

THE WATCHTOWER

MARCH 15, 2001

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

The Resurrection of Jesus

**FACT OR
LEGEND?**

THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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

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JESUS' RESURRECTION ON TRIAL

"I can tell you frankly that while we can be absolutely sure that Jesus lived . . . , we cannot with the same certainty say that we know He was raised by God from the dead." So stated the Church of England's ranking prelate, the Archbishop of Canterbury.

THE Christian apostle Paul had no such reservations. In chapter 15 of his first inspired letter to fellow Christians in ancient Corinth, Paul wrote: "I handed on to you, among the first things, that which I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, yes, that he has been raised up the third day according to the Scriptures."—1 Corinthians 15:3, 4.

It was faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ that moved his disciples to preach the gospel throughout the Greco-Roman world—"in all creation that is under heaven." (Colossians 1:23) In fact, Jesus' resurrection is the very foundation of Christian faith.

From the very beginning, though, the resurrection of Jesus met with doubt and disbelief. To the Jews in general, it was blasphemous for Jesus' followers to claim that this impaled man was the Messiah. And to most educated Greeks, with their belief in the immortality of the soul, the very idea of a resurrection was repugnant.—Acts 17:32-34.

Modern Doubters

In recent years, some scholars who profess to be Christians have published books and articles dismissing Jesus' resurrection as a fable and have initiated a fierce debate over this subject. In their search for "the historical Jesus," various scholars argue that the Gospel accounts of the empty tomb and Jesus' post-

resurrection appearances are pure fiction, devised long after his death in order to support claims of his heavenly power.

For example, take the views of German scholar Gerd Lüdemann, professor of New Testament and author of the book *What Really*



From the Self-Pronouncing Edition of the Holy Bible,
containing the King James and the Revised versions

Happened to Jesus—A Historical Approach to the Resurrection. He argues that Jesus' resurrection is "an empty formula" that must be rejected by anyone holding a "scientific view of the world."

Professor Lüdemann maintains that the resurrected Christ who appeared to the apostle Peter was a vision resulting from Peter's overwhelming grief and guilt for having denied Jesus. And according to Lüdemann, Jesus' appearance to upward of 500 believers on one occasion was a case of "mass ecstasy." (1 Corinthians 15:5, 6) In short, many scholars reduce the Bible accounts about the resurrected Jesus to a series of subjective experiences that produced in the disciples a renewed sense of spiritual self-confidence and missionary zeal.

Of course, many have little interest in academic skirmishes. However, a discussion of Jesus' resurrection should be of concern to all of us. Why? Because, if he was not resurrected, Christianity is based on a false foundation. On the other hand, if Jesus' resurrection is really a fact of history, Christianity is based on truth. Under those circumstances, not only are Christ's claims vindicated but so are his promises. Moreover, if there is a resurrection, death is not the great victor but an enemy that can be defeated.—1 Corinthians 15:55.

"FOR A FACT THE LORD WAS RAISED UP!"

Imagine how distressed Jesus' disciples were when their Lord was put to death. Their hope seemed as lifeless as the body that Joseph of Arimathea laid in the tomb. Dead too were any expectations that Jesus would free the Jews of the Roman yoke.

IF THAT had been the end of the matter, Jesus' disciples would probably have disappeared like the followers of the many would-be Messiahs. But Jesus was alive! According to the Scriptures, he appeared to his followers on several occasions shortly after his death. Therefore, some of them were moved to exclaim: "For a fact the Lord was raised up!" —Luke 24:34.

The disciples were called upon to defend their faith in Jesus as the Messiah. In doing so, they especially pointed to his resurrection from the dead as solid proof of his Messiahship. Indeed, "with great power the apostles continued giving forth the witness concerning the resurrection of the Lord Jesus."—Acts 4:33. If anyone had ever proved that this resurrection was a fraud—perhaps by getting one of



the disciples to admit that it was or by showing that Jesus' body remained in the tomb—Christianity would have failed at the start. But it did not. Knowing that Christ was alive, Jesus' followers went everywhere proclaiming his res-

urrection, and multitudes became believers in the risen Christ.

Why can you too believe in the resurrection of Jesus? What evidence is there that this was an actual event?

Why Consider the Evidence?

All four Gospel accounts report on Jesus' resurrection. (Matthew 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-12; John 20:1-29)* Other portions of the Christian Greek Scriptures speak with certainty about the raising of Christ from death.

No wonder Jesus' resurrection has been declared by his followers! If he was actually raised to life by God, that is the most amazing news the world has ever heard. It means that God exists. Moreover, it means that Jesus is alive right now.

How does that affect us? Well, Jesus prayed: "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ." (John 17:3) Yes, we can acquire life-giving knowledge of Jesus and of his Father. By applying such knowledge, even if we should die, we ourselves can be resurrected, since Jesus was. (John 5:28, 29) We can have the hope of everlasting life on a paradise earth under God's heavenly Kingdom in the hands of his glorified Son, Jesus Christ, the King of kings.—Isaiah 9:6, 7; Luke 23:43; Revelation 17:14.

So, then, the question of whether Jesus actually rose from the dead is crucial. It affects our life now and our prospects for the future. That is why we invite you to examine four lines of evidence that Jesus died and was resurrected.

Jesus Really Died on the Stake

Some skeptics claim that, though impaled, Jesus did not really die on the stake. They hold

* For evidence regarding the authenticity of the Gospel accounts, see "The Gospels—History or Myth?" in *The Watchtower* of May 15, 2000.

that he was only near death and that he was revived by the coolness of the tomb. Yet, every source available proves that it was the lifeless body of Jesus that was placed in the tomb.

Since Jesus was executed publicly, there were witnesses to the fact that he actually died on the stake. His death was certified by the centurion in charge of the execution. That army officer was a professional whose job included determining that death had taken place. Moreover, only after confirming that Jesus had died did the Roman Governor Pontius Pilate release Jesus' body to Joseph of Arimathea for interment.—Mark 15:39-46.



The Tomb Was Found Empty

The empty tomb gave the disciples their first proof of Jesus' resurrection, and this evidence remains undisputed. Jesus was buried in a new tomb, one that had never been used. It was near the place of impalement and back then could unmistakably be located very easily. (John 19:41, 42) All the Gospel accounts agree that when Jesus' friends arrived at the tomb on the second morning after his death, his body was gone.—Matthew 28:1-7; Mark 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3; John 20:1-10.

The empty tomb was astonishing to Jesus' enemies, just as it was to his friends. His foes had long been working to see him dead and buried. Having accomplished their goal, they took pains to post a guard and seal the tomb. Nevertheless, on the morning of the first day of the week, it was empty.

Did Jesus' friends take his body from the tomb? Not likely, since the Gospels show that they were greatly distressed after his execution. Furthermore, his disciples would hardly have gone on to suffer persecution and death for something they knew to be fraudulent.



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Who emptied the tomb? Jesus' enemies would have been the least likely to have taken the body. Even if they had, they would certainly have produced it later so as to refute the disciples' claims that Jesus had been resurrected and was alive. But nothing of that sort ever happened, for it was God who had taken action.

Weeks later, Jesus' enemies did not rise up with an overwhelming rebuttal when Peter testified: "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man publicly shown by God to you through powerful works and portents and signs that God did through him in your midst, just as you yourselves know, this man, as one delivered up by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God, you fastened to a stake by the hand of lawless men

and did away with. But God resurrected him by loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to continue to be held fast by it. For David says respecting him, 'I had Jehovah constantly before my eyes . . . Moreover, even my flesh will reside in hope; because you will not leave my soul in Hades, neither will you allow your loyal one to see corruption.'" —Acts 2:22-27.

Many Saw the Resurrected Jesus

In the book of Acts, the Gospel writer Luke stated: "To [the apostles] also by many positive proofs [Jesus] showed himself alive after he had suffered, being seen by them throughout forty days and telling the things about the kingdom of God." (Acts 1:2, 3) A number of disciples saw the resurrected Jesus on various occasions—in a garden, on a road, during a meal, by the Sea of Tiberias.—Matthew 28:8-10; Luke 24:13-43; John 21:1-23.

Critics question the veracity of these appearances. They say that the writers fabricated the accounts, or they cite seeming discrepancies in them. Actually, minor variations in the Gospel accounts prove that there was no collusion involved. Our knowledge of Jesus is broadened when one writer supplies details that supplement other accounts of certain incidents in the earthly life of Christ.

Were Jesus' post-resurrection appearances hallucinations? Any argument along those lines is implausible, since he was seen by so many people. Among them were fishermen, women, a civil servant, and even the doubting apostle Thomas, who was convinced only when he saw the irrefutable proof that Jesus had been raised from the dead. (John 20:24-29) On several occasions, disciples of Jesus did not at first recognize their resurrected Lord. Once, over 500 people saw him, most of whom were still alive when the apostle Paul used that incident as evidence in his defense of the resurrection.—1 Corinthians 15:6.

*Millions find true
happiness as followers
of Jesus Christ*



The Living Jesus Has an Effect on People

The resurrection of Jesus is not simply a matter of curiosity or debate. The fact that he is alive has affected people everywhere in a positive way. Since the first century, countless individuals have turned from indifference or total opposition to Christianity to absolute certainty that it is the true religion. What changed them? A study of the Scriptures proved to them that God resurrected Jesus to life as a glorious spirit creature in heaven. (Philippians 2: 8-11) They have exercised faith in Jesus and in Jehovah God's provision for salvation through Christ's ransom sacrifice. (Romans 5:8) Such individuals have found genuine happiness by doing God's will and living in harmony with Jesus' teachings.

