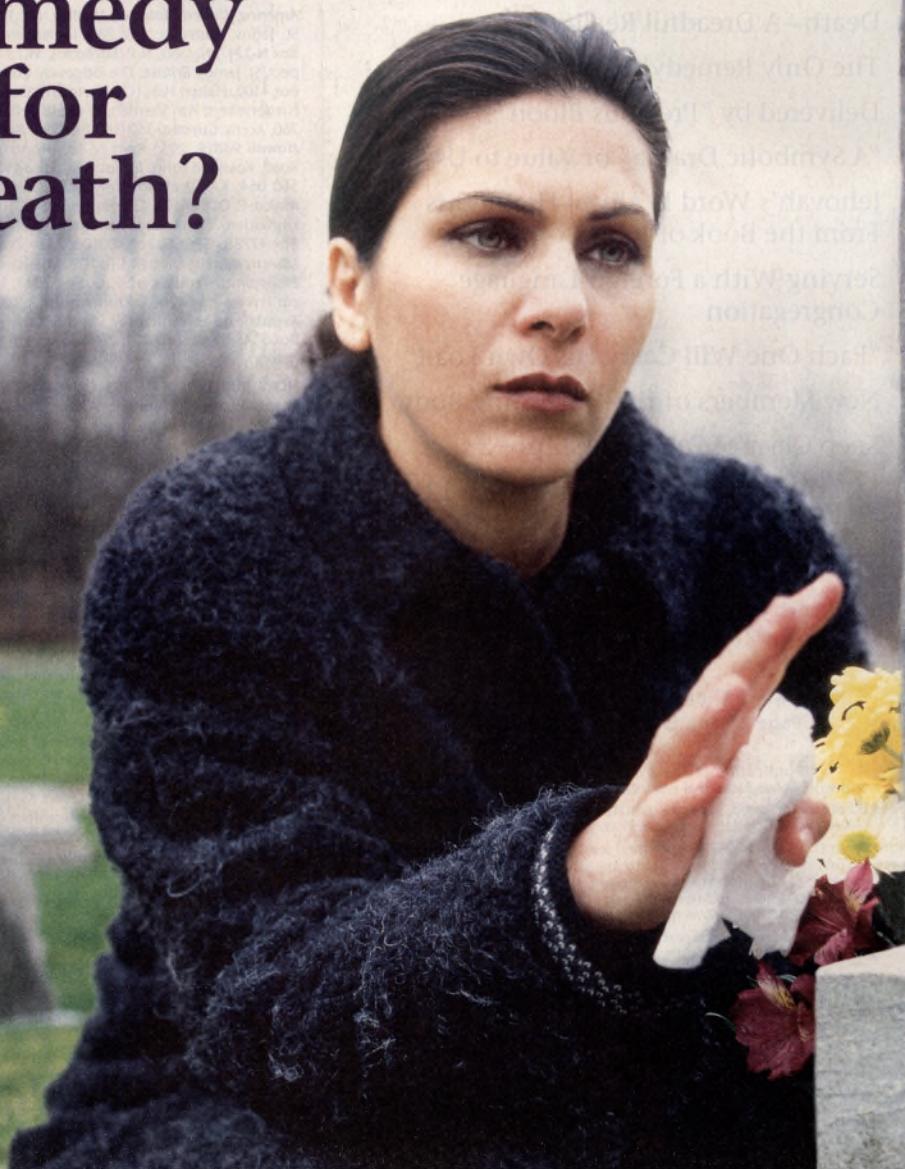


# THE WATCHTOWER

MARCH 15, 2006

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

## Is There a Remedy for Death?



# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

March 15, 2006

Average Printing Each Issue: 27,055,000

Vol. 127, No. 6

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

## IN THIS ISSUE

- 3 Death—A Dreadful Reality!
- 4 The Only Remedy!
- 8 Delivered by "Precious Blood"
- 10 "A Symbolic Drama" of Value to Us
- 13 Jehovah's Word Is Alive—Highlights From the Book of Job
- 17 Serving With a Foreign-Language Congregation
- 21 "Each One Will Carry His Own Load"
- 26 New Members of the Governing Body
- 27 Keep Clear of False Worship!
- 32 Meet With Us—Wednesday, April 12

## WATCHTOWER STUDIES

APRIL 17-23:

"Each One Will Carry His Own Load."  
Page 21. Songs to be used: 214, 108.

APRIL 24-30:

Keep Clear of False Worship!  
Page 27. Songs to be used: 207, 80.

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).

© 2006 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania.  
All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A.

Semimonthly

ENGLISH

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

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

**NOW PUBLISHED IN 153 LANGUAGES. SEMIMONTHLY:** Afrikaans, Albanian,\* Amharic, Arabic, Bengali, Bicol, Bulgarian, Cebuano,\* Chichewa,\* Chinese, Chinese (Simplified),\* Clbemba,\* Croatian,\* Czech,\*\* Danish,\*\* Dutch,\*\* East Armenian, Efik, \*English\*\*<sup>①</sup> (also Braille), Estonian, Ewe, Fijian, Finnish,\* French\*\* (also Braille), Ga, Georgian,\* German,\*\* Greek,\* Gun, Hebrew, Hiligaynon, Hindi, Hungarian,\*\* Igbo,\* Iloko,\* Indonesian, Italian,\*\* Japanese\*\* (also Braille), Kannada, Kinyarwanda, Kirundi, Korean\*\* (also Braille), Latvian, Lingala, Lithuanian, Luvale, Macedonian, Malagasy,\* Malayalam, Maltese, Myanmar, Norwegian,\* Pangasinan, Papiamento (Aruba), Papiamento (Curaçao), Polish,\* Portuguese\*\* (also Braille), Punjabi, Rarotongan, Romanian,\* Russian,\* Samar-Leyte, Samoan, Sango, Sepedi, Serbian, Sesotho, Shona,\* Silozi, Sinhala, Slovak,\* Slovenian, Spanish\*\* (also Braille), Sranantongo, Swahili,\* Swedish,\*\* Tagalog,\* Tamil, Telugu, Thai, Tigrinya, Tok Pisin, Tongan, Tshiluba, Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Twi, Ukrainian,\* Vietnamese, Xhosa, Yoruba,\* Zulu\*

**MONTHLY:** American Sign Language,<sup>②</sup> Armenian, Azerbaijani (roman script), Baoulé, Bislama, Brazilian Sign Language,<sup>③</sup> Cambodian, Chitonga, Gilbertese, Greenlandic, Gujarati, Haitian Creole, Hausa, Hiri Motu, Icelandic, Isoko, Kaonde, Kazakh, Kikongo, Kiluba, Kirghiz, Kongo, Kosraean, Kwanyama/Ndonga, Lunda, Marathi, Marshallese, Mauritian Creole, Maya, Mizo, Moore, Nepali, Niuean, Ossetian, Otetela, Palauan, Persian, Ponaean, Seychelles Creole, Solomon Islands Pidgin, Tahitian, Tatar, Tiv, Trukese, Tumbuka, Tuvaluan, Umbundu, Urdu, Urundu, Venda, Wallilian, Yapese, Zande

\* Study articles also available in large-print edition.

<sup>①</sup> Audio cassettes also available.

<sup>②</sup> CD also available.

<sup>③</sup> MP3 CD-ROM also available.

<sup>④</sup> Videocassette

<sup>⑤</sup> DVD



# Death *A Dreadful Reality!*

**F**ROM the moment of birth there is the constant possibility that a human being may die at any moment," wrote British historian Arnold Toynbee. He added: "And inevitably this possibility is going to become an accomplished fact." What grief death brings upon us when it strikes a beloved family member or a close friend!

Death has been a dreadful reality for mankind for millenniums. A feeling of helplessness engulfs us when someone dear to us dies. This sadness strikes indiscriminately. It spares no one. "Sorrow makes us all children again—destroys all differences of intellect. The wisest knows nothing." So wrote a 19th-century essayist. We become like little children—helpless, unable to alter the situation. Neither riches nor power can reverse the loss. The wise and intellectual are without answers. Strong ones weep, as do the weak.

King David of ancient Israel experienced such anguish when his son Absalom died. Upon hearing the news of his death, the king gave way to weeping and exclaimed: "My son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! O that I might have died, I myself, instead of you, Absalom my son, my son!" (2 Samuel 18:33) A mighty king who had subdued powerful enemies could do nothing but helplessly wish that he himself had surrendered to "the last enemy, death," in place of his son.—1 Corinthians 15:26.

Is there a remedy for death? If so, what hope is there for the dead? Will we ever see our loved ones again? The following article provides Scriptural answers to these questions.

# *The Only Remedy!*

**A** MAN named Lazarus and his sisters, Martha and Mary, live in Bethany, a town located some two miles outside Jerusalem. One day when their friend Jesus is away, Lazarus becomes critically ill. His sisters are very much concerned about him. They send a message to Jesus. Some time after hearing the news, Jesus sets out to see Lazarus. On the way, Jesus informs his disciples that he is traveling there to awaken Lazarus from sleep. The disciples at first misunderstand him, but Jesus clarifies the matter, saying: "Lazarus has died."—John 11:1-14.

When Jesus reaches the tomb of Lazarus, he first gives instruction to take away the stone blocking the entrance to the tomb. After praying aloud, he commands: "Lazarus, come on out!" And Lazarus comes out. The man who had been dead for four days has been resurrected.—John 11:38-44.

The account involving Lazarus shows that the resurrection is the sure remedy for death. But did the miracle of bringing Lazarus back to life really happen? The Bible presents it as fact. Read the account at John 11:1-44, and you will see how vivid the details are. Can you deny that it happened? Doing so might give you reason to question the truthfulness of all the miracles recorded in the Bible, including the resurrection of Jesus Christ himself. And "if Christ has not been raised up," says the Bible, "your faith is useless." (1 Corinthians 15:17) The resurrection is a fundamental Scriptural teaching. (Hebrews 6:1, 2) What, though, does the term "resurrection" mean?

## **What Is Meant by "Resurrection"?**

In the Christian Greek Scriptures, the word "resurrection" occurs more than 40 times. It

is translated from a Greek word that literally means "a standing up again." The corresponding Hebrew expression means "revival of the dead." After a person dies, what is resurrected? It cannot be the body, which decays and returns to the dust of the ground. What is resurrected is not the same body but the same person who died. Thus, resurrection involves the restoration of the life pattern of the individual—his personality traits, his personal history, and all the details of his identity.

Jehovah God, who is perfect in memory, has no problem remembering the life patterns of those who have died. (Isaiah 40:26) Since he is the Originator of life, Jehovah can readily bring back to life the same person in a newly formed body. (Psalm 36:9) Moreover, the Bible states that Jehovah God has "a yearning"—an earnest longing and desire—to resurrect the dead. (Job 14:14, 15) How glad we can be that not only is Jehovah able to bring a person back to life but he also wants to do it!

