



THE WATCHTOWER

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

NOVEMBER 1, 1980



SIN
DOES IT
MATTER
ANYMORE?

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Sin—Does It Matter Anymore?

"**A**S A nation, we officially ceased 'sinning' some twenty years ago." This was the comment of Dr. Karl Menninger in his book *Whatever Became of Sin?* He noted that the last time an American president mentioned sin as a major national concern was in a proclamation in 1953.

In Eastern countries, the concept of sin is not usually as important as, say, the concept of honor, or of filial piety. But in Western lands it was at one time considered vitally important. If someone was accused of sinning, this was extremely serious. Nowadays, things seem to have changed. If people say they have sinned, it is usually with a half smile on their face. Sin no longer is fearsome. Is this how it should be viewed?

Exactly what is sin? The truth is, many are not even sure anymore. Formerly, men spoke of the "seven deadly sins": pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy and sloth. Today, these traits seem commonplace. Pride is encouraged in such things as national pride or racial pride. It is hard to see how the consumer societies in many wealthy countries could continue without a measure of covetousness, envy and gluttony among the populace. Adultery, homosexuality and fornication—varieties of lust—are tolerated or encouraged, even by some religious leaders. And sloth is actively encouraged by modern inventions such as television.

Whose Opinion?

Sometimes people say: 'Well, as long as you let your conscience be your guide, you will not commit a sin.' It is true that our conscience is a God-given help to recognize what is good and what is bad. If it had not been for conscience, human society would

probably have long ago fallen into complete chaos and barbarism.—Rom. 2:14, 15.

But conscience can be deceptive, too. For example, most people would recognize murder to be a sin. Yet murder was religiously sanctioned for the worshipers of the Hindu goddess Kali, as well as for the Roman Catholic inquisitors of the Middle Ages. Jesus warned his followers: "The hour is coming when everyone that kills you will imagine he has rendered a sacred service to God." (John 16:2) Even today, up to 50 million unborn babies are murdered each year through abortion, often with the approval of the law of the land.

Additionally, some have a remarkable ability to bend their conscience. As was said of a certain statesman, their conscience becomes their "accomplice" rather than their "guide." Thus, it is true that most would view stealing as a sin, particularly if it was *their* money that was stolen. But one of the biggest crime problems in the United States is business crime, involving things like pilfering, insurance fraud, bribery and kickbacks. Millions of ordinary

people indulge in this. Does their conscience bother them? Apparently not. Why not? Perhaps because they are not exposed, or because "everybody does it."

Hence, while conscience has a part to play in recognizing what sin is, it seems to need guidance. But where does the guidance come from? Often, those who claim to be authorities on the subject contradict themselves or one another.

In the Roman Catholic Church, for example, at one time it was considered a sin to eat meat on Fridays. Nowadays, on most Fridays of the year, this is no longer the case. Many wonder: 'What is the difference between then and now?'

This same religious organization views it as a serious sin to use "artificial" means to limit the size of a family. Yet many people, even Catholics, view with alarm the earth's exploding population and now think differently. They doubtless agree with Dr. Karl Menninger's comments: "Ruthlessness, indifference, lack of restraint in reproduction, or ignorance and indifference regarding its world consequences seem to me the expression of a most heinous sin." Which is the sin—to limit or to encourage population growth?

Such things cause confusion in the mind of the people. A recent survey of Roman Catholics in the United States found an "absence in most Catholics of a clear idea of what sin is." Many admitted that they are "confused as to what sin is," and hence "are not sure what to confess."

Some intellectuals even question whether sin exists anymore. They prefer to talk about "sickness" rather than "sin." Concerning Jim Jones, the promulgator of the recent mass suicide of his followers in Guyana, a theologian quoted in *Time* mag-

azine commented: "I think what really happens with people like Hitler and Jones is simple psychological sickness. The only response, it seems to me, is pity for everybody involved, not moral horror."

Does It Really Matter?

In view of such widespread diversity of opinion, does sin really matter anymore? Well, if we care about our family and neighbors, if we want a hope for the future and desire to live happy, satisfying lives now, then the answer must be "Yes."

"Sin" is sometimes defined as "the breaking of religious law or a moral principle." The mention of "religious law" brings to mind the fact that, really, the only One who can authoritatively tell us what sin is and how to avoid it is the Author of true religion, Jehovah God. He created man to live according to certain moral laws. If we break natural laws—such as the law of gravity—the result can be disastrous. Similarly, if we break God's moral laws—that is, if we sin—the result eventually may be equally disastrous. The Bible warns us: "Do not be misled: God is not one to be mocked. For whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap."

—Gal. 6:7.

Sin's calamitous effect on an individual is revealed in these words of Ezekiel 18:4: "The soul that is sinning—it itself will die." Its bad effect on whole nations is shown at Proverbs 14:34, which states: "Righteousness is what exalts a nation, but sin is something disgraceful to national groups."

Yes, sin *does* matter. For our own good, we have to recognize what it is, and must learn to avoid it. How is this possible? Let us see in the following articles.

Is It True that "All Have Sinned"?

HAVE you ever wondered why, in spite of all the efforts of sincere people, man has so far failed to solve most of his pressing problems? Why is it that, although having a fairly clear vision of what he wants—peace, prosperity, happiness, freedom from sickness—he seems to be getting farther and farther from these desirable goals?

A major reason is found in these words of the apostle Paul: "All have sinned and fall short of the



glory of God." (Rom. 3:23) Yes, most of mankind's endeavors have been frustrated by human sinfulness.

Some may question the apostle Paul's remark. They may say: 'How can you believe that I am a sinner? I don't do any harm to my neighbor. I live a quiet life and don't cause any trouble. What sins

do I commit?' The truth is, however, that sin involves more than merely hurting our neighbor or causing trouble. Yes, these things *are* sins, and to avoid them is commendable. But the word "sin" has a wider application. Paul associated it with 'falling short of the glory of God.'

Hence, it has to do with our relationship with our Creator, Jehovah God.

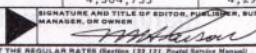


The words translated "sin" in our modern Bibles originally carried the thought of "missing the mark" of perfect obedience. Obedience to what? To God's will. Hence, a modern Bible dictionary says: "Sin is both a falling away from a relationship of faithfulness towards God and also disobedience to the commandments and the law." Since this is the case, only God himself can authoritatively tell us what he views as sin, and this he has done in the Bible.

Some Examples of Sin

First of all, many things that are coming to be acceptable in the modern world really *are* wrong. The Bible says: "Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men kept for unnatural purposes, nor men who lie with men, nor thieves, nor greedy persons, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit God's kingdom." (1 Cor. 6:9, 10) Yes, adultery, fornication and homosexuality *are* sins. And so is stealing.

True, many people avoid immorality and stealing, and this is fine. But there are other sins. Our speech, as well as our actions, can be sinful. Lying is a sin. So is slanderous gossip, angry speech and reviling. (Col. 3:9; Ps. 101:5; Eph. 4:31)

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Additionally, Paul said: "Do not grumble, as some of them grumbled and perished by the destroyer." (1 Cor. 10:10, *The Bible in Living English*) James condemned bragging, while Paul advised us to avoid foolish talking and obscene jesting. (Jas. 4:16; Eph. 5:4) Can any of us honestly say that he has *never* sinned in at least one of the foregoing ways? It is doubtful. James, the brother of Jesus, said: "If anyone does not stumble in word, this one is a perfect man." (Jas. 3:2) Can any of us claim to be perfect? No.

This same disciple cited another way that we can sin. He said: "If one knows how to do what is right and yet does not do it, it is a sin for him." (Jas. 4:17) How could this be? Well, imagine a man walking along the sidewalk when suddenly a child dashes out of a garden in front of him and onto the busy street. What if the man is in a position to save the child from being run over but just ignores him and walks past. True, he does not *do* anything wrong. But the fact that he *fails to do* something to help the child would be a sin for him. How many times have all of us failed to act in a really loving way toward our fellow humans, or toward God? Each time we fail, it is a sin.

Wrong attitudes can also be sinful. Haughtiness and arrogance are condemned by the Bible, as is cowardice. (Prov. 21:4; Rev. 21:8) Even wrong thoughts are sinful. The last of the Ten Commandments states: "You must not desire your fellowman's house. You must not desire your fellowman's wife, nor his slave man nor his slave girl nor his bull nor his ass nor anything that belongs to your fellowman."

—Ex. 20:17.

How can we prevent wrong desires from entering our mind? Perhaps by getting preoccupied with something healthful. But if this does not work, we just have to recognize them for what they are and fight them. (1 Cor. 9:27) These wrong

desires are sins in God's eyes.—Prov. 21:2.

Finally, false religion can lead us into sin. Apart from such wrong practices as idolatry and spiritism, which are expressly forbidden in the Bible, merely belonging to a false religion is shown to be sinful. Describing false religion as a great worldwide city called Babylon the Great, the last book of the Bible says: "Get out of her, my people, *if you do not want to share with her in her sins*, and if you do not want to receive part of her plagues." (Rev. 18:4) False religion is guilty of great sins. She has misrepresented the only true God, persecuted God's true servants and mixed in with politics. All of those who belong to false religion share in those sins in that they support the organizations that commit them.

Why Are We Sinful?

Reference has been made to only a few of the ways that we can fall into sin. Many others are outlined in the Bible. After considering them, you may come to the conclusion that it is impossible to avoid sinning in one way or another. You probably agree with King Solomon, who said: "There is no man that does not sin." (1 Ki. 8:46) God himself noted: "The inclination of the heart of man is bad from his youth up." (Gen. 8:21) Yes, many things cause us to sin, but especially does the weakness of our own flesh.

Why should this be? It is a matter of inheritance. Originally, our first parents, Adam and Eve, did not have this problem. They were perfect and could make balanced, reasonable decisions as to sin. But they made a wrong choice, decided to rebel against God, and, hence, fell from perfection to imperfection. Because of this, they left to all their children a legacy of sinful, wrong tendencies. The apostle Paul explained it this way: "Through one man [Adam] sin entered into the world and

death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned." —Rom. 5:12.

Hence, even with the best motivation in the world, we cannot avoid sinning. Why? The apostle Paul himself confessed: "The good that I wish I do not do, but the bad that I do not wish is what I practice"! (Rom. 7:19) We all have the same problem.