Consider what it meant to be a Christian in the first century. There was no gain in prestige, power, or wealth. Quite on the contrary, many early Christians 'joyfully took the plundering of their belongings' for the sake of their faith. (Hebrews 10:34) Christianity called for a life of sacrifice and persecution that in many cases ended in martyrdom.

Before becoming Christ's followers, some had good prospects as far as prestige and wealth were concerned. Saul of Tarsus studied under the renowned Law teacher Gamaliel and was beginning to distinguish himself in the eyes of the Jews. (Acts 9:1, 2; 22:3; Galatians 1:14) Yet, Saul became the apostle Paul. He and many others turned their back on the prestige and power that this world offered.

Why? In order to spread a message of true hope based on God's promises and on the fact that Jesus Christ had been resurrected from the dead. (Colossians 1:28) They were willing to suffer for a cause they knew to be founded on truth.

The same is true of millions today. You can find them in the congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide. The Witnesses cordially invite you to the annual observance of Christ's death, which will take place after sundown on Sunday, April 8, 2001. They will be glad to have you present on that occasion and at all their meetings for Bible study held at their Kingdom Halls.

Why not learn more, not only about the death and resurrection of Jesus but also about his life and teachings? He invites us to come to him. (Matthew 11:28-30) Act now to acquire accurate knowledge of Jehovah God and Jesus Christ. Doing so can mean eternal life under God's Kingdom in the hands of his dear Son.



Courageous Integrity Keepers Triumph Over Nazi Persecution

BE WISE, my son, and make my heart rejoice, that I may make a reply to him that is taunting me." (Proverbs 27:11) This warm appeal reveals that God's intelligent creatures are able to make Jehovah's heart glad because they are faithful and loyal to him. (Zephaniah 3:17) However, Satan, the taunter, is determined to break the integrity of those who serve Jehovah.—Job 1:10, 11.

Especially since the early part of the 20th century when he was hurled out of heaven to the vicinity of the earth, has Satan displayed great anger toward Jehovah's people. (Revelation 12:10, 12) Nevertheless, true Christians have stood "complete and with firm conviction" and have kept their integrity to God. (Colossians 4:12) Let us briefly consider one outstanding example of such integrity keeping—that of Jehovah's Witnesses in Germany before and during World War II.

Zealous Activity Leads to Tests of Integrity

In the 1920's and early 1930's, the *Bibelforscher*, as Jehovah's Witnesses were then known in Germany, distributed large amounts of Bible literature. Between 1919 and 1933, they placed on an average eight books, booklets, or magazines with each family in Germany.

At that time, Germany had one of the largest concentrations of anointed followers of Christ. In fact, of the 83,941 persons worldwide who partook of the Lord's Evening Meal in 1933, nearly

30 percent lived in Germany. Before long, these German Witnesses experienced grueling tests of integrity. (Revelation 12:17; 14:12) Dismissals from jobs, raids on homes, and expulsions from schools quickly escalated into beatings, arrests, and imprisonment. (Picture 1) Consequently, in the years leading up to World War II, Jehovah's Witnesses made up 5 to 10 percent of all those held in concentration camps.



Why the Nazis Persecuted the Witnesses

Why, though, did Jehovah's Witnesses provoke the fury of the Nazi regime? In his book *Hitler—1889-1936: Hubris*, professor of history Ian Kershaw notes that the Witnesses became a target of persecution because they refused "to yield to the total claim of the Nazi state."

The book *Betrayal—German Churches and the Holocaust*, edited by professor of history Robert P. Erickson and professor of Jewish studies Susannah Heschel, explained that the Witnesses "refused to participate in violence or the use of military force. . . . Witnesses believed in political neutrality, which meant



Państwowe Muzeum Oświęcim-Brzezinka, courtesy of the USHMM Photo Archives

they would not vote for Hitler nor give the Hitler salute." This, adds the same source, provoked the anger of the Nazis and put the Witnesses in harm's way because "National Socialism would not tolerate such a refusal."

A Worldwide Protest and an All-Out Attack

By special messenger, on February 9, 1934, Joseph F. Rutherford, who was at the forefront of the work at that time, sent Hitler a letter of protest in response to Nazi intolerance. (Picture 2) On October 7, 1934, Rutherford's letter was followed by some 20,000 letters and telegrams of protest sent to Hitler by Jehovah's Witnesses in 50 countries, including Germany.

The Nazis responded by stepping up their persecution. On April 1, 1935, the Witnesses were banned nationwide. And on August 28, 1936, the Gestapo launched an all-out attack against them. Yet, the Witnesses "continued to distribute pamphlets and otherwise maintain their faith," notes *Betrayal—German Churches and the Holocaust*.

Right under the nose of the Gestapo, for instance, on December 12, 1936, some 3,500 Witnesses distributed tens of thousands of copies of a printed resolution regarding the ill-treatment that they were suffering. Respecting this campaign, *The Watchtower* reported: "It was a great victory and a sharp stab at the enemy, to the indescribable joy of the faithful workers."—Romans 9:17.

Persecution Fails!

The Nazi search for Jehovah's Witnesses continued. By 1939, six thousand of them had been imprisoned, and thousands had been sent to concentration camps. (Picture 3) What was the situation by the end of World War II? Some 2,000 imprisoned Witnesses had died, over 250 by execution. Nonetheless, wrote Professors Erickson and Heschel, "Jehovah's Witnesses



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largely held to their faith in the face of trouble." As a result, when Hitler's regime fell, over a thousand Witnesses emerged victorious from the camps.—Picture 4; Acts 5:38, 39; Romans 8:35-37.

What gave Jehovah's people the strength to endure persecution? Concentration camp survivor Adolphe Arnold explained: "Even if you are at the lowest, Jehovah sees you, knows what you are going through, and he will impart to you the needed strength to overcome the situation and stay faithful. His hand is not too short."

How well the words of the prophet Zephaniah apply to those faithful Christians! He declared: "Jehovah your God is in the midst of you. As a mighty One, he will save. He will exult over you with rejoicing." (Zephaniah 3:17) May all worshipers of the true God today imitate the faith of those loyal Witnesses who maintained integrity in the face of Nazi persecution and likewise make Jehovah's heart rejoice.—Philippians 1:12-14.



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GAINING THE VICTORY OVER HUMAN WEAKNESS

"The minding of the flesh means death."—ROMANS 8:6.

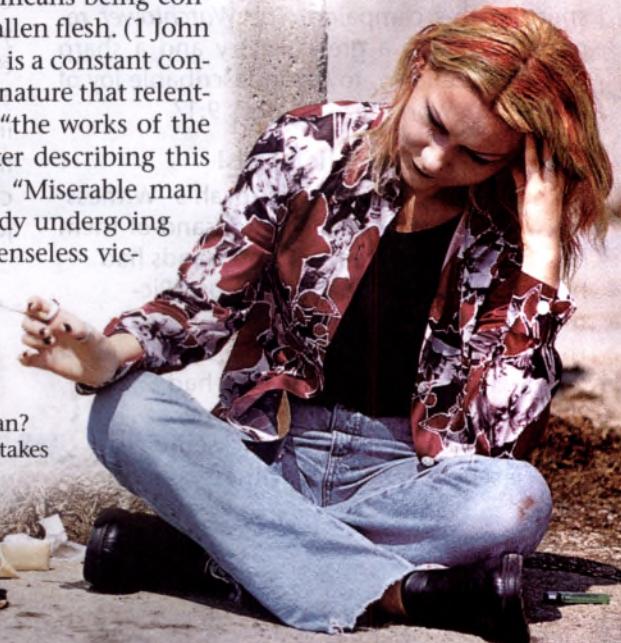
I SHALL laud you because in a fear-inspiring way I am wonderfully made." (Psalm 139:14) So sang the psalmist David while contemplating one of Jehovah's creations—the human body. Instead of giving such well-founded praise, some religious teachers consider the body to be the lurking place and instrument of sin. It has been called "the garment of ignorance, the foundation of vice, the bonds of corruption, the dark cage, the living death, the sentient corpse, the portable tomb." True, the apostle Paul said: "In my flesh, there dwells nothing good." (Romans 7:18) But does this mean that we are hopelessly trapped in a sinful body?

The Scriptures sometimes refer to the human body as "flesh." (1 Kings 21:27) They also use "flesh" to represent man in his imperfect state as a sinful descendant of rebellious Adam. (Ephesians 2:3; Psalm 51:5; Romans 5:12) Our inheritance from him has produced 'weakness of the flesh.' (Romans 6:19) And Paul warned: "The minding of the flesh means death." (Romans 8:6) Such "minding of the flesh" means being controlled and motivated by the desires of the fallen flesh. (1 John 2:16) So if we are trying to please God, there is a constant conflict between our spirituality and our sinful nature that relentlessly exerts pressure upon us to carry out "the works of the flesh." (Galatians 5:17-23; 1 Peter 2:11) After describing this painful clash within him, Paul exclaimed: "Miserable man that I am! Who will rescue me from the body undergoing this death?" (Romans 7:24) Was Paul a defenseless victim of temptation? The Bible answers with a resounding no!

1. How do some view the human body, and what question merits consideration?
2. (a) What does "the minding of the flesh" mean?
(b) What conflict between "flesh" and "spirit" takes place within humans desiring to please God?