Jesus Christ too plays a key role in resurrecting the dead. A little over a year after beginning his ministry, Jesus said: "Just as the Father raises the dead up and makes them alive, so the Son also makes those alive whom he wants to." (John 5:21) Does not the experience of Lazarus show that Jesus Christ has the power as well as the desire to resurrect the dead?

What about the idea that something inside us goes on living after death? The teaching of the resurrection and the idea of the immortality of the human soul or spirit are, in fact, incompatible. If something inside us survived death, what need would there be for

a resurrection? Lazarus' sister Martha did not believe that when her brother died, he continued to exist in a spirit realm. She had faith in the resurrection. When Jesus assured her: "Your brother will rise," Martha said: "I know he will rise in the resurrection on the last day." (John 11:23, 24) And when brought back to life, Lazarus did not relate any experiences of an afterlife. He had been dead. "As for the dead, they are conscious of nothing at all," states the Bible. "There is no work nor devising nor knowledge nor wisdom in Sheol [the common grave of mankind], the place to which you are going."—Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10.

According to the Bible, then, the only remedy for death is the resurrection. But of the countless dead, who will be resurrected, and to where?

### Who Will Be Resurrected?

"The hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear [Jesus'] voice and come out," said Jesus. (John 5:28, 29) Ac-

cording to this promise, those in the memorial tombs—those who are in Jehovah's memory—will be resurrected. The question, then, is, Of all those who have died, who actually are in God's memory awaiting a resurrection?

The Bible book of Hebrews chapter 11 lists by name men and women who faithfully served God. They as well as those loyal servants of God who have died in recent years will be among the resurrected ones. What about people who failed to meet God's standards of righteousness, perhaps because of a lack of knowledge? Are they also in God's memory? Yes, many are, for the Bible promises: "There is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous."—Acts 24:15.

However, not everyone who has ever lived will receive a resurrection. "If we practice sin willfully after having received the accurate knowledge of the truth," states the Bible, "there is no longer any sacrifice for sins left, but there is a certain fearful



expectation of judgment." (Hebrews 10:26, 27) Some committed sins for which there is no forgiveness. They are not in Hades (mankind's common grave) but in Gehenna, a symbolic place of eternal destruction. (Matthew 23:33) We must be careful, though, not to speculate on whether a certain person will be resurrected or not. This judgment belongs to God. He knows who is in Hades and who is in Gehenna. For our part, we do well to live our lives according to God's will.

### **Resurrection to Life in Heaven —For Whom?**

The most remarkable resurrection was that of Jesus Christ. He was 'put to death in the flesh, but was made alive in the spirit.' (1 Peter 3:18) No human had ever experienced such a resurrection before. Jesus himself said: "No man has ascended into heaven but he that descended from heaven, the Son of man." (John 3:13) Indeed, the Son of man was the first to be raised as a spirit person. (Acts 26:23) And there were to be others. The Scriptures say: "Each one in his own rank: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who belong to the Christ during his presence." —1 Corinthians 15:23.

A small group of people—"those who belong to the Christ"—are to be resurrected to life in heaven for a special purpose. (Romans 6:5) They will rule with Christ as "kings over the earth." (Revelation 5:9, 10) Moreover, they will serve as priests in that they will have a share in removing the effects of the sin that mankind inherited from the first man, Adam. (Romans 5:12) Those ruling with Christ as kings and priests number 144,000. (Revelation 14:1, 3) What type of body do they receive when they are resurrected? "A spiritual body," says the Bible. This will make it possible for them to live in heaven.—1 Corinthians 15:35, 38, 42-45.

When does the heavenly resurrection take place? "During [Christ's] presence," answers 1 Corinthians 15:23. World events since 1914 clearly show that both Christ's presence and "the conclusion of the system of things" began in that year. (Matthew 24:3-7) So there is reason to conclude that the resurrection of faithful Christians to heaven has already begun, though, of course, unseen by humans. That would mean that the apostles and the early Christians have been raised to heavenly life. What about Christians living now who have the sure, God-given hope of ruling with Christ in heaven? They are raised "in the twinkling of an eye," or immediately after they die. (1 Corinthians 15:52) Since the resurrection of this small group of 144,000 precedes that of the large number who will be resurrected to life on earth, it is called "the earlier resurrection" and "the first resurrection."—Philippians 3:11; Revelation 20:6.

### **Who Will Be Resurrected to Life on Earth?**

According to the Scriptures, the vast majority of the dead will be brought back to life on earth. (Psalm 37:29; Matthew 6:10) Describing his breathtaking vision of resurrected ones, the apostle John wrote: "The sea gave up those dead in it, and death and Hades gave up those dead in them, and they were judged individually according to their deeds. And death and Hades were hurled into the lake of fire. This means the second death, the lake of fire." (Revelation 20:11-14) Those in Hades, or Sheol—mankind's common grave—are in God's memory. Every single one of them will be released from the grip of death. (Psalm 16:10; Acts 2:31) And each one will be judged according to the deeds he performs after he is resurrected. What will then happen to death and Hades? They will be hurled into "the lake of fire."

This means that the death that humans inherited from Adam will no longer affect them.

Just think of the happy prospect that the promise of the resurrection opens up for those who have lost a loved one in death! When Jesus resurrected the only son of the widow of Nain, what joy she must have experienced! (Luke 7:11-17) And concerning the parents of a 12-year-old girl whom Jesus brought back to life, the Bible says: "At once they were beside themselves with great ecstasy." (Mark 5:21-24, 35-42; Luke 8:40-42, 49-56) In God's promised new world, it will be a delight to welcome back loved ones.

What impact can knowing the truth about the resurrection have on us now? "Most people fear death and try to avoid thinking about it," says *The World Book Encyclopedia*. Why? Because to most people, death is a mystery—something unknown to be feared.

Knowing the truth about the condition of the dead and having the resurrection hope can impart courage to us if we come face-to-face with "the last enemy, death." (1 Corinthians 15:26) This knowledge also makes it easier to bear the pain that we experience when losing a close friend or a relative in death.

When will the earthly resurrection begin? The earth today is filled with violence, strife, bloodshed, and pollution. If the dead were to come back to life on such an earth, surely any happiness would be short-lived. However, the Creator has promised that he will soon bring an end to the present world under Satan's control. (Proverbs 2:21, 22; Daniel 2:44; 1 John 5:19) God's purpose for the earth is about to be fulfilled. Then, in the peaceful new world of God's making, billions who are now asleep in death will open their eyes.

**Most of the dead will be  
resurrected to life on earth**



## Delivered by "Precious Blood"



J EHOVAH'S greatest act of love was that of sending his only-begotten Son to offer his perfect human life as a ransom. As sinful humans, we sorely need such deliverance, since no imperfect man "can by any means redeem even a brother, nor give to God a ransom for him . . . that he should still live forever." (Psalm 49:6-9) How grateful we are that God "gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life!"—John 3:16.

How does the ransom provide deliverance? Let us consider four ways in which we gain freedom as a result of this monumental act of love on the part of Jehovah God.

### Release by Ransom

First, Jesus' sacrifice can deliver us from inherited sin. All of us are born in sin. Yes, we are sinful even before we are able to violate Jehovah's law. How so? Romans 5:12 says: "Through one man [Adam] sin entered into the world and death through sin." As children of sinful Adam, we have inherited his imperfect condition. However, the payment of the ransom makes it possible for us to be freed from the grip of inherited sin. (Romans 5:16) Jesus 'tasted death for every man,' bearing the consequences of sin for Adam's offspring.—Hebrews 2:9; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24.

Second, the ransom can liberate us from the fatal effects of sin. "The wages sin pays

is death." (Romans 6:23) The penalty for sin is death. By means of his sacrificial death, the Son of God made eternal life possible for obedient mankind. Indeed, "he that exercises faith in the Son has everlasting life; he that disobeys the Son will not see life."—John 3:36.

Notice that we can be delivered from the effects of sin only if we exercise faith in God's Son. This involves making changes in our life and bringing it into harmony with God's will. We must reject any wrong course that we may have been pursuing and must take action to do what is pleasing to God. The apostle Peter said that we need to 'repent and turn around so as to get our sins blotted out.'—Acts 3:19.

Third, the sacrifice Jesus offered frees us from a guilty conscience. All who make a dedication to Jehovah and become baptized disciples of his Son experience comfort. (Matthew 11:28-30) In spite of our imperfection, we find deep joy in serving God with a clean conscience. (1 Timothy 3:9; 1 Peter 3:21) By confessing our sins and leaving them, we are shown mercy and gain relief from a troubled conscience.—Proverbs 28:13.

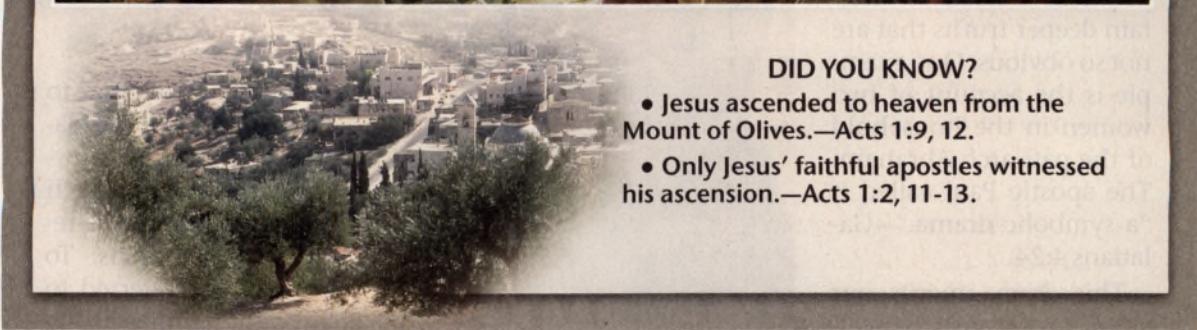
### Providing Help and Hope

Finally, by exercising faith in the ransom, we are delivered from fear regarding our standing before God. The apostle John wrote: "If anyone does commit a sin, we have a helper with the Father, Jesus Christ." (1 John 2:1) Regarding Jesus' role as a help-



#### DID YOU KNOW?

- Jesus ascended to heaven from the Mount of Olives.—Acts 1:9, 12.
- Only Jesus' faithful apostles witnessed his ascension.—Acts 1:2, 11-13.



er, the apostle Paul wrote: "He is able also to save completely those who are approaching God through him, because he is always alive to plead for them." (Hebrews 7:25) As long as we have any taint of sin, we will need the services of the High Priest Jesus Christ to help us have a right standing with God. How did Jesus act as a high priest in our behalf?

