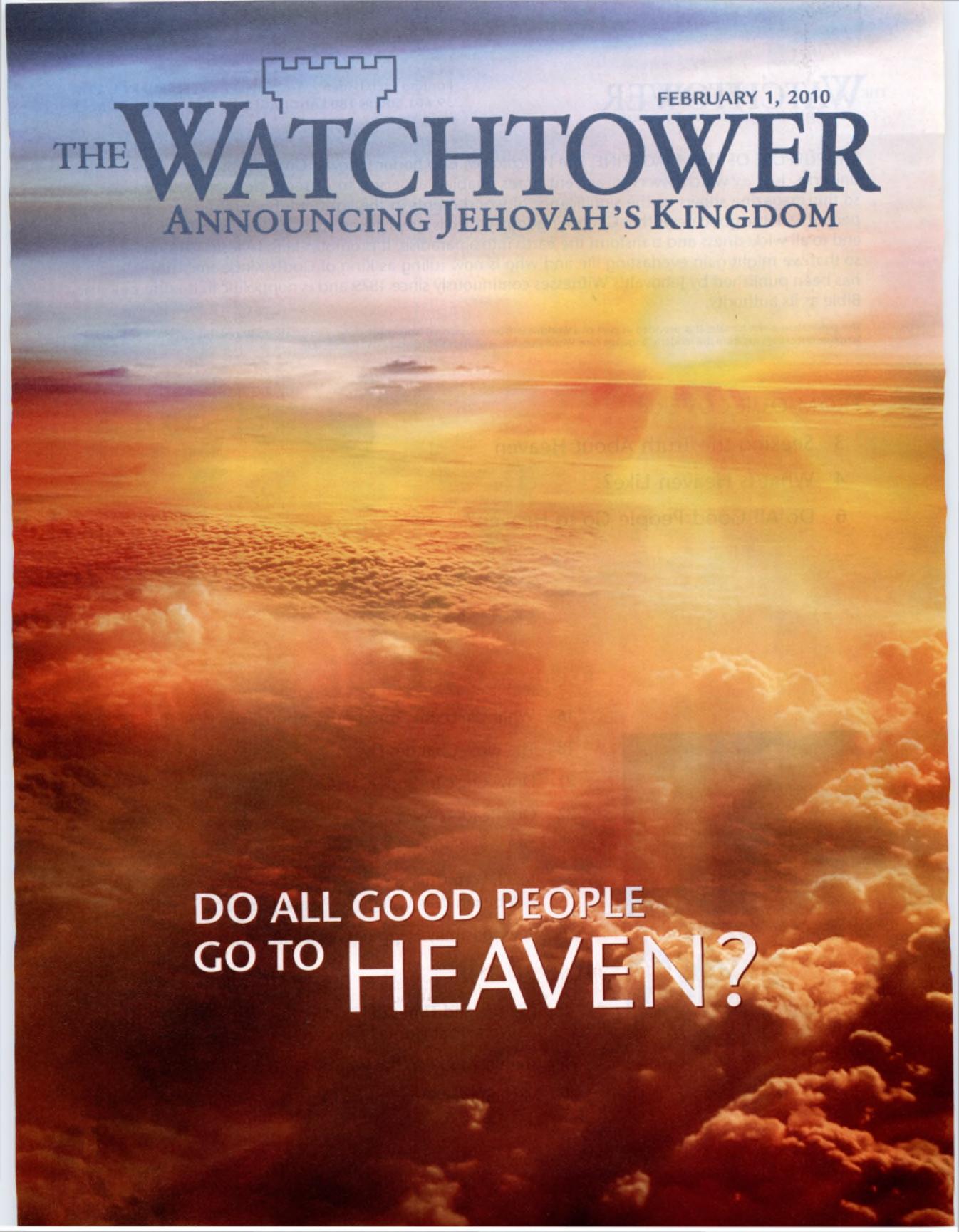


FEBRUARY 1, 2010

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



DO ALL GOOD PEOPLE
GO TO HEAVEN?

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

This publication is not for sale. It is provided as part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations. Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the modern-language *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References*.

FROM OUR COVER

- 3 Seeking the Truth About Heaven
- 4 What Is Heaven Like?
- 6 Do All Good People Go to Heaven?

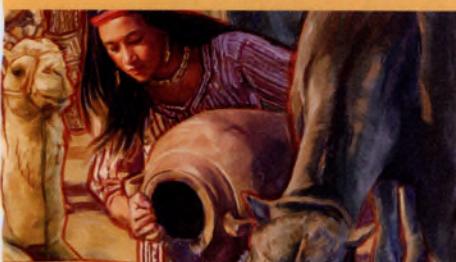


REGULAR FEATURES

- 16 What We Learn From Jesus—About True Worship
- 18 The Bible Changes Lives
- 21 Draw Close to God—Can God Feel Regret?
- 22 Our Readers Ask . . .
- 23 Did You Know?
- ◀ 24 Teach Your Children
—Rebekah Was Willing to Please Jehovah
- 26 Keys to Family Happiness—Dealing With In-Laws

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

- ◀ 8 The Life and Times of First-Century Christians
—"Workers at Home"
- 11 Should You Keep the Weekly Sabbath?
- 29 Missionaries Sent "to the Most Distant Part of the Earth"





Seeking the Truth About Heaven

HOW attractive the prospect of going to heaven can sound! The hope of life after death is held in various forms by Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, members of Christendom's churches, and even many who are not interested in religion. Heaven is usually imagined as a place of beauty and pleasure where people gain relief from suffering and are reunited with "departed loved ones." And yet, for most of mankind, the old adage is true: Everyone wants to go to heaven, but nobody wants to die to get there. Why is that so?

If we were designed to die and go to heaven, would not more people look forward to it as much as a child looks forward to growing up or a youth looks forward to getting married? But most people do not want to die.

Even so, preachers claim that after our short sojourn on earth, heaven is where we are intended to live. For example,

Theodore Edgar Cardinal McCarrick, archbishop emeritus of Washington, D.C., was quoted as saying: "This life is not what we're made for. We're made for heaven." Similarly, a former president of the U.S. National Association of Evangelicals was quoted as saying: "The purpose of life is to glorify God and go to heaven . . . 'cause heaven is our home."

Those who believe in an afterlife in heaven commonly base their faith on scant information. George Barna, president of a company that researches religious opinions, found that many people adopt "views of life and the afterlife based upon ideas drawn from disparate sources, such as movies, music and novels." An Episcopalian pastor in Florida was quoted as saying: "We don't know anything about heaven except that heaven is where God is."

Heaven, however, is an important topic discussed in the Bible. According to God's Word, what is heaven like? Was man made to live in heaven? If people do go to heaven, what will they do there?

What Is Heaven Like?

SOME people think that it is impossible to know about heaven because no one has ever come down from there to tell us about it. Perhaps they have forgotten that Jesus said: "I have come down from heaven." (John 6:38) To some religious leaders, he also said: "You are from the realms below; I am from the realms above." (John 8:23) What did Jesus say about heaven?

Jesus confirmed that heaven is where Jehovah resides. He called God "my Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 12:50) But Jesus used the word "heaven" in more than one sense. For example, he referred to the earth's atmosphere as "heaven" when he said: "Observe intently the birds of heaven." (Matthew 6:26) Nevertheless, Jehovah lives beyond the atmosphere. The Bible says: "There is One who is dwelling above the circle of the earth."—Isaiah 40:22.

Does the "Father who is in heaven" live among the stars? The physical universe is also called "heaven" in the Holy Scriptures. For example, one psalmist wrote: "When I see your heavens, the works of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have prepared, what is mortal man that you keep him in mind?"—Psalm 8:3, 4.

No, Jehovah God does not have to live inside the physical universe that he created

any more than a carpenter has to live inside a cupboard that he makes. Thus, when King Solomon dedicated the temple in Jerusalem to Jehovah, he said: "Will God truly dwell upon the earth? Look! The heavens, yes, the heaven of the heavens, themselves cannot contain you; how much less, then, this house that I have built!" (1 Kings 8:27) If Jehovah does not dwell in the physical heaven, what is the heaven where he does dwell?

Although men have studied the physical heavens with powerful telescopes and some have traveled to outer space, what the Bible says remains true: "No man has seen God at any time." (John 1:18) Jesus explained why when he said: "God is a Spirit."—John 4:24.

A spirit is a form of life higher than a human. A spirit is not composed of physical material, such as flesh and blood, that can be seen and felt by human senses. So when Jesus said that he used to dwell alongside his Father in "heaven," he meant that he used to have a form of life that is more glorious than any physical form of life. (John 17:5; Philippians 3:20, 21) This spirit realm where Jesus used to live with his Father is what the Bible calls "heaven." What is it like? What happens there?

THE WATCHTOWER ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

Would you welcome more information or a free home Bible study? Please send your request to Jehovah's Witnesses, using one of the addresses below. For a complete list of addresses, see www.watchtower.org/address.

America, United States of: 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483. *Australia:* PO Box 280,

Ingleburn, NSW 1890. *Bahamas:* PO Box N-1247, Nassau, NP. *Britain:* The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN. *Canada:* PO Box 4100, Georgetown, ON L7G 4Y4. *Germany:* Am Steinfels, 65618 Selberts. *Guam:* 143 Jehovah St, Barrigada, GU 96913. *Guyana:* 352-360 Tyrell St, Republic Park Phase 2 EBD. *Hawaii:* 2055 Kamehameha IV Road, Honolulu, HI 96819-2619. *Jamaica:* PO Box 103, Old Harbour, St. Catherine. *Japan:* 4-7-1 Nakashinden, Ebina City, Kanagawa-Pref, 243-0496. *Puerto Rico:* PO Box 3980, Guayanabo, PR 00970. *South Africa:* Private Bag X2067, Krugersdorp, 1740. *Trinidad and Tobago:* Lower Rapsey Street & Laxmi Lane, Curepe.

