

The WATCHTOWER

Announcing
JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM

JULY 15, 1973

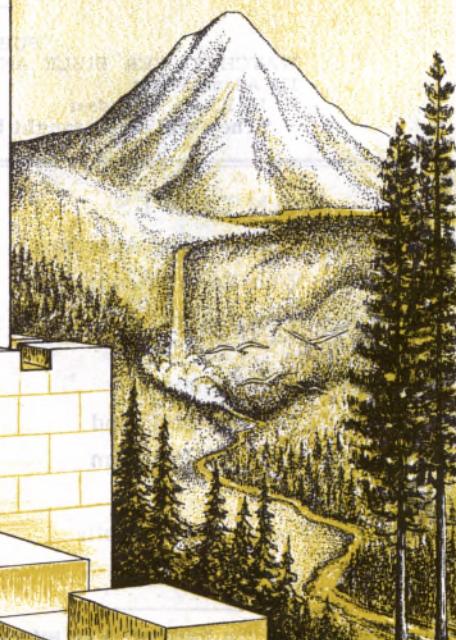
Semimonthly

SEEK GOD WHILE HE
MAY BE FOUND

DOES IT MATTER WHO YOUR
FRIENDS ARE?

HOW DOES YOUR CHURCH
VIEW ABORTIONS?

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"YOU ARE MY WITNESSES," SAYS JEHOVAH.—Isa. 43:12

THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER"

Every watchtower has its purpose. It serves as an elevated place for a wide-awake person with sharp vision. It enables him to see far ahead into the distance and tell those below for whom he is a watchman what is drawing near, whether it is a danger against which to prepare or it is something good over which to be glad with strong faith and hope.

Because of having the name "The Watchtower" this magazine justly has to render a similar useful service to the people of all nations. This is an international magazine and makes no racial distinctions, for we are all facing a common world danger; we are all hoping for a common good.

Ever since "The Watchtower" began to be published in July of 1879 it has looked ahead into the future, always striving to aid its readers to advance in knowledge and to gain a clearer picture of the glorious new order of things that is in store for righteous mankind. No, "The Watchtower" is no inspired prophet, but it follows and explains a Book of prophecy the predictions in which have proved to be unerring and unfailing till now. "The Watchtower" is therefore under safe guidance. It may be read with confidence, for its statements may be checked against that prophetic Book.

Among the many nations of today there are hundreds of differing religions. Which one does this magazine present? Not the confused religions of Christendom, but the religion of the oldest sacred Book on earth. Which Book? The Sacred Bible of the Holy Scriptures, written by inspiration in the name of the Creator of heaven and earth, the only living and true God.

The sacred, nonpolitical purpose of "The Watchtower" is accordingly to encourage and promote study of the Holy Bible and to give our many readers the needed unsectarian help to understand that Book of true religion and infallible prophecy. Thus this magazine will be helping them to prove worthy of perfect life and happiness in God's promised new order under His everlasting kingdom of righteousness.

PUBLISHED BY THE
WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA
117 Adams Street Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201, U.S.A.
N. H. KNORR, President GRANT SUITER, Secretary
"They will all be taught by Jehovah."—John 6:45; Isaiah 54:13

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Average Printing Each Issue: 7,850,000

Five cents a copy

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Semimonthly: Afrikaans, Arabic, Cebuano, Chinese, Chishona, Cibemba, Cinyanja, Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hiligaynon, Iloko, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Malagasy, Norwegian, Portuguese, Sesotho, Spanish, Swahili, Swedish, Tagalog, Thai, Xhosa, Yoruba, Zulu.
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Yearly subscription rates for semi-monthly editions in local currency
Watch Tower Society offices America, U.S., 117 Adams St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201 \$1.50
Australia, 11 Beresford Rd., Strathfield, N.S.W. 2135 \$1.50
Canada, 150 Bridgeland Ave., Toronto, Ontario M6A 1Z5 \$1.50
England, Watch Tower House, The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN 65p
Ghana, West Africa, Box 760, Accra £1.90
New Zealand, 621 New North Rd., Auckland 3 \$1.50
Nigeria, West Africa, P.O. Box 194, Yaba, Lagos State N1.05
Philippines, P.O. Box 2044, Manila D-406 P10
South Africa, Private Bag 2, P.O. Elandsfontein, Transvaal R1.10
(Monthly editions cost half the above rates.)

Remittances for subscriptions should be sent to the office in your country. Otherwise send your remittance to Brooklyn.

Notice of expiration is sent at least two issues before subscription expires. Second-class postage paid at Brooklyn, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices.

Printed in U.S.A.

The Bible translation used in "The Watchtower" is the modern-language "New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures," unless otherwise indicated.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS should reach us thirty days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address in full). Write Watchtower, 117 Adams St., Brooklyn, New York 11201, U.S.A.



Announcing
JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM

Vol. XCIV

July 15, 1973

Number 14

ON January 22, 1973, the United States Supreme Court ruled in favor of liberalized abortion laws. Other countries have taken a similar course.

How do you view such changes? Do you believe it is right to destroy a developing, though unborn, child? Does your church?

Many churches do. For example, in a resolution adopted on May 31, 1968, the American Baptist Churches of the U.S.A. urged "that legislation be enacted to provide: That the termination of a pregnancy . . . be at the request of the individuals concerned and be regarded as an elective medical procedure."

Also, the General Council of the United Church of Canada affirmed "that abortion is morally justifiable in certain medical, social and economic circumstances, and should be a private matter between a woman and her doctor."

Hundreds of clergymen took a lead in seeking to liberalize abortion laws. For example, an appeal to vote for abortion law reform appeared in the Jackson, Michigan, *Citizen Patriot* of November 6, 1972. Signed by 178 clergymen, it said:

"We believe that abortion—like religion—is a personal decision, and that the State should not prevent a woman from following the dictates of her conscience."

Following the long list of clergymen's names, the paper said:

HOW DOES YOUR CHURCH VIEW

ABORTIONS?

"The clergy listed above have ecclesiastical standing in 14 denominations whose national bodies have issued statements supporting abortion law reform."

Among the many churches endorsing liberalized abortion laws are the United Church of Christ, the United Presbyterian Church, the Lutheran Church in America and the United Methodist Church. The New York City Council of Churches, which includes some twenty-three denominations, said in its paper *Metropolitan Church News*:

"The news of the Supreme Court's decision favoring women's rights to determine whether or not to have an abortion was received with deep appreciation by the officers and staff of the Council."

True, top Roman Catholic leaders voice displeasure. Yet some priests support abortion. And the *National Catholic Reporter* of September 15, 1972, said: "Fifty-six percent of the nation's Catholics, according to the latest Gallup Poll on abortion, believe that the decision to terminate pregnancy should be made 'solely by a woman and her physician.'"

Justifying its revolutionary decision, the Supreme Court noted that the unborn are not "recognized in the law as persons

in the whole sense." Thus the Court permits terminating the life of the unborn up to the twenty-eighth week of pregnancy.

However, most abortions are performed earlier, usually before the thirteenth week of pregnancy. And so the Supreme Court overruled *all state laws that prohibit or restrict abortions during this thirteen-week period*. The Court contended that such abortions, for the woman, are relatively safe.

But, of course, the developing child inside the mother is destroyed. Of what does the unborn child really consist? Is it simply an indistinguishable blob of tissue?

Commenting on this, Dr. Denis Cavanaugh noted in *Ob. Gyn. [Obstetrical Gynecological] News*:

"At the end of the second week [of pregnancy] differentiation of the cardiovascular and nervous systems begins. At the end of 6 weeks [which is about the time a woman usually becomes certain she is pregnant] all the internal organs of the complete human being are present . . .

"By the end of the eighth week the skeleton has begun to form, and the eyes, fingers and toes are evident, so that the embryo is now called a fetus. . . . After the eighth week, no new major structures will be added, and further growth will consist of maturation and development of the existing structures rather than the creation of anything new."

Thus Dr. P. G. Coffey wrote in the *Toronto Daily Star*:

"There is no essential difference biologically between an unborn infant and one that has been born, or if you want a specific example, between a two- to three-month-old fetus and a newborn baby, except that one is more mature than the other."

Clearly the developing child that is de-

stroyed is not an indistinguishable blob of tissue! Some children aborted within the time period permitted by law move and breathe; some even survive the abortion process. The *New York Times* of February 1, 1972, noted:

"Nurses in delivery rooms had been accustomed to every conceivable effort to save babies, even those of one to three pounds, and they found that sometimes they were 'salting out' [aborting] bigger babies than those they had worked to save. . . . Recently a baby emerged from the salting out process still alive."

Is it not understandable, then, why Dr. George C. Manning wrote that abortion is "murder just as certainly as it is murder willfully to turn off the heat in the incubator of a 1½ pound premature baby"? Some persons worry what the next possible step may be. As Sir John Peel, president of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, asked:

"If society gives sanction to the destruction of life for one set of circumstances for what it claims to be the good of society, why should it not sanction the infanticide of the abnormal neonate [newborn child], the mental defective, the delinquent, the incurable, the senile?"

Could you approve of killing a helpless newborn infant? But is it not just as wrong to kill a baby before it is born? According to God's law given through Moses, the human embryo or fetus was considered a life, and God's law protected that life. (Ex. 21:22, 23) Should we not have similar regard for the unborn? Yet many, many religions take a stand contrary to what God's Word says. Where does your church stand?



When the U.S. Supreme Court approved abortions that would kill infants such as this one, many churches applauded the decision. How do you think that God views such churches?



DOES IT MATTER Who YOUR FRIENDS Are?



HAVING friends is one of the things that contributes most to the joy of living. People who isolate themselves and shun others are never really happy. What is there about companionship that adds so much to our happiness?

Doing something with a friend seems to multiply our enjoyment of life's pleasurable experiences and accomplishments. You may remember how, in Jesus' parables, the shepherd who found his lost sheep and the woman who found her lost coin each called in his or her friends, saying, "Rejoice with me." (Luke 15:6, 9) Yes, we normally want to share good things with companions, and our pleasure seems to double as a result.

On the other hand, when things do not go so well for us and we feel depressed, a good friend can do much to reduce our sadness. Friends can often be of tremendous help when trouble threatens, warning us against danger or helping us to escape it, giving us extra strength at critical moments. As Proverbs 17:17 says: "A true companion is loving all the time, and is a brother that is born for when there is distress."

That scripture emphasizes a quality that outstandingly marks real friends: loyalty. Being a friend really means more than

Helpful facts that young people want to know

just 'acting friendly.' A genuine friend is loyal to you and to your best interests. Are your friends like that?

Today, people in general seem more interested in outdoing their neighbor than in helping their neighbor. This is just as true among young people as among older ones. Even among so-called 'friends' there is often a spirit of competition, not of loyalty. Many friendships last only as long as neither person is called on to make some change or sacrifice some selfish interest. In this competitive world, a true friend is not easy to find. "There exist companions disposed to break one another to pieces," Proverbs 18:24 tells us, "but there exists a friend sticking closer than a brother."

The Bible shows that David, the son of Jesse, had some really worthwhile friends. More than once these saved his life. You may recall how, after David's defeat of the immense Philistine warrior Goliath, he gained a fine friend in Jonathan, the son of King Saul. Jonathan could have hated David as a rival for the throne of Israel, a throne that Jonathan might have hoped to inherit from his father, King Saul. Instead, Jonathan recognized that God's favor was on David, and "Jonathan's very soul became bound up with the soul of David, and Jonathan began to love him as

his own soul." (1 Sam. 18:1, 3) Instead of being envious of David, Jonathan loved him for his courage and faith in Jehovah God. And more than once Jonathan risked his life and endured his father's fierce (but unjustified) anger in order to protect his friend.—1 Sam. 19:1-20:17, 24-40.