Forty days after his resurrection in 33 C.E., Jesus ascended to heaven, where he presented the value of his "precious blood" to God. As a result, Jesus will soon free obedient

mankind from sin and death.\* (1 Peter 1:18, 19) Therefore, do you not agree that Jesus Christ deserves our love and obedience?

Additionally, Jehovah God deserves our love and obedience. He lovingly made possible our "release by ransom." (1 Corinthians 1:30) We owe him not only the life we have now but also any prospect we have of enjoying everlasting life. Therefore, we have every reason to "obey God as ruler rather than men."—Acts 5:29.

\* See the 2006 *Calendar of Jehovah's Witnesses*, March/April.

# **“A Symbolic Drama” of Value to Us**

HOW hard it would be to discern the full significance of certain Scriptural passages if other parts of the Bible did not shed light on them! Historical accounts in God's Word can be taken at face value. But some of these narratives contain deeper truths that are not so obvious. One example is the account of two women in the household of the patriarch Abraham. The apostle Paul called it “a symbolic drama.”—Galatians 4:24.

This drama merits our attention because the realities represented by it are of fundamental importance to all who desire to enjoy the blessing of Jehovah God. Before examining why this is so, let us consider the circumstances that moved Paul to unveil the significance of the drama.

A problem existed among Christians in first-century Galatia. Some of them were “scrupulously observing days and months and seasons and years”—things commanded by the Mosaic Law. These individuals claimed that obedience to the Law was

necessary for believers to have God's favor. (Galatians 4:10; 5:2, 3) However, Paul knew that such observances were not required of Christians. To prove this, he referred to an account familiar to any who were of Jewish background.

Paul reminded the Galatians that Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation, begot Ishmael and Isaac. The first was produced by the servant girl Hagar, and the second by the free woman Sarah. Those in Galatia who were promoting obedience to the Mosaic Law would no doubt have been acquainted with the account of Sarah's initial barrenness and of her giving Abraham her maid-servant Hagar to bear a child in her place. They would have known that after conceiv-



ing Ishmael, Hagar began to despise her mistress, Sarah. According to God's promise, though, Sarah finally gave birth to Isaac in her old age. Later, Abraham sent Hagar and Ishmael away because Ishmael mistreated Isaac.—Genesis 16:1-4; 17:15-17; 21:1-14; Galatians 4:22, 23.

### Two Women, Two Covenants

Paul explained the elements of this "symbolic drama." "These women mean two covenants," he wrote, "the one from Mount Sinai, which brings forth children for slavery, and which is Hagar.... She corresponds with the Jerusalem today, for she is in slavery with her children." (Galatians 4:24, 25) Hagar represented literal Israel, with Jerusalem as its capital. The Jewish nation was bound to Jehovah by the Law covenant inaugurated at Mount Sinai. Under the Law covenant, the Israelites were constantly reminded that they were slaves to sin and in need of redemption.—Jeremiah 31:31, 32; Romans 7:14-24.

Whom, then, did "the free woman" Sarah and her son, Isaac, represent? Paul indicated that Sarah, the "barren woman," symbol-

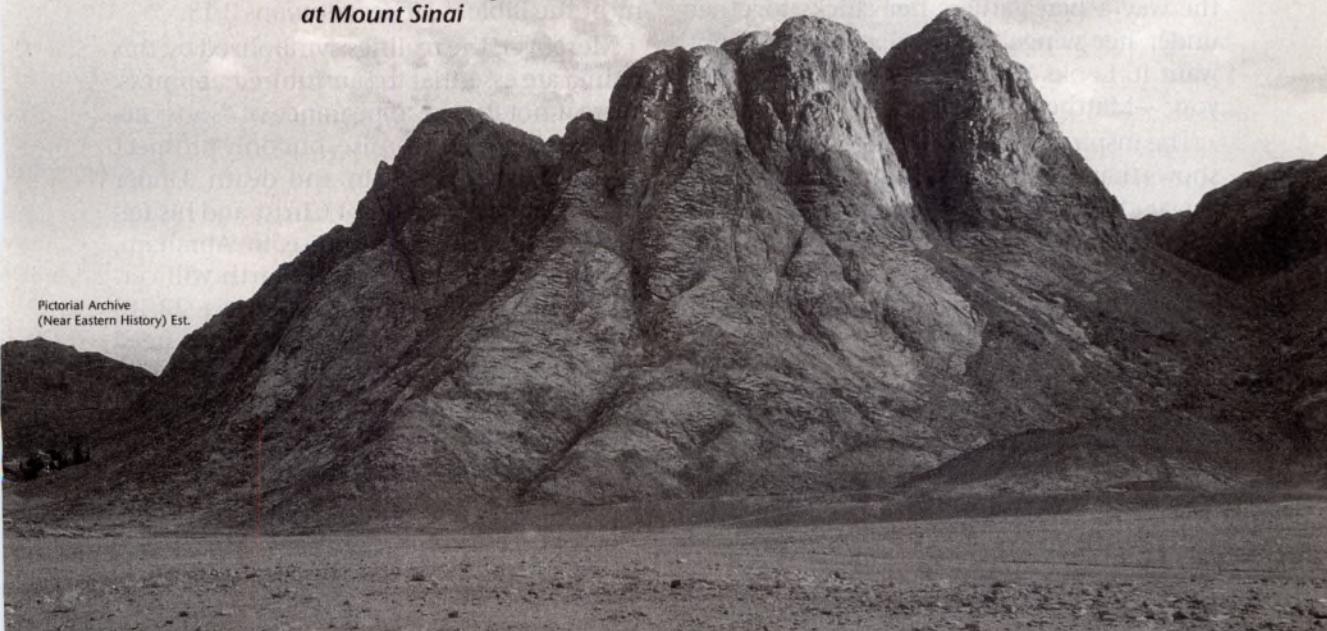
ized God's wife, the heavenly part of his organization. This heavenly woman was barren in that before Jesus came she had no spirit-anointed "children" on the earth. (Galatians 4:27; Isaiah 54:1-6) However, at Pentecost 33 C.E., holy spirit was poured out on a group of men and women who were thus born again as children of this heavenly woman. The children produced by this organization were adopted as sons of God and became joint heirs with Jesus Christ under a new covenant relationship. (Romans 8:15-17) One of these children, the apostle Paul, could write: "The Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother."—Galatians 4:26.

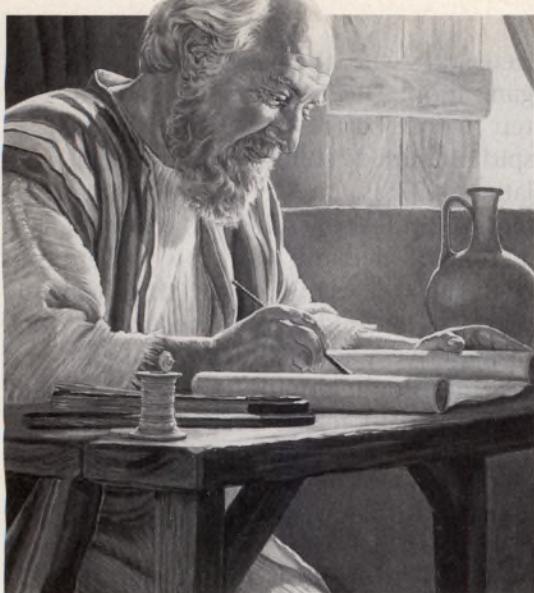
### Children of the Women

According to the Bible account, Ishmael persecuted Isaac. In like manner, during the first century C.E., the children of enslaved Jerusalem mocked and persecuted the children of the Jerusalem above. "Just as then the one born in the manner of flesh [Ishmael] began persecuting the one born in the manner of spirit [Isaac], so also now," Paul explained. (Galatians 4:29) When Jesus Christ appeared on earth and

*The Law covenant was inaugurated  
at Mount Sinai*

Pictorial Archive  
(Near Eastern History) Est.





*What is the significance of the “symbolic drama” mentioned by the apostle Paul?*

of their fleshly descent.

The identity of a number of these joint heirs with Christ became apparent at Pentecost 33 C.E. As time went on, Jehovah anointed others as sons of the Jerusalem above.

Paul’s purpose in explaining this “symbolic drama” was to illustrate the superiority of the new covenant over the Law covenant mediated by Moses. No one could gain God’s favor by works of the Mosaic Law, for all humans are imperfect and the Law simply highlighted their slavery to sin. Yet, as Paul explained, Jesus came that “he might release by purchase those under law.” (Galatians 4:4, 5) Hence, faith in the value of Christ’s sacrifice led to freedom from the Law’s condemnation.—Galatians 5:1-6.

### Value to Us

Why should we be interested in Paul’s inspired explanation of this drama? One reason is that it gives us insight into Scriptural meanings that would otherwise have remained obscure. The explanation strengthens our confidence in the unity and harmony of the Bible.—1 Thessalonians 2:13.

Moreover, the realities symbolized by this drama are essential to our future happiness. Were it not for the appearance of “sons” according to God’s promise, our only prospect would be slavery to sin and death. Under the loving supervision of Christ and his fellow heirs of God’s promise to Abraham, however, “all nations of the earth will certainly bless themselves.” (Genesis 22:18) This will occur when they are forever freed from the effects of sin, imperfection, sorrow, and death. (Isaiah 25:8, 9) What a glorious time that will be!

began announcing the Kingdom, the Jewish religious leaders behaved just as Hagar’s son Ishmael had behaved toward Abraham’s true heir, Isaac. They mocked and persecuted Jesus Christ, evidently viewing themselves as Abraham’s legitimate heir and Jesus as the intruder.

Shortly before the rulers of natural Israel had him put to death, Jesus said: “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the killer of the prophets and stoner of those sent forth to her,—how often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks together under her wings! But you people did not want it. Look! Your house is abandoned to you.”—Matthew 23:37, 38.

The inspired record of first-century events shows that the fleshly nation represented by Hagar did not of itself produce sons who would be joint heirs with Jesus. Jews who proudly believed that they had a right to such an inheritance by virtue of their birth were driven out, rejected by Jehovah. Of course, some individual natural Israelites did become joint heirs with Christ. However, that privilege was granted on the basis

# Jehovah's Word Is Alive

## Highlights From the Book of Job

THE patriarch Job resides in the land of Uz, now in Arabia. A large number of Israelites live in Egypt at the time. Though not an Israelite himself, Job is a worshipper of Jehovah God. Concerning him, the Bible says: "There is no one like him in the earth, a man blameless and upright, fearing God and turning aside from bad." (Job 1:8) This must be the period between the lives of two outstanding servants of Jehovah—Jacob's son Joseph and the prophet Moses.

