

SEPTEMBER 1, 2009

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



DOES GOD PROMISE
WEALTH?

THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE, *The Watchtower*, is to honor Jehovah God, the Supreme Ruler of the universe. Just as watchtowers in ancient times enabled a person to observe developments from afar, so this magazine shows us the significance of world events in the light of Bible prophecies. It comforts people with the good news that God's Kingdom, which is a real government in heaven, will soon bring an end to all wickedness and transform the earth into a paradise. It promotes faith in Jesus Christ, who died so that we might gain everlasting life and who is now ruling as King of God's Kingdom. This magazine has been published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879 and is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

This publication is not for sale. It is provided as part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations. Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the modern-language New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References.

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Does God Promise You Riches?

'God wants you to be rich—cars in the garage, a prosperous business. Just believe in him, open your wallet, and give him everything you can.'

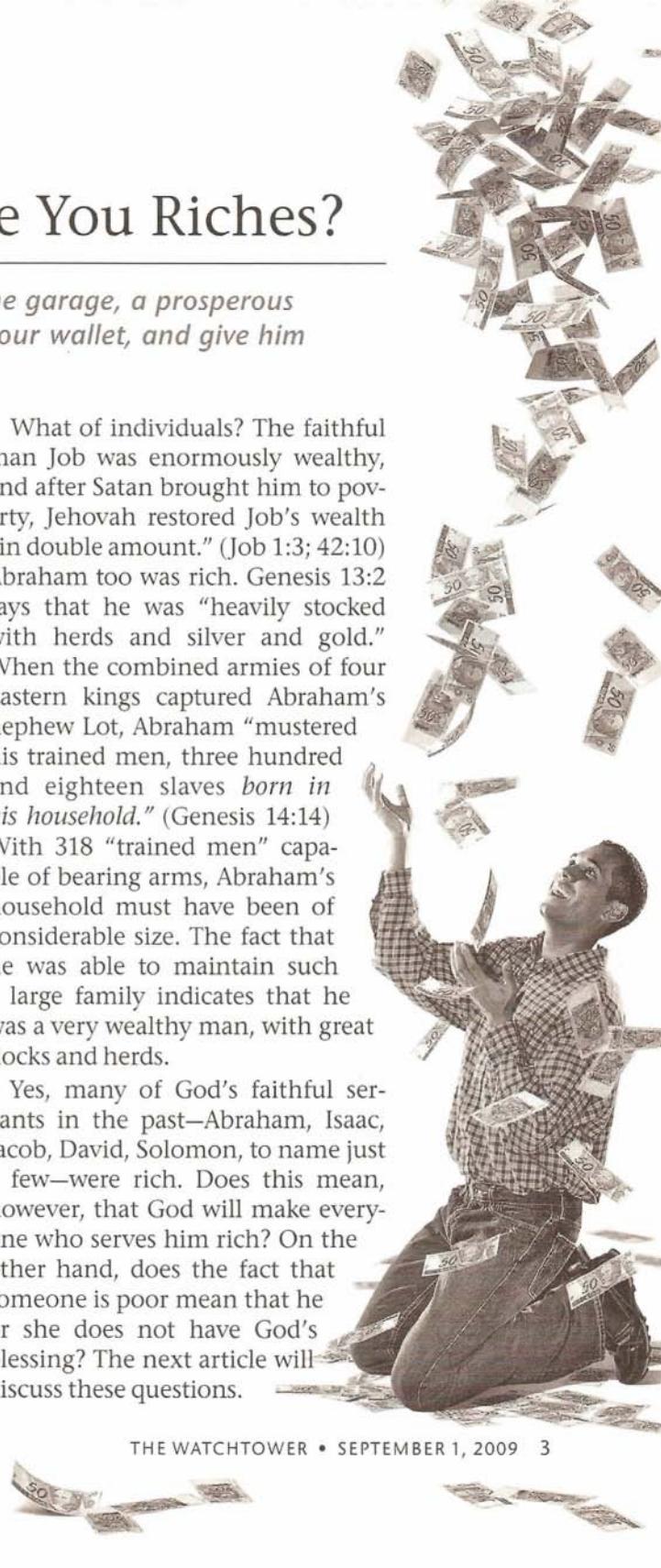
SUCH is the message promoted by certain religious groups in Brazil, according to a newspaper printed there. It is a message that many take to heart. Regarding a poll taken in the United States of people who claim to be Christians, *Time* magazine reports: "A full 61% believed that God wants people to be prosperous. And 31% . . . agreed that if you give your money to God, God will bless you with more money."

Ideologies of this sort, often called prosperity theology, proliferate especially in Latin-American countries, such as Brazil, and people flock to churches that promise material blessings from God. But does God really promise riches to those who serve him? Were all of God's servants in the past wealthy?

It is true that in the Hebrew Scriptures, we often find God's blessing associated with material prosperity. For example, at Deuteronomy 8: 18, we read: "You must remember Jehovah your God, because he is the giver of power to you to make wealth." This assured the Israelites that if they were obedient to God, he would make them a prosperous nation.

What of individuals? The faithful man Job was enormously wealthy, and after Satan brought him to poverty, Jehovah restored Job's wealth "in double amount." (Job 1:3; 42:10) Abraham too was rich. Genesis 13:2 says that he was "heavily stocked with herds and silver and gold." When the combined armies of four Eastern kings captured Abraham's nephew Lot, Abraham "mustered his trained men, three hundred and eighteen slaves *born in his household*." (Genesis 14:14) With 318 "trained men" capable of bearing arms, Abraham's household must have been of considerable size. The fact that he was able to maintain such a large family indicates that he was a very wealthy man, with great flocks and herds.

Yes, many of God's faithful servants in the past—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Solomon, to name just a few—were rich. Does this mean, however, that God will make everyone who serves him rich? On the other hand, does the fact that someone is poor mean that he or she does not have God's blessing? The next article will discuss these questions.



Riches That Come From God

IF YOU are faithful to God, will he bless you with riches? Perhaps, but probably not with the sort of riches you expect. Consider Mary, the mother of Jesus. The angel Gabriel appeared to her and said that she was "highly favored" by God and that she would give birth to the Son of God. (Luke 1: 28, 30-32) Yet, she was not wealthy. When Mary offered a sacrifice after Jesus' birth, she presented "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons," which was the customary offering that poor people made to Jehovah. —Luke 2:24; Leviticus 12:8.

Did the fact that Mary was poor mean that she did not have God's blessing? On the contrary, when she went to visit Elizabeth, her relative, "Elizabeth was filled with holy spirit, and she called out with a loud cry and said: 'Blessed are you [Mary] among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!'" (Luke 1:41, 42) Mary was privileged to become the earthly mother of God's beloved Son.

Jesus himself was not a rich man. Not only was he born and brought up in humble surroundings but he was poor throughout his life on earth. He once told a man who was seeking to be a disciple: "Foxes have dens and birds of heaven have roosts, but the Son of man has nowhere to lay down his head." (Luke 9:57, 58) Nevertheless, what Jesus Christ did in coming to the earth made it possible for his disciples to come into possession of great riches. The apostle Paul wrote: "He became poor for your sakes, that you might become rich through his poverty." (2 Corinthians 8:9) What kind of riches did Jesus give his disciples? And what about today?

What Kind of Riches?

Material wealth is often an obstacle to faith, since a rich person may trust in his money rather than in God. Jesus said: "How difficult a thing it will be for those with money to enter into the kingdom of



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Though materially poor, Jesus' earthly family was richly blessed by God

God!" (Mark 10:23) Evidently, then, the riches Jesus offered his followers were not material ones.

In fact, the majority of Christians in the first century were of limited means. When a man lame from birth asked for money, Peter replied: "Silver and gold I do not possess, but what I do have is what I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, walk!" —Acts 3:6.

The words of the disciple James also indicate that the Christian congregation was basically composed of poor people. He wrote: "Listen, my beloved brothers. God chose the ones who are poor respecting the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he promised to those who love him, did he not?" (James 2:5) Furthermore, the apostle Paul also said that not many "wise in a fleshly way" or "powerful" or "of noble birth" were called to become part of

the Christian congregation.—1 Corinthians 1:26.

If the riches that Jesus gave his followers were not material ones, what kind of riches did he give them? In a letter that Jesus sent to the congregation in Smyrna, he said: "I know your tribulation and poverty—but you are rich." (Revelation 2:8, 9) The Christians at Smyrna, though poor, possessed riches far more valuable than silver or gold. They were rich because of their faith and integrity to God. Faith of itself is precious because it "is not a possession of all people." (2 Thessalonians 3:2) Those not having faith are actually poor in God's eyes.—Revelation 3:17, 18.

Riches That Result From Faith

In what ways, though, is faith valuable? Those with faith in God benefit from "the riches of his kindness and forbearance and

long-suffering." (Romans 2:4) They also enjoy "forgiveness of [their] trespasses" because of their faith in Jesus' ransom sacrifice. (Ephesians 1:7) Furthermore, theirs is the wisdom that "the word of the Christ" brings to those who have faith. (Colossians 3:16) As they pray to God in faith, "the peace of God that excels all thought" guards their hearts and minds, bringing them contentment and happiness.—Philippians 4:7.

