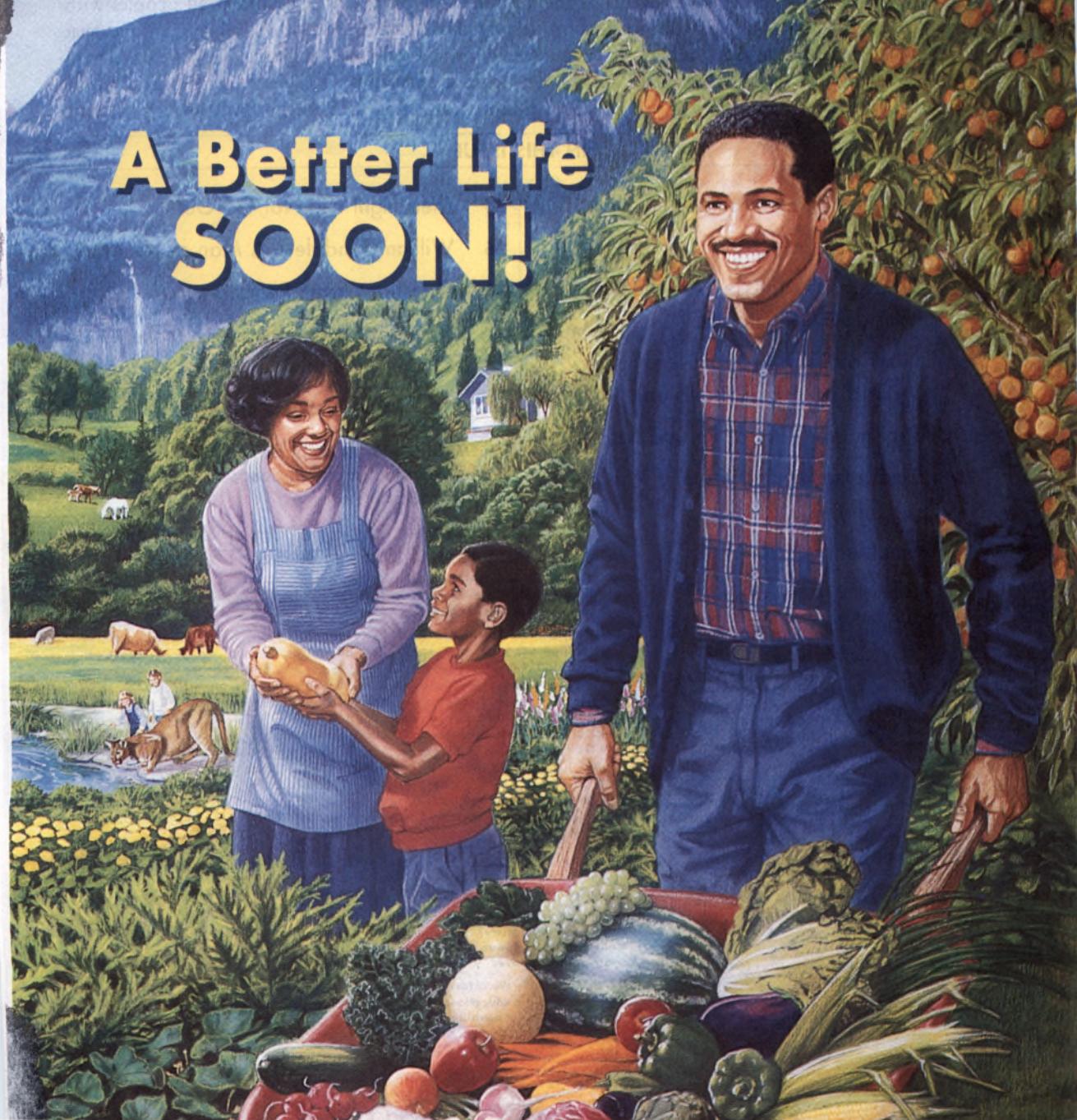


NOVEMBER 15, 1995

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

A Better Life SOON!



THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

November 15, 1995

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

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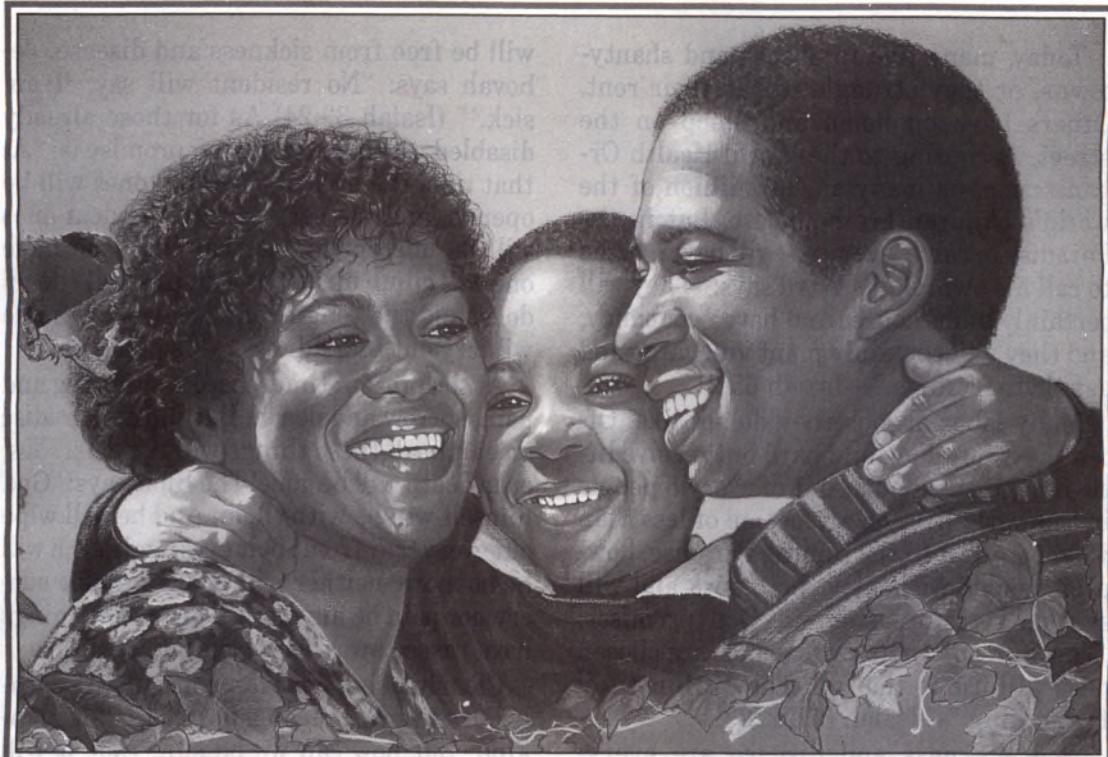
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A Better Life Is Promised

WOULD you like to be free from the problems that make life difficult? Do you want to live in a world where life is as delightful as it is in the scene depicted on the front and back covers of this magazine? Take a good look at that picture. People have plenty to eat. They will really enjoy that delicious food. Everyone is happy. People of different races are at peace with one another. Even the animals are at peace! No one is fighting. No one is poor. No one is sick. There are lovely surroundings, beautiful trees, and pure, clean water. What a splendid setting!

Will this earth ever be like that? Yes, it will be a paradise. (Luke 23:43) God, who created the earth, has purposed that hu-

mans will enjoy a better life on a paradise earth. And you can be there!

Which Life Would You Prefer?

How will the future earthly Paradise be different from the world in which we now live? Presently, over one billion people go hungry every day. But in the Paradise that God has purposed for the earth, everyone will have plenty to eat. The Bible promises: "Jehovah of armies will certainly make for all the peoples . . . a banquet of well-oiled dishes, a banquet of wine kept on the dregs." (Isaiah 25:6) There will be no shortage of food, for the Bible says: "There will come to be plenty of grain on the earth; on the top of the mountains there will be an overflow."—Psalm 72:16.

Today, many live in shacks and shantytowns, or they struggle to pay their rent. Others have no home and sleep on the street. According to the World Health Organization, as many as 100 million of the world's children are homeless. But in the Paradise to come, everyone will have a home to call his own. God's Word says: "They will certainly build houses and have occupancy; and they will certainly plant vineyards and eat their fruitage."—Isaiah 65:21.

Many labor at jobs they do not like. Often they work long and hard but receive little in return. About 1 out of every 5 people in the world lives on an income of less than \$500 per year. In the coming Paradise, however, people will enjoy their work and will see good results from it. God promises: "The work of their own hands my chosen ones will use to the full. They will not toil for nothing."—Isaiah 65:22, 23.

Now sickness and disease are everywhere. Many are blind. Some are deaf. Others cannot walk. But in Paradise, people

will be free from sickness and disease. Jehovah says: "No resident will say: 'I am sick.'" (Isaiah 33:24) As for those already disabled, the heartwarming promise is: "At that time the eyes of the blind ones will be opened, and the very ears of the deaf ones will be unstopped. At that time the lame one will climb up just as a stag [a male deer] does, and the tongue of the speechless one will cry out in gladness."—Isaiah 35:5, 6.

At the present time, there is suffering and pain, sorrow and death. But in the Paradise on earth, all these things will not exist. Yes, even death will be gone! The Bible says: "God himself will be with them. And he will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away."—Revelation 21:3, 4.