Moses, who is thought to have written the book of Job, probably learned about Job when he spent 40 years in Midian, which is near the land of Uz. Moses could have heard about Job's final years when the Israelites were near Uz, toward the end of their 40-year sojourn in the wilderness.\* Job's experience is so beautifully set out in written form that the account is considered to be a literary masterpiece. More than that, though, it answers such questions as: Why do good people suffer? Why does Jehovah permit wickedness to exist? Can imperfect humans maintain their integrity to God? As a part of the inspired Word of God, the message of the book of Job is alive and exerts power even today.—Hebrews 4:12.

### 'LET THE DAY OF MY BIRTH PERISH'

(Job 1:1–3:26)

One day Satan challenges Job's integrity before God. Jehovah accepts the challenge and allows Satan to bring upon Job one calamity after another. But Job refuses to "curse God."—Job 2:9.

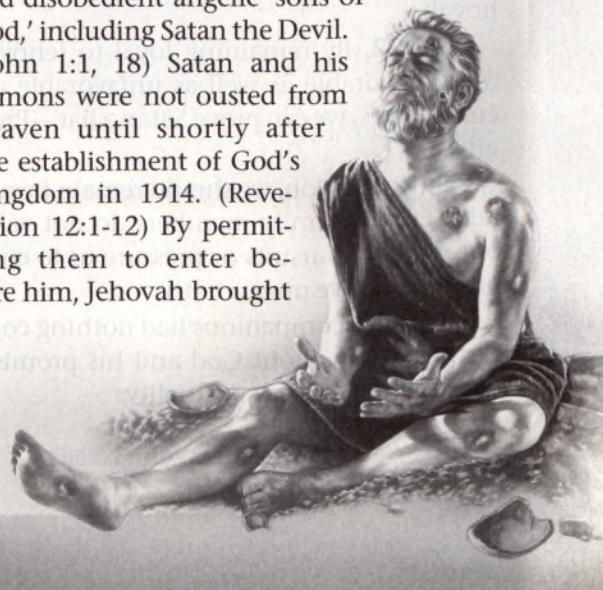
\* The book of Job covers a period of more than 140 years, between 1657 and 1473 B.C.E.

Job's three companions arrive to "sympathize with him." (Job 2:11) They sit with him without speaking a word until Job breaks the silence by saying: "Let the day perish on which I came to be born." (Job 3:3) He wishes to be "like children that have seen no light," or who were stillborn.—Job 3:11, 16.

### Scriptural Questions Answered:

**1:4—Did Job's children observe birthdays?** No, they did not. The original-language words for "day" and "birthday" are different, each having its own meaning. (Genesis 40:20) At Job 1:4, the word "day" is used, denoting an interval of time from sunrise to sunset. The seven sons of Job apparently held a seven-day family gathering once a year. As they made the circuit, each son was the host of the banquet held at his house on "his own day."

**1:6; 2:1—Who were allowed to enter before Jehovah?** Among those who took their stand before Jehovah were God's only-begotten Son, the Word; the faithful angels; and disobedient angelic 'sons of God,' including Satan the Devil. (John 1:1, 18) Satan and his demons were not ousted from heaven until shortly after the establishment of God's Kingdom in 1914. (Revelation 12:1-12) By permitting them to enter before him, Jehovah brought



before all spirit creatures Satan's challenge and the issues it raised.

**1:7; 2:2—Did Jehovah speak to Satan directly?** The Bible does not give much detail about how Jehovah communicates with spirit creatures. However, the prophet Micaiah had a vision in which he saw an angel communicate directly with Jehovah. (1 Kings 22: 14, 19-23) It would seem, then, that Jehovah talked to Satan without an intermediary.

**1:21—In what way could Job return to his “mother’s belly”?** Since Jehovah God formed man “out of dust from the ground,” the term “mother” is here used figuratively to refer to the earth.—Genesis 2:7.

**2:9—What frame of mind might Job’s wife have been in when she told her husband to curse God and die?** Job’s wife had suffered the same losses as her husband. It must have pained her to see her once active husband brought low by a loathsome disease. She had lost her beloved children. She may have been so distraught because of all of this that she lost sight of what was truly important—their relationship with God.

#### **Lessons for Us:**

**1:8-11; 2:3-5.** As shown in Job’s case, along with proper action and speech, integrity calls for the right motive for serving Jehovah.

**1:21, 22.** By remaining loyal to Jehovah under favorable as well as unfavorable circumstances, we can prove Satan a liar.—Proverbs 27:11.

**2:9, 10.** Like Job, we should remain firm in faith even if family members do not value our spiritual pursuits or pressure us to compromise or give up our faith.

**2:13.** Job’s companions had nothing comforting to say about God and his promises because they lacked spirituality.

#### **“I SHALL NOT TAKE AWAY MY INTEGRITY FROM MYSELF!”**

(Job 4:1-31:40)

The basic point that Job’s three companions make in their speeches is that Job must have done something very bad to receive such severe punishment from God. Eliphaz takes the lead. Bildad follows Eliphaz, using language that is more biting. Zophar is even more scathing.

Job does not accept the false reasoning of his visitors. Unable to understand why God has permitted his suffering, he becomes overly concerned about justifying himself. Still, Job loves God and exclaims: “Until I expire I shall not take away my integrity from myself!”—Job 27:5.

#### **Scriptural Questions Answered:**

**7:1; 14:14—What is meant by “compulsory labor” or “compulsory service”?** Job’s distress was so severe that he thought of life as hard, arduous compulsory labor. (Job 10: 17, footnote) Since the time one spends in Sheol—from the time of one’s death to the resurrection—is an enforced period, Job likened that time to compulsory service.

**7:9, 10; 10:21; 16:22—Do these statements indicate that Job did not believe in the resurrection?** These are comments about Job’s immediate future. What, then, did he mean? One possibility is that if he should die, none of his contemporaries would see him. From their standpoint, he would neither return to his house nor get further acknowledgment until God’s appointed time. Job might also have meant that no one can come back from Sheol on his own. That Job hoped in a future resurrection is clear from Job 14:13-15.

**10:10—How did Jehovah ‘pour Job out as milk and curdle him like cheese’?** This is a poetic description of how Job was formed in his mother’s womb.

**19:20**—What did Job mean by the expression “I escape with the skin of my teeth”? By saying that he escaped with the skin of something that apparently has no skin, Job might have been saying that he escaped with practically nothing.

### Lessons for Us:

**4:7, 8; 8:5, 6; 11:13-15.** We must not quickly assume that a person in distress is reaping what he has sown and does not have God’s approval.

**4:18, 19; 22:2, 3.** Our counsel should be based on God’s Word, not on personal opinion.—2 Timothy 3:16.

**10:1.** Bitterness blinded Job, so that he did not consider other possible reasons for his suffering. We must not become bitter when undergoing suffering, especially since we have a clear understanding of the issues involved.

**14:7, 13-15; 19:25; 33:24.** During any test that Satan may thrust upon us, the resurrection hope can sustain us.

**16:5; 19:2.** Our words should encourage and strengthen others, not irritate them.—Proverbs 18:21.

**22:5-7.** Counsel given on the basis of accusations that lack solid evidence is valueless and damaging.

**27:2; 30:20, 21.** Maintaining integrity does not require perfection. Job wrongly criticized God.

**27:5.** Only Job could take away his own integrity because integrity is dependent upon one’s love for God. We should therefore cultivate strong love for Jehovah.

**28:1-28.** Man knows where earth’s treasures are. As he searches for them, his ingenuity takes him to underground pathways that no farsighted bird of prey can see. Godly wisdom, though, comes from fearing Jehovah.

**29:12-15.** We should willingly extend loving-kindness to those in need.

**31:1, 9-28.** Job set an example for us in that he avoided flirting, adultery, unfair and unmerciful treatment of others, materialism, and idolatry.

### “I DO REPENT IN DUST AND ASHES”

(Job 32:1-42:17)

A young bystander named Elihu has patiently been listening to the debate. Now he speaks up. He corrects Job and his three tormentors.

As soon as Elihu finishes, Jehovah answers from a windstorm. He gives no explanation for Job’s suffering. By asking a series of questions, however, the Almighty makes Job aware of His awesome power and great wisdom. Job admits that he has spoken without understanding and says: “I make a retraction, and I do repent in dust and ashes.” (Job 42:6) As Job’s trial ends, his integrity is rewarded.

### Scriptural Questions Answered:

**32:1-3—When did Elihu arrive?** Since Elihu heard all the speeches, he must have taken a seat within hearing distance sometime before Job spoke and ended the seven-day silence of his three companions.—Job 3:1, 2.

**34:7—How was Job like a man “who drinks up derision like water”?** In his distressed state, Job was inclined to take the ridicule of his three visitors as directed toward him, although they were really speaking against God. (Job 42:7) Thus, he was taking



in derision like someone who drinks water with enjoyment.

### **Lessons for Us:**

**32:8, 9.** Wisdom does not come with age alone. It requires understanding of God's Word and the guidance of his spirit.

**34:36.** Integrity is proved by our being 'tested to the limit' in some way.

**35:2.** Elihu listened carefully and pinpointed the real issue before speaking. (Job 10:7; 16:7; 34:5) Prior to giving counsel, Christian elders must carefully listen, get the facts, and clearly understand the pertinent issues.—Proverbs 18:13.

**37:14; 38:1-39:30.** Reflecting upon Jehovah's wonderful works—expressions of his

power and wisdom—humbles us and helps us to see that the vindication of his sovereignty is more important than any of our personal interests.—Matthew 6:9, 10.

**40:1-4.** When we feel inclined to complain against the Almighty, we should 'put our hand over our mouth.'

**40:15-41:34.** What power Behemoth (the hippopotamus) and Leviathan (the crocodile) have! To endure in God's service, we too need strength from the Maker of these powerful beasts, who imparts power to us.—Philippians 4:13.

**42:1-6.** Hearing Jehovah's word and being reminded of the manifestation of his power helped Job to "behold God," or see the truth about him. (Job 19:26) This adjusted his thinking. When corrected Scripturally, we should be eager to acknowledge our error and make adjustments.

### **Cultivate "the Endurance of Job"**

The book of Job clearly shows that God is not responsible for human suffering. Satan is. God's permission of wickedness on earth affords us an opportunity to give a personal answer as to where we stand on the issues of Jehovah's sovereignty and our integrity.

