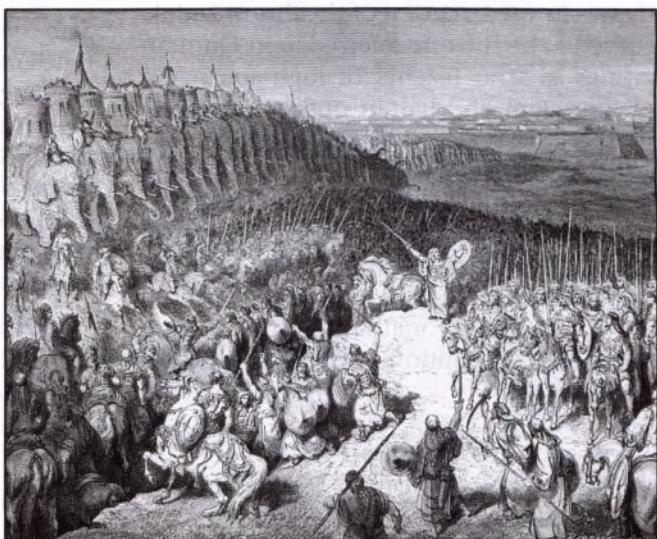
The years immediately following the Maccabean revolt and victory were distinguished by a tendency to form sects based on competing ideologies, each vying with the others to win over the wider Jewish community. But why did this tendency develop? Why did Judaism become so divided? To answer, let us examine the history of the Hasmonaeans.

Increasing Independence and Disunity

After achieving his religious goal of restoring worship at Jehovah's temple, Judah Maccabee turned political. Consequently, many Jews left off following him. Still, he continued his fight against the Seleucid rulers, formed a treaty with Rome, and sought to establish an independent Jewish State. Following Judah's death in battle, his brothers Jonathan and Simon continued the struggle. The Seleucid rulers at first opposed the Maccabees vigorously. But in time, the rulers agreed to political compromises, allowing the Hasmonaean brothers a degree of autonomy.

Although of priestly descent, no Hasmonaean had ever served in the position of high priest. Many Jews felt that this position should be filled by priests of the line of Zadok, whom Solomon had appointed as high priest. (1 Kings 2:35; Ezekiel 43:19) Jonathan used warfare and

Judah Maccabee sought Jewish independence



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diplomacy to persuade the Seleucids to appoint him as high priest. But after Jonathan's death, his brother Simon achieved even more. In September 140 B.C.E., an important decree was issued in Jerusalem, enshrined on bronze tablets in Greek style: "King Demetrius [the Greek Seleucid ruler] confirmed him [Simon] in the high priesthood, made him one of his Friends, and paid him high honors. . . . The Jews and their priests have resolved that Simon should be their leader and high priest forever, until a trustworthy prophet should arise."—1 Maccabees 14:38-41 (a historical book found in the Apocrypha).

Simon's position as ruler as well as high priest—for him and his descendants—was thus agreed upon not only by foreign Seleucid authority but also by "the Great Assembly" of his own people. This marked an important turning point. As historian Emil Schürer put it, once a political dynasty was established by the Hasmonaeans, "their central concern was no longer with the fulfilment of the Torah [Jewish Law] but with the preservation and extension of their political power." However, careful not to offend Jewish sensibilities, Simon used the title "ethnarch," or "leader of the people," rather than "king."

Not all were pleased with the Hasmonaean usurpation of both religious and political control. According to many scholars, it was during this period that the Qumran community was formed. A priest of the line of Zadok, believed to be the one referred to in Qumran writings as "the Teacher of Righteousness," left Jerusalem and led an opposition group into the Judean Desert by the Dead Sea. One of the Dead Sea Scrolls, a commentary on the book of Habakkuk, condemns "the Wicked Priest who was called by the name of truth at the beginning, but when he ruled over Israel his heart became haughty." Many scholars believe that either Jonathan or Simon could fit the sect's description of the ruling "Wicked Priest."

Simon continued military campaigns to expand the territory under his control. However, his rule came to an abrupt end when his son-in-law, Ptolemy, assassinated him along with two of his sons while they were banqueting near Jericho. This attempt to gain control failed. John Hyrcanus, Simon's remaining son, was warned of the attempt on his life. He captured his potential assassins and took over the leadership and high priesthood in place of his father.

