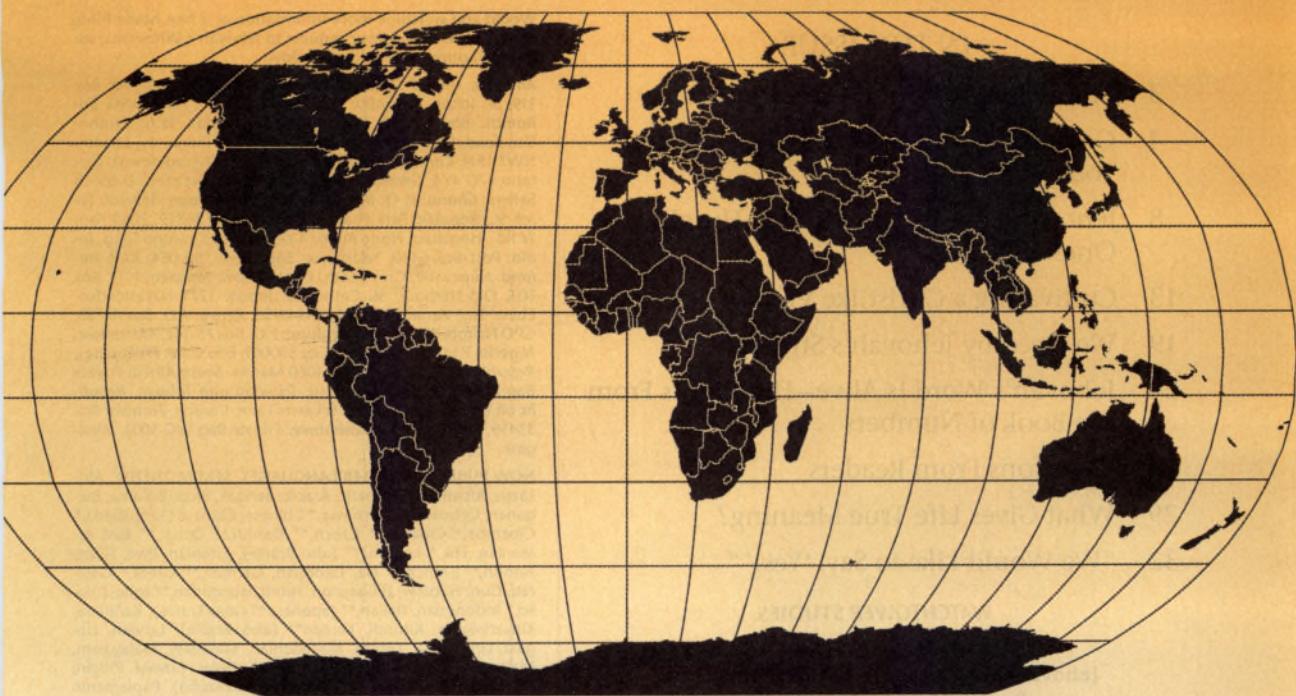


AUGUST 1, 2004

THE WATCHTOWER ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



Good Government

Where Can It Be Found?

THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

August 1, 2004

Average Printing Each Issue: 25,618,000

Vol. 125, No. 15

THE PURPOSE OF *THE WATCHTOWER* is to exalt Jehovah God as Sovereign Lord of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as these fulfill Bible prophecy. It comforts all peoples with the good news that God's Kingdom will soon destroy those who oppress their fellowmen and that it will turn the earth into a paradise. It encourages faith in God's now-reigning King, Jesus Christ, whose shed blood opens the way for mankind to gain eternal life. *The Watchtower*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879, is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

IN THIS ISSUE

- 3 The Search for Good Government
- 4 God's Kingdom Government—A Reality Today
- 8 Jehovah Reveals His Glory to Humble Ones
- 13 Cultivating a Christlike View of Greatness
- 19 We Lived by Jehovah's Strength
- 24 Jehovah's Word Is Alive—Highlights From the Book of Numbers
- 28 Questions From Readers
- 29 What Gives Life True Meaning?
- 32 "We Would Like to Say, 'Yes!'"

WATCHTOWER STUDIES

AUGUST 30–SEPTEMBER 5:

Jehovah Reveals His Glory to Humble Ones.

Page 8. Songs to be used: 122, 8.

SEPTEMBER 6–12:

Cultivating a Christlike View of Greatness.

Page 13. Songs to be used: 205, 106.

Publication of *The Watchtower* is part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations.

The Bible translation used is the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References*, unless otherwise indicated.

The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) is published semimonthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; M. H. Larson, President; G. F. Simonis, Secretary-Treasurer; 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483. Periodicals Postage Paid at Brooklyn, NY, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Watchtower, Wallkill, NY 12589.

Changes of address should reach us 30 days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label).

© 2004 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania.
All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A.

Semimonthly

ENGLISH

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

America, United States of: Wallkill, NY 12589. **Antigua:** Box 119, St. Johns. **Australia:** Box 280, Ingleburn, NSW 1890. **Bahamas:** Box N-1247, Nassau, N.P. **Barbados, W.I.:** Crusher Site Road, Prospect, St. James. **Britain:** The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN. **Canada:** Box 4100, Halton Hills (Georgetown), Ontario L7G 4Y4. **Germany:** Niederselters, Am Steinfels, D-65618 Selters. **Ghana:** P. O. Box GP 760, Accra. **Guyana:** 352-360 Tyrell St., Republic Park Phase 2 EBD. **Hawaii 96819:** 2055 Kam IV Rd., Honolulu. **Hong Kong:** 4 Kent Road, Kowloon Tong. **India:** Post Box 6440, Yelahanka, Bangalore 560 064, KAR. **Ireland:** Newcastle, Greystones, Co. Wicklow. **Jamaica:** P. O. Box 103, Old Harbour, St. Catherine. **Japan:** 1271 Nakashinden, Ebina City, Kanagawa Pref., 243-0496. **Kenya:** P.O. Box 47788, GPO Nairobi 00100. **New Zealand:** P.O. Box 75-142, Manurewa. **Nigeria:** P.M.B. 1090, Benin City 300001, Edo State. **Philippines, Republic of:** P. O. Box 2044, 1060 Manila. **South Africa:** Private Bag X2067, Krugersdorp, 1740. **Trinidad and Tobago, Republic of:** Lower Rapsey Street & Laxmi Lane, Curepe. **Zambia:** Box 33459, Lusaka 10101. **Zimbabwe:** Private Bag WG-5001, Westgate.

NOW PUBLISHED IN 148 LANGUAGES. SEMIMONTHLY: Afrikaans, Albanian,* Amharic, Arabic, Bengali, Bicol, Bislama, Bulgarian, Cebuano,* Chichewa,* Chinese, Chinese (Simplified),* Cibemba,* Croatian,* Czech,** Danish,** Dutch,** East Armenian, Efik,* English** (also Braille), Estonian, Ewe, Fijian, Finnish,** French,** Ga, Georgian, German,** Greek,* Gujarati, Gun, Hebrew, Hiligaynon, Hindi, Hungarian,* Igbo,* Iloko,* Indonesian, Italian,* Japanese** (also Braille), Kannada, Kinyarwanda, Kirundi, Korean** (also Braille), Latvian, Lingala, Lithuanian, Luvale, Macedonian, Malagasy, Malayalam, Maltese, Marathi, Myanmar, Nepali, New Guinea Pidgin, Norwegian,** Pangasinan, Papiamento (Aruba), Papiamento (Curaçao), Polish,* Portuguese** (also Braille), Punjabi, Rarotongan, Romanian,* Russian,* Samar-Leyte, Samoan, Sango, Sepedi, Serbian, Sesotho, Shona,* Silozi, Sinhala, Slovak,* Slovenian, Solomon Islands Pidgin, Spanish,** Sranantongo, Swahili,* Swedish,* Tagalog,* Tamil, Telugu, Thai, Tigrinya, Tongan, Tshiluba, Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Twi, Ukrainian,* Urdu, Venda, Vietnamese, Wallisian, Xhosa, Yoruba,* Zulu*

MONTHLY: American Sign Language,[△] Armenian, Assamese, Azerbaijani (Roman script), Cambodian, Chitonga, Gilbertese, Greenlandic, Haitian Creole, Hausa, Hiri Motu, Icelandic, Isoko, Kaonde, Kazakh, Kiluba, Kirghiz, Kwanyama/Ndonga, Luganda, Marshallese, Mauritian Creole, Mizo, Monokutuba, Moore, Niuean, Ossetian, Otetela, Palauan, Persian, Ponapean, Seychelles Creole, Tahitian, Tatar, Tiv, Trukese, Tumbuka, Tuvaluan, Umbundu, Yapese, Zande

* Study articles also available in large-print edition.

** Audio cassettes also available.

△ CD (MP3 format) also available.

▲ Videocassette

□ DVD

THE SEARCH FOR GOOD GOVERNMENT

"The growing interdependence of the world has given rise to a series of global problems that individual states can no longer resolve by themselves. Only through worldwide cooperation can we cope with the growing dangers and challenges that mankind faces." —Ghulam Umar, Pakistani political analyst.

TODAY'S world is full of paradoxes. In the midst of material abundance, many barely eke out a living. This electronic generation could well be the most educated and knowledgeable to date, yet more and more people have a hard time finding a stable job. Though humans seem to have more freedom than ever before, millions live in a climate of fear, insecurity, and uncertainty. We may be surrounded by alluring opportunities, but corruption and lawlessness in places high and low have resulted in hopelessness for many.

The scope of the problems facing mankind is so overwhelming that it far exceeds what any one nation, or even group of nations, can handle. Thus, many observers have concluded that for world peace and security to become a reality, all nations must unite under a single government. Albert Einstein, for example, long advocated such an idea. In 1946, he asserted: "I firmly believe that the majority of peoples in the world would prefer to live in peace and security... Mankind's desire for peace can be realized only by the creation of a world government."

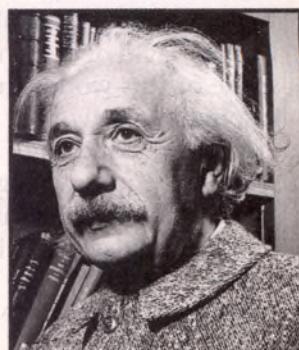
After five decades, this vital need is yet to be satisfied. Listing the challenges of the 21st century, a commentary in the news-

paper *Le Monde* of Paris, France, notes: "It is a matter of constructing the judicial, administrative, and constitutional bases of an international government capable of intervening immediately, everywhere in the world, in cases of ethnic massacre. It is a matter of accepting the idea that henceforth the Earth is one country." Who or what has the power and ability to bring this about so as to ensure that humanity has a peaceful future?

