

APRIL 1, 2007

# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

The Bible  
*Practical for  
Life Today?*

# THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

April 1, 2007

Average Printing Each Issue: 28,578,000

Vol. 128, No. 7

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 fellow men 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.

## IN THIS ISSUE

- 3 The Search for Right Answers
- 4 Answers That Work!
- 8 Faith in Bible Prophecy Preserves Life
- 12 The Disciple-Making Work Has Shaped My Life
- 17 Offering Sacrifices That Please God
- 21 Loyal to Christ and His Faithful Slave
- 26 Humbly Submitting to Loving Shepherds
- 31 Questions From Readers
- 32 An Invitation to a Special Talk

## WATCHTOWER STUDIES

MAY 7-13:

Loyal to Christ and His Faithful Slave.

Page 21. Songs to be used: 114, 8.

MAY 14-20:

Humbly Submitting to Loving Shepherds.

Page 26. Songs to be used: 77, 101.

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

*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).

© 2007 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania.

All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A.

Semimonthly

ENGLISH

Would you welcome more information or a free home Bible study? Please send your request to Jehovah's Witnesses, using the appropriate address below.

*America. United States* of: Wallkill, NY 12589. *Antigua*: Box 119, St. Johns. *Australia*: Box 280, Ingleburn, NSW 1890. *Bahamas*: Box N-1247, Nassau, N.P. *Barbados*, W.I.: Crusher Site Road, Prospect, St. James BB 24012. *Britain*: The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN. *Canada*: Box 4100, Halton Hills (Georgetown), Ontario L7G 4Y4. *Germany*: Niederselters, Am Steinfields, D-65618 Selters. *Ghana*: P. O. Box GP 760, Accra. *Guyana*: 352-360 Tyrell St., Republic Park Phase 2 EBD. *Hawaii* 96819: 2055 Kam IV Rd., Honolulu, *Hong Kong*: 4 Kent Road, Kowloon Tong. *India*: Post Box 6440, Yelahanka, Bangalore 560 064, KAR. *Ireland*: Newcastle, Greystones, Co. Wicklow. *Jamaica*: P. O. Box 103, Old Harbour, St. Catherine. *Japan*: 4-7-1 Nakashinden, Ebina City, Kanagawa Pref., 243-0496. *Kenya*: P.O. Box 47788, GPO Nairobi 00100. *New Zealand*: PO Box 75142, Manurewa, Manukau 2243. *Nigeria*: P.M.B. 1090, Benin City 300001, Edo State. *Philippines, Republic of*: P. O. Box 2044, 1060 Manila. *South Africa*: Private Bag X2067, Krugersdorp, 1740. *Trinidad and Tobago, Republic of*: Lower Rapsey Street & Laxmi Lane, Curepe. *Zambia*: Box 33459, Lusaka 10101. *Zimbabwe*: Private Bag WG-5001, Westgate.

NOW PUBLISHED IN 158 LANGUAGES. SEMIMONTHLY: Afrikaans, Albanian,\* Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Bengali, Bicol, Bulgarian, Cebuano,\* Chichewa,\* Chinese, Chinese (Simplified),\* Ciembemba,\* Croatian,\* Czech,\*\* Danish,\*\* Dutch,\*\* Efik,\* English\*\* (also Braille), Estonian, Ewe, Fijian, Finnish,\*\* French\*\* (also Braille), Ga, Georgian,\* German,\*\* Greek,\* Gun, Hebrew, Hiligaynon, Hungarian,\*\* Igbo,\* Iloko,\* Indonesian, Italian,\*\* Japanese,\*\* (also Braille), Kinyarwanda, Kirundi, Korean,\*\* (also Braille), Latvian, Lingala, Lithuanian, Luvala, Macedonian, Malagasy,\* Malayalam, Maltese, Myanmar, Norwegian,\* Pangasinan, Papiamento (Aruba), Papiamento (Curaçao), Polish,\*\* Portuguese\*\* (also Braille), Punjabi, Rarotongan, Romanian,\* Russian,\*\* Samar-Leyte, Samoan, Sepedi, Serbian, Sesotho, Shona,\* Silozi, Sinhala, Slovak,\* Slovenian, Spanish\*\* (also Braille), Sranantongo, Swahili,\* Swedish,\*\* Tagalog,\* Tamil, Telugu, Thai, Tigrinya, Tok Pisin, Tongan, Tshilubila, Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Twi, Ukrainian,\* Vietnamese, Xhosa, Yoruba,\* Zulu\*

MONTHLY: American Sign Language, □ Armenian (West), Azerbaijani, Azerbaijani (Cyrillic), Baoulé, Bislama, Brazilian Sign Language,<sup>□</sup> Cambodian, Chitonga, Chukchee, Gilbertese, Greenlandic, Guarani, Gujarati, Haitian Creole, Hausa, Hindi, Hiri Motu, Icelandic, Isoko, Kannada, Kaonde, Kazakh, Kikongo, Kiluba, Kirghiz, Kongo, Kosraean, Kwanyama/Ndonga, Luganda, Lunda, Marathi, Marshallese, Mauritian Creole, Maya, Mexican Sign Language, Mizo, Moore, Nepali, Niuean, Ossetian, Otetela, Palauan, Persian, Ponapean, Sango, Seychelles Creole, Solomon Islands Pidgin, Tahitian, Tatar, Tiv, Tumbuka, Tuvaluan, Umbundu, Urdu, Urundu, Uzbek, Venda, Wallisian, Yapese, Zande, Zapotec (Isthmus)

\* Study articles also available in large-print edition.

\*\* Audiocassettes also available.

□ CD also available.

MP3 CD-ROM also available.

△ Videocassette

DVD

# The Search for Right Answers

— How can I safeguard my health? —

— What can I do to make my family life happier? —

— How can I improve my chances of keeping a job? —

HAVE you ever asked any of those questions? Did you find practical answers that really worked? Each year, some 2,000 different books are published that offer advice on these and other important subjects. In Britain alone, readers spend as much as 80 million pounds (about \$150 million, U.S.) a year on books offering advice about how to cope with life's challenges. In the United States, sales of self-help books generate about \$600 million a year. You are certainly not alone in seeking good advice on how to deal with everyday life.

Regarding the advice found in this avalanche of publications, one author said: "Many new books merely repeat what has already been written." Indeed, much of the advice found in these books simply echoes the wisdom recorded in one of the oldest books in the world. This book is by far the world's most widely distributed publication.

It has been translated in whole or in part into some 2,400 languages. In total, more than 4.6 billion copies have been printed globally. It is none other than the Bible.

The Bible plainly states: "All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching, for reproofing, for setting things straight, for disciplining in righteousness." (2 Timothy 3: 16) Granted, the Bible was not written as a self-help manual. Its primary purpose is to reveal God's will for mankind. Even so, the Bible has much to say about how to cope with the problems common to us all, and it promises that those who follow its direction will learn to benefit themselves. (Isaiah 48: 17, 18) When applied, its practical counsel always works, regardless of a person's ethnic, cultural, or educational background. Why not consider the following article and decide for yourself whether what the Bible says on such subjects as health, family, and employment is practical?

# Answers That Work!



MUCH of the advice found in the numerous self-help books available today focuses on assisting people whose lives are currently in crisis. The Bible is different. Although its counsel can aid those in distress, the Bible does more than that. Its advice helps a person to *avoid* mistakes that can make life unnecessarily difficult.

The Bible can "give to the inexperienced ones shrewdness, to a young man knowledge and thinking ability." (Proverbs 1:4) If you apply what is said in the Bible, "thinking ability itself will keep guard over you, discernment itself will safeguard you, to deliver you from the bad way." (Proverbs 2:11, 12) Consider some specific examples of how following the Bible's advice can safeguard your health, improve your family life, and make you a better worker or employer.

## Be Reasonable With Alcohol

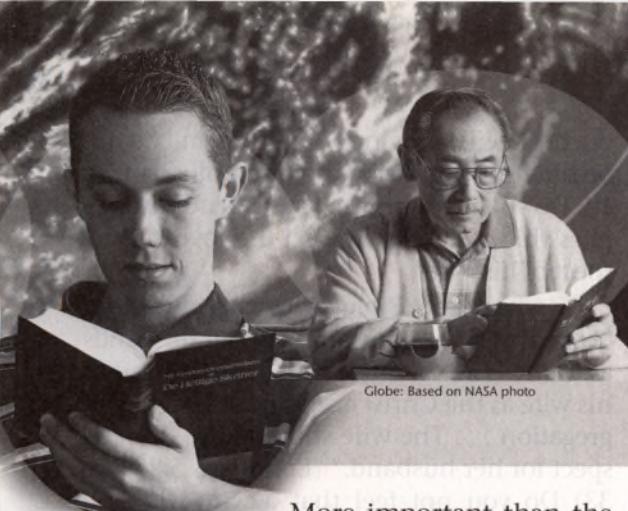
The Bible does not condemn the moderate use of alcohol. The apostle Paul pointed to the medicinal benefits of wine when he advised young Timothy: "Use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent cases of sickness." (1 Timothy 5:23) Other Bible passages show that God intended wine to be more than just medicine. Wine is described as making "the heart of mortal man rejoice." (Psalm 104:15) However, the Bible warns against becoming "en-

slaved to a lot of wine." (Titus 2:3) It states: "Do not come to be among heavy drinkers of wine, among those who are gluttonous eaters of flesh. For a drunkard and a glutton will come to poverty." (Proverbs 23:20, 21) What results when such balanced advice is ignored? Note the facts from just a few countries.

The World Health Organization's *Global Status Report on Alcohol 2004* says: "Alcohol-related problems cost Irish society approximately €2.4 billion [\$3 billion, U.S.] per year." Included in this huge financial burden are "healthcare costs (€279 million), costs of road accidents (€315 million), costs of alcohol-related crime (€100 million), loss of output due to alcohol-related work absences (€1034 million)," says the report.

