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THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

*Who Is
the
Antichrist?*

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.

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Why Identify the Antichrist?

"You have heard that antichrist is coming," wrote the inspired apostle long ago. (1 John 2:18) How intriguing those words are! For centuries, people have pondered their meaning. Who is the antichrist? When will he come?

What will he do when he does come?

THE list of those charged with being the antichrist is a long one. In the past, those labeled "antichrist" included Jews, the Catholic papacy, and Roman emperors. For example, when Emperor Frederick II (1194-1250) chose not to join a Crusade on behalf of the church, Pope Gregory IX named him the antichrist and excommunicated him. Gregory's successor, Innocent IV, excommunicated him again. In response, Frederick declared Innocent to be the antichrist.

The apostle John is the only Bible writer to use the word "antichrist." In two of the letters bearing his name, the word appears five times, in both the singular and the plural. The verses in which the word appears are listed in the box on the next page. From these vers-

es, we can see that the antichrist is a liar and a deceiver, bent on destroying a person's relationship with Christ and with God. Accordingly, the apostle urged his fellow Christians: "Beloved ones, do not believe every inspired expression, but test the inspired expressions to see whether they originate with God, because many false prophets have gone forth into the world."

—1 John 4:1.

Jesus too warned against deceivers, or false prophets, saying: "[They] come to you in sheep's covering, but inside they are ravenous wolves. By their fruits [or, works] you will recognize them." (Matthew 7:15, 16) Was Jesus also warning his followers against the figurative antichrist? Let us see how we can identify this vicious deceiver.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT THE ANTICHRIST

"Young children, it is the last hour [evidently the end of the apostolic period], and, just as you have heard that antichrist is coming, even now there have come to be many antichrists."

—1 John 2:18.

"Who is the liar if it is not the one that denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one that denies the Father and the Son."

—1 John 2:22.

"Every inspired expression that does not confess Jesus does not originate with God. Furthermore, this is the antichrist's inspired expression which you have heard was coming, and now it is already in the world."

—1 John 4:3.

"Many deceivers have gone forth into the world, persons not confessing Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist."—2 John 7.

The Antichrist Exposed

HOW would you protect yourself if you knew that a deadly epidemic was raging in your area? You would likely build up your immune system and stay away from people who are contagious. We must do the same in a spiritual sense. The Scriptures tell us that the antichrist "is already in the world." (1 John 4:3) If we want to escape "infection," we must identify the "carriers" and avoid them. Thankfully, the Bible sheds considerable light on the subject.

"Antichrist" means "against (or instead of) Christ." So in its broadest sense, the term refers to all who oppose or lyingly claim to be the Christ or his representatives. Jesus himself said: "He that is not on my side is against me [or is antichrist], and he that does not gather with me scatters."—Luke 11:23.

Of course, John wrote about the antichrist over 60 years after Jesus died and was resurrected to heaven. Hence, the antichrist's activities must be understood in the light of how they affect Jesus' loyal followers on earth.—Matthew 25:40, 45.

The Antichrist Is Anti-Christian

Jesus warned his followers that the world in general would hate them. He said: "People will deliver you up to tribulation and will kill you, and you will be objects of hatred by all the nations on account of my name. And many false prophets will arise and mislead many."—Matthew 24:9, 11.

Because Jesus' disciples are persecuted "on account of [Jesus'] name," the persecutors are clearly anti-christ, against Christ. The "false prophets," some of whom were once Christians, are also in that category.





Augustine:
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A DECEIVER WITH MANY FACES

The word "antichrist" applies to all who deny what the Bible says about Jesus Christ, all who oppose his Kingdom, and all who mistreat his followers. It also includes individuals, organizations, and nations that falsely claim to represent Christ or that improperly ascribe to themselves the role of Messiah by presumptuously promising to achieve that which only Christ can do—bring about true peace and security.

(2 John 7) These "many antichrists," wrote John, "went out from us, but they were not of our sort; for if they had been of our sort, they would have remained with us."—1 John 2: 18, 19.

The words of both Jesus and John plainly indicate that the antichrist is not a single person but is made up of many individual antichrists. Moreover, because they are false prophets, one of their main objectives is religious deception. What are some of their devices?

Spreading Religious Lies

The apostle Paul warned his fellow worker Timothy to beware of the teachings of apostates, such as Hymenaeus and Philetus, whose "word will spread like gangrene." Paul added: "These very men have deviated from the truth, saying that the resurrection has already occurred; and they are subverting the

faith of some." (2 Timothy 2:16-18) Apparently, Hymenaeus and Philetus taught that the resurrection was a symbolic one and that Christians had already been resurrected in a spiritual sense. Granted, becoming a genuine disciple of Jesus brings one to life from God's standpoint, which Paul himself plainly stated. (Ephesians 2:1-5) Nevertheless, the teaching of Hymenaeus and Philetus disregarded Jesus' promise of a literal resurrection of the dead under God's Kingdom rule.—John 5: 28, 29.

Ideas of a purely symbolic resurrection were later developed by a group called Gnostics. Believing that knowledge (*gnosis* in Greek) could be derived in a mystical way, Gnostics combined apostate Christianity with Greek philosophy and Oriental mysticism. For instance, they held that all physical matter is evil, and for that reason, Jesus did not come in the flesh but only

seemed to have a human body—a belief called Docetism. As we have seen, this is precisely what the apostle John had warned against.—1 John 4:2, 3; 2 John 7.

Another fabrication, concocted centuries later, is the doctrine of the so-called holy Trinity, which makes the assertion that Jesus is both Almighty God and the Son of God. In his book *The Church of the First Three Centuries*, Dr. Alvan Lamson states that the doctrine of the Trinity “had its origin in a source entirely foreign from that of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures; that it grew up, and was ingrafted on Christianity, through the hands of the Platonizing Fathers.” Who were these “Platonizing Fathers”? They were apostate clerics who were infatuated with the teachings of pagan Greek philosopher Plato.

The engrafting of the Trinity was a master-stroke of the antichrist, for this doctrine shrouded God in mystery and blurred his relationship with the Son. (John 14:28; 15:10; Colossians 1:15) Just think, how can one “draw close to God,” as encouraged by the Scriptures, if God is a mystery?—James 4:8.

Adding to the confusion, many Bible translators have taken God’s name, Jehovah, out of their translations, even though it occurs over 7,000 times in the original text! Clearly, attempting to turn the Almighty into not just a mystery but a *nameless* mystery is an act of gross disrespect for our Creator and his inspired Word. (Revelation 22:18, 19) Furthermore, replacing the divine name with such titles as Lord and God is a violation of Jesus’ model prayer, which says in part: “Thy name be hallowed [or, made holy].”—Matthew 6:9, *The New English Bible*.

Antichrists Reject God’s Kingdom

Antichrists have become particularly active during “the last days,” the time in which we now live. (2 Timothy 3:1) A key objective of these modern-day deceivers is to mislead

people in regard to Jesus’ role as King of God’s Kingdom, a heavenly government that will soon rule over the entire earth.—Daniel 7:13, 14; Revelation 11:15.

For example, some religious leaders preach that God’s Kingdom is a condition in the heart of men, a view that finds no basis in the Scriptures. (Daniel 2:44) Others claim that Christ works through human governments and institutions. Yet, Jesus stated: “My kingdom is *no part* of this world.” (John 18:36) Indeed, Satan, not Christ, is “the ruler of the world” and “the god of this system of things.” (John 14:30; 2 Corinthians 4:4) This explains why Jesus will soon eliminate all human governments and become earth’s sole Ruler. (Psalm 2:2, 6-9; Revelation 19:11-21) People pray for this outcome when they recite the Lord’s Prayer, saying: “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth.”—Matthew 6:10, *King James Version*.

Because they support the political systems of the world, many religious leaders have opposed, even persecuted, those who proclaim the truth about God’s Kingdom. Interestingly, the Bible book of Revelation mentions a symbolic harlot—“Babylon the Great”—who is “drunk with the blood of the holy ones and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus.” (Revelation 17:4-6) She also practices spiritual harlotry by lending her support to earth’s “kings,” or political rulers, receiving favors in return. This symbolic woman is none other than the false religions of the world. She is a major part of the antichrist.—Revelation 18:2, 3; James 4:4.

The Antichrist ‘Tickles Ears’

Besides rejecting Bible truth, many so-called Christians have renounced Bible standards of conduct in favor of popular morality. God’s Word foretold this development, saying: “There will be a period of time when they [people professing to serve God] will not

put up with the healthful teaching, but, in accord with their own desires, they will accumulate teachers for themselves to have their ears tickled." (2 Timothy 4:3) These religious frauds are also described as "false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ." The Bible goes on to say: "Their end shall be according to their works."—2 Corinthians 11:13-15.

Their works include "loose conduct," which is a brazen disregard for high moral principles. (2 Peter 2:1-3, 12-14) Do we not see an increasing number of religious leaders and their followers adopting—or at least condoning—unchristian practices, such as homosexuality and sex outside of marriage? Please take a moment to compare these widely accepted views and lifestyles with what the Bible states at Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1:26, 27; 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10; Hebrews 13:4; and Jude 7.