Is the United Nations the Answer?

Many have put their hope for world peace in the United Nations organization. Is the UN a government that can bring true peace and security to the world? Without a doubt, there is no lack of political rhetoric that sounds inspiring and promising. For instance, in its "Millennium Declaration" of 2000, the United Nations General Assembly

Einstein advocated the need for a world government



Einstein: U.S. National Archives photo

made this solemn resolve: "We will spare no effort to free our peoples from the scourge of war, whether within or between States, which has claimed more than 5 million lives in the past decade." Such proclamations have won the UN praise and admiration from many quarters, as well as the 2001 Nobel Peace Prize. In thus honoring the UN, the Norwegian Nobel Committee stated that "the only negotiable route to global peace and cooperation goes by way of the United Nations."

Despite all of this, has the United Nations organization, established in 1945, proved to be a government that is able to bring genu-

ine and lasting world peace? No, for self-interest and nationalistic aspirations of its member nations have frustrated many of its efforts. The public's impression, in the words of one newspaper editor, is that the UN is no more than "a kind of barometer of global opinion" and that "its agenda is full of issues that have been debated for years with little if any progress towards solution." The question remains: Will the nations of the world really be united someday?

The Bible reveals that such unity will soon be realized. How will this take place? And what government will bring it about? For answers, please read the next article.

GOD'S KINGDOM GOVERNMENT A REALITY TODAY

"How can so many countries, with such diverse cultures at such different stages of development, agree? It has been said that only an attack from another planet will unify the human race."

—*The Age*, Australian newspaper.

AN ATTACK from another planet? Whether that would bring together all the nations of the earth or not, Bible prophecy does speak of an impending crisis that will cause the nations of the world to band together. And the crisis will, indeed, be brought about by extraterrestrial forces.

King David of ancient Israel prophetically spoke of this world situation. Under divine inspiration he wrote: "The kings of earth take their stand and high officials themselves have massed together as one against Jehovah and against his anointed one, saying: 'Let us tear their bands apart and cast

their cords away from us!'" (Psalm 2:2, 3; Acts 4:25, 26) Note that the rulers of the world would mass together as one against Jehovah, the Creator of the universe, and his anointed one, or his appointed King, Jesus Christ. How would that take place?

According to Bible chronology and fulfilled prophecies, in the year 1914, God's Kingdom was established in the heavens with Jesus Christ as King.* At that time the

* For a detailed discussion, see chapter 10, "God's Kingdom Rules," in the book *Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses, pages 90-7.

nations of the world had one thought in common. Rather than submitting to the sovereignty of God's newborn Kingdom, they were embroiled in a contest of power—the Great War, or World War I.

How does Jehovah God view such a reaction on the part of human rulers? "The very One sitting in the heavens will laugh; Jehovah himself will hold them in derision. At that time he will speak to them in his anger and in his hot displeasure he will disturb them." Then, Jehovah will tell his Son, the anointed King of the Kingdom: "Ask of me, that I may give nations as your inheritance and the ends of the earth as your own possession. You will break them with an iron scepter, as though a potter's vessel you will dash them to pieces."—Psalm 2:4, 5, 8, 9.

This final crushing of the opposing nations with an iron scepter will take place at Armageddon, or Har-Magedon. The last book of the Bible, Revelation, describes this climactic event as "the war of the great day of God the Almighty," to which "the kings of the entire inhabited earth" are being gathered together. (Revelation 16:14, 16) Under demonic influence, the nations of the earth will finally be united with one objective—to war against God the Almighty.

The time when humans will mass together to fight against God's sovereignty is fast approaching. Ironically, their "unity" will bring them no personal benefits. Instead, their action will be a prelude to the long-awaited peace for all mankind. How so? In that final battle, God's Kingdom "will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms [of the world], and it itself will stand to times indef-

inite." (Daniel 2:44) God's Kingdom, not any human organization, will be the government that will fulfill mankind's desire for world peace.

The Chief Administrator of the Kingdom Government

That is the Kingdom for which many sincere people have prayed, saying: "Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth." (Matthew 6:10) Rather than being an abstract condition of the heart, God's Kingdom is a real government that has accomplished wonderful deeds since its inauguration in heaven in 1914. Let us consider some key factors that demonstrate that God's Kingdom is a reality in full action today.

First of all, it has a powerful and efficient executive branch headed by the enthroned King, Jesus Christ. In 33 C.E., Jehovah God made Jesus Christ the Head of the Christian congregation. (Ephesians 1:22) Since then, Jesus has been exercising his headship, thus demonstrating his administrative ability. For example, when a great famine struck Judea in the first century, the Christian congregation immediately took action to come to the aid of its members. A relief work was organized, and Barnabas and Saul were dispatched from Antioch with a relief ministration.—Acts 11:27-30.

No less can be expected of Jesus Christ now that the Kingdom government is in operation. Whenever disasters—earthquakes, famines, floods, hurricanes, storms, or volcanic

*In 1914 the nations became
embroiled in a world war*





Voluntary relief work is evidence of Christian love in action



eruptions—strike, the Christian congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses responds quickly to the needs of fellow believers and others in the affected areas. For instance, when devastating earthquakes hit El Salvador in January and February 2001, relief activities were organized in all parts of the country, and groups of Jehovah's Witnesses from Canada, Guatemala, and the United States provided help. Three of their places of worship as well as over 500 homes were rebuilt in short order.

Subjects of God's Kingdom Government

Ever since its establishment in 1914, God's heavenly Kingdom has been gathering and organizing its subjects from peoples around the world. This is in fulfillment of a remarkable prophecy recorded by Isaiah: "It must occur in the final part of the days that the mountain of the house of Jehovah [his exalted true worship] will become firmly established above the top of the mountains, . . . and to it all the nations must stream." The prophecy shows that "many peoples" would go up to that mountain and embrace Jehovah's instructions and laws.—Isaiah 2:2, 3.

This activity has resulted in the most significant movement of modern times—an international brotherhood of over 6,000,000 Christians in more than 230 lands of the earth.

At international conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses, observers are often astounded to see the love, peace, and unity among the vast crowds of people, transcending barriers of nationality, culture, and language. (Acts 10:34, 35) Would you not agree that for a government to be able to bring hundreds of ethnic groups together in peace and harmony, it must be effective and stable—and real?

God's Kingdom and Education

Every government has standards that its citizens are expected to meet, and everyone who wants to live under that government must meet those standards. Similarly, God's Kingdom has standards that all who would qualify as its subjects must measure up to. However, to enable so many people with vastly different backgrounds to accept and abide by the same standards is certainly a mammoth undertaking. Here, then, is another factor that testifies to the reality of God's Kingdom—its effective program of education that reaches and transforms not only the mind but also the heart.

How does the Kingdom government accomplish this challenging task? By the apostolic method of preaching "from house to house" and teaching God's Word on an individual basis. (Acts 5:42; 20:20) How effective is this form of education? Jacques Johnson, a Catholic priest, wrote in a Canadian weekly about his efforts to dissuade a wom-

**Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide
benefit from the same program
of education**

an from studying with Jehovah's Witnesses. "I was quite baffled and realized that I was involved in a losing battle," he said. "I began to realize that over several months these JW women knitted meaningful relationships with this young shut-in mother. They connected with her by helping her, befriending her, establishing meaningful bonds of the heart. She soon became an active member in their religion and there was little I could do to prevent that from happening." Just as the heart of this former Catholic was moved by the Bible message taught by Jehovah's Witnesses and by their Christian conduct, so the hearts of millions worldwide are being touched.

This form of education—Kingdom education—is centered on the Bible, upholding its values and its standards on morals. It teaches people to love and honor one another regardless of their background. (John 13:34, 35) It also helps people to respond to the admonition: "Quit being fashioned after this system of things, but be transformed by making your mind over, that you may prove to yourselves the good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Romans 12:2) Leaving behind their former way of life and happily conforming to the laws and principles of the Kingdom government, millions have found peace and happiness now and bright prospects for the future.—Colossians 3:9-11.

An outstanding aid in achieving this worldwide unity is this magazine, *The Watchtower*. By means of coordinated translation methods and multilanguage publishing equipment, the principal articles in *The Watchtower* are published simultaneously in 135 languages, and over 95 percent of its



readers worldwide can study the material in their own language at the same time.

A Mormon writer cataloged the most exceptional missionary successes outside of his own church. He listed *The Watchtower* and *Awake!*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses, as the best evangelizing magazines and said: "No one could ever accuse Watchtower or Awake! of fostering complacency—to the contrary, they generate a sense of awareness that I have rarely encountered in other religious publications. The Watchtower and Awake! are refreshing in their factual-based, well-researched, relevant real-world content."

Evidence is overwhelming that God's Kingdom is a reality in full operation. Jehovah's Witnesses happily and energetically share "this good news of the kingdom" with their neighbors, inviting them to become its subjects. (Matthew 24:14) Does such a prospect appeal to you? You can enjoy the blessings that come from associating with those who are being educated in and endeavoring to live by the standards of the Kingdom. Better still, you can come to enjoy the prospect of living under Kingdom rule in the promised new world in which "righteousness is to dwell."—2 Peter 3:13.

JEHOVAH REVEALS HIS GLORY TO HUMBLE ONES

"The result of humility and the fear of Jehovah is riches and glory and life."

—PROVERBS 22:4.

STEPHEN was "a man full of faith and holy spirit." He was also "full of graciousness and power." As one of Jesus' early disciples, he was performing great signs and portents among the people. On one occasion, certain men rose up to dispute with him, "yet they could not hold their own against the wisdom and the spirit with which he was speaking." (Acts 6:5, 8-10) Stephen clearly was a good student of the Word of God, and he powerfully defended it before the Jewish religious leaders of his day. His detailed testimony, recorded in Acts chapter 7, testifies to his intense interest in the unfolding of God's purpose.

² Unlike those religious leaders, whose position and knowledge made them feel superior to the common people, Stephen was humble. (Matthew 23:2-7; John 7:49) Although well-versed in the Scriptures, he was more than happy to be given an assignment to "distribute food to tables" so that the apostles could devote themselves "to prayer and to the ministry of the word." Stephen had a fine reputation among the brothers and was therefore chosen to be one of seven certified men who would handle this daily distribution of food. He humbly accepted the task.
—Acts 6:1-6.

³ Stephen's humble disposition, coupled

- 1, 2. (a) How does the book of Acts show that Stephen was "a man full of faith and holy spirit"? (b) What evidence is there that Stephen was humble?
3. What outstanding demonstration of God's undeserved kindness did Stephen experience?

