

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

AUGUST 1, 2007



SPIRITUALITY

**WHAT IS IT?
HOW CAN YOU FIND IT?**

August 1, 2007

Average Printing Each Issue: 28,578,000

Vol. 128, No. 15

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

IN THIS ISSUE

- 3 In Search of Spirituality
- 4 True Spirituality—How Can You Find It?
- 8 Jehovah's Word Is Alive—Highlights From the Book of Ezekiel—II
- 12 Serving Jehovah—An Honor and a Privilege Beyond Compare
- 16 Two "Miracles" at One Convention in Georgia
- 20 A Mother's Faith Triumphs Over Tragedy
- 21 "Guard Against Every Sort of Covetousness"
- 26 Are You "Rich Toward God"?
- 31 Questions From Readers
- 32 Are God's Eyes Upon You?

WATCHTOWER STUDIES

SEPTEMBER 10-16:

"Guard Against Every Sort of Covetousness."

Page 21. Songs to be used: 132, 67.

SEPTEMBER 17-23:

Are You "Rich Toward God"?

Page 26. Songs to be used: 172, 9.

Publication of *The Watchtower* is 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*.

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

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

© 2007 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania.

All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A.

Semimonthly

ENGLISH

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

America, United States of: Wallkill, NY 12589. **Antigua:** Box 119, St. Johns. **Australia:** Box 280, Ingleburn, NSW 1890. **Bahamas:** Box N-1247, Nassau, N.P. **Barbados, W.I.:** Crusher Site Road, Prospect, St. James BB 24012. **Britain:** The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN. **Canada:** Box 4100, Halton Hills (Georgetown), Ontario L7G 4Y4. **Germany:** Niederselters, Am Steinfeins, D-65618 Selters. **Ghana:** P. O. Box GP 760, Accra. **Guyana:** 352-360 Tyrell St., Republic Park Phase 2 EBD. **Hawaii 96819:** 2055 Kam IV Rd., Honolulu. **Hong Kong:** 4 Kent Road, Kowloon Tong. **India:** Po Box 6440, Yelahanka, Bangalore 560 064, KAR. **Ireland:** Newcastle, Greystones, Co. Wicklow. **Jamaica:** P. O. Box 103, Old Harbour, St. Catherine. **Japan:** 4-7-1 Nakashinden, Ebina City, Kanagawa Pref., 243-0496. **Kenya:** P.O. Box 47788, GPO Nairobi 00100. **New Zealand:** PO Box 75142, Manurewa, Manukau 2243. **Nigeria:** P.M.B. 1090, Benin City 300001, Edo State. **Philippines, Republic of:** P. O. Box 2044, 1060 Manila. **South Africa:** Private Bag X2067, Krugersdorp, 1740. **Trinidad and Tobago, Republic of:** Lower Rapsey Street & Laxmi Lane, Curepe. **Zambia:** Box 33459, Lusaka 10101. **Zimbabwe:** Private Bag WG-5001, Westgate.

NOW PUBLISHED IN 161 LANGUAGES, SEMIMONTLY: Afrikaans, Albanian,* Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Bengali, Bicol, Bulgarian, Cebuano,* Chichewa,* Chinese, Chinese (Simplified),* Cibemba,* Croatian,* Czech, * Danish,** Dutch,** Efik, * English*+o (also Braille), Estonian, Ewe, Fijian, Finnish, **+ French*++ (also Braille), Ga, Georgian,* German, ** Greek,* Gun, Hebrew, Hiligaynon, Hungarian,*+ Igbo, * Iloko, * Indonesian, Italian, ** Japanese*++ (also Braille), Kinyarwanda, Kirundi, Korean**+ (also Braille), Lingala, Lithuanian, Luvale, Macedonian, Malagasy,* Malayalam, Maltese, Myanmar, Norwegian, ** Pangasinan, Polish, ** Portuguese*++ (also Braille), Punjabi, Rarotongan, Romanian,* Russian,*+o Samar-Leyte, Samoan, Sepedi, Serbian, Sesotho, Shona, * Silozi, Sinhala, Slovak,* Slovenian, Spanish*++ (also Braille), Sranantongo, Swahili,* Swedish,* Tagalog,* Tamil, Telugu, Thai, Tigrinya, Tok Pisin, Tongan, Tshiluba, Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Twi, Ukrainian,* Vietnamese, Khosa, Yoruba,* Zulu*

MONTHLY: American Sign Language,[□] Armenian (West), Azerbaijani,[□] Azerbaijani (Cyrillic), Baoulé, Bislama, Brazilian Sign Language,[□] Cambodian, Chitonga, Chuukese, Colombian Sign Language,[□] Gilbertese, Greenlandic, Guarani, Gujarati, Haitian Creole, Hausa, Hindi, Hiri Motu, Icelandic, Isoko, Kannada, Kaonde, Kazakh, Kikongo, Kiluba, Kirghiz, Kongo, Kosraean, Kwanyama/Ndonga, Latvian, Lunda, Lunda, Marathi, Marshallese, Mauritian Creole, Maya, Mexican Sign Language,[□] Mizo, Moore, Nepali, Nivean, Ossetian, Ote-tela, Palauan, Papiamento (Curaçao), Persian, Ponapean, Sango, Seychelles Creole, Solomon Islands Pidgin, Tahitian, Tatar, Tiv, Tumbuka, Tuvaluan, Tzotzil, Umbundu, Urdu, Uruund, Uzbek, Venda, Wallisian, Yapese, Zande, Zapotec (Isthmus)

* Study articles also available in large-print edition.

[□] Audio cassettes also available.

• CD also available.

○ MP3 CD-ROM also available.

△ Videocassette

□ DVD

IN SEARCH OF SPIRITUALITY

IN HIS famous Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said: "Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need." (Matthew 5:3) You probably agree with that statement. People everywhere recognize the need for spirituality in their life and assume that once found, it will bring them happiness. What, though, is the meaning of the term "spirituality"?

One dictionary defines spirituality as "sensitivity or attachment to religious values" and "the quality or state of being spiritual." Thus, such terms as "spirituality," "being spiritual," or "being spiritually-minded" are viewed as synonymous. To clarify the term further, think of this comparison: An individual who is skillful in commercial affairs is said to be business-minded. Similarly, someone who keenly values spiritual or religious interests is called spiritually-minded.

How, then, is true spirituality achieved? Though just about every religion claims to know the path to spirituality, the directions given are about as numerous as the religions themselves. A Protestant claims to be saved at a revival meeting. A Catholic seeks communion with God at Mass. A Buddhist pursues enlightenment through meditation. A Hindu strives for release from the cy-



cle of rebirths through self-denial. Are all of these on the path to true spirituality? Are any?

For many, the answer to those questions is no. They hold that spirituality means to "believe without belonging," that is, to believe in a god or a deity without belonging to a church. Others feel that spirituality refers, not to a

religious experience, but to a desire for inner peace and for meaning in life. They assert that those seeking spirituality need not look to religion at all. Rather, they need only to look inwardly, to their innermost feelings. One writer says: "True spirituality is something that is found deep within oneself. It is your way of loving, accepting and relating to the world and people around you. It cannot be found in a church or by believing in a certain way."

Clearly, people differ greatly in their ideas about spirituality. Thousands of books claim to show the way to a spiritual life, yet all too often readers are left feeling unfulfilled and confused. There is one book, however, that does contain reliable guidance on spiritual matters. It is the book that shows evidence of being inspired of God. (2 Timothy 3:16) Let us see what that book, the Bible, says about the meaning of spirituality and the value of it.

TRUE SPIRITUALITY

HOW CAN YOU FIND IT?

TO BE carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace," wrote the apostle Paul. (Romans 8:6, King James Version) With those words, the apostle was pointing out that being a spiritual person is more than a matter of personal preference or inclination. Essentially, it is a matter of life and death. In what sense, though, does a spiritual person receive "life and peace"? According to the Bible, such a person enjoys peace now—with self and with God—and will be blessed with everlasting life in the future. (Romans 6:23; Philippians 4:7) No wonder Jesus observed: "Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need!"—Matthew 5:3.

The fact that you are reading this magazine indicates that you have an interest in spirituality—and wisely so. Yet, views on this subject differ widely, so you may wonder: 'What is true spirituality? And how does one attain it?'

"The Mind of Christ"

In addition to pointing out the importance and benefits of being spiritually-minded, the apostle Paul had much to say about what true spirituality is. To the Christians in the ancient city of Corinth, Paul explained the difference between a physical man, that is, a person who follows the impulses of the flesh, and a spiritual man, a person who cherishes spiritual things. Paul wrote: "A physical man does not receive the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him." On the other hand, Paul explained that the spiritual man is characterized by having "the mind of Christ."—1 Corinthians 2:14-16.

Having "the mind of Christ" basically means having "the same mental attitude that Christ Jesus had." (Romans 15:5; Philippians 2:5) In other words, a spiritual man is one who thinks as Jesus does and walks in His footsteps. (1 Peter 2:21; 4:1) The more a person's mind resembles that of Christ, the deeper his spirituality is and the closer he is to gaining "life and peace."—Romans 13:14.

How to Get to Know "the Mind of Christ"

To *have* the mind of Christ, however, one must first *know* that mind. Therefore, the first step in developing spirituality is to get to know Jesus' way of thinking. But how do you come to know the mind of someone who lived on earth 2,000 years ago? Well, how, for example, did you learn about the historical figures of your country? Likely by reading about them. Similarly, reading a written history of Jesus is an important way to get to know the mind of Christ.—John 17:3.

In Jesus' case, there are four vivid historical accounts—the Gospels written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Reading these accounts carefully will help you to perceive Jesus' way of thinking, his depth of feeling, and the motivation behind his actions. When you take time to reflect on what you read about Jesus, you build a picture in your mind of the kind of person he was. Even if you already consider yourself a follower of Christ, such reading and reflection will help you to "go on growing in the undeserved kindness and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."—2 Peter 3:18.

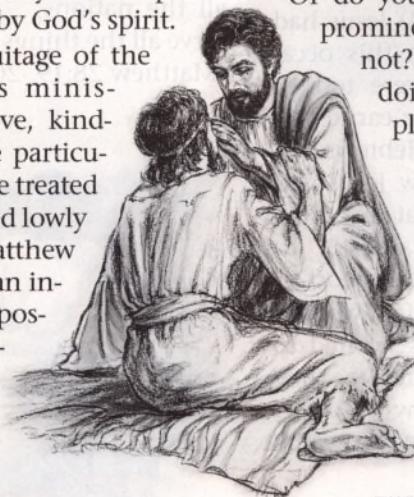
*The Bible helps you get to know
"the mind of Christ"*

With that in mind, let us examine some passages in the Gospels to see what made Jesus such a spiritual person. Then, ask yourself how you can imitate the pattern set by him.—John 13:15.

