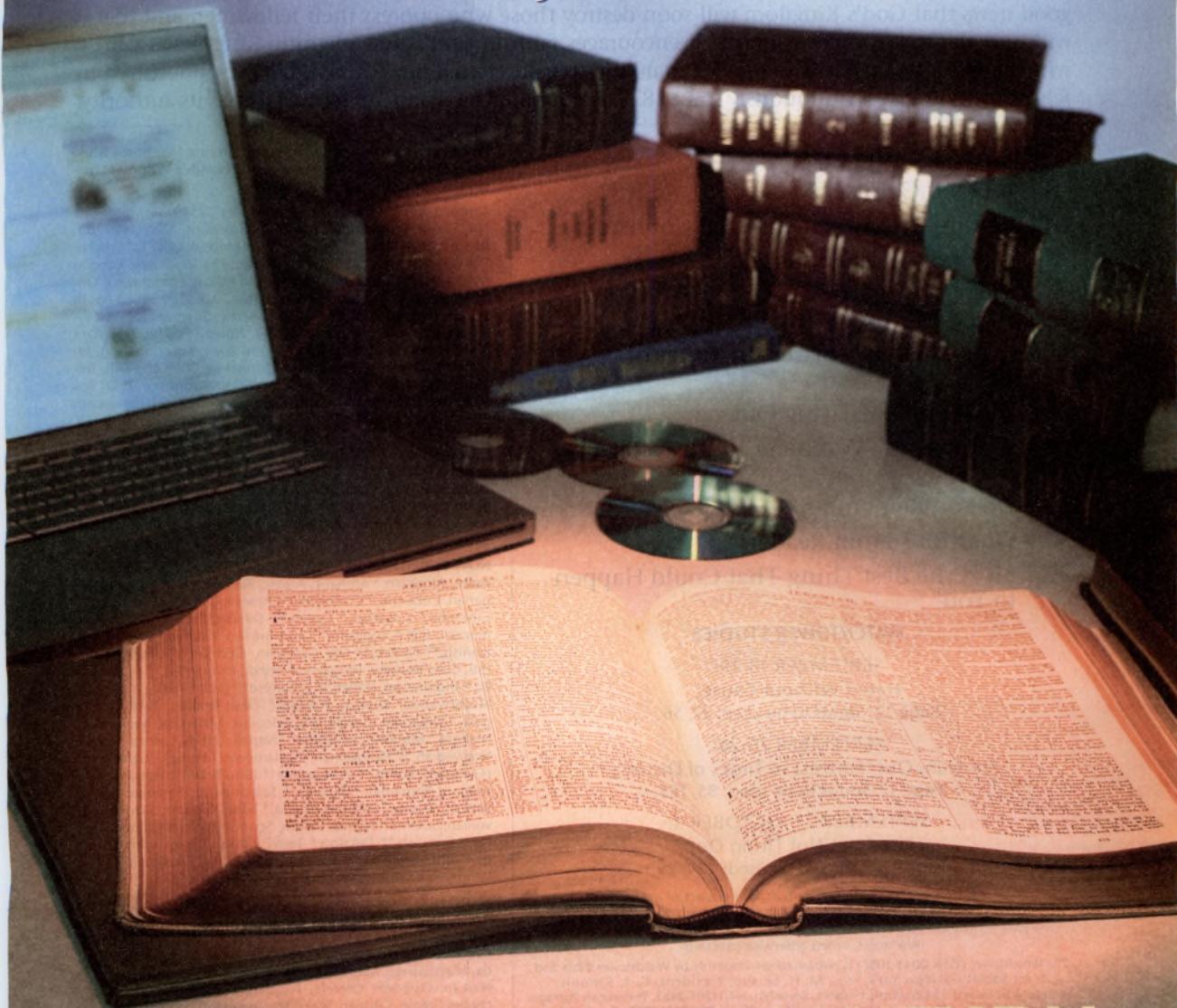


AUGUST 15, 2004

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



**WHERE SHOULD YOU TURN
TO FOR COUNSEL?**

THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

August 15, 2004

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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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The Most Beneficial Counsel

Is Good Counsel NEEDED?

TODAY, many believe that they have the ability to know good from bad and that they have the right to do whatever they want. Others say that almost anything goes as long as it makes a person feel good. Marriage and family life, long considered the basic structures of human society, are being affected drastically.—Genesis 3:5.

Consider Verónica,* who lives in Mexico. She reports: "Shortly before our 15th wedding anniversary, my husband told me that he was having a relationship with another woman. He said that since this woman was younger and made him feel better, he would not leave her. I was shocked at the thought that my best friend would not be by my side anymore to keep me company. I used to think that the death of our dear ones was

the greatest cause of pain. But for me, adultery was even harder because not only did I lose one whom I loved deeply but he continued to do things that hurt me."

Then there is the situation of a 22-year-old man who is already divorced and has a son but who is not willing to accept his responsibilities as a father. He expects his mother to care for him and his son. If she does not agree to all his demands, he gets furious and attacks her verbally, much like an ill-mannered child. His mother feels helpless in the face of such offensive behavior.

These are not isolated cases. Legal separation and divorce are on the increase everywhere. Many children see one of their parents leave home to start a new life. Some young ones have lost all respect for others,

* Name has been changed.

including their parents, and engage in conduct that would have been almost unimaginable in the past. Sexual experimentation, drug abuse, attacks by youths, and murders of teachers or parents by children have become rather common in many lands. And you may have noticed that child rearing and marriage are not the only fields facing difficulties in today's world.

As we witness these developments, we may wonder what has happened to society.

If people really know good from bad, why do so many problems remain unsolved? Is there a need for good counsel? Is there a source of such beneficial counsel, one that has proved to be trustworthy? Although many say that they believe in God and his written Word, this does not seem to influence their decisions. But what benefits can we derive when we seek and obtain counsel from God? Let us consider that in the next article.

FINDING the Most Beneficial Counsel

A SUCCESSFUL life is truly desirable. Good counsel and the disposition to act in harmony with it are keys to achieving such a life in this complex world. However, humans have not always been willing to pay attention to beneficial counsel. Many have claimed that man should live his life according to his own preferences. In fact, the Bible record shows that Satan, the original enemy of divine sovereignty, offered independence to the first humans. Genesis 3:5 records his assertion to Eve: "God knows that in the very day of your eating from [the tree of the knowledge of good and bad] your eyes are bound to be opened and you are bound to be like God, knowing good and bad."

Were Adam and Eve able thereafter to live successfully, without dire consequences, being guided solely by their own opinions? Hardly. They were immediately disappointed with the results of presuming to know good from bad. They fell under God's just

disapproval and began a harsh life in imperfection, death being the final result. (Genesis 3:16-19, 23) Death affects us all. The Bible says: "Through one man [Adam] sin entered into the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned."—Romans 5:12.

Even though there are adverse consequences of Adam and Eve's choice, many are still not convinced of the wisdom of applying the counsel from man's Maker. However, the Bible states that it "is inspired of God and beneficial," and it can help us to "be fully competent, completely equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16, 17) We will certainly be happier if we follow the counsel in the Bible. Family life is a major area in which this applies.

Fidelity in Marriage

According to the Bible, God purposed marriage to be permanent. (Genesis 2:22-

24; Matthew 19:6) Furthermore, the Scriptures say that "the marriage bed [should] be without defilement," meaning that this union should not be contaminated by sexual relations outside the marriage. (Hebrews 13:4) You likely know, however, that today many marriages do not meet this standard. Some people are in the habit of flirting on the job with individuals who are not their mates. Others lie to their families in order to spend time with a love interest other than their spouse. Some even abandon their spouse to live with a younger partner, arguing that they thus feel younger and happier, as happened in the case of Verónica, mentioned in the preceding article.

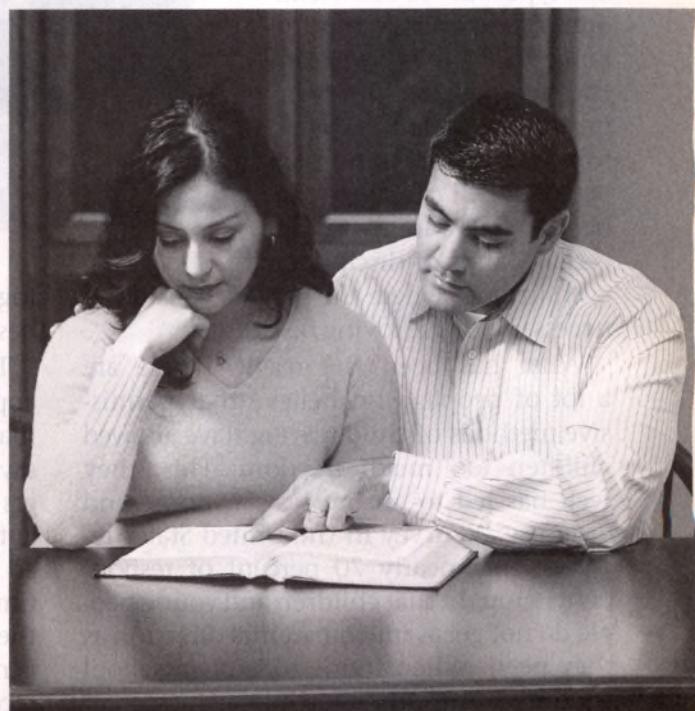
Nevertheless, a determination to please oneself at any cost will not produce lasting happiness. Ronald can bear witness to that. Convinced that he would improve his life, he abandoned his wife to have a new family with the woman who had been his secret lover for six years and with whom he already had two children. However, some time after he had ended his marriage, his lover abandoned him! Ronald finally went to live with his parents. He described his situation as "degrading." That is but one example. Such behavior driven by selfish desires has contributed to an unprecedented wave of divorces and family breakups, resulting in suffering for countless individuals—adults and children alike.

On the other hand, observing the Bible's counsel results in true happiness. Such was the case with Roberto, who says: "Thanks to the counsel of the Bible, I did not have to lose my wife. We do not achieve true happiness by giv-

ing in to temptation with someone who is not our spouse, even if such a person might seem charming. Bible education has helped me to value my mate, who has been by my side for so many years." The Biblical counsel "with the wife of your youth may no one deal treacherously" played an important role in Roberto's life. (Malachi 2:15) In what other respects can we benefit from divine counsel?

