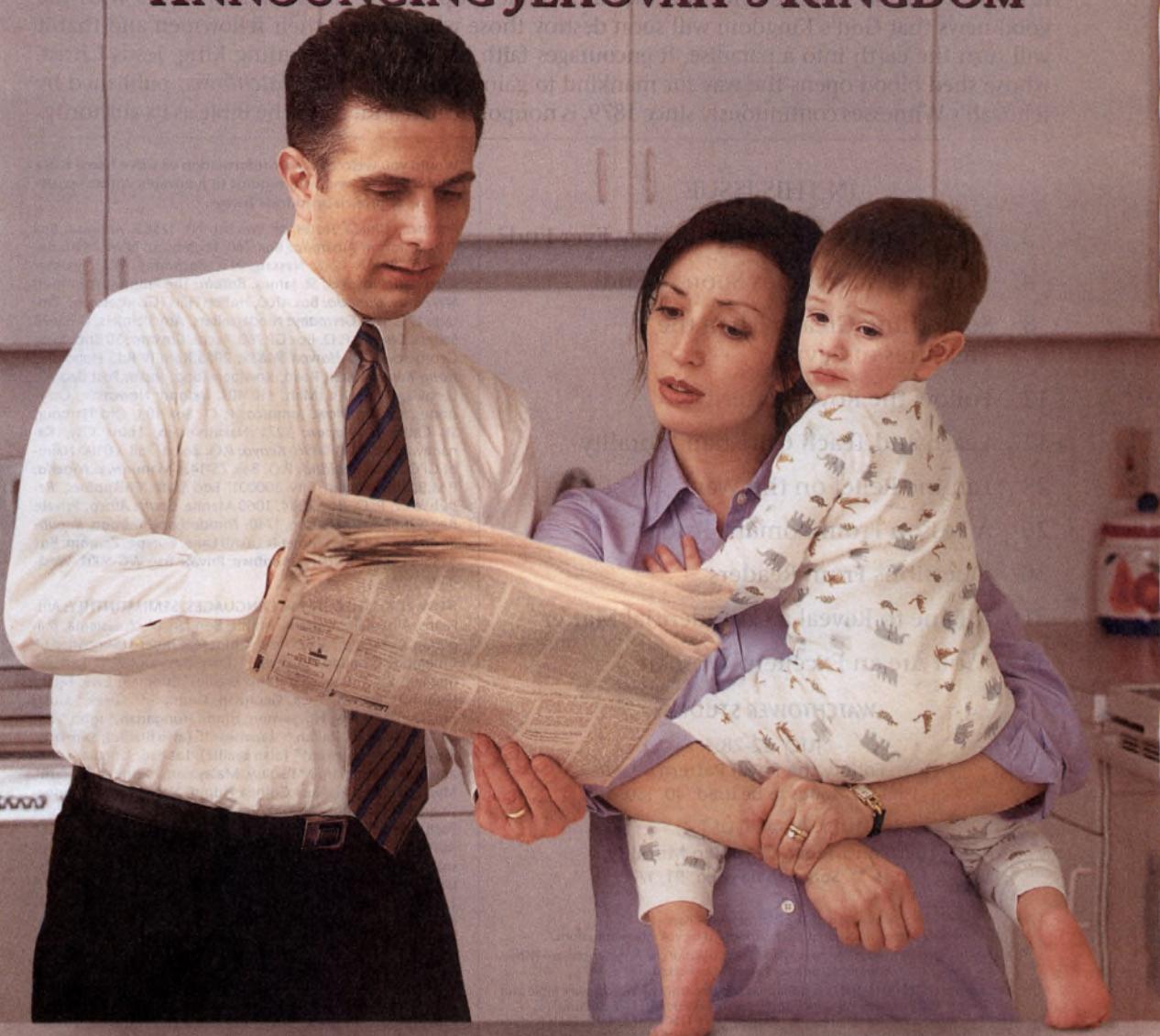


JUNE 15, 2002

# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



**Mankind's Problems  
SOON TO END!**

# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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

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# Mankind's Problems Will They Ever End?

"ONE quarter of the world's population live in poverty, 1.3 billion survive on less than \$1 a day, 1 billion are illiterate, 1.3 billion lack access to safe drinking water and 1 billion go hungry daily." So notes a report from Ireland about the state of the world.

What a sad indictment of man's inability to find lasting solutions to the world's problems! Those problems seem even more tragic when you realize that the overwhelming majority of people described in that report are defenseless women and children. Is it not appalling that even now, in the 21st century, their rights continue to be "violated every day in numbers of such magnitude as to defy counting"?—*The State of the World's Children 2000*.

## "A New World Within a Single Generation"

The United Nations Children's Fund has expressed confidence that "the pall that these abuses... have cast on lives around the globe can be lifted." This organization says that the terrible conditions these unfortunate billions currently have to endure are "neither inevitable nor immutable." In fact, it has issued a call for "all people to realize a new world within a single generation." This, it hopes, will be a world in which all mankind will be "freed from poverty and discrimination, freed from violence and disease."

Those expressing such sentiments draw inspiration from the fact that even now caring people do a tremendous work to alleviate

the sad consequences of "a seemingly unending string of conflicts and crises." For example, over the past 15 years, the Chernobyl Children's Project "has helped to lessen the suffering of hundreds of children affected by the cancers which the nuclear cloud left in its wake." (*The Irish Examiner*, April 4, 2000) Aid agencies large and small certainly do make a huge difference in the lives of the countless victims of war and disaster.

Still, those involved in such humanitarian efforts are realists. They know that the problems being faced "are more widespread and profoundly entrenched than they were even a decade ago." David Begg, chief executive of the Irish charity Concern, says that "staff, supporters and donors responded magnificently" when Mozambique was hit by catastrophic flooding. "But," he adds, "we cannot cope alone with the sheer scale of such disasters." Regarding aid efforts in Africa, he candidly admits: "The few candles of hope that do exist flicker weakly." Many would feel that his comment accurately sums up the global situation as well.

Can we realistically expect to see the hoped-for "new world within a single generation"? While current humanitarian efforts are truly commendable, surely it makes sense to consider another prospect for a just and peaceful new world. The Bible points to that prospect, as the next article will consider.



# Mankind's Problems Soon to End!

"HUMANITARIAN action is of limited value if it does not form part of a wider strategic and political framework aimed at addressing the root causes of conflict. Experience has shown time and time again that humanitarian action alone cannot solve problems which are fundamentally political in nature."—*The State of the World's Refugees 2000*.

Despite great humanitarian action, mankind's problems grow inexorably. What chance is there of a lasting political solution? In truth, very little. But where else can we look? In a meaningful passage at the beginning of his letter to Christians in Ephesus, the apostle Paul explains how God will put an end to all of mankind's problems. He even indicates what agency God will use to do this—an agency that will address the root causes of all the problems that plague us today. Why not consider what Paul has to say? The passage is found at Ephesians 1:3-10.

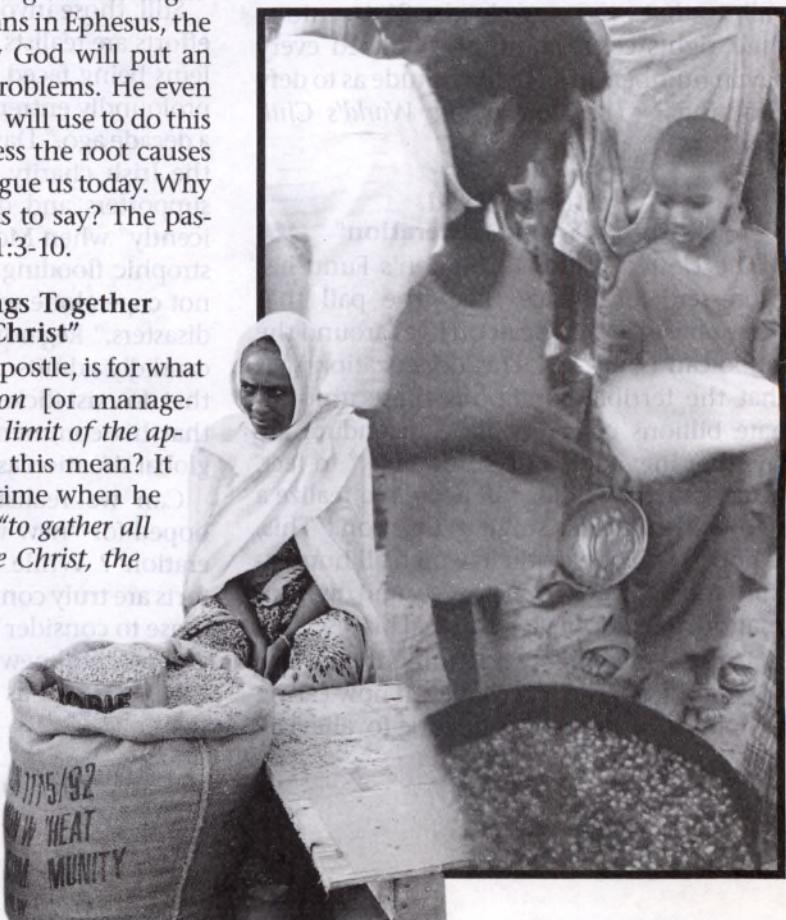
## **"To Gather All Things Together Again in the Christ"**

God's purpose, says the apostle, is for what he calls "*an administration [or management of affairs] at the full limit of the appointed times.*" What does this mean? It means that God has a set time when he will act in such a way as "*to gather all things together again in the Christ, the*

***Humanitarian acts have not solved mankind's problems***

*things in the heavens and the things on the earth.*" (Ephesians 1:10) Yes, God has set in motion an arrangement to bring everything in heaven and on earth back into harmony under his direct control. Interestingly, regarding the term here rendered 'to gather together again,' Bible scholar J. H. Thayer notes: "Bring together again for himself . . . all things and beings (hitherto disunited by sin) into one combined state of fellowship in Christ."