The result has been disastrous for humankind. Man's best intentions have been frustrated by his own fallibility. Selfishness and greed result in pollution, poverty and injustice. Suspicion and mistrust cause instability in international relations as well as in families. Corruption and crime hinder the efforts of countries to make progress. And there is little that man can do about it.

Additionally, in view of the inherent sinfulness of humans, the rule stated at Romans 6:23 hangs like a sinister cloud over our heads: "The wages sin pays is death." There is nothing we can do on our own to avoid suffering the death penalty for our sins, since there is nothing that we can do to avoid sinning completely. We are largely at the mercy of our own imperfection.

Is that all there is to it? Will man always be prevented by his own weaknesses from realizing his highest dreams and aspirations? No. For there is One who can help us. The apostle Paul, having confessed his personal inability to avoid falling into sin, goes on to say: "Miserable man that I am! Who will rescue me from the body undergoing this death?" His answer? "Thanks to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Rom. 7:24, 25) Yes, the realization of just how much we are under the power of sin and our helplessness to rescue ourselves make us appreciate the great love and consideration of God who *has* helped us. But how has he done this?

baseless names and has no significant value. "Earth has had her say now, and the world—politicized and war-torn—now stands in judgment before the divine tribunal of justice. Humanity has lost its innocence and its God-given right to rule over the earth."—*The Watchtower*, November 1979.

After Jehovah God had finished his creative activity, he surveyed all that he had made and pronounced it "very good." (Gen. 1:31) Everything he had made was perfect. (Deut. 32:4) When sin invaded this righteous arrangement, it was like an undesirable cancer cell invading a healthy body.

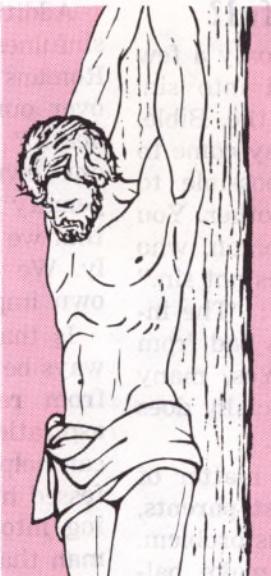
Actually, humans have not been the only ones to rebel against God and sin. The Bible speaks of "the angels that sinned." (2 Pet. 2:4) It was a spirit creature, Satan the Devil, who first led Adam and Eve into their wrong course. (John 8:43, 44) However, nothing can be done for these wicked spirits. They were perfect and made a deliberate choice. Hence, their sin was inexcusable. The stain of their sinfulness will be removed from the universe by their final destruction in God's due time.—Matt. 25:41.

Similarly, Adam and Eve chose to sin. Although created perfect, they deliberately did wrong. Thus, they voluntarily became slaves of sin, since Jesus himself explained: "Every doer of sin is a slave of sin." (John 8:34) Eventually they were removed from the scene, when

Removing the Stain of Sin

God allowed them to die as a result of their sin-induced imperfection.—Gen. 3:19; 5:5.

It is different with us, however. We, too, are slaves of sin, but not entirely by choice. We are sinners because we were born that way, as if we had been sold as slaves even before our birth. (Rom. 5:12; 7:14) Hence, Jehovah God, in his love and wisdom, has made a provision so that we can get out of slavery to sin, if we really want to.



Solving the Problem

In his dealings with the nation of Israel, Jehovah showed that he accepts the principle of repurchase. For example, if an Israelite became poor and had to sell himself as a slave to a non-Israelite, a close relative could repurchase, or ransom, him, if he was able to do so. (Lev. 25:47-49) The price was worked out exactly, so that the repurchase was entirely just.

Jehovah also established the principle of equivalence in handling guilt for sin. For example, if someone deliberately caused bodily harm to a fellow Israelite, according to justice he had to suffer the same kind of harm. The law specified that "soul [should go] for soul, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, branding for branding, wound for wound, blow for blow."—Ex. 21:23-25.

Comparably, God would allow for the repurchasing of mankind out of slavery to sin, but this would have to take place in accordance with justice. The price paid would have to be correct, not trivial, as if what was being repurchased had no real value. What was the price? Well, just think. What Adam had given up was perfect, sinless human life with the prospect of living forever. That was very valuable.

Nothing that man possesses is equal to this in value. Even the wealthiest men in the world have to die some time. All their silver and gold cannot prolong even this imperfect life, let alone buy everlasting life. The inspired psalmist said: "Not one of them can by any means redeem even a brother, nor give to God a ransom for him . . . that he should still live forever and not see the pit." (Ps. 49:7-9) Therefore, help had to come from *outside* the human race.

God first revealed his purpose to provide this help right after Adam and Eve chose sin instead of obedience. He foretold the coming of a "seed" who would oppose the influence of the wicked spirit creature that had led mankind into sinfulness. (Gen. 3:15) By successive revelations, he identified the family that would produce this seed, or offspring. Eventually, these revelations focused on an engaged couple named Joseph and Mary, living in Palestine during the time of the Roman Empire.—Gen. 22:15-18; 49:10; Luke 1: 26-35.

This couple learned that Mary was going to have a son who would play a pivotal part in removing the stain of sin from God's creation. Jehovah's angel informed Joseph in a dream: "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife home, for that which has been begotten in her is by holy spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you must call his name Jesus, for he will save his people

from their sins." (Matt. 1:20, 21) Here at last was one who *could* "redeem even a brother."

Jesus was born a son of Mary, and, hence, was truly a Jew of the family of David. As was later revealed, however, he had actually had a prehuman existence in heaven. His life was transferred by Jehovah's miraculous power to the womb of Mary, so that God's Son could be born as a man. (John 1:1-3, 14) In this way, Jesus did not inherit the sinfulness that had crippled all of mankind up to his time. Like Adam, he was perfect. Unlike Adam, he remained obedient. Hence, unique in human history, Jesus was a man who never sinned. The apostle Peter said: "He committed no sin, nor was deception found in his mouth." Paul explained that Jesus was "loyal, guileless, undefiled, separated from the sinners."—1 Pet. 2:22; Heb. 7:26.

Jesus thus possessed the only thing that is equivalent in value to a perfect human life: *another perfect human life*. When he died, his death was not the "wages sin pays." (Rom. 6:23) Jesus did not deserve to die. Hence, at his death he sacrificed something that was exactly equivalent to the perfect life Adam had lost.—1 Tim. 2:6.

Jesus' sacrifice had precisely the opposite effect of Adam's sin. The apostle Paul said: "Just as in Adam all are dying, so also in the Christ all will be made alive." (1 Cor. 15:22) Jesus was able to use his perfect human life as a price to buy mankind out of sin. "He gave himself for our sins that he might deliver us from the present wicked system of things according to the will of our God and Father."—Gal. 1:4.

Relief from Sin

So now there exists a way out for mankind! A redemptive price has been paid.

Does this mean that everyone now will automatically be freed from slavery to sin and will be restored to perfection? Not really. The way this provision works was explained by Jesus himself, who said: "God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone *exercising faith* in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) Yes, those who *exercise faith* in Jesus Christ, through whom God made the ransom provision, will enjoy life everlasting from which Adam's willful disobedience had cut them off.

Even now, those who really accept Jesus' sacrifice gain benefits. Of course, they are still imperfect. God's time for restoring mankind to literal human perfection has not yet arrived. But if, because of imperfection, they do commit a sin, this does not irreparably break their relationship with their heavenly Father. The apostle John wrote: "I am writing you these things that you may not commit a sin. And yet, if anyone does commit a sin, we have a helper with the Father, Jesus Christ, a righteous one." (1 John 2:1, 2) Yes, if because of imperfection we fall into sin, we can pray to God on the basis of Jesus' sacrifice, confident that Jehovah will forgive us.—1 John 1:7-9.

Does this mean, then, that sin really does not matter anymore? Because of this loving provision, can we now commit any sin we want to, and be assured that we will be forgiven because of Jesus' sacrifice? No, this is not the case at all. If we want to benefit from this provision, we have to demonstrate the same attitude toward sin that Jesus has. He 'loves righteousness and hates lawlessness,' and so should we. (Heb. 1:9) Like Paul, we should 'pummel our bodies and lead them as slaves' to overcome the tendency to sin. (1 Cor. 9:27) This involves clearly understanding what sin is and fighting to

resist it. God will help us in this, and it can result in our real transformation as a person.—Rom. 12:2.

If, however, we do not fight our sinful tendencies, it may be that the apostle Paul's further words will come to apply to us: "For if we practice sin willfully after having received the accurate knowledge of the truth, there is no longer any sacrifice for sins left, but there is a certain fearful expectation of judgment."—Heb. 10:26, 27.

Finally, those who demonstrate that, in spite of their imperfect flesh, they truly wish to escape slavery to sin have an even more wonderful prospect. They are promised the opportunity of living in a new order where sin will be a thing of the past. It will have been completely eliminated from God's creation. At that time, "they will not do any harm or cause any ruin in all my holy mountain; because the earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters are covering the very sea." (Isa. 11:9) The inspired psalmist promises us that "the wicked [or, deliberately sinful] one will be no more." On the contrary, "the meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace."—Ps. 37:10, 11.

All the bad results of sin—sickness, death, and alienation from God—will be things of the past. (Rev. 21:3, 4) Instead, God's purpose toward this earth will be fully accomplished.—Matt. 6:9, 10.

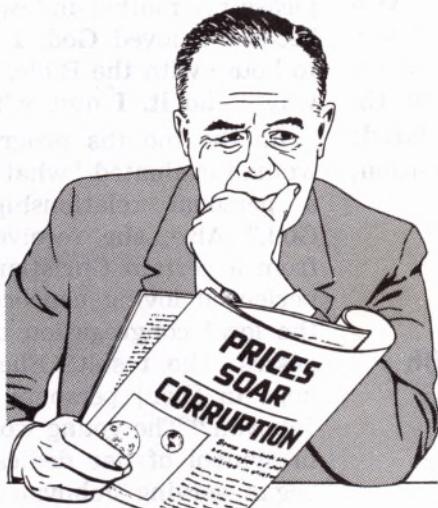
Yes, thanks to Jesus' ransom sacrifice, believing mankind has the wonderful opportunity finally to come out from slavery to sin. Hence, the encouragement of the psalmist is very timely: "Turn away from what is bad and do what is good, and so reside to time indefinite. For Jehovah is a lover of justice, and he will not leave his loyal ones. To time indefinite they will certainly be guarded."—Ps. 37:27, 28.