Clearly, then, Jehovah's promised earthly Paradise will mean a better life for mankind. But how can we be sure that it will come? When will it come, and how? What must you do to be there?

A Better Life—Soon!

IMAGINE a weather forecaster whose predictions almost always come true. If he predicts on the evening news that it will rain the following day, you do not hesitate to take along your umbrella when you leave the house the next morning. His past record has won your confidence. You act on what he says.

Now, how reliable is Jehovah's promise of a better life on a paradise earth? Well, what does his past record indicate? The fulfillment of Bible prophecies clearly establishes Jehovah's record. He is a God

of *unfailing accuracy and truthfulness.* (Joshua 23:14; Isaiah 55:11) So reliable are Jehovah God's promises that at times he actually speaks of promised future events as though they had already happened. For example, following his promise of a new world in which death and mourning will be no more, we read: "They [the promised blessings] have come to pass!" In other words, "They are a fact!"—Revelation 21:5, 6, footnote.

Yes, the fulfillment of Jehovah's past promises gives us confidence in the real-

ization of his promise of a better life for mankind. But *when* will this better life come?

A Better Life—When?

A much better life will come soon! We can be sure of that because the Bible says that many bad things would happen on earth just before Paradise was to usher in a better life. Those bad things are happening now.

For example, Jesus Christ foretold that there would be great wars. He said:

"Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom." (Matthew 24:7) This prophecy has come true. During the years 1914 to 1945, there were two world wars, and these have been followed by numerous other wars in which nations have fought one another. "On an average yearly basis, the number of war deaths in this period [since World War II] has been more

than double the deaths in the 19th century and seven times greater than in the 18th century."—*World Military and Social Expenditures 1993*.

The spread of disease is another evidence of the nearness of a better life in Paradise. Jesus foretold that there would be 'pestilences in one place after another.' (Luke 21:11) Has this prophecy come true? Yes. After the first world war, the Span-

ish flu killed over 20 million people. Since then, cancer, heart disease, malaria, AIDS, and other illnesses have killed millions of people. In developing countries, diseases resulting from contaminated water (including diarrhea and intestinal worm infections) claim millions of lives every year.

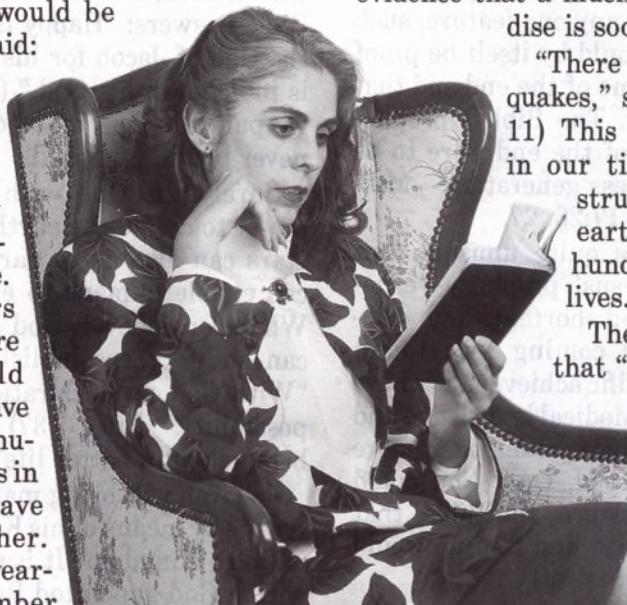
Jesus also said: "There will be food shortages." (Matthew 24:7) As noted in the preceding article, the world's poor do not have enough to eat. This is another part of the evidence that a much better life in Paradise is soon to come.

"There will be great earthquakes," said Jesus. (Luke 21:11) This also has come true in our time. Since 1914 destruction by devastating earthquakes has claimed hundreds of thousands of lives.

The Bible further says that "the last days" would be marked by a change in people. They would be "lovers of themselves" and "lovers of money," and children would be "disobedient to parents." People in general would

be "lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God." (2 Timothy 3:1-5) Do you not agree that many fit this description?

As more and more people practice bad things, there is an increase in lawlessness. This was also foretold. According to Matthew 24:12, Jesus spoke of an "increasing of lawlessness." Likely you will agree that crime is worse now than it was years ago. People everywhere are fearful that they



Bible prophecies indicate that a better life is near

will be robbed, cheated, or harmed in some way.

Wars, widespread disease, food shortages, earthquakes, increasing crime, and a change for the worse in human relations—all of these are evident today, just as the Bible foretold. ‘But have not these things happened all throughout human history?’ you may ask. ‘What is different about our day?’

There are some highly significant aspects of what is happening today. The Bible does not say that any one feature, such as food shortages, would by itself be proof that we are in the time of the end and that a better life is near. The Bible’s prophecies about the time of the end were to be fulfilled upon a godless generation.—Matthew 24:34-39; Luke 17:26, 27.

Furthermore, it is quite unusual that some features of Jesus’ prophecy—especially those about food shortages and widespread disease—are coming true today. Why? Because scientific achievements have never been greater. Medical knowledge and forms of treatment have never been more advanced or widespread. Only God could have foretold in his Word, the Bible, that at such a time, disease and famine would get worse, not better.

Since all the Bible’s prophecies about the time of the end, or “the last days,” are coming true, what can we conclude? That a better life is near! But how will it come about?

A Better Life—How?

Do you think that humans can bring about Paradise? Throughout history right down to this day, there have been many kinds of human government. Some have tried very hard to satisfy the needs of the people. Yet, many problems are getting worse. Both in rich countries and in poor lands, governments struggle with drug

abuse, poor housing, poverty, crime, unemployment, and warfare.

Even if governments could solve some of these problems, they could never provide complete freedom from ill health; neither could they put an end to old age and death. Clearly, humans will never bring Paradise to this earth.

The Bible wisely says: “Do not put your trust in nobles, nor in the son of earthling man, to whom no salvation belongs.” In whom, then, should we put our trust? The Bible answers: “Happy is the one who has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in Jehovah his God.” (Psalm 146:3, 5) If we put our hope in Jehovah God, we will never be disappointed.

Surely the One with the wisdom and power to create the earth, the sun, and the stars can also make earth a paradise. He can enable humans to enjoy a better life. Whatever Jehovah God sets out to do, he can and will accomplish. His Word says: “With God no declaration will be an impossibility.” (Luke 1:37) But how will God bring about a better life?

Jehovah will bring mankind a much better life by means of his Kingdom. And what is God’s Kingdom? It is a real government with a God-appointed Ruler, Jesus Christ. God’s Kingdom is located in heaven, but it will soon bring marvelous blessings and a much better life to the residents of the Paradise earth.—Isaiah 9:6, 7.

You may already be familiar with Jesus’ model prayer, found in the Bible at Matthew 6:9-13. Part of that prayer to God says: “Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth.” In harmony with that prayer, God’s Kingdom will “come” to carry out Jehovah God’s purpose for the earth. And it is his purpose that the earth become a paradise.



God's Kingdom will usher in a better life for mankind

One final question arises: What must you do to enjoy a better life in the coming Paradise?

What You Need to Do

Jehovah God lovingly holds out the prospect of a better life in Paradise to all who do his will. The Bible tells us: "The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it." (Psalm 37:29) But what makes a person righteous in God's eyes?

To please Jehovah we need to learn more about what he wants us to do. If we take in knowledge of God and apply it in our lives, we can live forever. In a prayer to God, Jesus 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.

The book that tells us about Jehovah God and Jesus Christ is God's Word, the Bible. It is one of Jehovah's most precious gifts. The Bible is like a letter from a loving father to his children. It tells us about God's promise to bring about a better life for mankind and shows us how we may gain it. The Bible lets us know what God has done in the past and what he will do in the future. It also gives us practical advice about how to deal successfully with our problems now. Indeed, God's Word teaches us how to find a measure of happiness even in this troubled world.—2 Timothy 3:16, 17.

Jehovah's Witnesses will gladly arrange a free home Bible study for you. Learn how you can have a happier life now, with the prospect of a much better life in the near future.

Jehovah's Witnesses Around the World

CAN islands praise Jehovah? Yes, according to Isaiah 42:10: "Sing to Jehovah a new song, his praise from the extremity of the earth, . . . you islands and you inhabiting them." The islands that make up New Zealand certainly praise Jehovah. World renowned for lakes, fjords, towering mountains, glaciers, beaches, fern-decked rain forests, and lush pastoral landscapes, New Zealand speaks eloquently of the majesty and grandeur of the Creator of heaven and earth.

Since just after the turn of the century, more and more of New Zealand's inhabitants have added their voices to praise Jehovah by turning to him in pure worship and sharing the good news of God's Kingdom with others. Recently, a Witness who had heard a good experience about witnessing to relatives decided to make an effort with his family. He presented gift copies of the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth* to several family members. The results thus far? He reports that one sister and one brother are now studying the Bible, a nephew has been baptized as one of Jehovah's Witnesses, and others are now more receptive to the truth of God's Word. He still has a large field to work with; besides his parents, he has six brothers and nine sisters!

Praise to Jehovah also results when the Witnesses join forces

to construct Kingdom Halls. For example, newspaper columnist Roy Perkins wrote in the *Opotiki News* of May 17, 1994: "Being a non-believer, I was greatly impressed by the works and effort by all the dedicated workers who put so much time and effort into the project for the love of their God."