Spirituality and "the Fruitage of the Spirit"

Gospel writer Luke stated that God's holy spirit was poured out on Jesus at his baptism and that Jesus was "full of holy spirit." (Luke 3:21, 22; 4:1) Jesus, in turn, impressed upon his followers the importance of being guided by God's holy spirit, or "active force." (Genesis 1:2; Luke 11:9-13) Why is that so important? Because God's spirit has the power to transform a person's mind, so that it begins to resemble the mind of Christ. (Romans 12: 1, 2) The holy spirit produces in a person such qualities as "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control." These qualities—which the Bible calls "the fruitage of the spirit"—mark a truly spiritual person. (Galatians 5:22, 23) In short, a spiritually-minded person is one who is guided by God's spirit.

Jesus displayed the fruitage of the spirit throughout his ministry. Such qualities as love, kindness, and goodness were particularly evident in the way he treated those who were considered lowly members of society. (Matthew 9:36) Note, for example, an incident described by the apostle John. We read: "As [Jesus] was passing along he saw a man blind from birth." Jesus' disciples



also noticed the man but saw him as a sinner. "Who sinned," they asked, "this man or his parents?" The man's neighbors also noted the man, but all they saw was a beggar. "This is the man that used to sit and beg, is it not?" they said. Jesus, however, saw the blind man as an individual who needed help. He spoke to the blind man and cured him.—John 9: 1-8.

What does this incident tell you about the mind of Christ? First, Jesus did not overlook lowly ones but treated them with tender compassion. Second, he took the initiative to help others. Do you see yourself following this pattern set by Jesus? Do you see people as Jesus did, giving them the help they need to improve their life and brighten their future?

Or do you tend to favor those who are prominent and overlook those who are not? If the former is the case, you are doing well in following Jesus' example.—Psalm 72:12-14.

Spirituality and Prayer

The Gospel accounts show that Jesus often turned to God in prayer. (Mark 1:35; Luke 5: 16; 22:41) During his ministry on earth, Jesus deliberately set aside time to pray. The disciple Matthew wrote: "Having sent the crowds away, [Jesus] went

up into the mountain by himself to pray." (Matthew 14:23) From such moments spent in quiet communication with his heavenly Father, Jesus gained strength. (Matthew 26:36-44) Today, spiritually-minded people likewise look for opportunities to communicate with God, knowing that this will strengthen their relationship with the Creator and help them to become more Christ-like in their thinking.

Jesus often spent extended periods of time in prayer. (John 17:1-26) For instance, before he chose the 12 men who would become his apostles, Jesus "went out into the mountain to pray, and he continued *the whole night* in prayer to God." (Luke 6:12) Although not necessarily spending the whole night in prayer, those who are spiritually-minded follow Jesus' example. Before making major decisions in life, they take ample time to pray to God, seeking the direction of the holy spirit in making choices that will deepen their spirituality.

In his prayers, Jesus also showed the depth of feeling that we ought to imitate in our prayers. Note what Luke recorded about the way Jesus prayed on the evening before he died. "Getting into an agony he continued praying *more earnestly*; and his sweat became as drops of blood falling to the ground." (Luke 22:44) Jesus had prayed earnestly before, but on this occasion, faced with the most severe test of his earthly life, he prayed "*more earnestly*" —and his prayer was answered. (Hebrews 5:7) Spiritually-minded people follow Jesus' example. When faced with trials that are particularly severe, they pray "*more earnestly*" to God for holy spirit, guidance, and support.

Since Jesus was clearly a man of prayer, it is not surprising that his disciples wanted to imitate him in this regard. Therefore, they asked him: "Lord, teach us how to pray." (Luke 11:1) Similarly today, those who value

spiritual matters and want to be guided by God's holy spirit follow Jesus' example in how they pray to God. True spirituality and prayer go hand in hand.

Spirituality and the Preaching of the Good News

In the Gospel of Mark, we find an account in which Jesus cured many ill people, doing so late into the night. Early the next morning when he was alone praying, his apostles came and told him that many people were looking for him, perhaps wanting to be cured. However, Jesus told them: "Let us go somewhere else, into the village towns nearby, that I may *preach* there also." Then Jesus explained why: "It is for this purpose I have gone out." (Mark 1:32-38; Luke 4:43) Although curing people was important to Jesus, preaching the good news of God's Kingdom was Jesus' primary mission.—Mark 1:14, 15.

Today, telling others about God's Kingdom is still an identifying mark of those who have the mind of Christ. To all who want to be his followers, Jesus gave the command: "Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations, . . . teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:19, 20) In addition,



Jesus foretold: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come." (Matthew 24:14) Since God's Word indicates that the preaching work is accomplished by the power of the holy spirit, having a meaningful share in that work is a sign of true spirituality.—Acts 1:8.

Preaching the Kingdom message to people around the world requires the united efforts of millions of people. (John 17:20, 21) Those engaged in this work need to be not only spiritually-minded but also well-organized on a global scale. Can you identify the people who are following in the footsteps of Christ and preaching the good news of the Kingdom around the world?

How Do You Measure Up?

Of course, there are other characteristics that identify a truly spiritual person, but how do you measure up to those already considered? To find out, ask yourself: 'Do I regularly read God's Word, the Bible, and reflect on what I read? Do I manifest the fruitage of the spirit in my life? Am I a man or a woman of prayer? Do I want to associate with the people who are carrying out the worldwide preaching of the good news of God's Kingdom?'

An honest self-examination may help you to determine the depth of your spirituality. We urge you to take the necessary steps now so that "life and peace" may be your lot. —Romans 8:6; Matthew 7:13, 14; 2 Peter 1:5-11.

MARKS OF SPIRITUALITY

- ◆ Having love for God's Word
- ◆ Manifesting the fruitage of the spirit
- ◆ Praying to God regularly and sincerely
- ◆ Sharing the Kingdom good news with others



Jehovah's Word Is Alive

Highlights From the Book of Ezekiel—II

IT IS December 609 B.C.E. The Babylonian king has begun his final siege of Jerusalem. So far, Ezekiel's message to the exiles in Babylon has centered on one theme: the fall and destruction of their beloved city, Jerusalem. Now, though, the subject of Ezekiel's prophecies shifts to the doom of the pagan nations that would rejoice at the calamity upon God's people. When Jerusalem falls 18 months later, Ezekiel's message once again takes on a new theme: the glorious restoration of true worship.

Ezekiel 25:1–48:35 contains prophecies about the nations surrounding Israel and the deliverance of God's people.* Except for Ezekiel 29:17–20, the account follows chronological as well as topical order. However, these four verses are in place topically. As part of the inspired Scriptures, the book of Ezekiel has a message that "is alive and exerts power."—Hebrews 4:12.

'THAT LAND IS TO BECOME LIKE THE GARDEN OF EDEN' (Ezekiel 25:1–39:29)

Foreseeing their response to the fall of Jerusalem, Jehovah has Ezekiel prophesy against Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Tyre, and Sidon. Egypt is to be plundered. 'Pharaoh the king of Egypt and his crowd' are likened to a cedar that will be cut down by the "sword of the king of Babylon."—Ezekiel 31:2, 3, 12; 32:11, 12.

* For a discussion of Ezekiel 1:1–24:27, see "Highlights From the Book of Ezekiel—I," in the July 1, 2007, issue of *The Watchtower*.

About six months after the destruction of Jerusalem in 607 B.C.E., an escapee comes and reports to Ezekiel: "The city has been struck down!" The prophet is 'no longer speechless' to the exiles. (Ezekiel 33:21, 22) He has restoration prophecies to declare. Jehovah "will raise up over them one shepherd, [his] servant David." (Ezekiel 34:23) Edom is to be desolated, but that land yonder, Judah, is to become "like the garden of Eden." (Ezekiel 36:35) Jehovah promises to protect his restored people from the attack of "Gog."—Ezekiel 38:2.

Scriptural Questions Answered:

29:8–12—When was Egypt desolated for 40 years? After the destruction of Jerusalem in 607 B.C.E., the remnant of Judah fled to Egypt despite the prophet Jeremiah's warning. (Jeremiah 24:1, 8–10; 42:7–22) That did not prove to be an escape for them because Nebuchadnezzar came up against Egypt and conquered it. The 40-year desolation of Egypt may have followed that conquest. While secular history provides no evidence of this desolation, we can be confident that it took place because Jehovah is the Fulfiller of prophecy.—Isaiah 55:11.

29:18—How was 'every head made bald and every shoulder rubbed bare'? The siege of the inland city of Tyre was so intense and strenuous that the heads of Nebuchadnezzar's troops were made bald by the chafing of their helmets and their shoulders were rubbed bare from carrying building materials for towers and fortifications.—Ezekiel 26:7–12.

Lessons for Us:

29:19, 20. Since the Tyrians escaped to their island-city with much of their wealth, King Nebuchadnezzar received very little spoil from Tyre. Even though Nebuchadnezzar was a proud, self-centered pagan ruler, Jehovah compensated him for his service by giving him Egypt as “wages for his military force.” Should we not imitate the true God by paying taxes to the governments for the services they perform in our behalf? Neither the conduct of secular authorities nor the way the taxes are put to use cancels this obligation.—Romans 13:4-7.

33:7-9. The modern-day watchman class—the anointed remnant—and its companions should never hold back from preaching the good news of the Kingdom and warning people about the coming “great tribulation.”—Matthew 24:21.

33:10-20. Our salvation depends on our turning away from bad ways and complying with what God requires. Indeed, Jehovah’s way is “adjusted right.”

36:20, 21. Because of not living up to what they were known as, that is, “the people of Jehovah,” the Israelites profaned God’s name among the nations. We should never become worshippers of Jehovah in name only.

36:25, 37, 38. The spiritual paradise that we enjoy today is filled with “a flock of holy persons.” Therefore, we should strive to keep it clean.