Like the Beroeans, we should 'examine the Scriptures daily'

"Test the Inspired Expressions"

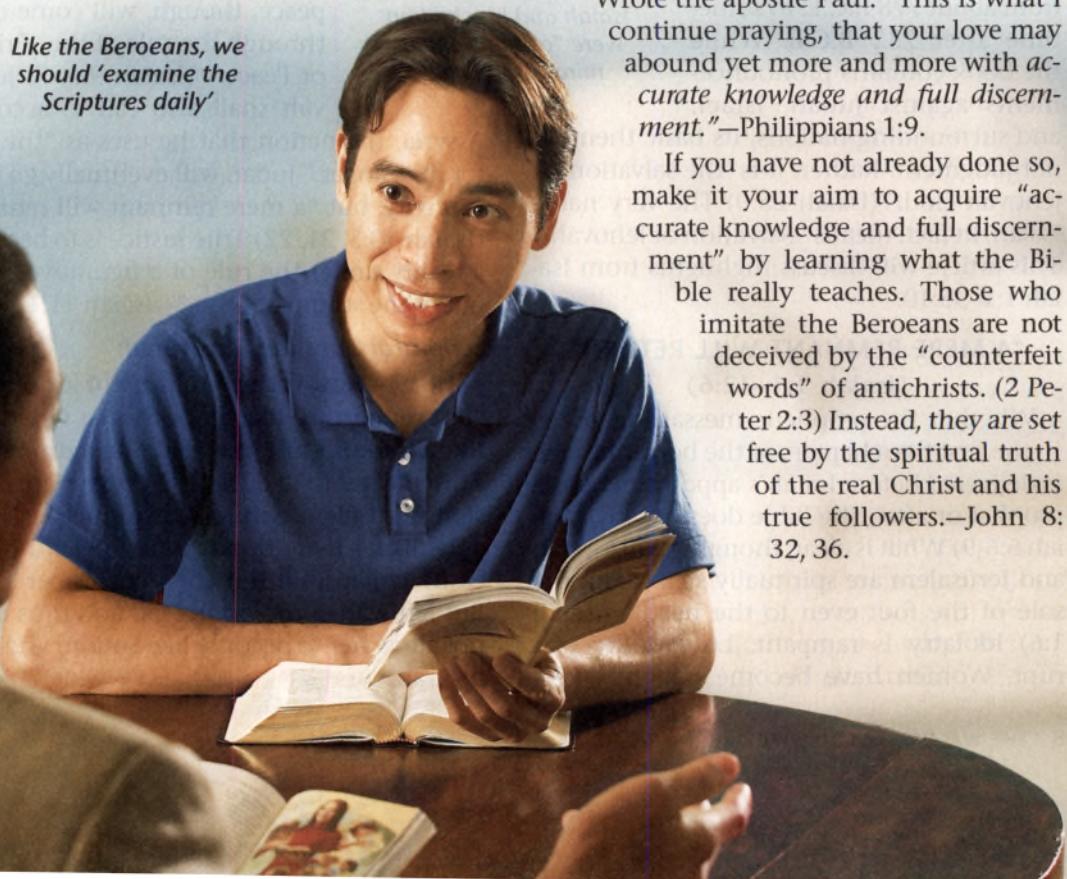
In view of the foregoing, we should heed the apostle John's words not to take our religious beliefs lightly or for granted. "Do not believe every inspired expression," he warns, "but test the inspired expressions to see whether they originate with God, because many false prophets have gone forth into the world."—1 John 4:1.

Consider the good example of certain "noble-minded" people who lived in the city of Beroea in the first century. They "received the word with the greatest eagerness of mind, carefully examining the Scriptures daily as to whether these things [spoken by Paul and Silas] were so." (Acts 17:10, 11) Yes, while eager to learn, the Beroeans made sure that what they heard and accepted was firmly rooted in the Scriptures.

Today, too, genuine Christians are not influenced by the ebb and flow of popular views but cling firmly to Bible truth.

Wrote the apostle Paul: "This is what I continue praying, that your love may abound yet more and more with accurate knowledge and full discernment."—Philippians 1:9.

If you have not already done so, make it your aim to acquire "accurate knowledge and full discernment" by learning what the Bible really teaches. Those who imitate the Beroeans are not deceived by the "counterfeit words" of antichrists. (2 Peter 2:3) Instead, they are set free by the spiritual truth of the real Christ and his true followers.—John 8:32, 36.



Jehovah's Word Is Alive

Highlights From the Book of Isaiah—I

“WHOM shall I send, and who will go for us?” To this invitation from Jehovah God, Isaiah the son of Amoz replies: “Here I am! Send me.” (Isaiah 1:1; 6:8) At that, he receives an assignment as a prophet. Isaiah’s prophetic activities are recorded in the Bible book bearing his name.

Written by the prophet himself, the book of Isaiah covers a period of 46 years, from about 778 B.C.E. to sometime after 732 B.C.E. While the book contains pronouncements against Judah, Israel, and surrounding nations, its basic theme is not judgment. Rather, it is ‘the salvation by Jehovah God.’ (Isaiah 25:9) The very name Isaiah, in fact, means “Salvation of Jehovah.” This article will discuss highlights from Isaiah 1:1–35:10.

“A MERE REMNANT WILL RETURN”

(Isaiah 1:1–12:6)

Whether the prophetic message recorded in the first five chapters of the book of Isaiah is delivered before Isaiah’s appointment as a prophet or after, the Bible does not say. (Isaiah 6:6–9) What is clear, though, is that Judah and Jerusalem are spiritually sick “from the sole of the foot even to the head.” (Isaiah 1:6) Idolatry is rampant. Leaders are corrupt. Women have become haughty. Peo-



Isaiah and his children were “as signs and as miracles in Israel”

ple do not serve the true God acceptably. Isaiah is commissioned to go and speak “again and again” to those who neither understand nor want any knowledge.

Judah is threatened with invasion by the combined forces of Israel and Syria. Using Isaiah and his children “as signs and as miracles,” Jehovah assures Judah that the Syro-Israelite alliance will not succeed. (Isaiah 8:18) Unending peace, though, will come only through the rule of the “Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6, 7) Jehovah shall also call to account

Assyria, the nation that he uses as “the rod for [his] anger.” Judah will eventually go into captivity, but “a mere remnant will return.” (Isaiah 10:5, 21, 22) True justice is to become a reality under the rule of a figurative “twig out of the stump of Jesse.”—Isaiah 11:1.

Scriptural Questions Answered:

1:8, 9—How is the daughter of Zion to be “left remaining like a booth in a vineyard, like a lookout hut in a field of cucumbers”? This means that during the Assyrian invasion, Jerusalem will look extremely vulnerable, like a mere booth in a vineyard or an easily collapsible hut in a cucumber field. But Jehovah comes to her aid and thus does not allow her to become like Sodom and Gomorrah.

1:18—What is meant by the words: "Come, now, you people, and let us set matters straight between us"? This is not an invitation to talk things over and reach a mutual agreement by having give-and-take discussions. Instead, the verse refers to establishing a forum of justice in which the righteous Judge, Jehovah, gives Israel an opportunity to change and cleanse herself.

6:8a—Why are the pronouns "I" and "us" used here? The pronoun "I" stands for Jehovah God. The plural pronoun "us" indicates that there is another person with Jehovah. This, of course, is his "only-begotten Son."

—John 1:14; 3:16.

6:11—What did Isaiah mean when he asked: "How long, O Jehovah?" Isaiah was not asking how long he would have to deliver Jehovah's message to unresponsive people. Rather, he wanted to know how long the spiritually sick condition of the people would continue to bring dishonor to God's name.

*Jerusalem was to become
"like a booth in a vineyard"*



7:3, 4—Why did Jehovah extend salvation to wicked King Ahaz? The kings of Syria and Israel planned to dethrone King Ahaz of Judah and install in his place a puppet ruler, the son of Tabeel—a man who was not a descendant of David. This diabolical scheme would have the effect of interrupting the operation of the Kingdom covenant with David. Jehovah extended salvation to Ahaz in order to preserve the line through which the promised "Prince of Peace" would come.—Isaiah 9:6.

7:8—How was Ephraim "shattered to pieces" within 65 years? The deportation of the people from the ten-tribe kingdom and the repopulation of the land with foreigners began "in the days of Pekah the king of Israel," shortly after Isaiah uttered this prophecy. (2 Kings 15:29) It continued long thereafter into the days of the Assyrian King Esar-haddon, a son and successor of Sennacherib. (2 Kings 17:6; Ezra 4:1, 2; Isaiah 37:37, 38) This ongoing Assyrian transplantation of people to and from Samaria allows for the period of 65 years mentioned at Isaiah 7:8.

11:1, 10—How can Jesus Christ be "a twig out of the stump of Jesse" as well as "the root of Jesse"? (Romans 15:12) Jesus was "out of the stump of Jesse" in a fleshly way. He was a descendant of Jesse through Jesse's son David. (Matthew 1:1-6; Luke 3:23-32) However, the receiving of the kingly power affects Jesus' relationship with his ancestors. By virtue of his having been given power and authority to grant obedient mankind everlasting life on earth, Jesus becomes their "Eternal Father." (Isaiah 9:6) Hence, he is also "the root" of his ancestors, including Jesse.

Lessons for Us:

1:3. To refuse to live by what our Creator requires of us is to know less than a bull or an ass. On the other hand, building

appreciation for all that Jehovah has done for us will deter us from behaving without understanding and leaving him.

1:11-13. Hypocritical religious ceremonies and formalistic prayers are wearisome to Jehovah. Our actions and prayers should stem from a right heart motive.

1:25-27; 2:2; 4:2, 3. Slavery and the desolation of Judah were to end with the return of the repentant remnant to Jerusalem and the restoration of true worship. Jehovah is merciful to repentant wrongdoers.

2:2-4. Our having a zealous share in the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making work helps individuals from many nations to learn the ways of peace and to pursue peace with one another.

4:4. Jehovah will remove, or wash away, moral filthiness and bloodguilt.

5:11-13. To shed restraint and moderation in one's choice of recreation is to refuse to act according to knowledge.—Romans 13:13.

