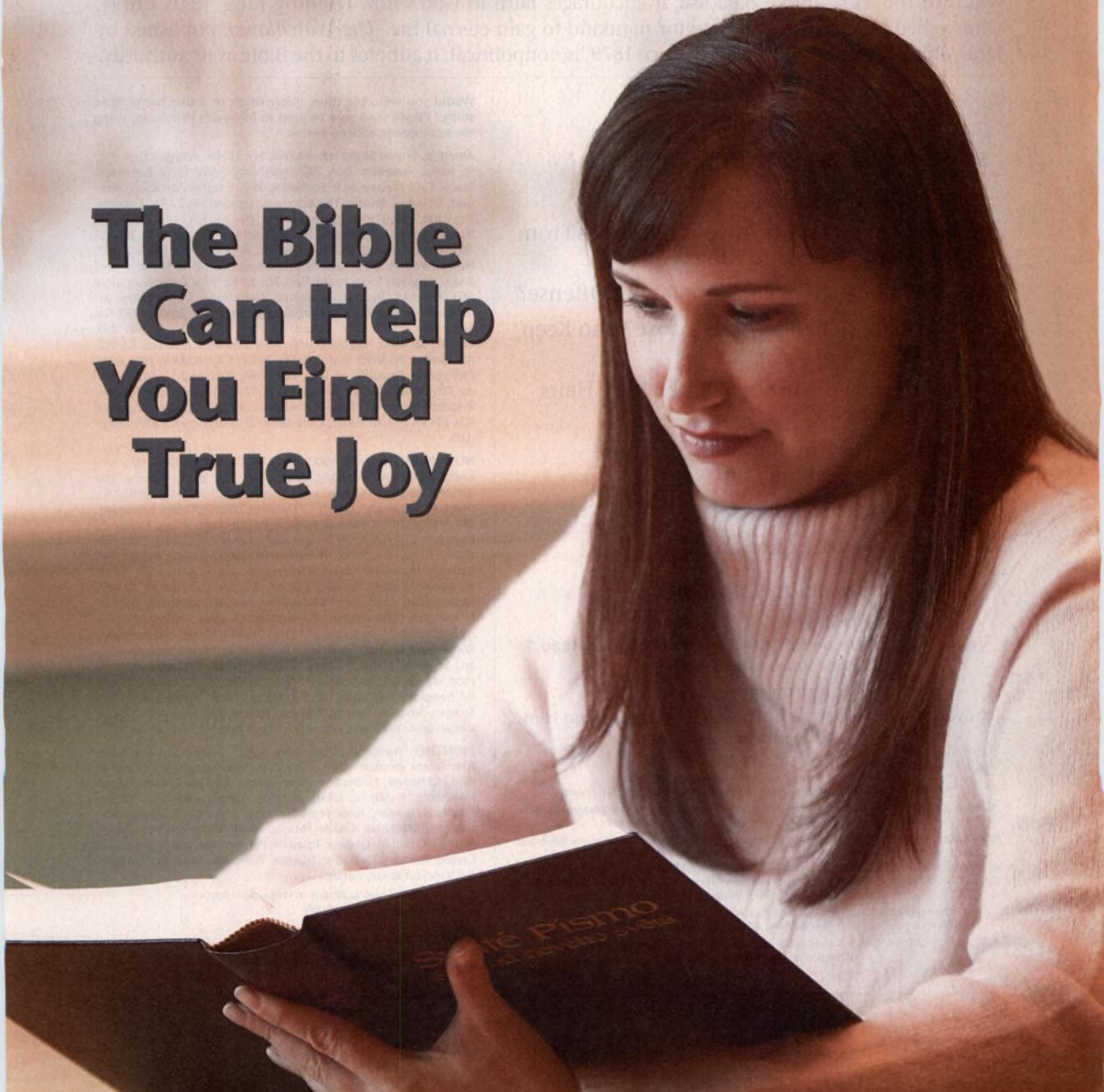


# THE WATCHTOWER

AUGUST 1, 2005

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

The Bible  
Can Help  
You Find  
True Joy





# THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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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.

## IN THIS ISSUE

- 3 Do You Struggle With Your Feelings?
- 4 The Bible Can Help You Find Joy
- 8 Jehovah's Word Is Alive—Highlights From the Book of Second Kings
- 13 When Is There a Basis for Taking Offense?
- 16 Jehovah Richly Rewards Those Who Keep His Way
- 21 Jehovah Has Numbered "the Very Hairs of Your Head"
- 26 Jehovah Is "the Rewarder of Those Earnestly Seeking Him"
- 31 Questions From Readers
- 32 A Long Journey Rewarded

## WATCHTOWER STUDIES

AUGUST 29—SEPTEMBER 4:

Jehovah Has Numbered "the Very Hairs of Your Head."

Page 21. Songs to be used: 44, 58.

SEPTEMBER 5-11:

Jehovah Is "the Rewarder of Those Earnestly Seeking Him."

Page 26. Songs to be used: 114, 125.

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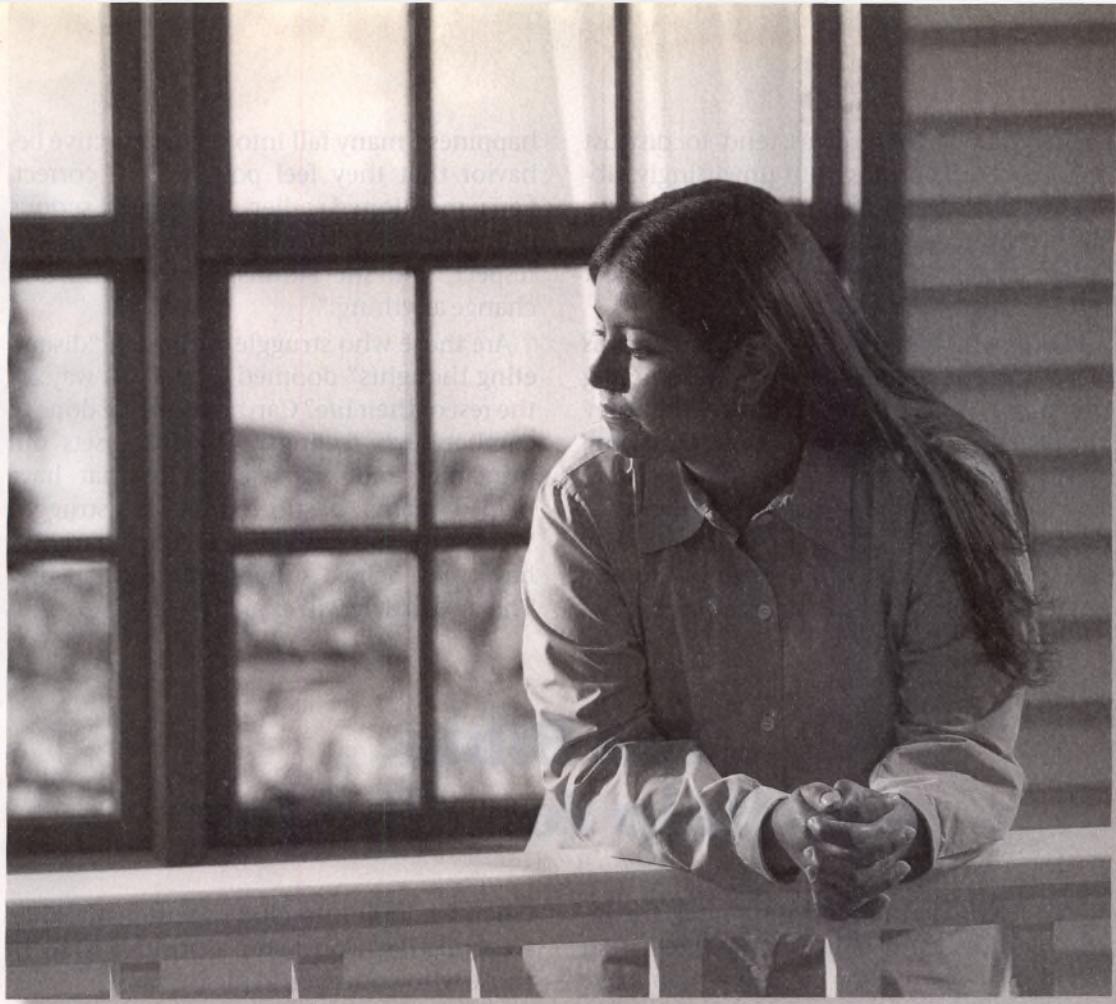
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## Do You Struggle With Your Feelings?

FOR much of her life, Lena has struggled with negative feelings about herself. "Years of sexual abuse during my childhood killed a big part of my self-respect," she said. "I felt that I was completely useless." Simone too looks back on her youth and says, "Deep within me there was a void and the belief that I wasn't worth much." The profound unhappiness that results from such feelings seems to be widespread today. One telephone counseling service for teenagers says

that almost half of their callers express "persistent feelings of low self-value."

According to some experts, feelings of inadequacy emerge when people are made to feel worthless by others. Such a state of mind may develop when one is subjected to constant berating, excessive and harsh criticism, or abusive exploitation. Whatever the reason, the consequences can be debilitating and even destructive. A recent medical study found that individuals with negative

feelings about themselves tend to distrust themselves and others, thus unwittingly sabotaging close relationships and friendships. "In a sense," says the report on the study, "they 'create' the very situations they fear most."

People who feel that way are often victims of what the Bible calls their own "disquieting thoughts." (Psalm 94:19) They feel that they are never good enough. When something goes wrong, they instinctively blame themselves. Though others may praise them for their achievements, deep down inside they feel like a fraud who will be exposed sooner or later. Believing that they are unworthy of

happiness, many fall into self-destructive behavior that they feel powerless to correct. Lena, mentioned earlier, developed a serious eating disorder because of her lack of self-respect, and she admits, "I felt unable to change anything."

Are those who struggle with such "disquieting thoughts" doomed to feel this way for the rest of their life? Can anything be done to combat such feelings? The Bible sets out principles and practical advice that have helped many to succeed in the struggle. What are some of these principles, and how have they helped sufferers find joy in life? The next article will explain.