That points to the need for God to do this in view of how disunity arose in the first



place. Early in man's history, our original parents, Adam and Eve, followed Satan the Devil in rebellion against God. They wanted independence in the form of the right to decide for themselves what was good and what was bad. (Genesis 3:1-5) In line with divine justice, they were expelled from God's family and lost their fellowship with him. They plunged mankind into imperfection with all the terrible consequences we experience today.—Romans 5:12.

### Temporary Permission of Evil

'Why did God let them do that?' some might ask. 'Why did he not simply use his supreme power and enforce his will, thus preventing all the pain and suffering we now experience?' It may be tempting to think that way. But what would such a use of overwhelming power really prove? Do you admire or approve of anyone who at the first sign of dissent simply crushes all opposition because he has the power to do so? Surely not.

Those rebels did not really challenge God's almighty power. They more particularly challenged the rightfulness and rightness of his way of ruling. To settle once and for all time the fundamental issues raised, Jehovah has allowed his creatures to run their own affairs without his direct control for a limited time. (Ecclesiastes 3:1; Luke 21:24) When that time is up, he will intervene to re-exercise total control of the earth. By then it will be abundantly clear that his way of ruling is the only way that guarantees lasting peace, happiness, and prosperity to earth's inhabitants. Then all the world's oppressors will be removed forever.—Psalm 72:12-14; Daniel 2:44.

### "Before the Founding of the World"

Jehovah purposed to do all of this long ago. Paul mentions "*before the founding of the world.*" (Ephesians 1:4) That was not before the creation of the earth or of Adam and

Eve. That world was "very good," and rebellion had not broken out. (Genesis 1:31) What "world" did the apostle Paul mean, then? The world of Adam and Eve's children—a sinful, imperfect world of mankind having the prospect of being redeemed. Before any children were born, Jehovah already knew how he would handle affairs to provide relief for Adam's redeemable descendants.—Romans 8:20.

This is not to suggest, of course, that the Sovereign of the universe has to handle matters as humans do. Recognizing that an emergency might arise, they plan various detailed strategies to cope. No, the almighty God simply sets forth his purpose and accomplishes it. Still, Paul does explain how Jehovah decided to work things out so as to bring permanent relief to mankind. What were those measures?

### Who Will Bring Relief?

Paul explains that Christ's spirit-anointed disciples have a special role in undoing the harm caused by Adamic sin. Jehovah "*chose us in union with [Christ],*" says Paul, to rule with Jesus in his heavenly Kingdom. Explaining this further, Paul says that Jehovah "*foreordained us to the adoption through Jesus Christ as sons to himself.*" (Ephesians 1:4, 5) Of course, Jehovah did not choose, or foreordain, them as individuals. He did, however, foreordain a class of faithful and devoted people who would share with Christ in undoing the harm that Satan the Devil, along with Adam and Eve, brought on the human family.—Luke 12:32; Hebrews 2:14-18.

What an amazing thing! In his original challenge against God's sovereignty, Satan implied that God's human creation was flawed—that given enough pressure or incentive, they would all rebel against God's rule. (Job 1:7-12; 2:2-5) In a dramatic demonstration of "*his glorious undeserved kindness,*"

*Christ's ransom sacrifice provided mankind with relief from Adamic sin*

Jehovah God in time showed his confidence in his earthly creation by adopting some from Adam's sinful family to be his spiritual children. Those in this small group would be taken to serve in heaven. For what purpose?—Ephesians 1:3-6; John 14:2, 3; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17; 1 Peter 1:3, 4.

These adopted sons of God, says the apostle Paul, become "joint heirs with Christ" in his heavenly Kingdom. (Romans 8:14-17) As kings and priests, they will have a part in freeing the human family from the pain and suffering it now experiences. (Revelation 5:10) True, "all creation keeps on groaning together and being in pain together until now." Soon, though, these specially chosen sons of God will follow Jesus Christ into action, and all obedient humans "will be set free from enslavement to corruption and have the glorious freedom of the children of God" once again.—Romans 8:18-22.

#### **"Release by Ransom"**

All of this has been made possible through what must be the most dramatic and sublime expression of God's undeserved kindness toward this world of redeemable mankind—the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Paul writes: "*By means of [Jesus Christ] we have the release by ransom through the blood of that one, yes, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his undeserved kindness.*"—Ephesians 1:7.

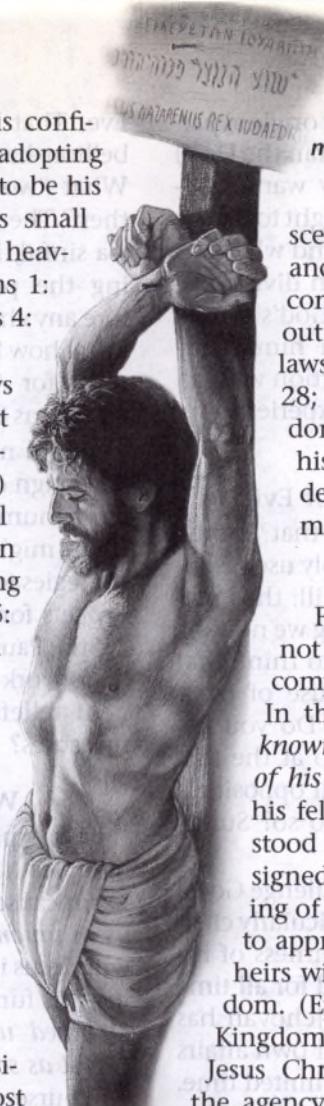
Jesus Christ is the primary figure in the outworking of God's purpose. (Hebrews 2:10) His ransom sacrifice provides the legal basis for Jehovah to adopt some of Adam's de-

scendants into his heavenly family and to relieve humankind of the consequences of Adamic sin, without undermining confidence in His laws and principles. (Matthew 20:28; 1 Timothy 2:6) Jehovah has done things in a way that upholds his righteousness and meets the demands of perfect justice.—Romans 3:22-26.

#### **God's "Sacred Secret"**

For thousands of years, God did not reveal exactly how he would accomplish his purpose for the earth. In the first century C.E., "*he made known to [Christians] the sacred secret of his will.*" (Ephesians 1:9) Paul and his fellow anointed Christians understood clearly the magnificent role assigned to Jesus Christ in the outworking of God's purpose. They also began to appreciate their special role as joint heirs with Christ in his heavenly Kingdom. (Ephesians 3:5, 6, 8-11) Yes, the Kingdom government in the hands of Jesus Christ and his associate rulers is the agency God will use to bring lasting peace not just in the heavens but also on the earth. (Matthew 6:9, 10) Through it, Jehovah will restore this earth to the condition he originally purposed for it.—Isaiah 45:18; 65:21-23; Acts 3:21.

His appointed time for direct action to rid the earth of all oppression and injustice lies in the near future. But Jehovah actually began the process of restoration at Pentecost 33 C.E. How? By then starting to gather "*the things in the heavens,*" those who will rule with Christ in the heavens. These included the Ephesian Christians. (Ephesians 2:4-7)





*It is possible to find spiritual protection and healing today*

*Soon, through the Messianic Kingdom, complete relief from problems will come*

More recently, in our time, Jehovah has been gathering "*the things on the earth.*" (Ephesians 1:10) Through a global preaching campaign, he is making known to all nations the good news about his Kingdom government in the hands of Jesus Christ. Those who respond are even now being gathered into a place of spiritual protection and healing. (John 10:16) Soon, on a cleansed paradise earth, they will experience complete freedom from all injustice and suffering.

—2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 11:18.

"Many stunning steps forward" have been made in humanitarian efforts to help oppressed humanity. (*The State of the World's Children 2000*) Yet, the most stunning step will be the imminent intervention by Christ Jesus and his associate rulers in the heavenly Kingdom government. They will address completely all the root causes of conflict and all the other evils that beset us. They will bring to an end all of mankind's problems.

—Revelation 21:1-4.





## SOMETHING GREATER THAN THE TREASURES OF EGYPT

**M**OSES is among the greatest of all historical figures. Four Bible books—from Exodus to Deuteronomy—almost exclusively recount God's dealings with Israel under Moses' leadership. He directed their Exodus from Egypt, mediated the Law covenant, and guided Israel to the border of the Promised Land. Moses had been raised in Pharaoh's household, but he became the authorized commander of God's people, as well as a prophet, judge, and divinely inspired writer. Yet, he was 'by far the meekest of all men.'—Numbers 12:3.

Most of what the Bible details about Moses involves the last 40 years of his life, covering the period from Israel's release from slavery to Moses' death at the age of 120. From age 40 to 80, he was a shepherd in Midian. But, says one source, "perhaps the most intriguing part of his life, and yet one that is most obscure," is his first 40 years, from his birth to his flight from Egypt. Just what can we discern about this period? How could the cir-

cumstances of Moses' upbringing have affected the man he turned out to be? To what influences would he have been subject? What challenges would he have had to face? And what can all of this teach us?

### Slavery in Egypt

The book of Exodus relates that a Pharaoh began to fear Israelite settlers in Egypt because of their proliferation. Believing that he was acting "shrewdly," he attempted to reduce their numbers by subjecting them to tyrannical slave labor under the lash of taskmasters—bearing burdens, making clay mortar, and meeting daily quotas of bricks.—Exodus 1:8-14; 5:6-18.

This picture of the Egypt into which Moses was born well matches historical evidence. Ancient papyri and at least one tomb painting describe the manufacture of mud bricks by slaves in the second millennium B.C.E. or earlier. Officials responsible for supplying bricks marshaled hundreds of slaves grouped

into gangs of 6 to 18 under a foreman or crew leader. Brick clay had to be dug and straw ferried to the brickyard. Workers of different nationalities drew water, and using hoes they mixed it with clay and straw. Row upon row of bricks were turned out of rectangular molds. Laborers then carried yoke loads of sun-dried bricks to the construction site, sometimes reached by a ramp. Egyptian overseers, armed with batons, sat or strolled as they kept vigil over the work.

One ancient accounting sheet refers to 39,118 bricks made by 602 laborers, which works out to an average of 65 bricks a man per shift. And a document from the 13th century B.C.E. says: "The men are making . . . their quota of bricks daily." All of this is strongly reminiscent of the labor demanded of the Israelites as described in the book of Exodus.