Like Job, all those who love Jehovah will be tested. The account of Job gives us confidence that we can endure. It reminds us that our problems will not last forever. "You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome Jehovah gave," says

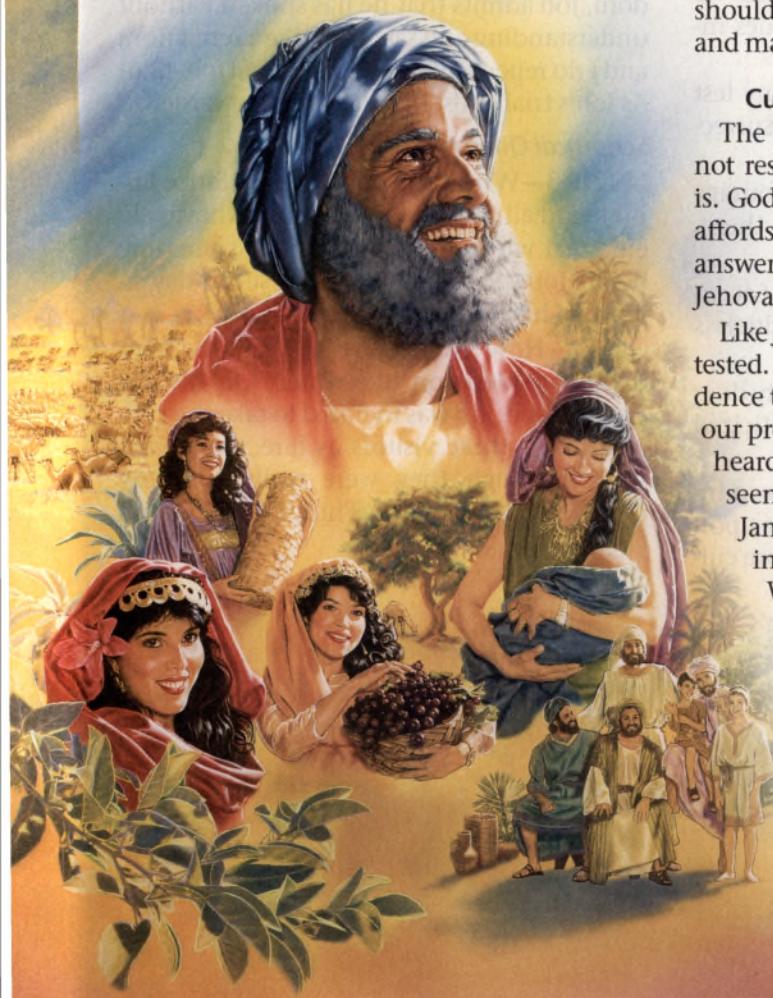
James 5:11. Jehovah rewarded Job for being an integrity keeper. (Job 42:10-17)

What a grand hope is set before us—everlasting life in Paradise on earth!

Like Job, let us therefore be determined to maintain our integrity.

—Hebrews 11:6.

*What can we learn from  
"the endurance of Job"?*



# Serving With a Foreign-Language Congregation

"I SAW another angel flying in midheaven," wrote the apostle John, "and he had everlasting good news to declare as glad tidings to those who dwell on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people." (Revelation 14:6) In fulfillment of this prophetic vision, the good news of God's Kingdom is being preached worldwide in various tongues, or languages. Many of these languages are spoken by immigrants living far from their native lands. These individuals too are hearing the good news from zealous Witnesses of Jehovah who have learned another language.

Are you among those Witnesses who are serving with a foreign-language congregation? Or are you perhaps thinking about doing so? To succeed in your endeavor, you need an unselfish motive and a proper mental attitude. Since your objective is to help others learn the truth from God's Word, you have the best possible motive—love for God and neighbor. (Matthew 22:37-39; 1 Corinthians 13:1) The desire to help others come to know God provides far stronger motivation than merely enjoying the company, food, and culture of people of another nationality or group. Does the prospect of learning another language seem overwhelming to you? If so, having the right outlook will be helpful. "Don't let the language intimidate you," says James, who learned Japanese. Realizing that many others before you have succeeded can help you to persevere and to maintain a positive attitude. How, then, can you learn a new lan-



guage? What will help you adjust to a congregation where that language is used? And what must you do to stay spiritually strong?

## Tackling the Language

There are many ways to learn a language. Students and teachers vary in their preferences. For most students, though, attending a few classes taught by a qualified teacher makes learning faster and easier. Reading the Bible and Bible-based publications in your new language and listening to whatever recordings are available will help you to build your vocabulary and expand your knowledge of theocratic expressions. Radio, TV, and video programs with suitable content can also expose you to the language and culture. As to the length of the study sessions, studying a little every day is usually more effective than enduring painfully long but infrequent study sessions.

Learning a language is like learning to swim. You cannot learn to swim just by reading a book. You have to get into the water and splash about in it. So it is with learning a language. This is difficult to do only by studying. You need to interact with people whenever you can—listen to their speech,



*Attending language classes taught by a qualified teacher makes learning faster and easier*

approach them, and by all means, talk! Christian activities provide the ideal setting for this. Often, you can put what you learn to immediate use in the field ministry. "It may seem frightening," notes Midori, who is learning Chinese, "but householders can see that we Witnesses are trying hard. This can move hearts. We only have to say, 'I am happy to meet you' in their language, and their eyes light up!"

Christian meetings are also a great help. At every meeting, try to comment at least once. No matter how terrifying that may seem in the beginning, do not worry. The congregation wants you to succeed! Monifa, who is learning Korean, says: "I am so grateful to the sister who sits next to me during meetings, writing down the meaning of certain words for me. Her warm and patient support really helps me." As your vocabulary increases, you can begin to think in the new language—associating words directly with what they represent rather than translating each word in your mind.

Your first linguistic goal should be to "utter speech easily understood." (1 Corinthians 14:8-11) Though people may be tolerant, mistakes or a heavy accent may distract them from listening to your message. Giving attention to proper pronunciation and

grammar right from the start will prevent you from forming bad habits that are hard to break. Mark, who learned Swahili, suggests: "Ask good speakers to correct your worst mistakes, and then thank them for doing it!" Of course, be considerate of the time and energy of those who help you in this way. Although you may ask someone to check your work, try to prepare your talks and comments using the words you already know or have looked up. This speeds up the learning process and helps you to speak with confidence.

### Keep Moving Forward

"Learning another language is by far the hardest task I have ever undertaken," says Monifa. "I have moments when I want to quit. But I remember how much the Bible student loves to hear deep spiritual truths in my simple Korean and the joy the brothers show when I progress even a little." The point is, do not give up too easily. Your goal is to be able to teach lifesaving Scriptural truths to others. (1 Corinthians 2:10) Hence, learning to teach the Bible in another language requires concentrated, long-term effort. As you move ahead, avoid measuring your progress by comparing yourself negatively with others. Those learning a new language progress at different rates and in different ways. However, it is useful to be aware of your own progress. (Galatians 6:4) "With language, the learning curve is more like a staircase," notes Joon, who has taken up Chinese. "Just when you feel you are not improving, you suddenly realize you have made progress."

Learning a new tongue is a lifelong pursuit. Therefore, enjoy the journey, and do not expect perfection. (Psalm 100:2) Mistakes are inevitable. They are part of the learning process. When he began preaching in Italian, one Christian asked a household-er, "Do you know the *broom* of life?" He meant to say "*purpose* of life." A Witness new to Polish invited the congregation to sing the *dog* instead of the *song*. And by a slight change of intonation, an individual learning Chinese urged his audience to have faith in Jesus' *bookcase* rather than in the *ransom*. The bright side of mistakes is that the correct terms learned are not likely to be forgotten.

### Working With the Congregation

Language differences are not all that separate people. Cultural, racial, and national differences often divide mankind even further. These barriers, though, are not insurmountable. A scholar studying Chinese-language religious groups in Europe observed that Jehovah's Witnesses are "supranational." Among the Witnesses, he noted, "ethnicity plays no role, and language is nothing but a vehicle to understanding God's word." Indeed, applying Bible principles is what helps true Christians to rise above national differences. For those who put on the 'new personality, there is neither Greek nor Jew nor foreigner.'—Colossians 3: 10, 11.

All in the congregation should therefore work to promote unity. This requires opening one's mind and heart to new ways of thinking, feeling, and doing things. You can prevent differences from turning into divisions by not giving undue attention to personal preferences. (1 Corinthians 1:10; 9:19-23) Learn to enjoy the best elements of all cultures. Remember, unselfish love is the key to good relations and real unity.

Most foreign-language congregations begin as small groups, often consisting largely of those learning the new language, along with some who have only recently begun to learn Bible principles. Hence, misunderstandings are more likely to occur in such groups than they are in a large, established congregation. Mature Christians should therefore strive to be a force for stability. Showing love and kindness in words and deeds helps to create a wholesome environment in which new ones can grow spiritually.

Those who volunteer to help in a foreign-language congregation must also be balanced in their expectations of others. Rick, an elder in such a congregation, explains: "Some newer Witnesses may not be as well trained in organizational skills as are those in the local-language congregations. But what they lack in ability, they often make up for in love and enthusiasm. And many interested ones are coming into the truth." By regularly being on hand and by giving of yourself in whatever way you can, you will truly benefit the congregation, even while you are still learning the language. Working together, all can contribute to the congregation's spiritual advancement.

### Maintaining Spiritual Strength

A brother who was relatively new in a foreign-language congregation overheard a mother helping her child to prepare a comment. "But Mommy, can't it be shorter?" pleaded the child. "No, dear," the mother replied. "We have to save the short ones for the language learners."

For an adult, being unable to communicate well for months or even years can be mentally, emotionally, and spiritually taxing. "I easily got depressed by my own limitations," recalls Janet, who now speaks

Spanish fluently. Hiroko, who learned English, remembers thinking: 'Even dogs and cats in the territory understand more English than I do.' And Kathie says: 'When I moved to a Spanish congregation, I went from having several Bible studies and a notebook full of return visits to having none. I felt I wasn't doing anything.'

Here is where a positive attitude is essential. When she became discouraged, Hiroko reasoned: 'If others can do it, so can I.' Kathie says: 'I thought of my husband, who is making such good progress and doing so much in the congregation. That got me over the hump. It is still a lot of work, but I am gradually gaining the ability to preach and teach, and that makes me happy.' Her husband, Jeff, adds: 'It can be frustrating not to grasp everything that is said in announcements and at elders' meetings. I have to be honest and humble and ask for details, but the brothers are happy to help.'

To avoid spiritual exhaustion while working with a foreign-language congregation, you must not fail to give priority to your spiritual health. (Matthew 5:3) Kazuyuki, who for many years has served in the Portuguese field, says: 'It is important that we

*Your spiritual health should not be compromised while you are learning a foreign language*

get sufficient spiritual nourishment. That is why as a family we study and prepare for meetings in our own language as well as in Portuguese.' Some occasionally attend meetings in their own language. Moreover, getting enough rest is vital.—Mark 6:31.