## The Bible Can Help You Find Joy

THOUGH not a medical manual, the Bible does comment on the effect that emotions—positive or negative—can have on a person's mental and physical health. "A heart that is joyful does good as a curer," says the Bible, "but a spirit that is stricken makes the bones dry." Further, we read: "Have you shown yourself discouraged in the day of distress? Your power will be scanty." (Proverbs 17:22; 24:10) Feelings of discouragement can sap our energy, making us feel weak and vulnerable with no desire to change or to seek help.

Discouragement can also affect a person spiritually. People who feel worthless often feel that they can never enjoy a good relationship with God and be blessed by him. Simone, mentioned in the preceding article, doubted that she was "the kind of person God would approve of." However,

when we look into God's Word, the Bible, we find that God takes a positive view of those who endeavor to please him.

### God Does Care

The Bible tells us that "Jehovah is near to those that are broken at heart; and those who are crushed in spirit he saves." God does not despise "a heart broken and crushed," but he promises "to revive the spirit of the lowly ones and to revive the heart of the ones being crushed."—Psalm 34:18; 51:17; Isaiah 57:15.

On one occasion God's Son, Jesus, found it necessary to draw to the attention of his disciples the fact that God sees the good in His servants. By way of an illustration, he related that God notices when a sparrow falls to the ground—something that most humans would consider of little importance.

He also highlighted that God knows the smallest detail about humans, even the number of the hairs on their head. Jesus concluded his illustration by saying: "Therefore have no fear: you are worth more than many sparrows." (Matthew 10: 29-31)\* Jesus indicated that despite what individuals may feel about themselves, humans with faith do have value in God's eyes. In fact, the apostle Peter reminds us that "God is not partial, but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him."—Acts 10: 34, 35.

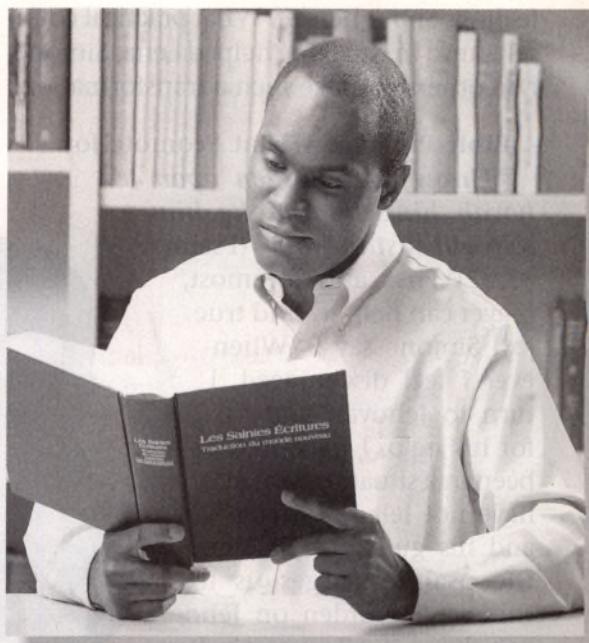
### Maintain a Sense of Balance

God's Word urges us to cultivate balance in the way we view ourselves. The apostle Paul wrote under inspiration: "Through the undeserved kindness given to me I tell everyone there among you not to think more of himself than it is necessary to think; but to think so as to have a sound mind, each one as God has distributed to him a measure of faith."—Romans 12:3.

Certainly, we would not want to think too highly of ourselves to the point of becoming conceited; nor would we want to go to the other extreme and think nothing of ourselves. Rather, our aim should be to cultivate a reasonable view of ourselves, one that takes into consideration our strengths as well as our limitations. A Christian woman put it this way: "I'm not the epitome of evil; nor am I God's gift to others. I have both good points and bad points, and so does everyone else."

Of course, to attain such a balanced perspective is easier said than done. It may take a great deal of effort to undo an overly negative view of ourselves that we may have

\* This portion of Scripture is discussed in detail on pages 22 and 23.



developed over many years. Nevertheless, with God's help we can change our personality as well as our outlook on life. Actually, this is what God's Word urges us to do. We read: "Put away the old personality which conforms to your former course of conduct and which is being corrupted according to his deceptive desires; but . . . you should be made new in the force actuating your mind, and should put on the new personality which was created according to God's will in true righteousness and loyalty."—Ephesians 4:22-24.

By making the effort to transform 'the force actuating our mind,' that is, the dominant inclination of our mind, we can change our personality from one that is overly negative to one that is positive. Lena, mentioned in the preceding article, came to appreciate that until she put away the thought that no one could love her or help her, nothing would or could change her

feelings about herself. What practical counsel found in the Bible helped Lena, Simone, and others to make such a transformation?

### Bible Principles That Promote Joy

***"Throw your burden upon Jehovah himself, and he himself will sustain you."*** (Psalm 55:22)

First and foremost, prayer can help us find true joy. Simone says: "Whenever I feel discouraged, I turn to Jehovah and ask for his help. I have never been in a situation where I have not felt his strength and his guidance." When the psalmist urges us to throw our burden on Jehovah, he is in effect reminding us that Jehovah not only cares about us but also views us as individuals worthy of his help and support. On the night of the Passover 33 C.E., Jesus' disciples were grieved because of what Jesus said about his impending departure. Jesus urged them to pray to the Father, and then he added: "Ask and you will receive, that your joy may be made full."—John 16:23, 24.

***"There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving."*** (Acts 20:35) As Jesus taught, giving is a key to finding true joy in life. Applying this Bible truth enables us to focus on the needs of others rather than on our own inadequacies. When we help others and see their appreciative response, we feel better about ourselves. Lena is



convinced that regularly sharing the good news from the Bible with her neighbors helps her in two ways. "First, it gives me the kind of happiness and satisfaction Jesus spoke of," she says. "Second, I receive much positive feedback from others, which helps me to find joy." By generously giving of ourselves, we will experience the truthfulness of Proverbs 11:25: "The one freely watering others will himself also be freely watered."

***"All the days of the afflicted one are bad; but the one that is good at heart has a feast constantly."*** (Proverbs 15:15)

All of us have a choice as to how we view ourselves and our circumstances. We can be like the one who sees everything neg-

atively and feels afflicted, or we can choose to think positively, feel "good at heart," and be joyful as if we were at a feast. Says Simone: "I try to remain as positive as possible. I keep busy in personal study and in the ministry, and I persevere in prayer. I also try to surround myself with positive people, and I try to be there for others." Such a heart attitude leads to true joy, even as the Bible urges us: "Rejoice in Jehovah and be joyful, you righteous ones; and cry out joyfully, all you who are upright in heart."—Psalm 32:11.

***"A true companion is loving all the time, and is a brother that is born for when there is distress."*** (Proverbs 17:17) Confiding in a loved one or in a trusted counselor can help

us get a grip on negative feelings and put them out of the way before they overwhelm us. Speaking with others can help us to see things from a balanced, positive viewpoint. "Talking things out helps a lot," admits Simone. "You need to tell someone how you're feeling. Often just getting it out is all that's needed." Doing so will help you experience the truthfulness of the proverb that says: "Anxious care in the heart of a man is what will cause it to bow down, but the good word is what makes it rejoice."—Proverbs 12:25.

***Living by Bible principles promotes joy***

## What You Can Do

We have considered but a few of the many wonderful and practical principles from the Bible that can help us overcome negative feelings and find true joy. If you are among those who are struggling with feelings of inadequacy, we encourage you to make a closer examination of God's Word, the Bible. Learn to cultivate a realistic and healthy feeling about yourself and about your relationship with God. It is our sincere hope that with guidance from God's Word, you will be able to find true joy in all that you do.



# Jehovah's Word Is Alive

## Highlights From the Book of Second Kings

THE Bible book of Second Kings takes up where the book of First Kings leaves off. It is an account of 29 kings—12 from the northern kingdom of Israel and 17 from the southern kingdom of Judah. Second Kings also relates activities of the prophets Elijah, Elisha, and Isaiah. Though not strictly in chronological order, the record reaches down to the time of the destruction of Samaria and Jerusalem. Altogether, Second Kings covers a period of 340 years—from 920 B.C.E. to 580 B.C.E. when the prophet Jeremiah completed the writing of this book.

Of what value is Second Kings to us? What does it teach us about Jehovah and his dealings? What lessons can we draw from the actions of the kings, the prophets, and others mentioned in the book? Let us see what we can learn from Second Kings.

### ELISHA SUCCEEDS ELIJAH (2 Kings 1:1–8:29)

King Ahaziah of Israel suffers a fall in his home and is sick. He receives a notice of death from the prophet Elijah. Ahaziah dies, and his brother Jehoram ascends to the throne. Meanwhile, Jehoshaphat is king over Judah. Elijah is taken up in a windstorm, and his assistant, Elisha, succeeds him as a prophet. During some 60 years of his ministry that follows, Elisha performs many miracles.—See the box “Elisha’s Miracles.”

When a Moabite king rebels against Israel, Jehoram, Jehoshaphat, and the king of Edom go out to meet him in battle. They are given victory because of the faithfulness of Jehoshaphat. Later, the king of Syria plans a surprise attack against Israel. However, Elisha foils the

plan. The Syrian king is enraged and sends “horses and war chariots and a heavy military force” to capture Elisha. (2 Kings 6:14) Elisha performs two miracles and turns back the Syrians in peace. In time, Syrian King Ben-hadad lays siege against Samaria. This results in a severe famine, but Elisha foretells that the famine will end.