The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) is published semimonthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; M. H. Larson, President; G. F. Simonis, Secretary-Treasurer; 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483. Periodicals Postage Paid at Brooklyn, NY, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Watchtower, 1000 Red Mills Road, Wallkill, NY 12589-3299.

© 2010 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A.
Semimonthly ENGLISH

A Place of Happy Activity

The Bible describes heaven as a hive of activity. It mentions hundreds of millions of faithful spirit creatures who live there. (Daniel 7:9, 10) Each of these spirit creatures has his own distinct personality. How do we know that? In all observable creation, no two living things are exactly alike, so we can be sure that in heaven, there is great diversity as well. Remarkably, all these heavenly personalities work together in unity, thus providing an admirable contrast to the earth today, where people rarely cooperate well.

Notice how the Bible describes activity in heaven. "Bless Jehovah, O you angels of his, mighty in power, carrying out his word, by listening to the voice of his word. Bless Jehovah, all you armies of his, you ministers of his, doing his will." (Psalm 103:20, 21) So a lot of work is being done in heaven. We can be sure that it is satisfying work.

Angels have a long history of happy service that goes back to a time even before the earth was created. According to the Scriptures, when Jehovah founded the earth, the sons of God "joyfully cried out together" and "began shouting in applause." (Job 38:4, 7) One of God's heavenly sons was even privileged to work along with God in the creation of all other things. (Colossians 1:15-17) This appealing description of happy activity in heaven may raise questions in your mind about heaven and mankind.

Were Humans Intended to Go to Heaven?

Since angels were serving God in heaven before the founding of the earth, the first man and woman were evidently not created to populate the heavens. Rather, God said to that first human pair: "Be fruitful and become many and fill the earth." (Genesis 1:28; Acts 17:26) Adam was the first of a new form of earthly life, able to know God and to serve him faithfully. He was to father a race of humans whose home would be the earth. "As regards the heavens, to Jehovah the heavens belong, but the earth he has given to the sons of men."—Psalm 115:16.

People do not normally want to die; death is not natural for humans. God mentioned death to Adam only as the punishment for disobedience. Had Adam obeyed, he would never have died.—Genesis 2:17; Romans 5:12.

Not surprisingly, then, God said nothing to Adam about going to heaven. So the earth was not to be a proving ground where people would be tested to see if they were fit for heaven. Man was created to live forever on earth, and that purpose of God will yet be fulfilled. The Bible promises that "the righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it." (Psalm 37:29) Clearly, humans were not originally meant to go to heaven. Why, then, did Jesus promise heavenly life to his apostles? Did Jesus mean that *all* good people will go to heaven?

NOW PUBLISHED IN 180 LANGUAGES: Afrikaans,⁺ Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Armenian (West), Aymara, Azerbaijani, Azerbaijani (Cyrillic), Baoulé, Bengali, Bicol, Bislama, Bulgarian, Cambodian, Cebuano, Chichewa, Chinese⁺ (audio Mandarin only), Chinese (Simplified), Chitonga, Chuukese, Cibemba, Croatian, Czech,⁺ Danish,⁺ Dutch,⁺ Efik, English^{++*} (also Braille), Estonian, Ewe, Fijian, Finnish,^{++*} French,^{++*} Ga, Georgian, German,^{++*} Gilbertese, Greek, Greenlandic, Guarani, Gujarati, Gun, Haitian Creole, Hausa, Hebrew, Hiligaynon, Hindi, Hiri Motu, Hungarian,⁺ Icelandic, Igbo, Iloko, Indonesian, Isoko, Italian,^{++*} Japanese,⁺ Kannada, Kaonde, Kazakh, Kikongo, Kilu-

ba, Kinyarwanda, Kirghiz, Kirundi, Kongo, Korean,^{++*} Kosraean, Kwangali, Kwanyama, Latvian, Lingala, Lithuanian, Luganda, Lunda, Luo, Luvale, Macedonian, Malagasy, Malayalam, Maltese, Marathi, Marshallese, Mauritian Creole, Maya, Mizo, Moore, Myanmar, Ndonga, Nepali, Niuean, Norwegian,⁺ Nyaneke, Oromo, Ossetian, Otetela, Palauan, Pangasinan, Papiamento (Curaçao), Persian, Polish,^{++*} Ponapean, Portuguese,^{++*} Punjabi, Quechua (Ancash), Quechua (Ayacucho), Quechua (Bolivia), Quechua (Cuzco), Quichua, Rarotongan, Romanian, Russian,^{++*} Samar-Leyte, Samoan, Sango, Sepedi, Serbian, Serbian (Roman), Sesotho, Seychelles Creole, Shona, Silozi, Sinhala, Slovak, Slovenian,

Solomon Islands Pidgin, Spanish,^{++*} Sranantongo, Swahili, Swati, Swedish,⁺ Tagalog, Tahitian, Tamil, Tatar, Telugu, Thai, Tigrinya, Tiv, Tok Pisin, Tongan, Tshiluba, Tsonga, Tswana, Tumbuka, Turkish, Tuvaluan, Twi, Tzotzil, Ukrainian, Umbundu, Urdu, Urund, Uzbek, Venda, Vietnamese, Wallilian, Xhosa, Yapepe, Yoruba, Zande, Zapotec (Isthmus), Zulu

⁺ CD also available.

^{++*} MP3 CD-ROM also available.

^{*} Audio recordings also available at www.jw.org.

Do All Good People Go to Heaven?

AFTER Jesus' final meal with his apostles on the evening before his execution, Jesus promised to reward them with a place in heaven. He said: "In the house of my Father there are many abodes. Otherwise, I would have told you, because I am going my way to prepare a place for you." (John 14:2) Why would Jesus provide them a place in heaven? What will they do there?

Jesus had in mind a special assignment for his disciples. During that same evening, he said: "You are the ones that have stuck with me in my trials; and I make a covenant with you, just as my Father has made a covenant with me, for a kingdom." (Luke 22:28, 29) God had promised Jesus that he would be the King who would provide for one of mankind's greatest needs—good government. Jesus will save people from affliction and will crush those defrauding them. Although Jesus will have subjects extending "to the ends of the earth," his throne will be in heaven.

—Psalm 72:4, 8; Daniel 7:13, 14.

However, Jesus will not rule alone. Hence, he promised his apostles a place in heaven. They were the first ones chosen to "rule as kings over the earth."—Revelation 5:10.

How many go to heaven? As in any government, the rulers in God's heavenly Kingdom are few in comparison with all the people who live under its authority. To those who will rule with him, Jesus said: "Have no fear, little flock, because your Father has approved of giving you the kingdom." (Luke 12:32) That "little flock" will finally number

144,000. (Revelation 14:1) That number is small in comparison with the millions who will enjoy endless life on earth as loyal subjects of the Kingdom.—Revelation 21:4.

Thus, not all good people go to heaven. About good King David, the apostle Peter plainly said: "David did not ascend to the heavens." (Acts 2:34) John the Baptist was a good man. Yet, Jesus indicated that he would not be exalted to rule as a king in heaven. "Among those born of women," Jesus said, "there has not been raised up a greater than John the Baptist; but a person that is a lesser one in the kingdom of the heavens is greater than he is."—Matthew 11:11.

Will You Receive the Reward of Good People?

To receive the reward of living forever on earth, what must a person do? Jesus 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) Notice that God's love for the world leads him to make everlasting life available to all, but only those "exercising faith" actually receive that reward.

Faith needs to be based on accurate knowledge. (John 17:3) You can demonstrate that you are a good person by learning more about Jehovah's purpose for man. Respond in faith to what you learn. And be assured that the opportunity of life without end is really open to you.

What Does the Bible Say?

Question:

What happens to good people at their death?

Answer:

"As for the dead, they are conscious of nothing at all."—ECCLESIASTES 9:5.

Question:

What hope do good people have for the future?

Answer:

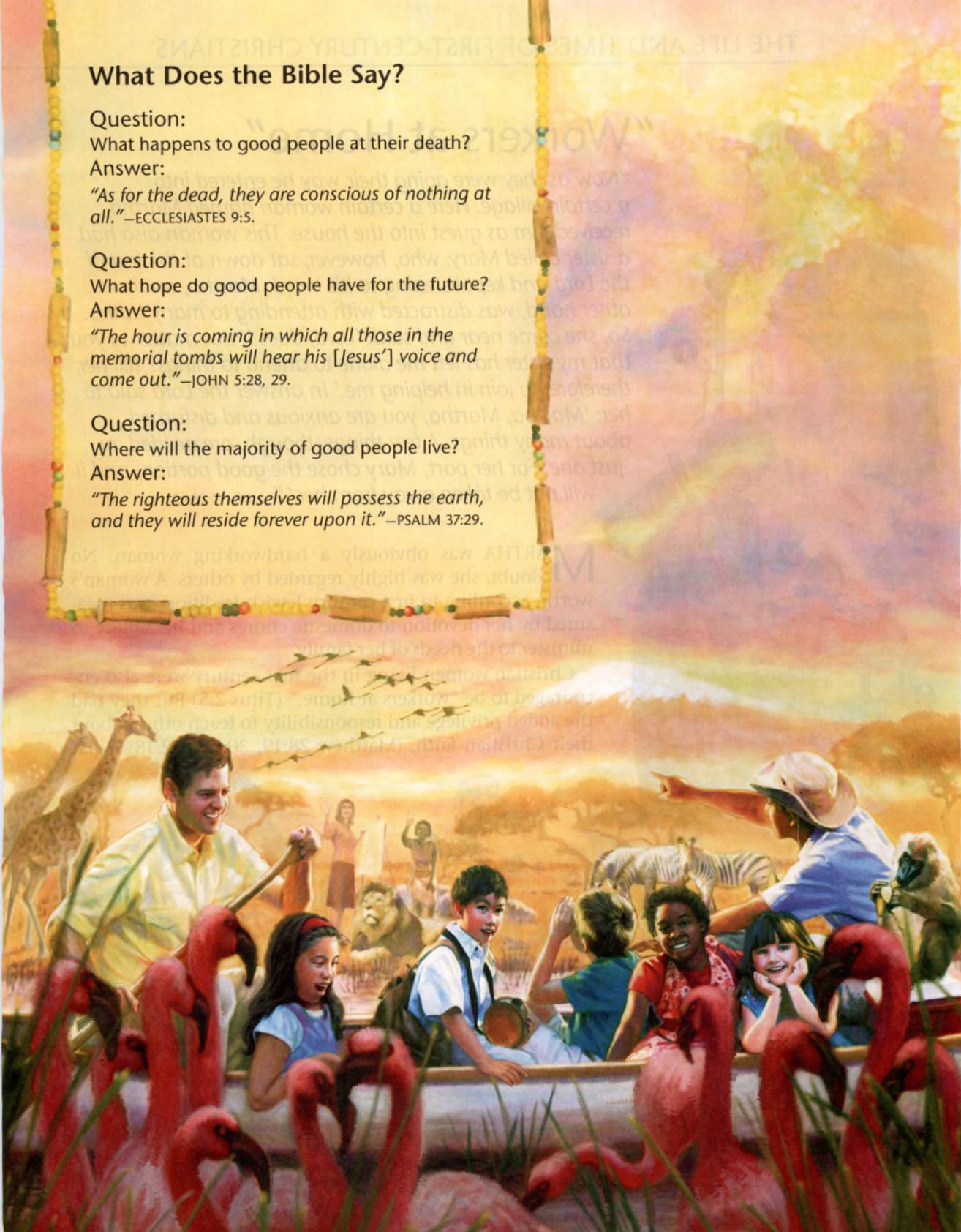
"The hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his [Jesus'] voice and come out."—JOHN 5:28, 29.