Our Children's Upbringing

Decades ago the idea became popular that in the upbringing of their children, parents should not set many limits. It appeared reasonable to allow children to make their own decisions about how to think and behave. The objective was to avoid repressing their development. In some places, even less structured educational systems were set up in which, among other



The Bible's counsel can strengthen the marriage bond



Bible counsel is the basis for fine direction, yet it allows for having fun

mitted by teenagers, many blame "lax parental control." And even when the results are not so tragic, parents and children reap the bitter fruits of misguided child rearing.

What does the Bible have to say in this regard? The Scriptural counsel is that parental authority should be exercised with love as well as with firmness. The Bible says: "Foolishness is tied up with the heart of a boy; the rod of discipline is what will remove it far from him." (Proverbs 22:15) Of course, all parental discipline should be appropriate to the circumstances. Mildness, self-control, and consideration should govern any discipline given. Thus it is a sign of love. The exercise of parental authority in a loving manner, not harsh brutality, offers the best likelihood of success.



things, the pupils could decide whether they would attend classes or not and could choose the amount of recreation or instruction that they would receive. The policy of one school of this type was "to allow children to experience the full range of feelings free from the judgment and intervention of an adult." Today, some counselors in human behavior still challenge the benefits of administering certain kinds of discipline, even in cases where the parents consider it necessary to give loving discipline.

What has been the result? There are a lot of people who believe that permissive methods of child rearing have allowed children too much freedom. This, they feel, has led to an increase in crime and drug use. A survey in the United States revealed that nearly 70 percent of respondents thought that children and young people do not get as much parental direction as they need. When trying to explain school shootings and other terrible crimes com-

There are observable good results from applying this advice. Arturo, a 30-year-old man in Mexico who recently got married, says: "My father made it clear to my brothers and me that he and my mother had the authority in the family. They never hesitated to discipline us. Yet, they always had time to talk to us. Now as an adult, I value the stable life that I enjoy, and I know that it is mostly the result of the good guidance I received."

Take Advantage of the Most Beneficial Counsel

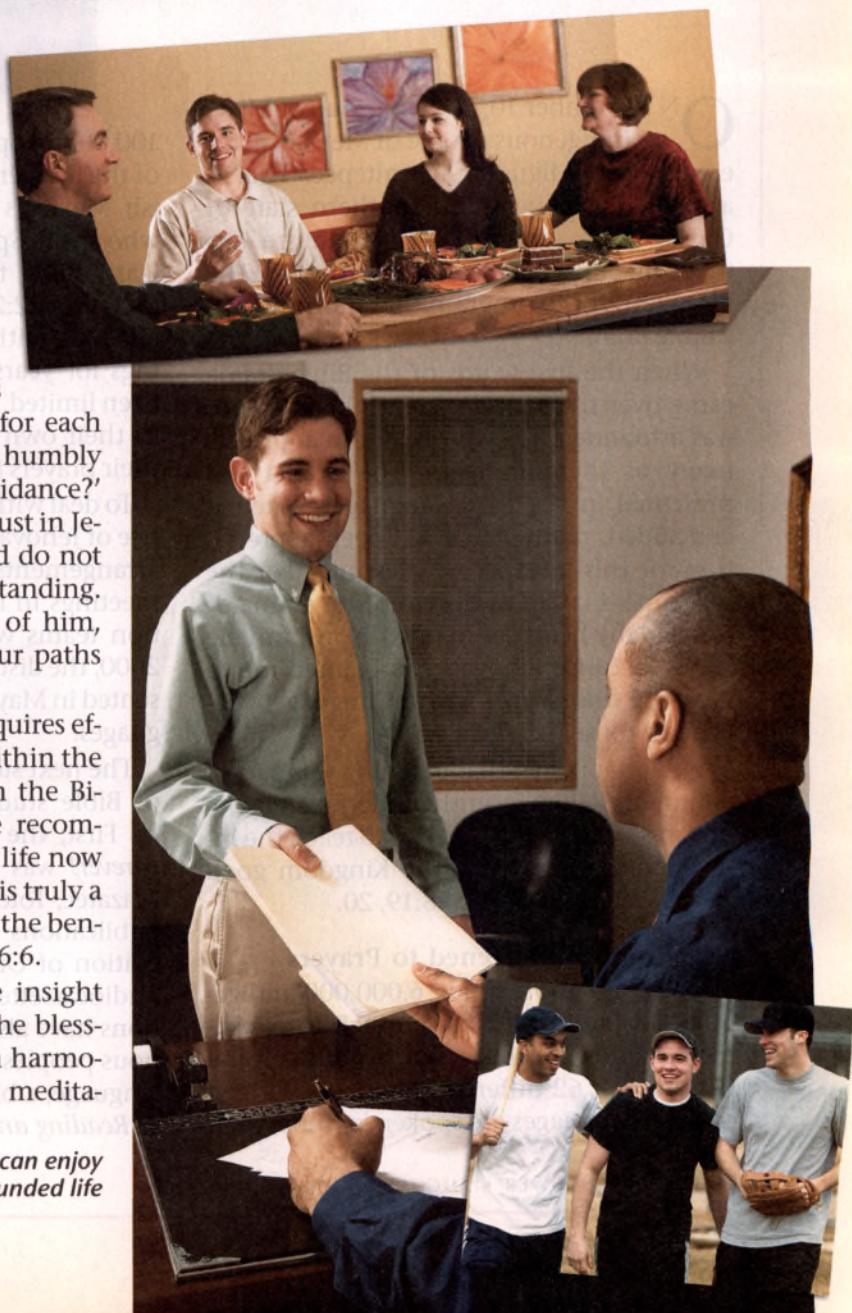
God's Word, the Bible, contains the most beneficial counsel available to mankind. Its guidance is not limited to the family circle. It helps to equip us in many ways because it teaches us how to act in a world where most are not willing to accept that a superior Source of wisdom should govern their lives for their own good.

Jehovah God, the Creator of mankind, gave this assurance through the psalmist David: "I shall make you have insight and instruct you in the way you should go. I will give advice with my eye upon you." (Psalm 32:8) Can you imagine what it means to have the Creator watching out for us in order to safeguard us from dangers? The question for each of us, though, is this: 'Will I humbly accept Jehovah's protective guidance?' His Word lovingly tells us: "Trust in Jehovah with all your heart and do not lean upon your own understanding. In all your ways take notice of him, and he himself will make your paths straight."—Proverbs 3:5, 6.

Getting to know Jehovah requires effort and dedication, yet it is within the reach of humankind through the Bible. The way of life that he recommends "holds promise of the life now and that which is to come." It is truly a means of great gain in view of the benefits it offers.—1 Timothy 4:8; 6:6.

If you are attracted by the insight that the Bible offers and by the blessings that result from living in harmony with it, make reading and medita-

tion on God's Word a priority in your life. Doing so will help you to face successfully the challenges of today and any that lie ahead. In addition, you will find the hope of living in God's new world, where all will be taught by Jehovah and their peace will be abundant.—Isaiah 54:13.



Those applying Bible counsel can enjoy a well-rounded life

Mexico's Indigenous Peoples

Hear the Good News

ON November 10, 2002, a group of Mixe, an indigenous people of Mexico, gathered in San Miguel, Quetzaltepec. That is a town in the beautiful southern state of Oaxaca. The group were attending a district convention of Jehovah's Witnesses. The highlight of the program that morning was a Bible drama.

When the first words of the Bible drama came over the sound system, the audience was astounded. They broke out in applause, many of them in tears. The drama was presented in the Mixe language! When it concluded, many expressed deep appreciation for this unexpected blessing. "For the first time, I could understand the drama. It reached my heart," said one. "Now I can die happy because Jehovah has granted me to hear the drama in my own language," declared another.

What happened that morning was part of an intense effort recently undertaken by Jehovah's Witnesses in Mexico to reach the indigenous peoples with the Kingdom good news.—Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20.

Jehovah Listened to Prayers

There are more than 6,000,000 indigenous people in Mexico—enough to constitute a nation on their own, a multicultural nation with 62 different languages. Fifteen of those languages are spoken by more than



100,000 people each. More than 1,000,000 of the indigenous people do not speak Spanish, Mexico's official language. And of those who speak Spanish, many can more readily learn Bible truth in their own language. (Acts 2:6; 22:2) Some have studied the Bible and have faithfully attended Christian meetings for years, yet their understanding has been limited. So having the message of truth in their own tongue has been a subject of their prayers for some time.

To deal with that challenge, the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in Mexico began arrangements in 1999 to hold congregation meetings in indigenous languages. Translation teams were also formed. By the year 2000, the district convention drama was presented in Maya and later in several other languages.

The next step was to tackle the translation of Bible study aids of Jehovah's Witnesses. First, the brochure *Enjoy Life on Earth Forever!* was translated into Huave, Maya, Mazatec, Totonac, Tzeltal, and Tzotzil. More publications followed, including a regular edition of *Our Kingdom Ministry* in Maya. Audiocassette recordings of some publications have also been made. To teach indigenous peoples to read and write in their own language, a brochure entitled *Apply Yourself to Reading and Writing* is being adapted for

local use. Bible literature is presently produced in 15 of the indigenous languages, and more publications are on the way.

"Making Every Effort"

The translation work has not been easy. For one thing, very little secular literature has been published in the indigenous languages of Mexico. In many cases, finding dictionaries has been a challenge. Then there are the many dialects of some of the languages. For example, in Zapotec alone there are at least five variants being spoken. These dialects have become so distinct that Zapotec from different areas cannot understand one another.

Furthermore, where there are no established standards for a language, the translators have to establish some of their own. This requires much investigation and consultation. No wonder many of them at first felt the way Élida, from the Huave team, did! She recalls: "When I was invited to the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in Mexico to do translation work, I had two emotions—joy and fear."

The translators also have to learn computer skills, scheduling, and translation techniques. Indeed, the task has been quite a challenge for them. How do they feel about it? Gloria, a member of the Maya team, responds: "We have no words to describe our joy at having a share in translating Bible publications into Maya, our native language." And an overseer in the Translation Department observes about the translators: "The desire to have Bible publications in their language is so

strong that they are making every effort to meet the challenge." Has it been worthwhile?