Oppression failed to reduce the Hebrew population. Rather, "the more [the Egyptians] would oppress them, the more they would multiply . . . , so that they felt a sickening dread as a result of the sons of Israel." (Exodus 1:10, 12) Hence, Pharaoh ordered first the Hebrew midwives then all his people to slay every newborn male Israelite. Under these terrifying circumstances, a beautiful

baby boy, Moses, was born to Jochebed and Amram.—Exodus 1:15-22; 6:20; Acts 7:20.

### Hidden, Found, and Adopted

Moses' parents defied Pharaoh's murderous command and hid their little boy. Did they do so despite spies and inspectors making rounds to search out infants? We cannot be certain. At any rate, after three months Moses' parents could no longer conceal him. So his desperate mother made a papyrus basket, coated it with pitch to make it watertight, and laid her child inside it. In a sense, Jochebed obeyed the letter, if not the spirit, of Pharaoh's order to cast every newborn Hebrew male into the Nile. Miriam, Moses' elder sister, then stationed herself nearby to keep watch.—Exodus 1:22-2:4.

Whether Jochebed meant for Moses to be found by Pharaoh's daughter when she came to the river to bathe, we do not know, but that is what happened. The princess realized that this was a child of the Hebrews. What would she do? Would she, in obedience to her father, order its death? No, she reacted as most women normally would. She acted compassionately.

Miriam was soon by her side. 'Shall I call a Hebrew woman to nurse the child for you?'

*Brickmaking in Egypt has changed little since Moses' day, as shown by an ancient painting*



Above: Pictorial Archive (Near Eastern History)  
Ett, Below: Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY





she asked. Some find great irony in this passage. Moses' sister is set in contrast with Pharaoh, who schemed with his counselors to deal "shrewdly" with the Hebrews. Of course, Moses' well-being was confirmed only when the princess agreed to his sister's plan. "Go!" responded Pharaoh's daughter, and Miriam at once summoned her mother. In a remarkable bargain, Jochebed was then hired to raise her own child with royal protection.—Exodus 2:5-9.

The compassion of the princess certainly contrasts with the cruelty of her father. She was neither ignorant nor deceived about the child. Warmhearted pity moved her to adopt him, and her agreeing to the idea of a Hebrew wet nurse reveals that she did not share her father's prejudices.

### Upbringing and Education

Jochebed "took the child and nursed him. And the child grew up. Then she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, so that he became a son to her." (Exodus 2:9, 10) The Bible does not say how long Moses lived with his natural parents. Some think it must have been at least until he was weaned—two or three years—but it may have been longer. Ex-

odus simply states that he "grew up" with his parents, which can signify reaching any age. In any case, Amram and Jochebed doubtless used the time to make their son aware of his Hebrew origin and to teach him about Jehovah. How well they succeeded in instilling a faith and love for righteousness in Moses' heart, only time would tell.

On being returned to Pharaoh's daughter, Moses was educated "in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." (Acts 7:22) That would imply training designed to fit Moses for government office. The vast learning of Egypt included mathematics, geometry, architecture, construction, and other arts and sciences. Presumably, the royal family would have wanted him to receive instruction in Egyptian religion.

Moses may have received his privileged education along with other royal offspring. Among those who benefited from such elite education were "children of foreign rulers who were sent or taken as hostages to Egypt to be 'civilized' and then returned to rule as vassals" faithful to Pharaoh. (*The Reign of Thutmose IV*, by Betsy M. Bryan) Nurseries connected to royal palaces seem to have prepared youths to serve as court officials.\* Inscriptions dating to the Egyptian Middle and New Kingdom periods reveal that several of Pharaoh's personal attendants and high-ranking government officers retained the honorable title "Child of the Nursery" even as adults.

Court life would test Moses. It offered wealth, luxury, and power. It also presented moral dangers. How would Moses react? Where would his loyalties be? Was he at heart a worshiper of Jehovah, a brother of the oppressed Hebrews, or did he prefer all that pagan Egypt could offer?

\* This education may have resembled that received by Daniel and his companions to serve as state functionaries in Babylon. (Daniel 1:3-7) Compare *Pay Attention to Daniel's Prophecy!*, chapter 3, published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

## A Momentous Decision

At age 40, by which time Moses could have become thoroughly Egyptian, he 'went out to look at the burdens his brothers were bearing.' His subsequent actions showed that this was no idle curiosity; he yearned to help them. When he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, he intervened, killing the oppressor. That act showed that Moses' heart was with his brothers. The dead man was likely an official, killed as he carried out his duties. In the eyes of the Egyptians, Moses had every reason to be loyal to Pharaoh. Yet, what moved Moses was also love of justice, a quality further manifested when the next day he

### Wet-Nursing Contracts

Mothers normally suckled their own infants. However, says scholar Brevard Childs in *Journal of Biblical Literature*, "in certain instances among aristocratic [near Eastern] families a wet nurse was hired. This practice was also common where the mother was unable to nourish her child or where the mother was unknown. The nurse assumed responsibility of raising the child as well as suckling it during the stipulated period." Several papyrus wet-nursing contracts have survived from Near Eastern antiquity. These documents attest to what was a widespread practice from the Sumerian period down to the late Hellenistic period in Egypt. Common features of these documents are a statement of the individuals involved, the time covered by the contract, conditions of work, specifications concerning nourishment, fines for breach of contract, wages, and how wages would be paid. Typically, "nursing extended over a period of two to three years," explains Childs. "The wet nurse raised the child in her home, but at times was required to return the child to its owner for inspection."

remonstrated with a Hebrew who was unjustly beating his companion. Moses desired to liberate the Hebrews from bitter slavery, but when Pharaoh learned of his defection and tried to kill him, Moses was forced to flee to Midian.—Exodus 2:11-15; Acts 7:23-29.\*

Moses' timing in wanting to liberate God's people did not match Jehovah's. Still, his actions revealed faith. Says Hebrews 11:24-26: "By faith Moses, when grown up, refused to be called the son of the daughter of Pharaoh, choosing to be ill-treated with the people of God rather than to have the temporary enjoyment of sin." Why? "Because he esteemed the reproach of the Christ as riches greater than the treasures of Egypt; for he looked intently toward the payment of the reward." This exceptional use of the expression "the Christ," meaning "anointed one," fits Moses in the sense that he later received a special commission directly from Jehovah.

Just think! Moses had an upbringing that only an Egyptian aristocrat could receive. His position offered a brilliant career and every pleasure imaginable, yet he rejected it all. He could not reconcile life at the court of Pharaoh, the oppressor, with love for Jehovah and for justice. Knowledge of and meditation on God's promises to his forefathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob led Moses to prefer divine favor. As a result, Jehovah was able to use Moses in the most privileged of roles to accomplish His purposes.

All of us face choices about what things are most important. Like Moses, perhaps you face a difficult decision. Should you give up certain practices or apparent advantages, no matter what the cost? If that is the choice before you, remember that Moses considered Jehovah's friendship more valuable than all the treasures of Egypt, and he did not regret it.

\* That Moses had zeal for justice is further shown by his defending helpless shepherdesses from ill-treatment in Midian, where he was a fugitive.—Exodus 2:16, 17.

# FOLLOW THE ROYAL PATTERN

*"He must write in a book for himself a copy of this law . . . And it must continue with him, and he must read in it all the days of his life."*—DEUTERONOMY 17:18, 19.

**Y**OU may hardly think of yourself as a king or a queen. What faithful Christian and student of the Bible would imagine himself or herself acting with royal authority, like good Kings David, Josiah, Hezekiah, or Jehoshaphat? Yet, you can and should be like them in at least one special way. What is that? And why should you want to be like them in that regard?

<sup>2</sup> In Moses' day, long before God approved of a human king for the Israelites, He foresaw that the desire to have a king would arise among His people. Therefore he inspired Moses to include relevant instructions in the Law covenant. These were royal instructions, directions for a king.

<sup>3</sup> God said: "When you eventually come into the land that Jehovah your God is giving you, . . . and you have said, 'Let me set a king over myself like all the nations who are round about me'; you should without fail set over yourself a king whom Jehovah your God will choose. . . . And it must occur that when he takes his seat on the throne of his kingdom, he must write in a book for himself a copy of this law . . . And it must continue with him, and he must read in it all the days of his life, in order that he may learn to fear Jehovah."

1. A Christian might want to be like whom?
- 2, 3. What did Jehovah foresee regarding a human king, and what was such a king to do?



vaah his God so as to keep all the words of this law and these regulations by doing them."—Deuteronomy 17:14-19.

<sup>4</sup> Yes, the king that Jehovah would choose for his worshipers was to make a personal copy of writings that you can find in your Bible. Then the king was to read in that copy daily, repeatedly. That was not a memory exercise. It was study, and it had a beneficial objective. The king who would have Jehovah's approval needed to pursue such study to develop and retain the right heart attitude. He also needed to study those inspired writings to be a successful, insightful king.—2 Kings 22:8-13; Proverbs 1:1-4.

## Learn Like a King

<sup>5</sup> What do you think that would have entailed for David when he became king over Israel? Well, he would have had to make a copy of the books of the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy). Think of what an impression it must have made on David's mind and heart to use his own eyes and hands to write out a copy of the Law. Likely, Moses also penned the book of Job as well as Psalms 90 and 91. Would David

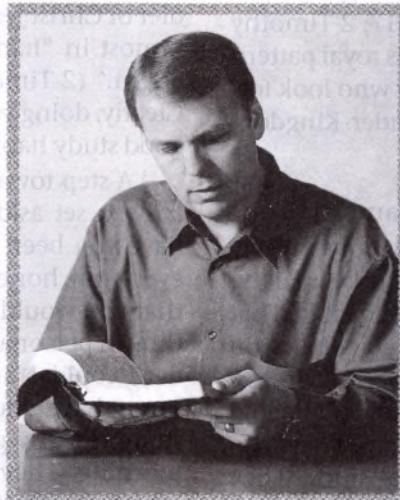
4. What did God's directions for kings involve?
5. King David had what parts of the Bible to copy and read, and how did he feel about this?

have copied these too? Perhaps. Also, he would probably have had available the books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth. So you can see that King David would have had a good part of the Bible to read and absorb. And you have reason to believe that he did just that, for note his comments about God's Law, now found at Psalm 19:7-11.