Question:

Where will the majority of good people live?

Answer:

"The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it."—PSALM 37:29.



"Workers at Home"

"Now as they were going their way he entered into a certain village. Here a certain woman named Martha received him as guest into the house. This woman also had a sister called Mary, who, however, sat down at the feet of the Lord and kept listening to his word. Martha, on the other hand, was distracted with attending to many duties. So, she came near and said: 'Lord, does it not matter to you that my sister has left me alone to attend to things? Tell her, therefore, to join in helping me.' In answer the Lord said to her: 'Martha, Martha, you are anxious and disturbed about many things. A few things, though, are needed, or just one. For her part, Mary chose the good portion, and it will not be taken away from her.'" —LUKE 10:38-42.

MARTHA was obviously a hardworking woman. No doubt, she was highly regarded by others. A woman's worth, according to first-century Jewish tradition, was measured by her devotion to domestic chores and her ability to minister to the needs of her family.

Christian women living in the first century were also encouraged to be "workers at home." (Titus 2:5) But they had the added privilege and responsibility to teach others about their Christian faith. (Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 2:18) What



were some of the “many duties” that a Jewish woman living in the first century had to care for? And what lesson can we learn from Jesus’ words about Mary?

“Attending to Many Duties” A Jewish housewife’s day began early, likely before sunrise. (Proverbs 31:15) After preparing a simple meal of porridge for her family, she might escort her sons to synagogue school. Her daughters would stay at home to be taught the skills required to become capable wives.

Together, the mother and her daughters would begin the day by caring for basic household chores—filling the oil lamps (**1**), sweeping the floors (**2**), and milking the family’s goat (**3**). Next, they would make the bread for the day. The girls would first sift the grain to remove impurities (**4**) and then grind the grain to a coarse flour, using a stone hand mill (**5**). The mother would take the flour and add water and leaven. She would knead the dough (**6**) and then leave the mixture to rise while continuing with other chores. Meanwhile, the girls could be busy curdling the fresh goat’s milk into cheese (**7**).

Later in the morning, the mother and her daughters might head to the local market-

place. There, her senses beset by the spice-laden air, raucous calls of animals, and shouts of shoppers haggling over prices, she would buy supplies for the day (**8**). Fresh vegetables and dried fish might be on the menu. If she was a Christian, she might also use the opportunity to talk about her faith to others at the marketplace.—Acts 17:17.

A conscientious mother would use such opportunities as walking on the road to and from the market to help her children learn and appreciate Scriptural principles. (Deuteronomy 6:6, 7) She might also discuss with her girls principles that would help them become thrifty shoppers.—Proverbs 31:14, 18.

Another daily chore for the women was a visit to the well (**9**). There they would replenish the family’s water supply, perhaps talking with other women doing the same. Upon returning home, the mother and her daughters would begin baking. First, they would shape the dough into flat disks and then place them in a preheated oven (**10**), which was usually located outside. While enjoying the aroma and conversing together, they would watch as the bread baked.

Then they would be off to the nearby stream to wash clothes (**11**). The women would first carefully clean the clothes with lye, a sodium or potassium carbonate soap made from the ashes of certain vegetation.



After rinsing the clothes and wringing them out, the women would spread the garments on nearby bushes and rocks to dry.

After bringing the wash home, the mother and her daughters might go up to the flat roof of their dwelling to mend (12) any damaged garments before returning them to the closets. Later, the girls might be given some embroidery and weaving lessons (13). Soon, it would be time for the women to begin cooking the evening meal (14). Hospitality was a way of life, so the family would be prepared to share their simple meal of bread, vegetables, curds, dried fish, and cool water with any guests.

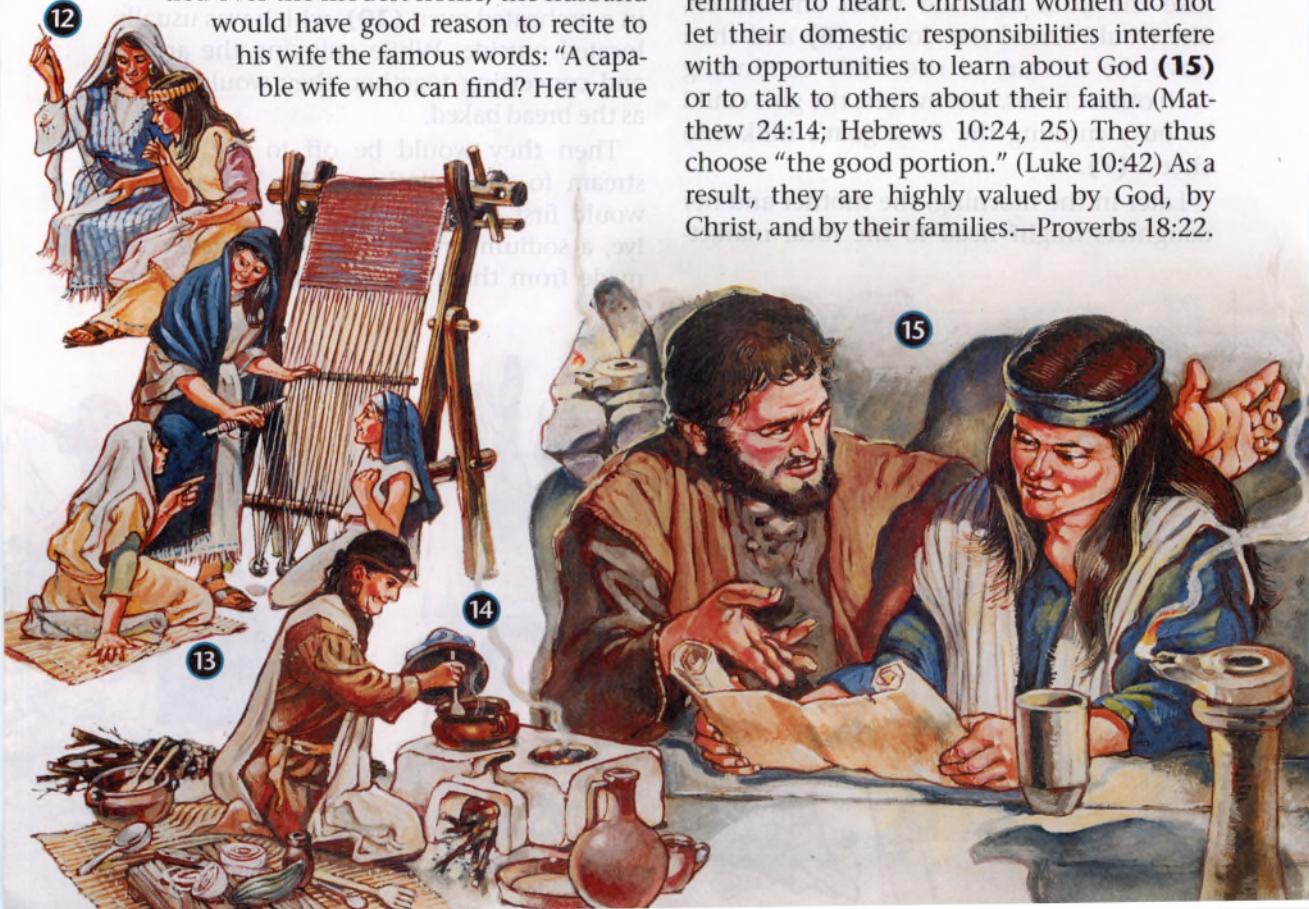
At the end of the day, as the children would ready themselves for bed, a skinned knee might be daubed with soothing oil. Then, by the light of a flickering lamp, the parents might recite a story from Scripture and say a prayer with their children. As quiet settled over the modest home, the husband

would have good reason to recite to his wife the famous words: "A capable wife who can find? Her value

is far more than that of corals."—Proverbs 31:10.

Choosing "the Good Portion" Without a doubt, conscientious women living in the first century had "many duties" to keep them busy. (Luke 10:40) Likewise, women today, especially mothers, lead busy lives. Modern inventions have simplified some of the household chores. But many mothers are forced by circumstances not only to care for their family but also to work outside the home.

