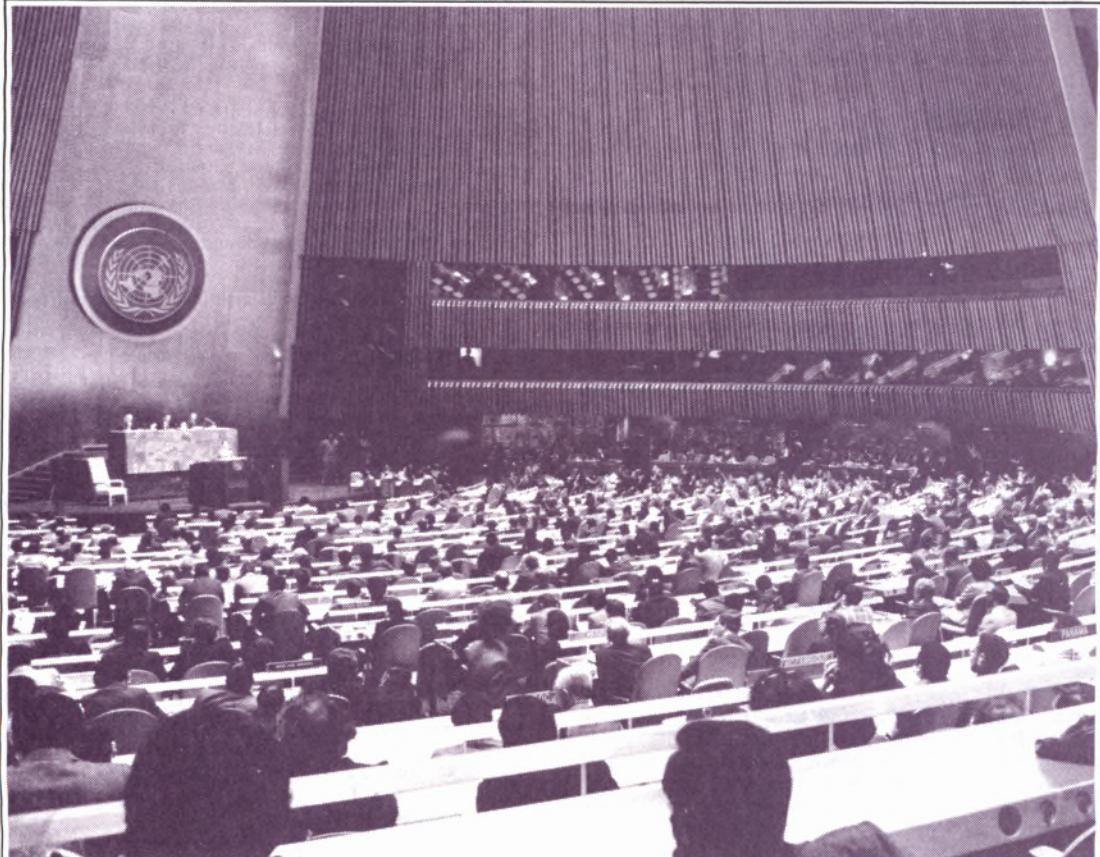


August 15, 1983



# The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



## Who Can Save the World?



# The Watchtower®

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

August 15, 1983  
Vol. 104, No. 16

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THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER" is to exalt Jehovah God as the Sovereign of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as they 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 the now-reigning King, Jesus Christ, whose shed blood opens the way for mankind to gain eternal life. "The Watchtower," published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879, is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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Songs to Be Used: 30, 22.
- September 18: United Fruit Bearers. Page 19. Songs to Be Used: 63, 68.
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# Who Can Save the World?

**I**N ANSWER to this question, some might say, 'No one.' And none of us can deny that the world's problems are multiplying so fast, and their nature has become so complex, that the task of saving the world seems beyond the ability of present human governments or even of the United Nations.

But since our lives and future are involved, we have good reason for wanting to know, Is there any way it can be saved? If so, by whom?

World leaders tend to take a bleak view of the future. In a 26-page report on the international scene, former UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim said: "The past year has brought new crises and few encouragements . . . The pattern of world affairs was shifted in unexpected and at times ominous ways, . . . tending to aggravate many existing problems." He added that people are right when they "view this situation with concern."

At the close of 1981 the following question was pointedly asked in an editorial in the Latin-American *Daily Post*: "Did you wake up this morning, read the headlines and did it suddenly occur to you the world seems to be an awfully dangerous, unstable place these days?" After considering several aspects of the international problems, the editorial concluded: "We would like to wake up tomorrow, scan the headlines and come away with a feeling that things are get-

ting better. But, somehow, we just don't think that's the way it's going to be."

Youths especially tend to take a negative view of the world situation. West Germany is reportedly worried by a "growing army of aimless, sometimes violent, inarticulate, usually jobless and often unemployable youngsters." A social worker described them as having "no horizons, no prospects and no hope." One of these youths declared: "In my heart, I believe the world will not last another five or ten years. But we have to do something about the misery that prevails. We have come to the stage where we refuse to take responsibility for a system we do not approve of."

How do you personally feel? Can you look back on your brief life span and say that the world today is a better place in which to live? Most persons readily answer, No. Instead it seems clearly to be heading for destruction. Can it be saved? Doubtless, you will agree that this earth is a wonderful place on which to live, and you do all you can to extend your life as long as possible. Wherein lies the problem? Did you notice the words of the youth in the previous paragraph? He spoke of a "system" of which he did not approve. Interestingly, the apostles of Jesus Christ questioned Jesus about "the conclusion of the *system* of things." (Matthew 24:3-14) In reply he gave a long-range prophecy that is being fulfilled in our day. So when we speak of saving

the world, we should not think of saving this earthly globe. Nor should we think of saving this present system of things that God's Word says is destined to be eliminated. Rather, the question centers on people—the world of mankind.

Who, then, is to save the world of mankind? We are not left in doubt, for God's Word states: "God sent forth his Son into the world, not for him to judge the world, but for the *world to be saved through him.*" (John 3:17; 12:47) Yes, it is man's Creator who has taken steps to save the world through his Son, Jesus Christ. Even a group of Samaritans, who previously hated the Jews, said of Jesus, "We know that this man is for a certainty the *savior of the world.*"—John 4:42.

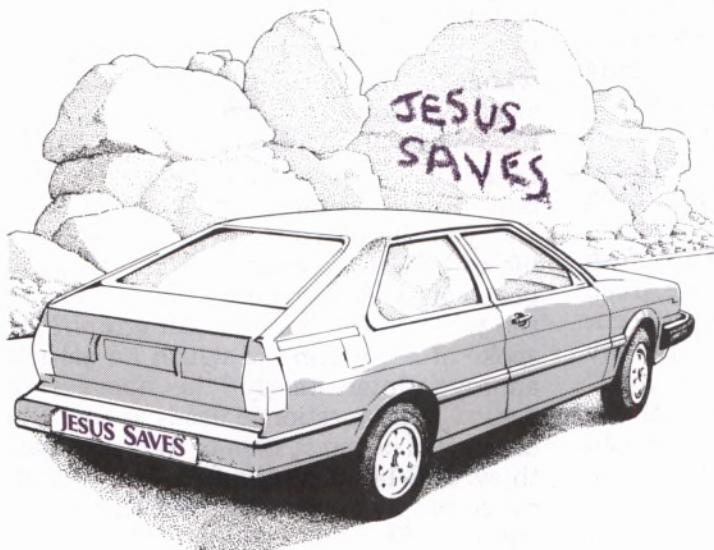
A religious phenomenon of our day is the appearance of many so-called Jesus groups. You see the name Jesus stuck on cars and buildings, painted on rocks in the countryside. You read of huge, open-air mass meetings of the "Jesus" people. These have generally abandoned the traditional churches. They loudly proclaim that mankind's hope lies in Jesus Christ. Many of them believe that,

if Jesus were alive today, he would be side by side with them in their own particular revolution and that he would be fighting against the "system's" corruption and injustice.

A group of such persons in Brazil were asked to put in writing what they thought about Jesus. The consensus was that he was a well-meaning man who preached love in a cruel and unloving world. They said that he taught equality of men and set a fine example of courage, faith and hope. Yet they felt that Jesus was not very successful in his mission. As one Catholic priest put it, "Look at Jesus. He was always having discussions with the priests, and the only thing he got out of it was the cross."

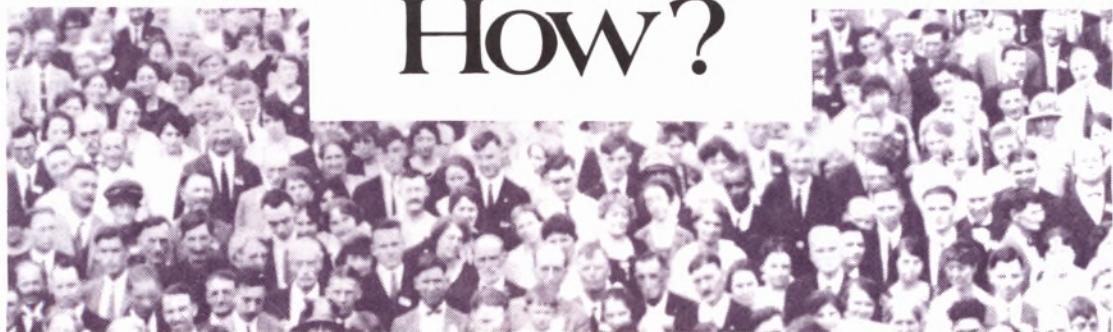
How do you view Jesus Christ? As a blazing revolutionary? As a great philosopher and a wise man, even a prophet? Without doubt his teachings have exerted a tremendous influence on mankind during the past 1,950 years. In fact, millions of people today claim that they are already personally saved by him.

There is no denying that Jesus is the means for some of the world of mankind's getting saved, as we noted from John 3:17. The apostle Peter confirmed this, declaring: "There is not another name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must get saved." (Acts 4:12) But how will Jesus save the world? If not everyone of mankind will accept Jesus and meet God's requirements for salvation, how does a person get saved? If that person is to be you, from what are you to be saved, and to what? Let us consider these very pertinent questions.



# Jesus Saves the World—

## How?



**D**ESPITE the bleak outlook that many informed world leaders (including some in the United Nations) have on mankind's future, the inspired Scriptures assure us that God is going to intervene to save the world. But each of us naturally wants to know how we are involved and can benefit. To do so we need to examine the word "world" in the Bible.