<sup>6</sup> The Greater David—Jesus, the Son of David—followed a similar pattern. It was Jesus' custom to go to the local synagogue weekly. There he heard the Scriptures read and commented on. More than that, on occasion Jesus himself publicly read aloud from God's Word and explained its application. (Luke 4:16-21) You can easily get a sense of his familiarity with the Scriptures. Just read the Gospel accounts, and note how often Jesus said "it is written" or in other ways referred to specific passages of Scripture. Why, in his Sermon on the Mount as recorded by Matthew, Jesus quoted from the Hebrew Scriptures 21 times.—Matthew 4: 4-10; 7:29; 11:10; 21:13; 26:24, 31; John 6:31, 45; 8:17.

<sup>7</sup> Jesus followed the counsel at Psalm 1:1-3: "Happy is the man that has not walked in the counsel of the wicked ones, . . . but his delight is in the law of Jehovah, and in his law he reads in an undertone day and night. . . . Everything he does will succeed." How that contrasted with the religious leaders of his day, who had "seated themselves in the seat of Moses" but who ignored "the law of Jehovah"!—Matthew 23:2-4.

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6. How can we be sure that Jesus like his forefather David had an interest in the Scriptures?
  7. How did Jesus differ from the religious leaders?



<sup>8</sup> Some might be puzzled, however, by one passage that could be interpreted as though Jesus were discouraging the study of the Bible. At John 5:39, 40, we read what Jesus said to some in his day: "You are searching the Scriptures, because you think that by means of them you will have everlasting life; and these are the very ones that bear witness about me. And yet you do not want to come to me that you may have life." By that comment Jesus was not discouraging his Jewish listeners from studying the Scriptures. Rather, he was showing up their insincerity or their inconsistency. They realized that the Scriptures could guide them to everlasting life, but the very Scriptures that they were searching

also should have led them to the Messiah, Jesus. Nonetheless, they refused to accept him. Studying was thus of no profit because they were not sincere, teachable.—Deuteronomy 18:15; Luke 11:52; John 7:47, 48.

<sup>9</sup> How different the picture was with Jesus' disciples, including the apostles! They studied "the holy writings, which are able to make [one] wise for salvation." (2 Timothy 3: 15) In this they were like the earlier prophets who made "a diligent inquiry and a careful search." Those prophets did not consider that search to be just one zealous burst of study for a few months or a year. The apostle Peter says that "they kept on investigating," particularly about the Christ and what glories were involved in his saving role for mankind. In his

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8. Why was it to no avail that the Jewish religious leaders read and studied the Bible?
  9. What fine example did the apostles and earlier prophets set?

first letter, Peter 34 times quoted from ten Bible books.—1 Peter 1:10, 11.

<sup>10</sup> Clearly, then, careful study of God's Word was a royal assignment for the kings in ancient Israel. Jesus followed this pattern. And studying it was an undertaking for those who would rule with Christ as kings in heaven. (Luke 22:28-30; Romans 8:17; 2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 5:10; 20:6) This royal pattern is just as necessary for all today who look forward to blessings on earth under Kingdom rule.—Matthew 25:34, 46.

### An Undertaking for Kings and for You

<sup>11</sup> We can emphatically and honestly say that each true Christian should be making his or her own examination of the Bible. That is not something needed merely when you first study the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses. Each of us ought to be resolved to avoid being like some in the apostle Paul's day who in time slacked off in personal study. They learned "the elementary things of the sacred pronouncements of God," such as "the primary doctrine about the Christ." Yet, they did not keep up their studying and thus did not "press on to maturity." (Hebrews 5:12-6:3) We can accordingly ask ourselves: 'How do I feel about personal study of God's Word, whether I have been associated with the Christian congregation for a short while or for decades? Paul prayed that Christians in his day keep "increasing in the accurate knowledge of God." Do I show that I have the same desire?'—Colossians 1:9, 10.

<sup>12</sup> A key to your having good study habits is that you develop a fondness for God's Word.

10. Why should each of us be interested in Bible study?

11. (a) What danger as to study exists for Christians? (b) We would do well to ask ourselves what questions?

12. Why is an ongoing fondness for God's Word important?

Psalm 119:14-16 points to regular, purposeful reflection upon God's Word as a means by which you come to take delight in it. Again, that is true no matter how long you have been a Christian. Underscoring that, recall the example of Timothy. Though this Christian elder was already serving as "a fine soldier of Christ Jesus," Paul urged him to do his utmost in "handling the word of the truth aright." (2 Timothy 2:3, 15; 1 Timothy 4:15) Clearly, doing your "utmost" involves having good study habits.

<sup>13</sup> A step toward good study habits is regularly to set aside time for Bible study. How have you been doing in that regard? Whatever your honest response is, do you think that you would benefit from spending more time in personal study? 'How,' you may wonder, 'could I arrange time for that?' Well, some have increased their effective Bible study time by getting up a bit earlier in the morning. They might read the Bible for 15 minutes or work on a personal study project. As another possibility, what about making a slight adjustment in your weekly schedule? For example, if you are in the habit of reading the newspaper most days or watching the evening news on television, would it be possible to skip doing that just one day a week? You could use the time on that day for increased Bible study. If you replaced the news one day and devoted a time slot of 30 minutes or so to personal study, you would gain over 25 hours a year. Imagine the benefits of 25 hours of additional Bible reading or study! Here is another idea: Over the course of the coming week, analyze your activities at the end of each day. See if you can find something that could be omitted or curtailed to allow time for more Bible reading or study.—Ephesians 5:15, 16.

13. (a) How might more time be made available for Bible study? (b) What adjustments can you see yourself making to gain time for study?

## "In Our Hands"

"If we want . . . a concordance to the Bible, we can find no better medium than the Internet. But if we want to read the Bible, to study it, think about it, reflect upon it, we should have it in our hands, for that is the only way of getting it into our minds and our hearts."—Gertrude Himmelfarb, distinguished professor emeritus, City University, New York.

<sup>14</sup> What will make studying easier for you, more appealing? Goals. What realistic study goals could you set? For many, an admirable first goal is that of reading the entire Bible. Perhaps up till now, you have read sections of the Bible on occasion and have benefited from it. Could you now make it your determination to read the entire Bible? Your initial goal to that end might be to read the four Gospels, followed by an intermediate goal, such as then reading the rest of the Christian Greek Scriptures. Once you have the resulting satisfaction and benefits, your next goal might be a progressive reading of the books of Moses and the historical books through Esther. Accomplishing that, you will see it is realistic to complete the rest of the Bible. One woman, who was about 65 years old when she became a Christian, wrote on the inside cover of her Bible the date when she began to read it through and later the date when she finished it. She now has five pairs of dates! (Deuteronomy 32:45-47) And rather than read from a computer screen or printout, she had the Bible in her hands.

<sup>15</sup> Some who have already met the goal of reading the whole Bible take other steps to make their ongoing study increasingly productive and rewarding. One way is to include selected study material prior to reading each successive Bible book. In "*All Scripture Is Inspired of God and Beneficial*" and *Insight on the Scriptures*, one can find excellent information about the historical setting,

14, 15. (a) Why are goals important when it comes to personal study? (b) What are possible goals involving reading the Bible?

style, and potential benefits of each Bible book.\*

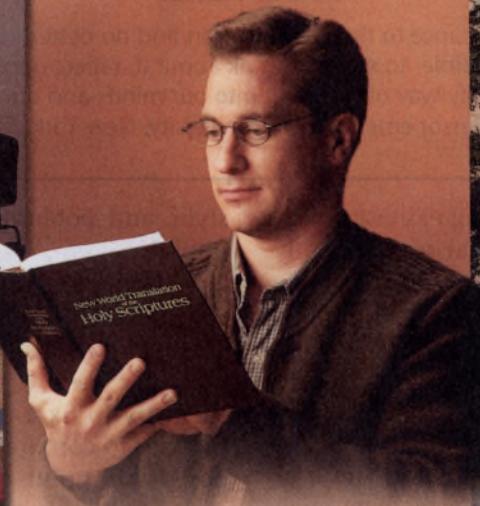
<sup>16</sup> During your study, avoid the approach common to many so-called Bible scholars. They focus excessively on analyzing texts as if the Bible were of human origin. Some of them try to fix a distinct audience for each book or to conjure up an objective and supposed viewpoint that a human author of each book had in mind. The effect of such human reasoning may be that of relegating Bible books to mere history or viewing them as reflecting evolutionary approaches to religion. Other scholars give themselves over to word studies, like the philology of Bible literature. They get more involved in studying word origins and citing Hebrew and Greek meanings than in the import of God's message. Do you think that such approaches are likely to impart deep and motivating faith? —1 Thessalonians 2:13.

<sup>17</sup> Are the scholars' conclusions even valid? Is it true that each Bible book has but one key point or is intended for one audience exclusively? (1 Corinthians 1:19-21) The fact is that the books of God's Word have permanent value for people of all ages and backgrounds. Even if a book was initially addressed to one person, such as Timothy or Titus, or to a particular group, perhaps the Galatians or the Philippians, all of us can

\* These study aids are published by Jehovah's Witnesses and are available in many languages.

16. We should avoid following what example as to Bible study?

17. Why should we view the Bible as having a message for all?



and should study those books. They are important for every one of us, and a given book may treat many themes and benefit many audiences. Yes, the message of the Bible is universal, which helps us to understand why it has been translated into the tongues of people around the globe.—Romans 15:4.

### Profit for You and Others

<sup>18</sup> As you study, you will find it very profitable to seek an understanding of the Bible as well as to try to see details in their right relationships. (Proverbs 2:3-5; 4:7) What Jehovah has revealed through his Word is intimately connected to his purpose. So as you read, relate the facts and counsel to that. You might ponder how an incident, idea, or prophecy relates to Jehovah's purpose. Ask yourself: 'What does this tell me about Jehovah? How does it bear on God's purpose being carried

18. As you read God's Word, on what should you be reflecting?

out through his Kingdom?' You might also reflect: 'How can I use this information? Can I employ it in teaching or advising others based on the Scriptures?'—Joshua 1:8.