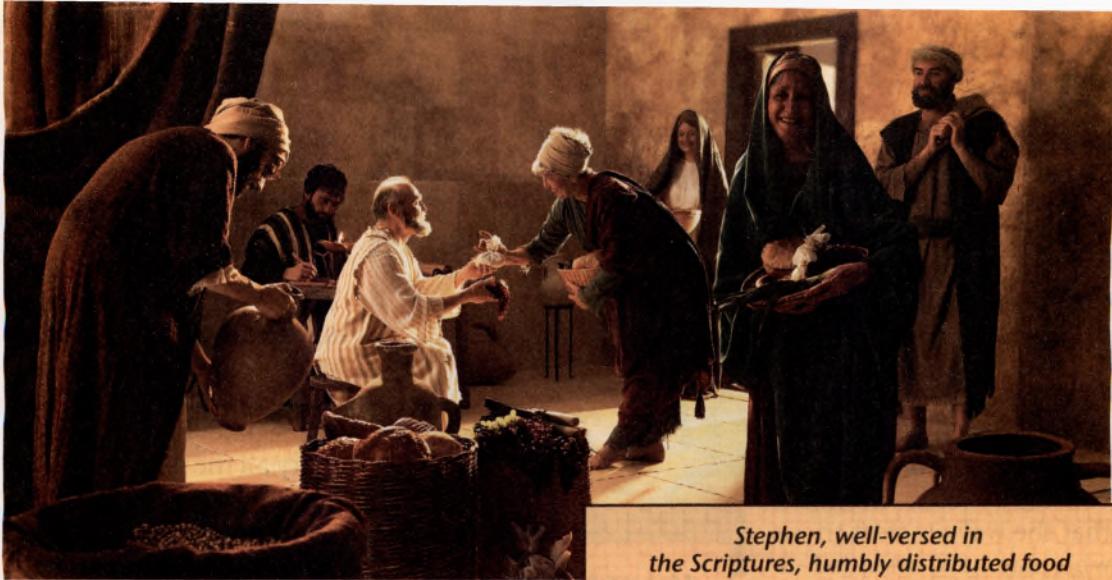
with his spirituality and integrity, did not go unnoticed by Jehovah. When Stephen was witnessing to the hostile crowd of Jewish leaders in the Sanhedrin, his opposers "saw that his face was as an angel's face." (Acts 6:15) His countenance was that of a messenger of God, with the peace that came from the God of glory, Jehovah. After giving a bold witness to members of the Sanhedrin, Stephen experienced an outstanding demonstration of God's undeserved kindness. "He, being full of holy spirit, gazed into heaven and caught sight of God's glory and of Jesus standing at God's right hand." (Acts 7:55) For Stephen, this spectacular vision reaffirmed Jesus' position as God's Son and the Messiah. It fortified humble Stephen and served to assure him that he had Jehovah's favor.

⁴ As the vision given to Stephen illustrates, Jehovah reveals his glory and his purpose to God-fearing individuals who are humble and who appreciate their relationship with him. "The result of humility and the fear of Jehovah is riches and glory and life," says the Bible. (Proverbs 22:4) It is, therefore, vital that we understand what true humility is, how we can cultivate this important quality, and how we benefit by displaying it in all aspects of life.

Humility—A Godly Quality

⁵ It may be surprising to some that Jeho-

4. To whom does Jehovah reveal his glory?
- 5, 6. (a) What is humility? (b) How has Jehovah displayed humility? (c) How should we be affected by Jehovah's humility?



*Stephen, well-versed in
the Scriptures, humbly distributed food*

vah God, the highest and most glorious one in the universe, is the ultimate example of humility. To Jehovah, King David said: "You will give me your shield of salvation, and your own right hand will sustain me, and your own humility will make me great." (Psalm 18:35) In describing Jehovah as humble, David drew on a Hebrew root word that means "be bowed down." Besides the word "humility," other words that are related to the same root include "lowliness," "meekness," and "condescension." So Jehovah displayed humility when he lowered himself to have dealings with the imperfect man David and used him as His representative king. As the superscription of Psalm 18 shows, Jehovah protected and supported David, delivering him "out of the palm of all his enemies and out of the hand of Saul." David, in turn, knew that any greatness or glory that he might achieve as king depended on Jehovah's humbly acting in his behalf. This realization helped David to remain humble.

⁶ What about us? Jehovah has seen fit to teach us the truth, and he may have granted us special privileges of service through his organization, or he may have used us in some way to carry out his will. How should

we feel about all of this? Should we not be humbled? Should we not be thankful for Jehovah's humility and avoid exalting ourselves, which would surely lead to disaster? —Proverbs 16:18; 29:23.

⁷ Not only has Jehovah shown great humility by having dealings with imperfect men but he has also shown a willingness to extend mercy to those who are lowly in mind, even raising up, or exalting, those who humble themselves. (Psalm 113:4-7) Take, for example, the case of King Manasseh of Judah. He misused his privileged position as king to promote false worship and "did on a grand scale what was bad in the eyes of Jehovah, to offend him." (2 Chronicles 33:6) Finally, Jehovah punished Manasseh by allowing him to be taken off his throne by the king of Assyria. In prison, Manasseh "softened the face of Jehovah his God and kept humbling himself greatly," so that Jehovah restored him to the throne in Jerusalem, and Manasseh "came to know that Jehovah is the true God." (2 Chronicles

7, 8. (a) How was Jehovah's humility manifest in his dealings with Manasseh? (b) In what way does Jehovah, as well as Manasseh, set an example for us to follow in showing humility?

33:11-13) Yes, in the end, Manasseh's humble state of mind pleased Jehovah, who in turn showed humility by forgiving him and reinstating him as king.

⁸ Jehovah's willingness to forgive and Manasseh's repentant attitude provide important lessons in humility for us. We should constantly bear in mind that the way we treat those who may have offended us and the attitude we display when we sin can affect the way Jehovah deals with us. If we willingly forgive the transgressions of others and humbly admit our errors, we can look to Jehovah for his mercy.—Matthew 5:23, 24; 6:12.

Divine Glory Revealed to Humble Ones

⁹ Humility and related qualities, however, should not be mistaken as a sign of weakness or as a tendency to condone what is wrong. As the Holy Scriptures testify, Jehovah is humble, yet he displays righteous indignation and awesome power when the occasion calls for them. Because of his humility, Jehovah gives favorable attention, or special consideration, to those who are lowly in mind, while he distances himself from those who are proud. (Psalm 138:6) How has Jehovah shown special consideration to his humble servants?

¹⁰ In his own due time and through his chosen channel of communication, Jehovah has revealed to humble ones details regarding the outworking of his purpose. These glorious things remain hidden from

9. Is humility a sign of weakness? Explain.
10. What does Jehovah reveal to humble ones, as indicated at 1 Corinthians 2:6-10?



those who proudly rely on, or stubbornly cling to, human wisdom or thinking. (1 Corinthians 2:6-10) But the humble ones, having been given an accurate understanding of Jehovah's purpose, are moved to magnify Jehovah because they appreciate his impressive glory all the more.

¹¹ In the first century, many, including some who claimed to be Christians, showed a lack of humility and were stumbled by what the apostle Paul revealed to them about God's purpose. Paul became "an apostle to the nations," but it was not because of his nationality, education, age, or long record of fine works. (Romans 11:13) Often, fleshly-minded individuals view these as the factors that determine whom Jehovah should use as his instrument. (1 Corinthians 1:26-29; 3:1; Colossians 2:18) However, Paul was Jehovah's choice, in harmony with His loving-kindness and righteous purpose. (1 Corinthians 15:8-10) Those whom Paul described as "superfine apostles," as well as other opposers, refused to accept Paul and his reasoning from the Scriptures. Their lack of humility hindered them from gaining knowledge and understanding of the glorious way Jehovah works out his purpose. May we never underestimate or prejudge those whom Jehovah chooses to use to accomplish his will.—2 Corinthians 11:4-6.

¹² On the other hand, there are many Bi-

11. In the first century, how did some show a lack of humility, and how did this prove detrimental to them?
12. How does the example of Moses show that Jehovah favors those who are humble?

ble examples that highlight how humble people are favored with a glimpse of God's glory. Moses, "by far the meekest" of all men, saw God's glory and enjoyed an intimate relationship with him. (Numbers 12:3) This humble man, who spent 40 years as a lowly shepherd, likely much of it on the Arabian Peninsula, was highly favored by the Creator in many ways. (Exodus 6:12, 30) With the backing of Jehovah, Moses became the spokesman for and chief organizer of the nation of Israel. He enjoyed two-way communication with God. Through a vision, he beheld "the appearance of Jehovah." (Numbers 12:7, 8; Exodus 24:10, 11) Those who recognized this humble servant and representative of God were also blessed. Similarly, we will be blessed if we recognize and obey the prophet greater than Moses, Jesus, as well as "the faithful and discreet slave" appointed by him.—Matthew 24:45, 46; Acts 3:22.

¹³ To whom did 'Jehovah's glory gleam' with the angelic announcement of the good news of the birth of "a Savior, who is Christ the Lord"? It was not to the high-minded religious leaders or to the important people in high places but to the humble shepherds "living out of doors and keeping watches in the night over their flocks." (Luke 2:8-11) These individuals were not highly esteemed for their credentials and work. Yet, they were the ones Jehovah took note of and chose to inform first about the birth of the Messiah. Yes, Jehovah reveals his glory to the humble and God-fearing ones.

¹⁴ What do these examples teach us? They show us that Jehovah favors and reveals knowledge and understanding of his purpose to humble ones. He chooses individu-

13. How was Jehovah's glory revealed to humble shepherds in the first century?

14. What blessings from God come to those who are humble?

als who may not meet certain human expectations and uses them as his means to communicate his glorious purpose to others. This should motivate us to continue looking to Jehovah, his prophetic Word, and his organization for direction. We can be sure that Jehovah will keep his humble servants informed regarding the unfolding of his glorious purpose. The prophet Amos declared: "The Sovereign Lord Jehovah will not do a thing unless he has revealed his confidential matter to his servants the prophets."—Amos 3:7.

