

THE WATCHTOWER

JULY 15, 2001

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



Is There
LIFE
After Death?

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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Publication of *The Watchtower* is part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations.

The Bible translation used is the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References*, unless otherwise indicated.

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

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

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Semimonthly

ENGLISH

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Is There Life After Death?

"**I**F AN able-bodied man dies can he live again?" asked the patriarch Job some 3,500 years ago. (Job 14:14) This question has perplexed mankind for millennia. Throughout the ages, people in every society have pondered this subject and have come up with various theories.

Many nominal Christians believe in heaven and hell. Hindus, on the other hand, believe in reincarnation. Commenting on the Muslim view, Emir Muawiyah, an assistant at an Islamic religious center, says: "We believe there will be a day of judgment after death, when you go before God, Allah, which will be just like walking into court." According to Islamic belief, Allah will then assess each person's life course and consign him either to paradise or to hellfire.

In Sri Lanka, both Buddhists and Catholics leave their doors and windows wide open when a death occurs in their households. An oil lamp is lit, and the casket is placed with the feet of the deceased facing the front door. These measures, they believe, facilitate the exit of the spirit of the deceased.

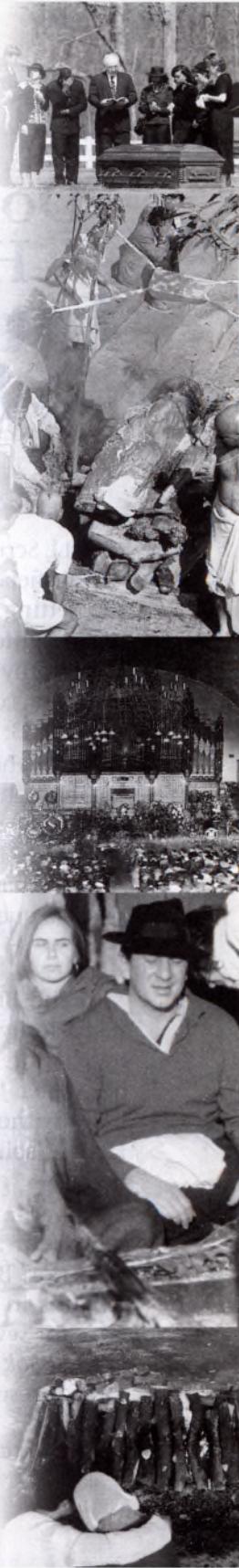
According to Ronald M. Berndt of the University of Western Australia, Australian Aborigines believe that "human beings are spiritually indestructible." Certain African tribes

believe that after death ordinary people become ghosts, whereas prominent individuals become ancestor spirits who will be honored and petitioned as invisible leaders of the community.

In some lands, beliefs regarding the condition of the dead are a blend of local tradition and nominal Christianity. Among many Catholics and Protestants in West Africa, for instance, it is customary to cover mirrors when someone dies so that no one might look and see the dead person's spirit.

Diverse, indeed, are the answers people give to the question, 'What happens to us when we die?' Yet, one basic idea is: Something inside a person is immortal and survives death. Some people believe that "something" to be a spirit. For example, in parts of Africa and Asia and throughout the Pacific regions of Polynesia, Melanesia, and Micronesia, many believe that a spirit—not a soul—is immortal. In fact, certain languages do not even have the word "soul."

Is there a spirit in a living person? Does that spirit really leave the body at death? If so, what happens to it? And what hope is there for the dead? These questions should not be ignored. Whatever your cultural or religious background, death is a fact that has to be faced. The issues thus involve you in a profoundly personal way. We encourage you to look into the matter.



Do You Have an Immortal Spirit?

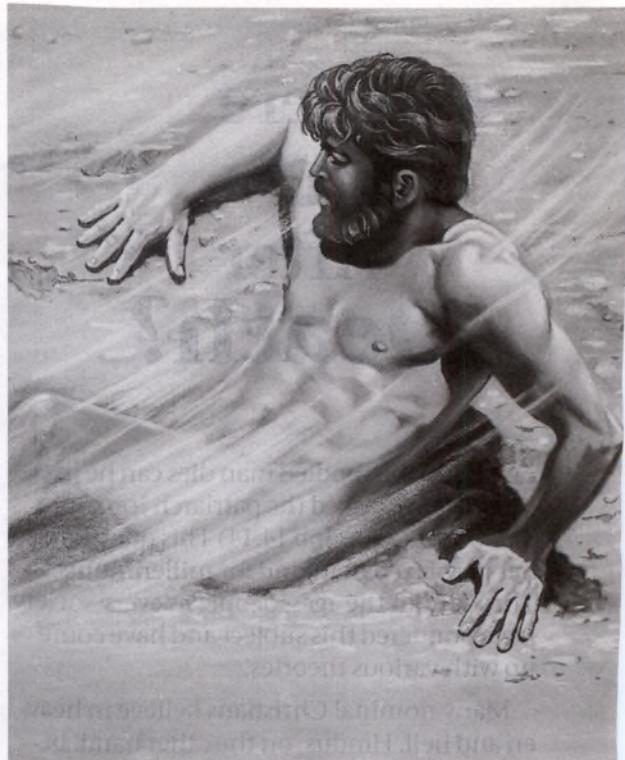
"**A**LL Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching, for reproofing, for setting things straight, for disciplining in righteousness," wrote the apostle Paul. (2 Timothy 3:16) Yes, the Bible is a book of truth that comes from the true God, Jehovah.—Psalm 83:18.

Since Jehovah is the Creator of all things, including humans, he well knows what happens to us when we die. (Hebrews 3:4; Revelation 4:11) And in his inspired Word, the Bible, he has given truthful and satisfying answers to questions about the hereafter.

What Is the Spirit?

In the Bible, the words translated "spirit" basically mean "breath." But this implies much more than the act of breathing. The Bible writer James, for example, states: "The body without spirit is dead." (James 2:26) Hence, spirit is that which animates the body.

This animating force cannot simply be the breath, or air, moving through the lungs. Why not? Because after breathing stops, life remains in the body cells for a brief period—"for several minutes," according to *The World Book Encyclopedia*. For this reason, efforts at resuscitation can succeed. But once



"Dust you are and to dust you will return"

the spark of life is extinguished from the cells of the body, any efforts to restore life are futile. All the breath, or air, in the world cannot revive even one cell. The spirit, then, is the invisible life-force—the spark of life that keeps the cells and the person alive. This life-force is sustained by breathing.—Job 34:14, 15.

Is that spirit active only in humans? The Bible helps us to reach a sound conclusion in this matter. Wise King Solomon acknowledged that humans and animals "all have but one spirit," and he asked: "Who is there knowing the spirit of the sons of mankind, whether it is ascending upward; and the spirit of the beast, whether it is descending downward to the earth?" (Ecclesiastes 3:

19-21) So animals as well as men are spoken of as having a spirit. How can that be?

The spirit, or life-force, can be compared to the electric current that flows through a machine or an appliance. The invisible electricity may perform various functions, depending on the type of equipment it powers. For example, an electric stove can be made to generate heat, a computer to process information, and a television set to produce images and sound. Yet, the electric current never takes on the features of the equipment it activates. It remains simply a force. Similarly, the life-force does not take on any of the characteristics of the creatures it animates. It has no personality and no thinking ability. Humans and animals "have but one spirit." (Ecclesiastes 3:19) When a person dies, therefore, his spirit does not go on existing in another realm as a spirit creature.

What, then, is the condition of the dead? And what happens to the spirit when a person dies?

"To Dust You Will Return"

When the first man, Adam, deliberately disobeyed God's command, He said to him: "In the sweat of your face you will eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken. For dust you are and to dust you will return." (Genesis 3:19) Where was Adam before Jehovah created him from the

dust? Why, he was nowhere! He simply did not exist. So when Jehovah God said that Adam would "return to the ground," he meant that Adam would die and return to the elements in the ground. Adam would not cross over to the spirit realm. At death Adam would once again be nonexistent. His punishment was death—absence of life—not a transfer to another realm.—Romans 6:23.

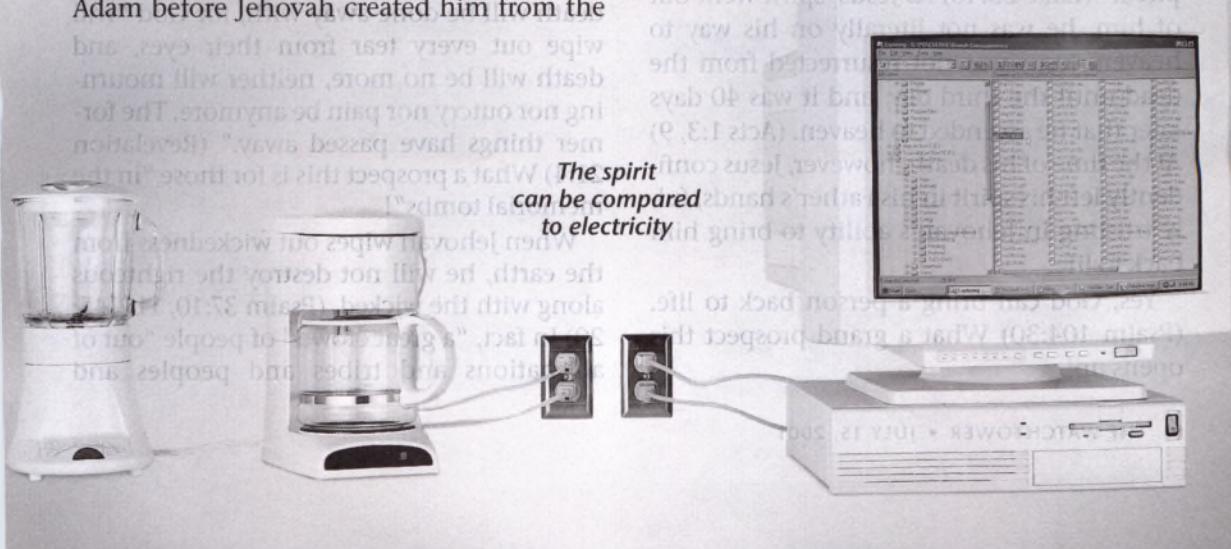
What about others who have died? The condition of the dead is made clear at Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10, where we read: "The dead know nothing . . . There is no pursuit, no plan, no knowledge or intelligence, within the grave." (Moffatt) Death, therefore, is a state of nonexistence. The psalmist wrote that when a person dies, "his spirit goes out, he goes back to his ground; in that day his thoughts do perish."—Psalm 146:4.