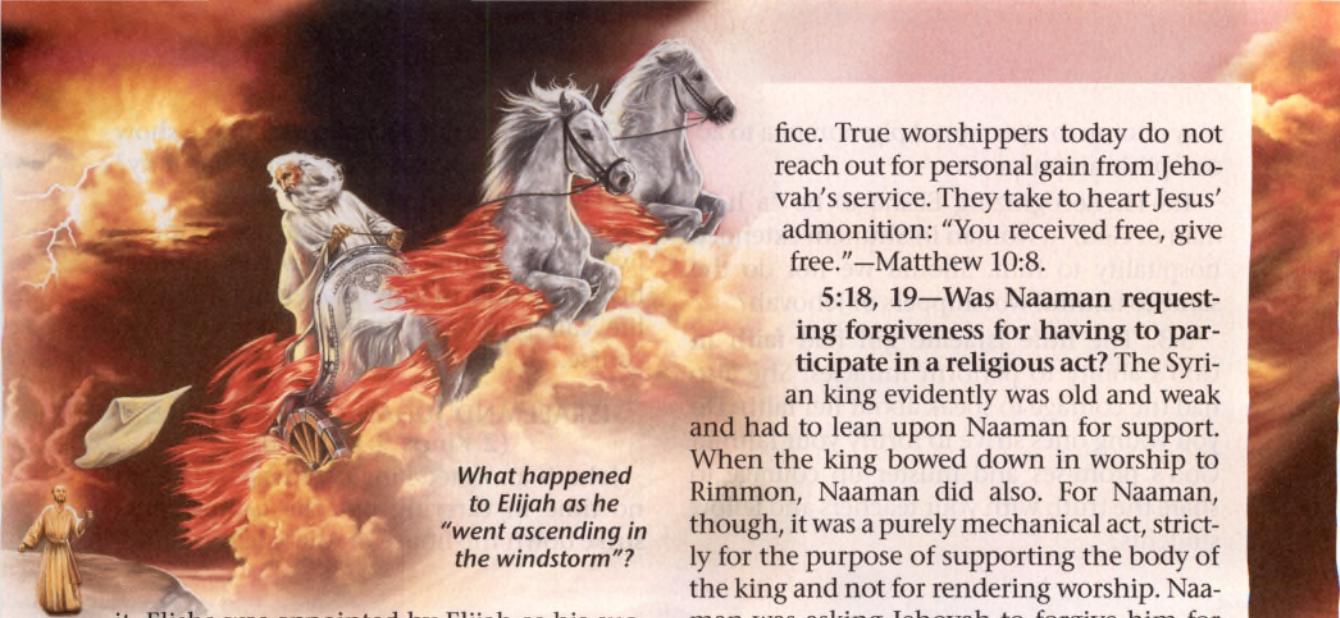
Some time later, Elisha goes to Damascus. King Ben-hadad, now sick, sends Hazael to inquire if he will recover from his sickness. Elisha foretells that the king will die and that Hazael will rule in his place. The very next day, Hazael suffocates the king under a wet “netted cloth” and assumes the kingship. (2 Kings 8:15, footnote) In Judah, Jehoshaphat’s son Jehoram becomes king, and he is succeeded by his son Ahaziah.—See the box “Kings of Judah and of Israel.”

### Scriptural Questions Answered:

2:9—Why did Elisha ask for ‘two parts in Elijah’s spirit’? To carry out the responsibility as a prophet to Israel, Elisha would need the same spirit that Elijah had shown, that of courage and fearlessness. Realizing this, Elisha asked for a double portion of Elijah’s spir-

*Naaman humbled himself and was healed by Jehovah’s power*





*What happened  
to Elijah as he  
“went ascending in  
the windstorm”?*

it. Elisha was appointed by Elijah as his successor and had been his attendant for six years, so Elisha viewed Elijah as his spiritual father; Elisha was like the firstborn spiritual son of Elijah. (1 Kings 19:19-21; 2 Kings 2:12) Hence, just as the literal firstborn received two parts of his father's inheritance, Elisha asked for and received two parts of spiritual inheritance from Elijah.

**2:11—What were “the heavens” to which “Elijah went ascending in the windstorm”?** These were neither the distant parts of the physical universe nor the spiritual place where God and his angelic sons dwell. (Deuteronomy 4:19; Psalm 11:4; Matthew 6:9; 18:10) “The heavens” to which Elijah ascended were the atmospheric heavens. (Psalm 78:26; Matthew 6:26) Racing through earth's atmosphere, the fiery chariot evidently transferred Elijah to another part of the earth, where he continued living for a time. Years later, in fact, Elijah wrote a letter to Jehoram, the king of Judah.—2 Chronicles 21:1, 12-15.

**5:15, 16—Why did Elisha not accept Naaman's gift?** Elisha refused the gift because he recognized that the miracle of healing Naaman was performed by Jehovah's power, not his own. It would have been unthinkable on his part to profit from his God-appointed of-

fice. True worshippers today do not reach out for personal gain from Jehovah's service. They take to heart Jesus' admonition: “You received free, give free.”—Matthew 10:8.

**5:18, 19—Was Naaman requesting forgiveness for having to participate in a religious act?** The Syrian king evidently was old and weak and had to lean upon Naaman for support. When the king bowed down in worship to Rimmon, Naaman did also. For Naaman, though, it was a purely mechanical act, strictly for the purpose of supporting the body of the king and not for rendering worship. Naaman was asking Jehovah to forgive him for performing this civil duty. Believing Naaman, Elisha said to him: “Go in peace.”

#### **Lessons for Us:**

**1:13, 14.** Learning from observation and acting with humility can save lives.

**2:2, 4, 6.** Even though Elisha had been Elijah's attendant for perhaps six years, he insisted on not leaving him. What a fine example of loyalty and friendship!—Proverbs 18:24.

**2:23, 24.** The main reason for this mocking of Elisha appears to be that a bald man was wearing Elijah's official garment. The children recognized Elisha as Jehovah's representative and simply did not want him around. They told him to “go up,” that is, keep going up to Bethel or be taken up as Elijah had been. The children evidently reflected the antagonistic attitude of their parents. How vital that parents teach their children to respect God's representatives!

**3:14, 18, 24.** Jehovah's word always comes true.

**3:22.** The reflection of the early morning light created the illusion that the water was blood, perhaps because the soil in the freshly made ditches contained red clay. Jehovah

may choose to use natural phenomena to accomplish his purposes.

**4:8-11.** Recognizing Elisha to be “a holy man of God,” a woman in Shunem extended hospitality to him. Should we not do the same to faithful worshippers of Jehovah?

**5:3.** The little Israelite girl had faith in God’s ability to perform miracles. She also had the courage to speak about her faith. Do you young ones strive to fortify your faith in God’s promises and muster up courage to share the truth with your teachers and fellow students?

**5:9-19.** Does not Naaman’s example show that a proud person can learn humility? —1 Peter 5:5.

**5:20-27.** What a price to pay for trying to live a lie! Giving thought to the personal heartache and tragedy that living a double life can bring will help us avoid such a course.

### ISRAEL AND JUDAH GO INTO EXILE (2 Kings 9:1–25:30)

Jehu is anointed king over Israel. He loses no time in carrying out the campaign to strike down the house of Ahab. Jehu skillful-



### ELISHA’S MIRACLES

**1. The waters of the Jordan are made to divide.**—2 Kings 2:14

**2. The bad water supply of Jericho is made healthful.**—2 Kings 2:19-22

**3. Juvenile delinquents are attacked by bears.**—2 Kings 2:23, 24

**4. Water is supplied to armies.**—2 Kings 3:16-26

**5. A widow receives edible oil.**—2 Kings 4:1-7

**6. A barren Shunammite woman conceives a child.**—2 Kings 4:8-17

**7. A child is raised from the dead.**—2 Kings 4:18-37

**8. A poisonous stew becomes edible.**—2 Kings 4:38-41

**9. One hundred men are fed with 20 loaves.**—2 Kings 4:42-44

**10. Naaman is healed of his leprosy.**—2 Kings 5:1-14

**11. Gehazi receives Naaman’s leprosy.**—2 Kings 5:24-27

**12. An axhead is made to float.**—2 Kings 6:5-7

**13. A servant sees angelic chariots.**—2 Kings 6:15-17

**14. The Syrian army is struck with blindness.**—2 Kings 6:18

**15. The sight of the Syrian army is restored.**—2 Kings 6:19-23

**16. A dead man comes to life.**—2 Kings 13:20, 21

ly ‘annihilates Baal worship out of Israel.’ (2 Kings 10:28) Upon learning that her son has been killed by Jehu, Ahaziah’s mother, Athaliah, ‘rises up to destroy all the offspring of the kingdom of Judah’ and usurps the throne. (2 Kings 11:1) Only Ahaziah’s baby son, Jehoash, is rescued and after six years in hiding is appointed king over Judah. Instructed by Jehoiada the priest, Jehoash continues to do what is right in Jehovah’s eyes.

After Jehu, all the kings who rule Israel do what is bad in Jehovah’s eyes. Elisha dies a natural death in the time of Jehu’s grandson. The fourth Judean king following Jehoash is Ahaz, and he ‘does not do what is right in the eyes of Jehovah.’ (2 Kings 16:1, 2) His son Hezekiah, however, proves to be a king who ‘keeps sticking to Jehovah.’ (2 Kings 17:20; 18:6) In 740 B.C.E., when Hezekiah is king over Judah and Hoshea rules over Israel, Assyrian King Shalmaneser ‘captures Samaria and leads Israel into exile in Assyria.’ (2 Kings 17:6) Subsequently, foreigners are brought into the territory of Israel, and the Samaritan religion is born.

Of the seven kings who follow Hezekiah in Judah, only Josiah takes steps to rid the land of false worship. Finally, in 607 B.C.E., the Babylonians capture Jerusalem and ‘Judah goes into exile from its soil.’—2 Kings 25:21.

#### *Scriptural Questions Answered:*

**13:20, 21—Does this miracle support the veneration of religious relics?** No, it does not. The Bible does not show that the bones of Elisha were ever venerated. It was God’s power that made this miracle possible, as was the case with all the miracles Elisha performed when he was still alive.

**15:1-6—Why did Jehovah plague Azariah (Uzziah, 15:6, footnote) with leprosy?** “As soon as [Uzziah] was strong, his heart became haughty . . . , so that he acted unfaithfully against Jehovah his God and came

into the temple of Jehovah to burn incense upon the altar of incense.” When the priests “stood up against Uzziah” and told him to “go out from the sanctuary,” he became enraged against the priests and was struck with leprosy.—2 Chronicles 26:16-20.

**18:19-21, 25—Had Hezekiah made an alliance with Egypt?** No. Rabshakeh’s accusation was false, as was his claim to have come with “authorization from Jehovah.” Faithful King Hezekiah relied solely on Jehovah.

#### **Lessons for Us:**

**9:7, 26.** The heavy judgment against the house of Ahab shows that false worship and the shedding of innocent blood are detestable to Jehovah.

**9:20.** Jehu’s reputation as a furious chariot driver gave evidence of his zeal in carrying out his commission. Are you personally known as a zealous Kingdom proclaimer?—2 Timothy 4:2.

**9:36, 37; 10:17; 13:18, 19, 25; 14:25; 19:20, 32-36; 20:16, 17; 24:13.** We can be confident that ‘the word that goes forth from Jehovah’s mouth always has certain success.’—Isaiah 55:10, 11.