In addition to all these benefits, those who put faith in God through his Son, Jesus Christ, have the marvelous prospect of life everlasting. Well-known are the words of Jesus Christ: "God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone *exercising faith* in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) That precious prospect is strengthened when one gains accurate knowledge of the Father and the Son, for Jesus also said: "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ."—John 17:3.

While God's blessings are basically of a spiritual kind, there are emotional and physical benefits as well. Take, for example, Dalídio in Brazil. Before coming to an accurate knowledge of God's purpose, he had a drinking problem. This had a very destructive effect on his family relationships. In addition, his financial situation was precarious. Then he began to study the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses and experienced a remarkable transformation.

Dalídio's newfound knowledge led him to abandon his harmful habits. He made so much spiritual progress that he said, "I used to go from bar to bar; now I go from house to house." He had become a full-time minister of God's Word. Such a change im-

proved not only his health but also his financial situation. Dalídio said, "The money that I used to spend on drink, I now use to help others in need or to buy things that I need." He has also made many real friends through his association with people who have a similar spiritual outlook. Dalídio now enjoys peace of mind and contentment beyond anything he could have imagined before coming to know God.

For another example of the life-enriching experiences that come to those who develop faith in Jehovah God, consider Renato.

Faith in God results in peace, contentment, and happiness

When you see his happy, smiling face today, it is difficult to believe that he has had every reason to feel that he had been given a raw deal in life. When he was a newborn baby, he was abandoned by his mother. He was left in a bag under a bench, badly scratched and bruised and with his umbilical cord still attached. Two women walked by and saw the bag under the bench moving. They at first thought that someone had left a kitten there. When they discovered that it was a newborn baby, they quickly took him to a nearby hospital for treatment.

One of the women was one of Jehovah's Witnesses, and she told Rita, another Witness, about the baby. Rita had suffered a number of stillbirths, and she had just one daughter. She very much wanted a son, so she decided to adopt Renato.

Rita told Renato at an early age that she was not his real mother. But she cared for



him with love and affection and sought to instill spiritual values in him. As he grew older, he began to take an interest in the Bible. His appreciation for the almost unbelievable way that he had been saved also grew. His eyes fill with tears every time he reads the psalmist David's words: "In case my own father and my own mother did leave me, even Jehovah himself would take me up."—Psalm 27:10.

As an expression of his appreciation for all that Jehovah has done for him, Renato was baptized in 2002 and became a full-time Christian minister the following year. He still does not know the identity of his biological father and mother and probably never will. However, Renato feels that one of the most precious gifts that he has received is coming to know and to have faith in Jehovah as his loving and caring Father.

Perhaps you long to have a close and loving relationship with God, which can truly

enrich your life. The opportunity to have such a relationship with Jehovah God and his Son, Jesus Christ, is open to all—rich and poor. It may not bring material wealth, but it will result in an inner peace and contentment that all the money in the world cannot buy. True indeed are the words found at Proverbs 10:22: "The blessing of Jehovah—that is what makes rich, and he adds no pain with it."

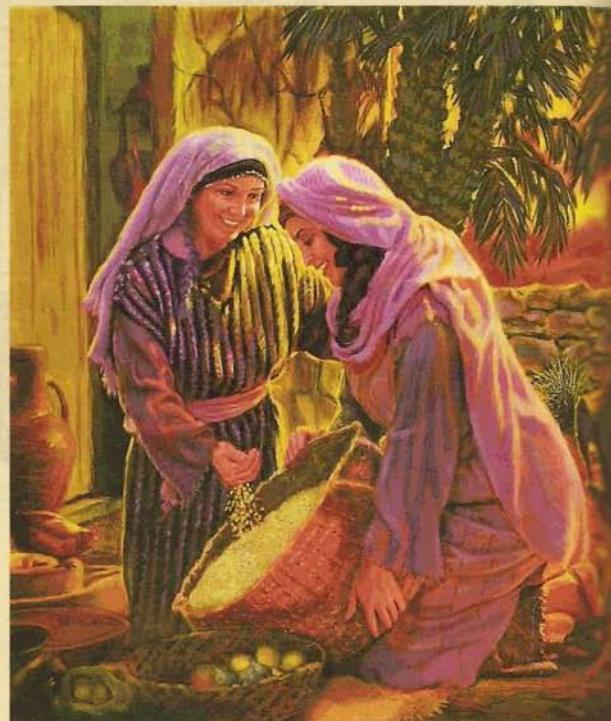
Jehovah God is very much interested in people who come to him: "O if only you would actually pay attention to my commandments! Then your peace would become just like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea." (Isaiah 48:18) And he promises that those who come to him with the right motive and attitude will be richly rewarded: "The result of humility and the fear of Jehovah is riches and glory and life."—Proverbs 22:4.

Is Poverty a Sign of God's Disapproval?

GOD told the ancient Israelites: "No one should come to be poor among you." This was because in the Law that he gave them, there were provisions to care for the poor and even for the releasing of debts. (Deuteronomy 15:1-4, 7-10) Therefore, there should have been no poor people among the Israelites, for Jehovah promised to bless them. However, that blessing was dependent on obeying the Law, which the Israelites failed to do.

This did not mean, however, that those who had little in a material way were necessarily disapproved by God, any more than those who had plenty were necessarily blessed by God. Many of God's faithful servants were materially poor. The prophet Amos was a humble sheep raiser and seasonal laborer. (Amos 1:1; 7:14) In the days of Elijah the prophet, when a famine came upon Israel, Elijah had to depend on the hospitality of a poor widow, whose meager supply of flour and oil were miraculously sustained during the famine. Neither Elijah nor the widow became rich; Jehovah provided for just their basic needs.—1 Kings 17:8-16.

Unforeseen occurrences might plunge people into poverty. Accidents and sickness could temporarily or permanently hinder a person from working. And death could leave behind orphans and widows. Even such adverse circumstances are no indication of God's disapproval. The account of Naomi and Ruth is a heartwarming example of Jehovah's loving care for the needy.



Though poor and destitute, Naomi and Ruth were blessed and lovingly cared for by God

Though Naomi and Ruth were left destitute by the death of their husbands, Jehovah God blessed them and made provision to care for their needs.—Ruth 1:1-6; 2:2-12; 4:13-17.

Clearly, poverty is not an evidence of God's disapproval. Those who are faithful to Jehovah God can have confidence in King David's words: "A young man I used to be, I have also grown old, and yet I have not seen anyone righteous left entirely, nor his offspring looking for bread."—Psalm 37:25.

Is Money the Source of True Happiness?

SONIA was born in Spain. As a child, she attended the meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses with her mother. But when she grew up, she moved to London, England, and eventually started working in the finance industry as a bond broker.

Sonia loved her job. She was making a lot of money and dealing in huge sums for her clients. It was exciting, and she was successful. Sonia regularly worked 18 hours a day, and some nights she got only two or three hours of sleep. Her job was her life. Then, suddenly, everything came crashing down. Sonia suffered a severe stroke—perhaps the result of her stressful lifestyle. She was only 30 years of age.

Sonia was paralyzed on one side of her body, and the doctors were not sure that she would ever regain her speech. Her mother immediately traveled to England to care for

her. As Sonia began to walk again, her mother told her, "I'm going to the congregation meetings, and you'll have to come with me because I can't leave you on your own." Sonia agreed to go along. What was the result?

"Everything I heard rang true. It was wonderful," Sonia recalls. "I was happy to accept a Bible study with one of the many who greeted me the first time I went to the Kingdom Hall. My former acquaintances had stopped visiting me, but my new friends were warm and caring."

Gradually, Sonia's speech returned, and she made rapid spiritual progress as well. In less than a year, she was baptized. Many of her new friends were in the full-time Christian ministry, and she could see how happy they were. 'I want to be like that too,' Sonia thought. 'I want to give Jehovah God my best!' Now Sonia serves full-time in the ministry.

What has Sonia learned from her experience? "Although I was earning a lot of money, the stress and insecurity on the job made me worried and unhappy. I've come to realize that the most important thing in life is having a good relationship with my heavenly Father, Jehovah. Now I'm truly happy."

"The love of money is a root of all sorts of injurious things," wrote the apostle Paul. "By reaching out for this love some have been led astray from the faith and have stabbed themselves all over with many pains." (1 Timothy 6:10) Sonia can vouch for the truthfulness of these words.



Happy and Hopeful Despite Poverty

SERVING as a missionary in a developing country, I never get used to seeing poverty and hopelessness. I want to see immediate relief from suffering for everyone. But I know that only God's Kingdom will solve these problems. Yet, time and again I have seen that people who follow God's Word find happiness despite dire circumstances. Sabina is one of them.

Years ago, Sabina, holding her two baby daughters in her arms, watched her husband board an old bus to search for a better-paying job in another country. As she awaited his return, months turned into years, but he never came home. Ever since he left, Sabina has fought a daily battle to provide for herself and her daughters, Milena and Ghelian.

I first met Sabina one afternoon while she was patiently attending to demanding customers at her sister's store. I could see in Sabina's weary eyes that she had been working hard all day. I offered to study the Bible with her and her daughters. "I would love to," she said, "but I am just too busy. However, I would like my girls to study with you." I agreed. As the girls' study progressed, I got to know Sabina, and I came to understand her plight.