5:21-23. Christian elders, or overseers, must avoid being "wise in their own eyes." They also need to exercise moderation in "drinking wine" and must refrain from showing favoritism.

11:3a. Jesus' example and teachings show that there is joy in the fear of Jehovah.

"JEHOVAH WILL SHOW MERCY TO JACOB" (Isaiah 13:1–35:10)

Chapters 13 to 23 are pronouncements against the nations. However, "Jehovah will show mercy to Jacob" by allowing all tribes of Israel to return home. (Isaiah 14:1) The message of desolation for Judah in chap-

ters 24 to 27 is accompanied by the promise of restoration. Jehovah expresses his anger at "the drunkards of Ephraim [Israel]" for forming an alliance with Syria and at "priest and prophet" of Judah for seeking an alliance with Assyria. (Isaiah 28:1, 7) Woe is pronounced upon "Ariel [Jerusalem]" for "setting out to go down to Egypt" for protection. (Isaiah 29:1, footnote; 30:1, 2) Still, salvation is foretold for individuals who exercise faith in Jehovah.

Like 'a maned young lion growling over its prey,' Jehovah will guard "Mount Zion." (Isaiah 31:4) There is also a promise: "Look! A king will reign for righteousness itself."

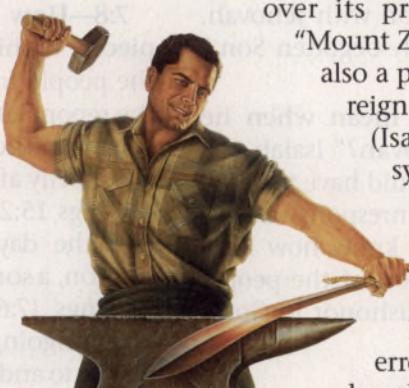
(Isaiah 32:1) While the Syrian threat to Judah causes even "the very messengers of peace" to weep bitterly, Jehovah promises that his people will be healed, "pardoned for their error." (Isaiah 33:7, 22-24) Jehovah has indignation against all the nations, and rage against all their army." (Isaiah 34:2) Judah will not remain desolate.

"The wilderness and the waterless region will exult, and the desert plain will be joyful and blossom as the saffron." —Isaiah 35:1.

Scriptural Questions Answered:

13:17—In what way did the Medes consider silver as nothing and take no delight in gold? The Medes and the Persians regarded the glory resulting from a conquest more highly than the spoils of war. This proved true in the case of Cyrus, who gave the returning exiles the gold and silver utensils that Nebuchadnezzar had looted from Jehovah's temple.

14:1, 2—How did Jehovah's people become "the captors of those holding them



How are people from the nations being helped to "beat their swords into plowshares"?

captive” and “have in subjection those who were driving them to work”? This was fulfilled in the case of such individuals as Daniel, who held a high office in Babylon under the Medes and the Persians; Esther, who became a Persian queen; and Mordecai, who was appointed prime minister of the Persian Empire.

20:2-5—Did Isaiah really walk about completely naked for three years? Isaiah possibly took off his outer garment only and walked about “lightly clad.”—1 Samuel 19:24, footnote.

21:1—What region is called “the wilderness of the sea”? Even though Babylon was nowhere near the actual sea, it is referred to this way. This is because the overflowing waters of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers flooded the region annually, creating a marshy “sea.”

24:13-16—How would the Jews become “in among the peoples, like the beating off of the olive tree, like the gleaning when the grape gathering has come to an end”? Just as some fruit is left on a tree or a vine after the harvest, only a few would survive the destruction of Jerusalem and Judah. Wherever the survivors were deported, whether to “the region of light [Babylon in the East]” or to “the islands of the [Mediterranean] sea,” they would glorify Jehovah.

24:21—Who are “the army of the height” and “the kings of the ground”? “The army of the height” could well refer to the wicked spirit forces. “The kings of the ground,” then, are the earthly rulers, over whom the demons have powerful influence.—1 John 5:19.

25:7—What is “the envelopment that is enveloping over all the peoples, and the woven work that is interwoven upon all the nations”? This comparison draws attention to two great enemies of mankind—sin and death.

Lessons for Us:

13:20-22; 14:22, 23; 21:1-9. Jehovah’s prophetic word always comes true, as it did in the case of Babylon.

17:7, 8. Though most in Israel did not listen, some individuals looked to Jehovah. Similarly, some in Christendom respond to the Kingdom message.

28:1-6. Israel will fall to Assyria, but God will see to it that faithful individuals survive. Jehovah’s judgments do not leave the righteous without hope.

28:23-29. Jehovah readjusts sincere individuals according to their specific needs and circumstances.

30:15. Salvation by Jehovah requires that we show faith by “resting,” or refraining, from seeking salvation through human schemes. By “keeping undisturbed,” or not being fearful, we also demonstrate trust in Jehovah’s ability to protect us.

30:20, 21. We ‘see’ Jehovah and “hear” his voice of salvation by heeding what he says through his inspired Word, the Bible, and through “the faithful and discreet slave.”—Matthew 24:45.

Isaiah’s Prophecy Fortifies Our Confidence in God’s Word

How thankful we can be for God’s message in the book of Isaiah! The prophecies that have already been fulfilled fortify our confidence that the ‘word that goes forth from Jehovah’s mouth will not return to him without results.’—Isaiah 55:11.

What about the Messianic prophecies, such as those found at Isaiah 9:7 and 11:1-5, 10? Do they not strengthen our faith in Jehovah’s provision for our salvation? The book also contains prophecies whose major fulfillments are taking place in our day or will yet occur. (Isaiah 2:2-4; 11:6-9; 25:6-8; 32:1, 2) Indeed, the book of Isaiah adds to the evidence that “the word of God is alive”!—Hebrews 4:12.



OUR FIGHT TO STAY SPIRITUALLY STRONG

AS TOLD BY
ROLF BRÜGGEIMEIER

The first letter I received after being imprisoned came from a friend. He informed me that my mother and my younger brothers—Peter, Jochen, and Manfred—had also been arrested. That left our two little sisters without parents or siblings. Why did the East German authorities persecute our family? What helped us to stay spiritually strong?

WORLD WAR II shattered our peaceful childhood; we learned firsthand the cruelty of war. Father joined the German army and died as a prisoner of war. This meant that Mother, whose name was Berta, had to care for six children from one to 16 years of age.

The church she attended made Mother feel totally disappointed with religion, causing her not to want to hear anything more about God. But one day in 1949, Ilse Fuchs, a discreet little woman, came to our door to talk about God's Kingdom. Her questions

and reasoning piqued Mother's curiosity. A study of the Bible gave Mother hope.

We boys, however, were skeptical at first. The Nazis and then the Communists had made great promises, only to disappoint us. Although we were suspicious of any new promises, we were impressed when we got to know some Witnesses who had been in concentration camps for refusing to support the war effort. The following year, Mother, Peter, and I were baptized.

Our younger brother Manfred was also baptized, but apparently Bible truth had not

become rooted in his heart. When the Communists banned our work in 1950 and he was pressured by the secret police—the notorious *Stasi*—he revealed where our meetings were held. That is what eventually led to the arrest of my mother and my other brothers.

Serving Under Ban

Because of the ban, we had to smuggle Bible literature into East Germany. As a courier, I picked up supplies in the western section of Berlin, where our literature was not banned, and transported them across the border. I escaped the police more than once, but in November 1950, I was arrested.

The *Stasi* put me in a windowless underground cell. During the day I was not allowed to sleep, and at night I was questioned and at times beaten. I had no contact with my family until March 1951 when Mother, Peter, and Jochen came to my court trial. I received a six-year sentence.

Peter, Jochen, and Mother were arrested six days after my trial. Afterward, a fellow believer cared for my sister Hannelore, who was 11, and an aunt took in Sabine, who was 7. The *Stasi* guards treated Mother and my brothers as dangerous criminals, even taking away their shoelaces. They had to



With my family in 1948: (front, left to right) Manfred, Berta, Sabine, Hannelore, Peter; (back, left to right) me and Jochen

remain standing throughout the interrogations. They too were sentenced to six years each.

In 1953, some other Witness prisoners and I were assigned to build a military airfield, which we refused to do. The authorities punished us with 21 days of isolation, which meant no work, no letters, and little food. Some Christian sisters saved bread from their own meager rations and smuggled it to us. This led to my knowing Anni, one of those sisters, and marrying her after she and I were released in 1956 and 1957 respectively. A year after we were married, our daughter, Ruth, was born. Peter, Jochen, and Hannelore each got married about the same time.

About three years after my release, I was arrested again. A *Stasi* officer tried to persuade me to become an informer. He said: "Dear Mr. Brüggemeier, please be reasonable. You know what it means to be in prison, and we do not want you to go through all of that again. You can remain a Witness, continue your studies, and talk about the Bible as you please. We just want to be kept up-to-date. Think about your wife and your little daughter." That last statement cut me to the quick. Yet, I knew that while I was in

On our wedding day, 1957



prison, Jehovah would care for my family better than I could myself, and he did!

The authorities tried to force Anni to work full-time and allow other people to look after Ruth during the week. Anni resisted and worked at night so that she could care for Ruth during the day. Our spiritual brothers were most caring and gave my wife so many things that she was able to share some with others. Meanwhile, I spent almost six more years behind prison bars.

How We Maintained Faith While in Prison

Upon my return to prison, my Witness cell mates were eager to know what things had recently been published. How happy I was that I had carefully studied the *Watchtower* magazine and had regularly attended the meetings, so that I could be a source of spiritual encouragement to them!