"In all these work-hours put into the weekend I never saw or heard of one union dispute . . . Women were up on the scaffolding working alongside their men, pointing, lifting, carrying, all in a relaxed and happy mood.

"And not one minute lost while Tom, Dick or Harry had time-out to roll a cigarette. For all those people working in whatever capacity the air was pure and as clean as paint fumes and brick dust would allow."

The Opotiki Congregation's body of elders wrote: "The entire project has taken the town by storm. It seems as though everybody is talking about it. Several Bible studies have been started. One in particular that we find very exciting is a deeply religious couple who for many years have asked that we not call on them. They came to the site each day and then to the meeting. The husband said afterward, 'I can see you are God's people. Inside, I have been yearning all my life to associate with a people like this.'"

The previous year, a columnist for the *Otago Daily Times* said the following about a quickly built Kingdom Hall in Dunedin: "It was a remarkable performance, a remarkable example of motivation and self-help." The same newspaper commented: "City folk watched with admiration as a large building grew before their eyes, and many must be reflecting what other transformations and positive projects can be accomplished if a similarly large pool of voluntary labour and lots of cooperative spirit were available. Kingdom Hall is a proud symbol of constructive effort achieving results."

Of the many hundreds who visited the construction site, one gentleman observed that the Witnesses were building "churches" while his religious denomination was selling them because of dwindling membership. "If you had waited about another twelve months, you could have bought one of ours," he ventured. "We have to sell one because we can't keep up the payments. But, of course, you people don't have paid clergy. . . . And then your buildings are low maintenance, not high buildings with steeples that are impossible to maintain."

Clearly, islands can indeed praise God. May Jehovah's praises continue to resound in this beautiful Pacific land—and around the world!



NEW ZEALAND



COUNTRY PROFILE: 1994 Service Year

PEAK NUMBER WITNESSING:
12,867

RATIO:
1 Witness to 271

MEMORIAL ATTENDANCE:
24,436

AVERAGE PIONEER PUBLISHERS:
1,386

AVERAGE BIBLE STUDIES:
7,519

NUMBER BAPTIZED:
568

NUMBER OF CONGREGATIONS:
158

BRANCH OFFICE:
MANUREWA

CITIES OF REFUGE —GOD'S MERCIFUL PROVISION

"These six cities will serve as a refuge, for anyone to flee there that fatally strikes a soul unintentionally."—NUMBERS 35:15.

JEHOVAH GOD considers human life sacred. And life is in the blood. (Leviticus 17:11, 14) Cain, the first human born on the earth, therefore incurred blood-guilt when he murdered his brother Abel. Consequently, God told Cain: "Your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground." The blood that stained the ground at the murder scene bore silent, though eloquent, testimony to the life that had brutally been cut short. Abel's blood cried out to God for vengeance.—Genesis 4:4-11.

² God's respect for human life was emphasized after righteous Noah and his family emerged from the ark as survivors of the global Flood. At that time Jehovah expanded mankind's diet to include animal flesh but not blood. He also decreed: "Your blood of your souls shall I ask back. From

the hand of every living creature shall I ask it back; and from the hand of man, from the hand of each one who is his brother, shall I ask back the soul of man. Any-one shedding man's blood, by man will

his own blood be shed, for in God's image he made man." (Genesis 9:5, 6) Jehovah recognized the right of the victim's nearest relative to put the manslayer to death when coming upon him.—Numbers 35:19.

³ In the Law given to Israel through the prophet Moses, the sacredness of life was repeatedly stressed. For example, God commanded: "You must not murder." (Exodus 20: 13) Respect for life was also evident in what the Mosaic Law said about a fatality involving a pregnant woman. The Law specified that if she or her unborn child suffered a fatal accident as a result of a struggle between two

1. What is God's view of life and bloodguilt?
2. How was Jehovah's respect for life emphasized after the Flood?

3. What stress did the Mosaic Law place on the sacredness of life?



men, judges were to weigh the circumstances and degree of deliberateness, but the penalty could be "soul for soul," or life for life. (Exodus 21:22-25) However, could an Israelite murderer somehow escape the consequences of his violent act?

Asylum for Murderers?

⁴ In nations other than Israel, sanctuary, or asylum, was granted to murderers and other criminals. This was the case at such sites as the temple of the goddess Artemis in ancient Ephesus. Concerning similar places, it is reported: "Some shrines were nurseries of criminals; and it often became necessary to limit the number of asylums. In Athens only certain sanctuaries were recognized by law as refuges (for example, the temple of Theseus for slaves); in the time of Tiberius the congregations of desperadoes in shrines had become so dangerous that the right of Asylum was limited to a few cities (in the year 22)." (*The Jewish Encyclopedia*, 1909, Volume II, page 256) Later, churches of Christendom became places of asylum, but this tended to transfer power from civil authorities to the priesthood and worked against the proper administration of justice. Abuses eventually led to the abolition of this arrangement.

⁵ Among the Israelites, deliberate murderers were not granted sanctuary or asylum. Even a Levite priest serving at God's altar was to be led away to execution for a crafty murder. (Exodus 21:12-14) Moreover, the Law did not allow for negligence as a claim for mercy when someone was killed. For example, a man was to make a parapet for the flat roof of his new house. Otherwise, bloodguilt would come upon the

4. Outside of Israel, what places of asylum have existed in the past?

5. What evidence is there that the Law did not allow for negligence as a claim for mercy when someone was killed?

house if someone fell to his death from the roof. (Deuteronomy 22:8) Furthermore, if the owner of a bull in the habit of goring had been warned but had not kept the animal under guard and it killed someone, the bull's owner was bloodguilty and could be put to death. (Exodus 21:28-32) Further proof of God's high regard for life is evident in that anyone fatally striking a thief was bloodguilty if this happened in the daytime when the intruder could be seen and identified. (Exodus 22:2, 3) Clearly, then, God's perfectly balanced regulations did not allow willful murderers to escape capital punishment.

⁶ If a murder was committed in ancient Israel, the blood of the victim was to be avenged. The law of 'life for life' was satisfied when the murderer was put to death by "the avenger of blood." (Numbers 35: 19) The avenger was the murdered person's nearest male relative. But what about unintentional manslayers?

Jehovah's Merciful Provision

⁷ For those who accidentally or unintentionally killed someone, God lovingly provided cities of refuge. Concerning these, Moses was told: "Speak to the sons of Israel, and you must say to them, 'You are crossing the Jordan to the land of Canaan. And you must choose cities convenient for yourselves. As cities of refuge they will serve for you, and the manslayer must flee there who fatally strikes a soul unintentionally. And the cities must serve you as a refuge from the blood avenger, that the manslayer may not die until he stands before the assembly for judgment. And the cities that you will give, the six cities of refuge, will be

6. How was the law of 'life for life' satisfied in ancient Israel?

7. What provision did God make for those who unintentionally killed someone?

at your service. Three cities you will give on this side of the Jordan, and three cities you will give in the land of Canaan. As cities of refuge they will serve . . . for anyone to flee there that fatally strikes a soul unintentionally.”—Numbers 35:9-15.

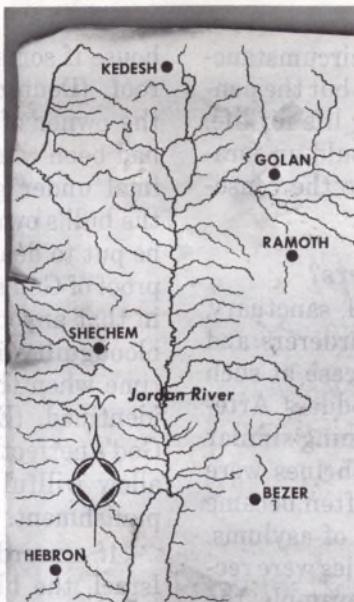
⁸ When the Israelites entered the Promised Land, they obediently established six cities of refuge. Three of these cities—Kedesh, Shechem, and Hebron—were located west of the Jordan River. East of the Jordan were the refuge cities of Golan, Ramoth, and Bezer. The six refuge cities were conveniently located on roads kept

in good repair. At appropriate places along these roads, there were signs bearing the word “refuge.” These signs pointed in the direction of the city of refuge, and the unintentional manslayer ran for his life to the nearest one. There he could find protection from the avenger of blood.—Joshua 20:2-9.

⁹ Why did God provide for cities of refuge? They were provided so that the land would not be polluted with innocent blood and bloodguilt would not come upon the people. (Deuteronomy 19:10) For whose benefit were the refuge cities provided? The Law stated: “For the sons of Israel and for the alien resident and for the settler in the midst of them these six cities will serve as a refuge, for anyone to flee there that fatally strikes a soul unintentionally.” (Numbers 35:15) Thus, to be fair and to serve the ends

8. Where were the cities of refuge located, and how were unintentional manslayers helped to reach them?

9. Why did Jehovah provide the cities of refuge, and for whose benefit were they provided?



Israel's cities of refuge were conveniently located

of justice while allowing for mercy, Jehovah told the Israelites to set aside cities of refuge for unintentional manslayers who were (1) native Israelites, (2) alien residents in Israel, or (3) settlers from other countries who were dwelling in the land.

¹⁰ It is noteworthy that even if an individual was an unintentional manslayer, he was to be put to death under God’s decree: “Anyone shedding man’s blood, by man will his own blood be shed.” Hence, it was only by a merciful provision of Jehovah God that an unintentional manslayer could flee to one of the cities of refuge.