The Bible does not teach that we are helpless victims of our fleshly desires



The Reality of Temptation and Sin

³ For many today, sin is an unacceptable concept. Some use "sin" humorously as an old-fashioned term to describe human foibles. They do not realize that "we must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of the Christ, that each one may get his award for the things done through the body, according to the things he has practiced, whether it is good or vile." (2 Corinthians 5:10) Others may make the casual remark: "I can resist anything but temptation!" Some people live in a culture that thrives on instant gratification, whether it involves food, sex, fun, or achievement. Not only do they want everything but they want it right now! (Luke 15:12) They do not look beyond immediate pleasure to the future joy of "the real life." (1 Timothy 6:19) The Bible, however, teaches us to think carefully and to be far-sighted, keeping clear of anything that would harm us spiritually or otherwise. Says an inspired proverb: "The shrewd one that has seen the calamity has concealed himself; the inexperienced that have passed along have suffered the penalty."—Proverbs 27:12.

⁴ When Paul wrote to Christians living in Corinth—a city known for its moral depravity—he offered a realistic warning against temptation and the power of sin. He said: "Let him that thinks he is standing beware that he does not fall. No temptation has taken you except what is common to men. But God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear, but along with the temptation he will also make the way out in order for you to be able to endure it." (1 Corinthians 10:12, 13) All of us—young and old, male and female—encounter many temptations in school, at work, or elsewhere. Let us,

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3. How do many view sin and temptation, but how does the Bible warn against such an attitude?
 4. What admonition recorded at 1 Corinthians 10:12, 13 did Paul give?

therefore, examine Paul's words and see what meaning they have for us.

Do Not Be Overconfident

⁵ Paul states: "Let him that thinks he is standing beware that he does not fall." Overconfidence about our moral strength is risky. It betrays a lack of understanding of the nature and power of sin. Since people like Moses, David, Solomon, and the apostle Peter fell into sin, should we feel that we are not vulnerable? (Numbers 20:2-13; 2 Samuel 11:1-27; 1 Kings 11:1-6; Matthew 26:69-75) "The wise one fears and is turning away from badness, but the stupid is becoming furious and self-confident," says Proverbs 14:16. Moreover, Jesus said: 'The spirit is eager, but the flesh is weak.' (Matthew 26:41) Since no imperfect human is immune to corrupt appetites, we need to take Paul's warning seriously and resist temptation, or we take the risk of falling.—Jeremiah 17:9.

⁶ It is wise to prepare for trouble that may occur unexpectedly. King Asa recognized that a period of peace was the right time for him to build his defenses. (2 Chronicles 14:2, 6, 7) He knew that it would be too late to prepare at the moment of attack. Similarly, decisions about what to do when temptations arise are best made with a cool head in the peace of untroubled moments. (Psalm 63:6) Daniel and his God-fearing friends made their decision to be faithful to the law of Jehovah before they were pressured to eat the king's delicacies. Hence, they did not hesitate to stick to their convictions and not partake of unclean food. (Daniel 1:8) Before tempting situations arise, let us strengthen our resolve to remain morally clean. Then we will be able to resist sin.

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5. Why is overconfidence risky?
 6. When and how should we prepare for temptation?

⁷ What comfort we derive from Paul's words: "No temptation has taken you except what is common to men"! (1 Corinthians 10:13) The apostle Peter wrote: "Take your stand against [the Devil], solid in the faith, knowing that the same things in the way of sufferings are being accomplished in the entire association of your brothers in the world." (1 Peter 5:9) Yes, others have faced similar temptations and have successfully resisted them with God's help, and so can we. However, as true Christians living in a depraved world, all of us can expect to be tempted sooner or later. How, then, can we be confident of victory over human weakness and temptation to sin?

We Can Resist Temptation!

⁸ A basic way to quit "being slaves to sin" is to avoid temptation when possible. (Romans 6:6) Proverbs 4:14, 15 urges us: "Into the path of the wicked ones do not enter, and do not walk straight on into the way of the bad ones. Shun it, do not pass along by it; turn aside from it, and pass along." We often know beforehand whether a certain set of circumstances would likely lead to sin. Therefore, the obvious thing to do as Christians is to "pass along," staying away from anyone and anything and any place that could kindle wrong desires and inflame us with unclean passions.

⁹ Running away from a tempting situation is another basic step toward victory over temptation. Paul counseled: "Flee from fornication," (1 Corinthians 6:18) And he wrote: "Flee from idolatry." (1 Corinthians 10:14) The apostle also warned Timothy to flee from an inordinate yearning for material riches, as well as "from the desires incidental to youth." —2 Timothy 2:22; 1 Timothy 6:9-11.

7. Why is it comforting to know that others have successfully resisted temptation?
8. What is a basic way to avoid temptation?
9. How is fleeing from compromising situations stressed in the Scriptures?

¹⁰ Consider the case of Israel's King David. As he gazed from his palace roof, he saw a beautiful woman bathing, and wrong desires filled his heart. He should have left the roof and fled from the temptation. Instead, he inquired about this woman—Bath-sheba—and the results were devastating. (2 Samuel 11:1-12:23) On the other hand, how did Joseph act when his master's immoral wife urged him to lie down with her? The account tells us: "As she spoke to Joseph day after day he never listened to her to lie alongside her, to continue with her." Even without the commands of the Mosaic Law, which had not yet been given, Joseph answered her by saying: "How could I commit this great badness and actually sin against God?" One day she

¹⁰. What two contrasting examples show the value of fleeing from temptation?

10. What two contrasting examples show the value of fleeing from temptation?

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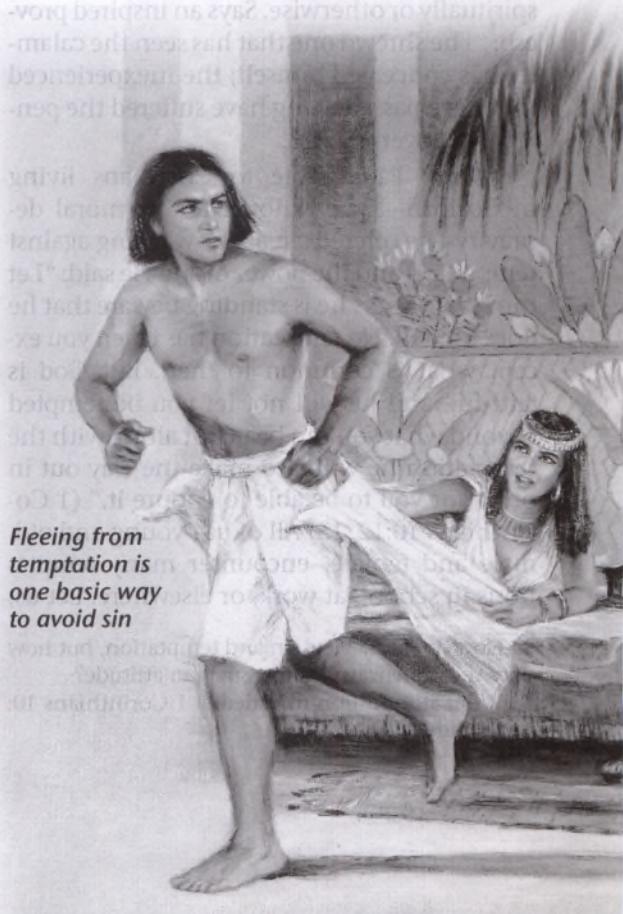
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Fleeing from temptation is one basic way to avoid sin

grabbed hold of him, saying: "Lie down with me!" Did Joseph stay there and try to reason with her? No. He "took to flight and went on outside." Joseph did not give sexual temptation a chance to overtake him. He fled!—Genesis 39:7-16.

¹¹ Running away is sometimes considered cowardly, but physically removing ourselves from a situation is often the wise course to take. Perhaps we are experiencing a recurring temptation at work. Though we may not be able to change jobs, there may be other ways to remove ourselves from tempting circumstances. We need to flee from anything we know to be wrong, and we should be determined to do only what is right. (Amos 5:15) Elsewhere, fleeing temptation would require avoiding pornographic Internet sites and questionable places of entertainment. It might also mean discarding a magazine or finding a new set of friends—those who love God and who may be able to help us. (Proverbs 13:20) Whatever tempts us to sin, we are wise if we determinedly turn our back on it.

—Romans 12:9.

How Prayer Can Help

¹² Paul gives this heartening assurance: "God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear, but along with the temptation he will also make the way out in order for you to be able to endure it." (1 Corinthians 10:13) One way that Jehovah assists us is by answering our prayers for his help in coping with temptation. Jesus Christ taught us to pray: "Do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the wicked one." (Matthew 6:13) In response to such heartfelt prayer, Jehovah will not abandon us to temptation; he will deliver us from Satan

11. What may be possible if we are experiencing a recurring temptation?

12. What do we ask from God when we pray: "Do not bring us into temptation"?

and his crafty acts. (Ephesians 6:11, footnote) We should ask God to help us recognize temptations and have the strength to resist them. If we implore him not to allow us to fail when we are tempted, he will help us so that we are not overreached by Satan, "the wicked one."

¹³ Especially do we need to pray fervently when confronted by persistent temptation. Some temptations can cause powerful inner struggles, with thoughts and attitudes that dramatically remind us of how weak we really are. (Psalm 51:5) For instance, what can we do if we are tormented by recollections of some former depraved practice? What if we are tempted to return to it? Rather than merely trying to suppress such feelings, take the matter to Jehovah in prayer—repeatedly if necessary. (Psalm 55:22) With the power of his Word and holy spirit, he can help us to cleanse our mind of unclean inclinations.—Psalm 19:8, 9.