What Gives True Peace of Mind?

PEACE of mind. Who can find it in today's turbulent world? Terrorists often imperil the lives of fellow humans. Refugees resort to flight from one country to another. Nuclear weapons abound and stand as potentially death-dealing sentinels over the whole human race. Inflation rapidly eats up accumulated funds, and often lifelong savings. Add to this the many personal "battles" with health problems, the grief that stems from the death of a loved one—and the myriads of anxieties common to people everywhere—and surely true peace of mind is a scarce commodity in present-day society.

But where do many look for security and hoped-for peace of mind? Often to the possession of money and many material things. Yet, does this give true peace of mind?

It may seem to do so. But silently—almost imperceptibly—the value of material things will wane with the passing of years. For example, a wealthy man may have many costly garments. But how unwise to place too much value on one's wardrobe! A four-winged insect—particularly in its larval stage—can wreak havoc with prized clothing. Yes, the



moth can be a menace and, to a degree at least, can rob a person of his sense of security and his supposed peace of mind. For that matter, even when escaping the ravages of moths, garments do wear out or a thief can steal them.

"A Never-failing Treasure"

God's prophet Isaiah showed that the final outcome for his wayward antagonists would be comparable to that of a worn-out or moth-eaten garment. But in the same context Isaiah pointed to the real source of security and peace of mind, saying: "Look! The Sovereign Lord Jehovah himself will help me. Who is there that can pronounce me wicked? Look! All of them, like a garment, will wear out. A mere moth will eat them up." (Isa. 50:7-9) Indeed, whereas material things are of only transitory value, a close personal relationship with God is sustaining. It gives true peace of mind.

Jesus Christ took matters a step farther when he said: "Have no fear, little flock, because your Father has approved of giving you the kingdom. Sell

the things belonging to you and give gifts of mercy. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, a never-failing treasure in the heavens, where a thief does not get near nor moth consumes. For where your treasure is, there your hearts will be also.”

(Luke 12:32-34) Jesus then was speaking to his anointed followers who would become his joint heirs in the heavenly kingdom. (Rom. 8:12-17) But the underlying principle is applicable to all Christians. Spiritual things are of excelling value.

Treasured “Intimacy with Jehovah”

Yet, precious beyond all other things is a personal relationship with the Most High God. Regarding this “treasure,” the psalmist David said: “The intimacy with Jehovah belongs to those fearful of him.” (Ps. 25:14) And how grand it is to associate with others enjoying a close personal relationship with God as his people! On another occasion, David happily declared: “I will laud you in the big congregation;

be lacking if an individual simply engages in Christian activities without proper motivation. Before dedicating her life to God, one young woman was very pleased to associate with Jehovah’s Witnesses. But she admits:

“... I was drawn to the people of this new religion. They were happy, friendly people who enjoyed observing the Bible’s high moral standards. I enjoyed being with them. I went to their meetings and even shared in going from house to house to talk to others about the Bible.”

“Then one day a serious question came into my mind. Should a religion be a relationship with other people or should it not rather be a relationship with God? I saw I was becoming active as one of Jehovah’s Witnesses because I so thoroughly enjoyed the people and I also wanted to please my mother-in-law [a Witness], not because I loved God. I went from house to house with the Bible, but I didn’t know why I did it. I quit what I was doing.”

As the months progressed, the young woman evaluated “what it means to have a personal relationship with Jehovah God.” Also, she received Scriptural aid from a certain Christian woman and experienced loving concern on the part of the local congregation of Jehovah’s Witnesses. The result? She “found a living hope in [her] personal relationship with Jehovah.” The young woman was baptized in symbol of her dedication to God and began serving Jehovah happily with his people.

Peace of mind and a real sense of security are enjoyed by those who have an intimate relationship with Jehovah. And despite life’s varied anxieties, they, along with their fellow believers, “serve Jehovah with rejoicing.” (Ps. 100:2) But let us probe more deeply and learn why genuine Christians enjoy true peace of mind and heart in this turbulent world.

In Coming Issues

- **Humanity’s State of Health that Might Have Been**
- **How Shall We Escape?**
- **Your Spirit—How Can You Control It?**

among a numerous people I shall praise you.”—Ps. 35:18.

Important as it is to be with God’s people, however, our service cannot be merely formal and routine if it is to have divine approval. In fact, true peace of mind may

"Do Not Be Anxious over Anything"

"Do not be anxious over anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God."
—Phil. 4:6.

JEHOVAH is the "God of peace." (Phil. 4:9) He experiences no distressing anxiety, no mental uneasiness or apprehension. Nothing—not even the vile deeds of the wicked—can rob God of tranquillity or cause him to lose his equilibrium. His attributes are always in perfect balance. For instance, acting in *love*, Jehovah "makes his sun rise upon wicked people and good." (Matt. 5:44, 45; 1 John 4:8) He never perverts *justice*. (Gen. 18:25) God's peerless *wisdom* enables him to 'see the end from the beginning' and to cope with any eventuality. Also, his limitless *power*, never exercised irresponsibly, always results in the fulfillment of his righteous will.—Job 12:13; Isa. 40:26; 46:9, 10.

² How should this incomparable "God of peace" be viewed by those in the universal family of his worshipers? (Compare Ephesians 3:14, 15.) Since their heavenly Father is able to cope with any situation, praisers of Jehovah have every reason to be tranquil. They can have a sense of true security in their relationship with him.

Entirely Without Anxieties?

³ This does not mean, of course, that "lovers of Jehovah" are totally without anxieties. (Ps. 97:10) They have imperfections inherited from Adam and must live among other sinful descendants of the first man. (1 Ki. 8:46; Rom. 5:12) 'The days of their years' are troubled, and all imperfect humans are "short-lived and glutted with agitation." (Job 14:1; Ps. 90:10) So it is not surprising that Jehovah's servants should experience some anxiety.

1. For what Scriptural reasons can we say that Jehovah is the "God of peace"?

2. How should Jehovah be viewed by his worshipers?

3. Why is it not surprising that Jehovah's servants should experience some anxiety?

⁴ For instance, there may be emotional distress, even as Esau's Hittite wives "were a source of bitterness of spirit" to his godly parents Isaac and Rebekah. (Gen. 26:34, 35) Illness creates some anxiety for God's servants today, as it must have in the lives of such faithful Christians as Timothy and Trophimus. (1 Tim. 5:23; 2 Tim. 4:20) Like "righteous Lot," present-day praisers of Jehovah are distressed over the immoral course of law-defying people. (2 Pet. 2:7) At times, individuals devoted to Jehovah have to subsist on meager provisions, certainly a cause of more than normal concern. (Phil. 4:12) And like the apostle Paul, many Christian men of our time have anxiety for fellow believers. (2 Cor. 11:28) Add to all of this the varied troubles that beset godly persons individually and it can readily be seen that they cannot now be entirely free of anxieties.

⁵ Yet, Jehovah's servants have divine aid in coping with all their

4. What scriptures show why godly persons cannot be totally free of anxieties?

5. (a) What special help do Jehovah's people have to cope with anxiety? (b) As used in the Scriptures, "peace" denotes what?

anxieties—precious help not enjoyed by anyone lacking spirituality. (Compare Jude 17-21.) Jehovah is not only the “God of peace,” but, happily, is also “the God who *gives peace*.” (Rom. 15:33) In Scripture, “peace” means much more than the absence of strife. Among other things, it denotes ‘welfare, happiness, prosperity and good of every kind.’ (Gen. 41:16, *Authorized Version*; Mark 5:34; Luke 1:79) Surely, possessing such all-embracing peace should counteract or lessen life’s anxieties.

⁶ But to achieve and maintain this God-given peace, a person must have deep love for Jehovah and his Word. This involves loving God, keeping his commandments, having faith in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and showing love to others. (1 John 3:19-24; 5:2-4) Of course, to keep God’s commandments we must know them. This requires our making the study of the Scriptures a daily concern. (Josh. 1:8) And, doubtless, as we spend more time with Jehovah’s Word, we will form an increased “longing” for it. This, in turn, will bring us greater peace of heart and mind.—1 Pet. 2:1-3.

A Loving Father of Mighty Acts

⁷ Our improved knowledge of God’s Word will draw us ever closer to the Most High, provided we approach him in child-like humility and with a heartfelt desire to acquire “wisdom from above.” (Jas. 3:17, 18) We will be impressed with the fact that Jehovah is “a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness and truth.” (Ex. 34:6) We will more fully realize that he is “good and ready to forgive.” (Ps. 86:5) Being

imperfect and sinful, we will falter in our way, but we have this assurance: “As a father shows mercy to his sons, Jehovah has shown mercy to those fearing him. For he himself well knows the formation of us, remembering that we are dust.” (Ps. 103:13, 14) How this lifts from our hearts and minds the anxiety that might otherwise crush us! And an act of love beyond human comprehension is Jehovah’s provision of the ransom, made through his dear Son “in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life.”—John 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:5, 6.

⁸ Our heavenly Father also is the Performer of “mighty acts.” (Ps. 106:1, 2; 145:4, 11, 12) In imploring favor from God, Moses could say: “O Sovereign Lord Jehovah, you yourself have started to make your servant see your greatness and your strong arm, for who is a god in the heavens or on the earth that does deeds like yours and mighty performances like yours?” (Deut. 3:23, 24) Moses could recall how Jehovah mightily freed His people from slavery in Egypt and led them dryshod through the Red Sea. (Ex. 12:29-42; 14:5-31) Also, the prophet had observed Jehovah’s acts in making Israel victorious over the Amorites, who were under Kings Sihon and Og. Moreover, since Jehovah was fighting for the Israelites, Moses had confidence that God would overthrow other enemy kingdoms and give His people the land of promise. (Deut. 3:1-22) Yes, and God did just that, because he is a Keeper of Promises. (Josh. 23:1-5) How, then, should “lovers of Jehovah” feel when they consider God’s reliability and his acts of deliverance? Is there basis for distressing anxiety on the part of his people today? By no means, for Jehovah is faithful, and he “knows

6. What must we do if we wish to achieve and maintain God-given peace?

7. How does improved knowledge of God’s Word affect our relationship with him, and how does it relieve us of anxiety?

8, 9. (a) What scriptures tell how Jehovah is the Performer of “mighty acts”? (b) Why would you say that God’s past deeds prove that his people can expect to have his help in coping with life’s anxieties?



how to deliver people of godly devotion.”
—2 Pet. 2:5-9.