Apparently, the people in general felt sympathy for anyone fleeing from the avenger of blood, for all of them were aware that they might unintentionally commit a similar offense and need refuge and mercy.

Flight for Refuge

¹¹ An illustration may well enhance your appreciation of God’s merciful arrangement for refuge. Imagine that you were a man chopping wood in ancient Israel. Suppose the axhead suddenly flew off its handle and fatally struck a fellow worker. What would you do? Well, the Law covered this very situation. Undoubtedly, you would take advantage of this God-given provision: “This is the case of the manslayer who may flee [to a city of refuge] and has to live: When he strikes his fellowman without knowing it and he was no hater of him formerly; or

10. Why can it be said that the refuge cities were a merciful provision made by God?

11. In ancient Israel, what could a man do if he accidentally killed a fellow worker?

when he goes with his fellowman into the woods to gather wood, and his hand has been raised to strike with the ax to cut the tree, and the iron has slipped off from the wooden handle, and it has hit his fellowman and he has died, he himself should flee to one of these cities and must live." (Deuteronomy 19:4, 5) Yet, even if you got to a refuge city, you would not be free of all responsibility for what had happened.

¹² Though you were received hospitably, you would have to state your case to the elders at the gate of the refuge city. After entering the city, you would be sent back to stand trial before the elders representing the congregation of Israel at the gates of the city having jurisdiction over the area where the killing occurred. There you would have an opportunity to prove your innocence.

When Manslayers Were on Trial

¹³ During the trial before the elders at the gate of the city of jurisdiction, you would undoubtedly note with gratitude that much emphasis was laid upon your previous conduct. The elders would carefully weigh your relationship with the victim. Did you hate the man, lie in wait for him, and deliberately strike him dead? If so, the elders would have to deliver you to the blood avenger, and you would die. These responsible men would be aware of the Law's requirement that 'guilt for innocent blood be cleared away from Israel.' (Deuteronomy 19:11-13) Comparably, in a judicial action today, Christian elders need to know the Scriptures well, acting in harmony with them while taking a wrongdoer's previous attitude and conduct into account.

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12. What procedure would be followed after an unintentional manslayer reached a refuge city?
 - 13, 14. What are some things the elders would want to ascertain during the trial of a manslayer?

¹⁴ Probing kindly, the city elders would want to know if you stalked the victim. (Exodus 21:12, 13) Did you assail him from a hiding place? (Deuteronomy 27:24) Were you so heated up with anger against the person that you resorted to some crafty plan to kill him? If so, you would be worthy of death. (Exodus 21:14) Especially would the elders need to know if there had been enmity, or hatred, between you and the victim. (Deuteronomy 19:4, 6, 7; Joshua 20:5) Let us say that the elders found you innocent and returned you to the city of refuge. How thankful you would be for the mercy shown!

Life in the City of Refuge

¹⁵ An unintentional manslayer had to remain in the refuge city or within a distance of 1,000 cubits (about 1,450 feet) outside its walls. (Numbers 35:2-4) If he wandered beyond that point, he might encounter the avenger of blood. Under those circumstances, the avenger could with impunity put the manslayer to death. But the manslayer was not shackled or imprisoned. As a resident of the refuge city, he had to learn a trade, be a worker, and serve as a useful member of society.

¹⁶ How long would the unintentional manslayer have to remain in the city of refuge? Possibly for the rest of his life. In any case, the Law stated: "He ought to dwell in his city of refuge until the high priest's death, and after the high priest's death the manslayer may return to the land of his possession." (Numbers 35:26-28) Why did the high priest's death allow the unintentional manslayer to leave the city of refuge? Well, the high priest was one of the most

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15. What requirements were imposed on an unintentional manslayer?
 16. (a) How long would the unintentional manslayer have to remain in the city of refuge?
(b) Why did the high priest's death make it possible for a manslayer to leave the city of refuge?

prominent persons in the nation. His death would therefore be such a notable event that it would become known throughout all the tribes of Israel. All refugees in the refuge cities could then return to their homes free from danger at the hands of blood avengers. Why? Because God's Law had decreed that the avenger's opportunity to kill the manslayer expired with the high priest's death, and everyone knew this. If the next of kin were to avenge the death after that, he would be a murderer and would ultimately pay the penalty for murder.

Lasting Effects

¹⁷ What were the probable effects of the restrictions imposed upon the unintentional manslayer? They were a reminder that he had caused someone's death. Likely, he would ever after view human life as sacred. Moreover, he could hardly forget that he had been treated mercifully. Having been shown mercy, he would surely want to be merciful to others. The arrangement of refuge cities with their restrictions also benefited the people in general. How so? It certainly must have impressed upon them that they should not be careless or indifferent about human life. Christians should thereby be reminded of the need to avoid carelessness that might result in an accidental death. Then, too, God's merciful arrangement for cities of refuge ought to move us to show mercy when doing so is warranted.

—James 2:13.

¹⁸ Jehovah God's provision for cities of refuge was also advantageous in other ways. The people did not form vigilante groups in pursuit of a manslayer under the presumption of his guilt before trial. Instead, they

17. What were the probable effects of the restrictions placed on the unintentional manslayer?

18. In what ways was God's arrangement for refuge cities advantageous?

considered him innocent of deliberate murder, even assisting him to safety. Furthermore, the provision for cities of refuge was the very opposite of present-day arrangements for placing murderers in jails and penitentiaries, where they are financially supported by the public and often become worse criminals due to their close association with other wrongdoers. In the refuge city arrangement, it was unnecessary to build, maintain, and guard expensive walled, iron-barred prisons from which inmates so often seek to escape. In effect, the manslayer sought the "prison" and stayed therein during the specified time. He also had to be a worker, thus doing something to benefit fellow humans.

¹⁹ Merciful, indeed, was Jehovah's arrangement of Israel's cities of refuge for the protection of unintentional manslayers. This provision certainly promoted respect for life. However, do the ancient refuge cities have meaning for people living in the 20th century? Could we be blood-guilty before Jehovah God and not realize that we need his mercy? Is there any modern-day significance for us in Israel's cities of refuge?

19. What questions are raised regarding cities of refuge?

How Would You Answer?

- How does Jehovah view human life?
- What merciful provision did God make for unintentional manslayers?
- How did a manslayer gain access to a city of refuge, and how long was he to remain there?
- What were the probable effects of the restrictions placed on the unintentional manslayer?

STAY IN THE “CITY OF REFUGE” AND LIVE!

“He ought to dwell in his city of refuge until the high priest’s death.”

—NUMBERS 35:28.

J EHOVAH’S Avenger of blood, Jesus Christ, is about to strike. With his angelic forces, this Avenger will soon take action against all who are unrepentantly bloodguilty. Yes, Jesus will serve as God’s Executioner during the rapidly approaching “great tribulation.” (Matthew 24:21, 22; Isaiah 26:21) Mankind will then be brought face-to-face with their bloodguilt.

² The way to safety is to get on the road to the antitypical city of refuge and run for one’s life! If admitted to the city, a refugee would have to remain there, for it is the only true place of refuge. But you may wonder, ‘Since most of us have never killed anyone, are we really bloodguilty? Why is Jesus the Avenger of blood? What is the modern-day city of refuge? Can anyone ever safely leave it?’

Are We Really Bloodguilty?

³ A feature of the Mosaic Law will help us to see that earth’s billions share bloodguilt. God laid upon the Israelites a joint responsibility for bloodshed. If someone was found slain and his murderer was unknown, judges had to measure the distance to sur-

1. Who is the Avenger of blood, and what action will he soon take?
2. What is the only true place of refuge, and what questions require answers?
3. What feature of the Mosaic Law will help us to see that earth’s billions share bloodguilt?

rounding cities to determine the nearest city. To clear away guilt, the elders of that apparently bloodguilty city had to break the neck of a young, unworked cow in an uncultivated torrent valley. This was done before Levite priests ‘because Jehovah chose them to dispose of disputes over violent deeds.’ The city’s elders washed their hands over the cow and said: “Our hands did not shed this blood, neither did our eyes see it shed. Do not set it to the account of your people Israel, whom you redeemed, O Jehovah, and do not put the guilt of innocent blood in the midst of your people Israel.” (Deuteronomy 21:1-9) Jehovah God did not want the land of Israel to be polluted with blood or its people to carry joint bloodguilt.

⁴ Yes, there is such a thing as joint, or community, bloodguilt. Consider the immense bloodguilt that rests upon Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion. Why, she is *drunk* with the blood of Jehovah’s servants! (Revelation 17:5, 6; 18:24) Christendom’s religions claim to follow the Prince of Peace, but wars, religious inquisitions, and death-dealing crusades have made her bloodguilty before God. (Isaiah 9:6; Jeremiah 2:34) In fact, she must bear major guilt for the deaths of millions in the two world wars of this century. Therefore,

4. Babylon the Great has what record of blood-guiltiness?

the adherents of false religion as well as the supporters and participants in human warfare are bloodguilty before God.

⁵ Some people have caused human death willfully or through carelessness. Others have taken part in collective killing, perhaps persuaded by religious leaders that this was God's will. Still others have persecuted and killed servants of God. Even if we have not done such things, though, we share community responsibility for the loss of human life because we did not know God's law and will. We are like the unintentional manslayer 'who killed his fellowman without knowing it and who did not hate him formerly.' (Deuteronomy 19:4) Such individuals ought to implore God for mercy and should run into the antitypical city of refuge. Otherwise they will have a fatal meeting with the Avenger of blood.

