

DECEMBER 15, 2012

# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY EDITION

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## STUDY ARTICLES

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**JANUARY 28–FEBRUARY 3**

### **Find Real Success in Life**

PAGE 4 • SONGS: 115, 45

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**FEBRUARY 4-10**

### **You Are a Trusted Steward!**

PAGE 9 • SONGS: 62, 125

---

**FEBRUARY 11-17**

### **Maintaining Our Position as “Temporary Residents”**

PAGE 19 • SONGS: 107, 40

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**FEBRUARY 18-24**

### **“Temporary Residents” United in True Worship**

PAGE 24 • SONGS: 124, 121



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THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE, *The Watchtower*, is to honor Jehovah God, the Supreme Ruler of the universe. Just as watchtowers in ancient times enabled a person to observe developments from afar, so this magazine shows us the significance of world events in the light of Bible prophecies. It comforts people with the good news that God's Kingdom, which is a real government in heaven, will soon bring an end to all wickedness and transform the earth into a paradise. It promotes faith in Jesus Christ, who died so that we might gain everlasting life and who is now ruling as King of God's Kingdom. This magazine has been published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879 and is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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## PURPOSE OF STUDY ARTICLES

### STUDY ARTICLES 1, 2 PAGES 4-13

What does it mean to be truly successful in life? These articles show that the correct answer differs from the way the world views the matter. We will also see that to be truly successful, we must remain faithful to God and accept the responsibilities given us.

### STUDY ARTICLES 3, 4 PAGES 19-28

How are anointed Christians—and in a sense their companions of the “other sheep”—“temporary residents”? (John 10: 16; 1 Pet. 2:11) These articles will give us the answer and will strengthen us in our determination to remain such, unitedly preaching as part of an international brotherhood.

## ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

### 3 BEWARE OF SUPERSTITIOUS USE OF THE BIBLE

### 14 QUESTIONS FROM READERS

### 18 DO YOU REMEMBER?

### 29 THE SIMPLIFIED WATCHTOWER —WHY INTRODUCED?

### 32 SUBJECT INDEX FOR *THE WATCHTOWER* 2012



**COVER:** There are more than 100,000 Witnesses in South Korea. Because they are politically neutral and refuse to bear arms against their fellow man, many are in prison. Even there, they strive to give a good witness, such as by writing letters

## SOUTH KOREA

POPULATION  
48,184,000

PUBLISHERS  
100,059

BROTHERS IN PRISON  
LAST YEAR  
731

HOURS SPENT IN THE  
MINISTRY PER MONTH  
9,000



# Beware of Superstitious Use of the Bible

“THE word of God is alive and exerts power.” (Heb. 4:12) With those words the apostle Paul highlighted the power of God’s word to touch hearts and to transform lives.

That view of the power of the Bible’s message became muddled, however, when the foretold apostasy took root after the death of the apostles. (2 Pet. 2:1-3) In time, church leaders started to attribute magical powers to God’s Word. Professor Harry Y. Gamble wrote about “the magical use of Christian texts.” He noted that in the third century, Church Father Origen suggested that “the very sound of sacred words in the ear is somehow beneficial: if words have power in pagan magic, how much more powerful must be the truly divine words of scripture.” John Chrysostom of the late fourth century wrote that “the devil will not dare

to approach a house where a Gospel is lying.” He also reported that some hung excerpts from the Gospels from their necks as a powerful amulet. Professor Gamble further noted that the Catholic theologian Augustine “considered it permissible in case of a headache to sleep with a copy of the Gospel of John under one’s pillow”! Thus Bible texts were employed for magical purposes. Would you consider the Bible to be an amulet, or a good-luck charm, that could protect you from evil?

Perhaps a more common misuse of the Bible is the practice of bibliomancy. What is that? It refers to opening at random a book, often the Bible, and reading the text that first meets the eye in the belief that those words will provide needed guidance. For example, according to Professor Gamble, when Augustine on one occasion heard the voice of a child in a neighboring house saying: “Take and read, take and read,” Augustine took that to be a divine command to open the Bible and read the first text that he saw.

Have you heard of people who when facing a difficult situation prayed to God and then opened the Bible at random, believing that the first verse they saw would help them cope with the problem? Although they may have had good intentions, that is not the way Christians should seek guidance from the Scriptures.

Jesus assured his disciples that he would send them “the helper, the holy spirit.” He continued: “That one will teach you all things and *bring back* to your minds all the things I told you.” (John 14:26) In contrast, bibliomancy requires no knowledge of the Scriptures.

The practice of bibliomancy and other superstitious uses of the Bible are common. God’s Word, however, condemns looking for omens. (Lev. 19:26; Deut. 18:9-12; Acts 19:19) “The word of God is alive and exerts power,” but we must be skilled in the use of it. Accurate Bible knowledge, not using the book superstitiously, improves people’s lives. Obtaining such knowledge has helped many to develop sound morals, to abandon ruinous lifestyles, to strengthen family life, and to nurture a personal relationship with the Bible’s Author.





# FIND REAL SUCCESS IN LIFE

*“You will make your  
way successful and  
. . . act wisely.”*

—JOSH. 1:8.

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## HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

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How successful was Solomon?

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In what way was Paul truly  
successful?

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How can you be lastingly  
successful?

**W**HAT does it mean to be successful in life? Ask people that question, and you will find that their answers vary greatly. Many, for example, define success in terms of outstanding achievement in financial, professional, or academic pursuits. Others factor in relationships—how well they relate to family, friends, or workmates. One who serves God might even link success to a position of responsibility in the congregation or to achievements in the ministry.

<sup>2</sup> To identify your personal view of success, you might write down the names of a few people whom you consider to be successful—those whom you most admire and respect. What outstanding characteristic do they have in common? Are they rich or famous? Are they prominent? The answers may well reveal what is in your heart, and that can profoundly influence the choices you make and the goals you pursue. —Luke 6:45.

<sup>3</sup> What matters most is whether Jehovah views us as successful, for our very lives depend on his approval. When giving Joshua the weighty assignment of leading the Israelites into the Promised Land, Jehovah told him to read the Mosaic Law “day and night” and to be careful to obey what was written in it. God assured him: “Then you will make your way successful and then you will act wisely.” (Josh. 1:7, 8) And you know that Joshua did prove to be successful. What about us? How may we determine whether our view of success matches God’s view? To that

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1, 2. (a) How do many people define success? (b) How might you gauge your view of success?

3. (a) What was Joshua to do to make his way successful? (b) What will we now consider?

end, consider the lives of two men mentioned in the Bible.

### **WAS SOLOMON SUCCESSFUL IN LIFE?**

<sup>4</sup> In many ways, Solomon was exceptionally successful. Why? Because for a number of years, he feared and obeyed Jehovah, who blessed him greatly. Recall that when Jehovah had Solomon make a request, the king asked for wisdom to guide the people. Thereupon God blessed him with both wisdom and riches. (*Read 1 Kings 3:10-14.*) His wisdom was “vaster than the wisdom of all the Orientals and than all the wisdom of Egypt.” Solomon’s fame came to be known “in all the nations all around.” (1 Ki. 4:30, 31) As to wealth, his annual revenue of gold alone weighed some 25 tons! (2 Chron. 9:13) He was brilliant in diplomacy, construction, and commerce. Yes, while he maintained his right standing with God, Solomon proved to be successful.—2 Chron. 9:22-24.

<sup>5</sup> What Solomon wrote in the book of Ecclesiastes shows that he was not misled into thinking that achievement and joy are limited to those having wealth or prominence. Not at all. He wrote: “I have come to know that there is nothing better for them than to rejoice and to do good during one’s life; and also that every man should eat and indeed drink and see good for all his hard work. It is the gift of God.” (Eccl. 3:12, 13) And he realized that such pleasures are truly meaningful for the one who has God’s approval, who has a good relationship with Him. Solomon rightly stated: “The conclusion of the matter, everything

having been heard, is: Fear the true God and keep his commandments. For this is the whole obligation of man.”—Eccl. 12:13.

<sup>6</sup> For years, Solomon walked in the fear of God. We read that he “continued to love Jehovah by walking in the statutes of David his father.” (1 Ki. 3:3) Would you not count that as true success? At God’s direction, Solomon built a magnificent temple for true worship and wrote three Bible books. While we may not expect to do the same, Solomon’s example when he was faithful to God should show us how to evaluate what is real success and should thus help us to achieve it. In this regard, remember that under inspiration Solomon wrote that wealth, wisdom, fame, and power—what most people today would view as benchmarks of success—are vain. Such things are really empty, “a striving after wind.” Have you not seen that many lovers of wealth yearn to have ever more? And they often worry about what they do have. Moreover, their riches will one day go to others.—*Read Ecclesiastes 2:8-11, 17; 5:10-12.*

<sup>7</sup> You also know that Solomon eventually strayed from the course of faithful obedience. God’s Word states: “It came about in the time of Solomon’s growing old that his wives themselves had inclined his heart to follow other gods; and his heart did not prove to be complete with Jehovah his God like the heart of David his father. . . . Solomon began to do what was bad in the eyes of Jehovah.” —1 Ki. 11:4-6.

<sup>8</sup> Rightly displeased, Jehovah told Solomon: “For the reason that . . . you have

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4. Why might it be said that Solomon was successful?

5. What did Solomon conclude about those who are successful before God?

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6. What insight does Solomon’s example offer us as to measuring true success?

7, 8. How did Solomon prove unfaithful, and with what result?

not kept my covenant and my statutes that I laid in command upon you, I shall without fail rip the kingdom away from off you, and I shall certainly give it to your servant.” (1 Ki. 11:11) How tragic! Though Solomon had been a success in many ways, in time he disappointed Jehovah. In the most important area of life—faithfulness to God—Solomon failed. Each of us can ask, ‘Am I determined to make sure that the lesson learned from Solomon’s life will help me to be a success?’