Sabina's day begins at 4:00 a.m. While her daughters sleep in their one-room dwelling, Sabina lights the flame under a large, well-used aluminum pot. She cooks the meat filling for the empanadas that she sells to earn her family's livelihood. The night before, Sabina prepared the dough for these savory meat pies.

Carefully, Sabina loads a borrowed pushcart with all the equipment needed for the day—a sunshade, a one-burner stove, a propane-gas bottle, a table, stools, pots, and oil, along with the meat and dough and several gallons of homemade fruit drink.

At 6:00 a.m., Sabina and her two daughters are ready to go. They shut and padlock the door behind them. Their faces are expressionless; no one talks or laughs. All their energy is focused on the task at hand. Many mornings, from the window of our missionary home, I have watched scenes like this unfold. Yes, Sabina is just one of an army of women who leave their homes before dawn to sell food and drink on the streets of Bolivia.

By 6:30 a.m., as the sun peeks over the mountain, Sabina and her girls arrive at their corner. Without a word, they unload the cart and set up their mobile kitchen. The first empanada hits the boiling oil and sizzles. A delicious aroma begins to permeate the cool morning air, quickly drawing hungry patrons.

"How many?" Sabina asks the first customer. Without looking up, a sleepy-eyed man raises two fingers, and she serves him two golden-brown, piping hot empanadas. She then collects the meager payment. This transaction will be repeated hundreds of times throughout the day. When they sell the last empanada, they pack up and head home. Although Sabina's legs ache from the morning's work, she goes on to her second job at her sister's store.

When I arrived at the store for her daughters' first Bible study, two small benches were already set up in a corner. From the beginning, Milena and Ghelian, then 9 and 7 years old, looked forward excitedly to each lesson and prepared well. Gradually, these shy girls opened up and allowed me to get close to them. Seeing this warmed Sabina's heart. Soon she decided that despite her grueling schedule, she too would study the Bible with me.

As Sabina's knowledge increased, so did her love for Jehovah God. She began to experience something foreign to her—happiness! The once tired and sad-faced street merchant now looked different. Her posture was erect, her head was up, and her eyes were bright. "Sabina is smiling all the time," noted her sister. "She never used to." Others likewise saw a big change in Sabina and her daughters. The spiritual void she had felt for so long was being filled.

Sabina enjoyed her study, but her demanding routine held her back from attending Christian meetings. Finally, she accepted

my invitation to visit the Kingdom Hall. After that, she never stopped coming. In the congregation, Sabina found true friends. She also experienced that Jehovah really does provide for those who love him and who make sacrifices to serve him.—Luke 12:22-24; 1 Timothy 6:8.

Sabina loved what she was learning, and she desired to share it with others. But she said, "I tremble whenever I think about preaching publicly." She thought, 'How will I, a timid, poorly educated woman, ever be able to teach someone else?' Still, the kindness shown to her and the wonderful improvement she had experienced in her own life motivated her to take this important step. She also realized that her daughters looked to her as an example. So she started telling others the good news. Her daughters enthusiastically joined her.

Today, Sabina is no longer just another poor woman toiling day after joyless day. Her economic status has not changed much. What has changed is her outlook on life. Now, as a baptized Christian, she shares with others the good news of God's Kingdom—the only permanent solution to the world's poverty and despair.—Matthew 6:10.

It is 5:00 a.m., and Sabina is ready once again to leave her one-room dwelling. But this morning she is not selling empanadas. She is meeting a group of fellow Christians to do street witnessing. Volunteering some of her time each week to help others has brought further happiness to her life. She locks the door and, with a broad smile on her face, turns onto the street. Instead of pushing a cart, she carries a large purse. Tucked inside are her Bible and the Bible literature that she will use to spread hope to others. Smiling confidently, Sabina says, "I never dreamed I would be able to speak to others about the Bible." She adds, "I love it!"

Adam AND Eve

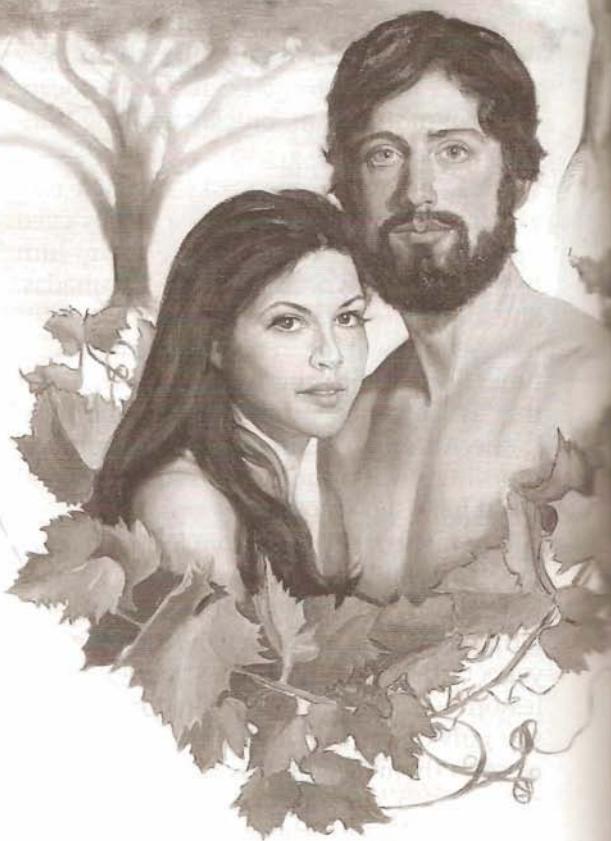
WERE THEY REAL PEOPLE?

TO MANY people, the Genesis account of Adam and Eve is merely a colorful story. "Mainstream Christians have long considered Genesis stories such as Adam and Eve to be allegories," states a letter to the editor of *Time*. Many Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish scholars agree. They claim that much of Genesis simply does not agree with history or science.

What do you think? Do you believe that Adam and Eve were real people? Is there any evidence to indicate that they really lived? On the other hand, what are the implications of dismissing the Genesis account as mere myth?

The Genesis Account —Scientifically Credible?

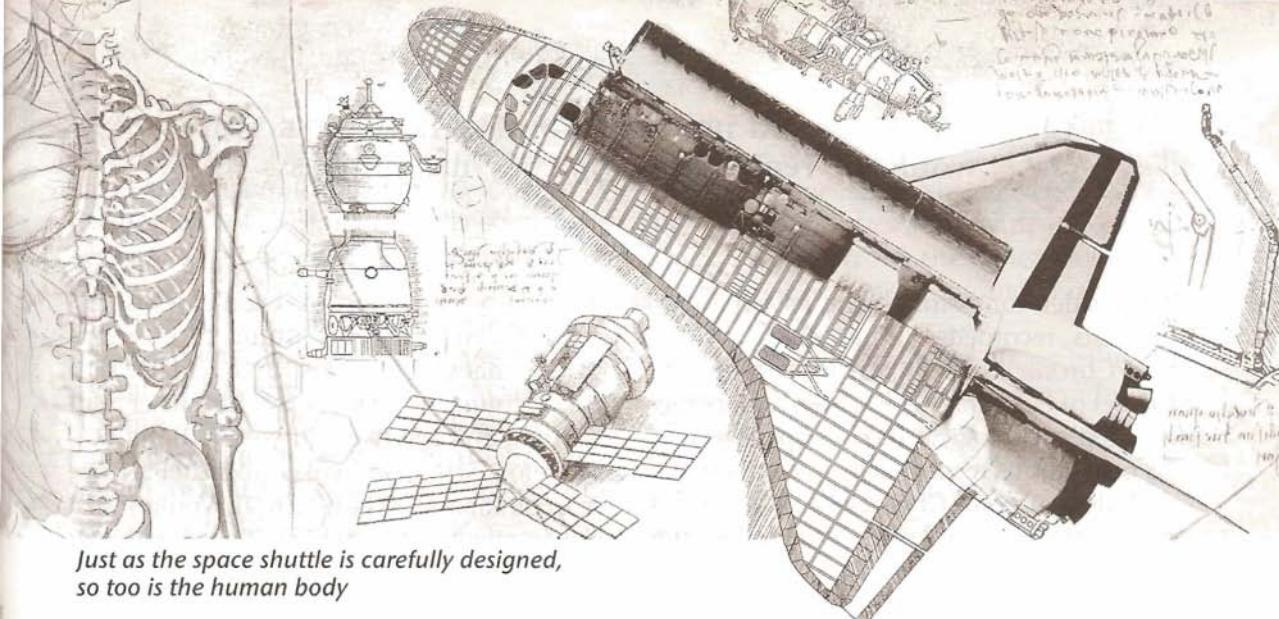
First, let us review the key elements in the account of the creation of the first man. Regarding Adam, the Bible says: "Jehovah God proceeded to form the man out of dust from the ground and to blow into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man came to



be a living soul." (Genesis 2:7) Is this statement scientifically credible?

The book *Nanomedicine* states that the human body is made up of 41 chemical elements. These basic elements—carbon, iron, oxygen, and others—are all present in the "dust" of the earth. Thus, as Genesis states, humans truly are formed "out of dust from the ground."

How did those lifeless building blocks come together to form a living human? To illustrate the enormity of the challenge, consider the NASA space shuttle, one of the most complex machines ever devised. This



*Just as the space shuttle is carefully designed,
so too is the human body*

technological marvel contains a staggering 2.5 million parts. It took teams of engineers years to design and put it together. Now consider the human body. It is made up of some 7 octillion atoms, 100 trillion cells, dozens of organs, and at least 9 major organ systems.* How did this biological machine of mind-boggling complexity and superb structure come to be? By blind chance or by intelligent design?