When we asked the guards for a Bible, they replied: "Giving Jehovah's Witnesses a Bible is as dangerous as giving an imprisoned burglar tools to break out." Each day, the brothers taking the lead would choose a Bible text to consider. During our daily half-hour walks in the yard, we were not as interested in exercise and fresh air as in benefiting from the day's Bible text. Although we had to stay 15 feet apart and were not allowed to talk, we still found ways to pass the text on. Back in our cells, we put together what each had managed to hear, and then we had our daily Bible discussion.

Eventually, an informer gave us away, and I was put in solitary confinement. What a blessing it was that by then I had learned several hundred scriptures by heart! I could fill those empty days by meditating on a variety of Bible subjects. Then I was transferred to another prison, where a guard put me in a cell with two other Witnesses and—joy of joys—gave us a Bible. After six months of solitary confinement, I appreciated being able

to discuss Bible subjects with fellow believers once again.

My brother Peter describes what helped him endure in another prison: "I imagined life in the new world and kept my mind occupied with Bible thoughts. We Witnesses strengthened one another by asking Bible questions or giving tests on the Scriptures. Life was not easy. Sometimes there were 11 of us confined in a space of about 130 square feet. There we had to do everything—eat, sleep, wash, even relieve ourselves. Nerves wore thin."

Jochen, one of my other brothers, recalls his prison experiences: "I sang the songs I could remember from our songbook. Every day I meditated on a scripture I had memorized. After my release, I continued with a good routine of spiritual instruction. Each day, I read the day's Bible text with my family. We also prepared for all the meetings."

Mother's Release From Prison

After a little more than two years of imprisonment, Mother was released. She used her freedom to study the Bible with Hannelore and Sabine, helping them to lay a good foundation for their faith. She also taught them to handle issues that came up at school because of their faith in God. Hannelore notes: "We did not mind the consequences because at home we encouraged one another. Our strong family ties made up for any trouble we experienced."

Hannelore continues: "We also supplied spiritual food to our brothers in prison. We hand copied in small letters on waxed paper a complete issue of *The Watchtower*. Then we wrapped the pages in waterproof paper and hid them among some prunes that we sent in the monthly parcel. What a joy it was to receive word that the prunes were 'so tasty.' We were so absorbed in our work that I must say it was a wonderful time."

Living Under Ban

Peter describes what it was like to live for decades under ban in East Germany: "We met in private homes in small groups, arriving and leaving at intervals. At each meeting, we made arrangements for the next time. We did this by means of signals and written notes because of the constant threat of eavesdropping by the *Stasi*."

Hannelore explains: "Sometimes we received tape recordings of assembly programs. This always made for a happy meeting. Our little group came together to listen for several hours to Bible instruction. Although we could not see the speakers, we followed the program carefully and took notes."

Says Peter: "Our Christian brothers in other countries went out of their way to provide us with Bible literature. The last decade or so before the Berlin Wall came down in 1989, they produced special small-size publications for us. Some risked their cars, their money, and even their freedom to transport spiritual food into East Germany. One night a couple whom we were waiting for did not show up. The police had found the literature and confiscated their car. Despite the dangers, we never considered stopping the work in order to have a calmer life."

Manfred, my younger brother who betrayed us back in 1950, describes what helped him to regain and maintain his faith: "After I was held in detention for a few months, I moved to West Germany and left the way of Bible truth. I returned to East Germany in 1954 and got married the following year. Soon my wife embraced Bible truth, and in 1957 she was baptized. In time, my



Forschungs- und Gedenkstätte NORMANNENSTRASSE

A small-size book used during the ban and "Stasi" eavesdropping equipment

conscience started to bother me, and with help from my wife, I returned to the congregation.

"Christian brothers who knew me before I left the truth accepted me back in a loving way, as if nothing had happened. To be greeted with a warm smile and an embrace is wonderful. I am so happy to be reconciled to Jehovah and to my brothers."

The Spiritual Fight Continues

Everyone in our family has had to put up a hard fight for the faith. "Today," my brother Peter points out, "as never before, we are surrounded by many distractions and material enticements. Under ban, we were content with what we had. For example, none of us wanted to be in another study group simply for personal reasons, and no one complained that the meetings were too far away or too late. We were all happy to come together, even if some of us had to wait until 11:00 p.m. for our turn to leave the meeting place."

In 1959, Mother decided to move to West Germany with Sabine, who was then 16.

Because they wanted to serve where there was a greater need for Kingdom publishers, they were directed by the branch office to Ellwangen, Baden-Württemberg. Mother's zeal despite her poor health motivated Sabine to start pioneering when she was 18. When Sabine got married, Mother—at the age of 58—learned to drive in order to increase her share in the preaching work. She cherished this service until her death in 1974.

As for me, after serving almost six years of my second prison term, I was deported in 1965 to West Germany, without my family's knowledge. In time, however, I was joined by my wife, Anni, and our daughter, Ruth. I asked the branch office if we could serve where there was a greater need for publishers, so they asked us to go to Nördlingen, Bavaria. There Ruth and her brother, Johannes, grew up. Anni took up the pioneer ministry. Her good example moved Ruth to start pioneering right after school. Both our children

married pioneers. Now they have families, and we are blessed with six lovely grandchildren.

In 1987, I seized the opportunity for early retirement and joined Anni in the pioneer ministry. Three years later, I was invited to the branch office in Selters to help enlarge the facilities. After that, we helped construct the first Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses in what used to be East Germany, in Glaubachau, where we later served as caretakers. For health reasons, we moved back to be with our daughter in the Nördlingen Congregation, where we serve as pioneers.

To my great joy, all my brothers and sisters and most of our family members continue serving our wonderful God, Jehovah. Over the years, we have learned that as long as we stay spiritually strong, we can experience the truth of the words of Psalm 126:3: "Jehovah has done a great thing in what he has done with us. We have become joyful."

*With my siblings: (front, left to right) Hannelore and Sabine;
(back, left to right) me, Jochen, Peter, and Manfred*



It Pays to Be HONEST

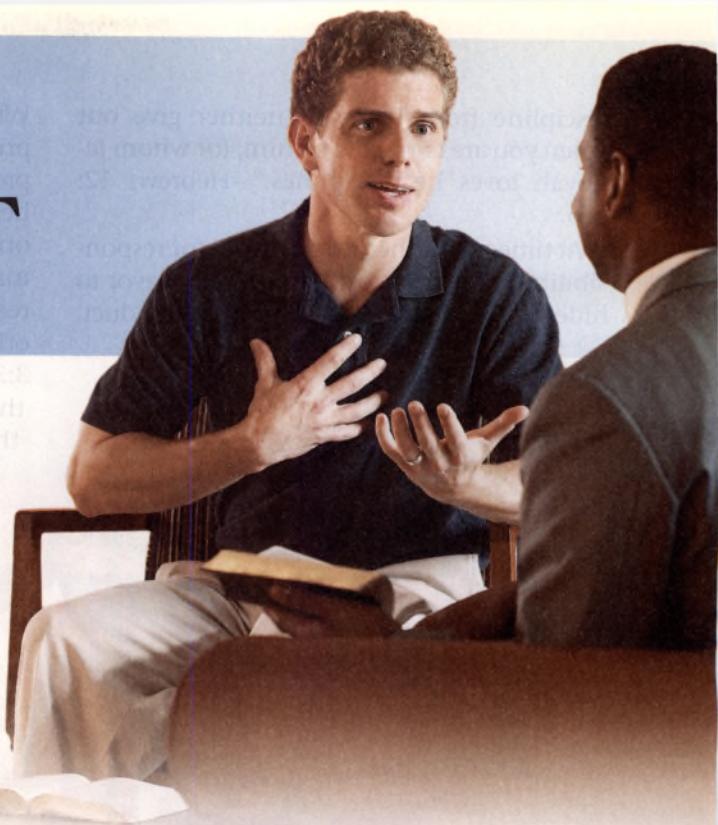
DISHONESTY has existed since the garden of Eden. Still, most cultures and societies value honesty and view lying and deception as undesirable and reprehensible. Being considered trustworthy is something to be proud of. Increasingly, though, dishonesty is regarded as necessary in order to survive in modern society. How do you feel about it? Is honesty worth cultivating? What is your standard for deciding what is honest behavior and what is not?

To please God, we must be honest in our speech and in our way of life. The apostle Paul admonished fellow Christians: "Speak truth each one of you with his neighbor." (Ephesians 4:25) Paul also wrote: "We wish to conduct ourselves honestly in all things." (Hebrews 13:18) Our motive for being honest is not to receive praise from fellow humans. We are honest because we respect our Creator and want to please him.

Do Not Hide Who You Are

In many countries, people misrepresent themselves to gain advantages in life. They obtain fraudulent documents, diplomas, and identity papers to enter a country illegally or to get a job or a position for which they are not qualified. Some parents falsify their children's birth certificates so that the children can extend their schooling.

To be pleasing to God, however, we cannot be deceitful. The Bible says that Jehovah is



"the God of truth" and that he expects truthfulness from those who have intimacy with him. (Psalm 31:5) If we want to maintain a close relationship with Jehovah, we cannot imitate "men of untruth," those who "hide what they are."—Psalm 26:4.

It is also common for people to hide the truth when facing the prospect of being disciplined for wrongdoing. Even in the Christian congregation, a person might be tempted to do so. In one congregation, for example, a young man acknowledged to the elders that he had committed certain sins. However, he did not admit to stealing, even though there was evidence against him. He was eventually found out and had to be disfellowshipped from the congregation. Would it not have been wiser for him to be completely honest and receive help to restore his precious relationship with Jehovah? After all, the Bible says: "Do not belittle the

discipline from Jehovah, neither give out when you are corrected by him; for whom Jehovah loves he disciplines."—Hebrews 12:5, 6.