<sup>19</sup> Thinking of others is of benefit in another respect too. In the process of your Bible reading and study, you will learn new things and gain new insights. Try to include these in upbuilding conversation with your family members or others. If you do so at appropriate times and in a modest way, such discussions unquestionably will be rewarding. Your sincere, enthusiastic recounting of what you gained or the aspects you found interesting will likely make such more impressive to others. More than that, it will be of profit to you personally. In what way? Experts have noted that a person will longer remember what he has learned or covered if while it is fresh in his mind, he uses or repeats it, as when relating it to others.\*

<sup>20</sup> Each time you read through a Bible

\* See *The Watchtower* of August 15, 1993, pages 13-14.

19. Who benefits as you relate to others the things you learn? Explain.

20. Why is it profitable to read the Bible repeatedly?

book, you certainly will glean new information. You will be struck by passages that previously did not say as much to you. They will take on new meaning. This should underscore that rather than being mere human literature, the books of the Bible are treasures fit for your repeated study and benefit. Remember, a king, such as David, was to "read in it all the days of his life."

<sup>21</sup> Yes, those who take the time for deep study of the Bible profit immensely. They gain spiritual gems and insights. Their relationship with God becomes stronger, richer. They also become an increasingly valuable asset to family members, to brothers and sis-

ters in the Christian congregation, and to those who have yet to become worshipers of Jehovah.—Romans 10:9-14; 1 Timothy 4:16.

21. What reward can you expect from increasing your study of God's Word?

### Do You Recall?

- What were the kings in Israel supposed to do?
- Jesus and the apostles provided what example as to Bible study?
- What adjustments can you make to increase your time for personal study?
- You should approach a study of God's Word with what frame of mind?

## LEARN AND TEACH CHRISTIAN MORALITY

*"Do you, however, the one teaching someone else, not teach yourself?"—ROMANS 2:21.*

YOU have many reasons for studying God's Word. You likely want to know the facts in it—about people, events, places, and other things. You want to know doctrinal truth, as opposed to religious errors, such as the Trinity or hellfire. (John 8:32) You also should want to get to know Jehovah better so that you can be more like him and walk before him in an upright manner.—1 Kings 15:4, 5.

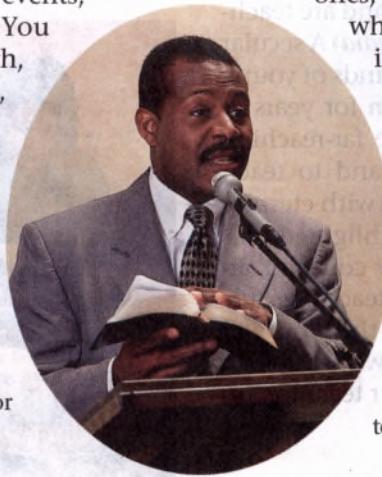
<sup>2</sup> A related and significant

1, 2. What reasons do you have for wanting to study the Bible?

reason to study the Word of God is to equip yourself to teach others—your loved ones, acquaintances, and even those whom you may not yet know. Doing this is not optional for true Christians. Jesus told his disciples: "Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations, . . . teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you."—Matthew 28:19, 20.

<sup>3</sup> Studying the Bible with a desire to teach others is

3, 4. Why is it honorable for you to teach as Jesus commanded?



honorable and can be the source of lasting satisfaction. Teaching has long been a respected profession. The *Encarta Encyclopedia* states: "Among the Jews, many adults considered teachers the guides to salvation and urged children to honor their teachers even more than their parents." It is particularly honorable for Christians to teach themselves by studying the Bible and then to teach others.



<sup>4</sup> "More people engage in teaching than in any other profession. About 48 million men and women throughout the world are teachers." (*The World Book Encyclopedia*) A secular teacher is entrusted with the minds of young people and can influence them for years to come. The effect is even more far-reaching when you obey Jesus' command to teach others; you can influence them with eternity in view. The apostle Paul highlighted this when he urged Timothy: "Pay constant attention to yourself and to your teaching. Stay by these things, for by doing this you will save both yourself and those who listen to you." (1 Timothy 4:16) Yes, your teaching involves salvation.

<sup>5</sup> Teaching yourself and then others is authorized and directed by the highest Source, the Sovereign of the universe. That of itself makes this field of teaching more elevated than any of a secular sort, whether that of teaching elementary subjects, employment skills, or even medical specialties. Christian teaching involves that the student learn personally to imitate God's Son, Christ Jesus, and to teach others to do the same.—John 15:10.

### Why Teach Yourself?

<sup>6</sup> Why is it said that we must first teach ourselves? Well, we cannot properly teach others if we have not first taught ourselves. Paul stressed this fact in a thought-provoking passage that had import for Jews back then but that carries a serious message for Christians today. Paul asked: "Do you, however, the one teaching someone else, not teach yourself? You, the one preaching 'Do not steal,' do you steal? You, the one saying 'Do not commit adultery,' do you commit adultery? You, the one expressing abhorrence of the idols, do you rob temples? You, who take pride in law, do you by your

5. Why is Christian teaching of the highest sort?
6. 7. (a) Why must we first teach ourselves? (b) In what sense had first-century Jews failed as teachers?



transgressing of the Law dishonor God?"—Romans 2:21-23.

<sup>7</sup> Rhetorically, Paul brought up two wrongs that the Ten Commandments directly addressed: Do not steal, and do not commit adultery. (Exodus 20:14, 15) Some Jews in Paul's day were proud that they had God's Law. They 'were orally instructed out of the Law and were persuaded that they were guides of the blind and a light for ones in darkness, teachers of babes.' (Romans 2:17-20) However, some were hypocrites because in secret they were committing theft or adultery. That would dishonor both the Law and its Author in heaven. You can see that they were hardly qualified to teach others; they really were not even teaching themselves.

<sup>8</sup> Paul mentioned robbing temples. Did some Jews literally do that? What did Paul have in mind? Frankly, in view of the limited information in this passage, we cannot be dogmatic as to how some Jews 'robbed temples.' Earlier the city recorder of Ephesus declared that Paul's companions were not 'temple robbers,' which suggests that at least some people thought that Jews were open to that accusation. (Acts 19:29-37) Were they personally using or commercializing precious items that came from pagan temples that had been plundered by conquerors or religious zealots? According to God's Law, the gold and silver of idols were to be destroyed, not appropriated for personal use. (Deuteronomy 7:25)\* So Paul might have been alluding to Jews who disregarded God's command and used or profited from items originating in pagan temples.

\* While painting the Jews as being free of sacrilege, Josephus restated God's law in this way: "Let none blaspheme the gods which other cities revere, nor rob foreign temples, nor take treasure that has been dedicated in the name of any god." (Italics ours.)—*Jewish Antiquities*, Book 4, chapter 8, paragraph 10.

8. How might some Jews in Paul's day have been 'robbing temples'?

<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, Josephus told of a scandal in Rome caused by four Jews, the leader being a teacher of Law. Those four convinced a Roman woman, a Jewish proselyte, to turn over gold and other valuables as a contribution to the temple in Jerusalem. Once they got these from her, they used the riches for themselves—as much as robbing from the temple.\* Others were in a sense robbing God's temple by their offering defective sacrifices and promoting greedy commercialism on its grounds, turning the temple into "a cave of robbers."—Matthew 21:12, 13; Malachi 1:12-14; 3:8, 9.

### Teach Christian Morality

<sup>10</sup> Whatever the first-century practices involving stealing, adultery, and robbing temples that Paul was alluding to, let us not miss the thrust of his comments. He asked: "Do you, however, the one teaching someone else, not teach yourself?" It is noteworthy that the examples that Paul raised had to do with morality. The apostle did not here focus on Bible doctrines or history. The teaching of oneself and of others to which Paul referred had to do with Christian morality.

<sup>11</sup> For us to apply the lesson of Romans 2:21-23 means learning Christian morality from God's Word, acting in line with what we learn, and then instructing others to do the same. Accordingly, as you study the Bible, be alert for indications of Jehovah's standards, from which true Christian morality is derived. Meditate on the counsel and the lessons that you find in the Bible. Then bravely apply what you learn. And doing so does take

\* *Jewish Antiquities*, Book 18, chapter 3, paragraph 5.

9. What wrong practices involving the temple in Jerusalem might have been much the same as robbing the temple?

10. We should not miss what thrust of Paul's words recorded at Romans 2:21-23?

11. Why should you give attention to Christian morality as you study God's Word?

courage combined with determination. It is easy for imperfect humans to develop excuses, reasons why a situation allows for or even requires disregarding Christian morality in a particular case. Perhaps the Jews whom Paul mentioned were experienced in such subtle reasoning intended to rationalize or to mislead others. Paul's words show, though, that Christian morality is not to be minimized or ignored at personal discretion.

<sup>12</sup> The apostle highlighted a prime reason for learning and then applying the morality that you find in the Bible. The Jews' misconduct reflected on Jehovah: "You, who take pride in law, do you by your transgressing of the Law dishonor God? For 'the name of God is being blasphemed on account of you people among the nations.'" (Romans 2:23, 24) It is equally true now that if we ignore Christian morality, we dishonor its Source. Conversely, if we hold firmly to God's standards, it reflects well on him, honoring him. (Isaiah 52:5; Ezekiel 36:20) Your being aware of this can strengthen your resolve if you face temptations or situations where ignoring Christian morality might seem the easiest or most convenient way to act. Moreover, Paul's words teach us something else. Beyond being personally aware that your conduct reflects on God, as you teach others, help them to see that how they apply the moral standards that they are learning will reflect on Jehovah. It is not simply that Christian morality promotes contentment and protects one's health. It also reflects on the One who provided and encourages that morality.—Psalm 74:10; James 3:17.

