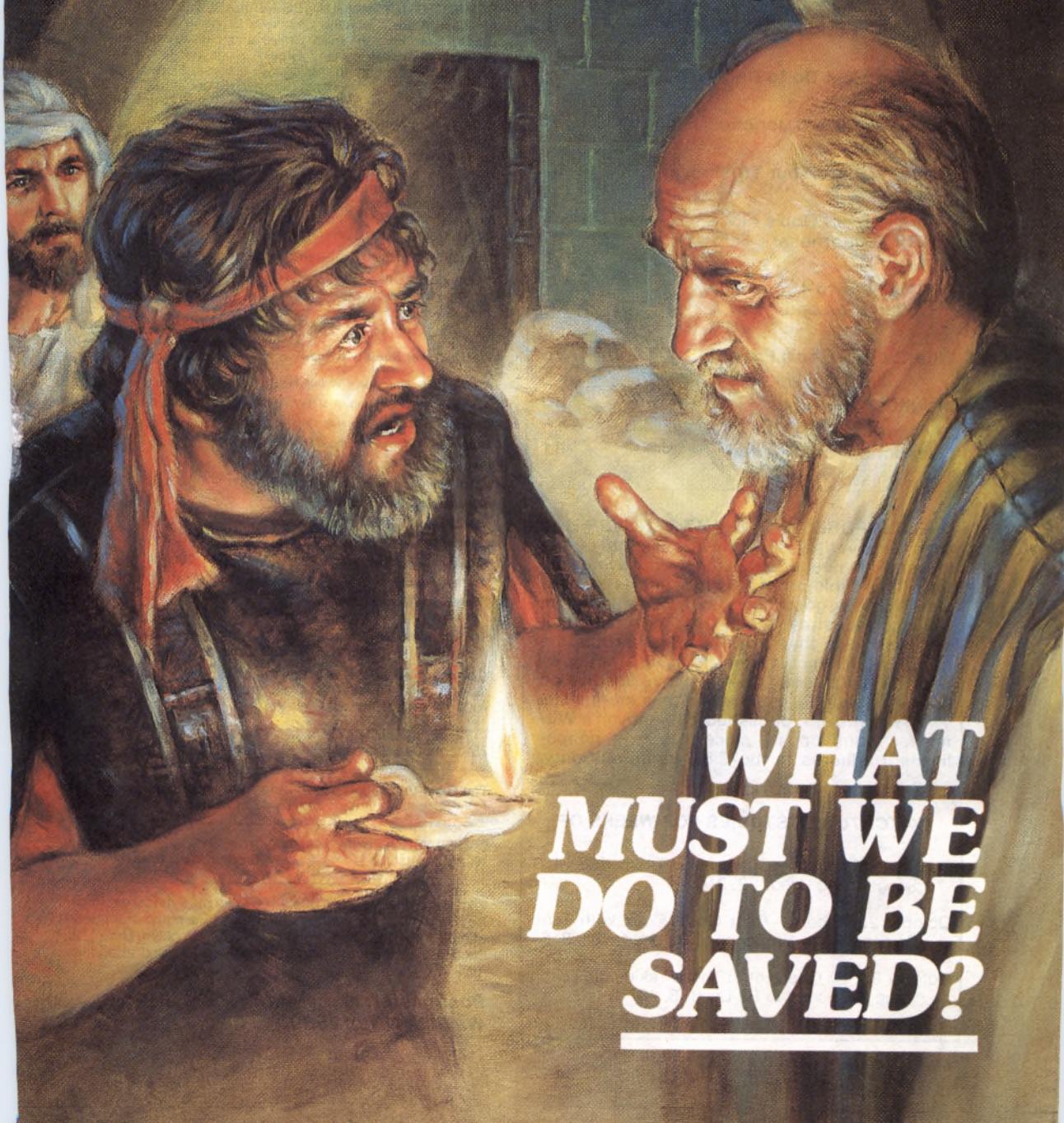


# The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

September 15, 1989



**WHAT  
MUST WE  
DO TO BE  
SAVED?**

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**THE PURPOSE OF THE WATCHTOWER** is to exalt Jehovah God as the Sovereign of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as they 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 the 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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- October 16: Elders—Guard Your Trust. Page 10.  
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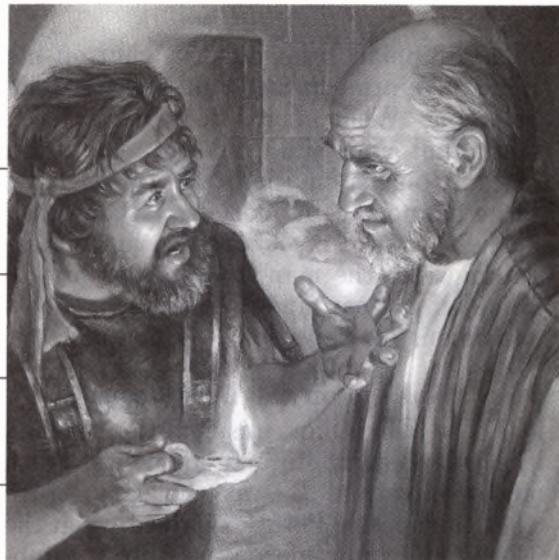
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# *"What must I do to get saved?"*

**W**HAT must I do to get saved?" This question was asked back in the year 50 C.E. by a jailer in Philippi, Macedonia. There had just been a great earthquake, and the doors of the prison in his charge had all broken open. Assuming that the prisoners had escaped, the jailer was about to kill himself. But one of the prisoners, the apostle Paul, called out: "Do not hurt yourself, for we are all here!"—Acts 16:25-30.

Paul and his fellow prisoner, Silas, had come to Philippi to preach a message of salvation, and they were in prison because of false accusations made against them. Grateful that the prisoners had not escaped, the jailer wanted to hear the message of Paul and Silas. What would he have to do to enjoy the salvation preached by these two Christian missionaries?

People today still need the salvation that Paul and Silas were preaching. Unhappily, though, many view the matter of being saved with deep suspicion. They are repelled by the arrogance and avarice of a number of those religionists who claim to teach them how to be saved. Others recoil



from the unreasoning emotionalism characterizing many evangelical religions that stress the idea of salvation. English journalist Philip Howard said that such so-called evangelists "assault the emotions and the check-signing hands rather than the minds of their audience."—Compare 2 Peter 2:2.

Still others are shocked by the changes that sometimes take place in individuals who believe they have had a "saving" experience. In their book *Snapping*, Flo Conway and Jim Siegelman discuss the many religious experiences—including being "saved"—that came into vogue in the last few decades. They write about "the dark side" of such experiences and say that people are "snapped" into sudden personality changes that fail to give the promised fulfillment and enlightenment but rather produce delusion, closed minds, and an inability to face reality. The authors add: "We can describe the process as one of shutting off the mind, of not-thinking."

This was not the case when first-century Christians experienced salvation.

The Philippian jailer did not 'shut off his mind' when the apostle Paul answered his question, "What must I do to get saved?" And Paul and Silas did not mount an 'assault on his emotions' and plead for a large financial contribution. Rather, "they spoke the word of Jehovah to him." Reasoning with the man, they helped him to come to a clear understanding of God's provisions for salvation.—Acts 16:32.

## **“Believe on the Lord Jesus”**

Those Christian missionaries opened the jailer's mind to a fundamental truth about salvation. It was the same truth that the apostle Peter explained when the Christian congregation was first established. Peter pointed to the central role of Jesus Christ in the matter of salvation, calling him "the Chief Agent of life." That apostle also said: "There is no salvation in

anyone else, for there is not another name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must get saved." (Acts 3:15; 4:12) Paul and Silas directed the Philippian jailer to this same Agent for salvation when they said: "Believe on the Lord Jesus and you will get saved."—Acts 16:31.

What does it mean, though, to believe on the Lord Jesus? Why is there no other name but that of Jesus by which we can get saved? Will everyone eventually attain salvation? Did the apostles believe in the idea of "once saved, always saved"? These are important questions because, despite the fact that the words and actions of many modern religionists have tended to downgrade the term, we still need salvation. All of us need a satisfying, reasonable answer to the question: "What must I do to get saved?"

tered into the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned." (Romans 5:12) Why did Adam's sin cause death to spread to all men? Really, this was because of the natural outworking of things.

When Adam sinned, he was condemned to death in accord with divine law. This was both just and necessary. It was just, for life is not a right but a gift from God. By sinning deliberately, Adam forfeited all claim to that gift. (Romans 6:23) Adam's condemnation to death was necessary because nothing imperfect can be permitted to survive and pollute the universe indefinitely. Thus, when Adam sinned, he began to die and no longer possessed perfect, sinless life to hand on to his children as an inheritance. He could only give them life tainted with imperfection and sin.—Romans 8:18-21.

We should not, however, forget that it

# What we must do to be saved

**W**HY do we need to be saved? Because all of us suffer the disastrous consequences of sin: imperfection, pain, sickness, grief, and finally death. The apostle Paul explained that this is so because our forefather Adam rebelled against God's law. Paul wrote: "Through one man [Adam] sin en-

is only because of God's undeserved kindness that we have even the short existence that is our lot today. (Job 14:1) God was not obliged to allow Adam and Eve to have children before they died. He allowed them to do so in order to prove that some imperfect humans would support God's sovereignty by keeping their integrity to him. God allowed this, too, because he knew that eventually he would redeem, or save, responsive descendants of those original rebels, Adam and Eve. How?

### Provision for Salvation

Jehovah God could not simply set aside his righteous judgment. He cannot arbitrarily forget Adam's original sin and all that mankind has added to it since then. If God were to ignore his own just laws, this would undermine respect for his whole system of justice and confidence in it. Imagine the outcry that would be heard if, because of some personal whim, a human judge arbitrarily allowed a criminal to go unpunished. However, a compassionate judge can appropriately arrange for a statutory fine to be paid on behalf of a guilty person by some other willing individual. This, in a way, is what God has done for us.

Jehovah arranged for his own Son, Jesus Christ, to give his perfect human life in place of the perfect life forfeited by Adam. Jesus willingly carried the penalty for our sins—death. (Isaiah 53:4, 5; John 10:17, 18) The Bible says: "The Son of man came . . . to give his soul a ransom in exchange for many." (Matthew 20:28; 1 Timothy 2:6) No one else could do this. Jesus was unique in that he was born without sin and remained a perfect, sinless human right up to his death. (Hebrews 7:26; 1 Peter 2:22) His faithfulness to death made it possible for him to pay the statutory penalty for our sins.

Remember, though, that God, the Su-

preme Judge, is under no obligation to free everyone. He views Jesus' sacrificed perfect human life as the payment of the debt we owe for sin. But Jehovah God will not apply this to unrepentant, unappreciative, willful sinners. Instead of offering some kind of general amnesty or universal salvation, the Bible sets out conditions that must be met if we are to be saved from the effects of inherited sin.

### Requirements for Salvation

So, then, what is required for salvation? The prime requirement is the one that the apostle Paul stated to the Philippian jailer: "Believe on the Lord Jesus and you will get saved." (Acts 16:31) Heartfelt acceptance of the shed blood of Jesus is essential if we are going to be saved. And what will salvation mean for us? Jesus indicated the answer when he said: "I give them everlasting life, and they will by no means ever be destroyed." (John 10:28) For most, salvation will mean everlasting life on an earth restored to paradisaic perfection. (Psalm 37:10, 11; Revelation 21:3, 4) In the case of a "little flock," however, it will mean ruling with Jesus in his heavenly Kingdom.—Luke 12:32; Revelation 5:9, 10; 20:4.