Cultivate Humility and Enjoy God's Favor

¹⁵ To enjoy lasting divine favor, we must remain humble. Once humble does not mean always humble. It is possible for a person to abandon humility and give way to pride and self-exaltation, which lead to presumptuousness and disaster. Saul, the first one anointed as king of Israel, did just that. When he was first chosen, he felt 'little in his own eyes.' (1 Samuel 15:17) However, after having ruled for only two years, he acted presumptuously. He disregarded Jehovah's arrangement for offering sacrifices through the prophet Samuel, and he fabricated excuses for taking things into his own hands. (1 Samuel 13:1, 8-14) This was the beginning of a chain of events that unmistakably betrayed his lack of humility. The result was the loss of God's spirit and favor, which eventually led to his ignominious death. (1 Samuel 15:3-19, 26; 28:6; 31:4) The lesson is clear: We must work at maintaining humility and submissiveness and stifle feelings of self-importance, thus avoiding any presumptuous acts that result in Jehovah's disfavor.

15. Why must we work at maintaining humility, and how is this highlighted in the case of King Saul of Israel?

¹⁶ Although humility is not listed as a part of the fruitage of God's spirit, it is a godly quality that must be cultivated. (Galatians 5:22, 23; Colossians 3:10, 12) Since it involves a state of mind—that is, how we view ourselves and others—developing humility requires deliberate effort. Reasoning and meditating on our relationship with Jehovah and with our fellowman can help us to stay humble. In God's eyes, all imperfect flesh is as green grass that grows for a time, then dries up and withers. Humans are like mere grasshoppers in a field. (Isaiah 40: 6, 7, 22) Does one blade of grass have reason to be proud just because it is a little longer than other blades of grass? Does a grasshopper have cause to vaunt its prowess just because it can hop a little farther than other grasshoppers? It is absurd even to think so. Thus, the apostle Paul reminded his fellow Christians: "Who makes you to differ from

16. How can reflecting on our relationship with Jehovah and with our fellowman help us to cultivate humility?



*What made Daniel a
"very desirable man"?*

another? Indeed, what do you have that you did not receive? If, now, you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as though you did not receive it?" (1 Corinthians 4:7) Reflecting on Bible texts such as these can help us to cultivate and display humility.

¹⁷ The Hebrew prophet Daniel was declared a "very desirable man" in God's eyes because of his "humbling" himself, that is, because of his humility. (Daniel 10:11, 12) What helped Daniel to cultivate humility? First of all, he displayed uncompromising reliance on Jehovah, regularly turning to him in prayer. (Daniel 6:10, 11) Additionally, Daniel was a diligent and rightly motivated student of God's Word, which helped him to keep God's glorious purpose in focus. He was also willing to acknowledge his own shortcomings, not just those of his people. And he was truly interested in pro-

17. What helped the prophet Daniel to cultivate humility, and what can help us do the same?

Strong yet Humble

At the 1919 Cedar Point, Ohio, U.S.A., convention of the Bible Students (known today as Jehovah's Witnesses), 50-year-old J. F. Rutherford, who was then overseeing the work, gladly volunteered as a bellhop, carrying luggage and escorting conventioners to their rooms. On the last day of the convention, he electrified the audience of 7,000 with the words: "You are an ambassa-

dor of the King of kings and Lord of lords, announcing to the people . . . the glorious kingdom of our Lord." While Brother Rutherford was a man of strong convictions, known for speaking out forcefully and without compromise for what he believed to be the truth, he was also genuinely humble before God, often reflecting that in his prayers at morning worship in Bethel.

moting God's righteousness, not his own. (Daniel 9:2, 5, 7) Can we learn from Daniel's outstanding example and endeavor to cultivate and demonstrate humility in all aspects of our life?

¹⁸ "The result of humility and the fear of Jehovah is riches and glory and life," states Proverbs 22:4. Yes, Jehovah favors those who are humble, and the result is glory and life. After almost giving up in his service to God but then having his thinking readjusted by Jehovah, the psalmist Asaph humbly acknowledged: "With your counsel you will lead me, and afterward you will take me even to glory." (Psalm 73:24) What about today? What glory awaits those who display humility? In addition to enjoying a favored

18. What glory awaits those who display humility today?

and blessed relationship with Jehovah, they can look forward to seeing the fulfillment of King David's inspired words: "The meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace." A glorious future indeed!—Psalm 37:11.

Do You Recall?

- How is Stephen an example of a humble person to whom Jehovah revealed His glory?
- In what ways has Jehovah God displayed humility?
- What examples show that Jehovah reveals his glory to humble ones?
- How can Daniel's example help us to cultivate humility?

CULTIVATING A CHRISTLIKE VIEW OF GREATNESS

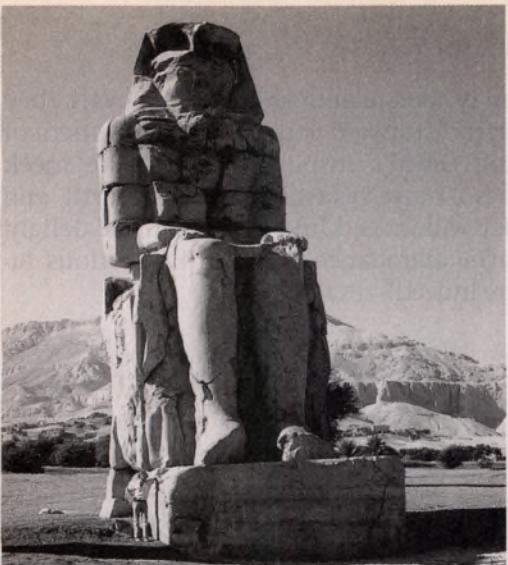
"Whoever wants to become great among you must be your minister."—MATTHEW 20:26.

NEAR the ancient Egyptian city of Thebes (modern-day Karnak), about 300 miles south of Cairo, stands a 60-foot-tall statue of Pharaoh Amenhotep III. One cannot look at that immense image without feeling tiny in comparison. This monument, doubtless meant to inspire awe of the ruler, is a symbol of the world's view of greatness—that of making oneself appear as big and important as possible and making others feel insignificant.

1. What is the world's view of greatness?

² Contrast this view of greatness with that taught by Jesus Christ. Although he was the "Lord and Teacher" of his followers, Jesus taught them that greatness comes from serving others. On the last day of his life on earth, Jesus demonstrated the meaning of what he taught by washing his disciples' feet. What a humble act of service! (John 13:4, 5, 14) To serve or to be served—which appeals to you more? Does Christ's example kindle

2. What example did Jesus set for his followers, and what questions do we need to ask ourselves?



A colossal image of Pharaoh Amenhotep III

within you a desire to be humble just as he was? Then let us examine Christ's view of greatness in contrast with the view common in the world.

Shun the World's View of Greatness

³ There are numerous Bible examples showing that the world's view of greatness leads to ruin. Think of powerful Haman, who was prominent in the Persian royal court during the days of Esther and Mordecai. Haman's craving for glory led to his humiliation and death. (Esther 3:5; 6:10-12; 7:9, 10) What about haughty Nebuchadnezzar, who was stricken with madness at the height of his power? His warped idea of greatness was expressed in these words: "Is not this Babylon the Great, that I myself have built for the royal house with the strength of my might and for the dignity of my majesty?" (Daniel 4:30) Then there is proud Herod Agrippa I, who accepted unwarranted glory for himself instead of giving glory to God. He

3. What Bible examples show the sad outcome of those who crave glory from men?

was "eaten up with worms and expired." (Acts 12:21-23) Failure to appreciate Jehovah's view of greatness led all these men to their humiliating downfall.

⁴ It is proper for us to want to use our life in a way that brings us honor and respect. Yet, the Devil exploits this desire by fostering a prideful spirit, which is a reflection of his own ambitions. (Matthew 4:8, 9) Never forget that he is "the god of this system of things," and he is determined to promote his thinking here on the earth. (2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2; Revelation 12:9) Knowing the source of such thinking, Christians shun the world's view of greatness.

⁵ One idea that the Devil promotes is that a big name in the world, accolades from men, and pockets full of money automatically result in a happy life. Is that true? Do achievement, recognition, and wealth guarantee a life filled with satisfaction? The Bible cautions us not to be deluded by such thinking. Wise King Solomon wrote: "I myself have seen all the hard work and all the proficiency in work, that it means the rivalry of one toward another; this also is vanity and a striving after the wind." (Ecclesiastes 4:4) Many individuals who have devoted their life to getting ahead in the world can attest to the truthfulness of that inspired Bible counsel. One example is a man who helped design, build, and test the spacecraft that took man to the moon. He reflected: "I had worked hard and had become very proficient in what I did. Yet it had been futile, or worthless, in securing for me lasting happiness and peace of mind."^{*} The worldly concept of greatness, whether it is in the field of business, sports,

* See *The Watchtower*, May 1, 1982, pages 3-6, "In Search of Success."

4. Who is behind the world's prideful spirit?
5. Do achievement, recognition, and wealth guarantee lasting satisfaction? Explain.



Do you know what led to Haman's downfall?

or entertainment, does not ensure lasting satisfaction.

Greatness From Service Motivated by Love

⁶ An event in the life of Jesus reveals what real greatness involves. Jesus and his disciples were traveling to Jerusalem for the Passover of 33 C.E. On the way, two of Jesus' cousins, James and John, manifested a wrong view of greatness. Through their mother, they made this request to Jesus: 'Give the word that we may sit at your right hand and at your left, in your kingdom.' (Matthew 20:21) Among the Jews, to sit at the right hand or left was considered a great honor. (1 Kings 2:19) James and John ambitiously made a bid to grab the most distinguished places. They wanted to stake their claims to these positions of authority. Jesus was aware of what was going on in their mind and took the opportunity to correct their mistaken view of greatness.

6. What shows that James and John had a wrong view of greatness?

⁷ Jesus knew that in this proud world, the man who is considered great is one who controls and commands others and who at the snap of his fingers can have his every whim catered to. But among Jesus' followers, it is humble service that is the measure of greatness. Jesus said: "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your minister, and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave."—Matthew 20:26, 27.

⁸ The Greek word translated "minister" in the Bible refers to one who diligently and persistently reaches out to render service in behalf of others. Jesus was teaching his disciples an important lesson: Ordering people to do things does not make one great; serving others when motivated by love does. Ask yourself: 'How would I have reacted if I were James or John? Would I have seen the point that true greatness comes from serving with love as the motive?'—1 Corinthians 13:3.

⁹ Jesus showed his disciples that the

7. How did Jesus describe the way to true Christian greatness?
8. What does it mean to be a minister, and what questions might we ask ourselves?
9. What example did Jesus set in his dealings with others?

**Do you look for opportunities
to serve others?**



standard of worldly greatness is not the standard of Christlike greatness. Never did he assume a superior attitude toward those whom he served or cause them to feel inferior. People of all sorts—men, women, and children, the rich, the poor, and the powerful, as well as noted sinners—felt at ease with him. (Mark 10:13-16; Luke 7:37-50) People are often impatient with those having limitations. Jesus was different. Even though his disciples were at times thoughtless and quarrelsome, he patiently instructed them, showing them that he was truly humble and mild-tempered.—Zechariah 9:9; Matthew 11:29; Luke 22:24-27.