<sup>13</sup> Morality affects other humans too. You can see that from examples in God's Word

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12. How does good conduct or misconduct reflect on Jehovah God, and why is it helpful to bear this fact in mind?
  13. (a) How does the Bible help us as to morality?  
(b) Give the gist of the counsel at 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7.

that illustrate the value of applying God's moral standards and the results of disregarding them. (Genesis 39:1-9, 21; Joshua 7:1-25) You can also find such pointed counsel on morality as: "This is what God 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, not in covetous sexual appetite such as also those nations have which do not know God; that no one go to the point of harming and encroach upon the rights of his brother in this matter, . . . for God called us, not with allowance for uncleanness, but in connection with sanctification."—1 Thessalonians 4:3-7.

<sup>14</sup> Almost anyone can see from this passage that sexual immorality breaches Christian morality. Yet, you can go beyond the obvious. Some texts offer avenues for considerable study and meditation, with resulting insight. For instance, you might reflect on what Paul meant in saying that engaging in fornication can bring one "to the point of harming and encroach upon the rights of his brother in this matter." What rights are included, and how will a better understanding of this provide you with added incentive to maintain Christian morality? How could the results of such research further equip you to teach others and help them to honor God?

### Study in Order to Teach

<sup>15</sup> Jehovah's Witnesses have tools they use to research questions or issues that arise as they study to teach themselves or others. One tool available in many languages is the *Watch Tower Publications Index*. If you have access to it, you can use it to locate information in the Bible-based publications of Jehovah.

14. What might you ask yourself about the counsel at 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7?
15. What tools could you use to teach yourself through personal study?

vah's Witnesses. You can search by subject or under a listing by Bible verse. Another tool available to Jehovah's Witnesses in many major languages is the *Watchtower Library*. This computer program on CD-ROM holds a large collection of publications in electronic form. Its program enables one to research topics and discussions of scriptures. If either or both these tools are available to you, utilize them regularly as you study God's Word so as to teach others.

<sup>16</sup> Let us take the example cited above, 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7. The question arose about rights. Whose rights? And how might those rights be encroached on? With the study tools mentioned, you can probably find a number of enlightening comments on these verses, even on the rights that Paul mentioned. You can read such comments in *Insight on the Scriptures*, Volume 1, pages 863-4; *True Peace and Security—How Can You Find It?*, page 145; *The Watchtower*, November 15, 1989, page 31.

<sup>17</sup> Pursuing the study, you will see that those publications show how true Paul's words are. A fornicator sins against God and exposes himself to diseases. (1 Corinthians 6:18, 19; Hebrews 13:4) A man engaging in fornication encroaches on various rights of the woman with whom he sins. He deprives her of a clean moral standing and a good conscience. If she is single, he encroaches on her right to enter marriage as a virgin and her future husband's right to expect her to be such. He hurts the woman's parents and her husband if she is married. The immoral man spoils his own family's right to a clean moral record. If he is a member of a Christian congregation, he brings reproach on it, hurting its reputation.—1 Corinthians 5:1.

16, 17. (a) Where can you find enlightening comments on the rights mentioned at 1 Thessalonians 4:6? (b) In what ways can fornication encroach on others' rights?

<sup>18</sup> Do not such comments about rights help that verse to unfold before you? Study of that sort is certainly of great value. As you pursue it, you are teaching yourself. Your grasp of the truthfulness and impact of God's message grows. You strengthen your determination to hold to Christian morality no matter what temptation may arise. And think how much more effective you can be as a teacher! For instance, while teaching others Bible truth, you can impart insight into 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7, increasing their understanding and appreciation for Christian morality. Thus, your study can help you and many others to honor God. And we have mentioned here just one example, from Paul's letter to the Thessalonians. There are many other aspects of Christian morality, and correspondingly many other Bible examples and points of counsel, that you can study, apply, and teach.

<sup>19</sup> There can be no valid question about the wisdom of doing that. James 3:17 says that "the wisdom from above," from Jehovah God himself, is "first of all chaste." That clearly implies following God's moral standards. In fact, Jehovah requires that those who represent him in teaching the

18. How do you benefit from Bible study regarding Christian morality?

19. Why is it essential that you hold to Christian morality?

### Do You Recall?

- Why must we study to teach ourselves before teaching others?
- How can our conduct reflect on Jehovah?
- A fornicator might be encroaching on whose rights?
- What is your determination regarding Christian morality?



Bible are themselves good examples "in chasteness." (1 Timothy 4:12) The life patterns of such early disciples as Paul and Timothy bear that out; they refrained from immorality, Paul even writing: "Let fornication and uncleanness of every sort or greediness not even be mentioned among you, just as it befits holy people; neither shameful conduct nor foolish talking nor obscene jesting."—Ephesians 5:3, 4.

<sup>20</sup> While the moral standards presented in God's Word are clear and specific, they are not an oppressive burden. This was evident to John, the longest-surviving apostle. Based on what he had observed over decades of life, he knew that Christian morality was not

20, 21. Why do you agree with what the apostle John wrote, as recorded at 1 John 5:3?

"His commandments do not weigh us down"

harmful. On the contrary, it proved to be good, beneficial, a blessing. John stressed this, writing: "This is the love of God: that we keep his commandments. And his commandments do not weigh us down."—1 John 5:3, *New English Translation*.

<sup>21</sup> Observe, however, that John did not present obeying God by Christian morality as the best course merely because it saves us from problems, from the bad consequence of doing otherwise. He put things in the right perspective by first acknowledging that it is an expression of our love for Jehovah God, a precious opportunity to display our love for him. Truly, teaching oneself or others to love God requires that we accept and apply his lofty standards. Yes, it means teaching ourselves and others Christian morality.



## Famine Relief on the Way!

**W**HAT kind of famine?" you might ask. A famine as regards spiritual food! An ancient Hebrew prophet foretold this famine: "Look! There are days coming," is the utterance of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah, "and I will send a famine into the land, a famine, not for bread, and a thirst, not for water, but for hearing the words of Jehovah." (Amos 8:11) To help relieve the spiritual famine, the 48 members of the 112th class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead, located in Patterson, New York, are going to 19 different lands on 5 continents and islands of the sea.

They go equipped, not with literal meat and grain, but with knowledge, experience, and training. For five months they engaged in intensive Bible study designed to strengthen their faith for missionary service in foreign fields. On March 9, 2002, the 5,554 in attendance for the graduation program listened with delight.

Stephen Lett, who serves as a member of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses, enthusiastically opened the program. He had a special welcome for the many guests visiting from different parts of the world. Then he proceeded to apply Jesus' words, "You are the light of the world" to the work of the future missionaries. (Matthew 5:14) He explained: 'In your assignments you will "light up" various aspects of Jehovah's marvelous works, enabling honesthearted ones to see the beauty of Jehovah and his purposes.' Brother Lett encouraged the missionaries to use the light of God's Word to expose the darkness of false doctrines and provide guidance for truth-seekers.

### Proper Attitude Vital for Success

After the chairman's opening remarks, Baltasar Perla, a member of the United States Branch Committee, gave the first of a series of talks designed to assist the graduates to be successful missionaries. He developed the theme "Be Courageous and Strong and Act." (1 Chronicles 28:20) King Solomon of ancient Israel received a challenging as-

signment to do something that he had never done before—build a temple in Jerusalem. Solomon did act, and with Jehovah's backing the temple was completed. Applying the lesson to the class, Brother Perla said: 'You have received a new assignment, that of becoming a missionary, and you need to be courageous and strong.' The students certainly found comfort in the assurance that Jehovah will not desert or leave them as long as they remain close to him. Brother Perla moved the audience by concluding with the personal observation: 'You can accomplish much good as

### CLASS STATISTICS

Number of countries represented: 6

Number of countries assigned to: 19

Number of students: 48

Average age: 33.2

Average years in truth: 15.7

Average years in full-time ministry: 12.2



### 112th Graduating Class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead

In the list below, rows are numbered from front to back, and names are listed from left to right in each row.  
(1) Parotte, M.; Hooker, E.; Anaya, R.; Reynolds, J.; Gesualdi, K.; Gonzalez, J. (2) Robinson, C.; Phillips, B.; Maidment, K.; Moore, I.; Noakes, J.; Barnett, S. (3) Stires, T.; Palmer, B.; Yang, C.; Groothuis, S.; Groppe, T.; Bach, C. (4) Anaya, R.; Soukoreff, E.; Stewart, K.; Simozrag, N.; Simottel, C.; Bach, E. (5) Stewart, R.; Yang, H.; Gilfeather, A.; Harris, R.; Barnett, D.; Parotte, S. (6) Maidment, A.; Moore, J.; Groothuis, C.; Gilfeather, C.; Noakes, S.; Stires, T. (7) Gesualdi, D.; Groppe, T.; Soukoreff, B.; Palmer, G.; Phillips, N.; Simottel, J. (8) Harris, S.; Hooker, P.; Gonzalez, J.; Simozrag, D.; Reynolds, D.; Robinson, M.

missionaries. Missionaries brought the truth to my family and me!"

"Look to Jehovah for Success" was the theme of the talk given by Samuel Herd, another member of the Governing Body. The students are embarking on a career in the missionary work, and their success depends much on their relationship with Jehovah. Brother Herd admonished them: 'You have accumulated much knowledge of the Bible through your studies at Gilead. You have been receiving joyfully. But now, for real success, you're going to have to start giving away what you have learned.' (Acts 20:35) The mis-

sionaries will have many opportunities to do this as they 'pour themselves out' in behalf of others.—Philippians 2:17.

What parting counsel would the instructors have for the students? Mark Noumair based his theme on Ruth 3:18, "Sit Still Until You See How the Matter Turns Out." Drawing on the example of Naomi and Ruth, the speaker encouraged the graduates to have full confidence in the arrangements that God's earthly organization has put in place and to respect theocratic authority. Touching the students' hearts, Brother Noumair said: 'There might be times when you don't un-

derstand why a decision that affects you was made or when you might have strong feelings that something should be done a different way. What will you do? Will you rise up and take matters into your own hands or will you "sit still," trusting in God's direction, confident that, in time, he will cause only good to result?" (Romans 8:28) The advice to 'concentrate on advancing Kingdom interests, keeping an eye on what Jehovah's organization is doing rather than on personalities,' will no doubt prove valuable to the future missionaries in their foreign assignments.