Moreover, what makes humans live? Where does the spark of life come from? Scientists confess that they do not know. In fact, they cannot even agree on an acceptable definition of life. To those who accept the idea of a Creator, the conclusion is obvious. The Source, of course, is God.[†]

What of the description in Genesis that Eve was fashioned from Adam's rib? (Genesis 2:21-23) Before dismissing the account as myth or fantasy, consider the following

* In the U.S. system of numeration, these figures are 7 followed by 27 zeros and 100 followed by 12 zeros respectively.

† For further information, see the books *Is There a Creator Who Cares About You?* and *Life—How Did It Get Here? By Evolution or by Creation?* both published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

facts: In January 2008, scientists in California, U.S.A., produced the world's first mature cloned human embryos from adult skin cells. In fact, using similar techniques, scientists have cloned at least 20 animals. The most famous of these, Dolly the sheep, was cloned in 1996 from the mammary gland of an adult sheep.*

What will come of such experiments remains to be seen. But the point is this: If humans can use biological material from one organism to produce another one of its kind, could not the almighty Creator fashion a human from existing biological material of another human? Interestingly, surgeons routinely use the rib bone in reconstructive surgery because of its ability to regrow and replace itself.

The Bible's Internal Evidence

Some people are surprised to learn that Adam and Eve are mentioned repeatedly throughout the Bible. What light do these references shed on the historicity of the Genesis account?

* These scientists, of course, are not creating life. Instead, they work with material from existing living cells.

Clearly, if Adam did not exist, Christ's ransom sacrifice would be rendered completely meaningless

Consider, for example, the Jewish ancestral lists recorded in the Bible book of First Chronicles chapters 1 to 9 and in the Gospel of Luke chapter 3. These remarkably detailed genealogical records span 48 and 75 generations respectively. Luke traces the genealogy of Jesus Christ, while Chronicles records the royal and priestly ancestral lines for the nation of Israel. Both lists include the names of such well-known figures as Solomon, David, Jacob, Isaac, Abraham, Noah, and finally Adam. All the names in the two lists represent *real* people, and Adam was the original *real* person on each list.

In addition, again and again the Bible presents Adam and Eve as real human beings, not as mythical characters. Here are some examples:

- “[God] made out of one man every nation of men.”—ACTS 17:26.
- “Through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, and thus . . . death ruled as king from Adam down to Moses.”—ROMANS 5:12, 14.
- “The first man Adam became a living soul.”
—1 CORINTHIANS 15:45.
- “Adam was formed first, then Eve.”
—1 TIMOTHY 2:13.
- “The seventh one in line from Adam, Enoch, prophesied also regarding [the wicked].”—JUDE 14.

More important, Jesus Christ, the most credible witness in the Bible, acknowledged the existence of Adam and Eve. When chal-

lenged on the subject of divorce, Jesus answered: “From the beginning of creation ‘[God] made them male and female. On this account a man will leave his father and mother, and the two will be one flesh’ . . . Therefore what God yoked together let no man put apart.” (Mark 10:6-9) Would Jesus use an allegory to establish a binding legal precedent? No! Jesus quoted Genesis as fact.

Summing up the Scriptural evidence, *The New Bible Dictionary* concludes: “The New Testament confirms the historicity of the account given in the early chapters of Genesis.”

The Domino Effect

Many sincere churchgoers think that belief in Adam and Eve is not essential to being a good Christian. On the surface, this might appear to be the case. But let us follow this line of reasoning and see where it would lead us.

Consider, for example, a Bible doctrine dear to the heart of most churchgoers—the ransom. According to this teaching, Jesus Christ gave his perfect human life as a ransom to save people from their sins. (Matthew 20:28; John 3:16) As we know, a ransom is a payment of a corresponding value to redeem or buy back something lost or forfeited. That is why the Bible describes Jesus as “a corresponding ransom.” (1 Timothy 2:6) Corresponding to what, we might ask? The Bible answers: “Just as in Adam all are dying, so also in the Christ all will be made alive.” (1 Corinthians 15:22) The perfect life that Jesus sacrificed to redeem obe-

dient mankind corresponds to the perfect life that Adam lost as a result of the original sin in Eden. (Romans 5:12) Clearly, if Adam did not exist, Christ's ransom sacrifice would be rendered completely meaningless.

Rejecting or trivializing the Genesis account about Adam and Eve creates a domino effect that undermines nearly every major teaching in the Bible!* Such a way of thinking leads to a host of unanswered questions and a faith with nothing to stand on.—Hebrews 11:1.

Life—Meaningful or Futile?

Finally, we come to this fundamental question: Does the rejection of the Genesis account satisfy the human need for meaning and purpose in life? In the view of Richard Dawkins, a leading evolutionist and atheist, the universe has “no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference.” What an utterly bleak outlook, totally contrary to human nature!

In complete contrast, the Bible provides satisfying answers to life’s most pressing questions: Where do we come from? What is the purpose of life? Why is there so much evil and suffering in the world? Will wickedness ever end? And so on. In addition, faith in Christ’s ransom holds out the hope of everlasting life in Paradise conditions, like those in Eden, where God placed the first humans, Adam and Eve. (Psalm 37:29; Revelation 21:3-5) What a truly wonderful prospect!#

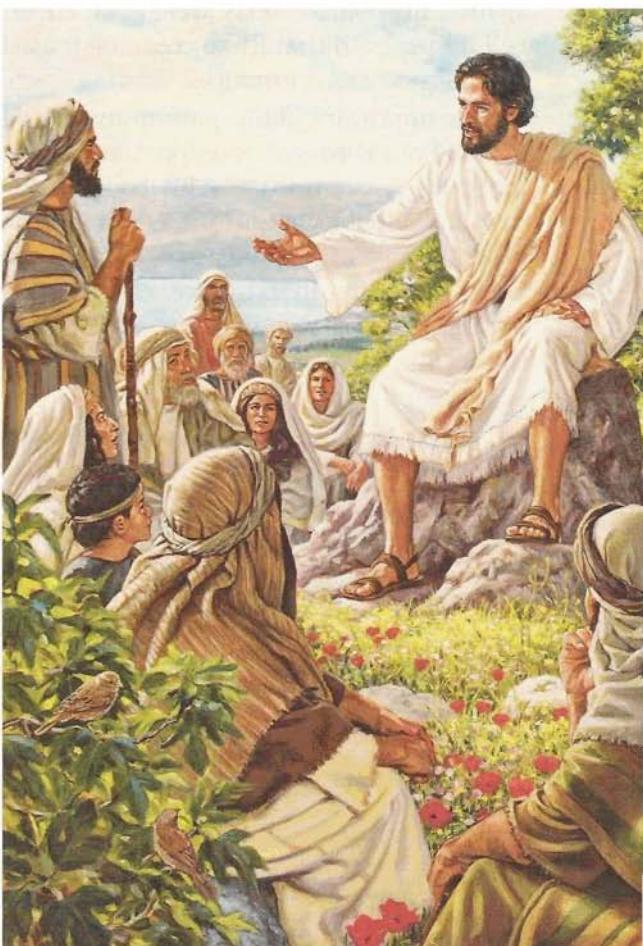
* These include teachings about God’s sovereignty, human integrity, good and evil, free will, the condition of the dead, marriage, the promised Messiah, a paradise earth, God’s Kingdom, and many others.

For further details, see the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* chapter 3, “What Is God’s Purpose for the Earth?,” and chapter 5, “The Ransom—God’s Greatest Gift,” published by Jehovah’s Witnesses.

While the Adam and Eve account may not agree with the theory of evolution, it matches what is known to science. Moreover, it harmonizes fully with the rest of God’s inspired Word, the Bible, which provides satisfying meaning and purpose to life.

So why not examine the Bible further for yourself? Jehovah’s Witnesses stand ready and willing to help you.

Jesus acknowledged Adam and Eve’s existence



RECOVERING A Bible Treasure

CENTURIES ago, writing materials were not as easily available as they are today. Sheets of parchment and other materials were recycled by scraping or washing off the ink of texts that were no longer needed. The result is known as a palimpsest, a word derived from the Greek, meaning "scraped again." Even Bible texts were scraped off vellum pages so that these could be reused to record other information.

One important Bible palimpsest is the Codex Ephraemi Syri rescriptus, rescriptus meaning "written over." This codex is extremely valuable because it is one of the oldest copies of portions of the Christian Greek Scriptures in existence. As such, it is among the best resources for establishing the accuracy of this part of God's Word.

The Scriptural text that had originally appeared on this fifth-century codex had been removed in the 12th century C.E. and overwritten with a Greek translation of 38 sermons of the Syrian scholar Ephraem. At the end of the 17th century, experts first noted the underlying Bible text. Over the next few years, some progress was made in extracting the original writings from the manuscript. Deciphering all of it, however, proved exceedingly difficult because of the faint and indistinct condition of the erased ink, the tattered state of many of the leaves, and the overlapping of the two texts. Chemicals were applied to the manuscript in an effort to highlight and read the Bible text—without much success. Most scholars thus concluded that the erased material as a whole was beyond recovery.