Some suggest that belief in Jesus is the end of the matter. "There is just one thing that any one needs to do to get to heaven," says one religious tract. "That is, to accept Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour, surrender to Him as Lord and Master, and openly confess Him as such before the world." Thus, many believe that a sudden, emotional conversion experience is all we need in order to guarantee everlasting life. However, to concentrate on only one essential requirement for salvation to the exclusion of the others is like reading one crucial clause in a contract and ignoring the rest.

This becomes more evident when we

listen to the comments of some who at one time thought that professing belief in Jesus was all that was needed to be saved. Bernice says: "I was raised in the Brethren Church, but I came to wonder why, if everlasting life is dependent solely on Jesus, he himself 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.

For nine years Norman was convinced that he was saved. But then he saw that more was required than an emotional profession that Jesus Christ was his Savior. "I saw from the Bible that it was not enough just to acknowledge to God that we are sinners and in need of salvation," he says. "We also have to do works that befit repentance."—Matthew 3:8; Acts 3:19.

Yes, believing in Jesus is crucial to our salvation, but more is needed. Jesus spoke of some who professed faith in him and even did "powerful works" in his name. But he did not recognize them. Why? Because they were "workers of lawlessness" and did not do the will of his Father. (Matthew 7:15-23) The disciple James reminds us of the need to "become doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves with false reasoning." He also said: "You believe there is one God, do you? You are doing quite well. And yet the demons believe and shudder. . . . Faith without works is dead."—James 1:22; 2:19, 26.

Some, though, argue that those who are genuinely saved do all these things anyway. But is that really the case in practice? Denis, who 'accepted Jesus' when he was a young boy, says: "The 'saved' people I have known feel no great need to examine the Scriptures because they think they already have all they need for salvation."

Indeed, the hypocrisy and unchristian acts of many who claim to be saved have brought the whole subject of salvation into disrepute.

Nevertheless, many insist that the Scriptures say: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." (John 3:36, *King James Version*) Therefore, they conclude that once you have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, you can never again be lost. "Once saved, always saved" is their watchword. But is that what the Scriptures really say? To answer this, we need to consider everything the Bible says on the subject. We would not want to 'deceive ourselves with false reasoning' by reading only selected parts of God's Word.

#### "Once Saved, Always Saved"?

Notice the inspired warning of the disciple Jude. He wrote: "Beloved ones, though I was making every effort to write you about the salvation we hold in common, I found it necessary to write you to exhort you to put up a hard fight for the faith that was once for all time delivered to the holy ones." (Jude 3) Why did Jude write this? Because he knew that individual Christians could still lose the 'salvation they hold in common.' He went on to say: "I desire to remind you . . . that Jehovah, although he saved a people [the Israelites] out of the land of Egypt, afterwards destroyed those not showing faith."—Jude 5.

Jude's warning would be pointless if Christians did not face a danger similar to that of those Israelites. Jude was not questioning the value of Jesus' sacrifice. That sacrifice has saved us from Adamic sin, and Jesus will protect those who exercise faith in him. No one can snatch them out of his hand. But we can lose that protection. How? By doing what was done by many Israelites who were saved from



*What would happen if you ran back into a burning building after being saved?*

not bearing fruit [God] takes away . . . If anyone does not remain in union with me, he is cast out as a branch and is dried up; and men gather those branches up and pitch them into the fire and they are burned." (John 15:2, 6; Hebrews 6:4-6) Those losing faith in Jesus also lose everlasting life.

#### **"He That Has Endured . . . Will Be Saved"**

Yes, there are various things involved in getting saved. We must take in accurate knowledge of God's purposes and his way of salvation. Then we must exercise

faith in the Chief Agent of salvation, Jesus Christ, and do God's will the rest of our lives. (John 3:16; Titus 2:14) Salvation is sure for those who follow this course. But it involves persevering right to the end of our present life or of this system of things. Only "he that has endured to the end is the one that will be saved."—Matthew 24:13.

Along with others in his household, the jailer in Philippi responded positively to the message of salvation that Paul and Silas preached. "One and all, he and his were baptized without delay." (Acts 16:33) We can take similar positive action. Thus, we will enter into a close and blessed relationship with Jehovah God and his Son, Jesus Christ, and can have complete confidence in divine provisions for salvation. The Philippian jailer "rejoiced greatly with all his household now that he had believed God." (Acts 16:34) Such a course will also cause us to 'rejoice greatly.'

Egypt. We can deliberately choose to disobey God.—Deuteronomy 30:19, 20.

Imagine being rescued from a burning tower. Think of the relief you would feel as you were safely taken from the building and the rescuer said: "You are safe now." Yes, you would have been saved from certain death. But what would happen if you decided to go back into the building for some foolish reason? Your life would again be in danger.

Christians are in a saved condition. They have the prospect of everlasting life because they are in an approved position before God. As a group, their salvation from Adamic sin and all its consequences is sure. But individually they will be saved to eternal life only if they continue to adhere to all of God's requirements. Jesus emphasized this when he likened himself to a vine and his disciples to branches in that vine. He said: "Every branch in me

## Jesus Teaches at Jericho

**S**OON Jesus and the crowds traveling with him arrive at Jericho, which is a city about a day's journey from Jerusalem. Apparently Jericho is a double city, the old Jewish city being about a mile from the newer Roman city. As the crowds make their way out of the old city and approach the new one, two blind beggars hear the commotion. One of them is named Bartimaeus.

On learning that it is Jesus who is passing by, Bartimaeus and his companion begin shouting: "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!" When the crowd sternly tells them to be quiet, they cry out even more and with louder voices: "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!"

Hearing the disturbance, Jesus stops. He asks those with him to call the ones doing all the shouting. These go to the blind beggars and say to one of them: "Take courage, get up, he is calling you." With unbounded excitement, the blind man throws off his outer garment, leaps to his feet, and goes to Jesus.

"What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asks the two men.

"Lord, let our eyes be opened," they plead.

Moved with pity, Jesus touches their eyes. According to Mark's account, Jesus says to one of them: "Go, your faith has made you well." Immediately the blind beggars receive sight, and doubtless both of them begin glorifying God. When all the people see what has happened, they also give praise to God.

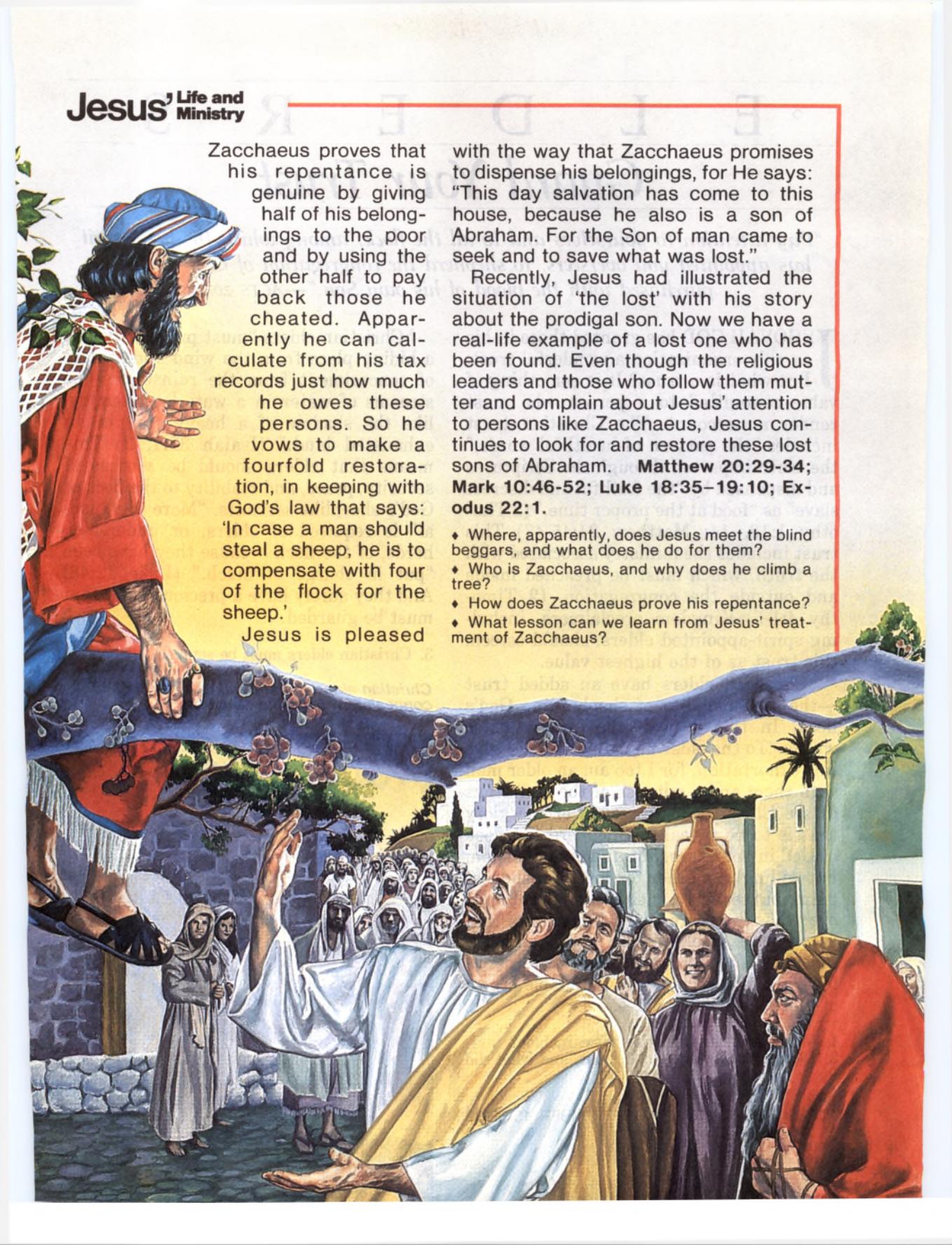
Without delay, Bartimaeus and his companion begin to follow Jesus.

As Jesus passes through Jericho, the crowds are tremendous. Everyone wants to see the one who has healed the blind men. The people press in upon Jesus from every direction, and as a result, some cannot even get a glimpse of him. Among these is Zacchaeus, the chief over the tax collectors in and around Jericho. He is too short to see what is going on.

So Zacchaeus runs ahead and climbs a fig-mulberry tree along the route that Jesus is taking. From this vantage point, he can get a good view of everything. As the crowds approach, Jesus calls up into the tree: "Zacchaeus, hurry and get down, for today I must stay in your house."

Zacchaeus climbs down with rejoicing and hurries home to get things prepared for his distinguished visitor. But when people see what is happening, they all begin grumbling. They consider it improper for Jesus to be the guest of such a man. You see, Zacchaeus became rich by dishonestly extorting money in his tax-collecting business.

Many people follow, and when Jesus enters into the home of Zacchaeus, they complain: "With a man that is a sinner he went in to lodge." Yet Jesus sees in Zacchaeus the potential for repentance. And Jesus is not disappointed, for Zacchaeus stands up and announces: "Look! The half of my belongings, Lord, I am giving to the poor, and whatever I extorted from anyone by false accusation I am restoring four-fold."