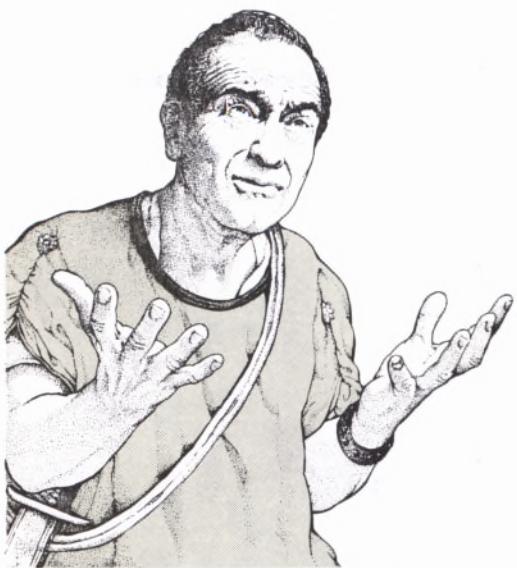
The Christian Greek Scriptures use the word *kosmos*, which is usually translated "world," 187 times. The Greek word has different shades of meaning and so can be applied in different ways. An understanding of some of these meanings can help us to appreciate better how Jesus is "the savior of the world." (John 4:42) We will also be in a better position to understand what is involved in a person's being saved.

Early in the Gospel of John we find this interesting passage: "[Jesus] was in the world, and the world came into existence through him, but the world did not know him." (John 1:10) Clearly, this verse is not talking about the earth, sun,

moon, planets and stars, which some people include when they speak about "the world." Rather, John was writing about people, the world of mankind in general. Jesus was born into this world, and people in general did not accept him or get to know him. Yet it is also true that "the world came into existence through" Jesus. How so? Because long before becoming a man he had been a co-worker in heaven with his Father, Jehovah God. As his Father's firstborn Son he had shared in the grand work of creating the first human pair, who were the parents of all mankind, including us today.—Genesis 1:26; Proverbs 8:22, 30, 31; Colossians 1:15-17.

For a different, more limited, meaning of "world," note what Jesus said to his disciples concerning what would happen at his death, "You will weep and wail, but the *world* will rejoice."—John 16:20.

In this verse a contrast is drawn between Jesus' disciples and the "world." Obviously, here the word "world" has reference only to those of mankind who



The Philippian jailer asked Paul,  
"What must I do to get saved?"

are alienated from God. On this same basis we can understand what Jesus meant when he said that his followers "are no part of the world." (John 17:14, 16) Whereas Christians definitely are a part of the "world" of mankind in general, according to Jesus' words here they are to be "no part of the world" alienated from God. Without losing sight of our point that accepting Jesus is central to salvation, we should examine what it might mean for us to be "no part of the world."

#### **"What Must I Do to Get Saved?"**

"Sirs, what must I do to get saved?" asked a frightened jailer of the first century when he saw that all his prisoners, including the apostle Paul and his companion Silas, had miraculously been let loose. The answer was, "Believe on the Lord Jesus and you will get saved, **you and your household.**" (Acts 16:30, 31) What was involved in 'believing on

the Lord Jesus and getting saved'? Was it just a matter of expressing belief and having faith in Jesus as "the savior of the world"? We can discern what was involved by looking at the Bible record of the thousands of persons saved during the first century C.E.

Some vital steps for those who at that time were saved are indicated in the inspired book of Acts. We read: "They received the word with the greatest eagerness of mind, carefully examining the Scriptures daily as to whether these things were so." "Therefore those who embraced his word heartily were baptized . . . And they continued devoting themselves to the teaching of the apostles."—Acts 17:11; 2:41, 42.

It is evident from this divine record that being saved involved learning the truth of God's Word, studying the Scriptures regularly and applying them to their lives. Those who were saved back then did not feel that a daily study of the Bible would indicate that they were fanatics or unbalanced. Rather, their study of the Bible led to a complete change in outlook on life, in their habits and customs. It meant a whole new way of life, a very happy one.

The apostle Paul later expressed it this way: "You should put away the old personality which conforms to your former course of conduct and . . . you should be made new in the force actuating your mind, and should put on the new personality which was created according to God's will in true righteousness and loyalty." (Ephesians 4:22-24) Others will notice a change in the Christian's life pattern, as the apostle Peter wrote: "For the time that has passed by is sufficient for you to have worked out the will of the nations when you proceeded in deeds of loose conduct, lusts, excesses with wine, revelries, drinking matches, and illegal idolatries. Because you do

not continue running with them in this course . . . they are puzzled and go on speaking abusively of you." (1 Peter 4:3, 4) In this way early Christians were delivered from the evil system of things in which they lived.

Such saved ones had to go still further. They realized that "the whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one," Satan the Devil, "the god of this system of things." (1 John 5:19; 2 Corinthians 4:4) They felt the desire to help others to get out from under his rule. So, what did they do? "Every day in the temple and from house to house they continued without letup teaching and declaring the good news about the Christ, Jesus." They "went through the land declaring the good news of the word." "At the same time Jehovah continued to join to them daily those being saved."—Acts 5:42; 8:4; 2:47.

'Being no part of the world' meant a good deal to those early Christians. Various history books offer the following reports on the conduct of early Christians: "They lived quiet, moral, indeed model lives . . . In every respect except that single matter of [the patriotic idolatry of] incense-burning they were exemplary citizens." "Christians refused to share certain duties of Roman citizens . . . They would not hold political office." "Zealous Christians did not serve in the armed forces or accept political offices."

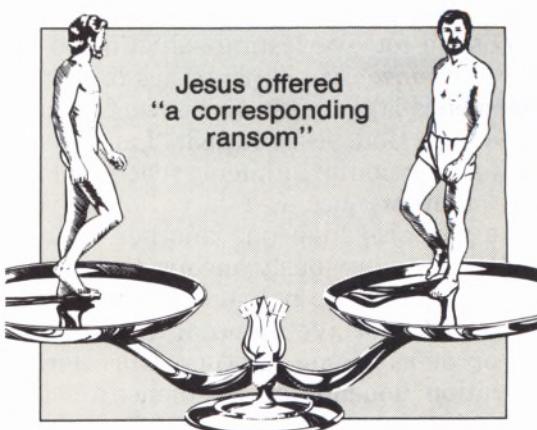
In explaining the reason for this drastic change in the lives of those becoming Christians, the apostle Paul wrote: "He delivered us from the authority of the darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of his love." (Colossians 1:13) Thus it is evident from the Scriptures and also from the example set by early Christians that being saved from this present system of things means that Christians took a completely neutral stand as far as political and military

matters were concerned. Jesus declared, "My kingdom is no part of this world." (John 18:36) Is this what you see among the millions of persons today who claim to be saved? Do you perceive any adjustment in your life that this calls upon you to make?

### **Jesus' Role in Your Being Saved**

The person who is saved has new hopes and aspirations. Rather than resting his hopes on the accomplishments of this present system of things, he looks forward with confidence to the realization of what his Savior, Jesus Christ, has promised for him. He realizes from the Bible that the whole world of mankind, as descendants of the willful sinner Adam, are under the condemnation of sin and death. When Adam sinned, he "sold" all his descendants into the slavery of sin and death.—Romans 3:23, 24; 5:12.

However, Jesus Christ offered his perfect human life in sacrifice on the torture stake as the price to redeem what Adam had lost, thus ransoming mankind. Jesus paid the exact price required—a perfect human life for a perfect human life—no more and no less. Paul stated: "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, a man, Christ Jesus, who



gave himself a *corresponding ransom* for all." (1 Timothy 2:5, 6) You have reason for hope then. If you accept Jesus' ransom, you can be 'set free from the law of sin and death.' (Romans 8:2) Saved mankind thus has a new hope of life. It is a prospect of everlasting life, even as Adam originally had the prospect of living forever on a paradise earth.

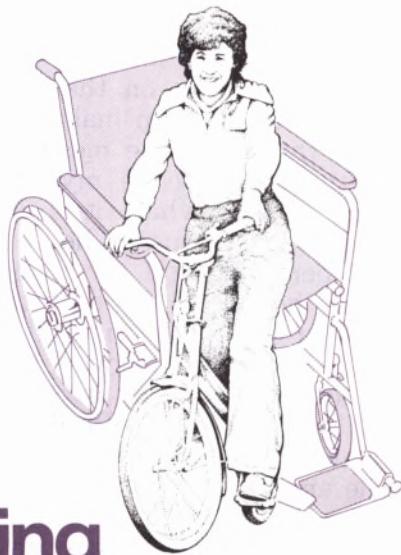
The marvelous benefits of being saved through Jesus Christ do not come automatically to anyone. At Hebrews 7:25 Paul shows that Jesus 'is able to save those approaching God through him.' In accord with this, to be saved a person must appreciate the difference between God and Christ. They are not equal parts of a triune god but are separate persons. Jehovah God is the Supreme One. He arranged for his Son to provide the ransom. Clearly, then, for a person to be truly saved he must separate himself from those religions of Christendom who teach falsely that Jesus and God are one and the same. Jesus himself said: "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ."—John 17:3.

However, you need more to be saved. The apostle Paul wrote: "After he [Jesus] had been made perfect he became responsible for everlasting salvation to *all those obeying him.*" (Hebrews 5:9) Such obedience is not easy in this world alienated from God. Jesus stated: "I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, that you also love one another." (John 13:34) This obviously means that those who are saved do not steal from another person, do not live immoral lives, do not lie or defraud one another. Our eternal salvation depends on obedience to God in such things.

### Saved to a New Order

There is another aspect to being saved that involves especially the present generation. The Scriptures point to an early end of the present system of things in what Jesus described as a "great tribulation such as has not occurred since the world's beginning until now, no, nor will occur again." (Matthew 24:21) This will be in "the war of the great day of God the Almighty." (Revelation 16:14-16) At that time Jesus will act, not as a great preacher and teacher, but as Jehovah's King and Vindicator. He will eliminate God's enemies but will preserve alive his saved ones who, according to Revelation 7:9, will be "a great crowd." Those persons who have persevered and who have been counted worthy to be carried through that "great tribulation" will cry in a loud voice: "Salvation we owe to our God . . . and to the Lamb." (Revelation 7:10) They will have been saved from destruction and will have before them the prospects of everlasting life on a paradise earth.—Compare Revelation 7:16, 17; 21:1-5.

Would you not like to share in that wonderful salvation? You can do so by gaining an accurate knowledge of what is actually required to be saved. As you do so, follow the example of the early Christians who were encouraged to 'keep working out their own salvation with fear and trembling.' (Philippians 2:12) Learn more about how Jesus saves now. This is not just a brief, emotional experience, but one that involves our accepting him and then following a new way of life doing God's will. Even if you have difficulties and opposition walking on the narrow way to life, remember Jesus' words, "He that has endured to the end is the one that *will be saved.*" —Matthew 10:22; 7:13, 14.



## Living in the Shadow of a Wheelchair

**“I** AM afraid that you will just have to accept that some people become confined to a wheelchair before they are 30 years old.”

I just could not believe it. “Look! I am 19, not 90!” I blurted.

“There is nothing we can do,” came the quiet reply. “You must accept it. There are people in this world who cannot walk by the time they are 30, and you are going to be one of them.”