Codex Ephraemi Syri rescriptus, an important palimpsest deciphered by Tischendorf (1815-1874)

ORIGINAL SCRIPTURAL TEXT

OVERWRITTEN TEXT OF
GREEK SERMON

In the early 1840's, Konstantin von Tischendorf, a gifted German linguist, applied himself to studying the codex. Tischendorf spent two years deciphering the manuscript. What enabled him to succeed when others had failed?

Tischendorf possessed a thorough understanding of Greek uncial script—consisting of large, separated capital letters.* Endowed with good eyesight, he found that by simply holding the parchment up to the light, he was able to make out the original text. For similar tasks today, scholars use optical aids, including infrared, ultraviolet, and polarized light.

Tischendorf published what he recovered or deciphered of the Codex Ephraemi in 1843 and 1845. This won him a reputation as a leader in Greek paleography.

The Codex Ephraemi is about 12 inches by 9 inches, and it is the earliest example of

* Tischendorf was best known for the discovery, in St. Catherine's Monastery at the foot of Mount Sinai, of a Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures—among the oldest ever found. That manuscript is known as the Codex Sinaiticus.

manuscripts with just one column of writing per page. Of the surviving 209 leaves, 145 are of portions of all books of the Christian Greek Scriptures except 2 Thessalonians and 2 John. The remaining leaves bear a Greek translation of parts of the Hebrew Scriptures.

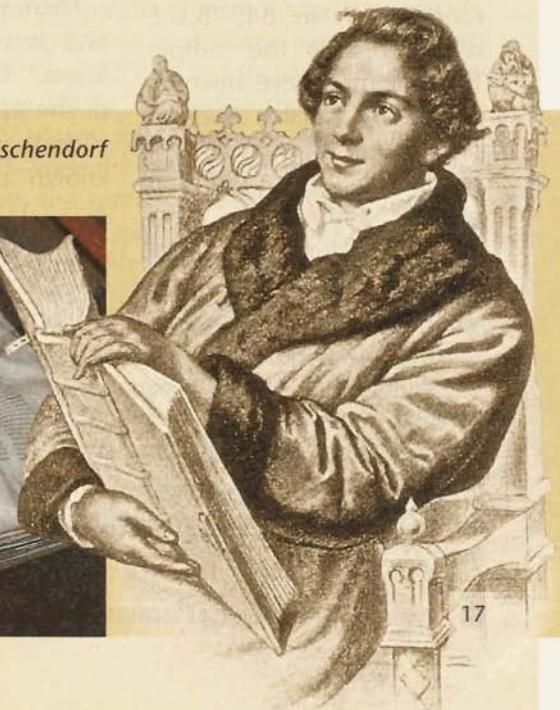
Today, this codex is kept in the National Library at Paris, France. Where the manuscript originated is unknown, although Tischendorf thought that it came from Egypt. Scholars count the Codex Ephraemi as one of a group of four important uncial manuscripts of the Greek Bible, the others being the Sinaitic, the Alexandrine, and the Vatican 1209 manuscripts, all of which date back to the fourth and fifth centuries C.E.

The message of the Holy Scriptures has been remarkably preserved for us in many forms, including palimpsests. Although in this case an unappreciative hand attempted to erase the Bible text, its message survived. This makes more certain for us the apostle Peter's words: "The saying of Jehovah endures forever."—1 Peter 1:25.

*Codex Sinaiticus, discovered in
St. Catherine's Monastery*



Tischendorf



Did You Know?

What really happened to the ark of the covenant?

For the Israelites, God's very presence was associated with the ark of the covenant. (Exodus 25:22) This was a sacred chest of wood overlaid with gold in which Moses placed the two stone tablets of the Law. While the Israelites dwelled in the wilderness, the Ark was kept in the Most Holy compartment of the tent of meeting. (Exodus 26:33) The Ark was eventually placed in the Most Holy compartment of Solomon's temple.—1 Kings 6:19.

The Ark is last mentioned at 2 Chronicles 35:3 when King Josiah in 642 B.C.E. returned it to the temple. The Ark may have been removed by Josiah's apostate predecessor, Manasseh, who put an image in the temple. Or perhaps the move had been for safekeeping during Josiah's temple renovations. (2 Chronicles 33:1, 2, 7; 34:1, 8-11) What became of the Ark thereafter is a mystery, for it is not listed among the objects taken from the temple when the Babylonians conquered Jerusalem in 607 B.C.E.—2 Kings 25:13-17.



The Scriptures do not say that the Ark was returned to the Most Holy of the temple rebuilt by Zerubbabel; nor does it seem that a replacement was ever made.—Ezra 1:7-11.

Who were the different men in the Bible called James?

There were four altogether, and it is easy to be confused.* One was the father of the apostle Judas (not Iscariot), and nothing more is known of him.—Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13.

Then we have a son of Zebedee. This James was brother of John, both being Jesus' apostles. (Matthew 10:2) His mother, it seems, was Salo-

* James is the English equivalent of Jacob. The phrase "Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" appears many times in the Bible, and Matthew 1:16 names Jacob as "father to Joseph the husband of Mary."

me, the sister of Jesus' mother. (Compare Matthew 27:55, 56 with Mark 15:40, 41 and John 19:25.) If so, James was Jesus' first cousin. He was a fisherman, who along with his brother was in partnership with Peter and Andrew.—Mark 1:16-19; Luke 5:7-10.

Next comes James the son of Alphaeus, also one of Jesus' apostles. (Mark 3:16-18) He is described as "James the Less" at Mark 15:40. He may have been called "the Less" because of being physically smaller or younger than James, the son of Zebedee.

Last comes Joseph and Mary's son, brother of Jude and half brother of Jesus. (Mark 6:3; Galatians 1:19) During Jesus' ministry, James was not one of his disciples. (Matthew 12:46-50; John 7:5) However, before Pentecost 33 C.E., James prayed with his mother, his brothers, and the apostles in an upper chamber in Jerusalem. (Acts 1:13, 14) James later became a prominent member of the Jerusalem congregation and wrote the Bible book bearing his name.—Acts 12:17; James 1:1.

A Judge Who Is Firm for What Is Right

Numbers 20:2-13

HUMAN judges may hand down sentences that are unfair or unduly severe but not so with Jehovah God—"a lover of justice." (Psalm 37:28) Although patient, he is not indulgent. He is firm for what is right. Consider how he responded to a case of quarreling and rebellion, as recorded in Numbers chapter 20.

Near the end of their wilderness trek, the Israelites faced a water shortage.* The people began quarreling with Moses and Aaron, saying: "Why have you men brought Jehovah's congregation into this wilderness for us and our beasts of burden to die there?" (Verse 4) The people complained that the wilderness was an "evil place" that had no "figs and vines and pomegranates"—the very fruit that Israelite spies had brought back from the Promised Land years before—and that there was "no water to drink." (Verse 5; Numbers 13:23) They were, in effect, blaming Moses and Aaron because the wilderness was not like the fruitful land that an earlier generation of murmurers had refused to enter!

Jehovah did not reject the murmurers. Instead, he directed Moses to do three things: take his rod, gather the people, and "speak to the crag before their eyes that it [might] indeed give its water." (Verse 8) Moses obeyed the first two directives, but he failed to be obedient in the third matter. Rather than speak in

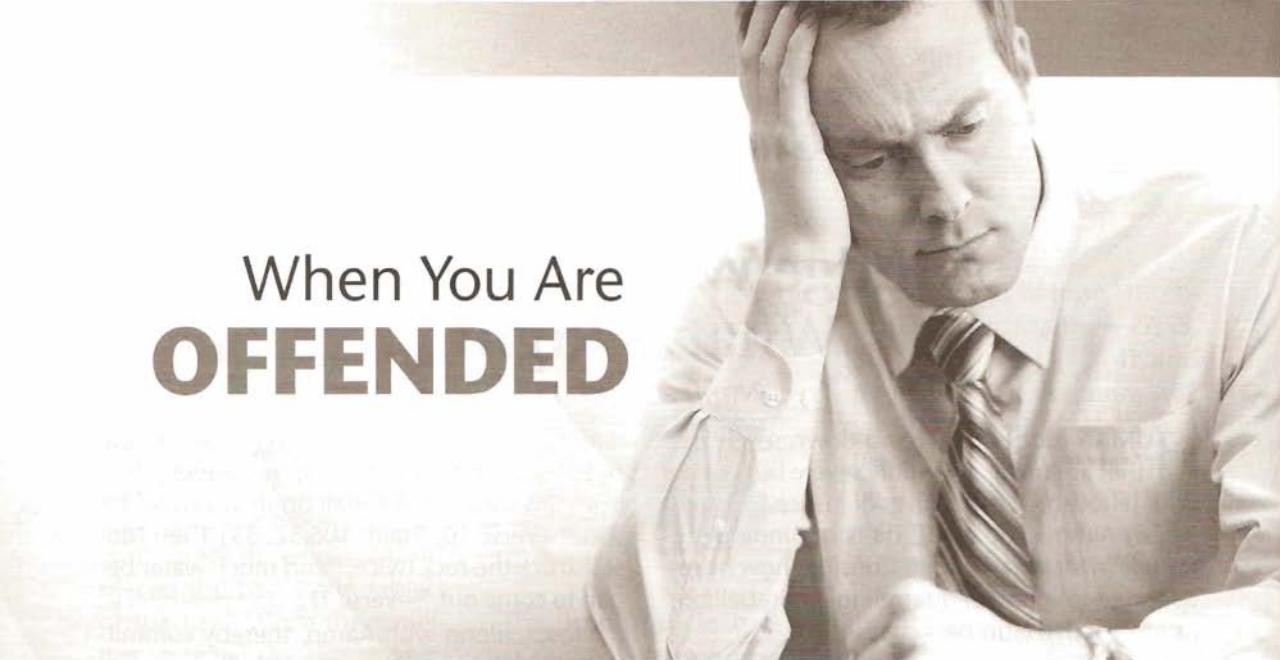
* After the Exodus from Egypt, the Israelites were poised to enter Canaan, the land that God had promised to Abraham. But when ten spies brought back a bad report, the people murmured against Moses. Jehovah thus decreed that they had to spend 40 years in the wilderness—enough time for the rebellious generation to die off.

faith to the rock, he spoke in bitterness to the people, saying: "Hear, now, you rebels! Is it from this crag that we shall bring out water for you?" (Verse 10; Psalm 106:32, 33) Then Moses struck the rock twice, "and much water began to come out."—Verse 11.