Clearly, the dead do not exist. They cannot know anything. They cannot see you, hear you, or talk to you. They can neither help you nor harm you. You certainly need not fear the dead. But how is it that the spirit "goes out" from a person at the time of his death?

The Spirit "Returns to the True God"

The Bible states that when a person dies, "the spirit itself returns to the true God who

*The spirit
can be compared
to electricity*



gave it." (Ecclesiastes 12:7) Does this mean that a spirit entity literally travels through space into God's presence? Not at all! The way in which the Bible uses the word "returns" does not require an actual movement from one place to another. For instance, unfaithful Israelites were told: "'Return to me, and I will return to you,' Jehovah of armies has said." (Malachi 3:7) Israel's 'returning' to Jehovah meant a turning around from a wrong course and again conforming to God's righteous way. And Jehovah's 'returning' to Israel meant his turning favorable attention to his people once again. In both cases the "return" involved an attitude, not a literal displacement from one geographic location to another.

Similarly, at death no actual movement from the earth to the heavenly realm occurs when the spirit "returns" to God. Once the life-force is gone from a person, only God has the ability to restore it to him. So the spirit "returns to the true God" in the sense that any hope of future life for that person now rests entirely with God.

Consider, for example, what the Scriptures say about Jesus Christ's death. The Gospel writer Luke relates: "Jesus called with a loud voice and said: 'Father, into your hands I entrust my spirit.' When he had said this, he expired." (Luke 23:46) As Jesus' spirit went out of him, he was not literally on his way to heaven. Jesus was not resurrected from the dead until the third day, and it was 40 days later that he ascended to heaven. (Acts 1:3, 9) At the time of his death, however, Jesus confidently left his spirit in his Father's hands, fully trusting in Jehovah's ability to bring him back to life.

Yes, God can bring a person back to life. (Psalm 104:30) What a grand prospect this opens up!

A Sure Hope

The Bible says: "The hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear [Jesus'] voice and come out." (John 5:28, 29) Yes, Jesus Christ promised that all those in Jehovah's memory will be resurrected, or brought back to life. Among them will indeed be those who have pursued a righteous course as Jehovah's servants. But millions of other people have died without showing whether they would comply with God's righteous standards. Either they did not know about Jehovah's requirements or they lacked sufficient time to make needed changes. Individuals of this sort are also in God's memory and will be resurrected, for the Bible says: "There is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous."—Acts 24:15.

Today, the earth is filled with hatred and strife, violence and bloodshed, pollution and disease. If the dead were to come back to life on such an earth, surely any resulting happiness would be short-lived. But the Creator has promised that he will soon bring an end to the present world society that is under the control of Satan the Devil. (Proverbs 2:21, 22; Daniel 2:44; 1 John 5:19) A righteous human society—"a new earth"—will then be a wonderful reality.—2 Peter 3:13.

At that time "no resident will say: 'I am sick.'" (Isaiah 33:24) Even the anguish of death will be done away with, for God "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 21:4) What a prospect this is for those "in the memorial tombs"!

When Jehovah wipes out wickedness from the earth, he will not destroy the righteous along with the wicked. (Psalm 37:10, 11; 145:20) In fact, "a great crowd" of people "out of all nations and tribes and peoples and

tongues" will survive "the great tribulation," which will destroy the present wicked world. (Revelation 7:9-14) Hence, a great multitude will be on hand to welcome back the dead.

Do you yearn to see your loved ones again? Do you want to live for-

ever in Paradise on earth? Then you must take in accurate knowledge of God's will and purposes. (John 17:3) It is Jehovah's will that "all sorts of men should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth." —1 Timothy 2:3, 4.



Helping Young People With Timely Instruction

EPAPHRAS was a first-century Christian who had traveled to Rome. For good reason, however, his thoughts kept going back to Colossae, a city in Asia Minor. He had preached the good news there and had undoubtedly helped some Colossians to become disciples of Jesus Christ. (Colossians 1:7) Epaphras was deeply concerned about fellow believers in Colossae, for from Rome the apostle Paul wrote them: "Epaphras . . . sends you his greetings, always exerting himself in your behalf in his prayers, that you may finally stand complete and with firm conviction in all the will of God." —Colossians 4:12.

Similarly, present-day Christian fathers and mothers fervently pray for the spiritual welfare of their children. These parents strive to implant love for God in the hearts of their young ones so that they will become firm in faith.

Many Christian youths have asked for help in dealing with the challenges they face in school and elsewhere. One 15-year-old girl said: "Our problems are worsening. Life is very scary. We need help!" Have the requests of such youths and the prayers of godly parents been answered? Yes! Bible-based instruction has been provided through "the faithful and discreet slave." (Matthew 24:45) Seen here is some of the literature that has helped hundreds of thousands of youths to "stand complete and with firm conviction." Let us consider a few of these publications.

"Behold . . . 15,000 New Witnesses!"

In August 1941, an audience of 115,000 assembled in St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.A., for the largest convention of Jehovah's Witnesses held up to that time. On its last day—"Children's Day"—some 15,000 children sitting near the platform listened intently as Joseph F. Rutherford spoke on the subject "Children of the King." Near the end of his talk, 71-year-old Rutherford said in a fatherly tone:

"All of you . . . children who have agreed . . . to obey God and his King, please stand up."

The children rose as one body. "Behold," exclaimed Brother Rutherford, "more than 15,000 new witnesses to the Kingdom!" There was a burst of applause. The speaker added: "All of you who will do what you can to tell others about God's kingdom . . . , please say Aye." The children responded with a loud "Aye!" Then he displayed the new book *Children*, which was received with prolonged applause.

After this moving talk, a long line of young people walked up on the platform, where Brother Rutherford handed them a gift copy of the new book. The scene moved the audience to tears. One eyewitness to the event said: "Only a heart of stone would not be moved at the spectacle of youth [showing] complete trust and faith in their God, Jehovah."

At that memorable assembly, 1,300 young people were baptized in symbol of their dedication to Jehovah. Many of them have remained firm in the faith until this very day. They support local congregations, are Bethel volunteers, or serve as missionaries in foreign lands. Indeed, "Children's Day" and the book *Children* made a lasting impression on many young hearts!

"They Seem to Come at Just the Right Time"

During the 1970's, Jehovah's Witnesses published three more books that reached the hearts of hundreds of thousands of young people. These were *Listening to the Great Teacher*, *Your Youth—Getting the Best out of It*, and *My Book of Bible Stories*. In 1982 the series "Young

People Ask . . ." began to appear in the *Awake!* magazine. These articles have touched a responsive chord in the hearts of young and old. "Every night I thank God for having them published," said a 14-year-old. "I love the articles," noted a 13-year-old, "they seem to come at just the right time." Parents and appointed Christian elders agree that these articles have been timely and beneficial.

By 1989 some 200 "Young People Ask . . ." articles had appeared in *Awake!* At the "Godly Devotion" District Convention that year, the book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work* was released. Has it helped youths to remain firm in the faith? Three youths wrote: "This book has been a wonderful asset to us in understanding our problems and in knowing how to deal with them. Thank you for your concern for our well-being." Numerous young readers throughout the world agree.

"It Satisfied Our Hunger"

In 1999, Jehovah's Witnesses produced another timely form of instruction for youths—the video *Young People Ask—How Can I Make Real Friends?* It triggered an enthusiastic response. "This video went straight to my heart," said a 14-year-old. "It will be a regular part of our spiritual diet," stated a single mother. "It is heartwarming to know that our best Friend, Jehovah, truly loves and cares for the youth in his worldwide organization," said one young woman.

What has the video accomplished? Young people say: "It has helped me to watch my association, to widen out in the congregation, and to make Jehovah my friend." "It has helped me to stand up to my peers." "It has made me firm in my determination to serve Jehovah the best that I can." And a married couple wrote: "Thank you from our hearts for providing us with this 'food.' It satisfied our hunger."

True to its God-given commission, the anointed "faithful and discreet slave" has provided timely spiritual food for all who will accept it. And what a joy it is to see how such Scriptural instruction is helping young people today to "stand complete and with firm conviction in all the will of God"!



BE JOYFUL HARVEST WORKERS!

"The harvest is great, but the workers are few. Therefore, beg the Master of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest."—MATTHEW 9:37, 38.

WHEN we recall the day of our baptism as one of Jehovah's servants, whether it occurred a few years ago or many, it may seem as though it took place yesterday. Praising Jehovah became the focal point of our dedicated life. As we bought out the opportune time to help others to hear and possibly accept the Kingdom message, joyful service to Jehovah was our major concern. (Ephesians 5:15, 16) To this day, we find that time flies when we are busy, "having plenty to do in the work of the Lord." (1 Corinthians 15:58) Although we encounter problems, our joy in doing Jehovah's will spurs us on.—Nehemiah 8:10.

² As Christians, we are engaged in a figurative harvest work. Jesus Christ likened the gathering of individuals for everlasting life to a harvest. (John 4:35-38) Since we are participating in such harvesting activity, it will be encouraging to examine the joy of the early Christian harvest workers. We will review three factors that contribute to the joy we experience in today's harvest work. These are (1) our message of hope, (2) the success of our search, and (3) our peace-making attitude as harvest workers.