¹⁰ The selfless example set by this foremost Son of God demonstrated what greatness really means. Jesus did not come to the earth to be waited on but to serve others, curing “various sicknesses” and freeing people from demon control. Though he was subject to fa-

10. How did Jesus’ entire life course reflect unselfish service in behalf of others?

tigue and needed time to rest, he always put the needs of others ahead of his own, going out of his way to comfort them. (Mark 1:32-34; 6:30-34; John 11:11, 17, 33) His love moved him to help people spiritually, traveling hundreds of miles over dusty roads to preach the good news of the Kingdom. (Mark 1:38, 39) Without a doubt, Jesus took serving others seriously.

Imitate the Humility of Christ

¹¹ In the late 1800’s, the proper spirit that Christian overseers should cultivate was highlighted when men were being selected to be traveling representatives to serve the needs of God’s people. What was looked for, according to *Zion’s Watch Tower* of September 1, 1894,

were men “of meekness—that they might not be puffed up . . . , of humble mind who seek not to preach themselves, but Christ—not to air their own knowledge, but his Word in its simplicity and power.” Clearly, true Christians should never seek responsibility in order to satisfy personal ambition or to gain prominence, power, and control over others. A humble overseer keeps in mind that his responsibilities constitute “a fine work,” not an exalted position to bring glory to himself. (1 Timothy 3:1, 2) All elders and ministerial servants should do their utmost to serve humbly in behalf of others and to take the lead in sacred service, setting a worthy example for others to imitate.—1 Corinthians 9:19; Galatians 5:13; 2 Timothy 4:5.

¹² Any brother reaching out for privileges

11. What qualities are looked for in brothers appointed to serve as overseers in the congregation?
12. What questions might those who are reaching out for privileges in the congregation ask themselves?

may need to ask himself: 'Do I look for opportunities to serve others, or do I have the tendency to want to be served? Am I willing to perform helpful tasks that are not readily noticed by others?' For example, a young man might be willing to give talks in the Christian congregation but might hesitate to render help to the elderly. He might enjoy the association of responsible men in the congregation yet be reluctant to share in the preaching work. Such a young man would do well to ask himself: 'Do I focus primarily on aspects of God's service that bring recognition and praise? Am I striving to shine before others?' Seeking personal glory is surely not Christlike.—John 5:41.

¹³ When we work hard to imitate the humility of Christ, we are moved to serve others. Consider the example of a zone overseer who was inspecting the operations of one of the branch offices of Jehovah's Witnesses. In spite of a very busy schedule and a heavy load of responsibility, this overseer stopped to help a young brother who was struggling to adjust the settings on a stitching machine. "I could not believe it!" the brother recounted. "He told me that he operated the same type of machine when he was a young man serving at Bethel, and he recalled how difficult it was to get just the right settings. He worked on that machine with me for some time even though he had so many other important things to do. That really impressed me." That brother, now an overseer at one of the branch offices of Jehovah's Witnesses, still remembers that act of humility. May we never feel that we are too lofty to do humble things or too important to do menial tasks. Rather, we ought to gird ourselves with "lowliness of mind." That is not optional. It is part

13. (a) How can an overseer's example of humility affect others? (b) Why can it be said that humility, or being lowly of mind, is not optional for a Christian?

Who Has Christlike Greatness?

One who wants to be served or
one who is willing to serve?

One who prefers the spotlight or
one who accepts humble tasks?

One who elevates himself or
one who elevates others?

of "the new personality" that a Christian must put on.—Philippians 2:3; Colossians 3:10, 12; Romans 12:16.

How to Acquire the Christlike View of Greatness

¹⁴ How can we acquire the proper view of greatness? One way is by meditating on our relationship with Jehovah God. His majesty, power, and wisdom elevate him far above the sphere of puny humans. (Isaiah 40:22) Meditating on our relationship with our fellowman also helps us to cultivate lowliness of mind. For example, we might surpass others in certain fields, but they may excel in aspects of life that are much more important, or our Christian brothers may have certain qualities that we are lacking. As a matter of fact, many who are precious in God's eyes tend not to stand out because of their meek and humble manner.—Proverbs 3:34; James 4:6.

¹⁵ Experiences of Jehovah's Witnesses under trial on account of their faith well illustrate this point. Time and again, it is those whom the world would consider ordinary who have maintained their integrity to God

14. How can meditating on our relationship with God and with our fellowman help us to cultivate the proper view of greatness?

15. How does the integrity of God's people show that no one has a basis for feeling superior to others?

under fiery tests. Meditating on such examples can help keep us humble and teach us 'not to think more of ourselves than it is necessary to think.'—Romans 12:3.*

¹⁶ All Christians, young and old, should seek to cultivate the Christlike view of greatness. In the congregation, a variety of tasks must be performed. Never resent being asked to do things that may appear to be lowly. (1 Samuel 25:41; 2 Kings 3:11) Parents, do you encourage your children and teenagers to work cheerfully at any assignment that they are given to do, whether at the Kingdom Hall, at an assembly, or at a convention site? Do they see you perform lowly tasks? One brother, who now serves at the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses, vividly recalls his parents' example. He said: "The way they treated the job of cleaning the Kingdom Hall or a convention center told me that they considered it to be important. They often volunteered to perform tasks that were for the good of the congregation or the brotherhood, no matter how menial those tasks might appear to be. This attitude has helped me to accept willingly any work assignment here at Bethel."

¹⁷ As for putting the interests of others ahead of one's own, we have an excellent example in Esther, who became queen of the Persian Empire in the fifth century B.C.E. Although living in a palace, she was willing to put her own life at risk in behalf of God's people, acting in harmony with his will. (Esther 1:5, 6; 4:14-16) Regardless of their economic circumstances, Christian women to

* For examples, see the 1992 *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses*, pages 181-2, and *The Watchtower* of September 1, 1993, pages 27-31.

16. How can all in the congregation cultivate greatness in imitation of the pattern set by Jesus?
17. In what ways can humble women be a blessing to the congregation?

day can show a spirit like that of Esther by encouraging the depressed, visiting the sick, sharing in the preaching work, and cooperating with the elders. What a blessing such humble sisters are to the congregation!

The Blessings of Christlike Greatness

¹⁸ Many benefits come to you when you maintain a Christlike view of greatness. Unselfishly serving others brings joy both to them and to you. (Acts 20:35) As you willingly and eagerly labor in behalf of your brothers, you endear yourself to them. (Acts 20:37) More important, Jehovah views what you do to promote the welfare of fellow Christians as a pleasing sacrifice of praise to him.—Philippians 2:17.

¹⁹ Each of us needs to probe his own heart and ask: 'Will I pay only lip service to cultivating Christ's view of greatness, or will I work diligently to put it into practice?' Jehovah's feelings toward the haughty are clear. (Proverbs 16:5; 1 Peter 5:5) May our actions show that we delight in manifesting the Christlike view of greatness, whether it is in the Christian congregation, in our family life, or in our day-to-day dealings with fellow humans—doing all things to God's glory and praise.—1 Corinthians 10:31.

18. What benefits come from manifesting Christlike greatness?

19. What should be our determination concerning the Christlike view of greatness?

Can You Explain?

- Why should we shun the worldly view of greatness?
- How did Jesus measure greatness?
- How can overseers imitate the humility of Christ?
- What can help us to cultivate Christlike greatness?



WE LIVED BY JEHOVAH'S STRENGTH

AS TOLD BY
ERZSÉBET HAFFNER

"I will not allow them to deport you," said Tibor Haffner when he learned that I had been ordered to leave Czechoslovakia. Then he added: "If you agree, I will marry you, and you will stay with me forever."

ON January 29, 1938, only a few weeks after that unexpected proposal, I married Tibor, the Christian brother who first witnessed to my family. It was not an easy decision. I had just turned 18, and as a full-time minister of Jehovah's Witnesses, I wanted to dedicate my young years exclusively to God's service. I cried. I prayed. Only after I calmed down did I realize that what Tibor offered me was more than a kind gesture, and I felt that I wanted to live with this man who genuinely loved me.

But why was I in danger of deportation? After all, I lived in a country that took pride in its democratic system and religious free-

dom. Well, I think that at this point I need to tell you more about my background.

I was born on December 26, 1919, to Greek-Catholic parents in the village of Sájószentpéter, Hungary, some 100 miles east of Budapest. Sadly, my father died before I knew him. Soon my mother married a widower with four children, and we moved to Lučenec, a lovely city in what was then Czechoslovakia. In those years, living in a stepfamily was not easy. As the youngest of five children, I felt like a fifth wheel on a cart. The economic situation was difficult, and I was deprived not only of material things but also of a normal amount of parental attention and love.

Does Anyone Know the Answer?

When I was 16, I was beset with serious questions. I read with great interest the history of World War I, and I was astonished by all the killings that took place between civilized nations claiming to be Christian. Besides, I could see a growing militarism all around. Nothing about it harmonized with what I learned in the church about neighbor love.

Thus, I went to a Roman Catholic priest and asked him: "What command should be binding on us as Christians—to go to war and kill our neighbors or to love them?" Irritated by my question, he answered that he taught what he got from higher authorities. A similar thing took place when I visited a Calvinist minister and then a Jewish rabbi. I did not get any answer, just their astonishment over my unusual question. Finally, I went to see a Lutheran minister. He got upset, but before I left, he said: "If you really want to know something about it, ask Jehovah's Witnesses."

I tried to find the Witnesses but without success. A few days later as I was coming home from work, I saw the door open half-way. A good-looking young man was reading to my mother from the Bible. A thought flashed through my mind, 'That must be it, a Witness of Jehovah!' We invited this man, Tibor Haffner, in, and I repeated my questions. Instead of answering in his own words, he showed me what the Bible says about the mark of true Christians, as well as about the times in which we were living.—John 13:34, 35; 2 Timothy 3:1-5.

Within a few months, before I turned 17, I was baptized. I felt that everyone had to hear these precious truths that I had found



*My son Tibor, Jr.,
(at age 4) whom
I had to leave
behind*

with so much difficulty. I started to preach full-time, which was quite challenging in Czechoslovakia during the late 1930's. Although our work was officially registered, we faced strong, clergy-instigated opposition.

First Taste of Persecution

One day in the latter part of 1937, I was preaching with another Christian sister in a village close to Lučenec. Before long we were arrested and taken to prison. "You are going to die here," said the guard, slamming shut the door of our cell.