Zacchaeus proves that his repentance is genuine by giving half of his belongings to the poor and by using the other half to pay back those he cheated. Apparently he can calculate from his tax records just how much he owes these persons. So he vows to make a fourfold restoration, in keeping with God's law that says: 'In case a man should steal a sheep, he is to compensate with four of the flock for the sheep.'

Jesus is pleased

with the way that Zacchaeus promises to dispense his belongings, for He says: "This day salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man came to seek and to save what was lost."

Recently, Jesus had illustrated the situation of 'the lost' with his story about the prodigal son. Now we have a real-life example of a lost one who has been found. Even though the religious leaders and those who follow them mutter and complain about Jesus' attention to persons like Zacchaeus, Jesus continues to look for and restore these lost sons of Abraham. **Matthew 20:29-34; Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18:35-19:10; Exodus 22:1.**

- ♦ Where, apparently, does Jesus meet the blind beggars, and what does he do for them?
- ♦ Who is Zacchaeus, and why does he climb a tree?
- ♦ How does Zacchaeus prove his repentance?
- ♦ What lesson can we learn from Jesus' treatment of Zacchaeus?

# ◊ E L D E R S ◊

## *Guard Your Trust*

*"Pay attention to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the holy spirit has appointed you overseers, to shepherd the congregation of God, which he purchased with the blood of his own Son."—ACTS 20:28.*

**J**EHOVAH GOD has granted those in his earthly organization a wonderful trust. But what is a trust? It is something of value committed to a person who must render an account. The Christian trust includes "the pattern of healthful words," the truth imparted through the Scriptures and dispensed by "the faithful and discreet slave" as "food at the proper time." (2 Timothy 1:13, 14; Matthew 24:45-47) This trust includes the ministry associated with the truth, which must be preached inside and outside the congregation. (2 Timothy 4:1-5) Kingdom proclaimers, including spirit-appointed elders, should esteem this trust as of the highest value.

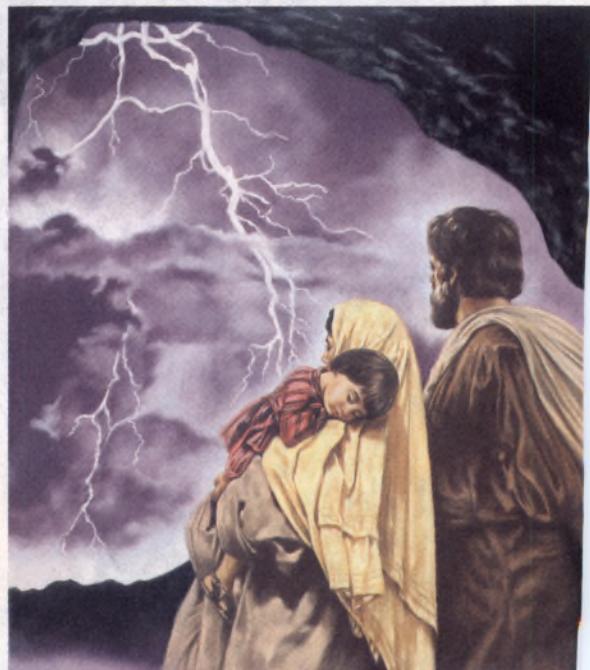
<sup>2</sup> Christian elders have an added trust—the responsibility of shepherding God's flock. In this regard, the apostle Peter wrote: "To the older men among you I give this exhortation, for I too am an older man with them and a witness of the sufferings of the Christ, a sharer even of the glory that is to be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God in your care, not under compulsion, but willingly; neither for love of dishonest gain, but eagerly; neither as lording it over those who are God's inheritance, but becoming examples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd has been made manifest, you will receive the unfadable crown of glory."—1 Peter 5:1-4.

1. What does the Christian trust include?
2. Elders have what added trust, and what did Peter say about it?

<sup>3</sup> Christian elders "must prove to be like a hiding place from the wind and a place of concealment from the rainstorm, like streams of water in a waterless country, like the shadow of a heavy crag in an exhausted land." (Isaiah 32:1, 2) This means that elders should be sources of security, peace, and stability to the flock of God's sheeplike servants. "More than usual" is required of elders, or undershepherds, of the flock because they have been "put in charge of much." (Luke 12:48) And they surely have a precious trust that must be guarded.

### 3. Christian elders must be sources of what?

*Christian elders must be like "a place of concealment from the rainstorm"*



## Why Entrusted to You?

<sup>4</sup> The existence of over 60,000 congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide requires scores of thousands of spiritually qualified men to care for God's flock. There are many elders in each country, and this is a cause for joy. Worldwide there is an average of about 60 Kingdom proclaimers in each congregation. Hence, there is much work for elders to do.—1 Corinthians 15:58.

<sup>5</sup> If you are an elder, why was this blessed privilege extended to you? Because you have done certain things, and you have spiritual qualifications. For instance, you must have studied God's Word diligently. (Joshua 1:7, 8) You must have shared zealously in the field ministry, also helping others to become Kingdom proclaimers. Having been "tested as to fitness first," you served faithfully as a ministerial servant. You 'reached out,' or sought to qualify, to be an elder, appreciating that being an overseer is "a fine work." (1 Timothy 3:1, 10) Like Timothy, you were "well reported on by the brothers." (Acts 16:2) When recommended as an elder, likely you were in your late 20's or older and were experienced in life. The congregation had come to respect you as a spiritually mature, approachable brother capable of giving effective Scriptural counsel and maintaining confidentiality.—Proverbs 25:9, 10.

## How to Guard Your Trust

<sup>6</sup> Yes, if you are an elder, it was for sound reasons that Christian oversight was entrusted to you. And how privileged you have felt! But how can you guard your trust?

4. Why are so many elders needed?

5. On what basis is the privilege of serving as an elder extended to a man?

6, 7. First Timothy 4:13-15 provides what counsel to help a man to guard his trust as an elder?

<sup>7</sup> One way to guard your trust as an elder is to be positive and diligent in caring for your duties. All of us have assignments of varying responsibility in Jehovah's organization. Therefore, keep your place, and be content to 'conduct yourself as a lesser one.' (Luke 9:46-48; compare Judges 7:21.) Cherish your privileges, and never 'work with a slack hand.' (Proverbs 10:4) Do not stand still, but with Jehovah's help, make progress in all aspects of the ministry. Indeed, follow this counsel given by Paul to Timothy: "Continue applying yourself to public reading, to exhortation, to teaching. Do not be neglecting the gift in you that was given you through a prediction and when the body of older men laid their hands upon you. Ponder over these things; be absorbed in them, that your advancement may be manifest to all persons."—1 Timothy 4:13-15.

<sup>8</sup> Make sure that you maintain a good, productive schedule of personal study. As an elder, you are rightly expected to give sound Scriptural counsel. To equip you for this responsibility, have you read the entire Bible meditatively, perhaps many times? (Proverbs 15:28) What about your platform assignments? Prepare them well, prayerfully seeking Jehovah's help so that you may impart something spiritually enriching to those present at our meetings. Elders in particular should 'say what is good for building up, that it may impart what is favorable to hearers.'—Ephesians 4:29; Romans 1:11.

<sup>9</sup> As an elder, heed Paul's admonition: "Preach the word, be at it urgently in favorable season, in troublesome season, reprove, reprimand, exhort, with all long-suffering and art of teaching." (2 Timothy

8. What will help an elder to give sound counsel and impart something spiritually enriching at meetings?

9. According to 2 Timothy 4:2, what must an elder do?

4:2) Paul was concerned about apostasy because some in the congregation 'fought about words,' indulged in 'foolish questionings,' and 'were not favorably disposed to the truth.' (2 Timothy 2: 14-18, 23-25; 3:8-13; 4:3, 4) Whether the congregation was experiencing a troublesome or a favorable season, however, Timothy was to "preach the word." This would strengthen fellow believers to resist apostasy. Similarly today, elders must preach the penetrating Word, or message, of God, which reaches the heart and encourages adherence to Jehovah's standards.—Hebrews 4:12.

<sup>10</sup> To speak with authority, an elder must live in harmony with God's Word. But he is not fully guarding his trust if he 'preaches the word' only on the platform inside the congregation. In the same context Paul urged Timothy: "Do the work of an evangelizer." To 'accomplish your ministry fully' as an elder, you must preach God's Word "publicly and from house to house." (2 Timothy 4:5; Acts 20:20, 21) Therefore, work in the field ministry with members of your family. This can contribute to the spiritual bond between you and your wife and will greatly benefit your children. Spend some time, too, sharing in the preaching work with other members of the congregation. This strengthens spiritual ties and increases brotherly love. (John 13:34, 35) Of course, an elder must strive for balance in dividing valuable time between his family and the congregation. The use of discernment will prevent him from devoting too much time to one, to the

10. Why should an elder regularly work in the field ministry with members of his family and others?



*As an elder, regularly share in the field ministry with members of your family and others*

neglect and detriment of the other.

<sup>11</sup> To guard your trust as an elder, also work hard to increase your capability as a teacher. "He that teaches, let him be at his teaching," said Paul, "or he that exhorts, let him be at his exhortation." (Romans 12:7, 8) Since a teacher stands as an instructor before others, they have a right to expect much of him. If an elder should err seriously in his teaching and this causes problems for fellow believers, he comes in line for judgment by God. Yes, teachers "shall receive heavier judgment." (James 3:1, 2; Matthew 12:36, 37) So elders need to be serious students of God's Word and must apply it in life. Then their Scriptural teaching, backed up by personal application, will be greatly appreciated by fellow believers. It will also shield the congregation from unwholesome influences, including apostasy.

#### Avoid Pitfalls

<sup>12</sup> Guard your trust as an elder, too, by avoiding pitfalls. One of these is misuse of the tongue as a teacher. The need for caution in this regard has long been emphasized by Jehovah's organization. For example, in its issue of May 15, 1897, this journal discussed James 3:1-13 and said especially of elders: "If they possess an eloquent tongue it may be a channel for a great blessing, swaying large numbers to

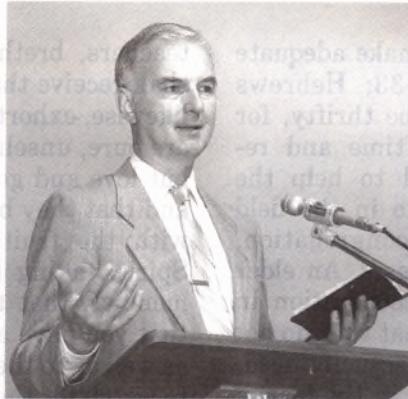
11. Why should an elder work hard to increase his capability as a teacher?

12. What counsel once published in this journal will help an elder to avoid the misuse of the tongue?

**If you guard your trust as an elder, the congregation will benefit in many ways**

the Lord, the truth and the way of righteousness; or, on the other hand, if contaminated with error, the tongue can do almost untellable harm—*injury to faith, to morals, to good works.* It is indeed true, that whoever exercises the gift of teaching lays himself open to increased responsibility in the sight of God and men. . . . Whoever would be a fountain from which would go forth the divine Word, carrying blessing and refreshment and strength, should see to it that bitter waters, false doctrines that would cause a curse, an injury—dishonoring God and perverting his Word—should not find in them a channel of utterance. In the choice of leaders for meetings the ‘tongue’ qualification, as here laid down should not be overlooked. The *fiery tongued* should not be chosen, but the meeker, the moderate, who ‘bridle’ their tongues and endeavor carefully to ‘speak as the oracles of God’ only.” How important it is that an elder use his tongue aright!