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1. What helps us to press on in doing God's will?
 2. What contributes to the joy we experience in the figurative harvest work?



Sent Forth as Harvest Workers

³ How the lives of early harvest workers—particularly Jesus' 11 faithful apostles—changed on the day in 33 C.E. when they went to a mountain in Galilee to meet the resurrected Christ! (Matthew 28:16) "Upward of five hundred brothers" may have been present on that occasion. (1 Corinthians 15:6) The commission Jesus gave them rang in their ears. He told them: "Go . . . and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit, teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:19, 20) Despite bitter persecution, they experienced much joy in the harvest work as they saw congregations of Christ's followers being established in one place after another. In time, 'the good news was being preached to all creation under heaven.'—Colossians 1:23; Acts 1:8; 16:5.

⁴ At an earlier point in his ministry in Galilee, Jesus had summoned the 12 apostles and

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3. In what respect did Jesus' early followers experience joy?
 4. Under what circumstances were Christ's disciples sent forth?

had sent them forth especially to declare: "The kingdom of the heavens has drawn near." (Matthew 10:1-7) He himself had "set out on a tour of all the [Galilean] cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the good news of the kingdom and curing every sort of disease and every sort of infirmity." Jesus felt pity for the crowds "because they were skinned and thrown about like sheep without a shepherd." (Matthew 9:35, 36) Deeply moved, he then told his disciples: "Yes, the harvest is great, but the workers are few. Therefore, beg the Master of the harvest [Jehovah God] to send out workers into his harvest." (Matthew 9:37, 38) Jesus' assessment of the need for harvest workers was the same in Judea when only six months of his earthly ministry remained. (Luke 10:2) On both occasions, he sent his followers forth as harvest workers.—Matthew 10:5; Luke 10:3.

Our Message of Hope

⁵ As Jehovah's present-day servants, we joyfully respond to the call for harvest workers. One factor that contributes greatly to our joy is that we take a message of hope to the downhearted and depressed. Like Jesus' first-century disciples, what a privilege we have to declare the good news—a real message of hope—to those "skinned and thrown about like sheep without a shepherd"!

⁶ By the middle of the first century, the apostle Paul was busy preaching the good news. And his harvesting work was surely effective, for in writing to Christians in Corinth in about 55 C.E., he said: "I make known to you, brothers, the good news which I declared to you, which you also received, in which you also stand." (1 Corinthians 15:1) The apostles and other early Christians were industrious harvest workers. Although the Bi-

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5. What kind of message do we declare?
 6. In what activity did the apostles engage in the first century?

ble does not tell us how many apostles lived through the momentous events ending in Jerusalem's destruction in 70 C.E., we do know that the apostle John was still preaching some 25 years later.—Revelation 1:9.

⁷ Then came centuries of dominance by Christendom's clergy, the apostate "man of lawlessness." (2 Thessalonians 2:3) Toward the end of the 19th century, however, those who sought to pattern their lives on primitive Christianity took up the message of hope, heralding the Kingdom. In fact, since its first issue (July 1879), the title of this journal has included the words "Herald of Christ's Presence," "Herald of Christ's Kingdom," or "Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom."

⁸ God's heavenly Kingdom was established in the hands of Jesus Christ in 1914, and we are now proclaiming the message of hope with more urgency than ever before. Why? Because among the blessings of Kingdom rule is the imminent end of the present wicked system. (Daniel 2:44) What better message could there be? And what greater joy could we have than to share in announcing the Kingdom before the "great tribulation" strikes?—Matthew 24:21; Mark 13:10.

A Successful Search

⁹ Another factor that contributes to our joy as harvest workers is the success of our search for those who become disciples and join us in the harvest work. Back in 31-32 C.E., Jesus instructed his disciples: "Into whatever city or village you enter, search out who in it is deserving." (Matthew 10:11) Not all individuals were deserving, as shown by their reaction to the Kingdom message. Nevertheless, Jesus' disciples zealously preached the good news wherever people happened to be.

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7. 8. What message of hope have Jehovah's servants been declaring with more urgency now than ever?
 9. What instruction did Jesus give his disciples, and how did people react to the Kingdom message?

^{be}¹⁰ After Jesus' death and resurrection, the search for deserving ones continued with vigor. Paul reasoned with the Jews in their synagogue and with people on hand in the marketplace in Athens. When he gave a witness on the Areopagus in that Greek city, "some men joined themselves to him and became believers, among whom also were Dionysius, a judge of the court of the Areopagus, and a woman named Damaris, and others besides them." Wherever Paul went, he was also exemplary in preaching "publicly and from house to house."—Acts 17:17, 34; 20:20.

¹¹ During the closing decades of the 19th century, anointed Christians boldly engaged in the search for deserving ones. In an article entitled "Anointed to Preach," *Zion's Watch Tower* of July/August 1881 said: "The preaching of the good news... is going on 'to the meek'—those willing and able to hear, in order to develop from among them the body of Christ, the joint heirs." God's harvest workers often met people as these were leaving church services and gave them tracts containing Scriptural messages designed to evoke a favorable response in deserving ones. After a reappraisal of the effectiveness of this method of witnessing, the *Watch Tower* of May 15, 1903, urged harvest workers to distribute the tracts "from house to house, on Sunday forenoons."

¹² In recent years, we have expanded our ministry by contacting people at places other than their homes. This has proved very effective in lands where economic conditions and the pursuit of leisure activities take people away from their homes at times when we normally call. When a Witness in England and her companion observed visitors leaving reg-



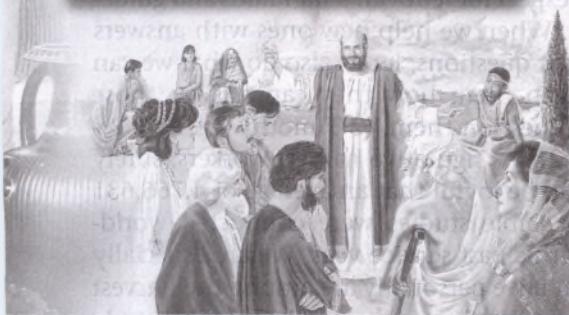
*Preaching in the 1st
and 20th centuries*

ularly by bus after enjoying a day at the coast, they summoned up courage to board the buses and present copies of *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* to the passengers. In one month, they distributed 229 copies. They report: "We have no fear of sea-front witnessing, business territory, or any other challenge we may come up against because we know that Jehovah is always with us." They established a magazine route, started a Bible study, and both of them have shared in the auxiliary pioneer service.

¹³ As the search for deserving ones continues, a careful reappraisal of our ministry may be called for in some places. Though many Witnesses have customarily engaged in preaching from house to house on Sunday mornings, in certain areas they find that early visits to people's homes are less effective because the occupants may be resting. By adjust-

10. How did Paul pursue his search for deserving ones?
11. What methods for carrying out the ministry were used years ago?
12. How have we increased the effectiveness of our preaching work? Illustrate.

13. What adjustment in our ministry is now called for in some places?



Like Paul, present-day harvest workers try to reach people everywhere

ing their schedule, many Witnesses now pursue the search later in the day, perhaps following Christian meetings. And this search has indeed proved fruitful. Last year the number of Kingdom proclaimers worldwide rose by 2.3 percent. This honors the Master of the harvest and brings joy to our hearts.

Maintain Peace in the Harvest Work

¹⁴ Another reason for our joy relates to the peace-making attitude we display in the harvest work. "When you are entering into the house," Jesus said, "greet the household; and if the house is deserving, let the peace you wish it come upon it." (Matthew 10:12, 13) The Hebrew greeting and the corresponding term in Biblical Greek both convey the thought 'May it go well with you.' This sentiment guides our approach to people when we preach the good news. Our hope is that they

¹⁴. With what attitude do we present our message, and why?

will respond favorably to the Kingdom message. For those who do, there is the prospect of reconciliation with God as they repent of their sins, turn around, and do his will. In turn, peace with God leads to everlasting life.—John 17:3; Acts 3:19; 13:38, 48; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20.

¹⁵ How can we maintain our peace when the reaction we encounter is unfavorable? Jesus directed: "If [the house] is not deserving, let the peace from you return upon you." (Matthew 10:13) Luke's account about the sending out of 70 disciples includes Jesus' statement: "If a friend of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if there is not, it will turn back to you." (Luke 10:6) When we approach people with the good news, we appropriately do so with a pleasant disposition and in a manner that is peaceable. An apathetic response, a complaint, or an unkind remark by a householder only serves to allow our peaceful message to 'return to us.' But none of this robs us of peace, a fruit of Jehovah's holy spirit.—Galatians 5:22, 23.

A Fine Goal for Harvest Workers

¹⁶ As harvest workers we are delighted to have a part in the gathering of people for

15. How can we maintain a peaceful attitude when we encounter an unfavorable reaction in our preaching work?

16, 17. (a) What is our goal when making return visits? (b) How can we help those who have Bible questions?



Proclaim the good news with a pleasant disposition

everlasting life. And what joy we experience when a person to whom we preach responds favorably, wants to learn more, and proves to be "a friend of peace"! Perhaps he has many Bible questions and we find it impossible to answer all of them during one visit. Since a prolonged stay on the first visit may be inappropriate, what can be done? We can have a goal like the one recommended some 60 years ago.

¹⁷ "All of Jehovah's witnesses should be prepared to conduct model studies in the Bible." That statement appeared in the third in a series of *Model Study* instruction booklets published from 1937 to 1941. It went on to say: "All [Kingdom] publishers should be diligent in assisting in every way possible the people of good-will showing interest in the Kingdom message. Back-calls [return visits] should be made on these persons, answering various questions . . . , and then begin a model study . . . as soon as you possibly can." Yes, our goal on return visits is to start a home Bible study and conduct it regularly.* A friendly attitude and loving concern for the interested person prompt us to prepare well and conduct the study effectively.