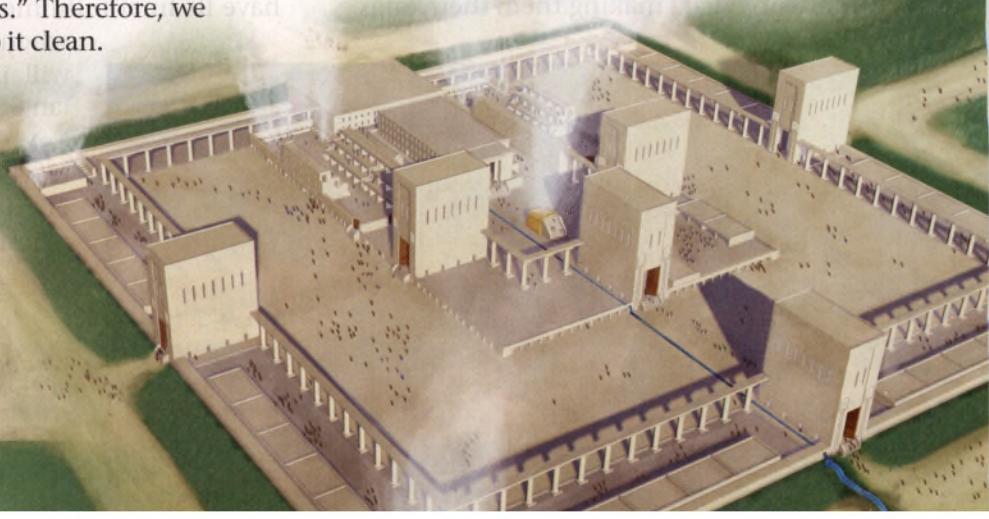
38:1-23. How reassuring it is to know that Jehovah will rescue his people from the attack of Gog of the land of Magog! Gog is the name given to “the ruler of this world,” Satan the Devil, after his ouster from heaven. The land of Magog refers to the vicinity of the earth, to which Satan and his demons are confined.—John 12:31; Revelation 12:7-12.

**“SET YOUR HEART UPON
ALL THAT I AM SHOWING YOU”**
(Ezekiel 40:1-48:35)

It is the 14th year after the city of Jerusalem was struck down. (Ezekiel 40:1) Fifty-six years of exile still lie ahead. (Jeremiah 29:10) Ezekiel is now close to 50 years of age. In a vision, he is brought to the land of Israel. He is told: “Son of man, see with your eyes, and with your ears hear, and set your heart upon all that I am showing you.” (Ezekiel 40:2-4) How thrilled Ezekiel must be to receive a vision of a new temple!

The glorious temple that Ezekiel sees has 6 gateways, 30 dining rooms, the Holy, the Most Holy, a wooden altar, and an altar for burnt offerings. “Going forth” from the temple is a stream of water that becomes a torrent. (Ezekiel 47:1) Ezekiel also receives a vision of tribal assignments of land—each allotment running east to west with an

*The glorious temple
of Ezekiel’s vision*



administrative strip between the allotments of Judah and Benjamin. "The sanctuary of Jehovah" and "the city" named Jehovah-Shammah are located in this strip.—Ezekiel 48:9, 10, 15, 35, footnote.

Scriptural Questions Answered:

40:3–47:12—What is represented by the visionary temple? This temple of gigantic proportions seen by Ezekiel in vision was actually never built. It pictured God's spiritual temple—his templelike arrangement for pure worship in our day. (Ezekiel 40:2; Micah 4:1; Hebrews 8:2; 9:23, 24) The temple vision is fulfilled during "the last days," when the priesthood is refined. (2 Timothy 3:1; Ezekiel 44:10-16; Malachi 3:1-3) However, it has a final fulfillment in Paradise. The visionary temple provided the Jewish exiles with a promise that pure worship would be restored and that each Jewish family would have an inheritance in the land.

40:3–43:17—What is significant about the measuring of the temple? The measuring of the temple is a sign that Jehovah's purpose concerning pure worship is sure to be fulfilled.

43:2-4, 7, 9—What were "the carcasses of their kings" that had to be removed from the temple? The carcasses evidently referred to idols. Jerusalem's rulers and her people had polluted God's temple with idols—in effect, making them their kings.

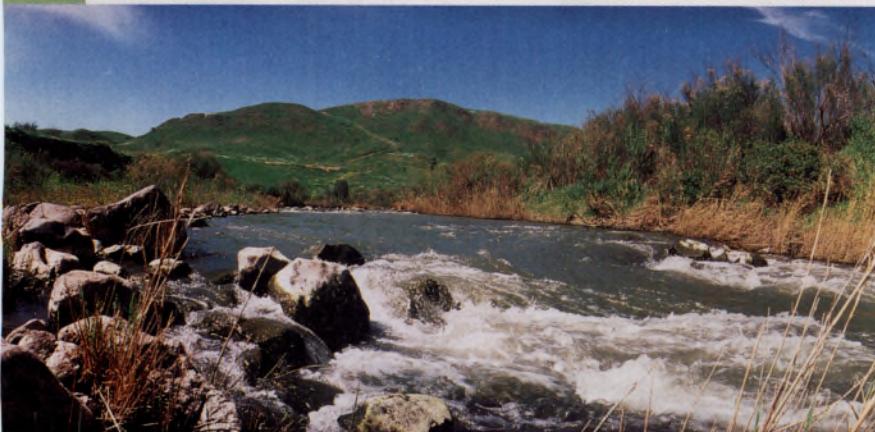
43:13-20—What is symbolized by the altar that Ezekiel saw in vision? The symbolic altar is God's will in connection with Jesus Christ's ransom sacrifice. Because of this provision, the anointed are declared righteous and the "great crowd" is clean and pure in God's eyes. (Revelation 7:9-14; Romans 5:1, 2) Perhaps that is why "the molten sea" of Solomon's temple—a huge water basin used for the priests to wash in—is lacking in the visionary temple.—1 Kings 7:23-26.

44:10-16—Who is represented by the priestly class? The priestly class foreshadows the body of anointed Christians in our day. The refining of them took place in 1918 when Jehovah sat "as a refiner and cleanser" in his spiritual temple. (Malachi 3:1-5) Those who were clean or who repented could continue in their privilege of service. Thereafter, they had to work hard to keep themselves "without spot from the world," thus becoming examples to the "great crowd," represented by the nonpriestly tribes.—James 1:27; Revelation 7:9, 10.

45:1; 47:13–48:29—What do "the land" and its allotment represent? The land represents the realm of activity of God's people. Regardless of where a worshipper of Jehovah happens to be, that one is in the restored land as long as he upholds true worship. The apportioning of the land will have its final fulfillment in the new world

when each faithful person will inherit a place.—Isaiah 65:17, 21.

45:7, 16—What is portrayed by the people's contribution for the priesthood and the chief-



What does the river of life in Ezekiel's vision represent?

tain? In the spiritual temple, this primarily refers to spiritual support—offering assistance and manifesting a cooperative spirit.

47:1-5—What is pictured by the water of Ezekiel's visionary river? The water pictures Jehovah's spiritual provisions for life, including the ransom sacrifice of Christ Jesus and the knowledge of God found in the Bible. (Jeremiah 2:13; John 4:7-26; Ephesians 5:25-27) The river progressively deepens to accommodate the influx of new ones who take up true worship. (Isaiah 60:22) The river will be flowing with the most potent water of life during the Millennium, and its waters will include further understanding obtained from the "scrolls" that will then be opened.—Revelation 20:12; 22:1, 2.

47:12—What do the fruitful trees represent? The symbolic trees picture God's spiritual provisions for restoring mankind to perfection.

48:15-19, 30-35, footnote—What does the city in Ezekiel's vision represent? "Jehovah-Shammah" is situated in "profane" land, indicating that it must represent something earthly. The city seems to represent the earthly administration that benefits those who will make up the righteous "new earth." (2 Peter 3:13) Having gates on each side illustrates its openness. The overseers among God's people are to be approachable.

Lessons for Us:

40:14, 16, 22, 26. The wall carvings of palm trees in the entryways of the temple show that only those who are morally upright are allowed to enter. (Psalm 92:12) This teaches us that our worship is acceptable to Jehovah only if we are upright.

44:23. How grateful we can be for the services provided by the modern-day priestly class! "The faithful and discreet slave" takes the lead in providing timely spiritual food that helps us to discern the difference between what is unclean and what is clean in Jehovah's eyes.—Matthew 24:45.

47:9, 11. Knowledge—a vital feature of the symbolic water—has been accomplishing a wonderful healing in our time. Wherever it is taken in, it brings people to life spiritually. (John 17:3) On the other hand, those who do not accept the life-giving water will be 'given to salt'—destroyed permanently. How vital it is that 'we do our utmost to handle the word of the truth aright'! —2 Timothy 2:15.

"I Shall Certainly Sanctify My Great Name"

After the removal of the last king of David's line, the true God allowed a long period of time to elapse before the coming of the One "who has the legal right" to the kingship. However, God did not forsake his covenant with David. (Ezekiel 21:27; 2 Samuel 7:11-16) Ezekiel's prophecy speaks of "my servant David," who would become a "shepherd" and a "king." (Ezekiel 34:23, 24; 37:22, 24, 25) This one is none other than Jesus Christ in Kingdom power. (Revelation 11:15) Jehovah will "sanctify [his] great name" by means of the Messianic Kingdom.—Ezekiel 36:23.

Very soon now, all those who profane God's holy name will be destroyed. But those who sanctify that name in their lives by worshipping Jehovah in an acceptable way will receive everlasting life. Let us therefore take full advantage of the waters of life that are flowing abundantly in our day and make true worship the very center of our lives.



SERVING JEHOVAH —AN HONOR AND A PRIVILEGE BEYOND COMPARE

AS TOLD BY
ZERAH STIGERS

My husband, who had been my faithful companion in the full-time ministry, died in 1938. That left me with an infant and a ten-year-old son to care for. Although I still yearned to serve as a full-time minister, how could I do so? Let me tell you a little about my earlier life before I explain how.

SHORTLY after I was born on July 27, 1907, in Alabama, U.S.A., my parents moved with me and my three siblings to Georgia. Soon afterward, we went to Tennessee and then to the vicinity of Tampa, Florida. While there, in 1916, I saw the picture show with sound "Photo-Drama of Creation." The movie industry was in its infancy, and everyone so enjoyed the "Photo-Drama"!

My parents were avid readers of *The Watchtower* and other Bible publications. Al-

though Father enjoyed the literature, at the time he did not actively associate with the Bible Students, as Jehovah's Witnesses were then called. Mother, however, took us children to the meetings. In fact, shortly after we moved to Niles, Michigan, we regularly traveled over ten miles by train to South Bend, Indiana, to attend meetings.