**10:15.** Just as Jehonadab wholeheartedly accepted Jehu’s invitation to get up into the chariot with him, the “great crowd” willingly support Jesus Christ, the modern-day Jehu, and his anointed followers.—Revelation 7:9.

**10:30, 31.** Though Jehu’s record was not flawless, Jehovah showed appreciation for all that he did. Indeed, ‘God is not unrighteous so as to forget our work.’—Hebrews 6:10.

**13:14-19.** Since Jehu’s grandson Jehoash did not exert himself but struck the earth with arrows only three times, he had limited success in defeating the Syrians. Jehovah expects us to do his assigned work wholeheartedly and with zeal.

**20:2-6.** Jehovah is the “Hearer of prayer.”—Psalm 65:2.

**24:3, 4.** On account of Manasseh's blood-guilt, Jehovah "did not consent to grant forgiveness" to Judah. God respects the blood of the innocent. We can be confident that Jehovah will avenge innocent blood by destroying those responsible for shedding it.—Psalm 37:9-11; 145:20.

### Valuable to Us

The book of Second Kings portrays Jehovah as the Fulfiller of promises. The exile of residents of the two kingdoms, first of Israel and then of Judah, forcefully brings to our attention how the prophetic judg-

ment recorded at Deuteronomy 28:15-29:28 came true. Second Kings describes Elisha as a prophet with great zeal for Jehovah's name and for true worship. Hezekiah and Josiah are depicted as humble kings who respect God's Law.

As we reflect on the attitude and actions of the kings, prophets, and others referred to in Second Kings, do we not learn valuable lessons in what to strive for and what to avoid? (Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11) Yes, "the word of God is alive and exerts power."—Hebrews 4:12.

### KINGS OF JUDAH AND OF ISRAEL

Saul/David/Solomon: 1117/1077/1037 B.C.E.\*

KINGDOM OF JUDAH	DATE (B.C.E.)	KINGDOM OF ISRAEL
Rehoboam	997	Jeroboam
Abijah/Asa	980/978	
	976/975/952	Nadab/Baasha/Elah
	951/951/951	Zimri/Omri/Tibni
	940	Ahab
Jehoshaphat	937	
	920/917	Ahaziah/Jehoram
Jehoram	913	
Ahaziah	906	
(Athaliah)	905	Jehu
JeHoash	898	
	876/859	Jehoahaz/JeHoash
Amaziah	858	
	844	Jeroboam II
Azariah (Uzziah)	829	
	803/791/791	Zechariah/Shallum/Menahem
	780/778	Pekahiah/Pekah
Jotham/Ahaz	777/762	
	758	Hoshea
Hezekiah	746	
	740	Samaria captured
Manasseh/Amon/Josiah	716/661/659	
Jehoahaz/Jehoiakim	628/628	
Jehoiachin/Zedekiah	618/617	
Jerusalem destroyed	607	

\* Some dates are the approximate beginning year of the reign.

# When Is There a Basis for Taking Offense?

**A**T ECCLESIASTES 7:9, the Bible states: “The taking of offense is what rests in the bosom of the stupid ones.” This verse shows that we should not be overly sensitive when someone offends us; rather, we should be forgiving.

However, is Ecclesiastes 7:9 saying that we should never be offended by anything or anyone, that we are to forgive all offenses regardless of how severe or how frequent they are and not do anything about them? Should we be unconcerned about our giving offense by word or action because we know that the one offended should be forgiving? This cannot be the case.

Jehovah God is the epitome of love, mercy, forgiveness, and long-suffering. Yet, in the Bible, he is many times spoken of as being offended. When the offense was severe, he took action against the offenders. Consider some examples.

## Offenses Against Jehovah

The account at 1 Kings 15:30 speaks of the sins of Jeroboam “with which he caused Israel to sin and by his offensiveness with which he offended Jehovah.” At 2 Chronicles 28:25, the Bible says regarding King Ahaz of Judah: “He made high places for making sacrificial smoke to other gods, so that he offended Jehovah the God of his forefathers.” Another example is found at Judges 2:11-14: “Israel fell to doing what was bad in the eyes of Jehovah and serving the Baals . . . , so that they offended Jehovah. . . . At this Jehovah’s anger blazed against Is-

rael, so that he gave them into the hands of the pillagers.”

There are other things that offended Jehovah and that called for strong action. For example, at Exodus 22:18-20, we read: “You must not preserve a sorceress alive. Anyone lying down with a beast is positively to be put to death. One who sacrifices to any gods but Jehovah alone is to be devoted to destruction.”

Jehovah did not continually forgive the major offenses of ancient Israel when they kept offending him and did not show true repentance. Where there was no true repentance and no actions to indicate that there was a turning around to obey Jehovah, God eventually gave the perpetrators up to destruction. This happened on a national scale in 607 B.C.E., at the hands of the Babylonians, and again in 70 C.E., at the hands of the Romans.

Yes, Jehovah takes offense at the bad things that people say and do, and he even executes unrepentant offenders whose sins are gross. But does this put him in the category of those of whom Ecclesiastes 7:9 speaks? Not at all. He is justified in taking offense at gross sins and always judges fairly. The Bible says of Jehovah: “Perfect is his activity, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness, with whom there is no injustice; righteous and upright is he.”—Deuteronomy 32:4.

## Major Offenses Against Individuals Under the Law that God gave to ancient

*Jehovah gave unrepentant Israel up to destruction  
by the Romans in 70 C.E.*



Israel, there were serious consequences for major offenses against individuals. For instance, if a thief came into a house at night and the householder killed him, there was no bloodguilt on the part of the householder. He was an innocent victim of a major crime. Hence, we read: "If a thief should be found in the act of breaking in and he does get struck and die, there is no bloodguilt for [the householder]."—Exodus 22:2.

#### IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

"Death Is Swallowed Up Forever"

The Royal Bible—A Milestone in Scholarship

Will You Reflect God's Glory?

A woman who has been raped has a right to be highly offended, as this is a major crime in God's eyes. Under the Mosaic Law, a man who raped a woman was to die "just as when a man rises up against his fellowman and indeed murders him." (Deuteronomy 22:25, 26) While we are no longer under that Law, it gives us insight into how Jehovah feels about rape—a horrible wrong.

In our time, rape is also a major crime with severe penalties. The victim has every right to report the matter to the police. In this way the proper authorities can punish the offender. And if the victim is a minor, the parents may want to initiate these actions.

#### Lesser Offenses

However, not all offenses require action by the authorities. Thus, we should not want to take undue offense at the relatively

minor mistakes that others make, but we should be forgiving. How often should we forgive? The apostle Peter asked Jesus: "Lord, how many times is my brother to sin against me and am I to forgive him? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered: "I say to you, not, Up to seven times, but, Up to seventy-seven times."—Matthew 18:21, 22.

On the other hand, there is a continuing need for us to work on our Christian personality to try to minimize giving offense. For instance, when you deal with others, are you at times blunt, tactless, insulting? Such ways are likely to offend. Rather than blaming the victim for taking offense and feeling that the burden of forgiveness is on him, the offender needs to realize that he is the reason that the person took offense. The of-

fender needs to work on controlling his actions and speech so as not to give offense in the first place. This effort will reduce the number of times we hurt the feelings of others. The Bible reminds us: "There exists the one speaking thoughtlessly as with the stabs of a sword, but the tongue of the wise ones is a healing." (Proverbs 12:18) When we offend others, even if we did not intend to do so, our making an apology goes a long way toward remedying the situation.

God's Word shows that we should "pursue the things making for peace and the things that are upbuilding to one another." (Romans 14:19) When we are tactful and kind, the proverb applies: "As apples of gold in silver carvings is a word spoken at the right time for it." (Proverbs 25:11) What a pleasant and delightful impression that leaves! Mild, tactful speech can even change the rigid attitudes of others: "A mild tongue itself can break a bone."—Proverbs 25:15.

Hence, God's Word counsels us: "Let your utterance be always with graciousness, seasoned with salt, so as to know how you ought to give an answer to each one." (Colossians 4:6) "Seasoned with salt" means that we make our expressions tasteful to others, thereby reducing the possibility of giving offense. In both word and deed, Christians strive to apply the Bible's admonition: "Seek peace and pursue it."—1 Peter 3:11.

Thus, Ecclesiastes 7:9 must mean that we should refrain from taking offense at the relatively minor sins of others. These may be the result of human imperfection or may even be deliberate yet not gross. But when an offense is a major sin, it is understandable that the victim may be offended and may choose to initiate appropriate action.—Matthew 18:15-17.

*"As apples of gold . . . is a word spoken at the right time"*





## JEHOVAH RICHLY REWARDS THOSE WHO KEEP HIS WAY

AS TOLD BY  
**ROMUALD STAWSKI**

When the second world war started in September 1939, northern Poland was the site of heavy fighting. As a curious nine-year-old boy, I went to a nearby battlefield to have a look. What I saw was horrifying—corpses littered the ground, and choking smoke filled the air. Although I was mainly thinking of how to get home safely, some questions came to my mind: "Why does God allow such terrible things to happen? Whose side is he on?"

**N**EAR the end of the war, youngsters were forced to work for the German regime. Anyone who dared to refuse was hanged on a tree or a bridge with the sign "traitor" or "saboteur" on his chest. Our town, Gdynia, was located between opposing armies. When we went outside the town to fetch water, bullets and bombs whizzed over our heads, and my younger brother Henryk was mortally wounded. Because of the terrible conditions, my mother moved us four children to a basement for safety. There my two-

year-old brother, Eugeniusz, died of diphtheria.

Again I asked myself: "Where is God? Why does he allow all this suffering?" Even though I was a zealous Catholic and attended church regularly, I did not find the answers.

### I Embraced Bible Truth

Answers to my questions came from an unexpected source. The war ended in 1945, and early in 1947, one of Jehovah's Witness-

es called at our home in Gdynia. My mother talked to the Witness, and I heard some of what was said. It seemed logical, so we accepted an invitation to a Christian meeting. Just a month later, though not yet firmly established in Bible truth, I joined a group of local Witnesses and preached to others about a better world, free from wars and atrocities. This gave me a lot of joy.