* Studies were organized first at locations where groups of interested people could be gathered. Soon, however, the studies were also held with individuals and families.—See *Jehovah's Witnesses—Proclaimers of God's Kingdom*, page 574, published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

How Would You Answer?

- What is the figurative harvest work?
- What kind of message do we declare?
- Why is our search for disciples successful?
- How do we maintain peace in the harvest work?
- Why do we keep on rejoicing in the harvest?

¹⁸ With the help of the book *Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life* and such brochures as *What Does God Require of Us?*, we can conduct effective home Bible studies and can thus share in assisting newly interested ones to become disciples. As we seek to imitate the Great Teacher, Jesus Christ, likely such Bible students will also learn from our peaceful, joyful manner, our sincerity, and our respect for Jehovah's standards and guidelines. When we help new ones with answers to their questions, let us also do what we can to teach them how they can answer those who question them. (2 Timothy 2:1, 2; 1 Peter 2:21) As figurative harvest workers, surely we can be joyful that an average of 4,766,631 home Bible studies were conducted worldwide this past service year. We are especially joyful if we personally are among the harvest workers who have a share in home Bible study activity.

Keep On Rejoicing in the Harvest

¹⁹ There were good reasons for joy in the harvest during Jesus' ministry and shortly thereafter. Many then responded favorably to the good news. Rejoicing was particularly great at Pentecost 33 C.E., for some 3,000 then accepted Peter's direction, received Jehovah's holy spirit, and became part of God's nation of spiritual Israel. Indeed, their numbers kept on increasing, and joy abounded as "Jehovah continued to join to them daily those being saved."—Acts 2:37-41, 46, 47; Galatians 6:16; 1 Peter 2:9.

²⁰ At that time, Isaiah's prophecy was proving true: "You [Jehovah] have made the nation populous; for it you have made the rejoicing great. They have rejoiced before you as

18. How can we help new ones to become disciples of Jesus Christ?
19. Why were there good reasons for joy in the harvest during Jesus' ministry and shortly thereafter?
20. What brings us abundant joy in our harvest work?

with the rejoicing in the harvesttime, as those who are joyful when they divide up the spoil." (Isaiah 9:3) Although we now see that 'populous nation' of anointed ones virtually complete, our joy is abundant as we observe the number of other harvest workers growing year by year.—Psalm 4:7; Zechariah 8:23; John 10:16.

²¹ We certainly have sound reasons to keep on rejoicing in the harvest work. Our message of hope, our search for deserving ones, and

21. What will we discuss in the following article?

our peace-making attitude—all of these factors bring us joy as harvest workers. Yet, they prompt an adverse reaction from many. The apostle John experienced this. He was imprisoned on the island of Patmos "for speaking about God and bearing witness to Jesus." (Revelation 1:9) How, then, can we maintain our joy when faced with persecution and opposition? What will help us to cope with the hardening attitude of many to whom we now preach? Our next article offers Scriptural help in answering these questions.

PRESS ON IN THE HARVEST WORK!

"Those sowing seed with tears will reap even with a joyful cry."—PSALM 126:5.

After Jesus Christ's third preaching tour of Galilee, he told his disciples: "The harvest is great, but the workers are few." (Matthew 9:37) The situation was the same in Judea. (Luke 10:2) Since that was true nearly 2,000 years ago, what is the case today? Well, during the last service year, over 6,000,000 Witnesses of Jehovah pressed on in the figurative harvest work among the world's 6,000,000,000 people, many of whom are "skinned and thrown about like sheep without a shepherd." So Jesus' exhortation to "beg the Master of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest" is as valid now as it was

1. Why "beg the Master of the harvest to send out workers" today?



centuries ago.—Matthew 9: 36, 38.

² Jehovah God, the Master of the harvest, has answered the plea to send out more workers. And what a joy it is to share in this God-directed harvest work! Though we are few in number compared with the nations, our zealous share in the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making activity brings us to the world's attention. In many lands we are frequently mentioned in the media. The ring of a doorbell in a television drama may elicit the comment that Jehovah's Witnesses are at the door. Yes, our Christian activity as figurative harvest workers is well-known in the 21st century.

2. What brings us to the attention of the people?

³ The world also noted first-century Kingdom-preaching activities and persecuted proclaimers of the good news. Thus, the apostle Paul wrote: "It seems to me that God has put us the apostles last on exhibition as men appointed to death, because we [the apostles] have become a theatrical spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men." (1 Corinthians 4:9) Similarly, our perseverance as Kingdom proclaimers despite persecution brings us to the world's attention and is of importance to the angels. Says Revelation 14:6: "I [the apostle John] saw another angel flying in midheaven, and he had everlasting good news to declare as glad tidings to those who dwell on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people." Yes, we have angelic support in our ministry—our harvest work!—Hebrews 1:13, 14.

"Objects of Hatred"

⁴ When Jesus' apostles were sent forth as harvest workers, they heeded his instruction to be "cautious as serpents and yet innocent as doves." Jesus added: "Be on your guard against men; for they will deliver you up to local courts, and they will scourge you in their synagogues. Why, you will be haled before governors and kings for my sake, for a witness to them and the nations. . . . And you will be objects of hatred by all people on account of my name; but he that has endured to the end is the one that will be saved."—Matthew 10:16-22.

⁵ We are "objects of hatred" today because "the whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one," Satan the Devil, who is the chief enemy of God and His people. (1 John 5:19) Our enemies observe our spiritual prosperity but refuse to attribute it to Jehovah. Oppos-



ers see our happy, smiling faces as we joyfully share in the harvest work. They marvel at our unity! In fact, they may grudgingly acknowledge it when they travel to another land and find that Jehovah's Witnesses there are doing the very same work as that observed in their homeland. Of course, we know that in due time Jehovah, our backer and the source of our unity, will be made known even to our enemies.—Ezekiel 38:10-12, 23.

⁶ The Master of the harvest has given his Son, Jesus Christ, "all authority . . . in heaven and on the earth." (Matthew 28:18) Jehovah thus uses Jesus to direct the harvest work through the heavenly angels and the anointed "faithful and discreet slave" here on the earth. (Matthew 24:45-47; Revelation 14:6, 7) But how can we cope with enemy opposition

3. (a) How do we know that notice was taken of first-century Kingdom-preaching activity? (b) Why can we say that the angels support our ministry?

4, 5. (a) What warning did Jesus give his disciples? (b) Why are God's present-day servants "objects of hatred"?

6. What assurance do we have as we engage in the harvest work, but what question arises?

and yet maintain our joy as we press on in the harvest work?

⁷ When we face opposition or even outright persecution, let us seek God's help so that we can maintain a disposition like that of Paul. He wrote: "When being reviled, we bless; when being persecuted, we bear up; when being defamed, we entreat." (1 Corinthians 4: 12, 13) This spirit, coupled with our tactful public ministry, sometimes changes the attitude of our opposers.

⁸ Not even the threat of death dampens our zeal as harvest workers. We fearlessly proclaim the Kingdom message as openly as possible. And we draw encouraging reassurance from Jesus' words: "Do not become fearful of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; but rather be in fear of him that can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna." (Matthew 10:28) We know that our heavenly Father is the Giver of life. He rewards those who

7. What disposition should we endeavor to maintain when opposed or persecuted?

8. What reassurance do you derive from Jesus' words recorded at Matthew 10:28?

Those engaging in the spiritual harvest have angelic support



maintain integrity to him and faithfully press on in the harvest work.

A Lifesaving Message

⁹ When the prophet Ezekiel boldly declared Jehovah's messages to the "rebellious nations"—the kingdoms of Israel and Judah—some individuals were pleased to hear what he had to say. (Ezekiel 2:3) "Look!" said Jehovah, "you are to them like a song of sensuous loves, like one with a pretty voice and playing a stringed instrument well." (Ezekiel 33:32) Although they liked Ezekiel's words, they failed to act on them. What is happening today? When the anointed remnant and their companions courageously declare Jehovah's messages, some like to hear about Kingdom blessings, but they do not respond appreciatively, become disciples, and join in the harvest work.

¹⁰ On the other hand, many have responded favorably to the harvest work and have

9. How did some respond to Ezekiel's words, and how is a similar thing happening today?

10, 11. In the first half of the 20th century, what was done to publicize our lifesaving message, and with what results?



Information marches brought the Kingdom message to the attention of many

shared in declaring God's messages. During a series of Christian conventions from 1922 to 1928, for instance, judgment messages on Satan's wicked system of things rang out clearly. Radio stations broadcast these denunciations presented at those assemblies. Thereafter, God's people distributed printed copies of these by the millions.

¹¹ In the late 1930's, another form of witnessing activity opened up—information marches. At first, Jehovah's people wore placards that announced public talks. Later, they carried placards with such slogans as "Religion is a snare and a racket" and "Serve God and Christ the King." When they marched through the streets, they attracted the attention of passersby. 'This did much to bring Jehovah's Witnesses into the limelight and to embolden them,' commented a brother who regularly shared in this work on the busy streets of London, England.