Those chilling words from an orthopedic consultant were the first indication that a spinal condition I had been born with would eventually lead to permanent disability. In total disbelief I jumped onto my bicycle and quickly rode away.

### Making the Most of My Time

For two years I had been sharing in the full-time ministry as a pioneer here in England, and what happy years they had been! My heart was set on continuing, but the consultant’s words kept coming back. Could they possibly come true? “Well, true or false,” I remember saying to myself, “there’s no point in giving up before the time actually comes, is there?” I would continue to pioneer.

During the next ten years the deterioration of my spine became progressively evident. That I was able to carry on in the full-time preaching activity was largely due to the encouragement and physical help of Elsa, my pioneer companion. We cycled hundreds of miles, witnessing in seaside towns, traveling the beautiful countryside, working in suburban areas and finally centering our activity in London’s inner city. What a deep feeling of freedom and satisfaction we had at being able to spend all our time in the work of preaching from God’s Word about his wonderful promise of a coming earthly Paradise!

Although my activities were interspersed with periods in hospitals where I underwent a dozen operations, I was able to continue pioneering. I began to use leg braces and eventually had to use elbow crutches. For the last two years of my pioneer service, this was how I managed to get around. People were really kind. One taxi driver would watch out for me and give me free rides between calls. Many other people offered their home for a rest whenever they saw me.

Then the consultant’s words painfully came true. My spine suddenly collapsed. After a long period in the hospital and many more months in a plaster cast, I was confined to a wheelchair. “I will wake up one day and find that it is not true,” I would tell myself. I somehow felt I was just marking time until that day.

### **Adjusting to My Disability**

In the beginning I was resentful. I desperately needed the consideration and help of others but felt embarrassed, even demoralized, at having to accept it. But I resented it as much if no help was offered. Probably only those who have had a similar experience can fully understand how it feels suddenly to become so dependent. The smile I wore in public was a cover-up for my feelings of infinite sadness and uselessness.

As time passed I worked myself through the worst of these negative emotions. Looking back, the turning point came when a fellow Witness read with me 2 Corinthians 12:8-10 from *The Living Bible*, which says in part: "I am glad to be a living demonstration of Christ's power, instead of showing off my own power and abilities." The Witness who read me these words of the apostle Paul had himself been badly injured in an accident, and I could see that he had proved them to be true in his case.

I supplicated Jehovah God to show me something constructive that I could still do to help me always to be useful to him and to others, rather than becoming self-centered. My whole life changed.

### **The Joy of Helping Others**

Looking around, I began to see that many people have limitations and are not free to do what they like. For example, women with large families to care for, men tied all day to a monotonous job, and persons who have grown old and no longer have the energy to accomplish much. I started to think about them, to watch how they coped.

After a while I was asked: "Would you like to conduct a Bible study with a lady who can come to your home?" How encouraging! She proved to be the first of several with whom I have studied in this way. It was a joy to realize that my

physical condition made no difference at all in my ability to use my years of experience in disciple making.

I was constantly on the lookout for new ways to share in making disciples. At first this was done mostly by writing letters. I have as my assignment a block of flats where it is difficult to gain entry for house-to-house witnessing. When writing I try to imagine a different household for each apartment and use a different Scriptural presentation for each. In this way I keep my mind active, projecting myself into the public ministry of the Word of God.

Finally, I decided to overcome my last hurdle and share again in the house-to-house evangelizing. I am so glad I did. There is nothing as faith strengthening as the oral declaration of one's faith. Now friends in the congregation regularly pick up me and my wheelchair, so I am even able to serve as an auxiliary pioneer from time to time.

It has been six years now since I last rode my bicycle. Some days I yearn for the freedom of movement I had then, for the fresh air and for the busy life I enjoyed so much. On the credit side, however, the active life I led in the pioneer service extended my years of mobility from the predicted 10 to over 15 years.

For the past few years I have lived alone. But Elsa and her husband treat me as one of the family. Their children are as dear to me as if they were my own.

I remind myself, too, that I have gained assets I did not possess before. Among the greatest of these is time. I am always available to listen to those who feel the need of a hearing ear. I have grown in compassion for those experiencing problems. Above all else, there is the growing closeness to Jehovah God, who has so lovingly taught me to enjoy life as it is and who has given me strength and purpose to continue serving him.

# Insight on the News

## Bishops Against Nuclear Weapons

U.S. Roman Catholic bishops are at odds with current U.S. nuclear military policy. In their recent 150-page pastoral letter, "The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response," the bishops, 239 to 8, condemn nuclear war with no exception and call for the immediate halt to new nuclear weapons systems. Sincere Catholics see in this an abrupt about-face. In the past, the U.S. government could count on the Catholic bishops to bless their participation in war. This was exemplified during the Vietnam conflict by words of the late Cardinal Spellman: "My country, right or wrong. My country."

But now something has changed. *U.S. News & World Report* quotes Cardinal Bernardin of Chicago, chairman of the letter's drafting committee, as saying that any "directly intended attack on civilian centers qualifies as murder in Catholic moral theology. It is not justified, even in retaliation for an attack on our cities, and no exceptions to the principle are admitted." San Francisco Archbishop Quinn, former president of the bishops' council, went one step further. He declared that Catholics in the military should refuse any order to detonate a nuclear bomb, even if that order came from the president, reports *U.S. News & World Report*.

Therefore, the bishops appear to have sounded the moral tone as to how 50 million Ameri-

can Catholics should respond to the nuclear weapons issue. The pastoral letter, while not binding, nonetheless forces a dilemma of conscience upon American Catholics in the military, in public office and in the defense industry. What the letter recommends, however, still does not fit in with the principle stated at Isaiah 2:4, which calls for 'beating swords into plowshares and not learning war anymore'—any kind of war anymore.

## Africa's Severe Drought

Jesus Christ predicted that "there will be food shortages . . . in one place after another" as part of a composite sign marking "the conclusion of the system of things." (Matthew 24:3, 7) The continent of Africa provides one evidence of this. Fifteen African states suffer from severe food shortages due to drought, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. Swaziland reportedly has the worst drought in 30 years, South Africa and Mozambique the worst in 50 years, and Zimbabwe claims to have its worst in this century, resulting in the loss of 50 percent of its mealie (maize) crop and of an estimated 1½ million head of livestock. As the dry season began, many regions were being proclaimed disaster areas. Their future looks bleak from a human viewpoint, but the Bible shows that soon Christ's reign will ensure "plenty of grain on the earth."—Psalm 72:16.

## "Let Anger Alone"

"Let anger alone and leave rage; do not show yourself heated up only to do evil," counsels the Bible. (Psalm 37:8) For years, popular human wisdom disagreed. "Let it all hang out," was the motto. "It's healthy to vent anger," prescribed many psychotherapists. But now scientific research is highlighting the value of controlling anger. For example, social psychologist Carol Tavris states in her new book *Anger: The Misunderstood Emotion*: "Expressing anger makes you angrier, solidifies an angry attitude, and establishes a hostile habit." Therefore, she advises: "If you keep quiet about momentary irritations and distract yourself with pleasant activity until your fury simmers down, chances are that you will feel better, and feel better faster, than if you let yourself go in a shouting match."

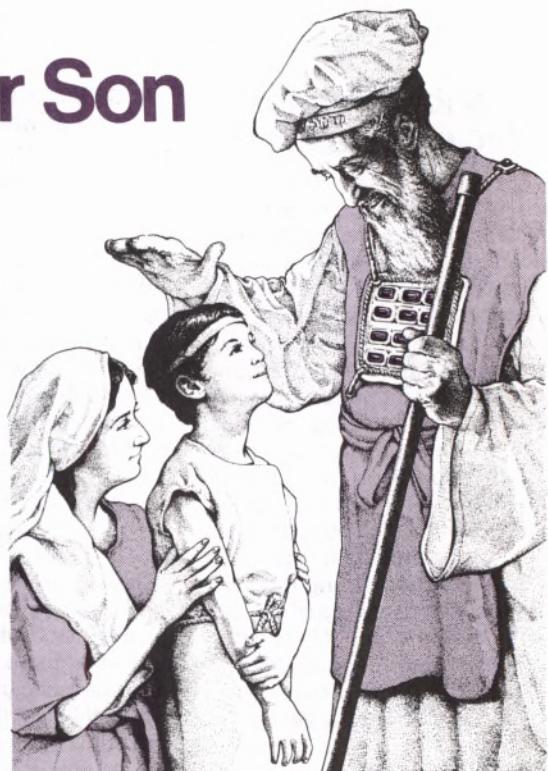
Duke University Medical Center, after a seven-year study, concluded that people who anger more quickly may die sooner than those who do not. Excessive hostility is linked to heart damage as much as smoking and high blood pressure are, their studies suggest. Therefore, since statistics show little evidence that spouting anger like an exploding Roman candle is healthy, would it not be better to heed what Proverbs 14: 29 says: "If you stay calm, you are wise, but if you have a hot temper, you only show how stupid you are"?—*Today's English Version*.

# God's Word Is Alive

## Imitate Hannah, Imitate Her Son

**I**F YOU are a young mother, your children probably live at home with you. But look at Hannah and her boy Samuel. Hannah is bringing him to Jehovah's tabernacle in Shiloh. This is where the priests live and serve God. Why is she bringing her son to live here? Does she not love her little boy?

Yes, Hannah loves Samuel. But when she was childless she prayed to Jehovah to have a son, and in her prayer she promised: "I will give him to Jehovah all the days of his life." (1 Samuel 1:10, 11) So that is what Hannah is doing. She is giving Samuel to serve at Jehovah's tabernacle for the rest of his life.



Hannah will miss Samuel very much. Yet she is willing to let him go because she loves Jehovah God and she knows that her son can be used here in Jehovah's service. If you are a parent, are you willing to let your children be used in Jehovah's service?

As Samuel grows he needs larger garments to wear. You can see Hannah bringing him the newest sleeveless coat that she has made for him. And when she visits each year you can be sure



# God's Word Is Alive

that she encourages Samuel to stay faithful in his service at Jehovah's tabernacle. (1 Samuel 2:18, 19) Is not Hannah's example of encouraging and helping her son to stay in the full-time service a fine one for parents today to imitate?

But Samuel's example is a fine one for all of us to imitate. He was willing to be used in God's service. Even though he may have been very homesick at times and wished he could be back home with his mother and father, he kept right on in his tabernacle service. Samuel also faced other tests of his faith, harder ones.

Look! the sons of the high priest Eli are taking those young women who serve at the entrance of the tabernacle and they are going to lie down with them and commit fornication! As Samuel was growing up such bad things were being done, but Samuel did what was right. (1 Samuel 2:22-26) Surely we are wise if we imitate his example and do not go along with the wrong course of those who may be around us.



# A Productive Olive Tree

"In this manner all Israel will be saved."—ROMANS 11:26.