By evening, we had four more cell mates. We started to comfort them and to give them a witness. They calmed down, and we were busy all night long sharing Bible truth with them.

At six in the morning, the guard called me out of the cell. I said to my companion: "We'll meet again in God's Kingdom." I asked her to tell my family what had happened if she survived. I offered a silent prayer and went with the guard. He took me to his apartment in the prison area. "I have some questions for you, girl," he said. "Last night you said that God's name is Jehovah. Can you show that to me in the Bible?" What a surprise and relief! He brought his Bible, and I showed him and his wife the name Jehovah. He had many other questions on the subjects that we had discussed with the four women during the night. Satisfied with the answers, he asked his wife to prepare breakfast for me and my partner.

A couple of days later, we were released, but a judge decided that since I was a Hungarian citizen, I had to leave Czechoslovakia. It was after this incident that Tibor Haffner asked me to become his wife. We got mar-

ried, and I moved into the house of his parents.

Persecution Intensifies

We continued in the preaching work as a couple, though Tibor also had organizational work to do. Just a few days before Hungarian soldiers marched into our city in November 1938, our son, Tibor, Jr., was born. In Europe, World War II was on the horizon. A large part of Czechoslovakia was taken over by Hungary, bringing increased persecution on those of Jehovah's Witnesses who lived in the annexed areas.

On October 10, 1942, Tibor left for Debrecen to meet some brothers. This time, however, he did not come back. Later he told me what happened. Instead of the brothers, some policemen in workers' clothing were on the bridge where the meeting was to be. They were waiting for my husband and Pál Nagypál, who were the last ones to come. The police took them to the police station and beat their bare feet with clubs until they fainted from pain.

Then they were ordered to put on their boots and stand up. Despite the pain, they were forced to go to the railway station. The police brought another man with his head so bandaged that he could barely see. This was Brother András Pilling, who had also come to the meeting. My husband was taken by train to detention in Alag, close to Budapest. One of the guards who saw Tibor's battered feet said sarcastically: "How cruel some people can be! Don't worry, we will heal you." Two other guards started to beat Tibor on his feet, splattering blood all around. After a few minutes, he lost consciousness.

The following month, Tibor and more than 60 other brothers and sisters were put on trial. Brothers András Bartha, Dénes Faluvégi, and János Konrád were sentenced to death by hanging. Brother András Pilling re-

ceived a life sentence, and my husband was sentenced to 12 years in prison. Their crime? The prosecutor accused them of high treason, refusal of military service, espionage, and slander of the most holy church. The death sentences were later changed to life imprisonment.

Following My Husband

Two days after Tibor left for the meeting in Debrecen, I was up before six, ironing our clothes. Suddenly there was a banging on the door. 'They are here,' I thought. Six policemen marched in and informed me that they had permission to make a search. All in the house were arrested and taken to the police station, including our three-year-old son. That very day we were transferred to a facility in Pétervására, Hungary.

After arrival, I developed a fever and was separated from other inmates. When I recovered, two soldiers were in my cell, quarreling over me. "We must shoot her! I will shoot her!" said one. But the other wanted to check the condition of my health before they took action. I pleaded with them to let me live. They finally left my cell, and I thanked Jehovah for helping me.

The guards had a special method of interrogation. They ordered me to lie on the floor facedown, put socks in my mouth, bound my hands and feet, and whipped me till I was bleeding. They stopped only when one of the soldiers said that he was exhausted.

Tibor, Sr., with other brothers in Bor



They asked me who my husband was to meet the day he was arrested. I did not tell them, so the beating continued for three days. On the fourth day, I was allowed to bring my son to my mother. In freezing weather, I carried my little child on my wounded back and walked some eight miles to the railway station. From there, I continued home by train, but I had to be back in the camp that very day.

I was sentenced to six years in a prison in Budapest. Upon my arrival, I learned that Tibor also was there. How happy we were when we got permission to speak with each other, although just for a few minutes through an iron fence! We both felt Jehovah's love and were strengthened by these precious moments. Before we met again, both of us were to go through horrendous trials, repeatedly escaping death just by a hairbreadth.

From Prison to Prison

There were some 80 of us sisters crammed into one cell. We longed for some spiritual food, but getting anything into prison seemed impossible. Could we get something from inside the prison? Let me tell you what we did. I volunteered to repair socks for the prison clerks. In one of the socks, I put a piece of paper with a request for the catalog number of the Bible in the prison library. To avoid any suspicion, I added two more titles.

The next day, I received another pile of socks from the clerks. In one of them was the answer. Then I gave a guard these numbers and asked for the books. What a joy when we got the books, including the Bible! The rest of the books we changed every week, but we kept the

Bible. When the guard asked about it, we always said: "It is a big book, and everyone wants to read it." Thus we were able to read the Bible.

One day, an officer invited me to his office. He seemed unusually polite.

"Mrs. Haffner, I have good news for you," he said. "You can go home. Maybe tomorrow. If there is a train, even today."

"That would be great," I replied.

"Of course, it would," he said. "You have a child, and I believe you want to raise him." Then he added, "Just sign this letter."

"What is it?" I asked.

"Don't worry about it," he insisted. "Just sign, and you can go." Then he told me: "As soon as you are home, do whatever you want. But now you must sign that you cease being one of Jehovah's Witnesses."

I stepped back and firmly refused.

"Then you'll die here!" he shouted angrily and sent me away.

In May 1943, I was transferred to another prison in Budapest and later to the village of Márianosztra, where we lived in a monastery with some 70 nuns. Despite hunger and other hardships, we were eager to share our hope with them. One of the nuns showed real interest in our message and said: "These are beautiful things. I have never heard anything like that. Please,

tell me more." We told her about the new world and the wonderful life there. As we were talking, the mother superior arrived. The interested nun was immediately taken away, stripped of her clothes, and severely beaten with a whip. When we met her again, she



With Tibor and Magdalena, my sister-in-law, in 1947, in Brno

pleaded: "Please, pray to Jehovah so that he will save me and take me away from here. I want to be one of you."

Our next destination was an old prison in Komárom, a city on the Danube River, about 50 miles west of Budapest. The living conditions were terrible. As did a number of other sisters, I got very sick with typhus, vomiting blood and becoming very weak. We had no medicine, and I thought my end had come. But then the officers were looking for someone who could do office work. The sisters mentioned my name. Thus, I was given some medicine, and I recuperated.

Reunited With My Family

As the Soviet army approached from the east, we were forced to move to the west. To describe all the horrors we went through would be a long story. I was close to death several times, but thanks to Jehovah's protective hand, I survived. When the war ended, we were in the Czech city of Tábor, some 50 miles from Prague. It took three more weeks before my sister-in-law Magdalena and I reached our home in Lučenec, on May 30, 1945.

From a distance I could see my mother-in-law and my dear son, Tibor, in the yard. My eyes filled with tears, and I called out, "Tibor!" He ran and jumped into my arms. "You won't go away again, Mom, will you?" Those were his first words to me, and I will never forget them.

Jehovah was merciful also to my husband, Tibor. From prison in Budapest, he was sent to the labor camp at Bor, with some 160 other brothers. Many times they were at death's door, but as a group, they were preserved alive. Tibor came back home on April 8, 1945, about a month before me.



I was close to death several times, but thanks to Jehovah's protective hand, I survived

After the war, we still needed Jehovah's strength to survive all the trials of the next 40 years under the Communist rule in Czechoslovakia. Tibor was again sentenced to a long term in prison, and I had to care for our son without him. After his release, Tibor served as a traveling overseer. During the 40 years of Communism, we used every opportunity to share our faith. We were able to help many to learn the truth. They thus became our spiritual children.

What a joy it was when we gained religious freedom in 1989! The next year, we attended the first convention in our country after such a long time. When we saw thousands of our brothers and sisters who for decades had maintained their integrity, we knew that Jehovah was a mighty source of strength for all of them.

My dear husband, Tibor, died faithful to God on October 14, 1993, and I am now living close to my son in Žilina, Slovakia. There is not much strength left in me physically, but my spirit is strong by Jehovah's power. I believe without any doubt that by his strength I can endure any trials in this old system. Moreover, I look forward to the time when, by Jehovah's undeserved kindness, I will be able to live forever.

Jehovah's Word Is Alive

Highlights From the Book of Numbers

FOLLOWING their Exodus from Egypt, the Israelites were organized into a nation. Shortly thereafter, they could have entered the Promised Land, but they did not. Instead, they had to wander for some four decades in a “great and fear-inspiring wilderness.” (Deuteronomy 8:15) Why? The historical narrative in the Bible book of Numbers tells us what happened. It should impress upon us the need to obey Jehovah God and respect his representatives.

Written by Moses in the wilderness and on the Plains of Moab, the book of Numbers covers a period of 38 years and 9 months—from 1512 B.C.E. to 1473 B.C.E. (Numbers 1:1; Deuteronomy 1:3) Its name is derived from the two censuses of the Israelites, taken some 38 years apart. (Chapters 1-4, 26) The narrative is divided into three sections. The first part relates events that happened at Mount Sinai. The second covers what took place during Israel’s wandering in the wilderness. And the final section considers events on the Plains of Moab. As you read this account, you may want to ask yourself: ‘What do these incidents teach me? Are there principles in this book that can benefit me today?’

AT MOUNT SINAI (Numbers 1:1–10:10)

The first of the two numberings takes place while the Israelites are still at the base of Mount Sinai. Males 20 years old and upward, except the Levites, total 603,550. The census is evidently taken for military purposes. The entire camp, including women, children, and the Levites, may amount to over three million people.

Following the census, the Israelites receive instructions regarding the order of march, details concerning the duties of Levites and tabernacle service, commands on quarantine, and laws relating to cases of jealousy and vows made by Nazirites. Chapter 7 contains information about offerings made by tribal chieftains in connection with the inauguration of the altar, and chapter 9 discusses the Passover observance. The assembly is also given instructions about setting up and breaking camp.

Scriptural Questions Answered:

2:1, 2—What were “the signs” around which the three-tribe divisions were to encamp in the wilderness? The Bible does not give a description of what these signs were. However, they were not regarded as sacred symbols or given religious significance. The signs were used for a practical purpose—to help a person find his proper place in the camp.

5:27—What is meant by the ‘falling away of the thigh’ of a wife guilty of adultery? The term “thigh” is used here to denote the procreative organs. (Genesis 46:26) The ‘falling away’ of it suggests the degeneration of these organs, so that conception would be impossible.