*Do you feel that the Bible's view on alcohol use is practical?*





More important than the financial cost of alcohol abuse is the cost in human suffering. In Australia, for example, in just one 12-month period, more than half a million people suffered physical abuse by those under the influence of alcohol. In France, alcohol abuse is blamed for some 30 percent of all domestic violence. In light of these facts, does not the Bible's advice about alcohol sound reasonable to you?

#### Avoid Habits That Contaminate

As early as 1942, when smoking was still viewed as fashionable, this journal helped its readers to see that using tobacco violates Bible principles and should be shunned. An article published that year reasoned that those who want to please God must follow

the Bible's command to "cleanse [themselves] of every defilement of flesh and spirit." (2 Corinthians 7:1) Now, some 65 years later, has not this Bible-based advice proved sensible?

In 2006 the World Health Organization described tobacco use as "the second major cause of death in the world." Each year, some five million people die as a result of tobacco consumption. By comparison, about three million die each year from HIV/AIDS. During the 20th century, smoking took the life of an estimated 100 million people, almost as many as were killed in all the wars of that century. Indeed, the wisdom of avoiding tobacco is now widely accepted.

#### "Flee From Fornication"

Less readily accepted is what the Bible says on sexual matters. Contrary to what many have been led to believe, the Bible does not prudishly condemn as sinful all sexual desire. But it does provide sound advice on how human sexuality should be expressed. The Bible teaches that sexual relations are reserved for a man and a woman who are married to each other. (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:4-6; Hebrews 13:4) Sex provides a way for marriage mates to express and receive love and tender affection. (1 Corinthians 7:1-5) Any children born of such a union benefit from having two parents who care for each other.—Colossians 3:18-21.

Regarding sexual promiscuity, the Bible commands: "Flee from fornication." (1 Corinthians 6:18) What is one reason for this? The verse continues: "Every other sin that a man may commit is outside his body, but he that practices fornication is sinning against his own body." What results when the Bible's advice regarding sexual matters is ignored?

Consider what is happening in the United States. That country now has the highest rate



*Do you agree with the Bible-based advice to avoid tobacco?*

of teenage pregnancy in the industrialized world—some 850,000 each year. Many of the babies who escape being aborted are born to unwed mothers. No doubt, a number of these young mothers do their best to raise their children with love and discipline, and some succeed. However, the cold facts are that the sons of teen mothers are more likely to end up in prison and that the daughters are more likely to become teen mothers themselves. After reviewing statistics of the past several decades, researcher Robert Lerman wrote: “The shift toward single-parent families may have contributed to a higher incidence of other social problems, such as higher rates of school dropouts, of alcohol and drug use, of adolescent pregnancy and childbearing, and of juvenile delinquency.”

Those who are sexually promiscuous also face major health risks, both physical and mental. For example, the journal *Pediatrics* reports: “Data suggest that sexually active adolescents are at high risk for depression and suicide.” Regarding other health dangers, the American Social Health Association states: “More than half of all people [in the United States] will have an STD [sexually transmitted disease] at some point in their lifetime.” Think of the heartache and suffering that could be avoided if the Bible’s practical counsel regarding sex were followed!

### Build Strong Family Ties

The Bible does more than just warn against destructive habits. Note its practical advice on how to improve the quality of family life.

God’s Word says: “Husbands ought to be loving their wives as their own bodies.” (Ephesians 5:28) Rather than taking their wives for granted, husbands are urged to dwell with them “according to knowledge, assigning them honor as to a weaker vessel, the feminine one.” (1 Peter 3:7) Regarding disputes that may arise, husbands are ad-

vised: “Keep on loving your wives and do not be bitterly angry with them.” (Colossians 3:19) Do you not agree that a husband who applies this counsel will earn the love and respect of his wife?

To wives, the Bible gives this direction: “Let wives be in subjection to their husbands as to the Lord, because a husband is head of his wife as the Christ also is head of the congregation . . . The wife should have deep respect for her husband.” (Ephesians 5:22, 23, 33) Do you not feel that a wife who follows this advice when she speaks to—or about—her husband will be deeply loved by him?

Regarding child training, the Bible’s advice to you parents is that you communicate with your children “when you sit in your house and when you walk on the road and when you lie down and when you get up.” (Deuteronomy 6:7) Fathers in particular are instructed to provide their children with moral guidance and loving discipline. “Fathers, do not be irritating your children, but go on bringing them up in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah,” says God’s Word. (Ephesians 6:4) In turn, children are told: “Be obedient to your parents,” and “honor your father and your mother.”\*—Ephesians 6:1, 2.

Do you feel that families would benefit from applying this advice? ‘Yes,’ you may say, ‘it sounds good in theory, but does it really work?’ We invite you to visit the local Kingdom Hall of Jehovah’s Witnesses. There you will meet families who are endeavoring to apply the Bible’s wise counsel. Talk to them. Observe the way the family members interact with one another. You will see firsthand that living by Bible principles really does make families happy!

\* For a detailed discussion of Bible principles that can help your family, see the book *The Secret of Family Happiness*, published by Jehovah’s Witnesses.



*Following the Bible's advice improves family life*

### A Diligent Worker and a Fair Employer

What does the Bible have to say about the daily challenge of keeping a job? It states that a worker who learns his job well is likely to be appreciated and rewarded. "Have you beheld a man skillful in his work?" asked wise King Solomon. "Before kings is where he will station himself." (Proverbs 22:29) On the other hand, "the lazy man" is like irritating "smoke to the eyes" of his employer. (Proverbs 10:26) The Bible encourages workers to be honest and diligent. "Let the stealer steal no more, but rather let him do hard work, doing with his hands what is good work." (Ephesians 4:28) This advice applies even when an employer is not watching. "Be obedient in everything to those who are your masters in a fleshly sense, not with acts of eye-service, as men pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, with fear of Jehovah." (Colossians 3:22) If you are an employer, would you not value a worker who applied this advice?

For employers, the Bible provides this reminder: "The workman is worthy of his wages." (1 Timothy 5:18) God's Law to the Israel-

ites directed that employers provide prompt and fair payment to their workers. "You must not defraud your fellow, and you must not rob. The wages of a hired laborer should not stay all night with you until morning," wrote Moses. (Leviticus 19:13) Would you not enjoy working for an employer who obeyed the Bible's direction and paid you promptly and fairly?

### A Superior Source of Wisdom

Does it surprise you that a book as ancient as the Bible contains counsel that is relevant today? The reason that the Bible has endured when so many other books have become irrelevant is that it contains, not the word of men, but "the word of God."—1 Thessalonians 2:13.

We encourage you to take time to become better acquainted with God's Word. If you do, you will start to feel a fondness for the Author of the Bible, Jehovah God. Apply the counsel he offers, and see it guard you from harm and help you improve your life. By doing so, you will "draw close to God, and he will draw close to you." (James 4:8) No other book can help you in such a way.

# FAITH IN BIBLE PROPHECY Preserves Life

JESUS is leaving the temple in Jerusalem for the last time when one of his disciples exclaims: "Teacher, see! what sort of stones and what sort of buildings!" The temple is the pride and glory of the Jewish nation. However, Jesus replies: "Do you behold these great buildings? By no means will a stone be left here upon a stone and not be thrown down."—Mark 13:1, 2.

The very idea is incredible! Some temple stones are huge. Furthermore, what Jesus says about the temple implies the destruction of Jerusalem and perhaps even of the Jewish state, of which the temple is the spiritual heart. So Jesus' disciples press him: "Tell us, When will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are destined to come to a conclusion?"—Mark 13:3, 4.

"The end is not yet," Jesus cautions. First, the disciples will hear of wars, earthquakes, famines, and pestilences in one place after

another. Then, dramatic events will plunge the Jewish nation into a cataclysm of unique proportions, yes, a "great tribulation." God, though, will intervene to save "the chosen ones," that is, faithful Christians. How?—Mark 13:7; Matthew 24:7, 21, 22; Luke 21:10, 11.

## In Defiance of Rome

Twenty-eight years pass, and the Christians in Jerusalem are still awaiting the end. The Roman Empire is racked by wars, earthquakes, famines, and pestilences. (See the box on page 9.) Judea is a hotbed of civil and ethnic strife. Yet, within the safety of Jerusalem's walls, relative peace prevails. People eat, work, marry, and bear children, as they have always done. The temple's immense physical presence projects a sense of stability and permanence over the city.



About 61 C.E., the Christians in Jerusalem receive a letter from the apostle Paul. He commands them for their endurance but is concerned that some in the congregation appear to lack a sense of urgency. A number are drifting spiritually or are falling short of Christian maturity. (Hebrews 2:1; 5:11, 12) Paul urges them: "Do not, therefore, throw away your freeness of speech . . . For yet 'a very little while,' and 'he who is coming will arrive and will not delay.' 'But my righteous one will live by reason of faith,' and, 'if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.'" (Hebrews 10:35-38) Timely counsel indeed! But will the Christians exercise faith and remain alert to the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy? Is Jerusalem's end really imminent?

Over the next five years, conditions in Jerusalem steadily deteriorate. Finally, in 66 C.E., the corrupt Roman Governor Florus seizes 17 talents in "tax arrears" from the sacred temple treasury. The Jews are incensed and rise up in revolt. Jewish rebels, or Zealots, swarm into Jerusalem and slaughter the Roman forces there. They then boldly declare Judea to be independent of Rome. Judea and Rome are now at war!

Within three months, the Roman governor of Syria, Cestius Gallus, marches south with 30,000 troops to suppress the Jewish rebellion. His army arrives at Jerusalem during the Festival of Booths and quickly penetrates the suburbs. The outnumbered Zealots seek refuge inside the temple fortress. Roman soldiers soon begin to undermine the temple wall. The Jews are horrified. Why, pagan soldiers are now defiling Judaism's holiest site! The Christians in the city, though, recall Jesus' words: 'When you catch sight of the disgusting thing standing in a holy place, then let those in Judea begin fleeing to the mountains.' (Matthew 24:15, 16) Would

## Aspects of the Sign Fulfilled in the First Century

### WARS:

- Gaul (39-40 C.E.)
- North Africa (41 C.E.)
- Britain (43, 60 C.E.)
- Armenia (58-62 C.E.)
- Civil and ethnic conflicts in Judea (50-66 C.E.)