In September 1947, I was baptized at a circuit assembly in Sopot. The following May, I started in the regular pioneer service, devoting most of my time to preaching the Bible's message to others. The local clergy bitterly opposed our work and incited violence against us. Once, an angry mob attacked us, hurled stones at us, and beat us severely. On another occasion local nuns and clergymen urged a group of people to attack us. We took refuge in a police station, but the mob surrounded the building, threatening to beat us. Finally, police reinforcements came, and we were taken away with a strong escort.

At that time, there was no congregation in our area. Sometimes we stayed overnight in the forest under the sky. We were happy that we could carry out the preaching work in spite of the conditions. Today, there are strong congregations in that area.

#### Bethel Service and Arrest

In 1949, I was invited to the Bethel Home in Łódź. What a privilege it was to serve at such a place! Sadly, my stay there did not last very long. In June 1950, a month before our work was officially banned, I was arrested along with other brothers at Bethel. I was taken to prison, and as it turned out, I was to face a cruel interrogation.

Because my father worked on a ship that regularly sailed to New York, the officers conducting the investigation tried to make me admit that he spied for the United States. I was subjected to merciless interrogation. In

addition, four officers simultaneously tried to make me testify against Brother Wilhelm Scheider, who was then supervising our activity in Poland. They beat me on my heels with thick sticks. As I lay on the floor bleeding, feeling that I could not bear it anymore, I cried, "Jehovah, help me!" My persecutors were surprised and stopped beating me. Within a few minutes, they fell asleep. I felt

*At an assembly held in a brother's garden in Kraków, 1964*



relieved and regained my strength. This convinced me that Jehovah lovingly responds to his dedicated servants when they cry out to him. It strengthened my faith and taught me to place my full confidence in God.

The final report of the investigation included false testimony supposedly given by me. When I protested, an officer told me, "You will explain it in court!" A friendly cell mate advised me not to worry, since the final report had to be verified by a military prosecutor, which would give me a chance to refute the false testimony. That turned out to be so.

#### Circuit Work and Another Imprisonment

I was released in January 1951. A month later, I started to serve as a traveling overseer.

Despite the ban, I worked with other brothers to strengthen the congregations and help fellow Witnesses who were dispersed because of the activity of the security services. We encouraged the brothers to continue in the ministry. In later years, these brothers courageously supported the traveling overseers and carried out the work of printing and distributing Bible literature underground.

One day in April 1951, after attending a Christian meeting, I was arrested in the street by security officers who had been watching me carefully. Because I refused to answer their questions, they took me to a prison in Bydgoszcz and started interrogating me that same night. I was ordered to stand against a wall for six days and six nights, with no food or drink and in dense tobacco smoke from the officers' cigarettes. I was beaten with a club and burned with cigarettes. When I fainted, they poured water on me and resumed the interrogation. I begged Jehovah for strength to endure, and he supported me.

Staying in Bydgoszcz prison had its good side. There I was able to share Bible truth with people who could not otherwise be reached. And truly, there were many opportunities to give a witness. Because of their sad, often hopeless, situation, the prisoners readily opened their ears and hearts to the good news.

### Two Important Changes

Soon after I was released in 1952, I met Nela, a zealous pioneer sister. She had been pioneering in the south of Poland. Later she worked in a "bakery," a secret place where our literature was printed. That was hard work, requiring alertness and self-sacrifice. We were married in 1954, and we continued in the full-time service until our daughter, Lidia, was born. Then we decided that in or-

der to allow me to continue in the traveling work, Nela would stop her full-time service, return home, and take care of our daughter.

That same year, we faced another important decision. I was asked to serve as a district overseer in an area that covered one third of Poland. We considered the matter prayerfully. I knew how important it



*With my wife, Nela, and  
our daughter, Lidia, 1968*

was to strengthen our brothers under ban. There were many arrests, so there was a great need for spiritual encouragement. With Nela's support, I accepted the assignment. Jehovah helped me to serve in this capacity for 38 years.

### In Charge of "Bakeries"

In those days, the district overseer was responsible for the "bakeries," located in secluded places. The police were constantly on our heels, trying to find and shut down our printing operations. Sometimes they succeeded, but we never lacked the necessary spiritual food. It was clearly evident that Jehovah was taking care of us.

To be invited to do the hard and dangerous work of printing, a person had to be loy-

al, alert, self-sacrificing, and obedient. It was those qualities that made it possible for a "bakery" to continue to function safely. Finding a good location for underground printing was also difficult. Some locations seemed suitable, but the brothers there were not very discreet. In other locations, the situation was the other way around. The brothers were willing to make exceptional sacrifices. I really appreciated all the brothers and sisters with whom I had the privilege to work.

### Defending the Good News

During those difficult years, we were constantly accused of engaging in illegal, subversive activity and taken to court. This was a problem because we did not have lawyers to defend us. Some lawyers were sympathetic, but most were afraid of the publicity and did not want to risk displeasing the authorities. However, Jehovah was aware of our needs, and in due time he maneuvered matters accordingly.

Alojzy Prostak, a traveling overseer from Kraków, was so brutally treated during interrogation that he had to be taken to the prison hospital. His firm stand in the face of mental and physical torture earned him the respect and admiration of the other prisoners in the hospital. One of them was a lawyer named Witold Lis-Olszewski, who was impressed with the courage of Brother Prostak. He talked to him several times and promised, "As soon as I am released and allowed to resume my practice, I will be willing to defend Jehovah's Witnesses." He meant what he said.

Mr. Olszewski had his own team of attorneys, whose commitment was truly admirable. During the time when opposition was most intense, they defended the brothers in about 30 trials per month—one a day! Because Mr. Olszewski needed to be well-

informed about all the cases, I was assigned to keep in touch with him. I worked with him for seven years in the 1960's and 1970's.

I learned a lot about legal work during those days. I often observed the trials, the lawyers' comments—both positive and negative—the methods of legal defense, and the testimony of accused fellow believers. It all became very useful in helping our brothers, especially those called as witnesses, to know what to say and when to keep silent before the court.

When a trial was on, Mr. Olszewski often stayed overnight in the homes of Jehovah's Witnesses. It was not because he could not afford a hotel room, but as he once said, "Before the trial, I want to breathe in some of your spirit." Thanks to his assistance, many trials ended favorably. He defended me several times, and he never accepted any money from me. On another occasion, he refused payment for 30 cases. Why? He said, "I want to contribute even a little bit to your work." And it was no little sum of money. The activity of Mr. Olszewski's team did not go unnoticed by the authorities, but that did not discourage him from assisting us.

It is difficult to describe the fine witness given by our brothers during those trials. Many came to the courts to observe the trials and to strengthen the accused brothers. During the time of the peak number of trials, I counted as many as 30,000 such supporters in one year. That surely was a great crowd of Witnesses!

### A New Assignment

By 1989 the ban on our work had been lifted. Three years later a new branch office was built and dedicated. I was invited there to work with Hospital Information Services, which assignment I gladly accepted. Working as a three-person team, we supported our brothers facing the blood issue and helped



*With a Witness boy before his bloodless heart surgery*



*With Dr. Wites,  
chief surgeon of bloodless  
heart surgery for children,  
at a Katowice hospital*

them to defend their stand, based on their Christian conscience.—Acts 15:29.

My wife and I have been very grateful for the privilege of serving Jehovah in the public ministry. Nela has always supported and encouraged me. I am always thankful that whenever I was busy with theocratic assignments or was sent to prison, she never complained about my absence from home. In difficult times, she comforted others instead of breaking down herself.

For example, in 1974, I was arrested along with other traveling overseers. Some brothers who knew about it wanted to inform my wife in a gentle way. When they saw her, they asked, "Sister Nela, are you ready for the worst?" At first, she froze with fear, as she thought I had died. When she learned what had really happened, she said with relief: "He is alive! This is not his first imprisonment." The brothers told me later



*With Nela, 2002*

that they were deeply impressed with her positive attitude.

Even though we have had some painful experiences in the past, Jehovah has always richly rewarded us for keeping his way. How glad we are that our daughter, Lidia, and her husband, Alfred DeRusha, have proved to be an exemplary Christian couple. They have brought up their sons, Christopher and Jonathan, to be dedicated servants of God, which adds to our happiness. My brother, Ryszard, and my sister, Urszula, have also been faithful Christians for many years.

Jehovah has never left us, and we want to continue serving him wholeheartedly. We have personally experienced the truthfulness of the words of Psalm 37:34: "Hope in Jehovah and keep his way, and he will exalt you to take possession of the earth." We look forward to that time with all our heart.

# JEHOVAH HAS NUMBERED “THE VERY HAIRS OF YOUR HEAD”

*“Not one [sparrow] will fall to the ground without your Father’s knowledge. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.”—MATTHEW 10:29, 30.*

“I CALL to you, O God, but you never answer; and when I pray, you pay no attention. You are treating me cruelly; you persecute me with all your power.” The man who spoke those words was in great anguish, and no wonder! He had lost his livelihood, a freakish disaster had claimed the lives of his children, and now he was beset by a debilitating illness. The man’s name was Job, and his harrowing ordeal is recorded in the Bible for our benefit.—Job 30:20, 21, *Today’s English Version*.

<sup>2</sup> Job’s expressions might make it appear that he had turned against God, but that was not the case. Job simply spoke from the depths of his distressed heart. (Job 6:2, 3) He did not know that Satan was the cause of his trials, so he mistakenly concluded that God had left him. At one point, Job even said to Jehovah: “Why do you conceal your very face and regard me as an enemy of yours?”\*—Job 13:24.

<sup>3</sup> Today, many of Jehovah’s people suffer unrelenting hardships as a result of wars, political or social upheavals, natural disasters, old age, sickness, dire poverty, and governmental bans. Likely you too are undergoing trials of one kind or another. At times, you

\* Similar statements were made by righteous David and by the faithful sons of Korah.—Psalm 10:1; 44:24.

1, 2. (a) Why did Job feel abandoned by God? (b) Did Job’s expressions mean that he had turned against Jehovah? Explain.

3. When adversities strike, what might come to our mind?

may think that Jehovah is concealing his face from you. You well know the words of John 3:16: “God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son.” Still, when you are suffering with no relief in sight, you may wonder: ‘Does God really love *me*? Does he notice what I am going through? Does he care about me as an individual?’