Moses, along with Aaron, thereby committed a serious sin. "You men rebelled against my order," God said to them. (Numbers 20:24) By going against God's order on this occasion, Moses and Aaron became what they accused the people of being—rebels. God's judgment was clear: Moses and Aaron would not lead Israel into the Promised Land. Was the sentence too severe? No, for a number of reasons.

First, God had not directed Moses to speak to the people, let alone adjudge them rebels. Second, Moses and Aaron failed to glorify God. "You did not . . . sanctify me," God said. (Verse 12) By saying "we shall bring out water," Moses spoke as if he and Aaron—not God—were the providers of miraculous water. Third, the sentence was consistent with past judgments. God had denied the earlier generation of rebels entrance into Canaan, so he did the same with Moses and Aaron. (Numbers 14:22, 23) Fourth, Moses and Aaron were Israel's leaders. Those with much responsibility have greater accountability to God.—Luke 12:48.

Jehovah is firm for what is right. Because he loves justice, he is incapable of handing down sentences that are unfair or unjust. Clearly, such a Judge deserves our trust and respect.



When You Are OFFENDED

REVENGE is sweet, it has often been said. That is because it is only natural for us to feel indignation when we have been offended or harmed in some way. Our inborn sense of right and wrong demands that an injustice be corrected. The question is, how?

There are, of course, varying degrees of offense, ranging from being slapped, pushed, or slighted to being verbally abused, physically assaulted, robbed, and so on. How do you feel when you experience a personal affront of one kind or another? The reaction of many people today seems to be, 'I'll make them pay for what they did!'

In the United States, a number of junior high school students have filed false charges of abuse to get revenge on teachers who disciplined them. "What happens," says Brenda Mitchell, president of the Teacher's Union in New Orleans, "is that once the accusation is made, the teacher's reputation is tarnished." Even after the accusation has been proved false, the damage can linger.

In the workforce, an increasing number of disgruntled employees seek revenge against their employers by damaging or deleting important information on the company's computer network. Others steal company secrets and sell them or give them away. In addition to the looting of electronic files, "old-fashioned theft also remains a staple of worker retaliation," reports *The New York Times*. To combat the threat of revenge, many companies have resorted to having a security officer escort a dismissed employee to his desk, wait for him to clear out his things, and walk him off the premises.

By far, the most common form of revenge involves those who are closest to us—friends, associates, and family members. Hurt feelings over an unkind word or thoughtless action can often bring a retaliatory response. If a friend addresses you in a harsh tone of voice, do you snap back with an unkind word? If a family member upsets you in some way, do you plot to get even? How easy it is to act like that when the offender is someone close to us!



The Folly of Revenge

Oftentimes, those seeking retaliation do so in an effort to ease the emotional pain of an offense. For example, the Bible tells us that when the sons of the Hebrew patriarch Jacob learned that the Canaanite Shechem had violated their sister Dinah, they "became hurt in their feelings and they grew very angry." (Genesis 34:1-7) To avenge the wrong done to their sister, two of Jacob's sons plotted against Shechem and his household. Using a ruse, Simeon and Levi entered the Canaanite city and killed every male, including Shechem.—Genesis 34:13-27.

Did all that bloodshed settle the matter? When Jacob learned of his sons' actions, he rebuked them, saying: "You have brought ostracism upon me in making me a stench to the inhabitants of the land, . . . and they will certainly gather together against me and assault me and I must be annihilated, I and my house." (Genesis 34:30) Yes, instead of settling matters, their vengeful actions had the opposite effect; Jacob's family now

had to be wary of counterattacks by angry neighbors. Likely to prevent such an outcome, God instructed Jacob to move his family out of the area to Bethel.—Genesis 35:1, 5.

The events surrounding Dinah's rape highlight an important lesson. Revenge often unleashes additional acts of vengeance, and the cycle is repeated again and again. Thus, the German proverb is proved true: Revenge does not long remain unrevenged.

The Cycle of Pain

Focusing one's mind and energy on punishing someone who has wronged us is destructive. The book *Forgiveness—How to Make Peace With Your Past and Get On With Your Life* observes: "Rage consumes you. It consumes time and energy as you stew about your painful past experiences, internally curse the people who hurt you, and plot ways to get even." As the Bible vividly describes it, "jealousy is rottenness to the bones."—Proverbs 14:30.

Indeed, how can a person be joyful if hatred and destructive feelings are bottled up inside of him? One commentator observed: "If you think 'revenge is sweet,' look into the faces of those who have lived on it for years."

Consider what has been happening in so many parts of the earth where ethnic and religious tensions run high. Often one killing begets another, which only serves to reinforce an endless cycle of hatred and death. For example, when a bomb killed 18 youths in a terrorist attack, a grieving woman shouted, "We should give it back to them a thousand times!" In that way, brutality only increases, and more and more people are drawn into the conflict.

"Eye for Eye"

Some point to the Bible in order to justify their vengeful attitude. They say, "Doesn't the Bible speak of 'eye for eye, tooth for tooth'?" (Leviticus 24:20) On the surface, the law of "eye for eye" may appear to promote revenge. Actually, though, it served to curb or limit senseless acts of revenge. How so?

If an Israelite assaulted a fellow Israelite and put out his eye, the Law allowed for just punishment. However, it was not up to the victim to take punitive action against the assailant or one of his family members. The Law required that he take the matter to the established authorities—the appointed judges—for proper disposition. The knowledge that the willful perpetrator of criminal or violent acts against another could be punished in kind served as a powerful deterrent. But there is more to the matter.

"You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind" and "You must love your neighbor as yourself"

Prior to stating the above-mentioned law of retribution, Jehovah God told the nation of Israel through Moses: "You must not hate your brother in your heart. . . . You must not take vengeance nor have a grudge." (Leviticus 19:17, 18) Yes, the idea of "eye for eye, tooth for tooth" should be viewed in the context of the whole Law covenant, which Jesus said was summed up in two commandments: "You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind" and "You must love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:37-40) How, then, should true Christians respond if they suffer an injustice?

Follow the Way of Peace

The Bible describes Jehovah as "the God of peace" and urges his worshippers to "seek peace and pursue it." (Hebrews 13:20; 1 Peter 3:11) But does such a course really work?

During his earthly ministry, Jesus was spit upon, flogged, and persecuted by his enemies, betrayed by a close associate, and even abandoned by his own followers. (Matthew 26:48-50; 27:27-31) How did he react? "When he was being reviled, he did not go reviling in return," wrote the apostle Peter. "When he was suffering, he did not go threatening, but kept on committing himself to the one who judges righteous-

ly."—1 Peter 2:23.

"Christ suffered for you," Peter explained, "leaving you a model for you to follow his steps closely." (1 Peter 2:21) Yes, Christians are encouraged to imitate Jesus, including his suffering injustices. In this regard, Jesus himself said in the Sermon on the Mount:



Love "does not keep account of the injury."
—1 Corinthians 13:5

"Continue to love your enemies and to pray for those persecuting you; that you may prove yourselves sons of your Father who is in the heavens."—Matthew 5:44, 45.

How do those with Christlike love respond to an actual or perceived wrong? Proverbs 19:11 says: "The insight of a man certainly slows down his anger, and it is beauty on his part to pass over transgression." They also take to heart this admonition: "Do not let yourself be conquered by the evil, but keep conquering the evil with the good." (Romans 12:21) What a contrast to the vengeful spirit so prevalent in the world today! True Christian love can help us to overcome the urge to retaliate and thus "pass over transgression" because love "does not keep account of the injury."—1 Corinthians 13:5.

Does this mean that if we are the victim of a crime or are threatened in some other way, we should just meekly accept it? By no means! When Paul said, "Keep conquering the evil with the good," he did not mean

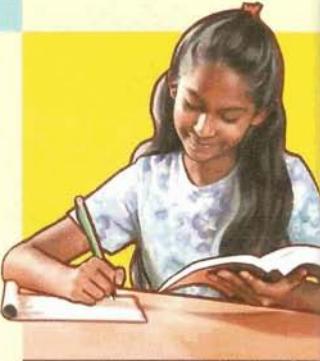
that a Christian should be obsessed with being a martyr. On the contrary, when attacked, we certainly have the right to defend ourselves. If your person or property is violated, you may choose to call the police. If the matter involves someone at work or at school, there are secular authorities we can turn to.—Romans 13:3, 4.