**O**LIVE trees are known to grow for hundreds of years. Even when the aged, often hollow, trunk finally dies, new stems sometimes spring from the roots, producing one or more new olive trees. Be that as it may, there exists an olive tree that was planted nearly 4,000 years ago and that is still alive and producing fruit today!

<sup>2</sup> In his letter to the Romans, the apostle Paul uses the olive tree as an illustration of the wonderful manner in which Jehovah fulfills part of a promise He made to Abraham centuries before:

"I shall surely bless you and I shall surely multiply your seed like the stars of the heavens and like the grains of sand that are on the seashore; and your seed will take possession of the gate of his enemies. And by means of your seed all nations of the earth will certainly bless themselves due to the fact that you have listened to my voice."—Genesis 22:16-18.

## The Abrahamic Covenant

<sup>3</sup> Abraham had just proved that he was willing to sacrifice Isaac, his only son by his first wife, Sarah. (Hebrews 11:17-19;

1. What can be said about olive trees?
2. In connection with what promise does Paul speak of the olive tree, and what does it illustrate?
3. 4. (a) How had Abraham just proved his faith? (b) What was prefigured by this episode?



please read Genesis 22:1-18.) From earliest times Christians have seen in this episode a prefiguration of Jehovah's sacrificing his Son and then receiving him back by means of the resurrection. Yes, "God loved the world [of mankind] so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that *everyone exercising faith in him* might not be destroyed but have everlasting life."—John 3:16.

<sup>4</sup> So in this prophetic picture Abraham prefigured Jehovah God, and Isaac—a young man who could have resisted his 125-year-old father—pictured Jesus Christ, who willingly laid down his human life as the ransom sacrifice.—Hebrews 7:27; 10:12.

<sup>5</sup> Because of Abraham's great faith, Jehovah had earlier made with him a covenant that took effect in 1943 B.C.E. (Genesis 12:4, 7; Galatians 3:17) Some 50 years later, after having seen the tested quality of Abraham's faith, even in connection with Isaac, Jehovah repeated and enlarged upon this covenant promise, as recorded in Genesis chapter 22. This fully expressed Abrahamic covenant supplied details as to the outworking of God's

5. Regarding the promised seed of Genesis 3:15, what was revealed in God's covenant with Abraham?

wonderful purposes. It showed that the seed of deliverance promised in Eden would appear on earth as a descendant of Abraham, that it would be a multiple seed (the precise number not being revealed at that time), that it would vanquish its enemies and, finally, that by means of that seed all nations of the earth would get blessings for themselves.

—Genesis 3:15.

### **Identifying the Seed of Abraham**

<sup>6</sup> Every detail of that promise is of interest to persons who share Abraham's faith and who want to be blessed by Jehovah. (Romans 4:16) Who, primarily, was the seed of Abraham, by means of whom all nations of the earth would eventually bless themselves? The apostle Paul identifies this primary Seed as being Christ.—Galatians 3:16.

<sup>7</sup> Further, since Jehovah promised Abraham that he would multiply his seed, what persons would make up the secondary part of Abraham's seed? Who would be the "heirs with reference to a promise," "joint heirs" with the primary Seed, Christ? (Galatians 3:29; Romans 8:17) For some 2,000 years even the number of those who would make up this secondary 'seed of Abraham' remained unknown to humans, like "the stars of the heavens" or "the grains of sand that are on the seashore." Then, toward the end of the first century C.E., the apostle John heard "the number of those who were sealed, a hundred and forty-four thousand, sealed out of every tribe of the sons of Israel."—Genesis 22:17; Revelation 7:4.

<sup>8</sup> Still, from among whom would these 144,000 "sons of Israel" be chosen and

6, 7. (a) Scripturally, who is the primary Seed of Abraham? (b) How do we know that there was to be a secondary seed of Abraham? (c) When was the exact number revealed, and what was it?

8. What special opportunity did the circumcised Jews have?

sealed? If sufficient fleshly Israelites had followed the Law covenant as a "tutor leading to Christ [the primary Seed of Abraham]," they could have supplied the entire 144,000 members of the secondary seed of Abraham and thus become "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation," for the blessing of all nations of the earth. (Galatians 3:24; Exodus 19:5, 6) But did enough prove themselves to be true children of Abraham, "the father of all those having faith"?—Romans 4:11.

<sup>9</sup> Even before Jesus began his earthly ministry John the Baptizer warned Jewish religious leaders: "Do not presume to say to yourselves, 'As a father we have Abraham.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. Already the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree, then, that does not produce fine fruit is to be cut down and thrown into the fire." (Matthew 3:9, 10) By Paul's time the wonderfully wise manner in which Jehovah would raise up the full number of the secondary seed of Abraham had been revealed. (Romans 16:25-27) Paul explains this in detail in his letter to the Romans.

### **Paul's Letter to the Romans**

<sup>10</sup> The Jews were very conscious of being God's chosen people. Regarding the expression "chosen people," *The Concise Jewish Encyclopedia* states: "A designation expressing the belief that the Jews have a special relationship with God. The concept is based on the covenant with Abraham." Proud of being Abraham's offspring, the Jews thought they were the seed whereby all other nations would be blessed, and that they could justify themselves before God by

9. How did John the Baptizer show that the spiritual seed of Abraham would not necessarily be composed exclusively of Jews?

10. What did the fleshly Jews erroneously believe?

works carried out under the Law covenant.—John 8:33, 39; Romans 9:31, 32; 10:3, 4; 11:7.

<sup>11</sup> It was against this background that the apostle Paul wrote to the Christian congregation in Rome. Some of the Jews in Rome had become Christians, but by far the majority of them refused to put faith in Jesus as the Messiah. The Christian congregation in Rome was made up also of many non-Jewish Christians.

<sup>12</sup> For different reasons both Jews and Gentiles had feelings of superiority—the Jews because they came from the original Abrahamic stock—the Gentiles because they had been admitted into special Abrahamic-covenant privileges as a result of lack of faith on the part of the unbelieving Jews. Paul sought to convince Christians of Jewish and non-Jewish origin that both groups owed their righteous standing before God to their faith in Christ rather than to works. (Romans 3:21-27) In writing his letter, Paul's aim was Christian unity and productivity, to the glory of Jehovah for the wonderful manner in which he moves forward in fulfilling the promises of the Abrahamic covenant.

### A Symbolic Olive Tree

<sup>13</sup> The apostle Paul expresses grief that "not all who spring from Israel are really 'Israel,'" and states: "Neither because they are Abraham's seed are they all children [part of Abraham's spiritual seed]." Then he goes on to illustrate how Jehovah 'raises up children to Abraham.' (Romans 9:1, 2, 6, 7) To describe how the Abrahamic covenant produces the full number of members of the spiritual seed of promise, he uses the symbol of

11, 12. (a) At the time Paul wrote to the Romans, what was the situation in the congregation in Rome? (b) Why did Paul write to Jewish and Gentile Christians in Rome?

13. Why did Paul express grief, and what did he illustrate by means of a cultivated olive tree?

a specially cultivated olive tree.—Please read Romans 11:13-26.

<sup>14</sup> Paul mentions the root before speaking of the tree itself, and he says "the root is holy." (Romans 11:16) Jehovah God is the "Most Holy One." (Hosea 11:12) He is frequently called "the Holy One of Israel," particularly in the book of Isaiah. (Isaiah 10:20; 29:19; 60:9) The apostle Peter counsels anointed Christians, saying: "In accord with the Holy One who called you, do you also become holy yourselves in all your conduct." (1 Peter 1:15, 16) Jehovah God, the Greater Abraham, is the root of the symbolic olive tree.

<sup>15</sup> As the patriarch Abraham was the root of the nation of Israel, so Jehovah gives life to spiritual Israel. As the 12 tribes of Israel stemmed from Abraham through his son Isaac, through Jacob and the 12 patriarchs, the 12 symbolic tribes of spiritual Israel stem from Jehovah through the Greater Isaac, Christ Jesus. He, as the primary Seed of Abraham, is symbolized by the olive tree's stock, or trunk. (Galatians 3:16) Jehovah, the root, produces the full number of members of the secondary seed through his Son, Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:29) But how or in what manner does Jehovah produce the required number of symbolic branches?

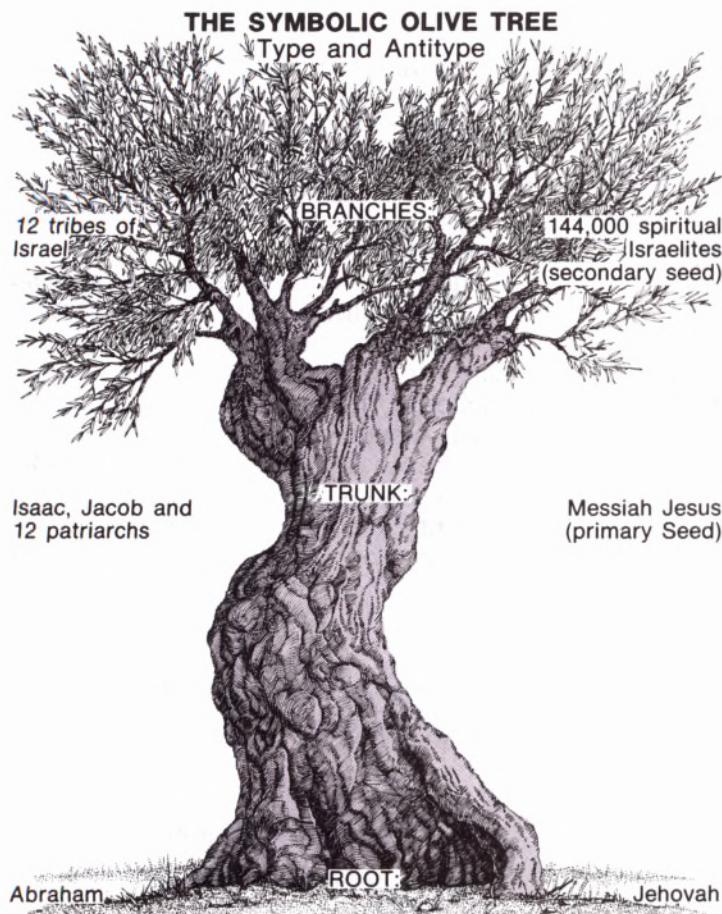
### Some Branches Lopped Off, Others Grafted In

<sup>16</sup> Paul goes on to explain this wonderful arrangement. He writes: "For I do not want you, brothers, to be ignorant of this sacred secret, in order for you not to be discreet in your own eyes: that a dulling of sensibilities has happened in

14. Who is the root of the symbolic olive tree, and what scriptures show this?

15. (a) In what ways is Jehovah the root of spiritual Israel? (b) Who is the trunk of the symbolic olive tree? Why?