### A TRULY SUCCESSFUL LIFE

<sup>9</sup> The apostle Paul’s life differed greatly from King Solomon’s. For Paul, there was no ivory throne or feasting with kings. Instead, there were times of hunger, thirst, cold, and nakedness. (2 Cor. 11:24-27) Once he accepted Jesus as the Messiah, Paul held no position of honor in the Jewish religion. Rather, the Jewish religious leaders hated him. He was imprisoned, whipped, beaten with rods, and stoned. Paul acknowledged that he and his fellow Christians were reviled, persecuted, and defamed. “We have become as the refuse of the world, the off-scouring of all things, until now.”—1 Cor. 4:11-13.

9. By the world’s standards, was Paul successful? Explain.

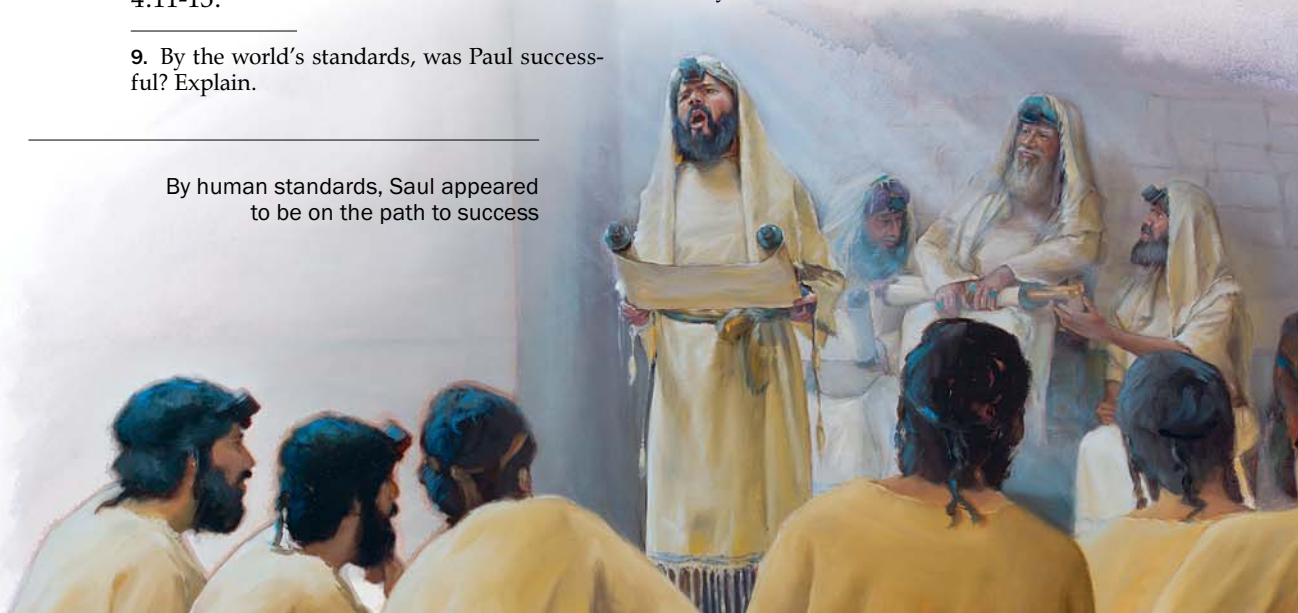
<sup>10</sup> As a young man named Saul, the apostle Paul seemed to have so much going for him. Born into what may have been a prominent family, he studied with Gamaliel, a respected teacher, and later wrote: “I was making greater progress in Judaism than many of my own age.” (Gal. 1:14) Fluent in Hebrew and Greek, Saul had Roman citizenship, which accorded him much-coveted privileges and rights. Had he chosen to keep pursuing such worldly success, he could likely have gained personal prominence and financial security. Instead, he chose a course that to others—perhaps even to some relatives—seemed to be sheer folly. Why?

<sup>11</sup> Paul loved Jehovah and desired his approval more than riches and prominence among men. Gaining an accurate knowledge of the truth, Paul came to value the ransom, the Christian ministry, the hope of life in heaven—things that the world largely ignores. Paul realized that there was an issue to be settled. Satan had charged that he could turn hu-

10. Why might it have seemed that Paul spurned success?

11. What values and goal did Paul hold dear, and why?

By human standards, Saul appeared to be on the path to success





Paul proved to be truly successful

mans aside from serving God. (Job 1:9-11; 2:3-5) No matter what trials came his way, Paul was determined to be faithful to God, to endure in true worship. That is a goal that is lacking on the world's agenda for success.

<sup>12</sup> Do you share Paul's determination? Though living a life of faithfulness is not always easy, we know that it brings Jehovah's blessing and approval, and that is what makes one truly successful. (Prov. 10:22) We benefit now, and we certainly can expect blessings in the future. (**Read Mark 10:29, 30.**) Hence, we have every reason to rest our hope, "not on uncertain riches, but on God, who furnishes us all things richly for our enjoyment." We 'safely treasure up for ourselves a fine foundation for the future, in order that we may get a firm hold on the real life.' (1 Tim. 6:17-19) Yes, we can be absolutely sure that a hundred years from now, even a thousand years

**12.** Why did you choose to rest your hope on God?

or more from now, we will be able to look back and say, "I definitely chose the course of real success!"

### WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS

<sup>13</sup> Jesus said about treasures: "Stop storing up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break in and steal. Rather, store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." —Matt. 6:19-21.

<sup>14</sup> A person's earthly treasure may be more than just money. In a sense, it could include any of those things that Solomon wrote about that have to do with being successful in the eyes of men—prestige, fame, or power. Jesus made a point similar to the one Solomon made in the book of Ecclesiastes—worldly treasures are not lasting. As you have likely seen in the world around you, all such treasures are perishable and can be easily lost. Professor F. Dale Bruner writes of such treasures: "It is well known that fame is fickle. Last Saturday's hero is next season's has-been. This year's financial success is next year's bankruptcy. . . . [Jesus] loves human beings. He urges them to avoid the inevitable despair that comes with evanescent glory. It doesn't last. Jesus does not want [his] disciples [to be] disappointed. 'Every day the world turns over on someone who was just sitting on top of it.'" Though most people would agree with those comments, how many allow the reality behind them to alter their approach to life? Will you?

**13.** Jesus gave what counsel about storing up treasures?

**14.** Why is it unwise to seek earthly treasures?

<sup>15</sup> Some religious leaders have preached that it is wrong to strive after success and that all effort to succeed should be stifled. Note, though, that Jesus was not condemning all such effort. Rather, he was exhorting his disciples to *redirect* their effort, admonishing them to store up imperishable “treasures in heaven.” Our foremost desire should be to strive to be a success as Jehovah would view it. Yes, Jesus’ words remind us that we have a choice as to what we will pursue. The fact is, though, that we will pursue what is in our heart, what is of value to us.

<sup>16</sup> If it is in our heart to please Jehovah, we can trust that he will see to it that we have the things we need. He may permit us to experience temporary hunger or thirst, as the apostle Paul did. (1 Cor. 4:11) Nevertheless, we can have every confidence in Jesus’ wise advice: “Never be anxious and say, ‘What are we to eat?’ or, ‘What are we to drink?’ or, ‘What are we to put on?’ For all these are the things the nations are eagerly pursuing. For your heavenly Father knows you need all these things. Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you.”—Matt. 6:31-33.

#### FIND SUCCESS IN GOD'S SIGHT

<sup>17</sup> A key point is this: Our being truly successful does not depend on our achievements or position in the eyes of the world. Moreover, true success is not measured by having a certain responsibility in the Christian arrangement. Such a blessing, though, can be related to what truly is the basis for success, our

obedience and faithfulness to God, who assures us: “What is looked for in stewards is for a man to be found faithful.” (1 Cor. 4:2) And we must endure in being faithful. Jesus said: “He that has endured to the end is the one that will be saved.” (Matt. 10:22) Would you not agree that being saved is an undeniable evidence of success?

<sup>18</sup> Reflecting on the above, you can see that faithfulness to God is not linked to prominence, education, financial standing, or social status; nor is faithfulness dependent on intelligence, talent, or ability. In whatever circumstances we may find ourselves, we can prove faithful to God. Among God’s people in the first century, some were rich, others were poor. To the former, Paul’s counsel “to work at good, to be rich in fine works, to be liberal, ready to share” was valid. Both those rich and those poor could “get a firm hold on the real life.” (1 Tim. 6:17-19) That is true today too. All of us have the same opportunity and the same responsibility: We must remain faithful and be “rich in fine works.” If we are, we will be successful in the eyes of our Creator and have the joy of knowing that we are pleasing him.—Prov. 27:11.

<sup>19</sup> You may not be able to control your circumstances completely, but you can control how you deal with them. Strive to be faithful whatever your circumstances are. It is worth the effort. Be confident that Jehovah will bless you richly—now and throughout eternity. Never forget the words that Jesus directed to anointed Christians: “Prove yourself faithful even to death, and I will give you the crown of life.” (Rev. 2:10) That indeed is real success!

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<sup>15</sup>. For what kind of success should we strive?

<sup>16</sup>. In what can we have every confidence?

<sup>17</sup>, <sup>18</sup>. (a) Upon what does true success depend? (b) Upon what does success not depend?

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<sup>19</sup>. In the matter of success, what is your resolve?





# YOU ARE A TRUSTED STEWARD!

*“You do not belong  
to yourselves.”*

—1 COR. 6:19.

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## HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

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What was the role of ancient  
stewards?

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What responsibilities do all  
stewards of God share?

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How should we view the  
stewardship entrusted to us?

**S**OME 2,500 years ago, a Greek playwright wrote: “No one willingly wears the yoke of slavery.” Many today would readily agree with that statement. Slavery evokes images of people oppressed and in bondage, whose work and sacrifices bring benefits, not to themselves, but to those who own and dominate them.

<sup>2</sup> Yet, Jesus indicated that his disciples would be humble servants, or slaves. There is nothing demeaning or oppressive, though, about this slavery involving true Christians. These slaves enjoy a position of honor, trust, and respect. Consider, for example, the comments Jesus made about one “slave” shortly before His death. Christ foretold that he would assign duties to a “faithful and discreet slave.”—Matt. 24:45-47.