¹² As we declare God's judgment messages, we also feature the positive aspects of the Kingdom message. Our bold witnessing on the world stage helps us search out deserving ones. (Matthew 10:11) Most of the final members of the anointed class responded to the

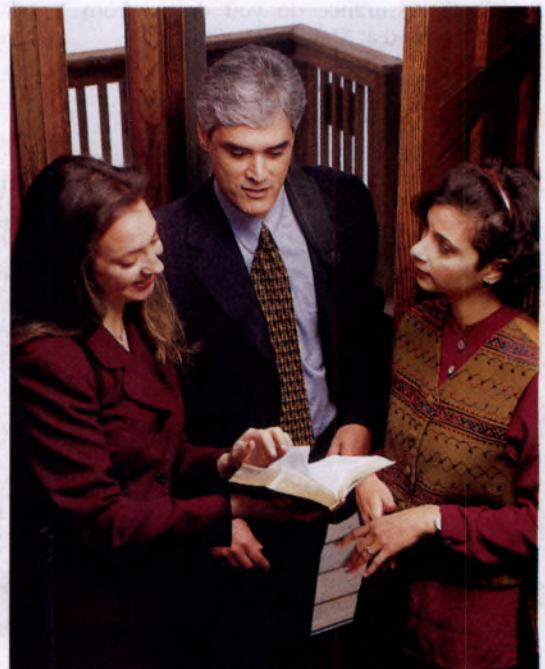
12. In addition to God's judgment messages, what have we featured in our ministry, and who are now united in preaching the good news?

clarion harvest call during the 1920's and 1930's. Then, at a convention in 1935, came the wonderful news of a blessed future for "a great crowd" of "other sheep" on a paradise earth. (Revelation 7:9; John 10:16) They have heeded God's judgment messages and have become united with the anointed ones in preaching the lifesaving good news.

¹³ Of great comfort to God's harvest workers, and especially to those who suffer persecution, are the words of Psalm 126:5, 6: "Those sowing seed with tears will reap even with a joyful cry. The one that without fail goes forth, even weeping, carrying along a bagful of seed, will without fail come in with a joyful cry, carrying along his sheaves." The psalmist's words about sowing and reaping illustrate Jehovah's care for and blessing on the

13, 14. (a) What comfort can be drawn from Psalm 126:5, 6? (b) If we continue to sow and water, what will happen?

We plant and water, but God makes it grow



remnant that returned from captivity in ancient Babylon. They were very happy at their release, but they may have wept when sowing seed in the desolate ground that had not been worked during their 70-year exile. However, those who went ahead with their sowing and construction activities enjoyed fruitage and satisfaction from their labor.

¹⁴ We may shed tears when under trial or when we or our fellow believers are suffering for righteousness' sake. (1 Peter 3:14) In our harvest work, we may at first have a hard time because we seemingly have nothing to show for our efforts in the ministry. But if we continue to sow and water, God will make things grow, often beyond our expectations. (1 Corinthians 3:6) This is well illustrated by the results of our distribution of Bibles and Scriptural publications.

¹⁵ Consider the example of a man named Jim. When his mother died, he found among her possessions a copy of the book *Life—How Did It Get Here? By Evolution or by Creation?** He read it with interest. In a discussion with a Witness who approached him on the street, Jim agreed to a return visit, and this led to a Bible study. Jim made rapid spiritual progress, dedicated himself to Jehovah, and was baptized. He told other members of his family about what he had learned. As a result, his sister and brother became Jehovah's Witnesses, and Jim later enjoyed the privilege of serving as a full-time volunteer at Bethel in London.

Persecuted yet Joyful

¹⁶ Why has there been such success in the harvest work? Because anointed Christians and their companions have heeded Jesus' in-

* Published and distributed by Jehovah's Witnesses.

15. Give an example of the usefulness of Christian publications in the harvest work.
16. (a) Why has success been experienced in the harvest work? (b) What warning did Jesus give regarding the effect of the good news, but with what attitude do we approach people?

structions: "What I tell you in the darkness, say in the light; and what you hear whispered, preach from the housetops." (Matthew 10:27) However, we can expect hardships, for Jesus warned: "Brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise up against parents and will have them put to death." Jesus further said: "Do not think I came to put peace upon the earth; I came to put, not peace, but a sword." (Matthew 10:21, 34) Jesus did not deliberately set out to divide families. But the good news sometimes had that effect. The same is true of God's servants today. When we visit families, it is not our intention to introduce a divisive factor. It is our desire that everyone embrace the good news. Therefore, we try to approach all members of a family in a kind, sympathetic way that makes our message appealing to those "rightly disposed for everlasting life."—Acts 13:48.

¹⁷ The Kingdom message has set apart those who uphold God's sovereignty. For instance, consider how our fellow worshipers stood out as different because they 'paid Caesar's things to Caesar but God's things to God' in the days of National Socialism in Germany. (Luke 20:25) In contrast with religious leaders and nominal Christians associated with the churches of Christendom, Jehovah's servants stood firm, refusing to violate Bible principles. (Isaiah 2:4; Matthew 4:10; John 17:16) Professor Christine King, author of the book *The Nazi State and the New Religions*, observed: "Only against the Witnesses was the [Nazi] government unsuccessful, for although they had killed thousands, the work went on and in May 1945 the Jehovah's Witness movement was still alive, whilst National Socialism was not."

18. Significant indeed is the attitude manifested by Jehovah's people when they are
17. How are those who uphold God's sovereignty set apart, and what is one example of this?
18. What attitude do Jehovah's people manifest despite persecution?

faced with persecution. While secular authorities may be impressed by our faith, they express amazement at the absence of ill-will or rancor on our part. For instance, Witness survivors of the Holocaust frequently express joy and contentment as they look back on their experiences. They know that Jehovah gave them "power beyond what is normal." (2 Corinthians 4:7) Anointed ones among us have the assurance that their "names have been inscribed in the heavens." (Luke 10:20) Their endurance produces a hope that does not lead to disappointment, and faithful harvest workers with earthly prospects have a similar conviction.—Romans 5:4, 5.

Persevere in the Harvest Work

¹⁹ How much longer Jehovah will allow us to engage in the figurative harvest work remains to be seen. In the meantime, we should bear in mind that harvesters have specific methods for doing their work. Similarly, we can be sure that our faithfulness in using the tried and tested ways of preaching will prove effective. Paul told fellow Christians: "I entreat you, . . . become imitators of me." (1 Corinthians 4:16) When Paul met with the Ephesian elders at Miletus, he reminded them that he had not held back from teaching them "publicly and from house to

19. What effective methods have been used in the Christian ministry?

How Would You Answer?

- How has the Master of the harvest answered the plea for more workers?
- Although we are "objects of hatred," what disposition do we maintain?
- Why are we joyful even though we are persecuted?
- Why should we persevere in the harvest work with a sense of urgency?

house." (Acts 20:20, 21) Paul's companion Timothy had learned what the apostle's methods were and could therefore acquaint the Corinthians with these. (1 Corinthians 4:17) God blessed Paul's teaching methods, even as he will bless our perseverance in preaching the good news publicly from house to house, on return visits, on home Bible studies, and anywhere that people can be found.—Acts 17:17.

²⁰ After witnessing to a Samaritan woman near Sychar in 30 C.E., Jesus spoke of the spiritual harvest. He told his disciples: "Lift up your eyes and view the fields, that they are white for harvesting. Already the reaper is receiving wages and gathering fruit for everlasting life, so that the sower and the reaper may rejoice together." (John 4:34-36) Perhaps Jesus had already seen the effect of his encounter with the Samaritan woman, for many were putting faith in him on account of her testimony. (John 4:39) In recent years, various countries have lifted restrictions on Jehovah's Witnesses or have granted them legal recognition, thus opening up new fields for harvesting. The result is that an abundant spiritual harvest is in progress. In fact, throughout the world, rich blessings are being experienced as we joyfully continue to engage in the spiritual harvest.

²¹ When crops are ripe and ready for harvesting, workers must act with urgency. They must labor without delay. Today, we need to work industriously and with a sense of urgency because we are living in "the time of the end." (Daniel 12:4) Yes, we encounter trials, but there is a greater harvest of Jehovah's worshipers than ever before. This is therefore a day of rejoicing. (Isaiah 9:3) As joyful workers, then, let us press on in the harvest work!

20. How did Jesus indicate that an abundant spiritual harvest was at hand, and how has this proved true in recent years?

21. Why do we have reason to press on as joyful harvest workers?

ARE YOU TRULY TOLERANT?

HAVE you ever felt incensed because of someone's improper conduct? Are you quick to act when corrupting influences are making inroads among your close associates?

Prompt and firm action is sometimes required to stop the spread of serious sin. For example, when brazen wrongdoing threatened to defile the Israelites in the 15th century B.C.E., Aaron's grandson Phinehas took decisive action to clear away what was bad. Jehovah God approved of what he did, saying: "Phinehas . . . has turned back my wrath from upon the sons of Israel by his tolerating no rivalry at all toward me in the midst of them."—Numbers 25:1-11.

Phinehas took appropriate action to halt the spread of contamination. But what about unchecked indignation at the mere human failings of others? If we were to act rashly or without just cause, we would become not so much a champion of righteousness as a figure of intolerance—someone who makes no allowances for the imperfections of others. What can help us to avoid this pitfall?

'Jehovah Is Forgiving All Your Error'
Jehovah is "a God who is jealous (zealous); a God not tolerating rivalry." (Exodus 20:5, footnote) Being the Creator, he has the right to demand our exclusive devotion. (Revelation 4:11) Yet, Jehovah is tolerant of human

weaknesses. Concerning him, the psalmist David therefore sang: "Jehovah is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness. He will not for all time keep finding fault . . . He has not done to us even according to our sins; nor according to our errors has he brought upon us what we deserve." Yes, if we are repentant, God 'is forgiving all our error.'—Psalm 103:3, 8-10.

Because he understands the sinful nature of humans, Jehovah does not "keep finding fault" with repentant wrongdoers. (Psalm 51:5; Romans 5:12) In fact, it is his purpose to eliminate sin and imperfection. Until that is fully accomplished, rather than bringing upon us "what we deserve," God graciously extends forgiveness on the basis of Jesus Christ's ransom sacrifice. None of us would be judged worthy of survival if Jehovah did not show mercy when appropriate. (Psalm 130:3) How grateful we can be that our heavenly Father, who rightfully demands exclusive devotion, is a merciful God!