⁹ Of course, God’s deeds in behalf of those wholly devoted to him are not restricted to acts of deliverance. Nevertheless, such performances prove that “Jehovah will not forsake his people.” (Ps. 94:14) So we can be confident that he will help them to cope with life’s anxieties.

‘Make Your Petitions Known to God’

¹⁰ Regular study of God’s Word will draw a sincere person closer to Jehovah. So will meditation on the heavenly Father’s loving ways and his mighty acts in behalf of those faithfully serving him. Yet

10. According to the apostle Paul’s words at Philippians 4:6, 7, how can we strengthen our bond with the “God of peace”?

there is another way to strengthen our bond with the “God of peace.” This the Christian apostle Paul made evident in urging fellow believers: “Do not be anxious over anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God.” This results in God-given tranquillity that is beyond human comprehension.—Phil. 4:6, 7.

¹¹ Long before Paul wrote those words, Jehovah had proved to be the loving, dependable “Hearer of prayer.” (Ps. 65:2)

His worshipers could cast upon him their various anxieties, with confidence that their petitions would be heard. To illustrate: The prayer of Abraham’s servant Eliezer was answered when he was directed in finding a wife for his master’s son, Isaac. (Gen. 15:2; 24:10-27, 62-67) Barren Hannah “prayed extendedly” with tears and was granted a son, Samuel, whom she gratefully ‘lent to Jehovah for life.’ (1 Sam. 1:4-28) With profuse weeping, deathly-ill King Hezekiah supplicated Jehovah and was healed. (2 Ki. 20:1-11) For days Nehemiah fasted and prayed—and at a critical moment silently petitioned “the God of the heavens”—with the joyful result that he was granted royal authority to rebuild devastated Jerusa-

11. What Biblical examples can you give to prove that Jehovah is the “Hearer of prayer”?

lem. (Neh. 1:1-2:8) At the temple faithful Anna rendered sacred service night and day "with fastings and supplications" and was rewarded by being present when the infant Jesus was brought there. (Luke 2:36-38) On the last night of his earthly life, Christ entreated Jehovah and was strengthened by his heavenly Father to drink the "cup" purposed for him.—Matt. 26:36-47.

¹² Consider, too, the many other prayers recorded in the Scriptures—those of confession, praise, thanksgiving. Then ask: Should not Jehovah's present-day servants prayerfully turn to him whether they are happy, grateful, distressed or anxious? Indeed they should, confident that their heavenly Father hears their humble, sincere pleadings and expressions.

¹³ Just before Paul advised fellow Christians to let their petitions be made known to God, the apostle urged: "Do not be anxious over anything." (Phil. 4:6) In this, he was echoing the advice of Jesus, who said: "Stop being anxious about your souls" and "do not be anxious beforehand about what to speak." (Matt. 6:25; Mark 13:11) The apostle knew that the heavenly Father would care for His worshipers and that they would have the aid of Jehovah's holy spirit in doing anything that had divine approval.

¹⁴ Aware that Jehovah is the "Hearer of prayer," we who pursue a godly life today can confidently heed Paul's admonition: "But in everything by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God." Often our prayers are "petitions." That is, they involve asking for *specific* things or making *definite* requests. Eliezer and Hannah were among faithful persons whose definite requests were heard by God, and

Jesus indicated that it was proper to petition God in a specific way. For instance, Christ told his disciples to ask the Father: "Give us our bread for the day according to the day's requirement."—Luke 11:2, 3.

¹⁵ Great anxiety can develop over many matters, and at times this may call for "supplication." This term lays stress on *need* and humble, earnest *entreaty*. So it is not merely a matter of worshipfully addressing God in general prayer. Both petitions and supplications are necessary at times. "In the days of his flesh," we read, "Christ offered up *supplications* and also *petitions* to the One who was able to save him out of death, with strong outcries and tears, and he was favorably heard for his godly fear." (Heb. 5:7) Acknowledging undeniable needs, Jesus made heartfelt entreaties, earnestly supplicating his Father. Moreover, Christ petitioned Jehovah, making definite requests.—John 17:9, 10, 15-21.

¹⁶ When a Christian's specific requests are met, and when his earnest entreaties are answered, he *knows* that Jehovah is with him. This realization of divine aid may elicit a response similar to that of Job, who exclaimed after enduring trial: "In hearsay I have heard about you [Jehovah God], but now my own eye does see you." (Job 42:5) Like Job, with the eye of understanding, faith and appreciation we can look at Jehovah's dealings with us and can "see" him as we never have seen him before. What peace of heart and mind results from this intimacy with our heavenly Father!

"Along with Thanksgiving"

¹⁷ Paul urged fellow believers to make their petitions known to God by prayer

15. (a) In connection with prayer, what does "supplication" denote? (b) What does Hebrews 5:7 teach us about the prayers of Jesus Christ?

16. How may a Christian be affected when his prayers are answered?

17. Why should we give thanks to God in prayer?

12. Why can Jehovah's servants confidently pray to him when they experience some anxiety?

13. Why could the apostle Paul urge fellow Christians not to be anxious "over anything"?

14. As regards prayer, what are "petitions"?

and supplication "along with thanksgiving." (Phil. 4:6) Many, indeed, are the reasons to thank and praise the Most High. (1 Chron. 29:10-13) Jesus set an example for his followers when he gave thanks for food and for the emblematic bread and wine used at the Lord's Evening Meal. (Matt. 15:36; 26:26, 27; Luke 22: 19, 20) Besides expressing similar gratitude to God, we should "give thanks to Jehovah" for "his wonderful works to the sons of men," for his "righteous judicial decisions," and for so much more. (Ps. 33:2-5; 92:1, 2; 100:4, 5; 107:1, 8, 15, 21, 31; 119:62) How appropriate to thank God for his matchless Word of truth! And how grateful we should be for his Son's sacrifice that has made possible reconciliation with Jehovah!—Rom. 5:6-11.

¹⁸ "Lovers of Jehovah" can thank him, too, because he really cares for them. The

18. If we are faithfully doing the divine will, why do we have no reason to be overwhelmed by anxiety?

apostle Peter wrote: "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time; while you throw all your anxiety upon him, because he cares for you." (1 Pet. 5:6, 7) Thus both Peter and Paul urged fellow believers not to be anxious over anything but to commit all their cares to Jehovah. And how fitting that counsel! There is absolutely nothing that the Most High is incapable of doing or controlling in behalf of those wholeheartedly devoted to him. (Mark 10:27; 12:29, 30) Whatever God permits, the faithful can bear because he gives them 'strength for all things.' (Phil. 4:13; 1 Cor. 10:13) With good reason, the psalmist David said: "Roll upon Jehovah your way, and rely upon him, and he himself will act." (Ps. 37:5) Yes, faithfully do the divine will and there is no basis for panic and overwhelming anxiety. Instead, there is sound reason to have inner peace, even amid tribulation and turmoil. But how great is that peace?

"The Peace of God That Excels All Thought"

THE Christian apostle Paul knew from experience that godly persons have no reason for undue anxiety, for Jehovah is with them. Paul had been imprisoned, beaten, stoned, had often been near death, and had experienced many dangers, even among false brothers. But never had God abandoned him. The apostle constantly turned to his

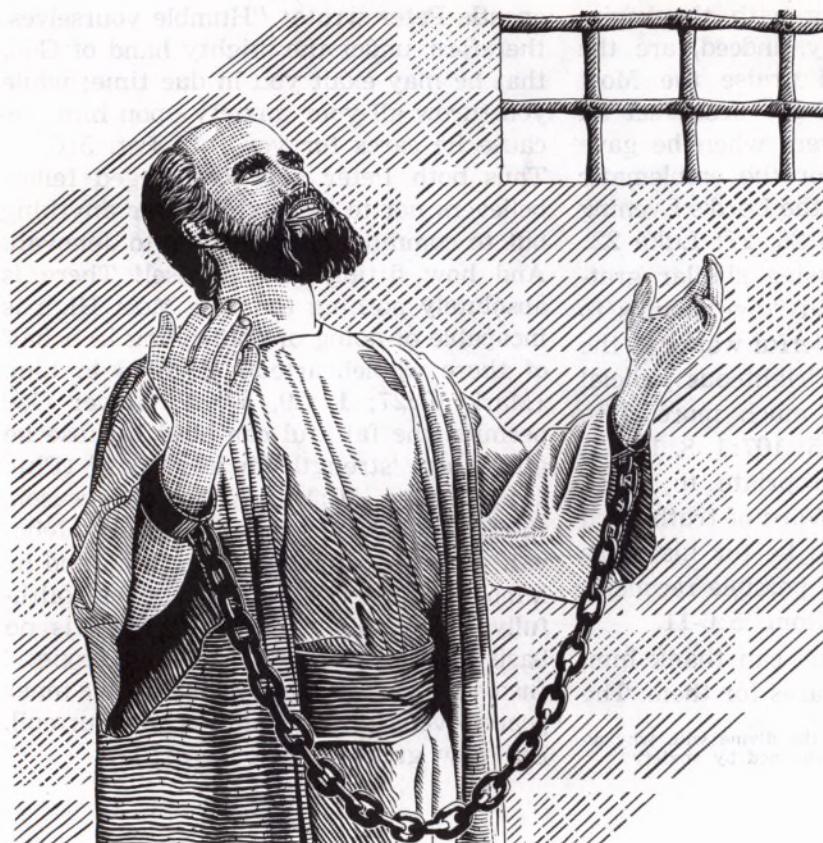
1. Why did the apostle Paul know that godly persons have no reason for undue anxiety?

"The peace of God that excels all thought will guard your hearts and your mental powers by means of Christ Jesus."—Phil. 4:7.

heavenly Father in earnest prayer, casting anxieties on him and never experiencing disappointment.—2 Cor. 4:7-9; 11: 23-27.

² So it was with utmost confi-

2. What would result if fellow Christians followed Paul's counsel recorded at Philippians chapter four, verse six?



Even amid the most difficult circumstances the Christian can enjoy the "peace of God"

dence that Paul urged fellow Christians not to be anxious over anything, but to let their petitions be made known to God, taking everything to Him in prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving. What would result from their doing this? The apostle continued: "And the peace of God that excels all thought will guard your hearts and your mental powers by means of Christ Jesus."—Phil. 4:6, 7.