<sup>3</sup> It is significant that in a parallel account, that slave is called a “steward.” (*Read Luke 12:42-44.*) Most faithful Christians now alive are not members of that faithful steward class. However, the Scriptures show that all who serve God have a stewardship. What responsibilities are involved? How should those be viewed? To find out, let us examine the role of stewards in ancient times.

## STEWARDS—THEIR ROLE

<sup>4</sup> In ancient times, a steward was often a trusted slave assigned to supervise the household or

1. The world in general has what view of independence?
- 2, 3. (a) What position do willing slaves, or servants, of Christ enjoy? (b) What questions about stewardship will we consider?
- 4, 5. What responsibilities did ancient stewards have? Give examples.

business affairs of his master. Typically, stewards had considerable authority and were charged with managing household belongings, money, and other servants. We can see this in the case of Eliezer, who was entrusted with the care of Abraham's extensive belongings. It may have been Eliezer whom Abraham sent to Mesopotamia to choose a wife for his son Isaac. What an important and far-reaching assignment!—Gen. 13:2; 15:2; 24:2-4.

<sup>5</sup> Abraham's great-grandson Joseph looked after the household of Potiphar. (Gen. 39:1, 2) In time, Joseph came to have a steward of his own, who was appointed "over Joseph's house." That steward arranged hospitality for Joseph's ten brothers. And at Joseph's command, he orchestrated matters concerning the "stolen" silver cup. Clearly, stewards enjoyed positions of great trust.—Gen. 43:19-25; 44:1-12.

<sup>6</sup> Centuries later, the apostle Paul wrote that Christian overseers were to be 'God's stewards.' (Titus 1:7) Appointed to shepherd "the flock of God," overseers give direction and take the lead in the congregations. (1 Pet. 5:1, 2) Of course, responsibilities vary. For example, most Christian overseers today serve one congregation. Traveling overseers serve many congregations. And Branch Committee members care for congregations in entire countries. Still, all are expected to carry out their duties faithfully; all must "render an account" to God.—Heb. 13:17.

<sup>7</sup> What, though, of the many loyal

Christians who are not overseers? The apostle Peter wrote a letter to Christians in general, stating: "In proportion as each one has received a gift, use it in ministering to one another as fine stewards of God's undeserved kindness expressed in various ways." (1 Pet. 1:1; 4:10) God has in his undeserved kindness imparted to all of us gifts, assets, abilities, or talents that we can use to benefit fellow believers. Accordingly, all who serve God are stewards, and with their stewardship comes honor, trust, and responsibility.

### WE BELONG TO GOD

<sup>8</sup> We will now focus on three principles that we as stewards need to consider. The first: *We all belong to God and are accountable to him.* Paul wrote: "You do not belong to yourselves, for you were bought with a price," the sacrificial blood of the Christ. (1 Cor. 6:19, 20) Since we belong to Jehovah, we are obliged to obey his commandments, which are not burdensome. (Rom. 14:8; 1 John 5:3) We also become slaves of Christ. Like stewards of old, we are given much freedom—but our freedom has limits. We must handle our responsibilities as instructed. No matter what privileges of service we may enjoy, we are still servants of God and of Christ.

<sup>9</sup> Jesus helps us to understand the relationship between master and slave. Once he spoke to his disciples about a slave who came home after working through the day. Does the master say: "Come here at once and recline at the

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6. What stewardship do various Christian elders have?

7. How do we know that, in a sense, all Christians are stewards?

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8. What is one important principle that we need to remember?

9. How did Jesus illustrate the relationship between master and slave?

table"? No. He says: "Get something ready for me to have my evening meal, and put on an apron and minister to me until I am through eating and drinking, and afterward you can eat and drink." How did Jesus apply the illustration? "So you, also, when you have done all the things assigned to you, say, 'We are good-for-nothing slaves. What we have done is what we ought to have done.'" —Luke 17:7-10.

<sup>10</sup> Of course, Jehovah appreciates our efforts to serve him. The Bible assures us: "God is not unrighteous so as to forget your work and the love you showed for his name." (Heb. 6:10) Jehovah is never unreasonable in what he asks of us. Furthermore, whatever he asks is in our best interests and is never unduly burdensome. Still, in line with Jesus' parable, a slave does not please himself, putting personal interests first. The point is, when we dedicate ourselves to God, we choose to put his interests first in our life. Do you not agree?

#### **WHAT JEHOVAH REQUIRES OF ALL OF US**

<sup>11</sup> A second principle is: *As stewards, we all adhere to the same basic standards.* True, some responsibilities are assigned to a few within the Christian congregation. However, most responsibilities are common to all. For example, as disciples of Christ and as Witnesses of Jehovah, we are enjoined to love one another. Jesus said that love is the identifying mark of true Christians. (John 13:35) Our love extends beyond the brotherhood, though. We endeavor to show

**10.** What shows that Jehovah appreciates our efforts to serve him?

**11, 12.** As stewards, what quality must we display, and what must we avoid?

love toward those who are not related to us in the faith. This is something all of us can and should do.

<sup>12</sup> Fine conduct is also required of us. We want to avoid conduct and lifestyles that are condemned in God's Word. Paul wrote: "Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men kept for unnatural purposes, nor men who lie with men, nor thieves, nor greedy persons, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit God's kingdom." (1 Cor. 6:9, 10) Admittedly, it takes effort to conform to God's righteous standards. Yet, such effort is worthwhile, imparting to us many benefits, including a lifestyle that contributes to good health, fine relationships with others, and an approved standing with God.—*Read Isaiah 48:17, 18.*

<sup>13</sup> Recall, too, that a steward had work to do. So do we. We have been given a precious gift—the knowledge of the truth. God expects us to share that knowledge with others. (Matt. 28:19, 20) Paul wrote: "Let a man so appraise us as being subordinates of Christ and *stewards of sacred secrets* of God." (1 Cor. 4:1) Paul recognized that this stewardship meant both scrupulously caring for the "sacred secrets" and faithfully imparting such to others as directed by the Master, Jesus Christ.—1 Cor. 9:16.

<sup>14</sup> Sharing the truth is, after all, a loving thing to do. Of course, circumstances differ from Christian to Christian. Not all can do the same in the ministry. Jehovah understands that. The important thing is to do *all* that we personally can. Thus we display unselfish love for God and for our neighbor.

**13, 14.** What responsibility is given to all Christians, and how should we view it?



Let us faithfully handle what we are assigned to do

### THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING FAITHFUL

<sup>15</sup> A third principle, closely related to the preceding two, is: *We must be faithful, trustworthy.* A steward may have many fine qualities and abilities, yet none of them would matter if he was irresponsible or disloyal to his master. Faithfulness is essential to be an effective, successful steward. Recall that Paul wrote: “What is looked for in stewards is for a man to be found faithful.” —1 Cor. 4:2.

<sup>16</sup> If we are faithful, we will be rewarded; that is certain. If we are not faithful, we will suffer loss. We see this principle in Jesus’ illustration of the talents. The slaves that faithfully “did business” with the master’s money received

commendation and were richly blessed. The slave who acted irresponsibly with what the master had entrusted to him was judged “wicked,” “sluggish,” and “good-for-nothing.” The talent he had been given was taken away, and he was thrown out.—*Read Matthew 25:14-18, 23, 26, 28-30.*

<sup>17</sup> On another occasion, Jesus pointed out the consequences of unfaithfulness. He said: “A certain man was rich and he had a steward, and this one was accused to him as handling his goods wastefully. So he called him and said to him, ‘What is this I hear about you? Hand in the account of your stewardship, for you can no longer manage the house.’” (Luke 16:1, 2) Because the steward squandered the property of his master, the master dismissed him. What a powerful lesson for us! We cer-

**15-17.** (a) Why is it essential that a steward be faithful? (b) How did Jesus illustrate the consequences of unfaithfulness?



tainly never want to be unfaithful in what is asked of us.

### **COMPARING OURSELVES WITH OTHERS—IS THAT WISE?**

<sup>18</sup> Each of us can ask, ‘How do I view my stewardship?’ Problems may arise when we compare ourselves with others. The Bible counsels 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.” (Gal. 6:4) Rather than compare what we do with what others do, we should focus on what we personally are able to do. This will protect us not only from being puffed up with pride but also from being discouraged. In evaluating ourselves, we should recognize that circumstances change. Perhaps because of poor health, age, or various responsibilities, we cannot do all we used to. On the other hand, we might be able to do more than we are now doing. If so, why not try to step up our activities?

<sup>19</sup> Another aspect to consider is what responsibilities we have or yearn to have. For example, a brother may desire to serve as an elder in the congregation or to be assigned parts at assemblies and conventions. It is good to work hard to qualify for such privileges, yet we should not become downhearted if they are not offered when we might have hoped they would be. For reasons we may not readily understand, some privileges may be extended much later than expected. Recall that Moses seemed ready to lead the Israelites out

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<sup>18</sup>. Why should we not compare ourselves with others?

<sup>19</sup>. If we do not receive a certain privilege, why should we not become downhearted?

of Egypt, but he had to wait 40 years before doing so. This allowed him enough time to develop qualities he needed to lead a stiff-necked and rebellious people.—Acts 7:22-25, 30-34.

<sup>20</sup> Sometimes a certain privilege may not be given to us at all. That was so with Jonathan. He was the son of Saul and thus in line to be king over all Israel. However, God chose David, a much younger man, to be king. How did Jonathan react to that development? He accepted it and supported David even at the risk of his own life. He said to David: “You yourself will be king over Israel, and I myself shall become second to you.” (1 Sam. 23:17) Do you see the point? Jonathan accepted his situation, and unlike his father, he did not become jealous of David. Rather than being envious of what others may have been assigned to do, all of us can concentrate on handling the responsibilities we do have. We can be sure that in the new world, Jehovah will see to it that the proper desires of all his servants are satisfied.