16. What is the "sacred secret" mentioned by Paul in Romans 11:25 and Ephesians 3:3-6?



part to Israel until the full number of people of the nations has come in, and *in this manner* [Greek, *kai hou'tos*\*] all Israel will be saved." (Romans 11:25,

\* "καὶ οὕτως = and thus; not merely temporal." (*The Expositor's Greek Testament*) Compare *Today's English Version* ("and this is how"), *Authorized Version*, *Revised Standard Version* and *New International Version* ("and so"). Those who believe in the ultimate conversion and salvation of the entire Jewish nation make *kai hou'tos* mean "and then," timewise. (See Romans 11:26, *The Jerusalem Bible*.) Many of Christendom's Bible commentaries give this interpretation, even though it goes against Paul's whole line of reasoning and against the facts of history, past and present.—Compare Romans 2:28, 29; 9:1-6, 27; 10:1, 21; 11:5, 7-10, 14; Acts 13:45, 46.

26; compare Ephesians 3:3-6.) Jehovah would "raise up children to Abraham" by admitting into the secondary seed of Abraham the required number, or "full number of people of the nations [Gentiles]." By showing "the faith of Abraham" this limited number of non-Jews would prove to be spiritual Jews, part of spiritual Israel, "the Israel of God."—Romans 4:16; 2:28, 29; Galatians 6:15, 16.

<sup>17</sup> Paul illustrated the outworking of this "sacred secret" by an unusual horticultural procedure. The normal procedure is to graft shoots from a cultivated tree onto a wild stock, in order to make it productive, as Paul was well aware. He told the Gentile Christians that they had been "grafted contrary to nature into the garden olive tree." (Romans 11:24) He thus likened the non-Jews who would be admitted into the

Abrahamic covenant to scions, or shoots, from a wild olive that would be grafted onto the trunk of a "garden olive tree." They would replace the natural branches that had been lopped off, these representing the fleshly Jews who had been rejected because of their lack of faith. (Romans 11:17, 19, 20, 24) This unusual illustration served as a forceful exposure of the proud and haughty

17. (a) What unusual procedure did Paul describe? (b) Who were pictured by the lopped-off branches and by the grafted-in shoots from a wild olive tree? (c) What exposure did this illustration make of the proud and haughty Jews?

unbelieving Jews, who considered the Gentiles to be as lifeless as stones or as incapable of producing fine fruit as wild olive branches. It confirmed that Jehovah had "power to raise up children to Abraham," even as John the Baptist had forewarned.—Luke 3:8.

<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, non-Jewish Christians who had been "grafted contrary to nature" into the Abrahamic-covenant tree as part of the spiritual seed had no reason to feel superior to the Jews. Paul explained: "They also [Jews], if they do not remain in their lack of faith, will be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again." (Romans 11:23) A small remnant of natural Jews accepted the primary Seed and became permanent branches in the symbolic tree. (Romans 9:27; 11:5) But the majority of the Jews had been broken off the Abrahamic-covenant tree in 36 C.E., at the end of the 70th week of years foretold by Daniel. (Daniel 9:27)\* After that, however, some Jews had been grafted back "into their own olive tree" by putting faith in the Messiah, Jesus, the primary Seed of Abraham. (Romans 11:24; Acts 13:5, 42, 43; 14:1) By pointing these things out Paul promoted unity among the anointed Christians, for all had become 'sharers in the olive's root of fatness' through "God's kindness."—Romans 11:17, 22.

### A Fully Productive Olive Tree

<sup>19</sup> Throughout the centuries, and particularly in the favorable part of this time of the end, other Jews and non-Jews

\* See chapter 7 of the book "*Let Your Kingdom Come*," published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

18. (a) What occurred in 36 C.E., but were any lopped-off branches grafted back into the Abrahamic-covenant tree? (b) How did Paul promote unity within the Christian congregation?

19. How has the Abrahamic covenant gradually produced the spiritual seed, to the saving of "all Israel"?

were grafted into the symbolic olive tree. Thus the Abrahamic covenant produces the "full number" of Jews and Gentiles needed to complete the spiritual seed. "In this manner all Israel will be saved," not fleshly Israel, but those who are "really 'Israel,'" the 144,000 members of spiritual Israel.—Romans 11:12, 25, 26; 9:6-8; Revelation 7:4.

<sup>20</sup> The wonderful manner in which Jehovah has fulfilled this most important part of the Abrahamic covenant, by producing the trunk and the full number of branches of this symbolic tree should fill us with wonder. Like Paul, we exclaim: "O the depth of God's riches and wisdom and knowledge! How unsearchable his judgments are and past tracing out his ways are! For 'who has come to know Jehovah's mind, or who has become his counselor?' Or, 'Who has first given to

20, 21. (a) What reaction should the fulfillment of this most important part of the Abrahamic covenant produce in us? (b) What will be examined in the following article?

### Did you grasp these key points?

- What promises are included in the Abrahamic covenant?
- Who are the primary and secondary seeds?
- Identify the following parts of the symbolic olive tree:
  - the root
  - the trunk
  - the lopped-off natural branches
  - the natural branches left on the tree or grafted back
  - the grafted wild-olive branches
- What is the "sacred secret" mentioned by Paul in Romans 11:25?
- Why is the symbolic olive tree fully productive?

him, so that it must be repaid to him?" Because from him and by him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever. Amen."—Romans 11:33-36.

<sup>21</sup> But what practical lessons can be drawn from the illustration of the grafted

olive tree, both for the symbolic branches (anointed Christians) and others who may now bless themselves by means of the seed produced by the Abrahamic covenant tree? These aspects will be covered in the following article.

# United Fruit Bearers

"Keep bearing much fruit and prove yourselves my disciples."—JOHN 15:8.

**J**EHOVAH GOD made to grow out of the ground every tree desirable to one's sight and good for food." (Genesis 2:9) In Israel newly planted fruit trees were to be allowed to grow for three years without the owner's using the fruitage for any purpose whatsoever. Even any fruit produced during the fourth year had to "become a holy thing of festal exultation to Jehovah." The fifth year, the owner could use the fruit crop as he wished, after giving the firstfruits to Jehovah. (Leviticus 19:23-25; Deuteronomy 26:1-10; Nehemiah 10:35-37) In the event of war, fruit trees were especially protected under the Mosaic Law.—Deuteronomy 20:19, 20.

## Unproductive Trees Cut Down

In the previous article we have seen that many natural branches in the symbolic olive tree (Romans, chapter 11) were broken off and replaced by branches from a wild olive. In that illustration the lopped-off branches represent faith-

1. How does the Bible show that Jehovah places much value on fruit trees?

2, 3. What did Jesus state in the parable of the barren fig tree?

less Jews who refused to recognize the olive trunk or primary Seed, the Messiah, Jesus. In a different illustration Jesus likened the Jewish nation to an entire tree—not an olive but a fig tree.

<sup>3</sup> In the fall of 32 C.E. Jesus stated: "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came looking for fruit on it, but found none. Then he said to the vinedresser, 'Here it is three years that I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, but have found none. Cut it down! Why really should it keep the ground useless?' In reply he said to him, 'Master, let it alone also this year, until I dig around it and put on manure; and if then it produces fruit in the future, well and good; but if not, you shall cut it down.'"—Luke 13:6-9.

<sup>4</sup> At the time Jesus spoke of this fig tree he, as the "vinedresser," had spent three years trying to cultivate faith among the Jews. Yet in spite of their many advantages under the Abrahamic and Law covenants, only a small remnant of the Jewish nation had accepted the Messiah. (Romans 9:4, 5, 27) During the fourth year of his ministry Jesus intensified his efforts among the Jews, symbolically digging and putting manure around the

4. How had Jesus proved himself to be a faithful "vinedresser"?

Jewish "fig tree" by zealously preaching and teaching in Judea, Perea and finally in and around Jerusalem.—Luke, chapters 10 to 19.

<sup>5</sup> However, halfway through that fourth year, a few days before his death, Jesus wept over Jerusalem and told the capital city of the Jewish nation that its house had been abandoned. (Matthew 23:37-39) Jehovah, the owner of the Jewish "fig tree," had inspected it once again in this fourth season of intensive care. Finding it fruitless as a nation, he ordered it to be cut down in line with the principle Jesus stated at Matthew 7:19. Thus the Kingdom of God was taken from the Jewish nation and given to a nation, spiritual Israel, producing its fruits. (Matthew 21:43) This transfer occurred at Pentecost of that same year, 33 C.E. Thirty-seven years later, in 70 C.E., the cut-down "fig tree" was "thrown into

5. How and why was the Jewish "fig tree" cut down, and when was it "thrown into the fire"?

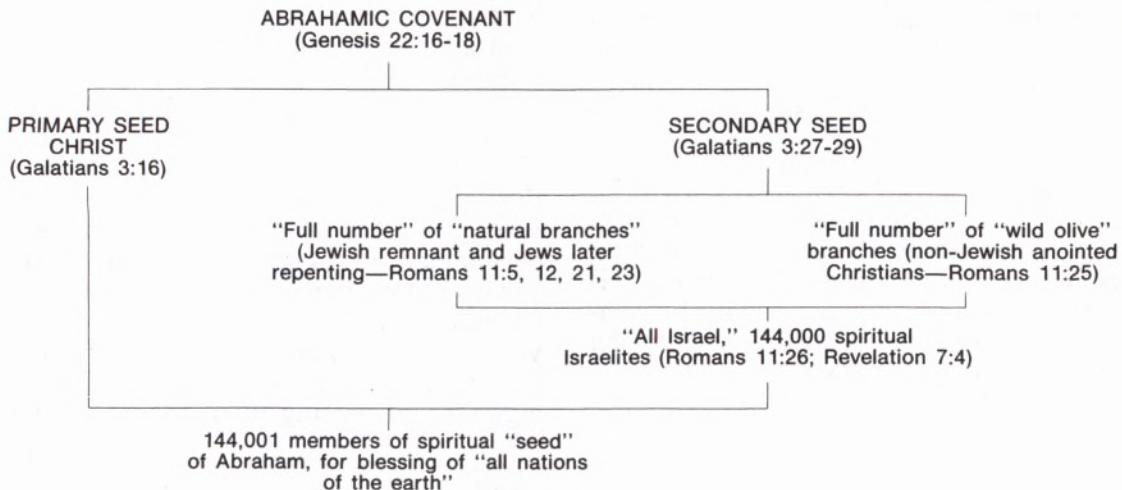
the fire" when Jerusalem and the Jewish nation were destroyed.—Matthew 3:9, 10; Luke 19:41-44.