### Counting the Cost

If you are thinking about moving to a congregation where another language is used, you must count the cost of doing so. (Luke 14:28) In this regard, the most important areas to consider are your spirituality and your relationship with Jehovah. Prayerfully assess your situation. Take into consideration your mate and children. Ask yourself, 'Do I have the circumstances and the necessary spiritual and emotional strength to take on such a long-term project?' Doing what is best for you and your family spiritually is the course of wisdom. There is much to be done and much joy to be found wherever you serve as a Kingdom proclaimer.

For those who can serve in a foreign-language congregation, there are great rewards. 'This is one of the happiest experiences of my life,' says Barbara, who with her husband moved to a Spanish congregation. 'It's like coming in the truth all over again. I am so thankful for the opportunity, especially since we cannot be missionaries in another country.'

Around the world, thousands of ordinary people of different ages are taking up the challenge of learning another language in order to advance the good news. If you are among them, keep your motive pure and your attitude positive. Above all, trust in Jehovah to bless your efforts.—2 Corinthians 4:7.





## "EACH ONE WILL CARRY HIS OWN LOAD"

*"Each of us will render an account for himself to God."*

—ROMANS 14:12.

THREE young Hebrews living in Babylon face a life-and-death decision. Should they bow down to a huge image, as required by the law of the land? Or should they refuse to worship it and be thrown into a burning fiery furnace? Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego do not have time to consult anyone; neither do they need to do so. Without hesitation, they declare: "Let it become known to you, O king, that your gods are not the ones we are serving, and the image of gold that you have set up we will not worship." (Daniel 3:1-18) The three Hebrews carried their own load of responsibility.

<sup>2</sup> Some six centuries later, the governor has heard the charges against the man.

1. What responsibility did three young Hebrews face up to?
2. Who, in effect, made Pilate's decision regarding Jesus Christ, and did that free the Roman governor from accountability?

Upon examining the case, he becomes convinced that the accused is innocent. The crowd, though, demands his execution. After putting forth some resistance, the governor proves reluctant to carry his load of responsibility and gives in to pressure. Washing his hands, he states: "I am innocent of the blood of this man." Then he hands the man over to be impaled. Yes, instead of shouldering his responsibility to make a decision regarding Jesus Christ, Pontius Pilate lets others decide for him. No amount of water can absolve him of his accountability for passing that unjust sentence upon Jesus.—Matthew 27:11-26; Luke 23:13-25.

3. What about you? When called upon to make decisions, are you like the three Hebrews, or do you allow others to make up your mind for you?
3. Why should we not let others make decisions for us?

your mind? Decision-making is not easy. It takes maturity to make right choices. For instance, parents need to make good decisions for their minor children. Of course, making a decision is very difficult when the situation is complex and various factors have to be weighed. However, the responsibility of making decisions is not so weighty as to be included among "the burdens," or "troublesome things," that those with "spiritual qualifications" may carry for us. (Galatians 6:1, 2; footnote) Rather, it is a load for which "each of us will render an account for himself to God." (Romans 14:12) "Each one will carry his own load," states the Bible. (Galatians 6:5) How, then, can we make wise decisions in life? First, we must recognize our human limitations and learn what is needed to compensate for them.

### A Key Requirement

<sup>4</sup> Early in human history, the first couple made a decision that brought disastrous consequences. They chose to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and bad. (Genesis 2:16, 17) What was the basis for their decision? "The woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was something to be longed for to the eyes, yes, the tree was desirable to look upon," says the Bible. "So she began taking of its fruit and eating it. Afterward she gave some also to her husband when with her and he began eating it." (Genesis 3:6) Eve's choice was based on selfish desire. Her action led Adam to join her. As a result, sin and death "spread to all men." (Romans 5:12) Adam and Eve's disobedience should teach us a vital lesson concerning man's limitations: Unless he adheres to divine guidance, man is prone to make wrong decisions.

- 
4. What vital lesson about making decisions should we learn from the disobedience of the first human couple?



*Adam and Eve's disobedience  
teaches us a vital lesson*

<sup>5</sup> How glad we can be that Jehovah God has not left us without direction! The Scriptures tell us: "Your own ears will hear a word behind you saying: 'This is the way. Walk in it, you people,' in case you people should go to the right or in case you should go to the left." (Isaiah 30:21) Jehovah speaks to us through his inspired Word, the Bible. We must study the Scriptures and acquire accurate knowledge of them. To make correct choices, we should partake of "solid food [that] belongs to mature people." "Through use," we also "have [our] perceptive powers trained to distinguish both right and wrong." (Hebrews 5:14) We can train our perceptive powers by applying what we learn from God's Word.

<sup>6</sup> Essential to the decision-making process is our inherited faculty of conscience. This faculty has the ability to render judgment, and we can be "accused or even excused" by it. (Romans 2:14, 15) For our conscience to function properly, however, it must be illuminated with the accurate knowledge of God's Word and made sensitive by applica-

5. What guidance has Jehovah provided for us, and what must we do to benefit from it?
6. What is necessary for our conscience to function properly?

tion of that Word. An unenlightened conscience is easily influenced by local customs and habits. Our surroundings and the opinions of other people can also misguide us. What happens to our conscience when its proddings are repeatedly ignored and divine standards are violated? It can, in time, come to be marked "as with a branding iron," becoming like seared flesh covered over with scar tissue—insensitive and unresponsive. (1 Timothy 4:2) On the other hand, a conscience trained by God's Word is a safe guide.

<sup>7</sup> A key requirement for shouldering the responsibility to make wise decisions, then, is an accurate knowledge of the Scriptures and the ability to apply it. Rather than impulsively jumping to conclusions when faced with choices, we ought to take time to search for godly principles and exercise our thinking ability in applying them. Even when called upon to make an on-the-spot decision—as were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—we are well-equipped if we have accurate knowledge of God's Word and our conscience has been trained by it. To see how pressing on to maturity can sharpen our decision-making ability, let us consider two areas of life.

### Who Will Be Our Associates?

<sup>8</sup> "Do not be misled," wrote the apostle Paul. "Bad associations spoil useful habits." (1 Corinthians 15:33) Jesus Christ told his disciples: "You are no part of the world." (John 15:19) Upon learning these principles, we quickly see the need to avoid fellowship with fornicators, adulterers, thieves, drunkards, and the like. (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10) As

7. What is a key requirement in making wise decisions?

8, 9. (a) What principles show the necessity of avoiding bad associations? (b) Does having bad association refer only to direct fellowship with unprincipled people? Explain.

we progress in knowledge of Bible truth, though, we realize that spending time with such individuals by watching them in movies, on television, or on computer screens or by reading about them in books is just as damaging. The same can be said of associating in Internet chat rooms "with those who hide what they are."—Psalm 26:4.

<sup>9</sup> What about having close association with those who may be morally clean but who lack faith in the true God? The Scriptures tell us: "The whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one." (1 John 5:19) We come to discern that bad associations are not limited to permissive or morally debased people. Hence, we are wise to cultivate close friendships only with those who love Jehovah.

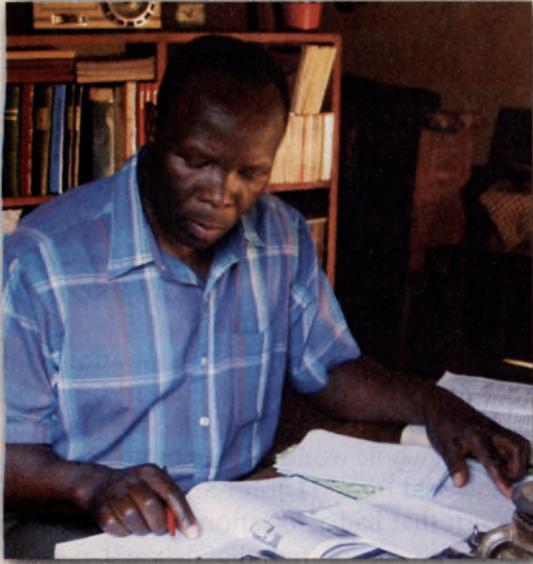
<sup>10</sup> Completely avoiding contact with those in the world is neither possible nor required. (John 17:15) Sharing in the Christian ministry, attending school, going to work all involve contact with the world. A Christian married to an unbeliever may have to rub shoulders with the world more than others do. Having our perceptive powers trained, however, we appreciate that it is one thing to have necessary limited contact with the world and quite another to cultivate close ties with it. (James 4:4) Thus, we are able to make mature decisions as to whether we will participate in extracurricular activities at school, such as sports events and dances, and attend parties and dinners arranged for fellow employees.

### Choosing Employment

<sup>11</sup> Applying Bible principles in a mature way helps us in making decisions about how we fulfill our obligation to 'provide for the members of our household.' (1 Timothy

10. What helps us to make mature decisions with respect to our contact with the world?

11. What is the first consideration in making employment decisions?



*Before making an important decision,  
search out godly principles*

5:8) The first consideration is the nature of the work itself—what it requires us to do. Choosing a type of work that promotes what is directly condemned in the Bible is definitely wrong. So true Christians do not accept jobs that may involve idolatry, stealing, misuse of blood, or other unscriptural practices. We would also not lie or cheat, even if an employer demands that we do so.—Acts 15:29; Revelation 21:8.

<sup>12</sup> What if the work itself does not specifically violate any divine requirement? As we grow in knowledge of the truth and our perceptive powers improve, we come to discern other criteria that must be considered. What if the work would involve us in an unscriptural practice, such as answering phones at a gambling establishment? The source of pay and the location of the employment also enter into the picture. For example, would a Christian who is a self-employed contractor bid on a job that involves painting one of the churches of Christendom and thereby share

12, 13. What are some factors besides the work itself that are significant in making employment decisions?

in helping to promote false religion?—2 Corinthians 6:14-16.

<sup>13</sup> What if on one occasion our employer accepts a contract to beautify a place of false worship? In this case, we would need to consider such factors as the extent of our having authority over what is being done and the degree of our involvement. And what about performing a legitimate service, such as delivering mail everywhere in a community, including places that promote wrong practices? Would not the principle stated at Matthew 5:45 have a bearing? Not to be overlooked is how doing the work day in and day out might affect our conscience. (Hebrews 13:18) Indeed, carrying our load of responsibility in making mature decisions regarding employment calls for us to sharpen our perceptive powers and train our God-given faculty of conscience.

#### **"In All Your Ways Take Notice of Him"**

<sup>14</sup> What about the decisions we make regarding other matters, such as pursuing secular education and accepting or rejecting certain medical treatment? When we are faced with making any decision, we must ascertain pertinent Bible principles and then use our mental faculties in applying them. "Trust in Jehovah with all your heart and do not lean upon your own understanding," said wise King Solomon of ancient Israel. "In all your ways take notice of him, and he himself will make your paths straight."—Proverbs 3:5, 6.