A Peace That "Excels All Thought"

³ The "peace of God" is a calmness and tranquillity enjoyed by dedicated witnesses of Jehovah even amid the most

difficult circumstances. It stems from a close personal relationship with our Father in heaven. As possessors of such peace from Jehovah, we let God's holy spirit motivate us and are sensitive to its leadings. In fact, we pray for that spirit, and for its fruit of peace. (Luke 11:13; Gal. 5:22, 23; Eph. 4:30) Hence, we have no reason to be overwhelmed by anxiety, for we know that nothing can happen that is outside the divine providence. (Compare Acts 11:26.) Indeed, Jehovah makes all his servants "dwell in security."—Ps. 4:8.

⁴ Compared with Jehovah's Witnesses,

3. (a) What is the "peace of God"? (b) If we have God-given peace, why have we no reason for overwhelming anxiety?

4, 5. (a) Compared with Jehovah's Witnesses, what kind of peace do others have? (b) How does the "peace of God" differ from any peace that might be experienced by those not serving Jehovah faithfully?

many people may have more secular education or greater ability in certain fields of human endeavor. They have problems, of course, but are confident that they will be able to reason out suitable solutions. Hence, they feel quite secure, not being especially anxious about their personal future. They seem to be at peace, enjoying relative tranquillity. Why, the Scriptures mention even "the very peace of wicked people"!—Ps. 73:3.

⁵ The "peace of God," however, is entirely different. It is not based on self-confidence and the viewpoint that human reasoning will always succeed. Paul said that this God-given peace "excels all thought" or "surpasses all comprehension." It has been called "that peace of God, which is so much greater than we can understand." (Phil. 4:7, *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures; The New American Standard Bible: New Testament; The Jerusalem Bible*) Yes, those faithfully serving Jehovah have a tranquillity neither possessed nor understood by humans in general.

⁶ Whether those dedicated to Jehovah really have the "peace of God" becomes especially evident when things happen that affect them deeply but that are beyond their control. Humanly speaking, they are incapable of coping with such anxieties. Do we at times find ourselves in these circumstances? How appropriate that we then pray earnestly, being specific in our petitions and making definite requests for divine aid or direction! (Compare Judges 6:36-40.) Thereafter, we must wait for Jehovah to act. In the meantime, if we have the "peace of God," we can sense the aid of Jehovah's holy spirit and

we remain tranquil, patiently waiting to see how the Most High will work out the problem. There is nothing foolhardy about this attitude, for the psalmist David said: "Throw your burden upon Jehovah himself, and he himself will sustain you. Never will he allow the righteous one to totter." (Ps. 55:22) Moreover, when the problem is thus resolved and the test is past, we will know that "the God who gives peace" has answered our prayers.—Rom. 15:33.

Guards Hearts and Mental Powers

⁷ Paul said that the "peace of God" will 'guard our hearts and mental powers.' (Phil. 4:7) One Bible translation calls this peace "a garrison to guard your hearts and minds." (*Weymouth*) In the Scriptures, "heart" often denotes the seat of affection and motivation. (Ex. 35:21, 26, 29; Ps. 119:11) If we are plagued by undue anxiety, our affections and motivations may be acted upon detrimentally and we may behave in an unbalanced or improper way. For instance, we may 'become heated up because of evildoers,' thus being robbed of all tranquillity. But this will not happen if we possess the "peace of God," for then we will know that Jehovah sees all things and will settle accounts in due time. (Ps. 37:1-11) So our hearts will remain calm and will not impel us to act rashly. This is good for us emotionally, spiritually and even physically, for "a calm heart is the life of the fleshly organism."—Prov. 14:30.

⁸ "Mental powers" are not synonymous with "hearts," although there is an inter-

6. (a) When does it become especially evident that we have the "peace of God"? (b) While waiting for Jehovah to act on a matter about which we have prayed, do we have any help? (c) Is it spiritually strengthening to 'throw our burdens upon Jehovah,' and why do you so answer?

7. (a) In the Scriptures, "heart" often denotes what? (b) If we have the "peace of God," why will we not 'become heated up because of evildoers'?

8. (a) At Philippians 4:7, what is the difference between "hearts" and "mental powers"? (b) If we have the "peace of God," why is it unlikely that we will lose mental balance? (c) Will anything permitted by our heavenly Father do us lasting harm?

play between them. Whereas the mind reasons on information, the heart motivates a person. So to make sure that we are pursuing a proper course, we must have knowledge of God's Word and must prayerfully rely on him. If our minds were unduly distressed—if we were to have great anxiety—we could not make suitable decisions. We might even lose mental balance. However, this is not likely to happen to us if we have the "peace of God," because then our hearts are in check and our minds are at rest. We really believe that 'the hand of Jehovah is with us' and that nothing our heavenly Father may permit will do us lasting injury. (Matt. 10:28; Acts 11:21) Instead of being anxious and beleaguered by many troubled thoughts, we truly trust in Jehovah, and thus our "mental powers" are guarded. How? "By means of Christ Jesus," through whom a close personal relationship with the heavenly Father has been made possible.—Gal. 1:3-5.

⁹ Naturally, Paul himself knew that Christians are not totally without heartfelt concern. He admitted that the failure of fellow Jews to embrace the "good news" caused him 'great grief and unceasing pain of heart.' Yet the apostle was not overwhelmed by anxiety and was content to let matters rest with God, who acts justly in choosing those upon whom He will have mercy. (Rom. 9:1-18) Hence, despite strong feelings, Paul let the "peace of God" guard his heart and mental powers.

¹⁰ Like Paul, who undeniably had deep concern, we can have the "peace of God"—that inner tranquillity and calmness that results from a precious relationship with Jehovah. It truly can guard our hearts and mental powers from becoming overly anxious about our needs. We can

be confident, fully assured that Jehovah provides for his servants and answers their prayers. Instead of being in constant turmoil, our hearts and minds will be at rest because we trust implicitly in our heavenly Father.—Ps. 33:20-22.

Life's Necessities Assured

¹¹ If we truly have the "peace of God" and are convinced that he is the "Hearer of prayer," we will be able to cope with anxieties. (Ps. 65:2) We will always feel that we have divine help, and in this there is great peace of heart and mind. For instance, we will not be unduly anxious about life's necessities. Jesus told his followers: "Quit being anxious about your souls [or, "life"] as to what you will eat or about your bodies as to what you will wear." Why should we not have such anxiety? Because Jehovah, who makes ample provision for the birds and the lilies, surely can and will feed and clothe his faithful servants. "So," said Jesus, "quit seeking what you might eat and what you might drink, and quit being in anxious suspense . . . Nevertheless, seek continually [God's] kingdom, and these things will be added to you." (Luke 12: 22-31) Indeed, if we put spiritual interests first in life, we can be confident that our heavenly Father will take care of us.

¹² Even individuals devoted to Jehovah need to avoid placing too much emphasis on material things. For example, because the land could not sustain them together and to end quarreling between their herdsmen, Abraham granted his nephew Lot the opportunity to choose where he preferred to reside. Lot chose the best of the land, but this meant living among wrongdoers. In time, he was taken captive and

9. Although Paul had the "peace of God," was he entirely without heartfelt concern?

10. How, then, will God-given peace guard our hearts and mental powers?

11. Having the "peace of God," why should we not be unduly anxious about life's necessities?

12. What Scriptural illustration shows why even those devoted to Jehovah must avoid placing too much emphasis on material things?

had to be rescued. (Gen. 13:1-14:16) Later, Lot found it necessary to abandon his material possessions so that his life might be spared when Jehovah destroyed Sodom. Still later, Lot felt compelled to leave the city of Zoar and take up residence in a cave. (Gen. 19:1-26, 30-38) Although he is called "righteous Lot," it appears he learned the "hard way" the folly of a godly person's laying great stress on supposed material advantages. (2 Pet. 2:7, 8) How much better to pray for specific direction and always put spiritual interests first in life!

¹³ If we do make spiritual matters of utmost importance in our lives, this will contribute to our peace of heart and mind. Certainly, we can be confident that the One to whom all the gold and silver belong is fully capable of furnishing his servants with life's necessities. (Hag. 2:8) Of course, it is proper to pray that God will "give us today our bread for this day," and it is fitting to work industriously to meet real needs. (Prov. 6:6-11; 31:10, 13-24; Matt. 6:11) But 'since we brought nothing into the world and cannot carry anything out, we should be content with sustenance and covering.' (1 Tim. 6:6-12) Why be in anxious suspense? The psalmist was right when he said: "A young man I used to be, I have also grown old, and yet I have not seen anyone righteous left entirely, nor his offspring looking for bread."—Ps. 37:25.

The Way to Real Success

¹⁴ It is not uncommon for men of the world to create anxiety for themselves by placing great emphasis on human achievement. The Bible does, of course, encourage diligence and the development of skill in one's work. (Prov. 22:29) But blinding

13. Why should Christians not be in anxious suspense over life's necessities?

14. Why is it not fitting for us, as Christian witnesses, to place great emphasis on human achievement and supposed success related to it?

ambition and much anxiety over supposed success are not compatible with the "peace of God." In fact, the quest for dominance over others may cause the ambitious person to use questionable methods, perhaps undermining the efforts of fellow workers and pursuing a devious course that results in divine disapproval. (Prov. 3:32; 2 Cor. 4:1, 2) True, the overly ambitious may receive the plaudits of men, even as hypocritical religious leaders of 19 centuries ago made gifts, prayed and fasted in such ways as to receive praise. But Jesus Christ condemned their actions and said that those self-centered hypocrites were "having their reward *in full*." (Matt. 6:1-18) How foolish for any of Jehovah's Witnesses to live with self-made anxiety by trying to be "great," only to find that eternal blessings have thus been lost! —Compare Jeremiah 45:5.

¹⁵ For the person who truly enjoys the "peace of God," the way to real success does not lead to questionable methods and pointless striving. From the Scriptures he has learned that in present-day society, filled as it is only with imperfect and sinful humans, 'the swift do not have the race, nor the mighty ones the battle, nor do the wise have the food, nor the understanding ones the riches, nor the knowledgeable ones the favor.' (Eccl. 9:11) Indeed, "foolishness has been put in many high positions," and a person can see "servants on horses but princes walking on the earth just like servants." (Eccl. 10:5-7) Yes, princely or noble individuals may not be granted the dignity they deserve, whereas servants—far less qualified men—may be 'riding on horses' just like the nobility.