<sup>4</sup> Consider what happened to the apostle Paul. “There was given me a thorn in the flesh, an angel of Satan, to keep slapping me,” he wrote, adding: “I three times entreated the Lord that it might depart from me.” Jehovah heard his entreaties. Nevertheless, he indicated to Paul that he would not intervene by means of a miraculous solution. Instead, Paul would have to rely on God’s power to help him cope with his “thorn in the flesh.”\* (2 Corinthians 12:7-9) Like Paul, you may be experiencing a certain ongoing trial. Perhaps you wonder, ‘Does the fact that Jehovah appears not to have done anything about my trial mean that he is unaware of my situation or that he does not care about me?’ The answer is a resounding no! Jehovah’s deep concern for each of

\* The Bible does not state just what Paul’s “thorn in the flesh” was. It might have been a physical affliction, such as poor eyesight. Or the expression “thorn in the flesh” might refer to false apostles and others who challenged Paul’s apostleship and ministry.—2 Corinthians 11:6, 13-15; Galatians 4:15; 6:11.

4. What ongoing situation did Paul have to endure, and in what ways might such a situation affect us?



*Why did Jehovah not remove Paul's  
"thorn in the flesh"?*

his faithful servants is underscored by what Jesus told his apostles shortly after he selected them. Let us see how his words can encourage us today.

**"Have No Fear"—Why?**

<sup>5</sup> The apostles received extraordinary powers from Jesus, including "authority over unclean spirits, in order to expel these and to cure every sort of disease and every sort of infirmity." Yet, this did not mean that their course would be free from trials and hardships. On the contrary, Jesus described in detail some of the things that were to befall them. However, he urged them: "Do not become fearful of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; but rather be in fear of him that can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna."—Matthew 10:1, 16-22, 28.

<sup>6</sup> To help his apostles understand why

5, 6. (a) How did Jesus help the apostles not to be fearful of what lay ahead? (b) How did Paul show confidence in Jehovah's care for him?

they need not be fearful, Jesus went on to give two illustrations. He said to them: "Do not two sparrows sell for a coin of small value? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father's knowledge. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Therefore have no fear: you are worth more than many sparrows." (Matthew 10:29-31) Note that Jesus linked not being fearful in the face of adversity with being confident that Jehovah cares for us personally. Evidently, the apostle Paul had such confidence. He wrote: "If God is for us, who will be against us? He who did not even spare his own Son but delivered him up for us all,

why will he not also with him kindly give us all other things?" (Romans 8:31, 32) No matter what challenges you face, you too can be sure that Jehovah cares for you personally as long as you remain loyal to him. This will become even more evident as we take a closer look at Jesus' admonition to his apostles.

**The Value of a Sparrow**

<sup>7</sup> Jesus' word pictures effectively describe Jehovah's concern for each of His servants. Consider first the matter of the sparrows. In Jesus' day, sparrows were used for food, but because they were a threat to crops, they were largely viewed as pests. Sparrows were so abundant and cheap that two could be purchased for less than the equivalent of five cents in modern values. Twice that amount would buy not four but five sparrows—the

7, 8. (a) How were sparrows viewed in Jesus' day? (b) Why, evidently, does Matthew 10:29 use the diminutive form of the Greek word for "sparrows"?

*What can we learn from Jesus' illustration of the sparrows?*

extra bird being thrown in, as if it had no value at all!—Luke 12:6.

<sup>8</sup> Think, too, about the size of this common bird. Compared to many other birds, even a full-grown sparrow is quite small. Yet, the Greek word translated “sparrows” at Matthew 10:29 specifically refers to *little* sparrows. Jesus evidently wanted his apostles to imagine a bird of the very least significance. As one reference work says, “Jesus cites a very small bird and uses a diminutive even of that!”

<sup>9</sup> Jesus’ analogy of the sparrows makes a powerful point: What seems valueless to humans is important to Jehovah God. Jesus further emphasized this truth by adding that a little sparrow would not “fall to the ground” without Jehovah’s notice.\* The lesson is clear. If Jehovah God takes note of the smallest and most insignificant bird, how much more will he be concerned about the plight of a human who has chosen to serve him!

<sup>10</sup> In addition to his illustration about the sparrows, Jesus said: “The very hairs of your head are all numbered.” (Matthew 10:30) This brief but profound statement amplifies the point of Jesus’ illustration about the sparrows. Consider: The average human head has about 100,000 strands of hair. For the most part, one hair seems just like the next, and no single hair seems to deserve our particular scrutiny. Yet, each hair is noticed

\* Some scholars suggest that the sparrow’s falling to the ground may allude to more than its dying. They say that the original-language phrase may refer to a bird’s alighting on the ground for food. If this is the case, it would imply that God notices and cares for the bird in its daily activities, not just when it dies.—Matthew 6:26.

9. What powerful point is made by Jesus’ illustration of the sparrows?

10. What is the significance of the statement: “The very hairs of your head are all numbered”?



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and numbered by Jehovah God. Since this is the case, is there any detail of our life that Jehovah cannot know? Surely Jehovah understands the unique makeup of each of his servants. Indeed, he “sees what the heart is.”—1 Samuel 16:7.

<sup>11</sup> David, who was no stranger to hardship, was confident that Jehovah noticed him. “O Jehovah, you have searched through me, and you know me,” he wrote. “You yourself have come to know my sitting down and my rising up. You have considered my thought from far off.” (Psalm 139:1, 2) You too can be certain that Jehovah knows you personally. (Jeremiah 17:10) Do not be quick to assume that you are too insignificant to be noticed by Jehovah’s all-seeing eyes!

**“Put My Tears in Your Skin Bottle”**

<sup>12</sup> Jehovah not only knows his servants individually but is also fully aware of the adversities each one suffers. For example, when the Israelites were being oppressed as slaves, Jehovah said to Moses: “Unquestionably I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and I have heard their outcry as a result of those who drive them to work; because I well know the pains they suffer.” (Exodus 3:7) How comforting it is to realize that when we are enduring a trial,

11. How did David express his confidence in Jehovah’s concern for him personally?

12. How do we know that Jehovah is fully aware of the adversities that his people suffer?

Jehovah sees what is happening and hears our outcries! He is certainly not indifferent to our suffering.

<sup>13</sup> Jehovah's care for those who have entered into a relationship with him is further seen in his feelings for the Israelites. Even though their suffering was often a result of their own stubbornness, Isaiah wrote concerning Jehovah: "During all their distress it was distressing to him." (Isaiah 63:9) As a faithful servant of Jehovah, you can be sure, then, that when you are pained, Jehovah is pained. Does that not impel you to face up to adversity fearlessly and to continue doing your best to serve him?—1 Peter 5:6, 7.

<sup>14</sup> King David's conviction that Jehovah cared for him and felt for him is made evident in Psalm 56, which David composed while running from murderous King Saul. David escaped to Gath, but he feared capture when he was recognized by the Philistines. He wrote: "My foes have kept snapping all day long, for there are many warring against me high-mindedly." Because of his perilous situation, David turned to Jehovah. "All day long they keep hurting my personal affairs," he said. "All their thoughts are against me for bad."—Psalm 56:2, 5.

<sup>15</sup> Then, as recorded at Psalm 56:8, David makes these intriguing statements: "My being a fugitive you yourself have reported. Do put my tears in your skin bottle. Are they not in your book?" What a touching description of Jehovah's tender care! When we are under stress, we may cry out to Jehovah with tears. Even the perfect man Jesus did so. (Hebrews

13. What shows that Jehovah truly feels for his servants?

14. What were the circumstances surrounding the composing of Psalm 56?

15. (a) What did David mean when he asked Jehovah to put his tears in a skin bottle or in a book? (b) When we are enduring a faith-challenging situation, of what can we be certain?

5:7) David was convinced that Jehovah observed him and would remember his agony, as if preserving his tears in a skin bottle or inscribing them in a book.\* Perhaps you feel that your tears would fill a good part of that skin bottle or many pages of such a book. If that is the case, you can take comfort. The Bible assures us: "Jehovah is near to those that are broken at heart; and those who are crushed in spirit he saves."—Psalm 34:18.

### Becoming an Intimate Companion of God

<sup>16</sup> The fact that Jehovah has numbered 'the very hairs of our head' gives us some idea of the kind of observant and caring God we are privileged to worship. Though we will have to wait until the promised new world for all pain and suffering to vanish, Jehovah is doing something marvelous for his people right now. David wrote: "The intimacy with Jehovah belongs to those fearful of him, also his covenant, to cause them to know it."—Psalm 25:14.

<sup>17</sup> "Intimacy with Jehovah." Why, the very idea seems beyond comprehension for imperfect humans! Yet, Jehovah invites those who fear him to be guests in his tent. (Psalm 15:1-5) And what does Jehovah do for his guests? He causes them to know his covenant, according to David. Jehovah confides in them, revealing his "confidential matter" to the prophets, so that they could know what his purposes are and what they must do to live in harmony with them.—Amos 3:7.

\* In ancient times, skin bottles were made from the tanned hides of sheep, goats, and cattle. Such bottles were used to hold milk, butter, cheese, or water. Those that were subjected to a more thorough tanning process could hold oil or wine.

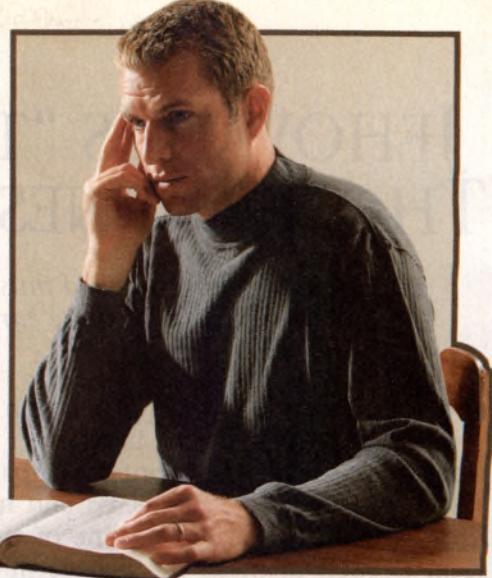
16, 17. (a) How do we know that Jehovah is not indifferent to the problems his people face? (b) What has Jehovah done to allow people to enjoy intimacy with him?