At times, a brother reaching out for responsibility in the congregation may endeavor to hide personal problems or past misconduct.

When filling out an application for a special privilege of service, for example, he may not provide complete answers to questions on health and morals, thinking that the truth on such matters might disqualify him. He may reason, 'I did not really lie,' but was he really being straightforward and honest with others? Consider the point made at Proverbs 3:32: "The devious person is a detestable thing to Jehovah, but His intimacy is with the upright ones."

Being honest means, first of all, being honest with ourselves. We often believe what we want to believe rather than what is right or true. How easy it is for us to shift the blame from ourselves to someone else! For example, King Saul tried to justify his disobedience by putting the blame on others. Consequently, Jehovah rejected him from being king. (1 Samuel 15:20-23) What a contrast to King David, who prayed to Jehovah: "My sin I finally confessed to you, and my error I did not cover. I said: 'I shall make confession over my transgressions to Jeho-

*True Christians
do not buy or use
fraudulent documents*



vah.' And you yourself pardoned the error of my sins."—Psalm 32:5.

Honesty Brings Blessings

Honesty, or the lack of it, influences how you are viewed by others. If people learn that you have deceived them even once, you will lose their trust, and that is not easily regained. If, on the other hand, you are truthful and honest, you will build a reputation as a person of integrity, worthy of trust. Jehovah's Witnesses have earned such a reputation. Consider some examples.

A company director realized that many of his employees were defrauding the company, so he requested police intervention. When he learned that an employee who was one of Jehovah's Witnesses was included among those who had been arrested, he went to the police so that the Witness could be released immediately. Why? Because the director knew that this person was an honest worker and that he was innocent. The Witness kept his job, while others were dismissed. His fellow Witnesses rejoiced, knowing that his conduct had brought honor to Jehovah's name.

Fine conduct does not go unnoticed. In one African community, a bridge spanning a large drainage ditch needed repair because some wooden planks had been stolen. Local residents decided to collect money to replace the planks, but who could be trusted to manage the funds? All agreed that it had to be one of Jehovah's Witnesses.

When an African country experienced political and ethnic turmoil, a Witness who worked as an accountant for an international company was transferred by his firm, as his life was in danger. The company arranged for him to work for many months in another country at their expense until the situation calmed down. Why? Because previously he had refused to collaborate with

those who were scheming to defraud the company. The management was aware of his reputation for impeccable honesty. Would they have been willing to help this employee if he had been known for shady dealings?

"The righteous is walking in his integrity," states Proverbs 20:7. An honest person is a person of integrity. He never cheats or deceives his fellow man. Is that not how you wish others to treat you? Honesty is basic to true worship. It is an expression of our love for God and neighbor. By being honest, we show our desire to follow the principle of conduct expressed by Jesus: "All things, therefore, that you want men to do to you, you also must likewise do to them."—Matthew 7:12; 22:36-39.

To be honest at all times may have its price, but the clean conscience that results is worth far more than anything it may cost. In the long run, being honest and upright pays the richest of dividends. The truth is that a good relationship with Jehovah is priceless. Why damage it by resorting to something dishonest in order to save face or gain some illegal advantage? Whatever challenge we may face, we can have confidence in the words of the psalmist: "Happy is the able-bodied man that has put Jehovah as his trust and that has not turned his face to defiant people, nor to those falling away to lies."—Psalm 40:4.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Jesus' Birth—How It Brings Peace

**Spreading Good News
in Colorful Haiti**

**Ebla—An Ancient City Emerges
From Oblivion**

LOVE THE GOD WHO LOVES YOU

"You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind." —MATTHEW 22:37.

THE question was evidently hotly disputed among the Pharisees of Jesus' day. Of the more than 600 laws that made up the Mosaic Law, which was the most important? Was it a law that had to do with sacrifice? After all, sacrifices were made both to receive forgiveness of sins and to offer thanks to God. Or might the supreme law be the law on circumcision? That too was important, since circumcision was a sign of the covenant that Jehovah had made with Abraham.—Genesis 17:9-13.

² On the other hand, conservatives apparently reasoned that since *every* law that God gave was great—even though some might have seemed to be of lesser importance—it would be wrong to lift any commandment above the others. The Pharisees decided to put the controversial question to Jesus. Perhaps he would say something that might damage his credibility. One of them approached Jesus and asked: "Which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"—Matthew 22:34-36.

³ The answer Jesus gave has tremendous importance for us today. In his reply, he summed up what always was and always will

- 1, 2. What may have prompted the question about the greatest commandment?
3. What did Jesus say was the greatest commandment?



*Jehovah truly values
what we can all express
—our love for him*

be the essence of true worship. Quoting from Deuteronomy 6:5, Jesus said:

"'You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment." Though the Pharisee asked for just one commandment, Jesus gave him another.

Quoting from Leviticus 19:18, he said: "The second, like it, is this, 'You must love your neighbor as yourself.'" Jesus then indicated that these two laws embraced the whole of pure worship. Forestalling any attempt to get him to list in order of importance the other laws, he concluded:

"On these two commandments the whole Law hangs, and the Prophets." (Matthew 22:37-40) In this article, we will consider the greatest of these two commandments. Why must we love God? How do we show that we do? And how can we develop such love? It is vital to know the answers to these questions, for to please Jehovah, we must love him with all our heart, soul, and mind.

The Importance of Love

⁴ It seems that the Pharisee who questioned Jesus was neither shocked nor sur-

- 4, 5. (a) Why was the Pharisee not surprised by what Jesus said? (b) What is worth more to God than sacrifices and offerings?

prised by the answer he received. He knew that love of God was an essential aspect of true worship, though many failed to display it. In the synagogues, it was the custom to recite aloud the Shema, or confession of faith, and this included the passage found at Deuteronomy 6:4-9, from which Jesus quoted. According to the parallel account in Mark, the Pharisee then said to Jesus: "Teacher, you well said in line with truth, 'He is One, and there is no other than He'; and this loving him with one's whole heart and with one's whole understanding and with one's whole strength and this loving one's neighbor as oneself is worth far more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."—Mark 12:32, 33.

⁵ Indeed, while burnt offerings and sacrifices were required by the Law, what really matters to God is the loving heart condition of his servants. A sparrow offered to God in love and devotion was worth more to him than thousands of rams given with a wrong motive. (Micah 6:6-8) Recall the account of the needy widow whom Jesus observed at the temple in Jerusalem. The two small coins she placed in the treasury chest could not buy even a single sparrow. Yet, that contribution, given with heartfelt love for Jehovah, meant more to him than the large donations given by the wealthy out of their surplus. (Mark 12:41-44) How encouraging to know that Jehovah values most what we can all express no matter what our circumstances—our love for him!

⁶ Stressing the importance of love in true worship, the apostle Paul wrote: "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels but do not have love, I have become a sounding piece of brass or a clashing cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophesying and am acquainted with

6. What did Paul write about the importance of love?

all the sacred secrets and all knowledge, and if I have all the faith so as to transplant mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my belongings to feed others, and if I hand over my body, that I may boast, but do not have love, I am not profited at all." (1 Corinthians 13:1-3) Clearly, love is essential if our worship is to be pleasing to God. How, though, do we show our love for Jehovah?

How We Show Our Love for Jehovah

⁷ Many believe that love is an emotion over which we have little control; people speak of falling in love. Yet, real love is not just something we feel. It is characterized and defined by action, not sentiment. The Bible refers to love as "a surpassing way" and as something we "pursue." (1 Corinthians 12:31; 14:1) Christians are encouraged to love, not only "in word nor with the tongue, but in deed and truth."—1 John 3:18.

⁸ Love of God impels us to do what is pleasing to him and to defend and uphold his sovereignty, by both words and deeds. It moves us to avoid loving the world and its ungodly ways. (1 John 2:15, 16) Those who love God hate what is bad. (Psalm 97:10) Love of God also involves love of neighbor, which we will discuss in the next article. Furthermore, love of God requires our obedience. The Bible says: "This is what the love of God means, that we observe his commandments."—1 John 5:3.

⁹ Jesus demonstrated perfectly what it means to love God. Love moved him to leave his heavenly home and to dwell on earth as a man. It impelled him to glorify his Father by the things he did and taught. Love moved him to be "obedient as far as death." (Philippians 2:8) That obedience—an expression of his love—opened the way for faithful ones to

7, 8. How can we show our love for Jehovah?

9. How did Jesus demonstrate his love for God?

have a righteous standing before God. Paul wrote: "Through the disobedience of the one man [Adam] many were constituted sinners, likewise also through the obedience of the one person [Christ Jesus] many will be constituted righteous."—Romans 5:19.

¹⁰ Like Jesus, we show our love by being obedient to God. "This is what love means," writes Jesus' beloved apostle John, "that we go on walking according to his commandments." (2 John 6) Those who truly love Jehovah long for his guidance. Recognizing that they cannot successfully direct their own steps, they trust in God's wisdom and submit to his loving direction. (Jeremiah 10:23) They are like the noble-minded ones in ancient Beroea who accepted God's message with "eagerness of mind," having a keen desire to do the will of God. (Acts 17:11) They carefully examined the Scriptures to understand the will of God more fully, which helped them express love in further acts of obedience.

¹¹ As Jesus said, love for God involves our whole heart, mind, soul, and strength. (Mark 12:30) Such love emanates from the heart, involving our feelings, desires, and inmost thoughts, and we fervently desire to please Jehovah. We also love with our mind. Our devotion is not blind; we have come to know Jehovah—his qualities, standards, and purposes. We use our soul, our whole being and the life we possess, to serve and praise him. And we use our strength to that end as well.