Jesus' Vital Roles

⁶ In Israel the avenger of blood was the victim's nearest kinsman. To avenge all those killed in the earth and especially the slain servants of Jehovah, the present-day Avenger of blood would have to be a kinsman of all mankind. That role has been filled by Jesus Christ. He was born a perfect man. Jesus surrendered his sinless life in death as a ransom sacrifice, and after his resurrection to heaven, he presented its value to God for the sake of sinful Adam's dying descendants. Christ thus became man-



kind's Redeemer, our closest relative—the rightful Avenger of blood. (Romans 5:12; 6:23; Hebrews 10:12) Jesus is identified as a brother to his anointed footstep followers. (Matthew 25:40, 45; Hebrews 2:11-17) As heavenly King he becomes the "Eternal Father" of those who will benefit from his sacrifice as his earthly subjects. These will live forever. (Isaiah 9:6, 7) So Jehovah has fittingly appointed this Kinsman of mankind as the Avenger of blood.

⁷ Jesus is also a sinless, tested, sympathetic High Priest. (Hebrews 4:15) In that

7. As the great High Priest, what does Jesus do for humans?

5. How have some people been like the unintentional manslayer in Israel?
6. Why can it be said that Jesus is mankind's closest relative?

capacity he applies the merit of his sin-atoning sacrifice to mankind. The cities of refuge were set up "for the sons of Israel and for the alien resident and for the settler in the midst of them." (Numbers 35:15)

So the great High Priest first applied the merit of his sacrifice to his anointed followers, "the sons of Israel." Now it is being applied to the 'alien residents' and 'settlers' in the antitypical city of refuge. These "other sheep" of the Lord Jesus Christ hope to live forever on earth.—John 10:16; Psalm 37:29, 34.

Today's City of Refuge

⁸ What is the antitypical city of refuge? It is not some geographical location like Hebron, one of the six Levite refuge cities and home of Israel's high priest. Today's city of refuge is God's provision for protecting us from death for violating his commandment about the sanctity of blood. (Genesis 9:6) Whether willful or unintentional, every violator of that command must seek God's forgiveness and the cancellation of his sin through faith in the blood of the High Priest, Jesus Christ. Anointed Christians with heavenly hopes and the "great crowd" with earthly prospects have availed themselves of the benefits of Jesus' sin-atoning sacrifice and are in the antitypical city of refuge.—Revelation 7:9, 14; 1 John 1:7; 2:1, 2.

⁹ Before he became a Christian, the apostle Paul had violated the commandment about blood. As Saul of Tarsus, he persecuted Jesus' followers and even approved of their murder. "Nevertheless," said Paul, "I was shown mercy, because I was ignorant and acted with a lack of faith." (1 Timothy

8. What is the antitypical city of refuge?
9. How did Saul of Tarsus violate God's commandment about blood, but how did he display a change of attitude?

1:13; Acts 9:1-19) Saul had a repentant attitude, later proved by many works of faith. But more than faith in the ransom is required in order to enter the antitypical city of refuge.

¹⁰ An unintentional manslayer could stay in one of Israel's cities of refuge only if he could prove that he had a good conscience toward God with regard to bloodshed. To obtain a good conscience, we must exercise faith in Jesus' sacrifice, repent of our sins, and change our course. We need to request a good conscience in a prayerful dedication to God through Christ, symbolizing this by water baptism. (1 Peter 3:20, 21) This good conscience allows us to attain a clean relationship with Jehovah. The only way to maintain a good conscience is to comply with God's requirements and perform the work assigned to us in the antitypical city of refuge, even as refugees in the ancient refuge cities had to obey the Law and fulfill their work assignments. The principal work for Jehovah's people today is that of declaring the Kingdom message. (Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20) Doing that work will help us to be useful residents of the present-day city of refuge.

¹¹ To leave today's city of refuge is to expose ourselves to destruction, for the Avenger of blood will soon go into action against all who are bloodguilty. This is no time to be caught outside this protective city or in a dangerous area near the outer edge of its pasture grounds. We would end up outside the antitypical city of refuge if we lost faith in the High Priest's sin-atoning sacrifice. (Hebrews 2:1; 6:4-6) We also would not be safe if we adopted worldly

10. How is it possible to obtain a good conscience, and what must be done to maintain it?
11. What must be avoided if we are to remain safely within today's city of refuge?

ways, stood at the fringes of Jehovah's organization, or deviated from our heavenly Father's righteous standards.—1 Corinthians 4:4.

Freed From the City of Refuge

¹² An unintentional manslayer in Israel had to remain in a city of refuge "until the high priest's death." (Numbers 35:28) So how long must formerly bloodguilty ones stay in the antitypical refuge city? Until they no longer need the services of the High Priest, Jesus Christ. "He is able also to save completely those who are approaching God through him," said Paul. (Hebrews 7:25) As long as any taints of sin and former blood-guilt continue, the services of the High Priest are needed so that imperfect humans can have a right standing with God.

¹³ Remember that the ancient cities of refuge were established for "the sons of Israel," the alien residents, and the settlers. "The sons of Israel" are spiritual Israelites. (Galatians 6:16) They must stay in the antitypical city of refuge as long as they live on earth. Why? Because they

12. How long must formerly bloodguilty ones stay in the antitypical city of refuge?
13. Who are the present-day "sons of Israel," and how long must they stay in the "city of refuge"?

In Our Next Issue

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Jehovah Gives to
the Tired One Power

"Where Does the Money
Come From?"

are still in the imperfect flesh and therefore need the atoning merit of their heavenly High Priest. But when these anointed Christians die and are resurrected to spirit life in heaven, they no longer need the High Priest's atoning services; they will forever have left the flesh and bloodguilt attached to it. Toward such resurrected anointed ones, the High Priest will have died in an atoning, protective capacity.

¹⁴ The very possession of human nature requires that those who will be heavenly "joint heirs with Christ" stay in the antitypical refuge city until they faithfully finish their earthly course in death. When they die, they will sacrifice human nature forever. (Romans 8:17; Revelation 2:10) Jesus' sacrifice applies only to those having human nature. Hence, the High Priest dies toward those of spiritual Israel when they are resurrected as spirit creatures who will reside eternally in heaven as "sharers in divine nature."—2 Peter 1:4.

¹⁵ When will the High Priest "die" with regard to the modern-day 'alien residents' and 'settlers,' allowing them to leave the antitypical city of refuge? These members of the great crowd cannot come out of this refuge city immediately after the great tribulation. Why not? Because they will still be in their imperfect, sinful flesh and will need to remain under the High Priest's protection. By availing themselves of his atoning services during his thousand-year kingship and priesthood, they will attain to human perfection. Jesus will then present them to God for a final, eternally decisive test of their integrity by the loosening of Satan and his demons for a little

14. What else requires that those with heavenly prospects stay in today's refuge city?

15. Who are the modern-day 'alien residents' and 'settlers,' and what will the great High Priest do for them?

while. Because they pass this test with divine approval, Jehovah will declare them righteous. Thus they will reach the very fullness of human perfection.—1 Corinthians 15:28; Revelation 20:7-10.*

¹⁶ So, then, survivors of the great tribulation will have to maintain a good conscience by staying in the antitypical refuge city until the end of Christ's Thousand Year Reign. As perfected humans, they will have no further need for the High Priest's atoning services and will come out from under his protection. Jesus will then die to them as High Priest, for he will no longer need to act in their behalf with the cleansing blood of his sacrifice. At that time they will leave the antitypical city of refuge.

¹⁷ Must those resurrected during Jesus' Thousand Year Reign enter the antitypical city of refuge and remain there until the death of the high priest? No, because by dying they paid the penalty for their sinfulness. (Romans 6:7; Hebrews 9:27) Nevertheless, the High Priest will help them to reach perfection. If they successfully pass the final test after the Millennium, God will also declare them righteous with a guarantee of eternal life on earth. Of course, failure to comply with God's requirements will bring condemnatory judgment and destruction upon any humans who do not pass the final test as integrity keepers.

¹⁸ Israelite high priests eventually died.

* See *The Watchtower*, December 15, 1991, page 12, paragraphs 15, 16.

16. When will survivors of the great tribulation have no further need for the High Priest's atoning services?

17. Why will it not be necessary for those resurrected during Christ's Thousand Year Reign to enter the antitypical city of refuge and stay there?

18. Regarding Jesus' kingship and priesthood, what will remain with mankind forever?

But Jesus "has become a high priest according to the manner of Melchizedek forever." (Hebrews 6:19, 20; 7:3) So the cessation of Jesus' office as a mediating High Priest toward mankind does not end his life. The good effects of his service as King and High Priest will remain with mankind forever, and humans will be eternally indebted to him for his having served in these capacities. Moreover, throughout eternity Jesus will take the lead in the pure worship of Jehovah.—Philippians 2:5-11.

Valuable Lessons for Us

¹⁹ We can learn various lessons from the provision of cities of refuge. For instance, no manslayer with murderous hatred for his victim was allowed to dwell in a refuge city. (Numbers 35:20, 21) So how could anyone in the antitypical city of refuge allow hatred for a brother to develop in his heart? "Everyone who hates his brother is a manslayer," wrote the apostle John, "and you know that no manslayer has everlasting life

19. What lesson concerning hatred and love can be learned from the provision of cities of refuge?

How Would You Answer?