You can also read about a later friend of David named Hushai, who, as the "king's companion," was one of David's closer associates during his kingship. The way Hushai risked his life to thwart the traitorous conspiracy of Absalom, one of David's sons, makes a thrilling account to consider.—See 2 Samuel 15:10-37; 16:16-17:16.

Perhaps you also have friends like these. But, if not, how can you gain them? It will take real effort, but it is certainly worth it.

SEEKING WORTHWHILE FRIENDS

There is a saying that 'the only way to have a friend is to be one.' A lot of truth there is in that statement. Sometimes persons are lonely and feel 'left out' of things by other young persons whom they may admire. Or they may have had friends only to 'lose' them. They may feel hurt because of this. But friendship is a two-way street.

So we do well to ask ourselves, What am I doing to be friendly to others? How much sincere and unselfish interest do I take in others and what do I do to contribute to their happiness and their good? What qualities am I cultivating that would make others feel they would like to share my companionship more often?

The way you go about trying to find friends will generally determine the kind you get. Some seek to win friends by spending money on them or by inviting them to share the pleasures of other material possessions—a stereo outfit and records, sports equipment or other such

things. True, this may draw certain ones to you, just as the book of Proverbs says that "many are the friends of the rich person" and that "everybody is a companion to the man making gifts." (Prov. 14:20; 19:6) Many people act friendly when a person spends his money in a lavish manner. But when the money runs out so do such 'friends.'

Sometimes it is not money or material possessions that we might use to try to 'buy' friendship. We could do it also by flattery or by catering to another's every whim and fancy, letting ourselves be used by that person for his or her selfish interests. But worthwhile friends cannot be 'bought' in these ways. Any friend that can be bought is never worth the price—no matter how small it may be. True friends are attracted to you by what you have in the way of worthwhile qualities—not by what they can get out of you.

So, it is good to have a friendly disposition toward people in general; but if you want genuine friends you need to be selective about those you accept for close companions. David was. He says: "Anyone slandering his companion in secrecy, him I silence. Anyone of haughty eyes and of arrogant heart, him I cannot endure. . . . There will dwell inside my house no worker of trickiness. As for anyone speaking falsehoods, he will not be firmly established in front of my eyes." (Ps. 101:5-7) Why is it so important for young people today to be selective as to close companions?

WHY SELECTIVITY IS VITAL

It is a basic principle of social relations that you tend to become what those around you are if you associate with them long enough. There is a Spanish proverb that says: "Tell me with whom you walk and I'll tell you who you are." (*Dime con quién andas y te diré quién eres.*) Your

choice of friends tells a lot about what kind of person you want to be. Your close friends are bound to have a 'molding' effect on your personality.

Do you choose friends who have qualities of honesty and decency, who are considerate and who have respect for God and his Word and have the courage to do what is right?

Or are you attracted by youths who are like the persons David avoided, those who have a very high opinion of themselves and who run others down, who pride themselves on being able to 'outsmart' others by slick methods, and who, in place of genuine courage, have only a foolhardiness that makes them take blind risks for no real purpose and with no worthwhile goal in view? They may engage in immorality, or steal or take drugs and then brag that they are 'getting away with it.' If they try to hook you into going along with them, can they rightly be called "friends"?

Remember, if you should become close companions of such persons you will either have to go along with them in what they do or disagree with them. To disagree with them will probably end the 'friendship.' Why? Because, while such youths often like to ridicule others, they usually cannot take reproof themselves; they hate it. Proverbs 9:8 talks about that kind of person and then, by way of contrast, adds, "Give a reproof to a wise person and he will love you." (See also Proverbs 15:12.) Real friends can talk frankly to one another and help one another to improve and to correct and strengthen themselves in things where they are weak. The ancient writer says: "Oil and incense are what make the heart rejoice, also the sweetness of one's companion due to the counsel of the soul." (Prov. 27:9) When you have a really good companion who

thinks straight and talks straight, it is almost like having a second mind to use for your good.

So many young people today, because of having no faith in God's Word and the hope it holds out, take the attitude of "let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we are to die." That was the way many men felt who were sentenced to fight wild beasts in the arena of ancient Ephesus in Asia Minor. They had no hope in Jehovah God and no hope in a resurrection to life in God's new order. As a young person you are really just getting started in life. So, do you want to adopt the philosophy of condemned prisoners and make that your attitude toward life? After describing that viewpoint of just 'living for today,' the apostle Paul goes on to say: "Do not be misled. Bad associations spoil useful habits." (1 Cor. 15:32, 33) If you seek close companionship with young persons who think only of the present, you can be sure they will spoil your hopes and efforts toward gaining a really happy future. "By his mouth the one who is an apostate brings his fellowman to ruin, but by knowledge are the righteous rescued." —Prov. 11:9.

Sometimes a young person may say that he or she associates with another of questionable reputation and practices with the idea of 'helping such one.' To want to help others is a fine thing. But if you go along with them in pursuit of selfish pleasure, how much help are you giving them? After all, if you saw a child in a mud puddle, would you take some soap out into the puddle and try to clean the child with it? You would only get yourself dirty as a result. You would first have to try to encourage the child to come out of the mud puddle before you could hope to do anything about cleaning him up at close range.

Actually, to accept a youth with bad

habits as your close associate will often have a bad effect on that person (as well as on you). Why? Because it may encourage such one to keep on in the same way, feeling that, in spite of what he is doing, you still find his close companionship acceptable. Would it not be of far greater help to limit your association to times when you can really aid the person by pointing out good counsel from God's Word and by inviting him to accompany you to places where that counsel is discussed and explained?

THE MOST IMPORTANT FRIENDS

Above all, you should think seriously as to how association with persons of questionable practices may affect your relationship with Jehovah God and Christ Jesus. One may say, 'But I don't do those bad things myself.' Perhaps not—at least not yet. But if you do not like or approve of the wrong things the person is doing, then why do you like his or her close companionship? Would not people be justified in thinking you do approve of such one's practices and would they not be justified in giving you a similar reputation?

At James 4:4 we are told that 'whoever wants to be a friend of the world is constituting himself an enemy of God.' That principle can apply to our relationship with any one person just the same as to our relationship with the world of mankind alienated from God. If we approve of worldly ways in an individual or prefer such one's companionship to that of the young person who really wants to please

God, then do we not show ourselves to be 'friends of the world'?

If you really want happiness now and in the future, by all means learn to prize the friendship of God and his Son above that of all others. For thousands of years now God has been demonstrating his friendship toward those who love righteousness, developing his grand purposes to bring them everlasting life in really happy conditions. His Son has worked with him and, when on earth, proved his loyal love for right-hearted persons. He told his disciples: "No one has love greater than this, that someone should surrender his soul in behalf of his friends. You are my friends if you do what I am commanding you."—John 15:13, 14.

Unlike many who may pretend to be your friends, Jehovah God and his Son will not give up on you or abandon you because you run into difficulties. If you put your trust in them you will find that your times of trouble will be when their help and support are most evident.

Do you really appreciate these great Friends? Then show it by seeking friends like them on earth. Seek loyal companions who accept and will live up to the obligation the apostle John wrote about when he said: "By this we have come to know love, because that one [Jesus] surrendered his soul for us; and we are under obligation to surrender our souls for our brothers." (1 John 3:16) Through thick and thin, they will prove to be the kind of friends worth having. They will help you to gain life forever in God's new order.

'Overpowered by Temptation'

- The observation has been made that a person who is suddenly 'over-powered by temptation' has usually been dreaming about it for a long time. Fitting is the Bible's counsel that Christians think on things that are true, righteous, chaste and lovable.—Phil. 4:8.

HUMAN HAPPINESS Under DIVINE GOVERNMENT

AN ILLUSTRATION

As an illustration of this, Jehovah gave a vision to the prophet Ezekiel in which He designated the place of each one of the twelve tribes of Israel, with its boundaries marked.

IT WOULD be wonderful to live in health in a gardenlike environment. With clean, clear lakes and streams, wholesome food and pure air, life could really be enjoyable. If, in addition, all men cooperated in a common cause, to use earth's resources for mankind's benefit, work would be a delight. Earth would truly be a paradise.

Of course, it would take more than merely delightful surroundings and cooperative people to bring about such a desirable condition. It would require a clean, incorruptible government. For it is readily acknowledged that "when the righteous are in power the people rejoice, but they groan when the wicked hold office." (Prov. 29:2, *New English Bible*) Governments devised by men have failed to bring the desired conditions. Does that mean such a desirable government is impossible?

The Creator tells us, in the Bible, that he purposes a righteous government for the earth. He is "the happy God" and, being man's Creator, he knows the kind of government people need in order to be happy. (1 Tim. 1:11) Through his prophet Ezekiel he has revealed the design of that government.

As Owner of the earth, Jehovah has assigned this planet to man as his home. As Sovereign Ruler, he will locate individuals in the earth as he chooses, not merely for his own satisfaction, but for the greatest happiness of all concerned.—Ex. 19:5; Ps. 115:16.

On the accompanying map you will see that there was an administrative strip of land, marked "The Chieftain," with seven sections north of the strip and parallel to it. To the south were the assignments of Israel's other five tribes. The territorial strips ran eastward from the Mediterranean Sea toward the Jordan River or toward the Dead Sea.—Ezek. 47:15-20.

The tribe of Levi had no assigned inheritance because it served at Jehovah's sanctuary, which was located within the administrative strip of land, inside a section 25,000 cubits (about 42,500 feet [8 miles]) square. (The cubit used in measuring was "a cubit and a handbreadth" [about 20.4 inches].) This square portion, called "the contribution that you people should contribute," was around the neighborhood of Mount Moriah.—Ezek. 43:13; 48:8, 9.

This land "contribution," in turn, was to be divided into three strips of land, each 25,000 cubits long. The northern and middle strips were 10,000 cubits wide; the southern one, 5,000 cubits wide. The northern strip was assigned to the nonpriestly Levites. (Ezek. 48:13, 14) The middle 10,000-cubit section of the "contribution" contained Jehovah's sanctuary and was called a "holy contribution for the priests" and "something most holy, on the boundary of the Levites."—Ezek. 48:10-12.

The southernmost land strip, 5,000 cubits (1.61 miles) in width, contained in its center the "city," 5,000 cubits square.