### **"Provided You Remain in His Kindness"**

<sup>6</sup> Just as the parable of the barren fig tree shows there are limits to Jehovah's patience, Paul's illustration of the olive tree, while highlighting Jehovah's kindness, also shows his severity. In his kindness Jehovah had sent John the Baptizer to the Jewish "natural branches" to tell them to "produce fruit that benefits repentance" and to believe in Jesus. (Matthew 3:8; Acts 19:4) Because of their lack of faith they were "broken off." This decrease in the number of Jewish "natural branches" meant "riches to people of the nations," inasmuch as Gentile 'wild olive branches' were grafted onto the Abrahamic-covenant tree to become

6. How do the illustrations of the barren fig tree and the grafted olive tree highlight God's kindness and severity?

### **Paul's illustration of the olive tree shows how the Abrahamic covenant produces the complete spiritual "seed"**



part of the spiritual seed of Abraham.—Romans 11:12, 17, 20, 21.

<sup>7</sup> But Paul adds a warning. Addressing himself to non-Jewish anointed Christians, he says: “For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you. See, therefore, God’s kindness and severity. Toward those [Jews] who fell there is severity, but toward you [Gentiles] there is God’s kindness, *provided you remain in his kindness*; otherwise, you also will be lopped off.” (Romans 11:21, 22) To remain in Jehovah’s kindness, Gentile Christians grafted into the Abrahamic-covenant tree had to show strong faith in the primary Seed of Abraham. They were “standing by faith,” which faith they had to prove by Christian fruitage, ‘presenting their bodies a sacrifice living, holy, acceptable to God, a sacred service.’—Romans 11:20; 12:1.

<sup>8</sup> Paul drew another practical lesson from the wonderful manner in which Jehovah enables the Abrahamic-covenant tree to produce the full number of 144,000 Jewish and Gentile “branches.” He goes on to say to both kinds of “branches”: “I tell everyone there among you not to think more of himself than it is necessary to think; but to think so as to have a sound mind, each one as God has distributed to him a measure of faith. For just as we have in one body many members, but the members do not all have the same function, so we, although many, are one body in union with Christ.” (Romans 12:3-5) Both Jewish and non-Jewish Christians had been admitted into the spiritual seed of Abraham by “God’s kindness.” Paul reminded them: “It is not you that bear the root [Jehovah], but the root bears you.” (Romans 11:18) To avoid being “lopped

7. What warning did Paul add?

8. What other practical lesson did Paul draw from his illustration of the olive tree?

off” they would have to remain in God’s kindness by preserving their unity as “one body in union with Christ.”—Romans 11:22.

<sup>9</sup> Does this warning to anointed Christians contain a lesson for Christians today who are not spiritual Israelites? It most certainly does. Although they are not a part of the spiritual seed produced by the Abrahamic covenant and therefore are “not of this fold,” these “other sheep” are definitely a part of the “nations of the earth” who can bless themselves by means of the seed. (John 10:16a; Genesis 22:18) It follows that they must have faith like Abraham, whose life prospects also are earthly, and “walk orderly in the footsteps of that faith.” (Romans 4:11, 12, 16) They must show their subjection to the Fine Shepherd, Christ, the primary Seed of Abraham. They must also cooperate with the remnant of the secondary seed of Abraham, becoming with them “one flock” under “one shepherd.” (John 10:14, 16b) If anointed Christians who do not remain in God’s kindness risk being “lopped off” the Abrahamic-covenant tree, should not the “other sheep” also be very careful to do nothing that might cause them to lose Jehovah’s goodwill?—Romans 11:22.

### **“If They Do Not Remain” Faithless**

<sup>10</sup> The illustration of the olive tree contains yet another general lesson that can apply to anointed Christians and to the “other sheep.” We find it in Romans 11:23, which reads: “They also [faithless Jews], if they do not remain in their lack of faith, will be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again.” Here we see another aspect of God’s kindness. When Paul wrote this letter (about 56 C.E.),

9. This contains what lesson for the “other sheep,” so what must they be careful to do?

10. What could occur if a Jew did not remain in his lack of faith, and what would this mean for him?

## These Have 'Returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of Their Souls'—1 Peter 2:25

A woman in Normandy, France, writes: "After ten years of inactivity and several unfruitful efforts to come back to the congregation [of Jehovah's Witnesses], I still hesitated to make a move. In view of my unscriptural conduct since leaving the congregation, I feared Jehovah's discipline and the reproachful looks of the elders and all the congregation. While on vacation with my parents-in-law I picked up a copy of *The Watchtower* and read an article that related the case of an inactive brother whose situation had been just like mine. Reading how kind Jehovah had been to him, how the elders had given him loving help, and how the members of the congregation had welcomed him back, I found the strength to return to Jehovah's organization."

Suzanne, a Witness in a congregation in northeastern France, writes: "I sincerely thank Jehovah, his Son Jesus Christ and 'the faithful and discreet slave' for the help given to inactive ones. I was inactive myself when the elders visited me and offered to arrange a Bible study for me. I accepted their offer and now I am very happy because I am attending the meetings again and I regularly share in the preaching

work. Now I am able to show sisterly love to others who are in need of encouragement."

Yolande, another French Witness, had not been to a meeting for years and stopped praying because she felt guilty at neglecting Jehovah's table. Helped back into fruitful Christian activity, she writes: "I express my deep gratitude to Jehovah for having helped me and given me another chance. With my whole heart I encourage all those who have slackened off for some reason to return to Jehovah."



With loving encouragement, many inactive ones have again become 'fruit bearers'

the Jewish nation as such had long since been cut down as an unfruitful "fig tree." Or, to come back to the olive-tree illustration, most of the "natural branches" had been "lopped off" because of their lack of faith in Jesus, the Messiah. Yet if any individual Jew did not remain in his lack of faith, Jehovah God was willing to graft him back into the symbolic olive tree and make him a member of the spiritual seed of Abraham. For such a repentant Jew, Jehovah's receiving him back would mean "life from the dead." —Romans 11:14, 15.

<sup>11</sup> Today, some of the "other sheep" have become complacent and, through

11. What has happened to some of the "other sheep," but what should they do?

lack of faith, have stopped serving Jehovah. They have cut themselves off from active association with his people. Some of them have got into sore straits, and the warnings contained in God's Word have 'found them out.' Should they feel irretrievably lost? God's Word states: "If you do look for Jehovah your God from there [outside the "land" of God's people], you will also certainly find him, because you will inquire for him with all your heart and with all your soul. When you are in sore straits and all these words [of warning] have found you out at the close of the days, then you will have to return to Jehovah your God and to listen to his voice. For Jehovah your God is a merciful God."—Deuteronomy 4:29-31.

<sup>12</sup> As a united group of fruit-bearing branches within the Abrahamic-covenant tree, "the faithful and discreet slave," the remaining ones of Christ's anointed brothers on earth, is very conscious of the vital need for some of the "other sheep" to awaken from complacency and to become once again fruit-bearing Christians. (Matthew 24:45-47) To that end, the "slave" arranges for the publishing of such articles as "'Return to the Shepherd of Your Souls,'" appearing in *The Watchtower* of May 1, 1982. Beginning in January 1982, *Our Kingdom Ministry* published a series of articles on that same theme. Has this firm lead from the Master's "slave" produced fruitful results? Have some returned to Jehovah their God? Many have. Note the typical examples on page 22.

### "Keep Bearing Much Fruit"

<sup>13</sup> Yes, any anointed Christians or their companions of the "other sheep" who have become complacent and unproductive should heed the warning, respond to Jehovah's kindness and accept help so as to become fruitful Christians once again. In an illustration that differs in several respects from those of the olive tree and of the barren fig tree, Jesus likened himself to a vinestock, or vine stem, and his anointed disciples to the branches of a vine. He stated: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the cultivator. Every branch in me not bearing fruit he takes away, and every one bearing fruit he cleans, that it may bear more fruit. . . . My Father is glorified in this, that you keep bearing much fruit and prove yourselves my disciples."—John 15:1-8.

12. (a) How has the 'faithful slave' shown concern for such strayed "other sheep"? (b) What examples can you relate to show that some have gratefully returned to the flock?

13. What should any who have become complacent now do, as shown by what words of Jesus?

<sup>14</sup> While the "other sheep" are not branches of the Abrahamic-covenant "olive tree" or of "the true vine," Christ Jesus, they must prove themselves to be Christ's disciples. Like all the anointed Christian "branches," they must "keep bearing much fruit." This they do by producing Christlike qualities of the new personality, including "the fruitage of the spirit." (Galatians 5:22, 23; Matthew 28:19, 20; Colossians 3:5-14) But to be really fruitful they give active expression to such qualities by sharing in the work of preaching "this good news." (Matthew 24:14) Just as the anointed "branches" of the "true vine" must remain in union with Christ, the "other sheep" must remain in close union with "the faithful and discreet slave," Christ's anointed "brothers." Only thus can they hope to 'inherit the Kingdom prepared for them from the founding of the world.'—Matthew 25:31-40.

### "Nations of the Earth" Already Blessing Themselves

<sup>15</sup> As the Abrahamic-covenant olive tree, with its holy "root of fatness" (Jehovah) and its solid trunk (Christ), finishes producing the full number of Jewish and Gentile "branches," rich blessings are already ensuing to "people of the nations" who are not spiritual Israelites. Paul foresaw this and wrote: "Now if their [the natural Jews'] false step means riches to the world, and their decrease means riches to people of the nations, how much more will the full number of them [Jewish anointed Christians] mean it!"—Romans 11:12.

14. (a) In what two ways must all Christians "keep bearing much fruit"? (b) What other requirement for anointed Christians is shown in the illustration of the "true vine"?

15. As the Abrahamic covenant finishes producing the promised "seed," what added meaning does Romans 11:12 take on?

<sup>16</sup> We have already seen that the "false step" of the Jewish nation as a whole meant great spiritual riches to Gentiles. But these wild olive branches' becoming members of the spiritual seed of Abraham did not exclude from the symbolic olive tree the natural branches—faithful Jewish Christians—who were either left on the tree or 'grafted in again' after 36 C.E. So the 144,000 branches include a "full number" of Jews and a "full number" of non-Jews. (Romans 11:12, 25) The facts indicate that this grafting in went on until the mid-1930's. Today, at this late date, there is good reason to believe that the "full number" of both Jewish and Gentile branches has been grafted in. Any branches grafted in since 1935 would reasonably be replacements for Jewish or non-Jewish branches lopped off through unfruitfulness.

<sup>17</sup> Now, Paul says that this completing of the membership of the seed of Abraham "means riches to people of the nations." How much more is this so because such spiritual riches and blessings affect not just a few tens of thousands of non-Jewish anointed Christians (as in the fulfillment of the first part of Romans 11:12) but literally *millions* of "people of the nations" who are not of the Abrahamic-covenant fold.

<sup>18</sup> This brings us back to the Abrahamic covenant. The primary Seed, Christ Jesus, is now enthroned in the heavens. He has gathered the members of the secondary seed into the Abrahamic-covenant fold. He is about to "take possession of the gate of his enemies," by

16. (a) How did the "false step" of the Jews mean "riches to people of the nations"? (b) At what stage is the grafting work?