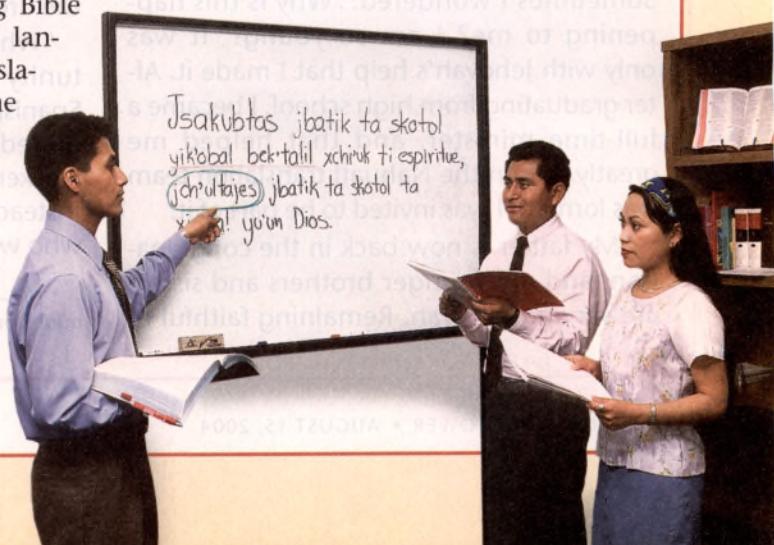
"Thank You, Jehovah!"

Jehovah's blessing on the work in the indigenous field has been evident. Attendance at Christian meetings and assemblies has multiplied. For example, in 2001, the 223 Mixe-speaking Witnesses met to observe the Memorial of Christ's death. Yet, the total attendance was 1,674—seven and a half times the number of Witnesses!

Some people who accept the truth are now able to understand it properly from the start. Mirna remembers what happened to her before the meetings were held in Maya. "I got baptized after three months of Bible study," she says. "I knew that I should be baptized, but I must say that I really did not understand Bible truths as well as I should have. I think the reason is that my native language is Maya, and I did not understand Spanish very well. It took a while for me to get the real sense of the truth." Today, she and her husband are happy to be part of the Maya translation team.

For all in the congregations, it is a great joy to receive the publications in their own language. When the newly translated *Enjoy Life on Earth Forever!* brochure in Tzotzil

Members of the Tzotzil translation team discuss a word that is difficult to translate



was presented, a woman who had begun to attend Christian meetings embraced it and exclaimed: "Thank you, Jehovah!" Reports show that many Bible students have more rapidly advanced to baptism, inactive publishers are being reactivated, and many Christian brothers now feel qualified to accept responsibilities in the congregation. Some householders are more willing to accept Bible literature in their own language and to study it.

In one case, a Witness went to conduct a Bible study, but the student was not at home. When the husband came to the door, she offered to read from a brochure. "I don't want anything," he replied. The sister said to him in Totonac that the brochure was in

their language. Hearing that, the man pulled up a bench and sat down. As she read to him, he kept saying, "That is true. Yes, that is true." He now attends Christian meetings.

In Yucatán, the husband of a Witness was opposed to the truth and sometimes hit her when she came home from the meetings. When meetings in Maya began to be held, she decided to invite him. He came and really enjoyed them. Now he attends the meetings regularly, has a Bible study and, needless to say, no longer beats his wife.

A Totonac-speaking man told two Witnesses that he never prayed because the Catholic priest had told him that God only listens to prayers in Spanish. In fact, he had to pay the priest to pray in behalf of the To-

Meet Some of the Translators

• "My parents taught me the truth ever since I can remember. Sadly, when I was 11, my father left the Christian congregation. Two years later, my mother abandoned us. Being the eldest of five children, I had to take on my mother's responsibilities, though I was still attending school.

"We had the loving support of our spiritual brothers and sisters, but life was hard. Sometimes I wondered: 'Why is this happening to me? I am so young!' It was only with Jehovah's help that I made it. After graduating from high school, I became a full-time minister, and that helped me greatly. When the Nahuatl translation team was formed, I was invited to be part of it.

"My father is now back in the congregation, and my younger brothers and sisters are serving Jehovah. Remaining faithful to

Jehovah has been well worth the effort. He has blessed my family very much."—Alicia.

• "A Witness classmate gave a talk on the origin of life. I missed that class and was concerned about the exam, so I asked her to explain the subject to me. I had always wondered why people die. When she offered me the *Creation* book* and a Bible study, I accepted. I was deeply touched by the Creator's purpose and love.

"When I finished school, I had the opportunity to become a bilingual teacher in Spanish and Tzotzil. But that would have required moving far away, taking classes on weekends, and missing Christian meetings. Instead, I worked as a bricklayer. My father, who was not a Witness, did not like my de-

* *Life—How Did It Get Here? By Evolution or by Creation?* published in 1985 by Jehovah's Witnesses.

tonac. The Witnesses explained that God listens to prayers in all languages, and they gave him a brochure in Totonac, which he accepted with great joy.—2 Chronicles 6:32, 33; Psalm 65:2.

"Kualtsin Tajtoua"

Thrilled with these developments, many Kingdom publishers are endeavoring to learn an indigenous language or to improve their knowledge of one. This is just what a circuit overseer who serves five Nahuatl-speaking congregations in northern Puebla is doing. He relates: "Children who used to fall asleep at the meetings are very alert and listen carefully when I speak in Nahuatl. At the end of one meeting, a four-year-old boy

cision at all. Later, while I was serving as a pioneer minister, a team to translate Bible literature into Tzotzil was organized. I was impelled to have a share in it.

"I can see that having publications in their own language makes our brothers and sisters feel appreciated and dignified. That is very satisfying. I feel highly privileged to have this assignment."—Humberto.

• "When I was six, my mother left us. During my teen years, my father started studying with Jehovah's Witnesses. One day a sister offered me a Bible study that included counsel for young people. As a teenager without a mother, I felt that this was exactly what I needed. I was baptized at age 15.

"In 1999 my father was killed by some evil people who wanted his land. I was devastated. I fell into severe depression and

came to me and said: '*Kualtsin tajtoua*' (you speak nice). That made me feel that the effort was well worth it."

Yes, the indigenous language field is truly "white for harvesting," and all those who share in it feel greatly encouraged. (John 4: 35) Roberto, who worked to organize the translation teams, sums it up in these words: "It has been an unforgettable experience to see tears of joy rolling down the faces of our brothers and sisters as they listen to the truth in their native language and get the sense of it. Thinking about this gives me a lump in my throat." Undoubtedly, helping these sincere people to take a stand for the Kingdom also brings joy to Jehovah's heart. —Proverbs 27:11.

felt that I could no longer go on. But I kept praying to Jehovah for strength. The traveling overseer and his wife encouraged me greatly. Soon I became a regular pioneer.

"Once I observed some who had walked for six hours just to hear a 20-minute talk in Totonac, even though the rest of the meeting was in Spanish, which they could not understand. Thus, I was thrilled when I was invited to help translate Bible publications into Totonac.

"I used to tell my father that I dreamed of serving at the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses. He told me that this would not be easy for a single girl of my age. How thrilled he will be when he comes back in the resurrection to find that I was able to do so, translating Bible literature into our language!"—Edith.

HATED WITHOUT CAUSE

"They hated me without cause."—JOHN 15:25.

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES strive to live by the principles found in God's Word. As a result, they enjoy a fine reputation in many lands. At times, however, they have been misrepresented. For example, a government official in the city of St. Petersburg, Russia, recalled: "Jehovah's Witnesses were presented to us as some kind of underground sect sitting in the darkness and slaughtering children and killing themselves." But after working with Jehovah's Witnesses in connection with an international convention, the same official observed: "Now I see normal, smiling people . . . They are peaceful and calm, and they love one another very much." He added: "I really do not understand why people tell such lies about them."—1 Peter 3:16.

² Servants of God find no pleasure in being maligned as evildoers, yet they are not surprised when people speak against them. Jesus forewarned his followers: "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated me before it hated you. . . . It is that the word written in their Law may be fulfilled, 'They hated me without cause.'"³ (John 15:18-20, 25; Psalm 35:19; 69:4) Earlier he had told his disciples: "If people have called the household-

er Beelzebul, how much more will they call those of his household so?" (Matthew 10:25) Christians understand that bearing such reproach is part of the "torture stake" they accepted when they became Christ's followers.
—Matthew 16:24.

³ The persecution of true worshipers has a long history, reaching all the way back to "righteous Abel." (Matthew 23:34, 35) It has not been limited to a few isolated incidents. Jesus said that his followers would be "objects of hatred by *all people*" on account of his name. (Matthew 10:22) Further, the apostle Paul wrote that all of God's servants—including each one of us—should expect to be persecuted. (2 Timothy 3:12) What accounts for this?

The Source of Unjustified Hatred

⁴ God's Word reveals that from the beginning, there has been an unseen instigator. Consider the brutal killing of the first man of faith, Abel. The Bible states that his murderous brother, Cain, "originated with the wicked one," Satan the Devil. (1 John 3:12) Cain took on Satan's disposition, and the Devil used him to carry out his wicked aims. The Bible also sheds light on Satan's role in the vicious attacks on Job and Jesus Christ. (Job 1:12; 2:6, 7; John 8:37, 44; 13:27) The book of Revelation leaves no doubt as to the source of the persecution of Jesus' followers, stating: "*The Devil will keep on throwing some of you into prison that you may be fully put to*

* In the Scriptures, the word "hate" has several shades of meaning. In some contexts, it simply means to love to a lesser degree. (Deuteronomy 21:15, 16) "Hate" may also signify a strong dislike but without any intent of bringing harm to the object, seeking instead to avoid it because of a feeling of loathing toward it. However, the word "hate" may also denote intense hostility, sustained ill will often accompanied by malice. It is this sense of the word that is discussed in this article.

1, 2. (a) Why are some puzzled when Christians are spoken against, but why should such speech not surprise us? (b) Which sense of the word "hate" will we consider in this article? (See footnote.)

3. To what extent have true worshipers been persecuted?
4. How does the Bible reveal the source of all unjustified hatred?

*Who was behind the reproach
that Jesus was subjected to?*

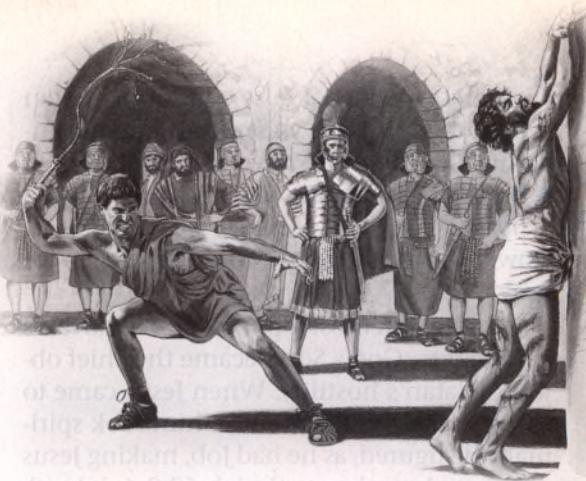
the test." (Revelation 2:10) Yes, Satan is the source of all unjustified hatred against God's people.