¹⁶ Have you been 'put on the shelf,' as it were, not enjoying the supposed success you once desired? Why be anxious about

15. Regarding supposed success, what can a godly person learn from Ecclesiastes 9:11 and 10:5-7?

16. On what do godly success and achievement depend?

that? Let the "peace of God" reign in your heart, and experience the comforting tranquillity that this brings. Continue to do the divine will and look to your heavenly Father to bless your efforts in his service. This is what *really* matters in life. Godly success and achievement depend on spiritual objectives and viewpoints. The psalmist correctly stated: "Happy is the man that has not walked in the counsel of the wicked ones . . . But his delight is in the law of Jehovah, and in his law he reads in an undertone day and night. And he will certainly become like a tree planted by streams of water, that gives its own fruit in its season and the foliage of which does not wither, and everything he does will succeed."—Ps. 1:1-3.

¹⁷ We could enjoy no greater success in life than to come into and maintain an intimate relationship with Jehovah God. A keen desire to please him will move us to bring him honor by our godly words and deeds, to do good to fellow humans and to share with them "the glorious good news of the happy God." (1 Tim. 1:11) Great will be our joy if, with the blessing of our heavenly Father, we can help others to learn about his marvelous purposes and also come into a precious dedicated relationship with him. Then, like us, they will learn to cope with life's anxieties. They, too, will come to enjoy "the peace of God that excels all thought."

17. (a) To enjoy the greatest success, what must we do? (b) What can you do to help others to enjoy "the peace of God that excels all thought"?

Humbly Respect Jehovah's Arrangement As Angels Do

THE Assyrian army, numbering over 185,000 men, was stationed in the lowlands at Libnah on the other side of the Judean plateau, more than 25 miles (40 km) away. A string of devastated cities and mutilated corpses lay in the army's wake. The final target was Jerusalem.

Judean King Hezekiah knew that deliverance by human resources was out of the question.

The Assyrian spokesman had called for surrender and then returned to the Assyrian camp at Libnah. But Hezekiah supplicated fervently: "O Jehovah our God, save us, please, out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, O Jehovah, are God alone." (2 Ki. 19:19) The answer was swift, even on the night of Hezekiah's prayer.

In time the report reached Hezekiah that during the preceding night Jehovah's angel had struck down 185,000 warriors in the Assyrian camp at Libnah. (2 Ki. 19:35) Consequently, King Sennacherib returned directly to Assyria. What an awesome display of power he had witnessed!

Humble Servants

Men of military prowess have boasted about far less significant achievements. But what is the attitude of angels? These spirit "sons of God" are outstanding examples of humility. (2 Pet. 2:11; Job 38:7) Take the case of the angelic messenger who appeared to the apostle John in vision. When John was about to do obeisance to him, the angel warned: "Be careful! Do not do that! All I am is a fellow slave of you and of your brothers who have the work of witnessing to Jesus." (Rev. 19:10; 22:8, 9) Thus the angel humbly acknowledged that he was no more than a slave of the Most High. Though he was highly privileged to pass along a divine revelation, he recognized that it would have been wrong for him to receive any veneration for doing his part as a servant of God.

Jesus Christ pointed out that the angels rejoice greatly when one sinner comes to repentance. (Luke 15:7, 10) This is indeed remarkable, since such a person would come in line for rulership in the heavenly kingdom. Rather than feeling jealous about the undeserved favor granted to former sinners, the angels appreciate the rightfulness of God's using humans who, by what they have experienced on earth, are equipped to serve as sympathetic kings and priests. (Compare Hebrews 4:15; 5:8, 9.) Prizing the privilege of being permitted to serve Jehovah in *any* capacity, the angels humbly minister to prospective Kingdom heirs. (Heb. 1:14) In fact, they even direct evangelizers in locating those who are searching for God.—Compare Acts 8:26-38.

Angels recognize that there is no place for self-exaltation in God's family, whether in heaven or on earth. Does this not inspire us to put forth real effort to do 'nothing out of contentiousness or out of egotism, but to act with lowliness of mind con-

sidering that the others are superior to us'? (Phil. 2:3) Do we humbly accept Jehovah's arrangement in the Christian congregation, respecting the imperfect men serving as overseers? (Heb. 13:17) And what of our attitude toward fellow believers? Are we respectful and kindly toward them, regardless of their imperfections? When addressing Abraham, Jehovah's angelic representative said, "please." (Gen. 13:14) Are we as respectful of children, wives, fellow believers? Angels took no liberties in dealing with imperfect humans. Neither should we.

In connection with the burial of Moses, we find another case of humble submission. There was a confrontation between the Devil and the archangel Michael who claimed the body as Jehovah's property. How did Michael handle the matter? Did he vent contemptuous disgust on this opposer who had been responsible for mankind's woes? (Gen. 3:1-5) No, "he did not dare to bring a judgment against [the Devil] in abusive terms, but said: 'May Jehovah rebuke you.'" (Jude 9) The archangel respected Jehovah's arrangement for judgment, avoiding presumptuousness.—Compare John 5:19, 30.

Following Michael's example, Christian husbands and fathers should avoid dealing harshly or demandingly in settling family issues, and congregational elders should exercise care not to abuse their authority by treating erring ones unkindly. (1 Pet. 3:7; 5:1-3) Those sharing life-giving truths from God's Word would certainly not wish to speak abusively of unresponsive individuals but would leave the judgment to Jehovah who "sees what the heart is."—1 Pet. 3:8-12; 1 Sam. 16:7.

Faithful Endurance

Humble respect for Jehovah's arrangement enabled angels to endure faithfully in their assignments of service. En route

to the prophet Daniel with a special message from God, one angel encountered fierce opposition. "The prince of the royal realm of Persia was standing in opposition to me for twenty-one days," the angel later told Daniel. Appreciating the importance of reaching God's earthly servant with the message, he fought opposition from the invisible demon overlord of Persia for 21 days, until the archangel Michael came to his aid.—Dan. 10:12-14.

Like that angel, we have a "wrestling, not against blood and flesh, but against . . . the wicked spirit forces in the heavenly places." (Eph. 6:12) Vigorous effort is needed to oppose demonic forces bent on destroying our friendship with Jehovah and stopping the proclamation of God's kingdom. Respect and appreciation for Jehovah's rulership will help us to gain the victory with the aid of the holy spirit.—Rev. 12:17.

On occasion, we may be discouraged by the negative attitudes of associates or family members. Angels, too, have been subjected to pressures from malcontents. Before the great deluge of Noah's days some angels succumbed to improper desires. They forsook "their own proper dwelling place" in the heavens, materialized human bodies and entered into unnatural relationships with women. (Jude 6) The majority of God's spirit sons, however, refused to be influenced by the faithless course of these rebellious members of Jehovah's family. More than 2,000 years later, Daniel saw a vision of the heavenly courts. How many faithful angels did he see? "There were a thousand thousands that kept ministering to him, and ten thousand times ten thousand that kept standing right before him." (Dan. 7:10) Like the righteous angels, refuse to let yourself be influenced by the attitudes of self-pleasing individuals. Draw encouragement from such faithful examples.—1 Thess. 1:7.

Appreciate God's Love

Jehovah created both angels and men with the capacity to develop love for him as their Father and Sovereign. God's great adversary was one angel who enjoyed the benefits of Jehovah's love; yet he failed to develop appreciation in response. Lack of humility led to a desire for prominence and to ultimate rebellion.—1 Tim. 3:6.

Should not all of this serve both as a warning and an encouragement to us? If angels, failing to meditate appreciatively on Jehovah's love for them have succumbed to wrong desire, what of us? Like the vast throng of faithful angels in Daniel's vision, will we be alert to see reasons for gratitude to Jehovah for his daily favors to us? Let us treasure our opportunities to draw close to God.

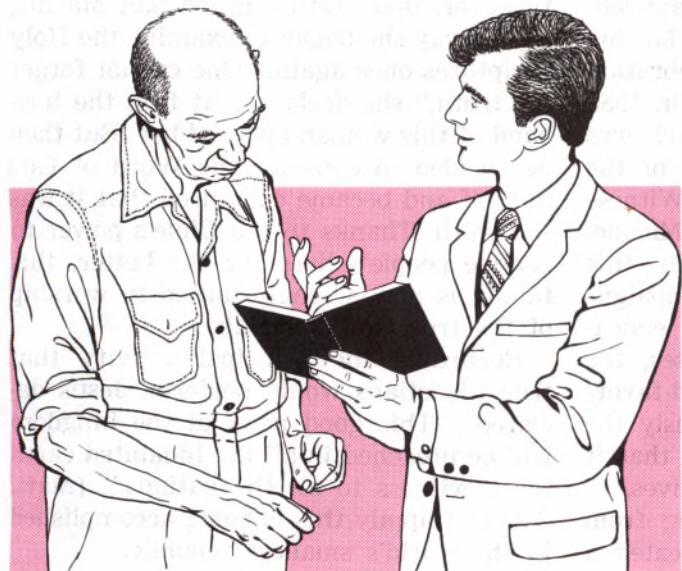
"Who can resemble Jehovah among the sons of God [the angels, Targum]?" asks the psalmist. "God is to be held in awe among the intimate group of holy ones; he is grand and fear-inspiring over all who are round about him." (Ps. 89:6, 7) How does such awesome respect develop in the hearts of angels and men? By daily meditation on the magnificent qualities of the Universal Sovereign as revealed in his creative works and his loving-kindness.

Witnesses of Jehovah today are no insignificant minority in their worship of the true God. "There are more who are with us than those who are with them," the Bible assures us. (2 Ki. 6:16) In our efforts to please Jehovah, we are associated with throngs of angels who render worship to the very same God. Such powerful creatures display a kindly interest in us, being ever ready to assist us to stand firm for Jehovah. (Ps. 34:7) Be encouraged, then, by the example of these sons of God who humbly respect Jehovah's arrangement. With them, let us continue to submit ourselves to the will of our generous heavenly Father.