<sup>13</sup> Excessive recreation is also a pitfall to avoid. Recreation should refresh and build up, not exhaust and distract a Christian. Furthermore, overseers must be “moderate in habits.” (1 Timothy 3:2) If moderation governs what you do regarding recreation, this will guard you and your family and will provide a fine example for the congregation. You would hardly be setting a good example if, time and again, you went away for recreational purposes on weekends while your fellow believers were dili-



gently engaging in the field ministry. The good news must be preached, and elders should take the lead in this work as zealous Kingdom proclaimers.—Mark 13:10; Titus 2:14.

<sup>14</sup> Sexual immorality is another pitfall to avoid. The world’s moral decay can influence even an elder if he does not

resist the temptations used by Satan in his efforts to break the integrity of God’s people. (Compare Matthew 4:1-11; 6:9, 13.) Remember that the prophet Balaam, unsuccessful in his attempts to curse the Israelites, reasoned that Jehovah himself would curse them if they could be seduced to engage in sex worship. So Balaam taught the Moabite king Balak “to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication.” Did they avoid that pitfall? No, for 24,000 Israelites died in a scourge from Jehovah because they had immoral relations with Moabite women and bowed down to their gods. (Revelation 2:14; Numbers 25:1-9) Remember, too, that even David, ‘a man agreeable to God’s heart,’ stumbled into the pitfall of sexual immorality. (1 Samuel 13:14; 2 Samuel 11: 2-4) As an elder, then, heed the repeated advice of “the faithful steward” never to assist a spiritual sister privately but to have another elder present when caring for this responsibility.—Luke 12:42.

<sup>15</sup> Materialism is another pitfall for an elder to avoid. Be content with necessities,

14. (a) What Scriptural examples highlight the need for elders to guard against sexual immorality? (b) Elders should not ignore what repeated advice on assisting spiritual sisters?

15. How can an elder’s family help him to avoid the pitfall of materialism?

13. Elders need to exercise what caution regarding recreation?

knowing that Jehovah will make adequate provision. (Matthew 6:25-33; Hebrews 13:5) Train your family to be thrifty, for wastefulness is a thief of time and resources that could be used to help the family, as well as to engage in the field ministry, strengthen the congregation, and promote Kingdom interests. An elder benefits from his family's cooperation in this regard and is grateful that they do not pressure him for things not actually needed. In fact, "better is a little in the fear of Jehovah than an abundant supply and confusion along with it."—Proverbs 15:16.

### "Pay Attention to Yourselves"

<sup>16</sup> If elders are to guard their trust, they must apply Paul's counsel to the overseers of Ephesus. He told them: "Pay attention to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the holy spirit has appointed you overseers, to shepherd the congregation of God, which he purchased with the blood of his own Son. I know that after my going away oppressive wolves will enter in among you and will not treat the flock with tenderness, and from among you yourselves men will rise and speak twisted things to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore keep awake, and bear in mind that for three years, night and day, I did not quit admonishing each one with tears."—Acts 20:28-31.

<sup>17</sup> More than 80 years ago, *The Watch Tower* (March 1, 1909) quoted the foregoing counsel of Paul to fellow elders and commented: "The Elders everywhere need to take special heed; because in every trial the most favored and most prominent have the severest besetments and tests. Hence [James] exhorts, 'Be not many of you

16. What counsel did Paul give to the overseers of Ephesus?

17, 18. What counsel published in this magazine some 80 years ago still applies to Christian elders?

teachers, brethren, knowing that a man shall receive the more severe testing.' We, likewise, exhort all the Elders who in heart are pure, unselfish, that they have nothing but love and good wishes for all mankind, and that they become more and more filled with the fruits and graces of the holy Spirit, taking heed also to the flock. Remember, that the flock is the Lord's and that you have a responsibility to the Lord, as well as to them. Remember, that you are to watch for their souls (interests) as those who must give an account to the Great Chief Shepherd. Remember, that the principal thing is Love, in all; and, while not neglecting doctrines, give special heed to the development of the Lord's Spirit amongst the various members of his Body, that thus they may become 'meet for the inheritance of the saints in light,' and, according to the Divine will, be not suffered to stumble in this evil day, but, having done all, to stand complete in Christ, his Body, his Members, his Joint-Sacrificers, his Joint-Heirs."

<sup>18</sup> Those words were directed to spirit-anointed elders and fellow believers in line with the understanding and circumstances of Jehovah's organization in those earlier days. Yet, how well that counsel applies today! Whether their hopes are heavenly or earthly, Christian elders must pay attention to themselves, guard their trust,

### What Would You Say?

- What added trust do Christian elders have?
- An elder can take what positive steps to guard his trust?
- To guard his trust, what pitfalls must an elder avoid?
- Why does joy result when elders guard their trust?

and lovingly care for the interests of God's flock.

### Joy Results From Guarding Your Trust

<sup>19</sup> Happiness—in fact, heartfelt joy—results from guarding your trust as a Christian elder. There is pleasure in discharging a serious responsibility well. So be cautious, prayerful, diligent. Guard your trust as an elder and look forward to the time when you can say, as did the man with the

19, 20. Why can it be said that joy results when elders guard their trust?

secretary's inkhorn: "I have done just as you have commanded me."—Ezekiel 9:3, 4, 11.

<sup>20</sup> Yes, work loyally as an elder so that it can be said of you as it was of Noah: "He did just so." (Genesis 6:22) From such diligent service, the congregation benefits in many ways. Most of all, Jehovah is honored by strong, active congregations served by faithful elders who guard their trust. But more is required if, in effect, you are to be told: "Well done, good slave!" (Luke 19:17) As an elder, you must also treat God's flock with tenderness.



## ◦ E L D E R S ◦ *Treat God's Flock With Tenderness!*

*"We became gentle in the midst of you, as when a nursing mother cherishes her own children."*—1 THESSALONIANS 2:7.

**J**EHOVAH is the Great Shepherd. He makes abundant provision for his sheeplike servants and leads them "in the tracks of righteousness" for the sake of

1. Why can every loyal Witness of Jehovah feel secure?

his holy name. Hence, those doing his will need fear nothing bad and can look to their compassionate God for comfort. Indeed, every loyal Witness of Jehovah has sound reason to feel secure in God's loving care.—Psalm 23:1-4.

<sup>2</sup> Jesus Christ "is the reflection of [God's] glory and the exact representation of his very being." (Hebrews 1:1-4) So Jesus, the Fine Shepherd, also displays love and compassion. (John 10:14, 15) For instance, on one occasion "he saw a great crowd, but he was moved with pity for them, because they were as sheep without a shepherd. And he started to teach them many things."—Mark 6:34.

<sup>3</sup> All Christians should 'imitate God and go on walking in love just as Christ loved them.' (Ephesians 5:1, 2) So they should be loving and compassionate. Especially should this be true of undershepherds of God's flock. The apostle Paul said: "Pay attention to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the holy spirit has appointed you overseers, to shepherd the congregation of God, which he purchased with the blood of his own Son. I know that after my going away oppressive wolves will enter in among you and will not treat the flock with tenderness, and from among you yourselves men will rise and speak twisted things to draw away the disciples after themselves."—Acts 20:28-30.

<sup>4</sup> In time, apostate "oppressive wolves" appeared and did "not treat the flock with tenderness." But how glad we are that elders among Jehovah's Witnesses do not practice such tyranny! Yet, what kind of treatment can fellow believers expect to receive from these spirit-appointed overseers? And how can such appointees show tender regard for Jehovah's sheep?

2. As the reflection of God's glory, what qualities does Jesus display?

3. (a) Like Jehovah God and Jesus Christ, Christian undershepherds should display what qualities? (b) What counsel and warning did the apostle Paul give overseers?

4. (a) In time, what happened in keeping with Paul's warning at Acts 20:29, 30? (b) What questions now merit consideration?

## Not to Lord It Over the Flock

<sup>5</sup> We can rightly expect Christian elders to treat us in a compassionate way. They are not like worldly rulers, who often lord it over their subjects. For instance, it is reported that the Frankish king Charlemagne (who ruled 768-814 C.E.) "compelled the Saxons, *under pain of death*, to receive baptism, condemned to the severest punishments the breakers of Lent, and everywhere substituted force for persuasion." (*The History of the Christian Church*, by William Jones) Tyranny has no place among Jesus' followers, for he said: "You know that the rulers of the heathen lord it over them, and their great men tyrannize over them. It is not to be so among you, but whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to hold the first place among you must be your slave, just as the Son of Man has come not to be waited on, but to wait on other people, and to give his life to ransom many others."—Matthew 20:25-28, *An American Translation*.

<sup>6</sup> A Christian man who is 'reaching out for an office of overseer is desirous of a fine work.' (1 Timothy 3:1) When we consider this and Jesus' counsel just cited, these basic factors stand out: (1) Christian elders must not tyrannize over others; (2) those shouldering responsibility among Jesus' followers must be their slaves, not their masters; and (3) men reaching out for an overseer's office should look upon it as "a fine work," not as an exalted position. (Proverbs 25:27; 1 Corinthians 1:31) The term "elder" does not elevate any man above other worshipers of Jehovah. Rather, the congregation has reason to expect

5. (a) How do worldly leaders often treat their subjects? (b) How did Jesus show that tyranny has no place among his followers?

6. (a) As regards elders, what basic factors stand out? (b) The congregation has reason to expect what of elders, and how should these men view themselves?

all elders to be spiritually mature, experienced, and humble men who take the lead in sacred service. Indeed, elders should view themselves as humble slaves of Jehovah God, Jesus Christ, and fellow Christians.—Romans 12:11; Galatians 5:13; Colossians 3:24.

<sup>7</sup> Humbly slaving in behalf of others naturally restrains an elder from trying to “lord it over” them. And how good it is that our overseers display an attitude similar to that of Paul! He told Christians at Corinth: ‘We are not the masters over your faith, but we are fellow workers for your joy.’ (2 Corinthians 1:24) Accordingly, those who exercise loving oversight do not burden fellow believers with unnecessary human regulations. Instead, overseers among Jehovah’s Witnesses are governed by Scriptural principles and render kind, helpful service. They also show deep regard for God’s flock by quickly applying instructions received from the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses.—Acts, chapter 15.

<sup>8</sup> Because Paul had tender regard for God’s flock, he could tell Christians at Thessalonica: “We became gentle in the midst of you, as when a nursing mother cherishes her own children. So, having a tender affection for you, we were well pleased to impart to you, not only the good news of God, but also our own souls, because you became beloved to us.” (1 Thessalonians 2:7, 8) Paul acted as does a nursing mother, who loves her children so deeply that she puts their interests ahead of her own and has tender regard for them. How this should move 20th-century elders to treat God’s flock with tenderness!

7. (a) How should elders apply 2 Corinthians 1:24 in dealing with others? (b) What should elders do about instructions received from the Governing Body?