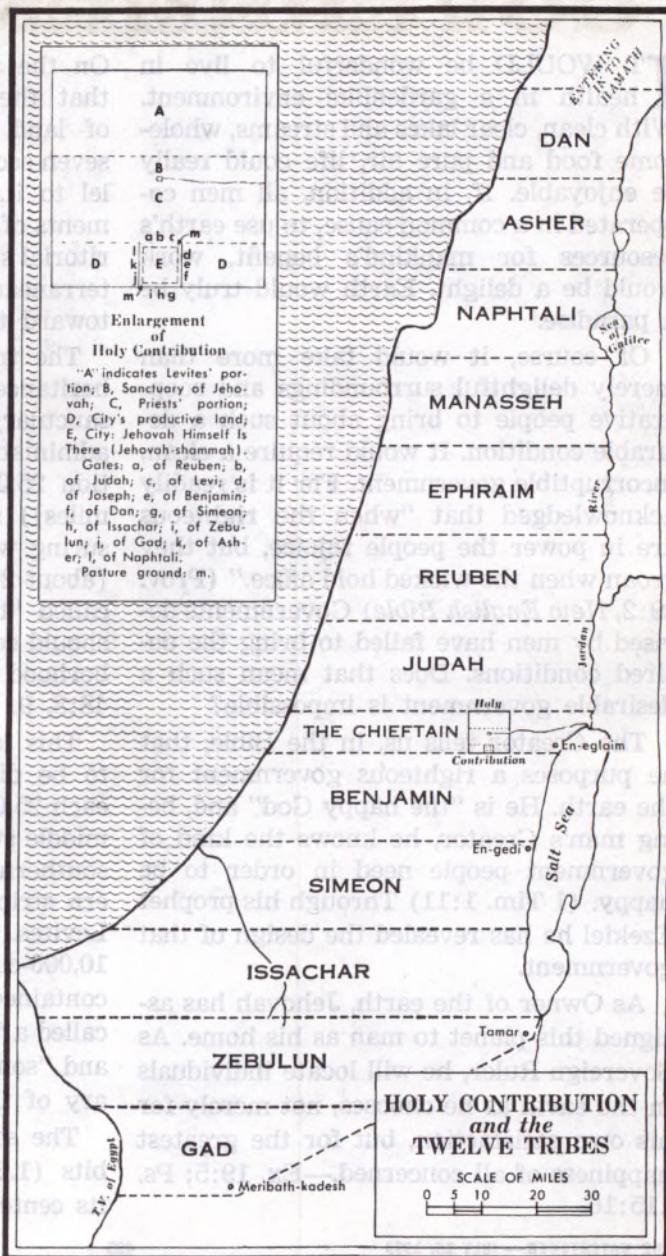
The wall around the city was 4,500 cubits on a side, with 250 cubits all around as pasture ground. (Ezek. 48:15-17) On each side of the city (east and west) was an area 10,000 cubits long by 5,000 cubits wide. This open land was to be cultivated to produce food for all those working in the city. These composed an intertribal staff of workers, persons from all twelve non-Levite tribes.—Ezek. 48:18, 19.

VISIBLE REPRESENTATIVES OF HEAVENLY GOVERNMENT

The visible head of this visionary city government was the "chieftain." His assigned territory was quite large, consisting of the land on each side of the 25,000-cubit-square land "contribution." This strip, 25,000 cubits wide, stretched all the way to the Mediterranean Sea on the west of the "contribution" and to the Jordan River and the Dead Sea on the east.—Ezek. 47:18, 20.

It is noteworthy that in Ezekiel's vision the city did not contain the temple, though the temple was close by in the special "contribution" of land. The priests and Levites did not dwell or work in this city. Therefore, in the fulfillment of the vision under Messiah's thousand-year reign, the visionary city would not picture the heavenly city, New Jerusalem, made up of Christ's congregation of spiritual Israelites, his Bride. (Rev. 20:3, 4, 6; 21:1, 2, 9-21) For they are priests, "a royal priesthood," their names being en-

rolled in the heavens. (1 Pet. 2:9; Heb. 12:23) Accordingly, the "city" pictures, not the heavenly government of Jesus Christ and his 144,000 associate kings and priests, but, instead, an earthly, visible seat of administration over the affairs of redeemed mankind.



The "chieftain" in the vision is therefore not a symbolic figure of Jesus Christ. The chieftain served in the "profane" section, not at the temple, whereas Jesus Christ is the great High Priest, serving in the heavenly area of Jehovah's spiritual temple. (Heb. 3:1; 8:1) True, Jehovah called the Messiah "a chieftain" in an earlier chapter of Ezekiel's prophecy. But there God speaks of that chieftain as "my servant David," whereas no such reference is made to the chieftain in this vision of the "city." David was the king of Israel from whose line the Messiah came, as regards his fleshly descent. (Ezek. 34:24; 37:25; Acts 2:29-36) Jesus Christ is, as the foretold Messiah, the heavenly King as well as High Priest.

Whom, then, does the "chieftain" in the temple vision symbolically portray? Just as the term "servant" often had a collective meaning, as where Jehovah called the nation of Israel his "servant," so the "chieftain" takes on a collective meaning. It stands for those whom the heavenly Messiah Jesus appoints as his visible representatives in the "new earth," under the direction of the "new heaven."—Isa. 43:10; Rev. 21:1, 2.

The psalmist wrote prophetically addressing the King Jesus Christ and referring to his earthly children: "In place of your [earthly] forefathers there will come to be your sons, whom you will appoint as princes in all the earth." (Ps. 45:16) Christ will see to it that these and others, having become his "sons" by reason of getting life through him, will, as righteous "princes" in the earth, justly administer the affairs of mankind and will keep them in security, for this is guaranteed in Isaiah chapter 32 in these grand words:

"Look! A king will reign for righteousness itself; and as respects princes, they will rule as princes for justice itself. And each one must prove to be like a hiding place from the wind and a place of concealment from the rainstorm, like streams of water in a waterless country, like the shadow of a heavy crag in an exhausted land."

"And in the wilderness justice will certainly reside, and in the orchard righteousness itself will dwell. And the work of the true righteousness must become peace; and the service of the true righteousness, quietness and security to time indefinite. And my people must dwell in a peaceful abiding place and in residences of full confidence and in undisturbed resting-places."—Isa. 32:1, 2, 16-18.

Jehovah did this for his people in a small-scale way when he restored them from exile in Babylon to rebuild Jerusalem and its temple. How much more he will do this for the people of all the earth during Christ's thousand-year reign! Then Christ's words to his apostles will come true, that they will sit with him "judging the twelve tribes of Israel," that is, all redeemed mankind, through the righteous visible princely representatives on earth.—Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:29, 30.

NAME OF THE CITY SIGNIFICANT

Volunteers from all parts of the earth and from all the ranks of ransomed mankind will then come in to cooperate actively with the "chieftain" class. This will be at the "city," which stands for the visible official seat of the "chieftain" class for administering the affairs of all mankind. Ezekiel's vision depicted three gates in each of the city's four walls, open to all twelve tribes of Israel. (Ezek. 48:30-34) The city-like administration will perfectly reflect the heavenly New Jerusalem, which has twelve gates inscribed with the names of the "twelve tribes of the sons of Israel." (Rev. 21:12) So the approachableness and loving care of Christ and his underpriesthood will also be shown by the

'princely' administration on earth. There will be free and open access for all who wish to receive help on a vital matter.

Ezekiel's prophecy closes giving the name of this city: "Round about [the city's perimeter] there will be eighteen thousand cubits; and the name of the city from that day on will be Jehovah Himself Is There." (Ezek. 48:35) It is just as Revelation 21:3 promises: "Look! The tent of God is with mankind, and he will reside with them, and they will be his peoples. And God himself will be with them." Jehovah himself will manifest his divine presence by directing his loving, beneficent attention to the "city." The fruitage of his spirit will abound there to his glory, namely, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control."—Gal. 5:22, 23.

With Jehovah's spirit operating through those "princes," we can then be sure of a righteous government that will have the glory of God, justice, righteousness, and the happiness of the people at heart. From Jesus Christ the great High Priest and his priesthood in the heavens will come the application of the sin-atoning value of Christ's sacrifice, with all its benefits. Fully under the direction of the "new heaven," the city-like visible administration will aid in the uplift of all obedient mankind to perfection of heart, mind and body in the earth's reestablished Paradise. Revelation 21:4 goes on to say: "And [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."

A REAL HOPE TO SEIZE NOW

At this time, under the influence of this system of things, and because of the sin we have inherited from our forefather Ad-

am, it is a constant fight for even the true Christian to overcome the bad, destructive tendencies of the imperfect flesh. (Rom. 7:19, 24, 25) Humans are helpless on their own, and the influence of Satan, "the god of this system of things," and the lack of care on the part of earth's governments for the welfare of the people, have left them in a pitiful state. (2 Cor. 4:4) But under the righteous 'new heavens and new earth,' with the administration of God-fearing princes in the earth, the prophecy will be fulfilled: "The earth will be filled with the knowing of the glory of Jehovah as the waters themselves cover over the sea." (Hab. 2:14; 2 Pet. 3:13) Coming to know Jehovah God and his unsurpassed loving-kindness, his wisdom, his justice and his provisions for happiness of mankind, they will glorify him and imitate his ways. Then, as the psalmist prophetically sang: "As for loving-kindness and trueness, they have met each other; righteousness and peace—they have kissed each other. Trueness itself will sprout out of the very earth, and righteousness itself will look down from the very heavens. Also, Jehovah, for his part, will give what is good, and our own land will give its yield."—Ps. 85:10-12.

If you are one who desires these good things, you undoubtedly see that they are not practiced in this present system of things. You may be vexed and upset by the things you see going on. (Ezek. 9:4) If so, show your love of righteousness now. God is setting before you the opportunity for deliverance, just as he did for righteous Lot in the midst of the corrupt city of Sodom. (2 Pet. 2:7-9) Do not sit complacently and wait, for Jehovah is going to destroy this corrupt world and all who hang onto it. (2 Pet. 3:7-9; 1 Pet. 4:17-19) Take steps to learn God's will now and to make it your way of life.

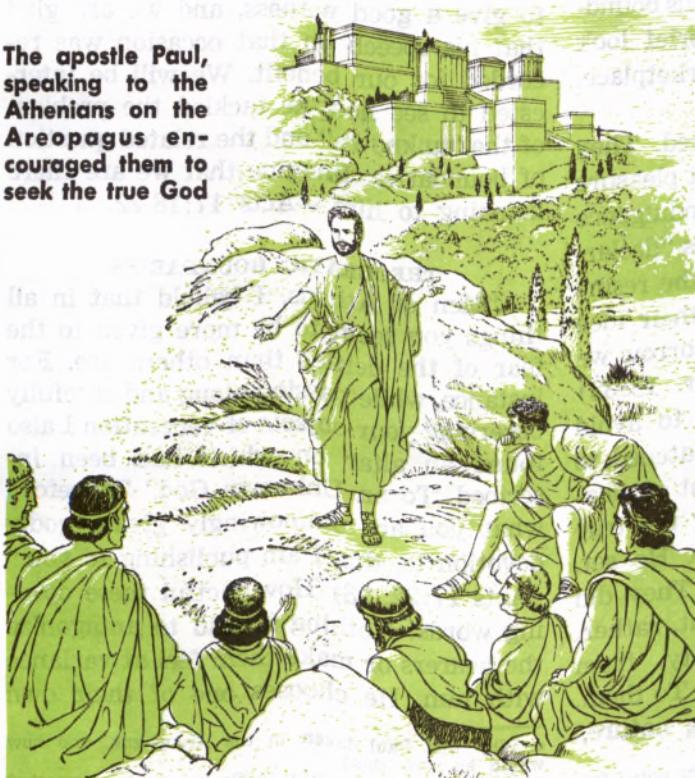
Seek God

WHILE HE MAY BE FOUND

THE man was unknown in the city, and on his arrival the city was unknown to him. Looking around, he noticed an altar dedicated "To an Unknown God." Would you like to be involved in worshiping a God whom you viewed as unknown? It was a most unsatisfactory situation, and that is doubtless how the apostle Paul felt after reaching Athens in the course of his second missionary tour, around 50 C.E. It happened that Paul's Christian brothers had brought him from Beroea as far as Athens, and had left him there, in accord with his instructions. It was only after receiving heavenly direction

"He [God] decreed the appointed times and the set limits of the dwelling of men, for them to seek God, if they might grope for him and really find him."
—Acts 17:26, 27.