### EARTHQUAKES:

- Rome (54 C.E.)
- Pompeii (62 C.E.)
- Asia Minor (53, 62 C.E.)
- Crete (62 C.E.)

### FAMINES:

- Rome, Greece, Egypt (c. 42 C.E.)
- Judea (c. 46 C.E.)

### PESTILENCES:

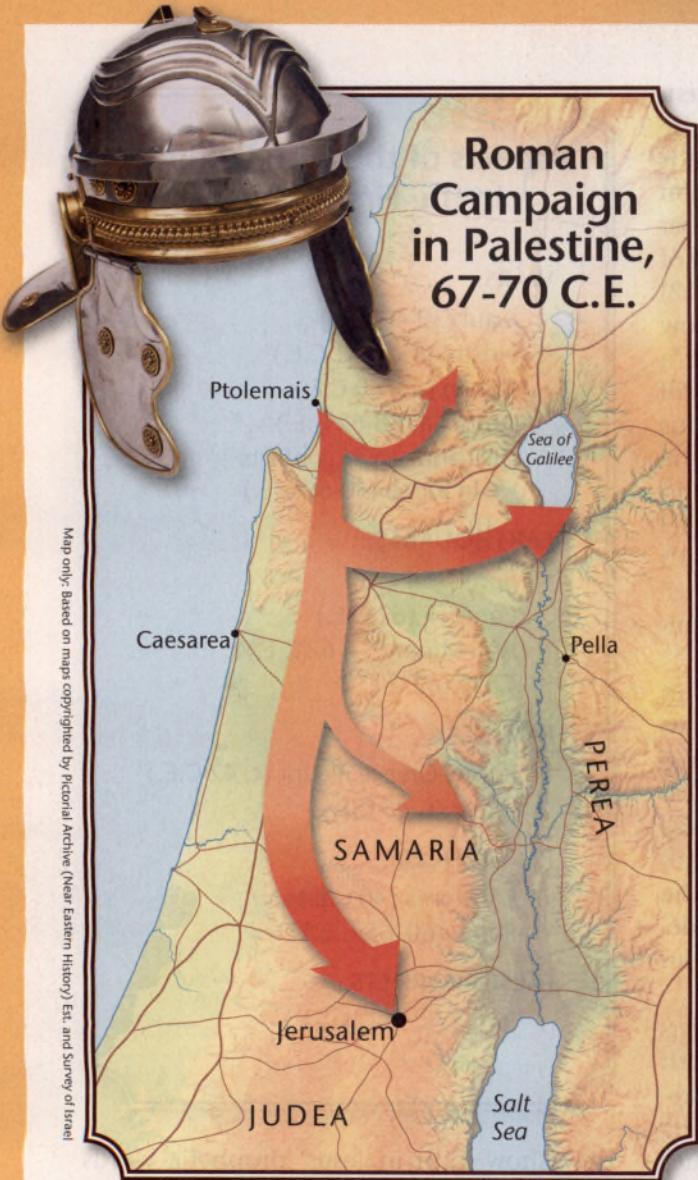
- Babylonia (40 C.E.)
- Rome (60, 65 C.E.)

### FALSE PROPHETS:

- Judea (c. 56 C.E.)

they show faith in Jesus' prophetic words and be moved to act accordingly? As matters turn out, their life depends on their doing so. But how?

Suddenly and for no apparent reason, Cestius Gallus withdraws his troops and retreats toward the coast with the Zealots in hot pursuit. Amazingly, the tribulation on the city has been cut short! Demonstrating their faith in Jesus' prophetic warning, the Christians flee from Jerusalem to Pella, a neutral



## Roman Campaign in Palestine, 67-70 C.E.

### Descent Into Anarchy

Within months, a new Roman army is on the move. During 67 C.E., General Vespasian and his son Titus mobilize a vast force of 60,000 troops. For the next two years, this military juggernaut advances toward Jerusalem, crushing all resistance in its path. Meanwhile, inside Jerusalem, rival Jewish factions engage in vicious struggles. The city grain reserves are destroyed, the area surrounding the temple is leveled, and more than 20,000 Jews are killed. Vespasian delays his advance toward Jerusalem, declaring: 'God acts as a Roman general better than I can do; our enemies are destroying one another with their own hands.'

When Roman Emperor Nero dies, Vespasian departs for Rome to secure the throne, leaving Titus to finish the Judean campaign. Titus advances on Jerusalem near Passover 70 C.E., trapping the residents and pilgrims inside the city. His forces strip the Judean countryside of trees to build a 4.5-mile-long wall of pointed stakes around the beleaguered capital. This is just as Jesus foretold: "Your enemies will build around you a fortification with pointed stakes and will encircle you and distress you from every side."—Luke 19:43.

city located in the mountains across the Jordan River. Their escape is timely. The Zealots soon return to Jerusalem and force the remaining inhabitants to join in their rebellion.\* Meanwhile, safe at Pella, the Christians await further developments.

\* Jewish historian Josephus reports that the Zealots pursued the Romans for seven days before returning to Jerusalem.

Famine soon grips the city. Armed mobs plunder the homes of the dead and the dying. At least one desperate woman kills and eats her infant child, fulfilling the prediction: "You will have to eat the fruit of your belly, the flesh of your sons and your daughters . . . because of the tightness and stress with which your enemy will hem you in."—Deuteronomy 28:53-57.

Finally, after a siege lasting five months, Jerusalem falls. The city and its grand temple are plundered and burned and then torn apart stone by stone. (Daniel 9:26) The dead total some 1,100,000; another 97,000 are sold into slavery.\* (Deuteronomy 28:68) Judea is virtually emptied of Jews. Truly, it is a national disaster without parallel, a watershed in Jewish political, religious, and cultural life.<sup>#</sup>

Meanwhile, the Christians in Pella give heartfelt thanks to God for their deliverance. Their faith in Bible prophecy has preserved their very lives!

Looking back on those events, each of us today would do well to ask: 'Do I have the faith that will preserve my life during the approaching great tribulation? Am I "the sort that [has] faith to the preserving alive of the soul"?'—Hebrews 10:39; Revelation 7:14.

\* According to one estimate, over one seventh of all the Jews in the Roman Empire were killed.

<sup>#</sup> Jewish Bible scholar Alfred Edersheim wrote: "[This] tribulation to Israel [was] unparalleled in the terrible past of its history, and unequalled even in its bloody future."

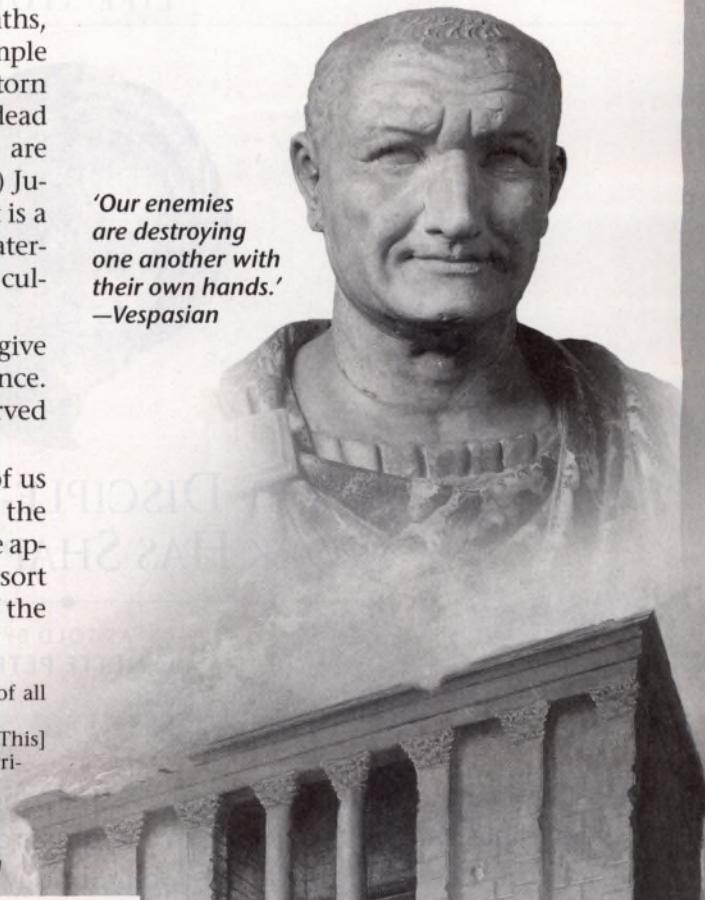
#### *In 70 C.E., Roman forces destroyed Jerusalem*



Relief: Soprintendenza Archeologica di Roma;  
Vespasian: Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz/Art  
Resource, NY



*'Our enemies  
are destroying  
one another with  
their own hands.'*  
—Vespasian





## THE DISCIPLE-MAKING WORK HAS SHAPED MY LIFE

AS TOLD BY  
LYNETTE PETERS

They had come to evacuate us. A sharpshooter was in place on top of the building. Marines lay prone in the grass, guns at the ready. As we scurried toward the waiting helicopter that Sunday morning, my fellow missionaries and I forced ourselves to remain calm. In an instant, we were airborne. Ten minutes later, we were safely aboard a military ship, which was anchored off the coast.

THE next morning, we learned that rebels bombed the hotel where we had sought refuge the night before. The years of civil unrest in Sierra Leone had finally escalated into full-scale war. All foreigners, including us, had been forced almost at a moment's notice to flee the country. To explain why I found myself in that situation, let me start from the beginning.

I grew up in British Guiana, known as Guyana since 1966. My early life there in the 1950's was carefree and enjoyable. Most par-

ents valued education highly, and young people were expected to do well in school. I recall that a bank clerk once asked my father, "Why do you pay so much tuition for your children's education?" Father replied, "Only the best education possible will guarantee their success." At the time, he thought that the best education was to be obtained at prestigious schools. He would soon come to think differently.