8. What attitude did Paul have toward fellow believers, and how should this affect 20th-century elders?

## Sources of Relief and Refreshment

<sup>9</sup> Pointing to this day of Kingdom rule by Jesus Christ, the prophet Isaiah foretold that a king would “reign for righteousness itself” and “princes” would rule “for justice itself.” Hence, elders in the present-day theocratic organization are handling the interests of the established heavenly Kingdom—princely service indeed! To these responsible men apply Isaiah’s further prophetic words: “Each one must prove to be like a hiding place from the wind and a place of concealment from the rainstorm, like streams of water in a waterless country, like the shadow of a heavy crag in an exhausted land.”—Isaiah 32:1, 2.

<sup>10</sup> Unlike Christendom’s oppressive religious leaders, elders among Jehovah’s Witnesses are sources of relief and refreshment. As bodies of older men, they promote peace, tranquillity, and security among Jehovah’s people. Individually, each elder can contribute to this fine condition by treating God’s flock with tenderness.

## With Justice and Righteousness

<sup>11</sup> Although problems arose in some first-century Christian congregations, their general state was that of peace, unity, and joy. (1 Corinthians 1:10-12; 3:5-9; Ephesians 1:2; James 2:1-9; 3:2-12; 4:11, 12; 1 John 1:3, 4) A fine spiritual condition also exists in most congregations of Jehovah’s Witnesses today because of God’s blessing, Christ’s leadership, and the faithful work of appointed

9. What circumstances of Jehovah’s present-day people were foretold at Isaiah 32:1, 2?

10. Each elder among Jehovah’s Witnesses should be a source of what?

11. (a) What general state existing among first-century Christians prevails in most congregations of Jehovah’s Witnesses today? (b) Overseers have what responsibility toward the congregation, and why?



**Heartfelt prayer is vital when a judicial committee meets with a fellow believer**

overseers. To ensure congregational peace, unity, and joy, these men seek divine help and diligently strive to keep God's organization clean, morally and spiritually. (Isaiah 52:11) An unclean organization could never be peaceful and joyous, and it surely would not have God's approval and blessing. He is "too pure in eyes to see what is bad," to tolerate wrongdoing. (Habakkuk 1:13) Among other things, then, elders are expected to care for judicial matters in an upright, Scriptural manner. But what are some factors to remember when handling such cases?

<sup>12</sup> For one thing, in cases involving personal differences, it may be possible for individuals to settle matters privately. (Matthew 18:15-17) Since elders are not 'masters over our faith,' they are not expected to look into purely personal affairs that do not involve serious violations of Bible laws or principles. Naturally, if there is evidence that a person has taken "some false step before he is aware of it," those having spiritual qualifications should "try to readjust such a man in a spirit of mildness."—Galatians 6:1.

12. Although elders are not required to look into personal affairs that do not violate Bible laws or principles, what should be done in view of Galatians 6:1?

<sup>13</sup> Elders are to serve "for justice itself," always being impartial. So they should act on *evidence* of wrongdoing, not on mere hearsay. Paul counseled: "Do not admit an accusation against an older man, except only on the evidence of two or three witnesses." (1 Timothy 5:19) According to Jehovah's standard, in ancient Israel a person charged with a capital sin was to be put to death 'at the mouth of two or three witnesses, not one.' Moreover, the accused apparently had the opportunity to face his accusers, and if the evidence was adequate, 'the hand of the witnesses first of all was to come upon him to put him to death.'—Deuteronomy 17:6, 7.

<sup>14</sup> There must be a sound Scriptural basis for judicial action. How glad we are that congregation overseers are not like proud Diotrephes of the first century C.E.! He wrongly tried "to throw out of the congregation" those wishing to receive traveling brothers hospitably. The apostle John did not view this and other misdeeds lightly but warned: "If I come, I will call to remembrance his works." (3 John 9, 10) Thus, a present-day judicial committee must be sure that there is a Biblical basis for any disfellowshipping action they take.\* Of course, God expects Christian elders to be just in dealing with others. Indeed, those administering the affairs of

\* A person can appeal a decision to disfellowship him if he believes that a serious error in judgment has been made.

13. How do the Scriptures show that elders should act only on evidence of wrongdoing, not on hearsay?

14. (a) What did Diotrephes wrongly try to do? (b) God expects what of elders when they are handling judicial matters?

Jehovah's earthly organization must be "capable men, fearing God, trustworthy men."—Exodus 18:21.

<sup>15</sup> Every Christian judicial committee should seek Jehovah's help in heartfelt prayer. A meeting with a brother or a sister accused of serious wrongdoing should be opened with prayer. In fact, it would be proper to pray at any time during the discussion that a particular need for God's help should arise.—James 5:13-18.

<sup>16</sup> Elders know that a fellow believer accused of wrongdoing is a "sheep" in God's flock and should be treated with tenderness. (Compare Ezekiel 34:7-14.) Literal sheep need tender care, for they are timid creatures dependent on their shepherd for protection. So, what about the figurative sheep in the local congregation? They undoubtedly feel secure in the care of the Great Shepherd, Jehovah God, and the Fine Shepherd, Jesus Christ. But undershepherds of the flock must act in ways that contribute to the inner peace and sense of security of sheeplike servants of Jehovah. If you are a Christian undershepherd, then, do your brothers and sisters feel secure and tranquil in your care? True, elders must firmly uphold Bible laws and principles. But they are Scripturally required to deal with the sheep in a loving way and to conduct judicial hearings in a calm, orderly, kind, and considerate manner.

<sup>17</sup> Being imperfect, "we all stumble many times" in what we say. (James 3:2) Each one of us needs God's mercy and Christ's "propitiatory sacrifice." (1 John 1:8-2:2; Psalm 130:3) So a Christian undershepherd ought to take a humble view of himself. He should

15. What role should prayer play at judicial hearings?

16. In what manner should elders conduct judicial hearings, and why?

17. What Scriptural points should elders keep in mind, especially during judicial hearings?

also remember Jesus' words: "Just as you want men to do to you, do the same way to them." (Luke 6:31) Especially should this counsel be applied during judicial hearings. Spiritually qualified men should try to re-adjust an erring Christian 'in a spirit of mildness, as they each keep an eye on themselves, for fear they also may be tempted.' —Galatians 6:1; 1 Corinthians 10:12.

<sup>18</sup> If elders were to treat others harshly during judicial hearings, this might prove harmful to such individuals. But even if emotional or physical harm did not result, there could be grave spiritual injury, and the qualifications of the overseers could also be called into question. (Compare James 2:13.) Hence, during judicial hearings and at all other times, elders should be kind and must guard against stumbling others. Of course, all Christians need to exercise care in this regard, for Jesus said: "Whoever stumbles one of these little ones that believe, it would be finer for him if a millstone such as is turned by an ass were

18. (a) What might result if elders treated others harshly during judicial hearings? (b) In view of Mark 9:42, against doing what should elders and other Christians be on guard?

#### What Is Your Thought?

- How did Jesus Christ show that tyranny has no place among his followers?
- What should elders do when instructions are received from the Governing Body?
- According to Isaiah 32:1, 2, elders should be sources of what?
- How do the Scriptures show that elders should not act on mere hearsay?
- How should Christian undershepherds treat the flock?

put around his neck and he were actually pitched into the sea." (Mark 9:42) An upper millstone could be so large that an animal's strength was normally needed to turn it, and nobody cast into the sea with such a weight around his neck could survive. Surely, then, an elder should be careful not to cause stumbling that could result in lasting spiritual harm to himself and any individual thus stumbled.—Philippians 1:9-11.

### Continue Showing Tender Regard

<sup>19</sup> The apostle Peter showed how fellow overseers were to shepherd the flock when he wrote: "Shepherd the flock of God in your care, not under compulsion, but willingly; neither for love of dishonest gain, but eagerly; neither as lording it over those who are God's inheritance, but becoming examples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd has been made man-

19. What counsel did Peter give fellow elders, and what bearing does properly responding to it have on their prospects?

fest, you will receive the unfadable crown of glory." (1 Peter 5:2-4) Only by applying such counsel and by manifesting tender regard for the flock of God can anointed overseers obtain their heavenly reward as immortal spirit creatures and can elders with earthly hopes receive eternal life in the coming global Paradise.

<sup>20</sup> Both Jehovah God and Jesus Christ are loving, compassionate Shepherds. So while Christian undershepherds firmly uphold divine standards, they must show love and compassion in dealing with their sheeplike fellow believers. Surely, all loyal Witnesses of Jehovah deeply appreciate the exemplary service of such self-sacrificing elders who guard their trust and treat God's flock with tenderness. That appreciation, along with proper respect, can be shown by being obedient to those taking the lead among us.

20. (a) How must Christian undershepherds deal with their fellow believers? (b) How do you feel about the exemplary service and tender care of loving elders?

## ◊ B E O B E D I E N T ◊

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### *to Those Taking the Lead*

*"Be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you and be submissive, for they are keeping watch over your souls as those who will render an account."*

—HEBREWS 13:17.

JEHOVAH has provided overseers for his organization in this "time of the end." (Daniel 12:4) They take the lead in caring for sheeplike ones, and their supervision is refreshing. (Isaiah 32:1, 2) Moreover, loving oversight by elders who treat

1. How do we benefit from the work of Christian overseers?

God's flock with tenderness serves as a protection from Satan and this wicked system of things.—Acts 20:28-30; 1 Peter 5:8; 1 John 5:19.

<sup>2</sup> But how do you view the elders? In your heart, do you say: 'I'll never go to another

2. How did some view the apostle Paul, but what attitude toward the elders is fitting?

elder in this congregation if I have a problem, for I have no confidence in any of them? If that is how you feel, could you be overemphasizing their imperfections? In ancient Corinth, some said of the apostle Paul: "His letters are weighty and forceful, but his presence in person is weak and his speech contemptible." Yet, God assigned Paul to a ministry and used him as "an apostle to the nations." (2 Corinthians 10:10; Romans 11:13; 1 Timothy 1:12) It is hoped, then, that you feel more like the sister who said: "We have the best body of elders in the world. They were right here to help when needed."

### Why Obey Them?

<sup>3</sup> Since Christian undershepherds have been provided by the Great Shepherd, Jehovah God, how do you think he wants us to view them? Surely, God expects us to follow the Bible-based direction received through loving overseers under the supervision of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses. Then 'the Lord will be with the spirit we show,' we will enjoy peace, and we will be upbuilt spiritually.—2 Timothy 4:22; compare Acts 9:31; 15:23-32.

<sup>4</sup> Paul urged: "Remember those who are taking the lead among you, who have spoken the word of God to you, and as you contemplate how their conduct turns out imitate their faith." (Hebrews 13:7) Among the early Christians, the apostles primarily took the lead. Today, we can observe those making up the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses, other anointed overseers, and men of the "great crowd" who take the lead among us. (Revelation 7:9) Although we are not urged to imitate their voice quality, posture, or other human traits, we should be able to make

3. If the Lord is to be with the spirit we show, how should we view Christian undershepherds?
4. How can we personally apply Hebrews 13:7?

our conduct turn out well by imitating their faith.

<sup>5</sup> On the earth today, the chief responsibility for caring for our spiritual needs has been entrusted to "the faithful and discreet slave." Its representative Governing Body takes the lead and coordinates the worldwide Kingdom-preaching work. (Matthew 24:14, 45-47) Especially might these spirit-anointed elders be viewed as spiritual governors, for Hebrews 13:7 can be rendered: "Be you mindful of the ones governing . . . you." (*Kingdom Interlinear*) With more than 60,000 congregations and over 3,500,000 Kingdom proclaimers, the 12 elders forming the Governing Body have 'plenty to do in the Lord's work.' (1 Corinthians 15:58) In view of their God-given assignment, they deserve our full cooperation, even as the first-century governing body had the cooperation of the early Christians.—Acts 15:1, 2.