Nevertheless, it is good to keep in mind that true justice in this system of things can be elusive. In fact, many have spent a lifetime seeking it, only to be consumed with bitterness and resentment when their expectations were not realized.

Satan would like nothing better than to see people torn apart by vengeance and hate. (1 John 3:7, 8) Far better it is to keep in mind these words from the Bible: "Do not avenge yourselves, beloved, but yield place to the wrath; for it is written: 'Vengeance is mine; I will repay,' says Jehovah.'" (Romans 12:19) By leaving matters in Jehovah's hands, we free ourselves from much pain, rage, and violence.—Proverbs 3:3-6.

Miracle at Pentecost!

Instructions: Do this exercise in quiet surroundings. As you read the scriptures, imagine that you are part of the event. Visualize the scene. Hear the voices. Feel the emotions of the characters. Let the account come to life!



ANALYZE THE SCENE.—READ ACTS 2:1-21, 38-41.

What comes to your mind as you read the account about the “rushing stiff breeze” and “tongues as if of fire”? _____

What do you imagine the people were saying when they were amazed to hear the disciples speak in foreign tongues? _____

What expressions do you visualize as being on the faces of the skeptics described in verse 13? _____

DIG DEEPER.

What sort of occasion was Pentecost, and how might this observance have affected the spirit of the crowd gathered in Jerusalem? (Deuteronomy 16:10-12) _____

How did Peter show respect in addressing his listeners, and in what way did he establish common ground with them? (Acts 2:29) _____

How did Peter’s boldness at Pentecost stand in sharp contrast with his earlier experience in the courtyard of the high priest? (Matthew 26:69-75) _____

APPLY WHAT YOU LEARNED. WRITE DOWN WHAT YOU LEARNED ABOUT... .

The need to establish common ground with our listeners and to speak respectfully to them when sharing our Bible-based beliefs. _____

Your potential to be a bold Witness for Jehovah, even if now you feel somewhat timid or fearful. _____

WHAT ASPECT OF THIS ACCOUNT IS MOST MEANINGFUL TO YOU, AND WHY?

For further research, see *The Watchtower*, September 15, 1996, pages 8-9.



THE TREASURES OF CENTRAL AMERICA'S LARGEST LAKE



THOUGH Nicaragua is a small country, it boasts the largest inland body of water in Central America—Lake Nicaragua. Intriguingly, Lake Nicaragua is perhaps the only freshwater lake in which are found such oceanic fish species as sharks, swordfish, and tarpon. Scientists believe that this body of water was once a bay open to the Pacific but that volcanic action sealed it off from the ocean. As the water lost its salinity, the fish adapted to their new environment.

The lake, about 100 miles long and 45 miles across at its widest point, is some 100 feet above sea level. There are over 400 islands in Lake Nicaragua, with about 300 of them clustered around the Asese Peninsula, near the town of Granada at the northern end of the lake. They are called the Islets of Granada.

The largest island in the lake is the centrally located Ometepe Island. About 16 miles long and 8 miles wide, Ometepe is made up of two volcanoes connected by an isthmus. The striking symmetrical cone of the taller volcano, Concepción, rises 5,282 feet above

the lake. It is active and dominates the north side of the island. The other volcano, 4,573-foot-high Madera, is dormant. Draped in thick vegetation, Madera cradles a misty lagoon in its crater.

Lake Nicaragua is one of the attractions for tourists to this area. They come to see its natural tropical beauty and the abundant archaeological remains of ancient civilizations. But there is another aspect of Lake Nicaragua's treasures that awaits discovery.

A Community on Water

The Islets of Granada are rich in tropical plants and wildlife. Exotic flowers bloom in the lush forests that cover most of these volcanic islands. Along the shore, beautiful waterbirds, such as little blue herons, great egrets, ospreys, anhingas, and cormorants, go about their daily business. On the fringes of the jungle, nests built by large chestnut-colored birds called Montezuma oropendolas hang from the huge trees and sway precariously in the breeze from the lake.

Some of the islets are inhabited. Here are the homes of the local fishermen and the





vacation cottages of the wealthy. Also found on the islands are local schools and a cemetery as well as restaurants and bars. The archipelago resembles a village, a community on water.

Every morning a blue and white boat makes its way from one island to another to pick up children for school. A floating store on a canoe goes from islet to islet, bringing fruits and vegetables for sale. Scenes of daily life include men setting up their fishing nets and women washing clothes in the lake.

Jehovah's Witnesses are also busy in these islands. They call on the local people by boat to speak to them about the good news of God's Kingdom. (Matthew 24: 14) The unusual geography of this area posed a challenge: Where could meetings be held to study God's Word, the Bible? In response to the Bible's injunction 'not to forsake gathering together,' the Witnesses

came up with an ingenious solution—Nicaragua's first floating Kingdom Hall!—Hebrews 10:25.

A Floating Kingdom Hall

A married couple who are full-time ministers of Jehovah's Witnesses moved to the Islets of Granada in November 2005. A few months later, when they invited the local people to the annual Memorial of Christ's death, they were pleasantly surprised to have 76 present. This convinced the couple of the need to start holding regular Christian meetings in the area. Since a suitable location for such meetings was difficult to find, the pioneers pursued another idea. Why not build a floating Kingdom Hall that could be towed to different locations convenient to the people?

This enterprising couple, who had never designed or built anything that floats, set about the construction. They and six others worked on the project for a month. The new meeting place was to be a simple raft. It would consist of welded frames made of steel pipes holding together a dozen 40-gallon drums filled with compressed air for flotation. There would be a plywood floor, and a tarpaulin would serve as a roof. The workers prayed every night about the project because they were not sure that the hall would float. It did!

*A floating Kingdom Hall
for Bible meetings*



The new Kingdom Hall was used for its first Public Meeting on June 10, 2006. The next day, it was towed to the other side of the archipelago in order to hold the same meeting for people there. The combined attendance of the two events was 48, despite the fact that some of the people had to walk more than half an hour through the jungle. All were delighted to have their own place of worship!

Meetings in this Kingdom Hall certainly have a local flavor. As the speaker gives his talk, the audience can hear in the background the sound of water gently lapping against the rocks or the occasional howl of a monkey off in the distance. The hall soon became quite a familiar sight to the islanders. They waved when they saw it being towed from one location to another. Every week, more than 20 people come to the floating Kingdom Hall for Christian fellowship and Bible education. What a treasure this has turned out to be!

On Ometepe Island

Some 30 miles to the south of Granada lies Ometepe Island. The island's natural beauty and its fertile soil have long made it a desirable place for habitation. In fact, the earliest evidence of agriculture in Nicaragua was found here. Today, Ometepe supports a population of some 42,000, who busy themselves with fishing and the cultivating of corn, bananas, coffee, and other crops. Here, too, the wildlife is splendid. There are flocks of screeching parrots, large magpie-jays that flash their blue and white plumage as they flit among the trees, and white-faced capuchin monkeys, a favorite with many.

The inhabitants of Ometepe are also well-served by proclaimers of the good news of God's Kingdom. From 8 who were baptized in 1966, the number of Witnesses on

Ometepe has grown to 183, in four thriving congregations. Each congregation has its own suitably located Kingdom Hall. Today, there is 1 Witness to every 230 people on the island.

Jehovah's Witnesses in Ometepe have faced difficulties over the years. For example, opposers burned down the Kingdom Hall in Mérida in 1980. Another hall was built in 1984. It was used until 2003 when a beautiful new Kingdom Hall was constructed, much to the joy of the 60 members of the local congregation.

In Moyogalpa, a Kingdom Hall was designed to accommodate larger gatherings when needed. A roof extends from the back of the hall, and a platform is built under it. In front of the platform, seats shaded by a canopy extend toward the back of the property. Here, local Witnesses and their friends from around the lake gather periodically for larger assemblies. At these gatherings, Lake Nicaragua offers a convenient location for baptizing new disciples of Jesus Christ.
—Matthew 28:19.

Treasures—Will They Be Preserved?

Lake Nicaragua has always seemed invincible, perhaps because of its great size. But today it needs protection. Its water is threatened by contamination from agricultural and industrial runoff and sediment from deforested land.

Whether efforts by local residents and the government will improve matters remains to be seen. Even so, the Creator will see to it that all earth's treasures, including its sparkling lakes, delightful islands, and magnificent wildlife, are preserved as a heritage for obedient mankind. "The righteous themselves will possess the earth," the Bible tells us, "and they will reside forever upon it."
—Psalm 37:29.

Our Readers Ask

IN WHAT WAY ARE JESUS AND HIS FATHER ONE?

"I and the Father are one," said Jesus. (John 10:30) Some quote this text to prove that Jesus and his Father are two parts of a triune God. Is that what Jesus meant by this statement?

Let us take a look at the context. In verse 25, Jesus stated that he did works *in the name of his Father*. From verses 27 to 29, he talked about symbolic sheep whom *his Father had given him*. Both statements by Jesus would have made little sense to his listeners if he and his Father were one and the same person. Instead, Jesus said, in effect, 'My Father and I are so close-knit that no one can take away the sheep from me, just as no one can take them away from my Father.' It is much like a son saying to his father's enemy, 'If you attack my father, you attack me.' No one would conclude that this son and his father were the same person. But all could perceive the strong bond of unity between them.