Eventually, on July 22, 1924, I was baptized in symbol of my dedication to Jehovah. Soon thereafter, Mother arranged her affairs to be

come a colporteur, as full-time ministers of Jehovah's Witnesses were then called. Her fine example and that of other colporteurs instilled in me a desire to enter that work.

Finding a Partner

While attending a large convention in Indianapolis, Indiana, in 1925, I met James Stigers, who was from Chicago. Right away James impressed me as an enthusiastic servant of Jehovah. I lived about 100 miles from Chicago, so it was not easy for us to visit each other. Back then, there was only one congregation in that large city, and meetings were held in a rented upstairs room. James often wrote to encourage me spiritually. We were married in December 1926, and about a year later, I gave birth to our first son, Eddie.

Shortly afterward, James and I began our pioneer ministry together. We served in eight states—Michigan, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Dakota, Iowa, Nebraska, California, and Illinois—enjoying the most delightful years of our life. Only when James became ill were those happy days as a family interrupted.

The financial consequences of James' illness led us to return to Chicago in 1936 to live with my mother-in-law, who was also a Witness. During the latter part of James' illness, while I was pregnant with our second child, I worked for \$1 a day in a lunchroom. My dear mother-in-law made sure that we had plenty to eat, and she would not take a penny in return. She couldn't have treated us better.

James was sick for about two years before he died of encephalitis, an inflammation of the brain. That was in July 1938. During his illness, he was unable to drive or to share in the door-to-door ministry, but he never passed up an opportunity to witness to others. In order to

My husband and I used this vehicle in the colporteur work

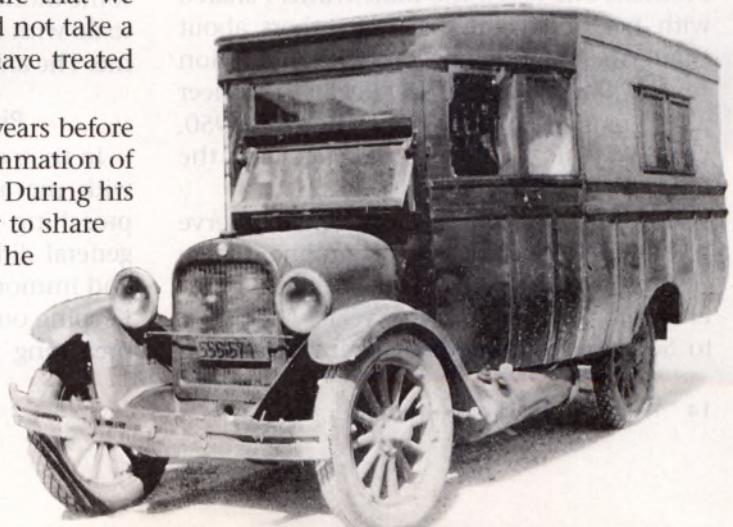
contribute to the financial support of our family, I discontinued the full-time ministry. I was able to find various jobs, each lasting for only a short period of time.

Our son Bobby was born on July 30, 1938, just eight days after his father died. However, my mother-in-law refused to let me go to the county hospital. Instead, she arranged for me to go to a better hospital and receive the care of her doctor. Moreover, she paid all the bills, an expression of Christian love I deeply appreciated.

Return to the Full-Time Ministry

We continued to live with my mother-in-law until Bobby was just over 2 years old, by which time Eddie was 12. Though I had to adjust to my new circumstances, I still had a burning desire to serve Jehovah full-time. At the Detroit, Michigan, convention in 1940, I met a pioneer couple who encouraged me to come to South Carolina to pioneer. So I bought a 1935 Pontiac for \$150 and prepared to move there. In 1941, the year the United States entered World War II, my two boys and I headed south, and I once again entered the full-time ministry.

When we moved to South Carolina, we first went to Camden, next to Little River, and then to Conway. In Conway, I obtained a small trailer. I received permission from a kindly gas-station owner to park near his



station, connect to his gas and electricity, and even use the station's restroom. During World War II, there was gas rationing, and I couldn't obtain any fuel. So I bought a used bicycle. Then, in 1943, when it seemed impossible to continue pioneering because all of our money was gone, I was invited to be a special pioneer; thereby I received a monthly reimbursement to help with expenses. Down through the years, Jehovah has helped me so much!

There were no other Witnesses living in Conway at the time, and it was difficult for the children and me to go in the ministry by ourselves. So I wrote and asked for a special pioneer partner, and in 1944, I was blessed with a wonderful one—Edith Walker! We served together in several assignments for 16 years. Then, sadly, because of a health problem, she had to return to Ohio.

Memorable Blessings

Of the many happy memories I have of those years, I will never forget 13-year-old Alberta, who lived in Conway and cared for her crippled grandmother and two younger brothers. She loved the Bible truths I shared with her and wanted to tell others about them. She too developed a deep appreciation for the pioneer service and began to pioneer after graduating from high school in 1950. Over 57 years later, she is still pursuing the full-time ministry!

In 1951, Edith and I were assigned to serve briefly in Rock Hill, South Carolina, where very few Witnesses lived. Then it was on to Elberton, Georgia, for three years. Then back to South Carolina, where I remained from



With my sons in 1941

1954 to 1962. In Walhalla, I met an elderly, hearing-impaired woman named Nettie, who lived alone in a rural area. To carry on our Bible study, she read a paragraph in the publication, I pointed to the question for that paragraph at the bottom of the page, and then she pointed to the answer in the paragraph.

When she did not understand something, she wrote her question on a piece of paper, and I wrote the answer after it.

In time, Nettie's appreciation for Bible truth grew so much that she began attending congregation meetings as well as engaging in the door-to-door ministry. She preached by herself, but I was never far away, usually just across the street, being ready in the event that she needed some assistance.

While I was in Walhalla, my old car just stopped running. An opportunity arose to buy a car for \$100, but I had no money. I contacted a Witness who owned a business, and he loaned me the \$100. Shortly thereafter, I received an unexpected letter from my sister saying that my siblings had just discovered that when our father died, he had left some money in a bank. They discussed what to do with it, and they all agreed to send it to me. The amount was \$100!

Pioneering With My Sons

In their early years, Eddie and Bobby were with me all the time in the door-to-door preaching work. In those days, people in general did not have problems with drugs, and immoral influences were not so strong. Keeping our life simple and focusing on the preaching work helped me avoid many of

the problems parents today face in rearing their children to serve Jehovah.

Eddie went to school in Camden until he finished the eighth grade, after which he wanted to pioneer with me. We enjoyed our pioneer service together for some years. Then he developed a desire to work at the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in Brooklyn, New York, where he served from 1947 to 1957. In 1958 he married Alberta, my former Bible student, and they became pioneer partners. What a joy when in 2004, the three of us attended the Pioneer Service School together!

I recall that one day many years ago, I heard little Bobby ask Jehovah in prayer to help me obtain enough gasoline to use the car to get to my regular Bible study appointments. Throughout his life, Bobby has demonstrated a love for the ministry, and he enjoyed the pioneer ministry for several years. Sadly, Bobby too experienced family tragedy. In 1970 he lost his wife of only 22 months when she died in childbirth along with their twin babies. Bobby and I have always lived near each other, and we have enjoyed a very close relationship.

Still Pioneering!

In 1962, I was assigned to my current congregation in Lumberton, North Carolina, and I am still here after 45 years. I continued to drive my car until I was well into my 80's. One of the Witness families who live close by now take me to the congregation meetings and out in the preaching work.

I have a walker and a wheelchair, but I don't need to use either of them, since I can walk without any assistance. I am grateful to Jehovah to have enjoyed excellent health, only lately having had some trouble with my eyes. I never miss a congregation meeting unless I am very sick, and I continue to serve as an infirm regular pioneer.

Having joyfully served in the pioneer ministry for over 70 years, I can sincerely say that Jehovah has helped me all along the way.* I realize that I have never been a very intelligent person or a very fast worker, but Jehovah knows what I can and cannot do. I am so thankful that he knows that I am trying and that he has used me.

I feel that serving Jehovah as fully as possible is important because we owe everything to him. As long as I am able, I would not choose to serve as anything other than a pioneer. What a wonderful privilege this has been! My prayer is that I can be used by Jehovah throughout eternity.

* Sister Stigers finished her earthly course on April 20, 2007, just three months short of 100 years of age. We are encouraged by her many years of faithful service and rejoice in her receiving the heavenly reward.

With Eddie and Bobby recently





TWO “MIRACLES” at One Convention in Georgia

AN UNFORGETTABLE event, one marked by two “miracles,” took place in the country of Georgia in 2006. For three days, July 7 to 9, the “Deliverance at Hand!” District Convention of Jehovah’s Witnesses was held in six locations throughout the country. It was a spiritual feast enjoyed by over 17,000 attendees.

In January 2006, efforts were set in motion to find a suitable site for the gathering of thousands in the key convention city, Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia. Other convention venues would be tied in through telecommunication.

Freedom of worship in Georgia has been granted progressively over the last several years. Thus, despite widespread opposition in the past, the Witnesses forged ahead, confident that a convention site would be found in the capital city. The Georgian people are

by nature very warm and hospitable. However, religious prejudice runs deep among some officials. Would they overcome their feelings and allow the Witnesses to rent a facility?

The brothers on the Convention Committee visited various stadiums and large sports halls. The managers promised the use of their facilities but declined when asked for a specific rental date. The committee was surprised, therefore, when the administration of the Tbilisi Philharmonic agreed to rent their facility to Jehovah’s Witnesses. The concert hall is located in the heart of the city, where many of the most prestigious events are held.

Encouraged that their efforts had finally paid off, the committee began organizing the Tbilisi convention, as well as conventions in towns and cities throughout the

country, including Tsnori, Kutaisi, Zugdidi, Kaspi, and Gori. Much work was done to connect all these convention sites by telephone tie line for a simultaneous program. Everything was ready to go. Then, suddenly, just one week before the convention was to begin, the management of the Tbilisi Philharmonic concert hall canceled the contract. No explanation was given.

The First "Miracle"

What could the brothers do at this very late date? Their only recourse was to turn to Marneuli, a farming community 25 miles outside of Tbilisi. Many conventions have been held there on the property of a family who are Jehovah's Witnesses. The site was once a large garden. For the past ten years, it has been the only place that the congregations in Tbilisi could use for conventions. However, Marneuli is also the location where Jehovah's Witnesses have suffered fierce mob attacks.