<sup>6</sup> Overseers have been spirit-appointed to care for the spiritual needs of the congregation. (Acts 20:28) They see to it that the Kingdom message is preached in the territory of the local congregation. These Scripturally qualified men also provide spiritual direction in a loving manner. They exhort, console, and bear witness to their spiritual brothers and sisters, to the end that these might go on walking worthily of God. (1 Thessalonians 2:7, 8, 11, 12) Even when someone takes a false step before he is aware of it, these men seek to readjust him "in a spirit of mildness."—Galatians 6:1.

<sup>7</sup> Our hearts are motivated to cooperate with such loving overseers. This is fitting,

5. On the earth today, to whom has the chief responsibility of caring for the Christian congregation been entrusted, and what do they deserve?

6. What are some things done by elders for the benefit of Jehovah's people?

7. What counsel did Paul give at Hebrews 13:17?

as Paul wrote: "Be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you and be submissive, for they are keeping watch over your souls as those who will render an account; that they may do this with joy and not with sighing, for this would be damaging to you." (Hebrews 13:17) How are we to understand this counsel?

<sup>8</sup> Paul urges us to obey those governing us spiritually. We are to "be submissive," to yield to these undershepherds. Why? Because 'they are keeping watch over our souls,' or lives dedicated to God. And how are they "keeping watch"? Here the present active indicative of the Greek verb *a·gru·pne'o* literally means that the elders "are abstaining from sleep." This reminds us of the solitary shepherd who forgoes sleep to protect his flock from nighttime dangers. Elders sometimes spend sleepless nights in prayerful concern for God's flock or in rendering spiritual aid to fellow believers. How much we should appreciate their faithful service! Surely, we do not want to be like the "ungodly men" of Jude's day who 'disregarded lordship and spoke abusively of glorious ones,' anointed Christian elders with God-given glory, or honor, conferred upon them.—Jude 3, 4, 8.

<sup>9</sup> Jehovah would be displeased if we failed to be obedient and submissive to Christian overseers. This would also prove burdensome to them and would harm us spiritually. If we were uncooperative, the elders might care for their duties with sighing, perhaps in a spirit of discouragement that could result in a loss of joy in our Christian activities. But our obedience and submissiveness promote godly conduct and strengthen our faith. 'The Lord is with the

8, 9. (a) In view of Hebrews 13:17, why should we be obedient to those taking the lead? (b) Our obedience and submissiveness can have what good effects?

spirit we show,' and joy flourishes in such a climate of cooperation, peace, and unity.—2 Timothy 4:22; Psalm 133:1.

<sup>10</sup> Our being obedient and submissive to congregation elders does not mean that we are men pleasers. That would be unscriptural, for first-century Christian slaves were told to obey their masters, "not with acts of eye-service, as men pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, with fear of Jehovah." (Colossians 3:22; Ephesians 6:5, 6) Overseers 'who preside in a fine way and work hard in speaking and teaching' deserve honor principally because their teaching is based on God's Word. As Paul wrote: "Let the older men who preside in a fine way be reckoned worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard in speaking and teaching. For the scripture says: 'You must not muzzle a bull when it threshes out the grain'; also: 'The workman is worthy of his wages.'"—1 Timothy 5:17, 18.

<sup>11</sup> Paul's words just quoted indicate that material help can rightly be given to those looking after the spiritual interests of others. However, this does not mean that elders should receive a salary, and "double honor" surely is not something exacted by an elder. It may come from the congregation's members spontaneously, but he must never use his assignment to gain power or material possessions. He should not seek his own glory or associate mainly with the more prosperous ones for material advantage and to the neglect of others. (Proverbs 25:27; 29:23; Jude 16) Rather, an overseer must shepherd God's flock 'willingly, not for love of dishonest gain, but eagerly.'—1 Peter 5:2.

10. According to 1 Timothy 5:17, why do those presiding in a fine way deserve honor?

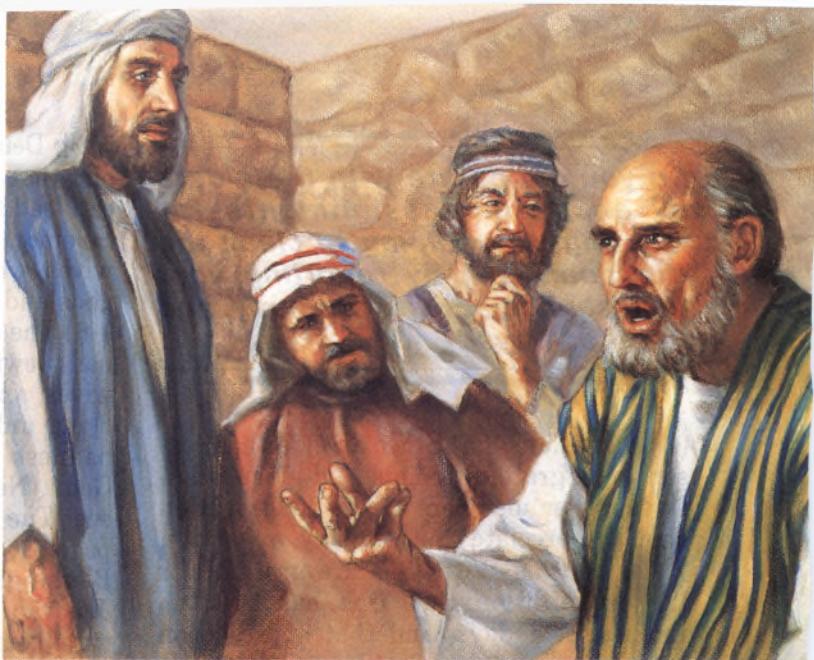
11. How may "double honor" come to an elder, but what must he avoid?

<sup>12</sup> We will be helped to obey and honor those taking the lead if we remember that God himself has provided the elders. (Ephesians 4:7-13) Since these men are spirit appointed and God's organization occupies a vital place in the lives of Jehovah's Witnesses, surely we want to demonstrate our gratitude and respect for theocratic arrangements. Moreover, we can assist new ones to develop this attitude if we set a fine example of obedience and submission to those taking the lead among us.

### Why Appreciate Their Service?

<sup>13</sup> In the world, there is a tendency to reject leadership. As one lecturer said: "The rising education level has improved the talent pool such that followers have become so critical that they are almost impossible to lead." But a spirit of independent thinking does not prevail in God's organization, and we have sound reasons for confidence in the men taking the lead among us. For instance, only those meeting Scriptural requirements are appointed as elders. (1 Timothy 3:1-7) They are trained to be kind, loving, and helpful, yet firm in upholding Jehovah's righteous standards. The elders adhere to Scriptural truth, 'holding firmly to the faithful word, that they may be able to exhort by healthful teaching.' (Titus 1:5-9) Of course, we should not magnify their human imperfections, for all of us are imperfect. (1 Kings

12. By keeping what in mind will we be helped to obey those taking the lead among us?
13. (a) What contrasting views of leadership exist in the world and in God's organization? (b) We have what sound reasons for confidence in the men taking the lead among us? (c) Instead of magnifying the imperfections of hardworking elders, what should we do?



*Paul was delighted to preach the good news and to serve fellow believers. As an elder, are you grateful for your God-given privileges of service?*

8:46; Romans 5:12) Instead of feeling frustrated by their limitations and treating their counsel lightly, let us appreciate and accept the Bible-based direction of the elders as coming from God.

<sup>14</sup> Paul, an appreciative man, said: "I am grateful to Christ Jesus our Lord, who imparted power to me, because he considered me faithful by assigning me to a ministry." (1 Timothy 1:12) That ministry, or service, included the preaching work and the serving of fellow believers. Although an overseer has an assignment by holy spirit to serve as a shepherd, this should not make him feel superior to others, for he himself is part of God's flock of sheeplike ones. (1 Peter 5:4) Instead, he should be grateful that the Head of the congregation, Jesus Christ, counted him worthy to minister to members of the flock and that God qualified him by granting him a measure of knowledge, wisdom, and understanding.

14. In view of 1 Timothy 1:12, how should an elder look upon the ministry assigned to him?

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***Do you cooperate with the elders by accepting assignments for meetings, by helping to clean the Kingdom Hall, by reporting your field service activity promptly, and in other ways?***

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(2 Corinthians 3:5) Since an elder has reason to be grateful for his God-given privileges, other members of the congregation should appreciate this ministry, or service.

<sup>15</sup> Jehovah's Witnesses are grateful for the organization that God has built up in these last days, and that appreciation moves us to respect the elders. We should be happy to cooperate fully with the arrangements they make for our benefit. Paul said: "Now we request you, brothers, to have regard for those who are working hard among you and presiding over you in the Lord and admonishing you; and to give them more than extraordinary consideration in love because of their work." (1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13) Applying this counsel brings joy and Jehovah's blessing.

#### **Be Quick to Apply Counsel**

<sup>16</sup> Paul urged Titus to 'keep exhorting and reproofing with full authority.' (Titus 2:15) Similarly, God's representatives today direct us to Bible principles and laws. There are sound reasons to accept the repeated admonition to apply the counsel and direction of Jehovah's organization and the appointed elders.

<sup>17</sup> To illustrate: The elders may urge a Christian to follow the Bible's counsel to marry "only in the Lord." (1 Corinthians

15. What is the essence of Paul's counsel at 1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13?

16, 17. What counsel might elders give regarding marriage, and what would result from following it?

7:39; Deuteronomy 7:3, 4) They may point out that marrying an unbaptized person can lead to serious problems, even as King Solomon erred gravely by taking foreign wives, who inclined his heart toward false gods and away from Jehovah. (1 Kings 11: 1-6) The elders may also explain that Ezra had Jewish men put away their pagan wives, and Nehemiah said that those marrying unbelievers were 'committing great badness in acting unfaithfully against God.' (Nehemiah 13:23-27; Ezra 10:10-14; see *The Watchtower*, March 15, 1982, page 31; November 15, 1986, pages 26-30.) Blessings and the satisfaction of pleasing Jehovah result from applying such Scriptural counsel given by loving elders.

<sup>18</sup> It is also proper to respect the judicial decisions of the elders. Paul told Christians in Corinth to "quit mixing in company with anyone called a brother that is a fornicator or a greedy person or an idolater or a reviler or a drunkard or an extortioner, not even eating with such a man." They were to 'remove the wicked man from among themselves.' (1 Corinthians 5:9-13) But how would you act if one of your relatives was disfellowshipped? While there might be a need for limited contact to care for family matters, all spiritual association with the disfellowshipped relative would have to be cut off. (See *The Watchtower*, April 15, 1988, pages 26-31.) Surely, loyalty to God and his organization should move us to respect the judicial decisions of the overseers.