17. In what way does the completing of the membership of the seed mean further riches for "people of the nations"?

18. What can be said about the promises of the Abrahamic covenant, so what part of it must have begun to be fulfilled?

the destruction of the world empire of false religion, Babylon the Great, and of the rest of Satan's visible organization. (Genesis 22:17, 18) It is not surprising, therefore, that the concluding part of the Abrahamic promise is already beginning to be fulfilled: "By means of your seed all nations of the earth will certainly bless themselves."

<sup>19</sup> Yes, "a great crowd . . . out of all nations," including not a few natural Jews, are already blessing themselves. With full faith in the Greater Abraham, Jehovah God, they have joined themselves to the remnant of spiritual Israel, and are "rendering him sacred service day and night in his temple," with everlasting life on earth in view. (Revelation 7:4, 9-17) May they continue to bring blessings upon themselves by means of the seed, on into the new system of things.

19. (a) How are people from "all nations of the earth" beginning to bless themselves? (b) What is their hope?

### Do you understand?

- What did the barren fig tree picture, when was it cut down, and when burned?
- How only could Jewish and Gentile Christians avoid being lopped off the "olive tree," and what lesson can we draw from this?
- Why can the grafting back of repentant Jews be a source of comfort to any who have gone astray?
- In what ways must all Christians keep on bearing fruit?
- How are many "people of the nations" already blessing themselves?

# Our Fight to Counteract Permissiveness

"We have a wrestling . . . against the wicked spirit forces in the heavenly places. On this account take up the complete suit of armor from God, that you may be able to resist in the wicked day and . . . to stand firm."—EPHESIANS 6:12, 13.

**T**HREE is something in the air of this wicked world. Can you detect it? Unquestionably, most of us agree that whatever it is that permeates this world's thinking and conduct gives evidence of being unhealthy and deadly. We can see the results in a morally and spiritually sick society.

<sup>2</sup> An obvious symptom of this sickness is permissiveness, which easily leads to lawlessness. It is not just the ordinary principles of acceptable human behavior that many want to get away from; rather, they seek to cast off virtually all restraints. They clamor for their right to do whatever they please, whenever they please, and to be free from controlling authority, whether this be parents, law-enforcement agencies or society's moral restrictions. Who or what is behind this spirit of disobedience? Why must Christians put up a determined fight to counteract such permissiveness?

<sup>3</sup> The fact that disobedience had its start with humans in the garden of Eden

1. What is the general feeling of many about today's world?
2. What is one obvious symptom of mankind's sickness?
3. (a) How can we identify the one chiefly responsible for the permissiveness and lawlessness rampant in the earth? (b) How does a person show that he originates with the Devil?

is well known. But who first introduced permissiveness and laid the trap for Adam and Eve to become wayward? Jesus identified that one when he told the hypocritical Pharisees that they 'wished to do the desires of their father, the Devil,' whom Jesus later identified as "the ruler of the world." (John 8:44; 14:30) The Devil, who "has been sinning from the beginning," has sought control of humankind for selfish ends. Those making a practice of lawlessness originate with him.—1 John 3:8.

<sup>4</sup> The Scriptures make it plain that Satanic influence is widespread, like the air that surrounds our planet. The apostle Paul spoke of the Devil as "the ruler of the authority of the air, the spirit that now operates in the sons of disobedience." (Ephesians 2:2) Individuals who allow themselves to become blinded by the world's thinking are more susceptible to his influence. The aim of the Devil and his demon host is, by every means at their disposal, to mislead mankind so as to do away with what is good and right. Hence, they generate a spirit of total permissiveness. Why? Because people who adopt that attitude more easily

4. (a) How extensive is Satan's influence? (b) What is the relationship between permissiveness and corruption?

yield to and become hardened by the deceptive power of sin. (Hebrews 3:13) By permissively sowing to the flesh, the "sons of disobedience" reap corruption.—Galatians 6:7, 8.

### Christians Have a Fight

<sup>5</sup> Wicked spirit forces are especially intent on subverting and trapping Jehovah's Witnesses, who are striving to keep God's commands. Paul warns that we have a fight, "not against blood and flesh, but against . . . the wicked spirit forces in the heavenly places." (Ephesians 6:12) When having to contend with frontal attacks of ridicule, persecution and imprisonment, our spiritual fight is like *open* warfare. Whereas such direct attacks may cause us to stiffen our resistance, a sly, *indirect* approach may catch us off guard by appealing to the weaknesses of our flesh. So we need always to be on the alert because quite often our fight must counteract subtle or unexpected approaches designed both to undermine gradually our efforts to follow godly principles and to destroy our relationship with Jehovah.

<sup>6</sup> To illustrate, perhaps you have had to take a stand on the issue of blood. Maybe unbelieving relatives or doctors pressured you to compromise. In the fight to maintain integrity you were willing to endure great stress. Why? Because the issue was clearly in focus. You were determined not to violate God's command. (Acts 15:28, 29) Think, too, of Christian brothers who kept separate from the world by refusing to buy political party cards even though their refusal meant suffering. (John 17:16; 1 Peter 3:14; 4:12-14) Others have endured imprisonment because of their neutral position amid worldly controversies. (Isaiah 2:4)

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5-7. (a) Satan uses what tactics against mankind? (b) What is the more difficult tactic to deal with? Illustrate.

Refusal to stop preaching the good news has brought other forms of persecution upon some.—Acts 5:28, 29, 40.

<sup>7</sup> Yes, time and again Jehovah's people have taken a strong stand on these issues, giving evidence of their integrity and loyalty to Bible principles. But what happens sometimes when we are faced with tests that involve the *gradual erosion* of adherence to Christian standards? Some falter due to permissiveness.

<sup>8</sup> We need to be on guard against permitting innocent-appearing situations to produce anxiety over things in this system, for that could choke the word that is in our heart or lead us into wrong-doing. (Matthew 13:22) This can result in our loss of divine favor and life just as much as letting persecution and other frontal attacks wear us down or defeat us. We should not be deceived into thinking that bad associations, wrong entertainment, overindulgence in alcoholic beverages and the like cannot ensnare us and destroy our spirituality. These things have taken their toll.

### Sad Consequences of Permissiveness

<sup>9</sup> Ancient Israel as a nation suffered greatly when the permissive attitudes of some led to serious difficulties. Recall how Balaam and Balak "put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication." (Revelation 2:14) How did this get started? By some accepting an invitation from the Baal worshipers to eat and drink, followed by merrymaking. Showing dissatisfaction with Jehovah's provisions by choosing to associate with these outsiders led the Israelite men to becoming sexually aroused. Then what? They committed fornication with Mo-

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8. In what areas should we not allow ourselves to be deceived?
  9. How did permissive behavior produce problems for some Israelites?



A Christian warrior must guard against direct attacks as well as subtle or unexpected dangers

abit and Midianite women and bowed down to their gods. This brought Jehovah's wrath upon those Israelites. In expression of his judgment, 24,000 died. (Numbers 25:1-9) What a tragic price to pay for permissiveness!

<sup>10</sup> There are also examples of individuals whose permissiveness brought them into trouble. Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, went to visit the Canaanite girls in the land. What resulted from Dinah's laxness as to her associations? She was

10. (a) How did Dinah's permissive behavior lead to much sadness? (b) To what did Solomon's permissive course gradually lead?

violated by one of the sons of Hamor. Such disgraceful folly angered Jacob's sons, provoking Simeon and Levi to kill every male in Shechem, while Jacob's other sons joined in the attack and plundered the city, bringing grief to Jacob. (Genesis 34:1, 2, 7, 25-31) Even Solomon, one of the wisest men, permissively took to himself wives who worshiped foreign gods. These "gradually inclined his heart" so that in his later years he followed other gods, doing what was bad in Jehovah's eyes.—1 Kings 11:1-6; Deuteronomy 17:17.

<sup>11</sup> What point do you get from these Bible examples? It was not an immediate frontal attack by the Devil that brought about the downfall of some true worshipers. But with their permissive thinking the Devil was able gradually to turn some from the path of uprightness.

### Tactics Used Today

<sup>12</sup> Satan, "the ruler of the authority of the air," uses similar tactics today. Undermine first, then turn the unwary from the path of righteousness. Christians, therefore, need to be on guard against the ideas and inclinations of this wicked world. Otherwise, how can they remain blameless in the midst of "a crooked and twisted generation"?—Philippians 2:15; 2 Timothy 3:13.

<sup>13</sup> Proverbs 13:20 tells us that "he that is having dealings with the stupid ones will fare badly." How true! Seeds of permissiveness often are sown and nurtured as a result of circulating among and having association with unwholesome companions, whether inside or outside the Christian congregation. (2 Thessalonians 3:14; Exodus 23:2a) If our associates are inclined toward the worldly, pleasure-

11. What should we bear in mind about permissiveness?

12, 13. In what ways must a Christian be on guard against Satan's tactics?

seeking point of view, problems are sure to ensue. This is especially so if we are enticed to "move around in the tents of wickedness."—Psalm 84:10.

<sup>14</sup> The world, in general, likes what it has, including the enjoyment of boundless pleasure. (2 Timothy 3:4) The hedonistic view appeals to many people. This is the philosophy that pleasure is the sole or chief good in life and that moral duty is fulfilled in the gratification of pleasure-seeking instincts. (1 Corinthians 15:32) This way of thinking can undermine a Christian's way of life.

<sup>15</sup> If you are going to school, how do you view other students who show no interest in serving Jehovah God? They may seem to be nice-looking individuals. Yet, many of them smoke and illegally drink alcoholic beverages. They see nothing wrong with taking mind-altering drugs. How will association with such persons affect you? How much pressure can you take from them before they prevail upon or coerce you into indulging in their vices? If you refuse, suppose they ridicule you and resort to name-

14. What is the popular view as to the enjoyment of pleasure?

15. (a) How might we be deceived by outward appearances? (b) What thought-provoking questions should young people ask about associations?

calling? Is your faith so strong that you can continue to associate with such ones and not be affected? (1 Corinthians 10:12) Will you give in to temptation and indulge as an "experiment" just to see what it is like? (Proverbs 1:10) Do you think you can remain strong, firm, determined and loyal to Jehovah and his Word by continuing such association? If you are so inclined, beware! Give heed to the Bible's advice to "flee from the desires incidental to youth," yes, "flee from fornication." (2 Timothy 2:22; 1 Corinthians 6:18) To counteract permissiveness, "fight the fine fight of the faith" by resisting any urge or inclination toward bad association.—1 Timothy 6:12; 1 Corinthians 15:33.

<sup>16</sup> At times some have regrettably become involved with fellow employees. At many places of employment it is customary to hold office parties or celebrate birthdays and holidays. Usually on such occasions alcoholic drinks are served. There may be music and dancing. If a Christian does not fight to counteract permissiveness in such areas, an erosion process can get a start. Socializing with worldly persons on the job has led some Christians into dating, committing fornication and other wrongdoing.