⁵ What is behind Satan's hatred of true worshipers? In a plot that betrays colossal conceit, Satan has pitted himself against "the King of eternity," Jehovah God. (1 Timothy 1:17; 3:6) He contends that God is unduly restrictive in his rulership over his creatures and that no one serves Jehovah with a pure motive, that people do so only for selfish gain. Satan claims that if allowed to put humans to the test, he can turn every one of them away from serving God. (Genesis 3:1-6; Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7) In vilifying Jehovah as an oppressor, a liar, and a failure, Satan seeks to establish himself as a rival sovereign. Thus, his rage against God's servants is driven by his craving to be worshiped.—Matthew 4:8, 9.

⁶ Do you see how this issue touches your life? As a servant of Jehovah, you have likely found that while doing God's will requires earnest effort, the benefits of doing so are surpassing. What, though, if circumstances in your life made it difficult, even painful, for you to continue to comply with Jehovah's laws and principles? And what if you seemed to receive no benefit in return? Would you conclude that it is not worthwhile to go on serving Jehovah? Or would love for Jehovah and deep appreciation for his magnificent qualities move you to continue to walk in all his ways? (Deuteronomy 10:12, 13) By allowing Satan to bring a measure of hardship

5. What is behind Satan's hatred of true worshipers?

6. (a) How are we personally involved in the issue of Jehovah's sovereignty? (b) How does an understanding of this issue help us to maintain our integrity? (See box, page 16.)



upon us, Jehovah has given each of us the opportunity to furnish our personal answer to Satan's challenge.—Proverbs 27:11.

"When People Reproach You"

⁷ Let us now consider more closely one of the crafty acts Satan uses in an effort to prove his side of the issue—his use of lying reproach. Jesus called Satan "the father of the lie." (John 8:44) The descriptive name Devil, meaning "Slanderer," identifies that one as the foremost slanderer of God, his good word, and his holy name. The Devil employs innuendos, false accusations, and outright lies in challenging Jehovah's sovereignty, and he uses these same tactics to malign God's loyal servants. By heaping reproach on these Witnesses, he can make a severe trial even more difficult for them to bear.

⁸ Consider what befell Job, whose name means "Object of Hostility." In addition to causing the loss of Job's livelihood, his children, and his health, Satan made Job appear to be a sinner who was being punished by God. Though he had been highly respected, Job came to be despised, even by his relatives and close friends. (Job 19:13-19; 29:1, 2, 7-11)

7. What is one tactic the Devil uses to try to turn us away from Jehovah?

8. How did Satan bring reproach on Job, and with what effect?

Further, by means of false comforters, Satan sought to 'crush Job with words,' first insinuating that he must have committed some serious sin and then directly condemning him as a wrongdoer. (Job 4:6-9; 19:2; 22:5-10) How disheartening that would have been for Job!

⁹ As the foremost upholder of Jehovah's sovereignty, God's Son became the chief object of Satan's hostility. When Jesus came to earth, Satan sought to make him look spiritually disfigured, as he had Job, making Jesus appear to be a sinner. (Isaiah 53:2-4; John 9:24) People called him a drunkard and a glutton and said that he 'had a demon.' (Matthew 11:18, 19; John 7:20; 8:48; 10:20) He was falsely accused of blasphemy. (Matthew 9:2, 3; 26:63-66; John 10:33-36) This distressed Jesus, for he knew that it reflected unjustly on his Father. (Luke 22:41-44) Finally, Jesus was impaled as an accursed criminal. (Matthew 27:38-44) In maintaining perfect integrity, Jesus endured much "contrary talk by sinners."—Hebrews 12:2, 3.

¹⁰ In modern times, the remaining ones of Christ's anointed followers have likewise become objects of the Devil's hostility. Satan is described as "the accuser of [Christ's] brothers . . . , who accuses them day and night before our God." (Revelation 12:9, 10) Since he was ousted from heaven and confined to the vicinity of the earth, Satan has intensified his efforts to paint Christ's brothers as despicable outcasts. (1 Corinthians 4:13) In some countries, they have slanderously been called a dangerous sect, even as the first-century Christians were. (Acts 24:5, 14; 28:22) As noted at the outset, they have been maligned through lying propaganda. Yet, "through glory and dishonor, through bad report and good report," the anointed

9. How was Jesus made to appear to be a sinner?
10. How have the remaining anointed ones been a target of Satan in modern times?

brothers of Christ, supported by their "other sheep" companions, have humbly endeavored 'to observe the commandments of God and do the work of bearing witness to Jesus.'—2 Corinthians 6:8; John 10:16; Revelation 12:17.

¹¹ Of course, not all reproach that individual servants of God experience is for "righteousness' sake." (Matthew 5:10) Some problems may be the result of our own imperfections. There is no special merit if when we "are sinning and being slapped, [we] endure it." However, if a Christian "because of conscience toward God, bears up under grievous things and suffers unjustly, this is an agreeable thing" in Jehovah's sight. (1 Peter 2:19, 20) Under what circumstances might this occur?

¹² Some have been treated abusively because they refused to share in unscriptural funeral customs. (Deuteronomy 14:1) Witness youths have been the target of relentless name-calling because of adhering to Jehovah's moral standards. (1 Peter 4:4) Some Christian parents have been wrongly labeled as "neglectful" or "abusive" because they sought nonblood medical treatment for their children. (Acts 15:29) Christians have been ostracized by relatives and neighbors solely because of becoming servants of Jehovah. (Matthew 10:34-37) All such ones are following the pattern set by the prophets and by Jesus himself in suffering unjustly.—Matthew 5:11, 12; James 5:10; 1 Peter 2:21.

Bearing Up Under Reproach

¹³ When we come under severe reproach for our faith, we may become discouraged, as

11, 12. (a) What may be the cause of some reproach that Christians experience? (b) In what ways might a Christian suffer unjustly on account of his faith?

13. What can help us to maintain our spiritual balance when we face severe reproach?



Job, Mary, and God's servants in modern times, such as Stanley Jones, have upheld Jehovah's sovereignty

did the prophet Jeremiah, and feel that we cannot go on serving God. (*Jeremiah 20:7-9*)

What can help us to maintain our spiritual balance? Seek to view the matter from Jehovah's standpoint. He views those who remain loyal under test as victors, not as victims. (*Romans 8:37*) Try to picture in your mind those who have upheld Jehovah's sovereignty in the face of every indignity that the Devil could hurl against them—such men and women as Abel, Job, Jesus' mother Mary, and other faithful ones of old, as well as our fellow servants in modern times. (*Hebrews 11:35-37; 12:1*) Meditate on their course of integrity. That great cloud of loyal ones beckons us to join them on the victory stand reserved for those who by their faith conquer the world.—*1 John 5:4*.

¹⁴ If 'our disquieting thoughts become many inside of us,' we can turn to Jehovah in fervent prayer, and he will console and strengthen us. (*Psalm 50:15; 94:19*) He will give us the wisdom we need to cope with the trial and help us to keep in focus the great issue, Jehovah's sovereignty, that is behind the unjustified hatred brought against his servants. (*James 1:5*) Jehovah can also grant us "the peace of God that excels all thought." (*Philippians 4:6, 7*) This God-given tranquillity enables us to remain calm and resolute in the face of extreme pressure, not yielding to doubt or fear. By means of his spirit, Jehovah

14. How can fervent prayer strengthen us to remain faithful?

can sustain us through whatever he permits to come upon us.—*1 Corinthians 10:13*.

¹⁵ What can help us not to become consumed with bitterness toward those who hate us without cause? Remember that our principal adversaries are Satan and the demons. (*Ephesians 6:12*) While some humans knowingly and deliberately persecute us, many of those who oppose God's people do so out of ignorance or are manipulated by others. (*Daniel 6:4-16; 1 Timothy 1:12, 13*) Jehovah desires that "all sorts of men" have the opportunity to "be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth." (*1 Timothy 2:4*) Indeed, some former opposers are now our Christian brothers as a result of having observed our blameless conduct. (*1 Peter 2:12*) In addition, we can draw a lesson from the example of Jacob's son Joseph. Although Joseph suffered greatly on account of his half brothers, he did not harbor animosity toward them. Why not? Because he discerned that Jehovah's hand was in the matter, maneuvering events in order to fulfill His purpose. (*Genesis 45:4-8*) Jehovah can likewise cause any unjust suffering we may undergo to work out for the glory of his name.—*1 Peter 4:16*.

¹⁶ We need not be unduly concerned if for a time opposers seem to be succeeding in hindering the advancement of the good news. Jehovah is now rocking the nations by means of the global witness being given, and the desirable things are coming in. (*Haggai 2:7*) Christ Jesus, the Fine Shepherd, said: "My sheep listen to my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give them everlasting life, . . . and *no one will snatch them out of my hand.*" (*John 10:27-29*) The holy angels are also involved in the

15. What can help us to avoid becoming bitter when we suffer?

16, 17. Why should we not become anxious over the efforts of opposers to hinder the preaching work?



They Discerned the Real Issue

One of Jehovah's Witnesses in Ukraine, where the Kingdom-preaching work was under ban for over 50 years, observed: "The situation in which Jehovah's Witnesses found themselves should not be evaluated merely in the context of human relations. . . . Most of the officials were merely doing their job. When the government changed, the officials changed loyalties, but we remained the same. We realized that the real source of our troubles had been revealed in the Bible."

"We did not view ourselves simply as the innocent victims of oppressive men. What helped us to endure was a clear understanding of the issue raised in the garden of Eden—the issue of God's right to rule. . . .

*Victor Popovych,
arrested in 1970*

We took a stand for an issue linked not only to the personal interests

of humans but also to the interests of the Sovereign of the universe. We had a much loftier understanding of the real issues involved. This made us strong and enabled us to keep our integrity even under the most extreme circumstances."

great spiritual harvest. (Matthew 13:39, 41; Revelation 14:6, 7) Therefore, nothing that opposers say or do can thwart God's purpose.—Isaiah 54:17; Acts 5:38, 39.