¹⁴ Noting his apostles' drowsiness in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus urged: "Keep on the watch and pray continually, that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit, of course, is eager, but the flesh is weak." (Matthew 26:41) One way to overcome temptation is to be alert to the various forms that temptation can take and be sensitive to its subtleties. It is also vital that we pray about the temptation without delay so that we may be spiritually equipped to fight it. Because temptation strikes where we are most vulnerable, we cannot resist it alone. Prayer is essential because the strength that God gives can shore up our defenses against Satan. (Philippians 4: 6, 7) We may also need the spiritual assistance and prayers of "the older men of the congregation."—James 5:13-18.

13. What should we do when faced with persistent temptation?

14. Why is prayer essential to cope with temptation?

Actively Resist Temptation

¹⁵ Besides avoiding a temptation when possible, we must actively resist it until it passes or the situation changes. When Jesus was tempted by Satan, he resisted until the Devil went away. (Matthew 4:1-11) The disciple James wrote: "Oppose the Devil, and he will flee from you." (James 4:7) Resistance begins by fortifying our mind with God's Word and firmly deciding that we will adhere to his standards. We do well to memorize and meditate on key scriptures that deal with our specific weakness. It would be wise to find a mature Christian—perhaps an elder—with whom to share our concerns and upon whom we can call for help when temptation strikes.—Proverbs 22:17.

¹⁶ The Scriptures urge us to put on the new personality. (Ephesians 4:24) This means allowing Jehovah to mold and change us. Writing to his fellow worker Timothy, Paul said: "Pursue righteousness, godly devotion, faith, love, endurance, mildness of temper. Fight the fine fight of the faith, get a firm hold on the everlasting life for which you were called." (1 Timothy 6:11, 12) We can "pursue righteousness" by diligently studying God's

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15. What is involved in resisting temptation?
 16. How can we remain morally upright?

Do You Recall?

- What does it mean to 'mind the flesh'?
- How can we prepare for temptation?
- What can we do to cope with temptation?
- What role does prayer play in dealing with temptation?
- How do we know that it is possible to gain the victory over human weakness?

Word in order to get an intimate knowledge of his personality and then by conducting ourselves in accord with his requirements. A full schedule of Christian activities, such as preaching the good news and attending meetings, is also vital. Drawing close to God and taking full advantage of his spiritual provisions will help us to grow spiritually and remain morally upright.—James 4:8.

¹⁷ Paul assures us that any temptation we experience will never go beyond our God-given ability to deal with it. Jehovah will 'make the way out so that we are able to endure it.' (1 Corinthians 10:13) Indeed, God does not allow a temptation to become so overwhelming that we would lack sufficient spiritual strength to maintain integrity if we continue to rely upon him. He wants us to succeed in actively resisting temptation to do what is wrong in his sight. Moreover, we can have faith in his promise: "I will by no means leave you nor by any means forsake you." —Hebrews 13:5.

¹⁸ Paul was not uncertain about the outcome of his personal struggle against human weakness. He did not consider himself a pitiful and impotent pawn of his fleshly desires. On the contrary, he said: "The way I am running is not uncertainly; the way I am directing my blows is so as not to be striking the air; but I pummel my body and lead it as a slave, that, after I have preached to others, I myself should not become disapproved somehow." (1 Corinthians 9:26, 27) We too can wage a successful battle against the imperfect flesh. By means of the Scriptures, Bible-based publications, Christian meetings, and mature fellow Christians, our loving heavenly Father provides constant reminders that assist us to pursue an upright course. With his help, we can gain the victory over human weakness!

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17. How do we know that God will not forsake us during temptation?
 18. Why can we be certain of victory over human weakness?

MIND THE SPIRIT AND LIVE!

"The minding of the spirit means life."—ROMANS 8:6; word 9m 92M

IT IS no small challenge to maintain a clean moral standing before God amid a depraved society that glorifies gratification of fleshly desires. However, the Scriptures contrast “flesh” and “spirit,” drawing a clear line of demarcation between the dire consequences of allowing oneself to be dominated by the sinful flesh and the blessed results of yielding to the influence of God’s holy spirit.

² For example, Jesus Christ said: “It is the spirit that is life-giving; the flesh is of no use at all. The sayings that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.” (John 6:63) To Christians in Galatia, the apostle Paul wrote: “The flesh is against the spirit in its desire, and the spirit against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other.” (Galatians 5:17) Paul also said: “He who is sowing with a view to his flesh will reap corruption from his flesh, but he who is sowing with a view to the spirit will reap everlasting life from the spirit.”—Galatians 6:8.

³ Jehovah’s holy spirit—his active force—can effectively root out unclean “fleshly desires” and destructive domination by our sinful flesh. (1 Peter 2:11) To break free from bondage to wrong inclinations, it is vital that we have the help of God’s spirit, for Paul wrote: “The minding of the flesh means death, but the minding of the spirit means life and peace.” (Romans 8:6) What does it mean to mind the spirit?

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1. 2. What contrast does the Bible make between “flesh” and “spirit”?
 3. What is needed in order to break free from wrong desires and inclinations?

“The Minding of the Spirit”

⁴ When Paul wrote about “the minding of the spirit,” he used a Greek word that denotes “way of thinking, mind(-set), . . . aim, aspiration, striving.” A related verb means “to think, to be minded in a certain way.” Thus, minding the spirit means being controlled, dominated, and impelled by Jehovah’s active force. It signifies that we willingly let our thinking, inclinations, and aspirations come under the complete influence of God’s holy spirit.

⁵ The degree to which we should submit to the influence of the holy spirit was emphasized by Paul when he spoke of being ‘slaves by the spirit.’ (Romans 7:6) On the basis of their faith in Jesus’ ransom sacrifice, Christians have been liberated from domination by sin and have thus “died” to their former situation as its slaves. (Romans 6:2, 11) Those figuratively dead in such a way are still alive physically and are now free to follow Christ as “slaves to righteousness.”—Romans 6:18-20.

A Dramatic Transformation

⁶ The transformation from being “slaves of sin” to serving God as “slaves to righteousness” is dramatic indeed. Regarding some who experienced such a change, Paul wrote: ‘You have been washed clean, you have been sanctified, you have been declared righteous in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and with the spirit of our God.’—Romans 6:17, 18; 1 Corinthians 6:11.

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4. What does “the minding of the spirit” mean?
 5. To what degree should we submit to the influence of the holy spirit?
 6. What transformation is experienced by those becoming “slaves to righteousness”?

⁷ In order to experience such a remarkable transformation, we first need to learn about Jehovah's view of matters. Centuries ago, the psalmist David fervently petitioned God: "Make me know your own ways, O Jehovah . . . Make me walk in your truth and teach me." (Psalm 25:4, 5) Jehovah listened to David, and He can answer such a prayer for his modern-day servants too.

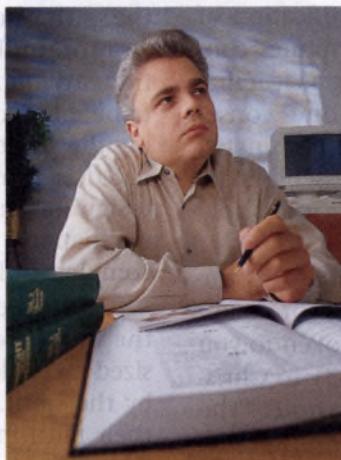
Since God's ways and his truth are clean and holy, meditation on them will be helpful if we are tempted to satisfy unclean fleshly desires.

The Vital Role of God's Word

⁸ God's Word, the Bible, is a product of his spirit. Thus, one vital way to let that spirit operate on us is by reading and studying the Bible—daily if possible. (1 Corinthians 2:10, 11; Ephesians 5:18) Filling our mind and heart with Bible truths and principles will assist us to withstand attacks on our spirituality. Yes, when immoral temptations arise, God's spirit can bring back to our minds Scriptural reminders and guiding principles that can reinforce our resolve to act in harmony with God's will. (Psalm 119:1, 2, 99; John 14:26) Therefore, we are not deceived into following a wrong course.—2 Corinthians 11:3.

⁹ As we continue our sincere and diligent study of the Scriptures with the help of Bible-based publications, God's spirit influences our mind and heart, causing our respect for Jehovah's standards to deepen. Our relation-

ship with God becomes the most important thing in our life. When faced with temptation, thoughts about how pleasurable it might be to engage in wrongdoing are not entertained. Rather, our immediate concern is to maintain our integrity to Jehovah. A strong appreciation for our relationship with him stirs us to combat any inclination that might damage or destroy it.



Bible study helps us to withstand attacks on our spirituality

"How I Do Love Your Law!"

¹⁰ If we are to mind the spirit, knowledge of God's Word is not enough. King Solomon had a very good grasp of Jehovah's standards, but he failed to live by them during the latter part of his life. (1 Kings 4:29, 30; 11:1-6) If we are spiritually-minded, we will see the need not only for knowing what the Bible says but also for obeying God's law wholeheartedly. That means making a conscientious examination of Jehovah's standards and diligently endeavoring to follow them. The psalmist had this kind of attitude. He sang: "How I do love your law! All day long it is my concern." (Psalm 119:97) When we are truly concerned about following God's law, we are moved to display godly qualities. (Ephesians 5:1, 2) Instead of being helplessly attracted to wrongdoing, we manifest the fruitage of the spirit, and a desire to please Jehovah turns us away from vile "works of the flesh."—Galatians 5:16, 19-23; Psalm 15:1, 2.