When I was 11 years old, my mother began to study the Bible with Jehovah's Wit-

nesses. She had visited a Kingdom Hall with a neighbor. What they heard that night convinced them both that they had found the truth. Later, my mother mentioned to another neighbor what had been discussed. Soon all three were studying with missionaries Daphne Harry (later Baird) and Rose Cuffie. In less than a year, Mother and her two friends were baptized. Five years after that, my father withdrew from the Seventh-Day Adventist Church and was baptized as one of Jehovah's Witnesses.

As youngsters, two of my sisters and I—the three eldest of ten children—spent many happy hours at the missionary home where Daphne and Rose lived. On such occasions we listened to the field service experiences

*My two sisters, who along with me spent many happy hours with the missionaries in the 1950's*



they related. These missionaries radiated joy in tirelessly caring for the spiritual welfare of others. It was their example that instilled in me the desire to be a missionary.

What, though, helped me to keep focused on the full-time ministry amid relatives and schoolmates who were all very career-minded? There were so many tempting opportunities—I could apply myself to the study of law, music, medicine, or anything else. My parents' fine example gave me the needed direction. They lived the truth, studied the Bible diligently, and devoted themselves to helping others learn about Jehovah.\* What is more, they regularly invited full-time ministers to our home. The joy and satisfaction that these brothers and sisters displayed strengthened my desire to let the disciple-making work shape my life.

At 15 years of age, I was baptized. Then as soon as I finished high school, I entered the full-time pioneer ministry. Philomena, a hospital worker, was the first person I helped to progress to dedication and baptism. The joy of seeing her come to love Jehovah reinforced my desire to continue in the full-time ministry. Shortly thereafter, I was offered a better job in the government service where I was working as a secretary. I declined, choosing instead to continue pioneering.

I was still living at home, and missionaries continued to visit us. How I enjoyed listening to their experiences! All of this reinforced my desire to be a missionary, even though it seemed a remote possibility. Missionaries were then being sent to Guyana and still are. One day in 1969, I was surprised but happy to receive an invitation to attend the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead in Brooklyn, New York.

\* My mother pioneered for more than 25 years, and when my father retired, he became an auxiliary pioneer.

## An Assignment I Did Not Expect

There were 54 students from 21 countries in the 48th class of Gilead. Seventeen of us were single sisters. Although that was 37 years ago, I still have vivid memories of those five months. There was so much to learn—not only Scriptural truths but also practical suggestions and counsel for life as future missionaries. For example, I learned to follow direction, to be balanced with regard to fashion trends, and to persevere despite unfavorable circumstances.

My parents had always stressed regular meeting attendance. Anyone who was too sick to attend the meeting on Sunday did not suddenly get well enough to attend a piano recital or a concert the next night. However, for a while during Gilead School, my meeting attendance slipped. One Friday evening, I tried to justify my absence to Don and Dolores Adams, a Bethel couple who provided my transportation to the meetings. Oh, the volume of homework, the reports! How could I make it to the Theocratic Ministry School and Service Meeting? After reasoning with me for a while, Brother Adams said: "Let your conscience be your guide." I took his advice and did not miss the meeting that night or any nights thereafter. Over the years, except in extreme circumstances, I have allowed nothing to interfere with my attendance at Christian meetings.

About midway through the term, there was talk about receiving our assignments. In my mind, I had always thought that I

would be assigned to Guyana, where help in the preaching work was very much needed. Imagine my surprise to learn that I would not be returning. Instead, I was assigned to Sierra Leone, West Africa. How grateful I was to Jehovah that my desire to be a missionary far away from home was finally fulfilled!

## So Much to Learn

"Picturesque" is the word that best expresses my first impression of Sierra Leone, with its many hills and mountains, bays and beaches. Yet, the real beauty of

this West African country lies in its inhabitants, whose love and kindness make even foreigners feel at home. This contributes in no small way to helping new missionaries overcome homesickness. Sierra Leoneans love to talk about their customs and culture and particularly to assist newcomers to master Krio, the lingua franca of the country.

The Krio-speaking people have many vivid proverbs. For example, Monkey works, baboon eats, means that the sower is not always the reaper. How aptly that describes the injustice so prevalent in the world!—Isaiah 65:22.

The preaching and disciple-making work was delightful. It was rare to find someone who was not interested in the Bible. Through the years, missionaries and long-time servants of Jehovah have helped people—young and old—from all walks of life and tribal origins to embrace the truth.



*With fellow students of the  
48th class of Gilead*

Erla St. Hill, my first missionary partner, was a tireless worker. Her diligence in caring for her missionary-home duties came second only to her zeal in the ministry. She helped me understand the importance of many things, such as getting acquainted with the neighbors, visiting sick Witnesses and interested ones, and supporting funeral arrangements where possible. She also impressed upon me the importance of never leaving a territory after field service without stopping by, no matter how briefly, to say hello to the brothers and sisters living in the area. By doing these things, I quickly gained mothers, brothers, sisters, and friends, and my assignment became my home.—Mark 10: 29, 30.

I also forged strong bonds of friendship with the fine missionaries who served with me. Among them were my roommate Adna Byrd, who served in Sierra Leone between 1978 and 1981, and Cheryl Ferguson, who has been my roommate for the past 24 years.

### Civil War Brings Tests

In 1997, about one month after the dedication of the new branch facilities in Sierra Leone, war forced us to evacuate the country, as mentioned earlier. Six years before that, we were impressed by the faith of the Liberian Witnesses who had fled to Sierra Leone to escape the war in Liberia. Some arrived with nothing. Despite the difficult situation, they participated in the ministry



GUINEA  
SIERRA LEONE

*I was assigned  
to Sierra Leone,  
West Africa*

every day. It was so touching to see their love for Jehovah and for people.

Now that we ourselves were refugees in the country of Guinea, we followed the example of the Liberian brothers and continued to trust in Jehovah and to put Kingdom interests first. A year later, we were able to return to Sierra Leone, but within seven months, fighting broke out and we had to evacuate to Guinea yet once more.

Soon we were told that members of one of the warring factions had taken up residence in our missionary home in Kissy and that all our belongings had been pillaged or destroyed. Rather than feeling downhearted, we were just thankful to be alive. We were left with few possessions, but we managed.



After our second evacuation, my roommate Cheryl and I remained in Guinea. This meant learning French. Some of my fellow missionaries were quick to use the French they learned, not being particularly bothered by their mistakes. As for me, I hated the idea of speaking incorrectly, so I spoke French only when absolutely necessary. It was all so painful. I had to remind myself daily why I was in Guinea—to help others to know Jehovah.

Slowly I made progress by studying, by listening to those who spoke the language well, and by enlisting the help of the children in the congregation, who are not restrained by tact. Then, unexpectedly, welcome provisions came from Jehovah's organization. Since September 2001, *Our Kingdom Ministry* has provided suggestions for presenting the magazines in addition to ideas for offering books and brochures to people of diverse religious persuasions. I now feel more confident when I engage in the ministry, even if I lack the precision of expression that I have in my mother tongue.

Growing up in a large family certainly helped me to adjust to living with many people, at one time as many as 17. During

my 37 years of missionary service, I have lived with over 100 other missionaries. What a privilege it has been to come to know so many people, all having different personalities yet all working with the same objective! And what a joy to be a fellow worker with God and to have a share in seeing people embrace Bible truth!—1 Corinthians 3:9.

Over the years, I have missed many major events in the lives of my own family members, such as the weddings of most of my younger siblings. And I have not seen my nieces and nephews as often as I wished. It has been a sacrifice for me and for my family, who have unselfishly encouraged me to remain in the missionary work.

Yet, what I missed back home, I have enjoyed at one time or another in the missionary service. Even though I chose to remain single, I have many spiritual children, not just those with whom I studied the Bible but others to whom I have grown close. What is more, I have watched their children grow up, marry, and rear their own children in the way of the truth. Some of them, like me, have also allowed the disciple-making work to shape their life.

#### *Dedication of the branch facilities in Sierra Leone*



# Offering SACRIFICES THAT PLEASE GOD

"LIFE flowed from death—so believed the Aztecs, who practiced human sacrifice on a scale unprecedented in Mesoamerica," says the book *The Mighty Aztecs*. "As the empire grew," the book continues, "only blood and more blood upheld its fragile confidence." According to another reference work, the number of human sacrifices by the Aztecs reached 20,000 a year.

Out of fear and uncertainty or motivated by feelings of guilt and remorse, people throughout history have offered sacrifices of one kind or another to their deities. On the other hand, the Bible shows that certain sacrifices were divinely instituted—by the almighty God, Jehovah. Therefore, it would be appropriate to ask: What kind of sacrifices please God? And should offerings and sacrifices be a part of worship today?

## Offerings and Sacrifices in True Worship

When the nation of Israel was formed, Jehovah gave explicit instructions about the way he wanted the Israelites to worship him, and this included offerings and sacrifices.

(Numbers, chapters 28 and 29) Some of the offerings were of the fruit of the earth; others involved sacrificing such animals as bulls, sheep, goats, pigeons, and turtledoves. (Leviticus 1:3, 5, 10, 14; 23:10-18; Numbers 15:1-7; 28:7) There were whole burnt offerings that were to be entirely consumed in fire. (Exodus 29:38-42) There were also communion sacrifices, in which those who offered them participated by eating from that which was sacrificed to God.—Leviticus 19:5-8.

All the offerings and sacrifices that were made to God under the Mosaic Law were a way of worshipping God and recognizing him as the Sovereign of the universe. Through such sacrifices, the Israelites expressed their gratitude to Jehovah for his blessing and protection as well as gained forgiveness for their sins. As long as they were faithful in observing Jehovah's requirements for worship, they were greatly blessed.—Proverbs 3:9, 10.