¹⁷ Often, the efforts of opposers backfire. In one African community, many terrible falsehoods had been spread about Jehovah's Witnesses, including that they were Devil worshipers. Because of this, whenever the Witnesses visited, Grace ran behind her house and hid until they left. One day the pastor of her church held up one of our publications and told all present not to read it because it would cause them to leave their

faith. This aroused Grace's curiosity. The next time the Witnesses called, instead of hiding she engaged them in conversation and received her personal copy of the publication. A Bible study was started, and in 1996 she was baptized. Grace now uses her time to search out others who may have been misinformed about Jehovah's Witnesses.

Fortify Your Faith Now

¹⁸ Since Satan can lash out with unjustified hatred at any time, it is vital that we fortify our faith now. How can we do this? A report from a country where Jehovah's people have been persecuted noted: "One thing has become very evident: Those with good spiritual habits and a deep appreciation of Bible truth have no problem in holding firm when tests arrive. But those who in 'favorable season' miss meetings, are irregular in field service, and compromise on small issues often fall when under a 'fiery' test." (2 Timothy 4:2) If you see areas in which you need to make im-

18. Why is there a need to strengthen our faith before severe trials arise, and how can we do so?

Can You Explain?

- What is behind unjustified hatred directed at true worshipers?
- How did Satan use reproach in an effort to break the integrity of Job and Jesus?
- How does Jehovah strengthen us to stand firm in the face of satanic hatred?

provement, put forth the effort to do so without delay.—Psalm 119:60.

¹⁹ The integrity of true worshipers under the scourge of satanic hatred is a living testimony to the rightfulness, deservedness, and righteousness of Jehovah's sovereignty.

19. What does the integrity of God's servants in the face of unjustified hatred accomplish?

JEHOVAH, OUR 'FORTRESS IN TIMES OF DISTRESS'

"The salvation of the righteous ones is from Jehovah; he is their fortress in the time of distress."—PSALM 37:39.

JEHOVAH is almighty. He has the power to protect his faithful worshipers in any manner he wishes. He could even separate his people physically from the rest of the world and place them in a safe and peaceful environment. However, regarding his disciples, Jesus prayed to his heavenly Father: "I request you, not to take them out of the world, but to watch over them because of the wicked one."—John 17:15.

² Jehovah has chosen not to take us "out of the world." Rather, it is his will that we live among the general population of this world in order to proclaim his message of hope and comfort to others. (Romans 10:13-15) But, as Jesus implied in his prayer, by living in this world, we are exposed to "the wicked one." Disobedient mankind and wicked spirit forces cause much pain and anguish, and Christians are not immune to distress.—1 Peter 5:9.

1, 2. (a) What did Jesus pray for in behalf of his disciples? (b) What is God's will regarding his people?

Their faithfulness makes God's heart rejoice. Though men may heap reproach on them, the one whose dignity is above earth and heaven "is not ashamed of them, to be called upon as their God." Indeed, regarding all such loyal ones, it can rightly be said: "The world was not worthy of them."—Hebrews 11:16, 38.

³ Under such trials, it is natural to go through periods of discouragement. (Proverbs 24:10) The Bible record contains numerous accounts of faithful ones who experienced distress. "Many are the calamities of the righteous one," says the psalmist, "but out of them all Jehovah delivers him." (Psalm 34:19) Yes, bad things happen even to "the righteous one." Like the psalmist David, at times we may even grow "numb and become crushed to an extreme degree." (Psalm 38:8) Yet, it is comforting to know that "Jehovah is near to those that are broken at heart; and those who are crushed in spirit he saves."—Psalm 34:18; 94:19.

⁴ In harmony with Jesus' prayer, Jehovah is indeed watching over us. He is our "fortress

⁵ 3. Even faithful worshipers of Jehovah must face what reality, but what comfort do we find in God's Word?

^{4, 5. (a)} In harmony with Proverbs 18:10, what must we do in order to avail ourselves of God's protection? (b) What are some specific steps we can take to receive God's help?

in the time of distress." (Psalm 37:39) The book of Proverbs uses similar language when it says: "The name of Jehovah is a strong tower. Into it the righteous runs and is given protection." (Proverbs 18:10) This scripture reveals a basic truth about Jehovah's tender concern for his creatures. God offers protection especially to righteous ones who actively seek him, as if we were running into a strong tower for shelter.

⁵ When faced with distressing problems, how can we run to Jehovah for protection? Let us consider three vital steps that we can take in order to receive Jehovah's help. First, we must turn to our heavenly Father in prayer. Second, we should work in harmony with his holy spirit. And third, we must submit to Jehovah's arrangement by seeking association with fellow Christians who can alay our distress.

The Power of Prayer

⁶ Some health experts recommend prayer as treatment for depression and stress. While it may be true that a quiet moment of prayerlike reflection may relieve stress, much the same could be said about certain sounds of nature or even a back rub. True Christians do not trivialize prayer by viewing it as just a feel-good therapy. We view prayer as reverential communication with the Creator. Prayer involves our devotion to and confidence in God. Yes, prayer is part of our worship.

⁷ Our prayers must be accompanied by a sense of confidence, or trust, in Jehovah. The apostle John wrote: "This is the confidence that we have toward him, that, no matter what it is that we ask according to his will, he hears us." (1 John 5:14) Jehovah, the

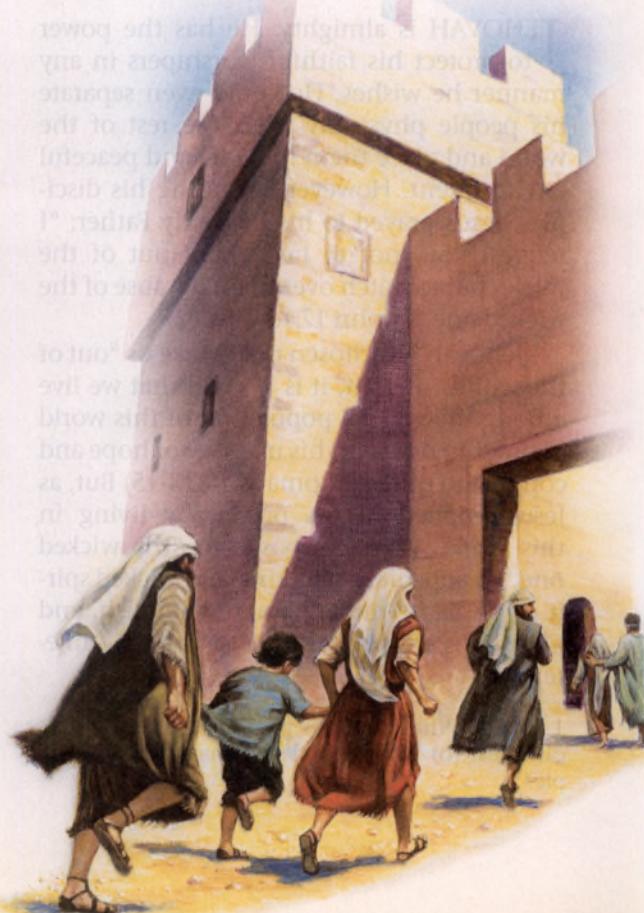
6. How do true Christians view prayer?
7. What does it mean to pray with confidence, and how do such prayers help us to cope with distress?

We must seek Jehovah as though we were running into a strong tower

Supreme Being, the only true and almighty God, actually gives special attention to the earnest prayers of his worshipers. Just knowing that our loving God hears us when we share our anxieties and problems with him is comforting.—Philippians 4:6.

⁸ Faithful Christians should never feel shy, unworthy, or lacking in confidence when approaching Jehovah in prayer. True, when we are disappointed in ourselves or are overwhelmed with problems, we might not always be inclined to approach Jehovah in prayer. On such occasions we do well to remember that Jehovah "shows pity upon his own afflicted ones" and that he "comforts those laid low." (Isaiah 49:13; 2 Corinthians 7:6) It is especially in times of anguish and

8. Why should faithful Christians never feel shy or unworthy when approaching Jehovah in prayer?



distress that we need to turn confidently to our heavenly Father as our fortress.

⁹ To benefit fully from the privilege of prayer, we must have real faith. The Bible says that “he that approaches God must believe that he is and that he becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him.” (Hebrews 11:6) Faith is more than just believing that God exists, that “he is.” True faith involves a strong belief in God’s ability and desire to reward our life course of obedience to him. “The eyes of Jehovah are upon the righteous ones, and his ears are toward their supplication.” (1 Peter 3:12) A constant awareness of Jehovah’s loving concern for us gives special meaning to our prayers.

¹⁰ Jehovah listens to our prayers when they are offered with a complete heart. The psalmist wrote: “I have called with my whole heart. Answer me, O Jehovah.” (Psalm 119:145) Unlike the ritualistic prayers in many religions, our prayers are not perfunctory or halfhearted. When we pray to Jehovah with our “whole heart,” our words are charged with meaning and purpose. After such earnest prayers, we begin to experience the relief that comes from throwing our “burden upon Jehovah himself.” As the Bible promises, “he himself will sustain” us.—Psalm 55:22; 1 Peter 5:6, 7.

God’s Spirit Is Our Helper

¹¹ Jehovah is not just the Hearer of prayer but also the Answerer. (Psalm 65:2) David wrote: “In the day of my distress I will call upon you, for you will answer me.” (Psalm 86:7) Accordingly, Jesus encouraged his disciples to “keep on asking” for Jehovah’s help

9. What role does faith play in our prayerful approach to God?
10. What must be true of our prayers if we are to receive spiritual sustenance from Jehovah?
11. What is one way that Jehovah answers us when we “keep on asking” for his help?

because “the Father in heaven” will “give holy spirit to those asking him.” (Luke 11:9-13) Yes, God’s active force acts as a helper, or comforter, to his people.—John 14:16.

¹² Even when we face trials, God’s spirit can infuse us with “the power beyond what is normal.” (2 Corinthians 4:7) The apostle Paul, who endured many stressful situations, confidently said: “For all things I have the strength by virtue of him who imparts power to me.” (Philippians 4:13) Likewise, many Christians today have felt a renewal of spiritual and emotional strength in answer to their supplications. Often, distressing problems do not seem so overwhelming after we receive the help of God’s spirit. Because of this God-given strength, we can say, as did the apostle: “We are pressed in every way, but not cramped beyond movement; we are perplexed, but not absolutely with no way out; we are persecuted, but not left in the lurch; we are thrown down, but not destroyed.”—2 Corinthians 4:8, 9.