Lessons for Us:

6:1-7. Nazirites were to abstain from the product of the vine and all intoxicating beverages, requiring self-denial. They were to let their hair grow long—a sign of submission to Jehovah, just as women were to be in subjection to their husbands or fathers. The Nazirites were to remain clean by staying away

from any dead body, even that of a close relative. Full-time servants today show a spirit of self-sacrifice when it comes to self-denial and submission to Jehovah and his arrangement. Some assignments may involve going to a distant land, which may even make it difficult or impossible to return home for the funeral of a close family member.

8:25, 26. To fill the positions of the Levite service properly, and out of consideration for their age, older men were commanded to retire from compulsory service. However, they could volunteer to assist other Levites. While there is no retirement from being a Kingdom proclaimer today, the principle of this law teaches a valuable lesson. If because of advanced age a Christian cannot fulfill certain obligations, he may engage in a form of service that is within his power to perform.

FROM PLACE TO PLACE IN THE WILDERNESS (Numbers 10:11–21:35)

When the cloud above the tabernacle eventually rises, the Israelites begin a march that will bring them to the desert plains of Moab 38 years and one or two months later. You may find it beneficial to follow their route on the map on page 9 of the brochure "*See the Good Land*," published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

On the way to Kadesh, in the Wilderness of Paran, there are at least three

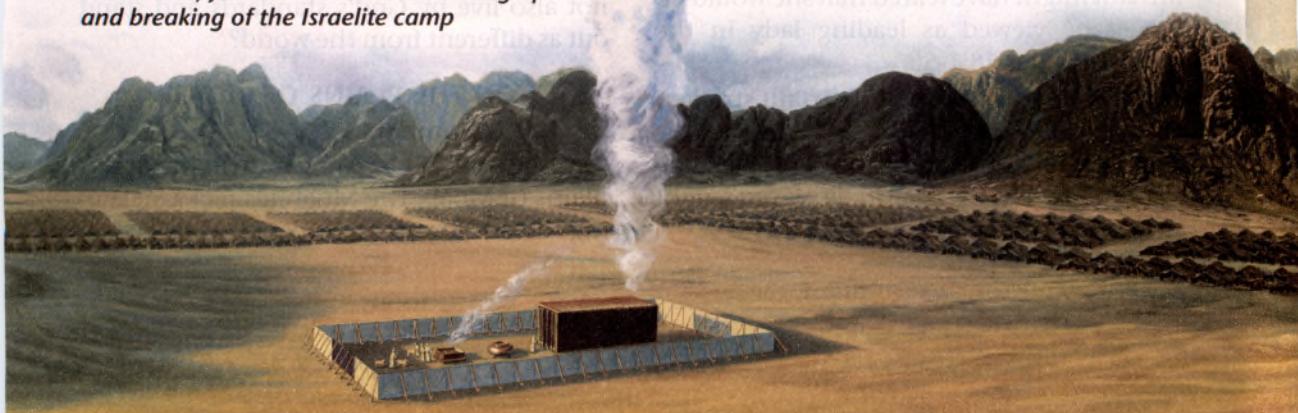
By means of a miraculous cloud over the tabernacle, Jehovah directed the setting up and breaking of the Israelite camp

cases of complaint. The first one is quelled when Jehovah sends a fire to consume some of the people. Then the Israelites cry out for meat, and Jehovah supplies quail. Miriam and Aaron's complaint against Moses results in Miriam being temporarily stricken with leprosy.

While camping at Kadesh, Moses sends out 12 men to spy out the Promised Land. They return 40 days later. Believing the bad report of ten of the spies, the people want to stone Moses, Aaron, and the faithful spies Joshua and Caleb. Jehovah proposes to strike the people with pestilence, but Moses intercedes, and God declares that they will become wanderers in the wilderness for 40 years—until those numbered have died.

Jehovah gives additional regulations. Korah and others rebel against Moses and Aaron, but the rebels are destroyed by fire or are swallowed up by the earth. The following day the entire assembly murmurs against Moses and Aaron. As a result, 14,700 die in a scourge from Jehovah. To make his selection of high priest known, God causes Aaron's rod to bud. Jehovah then gives further laws pertaining to Levite obligations and the cleansing of the people. The use of red-cow ashes prefigures the cleansing through Jesus' sacrifice.
—Hebrews 9:13, 14.

The sons of Israel return to Kadesh, where Miriam dies. The assembly again complains against Moses and Aaron. Their reason? Lack of water.





Jehovah deserves our obedience and expects us to respect his representatives

Because Moses and Aaron fail to sanctify Jehovah's name when miraculously providing water, they lose out on entering the Promised Land. Israel pulls away from Kadesh, and Aaron dies at Mount Hor. While going around Edom, the Israelites tire out and speak against God and Moses. Jehovah sends poisonous serpents to punish them. Moses once again intercedes, and God instructs him to make a copper serpent and set it upon a pole so that those bitten are cured by gazing at it. The serpent foreshadows the impalement of Jesus Christ for our eternal benefit. (John 3:14, 15) Israel defeats Amorite Kings Sihon and Og and takes possession of their lands.

Scriptural Questions Answered:

12:1—Why did Miriam and Aaron complain against Moses? The real reason for their complaint was apparently Miriam's desire for greater power. When Moses' wife, Zipporah, rejoined him in the wilderness, Miriam might have feared that she would no longer be viewed as leading lady in the camp.—Exodus 18:1-5.

12:9-11—Why was only Miriam stricken with leprosy? Very likely, she was the one who instigated the complaint and persuaded Aaron to join her. Aaron displayed a right attitude by confessing his wrong.

21:14, 15—What was the book mentioned here?

The Scriptures refer to various books that the Bible writers used as source material. (Joshua 10:12, 13; 1 Kings 11:41; 14:19, 29) "The book of the Wars of Jehovah" was such a writing. It contained a historical account of the wars of Jehovah's people.

Lessons for Us:

11:27-29. Moses provides an excellent example regarding how we should respond when others receive privileges in Jehovah's service. Rather than jealously seeking glory for himself, Moses was happy when Eldad and Medad began acting as prophets.

12:2, 9, 10; 16:1-3, 12-14, 31-35, 41, 46-50. Jehovah expects his worshipers to show respect for God-given authority.

14:24. A key to resisting worldly pressures toward wrongdoing is to develop "a different spirit," or mental attitude. It must be one that is not like that of the world.

15:37-41. The unique fringe of the Israelites' dress was intended to remind them that they were a people set apart to worship God and to obey his commandments. Should we not also live by God's standards and stand out as different from the world?

ON THE PLAINS OF MOAB (Numbers 22:1-36:13)

As the sons of Israel encamp on the desert plains of Moab, the Moabites feel a sickening dread of them. Moab's King Balak,

therefore, hires Balaam to curse the Israelites. But Jehovah forces Balaam to bless them. Moabite and Midianite women are then used to lure Israelite men into immorality and idolatry. As a result, Jehovah destroys 24,000 wrongdoers. The scourge finally ends when Phinehas demonstrates that he tolerates no rivalry toward Jehovah.

The second census reveals that none of the men counted in the first are still alive, except for Joshua and Caleb. Joshua is commissioned to be Moses' successor. The Israelites receive procedures for various offerings and instructions on the making of vows. The people of Israel also take vengeance upon the Midianites. Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh settle east of the Jordan River. Israel is given instructions on crossing the Jordan and taking possession of the land. Detailed boundaries of the land are defined. The inheritance is to be decided by lot. Levites are assigned 48 cities, and 6 of these are to serve as cities of refuge.

Scriptural Questions Answered:

22:20-22—Why did Jehovah's anger blaze against Balaam? Jehovah had told the prophet Balaam that he should not curse the Israelites. (Numbers 22:12) However, the prophet went with Balak's men with the full intention of cursing Israel. Balaam wanted to please the Moabite king and receive a reward from him. (2 Peter 2:15, 16; Jude 11) Even when Balaam was forced to bless rather than curse Israel, he sought the king's favor by suggesting that Baal-worshiping women be used to seduce Israelite men. (Numbers 31:15, 16) Thus, the reason for God's anger against Balaam was the prophet's unscrupulous greed.

30:6-8—Can a Christian man set aside his wife's vows? With regard to vows, Jehovah now deals with his worshipers individ-

ually. For example, dedication to Jehovah is a personal vow. (Galatians 6:5) A husband does not have the authority to set aside or cancel such a vow. A wife, though, should avoid making a vow that conflicts with God's Word or her duties toward her husband.

Lessons for Us:

25:11. What an example of zeal for Jehovah's worship Phinehas set for us! Should not the desire to keep the congregation clean move us to report any knowledge of gross immorality to Christian elders?

35:9-29. The fact that an unintentional manslayer had to leave his home and flee to a city of refuge for a period of time teaches us that life is sacred and that we must have respect for it.

35:33. The earth polluted by the spilled blood of the innocent can be atoned for only by the blood of those spilling it. How appropriate that Jehovah will destroy the wicked before the earth is transformed into a paradise!—Proverbs 2:21, 22; Daniel 2:44.

God's Word Exerts Power

We must show respect for Jehovah and for those appointed to positions of responsibility among his people. The book of Numbers makes this truth ever clearer. What an important lesson for maintaining peace and unity in the congregation today!

The incidents related in Numbers show how easily those who neglect their spirituality can fall into wrongdoing, such as murmuring, immorality, and idolatry. Some of the examples and lessons from this Bible book can serve as a basis for local needs parts on the Service Meeting at congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses. Indeed, "the word of God is alive and exerts power" in our life.—Hebrews 4:12.

Questions From Readers

What did Jesus mean when he told his disciples: "I began to behold Satan already fallen like lightning from heaven"?

Jesus had just chosen 70 disciples, and he "sent them forth by twos in advance of him into every city and place to which he himself was going to come." When the 70 returned, they were rejoicing over the success of their mission. "Lord, even the demons are made subject to us by the use of your name," they said. At that point, Jesus said: "I began to behold Satan already fallen like lightning from heaven."—Luke 10:1, 17, 18.

At first, it may seem that Jesus was referring to an event that had already taken place. Yet, 60 years after Jesus uttered the above words, the aged apostle John employed similar language, writing: "Down the great dragon was hurled, the original serpent, the one called Devil and Satan, who is misleading the entire inhabited earth; he was hurled down to the earth, and his angels were hurled down with him."—Revelation 12:9.

When John penned those words, Satan still resided in heaven. How do we know? Because Revelation is a book of prophecy, not history. (Revelation 1:1) Hence, as of John's day, Satan had not yet been cast down to earth. In fact,

evidence shows that this did not occur until shortly after Jesus was enthroned as King of God's Kingdom in 1914.*—Revelation 12:1-10.