- Why can it be said that earth's billions are bloodguilty?
- What roles does Jesus Christ fill with regard to mankind?
- What is the antitypical city of refuge, and how does one enter it?
- When will people be freed from the antitypical refuge city?
- What valuable lessons can we learn from the provision of cities of refuge?

remaining in him." Let us therefore "continue loving one another, because love is from God."—1 John 3:15; 4:7.

²⁰ For protection from the avenger of blood, unintentional manslayers had to stay in a city of refuge and not stray beyond its pasture grounds. What about those in the antitypical city of refuge? For safety from the great Avenger of blood, they must not leave the city. Indeed, they need to guard against enticements to go to the edge of the pasture grounds, so to speak. They must be careful not to let love for Satan's world develop in their hearts. This may call for prayer and effort, but their lives depend on it.—1 John 2:15-17; 5:19.

20. For protection from the Avenger of blood, what must those in the antitypical city of refuge do?

²¹ Unintentional manslayers in the ancient cities of refuge had to be productive workers. Similarly, the anointed "sons of Israel" have set a fine example as harvest workers and Kingdom proclaimers. (Matthew 9:37, 38; Mark 13:10) As 'alien residents' and 'settlers' in today's refuge city, Christians with earthly prospects are privileged to do this lifesaving work alongside anointed ones still on earth. And what rewarding work this is! Those working faithfully in the antitypical city of refuge will escape eternal death at the hands of the Avenger of blood. Instead, they will derive eternal benefits from his service as God's great High Priest. Will you stay in the city of refuge and live forever?

21. What rewarding work is being done by those in today's city of refuge?

Goddesses of Fertility and War

DURING an archaeological campaign at Ebla, Syria, a relic portraying Ishtar, Babylonian goddess of fertility and war, was discovered.

Archaeologist Paolo Matthiae describes it as a "cylindrical seal with a cult scene depicting a veiled priestess before a singular divine image . . . with its head fixed on a tall slender support."

The discovery is significant, for the image dates back to the beginning of the 18th century B.C.E. According to Matthiae, this offers "conclusive proof" that Ishtar worship spanned some 2,000 years.

Worship of Ishtar began in Babylon and in subsequent centuries spread throughout the Roman Empire. Jehovah commanded the Israelites to eliminate every trace of false religion from the Promised Land, but because they failed to do so, worship of Ashtoreth (the Canaanite counterpart of Ishtar) became a snare to them.—Deuteronomy 7:2, 5; Judges 10:6.

Although Ishtar and her counterpart Ashtoreth no longer exist, the traits that they represented—immorality and violence—are rampant. We may well ask whether modern society is really so much different from those ancient civilizations that worshiped these goddesses of fertility and war.



Ralph Crane/Bardo Museum

Children were also sacrificed to Tanit



Would You Extinguish a SMOLDERING WICK?

JESUS CHRIST declared the good news of God's Kingdom to all kinds of people. Many of them were oppressed, discouraged. But Jesus gave them a heartening message. He had compassion for suffering people.

The Gospel writer Matthew highlighted Jesus' compassion by drawing attention to a prophecy recorded by Isaiah. Quoting words fulfilled by Christ, Matthew wrote: "No bruised reed will he crush, and no smoldering flaxen wick will he extinguish, until he sends out justice with success." (Matthew 12:20; Isaiah 42:3) What is meant by these words, and how did Jesus fulfill this prophecy?

A Look at the Prophecy

A reed commonly grows in a wet area and is not a strong and stable plant. A "bruised reed" would be weak indeed. It therefore seems to represent oppressed or suffering people like the man with the withered hand whom Jesus healed on the Sabbath. (Matthew 12:10-14) But what about the prophetic reference to a lampwick?

A common household lamp of the first century C.E. was a small pitcherlike earthenware vessel with a loop handle. The lamp usually was filled with olive oil. By capillary attraction, a wick made of flax drew the oil up to feed the flame. Of course, a 'smoldering wick' would be one about to go out.

Jesus proclaimed his comforting message to many who were figuratively like a bruised reed, bent over and knocked about. These people were also like a smoldering flaxen wick because their last spark of life had nearly been extinguished. They really were oppressed and discouraged. However, Jesus did not crush a figurative bruised reed or extinguish a symbolic smoldering wick. His loving, tender, compassionate words did not further discourage and depress suffering people. Instead, his comments and his dealings with them had an uplifting effect.

—Matthew 11:28-30.

Today, too, many need compassion and encouragement because they face disheartening problems. Even servants of Jehovah are not always towers of strength. At times some resemble smoldering wicks. Christians should therefore be encouraging—fanning the flame, as it were—thus strengthening one another.—Luke 22:32; Acts 11:23.

As Christians we want to be upbuilding. We would not deliberately try to weaken anyone seeking spiritual help. Indeed, we desire to imitate Jesus' example in strengthening others. (Hebrews 12:1-3; 1 Peter 2:21) The fact that we could unwittingly crush any who look to us for encouragement is good reason to give serious thought to our way of dealing with others. We certainly do not want to 'extinguish a smoldering wick.' What Scriptural guidelines can help us in this regard?

Effects of Criticism

If a Christian 'takes some false step, those with spiritual qualifications should try to readjust such a person in a spirit of mildness.' (Galatians 6:1) However, would it be proper to *look* for flaws in others and seize every opportunity to correct them? Or would it be right to push them to do better

by implying that their present efforts are inadequate, perhaps causing them to have guilt feelings? There is no evidence that Jesus did anything of that kind. Though it is our intention to help others to improve, those on the receiving end of unkind criticism may feel weakened rather than strengthened. Even constructive criticism can be quite discouraging if carried to excess. If the best efforts of a conscientious Christian were to meet only with disapproval, he might virtually throw up his hands and say, 'Why try at all?' Indeed, he might give up entirely.

While the giving of Scriptural counsel is important, it should not characterize the spirit of appointed elders or others in the congregation. Christian meetings are not held primarily to give and receive counsel. Rather, we meet together regularly to up-build and encourage one another so that all can enjoy their association and their sacred service to God. (Romans 1:11, 12; Hebrews 10:24, 25) How good it is when we discern the difference between a serious flaw and an imperfection that it is wise and loving to overlook!—Ecclesiastes 3:1, 7; Colossians 3:13.

People respond more quickly to encouragement than they do to criticism. In fact, when individuals feel unfairly criticized, they may hold all the more tightly to the criticized behavior! But when they are justifiably commended, their spirit soars, and they are motivated to improve. (Proverbs 12:18) Like Jesus, let us therefore be encouraging and never 'extinguish a smoldering wick.'

What About Drawing Comparisons?

Hearing the fine experiences of other Christians can be very motivating. Jesus himself rejoiced when he heard about the success of his disciples in preaching the

Kingdom message. (Luke 10:17-21) Likewise, when we hear of the success, good example, or integrity of others in the faith, we are encouraged and feel more determined to hold to our Christian course.

Yet, what if a report was presented in such a way as to suggest, 'You are not as good as these Christians, and you ought to be doing much better than you are'? Is the listener likely to embark on an energetic program of improvement? It is probable that he will become discouraged and perhaps give up, especially if comparisons are often made or implied. This would be much like a parent asking his child, 'Why can't you be more like your brother?' Such a comment may cause resentment and discouragement, but it is unlikely to promote better behavior. Comparisons may have a similar effect on adults, even making them somewhat resentful toward those with whom they are being compared.

We cannot expect all to do the same amount in God's service. In one of Jesus' illustrations, a certain master gave his slaves either one, two, or five silver talents. These were given "to each one according to his own ability." The two slaves who traded wisely and increased their talents were commended because they were faithful, though their work yielded different results.—Matthew 25:14-30.

The apostle Paul appropriately wrote: "Let each one prove what his own work is, and then he will have cause for exultation in regard to himself alone, and not in comparison with the other person." (Galatians 6:4) To be truly encouraging to others, then, we should try to avoid making negative comparisons.

Some Ways to Build Up

What can we do to build up the discouraged and avoid 'extinguishing a smoldering

wick'? Well, providing encouragement is not a matter of following a specific formula. However, it is likely that our words will build others up if we apply Bible principles. What are some of these?

Be humble. At Philippians 2:3, Paul exhorted us to 'do nothing out of contentiousness or egotism.' Instead, we should speak and act humbly. 'With lowliness of mind we should consider others superior to us.' Paul did not say that we should think nothing of ourselves. Yet, we are to appreciate that every person is superior to us in some way. The Greek word here rendered "superior" suggests that a man "turns away his eyes from his own privileges, and studiously contemplates another's endowments in which he is superior." (*New Testament Word Studies*, by John Albert Bengel, Volume 2, page 432) If we do this and consider others superior, we will deal with them in a humble manner.

Show respect. By expressing ourselves sincerely, we can make it clear that we have confidence in faithful fellow believers, viewing them as individuals desiring to please God. But suppose they need spiritual help. Then let us provide assistance in a respectful, dignified manner. Paul put matters this way: "In showing honor to one another take the lead."—Romans 12:10.

Be a good listener. Yes, in order to encourage those who may face discouraging problems, we need to be good listeners, not lecturers. Instead of offering quick, superficial suggestions, let us take the time required to provide Scriptural guidelines that truly meet existing needs. If we do not know what to say, Bible research will help us to speak consolingly and strengthen others.