Wallace Liverance, who himself was a missionary and who now serves as a Gilead instructor, delivered the final discourse in the opening series. The theme of his talk was "Stay Focused, Stay in God's Service." He showed that the prophet Daniel discerned from seeing Babylon fall and from what Jeremiah had foretold that the liberation of the Israelites from captivity was near. (Jeremiah 25:11; Daniel 9:2) Daniel had an awareness of Jehovah's timetable, and that helped him stay focused on the unfolding of God's purpose. In contrast, the Israelites in the prophet Haggai's day said: "The time has not come." (Haggai 1:2) They lost sight of the times they were living in, became focused on their own comforts and self-fulfillment, and left the work for which they had been liberated from Babylon, the rebuilding of the temple. Brother Liverance concluded: "So stay focused by keeping Jehovah's purpose in mind at all times."

Gilead instructor Lawrence Bowen served as moderator of a part having the theme "Jehovah Blesses Those Who Use the Living Word." (Hebrews 4:12) This part dealt with field experiences of the class, highlighting how Jehovah blesses those who use the Bible when preaching and teaching. The moderator pointed out that Jesus Christ set a fine example for all ministers of God: 'Jesus could truthfully say that what he taught was not

of his own originality, but he spoke *God's Word*.' Honesthearted ones recognized the truth and responded positively to it. (John 7:16, 17) The same is true today.

### **Gilead Training Equips One for Every Good Work**

Next, longtime Bethel family members Richard Abrahamson and Patrick LaFrancia interviewed six Gilead graduates who are now serving in different forms of special full-time service. The graduates of the 112th class were encouraged upon hearing that years later those six, regardless of their current assignment, continue to use the training they received at Gilead in connection with Bible study, research projects, and in getting along with people.

Theodore Jaracz, a member of the Governing Body, gave the principal discourse of the program. It was entitled "What Is Accomplished by Enduring Satanic Hatred." During the past five months, the students were dwelling in a loving and theocratic environment. As pointed out in their classroom studies, however, we are living in an enemy world. Jehovah's people are under attack the world over. (Matthew 24:9) Using several Bible accounts, Brother Jaracz pointed out that 'we are a special target of the Devil. We must strengthen our relationship with Jehovah and be fortified to meet the tests.' (Job 1:8; Daniel 6:4; John 15:20; Revelation 12:12, 17) Brother Jaracz concluded that despite hatred continuing against God's people, 'there is no weapon formed against us, as Isaiah 54:17 says, that will have any success. Jehovah will see to it that we are delivered in his own time and way.'

"Completely equipped," the graduates of the 112th class of Gilead will no doubt do much toward relieving the famine of spiritual food in the lands where they will serve. (2 Timothy 3:16, 17) We eagerly look forward to reports about how they deliver the nourishing message to people in these lands.



# A Lesson From Roman History

**I**F, LIKE men, I have fought with wild beasts at Ephesus." Some think that those words, recorded at 1 Corinthians 15:32, mean that the apostle Paul was sentenced to fight in a Roman arena. Whether he did or not, fights to the death in arenas were common during that time. What does history tell us about the arena and the events occurring there?

As Christians, we desire to mold our consciences according to Jehovah's thinking, which can help us to make decisions about modern entertainment. For example, consider God's thinking about violence, reflected in the words: "Do not become envious of the man of violence, nor choose any of his ways." (Proverbs 3:31) Early Christians had that counsel available to guide them when many around them became excited over Roman gladiatorial con-

tests. In considering what occurred at such events, let us see what lesson is clear for Christians today.

Two armed gladiators face each other in a Roman arena. At the first blows of sword on shield, the frenzied crowd yells encouragement to their favorite. It is a desperate fight. Soon, wounded and unable to continue, one throws down his arms and kneels, thus recognizing defeat and appealing for mercy. The clamor rises to a crescendo. Some of the crowd shout for clemency, others for his death. All eyes are fixed on the emperor. He, attentive to the whims of the masses, can free the vanquished warrior or with a thumbs-down order his death.

The Romans had a passion for gladiatorial spectacles. You might be surprised to know that such fights were initially held at the funerals of important personages. It is believed that the contests had their origin in human sacrifice among the Oscan or Samnite peoples of what is now central Italy. The sacrifices were to appease the spirits of the dead. Such combat was called a *munus*, or "gift" (plural, *munera*). The first recorded games in Rome were held in 264 B.C.E. when three pairs of gladiators fought in the ox market. At the funeral of Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, 22 duels were fought. At Publius Licinius' funeral, 60 pairs faced one another. In 65 B.C.E., Julius Caesar sent 320 pairs into the arena.

"Aristocratic funerals were political acts," says historian Keith Hopkins, "and funeral games had political overtones . . . because of their popularity with citizen electors. Indeed, the growth in the splendour of gladiatorial shows was largely fuelled by political competition between ambitious aristocrats." By the reign of Augustus (27 B.C.E. to 14 C.E.), the *munera* had become lavish gifts—for the entertainment of the masses—that wealthy officers of state offered to further their political careers.

## Participants and Training

You may ask, 'Who were the gladiators?' Well, they might have been slaves, criminals condemned to death, prisoners of war, or free men drawn by excitement or the hope of fame and wealth. All were trained in prison-like schools. The book *Giochi e spettacoli* (Games and Spectacles) reports that gladiators in training "were always watched by guards and subject to rigid discipline, the severest of rules, and particularly harsh punishments . . . This treatment often led to suicide, mutiny, and revolt." Rome's largest gladiatorial school had cells for at least a thousand inmates. Each man had a specialty. Some fought with armor, shield, and sword, others with net and trident. Still others were trained to face wild beasts in another popular type of show, the hunt. Might Paul have been referring to just such an event?

Show organizers could turn to entrepreneurs who recruited and trained 17- or 18-year-olds to be gladiators. Trafficking in human lives was big business. One exceptional show that Trajan offered to celebrate a military victory fielded 10,000 gladiators and 11,000 animals.

Ancient gladiatorial helmet and shin guard



## A Day at the Arena

Mornings at the arena were dedicated to hunts. Wild beasts of all kinds might be forced into the arena. The audience particularly appreciated the pairing of a bull and a bear. Often the two were bound together to fight until one died, then the survivor was finished by a hunter. Other popular matches set lions against tigers, or elephants against bears. Hunters displayed their skill in slaying exotic animals brought from every corner of the empire, with no expense spared—leopards, rhinoceroses, hippopotamuses, giraffes, hyenas, camels, wolves, boars, and antelope.

### Fights to "Appease the Dead"

On the origin of gladiatorial combat, third-century writer Tertullian says: "The ancients thought that by this sort of spectacle they rendered a service to the dead, after they had tempered it with a more cultured form of cruelty. For of old, in the belief that the souls of the dead are propitiated with human blood, they used at funerals to sacrifice captives or slaves of poor quality whom they bought. Afterwards it seemed good to obscure their impiety by making it a pleasure. So after the persons procured had been trained in such arms as they then had and as best they might—their training was to learn to be killed!—they then did them to death on the appointed funeral day at the tombs. So they found comfort for death in murder. This is the origin of the *munus*. But by and by they progressed to the same height in refinement as in cruelty; for the pleasure of the holiday lacked something, unless savage beasts too had their share in tearing men's bodies to pieces. What was offered to appease the dead was counted as a funeral rite."

Scenic effects made hunts unforgettable. Rocks, ponds, and trees were used to mimic forests. In some arenas, beasts appeared as if by magic, delivered by underground elevators and trapdoors. Unpredictable animal behavior added interest, but what seems to have made hunts especially fascinating was cruelty.

Executions came next in the program. Efforts were made to render these with originality. Mythological dramas were presented in which actors really died.

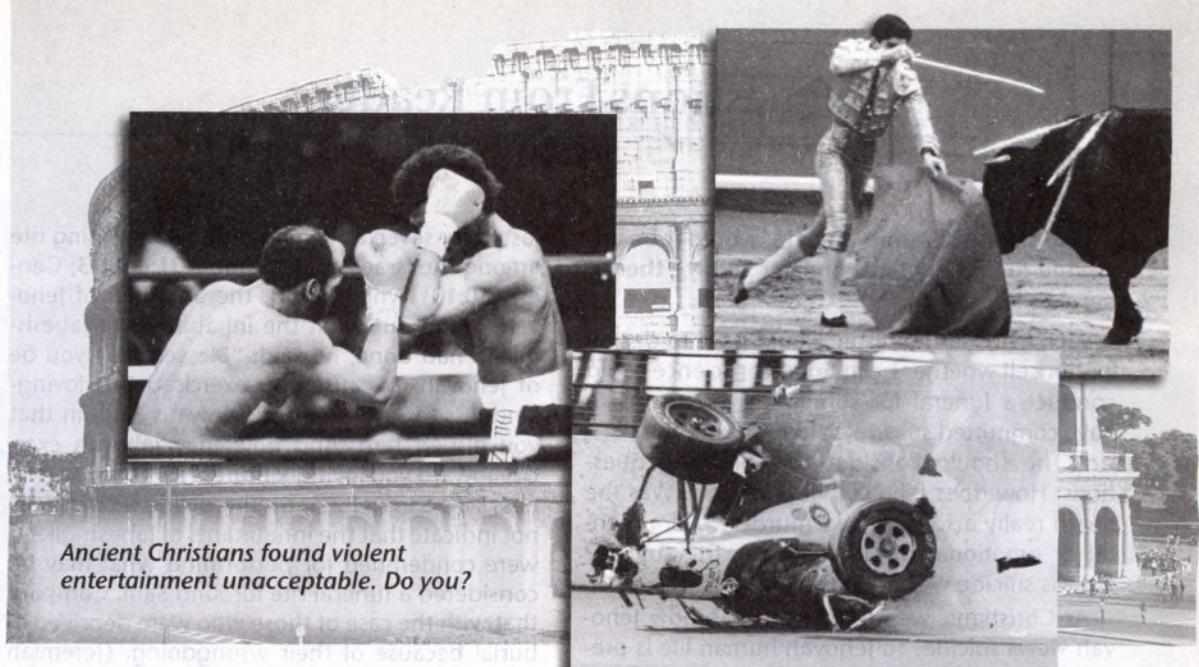
During the afternoons, different classes of gladiators armed in distinctive ways and trained in contrasting techniques fought one another. Some of those who dragged out the corpses were dressed as the god of the underworld.