<sup>19</sup> It is not easy to remain on the narrow road to life. To do so, we must follow the direction given in God's Word and by those entrusted with shepherding responsibilities in his organization. (Matthew 7:13, 14)

18. Considering what Paul wrote at 1 Corinthians 5:9-13, how should we react if a family member is disfellowshipped?

19. What should we do if the elders show us that we are going the wrong way spiritually?

If we were traveling from one city to another by automobile and made a wrong turn, action would be needed to correct our course. Otherwise, we would never reach our destination. Similarly, if the elders show us that we are going the wrong way spiritually, perhaps by courting an unbeliever, we should quickly apply their Scriptural counsel. This would be one way to show that we really do "trust in Jehovah." —Proverbs 3:5, 6.

### Respect Even in Small Things

<sup>20</sup> We need to show respect for the direction of the elders even in small matters. So we might ask ourselves: 'Am I cooperative if the elders ask us to visit the sick or train new ones in the field ministry? Do I readily accept assignments for meetings and prepare them well? Am I receptive when elders give direction on seat saving at conventions, our manner of dress, and so forth? Do I cooperate when they ask us to assist in cleaning the Kingdom Hall, report our field service promptly, or arrive at meetings on time?'

<sup>21</sup> Congregation overseers appreciate our cooperation, and it results in much good. In fact, our being respectful and cooperative even in small matters may well call to mind Jesus' words: "The person faithful in what is least is faithful also in much." (Luke 16:10) Surely, we want to be considered faithful.

### Keep Responding to Loving Oversight

<sup>22</sup> The benefits resulting from the loving oversight of the faithful slave and congre-

20. Asking ourselves what questions can help us to show respect for the direction of the elders even in small matters?

21. Our showing respect for the elders may call to mind what words of Jesus?

22. What are some benefits resulting from the loving oversight of the faithful slave and congregation elders?

gation elders prove that Jehovah's rich blessing is upon his earthly organization. Moreover, skillful direction by the elders blends their abilities and promotes unity among us. It also results in a concerted and successful effort to advance Kingdom interests. Indeed, one positive result of our appreciative response to the oversight of those taking the lead is that God blesses our preaching and disciple-making work. (Matthew 28:19, 20) Our cooperation with the elders is also preparing us for eternal life in the new system of things.

<sup>23</sup> Since we love Jehovah, obeying him is not an unpleasant duty. The apostle John wrote: "This is what the love of God means, that we observe his commandments; and yet his commandments are not burdensome." (1 John 5:3) Loyal Christians gladly obey Jehovah's commandments and are moved to cooperate with those to whom he has entrusted congregation oversight. How thankful we are to be in God's organization and to have such "gifts in men"! (Ephesians 4:8) With full confidence that God is directing his people, then, let us always be obedient to those privileged to take the lead among Jehovah's Witnesses.

23. In the light of 1 John 5:3, what should we be moved to do?

### What Are Your Comments?

- Why be obedient to those taking the lead among us?
- What attitude should we have regarding the service rendered by hardworking elders?
- Why be quick to apply counsel given by the elders?
- What benefits result from our appreciative response to loving oversight?

# *Who can be God's friend?*

**Y**OU can be God's friend. Some 4,000 years ago, the man Abraham put faith in Jehovah God. This was counted to him as righteousness, and that patriarch came to be called "Jehovah's friend." (James 2:23) So if you have faith in Jehovah, you can also be God's friend.

Friends are likely to be invited to a meal as guests. In fact, part of the well-known 23rd Psalm represents God as a gracious host. It says: "You [Jehovah] arrange before me a table in front of those showing hostility to me. . . . My cup is well filled."

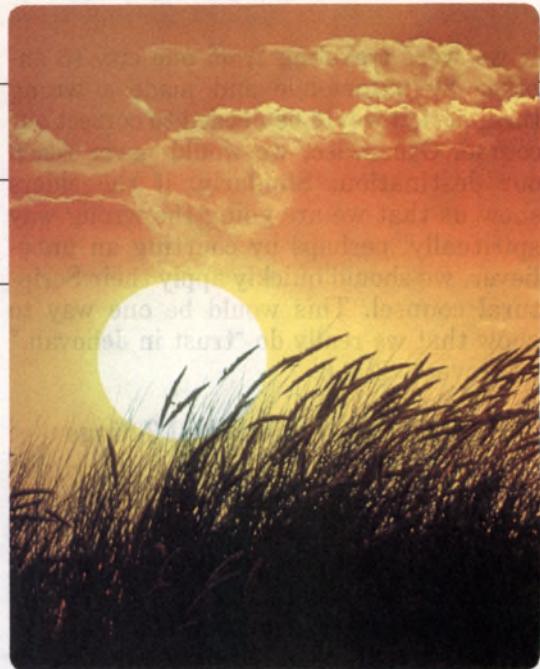
—Psalm 23:5.

On another occasion, the same psalmist—King David of ancient Israel—asked: "O Jehovah, who will be a guest in your tent? Who will reside in your holy mountain?" (Psalm 15:1) Figuratively, this means having access to Jehovah in acceptable prayer and worship. What an awesome privilege! How can imperfect humans possibly qualify to be God's friends and guests?

The 15th Psalm answers this question. It mentions ten specific requirements for those desiring to be God's friends and guests. Let us consider these requirements one by one, starting with verse 2.

## **"He who is walking faultlessly and practicing righteousness"**

Abraham's offspring flourished greatly because Abraham was morally faultless in walking before Jehovah. (Genesis 17:1, 2) "Walking" sometimes means pursuing a certain course in life. (Psalm 1:1; 3 John



3, 4) For God's friends and guests, it is not enough to belong to a religion, delight in its ornate buildings, and share in formal observances. Not all who say "Lord, Lord" or declare that they know God will enjoy the blessings of his Kingdom. (Matthew 7: 21-23; Titus 1:16) Jehovah's friends 'walk faultlessly' in his sight and 'practice righteousness' according to his standards.

—Micah 6:8.

This rules out every form of dishonesty, sexual immorality, and corruption. God himself tells us why, saying: "You must be holy, because I am holy." (1 Peter 1:16) Does your religion adhere to God's high standards, even disfellowshipping those who refuse to conform to his requirements? Do you insist on righteous conduct for yourself and your family? If so, you will be meeting the next requirement for God's friends and guests.

## **"And speaking the truth in his heart"**

If we want God's friendship, we cannot lie or resort to smooth talk with a double

heart. (Psalm 12:2) We must ‘speak the truth in our heart,’ not just have it on our lips. Yes, we have to be inwardly honest and must give evidence of “faith without hypocrisy.” (1 Timothy 1:5) Some people lie or speak half-truths to save face. Others cheat on school tests or falsify tax returns. Such actions betray a lack of love for what is true. But truthfulness and upright acts come from the very hearts of God’s friends. (Matthew 15:18-20) They are not devious or deceptive.—Proverbs 3:32; 6:16-19.

The apostle Paul wrote: “Do not be lying to one another. Strip off the old personality with its practices, and clothe yourselves with the new personality.” (Colossians 3:9, 10) Yes, those who really speak the truth in their heart clothe themselves with “the new personality.” Are you completely honest with yourself and others, speaking the truth in your heart? If you are, that should affect what you say about others.

#### **“He has not slandered with his tongue”**

To meet this requirement for God’s guests, we must never speak maliciously about others. (Psalm 15:3) The Hebrew verb rendered “slanderized” is derived from the word for “foot” and means “to foot it” and thus “to go about.” The Israelites were commanded: “You must not go around among your people for the sake of slandering. You must not stand up against your fellow’s blood. I am Jehovah.” (Leviticus 19:16; 1 Timothy 5:13) If we slander someone, robbing him of his good name, we cannot be God’s friends.

David declared: “Anyone slandering his companion in secrecy, him I silence.” (Psalm 101:5) We too can silence slanderers if we refuse to listen to them. And a good rule is to say nothing about a person behind his back that we would not be willing to say to his face. It is fine if we have our tongue under such control. Yet, how important it is to control our actions too!

#### **“To his companion he has done nothing bad”**

Noteworthy here are Jesus’ words: “All things, therefore, that you want men to do to you, you also must likewise do to them.” (Matthew 7:12) To enjoy God’s favor, we must refrain from doing what is bad. The psalmist said: “O you lovers of Jehovah, hate what is bad. He is guarding the souls of his loyal ones; out of the hand of the wicked ones he delivers them.” (Psalm 97:10) So if we want God’s friendship and help, we must accept his standards.

Shunning what is bad includes not wronging anybody in business dealings or in other ways. In word and deed, we must do nothing to harm our companion, but we should be doing good things for him. This can touch every aspect of life. For instance, when driving, we may courteously yield the right-of-way to pedestrians. We can help the elderly, encourage the despondent, comfort the grieving. In this regard, Jehovah sets the prime example. As Jesus said, God “makes his sun rise upon wicked people and good and makes it rain upon righteous people and unrighteous.” (Matthew 5:43-48) Akin to doing good to others is complying with what the psalmist next mentions.

#### **“And no reproach has he taken up against his intimate acquaintance”**

All of us make mistakes, and how grateful we are when friends choose to overlook these minor errors! We would be distressed if an intimate friend revealed our minor but embarrassing weaknesses to others. Some people do this to divert attention from their own faults or to make themselves appear superior to others. But such acts do not befit those desiring to be God’s friends.

“The one covering over transgression is seeking love, and he that keeps talking about a matter is separating those familiar

with one another," says Proverbs 17:9. Of course, we should not try to conceal serious wrongdoing. (Leviticus 5:1; Proverbs 28:13) But if we want to be God's friends, we will not 'take up,' or receive as true, reproachful stories about upright acquaintances. (1 Timothy 5:19) Jehovah's friends speak well of God's servants instead of spreading tales about them, adding to what they already bear from evil reproaches by ungodly men. God's friends and guests also guard their associations, for David adds in verse 4:

**"In his eyes anyone contemptible  
is certainly rejected"**

Seeking selfish benefits, some people keep company with rich or prominent persons even if they are corrupt. (Compare Jude 16.) But we cannot be Jehovah's friends if we associate with the wicked. We should hate evil so much that we do not want to have fellowship with those who practice it. (Romans 12:9) So bad was Israel's king Jehoram that the prophet Elisha told him: "As Jehovah of armies before whom I do stand is living, if it were not that it is the face of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah for which I am having consideration, I would not look at you or see you." (2 Kings 3:14) To be God's friends, we must heed Paul's warning: "Bad associations spoil useful habits."—1 Corinthians 15:33.

If we value Jehovah's friendship, then, we will refuse to associate with wrongdoers. We will do only necessary business with them. Our friends will be chosen for their good relationship with God, not for their standing in the world. We will choose friends wisely if we have a reverential fear of God. In this regard, note the seventh requirement to be met by Jehovah's guests.

**"But those fearing Jehovah  
he honors"**

To be God's friends and guests, we must fear him. Says Proverbs 1:7: "The fear of

Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge." What is "the fear of Jehovah"? It is reverential awe for God and a wholesome dread of displeasing him. This results in true knowledge, lifesaving discipline, and heavenly wisdom that is a sure guide.

Those fearing Jehovah adhere to his righteous standards even if this results in ridicule. For instance, many scoff when those fearing God work industriously, are honest on the job, or seek to help others spiritually. But how does a godly individual look upon such upright persons? 'He honors those fearing Jehovah,' holding them in high esteem, even if this means bearing reproach along with them. Do you have such respect for those fearing God? Citing another requirement for divine favor, the psalmist adds:

**"He has sworn to what is bad for  
himself, and yet he does not alter"**

The principle here is that of fulfilling our promises, as God does. (1 Kings 8:56; 2 Corinthians 1:20) Even if we later find that doing what we promised is very difficult, we should not change our mind and renege on our promise. Here the Greek *Septuagint*, Syriac *Peshitta*, and Latin *Vulgate* texts say, "sworn to his neighbor." If we swear to do something or make a proper vow, we should live up to it. (Ecclesiastes 5:4) Of

## In Our Next Issue

■ Is Hell Hot?