The apostle Paul, speaking to the Athenians on the Areopagus encouraged them to seek the true God



that Paul had recently visited Macedonia, up north of Athens, and evidently he had never set foot in Athens before. Likely he knew it was a center of learning, also of religion. He was disturbed by this latter aspect, and "his spirit within him came to be irritated at beholding that the city was full of idols." How did Paul react to the situation? How would you, if you were a Christian Jew, have reacted to it?—Acts 16:9, 10; 17:15, 16, 23.

² That which is "unknown" has no clearly defined boundaries or "set limits." This fact can result in much harm,

1. How did Paul come to be an unknown man in an unknown city, leading to what result?
2. In what way can that which is "unknown" be harmful, and how did Paul seek to overcome this?

easily leading to tragedy. Hence, if it is possible, this circumstance is something for us to overcome. Paul overcame that. He began to make himself and his mission known, and, at the same time, to make himself more familiar with the Athenians and their ways of thinking. "Consequently he began to reason in the synagogue with the Jews and the other people who worshiped God and every day in the marketplace with those who happened to be on hand." (Acts 17:17) Probably his experience with the Jews there in Athens was not much different from what happened in other cities. But in the marketplace he contacted many who prided themselves on their interest in learning and philosophy. Since "all Athenians and the foreigners sojourning there would spend their leisure time at nothing but telling something or listening to something new," could it be said they were seeking God within known religious boundaries? Hardly. Let us take a brief look at these who thronged the marketplace.

—Acts 17:21.

³ The Epicureans are mentioned. They believed that gaining the greatest pleasure without the bad effects of overindulgence was the chief aim in life. Paul was "declaring the good news of Jesus and the resurrection," which ran counter to their idea of "let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we are to die." (Acts 17:18; 1 Cor. 15:32) The one boundary they sought to avoid crossing was anything that threatened to deny their pursuit and attainment of pleasure. No, they were not seeking the true God within the boundaries that He set. The Stoics are also mentioned. They did not believe in a personal God, but, rather, thought of an impersonal deity, from which the human soul emanated. To them, a life of virtue meant 'following nature,'

since they believed that matter and energy were the elemental principles in the universe. They believed that fate governed human affairs. They, too, not being real truth seekers, were not ready to accept Paul's God-given message. In passing, it is not difficult to see a close similarity between the tenets of the foregoing groups and the teachings of many today, with their priorities on materialism and love of pleasure. To them, whether they say so or not, "God is dead," at least as far as their interest in sincerely seeking him, or even groping for him, is concerned.

⁴ The general attitude toward Paul was unfavorable. They "took to conversing with him controversially," and called him a "chatterer" and a "publisher of foreign deities." They led him to the Areopagus, possibly so as to give him a trial hearing. Paul would be pleased for this opportunity to give a good witness, and we are glad that his speech on that occasion was recorded for our benefit. We will be interested to see how he tackled the problem of the "unknown" and the related question of boundaries. Imagine that we are there listening to him.—Acts 17:18-22.

THEOCRATIC BOUNDARIES

⁵ "Men of Athens, I behold that in all things you seem to be more given to the fear of the deities than others are. For instance, while passing along and carefully observing your objects of veneration I also found an altar on which had been inscribed 'To an Unknown God.' Therefore what you are unknowingly giving godly devotion to, this I am publishing to you." (Acts 17:22, 23) How tactful these opening words! Nothing is said to antagonize the hearers or make them feel at variance with him. He chooses one of their own

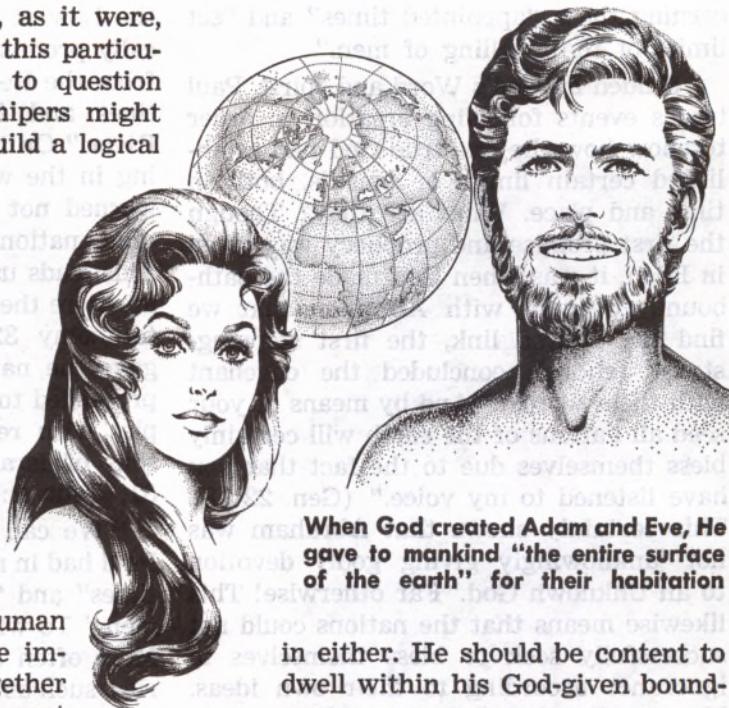
4. Why was Paul taken to the Areopagus, and how would he view this?

5. (a) What is noteworthy in Paul's opening remarks?
(b) How does he tackle the problem of the "unknown"?

3. What were the Epicureans and the Stoics noted for, and how is a similar attitude seen today?

"objects of veneration," and, as it were, joins them in contemplating this particular altar. Without stopping to question what kind of god the worshipers might have in mind, he starts to build a logical and persuasive argument, laying one solid fact of truth upon another. First, he gets away from the "unknown." He does not bluntly say it is wrong, but simply says that he will publish, or expound, the one and only worthy object of godly devotion. Notice how he does this.

⁶ He explains that God, the Creator of all things and Giver of life and breath, does not dwell in handmade temples, or need to be waited on by human hands. If this might give the impression that God was altogether beyond the reach of man, his next words give the true perspective. "And he [God] made out of one man every nation of men, to dwell upon the entire surface of the earth, and he decreed the appointed times and the set limits of the dwelling of men, for them to seek God, if they might grope for him and really find him, although, in fact, he is not far off from each one of us." (Acts 17:24-27) Both science and the Bible attest to the fact that the entire human family can trace its origin to one man; this man, in turn, received his life and breath from God, his Creator. The interesting point is then made that the wide limit for man's dwelling is "the entire surface of the earth." This, of course, does not agree with the ambitious saying that the sky is the limit. Man might travel through the atmosphere and even probe as far as the moon, but he cannot permanently reside



When God created Adam and Eve, He gave to mankind "the entire surface of the earth" for their habitation

in either. He should be content to dwell within his God-given boundary.

⁷ What does Paul have in mind when he next says that God "decreed the appointed times and the set limits [literally, a 'setting of the bounds'] of the dwelling of men, for them to seek God"? Notice that word "decreed." When God, the Sovereign Lord, issues a decree or anything similar, such as an edict, law or command, then a theocratic boundary, fixed limit, or line of demarcation, is immediately established. This must always be so, for the issuing of such lays down and imposes certain requirements and obligations that must be observed. Obedience requires that you stay within the bounds thereof. Disobedience means that you are overstepping or violating those bounds or limits, hence becoming out of bounds, as we say, and perhaps guilty of invading the rights of others. A further examination of this in the light of the Scriptures will help us in seeking God, but first we inquire con-

6. What truth does Paul establish concerning God's purpose for man and his home?

7. When God issues a decree or anything similar, what is always implied?

cerning these "appointed times" and "set limits of the dwelling of men."

⁸ Guided by God's Word and spirit, Paul traces events following creation in order to show how the one true God had established certain limits or bounds, both in time and place. What are they? Though the first promise and prophecy was given in Eden, it was when God made the oath-bound covenant with Abraham that we find the desired link, the first stepping-stone. Jehovah concluded the covenant with these words: "And by means of your seed all nations of the earth will certainly bless themselves due to the fact that you have listened to my voice." (Gen. 22:18) This certainly shows that Abraham was not 'unknowingly giving godly devotion to an Unknown God.' Far otherwise! This likewise means that the nations could not successfully seek to bless themselves in ignorance according to their own ideas. Men can find God and get his blessing only in God's appointed way. As Isaiah said: "Search for Jehovah, you people, while he may be found." You must also search where he may be found, "while he proves to be near." (Isa. 55:6) Are you, like Abraham, ready to listen responsively to God's voice?

⁹ Now see how God's promise worked out, with limits both in time and place. Concerning Abraham's seed, God said: "You may know for sure that your seed will become an alien resident in a land not theirs . . . for four hundred years. . . . But in the fourth generation they will return here." Jehovah went on to promise: "To your seed I will give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates." On time, after that four-hundred-year period, when the Israelites, Abraham's descendants, were receiving

the Law at Mount Sinai, Jehovah specifically promised: "I will fix your boundary from the Red Sea to the sea of the Philistines and from the wilderness to the River." On the other hand, when journeying in the wilderness, the Israelites were warned not to violate the boundaries of other nations, such as Moab and Ammon. This leads us to appreciate how appropriate were the words of Moses' song at Deuteronomy 32:8: "When the Most High gave the nations an inheritance, . . . he proceeded to fix the boundary of the peoples with regard for the number of the sons of Israel."—Gen. 15:13-21; Ex. 23:31; Deut. 2:4, 5, 18, 19.

¹⁰ We can now better understand what Paul had in mind regarding the "appointed times" and "set limits of the dwelling of men." To what end did God decree such? More often than not, men set up boundaries, such as a high wall, to keep out those who are unknown and unwanted. But in this instance we have a delightful contrast. Paul says that their purpose is to act as helpful signposts or guidelines for men "to seek God . . . and really find him, although, in fact, he is not far off from each one of us." This is backed up by the reminder that man is dependent on God for life and movement, "even as certain ones of the poets among you have said, 'For we are also his progeny.'" Then Paul gives warning against being misguided by idolatry, a form of worship based on ignorance: "Seeing, therefore, that we are the progeny of God, we ought not to imagine that the Divine Being is . . . like something sculptured by the art and contrivance of man." As we listen, we want to know what we are expected to do about this. Without delay, we are told: "True, God has overlooked the times of such ignorance, yet

8. How did God's promise to Abraham reveal certain limits or bounds?

9. How did that promise work out, involving limits in both time and place?

10. (a) For what purpose did God establish "appointed times" and "set limits"? (b) Based on this, what further argument and warning were then given?

now he is telling mankind that they should all everywhere repent."—Acts 17:27-30.

¹¹ The apostle quickly reaches the climax of his argument, at least as far as he is permitted to get. In a few words, he has reached right back to the start of creation, is now showing what God is telling men to do, then gives the reason for this by reaching into the future. Why the call to repentance? "Because he [God] has set a day in which he purposes to judge the inhabited earth in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and he has furnished a guarantee to all men in that he has resurrected him from the dead." (Acts 17:31) Do you notice the theocratic boundaries, the set "day" and the appointed "man" who is guaranteed by God to render a righteous judgment, favorable to those sincerely seeking him? These set time bounds speak of greater things than the "set limits of the dwelling of men" as earlier mentioned at Acts 17:26. Desiring a favorable judgment, we today need to get a clear view of the line of demarcation between obedience and disobedience toward God, between right and wrong. Do not draw this line yourself. As we shall see, it requires more care than is generally recognized, involving the heart as well as the mind.