Balance Is Needed

Since the Sovereign Lord of the universe displays tolerance in dealing with imperfect humans, should we not do the same? Tolerance has been defined as "the disposition to be patient with the opinions or practices of others." Do we personally have such a disposition—an inclination to exercise patience and forbearance when others say or do things that are not grossly sinful but perhaps are inappropriate in word or deed?

Of course, we need to avoid being overly tolerant. For instance, terrible damage is done when religious authorities tolerate abusive priests who persistently molest boys and girls. "Treating the children as occasions of sin," commented one reporter in Ireland,

"the church authorities merely moved on the offending priest [to another location]."

Is just transferring such a man an example of proper tolerance? Hardly! Suppose a medical body allowed an irresponsible surgeon to continue operating, transferring him from one hospital to another, even though he was killing or maiming his patients. A mistaken sense of professional loyalty might produce such "tolerance." But what about the victims whose lives were lost or adversely affected because of negligent or even criminal practices?

There is also a danger of showing too little tolerance. When Jesus was on the earth, some Jews known as Zealots wrongly sought to use the example of Phinehas in an attempt to justify their own activities. One extreme action of certain Zealots was "to mingle with crowds in Jerusalem during festivals and similar occasions and stab the objects of their displeasure unawares with daggers."

As Christians, we would never go as far as the Zealots did in physically attacking those who displease us. But does a certain degree of intolerance lead us to attack in other ways those we disapprove of—perhaps by speaking abusively of them? If we are truly tolerant, we will not resort to the use of such hurtful speech.

The first-century Pharisees were another intolerant group. They were constantly condemning others and made no allowance for human imperfection. The proud Pharisees looked down on the common folk, maligning them as "accursed people." (John 7:49) For good reason, Jesus denounced such self-righteous men, saying: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you give the tenth of the mint and the dill and the cumin, but you have disregarded the weightier matters of the Law, namely, justice and

mercy and faithfulness. These things it was binding to do, yet not to disregard the other things."—Matthew 23:23.

In making this statement, Jesus was not downplaying the importance of keeping the Mosaic Law. He was simply showing that the "weightier," or more important, aspects of the Law required applying it with reasonableness and mercy. How Jesus and his disciples stood out from the intolerant Pharisees and Zealots!

Neither Jehovah God nor Jesus Christ condones badness. Soon, 'vengeance will be brought upon those who do not know God and those who do not obey the good news.' (2 Thessalonians 1:6-10) In his zeal for righteousness, however, Jesus never fails to reflect his heavenly Father's patient, merciful, and loving concern for all who want to do what is right. (Isaiah 42:1-3; Matthew 11:28-30; 12:18-21) What a fine example Jesus set for us!

Patiently Put Up With One Another

Though we may have great zeal for what is right, let us apply the apostle Paul's counsel: "Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely if anyone has a cause for complaint against another. Even as Jehovah freely forgave you, so do you also." (Colossians 3:13; Matthew 6:14, 15) Tolerance requires putting up with one another's shortcomings and mistakes in this imperfect world. We need to be reasonable about what we expect of others.—Philippians 4:5.

Being tolerant does not in any way imply approval of wrongdoing or being blind to errors. Some aspect of a fellow believer's thinking or conduct may be somewhat out of harmony with Jehovah's standards. Though the deviation may not yet be so serious as to lead to rejection by God, it may give a warning signal indicating that some

adjustment is required. (Genesis 4:6, 7) How loving it is when those having spiritual qualifications try to readjust the erring one in a spirit of mildness! (Galatians 6:1) To succeed in this endeavor, though, it is necessary to act out of concern rather than with a critical spirit.

"With a Mild Temper and Deep Respect"

What about exercising patience toward people whose religious views differ from ours? A "General Lesson" that was posted in all the National Schools established in Ireland in 1831 reads: "Jesus Christ did not intend his religion to be forced on men by violent means. . . . Quarrelling with our neighbours and abusing them is not the way to convince them that we are in the right and they in the wrong. It is more likely to convince them that we have not a Christian spirit."

Jesus taught and acted in a way that drew people to God's Word, and so should we. (Mark 6:34; Luke 4:22, 32; 1 Peter 2:21) As a perfect man with special God-given insight, he could read hearts. When necessary, therefore, Jesus was able to pronounce scathing denunciations on Jehovah's enemies. (Mat-

*Avoid the
intolerant attitude
of the Pharisees*



thew 23:13-33) It was not intolerant for him to do this.

Unlike Jesus, we lack the ability to read hearts. Hence, we should follow the apostle Peter's counsel: "Sanctify the Christ as Lord in your hearts, always ready to make a defense before everyone that demands of you a reason for the hope in you, but doing so together with a mild temper and deep respect." (1 Peter 3:15) As Jehovah's servants, we should defend what we believe because it is solidly based on God's Word. But we need to do this in a way that shows respect for others and for their sincerely held beliefs. Paul wrote: "Let your utterance be always with graciousness, seasoned with salt, so as to know how you ought to give an answer to each one."—Colossians 4:6.

In his famous Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said: "All things . . . that you want men to do to you, you also must likewise do to them." (Matthew 7:12) So, then, let us patiently put up with one another and show respect for those to whom we preach the good news. By balancing our zeal for righteousness with Bible-based tolerance, we will please Jehovah and we will truly be tolerant.

Jesus reflected his Father's tolerant spirit. Do you?



'BLESSINGS ARE FOR THE RIGHTEOUS ONE'

"A YOUNG man I used to be, I have also grown old, and yet I have not seen anyone righteous left entirely, nor his offspring looking for bread," said the psalmist David in his old age. (Psalm 37:25) Jehovah God loves the righteous and dearly cares for them. In his Word, the Bible, he exhorts true worshipers to seek righteousness.—Zephaniah 2:3.

Righteousness is the state of being right with God by complying with his standards of good and bad. Encouraging us to conform to God's will, the 10th chapter of the Bible book of Proverbs points to rich spiritual blessings that are enjoyed by those who do so. Among these are an abundant supply of spiritually nourishing food, rewarding and satisfying work, and a good relationship with God and man. Let us, then, reflect on Proverbs 10:1-14.

A Fine Incentive

The opening words of the chapter leave no doubt as to the identity of the writer of the next section of the book of Proverbs. They read: "*Proverbs of Solomon.*" Identifying a fine incentive to follow the right course, King Solomon of ancient Israel says: "A wise son is the one that makes a father rejoice, and a stupid son is the grief of his mother."—Proverbs 10:1.

What grief parents experience when one of their offspring forsakes the worship of the true and living God! The wise king singles out the mother's grief, perhaps to suggest that she grieves more deeply. That indeed proved to be true for Doris.* She relates: "When our 21-year-old son left the truth, my husband, Frank, and I were heartbroken. The emotional pain has been more intense for me than for

Frank. The passing of 12 years has not healed the wound."

Children can affect their father's happiness and can cause their mother heartache. May we show wisdom and bring joy to our parents. And by all means, let us make glad the heart of our heavenly Father, Jehovah.

'The Soul of the Righteous One Is Satisfied'

"*The treasures of the wicked one will be of no benefit,*" says the king, "*but righteousness is what will deliver from death.*" (Proverbs 10:2) To true Christians living deep in the time of the end, these words are indeed precious. (Daniel 12:4) The destruction of the ungodly world is in the offing. No man-made means of security—material, financial, or military—will provide protection during the oncoming "great tribulation." (Revelation 7:9, 10, 13, 14) Only "the upright shall dwell on earth and blameless men remain there." (Proverbs 2:21, *The New English Bible*) May we, then, keep on "seeking first the kingdom and [God's] righteousness."—Matthew 6:33.

Servants of Jehovah do not have to wait until the promised new world to experience God's blessings. "*Jehovah will not cause the soul of the righteous one to go hungry, but the craving of the wicked ones he will push away.*" (Proverbs 10:3) Jehovah has provided abundant spiritual food through "the faithful and discreet slave." (Matthew 24:45) The righteous one certainly has reasons to "cry out joyfully because of the good condition of the heart." (Isaiah 65:14) Knowledge is pleasurable to his soul. Searching for spiritual treasures is his delight. The wicked one knows no such pleasures.

* Name has been changed.

Honesty contributes to a happy family life

'Diligence Makes One Rich'

The righteous one is blessed in yet another way. *"The one working with a slack hand will be of little means, but the hand of the diligent one is what will make one rich. The son acting with insight is gathering during the summertime; the son acting shamefully is fast asleep during the harvest."*

—Proverbs 10:4, 5.

Particularly meaningful are the king's words to workers during the harvest. The harvest season is not a time for slumber. It is a time for diligence and long hours. Indeed, it is a time of urgency.

Having in mind the harvest, not of grain, but of people, Jesus told his disciples: "The harvest is great, but the workers are few. Therefore, beg the Master of the harvest [Jehovah God] to send out workers into his harvest." (Matthew 9:35-38) In the year 2000, over 14 million attended the Memorial of Jesus' death—more than twice the number of Jehovah's Witnesses. Who, then, can deny that 'the fields are white for harvesting'? (John 4:35) True worshipers ask the Master for more workers while exerting themselves vigorously in the disciple-making work in harmony with their prayers. (Matthew 28:19, 20) And how richly Jehovah has blessed their efforts! During the 2000 service year, over 280,000 new ones were baptized. These also endeavor to become teachers of God's Word. May we experience joy and satisfaction in this harvest season by having a full share in the disciple-making work.

'Blessings Are for His Head'

"Blessings are for the head of the righteous one," Solomon continues, "but as regards the



mouth of the wicked ones, it covers up violence."

—Proverbs 10:6.

The one who is pure and righteous at heart gives ample evidence of his righteousness. His speech is kind and upbuilding, his actions positive and generous. Others receive him favorably. Such a person wins their appreciation—their blessings—in that they speak well of him.