Despite the challenges they face, many Christian women today follow the example of Mary, mentioned in the opening account. They place a high value on spiritual things. (Matthew 5:3) They care well for their families, as the Scriptures encourage them to do. (Proverbs 31:11-31) But they also live by the principle that Jesus mentioned to Martha. As a spiritual woman, she surely took the kindly reminder to heart. Christian women do not let their domestic responsibilities interfere with opportunities to learn about God (15) or to talk to others about their faith. (Matthew 24:14; Hebrews 10:24, 25) They thus choose "the good portion." (Luke 10:42) As a result, they are highly valued by God, by Christ, and by their families.—Proverbs 18:22.



SHOULD YOU KEEP THE WEEKLY SABBATH?

In the late 1980's, small groups of Methodists laid siege to Suva, the capital city of Fiji. Men, women, and children—all dressed for church—manned 70 roadblocks. They stopped all commercial traffic as well as domestic and international flights. What prompted that action? A demand to make the nation return to strict Sabbath observance.

In Israel, every new multistory building erected since 2001 must have at least one elevator that automatically stops at each floor. For what purpose? So that devout Jews, who observe the Sabbath from Friday evening until Saturday evening, do not have to do the "work" of pressing the buttons in an elevator.

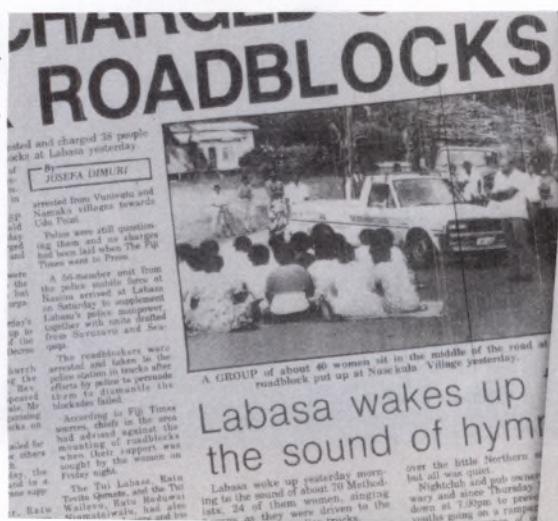
In Tonga, a kingdom in the South Pacific, all work is forbidden on Sunday. No aircraft is allowed to land, and no ship is permitted to dock. Any contracts signed on that day are not viewed as valid. The constitution of Tonga requires that Sunday be "kept holy" by all, regardless of a person's religious beliefs. Why? To ensure nationwide observance of the Sabbath.

As the above examples show, many people feel that God requires them to keep a weekly Sabbath day. In fact, some say that Sabbath-keeping is of utmost importance, believing

Newspapers document the roadblocks set up by groups of Methodists demanding that Fiji return to strict Sabbath observance



Courtesy of the Fiji Times



that it involves our eternal salvation. Others feel that the most important commandment from God is to keep the Sabbath. What is the Sabbath? And does the Bible urge Christians to observe a Sabbath day each week?

What Is the Sabbath?

The English word "Sabbath" comes from a Hebrew word meaning "rest, cease, desist." Although the Genesis account says that on the seventh day Jehovah God rested from his creative works, it was not until the time of Moses that God's people were instructed to observe a 24-hour day of rest, or Sabbath. (Genesis 2:2) After the Israelites left Egypt in 1513 B.C.E., Jehovah miraculously provided manna for them in the wilderness. Concerning the collecting of this manna, they were instructed: "Six days you will pick it up, but on the seventh day is a sabbath. On it none will form." (Exodus 16:26) We are then told that "the people proceeded to observe the sabbath on the seventh day," from sunset on Friday evening to sunset on Saturday evening.—Exodus 16:30.

A short time after those instructions were given, Jehovah provided a law concerning Sabbath-keeping, including it among the Ten Commandments given to Moses. (Exodus 19:1) The fourth of those commandments stated, in part: "Remembering the sabbath day to hold it sacred, you are to render service and you must do all your work six days. But the seventh day is a sabbath to Jehovah your God." (Exodus 20:8-10) Sabbath-keeping thus became an integral part of life for the Israelites.—Deuteronomy 5:12.

Did Jesus Keep a Weekly Sabbath?

Yes, Jesus did observe the Sabbath. Concerning him, we are told: "When the full limit of the time arrived, God sent forth his Son, who came to be out of a woman and who came to be under law." (Galatians 4:4) Jesus was born an Israelite and as such was under Law, and that included the Sabbath law. It was not until after Jesus' death that the Law covenant was taken away. (Colossians 2:13, 14) Knowing when these events took place in the stream of time helps us to

"Six days you will pick it up, but on the seventh day is a sabbath.

On it none will form."—EXODUS 16:26



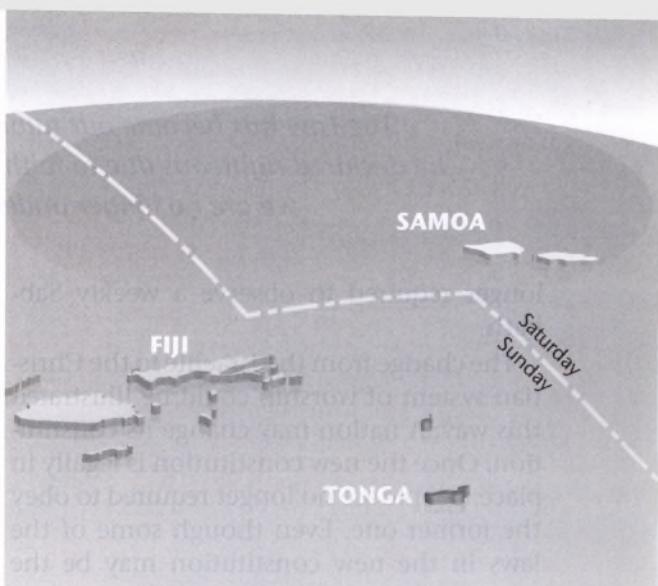
understand God's view on the matter.—See the chart on page 15.

True, Jesus did say: "Do not think I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I came, not to destroy, but to fulfill." (Matthew 5:17) But what does the expression "to fulfill" mean? To illustrate: A builder fulfills a contract to complete a building, not by ripping up the contract, but by finishing the structure. However, once the work has been completed to the client's satisfaction, the contract is fulfilled and the builder is no longer under obligation to it. Likewise, Jesus did not break, or rip up, the Law; rather, he fulfilled it by keeping it perfectly. Once fulfilled, that Law "contract" was no longer binding on God's people.

A Christian Requirement?

Since Christ fulfilled the Law, are Christians obligated to keep the weekly Sabbath? Under inspiration, the apostle Paul answers: "Therefore let no man judge you in eating and drinking or in respect of a festival or of an observance of the new moon or of a sabbath; for those things are a shadow of the things to come, but the reality belongs to the Christ."—Colossians 2:16, 17.

Those inspired words suggest quite a change in God's requirements for his servants. Why the change? Because Christians are under a new law, "the law of the Christ." (Galatians 6:2) The former Law covenant given through Moses to Israel came to an end when Jesus' death fulfilled it. (Romans 10:4; Ephesians 2:15) Did the commandment about keeping the Sabbath also come to an end? Yes. After saying that "we have been discharged from the Law," Paul went on to refer to one of the Ten Commandments. (Romans 7:6, 7) So the Ten Commandments—including the Sabbath law—are part of the Law that came to an end. God's worshippers, therefore, are no



The International Date Line and the Sabbath

The international date line presents a challenge for those who believe that they must keep a weekly Sabbath on the same day everywhere. The date line is an imaginary line that runs for the most part through the Pacific Ocean along the 180th meridian. Countries to the west of the date line are one day ahead of those to the east.

For example, when it is Sunday in Fiji and Tonga, it is Saturday in Samoa and Niue. So if a person keeps the Sabbath in Fiji on Saturday, members of his religion in Samoa, just 711 miles away, would be working because it is Friday there.

Seventh-Day Adventists in Tonga keep their Sabbath on Sunday, reasoning that by doing so, they are keeping the Sabbath at the same time as their members in Samoa, a little over 500 miles away. However, at the same time, Seventh-Day Adventists less than 500 miles away in Fiji are not resting because it is Sunday there, and they observe the Sabbath on Saturday!

"The Law has become our tutor leading to Christ, that we might be declared righteous due to faith. But now that the faith has arrived, we are no longer under a tutor."—GALATIANS 3:24, 25

longer required to observe a weekly Sabbath.

The change from the Israelite to the Christian system of worship could be illustrated this way: A nation may change its constitution. Once the new constitution is legally in place, people are no longer required to obey the former one. Even though some of the laws in the new constitution may be the same as those in the former constitution, others may be different. So a person would need to study the new constitution carefully to see what laws now apply. Additionally, a loyal citizen would want to know when the new constitution went into effect.

In like manner, Jehovah God provided over 600 laws, including 10 main ones, for the nation of Israel. These included laws about morals, sacrifices, health matters, and Sabbath-keeping. However, Jesus said that his anointed followers would constitute a new "nation." (Matthew 21:43) From 33 C.E. onward, this nation has had a new "constitution," founded on two basic laws—love of God and love of neighbor. (Matthew 22:36-40) Although "the law of the Christ" includes instructions that are similar to those in the Law given to Israel, we should not be surprised that some laws are very different and that others are no longer required. The law requiring the observance of a weekly Sabbath is one of those that are no longer binding.

Has God Changed His Standards?

Does this change from the Law of Moses to the law of the Christ mean that God has changed his standards? No. Just as a parent

will adjust the rules he makes for his children, taking into consideration their ages and circumstances, Jehovah has adjusted the laws his people are required to obey. The apostle Paul explains the matter this way: "Before the faith arrived, we were being guarded under law, being delivered up together into custody, looking to the faith that was destined to be revealed. Consequently the Law has become our tutor leading to Christ, that we might be declared righteous due to faith. But now that the faith has arrived, we are no longer under a tutor."—Galatians 3:23-25.