¹¹ How can we develop deep respect and love for Jehovah's law? One way is by care-

7. Why is it important to have Jehovah's view of matters?
8. Why is it imperative that we study the Bible?
9. How does Bible study strengthen our resolve to preserve our relationship with Jehovah?

10. Why is obeying Jehovah's law necessary in order to mind the spirit?
11. How would you explain that Jehovah's law prohibiting fornication is a protection for us?

fully examining its value. Consider God's law that limits sexual relations to marriage and forbids fornication and adultery. (Hebrews 13:4) Does obeying this law deprive us of anything good? Would a loving heavenly Father make a law that denies us something beneficial? Of course not! Look at what is happening in the lives of many who do not live in harmony with Jehovah's moral standards. Unwanted pregnancies often lead them to abortions or perhaps into premature and unhappy marriages. Many have to rear a child without a husband or a wife. Furthermore, those who practice fornication expose themselves to sexually transmitted diseases. (1 Corinthians 6:18) And if a servant of Jehovah commits fornication, the emotional effects can be devastating. Trying to suppress the naggings of a guilty conscience can cause sleepless nights and mental anguish. (Psalm 32:3, 4; 51:3) Is it not obvious, then, that Jehovah's law prohibiting fornication is designed to protect us? Yes, there is indeed great benefit in maintaining moral cleanliness!

Pray for Jehovah's Help

¹² The minding of the spirit certainly calls for heartfelt prayer. It is appropriate to ask for the help of God's spirit, for Jesus said: "If you . . . know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more so will the Father in heaven give holy spirit to those asking him!" (Luke 11:13) In prayer, we can express our dependence on the spirit for help regarding our weaknesses. (Romans 8:26, 27) If we real-



It is proper to pray for Jehovah's help to overcome sinful desires

ize that sinful desires or attitudes are affecting us, or if a loving fellow believer draws this to our attention, it would be wise to be specific about the problem in our prayers and ask for God's assistance in overcoming these leanings.

¹³ Jehovah can help us to concentrate on righteous, chaste, virtuous, and praiseworthy things. And how fitting it is to supplicate him earnestly so that "the peace of God" will guard our hearts and mental powers! (Philippians 4:6-8) Let us therefore pray for Jehovah's assistance to "pursue righteousness, godly devotion, faith, love, endurance, mildness of temper." (1 Timothy 6:11-14) With our heavenly Father's help, anxieties and temptations will not grow to the point of being out of control. Rather, our lives will be marked by God-given tranquillity.

Do Not Grieve the Spirit

¹⁴ Mature servants of Jehovah personally apply Paul's counsel: "Do not put out the fire of the spirit." (1 Thessalonians 5:19) Since God's spirit is "the spirit of holiness," it is clean, pure, sacred. (Romans 1:4) When operating upon us, that spirit is thus a force for holiness, or cleanliness. It helps to keep us in a clean way of life that is marked by obedience to God. (1 Peter 1:2) Any unclean practice constitutes a disregarding of that spirit, and that can have disastrous consequences. How so?

¹⁵ Well, Paul wrote: "Do not be grieving God's holy spirit, with which you have been

12, 13. Why is it appropriate to pray when besieged by sinful desires?

14. Why is God's spirit a force for cleanliness?

15, 16. (a) How might we grieve God's spirit? (b) How can we avoid grieving Jehovah's spirit?

Spiritual goals can help us to keep on minding the spirit



sealed for a day of releasing by ransom." (Ephesians 4:30) The Scriptures identify Jehovah's spirit as a seal, or a 'token of what was to come,' for faithful anointed Christians. And that is immortal heavenly life. (2 Corinthians 1:

22; 1 Corinthians 15:50-57; Revelation 2:10) God's spirit can direct anointed ones and their companions with an earthly hope in a life of faithfulness and can help them to avoid sinful works.

¹⁶ The apostle warned against tendencies toward falsehood, stealing, shameful conduct, and so forth. If we allowed ourselves to drift toward such things, we would be going against the spirit-inspired counsel of God's Word. (Ephesians 4:17-29; 5:1-5) At least to a degree, we could thus be grieving God's spirit, and surely that is something we want to avoid. For that matter, if any of us began to ignore the counsel of Jehovah's Word, we might start to develop attitudes or traits that could result in willful sin and the total loss of divine favor. (Hebrews 6:4-6) Though we might not be practicing sin right now, we

could be heading in that direction. By continually going contrary to the leading of the spirit, we would be grieving it. We would also be resisting and grieving Jehovah, the source of holy spirit. As those who love God, we never want to do that. Rather, may we pray for Jehovah's help so that we do not grieve his spirit but are able to bring honor to his holy name by continuing to mind the spirit.

Keep On Minding the Spirit

¹⁷ A noteworthy way for us to keep on minding the spirit is to set spiritual goals and work to attain them. Depending on our needs and circumstances, our goals may include improving our study habits, increasing our share in the preaching work, or reaching out for a specific privilege of service, such as the full-time pioneer ministry, Bethel service, or missionary work. This will keep our

17. What are some spiritual goals we might set, and why would working to attain them be wise?

mind occupied with spiritual interests and will help us to resist succumbing to our human weaknesses or being driven by the materialistic goals and unscriptural desires common to this system of things. This certainly is the wise course, for Jesus urged: "Stop storing up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break in and steal. Rather, store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." —Matthew 6:19-21.

¹⁸ Minding the spirit and suppressing worldly desires certainly is the course of wisdom in these "last days." (2 Timothy 3:1-5) After all, "the world is passing away and so is its desire, but he that does the will of God remains forever." (1 John 2:15-17) If a young Christian pursues the goal of full-time service, for example, this may serve as a guiding light during the challenging years of adolescence or young adulthood. When pressured to compromise, such an individual will have a clear vision of what he or she wants to accomplish in Jehovah's service. Such a spiritual person will deem it unwise, even foolish, to forfeit the achieving of spiritual goals for the sake of material pursuits or any pleasure that sin promises to give. Remember that spiritually inclined Moses 'chose to be ill-treated with the people of God rather than to have the temporary enjoyment of sin.' (Hebrews 11:24, 25) Whether young or old, we make a similar choice when we keep on minding the spirit instead of the fallen flesh.

¹⁹ "The minding of the flesh means enmity with God," whereas "the minding of the spirit means life and peace." (Romans 8:6, 7) If we keep on minding the spirit, we will expe-

18. Why is it so important to keep on minding the spirit in these last days?

19. What benefits will we enjoy if we keep on minding the spirit?

rience precious peace. Our hearts and mental powers will be more fully protected from the influence of our sinful condition. We will be better able to resist temptations to engage in wrongdoing. And we will have divine help to cope with the ongoing struggle between flesh and spirit.

²⁰ By continuing to mind the spirit, we maintain a vital link with Jehovah, the source of both life and holy spirit. (Psalm 36:9; 51:11) Satan the Devil and his agents are doing everything they can to destroy our relationship with Jehovah God. They try to gain control of our minds, knowing that if we give in, this will eventually lead to enmity with God and to death. But we can come off victorious in this battle between the flesh and the spirit. That was Paul's experience, for in writing about his own battle, he first asked: "Who will rescue me from the body undergoing this death?" Then, showing that rescue was possible, he exclaimed: "Thanks to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Romans 7:21-25) We too can thank God through Christ for providing the means to cope with human weaknesses and keep on minding the spirit with the wonderful hope of everlasting life. —Romans 6:23.

20. Why can we be sure that it is possible to come off victorious in the battle between the flesh and the spirit?

Do You Recall?

- What does it mean to mind the spirit?
- How can we let Jehovah's spirit operate on us?
- Explain why, in our battle against sin, it is vital to study the Bible, to obey Jehovah's law, and to pray to him.
- How can setting spiritual goals keep us in the course of life?

COULD THIS BE the Best Career for You?

IF YOU are a baptized Christian, love for God undoubtedly moves you to do his will. Moreover, the ministry must surely be your vocation. After all, Jesus Christ commissioned all of his followers to be disciple makers. (Matthew 28:19, 20) Yes, you may now be working secularly to support yourself. But as a follower of Jesus and one of Jehovah's Witnesses, first and foremost you are a Christian minister—one who gives the Kingdom-preaching work priority in life.—Matthew 24:14.

Perhaps you are in your late teens or early 20's. Possibly, you have given a lot of thought to what course you are going to pursue in life. In weighing the options open to you, personal satisfaction is likely to be an important factor.

Consider, then, what Jørgen in Denmark says about the choice he made. Jørgen describes it as "an ideal way of life in which you can concentrate on the most important work there is." Eva, a 31-year-old woman in Greece, says: "Comparing my life with that of my peers, I always conclude that it is richer, fuller, and more exciting." What career provides such satisfaction? How can you follow such a way of life?

Does God Show the Way?

Choosing a career may be quite difficult. In fact, some may wish that God would indicate exactly what he wants them to do.

When Moses was in Midian, Jehovah directed him to return to Egypt and lead the Israelites out of slavery. (Exodus 3:1-10) God's angel appeared to Gideon, who was appoint-

ed to save Israel from oppression. (Judges 6:11-14) David was tending sheep when God told Samuel to anoint him as Israel's next king. (1 Samuel 16:1-13) We are not guided in such ways today. Instead, we need to weigh matters and decide how to use our God-given abilities.

Jehovah has opened "a large door that leads to activity" for young Christians today. (1 Corinthians 16:9) How so? In the last decade, the number of Kingdom proclaimers has increased by over 2,125,000 to more than 6,000,000 earth wide. Who help to provide the millions of Bibles, books, brochures, magazines, and tracts needed for spiritual sustenance and for the global work of preaching the good news? This blessed privilege is enjoyed by members of the worldwide Bethel family.