To Jehovah, the most important thing was the attitude of those who offered the sacrifices. By means of his prophet Hosea,

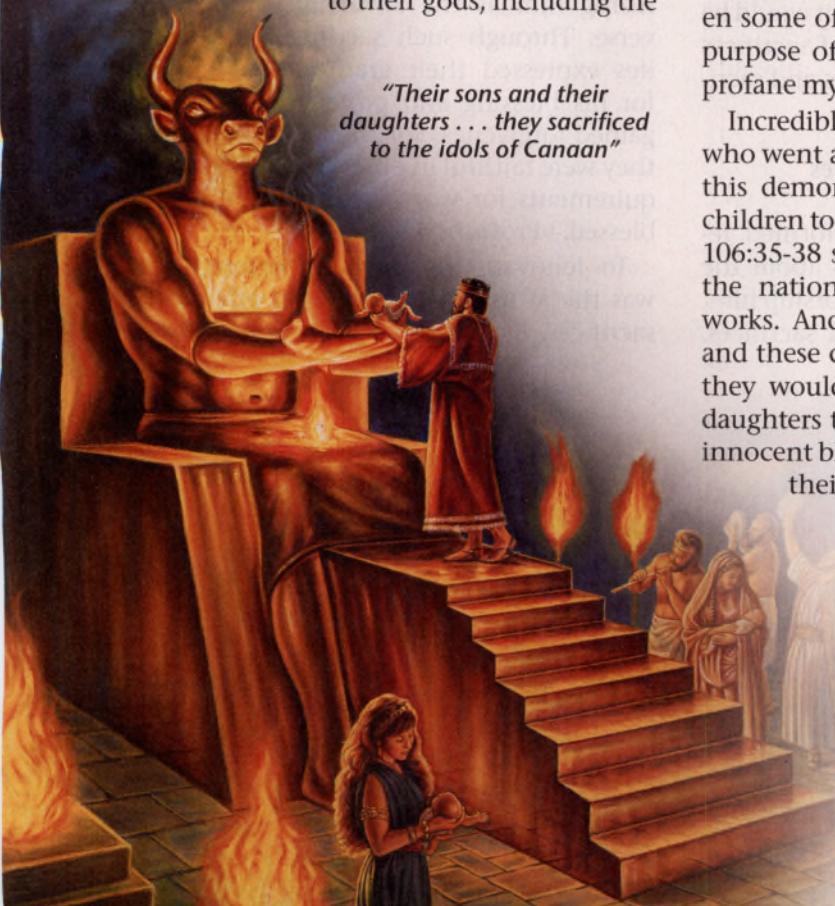


Jehovah said: "In loving-kindness I have taken delight, and not in sacrifice; and in the knowledge of God rather than in whole burnt offerings." (Hosea 6:6) Thus, when the people turned away from true worship and practiced loose conduct and shed innocent blood, the sacrifices that they were presenting on Jehovah's altar had no value. That is why, through Isaiah, Jehovah told the nation of Israel: "Of what benefit to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? . . . I have had enough of whole burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed animals; and in the blood of young bulls and male lambs and he-goats I have taken no delight."—Isaiah 1:11.

#### "A Thing That I Had Not Commanded"

In sharp contrast with the Israelites, the inhabitants of Canaan offered their children as sacrifices to their gods, including the

*"Their sons and their daughters . . . they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan"*



Ammonite god called Molech, also known as Milcom or Moloch. (1 Kings 11:5, 7, 33; Acts 7:43) *Halley's Bible Handbook* says: "Canaanites worshipped, by immoral indulgence, as a religious rite, in the presence of their gods; and then, by murdering their first-born children, as a sacrifice to these same gods."

Did such practices please Jehovah God? Decidedly not. As the Israelites were about to enter the land of Canaan, Jehovah gave them the command recorded at Leviticus 20:2, 3: "You are to say to the sons of Israel, 'Any man of the sons of Israel, and any alien resident who resides as an alien in Israel, who gives any of his offspring to Molech, should be put to death without fail. The people of the land should pelt him to death with stones. And as for me, I shall set my face against that man, and I will cut him off from among his people, because he has given some of his offspring to Molech for the purpose of defiling my holy place and to profane my holy name.'"

Incredible as it may seem, some Israelites who went astray from true worship took up this demonic practice of sacrificing their children to false gods. Regarding this, Psalm 106:35-38 says: "They went mingling with the nations and took up learning their works. And they kept serving their idols, and these came to be a snare to them. And they would sacrifice their sons and their daughters to demons. So they kept spilling innocent blood, the blood of their sons and their daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan; and the land came to be polluted with bloodshed."

Expressing his abhorrence of this practice, Jehovah said through his prophet Jeremiah regarding the sons of Ju-

dah: "They have set their disgusting things in the house upon which my name has been called, in order to defile it. And they have built the high places of Topheth, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, in order to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, a thing that I had not commanded and that had not come up into my heart."—Jeremiah 7:30, 31.

Because of engaging in such disgusting practices, the nation of Israel finally lost God's favor. Its capital city, Jerusalem, was eventually destroyed, and the people were taken captive to Babylon. (Jeremiah 7:32-34) Clearly, the practice of offering humans in sacrifice is not from the true God and is no part of pure worship. Human sacrifice in any form is demonic, and true worshippers of God stay away from anything that is connected with such a practice.

### The Ransom Sacrifice of Christ Jesus

Some, however, may ask, 'Why, then, did Jehovah's Law to the Israelites include animal sacrifices?' The apostle Paul considered this very question and provided this answer: "Why, then, the Law? It was added to make transgressions manifest, until the seed should arrive to whom the promise had been made... Consequently the Law has become our tutor leading to Christ." (Galatians 3:19-24) The animal sacrifices under the Mosaic Law typified a greater sacrifice that Jehovah God would provide in behalf of mankind—that of his Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus referred to this loving act when he said: "God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life."—John 3:16.

Out of love for God and for mankind, Jesus willingly surrendered his perfect human life as a ransom for Adam's offspring. (Ro-

mans 5:12, 15) Jesus said: "The Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his soul a ransom in exchange for many." (Matthew 20:28) No one else on earth could redeem humans from the bondage to sin and death into which Adam had sold them. (Psalm 49:7, 8) Thus, Paul explained that Jesus "entered, no, not with the blood of goats and of young bulls, but with his own blood, once for all time into the holy place and obtained an everlasting deliverance for us." (Hebrews 9:12) By accepting Jesus' sacrificial blood, God "blotted out the handwritten document against us." That is, Jehovah set aside the Law covenant, with its required offerings and sacrifices, thus bringing in 'the gift of everlasting life.'—Colossians 2:14; Romans 6:23.

### Spiritual Sacrifices and Offerings

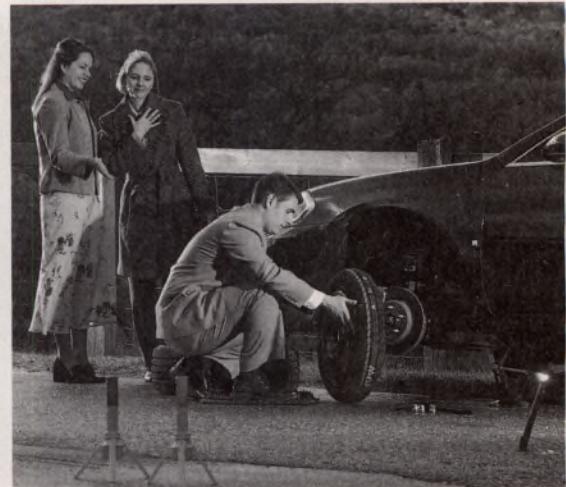
Since animal sacrifices and offerings are no longer part of true worship, are any sacrifices still required of us today? Yes, indeed. Jesus Christ lived a life of sacrifice in his service to God and finally offered himself in behalf of mankind. Hence, he declared: "If anyone wants to come after me, let him disown himself and pick up his torture stake and continually follow me." (Matthew 16:24) This means that anyone who wants to become Jesus' follower must make certain sacrifices. What are these?

### IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Will Cruelty Ever End?

A Field "White for Harvesting"

Let the Congregation Praise Jehovah



*By preaching the good news and being helpful in other ways, true Christians offer sacrifices that are pleasing to God*

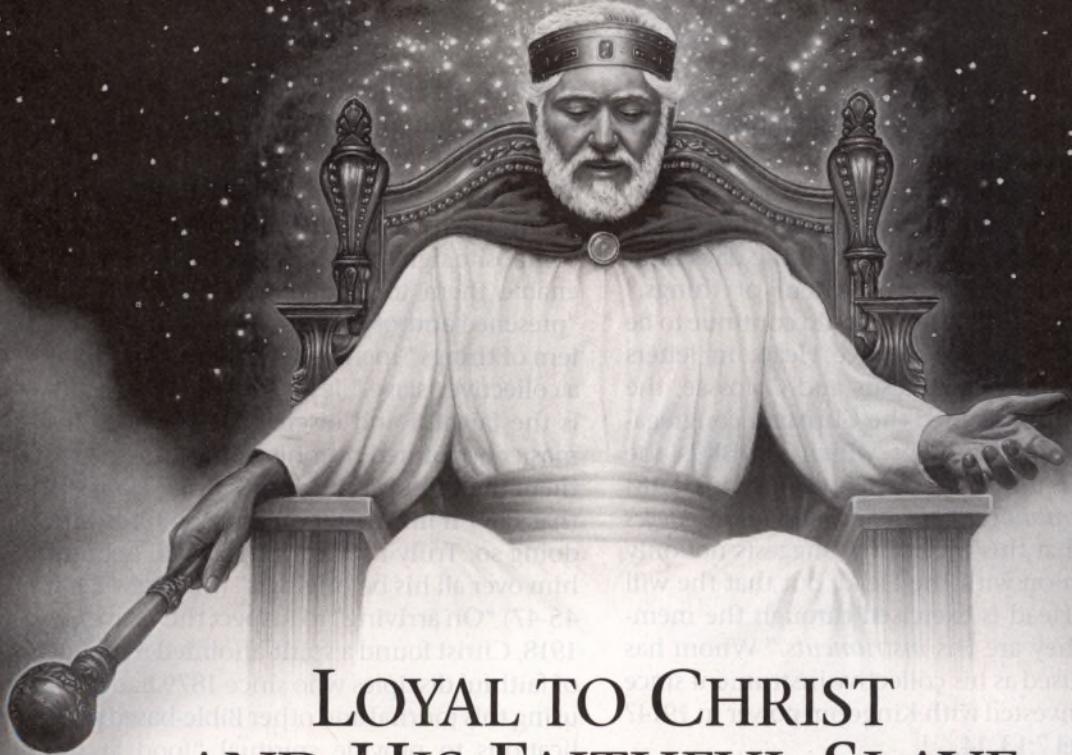
For one thing, a genuine follower of Christ no longer lives for himself but lives to do God's will. He subjects his personal will and desires to those of God. Note how the apostle Paul put it: "I entreat you by the compassions of God, brothers, to present your bodies a sacrifice living, holy, acceptable to God, a sacred service with your power of reason. And quit being fashioned after this system of things, but be transformed by making your mind over, that you may prove to yourselves the good and acceptable and perfect will of God."—Romans 12:1, 2.