Bible Education in the World's Smallest Republic

IN NORTHERN Italy, near the Adriatic Sea, lies the world's smallest republic. It covers an area of only 61 square kilometers (24 square miles). We are referring to San Marino, an independent republic surrounded on all sides by the republic of Italy.

Upon entering the capital city, San Marino, visitors quickly become impressed with the medieval



design of its buildings. Tradition has it that a stone-mason named Marinus from Dalmatia (a coastal region of what is now Yugoslavia) founded the republic in the fourth century C.E. He fled there to escape persecution of Christians by Roman Emperor Diocletian.

The activities of Jehovah's Witnesses in San Marino began about 20 years ago. In the late 1950's,

an elderly Italian male nurse began sharing Bible truths with residents of the republic. His efforts did not go without opposition. Several times local police, incited by Catholic priests, escorted him to the border, with orders never to return. However, in imitation of courageous Christians mentioned in the Bible this male nurse was determined to "obey God as ruler rather than men." (Acts 5:29) He continued to speak to people in San Marino about Bible truths.

His work was not in vain. An elderly lady listened attentively to his Scriptural message. Eventually she accepted what she was learning as the truth and was baptized. Later, some members of her family, though at first opposed to Jehovah's Witnesses, did likewise. By August of 1968 the small group of Witnesses in San Marino had grown to nine. The first time a traveling representative of the Watch Tower Society visited them, there were 31 present to hear his talk. At that time the Kingdom Hall was located in Italian territory, just across the western border of San Marino.

In time, some citizens of San

Marino became Jehovah's Witnesses. This laid a solid basis for future increase. The local Witnesses could preach freely in the territory. At first police would stop their activity. But after learning that they were citizens of San Marino, the police no longer hindered their efforts to preach publicly and from house to house.

By 1971 the number of Jehovah's Witnesses in San Marino had grown to 17. In that year the Italian branch of the Watch Tower Society recommended that the group be organized into a congregation. In 1972 it became possible to transfer the Kingdom Hall to San Marino. At that time the authorities permitted use of a government building, the Kursaal, for the first circuit assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses in San Marino. What a joy for local Witnesses to see at that convention a crowd of 1,749, with 35 being baptized!

Now the congregation in San Marino has grown to 70. During the celebration of the Memorial of Christ's death in 1980 there were 134 in attendance, which was one out of every 151 inhabitants of the republic. At present there is one Witness for every 257 inhabitants of San Marino.

Though Catholic clergymen in this republic occasionally launch campaigns from the pulpit against the Bible educational work of Jehovah's Witnesses, the people of San Marino often respond favorably to it. Those who take seriously the message of the Word of God find that it has a wonderful effect upon their lives.

Some time ago, while preaching from house to house, the Witnesses located a

woman who showed sincere interest. Regular Bible discussions were held with her and eventually she was baptized. Her mother-in-law also became a Witness. Due to heavy involvement with secular activities, at first the rest of her family were indifferent. However, two elders from the local congregation made some friendly visits and eventually established regular Bible discussions with them. As a result, eight persons in that family have expressed a desire to harmonize their lives with Bible principles.

One member of this family experienced opposition to her efforts to understand the inspired Word of God. In fact, a Catholic priest pressured her into signing a statement renouncing further Bible study with Jehovah's Witnesses. Thereafter this woman got married and went abroad. However, upon returning to San Marino, right away she began to examine the Holy Scriptures once again. "One cannot forget the truth," she declared. At first the husband of this woman opposed her. But then he decided to consider the Word of God himself and became convinced that it was the truth. Thanks to the Bible's power to change people's lives for the better, this family is now strongly united in worship of the true God, Jehovah.

Regarding the principal activity that true Christians would perform, Jesus declared: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations." (Matt. 24:14) Happily this is being accomplished in the world's smallest republic.

AN EXPENSIVE BOOK

Before Martin Luther produced his translation, printed versions of the Bible already existed in the German language. A handwritten German edition from about 1350 C.E. was first printed in 1466. How much did it cost? About "the equivalent of a town house, or fourteen fattened oxen."—"The Cambridge History of the Bible," Vol. 3, pp. 94, 95, 423.

INSIGHT ON THE NEWS

● Speaking at a Baptist World Congress in Toronto, evangelist Billy Graham cried out:

"Oh God, turn us back from the War of Armageddon . . . because that is where we are headed!" Columnist Dick Beddoes of "The

Globe and Mail," who reported the statement, also observed that Graham sees Armageddon as a war between superpowers.

However, the Bible shows clearly that Armageddon is not a war between nations. Instead, it is God's war against all the militarized nations of this world. At Revelation 16:14-16 it is plainly called "the war of the great day of God the Almighty." Additionally, nothing, not even fervent prayer, can head off that war because it is God's declared will that it must occur. (Zeph. 3:8; Rev. 19:17-21) This war of God will for all time establish his right to rule, and bring true peace and security by removing organizations and peoples who oppose his righteous rule. It is the only way that the 'meek will inherit the earth.' —Ps. 37:11; Matt. 5:5.

Hence, Graham ought to be crying out for Armageddon to come, because that means 'God's kingdom will come,' so that then 'God's will might be done on earth as it is in heaven.' (Matt. 6:10) When that happens, God's kingdom will "crush and put an end to all these kingdoms [of men], and it itself will stand to times indefinite." —Dan. 2:44.

● "Catholics wrestle daily with the scandal that is offered to us by our official church," declared columnist Kevin Starr, a Catholic, in the San Francisco "Examiner."

'Wrestling Daily with Scandal'

As an example, he said: "The pope goes to Latin America, . . . and preaches justice for the poor, and this is followed in [another Catholic country] by the spectacle of one archbishop and three bishops presiding over the extravagant waste of a nation's minimal resources. Those millions being spent were money taken from the poor, the very poor." Starr referred to a state marriage costing millions of dollars and conducted by those clergymen.

The columnist also acknowledged that whereas wealthy and influential Catholics might get marriages annulled, others "were forced to spend long years alone, forbidden to remarry because their first ceremony was a Catholic ceremony, or denied the sacraments (indeed excommunicated!) if they remarried 'outside the Church.'" Starr also called attention to the fact that the clergy often aligned themselves with the most repressive of political elements.

He concluded: "The Roman Catholic Church . . . is not a church for those who demand clarity and consistency." Admitting that the Church includes "a network of corruption and compromise," he added: "If you like schematic consistency in thought, word and deed, you most likely will leave the Church."

● The Memphis, Tennessee, "Commercial Appeal" notes that when prominent Baptist

clergyman Adrian Rogers was asked his position "on the preachers-into-politics phenomenon," he answered: "I do not believe that God ever ordained government and

then told his people to stay out of it." He said: "We will see more and more evangelicals taking definite stands for political issues and for persons who are running for office, and I think they should."

Yet nowhere did Jesus encourage his followers to become political, saying instead: "They are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world." (John 17:14) Also, Satan the Devil offered Jesus "all the kingdoms of the world." But Jesus refused the offer, although he could have done more good with such power than any politician. And implicitly, Jesus recognized that, as the Bible says, the Devil is the "god of this system of things." —Luke 4:5-8; 2 Cor. 4:4.

Had it been God's purpose to bring peace and prosperity through this world's political, commercial and false religious systems, it would have been done long ago. But that is not his purpose. Instead, he will eliminate those systems and usher in "a new earth" (a new human society) in which "righteousness is to dwell." —2 Pet. 3:12, 13.

Is Religion in Politics God's Way?

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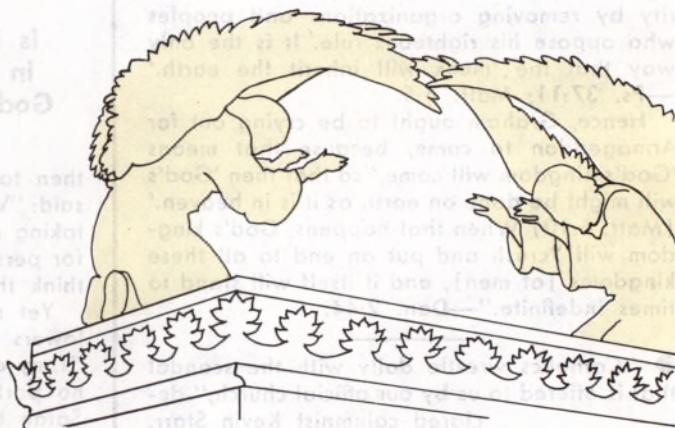
Cherubs in Israel's Worship —Why No Idolatry?

THE Ten Commandments for Israel were introduced against an awesome background of God's power and glory when God "came down upon [Mount Sinai] in fire; and its smoke kept ascending like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain was trembling very much." On that occasion God said: "You must not make for yourself a carved image or a form like anything that is in the heavens above or that is on the earth underneath or that is in the waters under the earth. You must not bow down to them nor be induced to serve them, because I Jehovah your God am a God exacting exclusive devotion." As Moses explained, the true God had come with such magnificence "in order that the fear of him may continue before your faces that you may not sin."—Ex. 19:18; 20:4, 5, 20.

With this law against idolatry so strongly emphasized to them, some might ask why Israel was also commanded to make two golden cherubs to be mounted on the cover of the ark of the covenant within the Most Holy compartment of the tabernacle. Besides this, the entire frame-

work of the structure was covered with linen cloths, embroidered on the inner side with colorful figures of cherubs.—Ex. 25:18; 26:1.

When this tabernacle was later replaced by Solomon's temple, "all the walls of [the temple] round about he carved with engraved carvings of cherubs," and "he made in the innermost room [the Most Holy] two cherubs of oil-tree wood, ten cubits being the height of each one." Also, the doors of the temple and the sidewalls of the copper carriages for



temple use were decorated with cherubs and other figures.—1 Ki. 6:29, 32, 23; 7:27-29.

Did the making of cherubs and other carved images for the temple not constitute idolatry?

Not All Images Are Idols

An idol is an image, a representation of anything or a symbol that is an object of devotion, whether material or imagined. Idolatry with the use of images and symbols is widespread. Even in the

10-tribe kingdom of Israel two golden calves were set up for idolatrous worship, and, during the reign of one of the later kings, Baal worship was established, with an altar and a sacred pole being erected.—1 Ki. 12:28; 16:29, 31-33.