One of these incidents took place on September 16, 2000. Police from the city of Marneuli set up roadblocks to stop the Witnesses from reaching the convention location. Then came busloads of thugs led by the defrocked Orthodox priest Vasili Mkalavishvili. They stopped cars and buses bound for the

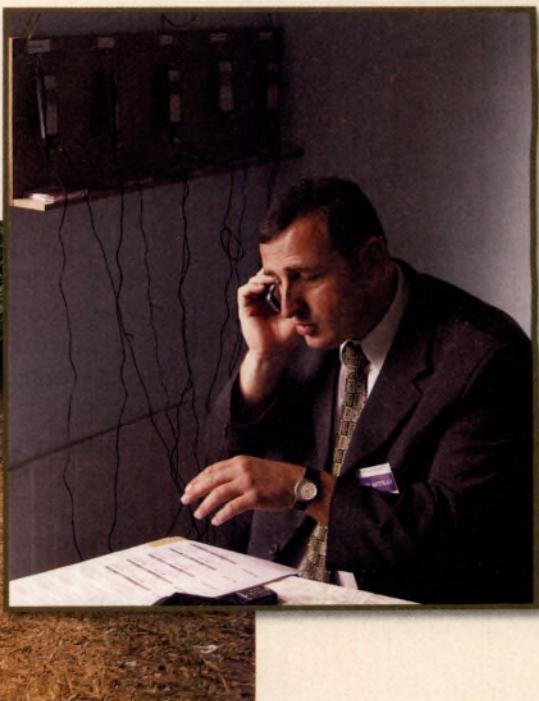
The convention at Marneuli was tied in with five other locations by mobile phones



convention in Marneuli, dragged several delegates from the vehicles, and beat them mercilessly, while other passengers were robbed of their belongings, including their Bibles and Bible literature.

The convention site in Marneuli was also attacked by a mob of about 60 people. Some 40 Witnesses were injured. One brother was stabbed in the chest with a knife. Some of the attackers brandished sawed-off shotguns, which they fired furiously into the air. One of them pointed a gun at the owner of the site and demanded her money and jewelry. The mob ransacked her house, which was located at one end of the site, and stole her valuables. After breaking all the windows in the house, they burned the Bible literature and the benches that had been made specially for the convention. One and a half tons of literature was destroyed. Rather than stopping the crime, police at the scene shared in the violence against the Witnesses.*

* For further details regarding the persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses in Georgia, see the January 22, 2002, issue of *Awake!* pages 18-24.





Delegates were delightfully surprised by the release of the complete "New World Translation" in Georgian

The Convention Committee had to contend with not only the threat of violence but also the challenge of how to fit 5,000 people into an area that normally holds about 2,500. How could this problem be solved in such a short time? It seemed like a miracle when the owners of two adjacent properties stepped in and offered to rent their garden plots.

Turning the plots into a suitable convention site was quite an undertaking. The weather made things very difficult—it rained the entire week before the convention. The neighbors' plots were planted with potatoes, and they had to be harvested. First, volunteers gathered in the pouring rain to dig the potatoes. Then fences were moved and frames erected for coverings to shield the audience from sun and rain. More wooden benches needed to be built, and additional sound equipment was installed. Sawing, nailing, and drilling, the volunteers worked day and night, some forgoing sleep.

"What if the rain continues during the convention?" everyone wondered. "Will the muddy field swallow up the delegates?" Straw was purchased for covering the wet

ground. At last, the sun came out! All three days of the convention, the grounds were bathed in beautiful, warm sunshine.

When the delegates arrived, they were greeted by a lovely sight. The peaceful country setting seemed like a glimpse of the new world. Comfortably seated, the delegates were surrounded by fig trees and other fruit trees and by fields of maize and tomatoes. The back of the stage was draped with grape vines. Occasionally during the program, the audience could hear roosters crowing and hens cackling as their eggs were being gathered. There were other noises typical of the countryside, but to those in attendance, these were just an amusing serenade. Rather than being distracted, the audience barely noticed, for they were intent on listening to the excellent Bible-based program. However, these were not the only unforgettable moments of this convention.

The Second "Miracle"

At the conclusion of the Friday morning session, the delegates were taken by surprise when a member of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses, Geoffrey Jackson, announced the release of the complete *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* in

"The Little One" Has Grown

The words of Isaiah 60:22 have come true in Georgia: "The little one himself will become a thousand, and the small one a mighty nation. I myself, Jehovah, shall speed it up in its own time." In less than 20 years, the number of Kingdom publishers in Georgia has grown from fewer than 100 to some 16,000. These zealous ministers of God's Word are conducting nearly 8,000 home Bible studies each week—a marvelous potential for further growth in Georgia.

Georgian.* Tears welled up in the eyes of many, who were simply astounded. One family excitedly remarked: "We cannot stop expressing our gratitude for this miracle—Jehovah's miracle. Such an enormous amount of work in such a short time!"

One sister from the town of Tsalendjikha who had listened to the program by telephone responded: "I cannot put into words the joy that I felt when we received the complete Bible. I want to thank you for this outstanding three-day convention. It was really a historic event." One family in a congregation in western Georgia, bordering the Black Sea, said: "Up until now, we have had only one Bible in our family, but now all four of us have our own copy of the *New World Translation*. Now each one of us can study the Bible personally."

Behind the scenes, however, not all had gone so smoothly. For instance, although the complete *New World Translation* was

* The *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures* in the Georgian language was released in 2004.

printed and shipped to Georgia in time for the convention, officials of the Customs Department refused to allow the shipment to cross the border. The brothers appealed to the Ombudsman Office. The ombudsman was able to secure the release of the Bibles just in time for the district convention. He even sent his assistant to the Marneuli convention to obtain copies of the new Bible for their office.

Warm Welcome, Georgian Style

The Marneuli district convention was a landmark occasion for Jehovah's Witnesses in Georgia for yet another reason. A member of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses was on the program. All in attendance were so thrilled that they personally wanted to extend to him their traditional warm welcome. Brother Jackson had to stand and greet the brothers and sisters for hours before, during, and after the convention, but he was happy to comply.

Back in 1903 at the close of another convention, one brother said: "I would not take a thousand dollars for the good I have received from this convention, and I am only a poor man." More than a century later, that was precisely the feeling of the Witnesses who attended the momentous conventions held in the summer of 2006 in the country of Georgia.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Admire the Design;
Learn About the Designer

Christianity Penetrates Asia Minor

You Can Deal With Injustice!

A Mother's Faith TRIUMPHS OVER TRAGEDY

"If you are reading this letter, it means that I did not survive the surgery and that I am not with you any longer."

THESE are the opening words of a letter written by Carmen, a Christian mother, to her three daughters, aged 25, 19, and 16. As it turned out, the operation did not go well, and sadly, Carmen died.

Having to leave behind three daughters under such grievous circumstances is enough to break anyone's heart. Yet, this mother's strong faith in Jehovah and his promises clearly triumphed over the tragedy, having given her the inner peace so beautifully discernible in her touching letter. Note what she said to her daughters.

"First of all, I want to tell you that I love you with all my heart. . . . You are the best daughters a mother could have, and I am very proud of you.

"I would have liked to continue with you until God's promised new world . . . , but as it cannot be, I have asked him to help you so that you can be faithful, as you have been. We have endured many trials together, and Jehovah has never forsaken us. . . . So keep on trusting in the guidance that he provides through his organization, and continue to give support to the congregation and the



elders. Preach as often as you can, and love all the brothers.

"Ours will be a temporary separation. . . . I beg your forgiveness for all the mistakes I have made and for all the times that I did not understand you or did not tell you how much I love you. . . . I know that each of you has your own needs. Jehovah knows that better than you do, and he will provide everything you need and will reward you for all that you have endured.

"Do not lose sight of your goal—life in the new world—and keep on striving to attain it. May Jehovah bless you and strengthen you so that you will be faithful until the end. . . . Don't be sad, my precious daughters. I love you!"

Tragedy can strike anyone at any time. "Time and unforeseen occurrence befall them all," wrote King Solomon of old. (Ecclesiastes 9:11) Those who have strong faith in God, however, can have the same assurance as the apostle Paul, who said: "I am convinced that neither death nor life . . . nor any other creation will be able to separate us from God's love that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."—Romans 8:38, 39; Hebrews 6:10.

“GUARD AGAINST EVERY SORT OF COVETOUSNESS”

“Even when a person has an abundance his life does not result from the things he possesses.”—LUKE 12:15.

MONEY, property, prestige, high-paying jobs, family—these are among the things that most people look at as a gauge of success or as insurance for a secure future. It is evident that in lands rich and poor, many people's interests and pursuits are focused on material gains and advancement. On the other hand, their interest in spiritual things—if there is any—is on a rapid decline.

² This is just as the Bible foretold. It says: “In the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here. For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, . . . lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God, having a form of godly devotion but proving false to its power.” (2 Timothy 3:1-5) Living among such people day in and day out, true Christians are under constant pressure to conform to this kind of mentality and lifestyle. What can help us to resist the world's efforts to ‘squeeze us into its own mould’?—Romans 12:2, *The New Testament in Modern English*, by J. B. Phillips.

³ As “the Chief Agent and Perfecter of our faith,” Jesus Christ provided us with powerful lessons in this regard. (Hebrews 12:2) On one occasion when Jesus was speaking to the crowd on some spiritually enlightening matters, a man interrupted the discussion with a request: “Teacher, tell my brother to divide

1, 2. (a) What have you observed about people's interests and pursuits today? (b) How may we be affected by such attitudes?

3. What counsel provided by Jesus will we consider now?

the inheritance with me.” In response, Jesus provided the man—and all those listening—with some serious counsel. He sounded a strong warning against covetousness and reinforced that warning with a thought-provoking illustration. We do well to take heed of what Jesus said on that occasion and see how we can benefit by applying it in our own life.—Luke 12:13-21.

An Inappropriate Request

⁴ Prior to the man's interruption, Jesus was speaking to his disciples and others about being on guard against hypocrisy, about having the courage to confess union with the Son of man, and about receiving help from the holy spirit. (Luke 12:1-12) Surely these are vital subjects that the disciples needed to take to heart. In the midst of such a soul-searching discourse, however, the man abruptly cut in and asked Jesus to arbitrate in what appeared to be a family squabble over material possessions. Yet, there is an important lesson that we can learn from this event.