¹² Paul's mention of a resurrection from the dead was too much for most of the listeners. "Some began to mock, while others said: 'We will hear you about this even another time.'" However, the fine witness that Paul gave was not entirely fruitless. "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." We rejoice to know that some listened respon-

11. What was the climax of Paul's argument, involving what theocratic boundaries?

12, 13. (a) The mention of a resurrection produced what general effect, but with what exceptions? (b) In what way can we expect to profit by looking back?

sively and proved obedient.—Acts 17:32-34.

¹³ Paul had to be brief on that occasion. For ourselves, however, not being under such immediate pressure of today, we will find it worth our while to look back and see how and why the need arose before Paul's day for seeking God, how that need has been met, and what obligations rest upon us.

HOW AND WHY THE SEARCH BEGAN

¹⁴ In the Bible it is surprising to find that the first mention of searching is not a searching on the part of man in seeking God, but the reverse. We read at Genesis 3:9: "And Jehovah God kept calling to the man and saying to him [repeatedly]: 'Where are you?'" What an amazing situation! Had something gone wrong? Yes, a wrong action had occurred, as a result of which, when Adam and his wife "heard the voice of Jehovah God walking in the garden . . . [they] went into hiding from the face of Jehovah God in between the trees of the garden." When we try to hide from the face of someone, it is often due to a troubled conscience, causing fear and shame. You know the feeling. Adam felt that way when he replied to God: "Your voice I heard in the garden, but I was afraid because I was naked and so I hid myself." Feeling afraid and wanting to hide is one thing, but feeling repentant and seeking to restore a good relationship is quite another thing. At no time was there any indication of the latter on the part of Adam or his wife. Of course, they bitterly regretted the *result* of their action, but there was no expression of regret or shame over the action itself. What was their wrong action?—Gen. 3:8, 10.

14. (a) The fact that Jehovah had to search for man implied what? (b) How did Adam reveal a troubled conscience, but was there any evidence of real repentance?

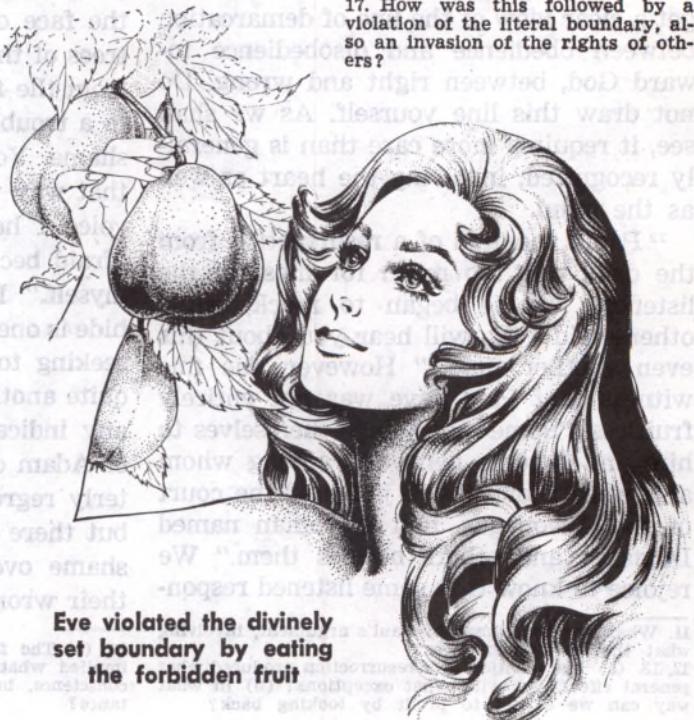
¹⁶ Both Adam and his wife had overstepped certain theocratic boundaries, literally and figuratively, or morally. They were also guilty of invading the rights of others. When God first put Adam in Eden, he did not just *invite* Adam to eat freely from every tree except one. Rather, we read that God "laid this *command* upon the man: 'From every tree of the garden you may eat to satisfaction. But as for the tree of the knowledge of good and bad you must not eat from it, for in the day you eat from it you will positively die.'" Twice afterward God spoke of it as a command. (Gen. 2:16, 17; 3:11, 17) Interestingly, when Satan, through the serpent, questioned Eve about this command, neither of them spoke of it as a command, but simply as something that God had said. (Gen. 3:1, 3) However, as previously mentioned, a command always creates one or more boundaries. In this case, the "tree of the knowledge of good and bad" was literally out of bounds for Adam and Eve. They were not to eat its fruit or even to touch it. But it was not out of reach physically; hence, there was raised the all-important *moral* boundary. The command of God imposed a test of their obedience.

¹⁶ Listening responsively to the serpent led to violation of the moral boundary. "The woman saw that the tree . . . was something to be longed for to the eyes, yes, the tree was desirable to look upon." Longings and desires spring from the heart. Though she had just repeated God's com-

mand, she allowed false information to be fed into her heart through her mind. She was deceived into thinking that she herself could draw the line of demarcation, "knowing good and bad" for herself. Is that not what most people do in life, setting up their own standards of right and wrong, or accepting the standards of others? Is that perhaps what you have done, with encouragement from others apart from God, believing that sincerity is a sufficient guide?—Gen. 3:5, 6.

¹⁷ Eve having violated the moral boundary in wrongfully desiring and deciding to eat the forbidden fruit, there quickly followed the violation of the literal boundary. She "began taking of its fruit and eating it. Afterward she gave some also to her husband when with her and he began eating it." (Gen. 3:6) Overstepping a boundary often means an invasion of the rights of others. In this instance, first Eve invaded the rights of her husband re-

17. How was this followed by a violation of the literal boundary, also an invasion of the rights of others?



Eve violated the divinely set boundary by eating the forbidden fruit

15. How did God's command at Genesis 2:16, 17 set up a boundary, both literally and morally?

16. With Eve, what caused a violation of a moral boundary, leading to what further error?

specting headship, taking the initiative into her own hands. More important, they both invaded the rights of Jehovah God by deciding on their own course in the act and spirit of disobedience. They deliberately stepped out of line. That is, they willfully ignored God's line of demarcation between what was permissible to eat and what was not, and drew their own. With what result?

¹⁸ After God's judgment had been pronounced, Adam and his wife were expelled from their garden home. A return to it was made impossible. Jehovah "drove the man out and posted at the east of the garden of Eden the cherubs and the flaming blade of a sword that was turning itself continually to guard the way to the tree of life." (Gen. 3:24) This was a forbidding boundary mark; an impenetrable barrier for them. Worse, they were banished from Jehovah's face and presence. As children of Adam, all of us, "made out of one man," are greatly affected thereby. Due to inherited sin and imperfection, not to mention the 'times of ignorance' in which we live, we are estranged from God. (Acts 17:26, 30) Granted, there is much religion practiced among men estranged from God. There are many religions, and many persons are satisfied with their particular religion. They decide for themselves between good and bad in matters of religion or where there is a moral issue to be considered. Do you do that? And does this mean there is no hope in existence? Is seeking for the true God and for the true religion all in vain? Can the search be ended successfully for us? See what happened after man's expulsion from Eden, and the encouragement that can be gained therefrom.

18. (a) How did God safeguard his rights? (b) To what extent has mankind been affected by Adam's disobedience, raising what questions?

HOW THE SEARCH CAN BE ENDED

¹⁹ Adam's first two sons, by way of contrast, provide much that will help us in our search. They each brought an offering to Jehovah, but, as events showed, each with a different motive. Cain's offering of "some fruits of the ground" was perhaps only a formality, not to be outdone by his younger brother, Abel, who brought a choice offering of "some firstlings of his flock, even their fatty pieces." By some means not disclosed, Jehovah showed favor toward Abel and his offering, but "he did not look with any favor upon Cain and upon his offering." Hence, Cain became "hot with great anger." Then Jehovah kindly warned him: "If you turn to doing good, will there not be an exaltation? But if you do not turn to doing good, there is sin crouching at the entrance, and for you is its craving; and will you, for your part, get the mastery over it?" This reveals that Cain had already been acting in a bad way, evidently seeking an "exaltation" in a selfish, headstrong spirit. He was perilously near to crossing the border of self-control. He did cross it, and became the first murderer. He "went away from the face of Jehovah and took up residence in the land of Fugitiveness," the land of flight from justice.—Gen. 4:3-16.

²⁰ When we look at Abel, what a happy contrast! God in some way showed favor toward him. Abel was fully aware of this. Paul emphasizes this, saying that "by faith Abel offered God a sacrifice of greater worth than Cain, through which faith he had witness borne to him that he was righteous, God bearing witness respecting his gifts; and through it he, although he died, yet speaks." (Heb. 11:4) Abel's faith had

19. What contrast is seen between Adam's first two sons, and how did Cain's course turn out?

20. In what way could Abel build up a strong faith, coupled with what other fine qualities?

a good foundation. He no doubt had been given a detailed description of Jehovah's bountiful provisions enjoyed in the Garden of Eden. He surely knew how Jehovah had spoken to Adam like a father speaking to his son. He was familiar with the Edenic promise and prophecy of Jehovah God concerning the bruising of the serpent's head, and had a sure hope of its fulfillment, though not knowing exactly when or how. Besides faith and hope, he had that other quality that is preeminent. He cultivated true love for Jehovah, coupled with a strong sense of loyalty and appreciation, strong enough to overcome the bad influence and example of his par-

ents and elder brother.—Gen. 3:15; 1 Cor. 13:13.

²¹ For Abel, with the evidence of Jehovah's blessing upon him, the search for the true God was ended. He did not need to seek God, except in the sense of always seeking to retain His favor by right conduct in the spirit of true obedience from the heart. What was possible for Abel is possible for you. We will look forward with confidence to searching into God's Word for further guidance and encouragement. Keep in mind the way that Jehovah helped Abel, and, we might say, even offered a helping hand to Cain.

21. What encouragement can we get from considering Abel?

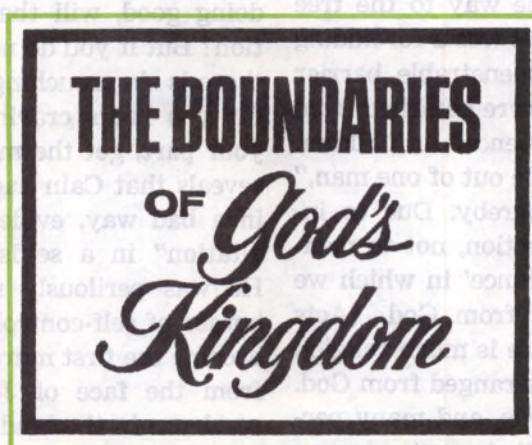
IN HIS well-known Sermon on the Mount, Jesus emphasized the importance of seeking God's kingdom in direct relation to its boundaries, that is, the persons whom it would include in its membership. Mentioning first the need for Kingdom heirs to have humility and a suppliant attitude, he said: "Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need, since the kingdom of the heavens belongs to them." By way of warning and encouragement, he also stressed the need for Kingdom heirs to keep within the bounds of God's commandments, saying: "Whoever, therefore, breaks one of these least commandments [of the Mosaic Law] and teaches mankind to that effect, he will be called 'least' [hence unfit] in relation

to the kingdom of the heavens. As for anyone who does them and teaches them, this one will be called 'great' in relation to the kingdom of the heavens."—Matt. 5:3, 19.