*By reading the Bible regularly, we can find assurance that God cares for us personally*

<sup>18</sup> Truly, it is heartwarming to know that we imperfect humans can become intimate companions of the Most High, Jehovah God. In fact, he urges us to do just that. “Draw close to God, and he will draw close to you,” says the Bible. (James 4:8) Jehovah wants us to have a close relationship with him. Actually, he has already taken steps to make such a relationship possible. The ransom sacrifice of Jesus has opened the door for us so that we can have a friendship with Almighty God. The Bible states: “As for us, we love, because he first loved us.”—1 John 4:19.

<sup>19</sup> That close relationship is enhanced when we endure under adverse circumstances. The disciple James wrote: “Let endurance have its work complete, that you may be complete and sound in all respects, not lacking in anything.” (James 1:4) What “work” is accomplished by enduring hardship? Recall Paul’s “thorn in the flesh.” What did endurance accomplish in his case? Paul said this about his trials: “Most gladly, therefore, will I rather boast as respects my weaknesses, that the power of the Christ may like a tent remain over me. Therefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in insults, in cases of need, in persecutions and difficulties, for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am powerful.” (2 Corinthians 12:9, 10) Paul’s experience was that Jehovah would supply the power needed—“the power beyond what is normal” if necessary—so that he could endure. That, in turn, drew him closer to Christ and to Jehovah God.—2 Corinthians 4:7; Philippians 4:11-13.

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18. How do we know that Jehovah wants us to have a close relationship with him?
  19. How can endurance enhance our relationship with Jehovah?



<sup>20</sup> Perhaps Jehovah has allowed your trials to continue. If so, take to heart his promise to those who fear him: “I will by no means leave you nor by any means forsake you.” (Hebrews 13:5) You can experience such support and comfort. Jehovah has numbered “the very hairs of your head.” He sees your endurance. He feels your pain. He genuinely cares for you. And he will never “forget your work and the love you showed for his name.”—Hebrews 6:10.

20. How can we be sure that Jehovah will support and comfort us in the face of adversity?

### Do You Recall?

- What factors can cause a person to feel abandoned by God?
- What lesson do we learn from Jesus’ illustrations of the sparrows and of the numbering of the hairs of our head?
- What does it mean to have one’s tears put in Jehovah’s “skin bottle” or in his “book”?
- How can we come to enjoy “intimacy with Jehovah”?

# JEHOVAH IS “THE REWARDER OF THOSE EARNESTLY SEEKING HIM”

*“He that approaches God must believe that he is and that he becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him.”—HEBREWS 11:6.*

“I HAVE been a Witness of Jehovah for nearly 30 years, but I have never felt worthy to be called that,” confides Barbara.\* “Even though I have pioneered and have had many other privileges, none of them seem enough to make me believe in my heart that I belong.” Keith expresses similar thoughts. “I have at times felt unworthy because Jehovah’s servants have many reasons to be happy, but I was not,” he says. “This led to feelings of guilt, which only made matters worse.”

\* Some names have been changed.

1, 2. Why might some of Jehovah’s servants struggle with negative feelings?

<sup>2</sup> Many of Jehovah’s faithful servants, both past and present, have struggled with similar feelings. Have you at times? You might be overwhelmed by one problem after another, while your fellow believers seem to be enjoying life, carefree and happy. As a result, you might feel that you neither have Jehovah’s approval nor merit his attention. Do not hastily conclude that this is the case. The Bible assures us: “[Jehovah] has neither despised nor loathed the affliction of the afflicted one; and he has not concealed his face from him, and when he cried to him for help he heard.” (Psalm 22:24) Those prophetic words about the Messiah show that



Jehovah not only hears his faithful ones but also rewards them.

<sup>3</sup> No one is immune to the pressures of this system of things—not even Jehovah's people. We live in a world that is ruled by Jehovah's archenemy, Satan the Devil. (2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 John 5:19) Rather than being miraculously protected, Jehovah's servants are, in fact, the prime target of Satan. (Job 1:7-12; Revelation 2:10) Until God's appointed time, therefore, we need to "endure under tribulation" and "persevere in prayer," confident that Jehovah cares for us. (Romans 12:12) We should not give in to the thought that we are unloved by our God, Jehovah!

### Ancient Examples of Endurance

<sup>4</sup> Many ancient servants of Jehovah had to endure distressing situations. Hannah, for example, was "bitter of soul" because she was childless—a condition that she considered tantamount to being forgotten by God. (1 Samuel 1:9-11) When Elijah was being pursued by murderous Queen Jezebel, he became fearful and prayed to Jehovah: "It is enough! Now, O Jehovah, take my soul away, for I am no better than my forefathers." (1 Kings 19:4) And the apostle Paul must have felt the full burden of his imperfection when he admitted: "When I wish to do what is right, what is bad is present with me." He added: "Miserable man that I am!" —Romans 7:21-24.

<sup>5</sup> Of course, we know that Hannah, Elijah, and Paul all endured in Jehovah's service, and He rewarded them richly. (1 Samuel 1:

3. Why are we not immune to the pressures of this system of things?

4. Give some examples of faithful servants of Jehovah who endured distressing situations.

5. (a) How were Hannah, Elijah, and Paul rewarded? (b) What comfort can we draw from God's Word if we struggle with negative emotions?

20; 2:21; 1 Kings 19:5-18; 2 Timothy 4:8) Still, they struggled with the full range of human emotions, including grief, despair, and fear. It should not surprise us, then, if at times we have negative feelings. What can you do, though, when life's anxieties cause you to wonder if you are really loved by Jehovah? You can draw comfort from God's Word. For example, in the preceding article, we discussed Jesus' statement that Jehovah has numbered "the very hairs of your head." (Matthew 10:30) Those encouraging words indicate that Jehovah is deeply interested in each of his servants. Recall, too, Jesus' illustration of the sparrows. If not one of those small birds falls to the ground without Jehovah's notice, why would he turn a blind eye to your plight?

<sup>6</sup> Is it really possible that we imperfect humans can be precious in the eyes of the all-powerful Creator, Jehovah God? Yes! In fact, there are numerous Bible passages that assure us of this. By taking these to heart, we can echo the words of the psalmist who stated: "When my disquieting thoughts became many inside of me, your own consolations began to fondle my soul." (Psalm 94:19) Let us consider some of these consoling statements from God's Word that will help us to appreciate more fully that we are valued by God and that he will reward us as we continue to do his will.

### Jehovah's "Special Property"

<sup>7</sup> A deplorable situation existed among the Jews during the fifth century B.C.E. The priests were accepting unfit animals and were offering these as sacrifices on Jehovah's altar. Judges were showing partiality. Sorcery, lying, fraud, and adultery

6. How can the Bible be a source of comfort to those who battle negative feelings?

7. What encouraging prophecy did Jehovah give through Malachi to the corrupt nation?

were rampant. (Malachi 1:8; 2:9; 3:5) To this blatantly corrupt nation, Malachi uttered an astonishing prophecy. In time, Jehovah would bring his people back into an approved condition. We read: “‘They will certainly become mine,’ Jehovah of armies has said, ‘at the day when I am producing a special property. And I will show compassion upon them, just as a man shows compassion upon his son who is serving him.’”—Malachi 3:17.

<sup>8</sup> Malachi’s prophecy has a modern-day fulfillment in connection with spirit-anointed Christians, who make up a spiritual nation of 144,000. That nation is indeed “a special property,” or “a people for special possession,” to Jehovah. (1 Peter 2:9) Malachi’s prophecy can also be encouraging to the “great crowd,” who are “standing before the throne and before the Lamb, dressed in white robes.” (Revelation 7:4, 9) These become one flock with the anointed, under one Shepherd, Jesus Christ.—John 10:16.

<sup>9</sup> How does Jehovah view those who choose to serve him? As noted at Malachi 3:17, he views them in the way that a loving father views his son. And note the glowing terms in which he describes his people—“a special property.” Other translations render that phrase “my very own,” “my most prized possession,” and “my jewels.” Why would Jehovah view those who serve him as being that special? For one thing, he is an appreciative God. (Hebrews 6:10) He draws close to

8. Why can Malachi 3:17 be applied in principle to the great crowd?

9. Why are Jehovah’s people “a special property” to him?



*God’s Word contains  
an abundance of  
consoling thoughts*

and views as special those who serve him from the heart.

<sup>10</sup> Can you think of a valued personal possession that you view as special property? Do you not take steps to protect it? Jehovah does the same with his “special property.” True, he does not shield his people from all of life’s trials and tragedies. (Ecclesiastes 9:11) But Jehovah can and will protect his faithful servants spiritually. He gives them

the strength they need to endure any trial. (1 Corinthians 10:13) Hence, Moses told God’s ancient people, the Israelites: “Be courageous and strong.... Jehovah your God is the one marching with you. He will neither desert you nor leave you entirely.” (Deuteronomy 31:6) Jehovah deals rewardingly with his people. To him, they are “a special property.”

#### **Jehovah “the Rewarder”**

<sup>11</sup> Another evidence that Jehovah values his servants is that he rewards them. He told the Israelites: “‘Test me out, please, in this respect,’ Jehovah of armies has said, ‘whether I shall not open to you people the flood-gates of the heavens and actually empty out upon you a blessing until there is no more want.’” (Malachi 3:10) Ultimately, of course, Jehovah will reward his servants with everlasting life. (John 5:24; Revelation 21:4) This priceless reward reveals the magnitude of Jehovah’s love and generosity. It also shows that he truly values those who choose to

10. How does Jehovah provide protection for his people?

11, 12. How can appreciating Jehovah in his role as our Rewarder help us fight feelings of doubt?

serve him. Learning to view Jehovah as a generous Rewarder can help us to battle any doubts about our standing with God. In fact, Jehovah urges us to view him as a Rewarder! Paul wrote: "He that approaches God must believe that he is and that he becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him." —Hebrews 11:6.

<sup>12</sup> Of course, we serve Jehovah because we love him—not just because he promises to reward us. Still, keeping close in our heart the hope of a reward is not improper or selfish. (Colossians 3:23, 24) Out of his love for them and the high value he places upon them, Jehovah takes the initiative and rewards those earnestly seeking him.

<sup>13</sup> The greatest indication of mankind's potential value in Jehovah's eyes is the provision of the ransom. The apostle John wrote: "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) The provision of the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ runs counter to the very notion that we are worthless or unlovable in Jehovah's eyes. Indeed, if Jehovah paid so high a price for us—offering his only-begotten Son—he must surely love us deeply.