⁵ It has been said that “the character of a man is often indicated by the direction which his thoughts take when he is listening to a religious exhortation.” While Jesus was speaking about serious spiritual matters, the man was probably thinking about what he could do to achieve certain financial advantages. Whether he had a legitimate

4. Why was the man's interrupting Jesus inappropriate?

5. What did the man's request reveal about him?

cause for grievance in connection with the inheritance is not stated. Perhaps he was trying to capitalize on Jesus' authority and reputation as a wise judge in human affairs. (Isaiah 11:3, 4; Matthew 22:16) In any case, his question suggested that deep down, there was a problem—a serious lack of appreciation for spiritual matters. Is this not good reason for us to examine ourselves? At Christian meetings, for example, it is easy to allow our mind to wander or to dwell on what we might do later. Instead, we should pay attention to what is said and think of ways to make personal application of the information so that we can improve our relationship with our heavenly Father, Jehovah God, and with our fellow Christians.—Psalm 22:22; Mark 4:24.

⁶ Whatever motivated the man to make the request, Jesus declined to act upon it. Instead, Jesus said to him: "Man, who appointed me judge or apportioner over you persons?" (Luke 12:14) In saying that, Jesus was referring to something that the people were well-aware of, for according to the Mosaic Law, judges in the cities were appointed to rule on just such matters. (Deuteronomy 16:18-20; 21:15-17; Ruth 4:1, 2) Jesus, on the other hand, was concerned with more important things—to bear witness to Kingdom truth and to teach people God's will. (John 18:37) Following Jesus' example, rather than being sidetracked by mundane issues, we use our time and energy to preach the good news and to "make disciples of people of all the nations."—Matthew 24:14; 28:19.

Beware of Covetousness

⁷ Being able to discern the deepest intentions of the heart, Jesus was aware that something more serious was involved in the

6. Why did Jesus decline to act as the man requested?
7. What penetrating observation did Jesus make?

man's request for Jesus to intervene in a personal matter. Thus, instead of simply turning down the request, Jesus got to the heart of the matter and said: "Keep your eyes open and guard against every sort of covetousness, because even when a person has an abundance his life does not result from the things he possesses."—Luke 12:15.

⁸ Covetousness is more than simply the desire to have money or certain things, which could have their proper use and purpose. It is the "inordinate desire for wealth or possessions or for another's possessions," according to one dictionary. It can involve the insatiable, greedy urge to have things—perhaps those belonging to someone else—simply for the sake of having them, without regard for one's own needs or the effect on others. A covetous person allows the object of his desire to dominate his thinking and actions to such an extent that it in essence becomes his god. Recall that the apostle Paul equates a greedy person with an idolater, who has no share in God's Kingdom.—Ephesians 5:5; Colossians 3:5.

⁹ Interestingly, Jesus warned against "every sort of covetousness." Covetousness comes in many forms. The last of the Ten Commandments enumerated some of them, stating: "You must not desire your fellowman's house. You must not desire your fellowman's wife, nor his slave man nor his slave girl nor his bull nor his ass nor anything that belongs to your fellowman." (Exodus 20:17) The Bible is replete with examples of individuals who have fallen into grievous sin on account of covetousness of one kind or another. Satan was the first to covet something that belonged to someone else—the glory, honor, and authority that are Jehovah's alone. (Revelation 4:11) Eve coveted the right of self-

8. What is covetousness, and what can it lead to?
9. In what ways can covetousness be manifested? Give some examples.

determination, and her being deceived in this regard started the human race down the road to sin and death. (Genesis 3:4-7) The demons were angels who became discontented with "their original position but forsook their own proper dwelling place" for something to which they were not entitled. (Jude 6; Genesis 6:2) Think, too, of Balaam, Achan, Gehazi, and Judas. Instead of being content with their lot in life, they allowed an inordinate desire for material possessions to cause them to misuse their trust, plunging them into ruin and destruction.

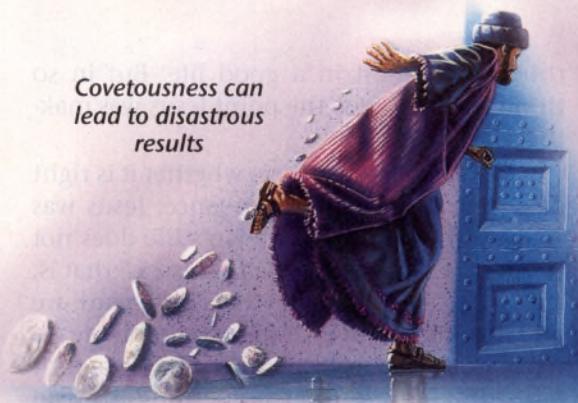
¹⁰ How fitting that Jesus prefaced the warning against covetousness with the words "keep your eyes open"! Why? Because it is so easy for people to see that someone else is being greedy or covetous, but it is rare that they will acknowledge that they themselves are guilty of it. Yet, the apostle Paul points out that "the love of money is a root of all sorts of injurious things." (1 Timothy 6:9, 10) The disciple James explains that wrong desire, "when it has become fertile, gives birth to sin." (James 1:15) In line with Jesus' admoni-

10. How should we 'keep our eyes open,' as Jesus admonished?

Why did Jesus turn down one man's request?



Covetousness can lead to disastrous results



tion, we should 'keep our eyes open,' not to observe others to see if they fit the description, but to examine ourselves to see what we have set our hearts on, so as to "guard against every sort of covetousness."

A Life of Abundance

¹¹ There is yet another reason why we must guard against covetousness. Note what Jesus next said: "Even when a person has an abundance his life does not result from the things he possesses." (Luke 12:15) This certainly is food for thought in our materialistic age, when people equate affluence and prosperity with happiness and success. By those words, Jesus was pointing out that a truly meaningful and satisfying life does not result from or depend on material possessions, no matter how abundant.

¹² Some, however, may disagree. They may reason that material possessions make life more comfortable and enjoyable, thus more worthwhile. Hence, they devote themselves to pursuits that would give them the ability to acquire all the goods and gadgets that they desire. This, they

11, 12. (a) What warning did Jesus give against covetousness? (b) Why do we need to heed Jesus' warning?

think, will result in a good life. But in so thinking, they miss the point Jesus was making.

¹³ Instead of focusing on whether it is right or wrong to have an abundance, Jesus was making the point that a man's life does not result from "the things he possesses," that is, the things he already has. In this regard, we all know that to live, or to sustain the life we have, does not really require very much. It takes only a little food, something to wear, and a place to lie down. The rich have an abundance of these things, and the poor may have to struggle to obtain what they need. What difference there is, however, is equalized when life comes to its end—everything comes to naught. (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6) Thus, for life to have meaning and worth, it cannot and should not simply consist of things that one can acquire or possess. This thought becomes evident when we examine what life Jesus was speaking about.

¹⁴ When Jesus said that "life does not result from the things he possesses," the word used here for "life" in Luke's Gospel (Greek, *zo·ē*) refers, not to the manner or style of living, but to life itself, life in the absolute sense.* Jesus was saying that whether we are rich or poor, whether we live in luxury or we barely eke out an existence, we do not have complete control over how long we may live or whether we will even be alive tomorrow. Jesus stated in his Sermon on the Mount: "Who of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his life span?" (Matthew 6:27) The Bible clearly shows that Jehovah alone is

* Another Greek word translated "life" is *bi'os*, from which come such English words as "biography" and "biology." According to *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, *bi'os* refers to "the period or duration of life," "the manner of life," and "the means of life."

13. What is a balanced view of life and possessions?
14. What can we learn from the word for "life" found in the Bible account?

"the source of life," and only he can grant faithful ones "the real life," or "everlasting life," life without end, either in heaven or on earth.—Psalm 36:9; 1 Timothy 6:12, 19.

¹⁵ Jesus' words point out how easy it is for people to have a warped or distorted view of life. Whether rich or poor, all humans are imperfect and have but one eventuality. Moses of old observed: "In themselves the days of our years are seventy years; and if because of special mightiness they are eighty years, yet their insistence is on trouble and hurtful things; for it must quickly pass by, and away we fly." (Psalm 90:10; Job 14:1, 2; 1 Peter 1:24) For this reason, people who have not cultivated a good relationship with God often adopt the "let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we are to die" mentality, referred to by the apostle Paul. (1 Corinthians 15:32) Others, sensing that life is fleeting and uncertain, try to find security and permanence in material possessions. Perhaps they feel that having many physical, tangible material things will somehow make life more secure. Thus, they labor incessantly to amass wealth and possessions, mistakenly equating such things with security and happiness.—Psalm 49:6, 11, 12.

15. Why do many put their trust in material possessions?

What Is Your Answer?

- What can we learn from Jesus' refusal to act on the request by a man in the crowd?
- Why must we guard against covetousness, and how can we do so?
- Why does life not result from material possessions?
- What can make life truly worthwhile and secure?

A Secure Future

¹⁶ It may be true that a higher living standard—having an abundance of food, clothing, shelter, and other amenities—could contribute to a more comfortable life or may even allow for better medical care and thus add a few years to a person's life span. However, is such a life really more meaningful and more secure? True worth in life is not measured in the number of years one might live or the amount of material things one might possess or enjoy. The apostle Paul pointed to the danger of putting too much stock in such things. To Timothy he wrote: "Give orders to those who are rich in the present system of things not to be high-minded, and to rest their hope, not on uncertain riches, but on God, who furnishes us all things richly for our enjoyment."—1 Timothy 6:17.