Further Expansion and Oppression

At first, John Hyrcanus faced serious threats from Syrian forces, but then in 129 B.C.E., the Seleucid dynasty lost a crucial battle with the Parthians. Regarding the effect of this war on the Seleucids, Jewish scholar Menahem Stern wrote: "The entire structure of the kingdom virtually collapsed." Hyrcanus was thus "able to recover in full Judea's political independence and to begin expanding in various directions." And expand he did.

Now unhindered by any Syrian threat, Hyrcanus began to invade territories outside of Judea, bringing them into subjugation. The inhabitants had to convert to Judaism or else their cities would be razed. One such campaign was against the Idumaeans (Edomites). On this, Stern remarked: "The conversion of the Idumeans was the first of its kind, as it was of an entire race rather than a few individuals." Among other areas conquered was Samaria, where Hyrcanus razed the Samaritan temple situated on Mount Gerazim. Expressing the irony of this policy of forced conversion by the Hasmonaean dynasty, historian Solomon Grayzel wrote: "Here was a grandson of Mattathias [Judah Maccabee's father] violating the very principle—religious freedom—which the previous generation had so nobly defended."

Pharisees and Sadducees Appear

It is when writing about Hyrcanus' reign that Josephus first deals with the increasing

influence of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. (Josephus had mentioned the Pharisees who lived during the reign of Jonathan.) He does not relate their origins. Some scholars view them as a group that came out of the Hasidim, a pious sect who supported Judah Maccabee in his religious goals but left him when his ambitions turned political.

The name Pharisees is generally connected to the Hebrew root meaning "separate ones," although some view it as related to the word "interpreters." Pharisees were scholars from among the common people, of no special descent. They separated themselves from ritual impurity by a philosophy of special piety, applying temple laws of priestly holiness to the ordinary situations of daily life. The Pharisees developed a new form of interpreting the Scriptures and a concept later known as the oral law. During Simon's reign they gained greater influence when some were appointed to the Geousia (council of older men), which later became known as the Sanhedrin.

Josephus relates that John Hyrcanus was at first a pupil and supporter of the Pharisees. However, at a certain point, the Pharisees reproved him for not giving up the high priesthood. This led to a dramatic break. Hyrcanus outlawed the Pharisees' religious ordinances. As an additional punishment, he sided with the Pharisees' religious opponents, the Sadducees.

The name Sadducees is likely connected with the High Priest Zadok, whose descendants had held the priestly office since Solomon's time. However, not all Sadducees were of this line. According to Josephus, the Sadducees were the aristocrats and wealthy men of the nation, and they did not have the support of the masses. Professor Schiffman comments: "Most of them . . . were apparently priests or those who had intermarried with the high priestly families." They had thus long been closely connected with those in power. Therefore, the increasing role of the Pharisees in public life and the Pharisaic concept of extending priestlike sanctity to all the people was perceived as a threat that could undermine Sadducean natural authority. Now, in the final years of Hyrcanus' reign, the Sadducees regained control.

More Politics, Less Piety

Hyrcanus' eldest son, Aristobulus, reigned only one year before dying. He continued the policy of forced conversion with the Itureans and brought upper Galilee under Hasmonaean control. But it was under the reign of his brother Alexander Jannaeus, who ruled from 103-76 B.C.E., that the Hasmonaean dynasty reached the zenith of its power.

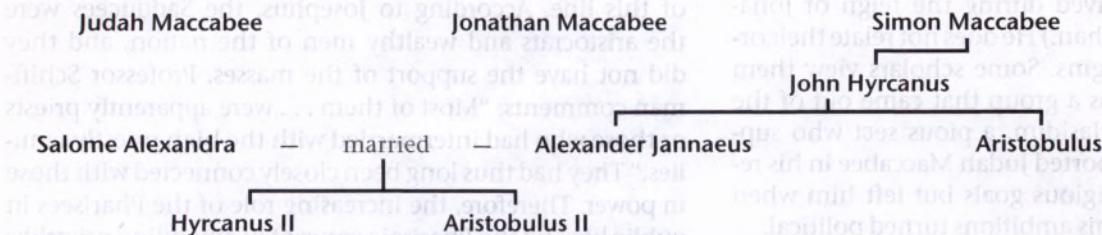
Alexander Jannaeus broke with previous policy and freely declared himself both high priest and king. The conflicts

The Hasmonaeans fought to expand control over non-Jewish cities



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The Hasmonaean Dynasty



between the Hasmonaeans and the Pharisees intensified, even leading to a civil war in which 50,000 Jews perished. After the rebellion was quelled, in an act reminiscent of pagan kings, Jannaeus had 800 of the rebels impaled. In their dying moments, their wives and children were slaughtered before their eyes, while Jannaeus feasted openly with his concubines.*