<sup>15</sup> Often, the choices we make affect others, and we need to give consideration to this. The first-century Christians, for example, were no longer under many of the dietary restrictions of the Mosaic Law. They could choose to eat certain foods that were

14. In making decisions, what measures should we take?

15. What do we learn from the first-century Christians about making decisions?

considered unclean under the Law and were not objectionable in other ways. However, the apostle Paul wrote about meat of an animal that might have some link with an idol temple: "If food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat flesh at all, that I may not make my brother stumble." (1 Corinthians 8: 11-13) The early Christians were encouraged to show consideration for the consciences of others so as not to stumble them. Our decisions should not make us "causes for stumbling."—1 Corinthians 10:29, 32.

### Seek Godly Wisdom

<sup>16</sup> An invaluable aid in making decisions is prayer. "If any one of you is lacking in wisdom," says the disciple James, "let him keep on asking God, for he gives generously to all and without reproaching; and it will be given him." (James 1:5) With confidence, we can turn to Jehovah in prayer and ask for the needed wisdom to make proper decisions. As we talk to the true God about our concerns and seek his guidance, holy spirit may help us better understand the scriptures that we are considering and bring to mind those we may have overlooked.

<sup>17</sup> Can others help us in making decisions? Yes, Jehovah has provided mature individuals in the congregation. (Ephesians 4:11, 12) They can be consulted, particularly if the decision is a major one. Individuals who have deep spiritual insight and are experienced in life can bring to our attention additional godly principles that may have a bearing on our decision and help us to "make sure of the more important things." (Philippians 1:9, 10) However, a word of caution is appropriate: We must be careful not to let others make decisions for us. The load of responsibility is ours to bear.

- 
16. How is prayer a help to us in making decisions?
  17. How can others help us in the decision-making process?

### The Outcome—Always Good?

<sup>18</sup> Will decisions that are solidly grounded on Bible principles and made conscientiously always lead to a good outcome? Yes, in the long run. At times, though, the short-term effect may bring adversity. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego knew that death might be the outcome of their decision not to worship the huge image. (Daniel 3:16-19) Similarly, after the apostles told the Jewish Sanhedrin that they must obey God as ruler rather than men, they were flogged before being set free. (Acts 5:27-29, 40) Moreover, "time and unforeseen occurrence" may adversely affect the result of any decision. (Ecclesiastes 9:11) If we suffer in some way despite having made a right decision, we can be confident that Jehovah will help us to endure and will bless us in the end.—2 Corinthians 4:7.

<sup>19</sup> When making decisions, then, we must seek out Scriptural principles and use our mental ability to apply them. How grateful we can be for the help Jehovah has provided by means of his holy spirit and the mature ones in the congregation! With such guidance and provisions, let us courageously carry our own load of responsibility in making wise decisions.

18. What can be said about the outcome of a good decision?
19. How can we courageously carry our own load of responsibility in making decisions?

### What Did You Learn?

- What is a key requirement for making good decisions?
- How does progressing to maturity affect our choice of associates?
- What are some important factors that we ought to consider when making decisions regarding employment?
- What help is available in making decisions?

# New Members *of the* GOVERNING BODY

ON Wednesday morning, August 24, 2005, the United States and Canada Bethel families, connected by video, heard an exciting announcement. Effective September 1, 2005, two new members—Geoffrey W. Jackson and Anthony Morris III—would be added to the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Brother Jackson started pioneering in February 1971 in Tasmania, the island state of Australia. In June 1974, he married Jeanette (Jenny). Shortly thereafter, they were appointed to serve as special pioneers. From 1979 to 2003, they served as missionaries in Tuvalu, Samoa, and Fiji—island nations in the South Pacific. While in the islands, Brother and Sister Jackson also contributed much to the work of translating Bible literature. Beginning in 1992, Brother Jackson served on the Branch Committee in Samoa, and from 1996, on the Branch Committee in

Fiji. In April 2003, he and Jenny became part of the United States Bethel family and began to work in the Translation Services Department. Soon thereafter, Brother Jackson was made a helper to the Teaching Committee of the Governing Body.

Brother Morris entered the pioneer service in 1971 in the United States. In December of that year, he married Susan, and they continued pioneering for nearly four years until the birth of their first son, Jesse. In time, they had another son, Paul. Brother Morris reentered the full-time service in 1979 as a regular pioneer. His wife joined him when the boys entered school. The family served where the need was great in Rhode Island and North Carolina, in the United States. In North Carolina, Brother Morris served as a substitute circuit overseer, and the boys took up regular pioneer service. Jesse and Paul were invited to the United States branch at the age of 19. Meanwhile, Brother Morris began circuit work. Then, in 2002 he and Susan were invited to Bethel, starting their new assignment on August 1. Brother Morris worked in the Service Department at Patterson and later as a helper to the Service Committee of the Governing Body.

In addition to these two new members, the Governing Body consists of C. W. Barber; J. E. Barr; S. F. Herd; M. S. Lett; G. Lösch; T. Jaracz; G. H. Pierce; A. D. Schroeder; D. H. Splane; and D. Sydlik. All members of the Governing Body are anointed Christians.

## IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Parents—Be a Fine Example  
for Your Children

When Exercising Authority,  
Imitate the Christ

Meeting the Requirements  
for Christian Baptism

# KEEP CLEAR OF FALSE WORSHIP!

*"Get out from among them, and separate yourselves,' says Jehovah,  
'and quit touching the unclean thing.'"*—2 CORINTHIANS 6:17.

MANY sincere people do not know the truth about God and the future of mankind. Not having found answers to their deepest spiritual concerns, they live in confusion and uncertainty. Millions are enslaved to superstitions, rituals, and celebrations that offend our Creator. Likely, you have neighbors and relatives who believe in a fiery hell, a triune God, the immortality of the soul, or some other false teaching.

<sup>2</sup> What is responsible for this widespread spiritual darkness? Ironically, it is religion—specifically the religious organizations and leaders who have promoted ideas contrary to God's thoughts. (Mark 7:7, 8) As a result, many people have been deceived into believing that they worship the true God, while in reality they offend him. False religion is directly responsible for this sad situation.

<sup>3</sup> There is an unseen entity behind false religion. Referring to him, the apostle Paul said: "The god of this system of things has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, that the illumination of the glorious good news about the Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine through." (2 Corinthians 4:4) "The god of this system of things" is none other than Satan the Devil. He is the

1. In what spiritual condition do many sincere people find themselves?
2. What have religious leaders done, and with what result?
3. Who is the principal promoter of false religion, and how is he described in the Bible?

principal promoter of false worship. "Satan himself keeps transforming himself into an angel of light," wrote Paul. "It is therefore nothing great if his ministers also keep transforming themselves into ministers of righteousness." (2 Corinthians 11:14, 15) Satan makes bad things appear good and deceives people into believing lies.

<sup>4</sup> No wonder the Bible strongly condemns false religion! For instance, the Mosaic Law specifically warned God's chosen people against false prophets. Anyone promoting untrue teachings and the worship of false gods was to be 'put to death for speaking of revolt against Jehovah.' The Israelites were commanded 'to clear out what was evil from their midst.' (Deuteronomy 13:1-5) Yes, Jehovah views false religion as evil.—Ezekiel 13:3.

<sup>5</sup> Jesus Christ and his apostles reflected Jehovah's strong feelings about false religion. Jesus warned his disciples: "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; Mark 13:22, 23) Paul wrote that "God's wrath is being revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who are suppressing the truth." (Romans 1:18) How vital that true Christians heed these warnings and stay clear of anyone who suppresses

4. What did God's Law to ancient Israel say about false prophets?
5. What warnings should we heed today?

the truth of God's Word or spreads false teachings!—1 John 4:1.

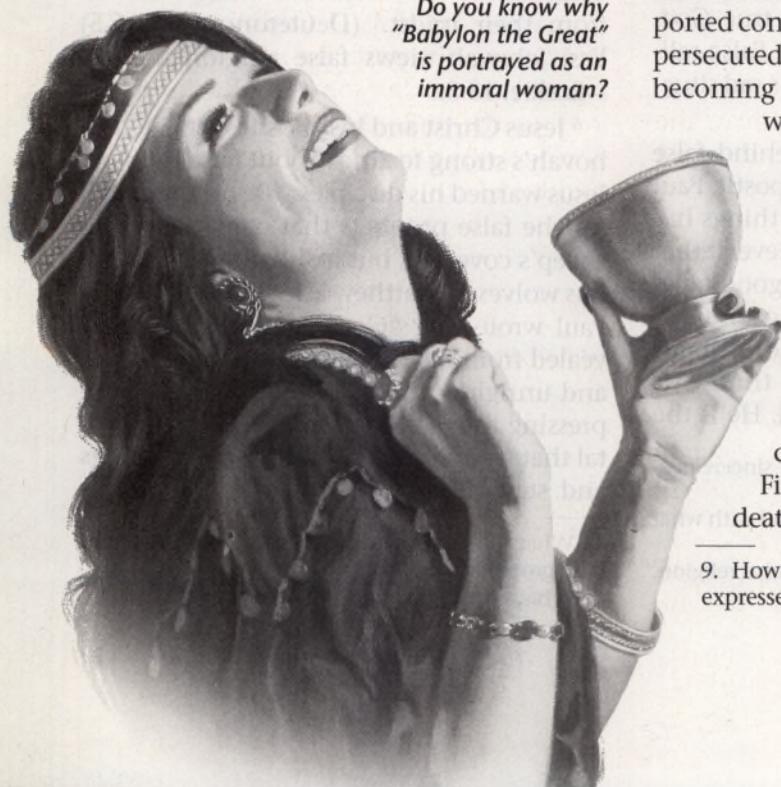
### Flee From "Babylon the Great"

<sup>6</sup> Consider how the Bible book of Revelation describes false religion. It is portrayed as a drunken prostitute who has power over many kingdoms and their peoples. This figurative woman commits fornication with many kings and is drunk with the blood of God's true worshippers. (Revelation 17:1, 2, 6, 18) She has a name written on her forehead that matches her filthy and repulsive conduct. The name is "Babylon the Great, the mother of the harlots and of the disgusting things of the earth."—Revelation 17:5.

<sup>7</sup> The Scriptural description of Babylon the Great fits the world's collective body of

- 
- 6. How is "Babylon the Great" portrayed in the Bible?
  - 7, 8. How has false religion prostituted herself, and with what results?