How does Paul's line of reasoning apply to the Sabbath? Consider this illustration: While at school, a student may be required to learn a certain subject, such as woodworking, on a particular day each week. However, upon entering the workforce, he may need to use the skills he learned, not just on that one day, but on every day of the week. Likewise, while under the Law, the Israelites were required to set aside one day every week for rest and worship. Christians, on the other hand, are required to worship God, not just one day per week, but every day.

Is it wrong, then, to set aside one day every week for rest and worship? No. God's Word leaves such a decision to each individual, saying: "One person decides that one day is holier than another. Another person decides that all days are the same. Every person must make his own decision." (Romans 14:5, *God's Word*) While some may choose to view one day as more holy than others, the Bible clearly indicates that God does not expect Christians to observe a weekly Sabbath.

Facts to Remember About the Sabbath:

Although a Bible verse may speak of the need to observe a weekly Sabbath, we need to ascertain the time when these words were stated.

BEFORE THE TIME OF MOSES

The law regarding the Sabbath was not given prior to the time of Moses and the Israelites.—Deuteronomy 5:1-3, 12-14.

4026 B.C.E.
ADAM CREATED

1513 B.C.E.
LAW GIVEN TO ISRAEL

33 C.E.
END OF LAW GIVEN TO ISRAEL

2010 C.E.

GOD'S LAW TO ISRAEL

The law concerning the Sabbath was not given to other nations. (Psalm 147:19, 20) It was given as "a sign" between Jehovah and the sons of Israel.—Exodus 31:16, 17.

The weekly Sabbath day was just one of many sabbaths that the Israelites were commanded to observe.—Leviticus 16:29-31; 23:4-8; 25:4, 11; Numbers 28:26.

THE LAW OF THE CHRIST

When deciding what God requires of Christians, in 49 C.E., the apostles and older men in Jerusalem made no mention of the need to observe a weekly Sabbath.—Acts 15:28, 29.

The apostle Paul was concerned about Christians who put emphasis on observing special days.—Galatians 4:9-11.



WHAT WE LEARN FROM JESUS

About True Worship

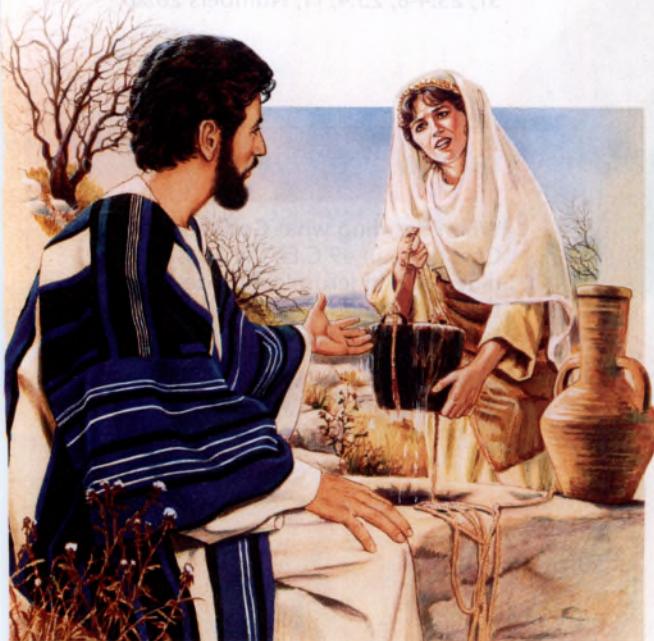
Does God approve of all worship?

■ Jesus' heart went out to people who had been deceived by false religion. He warned of "false prophets that come . . . in sheep's covering, but inside they are ravenous wolves." (Matthew 7:15) Have you noticed that some people use religion for evil ends?

Jesus said in prayer to God: "Your word is truth." (John 17:17) So God disapproves of worship that contradicts the truth of the Bible. Therefore, to some religious hypocrites, Jesus applied the words of God that say: "It is in vain that they keep worshiping me, because they teach commands of men as doctrines."—Matthew 15:9.



"Be on the watch for the false prophets that come to you in sheep's covering, but inside they are ravenous wolves."—Matthew 7:15



Is there a true religion?

■ When Jesus met a woman in Samaria who had been deceived by false religion, he said to her: "You worship what you do not know . . . The *true worshipers* will worship the Father with spirit and truth, for, indeed, the Father is looking for suchlike ones to worship him." (John 4:22, 23) Clearly, true worship can be found.

Jesus said: "I do nothing of my own initiative; but just as the Father taught me I speak these things." So Jesus knew that the religion he taught was the only true one. (John 8:28) Therefore, he said: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6) Since true worshipers are united in one approach to the Father, they must be united in one true religion.



How can you recognize true worshippers?

■ A Christian is one who follows Jesus Christ. Consider four ways in which imitating Jesus' example clearly identifies his followers.

1. Jesus Christ said in prayer to Jehovah: "I have made your name known." (John 17:26) True Christians still do likewise.

2. Jesus preached about Jehovah's Kingdom and sent his disciples from house to house to do the same. He said: "Into whatever city or village you enter, search out who in it is deserving." Later, he told his followers: "Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations." (Matthew 10:7, 11; 28:19) You can easily recognize true Christians today because they continue the same work.

3. Jesus refused to take sides in politics. Thus, he said of his followers: "They are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world." (John 17:14) True worshippers should be well-known for their political neutrality.

4. Jesus was self-sacrificing in his love for others. He said: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves." (John 13:35) True Christians care for one another and take no part in wars.

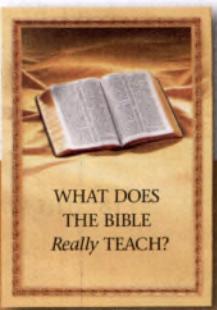


How can true worship benefit you?

■ To practice true worship, you first need to know Jehovah well. Knowledge of God will enable you to pursue the best way of life and will fill your heart with love for God. Jehovah promised life without end to those who love him. Thus, Jesus said: "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God."—John 17:3.

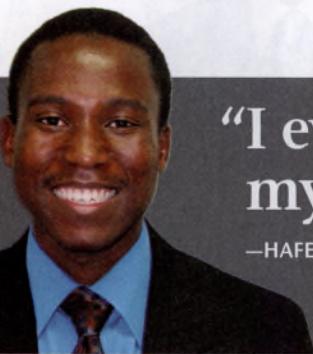
For more information, see chapter 15 of this book,
published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

WHAT DOES
THE BIBLE
Really TEACH?



THE BIBLE CHANGES LIVES

WHAT moved a Rastafarian to cut his dreadlocks and overcome his prejudice against white people? And what enabled a violent young man who collected money for drug dealers to change his lifestyle? Consider what these individuals have to say.

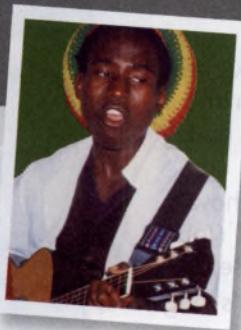


"I even overcame my prejudice."

—HAFENI NGHAMMA

AGE: 34

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: ZAMBIA
HISTORY: RASTAFARIAN



MY PAST: I was born in a refugee camp in Zambia. My mother had fled Namibia during a time of war and had joined the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO). This organization was fighting the South African regime that ruled Namibia at the time.

I lived in several refugee camps during the first 15 years of my life. Young ones in the SWAPO camps were groomed as pioneers for the liberation movement. We were politically indoctrinated and were taught to hate white people.

When I was 11, I wanted to be confirmed as a Christian in a camp church that was a conglomeration of Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Anglicans, and others. The pastor I talked to discouraged me from taking this step. From then on, I became

atheistic in my beliefs. At age 15, though, my love for reggae music and my desire to undo some of the injustices suffered by black Africans led me to join the Rastafarian movement. I grew dreadlocks, smoked marijuana, gave up eating meat, and advocated freedom for blacks. However, I did not change my immoral lifestyle or give up watching violent movies. And I continued to use vulgar speech.

HOW THE BIBLE CHANGED MY LIFE: In 1995, when I was about 20, I began thinking seriously about the course my life should take. I was studying all the Rastafarian publications I could find. Some of those made reference to the Bible, but the explanations did not make sense to me. So I decided to read the Bible for myself.

Later, a Rastafarian friend gave me a Bible study handbook published by Jehovah's Witnesses. On my own, I studied this publication along with the Bible. Later, I met Jehovah's Witnesses and continued my Bible study with them.

With great effort, I stopped smoking and heavy drinking. (2 Corinthians 7:1) I cleaned

up my appearance, cut my dreadlocks, stopped viewing pornography and violent movies, and held back from using vulgar speech. (Ephesians 5:3, 4) Eventually, I even overcame my prejudice against white people. (Acts 10:34, 35) Making these changes involved getting rid of music that encouraged racism and cutting off association with my former friends, who would try to influence me to fall back into my old lifestyle.

After making those changes, I looked for a Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses and asked to join the religion. A Bible study was conducted with me. When I decided to get baptized as one of Jehovah's Witnesses, my family was not happy. My mother told me to choose any other "Christian" religion but not Jehovah's Witnesses. One of my uncles, who was a prominent member of the government, constantly criticized me for my decision to associate with the Witnesses.

However, learning about how Jesus dealt with people and then applying his counsel helped me to cope with opposition and ridicule. When I compared what the Witnesses

teach with what the Bible says, I was convinced that I had found the true religion. For example, they follow the Bible's command

Making changes involved getting rid of music that encouraged racism

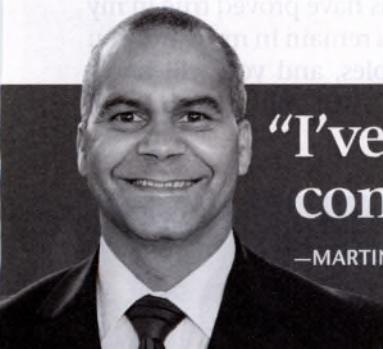
to preach to others. (Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 15:14) And they do not become involved in politics.—Psalm 146:3, 4; John 15:17, 18.