Why We Should Love Jehovah

¹² One reason we should love Jehovah is that he requires us to reflect his qualities. God is both the source and the supreme example of love. "God is love," wrote the in-

10. Why does love for God involve obedience?
11. What does it mean to love God with our whole heart, mind, soul, and strength?
12. Why does God require that we love him?

spired apostle John. (1 John 4:8) Humans were created in God's image; we were designed to love. In fact, Jehovah's sovereignty is based on love. He wants as his subjects those who serve him because they both love and desire his righteous way of ruling. Really, love is essential for the peace and harmony of all creation.

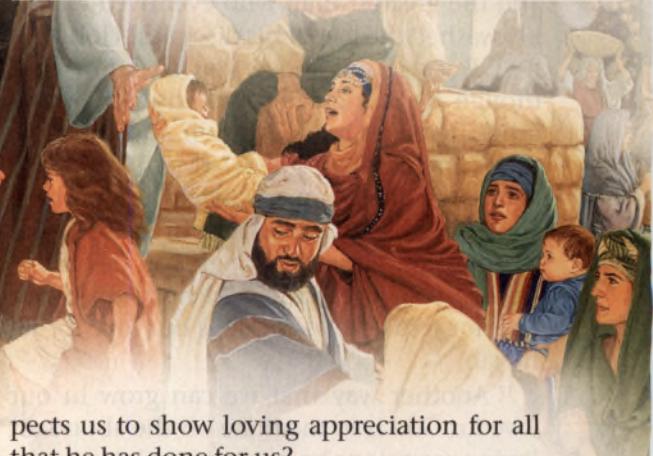
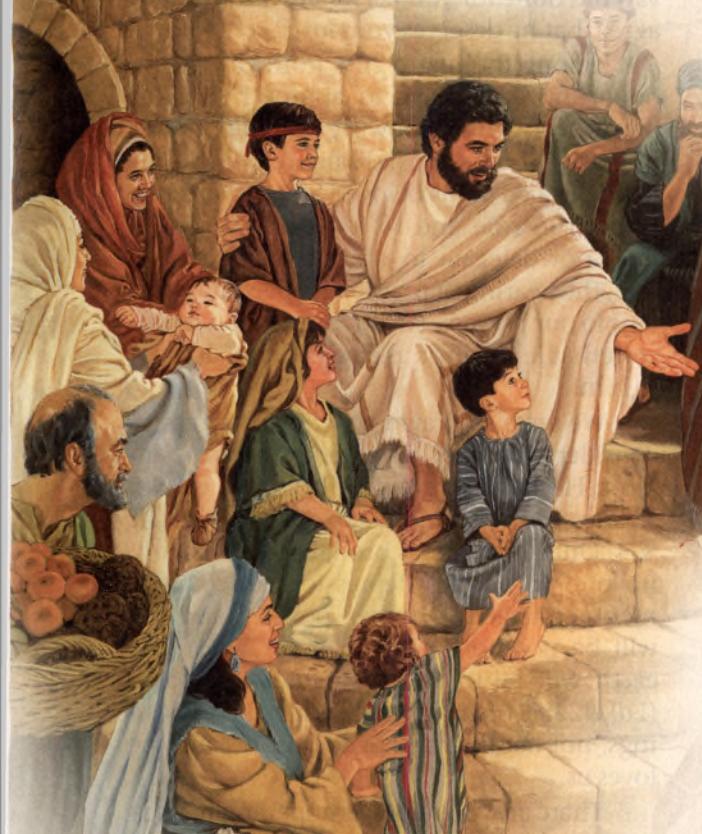
¹³ Another reason for loving Jehovah is that we appreciate what he has done for us. Recall that Jesus said to the Jews: "You must love Jehovah your God." They were not expected to love a divine being who was distant and unknown. They were to love the Person who had revealed his love to them. Jehovah was *their* God. He was the One who brought them out of Egypt into the Promised Land, the One who protected, sustained, and cherished them, the One who disciplined them in love. And today, Jehovah is *our* God, the one who gave his Son as a ransom that we might have everlasting life. How reasonable it is that Jehovah expects us to love him in return! Our love is a responsive love; we are asked to love the God who loves us. Our love is for the One who "first loved us."—1 John 4:19.

¹⁴ Jehovah's love for mankind is like that of a loving parent for his children. Though imperfect, loving parents toil for years in caring for their children, doing so at great sacrifice materially and otherwise. Parents instruct, encourage, support, and discipline their children because they want them to be happy and to flourish. What do parents desire in return? They want their children to love them and to take to heart what they have imparted to the children for their good. Is it not reasonable that our perfect heavenly Father ex-

13. (a) Why were the Israelites told: "Love Jehovah your God"? (b) Why is it reasonable that Jehovah expects us to love him?

14. In what way is Jehovah's love like that of a loving parent?

*"He that has seen me
has seen the Father also."
—John 14:9*



psects us to show loving appreciation for all that he has done for us?

Cultivating Love for God

¹⁵ We have neither seen God nor heard his voice. (John 1:18) Yet, he invites us to enter into a loving relationship with him. (James 4:8) How can we do that? The first step toward loving anyone is to take in knowledge of that one; it is hard to feel deep affection for someone we do not know. Jehovah has provided his Word, the Bible, so that we can learn about him. That is why Jehovah, through his organization, encourages us to read the Bible regularly. It is the Bible that teaches us about God, his qualities, his personality, as well as his dealings with people over thousands of years. As we meditate on such accounts, our appreciation and love for him will grow.—Romans 15:4.

15. What is the first step in cultivating love for God?



¹⁶ A primary way that we can grow in our love for Jehovah is to reflect on the life and ministry of Jesus. After all, Jesus mirrored his Father so perfectly that he could say: “He that has seen me has seen the Father also.” (John 14:9) Are you not touched by the compassion Jesus showed in restoring life to the only son of a widow? (Luke 7:11-15) Is it not appealing to know that he—the Son of God and the greatest man who ever lived—humbly washed the feet of his disciples? (John 13:3-5) Does it not move you to know that though he was greater and wiser than any other man, he made himself approachable to all, including children? (Mark 10:13, 14) As we meditate appreciatively upon these things, we become like the Christians about whom Peter wrote: “Though you never saw [Jesus], you love him.” (1 Peter 1:8) As our love for Jesus grows, so does our love for Jehovah.

¹⁷ Another way that we can grow in our love for God is to meditate on the abundant loving provisions he has made to let us enjoy life—the beauty of creation, the endless variety of delicious things to eat, the warm companionship of good friends, as well as countless other delights that give us pleasure and satisfaction. (Acts 14:17) The more we learn

16. How does reflecting on Jesus’ ministry enhance our love for God?

17, 18. Meditating on what loving provisions of Jehovah can make our love for him grow?

Do You Recall?

- Why is it essential that we love Jehovah?
- How can we show our love for God?
- What reasons do we have for loving Jehovah?
- How can we cultivate the love of God?

about our God, the more reasons we have to appreciate his boundless goodness and generosity. Think about all the things that Jehovah has done for you personally. Do you not agree that he deserves your love?

¹⁸ Among the many gifts from God is the opportunity we have to approach him in prayer at any time, knowing that the “Hearer of prayer” listens to us. (Psalm 65:2) Jehovah has delegated to his beloved Son the authority both to rule and to judge. However, he does not delegate to others, including his Son, the hearing of prayers. He personally listens to our prayers. The loving, personal concern that Jehovah thus shows draws us close to him.

¹⁹ We are also drawn to Jehovah when we consider what he has in store for mankind. He has promised to bring an end to sickness, sorrow, and death. (Revelation 21:3, 4) Once mankind is brought to perfection, no one will suffer depression, discouragement, or tragedy. Hunger, poverty, and war will be no more. (Psalm 46:9; 72:16) The earth will be transformed into a paradise. (Luke 23:43) Jehovah will bring these blessings, not because he has to, but because he loves us.

²⁰ There are, therefore, compelling reasons to love our God and to let that love grow. Will you continue to strengthen your love for God, allowing him to direct your ways? The choice is up to you. Moses recognized the benefits of cultivating and maintaining love for Jehovah. To the Israelites of long ago, Moses said: “You must choose life in order that you may keep alive, you and your offspring, by loving Jehovah your God, by listening to his voice and by sticking to him; for he is your life and the length of your days.”—Deuteronomy 30:19, 20.

19. What promises of Jehovah draw us to him?

20. What did Moses say about the benefits of loving Jehovah?



WHAT IT MEANS TO LOVE OUR NEIGHBOR

"You must love your neighbor as yourself."—MATTHEW 22:39.

WHAT does Jehovah require of those who worship him? In a few simple and profound words, Jesus summarized the answer. The greatest commandment, he said, is to love Jehovah with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength. (Matthew 22:37; Mark 12:30) As we have seen in the preceding article, love of God involves obeying him and keeping his commandments in response to the love he has shown us. For those who love God, doing his will is not a burden; it brings them delight.—Psalm 40:8; 1 John 5:2, 3.

² The second greatest commandment, Jesus said, is linked to the first: "You must love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:39) It is to this commandment that we now give attention, and for good reason. The times in which we live are marked by a selfish, distort-

ed form of love. In his inspired description of "the last days," the apostle Paul wrote that people would love, not one another, but themselves, money, and pleasures. Many would have "no natural affection," or as one Bible translation puts it, they would "lack normal affection for their families." (2 Timothy 3:1-4) Jesus Christ foretold: "Many...will betray one another and will hate one another.... The love of the greater number will cool off."—Matthew 24:10, 12.