Be loving. We need to feel love for those we wish to encourage. When applied to fellow servants of Jehovah, our love should go

beyond merely acting in their best interests. It should involve intense feeling. If we have such love for all of Jehovah's people, our words will be of genuine encouragement to them. Even if we need to offer a suggestion for improvement, it is unlikely that what we say will be misunderstood or will cause damage when our motive is not merely to make a point but to give loving help. As Paul so aptly said, "love builds up."—1 Corinthians 8:1; Philippians 2:4; 1 Peter 1:22.

Always Be Upbuilding

In these critical "last days," Jehovah's people face many trials. (2 Timothy 3:1-5) It is no wonder that they sometimes suffer to what seems to be the limit of their en-

durance. As servants of Jehovah, we surely would not want to say or do things that might cause any of our fellow worshipers to feel like smoldering wicks that are about to go out.

How important it is, then, that we encourage one another! Let us make every effort to be upbuilding by being humble and respectful to discouraged fellow worshipers. May we listen carefully when they confide in us and always seek to help them by directing attention to God's Word, the Bible. Above all, let us display love, for this fruit of Jehovah's holy spirit will help us to strengthen one another. May we never speak or act in any way that might 'extinguish a smoldering wick.'

Their Light Did Not Go Out

IN BIBLE times there were faithful Witnesses of Jehovah who experienced setbacks and difficulties. They faced opposition and apparent failures. Still, they did not give up out of discouragement. In effect, their light did not go out.

For example, the prophet Jeremiah was given a commission to be God's prophet to the apostate nation of Judah. He sounded the warning about the coming destruction of Jerusalem. (Jeremiah 1:11-19) As a result, Jeremiah had many confrontations with his fellow countrymen, who viewed him as a calamity howler.

The priest Pashhur, the leading commissioner in the house of God, once struck Jeremiah because of what he had prophesied and put him into stocks. With this seeming setback, Jeremiah said: "I became an object of laughter all day long; everyone is

holding me in derision. For as often as I speak, I cry out. Violence and despoiling are what I call out. For the word of Jehovah became for me a cause for reproach and for jeering all day long." The prophet was discouraged even to the point of saying: "I am not going to make mention of him [Jehovah], and I shall speak no more in his name."—Jeremiah 20:1, 2, 7-9.

However, Jeremiah did not succumb to discouragement. Speaking of "the word of Jehovah," he declared: "In my heart it proved to be like a burning fire shut up in my bones; and I got tired of holding in, and I was unable to endure it." (Jeremiah 20:8, 9) Strongly motivated to speak the pronouncements of God, Jeremiah was sustained by holy spirit and fulfilled his commission.

The apostle Paul also had a host of rea-

**Paul and Jeremiah did not let
their light go out**

sons for becoming discouraged, had he yielded to them. He endured natural disasters, shipwreck, persecution, and beatings. In addition, ‘what rushed in on him from day to day was the anxiety for all the congregations.’ (2 Corinthians 11:23-28) Yes, Paul daily had to deal with problems, worrying about new congregations that he had helped to establish. Moreover, he was imperfect and had to contend with “a thorn in the flesh,” possibly poor eyesight. (2 Corinthians 12:7; Romans 7:15; Galatians 4:15) Some even spoke against Paul behind his back, and this found its way to his ears.—2 Corinthians 10:10.

Nevertheless, Paul did not allow discouragement to overwhelm him. No, he was not a superman. (2 Corinthians 11:29, 30) What kept his ‘internal fire’ burning? For one thing, he had supportive companions, some even accompanying him into Rome where he was kept under house arrest. (Acts 28:14-16) Second, the apostle viewed his situation in a balanced way. His persecutors and opposers were in the wrong, not Paul. Toward the end of his earthly life, he evaluated his ministry in a positive way and said: “From this time on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me as a reward.”—2 Timothy 4:8.

Above all, Paul regularly approached Jehovah God in prayer, and ‘the Lord stood



near him and infused power into him.’ (2 Timothy 4:17) “For all things,” said Paul, “I have the strength by virtue of him who imparts power to me.” (Philippians 4:13) Communication with God and fellow Christians, together with a positive evaluation of his ministry, helped Paul to keep going in Jehovah’s service.

God inspired Paul to write: “Let us not give up in doing what is fine, for in due season we shall reap if we do not tire out.” (Galatians 6:7-9) Reap what? Everlasting life. So, then, be like Jeremiah, Paul, and the many other faithful witnesses of Jehovah mentioned in the Scriptures. Yes, be like them, and do not succumb to discouragement. Do not let your light go out.—Compare Matthew 5:14-16.

The Gospell off Sancte Ihon.

The fyre



Bible in the background: © The British Library Board; William Tyndale: By kind permission of the Principal, Fellows and Scholars of Hertford College, Oxford

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William Tyndale was born in England

"on the borders of Wales," likely in Gloucestershire, although the exact place and date cannot be determined. In October 1994,

England celebrated the 500th anniversary of the birth of the man who "gave us our English Bible." For this work Tyndale was martyred.

Why?

WILLIAM TYNDALE excelled in the study of Greek and Latin. In July 1515, when no more than 21 years of age, he received a Master of Arts degree at Oxford University. By 1521 he was an ordained Roman Catholic priest. At that

time Catholicism in Germany was in turmoil because of Martin Luther's activity. But England remained a Catholic country until King Henry VIII finally broke with Rome in 1534.

Though English was the common tongue

in Tyndale's day, all education was in Latin. It was also the language of the church and of the Bible. In 1546 the Council of Trent reiterated that Jerome's fifth-century Latin *Vulgate* was to be used exclusively. However, only the educated could read it. Why should the people of England be denied the Bible in English and the freedom to read it? "Jerom[e] also translated the bible into his mother tongue: why may not we also?" was Tyndale's contention.

A Step of Faith

Following his time at Oxford and possibly additional studies at Cambridge, Tyndale tutored the young sons of John Walsh for two years in Gloucestershire. During this period he nurtured his desire to translate the Bible into English, and doubtless had opportunity to develop his translating skills with the aid of Erasmus' new Bible text with Greek and Latin in parallel columns. In 1523, Tyndale left the Walsh family and traveled to London. His purpose was to seek permission for his translation from Cuthbert Tunstall, bishop of London.

Tunstall's authorization was necessary because the provisions of a 1408 synod at Oxford, known as the Constitutions of Oxford, included a ban on translating or reading the Bible in the vernacular, except by permission of a bishop. For daring to contravene this prohibition, many itinerant preachers known as Lollards were burned as heretics. These Lollards read from and distributed John Wycliffe's Bible, an English translation from the *Vulgate*. Tyndale felt that the time had come to translate the Christian writings from the Greek into a new, authentic version for his church and for the people of England.

Bishop Tunstall was a man of learning who had done much to encourage Erasmus. As evidence of his own skills, Tyndale had translated for Tunstall's approval one of the

orations of Isocrates, a difficult Greek text. Tyndale had fond hopes that Tunstall would extend friendship and patronage and accept his offer to translate the Scriptures. What would the bishop do?

Rejection—Why?

Although Tyndale had a letter of introduction, Tunstall would not see him. Tyndale therefore had to write seeking an interview. Whether Tunstall eventually deigned to meet Tyndale is not clear, but his message was, 'My house is full.' Why did Tunstall so deliberately snub Tyndale?

The reforming work by Luther on the continent of Europe was causing great concern to the Catholic Church, with repercussions in England. In 1521, King Henry VIII published a vigorous treatise defending the pope against Luther. Out of gratitude the pope conferred on Henry the title "Defender of the Faith."* Henry's Cardinal Wolsey was also active, destroying Luther's illegally imported books. As a Catholic bishop loyal to the pope, the king, and his cardinal, Tunstall was duty-bound to suppress any thinking that might be sympathetic to the rebel Luther. Tyndale was a prime suspect. Why?

During his stay with the Walsh family, Tyndale had fearlessly spoken out against the ignorance and bigotry of the local clergy. Among them was John Stokesley who had known Tyndale at Oxford. He eventually replaced Cuthbert Tunstall as bishop of London.

Opposition to Tyndale is also evident in a confrontation with a high-ranking clergyman who said: "We were better be without

* *Fidei Defensor* was soon struck on coins of the realm, and Henry asked for this title to be conferred on his successors. Today it appears around the head of the sovereign on British coins as *Fid. Def.*, or simply as *F.D.* Interestingly, "Defender of the Faith" was subsequently printed in the dedication to King James in the *King James Version* of 1611.

God's law than the pope's." In memorable words, Tyndale's reply was: 'I defy the Pope and all his laws. If God spare my life, ere many years I shall cause a boy that driveth the plow shall know more of the Scriptures than thou doest.'

Tyndale had to appear before the administrator of the Worcester diocese on trumped-up heresy charges. "He threatened me grievously, and reviled me," Tyndale later recalled, adding that he had been treated like "a dog." But there was no evidence to convict Tyndale of heresy. Historians believe that all these matters were secretly conveyed to Tunstall to influence his decision.

After a year spent in London, Tyndale concluded: "There was no room in my lord of London's palace to translate the new Testament, but also . . . there was no place to do it in all England." He was right. In the atmosphere of repression caused by Luther's work, what printer in England would dare to produce a Bible in English? So in 1524, Tyndale crossed the English Channel, never to return.