A Rewarding Life

Bethel means "House of God," and Bethel homes are the places of residence of Christian volunteers serving at the headquarters and at the branch offices of the Watch Tower Society. (Genesis 28:19, footnote) Present-day Bethel families might be likened to well-organized 'households built up by wisdom' and founded on love for Jehovah.—Proverbs 24:3.

What can be said about the familylike atmosphere at Bethel? A 25-year-old member of the Bethel family in Estonia states: "I enjoy the feeling of being among Jehovah's friends all the time. This is still the most valuable thing for me at Bethel."—Psalm 15:1, 2.

Worldwide, about 19,500 individuals now enjoy the privilege of Bethel service. (Psalm 110:3) In the United States, 46 percent of those at Bethel are between the ages of 19 and 29. Like Isaiah, they have said: "Here I am! Send me." (Isaiah 6:8) Isaiah—already dedicated to Jehovah—was volunteering for an additional privilege of service. This apparently meant sacrificing some personal advantages. Those in Bethel service leave their homes and familiar surroundings, as well as mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, and friends. These sacrifices are willingly made "for the sake of the good news."—Mark 10:29, 30.

In turn, what spiritual blessings there are at Bethel! A young member of the Bethel family in Russia explains: "By being self-sacrificing, we can learn a lot that will help us to live in the new world. I can say that in my case Jehovah's blessings are much greater than my sacrifices."—Malachi 3:10.

Life at Bethel

What is life like at Bethel? Members of the Bethel family agree that it is wholesome and satisfying, even exciting. Jens, who is 43, enjoys Bethel service. Why? He says: "Because of the feeling that we are part of a grand effort to carry out an important task. I am able to sense the scope and magnitude of Jehovah's work."

From Monday through Saturday, the day at Bethel begins with morning worship. This is a discussion of the Bible, presided over by an experienced elder. On Monday evenings an hour is devoted to the family study of the Bible with the aid of *The Watchtower*, followed at times by a talk based on a Scriptural theme especially suited to the Bethel family.

What happens when a person first comes to Bethel? To introduce new members to Bethel life, mature brothers of the family give lectures dealing with various facets of Bethel service. For a number of weeks during the first

year, a new member of the Bethel family attends a fine weekly school designed to broaden his or her understanding of the Scriptures. New entrants also enjoy a special Bible-reading program. During their first year of Bethel service, new members of the family read through the entire Bible.

What is the effect of all this training? Joshua, a 33-year-old member of the Bethel family in Hong Kong, answers: "Bethel has really deepened my appreciation for Jehovah. I can associate with many experienced brothers who have spent most of their lives serving Jehovah. I especially enjoy the spiritual programs, such as morning worship and the family *Watchtower* Study. Further, I like the orderly and simple way of life. This frees me from unnecessary anxiety. I also learn how to handle things in a Christian manner, and this has always proved to be beneficial."

Members of the Bethel family spend most of their time and effort doing what they volunteered to do. That is, to use their physical and mental resources primarily to care for the assignment they are given at Bethel. A great variety of things need to be done. Some operate printing presses or work in the bindery, making books that are shipped to many congregations. Others serve in the kitchen, the dining room, or the laundry. Assignments include cleaning, farming, construction work, and so on. Some have the responsibility of caring for the equipment in these departments. Others provide health care or do office work. All Bethel work assignments involve enjoyable challenges and are wonderfully rewarding. The work done at Bethel is especially satisfying because it promotes Kingdom interests and is performed out of love for God.

Members of the Bethel family are assigned to congregations, where they experience firsthand the benefits of their work.

WHAT CAN ELDERS AND PARENTS DO?

Elders and traveling overseers should particularly encourage young men to apply for Bethel.

Recently, an informal inquiry among younger members of the Bethel family showed that 34 percent of them were primarily urged by Christian overseers to make Bethel service their goal.

Yes, they may be missed by their local congregations. But it is good to remember that while Timothy no doubt exerted a wholesome influence on other young people in Lystra and Iconium, the elders there did not hold him back from serving with Paul. They did not conclude that having Timothy accompany the apostle would result in too great a loss to their congregation.—1 Timothy 4:14.

Especially should Christian parents seek to be a positive influence on their children in this matter. In the survey just mentioned, 40 percent of those asked cited their parents as the main source of encouragement for entering Bethel service. One sister who has been serving at Bethel for a few years stated: “My parents’ life in Jehovah’s service was a powerful impetus for me to enter Bethel service. By seeing their example in the full-time ministry, I just knew that this would be the best and most satisfactory way of life to choose.”



They enjoy attending meetings of the congregation and sharing in the preaching work. As a result, Bethel family members have developed strong ties with their brothers and sisters in the local congregations.—Mark 10:29, 30.

Rita, a member of the Bethel family in Britain, says: “I am so grateful for the congregation! When I am at the meetings and in the ministry, it strengthens my faith so much to see dear brothers, sisters, children, and older ones there! Come what may, they are there. That helps me to be more zealous in my Bethel service.”

Life at Bethel is not all work, meetings, field service, and study. The family enjoys periods of relaxation as well. From time to time, there are entertaining and spiritually rewarding “Family Night” programs, which afford opportunities to enjoy the talents of many and to learn encouraging things about the

lives of others serving at Bethel. Enjoyable, too, are wholesome and upbuilding social visits with others. Some recreational facilities may be provided, as well as libraries for personal reading and research. And not to be forgotten is the pleasant conversation around the dining tables at mealtimes.

Tom, a member of the Bethel family in Estonia, says: “Just a block away from Bethel is the sea, and nearby there is a beautiful forest where my wife and I enjoy going for short walks. I also occasionally play golf, hockey, and tennis with friends in the congregation and at Bethel. And when the weather allows, we go for a ride on our bikes.”

What Can You Do to Qualify?

Of course, Bethel is primarily a place where mature Christians render sacred service to Jehovah and work in behalf of fellow believers throughout the world. Those who

become members of the Bethel family must meet certain qualifications. What can you do to qualify for Bethel service?

Like Timothy, who served with the apostle Paul, those accepted for Bethel service must have a good standing in the congregation. (1 Timothy 1:1) Timothy "was well reported on by the brothers in Lystra and Iconium." (Acts 16:2) Though he was young, Timothy

knew the Scriptures and was well-grounded in the truth. (2 Timothy 3:14, 15) Similarly, a knowledge of the Bible is expected of those accepted for Bethel service.

Members of the Bethel family need to have a self-sacrificing spirit. So evident was Timothy's spirit of self-sacrifice and his willingness to put Kingdom interests ahead of his own that Paul could say of him: "I have no one



THEY APPRECIATE BETHEL SERVICE

"I cherish my service at Bethel. It is satisfying to know that I have served Jehovah all day long and that I will do the same tomorrow, the day after tomorrow, and so forth. This gives me a good conscience and fills my mind with positive thoughts."

"Bethel is a place where you can devote all your time and energies to the service of Jehovah without distraction. This brings inner joy. But you can also see Jehovah's organization from a different perspective. You feel much closer to the hub of that organization, and this makes it very exciting."

"Coming to Bethel is the best thing that ever happened to me. Here education never stops. And here education is, not for my own personal achievement, but for Jehovah. Here my work will never be in vain."

"Using my talents at Bethel makes me feel content and at peace because they are being used for Jehovah and for the brothers."

"I could not find real satisfaction and happiness in my former career. I had dreamed for many years about working with and for my brothers and sisters. That is why I came to Bethel. I find real satisfaction in knowing that all my efforts will benefit others spiritually and will bring praise to Jehovah."

else of a disposition like his who will genuinely care for the things pertaining to you. For all the others are seeking their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus. But you know the proof he gave of himself, that like a child with a father he slaved with me in furtherance of the good news."—Philippians 2:20-22.

Bethel service calls for spiritual men and women. Arrangements made for Bethel family members make it possible for them to grow spiritually through Bible study, regularity at Christian meetings and in the field ministry, and association with mature Christians. Thus those at Bethel are helped to follow Paul's counsel: "Go on walking in union with [Christ Jesus], rooted and being built up in him and being stabilized in the faith, just as you were taught, overflowing with faith in thanksgiving."—Colossians 2:6, 7.

Because of the nature of the work at Bethel, those accepted for this privilege of service must be physically strong and in good health. If you meet the qualifications that we

have mentioned, are 19 years of age or older, and have been baptized for at least one year, we encourage you to consider Bethel service.

We All Have a Share

As Christians, surely all of us desire to put Kingdom interests first in life and to be whole-souled in our service to Jehovah. (Matthew 6:33; Colossians 3:23) We can also encourage those serving at Bethel to continue rendering sacred service there. And especially should young brothers who qualify for Bethel service be urged to reach out for this blessed privilege.

Bethel service is a spiritually satisfying way of life—one that could indeed be the best career for you. It is for Nick, who started serving at Bethel at the age of 20. After ten years of Bethel service, he says: "I often pray to Jehovah to thank him for his undeserved kindness. What more could I ask for? Here, we are surrounded by faithful Christians who are doing their best to serve Jehovah."

"Happy Is the Man That Has Found Wisdom"

HE WAS a poet, an architect, a king. With an annual income of over 200 million dollars, he was wealthier than any other king on earth. The man was also renowned for his wisdom. So impressed was a visiting queen that she exclaimed: "Look! I had not been told the half. You have surpassed in wisdom and prosperity the things heard to which I listened." (1 Kings 10:4-9) Such was the position of King Solomon of ancient Israel.