³ Notice, however, that Jesus did not say that the love of *everyone* would cool off. There have always been and will always be those who display the sort of love that Jehovah both requires and deserves. Those who truly love Jehovah will strive to view others as he does. Who, though, is our neighbor whom we must love? How should we show love toward our neighbor? The Scriptures can help us to answer these important questions.

1. How do we show that we love God?
2. Why should we give attention to the commandment to love our neighbor, and what questions arise?

Who Is My Neighbor?

⁴ When telling the Pharisee that the second greatest commandment was to love one's neighbor as oneself, Jesus was referring to a specific law given to Israel. It is recorded at Leviticus 19:18. In that same chapter, the Jews were told that they should view others besides fellow Israelites as their neighbors. Verse 34 states: "The alien resident who resides as an alien with you should become to you like a native of yours; and you must love him as yourself, for you became alien residents in the land of Egypt." Thus, even non-Jews, especially the proselytes, were to be treated with love.

⁵ The Jewish leaders of Jesus' day, however, saw the matter differently. Some taught that the terms "friend" and "neighbor" applied only to Jews. Non-Jews were to be hated. Such teachers reasoned that the godly must despise the godless. "In such an atmosphere," says one reference work, "it was impossible for hatred to starve. It had plenty to feed on."

⁶ In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus addressed this issue, shedding light on who should be treated with love. He said: "You heard that it was said, 'You must love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' However, I say to you: Continue to love your enemies and to pray for those persecuting you; that you may prove yourselves sons of your Father who is in the heavens, since he makes his sunrise upon wicked people and good and makes it rain upon righteous people and unrighteous." (Matthew 5:43-45) Here Jesus made two points. First, Jehovah is generous and kind to both the good and the bad. Second, we should follow his example.

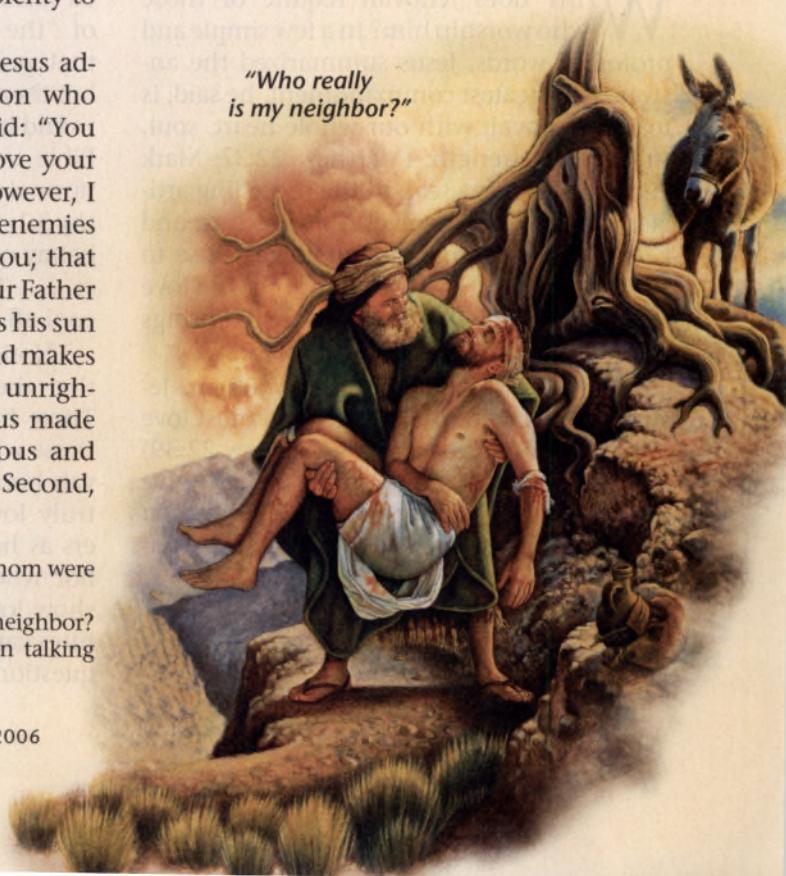
4. According to Leviticus chapter 19, to whom were the Jews to show love?
5. How did the Jews understand love of neighbor?
6. What two points did Jesus make when talking about love of neighbor?

⁷ On another occasion, a Jew well-versed in the Law asked Jesus: "Who really is my neighbor?" Jesus responded by relating a parable that described a Samaritan who came across a man, a Jew, who had been assaulted by robbers and stripped of his possessions. Even though Jews in general despised Samaritans, the Samaritan dressed the man's wounds and brought him to the safety of an inn, where he could recover. The lesson? Our love of neighbor should extend to people other than those of our own race, nationality, or religion.—Luke 10:25, 29, 30, 33-37.

What It Means to Love Our Neighbor

⁸ Love of neighbor, like love of God, is not merely a feeling; it involves action. It is helpful to consider further the context of the

7. What lesson do we learn from the parable of the neighborly Samaritan?
8. What does Leviticus chapter 19 say about how love was to be shown?



command recorded in Leviticus 19 that exhorts God's people to love their neighbor as themselves. There we read that the Israelites were to allow afflicted ones and alien residents to share in the harvest. There was no room for stealing, deceiving, or dealing falsely. In judicial matters the Israelites should show no partiality. Though they were to give reproof when needed, they were specifically told: "You must not hate your brother in your heart." These and many other commands were summed up in the words: "You must love your fellow as yourself."—Leviticus 19:9-11, 15, 17, 18.

⁹ While the Israelites were to show love to others, they were also to keep separate from those who worshipped false gods. Jehovah warned of the dangers and consequences of bad associations. For example, concerning the nations that the Israelites were to dispossess, Jehovah commanded: "You must form no marriage alliance with them. Your daughter you must not give to his son, and his daughter you must not take for your son. For he will turn your son from following me, and they will certainly serve other gods; and Jehovah's anger will indeed blaze against you."—Deuteronomy 7:3, 4.

¹⁰ Similarly, Christians guard against forming relationships with those who might weaken their faith. (1 Corinthians 15:33) We are admonished: "Do not become unevenly yoked with unbelievers," those who are no part of the Christian congregation. (2 Corinthians 6:14) Further, Christians are counseled to marry "only in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 7:39) Yet, never should we be disdainful of those who do not share our belief in Jehovah. Christ died for sinners, and many who once practiced vile things

9. Why did Jehovah command the Israelites to keep separate from other nations?

10. Against what do we need to be on guard?

changed their ways and became reconciled to God.—Romans 5:8; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11.

¹¹ In showing love to those who do not serve God, we can do no better than to imitate Jehovah himself. Though he is no lover of wickedness, he shows loving-kindness to all by extending to them the opportunity to turn back from their bad ways and receive everlasting life. (Ezekiel 18:23) Jehovah "desires all to attain to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9) It is his will that "all sorts of men should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth." (1 Timothy 2:4) That is why Jesus commissioned his followers to preach and to teach and to "make disciples of people of all the nations." (Matthew 28:19, 20) By our participation in this work, we show love for both God and neighbor, yes, including even our enemies!

Love for Our Christian Brothers

¹² The apostle Paul wrote: "Let us work what is good toward all, but especially toward those related to us in the faith." (Galatians 6:10) As Christians, we have an obligation to show love for those who are related to us in the faith—our spiritual brothers and sisters. How important is this love? Making this powerful point, the apostle John wrote: "Everyone who hates his brother is a manslayer . . . If anyone makes the statement: 'I love God,' and yet is hating his brother, he is a liar. For he who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot be loving God, whom he has not seen." (1 John 3:15; 4:20) These are strong words. Jesus Christ applied the words "manslayer" and "liar" to Satan the Devil. (John 8:44) Never would we want those terms applied to us!

11. What is the best way to show love to those who do not serve Jehovah, and why?

12. What did the apostle John write about loving our brother?

¹³ True Christians are “taught by God to love one another.” (1 Thessalonians 4:9) We are to love “neither in word nor with the tongue, but in deed and truth.” (1 John 3:18) Our love should be “without hypocrisy.” (Romans 12:9) Love moves us to be kind, compassionate, forgiving, long-suffering and not jealous, boastful, arrogant, or selfish. (1 Corinthians 13:4, 5; Ephesians 4:32) It impels us to “slave for one another.” (Galatians 5:13) Jesus told his disciples to love one another just as he loved them. (John 13:34) A Christian should therefore be willing to give even his life in behalf of fellow believers when necessary.

¹⁴ Especially should love be manifested within a Christian family and particularly between husband and wife. So close is the marriage bond that Paul said: “Husbands ought to be loving their wives as their own bodies.” He added: “He who loves his wife loves himself.” (Ephesians 5:28) We find Paul repeating this admonition five verses later. A husband who loves his wife will not imitate the Israelites of Malachi’s day who dealt treacherously with their mates. (Malachi 2:14) He will cherish her. He will love her as Christ loved the congregation. Love will likewise move a wife to respect her husband.—Ephesians 5:25, 29-33.

¹⁵ Clearly, this kind of love is the identifying mark of true Christians. Jesus said: “By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves.” (John 13:35) Our love for one another draws people to the God whom we love and represent. For example, from Mozambique comes this report about a Witness family. “We had never seen anything like it. In the afternoon, a fierce

13. In what ways can we show love for fellow believers?
14. How can we manifest love within the family?
15. What did observing brotherly love in action move some to say and do?

wind began to blow, followed by heavy rain and hailstones. The strong winds destroyed our reed house, and the zinc roofing sheets blew away. When our brothers from neighboring congregations came and helped to rebuild our house, our astonished neighbors said: ‘Your religion is very good. We have never received help like this from our church.’ We opened the Bible and showed them John 13:34, 35. Many of our neighbors are now studying the Bible.”