To Europe and Fresh Problems

With his precious books, William Tyndale found refuge in Germany. He brought with him £10 that his friend Humphrey Monmouth, an influential London merchant, had kindly given him. This gift was almost enough in those times to enable Tyndale to print the Greek Scriptures he planned to translate. Monmouth was subsequently arrested for assisting Tyndale and for allegedly sympathizing with Luther. Interrogated and thrown into the Tower of London, Monmouth was released only after petitioning Cardinal Wolsey for a pardon.

Exactly where Tyndale went in Germany is not clear. Some evidence points to Hamburg, where he could have spent a year. Did

he meet Luther? This is uncertain, even though the charge against Monmouth says that he did. One thing is certain: Tyndale was hard at work translating the Greek Scriptures. Where could he get his manuscript printed? He entrusted the task to Peter Quentell at Cologne.

All was going well until opposer John Dobneck, otherwise known as Cochlaeus, learned what was happening. Cochlaeus immediately reported his findings to a close friend of Henry VIII who promptly obtained a prohibition against Quentell's printing of Tyndale's translation.

Tyndale and his assistant, William Roye, fled for their lives, taking with them the pages of Matthew's Gospel that had been printed. They sailed up the river Rhine to Worms, where they finished their work. In time, 6,000 copies of the first edition of Tyndale's *New Testament* were produced.*

Success—Despite Opposition

Translating and printing was one thing. Getting the Bibles to Britain was another. Church agents and secular authorities were determined to prevent shipments across the English Channel, but friendly merchants had the answer. Hidden in bales of cloth and other merchandise, the volumes were smuggled to the shores of England and up into Scotland. Tyndale was encouraged, but his fight had only begun.

On February 11, 1526, Cardinal Wolsey, accompanied by 36 bishops and other church dignitaries, assembled near St. Paul's Cathedral in London "to see great basketfuls of books cast into a fire." Included among them were some copies of Tyndale's precious translation. Of this first edition, there are now just two copies extant. The only complete one (lacking just the title page) is

* This figure is uncertain; some authorities say 3,000.

in the British Library. Ironically, the other, with 71 pages missing, was discovered in St. Paul's Cathedral Library. How it got there, nobody knows.

Undaunted, Tyndale continued to produce fresh editions of his translation, which were systematically confiscated and burned by English clerics. Then Tunstall changed tactics. He struck a bargain with a merchant named Augustine Packington to buy any books written by Tyndale, including the *New Testament*, in order to burn them. This was arranged with Tyndale, with whom Packington had made an agreement. Halle's *Chronicle* says: "The bishop had the books, Packington had the thanks, and Tyndale had the money. Afterward when more *New Testaments* were imprinted, they came thick and threefold into England."

Why were the clergy so bitterly opposed to Tyndale's translation? Whereas the Latin *Vulgata* tended to veil the sacred text, Tyndale's rendering from the original Greek for the first time conveyed the Bible's message in clear language to the English people. For example, Tyndale chose to translate the Greek word *a·ga'pe* as "love" instead of "charity" in 1 Corinthians chapter 13. He insisted on "congregation" rather than "church" to emphasize worshippers, not church buildings. The last straw for the clergy, however, came when Tyndale replaced "priest" with "elder" and used "repent" rather than "do penance," thereby stripping the clergy of their assumed priestly powers. David Daniell says in this regard: "Purgatory is not there; there is no aural confession and penance. Two supports of the Church's wealth and power collapsed." (*William Tyndale—A Biography*) That was the challenge Tyndale's translation presented, and modern scholarship fully endorses the accuracy of his choice of words.

EARLY TRANSLATIONS

TYNDALE'S appeal for a translation of the Bible into the tongue of the common people was not unreasonable or without precedent. A translation into Anglo-Saxon was made in the tenth century. Printed Bibles translated from the Latin had freely circulated in Europe in the late 15th century: German (1466), Italian (1471), French (1474), Czech (1475), Dutch (1477), and Catalan (1478). In 1522, Martin Luther published his *New Testament* in German. All Tyndale asked was why England should not be permitted to do the same.

Antwerp, Betrayal, and Death

Between 1526 and 1528, Tyndale moved to Antwerp, where he could feel safe among the English merchants. There he wrote *The Parable of the Wicked Mammon*, *The Obedience of a Christian Man*, and *The Practice of Prelates*. Tyndale continued his translating work and was the first to use God's name, Jehovah, in an English translation of the Hebrew Scriptures. The name appears over 20 times.

As long as Tyndale stayed with his friend and benefactor Thomas Poyntz in Antwerp, he was safe from the intrigues of Wolsey and his spies. He became well-known for his care of the sick and the poor. Eventually, Englishman Henry Phillips cunningly inveigled himself into Tyndale's confidences. As a result, in 1535, Tyndale was betrayed and taken to Vilvorde Castle, six miles north of Brussels. There he was incarcerated for 16 months.

Who hired Phillips cannot be determined with certainty, but the finger of suspicion points directly at Bishop Stokesley, who was then busy burning "heretics" in London. On his deathbed in 1539, Stokesley "rejoiced

that in his lifetime he had burned fifty heretics," says W. J. Heaton in *The Bible of the Reformation*. Included in that number was William Tyndale, who was strangled before his body was publicly burned in October 1536.

Three prominent doctors of divinity from the Catholic Louvain University, where Phillips had enrolled, were on the commission that tried Tyndale. Three canons from Louvain and three bishops along with other dignitaries were also present to see Tyndale condemned for heresy and stripped of his priestly office. All rejoiced at his demise at the probable age of 42.

"Tyndale," said biographer Robert DeMaus over a hundred years ago, "was at all times conspicuous for his fearless honesty." To John Frith, his collaborator who was burned in London by Stokesley, Tyndale wrote: "I never altered one syllable of God's word against my conscience, nor would this day, if all that is in the earth, whether it be pleasure, honour, or riches, might be given me."

So it was that William Tyndale gave his life for the privilege of giving to the people of England a Bible they could easily understand. What a price he paid—but what a priceless gift!

QUESTIONS FROM READERS

At Philippians 2:9, Paul said about Jesus: "God exalted him to a superior position and kindly gave him the name that is above every other name." What is this new name? And if Jesus is inferior to Jehovah, how is Jesus' name above every other name?

Philippians 2:8, 9 reads: "More than that, when he [Jesus] found himself in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient as far as death, yes, death on a torture stake. For this very reason also God exalted him to a superior position and kindly gave him the name that is above every other name."

This passage does not mean that since only Jehovah has a name absolutely above every other name, Jesus must be the same person as Jehovah. As the context in Philippians chapter 2 shows, Jesus received his elevated name after his resurrection. Before that, he did not possess it. On the other hand, Jehovah has always been supreme, and his position has never changed. The fact that Jesus received a name higher than the name he had before his earthly service proves that he is not the same as Jehovah. When Paul said that Jesus was given a name above every other name, he

meant that Jesus now has the highest name of all God's creatures.

What is Jesus' high name? Isaiah 9:6 helps us to answer. In prophesying about the coming Messiah, Jesus, that verse says: "The princely rule will come to be upon his shoulder. And his name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace." Here Jesus' "name" has to do with his high position and authority, which is also how we understand "the name that is above every other name" mentioned at Philippians 2:9. Every knee is commanded to bend to Jesus in recognition of the high position of authority that Jehovah has given to him—a position of authority higher than that given to any other creature. The word "other" in this translation is not directly represented in the underlying Greek text, but it is implied by the sense of the verse. Jesus' "name" is not above his own name but is above every other creature's name.

How happy we are to join all faithful angels and humans in bowing the knee in recognition of Jesus' name! We do this by subjecting ourselves to Jesus in the elevated and powerful position given to him by Jehovah—"to the glory of God the Father."—Philippians 2:11; Matthew 28:18.



"Do Not Become Unevenly Yoked"

THE two bulls pictured here have enormous strength, enabling them to pull heavy loads with ease. But suppose one of the bulls was replaced by a donkey. Since a donkey is smaller and weaker than a bull, likely it would rebel by kicking the traces holding it in this uneven yoke. With good reason, then, God's law to Israel stated: "You must not plow with a bull and an ass together."—Deuteronomy 22:10.

The apostle Paul wrote something similar concerning humans. He said: "Do not become unevenly yoked with unbelievers." (2 Corinthians 6:14) This should especially be kept in mind when choosing a marriage mate. Marriage is a permanent partnership, for Jesus Christ said: "What God has yoked together let no man put apart." (Matthew 19:6) Much heartache results when a married couple do not share beliefs, principles, and goals. It is therefore only reasonable to follow the Bible's admonition to marry "only

in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 7:39) Entering into wedlock with someone who does not share your religious faith would present an even greater problem than yoking a bull with a donkey.

Difference in religious belief is just one factor that could cause a couple to be unevenly yoked. Prospective mates—even of the same faith—would do well to ask, 'Do we share the same goals? Where will we live? Who will handle the budget? Will both of us work? What about children? Would kindness and consideration govern the relationship?'

To some degree, the manner in which such issues are discussed can indicate whether a yoke will be even or uneven. Of course, no two persons are completely compatible. Overall, however, if a courting couple can face and solve problems together and if they can keep the lines of communication open, it is likely that they will not be unevenly yoked.



to two houses in the countryside community. Ossay, however, is a continuing concern for me and my wife. We hope our flowers will help keep the town of community spirit alive. It is difficult for us to be separated.

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