Furthermore, the Bible indicates that our expressions of praise can be viewed as sacrifices offered to Jehovah. The prophet Hosea used the phrase "the young bulls of our lips," showing that God considers the praise of our lips to be one of the finest sacrifices. (Hosea 14:2) The apostle Paul urged the Hebrew Christians: "Offer to God a sacrifice of

praise, that is, the fruit of lips which make public declaration to his name." (Hebrews 13:15) Today, Jehovah's Witnesses stay very busy preaching the good news and making disciples of people of all nations. (Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20) They are offering sacrifices of praise to God day and night around the earth.—Revelation 7:15.

Along with preaching, the doing of good to others is included among the sacrifices that please God. "Do not forget the doing of good and the sharing of things with others," exhorted Paul, "for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." (Hebrews 13:16) In fact, for sacrifices of praise to be pleasing to God, good conduct is required of those offering them. Paul admonished: "Behave in a manner worthy of the good news about the Christ."—Philippians 1:27; Isaiah 52:11.

As in the past, all sacrifices that are made in support of true worship will result in great joy and in blessings from Jehovah. Let us, therefore, do our best to offer sacrifices that truly please God!



## LOYAL TO CHRIST AND HIS FAITHFUL SLAVE

*"His master . . . will appoint him over all his belongings."*—MATTHEW 24:45-47.

**Y**OU must not let people call you 'leaders'—you have only one leader, Christ!" (Matthew 23:10, *The New Testament in Modern English*) With these words, Jesus made it plain to his followers that no man on earth would be their leader. Their one Leader would be heavenly—Jesus Christ himself. Jesus holds this position by divine appointment. Jehovah "raised him up from the dead and . . . made him head over all things to the congregation, which is his body."—Ephesians 1:20-23.

<sup>2</sup> Since Christ is "head over all things" with regard to the Christian congregation, he

1, 2. (a) Who do the Scriptures indicate is our Leader? (b) What shows that Christ actively leads the Christian congregation?

exercises his authority over all that takes place within the congregation. Nothing that occurs within the congregation escapes his notice. He closely observes the spiritual condition of each group of Christians, or congregation. This is clearly apparent in the revelation given to the apostle John at the end of the first century C.E. To seven congregations, Jesus stated five times that he knew their deeds, their strong points, and their weaknesses, and he gave counsel and encouragement accordingly. (Revelation 2:2, 9, 13, 19; 3:1, 8, 15) There is every reason to believe that Christ was equally familiar with the spiritual condition of other congregations in Asia Minor, Palestine, Syria, Babylonia, Greece, Italy, and elsewhere. (Acts 1:8) What of today?

## A Faithful Slave

<sup>3</sup> After his resurrection and shortly before his ascension to his Father in heaven, Jesus told his disciples: "All authority has been given me in heaven and on the earth." He also said: "Look! I am with you all the days until the conclusion of the system of things." (Matthew 28:18-20) He would continue to be with them as their active Head. In letters to Christians in Ephesus and Colossae, the apostle Paul likened the Christian congregation to a "body," of which Christ is the Head. (Ephesians 1:22, 23; Colossians 1:18) *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges* states that this metaphor "suggests not only vital union with the Head, but that the will of the Head is exercised through the members. They are His *instruments*." Whom has Christ used as his collective instrument since being invested with Kingdom power in 1914? —Daniel 7:13, 14.

<sup>4</sup> The prophecy of Malachi foretold that Jehovah, "the true Lord," accompanied by his "messenger of the covenant," his newly enthroned Son, Christ Jesus, would come in judgment to inspect His "temple," or spiritual house of worship. "The appointed time" for the 'judgment of the house of God' to begin evidently arrived in 1918.\* (Malachi 3:1; 1 Peter 4:17) Those claiming to represent God and his true worship on earth were duly examined. The churches of Christendom, who for centuries had taught God-dishonoring doctrines and had been heavily involved in the massacre of World War I, were rejected. A faithful remnant of spirit-

anointed Christians were tested, refined as with fire, and approved, becoming to Jehovah "people presenting a gift offering in righteousness."—Malachi 3:3.

<sup>5</sup> In line with Malachi's prophecy, the composite sign that Jesus gave his disciples to enable them to recognize the time of his "presence and of the conclusion of the system of things" included the identification of a collective "slave." Jesus stated: "Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domestics, to give them their food at the proper time? Happy is that slave if his master on arriving finds him doing so. Truly I say to you, He will appoint him over all his belongings." (Matthew 24:3, 45-47) "On arriving" to inspect the "slave" in 1918, Christ found a spirit-anointed remnant of faithful disciples who since 1879 had been using this journal and other Bible-based publications to provide spiritual "food at the proper time." He acknowledged them as his collective instrument, or "slave," and in 1919 entrusted them with the management of all his earthly belongings.

## Managing Christ's Earthly Belongings

<sup>6</sup> A few months before Jesus gave his prophecy on the sign of his presence, including the existence of a "slave" representing him on earth, he spoke of this "slave" in slightly different terms that shed light on the slave's responsibilities. Jesus stated: "Who really is the faithful steward, the discreet one, whom his master will appoint over his body of attendants to keep giving them their measure of food supplies at the proper time? I tell you truthfully, He will appoint him over all his belongings."—Luke 12:42, 44.

5. In harmony with Jesus' prophecy regarding his "presence," who did the faithful "slave" prove to be?  
6. 7. (a) In what other terms did Jesus speak of his faithful "slave"? (b) What is implied by Jesus' use of the word "steward"?

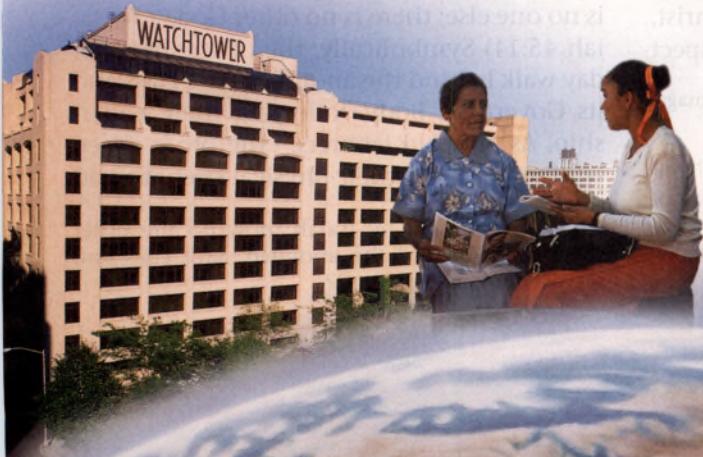
3. Why is it appropriate to compare Christ to a head and his congregation to a body?
4. As foretold in Malachi's prophecy, what did Jehovah and Christ Jesus find when they came to the spiritual temple for inspection?

<sup>7</sup> Here the slave is called a steward, a word translated from a Greek term denoting "the manager of a household or estate." The collective steward would not simply be a group of intellectuals who explain interesting points from the Bible. In addition to providing nourishing spiritual food "at the proper time," "the faithful steward" would be appointed over the entire body of Christ's attendants and assigned to manage all of Christ's interests on earth, "all his belongings." What would this entail?

<sup>8</sup> The slave's responsibilities include the supervision of the material facilities used by Christ's followers to carry out their Christian activities, such as the world headquarters and branch offices of Jehovah's Witnesses, as well as their places of worship—Kingdom Halls and Assembly Halls—throughout the world. More important, the slave also oversees spiritually upbuilding programs of Bible study at weekly meetings and periodic assemblies and conventions. At these gatherings, information on the fulfillment of Bible prophecies is dispensed, and timely direction on how to apply Bible principles in daily life is given.

<sup>8, 9</sup>. What "belongings" is the slave appointed to manage?

*The "belongings" supervised by the "steward" include material assets, spiritual programs, and the preaching activity*



<sup>9</sup> The steward's responsibilities also include the supervision of the all-important work of preaching "this good news of the kingdom" and making "disciples of people of all the nations." This involves teaching people to observe all the things that Christ, the Head of the congregation, commands to be done during this time of the end. (Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20; Revelation 12:17) The preaching and teaching work has produced "a great crowd" of loyal companions of the anointed remnant. These "desirable things of all the nations" are undoubtedly to be counted among the precious "belongings" of Christ administered by the faithful slave.—Revelation 7:9; Haggai 2:7.

#### A Representative Governing Body

<sup>10</sup> The faithful slave's heavy responsibilities would obviously involve much decision making. In the early Christian congregation, the apostles and elders in Jerusalem acted in a representative way, making decisions for the entire Christian congregation. (Acts 15:1, 2) The decisions of this first-century governing body were transmitted to the congregations by means of letters and traveling representatives. The early Christians were happy to receive this clear direction, and their willing cooperation with the governing body promoted peace and unity.—Acts 15:22-31; 16:4, 5; Philippians 2:2.

<sup>10</sup>. What decision-making body existed in the first century, and with what effect on the congregations?