A wicked person, on the other hand, is hateful or malicious and is basically intent on doing harm to others. His speech may be sweet and may 'cover up violence' concealed in his heart, but eventually he gives in to physical or verbal attacks. (Matthew 12:34, 35) Or alternatively, "violence will cover [or shut] the very mouth of wicked people." (Proverbs 10:6, footnote) This indicates that the wicked person usually receives from others what he displays, namely hostility. This, as it were, covers, or shuts, his mouth and silences him. What blessings can such a person expect from others?

"The remembrance of the righteous one is due for a blessing," writes the king of Israel, "but the very name of the wicked ones will rot." (Proverbs 10:7) The righteous one is

favorably remembered by others, most important by Jehovah God. By his faithfulness until death, Jesus "inherited a name more excellent" than that of the angels. (Hebrews 1:3, 4) Faithful pre-Christian men and women are remembered today by true Christians as examples worthy of imitation. (Hebrews 12:1, 2) How this differs from the name of the wicked ones, which becomes something sickening and putrid! Yes, "a name is to be chosen rather than abundant riches; favor is better than even silver and gold." (Proverbs 22:1) May we make a favorable name with Jehovah and our fellowman.

'A Man of Integrity Will Walk in Security'

Contrasting the wise and the foolish, Solomon states: "*The one wise in heart will accept commandments, but the one foolish with his lips will be trodden down.*" (Proverbs 10:8) A wise person well knows that "it does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step." (Jeremiah 10:23) He recognizes the need to seek guidance from Jehovah and readily accepts God's commandments. The one foolish with his lips, on the other hand, fails to understand this basic fact. His senseless babbling brings him to ruin.

A righteous person also enjoys a type of security that eludes the wicked. "*He that is walk-*

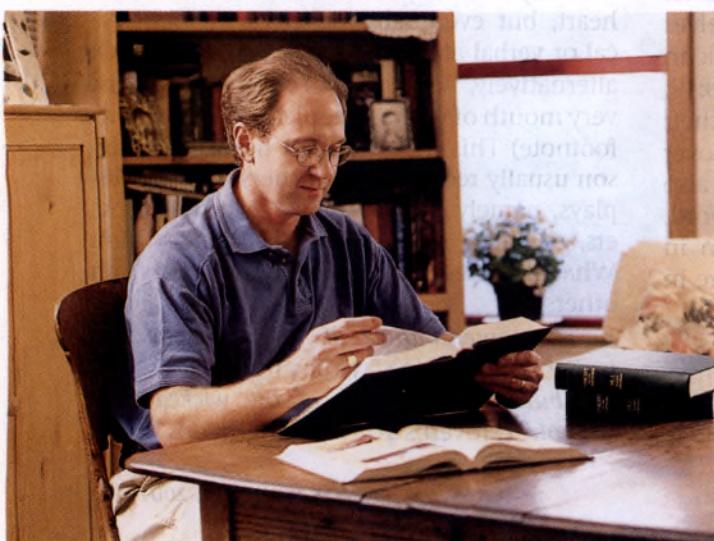
ing in integrity will walk in security, but he that is making his ways crooked will make himself known. The one winking his eye will give pain, and the one foolish with his lips will be trodden down."—Proverbs 10:9, 10.

A man of integrity is honest in his dealings. He earns the respect and trust of others. An honest person is a valued employee and is often trusted with greater responsibility. His reputation for honesty can keep him employed even when jobs are scarce. Moreover, his honesty contributes to a pleasant and peaceful atmosphere at home. (Psalm 34:13, 14) He feels secure in his relationship with the members of his family. Security is indeed a fruit of integrity.

The situation is different with the person who gives in to dishonesty for selfish gain. A deceiver may try to mask his untruthfulness with crookedness of speech or with body language. (Proverbs 6:12-14) The winking of his eye with malicious or deceptive intent may cause victims of his deception much mental anguish. But sooner or later, the crookedness of such a person becomes known. The apostle Paul wrote: "The sins of some men are publicly manifest, leading directly to judgment, but as for other men their sins also become manifest later. In the same way also the fine works are publicly manifest and those that are otherwise cannot be kept hid." (1 Timothy 5:24, 25) Regardless of who is involved—whether a parent, a friend, a marriage mate, or an acquaintance—dishonesty eventually gets exposed. Who can trust a man who has a reputation for dishonesty?

'His Mouth Is a Source of Life' *"The mouth of the righteous one is a source of life,"* Solomon says, "but as regards the mouth of the wicked ones,

'Wise ones treasure up knowledge'



it covers up violence." (Proverbs 10:11) Words from the mouth can heal or hurt. They can refresh and enliven a person, or they can tear him down.

Identifying the motivation behind spoken words, the king of Israel states: "*Hatred is what stirs up contentions, but love covers over even all transgressions.*" (Proverbs 10:12) Hatred produces contentions in human society, stirring up strife. Lovers of Jehovah must eradicate hatred from their lives. How? By replacing it with love. "Love covers a multitude of sins." (1 Peter 4:8) Love "bears all things," that is "all things it is covering." (1 Corinthians 13:7; *Kingdom Interlinear*) Godly love does not expect perfection from imperfect people. Rather than advertising the mistakes of others, such love helps us to overlook their errors unless a serious wrongdoing is involved. Love even bears mistreatment in the field ministry, at our place of employment, or at school.

The wise king continues: "*On the lips of the understanding person wisdom is found, but the rod is for the back of one in want of heart.*" (Proverbs 10:13) The wisdom of an understanding person guides his steps. Upbuilding words on his lips help others walk in the way of righteousness. Neither he nor those who listen to him have to be led in the right direction by force—the rod of chastisement.

"Treasure Up Knowledge"

What helps our words to be 'a bubbling torrent of wisdom' instead of a babbling brook of trivialities? (Proverbs 18:4) Solomon answers: "*The wise are the ones that treasure up knowledge, but the mouth of the foolish one is near to ruin itself.*"—Proverbs 10:14.

The first requirement is that our mind should be filled with the upbuilding knowledge of God. There is only one source of that knowledge. The apostle Paul wrote: "All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching, for reproofing, for setting

things straight, for disciplining in righteousness, that the man of God may be fully competent, completely equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16, 17) We must treasure up knowledge and dig into God's Word as if searching for a hid treasure. How exciting and rewarding a search that is!

For wisdom to be found on our lips, the knowledge of the Scriptures must also reach into our heart. Jesus told his hearers: "A good man brings forth good out of the good treasure of his heart, but a wicked man brings forth what is wicked out of his wicked treasure; for out of the heart's abundance his mouth speaks." (Luke 6:45) Therefore, we must habitually meditate on what we are learning. True, study and meditation require effort, but how spiritually enriching such study is! There is no reason for anyone to follow the ruinous course of a mere chatterer of thoughtless words.

Yes, a wise person does what is right in God's eyes and has a good influence on others. He enjoys an abundant supply of spiritual food and has plenty to do in the rewarding work of the Lord. (1 Corinthians 15:58) Being a man of integrity, he walks in security and has God's approval. Indeed, many are the blessings of the righteous one. May we seek righteousness by conforming our lives to God's standards of good and bad.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Can You "Distinguish Both Right and Wrong"?

Let Force of Habit Work for Your Good

Overcome Obstacles to Your Progress!

Questions From Readers

At 1 Peter 4:3, we read that some Christians had once shared in "illegal idolatries." Are not all idolatries illegal, condemned and forbidden by God?

Yes, in God's view, all idolatry is illegal. Those seeking his favor cannot practice idolatry.—1 Corinthians 5:11; Revelation 21:8.

It seems, however, that the apostle Peter was referring to idolatry in another way. For one thing, among many ancient nations, idolatry was both common and without legal restraint from the authorities. That is, the law of the land did not prohibit such idolatry. Some idolatry was even part of the national or governmental policy. In that sense, some had shared in 'idolatries without legal restraint' before becoming Christians. (*New World Translation*, 1950 edition) It may be noted, for instance, that Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar set up an idolatrous image of gold, but Jehovah's servants Shadrach,

Meshach, and Abednego refused to worship it.—Daniel 3:1-12.

From another standpoint, many idolatrous rites included acts grossly contrary to any natural law or moral sense stemming from inherited conscience. (Romans 2:14, 15) The apostle Paul wrote of degraded practices that were "contrary to nature" and "obscene," and these often found a place in religious rites. (Romans 1:26, 27) Men and women sharing in illegal idolatry were not observing the legal restraint of human nature. It certainly was appropriate that those becoming Christians left those corrupt practices.

In addition to the foregoing, such idolatries common among non-Jews were condemned by Jehovah God. Thus they were unlawful.*—Colossians 3:5-7.

* The Greek text at 1 Peter 4:3 literally means "unlawful idolatries." The phrase has been variously rendered in English Bibles with such designations as "illicit idolatry," "forbidden worship of idols," and "lawless idolatries."



ANNUAL MEETING OCTOBER 6, 2001

THE ANNUAL MEETING of the members of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania will be held on October 6, 2001, at the Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 2932 Kennedy Boulevard, Jersey City, New Jersey. A preliminary meeting of the members only will convene at 9:15 a.m., followed by the general annual meeting at 10:00 a.m.

The members of the corporation should inform the Secretary's Office now of any change in their mailing addresses during the past year so that the regular letters of notice and proxies can reach them during July.

The proxies, which will be sent to the members along with the notice of the annual meet-

ing, are to be returned so as to reach the Office of the Secretary of the Society not later than August 1. Each member should complete and return his proxy promptly, stating whether he is going to be at the meeting personally or not. The information given on each proxy should be definite on this point, since it will be relied upon in determining who will be present.

It is expected that the entire session, including the formal business meeting and reports, will be concluded by 1:00 p.m. or shortly thereafter. There will be no afternoon session. Because of limited space, admission will be by ticket only. No arrangements will be made for tying in the annual meeting by telephone lines to other auditoriums.