Despite his enmity toward the Pharisees, Jannaeus was a pragmatic politician. He saw that the Pharisees had increasing popular support. His deathbed instruction to his wife, Salome Alexandra, was to share power with them. Jannaeus had chosen her over his sons as successor to his kingdom. She proved herself a capable ruler, providing the nation with one of the more peaceful periods under Hasmonaean rule (76-67 B.C.E.). The Pharisees were restored to positions of authority, and the laws against their religious ordinances were revoked.

At Salome's death, her sons Hyrcanus II, who had served as high priest, and Aristobulus II entered a power struggle. Both lacked the political and military insight of their forefathers, and it seems that neither understood the full significance of the increasing Roman

presence in the area after the total collapse of the Seleucid kingdom. In 63 B.C.E., both brothers turned to the Roman ruler Pompey while he was in Damascus and requested his mediation in their dispute. That same year, Pompey and his troops marched into Jerusalem and took control. It was the beginning of the end for the Hasmonaean kingdom. In 37 B.C.E., Jerusalem was taken over by the Idumaean King Herod the Great, whom the Roman Senate had approved as "King of Judea," "ally and friend of the Roman people." The Hasmonaean kingdom was no more.

The Hasmonaean Legacy

The period of the Hasmonaeans, from Judah Maccabee to Aristobulus II, laid the foundation for the divided religious scene that existed when Jesus was on earth. The Hasmonaeans began with zeal for worship of God, but that deteriorated into abusive self-interest. Their priests, who had the opportunity to unite the people in following God's Law, led the nation into the abyss of political infighting. In this environment, divisive religious viewpoints flourished. The Hasmonaeans were no more, but the struggle for religious control between the Sadducees, the Pharisees, and others would characterize the nation now under Herod and Rome.

* The Dead Sea Scroll "Commentary on Nahum" mentions "the Lion of Wrath" who "hanged men alive," which may refer to the above-mentioned incident.

Questions From Readers

Why does the *New World Translation* at 2 Peter 3:13 speak of "new heavens [plural] and a new earth," whereas Revelation 21:1 foretells "a new heaven [singular] and a new earth"?

This is basically a grammatical detail involving the original languages. It does not seem to have any special significance as far as the meaning is concerned.

Consider first the Hebrew Scriptures. In the original-language text, the Hebrew word *sha-ma'yim*, rendered "heaven(s)," is always plural. Its plurality appears to reflect, not a plural of excellence, but the idea of a plural "of local extension," or the idea of "a whole composed of innumerable separate parts or points." That is understandable in that the physical heavens extend far from the earth in all directions and include billions of stars. When *sha-ma'yim* is preceded by the definite article (literally, "the heavens"), the *New World Translation* almost invariably renders it "heavens," as at Isaiah 66:22. When *sha-ma'yim* appears without the definite article, it can be rendered by the singular ("heaven," as at Genesis 1:8; 14:19, 22; Psalm 69:34) or the plural ("heavens," as at Genesis 49:25; Judges 5:4; Job 9:8; Isaiah 65:17).

At both Isaiah 65:17 and 66:22, the Hebrew word for heavens is in the plural form, and the consistent rendering chosen is "new heavens and a [or, the] new earth."

The Greek word *ou·ra·nos'* means "heaven," and the plural *ou·ra·noi'* means "heavens." Interestingly, the translators of the

Greek *Septuagint* employed the singular form at both Isaiah 65:17 and 66:22.