<sup>11</sup> As in early Christian times, a small group of spirit-anointed overseers make up the Governing Body of Christ's followers on earth today. By means of his "right hand" of applied power, Christ, the Head of the congregation, directs these faithful men as they supervise the Kingdom work. (Revelation 1:16, 20) In his life story, Albert Schroeder, a longtime member of the Governing Body who recently finished his earthly course, wrote: "The Governing Body meets every Wednesday, opening the meeting with prayer and asking for the direction of Jehovah's spirit. A real effort is made to see that every matter that is handled and every decision that is made is in harmony with God's Word the Bible."\* We can have confidence in such faithful anointed Christians. Regarding them in particular, we should heed the apostle Paul's injunction: "Be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you and be submissive, for they are keeping watch over your souls."—Hebrews 13:17.

### Showing Due Respect for the Faithful Slave

<sup>12</sup> A fundamental reason for showing proper respect for the faithful slave class is that by so doing, we are in fact showing respect for the Master, Jesus Christ. Paul wrote of the anointed ones: "He that was called when a freeman is a slave of Christ. You were bought with a price." (1 Corinthians 7:22, 23; Ephesians 6:6) Therefore, when we loyally submit to the direction of the faithful slave and its Governing Body, we are submitting to Christ, the slave's Master. Our showing due respect

\* Published in the March 1, 1988, issue of this magazine, pages 10-17.

11. Who is Christ using today to direct his congregation, and how should we view this group of anointed Christians?

12, 13. What Scriptural reasons are there for showing respect for the slave class?

for the instrument Christ is using to manage his earthly belongings is one way in which we "openly acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."—Philippians 2:11.

<sup>13</sup> Another Scriptural reason for showing respect for the faithful slave is that anointed Christians on earth are figuratively spoken of as a "temple" that Jehovah inhabits "by spirit." As such, they are "holy." (1 Corinthians 3:16, 17; Ephesians 2:19-22) It is to this holy temple class that Jesus has entrusted his earthly belongings, which means that certain rights and responsibilities within the Christian congregation belong exclusively to this collective slave. For this reason, all in the congregation view it as their sacred duty to follow and uphold the direction coming from the faithful slave and its Governing Body. Indeed, the "other sheep" count it a real privilege to assist the slave class in caring for the Master's interests.—John 10:16.

### Giving Loyal Support

<sup>14</sup> The humble submission of the other sheep to the anointed members of spiritual Israel was foretold in the prophecy of Isaiah: "This is what Jehovah has said: 'The unpaid laborers of Egypt and the merchants of Ethiopia and the Sabeans, tall men, will themselves come over even to you, and yours they will become. Behind you they will walk; in fetters they will come over, and to you they will bow down. To you they will pray, saying, "Indeed God is in union with you, and there is no one else; there is no other God."'" (Isaiah 45:14) Symbolically, the other sheep today walk behind the anointed slave class and its Governing Body, following their leadership. As "unpaid laborers," the other sheep willingly expend their physical strength and

14. As prophesied by Isaiah, how do the other sheep walk behind the anointed slave class and serve as "unpaid laborers"?

## By Way of Review

- Who is our Leader, and what shows that he is aware of conditions within the congregations?
- At the “temple” inspection, who were found to be acting as a faithful slave, and what belongings were entrusted to them?
- What Scriptural reasons are there for loyally supporting the faithful slave?

their resources in support of the worldwide preaching work that Christ assigned to his anointed followers on earth.—Acts 1:8; Revelation 12:17.

<sup>15</sup> The other sheep are happy and grateful to serve Jehovah under the oversight of the slave class and its Governing Body. They recognize the anointed as members of “the Israel of God.” (Galatians 6:16) As figurative “strangers” and “foreigners” associated with spiritual Israel, they joyfully serve as “farmers” and “vinedressers” under the direction of the anointed, the “priests of Jehovah” and ‘ministers of God.’ (Isaiah 61:5, 6) They zealously share in preaching this good news of the Kingdom and in making disciples of peo-

15. How does the prophecy of Isaiah 61:5, 6 foretell the relationship existing between the other sheep and spiritual Israel?

*Members of the other sheep support the faithful slave class by their zealous preaching*

ple of all the nations. They give wholehearted assistance to the slave class in shepherding and nurturing newly found sheeplike ones.

<sup>16</sup> The other sheep recognize that they have greatly benefited from the diligent efforts of the faithful slave in supplying them with timely spiritual food. They humbly acknowledge that were it not for the faithful and discreet slave, they would know little or nothing of precious Bible truths, such as Jehovah’s sovereignty, the sanctification of his name, the Kingdom, the new heavens and new earth, the soul, the condition of the dead, and the true identity of Jehovah, his Son, and the holy spirit. Out of sheer gratitude and loyalty, the other sheep lovingly support Christ’s anointed “brothers” on the earth during this time of the end.—Matthew 25:40.

<sup>17</sup> In view of their diminishing numbers, the anointed cannot be present in all congregations to ensure the management of Christ’s belongings. Consequently, the Governing Body appoints men from among the other sheep to positions of oversight in branch offices, districts, circuits, and congregations of Jehovah’s Witnesses. Does our attitude toward these undershepherds have a bearing on our loyalty to Christ and his faithful slave? This will be considered in the following article.

16. What moves the other sheep to give loyal support to the faithful and discreet slave?

17. What has the Governing Body found it necessary to do, and what will be considered in the following article?



# HUMBLY SUBMITTING TO LOVING SHEPHERDS

*"Be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you and be submissive."*

—HEBREWS 13:17.

**J**EHOVAH GOD and his Son, Jesus Christ, are loving Shepherds. Isaiah prophesied: "Look! The Sovereign Lord Jehovah himself will come even as a strong one, and his arm will be ruling for him. . . . Like a shepherd he will shepherd his own drove. With his arm he will collect together the lambs; and in his bosom he will carry them. Those giving suck he will conduct with care."—Isaiah 40:10, 11.

<sup>2</sup> That prophecy of restoration was first fulfilled when a Jewish remnant returned to Judah in 537 B.C.E. (2 Chronicles 36:22, 23) It was again fulfilled when the anointed remnant were delivered from "Babylon the Great" in 1919 by the Greater Cyrus, Jesus Christ. (Revelation 18:2; Isaiah 44:28) He is Jehovah's "arm" for ruling, collecting together the sheep and shepherding them with tender care. Jesus himself stated: "I am the fine shepherd, and I know my sheep and my sheep know me."—John 10:14.

<sup>3</sup> The prophecy of Isaiah 40:10, 11 emphasizes the tenderness with which Jehovah shepherds his people. (Psalm 23:1-6) Dur-

1, 2. What scriptures show that Jehovah and Jesus are loving Shepherds?

3. How does Jehovah show loving concern for the way his sheep are treated?



ing his earthly ministry, Jesus too showed tender concern for his disciples and for people in general. (Matthew 11:28-30; Mark 6:34) Both Jehovah and Jesus deplored the ruthlessness of the shepherds, or leaders, of Israel, who shamelessly neglected and exploited their flocks. (Ezekiel 34:2-10; Matthew 23:3, 4, 15) Jehovah promised: "I will save my sheep, and they will no longer become something for plunder; and I will judge between a sheep and a sheep. And I will raise up over them one shepherd, and he must feed them, even my servant David. He himself will feed them, and he himself will become their shepherd." (Ezekiel 34:22, 23) In this time of the end, Jesus Christ, the Greater David, is the "one shepherd" whom Jehovah has appointed over all His servants

on earth, both the spirit-anointed Christians and the "other sheep."—John 10:16.

### Heavenly Gifts to the Congregation

<sup>4</sup> By raising up over His servants on earth "one shepherd"—Jesus Christ—Jehovah gave a precious gift to the Christian congregation. This gift of a heavenly Leader was prophesied at Isaiah 55:4: "Look! As a witness to the national groups I have given him, as a leader and commander to the national groups." Both anointed Christians and members of the "great crowd" are gathered from among all national groups, tribes, peoples, and tongues. (Revelation 5:9, 10; 7:9) They make up an international congregation, "one flock," under the leadership of "one shepherd," Christ Jesus.

<sup>5</sup> Jesus, in turn, has given a precious gift to his congregation on earth. He has provided faithful undershepherds who, in imitation of Jehovah and Jesus, shepherd the flock with tender care. The apostle Paul spoke of this loving gift in his letter to Christians in Ephesus. He wrote: "'When he ascended on high he carried away captives; he gave gifts in men.' . . . He gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelizers, some as

4, 5. (a) What precious gift has Jehovah given to his people on earth? (b) What gift has Jesus given to his congregation?

shepherds and teachers, with a view to the readjustment of the holy ones, for ministerial work, for the building up of the body of the Christ."—Ephesians 4:8, 11, 12.

<sup>6</sup> These "gifts in men" are overseers, or elders, appointed by Jehovah and his Son, through holy spirit, to shepherd the sheep with tenderness. (Acts 20:28, 29) To begin with, these overseers were all anointed Christian men. At Revelation 1:16, 20, those who served on bodies of elders within the anointed congregation were symbolized by "stars" or "angels" in Christ's right hand, that is, under his control. In this time of the end, however, with the number of anointed overseers still on earth ever dwindling, the vast majority of Christian elders in the congregations are of the other sheep. Since these are appointed by representatives of the Governing Body under the leadings of the holy spirit, they too can be said to be under the right hand (or, under the direction) of the Fine Shepherd, Jesus Christ. (Isaiah 61:5, 6) Since the elders in our congregations submit to Christ, the Head of the congregation, they deserve our full cooperation.—Colossians 1:18.

6. How were anointed overseers who served on bodies of elders depicted at Revelation 1:16, 20, and what can be said of appointed elders who are of the other sheep?

### *Christian elders submit to Christ's leadership*



## Obedience and Submission

<sup>7</sup> Our heavenly Shepherds, Jehovah God and Jesus Christ, expect us to be obedient and submissive to the undershepherds whom they have placed in positions of responsibility within the congregation. (1 Peter 5:5) Under inspiration, the apostle Paul wrote: "Remember those who are taking the lead among you, who have spoken the word of God to you, and as you contemplate how their conduct turns out imitate their faith. 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 not with sighing, for this would be damaging to you."—Hebrews 13:7, 17.