¹⁷ To rest one's hope on riches is unwise because they are "uncertain." The patriarch Job was very well-off, but when disaster struck suddenly, his riches could not help him; they vanished overnight. It was his solid relationship with God that preserved him through all the trials and tribulations. (Job 1:1, 3, 20-22) Abraham did not allow his abundant material possessions to prevent him from accepting a challenging assignment from Jehovah, and he was blessed with becoming the "father of a crowd of nations." (Genesis 12:1, 4; 17:4-6) These and other examples are worthy of our imitation. Young or old, we need to examine our-

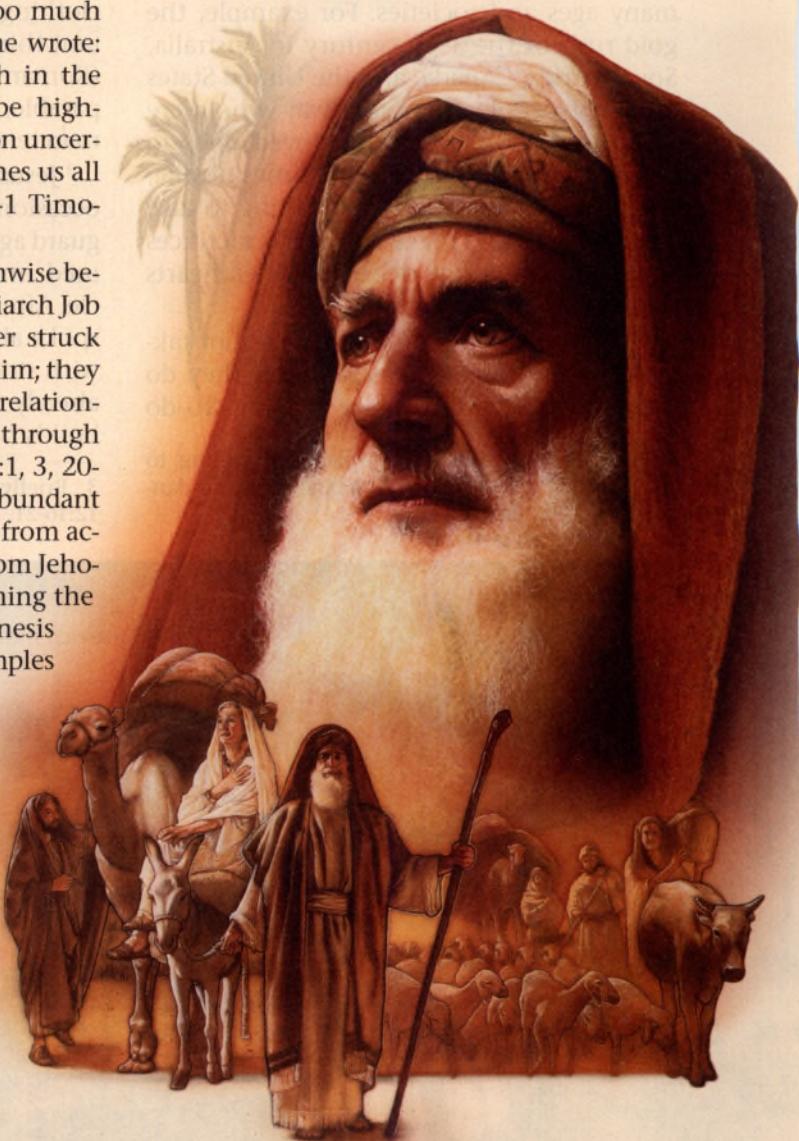
16. On what is true worth in life not based?

17, 18. (a) What outstanding examples with regard to material possessions are worthy of our imitation? (b) What parable of Jesus will be considered in the following article?

How did Abraham manifest a proper view of material possessions?

selves to see what is truly important in our life and on what we rest our hope.—Ephesians 5:10; Philippians 1:10.

¹⁸ The few words that Jesus spoke on covetousness and the proper view of life are meaningful and instructive indeed. However, Jesus had something further in mind, and he went on to relate a thought-provoking parable, or illustration, about an unreasonable rich man. How is that illustration pertinent to our life today, and what can we learn from it? The next article will provide the answers.



ARE YOU “RICH TOWARD GOD”?

“So it goes with the man that lays up treasure for himself but is not rich toward God.”—LUKE 12:21.

TREASURE HUNTING is not just a game that children like to play; it is also a real-life drama played out again and again in many ages and societies. For example, the gold rush of the 19th century in Australia, South Africa, Canada, and the United States attracted people from far away who were willing to leave home and loved ones to seek fortunes in strange, sometimes hostile, lands. Yes, many people are willing to take extreme risks and make enormous sacrifices in order to attain the riches that their hearts desire.

² Though most people today are not taking part in a literal treasure hunt, they do have to work hard to make a living. To do

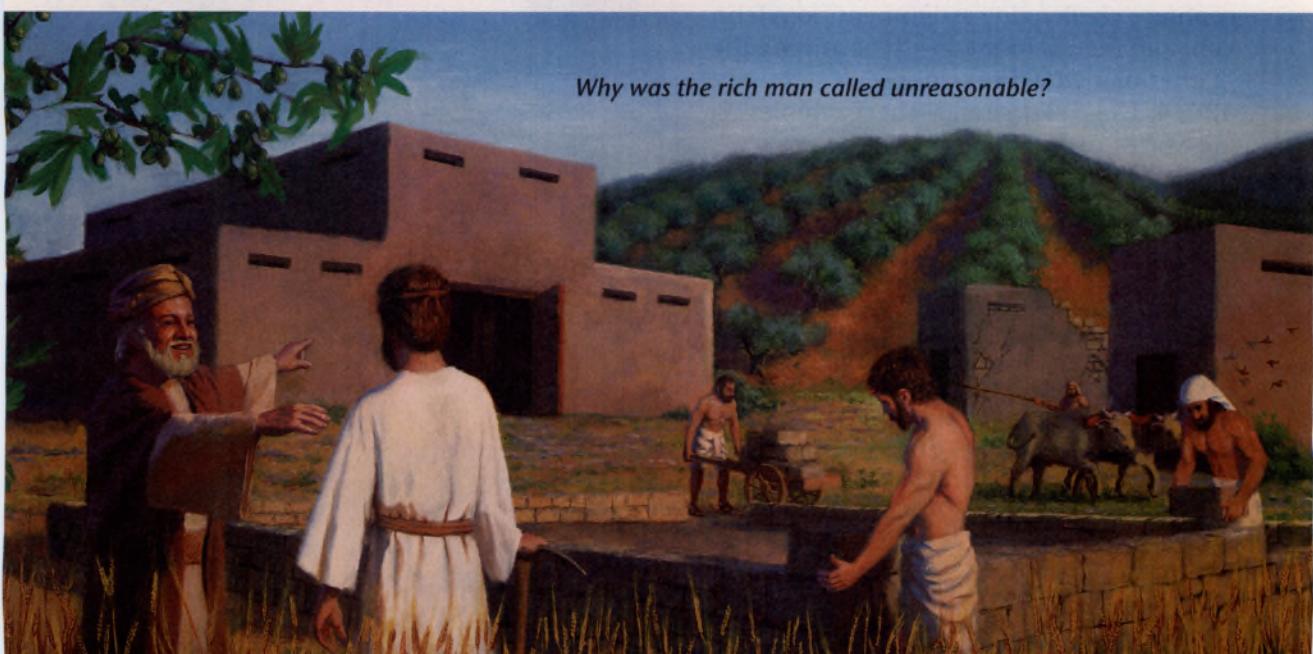
1, 2. (a) For what have people been willing to make great sacrifices? (b) What challenge and danger must Christians face?

that in the present system of things can be challenging, demanding, and burdensome. It is easy to become so concerned with food, clothing, and shelter that the more important things are neglected or even forgotten. (Romans 14:17) Jesus gave an illustration, or parable, that accurately delineated this human tendency. It is found at Luke 12:16-21.

³ Jesus' illustration was given on the same occasion that he spoke about the need to guard against covetousness, which we examined in some detail in the preceding article. After warning about covetousness, Jesus spoke about a rich man who is not content with storehouses filled with good things he already has but who tears them down and builds bigger ones in order to lay up more

3. Briefly relate Jesus' illustration recorded at Luke 12:16-21.

Why was the rich man called unreasonable?



good things. Just as he thinks he is ready to relax and enjoy a good life, God tells him that his life is coming to an end and all the good things the man has stored up will go to someone else. Then Jesus added the concluding statement: "So it goes with the man that lays up treasure for himself but is not rich toward God." (Luke 12:21) What lesson can we learn from this parable? How can we apply the lesson to our own life?

A Man With a Problem

⁴ The illustration that Jesus gave is a familiar one. We note that Jesus introduced the story simply by saying: "The land of a certain rich man produced well." Jesus did not say that the man acquired his riches by some devious or unlawful means. In other words, he was not portrayed as a bad man. In fact, from what Jesus said, it is reasonable to think that the man portrayed in the parable had worked hard. At least it can be understood that he was a man who planned and saved for the future, perhaps with the welfare of his family in mind. Thus, from a secular point of view, he can be taken to represent a hardworking man who took his obligations seriously.

⁵ In any case, Jesus did call the individual in the parable a rich man, meaning someone who already had in his possession an abundance of material goods. However, as Jesus described it, the rich man had a problem. His land produced much more than he expected, above and beyond what he needed or could care for. What should he have done?

⁶ Many of Jehovah's servants today face situations very much like that of the rich

4. What kind of man could we say was portrayed in Jesus' parable?
5. What problem confronts the man in Jesus' parable?
6. What choices do many of God's servants face today?



How may opportunities for advancement become a real test?

man. True Christians strive to be honest, diligent, and conscientious workers. (Colossians 3:22, 23) Whether they are employed or they have their own business, they often do well, even excel in what they do. When promotions or new opportunities come along, they are confronted with a decision. Should they move up or expand? Likewise, many Witness youths do well in school. As a result, they may be offered awards or scholarships for advanced education at prestigious institutions. Should they simply go along and accept what is offered?

⁷ Coming back to Jesus' illustration, what did the rich man do when his land produced so well that he had nowhere to store his harvest? He decided to tear down the storehouses that he had and build bigger ones to store all the excess grain and good things. That plan apparently gave him such a sense of security and satisfaction that he thought to himself: "I will say to my soul: 'Soul, you have many good things laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, enjoy yourself!'"—Luke 12:19.

7. How did the man in Jesus' parable deal with his problem?

Why “Unreasonable”?

⁸ As Jesus presented it, however, the rich man's plan provided only a false sense of security. Practical as it might have seemed, it left out one vital element—God's will. The man was only thinking about himself, how he would be able to take his ease and eat, drink, and enjoy himself. He thought that because of having “many good things,” he would also have “many years.” But too bad for him, things did not work out that way. Just as Jesus said earlier, “even when a person has an abundance his life does not result from the things he possesses.” (Luke 12:15) That very night, everything the man had worked for came to an abrupt end, for God said to him: “Unreasonable one, this night they are demanding your soul from you. Who, then, is to have the things you stored up?”—Luke 12:20.