<sup>21</sup> Let us bear in mind that as trusted stewards, we do not experience the abject slavery characterized by oppression and tears. Quite the opposite. We enjoy positions of great honor, entrusted as we are with the never-to-be-repeated work of declaring the good news during the last days of this system of things. While doing that, we enjoy great freedom as to how we will handle our responsibilities. Let us, then, be faithful stewards. And may we cherish the privilege we have to serve the greatest One in all the universe.

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<sup>20</sup>. We can draw what lesson from the experience of Jonathan?

<sup>21</sup>. How should we view our stewardship?

*Before coming to a knowledge of the truth, my wife and I submitted to in vitro fertilization because of our desire to have a baby. Not all our fertilized eggs (embryos) were used; some were frozen and stored. Must they be retained, or may they be disposed of?*

■ This is but one of many weighty moral/ethical issues that couples face if they choose to submit to in vitro fertilization (IVF). Each couple is responsible before Jehovah to decide what to do. It might help, though, to get an overview of this assisted reproductive technology.

In 1978 a woman in England became the first to bear what many called a test-tube baby. She had not been able to conceive because her Fallopian tubes were blocked, not allowing sperm to meet with her egg(s). Medical personnel surgically harvested a mature egg from her, placed it in a glass dish, and fertilized it with her husband's sperm. The resulting embryo was allowed to develop in nutrients and then inserted into her womb, where it implanted. In time, she had a baby girl. The procedure, and variations of it, came to be called in vitro (in glass) fertilization, or IVF.

While details may vary from country to country, generally IVF involves the following: The wife is given potent fertility drugs for weeks to stimulate her ovaries to produce numerous eggs. The husband may be asked to provide fresh sperm by masturbation. The eggs and washed sperm are combined in the laboratory. Multiple eggs may get fertilized and begin to divide, becoming human embryos. After a day or so, these nascent embryos are carefully examined in an effort to distinguish between any that are defective and those that seem to be healthy and most likely to implant and develop. About the third day, it is common to transfer into the wife's womb not one but two or three of the best embryos so as to increase the chance of a pregnancy. If one or more implant, she is pregnant, and it is expected that she will in time give birth.

But what of embryos that were not transferred, including ones that appeared less healthy or even

Christians facing this decision will be responsible before God to use their Bible-trained conscience



defective? If left alone, those excess embryos would soon cease to be viable. Before that occurs, the extra embryos may be frozen in liquid nitrogen. Why? If the first IVF attempt failed, some of those reserve embryos could be used in a subsequent IVF cycle at a lower cost. However, this raises ethical issues. As with the couple who presented the question above, many struggle to decide what to do with their frozen embryos. They may not want more children. The parents' ages or finances may not favor another attempt. They may fear the risks associated with a multiple pregnancy.\* Or the death or remarriage of one or both mates may complicate things. Yes, concerns abound, and as a result, some couples keep paying storage fees for years.

In 2008, a chief embryologist noted in *The New York Times* that many patients were genuinely torn about what to do with the extra embryos. The article said: "At least 400,000 embryos are frozen at clinics around the country, with more being added every day . . . Embryos can remain viable for a decade or more if they are frozen properly but *not all of them survive when they are thawed.*" (Italics ours.) That latter fact gives some Christians reason to pause and consider. Why?

Christian couples who face issues raised by IVF may well reflect on the implications of a different medical situation. A Christian might have to decide what to do about a loved one who is in a terminal situation and who is being sustained by artificial life support, such as a ventilator to keep breathing. True Christians oppose medical neglect; in line with Exodus 20:13 and Psalm 36:9, they hold life in high regard. *Awake!* of May 8, 1974, stated: "Because they respect God's view of the sanctity of life, out of regard for their own

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\* What if the developing fetus seems to be abnormal, or what if several embryos implant? Deliberately terminating a pregnancy would be an abortion. With IVF, multifetal pregnancies (twins, triplets, or more) are somewhat common, bringing increased risks, such as premature births and maternal hemorrhage. A woman carrying many fetuses may be urged to consider "selective reduction," allowing one or more of them to be killed. That would be deliberate abortion, which is tantamount to murder.—Ex. 21:22, 23; Ps. 139:16.

## OTHER IVF PROCEDURES

The development of IVF opened the way to other procedures that definitely conflict with God's thinking as reflected in the Scriptures. For example, a woman's eggs might be fertilized with sperm from a man who is not her husband. She might then allow the resulting embryos to be implanted in her. (Lesbian couples sometimes resort to this procedure.) Or a husband's sperm might be used to fertilize the eggs from a woman who is not his wife. The husband's wife might then allow the resulting embryos to be implanted in her.

In a variation that some term "embryo adoption," the embryos placed in a wife's womb involve neither her eggs nor her husband's sperm. In yet another variation, a married couple's eggs and sperm are fertilized outside the womb by IVF. The resulting embryos are then implanted in the womb of a surrogate, a woman who carries the baby and delivers it for them.\*

Those reproductive procedures are unacceptable to God's servants out of respect for his direction: "You must not give your emission as semen to the wife of your associate to become unclean by it." (Lev. 18:20, 29; Prov. 6:29) When fertilization involving eggs or sperm (or both) from someone not within the marital union occurs, this amounts to what the Bible terms *por-nei'a*, sexual immorality. Those procedures are a gross misuse of the sexual organs.—Matt. 5:32; 1 Cor. 5:11; 6:9, 18; Heb. 13:4.

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\* *Awake!* of March 8, 1993, pages 26-27, has a complete discussion of surrogate motherhood.

consciences and in obedience to governmental laws, those desiring to conform their lives to Bible principles would never resort to positive euthanasia,” which is a deliberate act to end a patient’s life. In some situations, though, life-support technology is the only thing sustaining a loved one. Family members must decide whether to continue or to discontinue that artificial life support.

True, that is not the same as the situation faced by a couple who employed IVF and now have stored embryos. But one option that may be offered to them is that of removing the embryos from the nitrogen freezer, allowing them to thaw. Without the artificial environment of the freezer, the embryos would soon deteriorate to the point of no longer being viable. The couple have to decide whether they will permit that.—Gal. 6:7.

Because a couple submitted to IVF to achieve pregnancy and hopefully have a baby, they might choose to bear the cost of keeping their reserve embryos frozen or they might choose to use them

in a future IVF attempt to have a child. However, another couple might decide that they can stop the maintenance of the frozen embryos, viewing them as being kept viable only by artificial means. Christians facing this decision are responsible before God to use their Bible-trained conscience. Their desire should be to have an untroubled conscience, while not ignoring the conscience of others.—1 Tim. 1:19.

One expert in reproductive endocrinology found that most couples “were confused yet deeply affected by the responsibility of deciding what to do with their [frozen] embryos.” He concluded: “For many couples, it seems there is no good decision.”

Clearly, true Christians even considering IVF should evaluate all the serious implications of this technology. The Bible counsels: “A shrewd person sees danger and hides himself, but the naive keep right on going and suffer for it.” —Prov. 22:3, *NET Bible*.

## QUESTIONS FROM READERS

*An unmarried couple who are studying the Bible want to get baptized, but they cannot legalize their union because the man is not in the country legally. The government does not allow an illegal alien to get married. May they sign a Declaration Pledging Faithfulness and then get baptized?*

■ That might seem to be a solution, but it is not the Scriptural way to resolve their problem. To appreciate why, let us first consider the purpose of a Declaration Pledging Faithfulness, why it exists, and how and where it may be applicable.

The document is a written statement signed before witnesses by a couple who are prevented from marrying for the reason mentioned below. In the document they pledge to be faithful to each other and to legalize their union if that becomes

possible. The congregation would view them as having gone on record before God and man to be faithful to each other so that their union could be treated as if validated by civil authorities.

Why and when is the Declaration Pledging Faithfulness used? Jehovah instituted human marriage and regards it highly. His Son said: “What God has yoked together let no man put apart.” (Matt. 19:5, 6; Gen. 2:22-24) Jesus added: “Whoever divorces his wife, *except on the ground of for-*



nication [sexual immorality], and marries another commits adultery.” (Matt. 19:9) So “fornication,” in other words, sexual immorality, is the only ground for divorce that can Scripturally end a marriage. If, for example, a man engages in sex relations outside of marriage, his innocent wife can decide whether to divorce him or not. If she does divorce him, then she is free to marry another.

However, in some lands, especially in the past, the dominant church did not accept this clear Biblical position. Rather, it taught that divorce cannot be granted for any reason. Thus, in some places where the church had great influence, the civil law code makes no provision for divorce, even on the valid ground that Jesus stated. In other countries, divorce is available, but the procedure is very long, complicated, and demanding. It might take many, many years to obtain a divorce. It is as if the church or the government ‘hinders’ what God accepts.—Acts 11:17.

For instance, a couple may live in a country where divorce is impossible or extremely difficult to obtain, perhaps taking years to become valid. If they have put forth all reasonable efforts to end a legally existing marriage and they qualify in God’s sight to marry, they may sign a Declaration Pledging Faithfulness. That allowance is a compassionate arrangement of the Christian congregation *in such lands*. However, it is not a provision to be used in most countries where divorce is possible, even if the process is somewhat expensive or complex.

Not understanding the Declaration Pledging Faithfulness, some who live where divorce is possible have asked about signing such a document rather than face any complications or inconveniences.

In the case in question, the man and woman who are living together immorally want to marry. Each is Scripturally free; neither is bound to a previous mate. Yet, the man is not in the country legally, and the government will not authorize the marriage of an illegal alien. (In many lands the authorities will permit a marriage even if one party or both parties lack legal status in the country.) In the case under discussion, the country does have a provision for divorce. Consequently, signing a Declaration Pledging Faithfulness is not an option there. Note that with this couple it is not as if either needed to obtain a divorce but is being prevented from getting one. They are both free to marry. In view of the man’s illegal status, though, how can they do so? They might have to go to another land where his status will not be an obstacle. Or it may even be possible for them to marry in the land where they now reside *if* the man takes steps to legalize his status there.