HOW I HAVE BENEFITED: Learning to live by Bible standards has helped me in practical ways. For example, giving up marijuana has saved me from wasting hundreds of dollars each month. I no longer have hallucinations, and my mental and physical health have improved.

My life now has the direction and purpose that I had yearned for since I was a youth. And most important of all, I now feel that I have been able to draw close to God.—James 4:8.

MY PAST: My family moved often while I was growing up. I lived in small towns, a big city, and for a while at an aboriginal mission in the outback. I have some good memories of that time with my cousins and uncles—fishing, hunting, making boomerangs, and carving other things.

My father was a boxer and started teaching me to fight when I was very young.

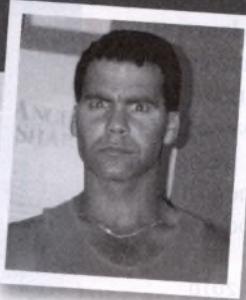


"I've learned to control my anger."

—MARTINO PEDRETTI

AGE: 43

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: AUSTRALIA
HISTORY: DRUG DEALER



Violence became a way of life for me. In my teen years, I spent a lot of time drinking at bars. My friends and I would look for fights. We would use knives and baseball bats to attack a crowd of 20 or more people.

I made money by selling drugs and goods stolen by wharf workers. I also collected money for drug dealers and would intimidate people for them, using shotguns and

My friends and I would look for fights. We would use knives and baseball bats to attack a crowd of 20 or more people
pistols. My goal was to become an assassin. My motto was, Kill or be killed.

HOW THE BIBLE CHANGED MY LIFE: I had heard about Jehovah's Witnesses when I was growing up. When I was in my early 20's, I remember asking my mother if she knew where any of them were. Two days later, a Witness named Dixon knocked on my door. After we had talked for a while, he invited me to a meeting of Jehovah's Witnesses. I went to that meeting and have been attending those meetings for more than 20 years now. Every question I had, the Witnesses were able to answer for me from the Bible.

I enjoyed learning that Jehovah is interested in individuals, even ungodly ones. (2 Peter 3:9) I discovered that he is a loving Father who would look after me, even when no one else would. I was also relieved to learn that he would forgive my sins if I changed my ways. The Bible verses at Ephesians 4:22-24 had a big impact on me. That passage encouraged me to "put away the old personality" and to "put on the new personality which was created according to God's will."

It took time for me to change my lifestyle. I would go through the week without touching drugs, but on the weekend, when I was with my friends, I would give in. I realized that I would have to move away from my associates if I wanted to clean up my life, so I decided to move to another state. Some friends offered to accompany me on my trip, and I accepted. During the trip, they started smoking marijuana and offered me some. I told them that I was leaving those habits behind, and we parted company at the state border. I later found out that shortly afterward my friends robbed a bank, using a sawed-off shotgun.

HOW I HAVE BENEFITED: Once I broke off my association with those companions, I found it much easier to make the needed changes in my life. In 1989, I became a baptized Witness. After I was baptized, my sister, my mother, and my father all joined me in serving Jehovah.

I have now been married for 17 years and have three lovely children. I have learned to control my anger, even when I am provoked. And I have learned to love people from all 'tribes, races, and tongues.' (Revelation 7:9) I feel that Jesus' words have proved true in my case. He said: "If you remain in my word, you are really my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." —John 8:31, 32.





DRAW CLOSE TO GOD

Can God Feel Regret?

JUDGES 2:11-18

AS IMPERFECT humans, we all feel regret at times. For example, we may feel sorry after we realize that we have made a mistake. Curiously, the Bible says that Jehovah can feel regret. ‘But God is perfect,’ you say. ‘He does not make mistakes!’ In what way, then, does God feel regret? The answer can help us to understand something awe-inspiring: Jehovah has feelings, and our actions can affect his feelings. Consider the words recorded at Judges 2:11-18.

The Bible book of Judges chronicles a turbulent period in Israel’s history. The nation was now settled in Canaan, the land that God had promised to Abraham. For the next several centuries, Israel’s course could be summed up as a recurring cycle of four phases: defection, oppression, supplication, and deliverance.*

Defection. Influenced by the Canaanites, Israel “abandoned Jehovah” and began following other gods; specifically, they “took up serving Baal and the Ashtoreth images.”[#] Such a defection amounted to apostasy. Little wonder that the Israelites “offended Jehovah,” the God who had delivered Israel out of Egypt!—Verses 11-13; Judges 2:1.

Oppression. Provoked to righteous anger, Jehovah would withdraw his protection from the people who had turned their backs on

* Judges 2:11-18 is part of an introductory summary that gives an overview of Israel’s pattern of behavior, which is recounted in detail in the chapters that follow.

[#] Baal was the most prominent god of the Canaanites, and Ashtoreth was a goddess who was considered to be the wife of Baal.

him. The Israelites would then fall “into the hand of their enemies,” who would come in and pillage the land.—Verse 14.

Supplication. In the throes of distress, the Israelites would feel sorry for their wrong course and cry out to God for help. Their supplication may be indicated by the expression “groaning because of their oppressors.” (Verse 18) Supplicating God was part of the recurring cycle. (Judges 3:9, 15; 4:3; 6:6, 7; 10:10) How did God respond?

Deliverance. Jehovah would hear Israel’s groaning and “feel regret.” The Hebrew word rendered “feel regret” can mean to “change one’s mind or intention.” One reference work says: “Jehovah, moved by their groaning, changed from his purpose of punishment to one of deliverance.” In his mercy, Jehovah would “raise up judges,” who would deliver his people from their enemies.—Verse 18.

Did you notice what moved God to feel regret, or change his mind? It was the change in attitude on the part of his people. Think of it this way: A loving father may discipline an erring child, perhaps by withholding some privilege. But upon seeing that the child is truly sorry, the father decides to end the punishment.

What do we learn about Jehovah from this account? Whereas willful sin arouses his anger, repentant hearts move him to show mercy. It is sobering to think that what we do can affect God’s feelings. Why not learn how you can make Jehovah’s “heart rejoice”? (Proverbs 27:11) You will never regret it.

OUR READERS ASK . . .

Must you believe in the Trinity to be a Christian?

■ A high-school textbook, *World Religions in Denmark*, published in 2007, described Jehovah's Witnesses as a Christian minority who follow the Bible closely. In fact, Jehovah's Witnesses are the third-largest Christian denomination in Denmark.



However, a bishop of the Danish National Church severely criticized the author's decision to include the Witnesses in the textbook. Why? "I have yet to meet a theologian who considers [Jehovah's Witnesses] to be Christians," said the bishop. "They deny the Trinity, which is the heart of the Christian religion."

The author of the book, religion sociologist Annika Hvithamar, pointed out that when people are asked why they consider themselves to be Christians, they hardly ever answer that it is because they believe that God is a Trinity. Moreover, a section in the textbook entitled "Are You a Christian?" states: "The

doctrine of the Trinity is one of the more difficult problems of Christian theology." It adds: "At all times, it has been difficult to explain to unschooled Christians why the Christian God is still one god and not three gods."

What the Bible teaches about God and Jesus is clear and simple. It is not difficult to understand. Neither the word "Trinity" nor the concept is found in God's Word. The Bible clearly states that Jesus Christ is God's first-born Son. (Colossians 1:15) It also points to Jesus as being the "mediator between God and men." (1 Timothy 2:5) About the Father, the Bible says: "You, whose name is Jehovah, you alone are the Most High over all the earth." —Psalm 83:18.

Jehovah's Witnesses believe that faith in Jesus is vital. (John 3:16) For this reason, they take seriously Jesus' command: "It is written, 'It is Jehovah your God you must worship, and it is to him alone you must render sacred service.'" (Matthew 4:10) Surely, someone who strives to obey Jesus' commands can be called Christian.

"The doctrine of the Trinity is one of the more difficult problems of Christian theology"



Minstensopfattelse. I anledning af Jehovah's Witnesses internationale stævne på Brøndby Stadion i 2003, hvor der deltog 26.000 mennesker, blev der trykt et stævneplakat. Valget af Illustrationer over Jehovah's vigtigste budskaber, som dem også ses i besværligheds klude. Forskellige nationaliteter og raser, der synes for at være de mest udprægede.

Tema: Religiøs minoritet

Jehovas Vidner er Danmarks 4.-største religiøse minoritet (folkekirkene), forskellige retninger inden for islam og den katolske kirke er større). De har eksisteret i Danmark i over hundrede år. Majoriteten af Jehovahs Vidner er etnisk danske, selv om de seneste årtiers øgede immigration har medført øget migration blandt indvandrere. Mange familier bosat i København findes Jehovahs Vidner. I København findes flere internationale menigheder, og i ... Vidnernes Lærer i stævne er end farsi-

Minoritetsidentitet

Jehovas Vidner er en religiøs minoritet. Medlemmerne har en anden religiøs end majoriteten. 1. Jehovahs Vidner tilhørte ligegyldigt dens religiøse overbevisning, var på majoriteten. Begge er mindre inden for kristendommen. Men troheden af både de kristne dogmer og den sociale alford, der knytter sig til at være skræddersydde, er forskellig fra majoritetsens opfattelse af, hvad kristendom er, og hvordan den skal leve.

DID YOU KNOW?

Apart from wine, what kinds of alcoholic beverages were made in Bible times?

■ "Wine and intoxicating liquor" are frequently mentioned together in the Bible. (Deuteronomy 14:26; Luke 1:15) The term "liquor" should not be understood to mean that these beverages were the product of distillation, since that process was invented centuries later. Alcoholic beverages were made not only from such fruits as grapes, dates, figs, apples, and pomegranates but also from honey.