*Do you know why  
"Babylon the Great"  
is portrayed as an  
immoral woman?*



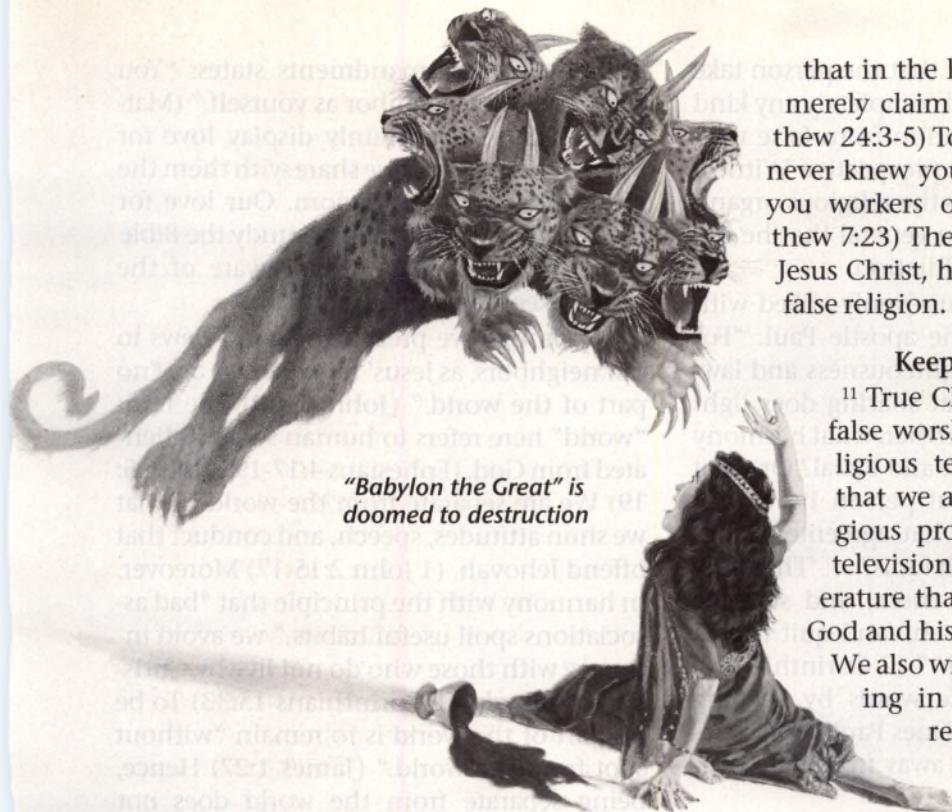
false religion. Although the thousands of religions are not formally united as one world organization, they are inseparably joined in purpose and deed. As depicted by the immoral woman in Revelation, false religion has tremendous influence over governments. Resembling a woman not faithful to her marriage vows, false religion has prostituted herself by forming alliances with one political power after another. "Adulteresses, do you not know that the friendship with the world is enmity with God?" wrote the disciple James. "Whoever, therefore, wants to be a friend of the world is constituting himself an enemy of God."—James 4:4.

<sup>8</sup> This mixing of false religion with the governments has resulted in much human suffering. African political analyst Dr. Xolela Mangcu observed that "world history is littered with examples of mass killings caused by linking religion and politics." One newspaper recently stated: "The bloodiest and most dangerous disputes today . . . are wrapped in religion." The lives of millions have been snuffed out in religiously supported conflicts. Babylon the Great has even persecuted and killed God's true servants, becoming drunk with their blood, as it were.—Revelation 18:24.

<sup>9</sup> That Jehovah hates false worship is clearly seen from what happens to Babylon the Great. Revelation 17:16 states: "The ten horns that you saw, and the wild beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her devastated and naked, and will eat up her fleshy parts and will completely burn her with fire."

First, a huge beast mauls her to death and eats up her fleshy parts.

- 
- 9. How is Jehovah's hatred for false worship expressed in the book of Revelation?



***"Babylon the Great" is doomed to destruction***

Then, whatever remains of her is completely burned. Correspondingly, soon the world governments will take such action against false religion. God will make it happen. (Revelation 17:17) Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion, is doomed to destruction. "She will never be found again."—Revelation 18:21.

<sup>10</sup> What position should true worshippers take regarding Babylon the Great? In no uncertain terms, the Bible commands: "Get out of her, my people, if you do not want to share with her in her sins, and if you do not want to receive part of her plagues." (Revelation 18:4) Those who want to be spared must get out of false religion before it is too late. When on earth, Jesus Christ foretold

10. What should be our position regarding false religion?

that in the last days, many would merely claim to follow him. (Matthew 24:3-5) To such ones, he says: "I never knew you! Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness." (Matthew 7:23) The now enthroned King, Jesus Christ, has nothing to do with false religion.

### Keep Clear—How?

<sup>11</sup> True Christians keep clear of false worship, rejecting false religious teachings. This means that we avoid exposure to religious programs on radio and television as well as religious literature that promotes lies about God and his Word. (Psalm 119:37) We also wisely refrain from sharing in social functions and recreational activities sponsored by any organization associated with false religion.

Additionally, we do not support false worship in any way. (1 Corinthians 10:21) Taking such measures protects us from being carried off by someone "as his prey through the philosophy and empty deception according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary things of the world and not according to Christ."—Colossians 2:8.

<sup>12</sup> What if a person who wishes to become one of Jehovah's Witnesses is currently a registered member of a false religion? In most cases, a letter of resignation serves as evidence that a person no longer wants to be viewed as a member of a false religion. It

- 
11. What should we do to keep clear of false worship?
  12. How can a person break free from any connection with false religious organizations?

is especially important that the person take decisive action to avoid completely any kind of spiritual contamination from false worship. The actions of a prospective Witness should make it clear to the religious organization and observers in general that he has ended that religious affiliation.

<sup>13</sup> "Do not become unevenly yoked with unbelievers," wrote the apostle Paul. "For what fellowship do righteousness and lawlessness have? Or what sharing does light have with darkness? Further, what harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what portion does a faithful person have with an unbeliever? And what agreement does God's temple have with idols? . . . 'Therefore get out from among them, and separate yourselves,' says Jehovah, 'and quit touching the unclean thing.'" (2 Corinthians 6: 14-17) We heed these words by keeping clear of false worship. Does Paul's advice require that we also stay away from false worshippers?

### "Go On Walking in Wisdom"

<sup>14</sup> Should true worshippers shun all contact with people who engage in false worship? Should we hold ourselves completely aloof from those who do not share our faith? The answer is no. The second of the

13. What counsel does the Bible offer regarding the need to keep clear of false worship?
14. Must we completely avoid those who engage in false worship? Explain.

### What Have You Learned?

- What is "Babylon the Great"?
- What must we do to keep clear of false religion?
- What dangers to our spirituality should we avoid?

two greatest commandments states: "You must love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:39) We certainly display love for our neighbors when we share with them the good news of the Kingdom. Our love for them is also shown when we study the Bible with them and make them aware of the need to keep clear of false worship.

<sup>15</sup> Although we preach the good news to our neighbors, as Jesus' followers we are "no part of the world." (John 15:19) The term "world" here refers to human society alienated from God. (Ephesians 4:17-19; 1 John 5: 19) We are separate from the world in that we shun attitudes, speech, and conduct that offend Jehovah. (1 John 2:15-17) Moreover, in harmony with the principle that "bad associations spoil useful habits," we avoid intimacy with those who do not live by Christian standards. (1 Corinthians 15:33) To be no part of the world is to remain "without spot from the world." (James 1:27) Hence, being separate from the world does not mean that we physically withdraw from all contact with other people.—John 17:15, 16; 1 Corinthians 5:9, 10.

<sup>16</sup> How, then, are we to treat those who are not acquainted with Bible truths? To the congregation in Colossae, Paul wrote: "Go on walking in wisdom toward those on the outside, buying out the opportune time for yourselves. Let your utterance be always with graciousness, seasoned with salt, so as to know how you ought to give an answer to each one." (Colossians 4:5, 6) The apostle Peter wrote: "Sanctify the Christ as Lord in your hearts, always ready to make a defense before everyone that demands of you a reason for the hope in you, but doing so together with a mild temper and deep re-

15. What does it mean to be "no part of the world"?
- 16, 17. How should Christians treat those who are not acquainted with Bible truth?

spect." (1 Peter 3:15) Paul counseled Christians "to speak injuriously of no one, not to be belligerent, to be reasonable, exhibiting all mildness toward all men."—Titus 3:2.

<sup>17</sup> As Jehovah's Witnesses, we avoid being harsh or arrogant toward others. We certainly do not use derogatory terms to describe people of other religions. Instead, we are tactful, even if the householder, neighbor, or workmate is unkind or uses abusive terms.—Colossians 4:6; 2 Timothy 2:24.

### "Keep Holding the Pattern of Healthful Words"

<sup>18</sup> After learning Bible truths, how tragic it would be if one regressed to false worship! The Bible describes the sad consequences of such a course when it says: "Certainly if, after having escaped from the defilements of the world by an accurate knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they get involved again with these very things and are overcome, the final conditions have become worse for them than the first. . . . The saying of the true proverb has happened to them: 'The dog has returned to its own vomit, and the sow that was bathed to rolling in the mire.'"—2 Peter 2:20-22.

<sup>19</sup> We must remain alert to anything that can endanger our spirituality. The dangers are real! The apostle Paul warns: "The inspired utterance says definitely that in later periods of time some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to misleading inspired utterances and teachings of demons." (1 Timothy 4:1) We live in "later periods of

18. What deplorable spiritual condition is experienced by those who regress to false worship?

19. Why is it vital to remain alert to anything that can endanger our spirituality?



*We display "a mild temper and deep respect" toward those who do not share our beliefs*

time." Those who do not keep clear of false worship can be "tossed about as by waves and carried hither and thither by every wind of teaching by means of the trickery of men, by means of cunning in contriving error."—Ephesians 4:13, 14.

<sup>20</sup> How can we protect ourselves against the damaging influence of false religion? Consider all that Jehovah has provided. We have God's Word, the Bible. (2 Timothy 3:16, 17) Jehovah has also provided abundant spiritual food through "the faithful and discreet slave." (Matthew 24:45) As we progress in the truth, should we not cultivate a taste for 'solid food that belongs to mature people' and a desire to come together where we learn spiritual truths? (Hebrews 5:13, 14; Psalm 26:8) Let us be determined to take full advantage of Jehovah's provisions so that we can "keep holding the pattern of healthful words" that we have heard. (2 Timothy 1:13) Thus we can keep clear of false worship.

20. How can we protect ourselves against the damaging influence of false religion?

## *A Night to Remember*

On the night before he died, Jesus Christ instituted the Memorial of his death. Using wine and unleavened bread as symbols, Jesus commanded: “Keep doing this in remembrance of me.”—Luke 22:19.

Jehovah’s Witnesses warmly invite you to join them in obeying Jesus by observing this annual event. Please see the back of this handbill or check with Jehovah’s Witnesses locally for the meeting place, the day, and the time.

*Meet With Us*  
**Wednesday, April 12**