Yes, the couple can bring their lives into harmony with God’s standards and Caesar’s law. (Mark 12:17; Rom. 13:1) It is hoped that they will do so. Thereafter, they may qualify for baptism.—Heb. 13:4.



**Have you carefully read the recent issues of *The Watchtower*?**

**Well, see if you can answer the following questions:**

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**How can we quench the fire of uncontrolled speech?**

We should examine our own heart. Rather than be critical of a brother, why not analyze what might be behind such an attitude? Might we criticize him as a means of making ourselves look better? Moreover, being critical can make a tense situation worse.—8/15, page 21.

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**How did the Law reflect God's view of women?**

Israelite women enjoyed considerable freedom, and they had access to education. They were to be honored and respected, with their rights being protected.—9/1, pages 5-7.

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**With Jehovah's day approaching, what events are yet to come?**

"Peace and security!" will be proclaimed. The nations will attack and destroy Babylon the Great. There will be an attack on God's people. The war of Armageddon will occur, followed by the abyssing of Satan and his demons.—9/15, page 4.

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**How do we benefit from not knowing when the end will come?**

Not knowing the exact day or hour allows us to reveal what is in our heart. It gives us the opportunity to make God's heart glad. It encourages us to pursue a life of self-sacrifice and helps us to rely more fully on God and his Word. Moreover, it allows present adversities to refine us.—9/15, pages 24-25.

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**How can we use Genesis 3:19 to reason with a person who believes in hellfire?**

The verse says that at death Adam would return to the dust of the ground, not that he would go to a fiery hell.—10/1, page 13.

**Who are represented by the "seven stars" in Jesus' right hand mentioned at Revelation 1:16, 20?**

They represent spirit-anointed overseers in congregations, and thus, by extension, all overseers.—10/15, page 14.

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**How can a family deal with debt they may be facing?**

A married couple should talk openly and calmly about their debt. It will help if they analyze their current budget. Can they increase their income or reduce family expenses? They should decide the order in which they will tackle their debts, perhaps negotiating payments with creditors. But they should be realistic and keep money in its proper place. (1 Tim. 6:8)—11/1, pages 19-21.

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**How did Jesus manifest the humble attitude referred to at Isaiah 50:4, 5?**

Those verses say that one having "the tongue of the taught ones" would "not turn in the opposite direction." Jesus displayed a humble attitude, paying close attention to what his Father taught him. Jesus was eager and willing to learn from Jehovah, closely observing God's humility in exercising mercy toward sinful mankind.—11/15, page 11.

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**How did an Estonian commemorative postage stamp testify to the integrity of Jehovah's Witnesses?**

In 2007 the National Post Office issued a stamp focusing on the Stalinist genocide of Estonians. It bore the number 382, referring to the number of Witnesses and their children who were deported in 1951 to labor camps deep inside Russia.—12/1, pages 27-28.



# MAINTAINING OUR POSITION AS “TEMPORARY RESIDENTS”

*“I exhort you as  
aliens and temporary  
residents to keep ab-  
staining from fleshly  
desires.”*—1 PET. 2:11.

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## HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

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Why can the anointed be called  
temporary residents?

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In what sense are the “other  
sheep” temporary residents?

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What are you longing for as far  
as the future is concerned?

SOME 30 years after Jesus ascended to heaven, the apostle Peter addressed a letter to “the temporary residents scattered about in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, to the ones chosen.” (1 Pet. 1:1) Clearly, by the term “the ones chosen,” Peter referred to those who, like him, had been anointed by holy spirit and given “a new birth to a living hope” to rule with Christ in the heavens. (**Read 1 Peter 1:3, 4.**) But why did he thereafter call these chosen ones “aliens and temporary residents”? (1 Pet. 2:11) And what meaning does this have for us today when only about 1 in 650 active Witnesses throughout the world lays claim to being an anointed chosen one?

<sup>2</sup> It was fitting to apply the term “temporary residents” to anointed ones in the first century. As is true of the remnant of this group alive today, their existence on earth was not permanent. The apostle Paul, himself a member of the anointed “little flock,” explained: “As for us, our citizenship exists in the heavens, from which place also we are eagerly waiting for a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Luke 12:32; Phil. 3:20) Given that their “citizenship exists in the heavens,” at death anointed ones will leave the earthly scene for something far better, immortal life in the heavens. (**Read Philippians 1:21-23.**) Thus, in a very literal way, they could be termed mere “temporary residents” of the earth under Satan’s control.

<sup>3</sup> But what about the “other sheep”? (John 10:16) Do they not have a Scripturally well-founded hope of becoming *permanent* residents of the earth? Indeed,

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1, 2. Whom did Peter refer to with the expression “the ones chosen,” and why did he call them “temporary residents”?

3. What question about the “other sheep” now arises?



that will be their home forever! Still, in a sense they too can at present be considered temporary residents. In what sense?

**“ALL CREATION KEEPS  
ON GROANING”**

<sup>4</sup> As long as Satan’s wicked system is allowed to exist, everyone, including Christians, will continue to suffer the consequences of Satan’s rebellion against Jehovah. We read at Romans 8: 22: “We know that all creation keeps on groaning together and being in pain together until now.” World leaders, scientists, and humanitarians, however sincere, are helpless to prevent this.

<sup>5</sup> Since 1914, millions have therefore chosen to become willing subjects of God’s enthroned King, Christ Jesus. They have no desire to be a part of Satan’s world system. They refuse to be supporters of Satan’s world. Instead,

4. What are world leaders helpless to prevent?
5. Since 1914, what step have millions taken, and why?

they use their lives and assets in support of God’s Kingdom, serving its interests. —Rom. 14:7, 8.

<sup>6</sup> Yes, Jehovah’s Witnesses are law-abiding citizens in over 200 countries, yet regardless of where they live, they are like aliens. They maintain a position of strict neutrality as regards the political and social issues of the day. Even now, they consider themselves to be citizens of a new world, one of God’s making. They rejoice to see their days of *temporary residence* in an imperfect world system rapidly drawing to a close.

<sup>7</sup> Soon Christ will exercise his authority to destroy Satan’s wicked system. Christ’s perfect government will free the earth of sin and sorrow. It will remove all visible and invisible traces of rebellion against Jehovah’s rightful sovereignty. Loyal servants of God will be in a position to become *permanent* resi-

6. In what sense can Jehovah’s Witnesses be called aliens?
7. How will servants of God become permanent residents, and of what?

We are not striving  
to save Satan’s world

We are promoting  
God’s new world





dents of the earthly Paradise. (*Read Revelation 21:1-5.*) In a full sense, creation will then have been “set free from enslavement to corruption and have the glorious freedom of the children of God.”—Rom. 8:21.

#### WHAT IS EXPECTED OF TRUE CHRISTIANS?

<sup>8</sup> Peter explains what is expected of Christians when he goes on to say: “Beloved, I exhort you as aliens and temporary residents to keep abstaining from fleshly desires, which are the very ones that carry on a conflict against the soul.” (1 Pet. 2:11) That advice was first directed to anointed Christians, but it is equally valid for Jesus’ other sheep.

<sup>9</sup> Some desires, when satisfied in the manner decreed by the Creator, are not wrong in themselves. Indeed, they add pleasure to life. For example, there are the normal desires to enjoy good food and drink, to participate in refreshing activities, and to find delight in wholesome companionship. Even the desire for sexual pleasure with one’s marriage mate is fitting and has its place. (1 Cor. 7:3-5) Peter, though, correctly limited the “fleshly desires” of which he was speaking to those that “carry on a conflict against the soul.” Making it obvious just what is meant, some Bible translations speak of “fleshly lusts” (*King James Version*) or “sinful desires” (*New International Version*). Clearly, any human desire that conflicts with Jehovah’s expressed purpose and that could negatively affect one’s good relationship with God must be kept in check. Otherwise a Christian’s hope of keeping his soul alive could be seriously endangered.

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**8, 9.** Explain what Peter meant by “abstaining from fleshly desires.”

<sup>10</sup> Satan’s goal is to weaken the determination of true Christians to view themselves as “temporary residents” in the present system. The glamour of materialism, the seduction of immorality, the attractiveness of prominence, the flattering appeal of “me first,” and the magnetism of nationalism—these are all traps of Satan and must be identified as such. By our being determined to refrain from these negative fleshly desires, we show clearly that we do not want to be a part of Satan’s wicked world. We give evidence that we are living in it only temporarily. What we really want and are striving hard to achieve is permanent residency in God’s new world of righteousness.

#### FINE CONDUCT

<sup>11</sup> Peter continues his explanation of what is expected of Christian “temporary residents,” saying in verse 12: “Maintain your conduct fine among the nations, that, in the thing in which they are speaking against you as evildoers, they may as a result of your fine works of which they are eyewitnesses glorify God in the day for his inspection.” Foreigners, temporary residents in a land not their own, are at times criticized. Simply because they differ from their neighbors, they may even be viewed as if they were evildoers. Their speech, their actions, their dress, perhaps even their appearance may be somewhat different. But when they do good works, that is to say, when their conduct is fine, negative comments about their being different are proved groundless.

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**10.** What are some methods that Satan uses to get Christians to become a part of his world?

**11, 12.** How are foreigners sometimes viewed, and what can be said about Jehovah’s Witnesses?

<sup>12</sup> Similarly, true Christians differ from many of their neighbors in certain respects, as in conversation or choice of entertainment. Their dress and grooming often identify them as being different from most in the community. These differences have sometimes led misinformed individuals to accuse them of being, as it were, evildoers. However, other people may praise them for their way of life.

<sup>13</sup> Yes, fine conduct can work to counteract unjustified criticism. Even Jesus, the only man ever to live in perfect faithfulness to God, was falsely accused. Some called him “a man glutinous and given to drinking wine, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.” The fact was, though, that his course of wisdom in serving God disproved the claims that he was a wrongdoer. “Wisdom is proved righteous by its works,” Jesus said. (Matt. 11:19) That is so to

**13, 14.** How is wisdom “proved righteous by its works”? Illustrate.

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Bible truth has helped to unite this Russian family



day too. As an example, some of their neighbors view as strange the brothers and sisters serving at the Bethel complex in Selters, Germany. But the mayor of the community spoke out in their behalf, reasoning: “The Witnesses who serve there have their own way of life, but one that in no way disturbs the lives of others in the community.”