² Consider next the opening words of the model prayer forming part of that talk: "Our Father in the heavens, let your name be sanctified. Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth." (Matt. 6:9, 10) These are not just general petitions. In effect, they form boundaries, or guiding lines, that we must apply to ourselves personally. We must sanctify Jehovah's name in our hearts and minds and in all our conduct. As the apostle Paul wrote regarding our conduct: "This is what God

1. At Matthew 5:3, 19, what two requirements are mentioned relative to God's kingdom?

2. How can and should the opening petitions of the Lord's Prayer be applied personally?



wills, the sanctifying of you, that you abstain from fornication; that each one of you should know how to get possession of his own vessel in sanctification and honor . . . For God called us, not with allowance for uncleanness, but in connection with sanctification. May the very God of peace sanctify you completely." We must not only desire to see God's will done on earth in a general way, but sincerely seek to know and carry out his will in our own lives right now, and thus prove our love for him. This means our dedication. The apostle John wrote: "Do not be loving either the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him . . . the world is passing away and so is its desire, but he that does the will of God remains forever."—1 Thess. 4:3-7; 5:23; 1 John 2:15-17.

³ Later in Jesus' talk, after warning of the dangers of materialism, "the things the nations are eagerly pursuing," he says: "Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and *his* [God's] righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you." (Matt. 6:32, 33) Strange as it may seem, Jesus here touched on one of the chief barriers encountered in seeking God, not only for the Jews, but for people generally. Most people are anxious to justify themselves and appear in the right, at least in the eyes of their associates. This is determined by their own standards, which vary greatly among different peoples, especially in the modern permissive society. The Jews generally sought to establish their own righteousness, trusting in their ability to keep the Law given through Moses. As Paul said: "They have a zeal for God; but not according to accurate knowledge; for, because of not knowing the righteousness

of God but seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the Law, so that everyone exercising faith may have righteousness."—Rom. 10:2-4; see also Galatians 3:10-14.

⁴ Surely, pride, the opposite of humility, is at the root of such a difficulty. It started with the Devil, "the god of this system of things," and is a means by which he "has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, that the illumination of the glorious good news about the Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine through." Pride acts as a barrier to our seeking the true God. It turns our hearts inward upon ourselves in admiration. So there is a dulling of our mental powers in unbelief, and this acts like a veil. "But when there is a turning to Jehovah [in humility and sincerity], the veil is taken away." Pride may well be a part of our natural makeup, but, as Paul said, we must "strip off the old personality," and, instead, 'clothe ourselves with lowliness of mind.'—2 Cor. 4:4; 3:13-16; Col. 3:9, 12.

⁵ Toward the conclusion of his talk on that mountain in Galilee, Jesus specified definite boundaries for those seeking life, saying: "Go in through the narrow gate; because broad and spacious is the road leading off into destruction, and many are the ones going in through it; whereas narrow is the gate and cramped the road leading off into life, and few are the ones finding it." (Matt. 7:13, 14) Do not let this discourage you. Jesus did not say that it was God's *will* that only a few should find it. You can be among the ones finding that restricted entrance and road leading to life, if you are prepared to accept the terms of discipleship involved. (Luke 9:

4. What is the cause of the difficulty? How does it operate, and how can it be overcome?

5. (a) How did Jesus describe the requirements for seeking life, and why so? (b) Is the way of the world really one of true freedom?

3. Besides seeking the Kingdom, what else did Jesus mention, and how have many stumbled over this?

23, 24) In passing, we might add that the way of the world, the course of self-indulgence and self-determination, though seemingly without boundaries, "broad and spacious," is actually a course of slavery, bounded by sin and selfishness, leading to frustration and destruction.—Rom. 6:16, 21.

⁶ Finally, again stressing the need for obedience and warning against a mere profession of seeking God, Jesus said: "Not everyone saying to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but the one doing the will of my Father who is in the heavens will." He concluded with a forceful illustration, showing the outcome to the one that "hears these sayings of mine and does them," and the outcome to the one "hearing these sayings of mine and not doing them."—Matt. 7:21-27; 15:7-9.

APPRECIATION LEADING TO MOTIVATION

⁷ With these sayings of Jesus in mind, we can appreciate more fully that in seeking God we must be ready and anxious to conform to all his requirements. Faith and devotion are essential. These are not just abstract qualities. If cultivated aright, they will motivate us to draw near to God in a close relationship with him, causing us to walk with him. This was true of those men and women of faith mentioned at Hebrews, chapter eleven. Like Abel, Enoch "had the witness that he had pleased God well." Next, Noah "showed godly fear and constructed an ark for the saving of his household." Concerning these men, it is said that they "walked with the true God." Of course, you cannot be searching for a person if you are already walking with that one, can you?

6. What final warning did Jesus give, backed by what forceful illustration?

7. (a) What qualities are vital in seeking God, leading to what fine result? (b) How was this demonstrated by Abel, Enoch and Noah?

For those men the search was ended, though at all times they sought to retain Jehovah's favor and approval. All those pre-Christian witnesses proved their faith and devotion by their works, their faithfulness and endurance.—Heb. 11:5, 7; Gen. 5:22; 6:9; Jas. 2:17; 1 John 3:18.

⁸ Take to heart the fundamental truth expressed by Paul in that same connection: "Without faith it is impossible to please him well, for he that approaches God must believe that he is and that he becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him." (Heb. 11:6) Actually, we have stronger grounds for faith than did those early witnesses. We have the complete Word of God with its wealth of information and experience. We also have the fine experiences of a great crowd of modern witnesses as given in the annual *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses*. Additionally, we can see in our day the fulfillment of many of the God-given prophecies recorded by the faithful men of old. As foretold, all the evidence shows that Christ Jesus, the heavenly King, was enthroned in 1914 C.E. This is a day when people of all nations are being separated, just as a shepherd separates sheep from goats. Soon will come Armageddon, followed by the thousand-year judgment day in which God will "judge the inhabited earth in righteousness" by the one appointed and guaranteed, the Son of man. We are living in the day looked forward to by Abel and Enoch, and foreshadowed by the days of Noah. And Jesus said that, "as these things start to occur, raise yourselves erect and lift your heads up, because your deliverance is getting near . . . [because you] know that the kingdom of God is near."—Acts 17:31; Luke 21:28-31; see also Genesis 3:15; Matthew 24:37-39; Jude 14, 15; Revelation 20:1-3.

8. What truth is stated at Hebrews 11:6, and how do we today have strong grounds for faith?

⁹ To increase our appreciation, our sense of values, so that our hearts impel us to maintain the right course of action, take note of James' practical counsel: "Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you meet with various trials, knowing as you do that this tested quality of your faith works out endurance." If you "let endurance have its work complete," it will result in "the crown of life, which Jehovah promised to those who continue loving him." James also stresses humility and definite action in seeking God: "'God opposes the haughty ones, but he gives undeserved kindness to the humble ones.' Subject yourselves, therefore, to God; but oppose the Devil, and he will flee from you. Draw close to God, and he will draw close to you." To acquire such a depth of appreciation, motivating us to a course of unwavering devotion, calls for patience, as James explains: "The farmer keeps waiting for the precious fruit of the earth, exercising patience over it until he gets the early rain and the late rain. You too exercise patience; make your hearts firm." —Jas. 1:2-4, 12; 4:6-8; 5:7, 8.

¹⁰ James was not the first to mention the two-way principle on which God acts in meeting halfway, so to speak, those who desire to draw close to him. Centuries earlier, David was inspired to give this encouragement and warning to his son: "And you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father and serve him with a complete heart and with a delightful soul; for all hearts Jehovah is searching . . . If you search for him, he will let himself be found by you; but if you leave him, he will cast you off forever." Similarly, Hanani the seer later said to King Asa: "As regards Jehovah, his eyes are roving about through all the earth to show his strength

in behalf of those whose heart is complete toward him. You have acted foolishly respecting this [in leaning on the king of Syria instead of on Jehovah], for from now on there will exist wars against you." —1 Chron. 28:9; 2 Chron. 16:9.

¹¹ Yes, this two-way principle can operate in a reverse manner. By his spirit, his invisible active force, Jehovah reveals himself and shows his strength in behalf of those who have a right heart attitude. God, "who knows the heart," will give his holy spirit to those sincerely asking him. But he can and will withdraw his spirit if one turns one's heart away from Him, as happened with Solomon. As recorded of him: "It came about in the time of Solomon's growing old that his wives themselves had inclined his heart to follow other gods; and his heart did not prove to be complete with Jehovah his God like the heart of David his father."—Acts 15:8; Luke 11:13; 1 Ki. 11:4.

¹² Note the emphasis laid on the importance of getting to know God's commandments and keeping well within their theocratic bounds. Just before the words spoken at 1 Chronicles 28:9, David told Solomon what God had said to him: "I shall certainly establish his [Solomon's] kingship firmly to time indefinite if he will be strongly resolved to do my commandments and my judicial decisions, as at this day," to which David added his own appeal. David concluded by giving his son this stirring exhortation: "See, now, for Jehovah himself has chosen you to build a house as a sanctuary. Be courageous and act." He fulfilled that commission, but later failed in the vital test of keeping true heart devotion to Jehovah. With what result? "Jehovah now said to Solomon: 'For the reason that this has taken place with

9. How does James link faith with endurance, and what further counsel does he give?

10. On what two-way principle does God act, and toward whom?

11. How and why can this two-way principle operate in a reverse manner?

12. (a) What was emphasized in God's words respecting Solomon, leading to what fine motivation? (b) But what finally resulted regarding Solomon, and why?

you [in going after other gods] and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes that I laid in command upon you, I shall without fail rip the kingdom away from off you, and I shall certainly give it to your servant.'”—1 Chron. 28:7, 8, 10; 1 Ki. 11:9-11.

¹³ With Solomon, the two-way principle ended in the reverse manner, to his shame and reproach. But it does not have to be that way. To Israel, though in Malachi's day they had a long record in their disfavor, Jehovah made this direct and positive appeal: “From the days of your forefathers you have turned aside from my regulations and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you.” In a final day of judgment on Israel, a remnant did return and become disciples of Jesus their Messiah. Likewise in this judgment day on Christendom, which is the foremost part of Babylon the Great, a remnant of true Christians has been refined and cleansed and are proving to be Christian witnesses of Jehovah. Note what distinguishes them. “‘And they will certainly become mine,’ Jehovah of armies has said, ‘at the day when I am producing a special property. . . . And you people will again certainly see the distinction between a righteous one and a wicked one, between one serving God and one who has not served him.’”—Mal. 3:2-4, 7, 17, 18; see also Luke 12:8, 9.