⁹ Here, we come to the central point of Jesus' illustration. God called the man unreasonable. The *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* explains that forms of the Greek word used “always signify a lack of understanding.” It observes that in this parable, God is represented as using the word to expose “the meaninglessness of the future plans of the rich.” The word refers, not to one who lacks intelligence, but to “one who refuses to acknowledge dependence on God.” Jesus' description of the rich man brings to mind what he later said to the Christians in the first-century congregation

8. What vital element did the man in Jesus' parable overlook?
9. Why was the man in the parable called unreasonable?

in Laodicea, Asia Minor: “You say: ‘I am rich and have acquired riches and do not need anything at all,’ but you do not know you are miserable and pitiable and poor and blind and naked.”—Revelation 3:17.

¹⁰ We do well to take the lesson to heart. Could we be like the man in the parable—work very hard to make sure that we would have “many good things” yet fail to do what is necessary to gain the prospect of having “many years”? (John 3:16; 17:3) The Bible says: “Valuable things will be of no benefit on the day of fury,” and “the one trusting in his riches—he himself will fall.” (Proverbs 11:4, 28) Therefore, Jesus added this final admonition to the parable: “So it goes with the man that lays up treasure for himself but is not rich toward God.”—Luke 12:21.

¹¹ When Jesus said “so it goes,” he was pointing out that what happened to the rich man in the illustration will also happen to those who build their life—their hope and their security—solely on material possessions. The fault is not so much in ‘laying up treasure for oneself’ as it is in failing to be “rich toward God.” The disciple James sounded a similar warning when he wrote: “Come, now, you who say: ‘Today or tomorrow we will journey to this city and will spend a year there, and we will engage in

10. Why is the possession of “many good things” no guarantee of having “many years”?

11. Why is it futile to build one's hope and security on material possessions?

“The blessing of Jehovah—that is what makes rich”



business and make profits,' whereas you do not know what your life will be tomorrow." What should they do? "Instead, you ought to say: 'If Jehovah wills, we shall live and also do this or that.'" (James 4:13-15) No matter how rich a person may be or how many possessions he may have, all will prove to be futile unless he is rich toward God. What, then, does it mean to be rich toward God?

To Be Rich Toward God

¹² In Jesus' statement, being rich toward God is set in contrast with laying up material treasures for oneself, or enriching oneself materially. Thus, Jesus was saying that our main concern in life should not be the accumulation of material riches or the enjoyment of what we may possess. Instead, we should use our resources in such a way as to enrich, or build up, our relationship with Jehovah. Doing so will surely make us rich toward God. Why? Because it opens the door to many blessings from him. The Bible tells us: "The blessing of Jehovah—that is what makes rich, and he adds no pain with it." —Proverbs 10:22.

¹³ When Jehovah bestows blessings on his people, he always gives them the best. (James 1:17) For example, when Jehovah gave the Israelites a home, it was "a land flowing with milk and honey." Although the land of Egypt had also been described that way, the land that Jehovah gave the Israelites was different in at least one vital respect. It was "a land that Jehovah your God is caring

12. Doing what will make us rich toward God?

13. How does Jehovah's blessing 'make rich'?

for," Moses told the Israelites. In other words, they would prosper because Jehovah would be looking after them. As long as the Israelites remained faithful to Jehovah, they were richly blessed by him and enjoyed a way of life that was visibly superior to that of all the nations round about. Yes, it is Jehovah's blessing that "makes rich"!—Numbers 16:13; Deuteronomy 4:5-8; 11:8-15.

¹⁴ The expression "rich toward God" is also rendered "rich in God's sight" (*Today's English Version*) or "rich in the eyes of God." (*The New Testament in Modern English*, by J. B. Phillips) Those who are rich materially are generally concerned with how they might appear in the eyes of others. This is often reflected in their way of life. They want to impress people with what the Bible calls "the showy display of one's means of life." (1 John 2:16) In contrast, those who are rich toward God enjoy God's approval, favor, and undeserved kindness in abundance and have a warm personal relationship with him. Being in such a precious state surely gives them a sense of well-being and security, more than any material riches can provide. (Isaiah 40:11) The question that remains is, What must we do in order to be rich in God's eyes?

Rich in God's Eyes

¹⁵ In Jesus' illustration, the man planned and worked hard only to enrich himself,

14. What do those who are rich toward God enjoy?

15. What must we do in order to be rich toward God?



and he was called unreasonable. To be rich toward God, therefore, we must endeavor to work hard and have a full share in the activities that are truly valuable and worthwhile in God's eyes. Among these is what Jesus commanded: "Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations." (Matthew 28:19) Using our time, energy, and talents, not for self-advancement, but in the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making work can be likened to making an investment. Those who have done so have reaped rich dividends spiritually, as shown by the following experiences.—Proverbs 19:17.

¹⁶ Consider the case of a Christian man in a country in the Orient. He had a well-paying job as a computer technician. However, his work occupied practically all his time and left him feeling spiritually impoverished. Finally, instead of trying to get ahead in his job, he quit and took up making ice cream and selling it on the street so that he would have more time to care for his spiritual needs and responsibilities. Former workmates made fun of him, but how did things turn out? "Actually, I was better off financially than when I worked with computers," he said. "It has made me happier because I do

16, 17. What experiences can you relate to show the way of life that makes one rich in God's eyes?

Can You Explain?

- What problem did the man in Jesus' illustration have?
- Why was the man in the parable called unreasonable?
- What does it mean to be rich toward God?
- How can we become rich toward God?

not have the stress and worry that I had with my former job. And most important, I now feel closer to Jehovah." The change enabled this Christian to enter the full-time ministry, and he is now serving at the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in his country. Jehovah's blessing indeed "makes rich."

¹⁷ Another example is that of a woman who grew up in a family in which education was highly valued. She attended universities in France, Mexico, and Switzerland and was headed for a promising career. "Success smiled upon me; prestige and privilege accompanied me," she said, "but on the inside, there was a void, a deep dissatisfaction." Then she learned about Jehovah. She said: "As I progressed spiritually, my desire to please Jehovah and to return a little of what he had given me helped me to see clearly the road to take—serve him full-time." She resigned from her position and was soon baptized. For the past 20 years, she has happily served in the full-time ministry. "Some think that I have wasted my talents," she relates, "but they recognize that I am happy, and they admire the principles by which I live my life. Every day I pray to Jehovah to help me to be humble so as to have his approval."

¹⁸ Saul, who became the apostle Paul, had a promising career ahead of him. Yet, he later wrote: "I do indeed also consider all things to be loss on account of the excelling value of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." (Philippians 3:7, 8) To Paul, the riches he gained through Christ excelled anything that the world could offer. Likewise, by relinquishing any selfish ambitions and pursuing a life of godly devotion, we too can enjoy a life that is rich in God's eyes. God's Word assures us: "The result of humility and the fear of Jehovah is riches and glory and life." —Proverbs 22:4.

18. Like Paul, how can we be rich toward God?

Questions From Readers

Why did King Saul ask David, "Whose son are you, boy?" after David killed Goliath, even though Saul had earlier sent for David to be his attendant?—1 Samuel 16:22; 17:58.

A simple suggestion is that Saul forgot who David was because their first encounter had been brief. This is unlikely, however, since the account at 1 Samuel 16:18-23 shows that King Saul had specifically sent for David and came to love him very much and made him his armor-bearer. Saul must have been well-acquainted with David.

Some Bible scholars consider 1 Samuel 17:12-31 and 17:55-18:5 to be later additions because these verses are not found in certain copies of the Greek *Septuagint*, a translation of the Hebrew Scriptures completed in the second century B.C.E. To draw such a conclusion on the basis of these copies of the *Septuagint* alone, however, is unwise, since these passages appear in other authoritative manuscripts of the Hebrew Scriptures.*

Evidently, by questioning first Abner and then David himself, Saul was not just interested in knowing the name of David's father. Having seen David in a completely new light as a person of great faith and courage who had just defeated Goliath, Saul wanted to know what kind of man had raised such a boy. Saul may have had in mind adding David's father, Jesse, or other members of his family to the army, since the courage and bravery seen in David might also be found in them.

Although 1 Samuel 17:58 includes only

* Regarding the authenticity of the passages omitted in the *Septuagint*, see *Insight on the Scriptures*, Volume 2, page 855, published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

David's brief reply, "the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite," what follows suggests that there could have been more to the conversation. On this point, note the comments by C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch: "It is very evident from the expression in [1 Samuel 18:1], 'when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul,' that Saul conversed with him still further about his family affairs, since the very words imply a lengthened conversation."

From all of this, we can conclude that by his question, "Whose son are you, boy?" Saul was intending to find out, not David's identity, which he already knew, but David's background.

Why did Saul ask David whose son he was?



ARE GOD'S EYES UPON YOU?

DOES Jehovah, the Master Creator, have the ability to see? Of course he does! The Bible reasons plainly: "The One forming the eye, can he not look?" (Psalm 94:9) Jehovah's vision is vastly superior to that of humans. Not only does he see our outward appearance but he is also "the examiner of hearts," and he can make "an estimate of hearts." (Proverbs 17:3; 21:2) Yes, he has the ability to evaluate our thinking, motivation, and inmost desires.

Jehovah is aware of the difficulties we may encounter in life, and he responds to our entreaties. The psalmist wrote: "The eyes of Jehovah are toward the righteous ones, and his ears are toward their cry for help. Jehovah is near to those that are broken at heart; and those who are crushed in spirit he saves." (Psalm 34:15, 18) How comforting it is to know that Jehovah understands our circumstances and heeds our heartfelt supplications!

Jehovah God is aware of works committed even in utter darkness. Yes, "all things are naked and openly exposed to the eyes of him with whom we have an

accounting." (Hebrews 4:13) So whether our actions are good or bad, they all are noted by God. (Proverbs 15:3) For example, Genesis 6:8, 9 states that "Noah found favor in the eyes of Jehovah" and that he "walked with the true God." Yes, Noah gained Jehovah's approval and blessing because he was obedient and upheld God's righteous principles. (Genesis 6:22) In contrast, the people of Noah's day were violent and depraved. God was not blind to this situation. He "saw that the badness of man was abundant in the earth and every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only bad all the time." Eventually, Jehovah brought destruction upon the wicked ones but preserved alive Noah and his family.—Genesis 6:5; 7:23.

Will Jehovah look with favor upon you? Indeed, the eyes of Jehovah "are roving about through all the earth to show his strength in behalf of those whose heart is complete toward him." (2 Chronicles 16:9) Soon he will again remove from the earth all wicked ones and deliver those who are meek at heart.—Psalm 37:10, 11.