ORIGEN

How Did His Teaching Affect the Church?

"The greatest master of the Church after the Apostles." Jerome, translator of the Latin Vulgate Bible, thus praised the third-century theologian Origen. But not everyone held Origen in such high esteem. Some viewed him as an evil root from which heresies sprang. In the words of a 17th-century writer, Origen's critics asserted: "His doctrine in general is absurd and pernicious, a Serpentine deadly poison, which he vomited into the world." About three centuries after his death, in fact, Origen was formally declared a heretic.

Culver Pictures

WHY did Origen evoke both admiration and animosity? What influence did he have on the development of church doctrine?

Zealous for the Church

Origen was born about 185 C.E. in the Egyptian city of Alexandria. He received a thorough education in Greek literature, but his father, Leonides, compelled him to expend equal effort in studying the Scriptures. When Origen was 17, the Roman emperor issued an edict making it a crime to change one's religion. Origen's father was thrown into prison because he had become a Christian. Filled with youthful zeal, Origen was determined to join him in prison and in martyrdom. Seeing this, Origen's mother hid his clothes to prevent him from leaving home. By letter, Origen pleaded with his father: "Be careful not to change your mind because of us." Leonides re-

mained firm and was executed, leaving his family destitute. But Origen had already advanced far enough in his studies to be able to support his mother and six younger brothers by teaching Greek literature.

The emperor's intent was to stem the spread of Christianity. Since his edict targeted not just students but also teachers, all Christian religious instructors fled Alexandria. When non-Christians seeking Scriptural instruction appealed to young Origen for help, he embraced this work as a commission from God. Many of his students suffered martyrdom, some even before completing their studies. At great personal risk, Origen openly encouraged his students, whether they were before a judge, in prison, or about to be executed. Fourth-century historian Eusebius reports that when they were being led to their death, Origen, "with great boldness, saluted them with a kiss."



Origen incurred the wrath of many non-Christians, who held him responsible for the conversion and death of their friends. He often narrowly escaped mob action and a violent death. Though forced to move from place to place to elude his pursuers, Origen did not let up in his teaching. Such fearlessness and dedication impressed Demetrius, the bishop of Alexandria. Hence, when Origen was only 18 years of age, Demetrius appointed him head of the school for religious instruction in Alexandria.

Eventually, Origen became a noted scholar and a prolific writer. Some said that he wrote 6,000 books, though this is likely an exaggeration. He is most famous for his *Hexapla*, a mammoth, 50-volume edition of the Hebrew Scriptures. Origen arranged the *Hexapla* in six parallel columns containing: (1) the Hebrew and Aramaic text, (2) a Greek transliteration of that text, (3) Aquila's Greek version, (4) Symmachus' Greek version, (5) the Greek *Septuagint*, which Origen revised to correspond more exactly to the Hebrew text, and (6) Theodotion's Greek version. "By this combination of texts," wrote Bible scholar John Hort, "Origen hoped to throw light on the meaning of many passages in which a Greek reader would be either bewildered or misled if he had only the *Septuagint* before him."

'Going Beyond the Things Written'

Nevertheless, the confused religious climate of the third century profoundly affected Origen's approach to teaching the Scriptures. Although Christendom was in its infancy, it had already become polluted with unscriptural beliefs, and its scattered churches were teaching a variety of doctrines.

Origen accepted some of these unscriptural doctrines, calling them the teaching of the apostles. But he felt free to speculate on other questions. Many of his students were then wrestling with contemporary philosophical issues. In an effort to help

them, Origen made a careful study of the various schools of philosophy that were shaping his young students' minds. He set out to provide his students with satisfying answers to their philosophical questions.

In an attempt to reconcile the Bible with philosophy, Origen relied heavily upon the allegorical method of interpreting the Scriptures. He assumed that Scripture always had a spiritual meaning but not necessarily a literal one. As one scholar noted, this allowed Origen "the means of reading into the Bible whatever non-biblical ideas were congenial to his own theological system, while professing (and no doubt sincerely imagining himself) to be a particularly enthusiastic and faithful interpreter of the thought of the Bible."

A letter that Origen wrote to one of his students provides insight into his thinking. Origen pointed out that the Israelites made utensils for Jehovah's temple out of Egyptian gold. In this he found allegorical support for his use of Greek philosophy to teach Christianity. He wrote: "How useful to the children of Israel were the things brought from Egypt, which the Egyptians had not put to a proper use, but which the Hebrews, guided by the wisdom of God, used for God's service." Origen thus encouraged his student to "extract from the philosophy of the Greeks what may serve as a course of study or a preparation for Christianity."

This unrestrained approach to Biblical interpretation blurred the lines between Christian doctrine and Greek philosophy. For example, in his book entitled *On First Principles*, Origen described Jesus as 'the only-begotten Son, who was born, but without any beginning.' And he added: 'His generation is eternal and everlasting. It was not by receiving the breath of life that he is made a Son, by any outward act, but by God's own nature.'

Origen did not find this idea in the Bible, for the Scriptures teach that Jehovah's only-begotten Son is "the firstborn of all creation"



**Origen's "Hexapla"
provides evidence
that God's name was
used in the Christian
Greek Scriptures**

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and "the beginning of the creation by God." (Colossians 1:15; Revelation 3:14) According to religious historian Augustus Neander, Origen arrived at the concept of "eternal generation" through his "philosophical education in the Platonic school." Thus, Origen violated this basic Scriptural principle: "Do not go beyond the things that are written."—1 Corinthians 4:6.

Condemned as a Heretic

During his early years as a teacher, an Alexandrine Synod stripped Origen of his priesthood. This probably occurred because Bishop Demetrius was envious of Origen's growing fame. Origen moved to Palestine, where admiration for him as a reputed defender of Christian doctrine remained unbounded, and there he continued as a priest. In fact, when "heresies" erupted in the East, his services were sought to convince erring bishops to return to orthodoxy. After his death in 254 C.E., Origen's name especially came into serious disrepute. Why?

After nominal Christianity had become a prominent religion, what the church accepted as orthodox teaching came to be more narrowly defined. Hence, later generations of theologians did not accept many of Origen's speculative and sometimes imprecise philosophical views. His teachings therefore ignited bitter controversies within the church. In an effort to settle these disputes and preserve its unity, the church formally convicted Origen of heresy.

Origen was not alone in his errors. Actually, the Bible had foretold a general departure

from the pure teachings of Christ. This apostasy began to flourish by the close of the first century, after Jesus' apostles had died. (2 Thessalonians 2:6, 7) Eventually, certain professed Christians established themselves as "orthodox," proclaiming all others to be "heretical." But in reality, Christendom deviated greatly from true Christianity.

"Falsely Called 'Knowledge'"

Despite Origen's many speculations, his works contain beneficial elements. For example, the *Hexapla* retained God's name in its original four-letter Hebrew form, called the Tetragrammaton. This provides important evidence that early Christians knew and used the personal name of God—Jehovah. Nevertheless, a fifth-century church patriarch named Theophilus once cautioned: "The works of Origen are like a meadow of every kind of flower. If I find any beautiful flower there, I pluck it; but if anything looks prickly to me I avoid it as I would a sting."

By mixing Bible teachings with Greek philosophy, Origen's theology became littered with error, and the consequences were disastrous for Christendom. For instance, though most of Origen's wild speculations were later rejected, his views about the "eternal generation" of Christ helped to lay the foundation for the non-Biblical doctrine of the Trinity. The book *The Church of the First Three Centuries* observes: "The taste for philosophy [introduced by Origen] was destined not to be soon extinct." With what result? "The simplicity of the Christian faith was corrupted, and an infinity of errors flowed into the Church."

For his part, Origen could have heeded the apostle Paul's admonition and avoided contributing to this apostasy by "turning away from the empty speeches that violate what is holy and from the contradictions of the falsely called 'knowledge.'" Instead, by basing so much of his teaching on such "knowledge," Origen "deviated from the faith."—1 Timothy 6:20, 21; Colossians 2:8.

"DOES GOD REALLY CONDEMN PEOPLE TO BURN IN HELL?"



"Are you taking a theology class?"

This question took Joel and Carl by surprise. The two young men—volunteers serving at the headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in Brooklyn, New York—were browsing in a nearby bookstore. As Joel examined Bible concordances, Carl related to him a discussion he had enjoyed in the ministry. Having overheard parts of this conversation, a man standing nearby was prompted to approach them.

The man, however, had a more personal concern than whether the two young men were taking a theology class. He explained: "I am Jewish, and some of my Christian friends have told me that I will burn in hell because the Jews rejected Jesus. This is very troubling to me. Such a punishment coming from a loving God does not seem just. Does God really condemn people to burn in hell?"

Joel and Carl told this sincere man that they were serious students of the Bible. They showed him from the Scriptures that the dead are unconscious and are simply asleep in death awaiting a resurrection. Hence, they experience no torment or painful hellfire. (Psalm 146:3, 4; Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10; Daniel 12:13; John 11:11-14, 23-26) At the end of their 45-minute conversation, the man gave his address to Joel and Carl and requested more information on the subject.

If hell were a place of fiery torment, would anyone ever ask to be sent there? Yet, the patriarch Job, wishing to escape his plight, made this request: "Who will grant me this, that thou mayest protect me in hell, and hide me till thy wrath pass?" (Job 14:13, *Douay Version*) Clearly, Job did not believe that hell is a place of torment. Rather, he sought protection there. Death is a state of nonexistence, and the Bible hell is the common grave of mankind.

the effort to settle these disputes will be increased
as the parties concerned will be forced to
face each other again. This will be a
great opportunity for the parties to
reconcile their differences and
to reach a final agreement.
In this way, the dispute will be
settled in a peaceful and
mutually acceptable manner.
The parties involved will be
able to work together to
achieve a common goal.
This will be a positive step
towards peace and
harmony in the
region.