¹³ The holy spirit has also inspired and preserved God’s written Word for our benefit. How has Jehovah proved to be our fortress in times of distress through the pages of his Word? One way is by providing us with practical wisdom and thinking ability. (Proverbs 3:21-24) The Bible trains our mental faculties and improves our power of reason. (Romans 12:1) Through regular reading and study of God’s Word, along with putting it to use, we can have our “perceptive powers trained to distinguish both right and wrong.” (Hebrews 5:14) You may personally have experienced how Bible principles helped you to make wise decisions when you faced difficulties. The Bible gives us

12. How can God’s spirit help us when problems seem overwhelming?
- 13, 14. (a) How has Jehovah proved to be our fortress through his written Word? (b) How has applying Bible principles helped you personally?

shrewdness that can help us find practical solutions to distressing problems.—Proverbs 1:4.

¹⁴ The Word of God provides us with another source of strength—the hope of salvation. (Romans 15:4) The Bible tells us that bad things will not continue to happen indefinitely. Whatever tribulations we suffer are temporary. (2 Corinthians 4:16-18) We have the “hope of the everlasting life which God, who cannot lie, promised before times long lasting.” (Titus 1:2) If we rejoice in that hope, with a constant awareness of the bright future that Jehovah promises, we can endure under tribulation.—Romans 12:12; 1 Thessalonians 1:3.

The Congregation —An Expression of God’s Love

¹⁵ Another provision from Jehovah that can help us in times of distress is the companionship we enjoy in the Christian congregation. The Bible says: “A true companion is loving all the time, and is a brother that is born for when there is distress.” (Proverbs 17:17) God’s Word encourages all in the congregation to honor and love one another. (Romans 12:10) “Let each one keep seeking, not his own advantage, but that of the other person,” wrote the apostle Paul. (1 Corinthians 10:24) Having such a frame of mind can help us to focus on the needs of others rather than on our own trials. When we give of ourselves to others, not only do



Spiritually mature ones use every opportunity to commend and encourage others

we help them but we also enjoy a measure of happiness and satisfaction that make our own burdens more bearable.—Acts 20:35.

¹⁶ Spiritually mature men and women can play an important role in strengthening others. In order to do so, they make themselves approachable and available. (2 Corinthians 6:11-13) The congregation is truly blessed when all make the time to commend young ones, to build up new believers, and to encourage those who are depressed. (Romans 15:7) Brotherly love will also help us to avoid a spirit of suspicion toward one another. We should be slow to conclude that personal difficulties are a sign of spiritual weakness. Paul appropriately urges Christians to “speak consolingly to the depressed souls.” (1 Thessalonians 5:14) The Bible shows that even faithful Christians experience distress.—Acts 14:15.

¹⁷ Christian meetings provide an excellent

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16. How can each Christian be encouraging?
 17. What opportunities do we have to strengthen the bond of Christian brotherhood?

15. How can Christians be a blessing to one another?

opportunity for us to comfort and encourage one another. (Hebrews 10:24, 25) This loving interaction is not limited to congregation meetings. Rather, God's people also look for opportunities to engage in wholesome association in casual settings. When distressing situations arise, we will readily assist one another because strong bonds of friendship have already been established. The apostle Paul wrote: "There should be no division in the body, but . . . its members should . . . care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the other members suffer with it; or if a member is glorified, all the other members rejoice with it."—1 Corinthians 12:25, 26.

¹⁸ At times, we may feel too downhearted to enjoy association with fellow Christians. We should fight such feelings so that we do not deprive ourselves of the comfort and assistance that fellow believers can offer. The Bible warns us: "One isolating himself will seek his own selfish longing; against all practical wisdom he will break forth." (Proverbs 18:1) Our brothers and sisters are an expression of God's care for us. If we recognize that loving provision, we will find relief in times of distress.

Maintain a Positive Attitude

¹⁹ When discouragement and sadness set in, it is easy to entertain negative thoughts. For instance, when experiencing adversity, some may begin to question their own spirituality, concluding that their hardship is a sign of God's disapproval. Remember, though, Jehovah does not try anyone with "evil things." (James 1:13) "Not out of his own heart has [God] afflicted or does he grieve the sons of men," says the Bible.

18. What tendency should we avoid when feeling downhearted?

19, 20. How do the Scriptures help us reject negative thoughts?

(Lamentations 3:33) On the contrary, Jehovah is deeply saddened when his servants suffer.—Isaiah 63:8, 9; Zechariah 2:8.

²⁰ Jehovah is "the Father of tender mercies and the God of all comfort." (2 Corinthians 1:3) He cares for us, and he will exalt us in due time. (1 Peter 5:6, 7) A constant awareness of God's affection for us will help us to maintain a positive attitude, even to rejoice. James wrote: "Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you meet with various trials." (James 1:2) Why? He answers: "Because on becoming approved he will receive the crown of life, which Jehovah promised to those who continue loving him."—James 1:12.

²¹ As Jesus warned us, in the world we will have tribulation. (John 16:33) But the Bible promises that no "tribulation or distress or persecution or hunger or nakedness or danger" will separate us from Jehovah's love and the love of his Son. (Romans 8:35, 39) How comforting it is to know that any distress we face is temporary! In the meantime, while we await the end of human suffering, our loving Father, Jehovah, watches over us. If we run to him for protection, he will prove to be "a secure height for anyone crushed, a secure height in times of distress."—Psalm 9:9.

21. Regardless of difficulties we face, what guarantee does God give to those who prove faithful to him?

What Did We Learn?

- What should Christians expect while living in this wicked world?
- How can our fervent prayers prove strengthening when we face trials?
- How is God's spirit a helper?
- What can we do to help one another?

TIRED BUT NOT TIRING OUT

"Jehovah, the Creator of the extremities of the earth, . . . is giving to the tired one power; and to the one without dynamic energy he makes full might abound."—ISAIAH 40:28, 29.

AS Jesus' disciples, we are well acquainted with his appealing invitation: "Come to me, all you who are toiling and loaded down, and I will refresh you. . . . For my yoke is kindly and my load is light." (Matthew 11:28-30) Christians are also offered "seasons of refreshing . . . from the person of Jehovah." (Acts 3:19) Surely you have experienced firsthand the refreshing effects of learning Bible truths, having a bright hope for the future, and applying Jehovah's principles in your life.

² Yet, some of Jehovah's worshipers undergo bouts of emotional tiredness. In some cases these times of discouragement are brief. At other times the weary feeling may persist for long periods. With the passing of time, some may feel that their Christian responsibilities have become a burden rather than a refreshing load as Jesus promised. Such negative feelings may pose a serious danger to a Christian's relationship with Jehovah.

³ Not long before his arrest and execution, Jesus told his disciples: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Exercise faith in God, exercise faith also in me." (John 14:1) Jesus said these words as the apostles were about to face tragic events. This would be followed by a rash of persecution. Jesus knew that his apostles could stumble out of utter discour-

- 1, 2. (a) What appealing invitation is extended to all who want to practice pure worship? (b) What may pose a serious danger to our spirituality?
3. Why did Jesus offer the counsel found at John 14:1?

agement. (John 16:1) If left unchecked, feelings of sadness could prove spiritually debilitating and cause them to lose their trust in Jehovah. This is also true of Christians today. Prolonged discouragement can cause much anguish, and our hearts may become weighed down. (Jeremiah 8:18) The person we are inside may weaken. Under this pressure, we may become emotionally and spiritually paralyzed, even lose our desire to worship Jehovah.

⁴ Appropriate indeed is the Bible's advice: "More than all else that is to be guarded, safeguard your heart, for out of it are the sources of life." (Proverbs 4:23) The Bible offers practical advice that helps us protect our figurative heart from discouragement and spiritual tiredness. First, however, we need to identify the cause of our weariness.

Christianity Is Not Oppressive

⁵ Granted, being a Christian requires vigorous exertion. (Luke 13:24) Jesus even stated: "Whoever is not carrying his torture stake and coming after me cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:27) On the surface these words may appear to contradict Jesus' statement about his load being light and refreshing, but in reality there is no contradiction.

⁶ Vigorous exertion and hard work, although physically tiring, can be satisfying

4. What can help us to keep our figurative hearts from tiring out?
5. What apparent contradiction exists regarding Christian discipleship?
- 6, 7. Why can it be said that our form of worship is not wearisome?

and refreshing when it is done for a good cause. (Ecclesiastes 3:13, 22) And what better cause could there be than that of sharing wonderful Bible truths with our neighbors? Also, our struggle to live by God's high moral standards pales into insignificance when compared with the benefits we enjoy as a result. (Proverbs 2:10-20) Even when persecuted, we deem it an honor to suffer for the sake of God's Kingdom.—1 Peter 4:14.

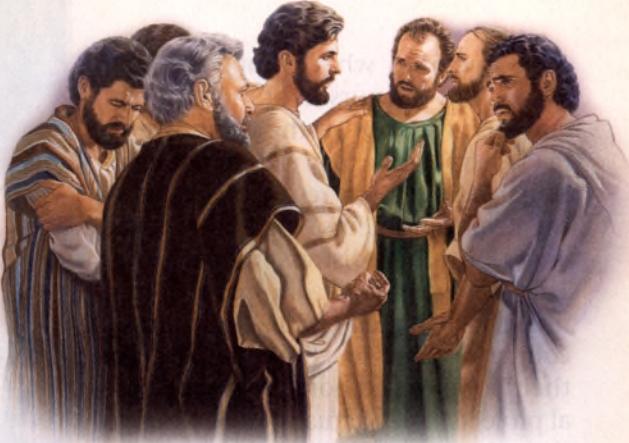
⁷ Jesus' load is indeed refreshing, especially when compared with the spiritual darkness of those who remain under the yoke of false religion. God has tender love for us and does not place unreasonable demands on us. Jehovah's "commandments are not burdensome." (1 John 5:3) True Christianity, as outlined in the Scriptures, is not oppressive. Clearly, our form of worship does not cause weariness and discouragement.