<sup>14</sup> Hence, should negative feelings well up in you, meditate on the ransom. Yes, view this gift as a personal provision from Jehovah. That is what the apostle Paul did. Recall that he said: "Miserable man that I am!" But then he went on to say: "Thanks to God through Jesus Christ our Lord," who, said Paul, "loved me and handed himself over for me." (Romans 7:24, 25; Galatians 2:20) In saying this, Paul was not being egotistical. He simply had confidence that Jehovah val-

ued him as an individual. Like Paul, you too should learn to view the ransom as a personal gift from God. Jehovah is not only a powerful Savior but also a loving Rewarder.

#### Beware of Satan's 'Crafty Acts'

<sup>15</sup> Still, you might find it hard to believe that the inspired consolations found in God's Word really apply to you. You may feel that the reward of living forever in God's new world is something that others can attain, but you are simply not worthy of it. If this is how you feel, what can you do?

<sup>16</sup> You are no doubt familiar with Paul's admonition to the Ephesians: "Put on the complete suit of armor from God that you may be able to stand firm against the machinations [“crafty acts,” footnote] of the Devil." (Ephesians 6:11) When we think of Satan's devices, such things as materialism and immorality might immediately come to mind and rightly so. These temptations have ensnared many of God's people both in ancient times and in our day. However, we should not overlook another crafty act of Satan—his effort to convince people that they are unloved by Jehovah God.

<sup>17</sup> The Devil is skilled at exploiting such feelings in his attempt to turn people away from God. Recall Bildad's words to Job: "How can mortal man be in the right before God, or how can one born of a woman be clean? Look! There is even the moon, and it is not bright; and the stars themselves have not proved clean in his eyes. How much less so mortal man, who is a maggot, and a son of man, who is a worm!" (Job 25:4-6; John 8:44) Can you imagine how demoralizing those words must have been? So do not let Satan dishearten you. On the other hand, be

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13. Why is the provision of the ransom the greatest evidence of Jehovah's love for us?
  14. What shows how Paul viewed the ransom?

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- 15-17. (a) How does the Devil exploit negative feelings? (b) What encouragement can we draw from the experience of Job?

aware of Satan's designs so that you will have the courage and stamina to fight all the harder to do what is right. (2 Corinthians 2:11) As for Job, even though he had to be corrected, Jehovah rewarded his endurance by restoring to him in double measure all that he had lost.—Job 42:10.

### Jehovah "Is Greater Than Our Hearts"

<sup>18</sup> Admittedly, it can be difficult to quell feelings of discouragement if these are deeply ingrained. Yet, Jehovah's spirit can help you progressively to overturn "strongly entrenched things . . . raised up against the knowledge of God." (2 Corinthians 10:4, 5) When negative thoughts threaten to overwhelm you, ponder the apostle John's words: "By this we shall know that we originate with the truth, and we shall assure our hearts before him as regards whatever our hearts may condemn us in, because God is greater than our hearts and knows all things."—1 John 3:19, 20.

<sup>19</sup> What is meant by the phrase "God is greater than our hearts"? At times, our heart may condemn us, especially when we become painfully aware of our imperfections and shortcomings. Or it may be that because of our background, we have an inordinate tendency to think negatively of ourselves, as

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18, 19. How is God "greater than our hearts," and in what way does he 'know all things'?

### Do You Remember?

- How are we "a special property" to Jehovah?
- Why is it important to view Jehovah as the Rewarder?
- What 'crafty acts' of Satan must we be on guard against?
- In what way is God "greater than our hearts"?

if nothing we do could be acceptable to Jehovah. The apostle John's words assure us that Jehovah is greater than that! He sees past our mistakes and perceives our real potential. He also knows our motives and intentions. David wrote: "He himself well knows the formation of us, remembering that we are dust." (Psalm 103:14) Yes, Jehovah knows us better than we know ourselves!

### "A Crown of Beauty" and "a Kingly Turban"

<sup>20</sup> Through the prophet Isaiah, Jehovah gave his ancient people the hope of the restoration. Exiled as they would be in Babylon, this comfort and reassurance was just what these despondent ones would need! Looking ahead to the time when they would be returned to their homeland, Jehovah stated: "You must become a crown of beauty in the hand of Jehovah, and a kingly turban in the palm of your God." (Isaiah 62:3) With these words, Jehovah clothed his people with dignity and splendor. He has done the same with his nation of spiritual Israel today. It is as though he held them up high for all to admire.

<sup>21</sup> While this prophecy finds its primary fulfillment in the anointed, it illustrates the dignity Jehovah bestows upon all who serve him. Hence, when beset by feelings of doubt, remember that even though imperfect, you can be as valuable as "a crown of beauty" and "a kingly turban" to Jehovah. So continue to make his heart rejoice by earnestly seeking to do his will. (Proverbs 27:11) By doing so, you can be confident that Jehovah will reward your faithful endurance!

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20. What does Isaiah's restoration prophecy reveal about how Jehovah views his servants?  
21. How can you gain confidence that Jehovah will reward your faithful endurance?

## Questions From Readers

**Does the word “probably” at Zephaniah 2:3 mean that servants of God cannot be sure of receiving eternal life?**

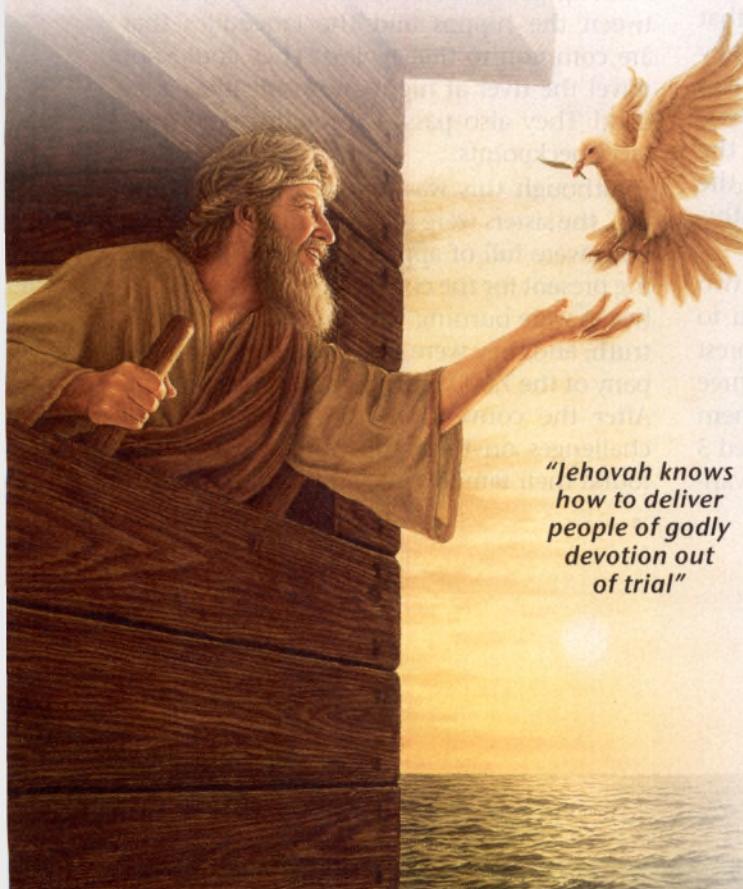
This scripture reads: “Seek Jehovah, all you meek ones of the earth, who have practiced His own judicial decision. Seek righteousness, seek meekness. Probably you may be concealed in the day of Jehovah’s anger.” Why does this verse say “probably”?

To understand how Jehovah will deal with his faithful ones at Armageddon, it is helpful to recall what the Bible teaches concerning what God will do for those who die before that time of judgment. Some will experience a resurrection to immortal life as spirit creatures in the heavens, while others will be res-

urrected to the earth with the prospect of living forever in Paradise. (John 5:28, 29; 1 Corinthians 15:53, 54) If Jehovah remembers and rewards his loyal ones who die before Armageddon, he will surely deal similarly with his servants who are alive on the day of his anger.

The inspired words of the apostle Peter are also encouraging. He wrote: “[God] kept Noah, a preacher of righteousness, safe with seven others when he brought a deluge upon a world of ungodly people; and by reducing the cities Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them, . . . and he delivered righteous Lot . . . Jehovah knows how to deliver people of godly devotion out of trial, but to reserve unrighteous people for the day of judgment to be cut off.” (2 Peter 2:5-9) Though Jehovah brought destruction on the wicked in times past, he preserved alive both Noah and Lot, who served him faithfully. Jehovah will also deliver people of godly devotion when he brings destruction on the wicked at Armageddon. “A great crowd” of righteous ones will survive.—Revelation 7:9, 14.

It seems, then, that “probably” is not used at Zephaniah 2:3 because of any uncertainty about God’s ability to preserve those who have his approval. Rather, a person’s being concealed in the day of Jehovah’s anger is only a probability when he begins to seek righteousness and meekness. Preservation will depend on an individual’s *continuing* to seek meekness and righteousness.—Zephaniah 2:3.



*“Jehovah knows how to deliver people of godly devotion out of trial”*

# A Long Journey Rewarded



FROM the Democratic Republic of Congo comes the report of two fleshly sisters who decided to make a long trip in a war-torn zone to attend the "Give God Glory" District Convention in Lisala. Apart from the spiritual instruction and Christian association that they hoped to enjoy at the convention, they looked forward to meeting representatives from the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in Kinshasa. Because of the civil war in the country, they had not seen anyone from the branch for years, and they wanted to take this opportunity to do so.

Traveling by pirogue, or dugout, the two sisters went from their native Basankusu to Lisala, a trip of some 200 miles through forest and along two rivers. It took them three weeks to make the trip. Since both of them are in the full-time ministry, having served 3 and 19 years respectively, they took advan-

tage of their trip to spread the Kingdom good news. They spent some 110 hours preaching to those they met along the way, placing 200 tracts and 30 magazines.

Along the river, they had to navigate between the hippos and the crocodiles that are common to that region. They could not travel the river at night—no navigation after dark! They also passed through many military checkpoints.

Although this was a very long and tiring trip, the sisters were happy to make the effort. Both were full of appreciation and joy at being present for the convention in Lisala. Their hearts were burning with enthusiasm for the truth, and they were encouraged by the company of the 7,000 brothers and sisters present. After the convention, they met the same challenges on their trip home, where they found their families safe and sound.