<sup>14</sup> A similar conclusion was recently reached in connection with Jehovah’s Witnesses living in Moscow, Russia. They had been falsely accused of a number of wrong acts. Then in June 2010, the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, France, ruled: “The Court finds that [Moscow’s] interference with the applicants’ right to freedom of religion and association was not justified. The domestic courts did not adduce ‘relevant and sufficient’ reasons to show that the applicant community” was guilty, for instance, of breaking up families, inciting suicide, or refusing medical care. Thus, “the sanction pronounced by the domestic courts was excessively severe in view of the lack of flexibility in the domestic law and disproportionate to whatever legitimate aim was pursued.”

#### PROPER SUBJECTION

<sup>15</sup> Jehovah’s Witnesses in Moscow—in fact, worldwide—fulfill a further requirement for Christians as outlined by Peter. He wrote: “For the Lord’s sake subject yourselves to every human creation: whether to a king as being superior or to governors.” (1 Pet. 2:13, 14) Although being no part of the wicked world, true Christians willingly subject themselves to government author-

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**15.** True Christians worldwide follow what Bible principle?

ities “in their relative positions,” even as Paul instructed them.—*Read Romans 13:1, 5-7.*

<sup>16</sup> When Jehovah’s Witnesses conduct themselves as “temporary residents” in the present system, they are not doing so as part of some silent civil protest; neither do they oppose or interfere with others who make their own political or social decisions. Unlike some other religious groups, Jehovah’s Witnesses refrain from meddling in politics. They never try to dictate policy matters to civil authorities. The idea that they would attempt to disrupt public order or undermine the government is completely without foundation!

<sup>17</sup> By obeying public officials in accord with Peter’s counsel to “have honor for the king,” Christians show the respect and honor that accords with the positions of those officials. (1 Pet. 2:17) At times, officials have acknowledged that they have no valid reason for being concerned about Jehovah’s Witnesses. For example, German politician Steffen Reiche, former cabinet minister in the state of Brandenburg and later member of the German parliament, said: “The conduct of Jehovah’s Witnesses in the camps and prisons embodies virtues that are as essential today as they were in the past for the existence of a democratic constitutional state: namely, their steadfastness against the SS and their compassion toward their fellow prisoners. Given the increasing brutality against foreigners and against political or ideological dissenters, these virtues are a must for every citizen of our country.”

**16, 17.** (a) What proves that we are not against governments? (b) What have some political leaders acknowledged?

## SHOWING LOVE

<sup>18</sup> The apostle Peter wrote: “Have love for the whole association of brothers, be in fear of God.” (1 Pet. 2:17) Jehovah’s Witnesses have a healthy fear of displeasing God, and this provides them with added motivation to do his will. They are happy to be serving Jehovah as part of a worldwide association of brothers and sisters who have the same desire. Therefore, it is only natural for them to “have love for the whole association of brothers.” Such brotherly love, which is so rare in today’s selfish society, comes at times as a surprise to non-Witnesses. For example, a tour guide working with an American travel agency was amazed at the affection and assistance shown by the Witnesses to foreign delegates at an international convention in Germany in 2009. She said that in all her years of serving as a guide, she had never seen anything like it. Later, one of the Witnesses remarked: “Everything she said about us was expressed in a tone of amazement and enthusiasm.” Have you heard similar reactions of people who observed the Witnesses at a convention that you have attended?

<sup>19</sup> In all the above ways—and more—Jehovah’s Witnesses demonstrate that in a real sense, they are “temporary residents” in Satan’s present system. And they are joyfully determined to remain such. Their hope that they will shortly become *permanent residents* of God’s new world of righteousness is strong and well-founded. Are you not looking forward to that?

**18.** (a) Why is it natural for us to love the whole association of brothers? (b) What have some non-Witnesses noted?

**19.** What should we be determined to do, and why?



# “TEMPORARY RESIDENTS” UNITED IN TRUE WORSHIP

*“Foreigners will be your farmers and your vinedressers. And as for you, the priests of Jehovah you will be called.”—ISA. 61:5, 6.*

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## HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

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How do some people view foreigners, but how is the Bible’s view different?

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What invitation is being extended to people of all nations?

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In what sense do we already experience a world without foreigners?

**A**S INDICATED in the preceding article, people use the word “foreigner” in a derogatory way, indicating disdain, even outright contempt. It is disrespectful to consider those of another nation to be inferior to people in one’s own country. More than that, such an attitude indicates an ignorance of the facts. The publication *The Races of Mankind* states: “The races of mankind are what the Bible says they are—brothers.” Brothers are often quite different, but they are brothers nonetheless.

<sup>2</sup> Of course, no matter where we reside, foreigners live among us. That was also the case with the ancient Israelites, who by means of the Law covenant were in a special relationship with Jehovah God. The rights of non-Israelites were somewhat limited, yet the Israelites were required to treat them respectfully and fairly. What a fine example for us to follow! There is no room for partiality or prejudice among true Christians. Why? The apostle Peter said: “For a certainty I perceive 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.

<sup>3</sup> Foreigners in ancient Israel benefited from their close association with native Israelites. This reflected Jehovah’s thinking on the matter as expressed years later by the apostle Paul when he asked about Jehovah: “Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of people of the nations? Yes, of people of the nations also.”—Rom. 3:29; Joel 2:32.

<sup>4</sup> By means of the new covenant, the congrega-

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1. How do some people view foreigners, but why is that not justified?

2, 3. What is Jehovah’s view of foreigners?

4. Why can it be said that there are no foreigners in “the Israel of God”?



tion of anointed Christians replaced literal Israel as the nation with whom God was to have a special relationship. It is therefore called “the Israel of God.” (Gal. 6:16) And as Paul explained, in this new nation, “there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, foreigner, Scythian, slave, freeman, but Christ is all things and in all.” (Col. 3:11) In that sense, then, there were to be no foreigners in the Christian congregation.

<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, someone may point to chapter 61 of the book of Isaiah, which contains a prophecy finding fulfillment in the Christian congregation. Verse 6 of that chapter mentions those who will serve as “priests of Jehovah.” Verse 5, though, mentions “foreigners” who would cooperate with and work with those “priests.” How is this to be understood?

<sup>6</sup> We understand those “priests of Je-

5, 6. (a) What question regarding Isaiah 61:5, 6 might arise? (b) Who are “the priests of Jehovah” and “the foreigners” mentioned by Isaiah? (c) What do the two groups have in common?

hovah” to be anointed Christians who have a share “in the first resurrection” and who “will be priests of God and of the Christ, and will rule as kings with him for the thousand years.” (Rev. 20:6) In addition, there are many loyal Christians who have an earthly hope. These, though working with and associating closely with those who will serve in heaven, are foreigners, figuratively speaking. They happily support and work along with “the priests of Jehovah,” serving as their “farmers” and “vinedressers,” as it were. Yes, they help cultivate spiritual fruitage to God’s glory, nurturing and harvesting people. Indeed, both the anointed and the “other sheep” find and then lovingly shepherd honest individuals who are desirous of serving God forever.—John 10:16.

#### **“TEMPORARY RESIDENTS” LIKE ABRAHAM**

<sup>7</sup> As noted in the preceding article, true Christians are like foreigners, or temporary residents, in Satan’s wicked

7. How are Christians today like Abraham and other faithful men of old?

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Will you remain focused on the fulfillment of God’s promises as Abraham was?



world. In this, they are similar to faithful men of old—including Abraham—of whom it is said that “they were strangers and temporary residents in the land.” (Heb. 11:13) Whatever is our hope for the future, we have the privilege of enjoying the kind of relationship with Jehovah that Abraham had. James explains that “‘Abraham put faith in Jehovah, and it was counted to him as righteousness,’ and he came to be called ‘Jehovah’s friend.’”—Jas. 2:23.

<sup>8</sup> God promised that through Abraham and his descendants, *all* families of the earth—not just one nation—were to be blessed. (**Read Genesis 22:15-18.**) Although the fulfillment of this God-given promise lay in the distant future, Abraham maintained his confidence in that fulfillment. For over half of his life, he and his family wandered from place to place. All the while, Abraham maintained his friendship with Jehovah.

<sup>9</sup> Despite not knowing how long he would have to wait to see his hope realized, Abraham’s love for and devotion to Jehovah never wavered. He kept his eyes focused, not settling down to become a *permanent* resident in some nation. (Heb. 11:14, 15) How wise it is for us to follow Abraham’s example by living a simple life and not letting ourselves become overly concerned about material possessions, social positions, or career goals! Why strive to lead a so-called normal life in a system that is soon to end? Why become overly attached to what is only temporary? As was true of Abraham, we are headed for something far better. We

are willing to show a patient, waiting attitude until our hope is realized.—**Read Romans 8:25.**

<sup>10</sup> Jehovah is still inviting people of all nations to be blessed through Abraham’s seed. And the anointed “priests of Jehovah,” as well as the other sheep “foreigners,” are passing on this invitation to people worldwide in over 600 languages.

### LOOK BEYOND NATIONAL BORDERS

<sup>11</sup> At the inauguration of the temple in 1026 B.C.E., and in harmony with the promise Jehovah made to Abraham, Solomon observed that people of all nations would join in praising Jehovah. In a heartfelt prayer, he said: “Also to the foreigner, who is no part of your people Israel and who actually comes from a distant land by reason of your name (for they shall hear of your great name and of your strong hand and of your stretched-out arm), and he actually comes and prays toward this house, may you yourself listen from the heavens, your established place of dwelling, and you must do according to all that for which the foreigner calls to you; in order that all the peoples of the earth may get to know your name so as to fear you the same as your people Israel do.”—1 Ki. 8:41-43.