<sup>8</sup> Notice that Paul invites us to "contemplate," or carefully observe, the outcome of the faithful conduct of the elders and to follow such examples of faith. Furthermore, he counsels us to be obedient and to submit to the direction of these appointed men. Bible scholar R. T. France explains that in the original Greek, the word here translated "be obedient" is not "the normal term for obedience, but literally 'be persuaded,' implying a willing acceptance of their leadership." We obey the elders not only because we are directed to do so in God's Word but also because we are persuaded that they have Kingdom interests and our best interests at heart. We will certainly be happy if we willingly accept their leadership.

<sup>9</sup> What, though, if we are not convinced that in a certain case the elders' direction is the best way of doing things? That is where

- 
7. What counsel did the apostle Paul give with regard to our attitude toward Christian overseers?
  8. What does Paul invite us to "contemplate," and how should we "be obedient"?
  9. Why is it necessary for us to "be submissive" in addition to being obedient?

submission comes into play. It is easy to obey when everything is clear and we agree, but we will show that we are truly submissive if we yield even when we do not personally understand the direction provided. Peter, who later became an apostle, showed this kind of submission.—Luke 5:4, 5.

## Four Reasons for Willing Cooperation

<sup>10</sup> At Hebrews 13:7, 17, quoted above, the apostle Paul gives four reasons why we should be obedient and submissive to Christian overseers. The first is that they "have spoken the word of God" to us. Recall that the "gifts in men" that Jesus gives to the congregation are for "the readjustment of the holy ones." (Ephesians 4:11, 12) He readjusted the thinking and conduct of first-century Christians by means of faithful undershepherds, some of whom were inspired to write letters to the congregations. He used such spirit-appointed overseers to guide and build up the early Christians.—1 Corinthians 16:15-18; 2 Timothy 2:2; Titus 1:5.

<sup>11</sup> Today, Jesus directs us by means of "the faithful and discreet slave," represented by its Governing Body and the appointed elders. (Matthew 24:45) Out of respect for "the chief shepherd," Jesus Christ, we heed Paul's counsel: "Have regard for those who are working hard among you and presiding over you in the Lord and admonishing you."—1 Peter 5:4; 1 Thessalonians 5:12; 1 Timothy 5:17.

<sup>12</sup> A second reason for cooperating with Christian overseers is that "they are keeping watch over [our] souls." If they detect anything in our attitude or behavior that might endanger our spirituality, they are quick to

- 
- 10, 11. In what way have overseers "spoken the word of God" to their fellow Christians in the first century and today?
  12. How are overseers "keeping watch over [our] souls"?



***There are many ways to demonstrate our submission to Jehovah's appointed shepherds***

give us needed counsel with a view to our re-adjustment. (Galatians 6:1) The Greek word translated "keeping watch" literally means "abstaining from sleep." According to one Bible scholar, it "implies the unflagging vigilance of the shepherd." In addition to their maintaining spiritual vigilance, elders may even lose sleep out of concern for our spiritual well-being. Should we not willingly co-operate with such loving undershepherds, who do their best to imitate the tender care given by Jesus Christ, "the great shepherd of the sheep"?—Hebrews 13:20.

<sup>13</sup> A third reason for our willingly cooperating with the overseers is that they keep watch over us "as those who will render an account." Overseers remember that they are undershepherds, serving under the heavenly Shepherds, Jehovah God and Jesus Christ. (Ezekiel 34:22-24) Jehovah is the Owner of the sheep, whom "he purchased with the blood of his own Son," and He holds the appointed overseers accountable for the way

13. To whom and in what ways are the overseers and all Christians accountable?

they treat His flock, which should be "with tenderness." (Acts 20:28, 29) Hence, all of us are answerable to Jehovah for the way we respond to his direction. (Romans 14:10-12) Our obedience to the appointed elders also gives evidence of our submission to Christ, the Head of the congregation.—Colossians 2:19.

<sup>14</sup> Paul gave a fourth reason why we should humbly submit to Christian overseers. He wrote: "That they may do this with joy and not with sighing, for this would be damaging to you." (Hebrews 13:17) With their weighty responsibilities of teaching, shepherding, taking the lead in the preaching work, raising their families, and handling problems in the congregation, Christian elders carry a heavy load. (2 Corinthians 11:28, 29) If we fail to cooperate with them, we only add to their load. This would result in their "sighing." Our showing an uncooperative spirit is displeasing to Jehovah and could prove to be damaging to

14. What could lead to Christian overseers' serving "with sighing," and with what results?

us. Instead, when we show proper respect and cooperation, the elders can carry out their duties with joy, and this contributes to unity and joyful participation in the Kingdom-preaching work.—Romans 15:5, 6.

### Demonstrating Our Submission

<sup>15</sup> There are many practical ways in which we can cooperate with appointed overseers. With a view to adapting to new circumstances in the territory, have the elders arranged to hold meetings for field service on days and at times that require changes in our routine? Let us put forth an effort to support the new arrangements. We may receive unexpected blessings. Is the service overseer visiting our Congregation Book Study? Let us have as full a share as possible in the preaching work that week. Have we received an assignment in the Theocratic Ministry School? We should make it a point to be present and to carry out our assignment. Has the Congregation Book Study overseer announced that it is our group's turn to clean the Kingdom Hall? Let us give him full support, within the limits of our health and strength. In these and many other ways, we demonstrate our submission to the men whom Jehovah and his Son have appointed to care for the flock.

15. How can we demonstrate our obedience and submission?

### By Way of Review

- How have Jehovah and Jesus Christ proved themselves to be loving Shepherds?
- In addition to obedience, why is submission needed?
- In what practical ways can we demonstrate our submission?

<sup>16</sup> At times, an elder may not do things as directed by the faithful slave class and its Governing Body. If he continues acting this way, he will have to render an account to Jehovah, "the shepherd and overseer of [our] souls." (1 Peter 2:25) But any failure or mistakes on the part of certain elders would not justify an insubordinate attitude on our part. Jehovah does not bless disobedience and rebellion.—Numbers 12:1, 2, 9-11.

### Jehovah Blesses Willing Cooperation

<sup>17</sup> Jehovah God knows that the men he has appointed as overseers are imperfect. Yet, he is using them, and by means of his spirit, he shepherds his people on earth. It is true of the elders—and of us all—that "the power beyond what is normal [is] God's and not that out of ourselves." (2 Corinthians 4:7) We should therefore thank Jehovah for what he is accomplishing by means of our faithful overseers, and we should show them willing cooperation.

<sup>18</sup> Overseers do their best to live up to Jehovah's description of shepherds appointed over his flock in the last days, as found at Jeremiah 3:15: "I will give you shepherds in agreement with my heart, and they will certainly feed you with knowledge and insight." Surely the elders in our midst are doing a fine job of teaching and protecting Jehovah's sheep. May we continue to show our appreciation for their hard work through our willing cooperation, our obedience, and our submission. In so doing, we will demonstrate our appreciation for our heavenly Shepherds, Jehovah God and Jesus Christ.

- 16. If an elder does not do things as directed, why would this not justify rebellion on our part?
- 17. What should be our attitude toward our overseers?
- 18. By submitting to our overseers, what, in fact, are we doing?

## Questions From Readers

**How are we to understand Paul's words that a widow must be "a wife of one husband" in order to qualify for assistance from the Christian congregation?—1 Timothy 5:9.**

Since the apostle Paul was speaking about a widow, the expression "a wife of one husband" must obviously refer to her situation before she became a widow. Could this mean that the widow must have been married only once? Or could Paul's words possibly mean something else?\*

Some have suggested that Paul was speaking of widows who had been married only once. It is true that in many cultures and societies, a widow who remained unmarried was viewed as especially virtuous. However, such a view runs contrary to Paul's words

\* Polyandry, the practice of one woman having multiple husbands at one time, was not accepted in the Greco-Roman world of the apostle's time. Hence, it is unlikely that Paul was writing to Timothy about it or censoring anyone who practiced it.

elsewhere. For example, to the Corinthian Christians, he made it clear that although he was of the opinion that a widow would be happier if she remained single, "she is free to be married to whom she wants, only in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 7:39, 40; Romans 7:2, 3) In addition, in his letter to Timothy, Paul said: "I desire the younger widows to marry." (1 Timothy 5:14) Thus, no stigma was attached to a widow should she choose to remarry.

How, then, should we understand Paul's words to Timothy? The expression "a wife of one husband" appears only in this verse. In the original language, it literally means "woman of one man." Interestingly, this expression is similar to one that Paul used several times in his writings, namely, "a husband of one wife," or "man of one woman" in the original language. (1 Timothy 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6) Paul used the latter expression when he listed the qualifications for Christian overseers and ministerial servants. In that context, the statement primarily means that to qualify for responsibility in the Christian congregation, a man, if married, must be faithful and loyal to his wife and be morally irreprehensible.\* That being the case, the expression at 1 Timothy 5:9 would seem to call attention to the same point: For a widow to qualify for assistance from the congregation, she must have been a devoted and loyal wife who was faithful to her husband while he was alive and must be free from any moral lapses. The additional requirements listed by Paul all point to just such a person.—1 Timothy 5:10.

\* For a discussion of this point, see *The Watchtower* of October 15, 1996, page 17, and "Questions From Readers" in the issue of September 15, 1980, page 31.



## An Invitation to a Special Talk

# YOU CAN FEEL SAFE IN THIS TROUBLED WORLD!

This Bible discourse will be given worldwide in over 230 countries. In most places, the talk will be delivered on **Sunday, April 15, 2007**. What will you learn? Consider, for example:

*What has caused billions worldwide to feel unsafe?*

*When, in particular, did a sense of security vanish?*

*Where and how can real safety be found?*

Learn the answers by being present at this important Bible talk to be delivered in tens of thousands of locations. In most cases, it will be given at the local Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses. The Witnesses in your area will be glad to provide you with the time and address. We sincerely invite you to attend this timely and encouraging Bible talk.