¹⁴ Solomon truly had a fine commission in building the temple, God's sanctuary, but we today have an even greater privilege. The many buildings for which Solomon was responsible were built of timber and stone. However, since Pentecost, 33 C.E., the Christian congregation is identified as “God's building.” “Christ Jesus

himself is the foundation cornerstone. In union with him the whole building . . . is growing into a holy temple . . . a place for God to inhabit by spirit.” What a lofty conception of “God's building,” comprised of “living stones”! Today, besides the remnant of the Christian congregation, Jehovah has inaugurated a worldwide ingathering in which you can share, resulting in a “great crowd” who take their stand on the side of God and his kingdom, in close association with the remnant of Kingdom heirs. Referring to Christ Jesus as the chief “living stone,” Peter quotes from Isaiah's prophecy: “This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah has said: ‘Here I am laying as a foundation in Zion a stone, a tried stone, the precious corner of a sure foundation. . . . And I will make justice the measuring line and righteousness the leveling instrument.’” How important that we observe the boundaries marked by God's “measuring line” and “leveling instrument” in this judgment day!—1 Cor. 3:9, 17; Eph. 2:20-22; 1 Pet. 2:4-6; Isa. 28:16, 17.

RIGHTEOUSNESS—THE CHIEF BOUNDARY

¹⁵ In contrast to the present wicked system of things, Peter says: “There are new heavens and a new earth . . . and in these righteousness is to dwell.” (2 Pet. 3:13) Righteousness describes that which is upright, equitable and just. However, in the eyes and affairs of men the standard of what is right varies considerably, and is often influenced, if not governed, by expediency. In bitter conflicts over territorial boundaries between nations, each side claims to be in the right, but the outcome is according to the old saying that ‘might is right.’ It is never that way with Jehovah. True, he is “God the Almighty.” He is also infinitely wise. In fact, all his attributes are in the superlative degree and

13. Through Malachi, what appeal did Jehovah make, and how has this had a minor and a major fulfillment?

14. (a) What fine building work got under way at Pentecost of 33 C.E.? (b) What worldwide ingathering is in operation today? (c) As noted by Peter, what requirements are essential for good building?

15. How can righteousness be defined, highlighting what two attributes of God?

in perfect balance. His righteousness, however, is particularly exemplified in his love and justice. He is "The Rock, perfect is his activity, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness, with whom there is no injustice; righteous and upright is he." His sovereignty, especially as related to his kingdom under Christ, who gave his life as a ransom, magnifies God's love and justice in a wonderful way.—Rev. 16:14; Deut. 32:4; see also Malachi 3:6.

¹⁶ The more we appreciate this, the more our hearts are drawn out in deep gratitude, motivating us to pattern our own lives after the same standard. As Paul said: "You should be made new in the force actuating your mind, and should put on the new personality which was created according to God's will in true righteousness and loyalty." Specially concerning love, keep in mind that it is laid upon us as a law and a command, not merely an invitation. (Eph. 4:23, 24; see also Matthew 22:36-40; John 13:34; James 2:8; 1 John 4:7-12.) To help and guide you in this, Jehovah has gathered his people into a closely knit unity, like dwelling in a city of Bible times, bounded by a strong wall for protection. This is beautifully described at Isaiah 26:1-4, 7: "We have a strong city. He sets salvation itself for walls and rampart. Open the gates, you men, that the righteous nation that is keeping faithful conduct may enter. . . . Trust in Jehovah, you people, for all times, for in Jah Jehovah is the Rock of times indefinite. The path of the righteous one is uprightness. You being upright, you will smooth out the very course of a righteous one."—See also Revelation 22:15-21.

¹⁷ Perhaps you feel somewhat discouraged, feeling that the standard is too high for you personally. You may say you know

16. (a) Is it possible to pattern our lives after God's standard, and how so? (b) What fine provision has God made to help us keep within proper bounds? 17. If we feel that the standard is too high, how does God's Word provide help and encouragement?

yourself only too well. If so, do not forget that Jehovah knows you far better than you do. "As a father shows mercy to his sons, Jehovah has shown mercy to those fearing him. For he himself well knows the formation of us, remembering that we are dust." Much of the difficulty, even much of the wickedness, is due largely to ignorance of God's purpose and kindly provisions. Do you recall Paul's words to the Court of the Areopagus about this? "God has overlooked the times of such ignorance, yet now he is telling mankind that they should *all everywhere* repent." This is not an empty statement. The time for ignorance is past; the time for repentance is here. Repeatedly the Scriptures show that in the final analysis, there is not only the matter of individual responsibility, but also the possibility of making an individual choice. Your past record and personality may reveal inherent weaknesses, or even worse things, that you feel cannot be overcome. However, the fact that God has many times appealed even to the wicked shows that no one's case is hopeless, unless one has willfully opposed God and his standards, with no plea of ignorance or display of repentance. God's warning and appeal to Cain show that at that time he could have recovered himself, especially if he had asked for help.—Ps. 103:13, 14; Acts 17:30; Gen. 4:6, 7.

¹⁸ Throughout the prophecy of Ezekiel, chapter 18, individual responsibility is stressed. "The soul that is sinning—it itself will die." Repeated appeal is also made "as regards someone wicked, in case he should turn back from all his sins that he has committed and he should actually keep all my statutes and execute justice and righteousness, he will positively keep living. He will not die." A similar appeal was made to the nation: "Turn back, yes, cause a turning back from all your trans-

18. Coupled with individual responsibility, what appeals are made to the wicked in Ezekiel's prophecy?

gressions, . . . and make for yourselves a new heart and a new spirit . . . For I do not take any delight in the death of someone dying,' is the utterance of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah. 'So cause a turning back and keep living, O you people.' "—Ezek. 18:4, 20, 21, 27, 30-32; 33:11, 14-19; see also Joel 2:12-14.

¹⁹ As noted before, the same principle can operate in a reverse way. (Ezek. 18:26) Either way, the choice and responsibility are there. You can make a fresh choice, a right one, and make a fresh start to 'seek God, if you desire to grope for him and really find him.' He is not far off. Did you know that Paul puts himself on record as a striking example of one who had an extremely bad record as regards his former personality and deeds, but who, as he says, "was shown mercy, because I was ignorant and acted with a lack of faith"?—Acts 17:27; 1 Tim. 1:12-16; Gal. 1:13.

²⁰ The same merciful argument is inherent in Jesus' words at John 3:16-19: "God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, . . . not for him to judge [condemn] the world, but for the

19. What responsibility and possibility rest with each of us, and how does Paul's own record aid us in this regard?

20. How did Jesus stress this same possibility and responsibility?

world to be saved through him." That was not said in mockery. It was a real possibility. Jesus was the "true light that gives light to every sort of man." But, as Jesus said: "Men have loved the darkness rather than the light, for their works were wicked." That was their choice. They preferred to stay that way.—John 1:9.

²¹ For your part, why not join the generation described at Psalm 24:3-6? "Who may ascend into the mountain of Jehovah, and who may rise up in his holy place? Anyone innocent in his hands and clean in heart, who has not carried My soul to sheer worthlessness, nor taken an oath deceitfully. He will carry away blessing from Jehovah and righteousness from his God of salvation. This is the generation of those seeking him, of those searching for your face, O God of Jacob."

²² Why not respond to the appeal as expressed at Isaiah 55:6, 7? "Search for Jehovah, you people, while he may be found. Call to him while he proves to be near. Let the wicked man leave his way, and the harmful man his thoughts; and let him return to Jehovah, who will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will forgive in a large way." This can be your experience and blessing.

21. How is the generation of those seeking Jehovah described at Psalm 24:3-6?

22. What fine appeal is expressed at Isaiah 55:6, 7?

DESIRABLE TENANTS

✓ On November 24, 1971, a woman called the branch office of the Watch Tower Society in Wiesbaden, Germany, saying that she had bought an apartment house in Berlin and wanted to rent to Jehovah's witnesses. Asked why she wanted to have Jehovah's witnesses as tenants, she replied that a friend of hers in southern Germany was renting to them and had recommended that she do the same. She also commented about how difficult it was to get dependable tenants. Having been impressed by the conduct of Jehovah's witnesses, she observed: "I know that these people are God-fearing, ready to help, and industrious, and I would be very happy if you would be of help to me in carrying out my plan."

DETERMINED TO PREACH

As told by Beulah Prior



IN 1919, shortly after I was baptized, I came down with the Spanish flu. Along with the flu, I developed pneumonia. It almost got the better of me, but I just held on by Jehovah's undeserved kindness. I felt that this was no time to die, because there was too much work to do. It was such a privilege to tell people about the truth of God's Word—so few knew it! My desire and determination to live and to preach about Jehovah and his kingdom were so strong that this must have helped me to overcome such a serious illness.

From childhood I had been interested in the Bible. I was born in 1888 in Lowndes County, Alabama. Thanks to the efforts of my father, Bible reading was a routine practice in our home. When I was nine years of age and living in the city of Montgomery, my father began preaching in the Methodist church. I joined the church at that youthful age. When I was sixteen years old, I was made a teacher in the Sunday School; two years later, I

was made superintendent of the Sunday School.

As I learned all about the teachings of the Methodist Church, I began to question many of the things the church taught and practiced. It was very important to me to prove that what I was supporting was right according to the Bible. So I spent much time searching the Scriptures. The result? I could not find any support in the Bible for so many things our church taught.

I LEARN GOD'S TRUTH

One day, while I was away teaching in a Methodist high school, a traveling minister of the International Bible Students, as Jehovah's witnesses were then known, called on my parents. My mother readily took the literature for me. My fiancé's mother, who lived a few blocks away, also obtained a set of the books, the first three volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures*. My fiancé, who was home on vacation that summer from college, read some of the books. Little did we know the tremendous impact those publications would have on our lives!

During the summer of 1911, my fiancé would come by to visit. Our conversation would often turn to things he was reading in the books. As a result, I began reading my own copies with great anticipation. We quickly discovered we had a zeal for God but not a great deal of accurate knowledge.—Rom. 10:2, 3.

After we learned of God's purpose to restore the earth to paradisaic conditions, we could not keep the good news to ourselves. Both of us began talking about it to others. When the Watch Tower Society's president, C. T. Russell, visited Montgomery in 1914 to present the Photo-Drama of Creation, the story of the Bible with slides and motion pictures, we were more convinced than ever that this was indeed the truth!

Thereafter I began reading the publications of the Watch Tower Society with more interest than before and increasingly talked about them to others. By June 1915 we were married and had quit the Methodist Church.

The next year we moved to Fort Wayne, Indiana. Through an advertisement of the Bible Students, which we found on our porch, we located their meeting place and began associating with them. This was our first time ever for studying with a group of Jehovah's people. We had no idea that such an arrangement existed anywhere in the world. How happy we were to associate with others of like treasured faith! The Bible Students in Fort Wayne were somewhat surprised to see us at first, because no colored people in that area had shown an interest in God's truth. We were treated very kindly during our stay there in Fort Wayne.

When things improved economically in the South, we went back to Montgomery. The community branded my husband and me as "educated fools" because we had both graduated from college (my husband as a veterinarian and I as a teacher) and yet we followed what some called this "new religion." But such ridicule did not deter us from sticking to God's truth.

UPHOLDING THE BIBLE AS A TEACHER

In 1918 times were very hard. To assist in supporting the family (we now had two children), I got a job teaching in a Lutheran school that was hiring teachers of any religion. Many of the teachers, however, promised to become Lutherans eventually in order to get the job. But I made my position known from the start. I said:

"I am not going to join your church."

At first I taught the primary class, which included the daily routine of teaching the children the Lutheran catechism. As we went over it, I would let them know that it was not what I believed nor what the Bible teaches. Some of the children wanted to ask questions, and I encouraged them to come up during recess or after school and I would answer their questions. Many enjoyable lunch hours were spent in this manner.