Why, then, did Jesus speak of Satan's ouster from heaven as if it had already happened? Some scholars suggest that Jesus was rebuking his disciples for showing improper pride. They believe that he, in effect, was saying: 'You triumphed over the demons, but do not become boastful. Satan became prideful, and that led to his quick downfall.'

We cannot be dogmatic in the matter. However, it seems more likely that Jesus was rejoicing with his disciples and referring to Satan's future demise. More than any of his disciples, Jesus was well aware of the vicious animosity of the Devil. Imagine the joy Jesus felt at hearing that the powerful demons were being made subject to his imperfect human disciples! This subjugation of the demons was just a foregleam of the future day when Jesus, as Michael the archangel, would battle with Satan and cast him from heaven to earth.

When Jesus said that he beheld Satan "already fallen," he was evidently underscoring the certainty of Satan's fall. This is similar to other Bible prophecies that speak of future events in the past tense. For example, note the mixing of past and future tenses in the prophecy concerning the Messiah at Isaiah 52:13–53:12. Jesus likely was expressing confidence that Satan's ouster from heaven would take place according to His Father's purpose. Jesus was also certain that in God's due time, Satan and his demons would be abysmed and later destroyed once and for all.—Romans 16:20; Hebrews 2:14; Revelation 20:1-3, 7-10.

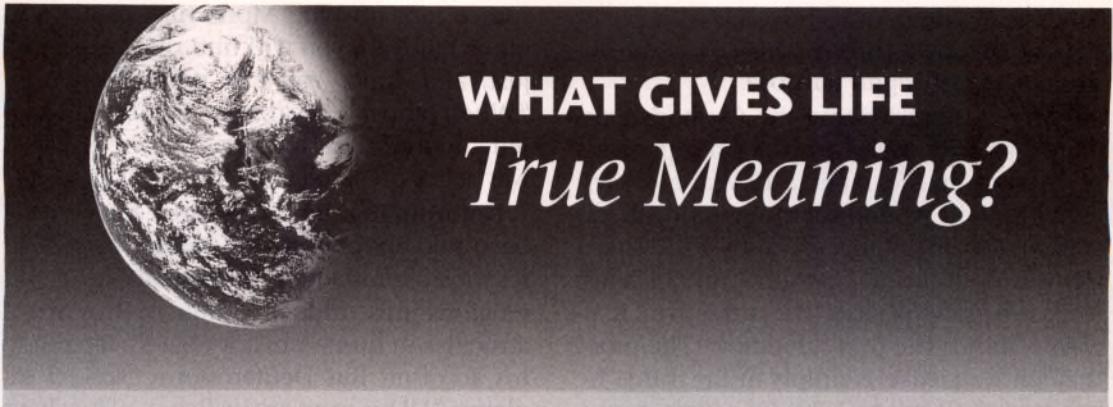
* See *Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life*, chapter 10, and *Revelation—Its Grand Climax At Hand!* chapter 27, published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Finding the Most Beneficial Counsel

Tired but Not Tiring Out

An Intrepid "Wanderer in the Gospel's Cause"



WHAT GIVES LIFE *True Meaning?*

WHEN Jesse, a 17-year-old high school student, was asked about the meaning of life, he replied, "Have as much fun as you can, as long as you're alive." Suzie had a different view. "I honestly believe that the meaning of life is what you make it mean," she said.

Have you wondered about the meaning of life? Is there a single universal purpose for mankind? Or is Suzie right—that life is essentially what each of us makes of it? No matter how technologically advanced our society gets, something inside us seems to yearn for meaning. At some point in our life, most of us wonder, 'Why are we here?'

Modern science has struggled to answer that question. With what result? "There is no intrinsic, evolutionary meaning to being alive," stated David P. Barash, a professor of psychology and zoology. For evolutionary biologists, living things have only one purpose: survive and reproduce. Thus, Professor Barash suggests: "In a huge universe that is devoid of purpose and uncaring about people, it is the human project to give meaning to our lives by the free, conscious, intentional choices we make."

The Source of Meaning and Purpose

Is that all there is, then, to life—each one of us doing what he or she wants? Rather than

leave us to wander aimlessly in a universe devoid of purpose or meaning, the Bible has long revealed that we are here for a reason. Our existence is not the result of some cosmic accident. The Creator, we are told, took years to prepare the earth for man's arrival. Nothing was left to chance. He made sure that everything was "very good." (Genesis 1:31; Isaiah 45:18) Why? It was because God had a purpose for man.

Yet, interestingly, God did not predestine the future of each individual, either by divine intervention or by some biological process. Although we are influenced by our genetic inheritance, we are largely in control of our actions. We are all free to choose our own course in life.

While it is up to each of us to choose what to do with our life, it would be a mistake to exclude the Creator from our deliberations. Actually, many have discovered that real meaning and purpose in life is bound up in a relationship with God. The vital connection between God and our purpose in life is highlighted in God's personal name, Jehovah, which literally means, "He Causes to Become." (Exodus 6:3; Psalm 83:18) That is, he progressively fulfills whatever he promises and always accomplishes what he has set out to do. (Exodus 3:14; Isaiah 55:10, 11) Think

about that. The name Jehovah is a pledge to all of us that he is the ultimate and enduring Source of meaningful purpose.

Simply acknowledging the Creator's existence has a profound impact on a person's perspective on life. Linet, a 19-year-old, says: "Seeing all the wonderful things Jehovah has created and their purpose shows me that I too was created for a reason." Amber adds: "When people speak of 'the unknown,' it always reminds me that I do know. The proof that Jehovah exists is simply in the things he has made." (Romans 1:20) Of course, recognizing that the Creator exists is one thing, but developing a meaningful relationship with him is another.

Friendship With God

Here again, the Bible can help. Its opening chapters provide clear evidence that Jehovah God is a loving Father. For instance, he did not create Adam and Eve and then leave them guessing about who he was. Rather, he regularly communicated with them. He did not leave them in Eden to find their own way in the world while he pursued other interests. Instead, he gave them specific direction on how best to live. He assigned them satisfying work, and he arranged for their ongoing education. (Genesis 1:26-30; 2:7-9) Is this not what you would expect of a capable, loving parent? Now think about what that means. "Knowing that Jehovah created the earth and designed us with the ability to enjoy his creation," says Denielle, "shows me that he wants us to be happy."

More than that, like any good father, Jehovah wants all his children to have a personal relationship with him. To that end, Acts 17:27 assures us: "He is not far off from each one of us." What difference does that make? Amber says: "Getting to know Jehovah has given me the confidence that I am never completely alone. No matter what, I always have

someone to turn to." Moreover, as you get to know Jehovah, you will find that he is kind, just, and good. You can depend on him. "When Jehovah became a close friend," says Jeff, "I knew that there was no one else that was better prepared to be there for me."

Unfortunately, many negative things have been said about Jehovah. He has been held responsible for much human suffering and religious misconduct. Some of the worst atrocities in human history have been put to his account. But Deuteronomy 32:4, 5 explains: "All his ways are justice. . . . They have acted ruinously on their own part; they are not his children, the defect is their own." We, therefore, are obligated to investigate the facts for ourselves.—Deuteronomy 30:19, 20.

God's Purpose Fulfilled

No matter what we decide, however, nothing will stop God from fully accomplishing his purpose for this earth and mankind. After all, he is the Creator. What, then, is that purpose? Jesus Christ referred to it in his Sermon on the Mount when he said: "Happy are the mild-tempered ones, since they will inherit the earth." Later, to his apostle John, he indicated that God is determined "to bring to ruin those ruining the earth." (Matthew 5:5; Revelation 11:18) Because Jesus was with God during creation, he knows that from the beginning it was God's purpose to have a perfect human family dwell on earth forever in a paradise. (Genesis 1:26, 27; John 1:1-3) And God does not change. (Malachi 3:6) "Surely just as I have figured," God promises us, "so it must occur; and just as I have counseled, that is what will come true."—Isaiah 14:24.

In our time, Jehovah has already begun laying the foundations of a united community that is based, not on greed and self-interest like so much of our world today, but on love of God and neighbor. (John 13:35; Ephesians 4:15, 16; Philippians 2:1-4) It is



A relationship with God gives our life meaning

a voluntary association of progressive and highly motivated individuals with a mission—to preach the good news of God's incoming Kingdom before this system of things ends. (Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20) In over 230 lands, more than six million Christians are already worshiping together in a loving, united international brotherhood.

Give Your Life Meaning

If you are looking for greater meaning in your life, you should know that Jehovah God is inviting you to associate with his people—his “righteous nation”—now. (Isaiah 26:2) You may be wondering, though, ‘What is life like in this Christian community? Do I really want to get involved?’ Listen to what some young people have to say:

Quentin: “The congregation is my protection from the world. Realizing that Jehovah is active in my life helps me to see that he exists and wants me to be happy.”

Jeff: “The congregation is the best place I can go for encouragement. My brothers and

sisters are there, offering their support and praise. They really are my extended family.”

Linet: “The joy of seeing someone embrace Bible truth and make a decision to serve Jehovah cannot be compared to any other. This brings great satisfaction to my life.”

Cody: “My life would be valueless without Jehovah. I would drift like so many others from one thing to another, trying to find happiness yet not finding it. Instead, Jehovah has given me the unbelievable privilege of being in a relationship with him, and that gives my life meaning.”

Why not investigate for yourself? You will discover that by drawing close to your Creator, Jehovah God, you will find real meaning in life.

"We Would Like to Say, 'Yes!'"

THE branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in Nigeria recently received a letter that, in part, says the following:

"Our son, Anderson, died when he was 14. Before his death, he was raising two chickens. He wanted to sell them and then send the money to the branch office as a contribution to the worldwide preaching work. But he died before they could be sold.

"In view of his desire, we, his parents, raised the chickens and sold them. We are sending the money to you as Anderson's contribution. Because of Jehovah's promise, we are confident that we will soon—very soon—see Anderson again. We would like to say, 'Yes!' when he asks if we carried out his heart's desire. Indeed, we look forward to seeing not only Anderson but also a 'great cloud of witnesses' who will be resurrected."

—Hebrews 12:1; John 5:28, 29.

As clearly reflected in the above letter, belief in the resurrection is a hope that sustains true Christians. What joy millions of families will experience when they, like Anderson's family, welcome back loved ones whom they have lost to the enemy death!—1 Corinthians 15:24-26.



God's Word holds out this comforting hope of the resurrection as one of the many marvelous things that will soon be realized in the righteous new world under God's Kingdom. (2 Peter 3:13) Speaking of what God will do for people at that time, the Bible says: "He will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away."—Revelation 21:4.