<sup>12</sup> A foreigner is basically someone who is in a land that is not his own or is a person who comes into a community or group from outside of it. This well describes Jehovah’s Witnesses. They owe their primary allegiance to a heavenly government, God’s Kingdom under Christ. Thus, they maintain strict neutrality in political matters, even if some

8. What promise was given to Abraham, and how did he feel about its fulfillment?

9, 10. (a) We can copy Abraham’s example in what ways? (b) What invitation can we extend to others?

11. Solomon expressed what view that extended beyond the Israelites?

12. Why might some people view Jehovah’s Witnesses as strange or as “foreigners”?



In Jehovah's eyes, none of them are foreigners

people view them as strangely out of place in today's society.

<sup>13</sup> Foreigners are often recognized by characteristics common to their minority group. It may be the language they speak, their customs, their physical characteristics, even their style or manner of dress. Still, the things they have in common with all other humans, regardless of nationality, are more significant than any of those characteristics. Thus, in actuality a foreigner is simply a person viewed as such because he is different in certain ways. When we learn to look beyond these actual or imagined differences, then the word "foreigner" loses

13. (a) In what sense is the concept of "foreigner" often just a matter of viewpoint? (b) Did Jehovah's original purpose include the idea of foreigners? Explain.

es much of its meaning. If all on earth were living under the same political entity or government, no one would be a foreigner in the political sense of the word. In fact, Jehovah originally purposed that all humans be united as *one* family under *one* rulership—*his* rulership. Could anything approaching that be possible now for people in all nations around the globe?

<sup>14</sup> In a selfish and nationalistic world, it is refreshing to find individuals who can and do look beyond national borders. Granted, overcoming prejudices can be difficult. The founder of the television network CNN, Ted Turner, comments about his work with a number of talented individuals from various nations: "Meeting with these people was an incredible experience. I came to see those from other countries not as 'foreigners,' but as fellow citizens of the planet. I began to view the word 'foreign' as pejorative and created a rule within CNN that the word could not be used either on air or in conversation around the office. Instead, the word 'international' was to be used."

<sup>15</sup> In lands around the globe, only Jehovah's Witnesses have adopted God's way of thinking *as a group*. By learning to see things as Jehovah does, they have been able mentally and emotionally to break down national barriers. Instead of treating members of differing national groups with distrust, suspicion, or even outright hatred, they have learned to cherish the variety of characteristics and abilities of these groups as something beautiful. Have you reflected on this accomplishment and how it has benefited you personally in dealing with others?

14, 15. What have Jehovah's Witnesses *as a group* come to appreciate?

## A WORLD WITHOUT FOREIGNERS

<sup>16</sup> Soon all present-day nations will face Jesus Christ and his heavenly forces in the final battle against God's rulership, which battle is "called in Hebrew Har-Magedon." (Rev. 16:14, 16; 19:11-16) Over 2,500 years ago, the prophet Daniel was inspired to foretell the outcome for human governments in conflict with God's purpose, writing: "In the days of

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Do you look forward  
to the time when there  
will be no man-made  
national boundaries,  
when the concept  
of "foreigner" will be  
a thing of the past?

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those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be brought to ruin. And the kingdom itself will not be passed on to any other people. It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite."—Dan. 2:44.

<sup>17</sup> Can you imagine what the fulfillment of that will mean for you personally? Man-made national boundaries, which today in some sense mark every human as a foreigner, will no longer exist. Any possible differences in appearance or any remaining normal physical characteristics will simply illustrate the marvelous variety found in God's creation. Such a thrilling prospect should motivate all of us to continue praising

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**16, 17.** What can the fulfillment of Revelation 16:16 and Daniel 2:44 mean for you personally?

and honoring our Creator, Jehovah God, as best we can.

<sup>18</sup> Is it unrealistic to believe that such a global change can happen? No, it really is not. On the contrary, it is totally reasonable to believe that it will happen. The very concept of "foreigner" has already lost much of its meaning among Jehovah's Witnesses, who pay little attention to the nationality of those in their midst. Recently, for example, several of their smaller branch offices were merged to simplify the work of oversight and to improve efficiency in accomplishing the preaching of the good news of the Kingdom. (Matt. 24:14) As far as legal requirements permitted, national barriers were ignored when such consolidations were made. That is yet another visible proof that Jesus Christ as Jehovah's rightfully enthroned Ruler is breaking down human barriers, and he is the one who will soon "complete his conquest"—Rev. 6:2.

<sup>19</sup> Coming from many nations and therefore speaking many different languages, Jehovah's Witnesses strive to uphold the pure language of truth. This creates a bond of unity impossible to break. (**Read Zephaniah 3:9.**) This is an international family standing in the midst of but separate from the present wicked system. This united family now is but a foretaste of the world to come—a world without foreigners. Then everyone alive, without exception, will happily acknowledge the truthfulness of what the publication quoted earlier said: "The races of mankind are what the Bible says they are—brothers."—*The Races of Mankind*.

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**18.** What recent developments show that the concept of "foreigner" can be overcome?

**19.** What has the pure language of truth made possible?





## The Simplified *Watchtower* Why Introduced?

FOR decades, men and women around the globe have appreciated and benefited from the Bible-based information published in the pages of *The Watchtower*. In July 2011, the first issue of a simplified study edition of this magazine was published in the English language. That issue explained: “This new edition will be tried for one year, and if it is helpful, it will continue to be printed.”

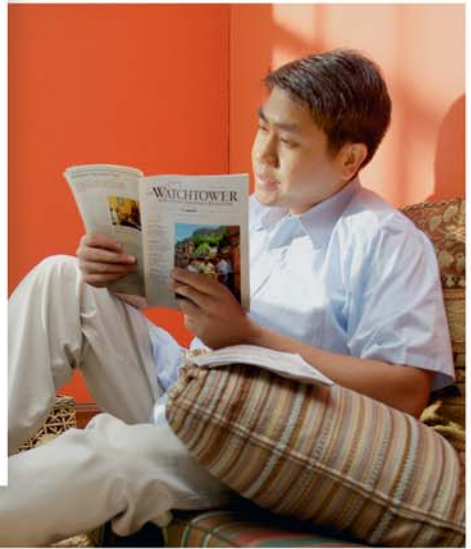
Now, it is a pleasure to announce that we have decided to continue to publish it. Moreover, in time a simplified edition in French, Portuguese, and Spanish will be available.

### WHY APPRECIATED

After receiving the simplified edition, several in the South Pacific reported: “Now the brothers are really able to get the full sense

of *The Watchtower*.” Another letter said: “The time once spent looking up words and explaining expressions is now spent gaining an understanding of the cited scriptures and how they tie into the lesson.”

A college graduate in the United States says: “I spent 18 years speaking and writing in the abstract language of higher education. I developed a habit of speaking and thinking in a way that was more complicated than necessary. I realized I needed to make big changes in my way of thinking and speaking.” Now an effective evangelizer, she writes: “The simplified *Watchtower* has proved to be a great help. Its language gives me an excellent example of how to put things simply.”



“The time once spent looking up words and explaining expressions is now spent gaining an understanding of the cited scriptures and how they tie into the lesson”

A sister in England who was baptized in 1972 wrote regarding the simplified *Watchtower*: “When I read the very first issue, I felt as though Jehovah were sitting beside me with his arm around my shoulders and we were reading it together. It was like an earthly father reading a bedtime story to his child.”

A Bethel sister in the United States who was baptized over 40 years ago said that the simplified edition has at times provided her with new insight. For example, the box “Some Expressions Explained” in the September 15, 2011, issue described the expression “cloud of witnesses” at Hebrews 12:1 in these words: “There were so many

that they could not be counted.” She said: “This illuminated my understanding of the verse.” Regarding the weekly meeting, she added: “Even if a child’s answers are directly from the simplified edition, they are not in the same words as the standard edition of *The Watchtower* that most have before them. So the child’s comments are fresh to the audience.”

Another sister at Bethel wrote: “I eagerly look forward to hearing the comments of little ones in the congregation. The simplified *Watchtower* has helped them to express themselves with such conviction. Their expressions have been an encouragement to me.”

A sister who was baptized in 1984 expressed appreciation for the simplified edition: "I feel that it was written just for me. It really makes it easy to understand what I am reading. Now I have confidence I can answer during the *Watchtower* Study."

### A TOOL PARENTS TREASURE

A mother of a seven-year-old boy commented: "Having to explain to him many sentences in our preparation for the *Watchtower* Study used to be long and tiresome." How did the simplified edition help? She writes: "I am amazed that he can share in reading the paragraphs and really grasp their meaning. Since the words are not difficult and the sentences are shorter, he is not intimidated. He has begun to prepare his comments for the meetings without my help, and his attention is focused on the magazine throughout the entire study."

The mother of a nine-year-old girl wrote: "Before we had to help her with her comments. Now she prepares her own. We seldom need to spend time explaining or break-

ing down the information. Because it is not over her head, she now feels that she is a real part of the *Watchtower* Study."

### HOW DO CHILDREN FEEL?

Many children feel that the simplified *Watchtower* has been provided especially for them. Twelve-year-old Rebecca requested: "Please keep the new edition going!" She added: "I love how you have the section 'Some Expressions Explained.' It is very simple for kids."

Seven-year-old Nicolette feels similarly: "*The Watchtower* used to be hard for me to understand. I can now give more comments by myself." Nine-year-old Emma wrote: "It has been a great help to me and my brother, who is six. We are able to understand a lot better! Thank you!"

Clearly, many are benefiting from an edition of *The Watchtower* that uses easily understood words in simple sentences. It is filling a need and will continue to be published along with the standard edition that has been such a valuable provision since 1879.