That same year a traveling representative of the Watch Tower Society, W. E. Walton, visited our group. He delivered a lecture on "Consecration," or dedication, as it is now called. That Sunday a fine crowd came to hear his wonderful talk. The next Monday I was baptized, already aware that I had dedicated my life to Jehovah God. I

knew that I was worshiping the Most High God, so upon learning that baptism was the next step to take, I did not hesitate to take it.—Matt. 28:19, 20.

It was not long before my interest in the Bible was made known to the superintendent of the school where I worked. Others on the teaching staff feared that I might be promoted, so they made known the fact that I had been baptized as an International Bible Student. Soon the superintendent approached me and brought up the subject. I explained that I was not joining his church and that I was dedicated to Jehovah God. "Anyhow," he said, "I like your work and your frankness." He asked me to take over the eighth grade, and I was promoted.

The older students also had many questions about my faith, and during recess

THE NEXT ISSUE

- You Can Break Free from the Tobacco Habit.
- Cultivating Friendship with God.
- Do You Qualify for Congregational Responsibility?

and after-school discussions, I answered their questions and helped them to learn something about the Bible. These discussions caused some of the parents to become interested, and I made many calls at the homes of the children to give a further witness to the Bible's truth.

It was during this time that I was out a month with the Spanish flu. While I was recovering, the pastor of the Lutheran mission visited our home and told me that if I would just stop "talking the Bible," I would have all things my way in his organization. I told him: "As long as I have breath, I won't stop talking about the truth in God's Word the Bible."

As a result of that conversation, I knew I had better look for other employment. It was not long before I heard of the need for a teacher in Opelika, Alabama. I applied and got the job.

SERVING IN YPSILANTI, MICHIGAN

In 1924 we moved to Ypsilanti, Michigan, where my husband's parents lived. While my husband went to Ypsilanti to get things arranged for us, I stayed with my parents in Youngstown, Ohio. Over the years my father had always been bitterly opposed to God's truth. After twenty years of opposition, he finally began to see the light of Bible truth. The Watch Tower Society's book *Enemies* seemed to open his eyes to the great issue facing all mankind. To see my father come to the truth was one of the most thrilling things that happened to me. My mother, who could not read, never did make a dedication to Jehovah, but she was always delighted to hear about the truth. In 1948, my father died, faithful to Jehovah.

Finally, things were ready in Ypsilanti, and we went to meet my husband there. The need for proclaimers of Bible truth was indeed great in this small college

town. From 1924 until now Jehovah has kindly permitted me to be used in his service in this area. Here Brother Pettibone took the lead in the meetings and was a pillar of spiritual strength. With his death, apostasy set in. For a time we were able to gather a few others in our home and keep the flickering flame of truth burning in this locality.

The falling away affected most of those that were attending meetings. My husband was even affected, and he left me and the four girls. Around 1932 the meetings in Ypsilanti, even the one that was held in our home, seemed to cool down. Activity seemed to be dead.

About that time I was stricken by a severe nerve condition. Despite this, I determined to continue witnessing even in my hospital bed! The results? Many marvelous experiences were enjoyed by my bedside, teaching people about Jehovah and his kingdom.

Four months later I was sent to my parents' home in Youngstown to recuperate. After a short stay, I went to be with Witness relatives in Homestead, Pennsylvania. Soon, both physical and spiritual strength began to return to me as I attended meetings in Pittsburgh. We moved to Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, where the joyous gathering work was going full speed. All around us there were increases in the number of praisers of Jehovah.

Finally, my physical and spiritual strength renewed, I was ready to return to Ypsilanti. What a disappointment! Nothing had changed! The Kingdom work was at a standstill. I wrote the Watch Tower Society about the condition of things in Ypsilanti. The answer came in the form of a special representative, Zone Servant Clayton Ball. He brought the sound car, phonographs and literature I had requested. Ever since that time, Je-

hovah has continued to supply spiritual assistance to keep the Kingdom-preaching going in this town.

In time I was able to arrange for a group of colored Witnesses to come out and assist in preaching in this area. A school was rented and the public talk was well advertised and attended. After the colored Witness gave the talk, it was well known that all races are represented and welcomed to Jehovah's true worship. As a result of the talk, much interest was evident among the colored people in the area. Soon, many Bible studies were begun with former opposers of the truth.

DETERMINED TO DO FULL-TIME PREACHING

I wanted desperately to enter the full-time preaching work. But I still had one girl in school and could not see how I was going to do it. I took the problem to Jehovah in prayer. Soon came the idea of renting out rooms in my house. But I did not have enough rooms to rent out to earn support for me and my daughter. Then another idea came to me: Enlarge the house! But how? I had no money, but I went to a local lumberman and laid my plans before him. Immediately, he accepted the idea and pledged his assistance. In addition to that, he trusted me for the price of the lumber. I enlarged the house, and in 1944 entered the full-time preaching work. The house has been a blessing in other ways as well as a means of support. Through the years, Jehovah has allowed many persons to come to a knowledge of the truth while rooming in that house. I am convinced that this is another marvelous example of Jehovah's motivating his people with his holy spirit.

During all those years, in view of our limited means, my Christian brothers and sisters lovingly gave me and the children assistance in attending conventions. Gradually, the renting of the rooms provided

enough income for me and my daughter to go to all the assemblies. We never missed one after that! There have been times recently, however, when I had to get permission to go from a hospital to attend an assembly in a wheelchair, but I was determined to be there and I was!

When I began the full-time preaching work in 1944, I was blessed with my first car, a 1934 Dodge. An old farmer had owned it, and two Witnesses repaired it for me. To help pay for it and keep gas in it, I sold junk and paper to the local scrap dealer. Jehovah, in his kindness, made opportunity for me to praise his great Name even more!—Ps. 96:1-3.

By Jehovah's kindness, I not only was able to attend the assemblies in the United States, but also had the blessing of making a trip to Europe in 1951, attending the London and Paris assemblies. In 1955 I was able to return to Europe to visit all the cities in which assemblies were being held. They were wonderful blessings.

The full-time preaching work has indeed been a privilege in which to share all these years. In this town, where quite a few people come and go, Jehovah has permitted me to help many persons to get a knowledge of God's truth before they moved on. Today these Christian brothers and sisters are scattered all over this country from coast to coast. During the years, I have had so many marvelous experiences that I cannot begin to recount them. Despite the pain of arthritis, I manage to continue in the full-time preaching work. With a crutch and a cane I have been privileged to assist in dispensing these wonderful truths to others.

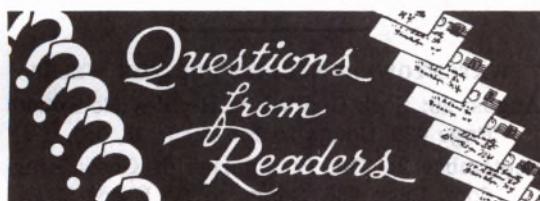
In 1965 my house burned down while I was out in the preaching work. Even that did not stop me from staying in the full-time preaching work. All I ever wanted was somewhere to rest at night, enough

food to keep alive to serve Jehovah, and a way to get to the people with God's message of truth.—Matt. 4:4.

Recently I was again confined to bed because of an accident. But I was able to carry on several Bible studies by means of the telephone. What had happened? The car slipped out of gear somehow and rolled backward over my legs. Despite this accident I held my study and then went to the hospital to be examined. Not a bone was broken! But I had to stay in the hos-

pital six weeks. The doctor who treated me was amazed and called it a "miracle."

Now, in the waning strength of my years, I continue to preach and laud the great name of Jehovah! At eighty-four years of age I remain determined to be faithful to the most wonderful and loving Employer in the universe, Jehovah. Yes, the full-time preaching work has indeed been a most wonderful and rewarding career! I pray to continue faithful to the end.



- When did God create dinosaurs, and when did they become extinct?—U.S.A.

The Bible does not provide specific answers to this question. According to the Genesis account, animals were created during the fifth and sixth creative periods or 'days.' If the Hebrew expression translated "great sea monsters" [Hebrew, *tan-ni-nim'*] includes dinosaurs, which often inhabited swampy, watery areas, this would mean that dinosaurs were created on the fifth "day." (Gen. 1:21) We do not know whether they continued to exist until man was created (toward the close of the sixth "day"). At the very latest it seems likely that they must have disappeared off the earth at the time of the flood of Noah's day. Dinosaurs were reptiles, and some kinds of dinosaurs bear strong resemblance structurally and otherwise to lizards (*sauros* is, in fact, the Greek word for "lizard"; *saura* in Leviticus 11:29, *LXX*). Not all types of dinosaurs were of such gigantic size. Hence, even if they had survived till the Flood, this would not have required taking pairs of the mammoth varieties into the ark. Other smaller members of the particular family or "kind" to which these belonged would have

sufficed to fulfill the divine command.—Gen. 6:19, 20; 7:14.

Some of the older translations of the Bible at times use the word "dragons" to translate the Hebrew *tan-ni-nim'* ("sea monsters," *NW*). (Ps. 74:13; 148:7; Isa. 27:1, *Authorized Version*) The term "dragon" (Greek, *dra'kon*) is found in the Christian Greek Scriptures. It has been suggested as possible that, rather than having a purely mythical source, this expression may originally have been applied to enormous creatures such as the dinosaurs, taking on mythical tones only after these mammoth creatures had long disappeared. Interestingly, many of the mythical depictions of the "dragon" strongly resemble certain types within the family of huge reptilian creatures that includes the dinosaur.

- Is it proper for a Christian to ask his parents or grandparents for a blessing, as is the custom in parts of Latin America?—Venezuela.

The Bible shows that God's servants in ancient times pronounced blessings on others. Jacob blessed Pharaoh, that is, he expressed a wish for his welfare. (Gen. 47:7) Rebekah's family blessed her when she left upper Mesopotamia to marry Isaac. (Gen. 24:60) And Isaac as well as Jacob pronounced special blessings upon their offspring. (Heb. 11:20, 21) According to Proverbs 30:11, parents are deserving of blessing from their children.

So no Scriptural objection need be raised to a parent's or grandparent's blessing his or her children. Even in lands where it is not a general custom to *ask* for a blessing, it is common

to pronounce blessings. Among dedicated servants of Jehovah everywhere it is not unusual to voice the wish that a fellow believer might have divine blessing in connection with a special assignment or as he continues faithfully serving the Creator in another location. It is also noteworthy that the parting greeting in many languages is, in effect, a blessing. For example, the English "good-bye" means "God be with you."

Of course, if in one's area there is no custom of "asking for a blessing" or bestowing such, as is done in some Latin-American lands, there is no need to start doing so. But if it is already a well-understood custom where you live, there are factors that a Christian might consider regarding the custom of blessing others. He might ask himself, Do I have the right view of such blessing? Is it a mere routine formula so that the reference to God is not sincere, genuine, heartfelt? (Compare Matthew 15:4-7.) Am I inclined to think that, any time I do not follow the custom, things will likely go wrong? Care must be exercised so that one does not become superstitious and begin viewing the

blessing as a magic charm. Then, too, if the parent or grandparent is not a dedicated servant of Jehovah, his religious views enter the picture. Can one who has no appreciation for true worship correctly petition divine blessing on a child when he does not even know the true God?

Thus, although there is no Biblical objection to one's asking for the blessing of one's parent or grandparent, when it comes to deciding what should be done in a particular case, the Christian must allow his Bible-trained conscience to govern. He will certainly want to avoid doing something that could give occasion for stumbling or that could misrepresent the true God to others.—Phil. 1:10.

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