"Put Off Every Weight"

⁸ Any spiritual tiredness we experience is often the result of the added weight placed on us by this corrupt system of things. Because "the whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one," we are surrounded by negative forces that can wear us down and erode our Christian balance. (1 John 5:19) Nonessentials can complicate and disturb our Christian routine. These extra burdens may weigh us down and even crush our spirit. Appropriately, the Bible admonishes us to "put off every weight."—Hebrews 12:1-3.

⁹ For instance, the world's preoccupation with prominence, money, entertainment, travel for pleasure, and other material pursuits can influence our thinking. (1 John 2:15-17) Some first-century Christians who pursued riches severely complicated their

8. What is often the cause of spiritual tiredness?
9. How can material pursuits weigh us down?



Jesus knew that prolonged discouragement could trouble the apostles

lives. The apostle Paul explains: "Those who are determined to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and many senseless and hurtful desires, which plunge men into destruction and ruin. For 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 6:9, 10.

¹⁰ When we feel tired and discouraged in our service to God, could it be because the pursuit of material things is smothering our spirituality? This possibility is very real, as indicated by Jesus' illustration of the sower. Jesus compared "the anxieties of this system of things and the deceptive power of riches and the desires for the rest of the things" to thorns that "make inroads and choke" the seed of God's word in our hearts. (Mark 4:18, 19) Hence, the Bible counsels us: "Let your manner of life be free of the love of money, while you are content with the present things. For he has said: 'I will by no means leave you nor by any means forsake you.' "—Hebrews 13:5.

10. What can we learn about riches from Jesus' illustration of the sower?

¹¹ Sometimes what complicates our lives is, not the pursuit of more things, but what we do with the things we already have. Some may experience emotional fatigue as a result of challenging health problems, the loss of loved ones, or other distressing problems. They have seen a need to make adjustments from time to time. One married couple decided to eliminate some of their hobbies and nonessential personal projects. They actually went through their things and literally packed all the materials related to such projects and put them out of sight. Periodically, we can all benefit from taking inventory of our habits and possessions, putting off every unnecessary weight so that we may not get tired and give out in our souls.

Reasonableness and Modesty Essential

¹² Our own errors, even in small matters, can gradually complicate our lives. How true the words of David: "My own errors have passed over my head; like a heavy load they are too heavy for me." (Psalm 38:4) Often, a few practical adjustments will relieve us of heavy burdens.

¹³ The Bible encourages us to develop "practical wisdom and thinking ability." (Proverbs 3:21, 22) "The wisdom from above is . . . reasonable," says the Bible. (James 3:17) Some have felt under pressure to keep pace with what others do in the Christian ministry. However, the Bible advises us: "Let each one prove what his own work is, and then he will have cause for exultation in regard to himself alone, and not in comparison with the other person. For each one will



Some have eliminated certain hobbies and nonessential personal projects

carry his own load." (Galatians 6:4, 5) True, the good example of fellow Christians can encourage us to serve Jehovah wholeheartedly, but practical wisdom and reasonableness will help us to set realistic goals according to our own circumstances.

¹⁴ Our reasonableness even in areas that may seem to be of minor importance can help prevent feelings of tiredness. For instance, do we develop balanced habits that are conducive to good physical health? Consider the example of a married couple who serve at one of the branch offices of Jehovah's Witnesses. They have seen the value of practical wisdom in preventing fatigue. The wife says: "No matter how much work we have, we try to go to bed about the same time every night. We also exercise regularly. This has really helped us. We have learned what our limitations are, and we do things accordingly. We try not to compare ourselves with those who seem to have an end-

11. How might we eliminate things that can weigh us down?

12. What should we recognize about our own mistakes?

13. How can reasonableness help us to have a balanced view of our ministry?

14, 15. How can we manifest practical wisdom in caring for our physical and emotional needs?

less amount of energy." Do we regularly eat wholesome meals and get enough rest? Reasonable attention to our health in general can minimize feelings of emotional and spiritual exhaustion.

¹⁵ Some of us have needs that are unique. For instance, one Christian sister has served in the full-time ministry in several challenging assignments. She has had serious health problems, including cancer. What helps her to cope with stressful situations? She says: "It is important for me to have time when I can be alone and totally quiet. The more I feel the stress and fatigue building up, the more urgently I need moments of calm solitude when I can read and rest." Practical wisdom and thinking ability help us recognize and satisfy our individual needs and thus avoid spiritual tiredness.

Jehovah God Energizes Us

¹⁶ Caring for our spiritual health is, of course, highly important. When we have an intimate relationship with Jehovah God, we may get physically tired, but never will we tire of worshiping him. Jehovah is the one "giving to the tired one power; and to the one without dynamic energy he makes full might abound." (Isaiah 40:28, 29) The apostle Paul, who personally experienced the truthfulness of these words, wrote: "We do not give up, but even if the man we are outside is wasting away, certainly the man we are inside is being renewed from day to day." —2 Corinthians 4:16.

¹⁷ Notice the expression "from day to day." This implies availing ourselves of Jehovah's provisions on a daily basis. A missionary who faithfully served for 43 years had to face periods of physical tiredness and discouragement. But she did not tire out. She says: "I

16, 17. (a) Why is caring for our spiritual health highly important? (b) What should we incorporate into our daily routine?

have made it a practice to rise early so that before starting any work, I can spend time in prayer to Jehovah and read his Word. This daily routine has helped me to endure until now." We can indeed count on Jehovah's sustaining power if we regularly, yes "from day to day," pray to him and meditate on his lofty qualities and his promises.

¹⁸ This is especially helpful to those who feel discouraged because of advancing age and ill health. Such ones may become downhearted, not because they compare themselves with others, but because they compare themselves with what they once were. How comforting it is to know that Jehovah honors the elderly! The Bible says: "Gray-headedness is a crown of beauty when it is found in the way of righteousness." (Proverbs 16:31) Jehovah knows our limitations and highly values our wholehearted worship despite our frailties. And the good works that we have already done are indelibly recorded in God's memory. The Scriptures assure us: "God is not unrighteous so as to forget your work and the love you showed for his name, in that you have ministered to the holy ones and continue ministering." (Hebrews 6:10) How glad we all are to have among us those who have proved loyal to Jehovah for many decades!

Do Not Give Up

¹⁹ Many believe that vigorous physical activity on a regular basis can alleviate tiredness. Similarly, regular spiritual activities can help relieve any feelings of emotional or spiritual exhaustion. The Bible says: "Let us not give up in doing what is fine, for in due season we shall reap if we do not tire out. Really, then, as long as we have time favorable for it,

18. What comfort does the Bible provide for faithful ones who are advanced in age or who are ill?

19. How do we benefit from keeping busy doing what is good?

let us work what is good toward all, but especially toward those related to us in the faith." (Galatians 6:9, 10) Notice the expressions "doing what is fine" and "work what is good." These imply action on our part. Doing good things for others can indeed help prevent us from tiring out in our service to Jehovah.

²⁰ In contrast, association and activities with people who disregard God's laws can become a tiring burden. The Bible warns us: "The heaviness of a stone and a load of sand—but the vexation by someone foolish is heavier than both of them." (Proverbs 27:3) To fight off feelings of discouragement and tiredness, we do well to avoid the company of those who dwell on negative thoughts and are prone to find fault and criticize others.

²¹ Christian meetings are a provision from Jehovah that can infuse us with spiritual energy. There we have an excellent opportunity to encourage one another with refreshing instruction and association. (Hebrews 10:25) All in the congregation should strive to be

20. To fight discouragement, whose company should we avoid?
21. How can we be of encouragement to others at Christian meetings?

A Brief Review

- What are some burdensome weights we may be able to put off?
- How can we share in working "what is good" toward our fellow Christians?
- How does Jehovah sustain us when we feel tired or discouraged?



Despite our limitations, Jehovah highly values our wholehearted worship

upbuilding when commenting at the meetings or when sharing in the program from the platform. Those who take the lead as teachers are especially responsible to be encouraging to others. (Isaiah 32:1, 2) Even when there is a need to exhort or reprove, the tone of the counsel should be refreshing. (Galatians 6:1, 2) Our love for others will indeed help us to serve Jehovah without tiring out.—Psalm 133:1; John 13:35.

²² Worshiping Jehovah in this time of the end involves work. And Christians are not immune to the effects of mental fatigue, emotional pain, and stressful circumstances. Our imperfect human nature is fragile, like clayware. Yet, the Bible says: "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the power beyond what is normal may be God's and not that out of ourselves." (2 Corinthians 4:7) Yes, we will get tired, but may we never tire out or give up. Rather, let us be "of good courage and say: 'Jehovah is my helper.'" —Hebrews 13:6.

²² Despite our imperfect human nature, why can we be of good courage?

An Intrepid "Wanderer in the Gospel's Cause"

IT IS reported that by the age of 18, George Borrow had a knowledge of 12 languages. Two years later he was able to translate "with facility and elegance" 20 different tongues.

In 1833 this unusually gifted man was invited to be interviewed by the British and Foreign Bible Society in London, England. Unable to finance his journey but determined to take advantage of this favorable opening, 30-year-old Borrow walked the 112 miles from his home in Norwich, doing so in just 28 hours.

The Bible Society presented him with a challenge—within six months to learn the Manchu language, used in parts of China. He asked for a grammar book, but all they could give him was a copy of Matthew's Gospel in Manchu and a Manchu-French dictionary. Yet, within 19 weeks he wrote to London, "I have mastered Manchu," with, as he put it, "the assistance of God." This achievement was even more remarkable because at the same time, he reportedly was correcting Luke's Gospel in Nahuatl, one of the indigenous languages of Mexico.

The Bible in Manchu

In the 17th century, when Manchu first appeared in written form, using a script borrowed from the Mongolian Uighur alphabet, it became the language used in China's official circles. Though in time its use declined, members of the British and Foreign Bible Society were eager to print



and distribute Bibles in Manchu. By 1822 they had financed an edition of 550 copies of Matthew's Gospel, translated by Stepan V. Lipoftsoff. He was a member of the Russian Foreign Office who had lived in China for 20 years. This was printed in St. Petersburg, but after only a handful of copies were distributed, the remainder were destroyed in a flood.

A translation of the entire Christian Greek Scriptures soon followed. In 1834 the discovery of an ancient manuscript version of most of the Hebrew Scriptures increased interest in the Bible. Who could coordinate the revision of the existing Manchu Bible and complete the rest of the translation? The British and Foreign Bible Society dispatched George Borrow to undertake this task on their behalf.