Love for Individuals

¹⁶ It is not difficult to love our neighbors collectively, as a group. Love for individuals, however, can prove to be a different matter. For example, some people’s love for neighbor goes no further than a donation to some charitable organization. Indeed, it is far easier *to say* that we love our neighbor than it is *to love* a coworker who seems not to care for us, an obnoxious person who lives next door, or a friend who disappoints us.

¹⁷ In this matter of love for individuals, we learn from Jesus, who perfectly reflected God’s qualities. Though he came to earth to take away the sin of the world, he showed love for individuals—a sickly woman, a leper,

16. What is the difference between loving a group and loving individuals?

17, 18. How did Jesus show love to individuals, and with what motive did he do so?

How Would You Answer?

- To whom should we show love, and why?
- How can we show love to those who do not serve Jehovah?
- How does the Bible describe the love we should have for our brothers?
- What does it mean to love our neighbor as ourselves?

a child. (Matthew 9:20-22; Mark 1:40-42; 7:26, 29, 30; John 1:29) Similarly, we show love for our neighbor by the way we deal with the individuals with whom we come in contact day by day.

¹⁸ Never should we forget, however, that love of neighbor is linked to love of God. Though Jesus helped the poor, healed the sick, and fed the hungry, his motive for doing all these things as well as for teaching the crowds was to help people become reconciled to Jehovah. (2 Corinthians 5:19) Jesus did all things for God's glory, never forgetting that he represented and reflected the God whom he loved. (1 Corinthians 10:31) By imitating Jesus' example, we too can show genuine love of neighbor and at the same time remain no part of the world of wicked mankind.

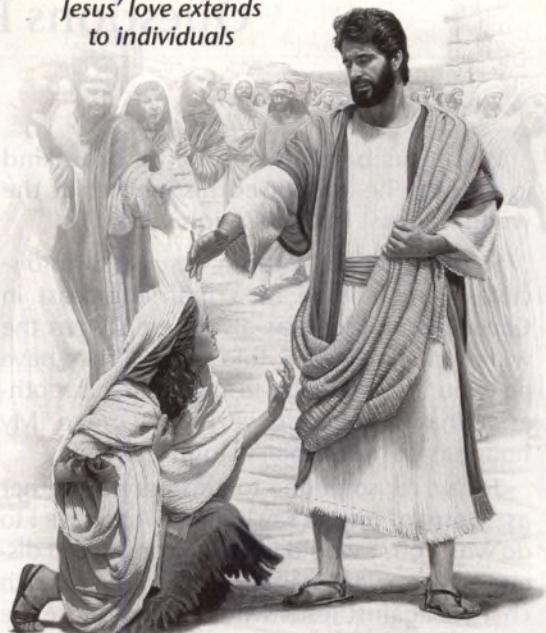
How Do We Love Our Neighbor as Ourselves?

¹⁹ Jesus said: "You must love your neighbor as yourself." It is normal to care about ourselves and to have a healthy measure of self-respect. If that were not so, the commandment would have little meaning. This proper love of self is not to be confused with the egocentric love of self mentioned by the apostle Paul at 2 Timothy 3:2. Rather, it is a reasonable sense of self-worth. One Bible scholar described it as "a balanced self-love that is neither a narcissistic 'I am divine' nor a masochistic 'I am dirt.'"

²⁰ To love others as we love ourselves means that we view others as we want to be viewed and treat others as we would like to be treated. Jesus said: "All things, therefore, that you want men to do to you, you also must likewise do to them." (Matthew 7:12) Notice that Jesus did not say to mull over what others have done to us in the past and then repay

19, 20. What does it mean to love our neighbor as ourselves?

Jesus' love extends to individuals



in kind. Instead, we are to think about how we would like to be treated and then act accordingly. Notice, too, that Jesus did not restrict his words to friends and brothers. He used the word "men," perhaps to indicate that we should act in this way toward all people, everyone we meet.

²¹ Loving our neighbor will protect us from doing what is bad. The apostle Paul wrote: "The law code, 'You must not commit adultery, You must not murder, You must not steal, You must not covet,' and whatever other commandment there is, is summed up in this word, namely, 'You must love your neighbor as yourself.' Love does not work evil to one's neighbor." (Romans 13:9, 10) Love will move us to look for ways to work what is good toward others. By loving fellow humans, we demonstrate that we also love the one who created man in His image, Jehovah God.—Genesis 1:26.

21. By showing love to others, what do we demonstrate?

Questions From Readers

Was Jesus being disrespectful or unkind in the way he addressed his mother at the wedding feast in Cana?—John 2:4.

Shortly after his baptism, Jesus and his disciples were invited to a marriage feast in Cana. His mother was also there. When the wine ran short, Mary told Jesus: "They have no wine." In response, Jesus said to his mother: "What have I to do with you, woman? My hour has not yet come."—John 2:1-4.

Today, for someone to address his mother as "woman" and to say to her "what have I to do with you?" would likely be considered disrespectful, even insulting. But to lay such charges against Jesus would be to ignore the cultural and linguistic context of the event. An understanding of the usage of these expressions in Bible times would be helpful.

Regarding the term "woman," *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* notes: "Used in addressing a woman, it is a term not of reproof or severity, but of endearment or respect." Other sources agree with this. For example, *The Anchor Bible* says: "This is not a rebuke, nor an impolite term, nor an indication of a lack of affection . . . It was Jesus' normal, polite way of addressing women." *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* explains that the word "is used as an address with no irreverent secondary meaning." And Gerhard Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* says that such usage "is in no way disrespectful or derogatory." Thus, we should not conclude that Jesus was being rude or unkind to his mother in addressing her by the term "woman."—Matthew 15:28; Luke 13:12; John 4:21; 19:26; 20:13, 15.

What about the expression "what have I to do with you?" This is apparently a common

Jewish idiom that appears a number of times in the Bible. For example, at 2 Samuel 16:10, we find David stopping Abishai from killing Shimei by saying: "What do I have to do with you men, you sons of Zeruiah? Thus let him call down evil, because Jehovah himself has said to him, 'Call down evil upon David!'" Likewise, we read at 1 Kings 17:18 that the widow of Zarephath, upon finding that her son had died, said to Elijah: "What do I have to do with you, O man of the true God? You have come to me to bring my error to mind and to put my son to death."

From these Bible examples, we can see that the expression "what have I to do with you?" is often used, not to show disdain or arrogance, but to refuse involvement in some proposed or suggested action or to express a difference in viewpoint or opinion. What, then, can be said about Jesus' words to Mary?

When Mary told Jesus, "They have no wine," she was evidently not simply informing Jesus of that fact but suggesting that he do something about it. Jesus used that common idiom to turn down Mary's subtle suggestion, and his added words, "My hour has not yet come," help us to see the reason for his doing so.

From the time of his baptism and anointing in 29 C.E., Jesus was keenly aware that it was Jehovah's will for him, as the promised Messiah, to follow a course of integrity that would culminate in his death, resurrection, and glorification. "The Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his soul a ransom in exchange for many," he said. (Matthew 20:28) As the time for his death neared, Jesus made this clear by saying: "The hour has come." (John 12:1, 23; 13:1) Thus, in his prayer on the night before



Jesus was kind but firm in speaking to his mother

his death, Jesus said: "Father, the hour has come; glorify your son, that your son may glorify you." (John 17:1) And, finally, when the mob arrived to arrest him in Gethsemane, Jesus roused the apostles from sleep and said: "The hour has come! Look! The Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners." —Mark 14:41.

At the wedding in Cana, however, Jesus had just embarked on his ministry as the Messiah, and his "hour" had not yet come. His primary objective was to do his Father's will in the way and at the time that his Father

directed, and no one could interfere with his determined course. In conveying this to his mother, Jesus was firm but in no way disrespectful or unkind. Mary, in turn, did not feel embarrassed or insulted by her son. In fact, sensing Jesus' meaning, Mary told those ministering at the wedding: "Whatever he tells you, do." Rather than ignoring his mother, Jesus performed his first miracle as the Messiah—turning water into quality wine—thus demonstrating a fine balance in doing his Father's will and acknowledging his mother's concern.—John 2:5-11.

Can a Judge Be Corrected?

SLADJANA, one of Jehovah's Witnesses in Croatia, was scheduled to appear in court concerning some financial matters. She presented herself on time before a judge. However, another party in the case was late. Sladjana was eager to give a witness, so while everyone was waiting, she mustered up the courage to speak to the judge.

"Sir, did you know that soon there will be no judges and no courts on earth?" she asked. She was referring, of course, to judges as we know them today.

Surprised, the judge simply looked at her, without saying a word. Just then the proceedings began. When they ended and Sladjana stood up to sign a document, the judge leaned over and asked her in a whisper: "Are you sure of what you just told me, that soon there will be no judges and no courts on earth?"

*Sladjana
with the judge*



"Yes, Sir. I am absolutely sure!" replied Sladjana.

"What evidence do you have for that?" the judge asked.

"It can be found in the Bible," Sladjana answered.

The judge said that he would like to read such evidence, but he did not have a Bible. So Sladjana offered to get him one. The Witnesses called on the judge, gave him a Bible, and encouraged him to have a weekly Bible study. The judge accepted the offer and soon became one of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Prophetically, Psalm 2:10 says: "Now, O kings, exercise insight; let yourselves be corrected, O judges of the earth." How heartwarming when such ones humbly accept Jehovah's loving direction!