In fact, the term "intoxicating liquor" could also refer to beer. The Hebrew word translated "intoxicating liquor" is related to an Akkadian word that can refer to the common barley

beer of Mesopotamia. That beverage was low in alcohol but potentially intoxicating if drunk in excess. (Proverbs 20:1) Clay models of breweries and paintings of brewers have been found in ancient Egyptian tombs. In Babylon, beer was an everyday drink both in palaces and in the homes of the poor. The Philistines enjoyed a similar brew. Throughout Palestine, archaeologists have found jugs equipped with strainer spouts. Those vessels strained the beer, preventing drinkers from swallowing husks of the barley from which it was brewed.

In the apostle Paul's day, why was it particularly hazardous to sail during certain times of the year?

■ Because of unfavorable winds, a ship on which the apostle Paul was sailing spent considerable time trying to make its way westward along the coast of Asia Minor. At a certain point, says the Bible account, it became "hazardous to navigate because even the fast of atonement day had already passed." Paul told his fellow travelers that any attempt to continue the voyage would be accompanied by the risk of loss "not only of the cargo and the boat but also of [their] souls."—Acts 27:4-10.

The fast of Atonement Day fell in late September or early October. Roman

mariners knew that voyages were generally safe from May 27 to September 14. Between this latter date and November 11, sailing was thought uncertain, and from November 11 through March 10, the sea was considered closed to general navigation. One reason, as Paul's subsequent experience graphically illustrates, was the instability of the weather. (Acts 27:13-44) Sailors faced the risk of violent storms as well as greater difficulty when navigating. Clouds obscured the sun by day and the stars by night. Mist and rain also decreased visibility and hid potential hazards.



WOODEN
EGYPTIAN MODEL
OF BEER BOTTLES

Erich Lessing/Art
Resource, NY



ROMAN CARGO
SHIP C. 100-200 C.E.

Pictorial Archive
(Near Eastern History) Est.



TEACH YOUR CHILDREN

Rebekah Was Willing to Please Jehovah

REBEKAH is a common name in many places today. Do you know anyone who has that name?—* Rebekah was an important person in the most famous book in the world, the Bible. What do you know about her?—We should want to learn about Rebekah because her example can help us to serve the true God, Jehovah.

Rebekah is the second woman named in the Bible who became a true worshipper of Jehovah. Do you know who the first such woman was?— It was Sarah, the wife of Abraham. In her old age, Sarah became the mother of Isaac—her only child. Let's now see how Rebekah was willing to do what pleased Jehovah and how she met Isaac.

Over 60 years have passed since God sent Abraham and Sarah out from Haran to the land of Canaan. When Abraham and Sarah are very old, God promises them a child who is to be named Isaac. As you can imagine, Isaac is dearly loved by his parents. When Sarah dies at the age of 127, her son, Isaac, is a grown man and very sad about losing his mother. Abraham does not want Isaac to marry a woman from Canaan because these people do not worship Jehovah. So he sends his servant, likely Eliezer, to choose a wife for Isaac from among Abraham's relatives in Haran, more than 500 miles away!—Genesis 12:4, 5; 15:2; 17:17, 19; 23:1.

* If you are reading with a child, the dash provides a reminder to pause and encourage the child to express himself.



In time Eliezer, with ten camels carrying supplies and gifts for the bride, arrives at Haran with fellow servants of Abraham. They stop at the well because Eliezer knows that in the afternoon, people come to get water for their animals and families. Eliezer now prays that the one he should choose to be a wife for Isaac will reply to his request for a drink of water by saying: "Take a drink, and I shall also water your camels."

This is exactly what happens! "Very attractive" young Rebekah arrives at the well. To Eliezer's request for a drink, she says: "For your camels too I shall draw water." As she is running "yet again and again to the well to draw water," Eliezer gazes at her "in wonder." Just think! To satisfy ten thirsty camels, Rebekah needs to bring them up to 250 gallons of water!

Eliezer provides Rebekah with beautiful gifts, and he learns that she is the daughter of Bethuel, a relative of Abraham's. Rebekah invites Eliezer and his friends to her family's home "to spend the night." Then she runs ahead to tell them of the visitors that Abraham has sent all the way from Canaan to see them.

When Rebekah's brother Laban sees the expensive gifts that were given to his sister and learns who Eliezer is, he invites him in. But Eliezer says: "I shall not eat until I have spoken about my matters." So he explains why Abraham has sent him. Bethuel, as well as his wife, and Laban are pleased and agree to the marriage.

After eating, Eliezer and those with him spend the night. The following morning, Eliezer says: "Send me off to my master." But Rebekah's mother and brother want them to stay for "at least ten days." When Rebekah is asked if she will go without delay, she answers, "*I am willing to go.*" Right away she leaves with Eliezer. At journey's end, she becomes Isaac's wife.—Genesis 24:1-58, 67.

Was it easy, do you think, for Rebekah to leave family and friends behind and go to a place far away, knowing she may never see them again?—No, it wasn't. However, Rebekah was blessed for being willing to do what pleased Jehovah. She became one through whom our Savior, Jesus Christ, was born. We too will be blessed if we are willing—like her—to do what pleases Jehovah.—Romans 9:7-10.

QUESTIONS:

- Who was Rebekah, and where did Eliezer meet her?
- Why did Abraham not want Isaac to marry a Canaanite woman?
- How did Rebekah show that she would make a good wife?
- What can we do to be like Rebekah?





KEYS TO FAMILY HAPPINESS

Dealing With In-Laws

Jenny* says: Ryan's mother wasn't shy about expressing her disapproval of me. But then it wasn't much better for Ryan when it came to my parents. In fact, I had never seen them act so rudely to anyone! Visiting parents on either side of the family came to be a stressful ordeal for both of us.

Ryan says: My mother never thought anyone was good enough for her children, so she found fault with Jenny right from the start. And Jenny's parents were the same with me—they constantly put me down. The problem is, after such incidents Jenny and I would defend our own parents and criticize each other.



CONFLICT with in-laws may be grist for the mill for comedians, but in real life it is no laughing matter. "For years, my mother-in-law interfered in our marriage," says Reena, a wife in India. "Often, I vented my anger on my husband because I could not do that to his mother. It seemed as if he constantly had to choose between being a good husband and being a good son."

Why do some in-laws interfere in the lives of their married children? Jenny, quoted at

the outset, suggests one possibility. "It may be difficult for them to see someone young and inexperienced become responsible for taking care of their son or daughter," she says. Dilip, Reena's husband, takes it a step further. "Parents who have sacrificed for and nurtured their child may feel that they are being sidelined," he says. "They could also be genuinely worried that their son or daughter lacks the wisdom to make the marriage a success."

To be fair, sometimes the in-laws are *invited* to interfere. For example, consider Michael and Leanne, a married couple in Australia. "Leanne came from a close-knit family where everyone discussed things openly," Michael says. "So after we got married, she would consult her father on decisions that she and I really needed to make. Her father had much wisdom to share, but I was hurt that she would go to him instead of to me!"

* Names have been changed.

Clearly, issues with in-laws can put stress on a marriage. Is that true in your case? How do you get along with your spouse's parents, and how does your spouse get along with yours? Consider two challenges that could arise and what you can do about them.

CHALLENGE 1: Your spouse seems overly attached to his or her parents. "My wife felt that if we didn't live near her parents, she would be disloyal to them," says a husband in Spain named Luis. "On the other hand," he adds, "when our son was born, my parents came to visit almost every day, leaving my wife stressed. This caused a number of conflicts between us."

The issues: Describing the marriage arrangement, the Bible says that in time "a man will leave his father and his mother and he must stick to his wife and they must become one flesh." (Genesis 2:24) Being "one flesh" implies more than merely living together. Really, it means that a husband and wife form a new family—one that takes priority over their families of origin. (1 Corinthians 11:3) Of course, both husband and wife still need to honor their parents, and often that entails giving them attention. (Ephesians 6:2) What if the way your spouse handles that responsibility leaves you feeling ignored or neglected?

What you can do: Look at the situation objectively. Is your spouse really too attached, or could it be that you simply do not have the same type of relationship with *your* parents? If that is the case, what bearing might your family background have on your view of the situation? Could a measure of jealousy on your part be involved?—Proverbs 14:30; 1 Corinthians 13:4; Galatians 5:26.

It takes honest self-examination to answer such questions. But it is important that you

do so. After all, if in-law issues are a constant source of contention between you and your spouse, then what you really have is a marriage problem—not an in-law problem.

Many marriage problems arise because no two partners share precisely the same view of a matter. Can you try to see things from your mate's perspective? (Philippians 2:4; 4:5) That is what a husband in Mexico named Adrián did. "My wife was raised in a negative family environment," he says, "so I avoided close association with my in-laws. Eventually I refused to have any association with them at all—for years. This caused conflict within our marriage because my wife still wanted to be close to her family, especially her mother."^{*}

In time, Adrián took a balanced position on the matter. "Although I know that too much contact with her parents has a negative effect on my wife emotionally, no contact at all can also lead to problems," he says. "To the extent possible, I have tried to restore and maintain a good relationship with my in-laws."

TRY THIS: You and your spouse write down what you believe is the primary concern regarding in-laws. If possible, start with "I feel that . . ." Then exchange papers. Together, in a spirit of teamwork, brainstorm ways that you can address each other's concerns.

CHALLENGE 2: Your in-laws constantly interfere in your marriage, giving unsolicited advice. "The first seven years of our marriage were spent with my husband's family," says a wife in Kazakhstan named Nelya. "Conflicts continually arose over how we raised our children as well as over such issues as my

* Admittedly, if parents engage in serious misconduct—especially in an ongoing, unrepentant way—family relationships may be severely strained and understandably limited.—1 Corinthians 5:11.

cooking and cleaning. I talked to my husband and my mother-in-law about it, but this only led to more conflict!"

The issues: When you marry, you are no longer under the authority of your parents. Instead, the Bible states that "the head of every man is the Christ; in turn the head of a woman is the man"—that is, her husband. (1 Corinthians 11:3) Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier, both husband and wife should honor their parents. In fact, Proverbs 23:22 tells us: "Listen to your father who caused your birth, and do not despise your mother just because she has grown old." But what if your parents—or your mate's parents—cross the line and try to impose their views?