However, God's law not to form images did not rule out the making of all representations and statues. As noted above, figures of cherubs were used to decorate the tabernacle in the wilderness and Solomon's temple in Jerusalem. According to ancient Jewish tradition, these cherubs had human form. They represented angelic creatures. Those on the cover of the ark of the covenant were described as "glorious cherubs." (Heb. 9:5) In every detail they were made "according to . . . the pattern" Moses received from Jehovah.—Ex. 25:9.

These cherubs indicated the royal presence of Jehovah, who said: "I will present myself to you there and speak with you from above the cover, from between the two cherubs that are upon the ark of the testimony." (Ex. 25:22) Hence, in a representative way, Jehovah was said to be "sitting upon [or, "between"] the cherubs." (1 Sam. 4:4; 2 Ki. 19:15) Thus Jehovah impressed upon the serving high priest of the nation, who alone was allowed to enter the Most Holy once a year, that He as God was the Ruler in Israel.—Heb. 9:7; Isa. 33:22.

The other representations of cherubs, in the tabernacle and temple interior, were seen also by the officiating underpriests. So they, too, were impressed deeply by Jehovah's holy presence.

As we have seen, these cherubic representations were not inventions of men. Jehovah himself ordered that they be placed in the temple for the purpose of making the priesthood fully aware of his presence. Also, they could not be objects of veneration by the people, because the people in general did not see the cherubs

and therefore were not induced to treat them idolatrously. (Num. 4:4-6, 17-20) Instead of encouraging idolatry, these cherubic representations constantly reminded Israel's priesthood of their relationship to the Most High, the ruling King in Israel, the One who exacted exclusive devotion.—Deut. 6:13-15.

The first encounter of humans with real cherubs was outside the garden of Eden, when Adam and Eve had sinned and Jehovah God had put them out of the garden "and posted at the east of the garden of Eden the cherubs and the flaming blade of a sword that was turning itself continually to guard the way to the tree of life." Man had defied God's position as Sovereign Ruler, and the cherubs as the upholders of the throne of Jehovah blocked the way back into an intimate relationship with Jehovah in the earthly paradise.—Gen. 3:23, 24.

However, the cherubs that later overshadowed the propitiatory cover of the Ark showed that Jehovah was again in the midst of his people Israel. God sat between the cherubs, indicating that he had opened the way into a proper relationship with him.

The priests in Israel bore the greatest responsibility, to keep the people in a proper relationship with Jehovah, "for the lips of a priest are the ones that should keep knowledge, and the law is what people should seek from his mouth." (Mal. 2:7) The "fear of Jehovah," as the "beginning of knowledge" and "the start of wisdom," was to be included in their teaching. (Prov. 1:7; 9:10) Their service in the tabernacle, and later in the temple, constantly reminded them of the presence of Jehovah and implanted a proper fear of Jehovah in their own hearts so that they, in turn, could instill this fear in the people.

However, what happened in the prophet Ezekiel's days? Alas, the people of the

land, under the guidance of their older men, turned away from the presence of Jehovah. In a vision, Ezekiel was brought into the inner courtyard of the temple to see 70 men of the elderly ones of the house of Israel committing idolatry in one of the inner rooms of the temple. They said: "Jehovah is not seeing us. Jehovah has left the land." (Ezek. 8:9-12) This happened right within the temple without interference on the part of the priests. Because of this idolatry, God brought destruction on Jerusalem and its temple,

QUESTIONS from READERS

- In view of Judges 4:4, can Deborah be viewed as one of the judges of ancient Israel, along with Samson, Gideon and others?

The Bible account at Judges 4:4 reads: "Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at that particular time." Earlier, the account at Judges 2:16 says: "Jehovah would raise up judges, and they would save them out of the hand of their pillagers." Thus the main work of a judge would be to save Israel from their enemies. It appears, then, that the phrase at Judges 4:4 about Deborah "judging Israel at that particular time" does not mean that Deborah was usurping the place of a man and that she was fulfilling all the duties of a judge in Israel. Unlike Samuel, Gideon or other judges she did not judge all Israel and act as their deliverer or "savior." In fact, at Nehemiah 9:27 the term "saviors" is used rather than "judges."—Compare Judges 3:9, 15.

Being a prophetess, Deborah told Barak what Jehovah's will was in the matter. She was used by Jehovah to call Barak to serve as judge for the overthrow of the enemy.

including its cherubic decorations, in the year 607 B.C.E. Destruction came not because of idolatry in connection with cherubic decorations but because Israel forgot the very thing that the cherubs should have made them realize, namely, the presence of Jehovah as the God exacting exclusive devotion.

So, as Christians in this time, let us hold fast our faith, "keeping close in mind the presence of the day of Jehovah." May we act in faith as seeing the Invisible One, Jehovah.—Heb. 11:27; 2 Pet. 3:12.

Barak served as the "savior" provided by Jehovah, not Deborah, although Barak asked that Deborah go with him. So it is most unlikely that Deborah performed all the duties usually associated with the office of a judge in Israel, the most prominent of which was leading the tribes in warfare against Jehovah's enemies.

Thus, while Deborah can properly be described as a prophetess, it is only in a general sense that she was doing a measure of judging in Israel; she was not taking the full place of a male judge in Israel. Judges 4:5 says: "She was dwelling under Deborah's palm tree between Ramah and Bethel in the mountainous region of Ephraim; and the sons of Israel would go up to her for judgment." As for the matter of giving the Israelites Jehovah's answer to difficult problems that would come up, this she could do because of Jehovah's spirit being upon her.

In contrast, Barak certainly was one who effected deliverance for the Israelites. The reasonable conclusion to draw is that Barak was a judge in the full sense of the word, and this is in accord with Hebrews 11:32, where he ranks among the judges of ancient Israel. Thus the book *Aid to Bible Understanding*, on page 980, in listing the judges of Israel, does not include Deborah.

- Does the missing of Christian meetings in itself constitute an unforgivable sin, since, at Hebrews 10:24-29, the apostle Paul speaks

of this sin right after discussing the importance of meetings?

Failure to heed the command to attend Christian meetings is serious and could lead to disastrous consequences for a servant of Jehovah. However, more is involved in committing the unforgivable sin.

Reading the full 10th chapter of Hebrews will be helpful in understanding the matter. The apostle first points out that sacrifices under the Law provided no forgiveness of sins, but were a shadow of good things to come, involving the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Jehovah provided Jesus Christ as the perfect sacrifice to take away sins. This is a specific provision of the "new covenant." The apostle gives encouragement to "hold fast the public declaration of our hope without wavering." (Heb. 10:23) How can this be done? He points out the necessity of gathering together regularly to incite to fine works, not giving in to the custom of some to slight Christian meetings. Rather, we should be attending such meetings "all the more so as you behold the day drawing near."—Vs. 25.

It is in this setting that the apostle continues: "For if we practice sin willfully after having received the accurate knowledge of the truth, there is no longer any sacrifice for sins left, but there is a certain fearful expectation of judgment and there is a fiery jealousy that is going to consume those in opposition. Any man that has disregarded the law of Moses dies without compassion, upon the testimony of two or three. Of how much more severe a punishment, do you think, will the man be counted worthy who has trampled upon the Son of God and who has esteemed as of ordinary value the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified?"—Heb. 10:26-29.

Hence, the conjunction "for" that begins the paragraph at verse 26 is not just a connective to the exhortation to attend Christian meetings, but ties back to all that is said prior thereto. One must accept God's way of salvation through Christ and continue to appreciate this provision, while having in mind that the attending of meetings is one of the ways Jehovah has provided to keep one strong in faith and active in good works. That this is the case is further confirmed by what the apostle says in verse 29, where he shows what punishment is due one who "has trampled upon the Son of God and who has esteemed

as of ordinary value the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified."

So we should not discuss Hebrews 10:24, 25 out of its setting and imply that failure to attend the meetings regularly is in itself what the apostle is talking about in discussing those who commit the unforgivable sin. Of course, when a person has "the custom" of not attending the meetings, he is working against his own spiritual interests and is in grave danger of growing weak in faith and becoming inactive in Christian works. This, in turn, could lead to a person's actually denying or not taking seriously the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ and his thus losing out on everlasting life.

The sin mentioned at Hebrews 10:26-29 does not apply to one from which the sinner is able to repent in sincere grief, appealing to God through Jesus for divine mercy. The sinner has actually renounced the Son of God as his savior and esteemed his sacrifice as having no redeeming value.—Compare Hebrews 6:4-6.

Such a person is sinning against accurate knowledge and the operation of God's holy spirit, and there is no possibility of his repenting and availing himself of God's provision for salvation through Christ. God has made no other means available for saving such a willful sinner.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

November 30: "Do Not Be Anxious over Anything." Page 13. Songs to Be Used: 21, 82.

December 7: "The Peace of God That Excels All Thought." Page 17. Songs to Be Used: 67, 71.



FROM HATRED TO CHRISTIAN LOVE

JESUS CHRIST said concerning his true followers: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves." (John 13:35) Even some who have become genuine Christians formerly hated each other. Only Jehovah God could have helped them to change their attitude. Evidence of this is apparent in the following experience from a Caribbean island:

"I was a leader in a certain political party that was interested in seeing a change in government. We used various means to gain that end, and so I heard that a detective had been assigned to follow me and to catch me. Since I now knew about what was happening, I was ready and on the alert in case this per-

son should appear. If I had met up with him, I do not know what would have happened, but a tragedy could easily have occurred. In my heart I began to hate him as a symbol of what I was against. However, I went to New York, and it was there that I began to study the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses. I left my former associations and affiliations with the political party and changed my life to serve Jehovah."

In time, this man returned to his homeland. He continues:

"One day I was working at an assembly [of Jehovah's Witnesses] and, being a cook, was helping out in the kitchen. One person asked me, 'Say, Brother B—, how did you learn the truth?' I began to explain and mentioned how thankful I was to Jehovah that I had never met the detective who had been following me because something terrible might have happened. At that moment another brother, who had been washing the pots and pans, rushed over and asked, 'Are you Brother B—?' 'Yes,' I said, to which he replied: 'Do you know who I am? I am the former detective who was assigned to get you.'

"What a scene then took place! We shook hands, hugged each other and slapped each other on the back. Tears of happiness flowed. The kitchen became a place of joy and happiness more than ever before as work stopped and all joined in the special moment. There in that assembly kitchen was living proof of how hate can be turned into love by the power of Jehovah's spirit and his loving-kindness."