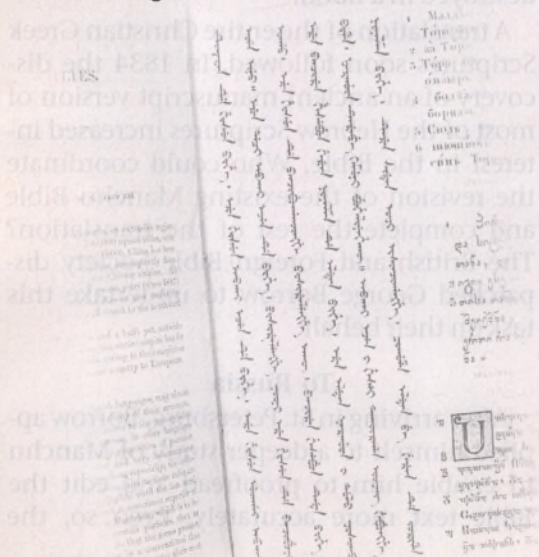
To Russia

After arriving in St. Petersburg, Borrow applied himself to a deeper study of Manchu to enable him to proofread and edit the Bible text more accurately. Even so, the

assignment was arduous, and he worked up to 13 hours a day helping to compose the type for *The New Testament*, which was eventually described as "a beautiful edition of an oriental work." One thousand copies were printed in 1835. But Borrow's cherished plan to take them to China and distribute them there was thwarted. The Russian government, fearing that this could be viewed as a missionary venture likely to jeopardize the friendly relationship they enjoyed with their neighbor, refused Borrow permission to travel to the Chinese border if he took "one single Manchu Bible" with him.

A few copies were distributed some ten years later, and translations of the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, with parallel columns in Manchu and Chinese, appeared in 1859. By then, however, most people who could read Manchu preferred to read Chinese, and prospects for a complete Manchu Bible began to fade. Manchu was, in fact, a dying language, soon to be superseded-

The opening words of John's Gospel in Manchu, printed in 1835, reading top to bottom from left to right



From the book *The Bible of Every Land*, 1860

ed by Chinese. The transition was complete by 1912 when China became a republic.

The Iberian Peninsula

Invigorated by his experiences, George Borrow returned to London. He was reassigned in 1835 to Portugal and Spain, "to ascertain how far the minds of the people were prepared to receive the truths of Christianity," as he later put it. At that time both countries were largely untouched by the British and Foreign Bible Society because of widespread political and social unrest. Borrow delighted to get into conversations about the Bible with people in the rural communities of Portugal, but within a short time, the religious apathy and indifference he encountered there prompted him to cross over to Spain.

Spain presented a different challenge, especially the Gypsy people with whom Borrow soon developed a close affinity, since he could speak their language. Shortly after his arrival, he started to translate the "New Testament" into the Spanish Gypsy tongue, Gitano. For part of this undertaking, he invited two Gypsy women to help him. He would read to them the Spanish version and then ask them to translate it for him. In this way he was able to learn the correct use of Gypsy idioms. As a result of this effort, Luke's Gospel was published in the spring of 1838, prompting one bishop to exclaim: "He will convert all Spain by means of the gypsy language."

George Borrow had been authorized to find "a person competent to translate the Scriptures in Basque." That task was given to a Dr. Oteiza, a physician "well versed in that dialect, of which I myself have some knowledge," wrote Borrow. In 1838, Luke's Gospel became the first Bible book to appear in Spanish Basque.

George Borrow's efforts to translate and distribute the Bible took him from (1) England to (2) Russia, (3) Portugal, and (4) Spain

Fired by his desire to enlighten the common people, Borrow made long, often perilous journeys to distribute books of the Bible among the poor in rural communities. He thought to emancipate them from religious ignorance and superstition. Exposing the worthlessness of the indulgences they were purchasing, he would, for example, reason: "Is it possible that God, who is good, would sanction the sale of sin?" But the Bible Society, fearing that such an iconoclastic work might lead to the banning of their activities, directed him to concentrate solely on the distribution of the Scriptures.

Borrow gained oral permission to print *El Nuevo Testamento*, a Spanish *New Testament*, without its Roman Catholic doctrinal notes. That was despite the initial opposition of the prime minister, who had described the translation as a dangerous and "improper book." Borrow then opened a depot in Madrid to sell this Spanish *New Testament*, a step that brought him into conflict with both the religious leaders and the secular authorities. He was imprisoned for 12 days. When he protested, Borrow was asked to leave quietly. Knowing full well that his



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imprisonment was illegal, he cited the example of the apostle Paul and chose to remain until he was rightly exonerated, with no stigma attached to his name.—Acts 16:37.

By the time their zealous emissary left Spain in 1840, the Bible Society could report: "Nearly 14,000 copies of the Scriptures have been brought into circulation in Spain within the last five years." Having played a great part in this, Borrow summed up his Spanish experiences as "the most happy years of my existence."

The Bible in Spain, first published in 1842—and still in print—is George Borrow's own vivid personal account of his travels and adventures. In this book, which became an instant success, he dubbed himself "wanderer in the Gospel's cause." He wrote: "I intended to visit the secret and secluded spots amongst the rugged hills and mountains, and to talk to the people, after my manner, of Christ."

In distributing and translating the Scriptures with such enthusiasm, George Borrow laid the groundwork for others—a precious privilege indeed.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Glorify God "With One Mouth"

Beware of "the Voice of Strangers"

What Inheritance
Do You Owe Your Children?

Do You Remember?

Have you appreciated reading the recent issues of *The Watchtower*? Why not see if you can answer the following questions?

- **What was the Complutensian Polyglot, and why was it significant?**

It was a printed, multilingual Bible that set out in parallel, adjacent columns the best text then available in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, along with some portions in Aramaic. This polyglot Bible was a major step forward in producing a refined text of the original languages.—4/15, pages 28-31.

- **How can humans make God rejoice?**

As a real living person, Jehovah is capable of thought, actions, and feelings. He is “the happy God” and takes pleasure in accomplishing his purpose. (1 Timothy 1:11; Psalm 104:31) The more sensitive we are to God’s feelings, the more we will become aware of what we can do to make his heart rejoice.—5/15, pages 4-7.

- **Why did David allow his wife Michal to have a teraphim image?**

When King Saul plotted to kill David, Michal helped him to escape, putting on the couch

an image that was perhaps in the shape of a man. She may have had a teraphim because her heart was not complete toward God. David either did not know about it or tolerated it because she was the daughter of King Saul. (1 Chronicles 16:25, 26)—6/1, page 29.

- **What was the underlying focus of God’s decrees about blood?**

By what God stated after the Flood, in the Mosaic Law, and in the decree found at Acts 15:28, 29, he pointed to the sacrifice involving Jesus’ shed blood. Only by that blood can we gain forgiveness and have peace with God. (Colossians 1:20)—6/15, pages 14-19.

- **How many miracles of Jesus are mentioned in the Bible?**

The Gospel accounts refer to 35 miracles of Jesus. But the exact number of Jesus’ miracles, including unreported ones, is not revealed. (Matthew 14:14)—7/15, page 5.

Questions From Readers

Some have claimed that Paul was not shipwrecked on the island of Malta, south of Sicily, but on another island. Where was he shipwrecked?

This question refers to a rather recent proposal that the apostle Paul was shipwrecked, not on the island of Malta, but on Cephalo-

nia (or, Kefallinia) near Corfu in the Ionian Sea, off western Greece. The inspired record tells us that Paul set out from Caesarea in the custody of the Roman centurion Julius, together with other soldiers and Paul’s companions. As illustrated on the map, they sailed to Sidon and Myra. Changing to a



large grain ship from Alexandria, Egypt, they proceeded westward to Cnidus. They could not hold to the proposed route across the Aegean Sea past the tip of Greece and on to Rome. Strong winds forced them south toward Crete and under lee of its shores. There they stopped at the harbor Fair Havens. Upon putting "out to sea from Crete," the ship was "violently seized" by "a tempestuous wind called Euroaquilo." The heavy grain ship was "tossed to and fro on the sea" until the 14th night. Finally, all 276 persons were shipwrecked on an island that the Greek text of the Holy Scriptures names *Me-li'te*.—Acts 27:1–28:1.

Over the years, various suggestions have been made as to the identity of this island, *Me-li'te*. Some have thought that it was the island Melite Illyrica, now known as Mljet, in the Adriatic Sea off the coast of Croatia. But this seems unlikely, since the northern location of Mljet is difficult to harmonize with the next stages of Paul's journey, namely Syracuse, Sicily, and then the west coast of Italy.—Acts 28:11–13.

Most Bible translators have concluded that *Me-li'te* refers to the island Melite Afri-canus, now known as Malta. The last port of call for the ship carrying Paul was Fair Havens, on Crete. Then a tempestuous wind forced the ship westward toward Cauda. The wind kept driving the ship for many days. It is entirely reasonable that the gale-driven ship would go farther west and reach Malta.

Considering the prevailing wind and "the direction and rate of drift," Conybeare and Howson noted in their book *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*: "The distance between Clauda [or, Cauda] and Malta is rather less than 480 miles. The coincidence is so remarkable, that it seems hardly possible to believe that the land, to which the sailors on the fourteenth night [approached] could be any other place than Malta. The probability is overwhelming."

While alternative identifications may be offered, a shipwreck at Malta shown on the accompanying map seems to fit the Biblical record.

"It Is the Best Thing That Could Happen to You"

ALEXIS is a five-year-old boy in the city of Morelia, Mexico, whose parents study the Bible and attend meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses. While attending a circuit assembly with his family, he observed a demonstration about preaching from house to house. He spontaneously turned to his father and asked, "Daddy, Daddy, why don't you go out and preach?" His father answered, "I am still studying so that I can do that." Alexis responded enthusiastically, "Daddy, it is the best thing that could happen to you."

This young child saw the need to act in harmony with his knowledge of Jehovah. Since some of his young cousins live in the same house as he does, he first prayed to Jehovah and then spoke to them about what he had learned with his parents' help from *My Book of Bible Stories*. Though Alexis did not yet know how to read, he knew the contents of the book very well from the pictures illustrating the stories. He even said he wanted to visit people in their homes to share with them what he was learning about God's purposes.

Indeed, both young and old can bring their lives into harmony with what Jehovah,

"the Holy One," expects of them and thus have the superlative privilege of giving a witness about him among the nations. (Isaiah 43:3; Matthew 21:16) Without doubt, that is one of the best things that can happen to a person.