### Effect on Spectators

The crowds' lust for action was insatiable, so reluctant fighters were egged on with whips and branding irons. Crowds would shout: "Why does he meet the sword in so cowardly a way? Why does he strike so feebly? Why doesn't he die [willingly]? Whip him to meet his wounds! Let them receive blow for blow, with chests bare and exposed to the stroke!" Roman statesman Seneca writes that during an intermission came the announcement: "A little throat-cutting in the meantime, so that there may still be something going on!"

Not surprisingly, Seneca admits that he returned home "more cruel and inhuman." That spectator's frank admission merits our serious thought. Might spectators at some of today's sports events be similarly affected, becoming "more cruel and inhuman"?

Some might have thought themselves fortunate to return at all. When one spectator made a witty remark at the expense of Domitian, that emperor had him dragged from his seat and thrown to the dogs. A lack of criminals for execution led Caligula to order that a



Ancient Christians found violent entertainment unacceptable. Do you?

section of the crowd be seized and thrown to the beasts. And when stage machinery did not work to his liking, Claudius commanded that the mechanics responsible fight in the arena.

Spectator fanaticism also led to disasters and riots. An amphitheater just north of Rome collapsed, and thousands reportedly died. A riot broke out during a spectacle in Pompeii in 59 C.E. Tacitus reports that clashes between the home crowd and rivals from a nearby town began with an exchange of insults, then stones, and finished with the use of the sword. Several were mutilated or injured, and many were killed.

#### A Clear Lesson

A recent exhibition (*Sangue e arena*, "Blood and Sand") in the Colosseum in Rome suggested modern parallels to the *munera*. Significantly, it showed video clips of bullfighting, professional boxing, horrible crashes in auto and motorcycle races, wild fighting by athletes in games, and riotous fighting by spectators. The presentation ended with an

aerial view of the Colosseum. What do you think visitors were to conclude? How many would learn the lesson?

Dogfights, cockfights, bullfights, and violent sports are common in some lands today. Lives are risked to thrill enormous crowds in motor sports. And think of daily television shows. Studies in one western land showed that the average TV-viewing child might witness 10,000 murders and 100,000 acts of aggression by the time he reaches the age of ten.

The pleasures of the spectacles were "not compatible with true religion and true obedience to the true God," said third-century writer Tertullian. He considered those who attended them to be accomplices of those doing the killing. What about today? One might ask, 'Am I entertained by the spectacle of blood, death, or violence on television or on the Internet?' It is worth remembering that Psalm 11:5 states: "Jehovah himself examines the righteous one as well as the wicked one, and anyone loving violence His soul certainly hates."

# Questions From Readers

If someone commits suicide, would it be advisable for a Christian minister to give the funeral talk?

Each Christian minister would have to decide for himself whether he in good conscience could conduct a funeral for someone who seems to have committed suicide. When making the decision, he should consider the following questions: How does Jehovah view suicide? Was the death really a self-inflicted murder? Did a mental or emotional disorder trigger the suicide? How is suicide viewed in the locality?

As Christians, we are interested in how Jehovah views suicide. To Jehovah human life is precious and sacred. (Genesis 9:5; Psalm 36:9) The intentional killing of oneself is self-murder, and it is therefore displeasing in God's eyes. (Exodus 20:13; 1 John 3:15) Does that fact preclude the giving of a funeral talk for a suicide victim?

Consider the case of King Saul of Israel. When he realized that he would not survive his final battle against the Philistines, rather than letting his enemy treat him abusively, "Saul took the sword and fell upon it." When the Philistines found his corpse, they fastened it on the wall of the city of Beth-shan. Upon finding out what the Philistines had done, the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead removed the corpse and burned it. Then they took his bones and buried them. They even

fasted for seven days, a traditional mourning rite among the Israelites. (1 Samuel 31:4, 8-13; Genesis 50:10) When David, the anointed of Jehovah, found out what the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead had done, he said: "Blessed may you be of Jehovah, because you exercised this loving-kindness toward your lord, toward Saul, in that you buried him. And now may Jehovah exercise toward you loving-kindness and trustworthiness." (2 Samuel 2:5, 6) The divine record does not indicate that the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead were condemned for performing what may be considered a funeral rite for King Saul. Compare that with the case of those who were deprived of burial because of their wrongdoing. (Jeremiah 25:32, 33) A Christian minister may consider the account about Saul in deciding whether he can give a funeral talk for a suicide victim.

The minister may also want to consider the purpose of a funeral service. Unlike people who believe in the immortality of the soul, Jehovah's Witnesses do not perform funerals with the erroneous idea of sending the deceased off to another world. Rather than to benefit the deceased, the main purpose of having a memorial service is to comfort the bereaved and to give a witness concerning the condition of the dead to those who attend. (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10; 2 Corinthians 1:3-5) Another important reason for having a funeral is to help all in attendance to reflect on the transitoriness of life. (Ecclesiastes 7:2) Will these purposes be served by performing the memorial service for the suicide victim?

Granted, some may feel that the person took his life intentionally, fully aware that he was sinning against Jehovah. But is there always a way to substantiate such a feeling? Could it have been a spur-of-the-moment act? Some who attempt suicide feel regret and do not go through with it. A person cannot after death repent for what he has done.

Another important factor is that of mental and emotional disorders that are involved in many

## IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

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Brings Rich Rewards

suicides. These can really be called suicide victims. According to some statistics, 90 percent of those who commit suicide have some kind of mental, emotional, or addictive problem. Will Jehovah forgive the self-murder committed by people in such a mental state? We are not in a position to judge whether the deceased committed an unforgivable sin in the eyes of Jehovah. A Christian minister may take into account the circumstances and medical history of the deceased when he considers whether to perform a funeral service for the suicide victim.

There is one more aspect to consider: How do people in the community view suicide and the death of the person? This is especially of concern to the elders, who are interested in the reputa-

tion of the local congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses. Depending on the general attitude toward suicide in the locality, and particularly toward the case involved, the elders may prefer not to sponsor such a funeral publicly or to have it in the Kingdom Hall.

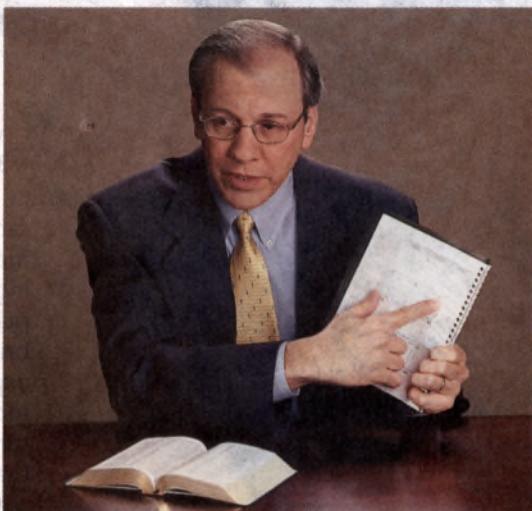
Still, if a Christian minister is asked to preside at the funeral, he may feel that on a private basis, he can do so. If he decides to do so, he should be discreet in not making any firm statements about whether a resurrection might be possible. Any future prospect for the dead is in the hands of Jehovah, and no one is in a position to say whether the deceased will be resurrected or not. The minister can concentrate on the Bible truths about death and offer comfort for the bereaved.

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## A Time to Reveal a Confidential Matter

Keeping certain matters confidential can mean the difference between peace and contention. But is there a time to reveal a confidential matter? Note what the prophet Amos says about his God: "Jehovah will not do a thing unless he has revealed his confidential matter to his servants the prophets." (Amos 3:7) From these words, we can glean something concerning confidentiality. Jehovah may keep certain matters confidential for a period of time and eventually reveal them to some individuals. How can we imitate Jehovah in this regard?

At times, the appointed shepherds in the Christian congregation find it beneficial to keep a certain matter undisclosed. (Acts 20:28) For instance, with the benefit of the con-



gregation in mind, they may decide to keep the details of some arrangements or changes in congregation responsibilities confidential until a specific time.

In such a case, however, it is important to make clear to those who are involved if, when, and in what manner the matter is to be revealed. Knowing when a matter will be publicly disclosed may help them to maintain confidentiality.—Proverbs 25:9.



# "You Are an Excellent Woman"

These words of praise were addressed to a young Moabitess. She was a widow named Ruth, the daughter-in-law of an Israelite woman, Naomi. Living in Israel some 3000 years ago, when the judges ruled, Ruth had acquired a name for excellence. (Ruth 3:11) How did she come by this reputation?

Who can benefit from her example?

Not one to eat "the bread of laziness," Ruth worked long and hard as a gleaner in the fields, her diligence being such that it earned her commendation. Even when an offer was made to ease her work load, she continued to toil, doing so beyond the call of duty. Outstandingly, she fitted the Bible's description of a praiseworthy, capable, industrious wife.—Proverbs 31:10-31; Ruth 2:7, 15-17.

It was Ruth's spiritual qualities—her humble, self-sacrificing attitude and her loyal love—that were the major factors in the public esteem she enjoyed. Leaving her parents and her native land, with little prospect of finding the security that marriage could bring, she stuck with Naomi. At the same time, Ruth expressed the desire to serve Jehovah, the God of her mother-in-law. In emphasizing her worth, the Scriptural account says that she was "better to [Naomi] than seven sons."—Ruth 1:16, 17; 2:11, 12; 4:15.

Meritorious though Ruth's record of excellence was among her human associates, of greater significance was God's positive appraisal of her qualities and his rewarding her with the privilege of becoming an ancestress of Jesus Christ. (Matthew 1:5; 1 Peter 3:4) What a fine example Ruth is not only for Christian women but for all who profess to worship Jehovah!