Jesus and his Father, Jehovah God, are also "one" in the sense that they are in complete agreement as to intentions, standards, and values. In contrast with Satan the Devil and the first human couple, Adam and Eve, Jesus never wanted to become independent of God. "The Son cannot do a single thing of his own initiative, but only what he beholds the Father doing," Jesus explained. "For whatever things that One does, these things the Son also does in like manner."—John 5:19; 14:10; 17:8.

This strong bond of unity, however, does not make God and his Son, Jesus, indistin-

guishable from each other. They are two individuals. Each one has his own distinct personality. Jesus has his own feelings, thoughts, experiences, and free will. Nevertheless, he chose to submit his will to that of his Father. According to Luke 22:42, Jesus said: "Let, not my will, but yours take place." These words would have been meaningless if his will could not differ from his Father's. If Jesus and his Father were really one person, why did Jesus pray to God and humbly admit to not knowing things that only his Father knew?—Matthew 24:36.

Members of many religions worship gods that are depicted as quarreling and fighting with their own family members. In Greek mythology, for example, Cronus overthrew his father, Uranus, and devoured his own children. How different this is from the oneness based on true love between Jehovah God and his Son, Jesus! And how this unity endears them to us! In fact, we have the incomparable privilege of being in union with these two highest Persons in all the universe. Regarding his followers, Jesus prayed: "I make request . . . that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in union with me and I am in union with you, that they also may be in union with us."—John 17:20, 21.

Thus, when Jesus said, "I and the Father are one," he was speaking, not of a mysterious Trinity, but of a wonderful unity—the closest bond possible between two persons.

HOW TO BE A SUCCESSFUL MISSIONARY

AN EXCITED crowd gathered at the Watchtower Educational Center in Patterson, New York, for a special occasion. Saturday, March 14, 2009, was graduation day for the 126th class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead. Its graduates were about to be sent to 22 countries to preach the good news of God's Kingdom.—Matthew 24:14.

The students had just completed an intensive, five-month course of Bible study designed to help them become successful Christian missionaries. Graduation day gave them one last opportunity as a class to listen to wise counsel on how to achieve that end.

Gilead School began training missionaries in 1943, recalled Anthony Morris, a member of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses, who acted as chairman of the program. Since then, graduates have had a tremendous impact on the worldwide preaching work.

Even though the scribes and Pharisees looked down on Jesus' apostles as "unlearned and ignorant," the speaker noted, those opposers had to recognize that the apostles' outspokenness resulted from their having been with Jesus. (Acts 4:13, *King James Version*) The training the students received enables them to be outspoken.

"Do Not Be a Taker of Faces" was the theme developed by Robert Ciranko, a helper to the Writing Committee of the Governing Body. He pointed out that the students will soon be meeting people of very different cultures and customs. Yet, preaching to them will be no problem if the students adopt Je-

ovah's attitude. According to a literal rendering of Acts 10:34, "God is not a taker of faces," that is, he does not favor one face over another. "God is not partial." (Acts 10:35) "By adopting God's attitude and viewing everyone in your assignment as being potentially acceptable to God, you will certainly succeed as his missionaries," said Brother Ciranko.

"You Have Got What It Takes"

"Some consider the camel ugly," began Samuel Herd, a member of the Governing Body, "yet it is perfectly suited to life in the desert." Similarly, the new missionaries have what it takes to succeed in their assigned territories. Five things will help them.

1. *Love for Jehovah.* (Matthew 22:37, 38) The students have already shown their determination to serve Jehovah.

2. *Stored knowledge of God's Word.* A camel stores food in the fat of its hump. Yet, it will not stop eating and rely on that emergency store. Missionaries, likewise, should not rely solely on the information learned during Gilead School but should go on nourishing themselves spiritually.

3. *Love for people.* (Matthew 22:39) The students have compassion for people.

4. *A willing spirit.* (Psalm 110:3) When a missionary's energy is sapped, Jehovah makes full might abound.—Isaiah 40:29.

5. *Youthful vigor.* Just as a camel carries a rider across a desert, a missionary may have to "carry" a fellow Christian who is in

spiritual difficulty. That requires much energy, but the missionaries have youthful vigor.

Other Features of the Program

Almonds were among the fine products that Jacob sent as a gift to an Egyptian ruler, noted Michael Burnett, a Gilead instructor. (Genesis 43:11) Almonds pack much nutrition in a tiny bundle. The students have chewed many spiritual almonds during their course. Among the lessons they should take with them are the importance of being content with Jehovah's provisions and of learning to love their new environment.

Mark Noumair, also a Gilead instructor, explained that God's Word is like "a bagful of wisdom." (Job 28:18) We need to open this bag and use its contents. If missionary service does not turn out to be what the students expected, they might think of the apostle Paul. Jesus' disciples sent him to his hometown for nine years. Instead of reasoning that as "a chosen vessel" he should be serving elsewhere, Paul worked hard wherever he was. (Acts 9:15, 28-30) Respecting Jehovah's choices may present a challenge. Another who did so was Jonathan. Recognizing that David was Jehovah's chosen king, Jonathan was content to support him.

In the part "God's Servants Speak With Boldness," the students reenacted experiences that they enjoyed in the preaching work during their course. Many of them started Bible studies. The next presentation, "Pre-

pared by Jehovah's Organization," featured interviews with three long-time missionaries. Each explained how he had been trained to cooperate with God's organization.

"Be a Happy Missionary"

Gerrit Lösch, another member of the Governing Body, then presented the principal part of the program, "Be a Happy Missionary." Many activities considered "fun" bring no real happiness, he noted. (Proverbs 14:13; Ecclesiastes 2:10, 11) Lasting happiness comes from doing God's will, even though this is not always easy. The Gilead course was hard work but brought great satisfaction.

Several things contribute to making true Christians happy. They worship the happy God. (Psalm 33:12; 1 Timothy 1:11) They live in a spiritual paradise, and the Bible promises that soon the earth will be a physical paradise. They have found the purpose of life—to serve Jehovah and praise him. Moreover, they are loved by Jehovah and Jesus.

"You will be a happy missionary," added the speaker, "if you learn to be content." Loving others and being loved by them is another ingredient of happiness. So cover over the errors of others instead of highlighting them. Do good to others, assist the weak, share good experiences. (Psalm 41:1, 2; Acts 20:35) Happiness is found in expending oneself in the preaching work.—Luke 11:28.

"Go forth as a happy missionary," concluded Brother Lösch, "having a moderate

CLASS STATISTICS

Number of countries represented: 6 • Number of countries assigned to: 22

Number of students: 56 • Number of married couples: 28 • Average age: 32.8

Average years in truth: 17.9 • Average years in full-time ministry: 13.5

CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

The graduates were assigned to Benin, Bolivia, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Costa Rica, Ghana, Guatemala, Honduras, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Romania, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Togo, and Uganda.



126th Graduating Class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead

Rows are numbered from front to back, and names are listed from left to right in each row.
(1) Kirchhoff, K.; Nichols, C.; Guzmán, Y.; Coil, H.; Becker, O.; De Simone, A. (2) Manzanares, A.; Bouvier, E.; Peddle, J.; Mason, H.; Braz, J. (3) Lee, J.; Forte, A.; Boucher, T.; Marsh, A.; Leighton, S.; Glover, M. (4) Kambach, H.; Jones, T.; Ferreira, A.; Morales, J.; Chicas, S.; Davis, B.; Dormanen, E. (5) Dormanen, B.; Nichols, J.; Pacho, T.; Titmas, L.; Bouvier, E.; Kirchhoff, A. (6) Leighton, G.; Pacho, A.; Van Campen, B.; Manzanares, A.; Rivard, A.; Lee, Y.; Titmas, L. (7) Boucher, M.; Coil, K.; Marsh, C.; Guzmán, J.; Jones, W.; Kambach, J. (8) Glover, A.; Ferreira, G.; Mason, E.; Forte, D.; Davis, N.; Chicas, O.; Rivard, Y. (9) Braz, D.; Van Campen, D.; Morales, A.; De Simone, M.; Becker, M.; Peddle, D.

amount of fun but concentrating on praising our happy God, Jehovah, and on making many others happy as well."

After conveying greetings from a number of lands, Anthony Morris presented the students with their diplomas. Thereafter, a representative of the 126th class read a letter addressed to the Governing Body. In it the students expressed their appreciation for attending Gilead School.

In his conclusion, the chairman remarked that the "joints and ligaments" uniting a body resemble the means and arrangements that "the faithful and discreet slave" uses to supply Jehovah's people with nourishment and direction. (Colossians 2:18, 19; Matthew 24:45) If the Gilead graduates fully cooperate with God's appointed representatives, they will succeed in fully accomplishing their ministry.—2 Timothy 4:5.

- If you are faithful to God, will he bless you with riches?
See page 4.
- Is money the source of true happiness? See page 9.
- Does it really matter whether you believe in
the existence of Adam and Eve? See page 12.
- Revenge—is it sweet or is it bitter? What do you think?
See page 20.
- What can you expect to find in the largest lake in
Central America? See page 25.