Solomon had both riches and wisdom. And that uniquely qualified him to decide which of the two was truly indispensable. He wrote: "Happy is the man that has found wisdom, and the man that gets discernment, for having it as gain is better than having silver as gain and having it as produce than gold itself. It is more precious than corals, and all other delights of yours cannot be made equal to it."—Proverbs 3:13-15.

Where, though, can wisdom be found? Why is it more valuable than riches? What are its attractive features? The 8th chapter of the Bible book of Proverbs, written by Solomon, answers these questions in a fascinating way. There wisdom is personified, as though able to speak and act. And wisdom personally reveals its appeal as well as its value.

"It Keeps Crying Loudly"

Chapter 8 of Proverbs begins with a rhetorical question: "Does not wisdom keep call-



ing out, and discernment keep giving forth its voice?"* Yes, wisdom and discernment keep calling out, but quite unlike the immoral woman who lurks in dark places and whispers seductive words in the ears of a solitary and inexperienced youth. (Proverbs 7:12) "*On top of the heights, by the way, at the crossing of the roadways it has stationed itself. At the side of the gates, at the mouth of the town, at the going in of the entrances it keeps crying loudly.*" (Proverbs 8:1-3) The strong and bold voice of wisdom is heard loud and clear in public places—at the gates, at the crossroads, at the entrances of a city. People can easily hear that voice and respond.

Who can deny that godly wisdom recorded in the inspired Word of God, the Bible, is available to nearly everyone on earth who desires to gain it? "The Bible is the most widely read book in history," says *The World Book Encyclopedia*. It adds: "More copies have been distributed of the Bible than of any other book. The Bible has also been translated more times, and into more languages, than any other book." With the complete Bible or portions of it available in more than 2,100 languages and dialects, over 90 percent of the human family have access to at least part of God's Word in their own language.

* The Hebrew word for "wisdom" is in the feminine gender. Hence, some translations use feminine pronouns when referring to wisdom.

Jehovah's Witnesses are publicly declaring the message of the Bible everywhere. In 235 lands, they are actively preaching the good news of God's Kingdom and teaching people the truths found in God's Word. Their Bible-based journals *The Watchtower*, published in 140 languages, and *Awake!*, printed in 83 languages, have a circulation of more than 20 million each. Wisdom certainly keeps crying loudly in public places!

"My Voice Is to the Sons of Men"

Personified wisdom begins to speak, saying: "To you, O men, I am calling, and my voice is to the sons of men. O inexperienced ones, understand shrewdness; and you stupid ones, understand heart."—Proverbs 8:4, 5.

The call of wisdom is universal. It extends its invitation to all mankind. Even inexperienced ones are invited to gain shrewdness, or prudence, and foolish ones, understanding. Indeed, Jehovah's Witnesses believe that the Bible is a book for all people and endeavor impartially to encourage everyone they meet to peer into it to find the words of wisdom it contains.

'My Palate Utters Truth'

Extending its appeal, wisdom continues: "Listen, for it is about the foremost things that I speak, and the opening of my lips is about uprightness. For my palate in low tones utters truth itself; and wickedness is something detestable to my lips. All the sayings of my mouth are in righteousness. Among them there is nothing twisted or crooked."—Proverbs 8:6-9.

Fittingly, wisdom urges: "Take my discipline and not silver, and knowledge rath-

Wisdom is indispensable to those in responsible positions



er than choice gold." This plea is sensible, "for wisdom is better than corals, and all other delights themselves cannot be made equal to it." (Proverbs 8:10, 11) But why? What makes wisdom more precious than riches?

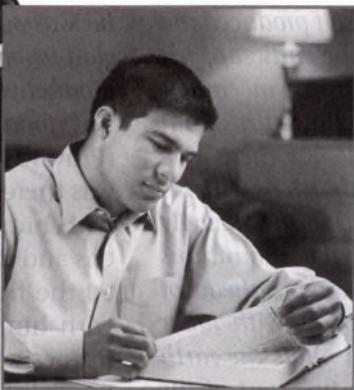
"My Fruitage Is Better Than Gold"

The gifts that wisdom bestows upon its listener are more precious than gold, silver, or corals. Stating what these gifts are, wisdom says: "I, wisdom, I have resided with shrewdness and I find even the knowledge of thinking abilities. The fear of Jehovah means the hating of bad. Self-exaltation and pride and the bad way and the perverse mouth I have hated."—Proverbs 8:12, 13.

Wisdom gives shrewdness and thinking abilities to its possessor. The man having godly wisdom also has reverence and awe for God, since "the fear of Jehovah is the start of wisdom." (Proverbs 9:10) Hence, he hates what Jehovah hates. Haughtiness, arrogance, immoral behavior, and perverse speech are



*Do not neglect the provisions
that impart wisdom*



far removed from him. His hatred for what is bad shields him from the corruptive effect of power. How important it is that those in responsible positions in the Christian congregation, as well as family heads, seek wisdom!

"I have counsel and practical wisdom," continues wisdom. *"I—understanding; I have mightiness. By me kings themselves keep reigning, and high officials themselves keep decreeing righteousness. By me princes themselves keep ruling as princes, and nobles are all judging in righteousness."* (Proverbs 8:14-16) The fruitage of wisdom includes insight, understanding, and mightiness—factors very much needed by rulers, high officials, and nobles. Wisdom is indispensable to those who are in a position of power and those who counsel others.

True wisdom is readily available to all, but not all find it. Some reject it or avoid it, even when it is at their doorstep. *"Those loving me I myself love,"* says wisdom, *"and those looking for me are the ones that find me."* (Proverbs 8:17) Wisdom is accessible only to those who seek it in earnest.

The ways of wisdom are just and righteous. It rewards its seekers. Wisdom says: *"Riches and glory are with me, hereditary values and righteousness. My fruitage is better than*

gold, even than refined gold, and my produce than choice silver. In the path of righteousness I walk, in the middle of the roadways of judgment, to cause those loving me to take possession of substance; and their storehouses I keep filled."—Proverbs 8:18-21.

Along with such excellent qualities and traits as prudence, thinking ability, humility, insight, practical wisdom, and understanding, wisdom's gifts include riches and honor. A wise person may well gain wealth by righteous means, and he will prosper spiritually. (3 John 2) Wisdom also brings a person honor. Moreover, he gains satisfaction from what he acquires, and he has peace of mind and a clean conscience toward God. Yes, happy is the man that has found wisdom. The fruitage of wisdom is indeed better than refined gold and choice silver.

How timely this advice is for us, since we live in a materialistic world where the emphasis is on gaining wealth by any means and at any cost! May we never lose sight of how valuable wisdom is or resort to unrighteous means for gaining wealth. Let us never neglect the very provisions that impart wisdom—our Christian meetings and our personal study of the Bible and the publications provided by “the faithful and discreet slave”—simply for the sake of gaining riches.—Matthew 24:45-47.

"From Time Indefinite I Was Installed"

The personification of wisdom found in the 8th chapter of Proverbs is not merely a

device to explain the characteristics of an abstract quality. It also symbolically refers to Jehovah's most important creation. Wisdom goes on to say: "Jehovah himself produced me as the beginning of his way, the earliest of his achievements of long ago. From time indefinite I was installed, from the start, from times earlier than the earth. When there were no watery deeps I was brought forth as with labor pains, when there were no springs heavily charged with water. Before the mountains themselves had been settled down, ahead of the hills, I was brought forth as with labor pains, when as yet he had not made the earth and the open spaces and the first part of the dust masses of the productive land."—Proverbs 8:22-26.

How well the foregoing description of wisdom personified matches what is stated concerning "the Word" in the Scriptures! "In the beginning the Word was," wrote the apostle John, "and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god." (John 1:1) Personified wisdom figuratively represents God's Son, Jesus Christ, in his prehuman existence.*

Jesus Christ is "the firstborn of all creation; because by means of him all other things were created in the heavens and upon the earth, the things visible and the things invisible." (Colossians 1:15, 16) "When he [Jehovah] prepared the heavens I was there," continues wisdom personified, "when he decreed a circle upon the face of the watery deep, when he made firm the cloud masses above, when he caused the fountains of the watery deep to be strong, when he set for the sea his decree that the waters themselves should not pass beyond his order, when he decreed the foundations of the earth, then I came to be beside him as a master worker, and I came to be the one he was specially fond of day by day, I being glad before him all the time, being glad at the productive land of his earth, and the things I was fond of were with the sons of men." (Proverbs 8:27-31)

Jehovah's firstborn Son was there beside his Father, actively working with him—the peerless Creator of the heavens and the earth. When Jehovah God created the first human, His Son was associated with him in the project as Master Worker. (Genesis 1:26) No wonder God's Son is very much interested in, even fond of, mankind!

"Happy Is the Man That Is Listening to Me"

As wisdom personified, the Son of God says: "Now, O sons, listen to me; yes, happy are the ones that keep my very ways. Listen to discipline and become wise, and do not show any neglect. Happy is the man that is listening to me by keeping awake at my doors day by day, by watching at the posts of my entrances. For the one finding me will certainly find life, and gets goodwill from Jehovah. But the one missing me is doing violence to his soul; all those intensely hating me are the ones that do love death."—Proverbs 8:32-36.

Jesus Christ is the very embodiment of God's wisdom. "Carefully concealed in him are all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge." (Colossians 2:3) Let us, then, listen to him without neglect and follow his steps closely. (1 Peter 2:21) To reject him is to do violence to our own soul and to love death, for "there is no salvation in anyone else." (Acts 4:12) Indeed, let us accept Jesus as the one whom God has provided for our salvation. (Matthew 20:28; John 3:16) Thus we will experience the happiness that comes from 'finding life and getting Jehovah's goodwill.'