■ Do You Condemn the World  
Through Your Faith?

■ 'Unless Jehovah  
Builds the House ...'

course, if we learn that something we promised is unscriptural, we should not do it.

Joshua did not break a covenant with the Gibeonites even though he later learned that they had deceived him into making it. (Joshua 9:16-19) So we should be men, women, and young persons who keep our word. Let us not make promises to others and then leave them in the lurch when more appealing opportunities open up to us. Jesus said: "Just let your word Yes mean Yes, your No, No." (Matthew 5:37) Especially should those dedicated to Jehovah be determined to live up to their promise to serve him eternally as his Witnesses. Besides keeping promises, we should be considerate in financial matters, as David shows in the 15th Psalm, verse 5.

#### **"His money he has not given out on interest"**

Money lent for business purposes can rightly be repaid with interest. But here David meant 'giving out money' to the destitute. The Mosaic Law specified: "If you should lend money to my people, to the afflicted alongside you, you must not become like a usurer to him. You must not lay interest upon him." (Exodus 22:25; Leviticus 25:35, 36) When Nehemiah found the poor suffering as victims of usurers, he stopped such exploitation.—Nehemiah 5:1-13.

For "interest," David used a Hebrew word derived from another one signifying "to bite." This suggests that greedy usurers were devouring the poor and the little that they had. Clearly, it is much better to help the poverty-stricken without expecting any return. Jesus made such a point by saying: "When you spread a dinner or evening meal, . . . invite poor people, crippled, lame, blind; and you will be happy, because they have nothing with which to repay you. For you will be repaid in the resurrection of the

righteous ones." (Luke 14:12-14) A person desiring to be God's friend and guest would never take undue advantage of his neighbor's poverty and would comply with what the psalmist goes on to mention.

#### **"And a bribe against the innocent one he has not taken"**

A bribe has a corrupting influence. The Israelites were commanded: "You must not . . . accept a bribe, for the bribe blinds the eyes of wise ones and distorts the words of righteous ones." (Deuteronomy 16:19) It is especially evil to take a bribe to do injury to an "innocent one," perhaps by changing court testimony. How despicable Judas Iscariot was in accepting a bribe to betray innocent Jesus!—Matthew 26:14-16.

We may consider ourselves faultless in this regard. But have we ever been tempted to buy our way out of an embarrassing situation? The prophet Samuel never accepted "hush money," or a bribe. (1 Samuel 12:3, 4) All of us must conduct ourselves in that way if we are to be God's friends and guests.

#### **"He that is doing these things will never be made to totter"**

After its tenfold description of an upright person, the 15th Psalm concludes with the foregoing words. They may well make us analyze our religion. If it is the true faith, it should teach us to (1) walk faultlessly and practice righteousness, (2) speak the truth even in the heart, (3) avoid slandering others, and (4) refrain from doing anything bad. Religion acceptable to God will (5) keep us from taking up reproaches against upright acquaintances and will (6) make us avoid association with contemptible persons. The true faith will move us to (7) honor those fearing Jehovah, (8) carry out what we have promised to do if it is proper, (9) give to the impoverished without charging interest, and (10) never take a bribe against an innocent person.

David does not say that anyone reading, hearing, speaking, or even believing these things "will never be made to totter." This will be the experience only of the individual "that is *doing* these things." Faith without works to back it up is dead and does not result in divine approval. (James 2:26) Doers of the good things mentioned in the 15th Psalm will not totter, for Jehovah will protect and uphold them.—Psalm 55:22.

There is, of course, more to pure worship than the ten points mentioned in the 15th Psalm. Jesus' followers later learned other things about worshiping God "with spirit and truth." (John 4:23, 24) So can you, for people who do these things exist today. Regular association with these Witnesses of Jehovah and study of the Bible will build up hope of life in an earthly paradise where you can be God's guest and friend forever.

## Insight on the News

### Satanic Influence

After doing research on the influence of Satanism in rock and heavy metal rock music, Toronto newspaper columnist Tom Harpur writes in *The Sunday Star*: "I must issue the strongest possible warning about what is happening. . . . I have never seen anything so depraved. The songs are obsessed with madness, possession, demons, blood, curses, violence of every kind, including rape, self-mutilation, murder, and suicide. Death and destruction, prophecies of doom, the denial of all that is good and the embracing of all that is hideous and evil—these are the themes."

Coinciding with the rise of satanic music is an increase in satanic cult activity in the United States and Canada. Reporting on a recent police seminar in Ontario, *The Globe and Mail*, a Canadian newspaper, says that satanic cults are "involved in animal sacrifices, graveyard desecrations and the ritual abuse of children." Detective James Bradley of Washington, D.C., linked hundreds of cases of child abuse to ritualistic crimes of Satanism. As quoted in *The*

*Globe and Mail*, detective Bradley adds that over the past five years, reports of child-abuse rituals have come from "hundreds of kids, hundreds of social workers and teachers."

Referring to "the last days" of the present wicked system of things, the apostle John wrote: "The Devil has come down to you, having great anger, knowing he has a short period of time." (2 Timothy 3:1; Revelation 12:12) The influence of Satan, "the ruler of the authority of the air," permeates even this world's popular music. (Ephesians 2:2) That is why the apostle Paul admonished fellow Christians to "stand firm against the machinations of the Devil." —Ephesians 6:11.

### "Out of Control"

When a 28-year-old female jogger was beaten and raped in New York City's Central Park, millions of people were shocked and dismayed. The reason? The savage and brutal attack was committed by a gang of teenagers whose "obscene gloating in the aftermath and their indifference to the suffering inflicted is truly horrifying," reports the *New York Post*.

Some of the youths responsible for the heinous crime were reported to be as young as 14. Appalled by the attack, one *Post* writer admitted that the world has become an "undisciplined, self-indulgent, drug-ridden, sex-obsessed, family-broken, violence-mad society" that is "out of control and the question is: why?"

Actually, this generation of unmatched violence is exactly what was foretold by the apostle Paul at 2 Timothy 3:1-5. Therein he explained that "the last days" would be marked by persons who are "selfish, greedy, boastful, and conceited." What is more, "they will be insulting, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, and irreligious; they will be unkind, merciless, slanders, violent, and fierce; they will hate the good; they will be treacherous, reckless, and swollen with pride; they will love pleasure rather than God." (*Today's English Version*) Will this violent world remain "out of control" indefinitely? No! Jesus said: "As these things start to occur, raise yourselves erect and lift your heads up, because your deliverance is getting near." —Luke 21:28.

# Questions From Readers

- Scientists hold that some stars burn out or explode, so why does Isaiah 40:26 say that "not one of [the stars] is missing"?



NASA photo

Jehovah is not here discussing whether he permits stars to disappear. He is emphasizing the extent of his wisdom and ability.

To King Hezekiah the prophet Isaiah relayed God's warning that the Babylonians would take the Jews into captivity. (Isaiah 39:5-7) Would the Babylonians be able to keep God's people indefinitely? No. Jehovah not only purposed to free them after 70 years but would do it. Nothing would hinder the One who can 'measure the waters in his hand and take the proportions of the heavens with a mere span.' He would not have to consult with anyone, for "the nations are as a drop from a bucket" to him. (Isaiah 40:12-17) To stress his astounding capacity, Jehovah called attention to his ability manifest in creation, which Hezekiah had previously acknowledged. (Isaiah 37:16, 17) God declared:

"To whom can you people liken me so that I should be made his equal?" says the Holy One. 'Raise your eyes high up and see. Who has created these things? It is the One who is bringing forth the army of them even by number, all

of whom he calls even by name. Due to the abundance of dynamic energy, he also being vigorous in power, not one of them is missing.'"—Isaiah 40:25, 26.

Scientists estimate that there are thousands of millions of stars in our Milky Way galaxy, and there are some one hundred thousand million galaxies. Yet, God knows each star by name, either an individual name or a namelike designation, perhaps in divine language. He is in command of their situation. Like a general able to muster the troops, Jehovah could call the stars to muster. If he did so, none would be "missing." Knowing the situation of each star, even if some of them do come to a natural end, it is no surprise to the One who knows all that is occurring.—Compare Isaiah 34:16.

Astronomers and physicists think that stars burn out or explode. In *Red Giants and White Dwarfs*, Robert Jastrow theorizes how this might happen: "Within the . . . star a series of nuclear reactions set in, in which all the other elements of the universe were manufactured out of the basic ingredient, hydrogen. Eventually these nuclear reactions died out, and the star's life came to an end. Deprived of its resources of nuclear energy, it collapsed under its own weight, and in the aftermath of the collapse an explosion occurred, spraying out to space all the materials that had been created within the star during its lifetime."

Supposedly some stars, consuming their hydrogen, change into red giants and then develop into white dwarfs or supernovas, some finally ending up as neutron

stars or, theoretically, black holes.

While such explanations are widely accepted, the final word may not have been heard; more may be learned. Consider, for example, points made in *The New York Times* of January 24, 1989: "Scientists believe they are on the verge of major discoveries about the 'dark ages' of the universe, the critical period from three minutes after the explosive moment of creation until the appearance of enormous galaxies. . . . With so little direct evidence, the genesis of structure has scientists thoroughly baffled. James S. Trefil, a physicist at George Mason University in Fairfax, Va., has written: 'The problem with explaining the existence of galaxies has proved to be one of the thorniest in cosmology. By all rights, they just shouldn't be there, yet there they sit!'"

The article discussed what may have happened during "the first three minutes," as explained by Dr. John Mather, astrophysicist. Yet, we read: "Dr. Mather, sensing an interviewer's growing confusion, interrupted his recital of the generally accepted creation scenario to say, 'Of course, we're making this all up,' meaning that it is an elaboration of theories based on inferences."

Yes, human scientists are very limited as to what they really know and can know. How different it is, though, with the Creator. His knowledge and dynamic energy certainly merit our awe. The psalmist rightfully said: "He is counting the number of the stars; all of them he calls by their names. Our Lord is great and is abundant in power; his understanding is beyond recounting. . . . Praise Jah, you people!"—Psalm 147:4, 5, 20.

# "There Was the God I Had Been Looking For"

Where? What was the person talking about?

The story goes back to when a gift was made of the book *Life—How Did It Get Here? By Evolution or by Creation?* The book was given to a retired archaeology lecturer living in Spain. Later, when the person who had given the gift was visiting Spain, this retired lecturer observed: "By the way, Edwin, thank you for sending that book. I read it but then gave it away to a young Spanish lad."

The young Spaniard was a drug user, with a beard and long hair. However, after the young man received the book, there was a remarkable transformation in the lad. He shaved off his beard, cut his hair, and stopped using drugs. Learning this, Edwin was eager to meet him.

When they met and the young lad learned where the book had come from, he embraced

Edwin and said: "For five years I have been looking for God, and when I opened that book, there was the God I had been looking for." The lad had progressed to the point of sharing his newfound faith with others.