What you can do: In a spirit of empathy, try to discern the motive behind the seeming intrusion. "In some cases parents need to know that they are still important in the lives of their children," says Ryan, quoted at the outset. Such interference may not be deliberate and can probably be handled by applying the Bible's admonition to "continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely if anyone has a cause for complaint against another." (Colossians 3:13) But what if interference from your in-laws has become serious enough to cause conflict between you and your spouse?

Some married couples have learned to establish appropriate boundaries with their parents. This does not mean that you have to lay down the law to them.* Often, it is just a matter of making it clear by your actions that your mate comes first in your life. For example, a husband in Japan named Masayuki says: "Even if parents express their views, don't just agree right away. Remember, you are building a new family unit. So first

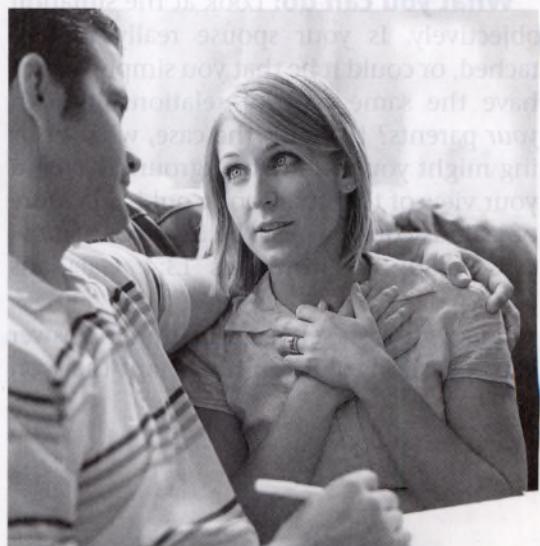
find out how your mate feels about the advice."

TRY THIS: Discuss with your spouse in what specific ways parental interference is causing conflict in your marriage. Together, write down what boundaries you can set and how you will protect them while still showing honor for your parents.

Many conflicts with in-laws can be alleviated by discerning their motives and by refusing to allow these conflicts to cause contention between you and your spouse. In this regard, Jenny admits: "Sometimes the discussions between my husband and me about our parents were fairly emotional, and it was readily apparent that a great deal of pain could be inflicted by talking about the imperfections of the parents on both sides. Eventually, though, we learned to stop using the imperfections of our in-laws as a club but to deal with the problem at hand. As a result, we have become much closer as husband and wife."

ASK YOURSELF . . .

- What good qualities do my in-laws possess?
- How can I honor my parents while not neglecting my spouse?



* In some cases, you may need to have a heart-to-heart talk with your parents or in-laws. If that is the case, do so in a spirit of respect and mildness.—Proverbs 15:1; Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:12.



Missionaries Sent "to the Most Distant Part of the Earth"

JESUS commissioned his disciples to be witnesses "to the most distant part of the earth." (Acts 1:8) Jehovah's Witnesses take that command seriously.

In fact, over the past 65 years, missionaries trained at the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead have helped to spearhead this preaching work in over 200 lands. On Saturday, September 12, 2009, another 56 experienced ministers graduated after five months of training at the missionary school located in Patterson, New York, U.S.A.

The Power of Imagination

Stephen Lett, a member of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses and chairman of the graduation program, spoke to the class on the theme "Use Your Imagination Wisely." He first warned the graduates of four ways not to use their imaginations. The first three points were: (1) Do not imagine that material things can provide lasting protection; (2) avoid imagining immoral activities; and (3) refrain from excessive worry, imagining how bad tomorrow might be. (Proverbs 18:11; Matthew 5:28; 6:34) Regarding the third point, the speaker said that an excessive worrier piles yesterday's anxieties on top of today's and then reaches forward to bring tomorrow's anxieties back to today. "That's a heavy load to bear," said Brother Lett. The fourth point? The class was cautioned not to imagine that their life was better before they took up their missionary assignments. Doing so would cause them to miss out on the joys available to them in their new locations.

Brother Lett then encouraged the class to use their imaginations in four positive ways. He said: (1) Foresee situations that could be spiritually or physically dangerous, and avoid the calamity; (2) visualize the scenes you read in the Bible, and imagine that you are part of the event; (3) imagine that each person you speak to in your new assignment is a potential worshipper of Jehovah; and (4) develop empathy by imagining yourselves in the place of those to whom you preach.—Proverbs 22:3.

The Value of Training Others

David Splane, a member of the Governing Body, developed the theme "These Things Commit to Faithful Men," based on 2 Timothy 2:2. When the apostle Paul instructed Timothy to train faithful men, Paul's intention was for Timothy not only to teach these men established truths but also to encourage them to train others. The speaker told the class that there is a great need for men to take the lead in Christian activities. When and how will these ones be trained? Brother Splane encouraged the class to begin training these men right from the time the missionaries first begin studying the Bible with them.

How, specifically, can missionaries train Bible students to be faithful examples to others? The speaker outlined several ways. Missionaries need to train them to prepare well for their personal Bible study lesson. Then, as the students begin attending congregation meetings, they need to learn how to prepare on their own the Bible-based material

discussed at the meetings. "If a person can't study the Bible on his own," reasoned the speaker, "he will never be able to teach others." Brother Splane also said that missionaries can help new ones to be punctual, to support the preaching work financially, and to be obedient to those who are now taking the lead. He said the best way to teach these lessons is by setting a good example.

The Privilege of Being Witnesses

Guy Pierce, also a member of the Governing Body, spoke on a theme based on Jesus' words recorded at Acts 1:8, "You Will Be Witnesses of Me." He reminded the class that in the first century C.E., the nation of Israel lost the privilege of being witnesses for Jehovah. That privilege was given to a nation producing Kingdom fruits. (Matthew 21:43) The congregation of anointed Christians proved to be that nation. The speaker quoted the apostle Peter, who said that the "holy nation" of anointed Christians would "declare abroad" the excellencies of Jehovah. (1 Peter 2:6-9) So Jesus was not saying that Christians would be witnesses only of him and no longer be witnesses of Jehovah. After all, Jesus is called "the Faithful Witness." (Revelation 1:5; 3:14) He is the foremost Witness of Jehovah and the model we follow.—1 Peter 2:21.

Today, the speaker told the class, Jesus' words at Acts 1:8 have taken on greater meaning. Why? A momentous milestone in prophecy, as recorded at Revelation 11:15, has been fulfilled! God's Messianic Kingdom has been established. Now, in a literal way, the witness work is being accomplished "to the most distant part of the earth." (Acts 1:8) Brother Pierce emphasized that missionaries bear witness about Jehovah and his Kingdom, not about themselves or about their former lifestyle, culture, and country. He encouraged the class to teach "as many as possible in the time that is left."

Other Highlights of the Program

Alex Reinmueller, a helper to the Publishing Committee, spoke on the theme "Jehovah Will Give You Courage." He said that if the missionaries rely on Jehovah's power, He will help them to recognize their strengths, accept their weaknesses, face their fears, and give God their best.

Two of the instructors in the Theocratic Schools Department, Sam Roberson and William Samuelson, also addressed the students. Brother Roberson spoke on the subject "I Am With You," based on Isaiah 41:10. He said that the missionaries will have many joys. They will also have problems. They can cope if they imitate King David, who cried out to his loving Father in prayer. (Psalm 34:4, 6, 17, 19) Brother Samuelson's discourse stressed the need to continue developing thinking ability. Missionaries who do are able to refrain from reacting negatively to unkind remarks and do not easily take offense.—Proverbs 2:10, 11.

Jim Mantz, a helper to the Writing Committee, interviewed a Branch Committee member from the Republic of Georgia, another from Honduras, and a Country Committee member from the Republic of Tajikistan. These experienced brothers gave the missionaries advice on how to make friends of potentially antagonistic people by "conquering the evil with the good." (Romans 12:21) Mark Noumair, another class instructor, hosted a lively discussion of the preaching experiences the students enjoyed during their Gilead training. The part had the thought-provoking theme "Yes, How Can I Help?"

The chairman concluded the program by quoting lyrics from the new song "See Yourself When All Is New." The 6,509 in attendance went away more determined than ever to bear witness about Jehovah and his Son "to the most distant part of the earth."



127th Graduating Class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead

In the list below, rows are numbered from front to back, and names are listed from left to right in each row.

- (1) Marshall, T.; Prudent, L.; Mashburn, A.; Rosenström, S.; Testa, A.; Takeyama, M.; Sisk, M.
- (2) Grooms, K.; Miura, S.; Camacho, M.; Rozas, S.; Burch, M.; Meza, I.; Young, G.; Geraghty, S.
- (3) Bonilla, C.; Knaller, D.; Parrales, R.; Hotti, S.; Takada, A.; Tournade, M.; Sopel, C.
- (4) Miura, Y.; Parrales, K.; Prudent, K.; Colburn, S.; Willis, L.; Vääränen, A.; Sisk, B.; Takada, R.
- (5) Grooms, J.; Vääränen, M.; Geraghty, B.; Stackhouse, R.; Wilson, A.; Bonell, E.; Camacho, D.; Meza, R.; Bonell, M.
- (6) Takeyama, S.; Testa, G.; Colburn, T.; Mashburn, C.; Willis, W.; Tournade, L.; Burch, J.; Stackhouse, J.
- (7) Wilson, J.; Young, J.; Marshall, E.; Rozas, M.; Knaller, J.; Hotti, N.; Rosenström, A.; Sopel, J.; Bonilla, O.

Class assigned to the 22 countries shown below





Was man intended to go to heaven?

[SEE PAGE 5.](#)



What must we do to receive the reward
of good people? [SEE PAGE 6.](#)



Are Christians required to keep the Sabbath?

[SEE PAGES 13-15.](#)



How can you recognize true worshippers?

[SEE PAGES 16-17.](#)



What can you do if your in-laws constantly
interfere in your marriage? [SEE PAGES 26-28.](#)