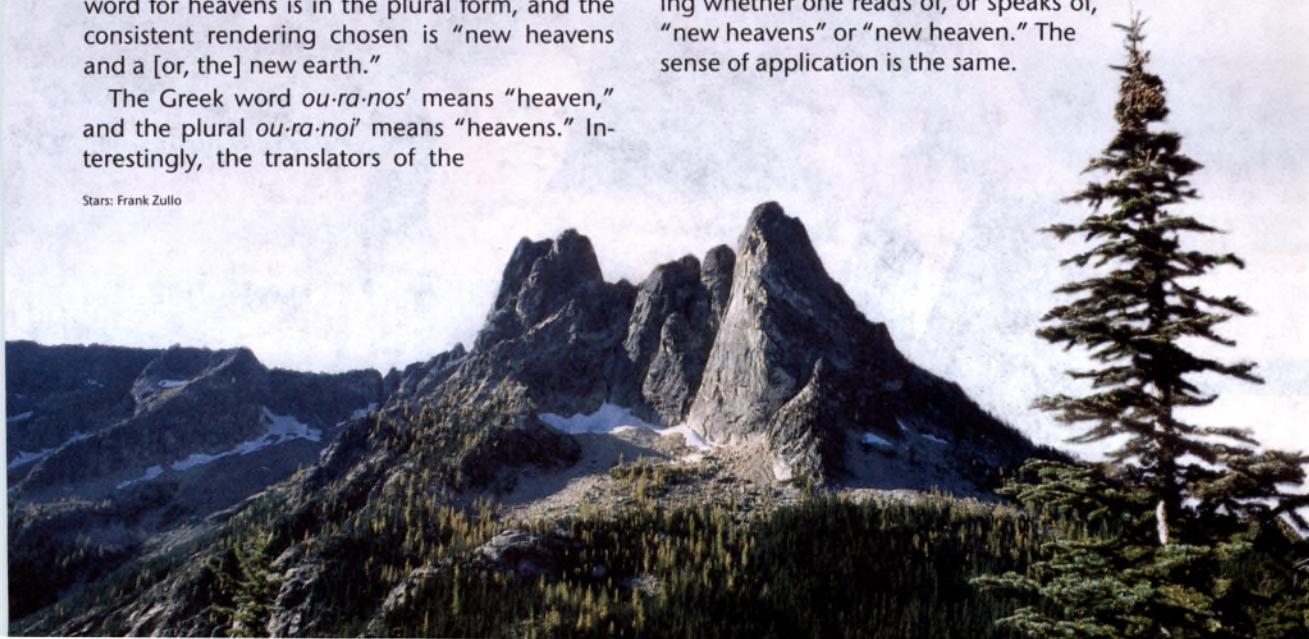
Now what about the two occurrences of the phrase "new heaven [or heavens] and a new earth" in the Christian Greek Scriptures?

At 2 Peter 3:13, the apostle used the Greek plural. Just before that (verses 7, 10, 12), he spoke of the present wicked "heavens," using the plural. So he was consistent in employing the plural in verse 13. Moreover, he seems to have been quoting from the original of Isaiah 65:17, where the Hebrew is in the plural, just as at 2 Peter 2:22, he quoted from the Hebrew text of Proverbs 26:11. Thus Peter pointed to "new heavens [plural] and a new earth that we are awaiting according to his promise."

In slight contrast, at Revelation 21:1, the apostle John evidently drew on the rendering of Isaiah 65:17 in the *Septuagint*, which, as noted, contained the Greek word for "heaven" in the singular form. Hence, what John wrote was: "I saw a new heaven [singular] and a new earth; for the former heaven and the former earth had passed away."

These are grammatical details related to translation. It bears repeating that there does not appear to be any difference in meaning whether one reads of, or speaks of, "new heavens" or "new heaven." The sense of application is the same.

Stars: Frank Zullo



"The Wounds of a Friend"

THE apostle Paul saw the need to administer some correction to first-century Christians in Galatia. Likely to forestall any resentment, he asked: "Well, then, have I become your enemy because I tell you the truth?"—Galatians 4:16.

In 'telling the truth,' Paul had not become their enemy. He was, in fact, acting in harmony with the Bible principle: "Faithful are the wounds of a friend." (Proverbs 27:6, King James Version) He knew that the pride of erring ones could be wounded. Yet, he was aware that to stand between a sinner and the discipline he needs could have the effect of denying that one an expression of Jehovah God's love. (Hebrews 12:5-7) Therefore, as a faithful friend with the long-term interests of the congregation at heart, Paul did not shrink back from offering corrective counsel.

Today, Jehovah's Witnesses are fulfilling their commission "to make disciples of people of all the nations, . . . teaching them to observe *all* the things [Jesus Christ has] commanded." In doing so, these sincere Christians do not com-

promise Bible truths that expose and condemn doctrinal error and unchristian behavior. (Matthew 15:9; 23:9; 28:19, 20; 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10) Rather than becoming enemies to be rejected, they are manifesting the interest of genuine friends.

With divinely inspired insight, the psalmist wrote: "Should the righteous one strike me, it would be a loving-kindness; and should he reprove me, it would be oil upon the head, which my head would not want to refuse."—Psalm 141:5.