"I am amazed that he can share in reading the paragraphs and really grasp their meaning"



# THE WATCHTOWER 2012

Indicating date of issue in which article appears

## BIBLE

Changes Lives, 1/1, 2/1, 4/1, 5/1, 7/1, 8/1, 10/1, 11/1  
Coverdale English Bible, 6/1  
Foretell Future? 1/1  
For Young People, 1/1, 4/1, 7/1, 10/1  
Superstitious Use, 12/15  
Swahili, 9/1  
Uniqueness, 6/1

## CHRISTIAN LIFE AND QUALITIES

Debt, 11/1  
Declaration Pledging Faithfulness, 12/15  
First-Century Christians in Politics? 5/1  
Gift of Singleness, 11/15  
Happiness Depend on Marriage? 10/1  
How Do You Give Advice? 3/15  
Kindness, 9/1  
Making Study Time Enjoyable, Productive, 1/15  
My Bible Lessons, 2/1, 5/1, 8/1, 11/1  
Pornography Result in Being Expelled? 3/15  
Seek "Skillful Direction," 6/15  
Teach Your Children, 3/1, 6/1, 9/1, 12/1  
'Watch Out for Leaven of Pharisees,' 5/15  
When Adolescent Questions Your Faith, 2/1  
Why Are Christians Baptized? 4/1

## JEHOVAH

Care About Women? 9/1  
Draw Close to God, 1/1, 2/1, 3/1, 4/1, 5/1, 6/1, 7/1, 8/1, 9/1, 10/1, 11/1, 12/1  
Father, 7/1  
Hearer of Prayer, 7/1  
Provide World Government? 11/1  
Punish People in Hellfire? 10/1  
What Would You Ask God? 11/1  
Why Ask Abraham to Sacrifice Son? 1/1  
Why Have an Organization? 2/1  
Why Send Jesus to Earth? 12/1  
Why Use Name? 6/1

## JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

A Letter From . . . , 3/1, 6/1, 9/1, 12/1  
Annual Meeting, 8/15  
'Best Message Ever Heard' (Canada radio), 11/15  
Colporteurs, 5/15  
Courageously Proclaimed God's Word! 2/15  
European Court Upholds Conscientious Objection (V. Bayatyan), 11/1  
Frontiers Mean Nothing (Portugal, Spain, France), 1/1  
Gilead Graduations, 2/1, 8/1  
Have Women Ministers? 9/1  
'History Does Not Lie' (Estonia), 12/1  
'How Will I Preach?' (paralytic), 1/15  
'It Made Me Conspicuous' (Dawn-Mobile), 2/15  
Kindness Melts Bitterness, 6/15  
Modern-Day Aztecs, 3/1  
'My Dream Has Come True' (pioneering), 7/15  
Offered Selves in Brazil, 10/15  
Offered Selves in Ecuador, 7/15  
'Out of Mouth of Children' (Russia, Australia), 10/15  
Pilgrims, 8/15  
'Please Take Our Picture' (Mexico), 3/15  
Preserving Gems From Our Past, 1/15  
'Safeguard Your Heart!' District Conventions, 5/1  
Simplified Edition (*Watchtower*), 12/15  
Study Edition (*Watchtower*), 1/15  
Surplus Offset Deficiency (contributions), 11/15  
Theocratic Schools, 9/15  
Why Preach From House to House? 6/1

## JESUS CHRIST

Apocryphal Gospels, 4/1  
Crime of Evidooers Impaled Alongside, 2/1  
How Remember Jesus' Death? 3/1

Is Jesus God? 4/1  
Meaning of "Go With Him Two Miles" (Mt 5:41), 4/1  
Questions Answered, 4/1  
View of Politics, 5/1  
When Become King? 8/1  
Who Sent "Star"? 4/1  
Why Jews Stumbled by Manner of Death, 5/1

## LIFE STORIES

Friends for 60 Years (L. Turner, W. Kasten, R. Kelsey, R. Templeton), 10/15  
I Found True Freedom! (M. Kilin), 12/1  
I Was Drawn to Wise Older Ones (E. Gjerde), 5/15  
Jehovah Has Opened My Eyes (P. Oyeka), 6/1  
Jehovah Taught Me to Do His Will (M. Lloyd), 7/15  
Now I Know the God I Worship (M. Bacudio), 9/1  
'Pleasantness at Your Right Hand Forever' (L. Didur), 3/15  
Power of God's Word on Hindu Family (N. Govindasamy), 10/1  
'Secret' Learned From Sacred Service (O. Randriamora), 6/15  
Seventy Years Holding On to Skirt of Jew (L. Smith), 4/15

## MISCELLANEOUS

Abraham, 1/1  
Acted Wisely, Bravely, Selflessly (Esther), 1/1  
Ahasuerus (of Esther), 1/1  
All Good People Go to Heaven? 8/1  
Altar to "Unknown God," 3/1  
Annas in Gospel Accounts, 4/1  
Armageddon, 2/1  
Believe You Lived Before? 12/1  
Bitumen as Mortar, 7/1  
Bricks in Ancient Egypt, 1/1  
Buying and Selling in Israel, 9/1  
Can You Live Forever? 10/1  
Choose Successful Future, 5/1  
Christians Flee Judea Before 70 C.E.? 10/1  
Colors, Fabrics in Bible Times, 3/1  
Corruption Ever End? 10/1  
Cosmetics in Bible Times, 12/1  
Death of God's Loyal Ones "Precious," 5/15  
Earth Come to an End? 2/1  
Eight Kings Revealed, 6/15  
Envy, 2/15  
'Excellent Woman' (Ruth), 10/1  
Faith an Emotional Crutch? 11/1  
Farmer (Bible times), 5/1  
First Impressions, 3/1  
Fishermen (Bible times), 8/1  
Flutes at Funerals in Jesus' Day? 2/1  
Frozen Human Embryos, 12/15  
Good News About Religion, 5/1  
How Letters Sent in Bible Times? 9/1  
'Impossible!'—What Does It Mean? 6/1  
Jewish Genealogies, 6/1  
Judgment Day, 9/1  
'Judgment Seat' (Ac 18:12), 5/1  
Loss of Drachma Coin, 12/1  
Marks of True Christianity, 3/1  
Miracles, 8/1  
Musicians, Instruments (Bible times), 2/1  
Nathan—Loyal Advocate of Pure Worship, 2/15  
Paper in Bible Times, 7/1  
Pens, Ink in Bible Times, 11/1  
Protected, Provided, Persevered (Joseph), 4/1  
Rebuilding Trust (after adultery), 5/1  
Reduced Income, 6/1  
Religion and Politics, 5/1  
'Reward for Your Activity' (Asa), 8/15  
Salt Losing Salinity? (Mt 5:13), 12/1  
Shepherd (Bible times), 11/1  
Something Better Than Christmas, 12/1

"Sons of the Prophets," 10/1  
Spirit Creatures Affect Us? 7/1  
Spiritism, 3/1  
Stones on High Priest's Breastpiece, 8/1  
Tax Collectors (first century), 3/1  
Tents Paul Made, 11/1  
Thessalonica, 6/1  
Tobacco, 8/1  
Trinity, 3/1  
When Anglo-American World Power Became Seventh, 6/15  
'Where You Go I Shall Go' (Ruth), 7/1  
Why Marry Only Fellow Believer? 7/1  
Why Do Some Not Celebrate Christmas? 12/1  
Wine as Medicine, 8/1

## STUDY ARTICLES

Are You Reflecting the Glory of Jehovah? 5/15  
'Be Courageous and Very Strong,' 2/15  
Betrayal—An Ominous Sign of the Times! 4/15  
Beware of the Devil's Snares, 8/15  
Carry On as Kingdom Citizens! 8/15  
Cultivate the Spirit of a Lesser One, 11/15  
Do Not Look at "the Things Behind," 3/15  
Do You Really Appreciate God's Gift of Marriage? 5/15  
Find Real Success in Life, 12/15  
Forgive One Another Freely, 11/15  
Happiness Is Possible in a Divided Household, 2/15  
Help People to "Awake From Sleep," 3/15  
How This World Will Come to an End, 9/15  
'I Am With You,' 8/15  
Imitate Jesus' Example of Watchfulness, 2/15  
Jehovah Congregates His Joyful People, 9/15  
Jehovah Is "a Revealer of Secrets," 6/15  
Jehovah Knows How to Deliver His People, 4/15  
Jehovah Reveals What "Must Shortly Take Place," 6/15  
Jehovah Safeguards Us for Salvation, 4/15  
Jesus Set the Pattern of Humility, 11/15  
Learn From 'the Framework of Truth,' 1/15  
Learn from the Patience of Jehovah and Jesus, 9/15  
Learn Watchfulness From Jesus' Apostles, 1/15  
Let Jehovah Lead You to True Freedom, 7/15  
Let Your *Yes* Mean Yes, 10/15  
Maintain a Complete Heart Toward Jehovah, 4/15  
Maintaining Our Position as "Temporary Residents," 12/15  
Maintain Your Sense of Urgency, 3/15  
Making Whole-Souled Sacrifices for Jehovah, 1/15  
Meeting Today's Adversities With Courage, 10/15  
Obey God and Benefit From His Sworn Promises, 10/15  
'Of Whom Shall I Be in Dread?' 7/15  
'One Jehovah' Gathers His Family, 7/15  
Peace for a Thousand Years—And Beyond! 9/15  
Preserve the Positive Spirit of the Congregation, 2/15  
Rejoicing in Our Hope, 3/15  
Royal Priesthood to Benefit All Mankind, 1/15  
Serve the God of Freedom, 7/15  
Stand Firm and Avoid Satan's Traps, 8/15  
Take a Positive View of a Strained Marriage, 5/15  
'Teach Me to Do Your Will,' 11/15  
'Temporary Residents' United in True Worship, 12/15  
'The Son Is Willing to Reveal the Father,' 4/15  
'They Were Borne Along by Holy Spirit,' 6/15  
True Christians Respect God's Word, 1/15  
Trust in Jehovah—The God of "Times and Seasons," 5/15  
What Does Jehovah's Forgiveness Mean for You? 11/15  
What Kind of Spirit Do You Show? 10/15  
Why Put Jehovah's Service First? 6/15  
You Are a Trusted Steward! 12/15  
'You Know Neither the Day Nor the Hour,' 9/15