* The fact that the Hebrew word for "wisdom" is always in the feminine gender does not conflict with the use of wisdom to represent God's Son. The Greek word for "love" in the expression "God is love" is also in the feminine gender. (1 John 4:8) Yet, it is used to refer to God.



PAUL ORGANIZES RELIEF CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE HOLY ONES

SPIRITUAL interests are of primary importance to true Christians. Nevertheless, concern for the physical welfare of others is also important to them. They have often provided for those experiencing hardship. Brotherly love motivates Christians to help fellow believers who are in need.—John 13:34, 35.

Love for his spiritual brothers and sisters moved the apostle Paul to organize a collection among congregations in Achaia, Galatia, Macedonia, and the district of Asia. What made this necessary? How was the relief program organized? What was the response? And why should we be interested in what took place?

Situation of the Jerusalem Congregation

After Pentecost 33 C.E., Jews and proselytes from elsewhere who became disciples at Pentecost remained in Jerusalem for some time to learn more about the true faith. Where necessary, fellow worshipers gladly helped to bear the burden of such an extended stay. (Acts 2:7-11, 41-44; 4:32-37) Civil unrest may have resulted in further need

as Jewish nationalists fomented rebellion and mob violence. So that no follower of Christ would go hungry, however, daily distributions were made to needy widows. (Acts 6:1-6)

Herod applied himself to persecuting the congregation, and in the mid-40's C.E., famine ravaged Judea. As far as Jesus' followers were concerned, all of this may have resulted in what Paul called "sufferings," "tribulations," and "the plundering of [their] belongings."—Hebrews 10:32-34; Acts 11:27-12:1.

In about 49 C.E., the situation was still serious. Thus, after agreeing that Paul would concentrate on the Gentiles in his preaching, Peter, James, and John urged him to "keep the poor in mind." That is what Paul endeavored to do.—Galatians 2:7-10.

Organizing the Collection

Paul supervised a fund for poor Christians in Judea. In about 55 C.E., he told the Corinthians: "Concerning the collection that is for the holy ones, just as I gave orders to the congregations of Galatia, do that way also yourselves. Every first day of the week let each of you at his own house set something aside in store as he may be prospering . . . [Then] whatever men you approve of by letters, these I shall send to carry your kind gift to Jerusalem." (1 Corinthians 16:1-3) A year

later Paul said that Macedonia and Achaia were participating. And when the proceeds were sent to Jerusalem, the presence of delegates from the district of Asia seems to indicate that congregations in that region too had contributed.—Acts 20:4; 2 Corinthians 8:1-4; 9:1, 2.

Nobody was pressed to give more than he could afford. Instead, it was a matter of equalizing so that any surplus might offset deficiency among the holy ones in Jerusalem and Judea. (2 Corinthians 8:13-15) “Let each one do just as he has resolved in his heart,” said Paul, “not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”—2 Corinthians 9:7.

The apostle gave the Corinthians good reason to be generous. Jesus ‘had become poor for their sakes, that they might become rich’ spiritually. (2 Corinthians 8:9) Surely they would want to imitate his giving spirit. Moreover, since God was enriching them “for every sort of generosity,” it was fitting that they help to supply the needs of the holy ones.—2 Corinthians 9:10-12.

Attitude of the Participants

We can learn much about voluntary giving by considering the attitude of participants in the first-century relief program for the holy ones. The collection went beyond concern for poor fellow worshipers of Jehovah. It im-

plied that there was a bond of brotherhood between Jewish and Gentile Christians. Offering and accepting contributions signified unity and friendship between these Gentiles and Jews. Their sharing was material as well as spiritual.—Romans 15:26, 27.

Paul may not originally have invited the Macedonian Christians to participate—they too were in deep poverty. However, they ‘kept begging for the privilege of giving.’ Why, even though they were experiencing “a great test under affliction,” they joyfully gave “beyond their actual ability”! (2 Corinthians 8:1-4) Their great test apparently included accusations that they were practicing a religion unlawful for Romans. So it is understandable that they would have empathy for their Judean brothers, who were suffering similar hardships.—Acts 16:20, 21; 17:5-9; 1 Thessalonians 2:14.

Although Paul had used the Corinthians’ initial zeal for the collection to encourage the Macedonians, enthusiasm in Corinth had waned. Now the apostle cited the generosity of the Macedonians to motivate the Corinthians. He found it necessary to remind them that it was time to finish what they had started a year earlier. What had happened?—2 Corinthians 8:10, 11; 9:1-5.

Titus had initiated the collection in Corinth, but problems arose that likely thwarted his efforts. After consulting with Paul in Macedonia, Titus returned with two others to bolster the congregation in Corinth and finish the collection. Some may have insinuated that Paul had tried to exploit the Corinthians. This is probably why he sent three men to complete the collection and gave recommendations for each of them. “We are avoiding having any man find fault with us in connection with this liberal contribution to be administered by us,” said Paul. “For we ‘make honest provision, not only in the sight of

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

“The Word of Jehovah
Went On Growing”

We Were a Team

Obedience
—An Important Childhood Lesson?

Jehovah, but also in the sight of men.'"
—2 Corinthians 8:6, 18-23; 12:18.

Delivering the Contribution

By the spring of 56 C.E., the donated money was ready to be taken to Jerusalem. Paul would go with the delegation chosen by the contributors. Acts 20:4 says: "There were accompanying him Sopater the son of Pyrrhus of Beroea, Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and from the district of Asia Tychicus and Trophimus." Evidently, among them there was also Luke, who may have represented the Christians in Philippi. Thus, at least nine men went on this mission.

"The total sum gathered for the collection must have been considerable," says scholar Dieter Georgi, "because the final efforts, involving Paul and so many delegates, would not have been worth the trouble and expense otherwise." The party served not only to ensure security but also to shield Paul from any accusation of dishonesty. Those sent represented the Gentile congregations before the holy ones in Jerusalem.

Sailing from Corinth to Syria, the delegation would have reached Jerusalem by Passover. However, word of a plot to kill Paul resulted in a change of plans. (Acts 20:3) Perhaps his enemies had intended to do away with him at sea.

Paul had other concerns. Before departing, he wrote Christians in Rome to pray that he 'might be delivered from unbelievers in Judea and that his ministry for Jerusalem might prove to be acceptable to the holy ones.' (Romans 15:30, 31) Although the holy ones would undoubtedly receive

the contributions with deep gratitude, Paul may have been concerned about the trouble that his arrival could cause among the Jews in general.

The apostle certainly kept the poor in mind. While the Scriptures do not say when the contribution was handed over, its delivery promoted unity and enabled Gentile Christians to show their Judean fellow believers gratitude for spiritual riches received from them. Paul's appearance at the temple not long after his arrival in Jerusalem provoked a riot and brought about his arrest. But this ultimately gave him opportunities to witness to governors and kings.—Acts 9:15; 21:17-36; 23:11; 24:1-26:32.

Our Contributions Today

Since the first century, much has changed—but not underlying principles. Christians are rightly informed of financial needs. Any contributions they make for those in need should be voluntary, motivated by love for God and for fellow humans.—Mark 12:28-31.

The relief measures taken in behalf of the holy ones in the first century show that the administering of such contributions must be well organized and handled in a scrupulously honest manner. Of course, Jehovah

God is aware of needs, and he makes provision for his servants so that they can continue sharing the good news of the Kingdom with others in spite of hardships. (Matthew 6:25-34) Yet, all of us can do our part, whatever our economic status. In that way, 'the person with much will not have too much, and the person with little will not have too little.'—2 Corinthians 8:15.



WILL RELIGION BRING WORLD PEACE?

FROM August 28 to August 31, 2000, more than 500 representatives from 73 countries converged on New York City. They met together at the United Nations for "The Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders." The leaders—many clad in turbans, saffron-colored robes, feather headdresses, or long black cloaks—represented a multitude of faiths. Among these were Baha'i, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Shinto, Sikhism, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, and religions of Christendom.

The delegates met at the United Nations for the first two days of the four-day conference. However, the conference was not organized or funded by the United Nations but by various foundations. Nevertheless, both UN and religious leaders spoke of the importance of working together to bring an end to poverty, racism, environmental problems, war, and weapons of mass destruction.

The delegates signed a document entitled "Commitment to Global Peace." While acknowledging that violence and war are "sometimes perpetrated in the name of religion," the document declared that the signers would "collaborate with the United Nations . . . in the pursuit of peace." There were, however, no specific resolutions indicating how this might be done.

On the second day, Bawa Jain, the secretary-general of the summit, concluded his opening remarks by explaining that some years earlier he had noticed a certain painting at the United Nations. The painting depicted a man taller than the United Nations Secretariat building. He was knocking on the building as if it were a door.



Below the picture was the caption: "Prince of Peace." Mr. Jain said: "[The picture] had a deep effect on me the moment I saw it. I asked different people what [it] meant. I think today I have the answer. The gathering of you all here, the spiritual and religious leaders of the world, demonstrates to me that [this] is the prince of peace knocking on the door of the United Nations."

The Bible presents a different view. It shows that the Prince of Peace is Jesus Christ. He will bring global peace, not through the efforts of this world's political or religious leaders, but by means of God's Kingdom. It is this Kingdom—God's heavenly government—that will successfully unite obedient mankind and cause God's will to be done on earth.—Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 6:9, 10.