### Wrong Entertainment

<sup>17</sup> Permissive attitudes can develop also toward immoral television programs. Television has become the baby-sitter for many young ones, but often what is watched is not properly monitored by parents, this resulting in many problems. There are adults who have allowed their attention to be captured by soap operas or TV serials. And commercial interests

16. A Christian may face what pitfalls involving association with fellow employees?

17. How can permissiveness as to television programs affect one's outlook and desires?

## In Our Next Issue

■ Why Be Grateful to the Creator?

■ 'Select Capable, God-Fearing Men'

■ Catholic Scholarship—Is It Loyal to God's Word?

have made it convenient to have cable television or video cassettes. These may have valid uses, yet many people admittedly obtain them so they can see in their own homes much of the debased entertainment this immoral generation craves. Yes, corruption of the mind and heart can take place in the living room or the den if such material is available there. Though such "entertainment" has become the daily diet of a large segment of the public, it behooves Christians to remember Paul's exhortation to think on 'whatever things are righteous, chaste and praiseworthy.'—Philippians 4:8.

### Examining Ourselves

<sup>18</sup> As dedicated Christians, what kind of example are we setting for our families and the congregation? Are we practicing what is good and clean in a spiritual and moral sense? (2 Corinthians 7:1) The high standard for us is: "Let fornication and uncleanness of every sort or greediness not even be mentioned among you, just as it befits holy people; neither shameful conduct nor foolish talking nor obscene jesting, things which are not becoming, but rather the giving of thanks."—Ephesians 5:3, 4.

<sup>19</sup> At social gatherings it is important for there to be proper oversight. Otherwise, an air of permissiveness may seep in to spoil the occasion. If alcoholic drinks are served, is moderation observed? If music is played, is it the kind that mature Christians do not find objectionable? The Scriptural counsel is to "do all things for God's glory." (1 Corinthians 10:31-33) This strengthens our hand in the fight to counteract permissiveness.

18. What good advice did Paul give at Ephesians 5:3, 4?

19. Why is mature oversight important at social gatherings?

<sup>20</sup> This is no time to be lulled into complacency. (Romans 13:11-14) The erosion of adherence to Bible principles is gradual. Satan uses sly tactics to destroy our faith. He can even appear as an angel of light. (2 Corinthians 11:14) Our protection calls for "the complete suit of armor from God" so as to stand firm against the Devil's crafty acts. Our fight is "against the world rulers of this darkness, against the wicked spirit forces in the heavenly places." So we need all the spiritual armor and protection that Jehovah provides, including "the sword of the spirit, that is, God's word," so as to resist in this wicked day.—Ephesians 6:11-13, 17.

<sup>21</sup> We know that Jehovah will soon clear the air of permissive evil in all its forms. No longer will its foul influence exist. Those surviving the end of this wicked system will see the dawn of a beautiful New Order of righteousness upon this earth under God's Kingdom by Christ Jesus. Be determined to be among those who will enjoy that privilege. Fight to counteract this world's permissiveness by getting better acquainted with and applying the principles of God's Word.—Psalm 15:1, 2; 19:7-11.

20. What appearance can Satan make to deceive the unwary, but what protection has Jehovah provided?

21. Those who resist the world's permissiveness can look forward to enjoying what?

### Can You Recall?

- In what two ways may Satan's forces attack you?
- What Bible examples show the danger of permissiveness?
- How may students be tested as to permissive attitudes?
- Why must we now especially be on guard as to our attitude?

# Do You Remember?

Have you given thought to recent issues of *The Watchtower*? You may recall the following:

- What is implied by the expression "moderate in habits" as used at 1 Timothy 3:2?

While it can apply to many aspects of life, the Greek word translated "moderate in habits" (*ne·pha·li·on*) is defined as meaning "sober, temperate; abstaining from wine, either entirely or at least from its immoderate use."—*Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*.—4/15, page 25.

- Why does Deuteronomy 14: 21 say that the "alien resident" could be sold unbled meat while Leviticus 17:10 forbids the "alien resident" to eat blood?

The explanation involves the religious standing of the alien involved. It appears that the sort of person meant in Deuteronomy 14: 21 was not a full proselyte, but a person who was not trying to keep all of God's laws and who might have his own uses for a carcass considered unclean by Israelites and proselytes. But the "alien resident" mentioned in Leviticus 17: 15 was a proselyte alien in the full sense of the word and thus obliged to keep God's law about blood.—4/15, pages 30, 31.

- In what way did Jesus 'feel pity' for the crowds coming to him as described at Matthew 14:14?

According to one Bible scholar the Greek word here translated "felt pity" "is formed from the word *splagchna*, which means *the bowels*." Jesus could not bear to see the suffering of others without easing the pain.—5/1, pages 5, 6.

- How only can you understand the book of Revelation?

To grasp the meaning of Revelation

you need knowledge of the Bible as a whole as well as of God's dealings with his people over the years.—5/1, page 29.

- How can we follow Christ's admonition given to the congregation of Laodicea that they should be "cold or else hot"? (Revelation 3:15, 16).

We can do so by never allowing ourselves to become "lukewarm," that is, apathetic, unfeeling or indifferent in our ministry. Instead, we must imitate Jesus' example of putting Kingdom interests first. By reflecting his manner and personality, we can become stimulatingly hot to those who love God and refreshingly cold, soothing, to those wearied by sin and the burdens of life. (Matthew 11:28, 29; John 2: 17)—5/15, pages 12-14.

- What is God's view of homosexuality?

God's law required that homosexuals in ancient Israel be "put to death without fail." (Leviticus 20: 13) His law for Christians shows that his view on the matter has not changed. "Homosexual perverts" are classed with others who "will not possess God's Kingdom." But homosexuals can repent and gain God's approval. (1 Corinthians 6: 9, 10, *Today's English Version*) —6/1, page 25.

- What must we do if we want God to hear our prayers?

The apostle John said: "Whatever we ask we receive from him, because we are observing his commandments and are doing the things that are pleasing in his eyes." (1 John 3:22) So we must do God's will and obey his laws. We have to work at what we pray for and show God by our actions that we really mean what we say.—6/15, pages 8, 9.

- Why is the book of Genesis so valuable to Christians?

It gives Christians a basis for faith, hope and courage. It inspires faith in Jehovah and hope in the promised "seed" of blessing. (Genesis 3:15; 22:18) It also helps Christians to face the future with courage as did early witnesses of Jehovah.—6/15, page 25.

- Does God care for mentally ill persons?

The Bible provides spiritual guidance and infuses hope for all depressed persons. (Romans 15:4, 13) It lays the primary obligation to care for the mentally ill upon the closest family members. (1 Timothy 5:4, 8) The Christian congregation, with the elders taking the lead in offering help, is yet another way Jehovah shows his care for those mentally ill. (1 Thessalonians 5:14)—7/1, pages 28-31.

- What makes this generation so different from all others?

No generation prior to 1914 has experienced two world wars or has been faced with self-destruction by nuclear weapons. No previous generation has ruined the earth by such widespread contamination and pollution as exist today. All of this has resulted in an unparalleled feeling of fear and insecurity. And no other generation has seen such a widespread preaching of the good news of God's Kingdom. (Matthew 24:14)—7/15, page 7.

- Can a true Christian be harmed by spiritistic practices of others?

No, for God can defeat anyone who tries to use witchcraft or magic on those who remain faithful to him. A Christian, though, must trust Jehovah completely and keep on the spiritual armor he provides. (Psalm 34:7; Ephesians 6:10-12) —7/15, pages 8, 9.

# Questions From Readers

## ■ Childbirth is a natural process, so would it be wrong for a Christian to practice as a midwife, despite not meeting the state's license or certification requirements?

True, childbirth is a natural process, a marvel for which our Life-Giver Jehovah can be credited. (Genesis 1:27, 28; 49:25) And from early times experienced midwives have assisted many deliveries. (Exodus 1:15-20) WHO (World Health Organization) reports that traditional birth attendants or midwives help with 60-80 percent of deliveries in Third World countries. (*Medical Tribune*, January 26, 1983) Even in some advanced lands there is growing acceptance of routine deliveries being handled at birthing centers or at home with trained nurse-midwives providing primary care.

Bible history shows, however, that complications at birth can occur, even bringing death to the mother, the child or both. (Genesis 3:16; 35:16-19) WHO reports that "some 500,000 women die annually from complications of childbearing." Thus many health authorities have encouraged deliveries in hospitals or where a doctor is present. They also have offered programs for training midwives and then certifying or licensing those who qualify.

Of course, there are conflicting preferences, claims and methods: Is home birth to be preferred where no complications are foreseen; which delivery position is easiest on the mother; will a baby do better if born in a soothing environment, even under water; should anesthesia normally be used; when

should the umbilical cord be cut?

The Christian congregation takes no official position on such matters, for they are personal. Nor does it urge women to use an obstetrician rather than a nurse-midwife, or vice versa. That, too, is for personal decision. But husband and wife should be interested in what they feel is best for the mother and the child, desiring that both of them live to serve Jehovah in good health.

The WHO report said that "training [of midwives] stresses methods of safe delivery and cleanliness." Programs for registering, certifying or licensing persons to assist with childbirth are evidently

designed to see that mother and child have available qualified care, rather than relying on unqualified practitioners. The law of the land may even rule that only persons who are licensed or certified may practice assisting deliveries. A person who disregarded known laws on this matter could be in danger of prosecution as a lawbreaker and could incur bloodguilt if a death resulted through carelessness or incompetence.—Romans 13:1-4.

When it comes to seeking or providing health care, whether regarding childbirth or other forms of treatment, Christians should bear in mind Jesus' statement: "Pay back, therefore, Caesar's things to Caesar, but God's things to God." —Matthew 22:21.

## ■ Should one speak of "chapters" regarding the sections of the Bible book of Psalms?

The Bible is customarily divided into 66 books, Psalms being one of these. A chapter is a main division of any book, whether a history book, a novel or even a book of the Bible. Thus we commonly speak of Genesis chapter 1, chapter 2, and so on. From this standpoint the standard 150 main divisions of the book of Psalms might also be referred to as chapters.

However, the English title "Psalms" is derived from the Greek *Septuagint*, which calls the book *Psalmoi*. That Greek title refers to songs sung with musical accompaniment. Evidently the various poetic writings making up our

book of Psalms originally were sung, perhaps accompanied by a harp. In fact, *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* defines "psalm" as "a sacred song or poem used in worship; esp : one of the biblical hymns collected in the Book of Psalms."

Hence, while it would not be wrong or improper to speak of "Psalms chapter 100," for instance, it is more accurate and descriptive to speak of "Psalm 100" or "the 100th psalm." That is, in fact, the manner the disciple Luke used in writing Acts, for he mentions one statement as being "written in the second psalm."—Acts 13:33.

