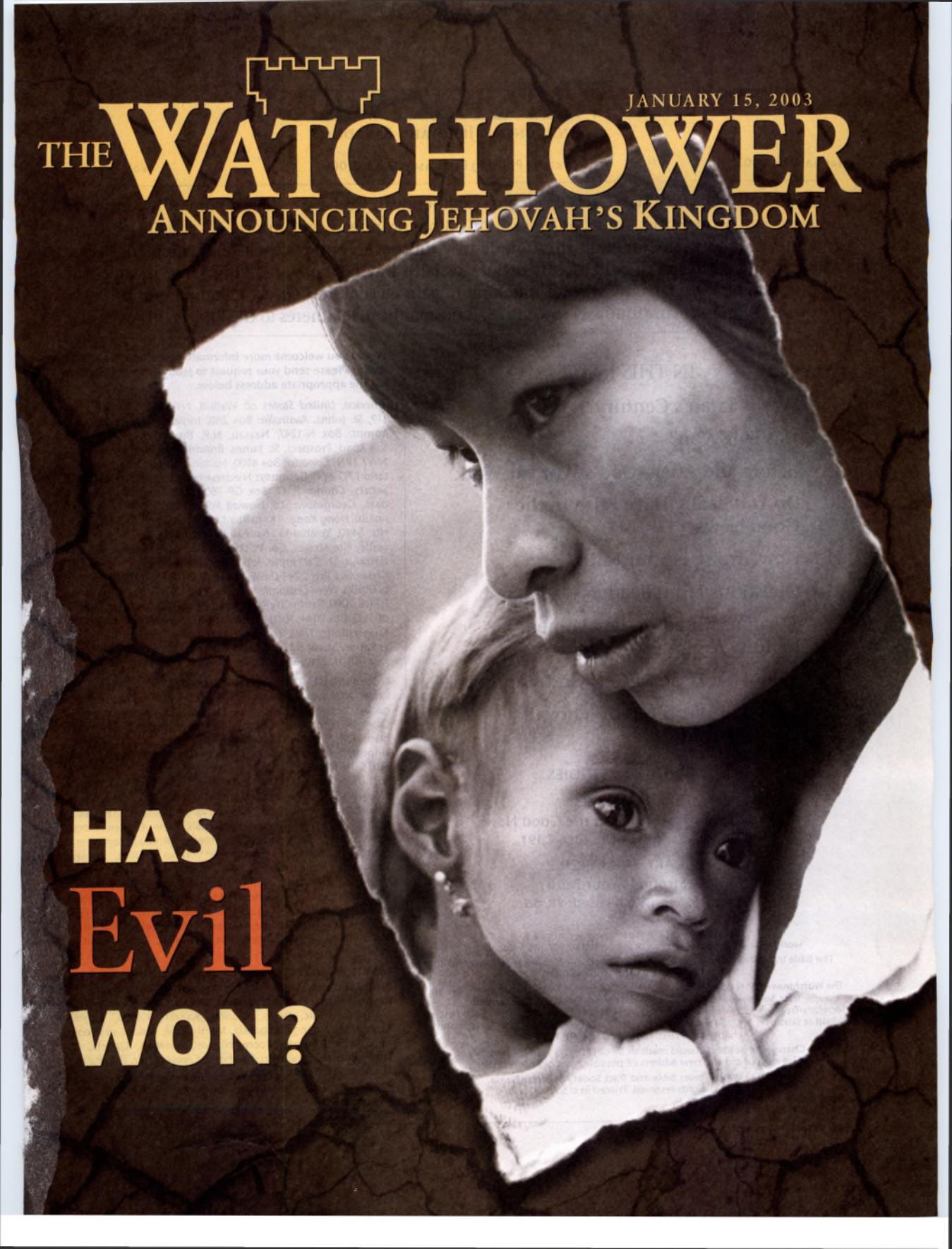


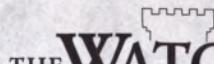
JANUARY 15, 2003

# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



HAS  
Evil  
WON?



# THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

January 15, 2003

Average Printing Each Issue: 25,203,000

Vol. 124, No. 2

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

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Publication of *The Watchtower* is part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations. The Bible translation used is the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References*, unless otherwise indicated.

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

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

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Semimonthly

ENGLISH

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saka 10101. **Zimbabwe:** Private Bag WG-5001, Westgate.

**NOW PUBLISHED IN 146 LANGUAGES. SEMIMONTLY:** Afrikaans, Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Bengali, Bicol, Bislama, Bulgarian, Cebuano,\* Chichewa, Chinese, Chinese (Simplified),\* Cibemba, Croatian,\* Czech,\*\* Danish,\*\* Dutch,\*\* East Armenian, Efik,\* English\*\* (also Braille), Estonian, Ewe, Fijian, Finnish,\*\* French,\*\* Ga, Georgian, German,\*\* Greek,\* Gujrati, Gun, Hebrew, Hiligaynon, Hindi, Hungarian,\*\* Igbo,\* Iloko,\* Indonesian, Italian,\*\* Japanese\*\* (also Braille), Kannada, Kinyarwanda, Kirundi, Korean\*\* (also Braille), Latvian, Lingala, Lithuanian, Luvale, Macedonian, Malagasy, Malayalam, Maltese, Marathi, Myanmar, Nepali, New Guinea Pidgin, Norwegian,\*\* Pangasinan, Papiamento (Aruba), Papiamento (Curaçao), Polish,\*\* Portuguese\*\* (also Braille), Punjabi, Rarotongan, Romanian,\* Russian,\* Samar-Leyte, Samoan, Sango, Sepedi, Serbian, Sesotho, Shona,\* Silozi, Sinhala, Slovak,\* Slovenian, Solomon Islands Pidgin, Spanish,\*\* Sranantongo, Swahili,\* Swedish,\*\* Tagalog,\* Tahitian, Tamil, Telugu, Thai, Tigrinya, Tongan, Tshiluba, Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Twi, Ukrainian,\* Urdu, Venda, Vietnamese, Wallilian, Xhosa, Yoruba,\* Zulu\*

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# Was It Satan's Century?

"**A**T ITS worst, this has been Satan's century. In no previous age have people shown so great an aptitude, and appetite, for killing millions of other people for reasons of race, religion or class."

The 50th anniversary of the liberation of innocent victims imprisoned in the Nazi death camps prompted the foregoing comment in an editorial in *The New York Times* of January 26, 1995. The Holocaust—one of the most widely known genocides in history—exterminated some six million Jews. Nearly three million non-Jewish Polish citizens perished in what has been termed the "Forgotten Holocaust."

"An estimate for the period from 1900 until 1989 is that war killed 86 million people," says Jonathan Glover in his book *Humanity*

—*A Moral History of the Twentieth Century*. He adds: "Death in twentieth-century war has been on a scale which is hard to grasp. Any averaging out of the numbers of deaths is artificial, since about two-thirds (58 million) were killed in the two world wars. But, if these deaths had been spread evenly over the period, war would have killed around 2,500 people every day. That is over 100 people an hour, round the clock, for ninety years."

Consequently, the 20th century has been called one of the bloodiest centuries humanity has ever known. In *Hope Against Hope*, Nadezhda Mandelstam writes: "We have seen the triumph of evil after the values of humankind have been vilified and trampled on." In the struggle of good against evil, has evil really won?



# Has Evil Won?

THE idea of a cosmic struggle between the forces of good and evil has prompted endless speculation by writers and philosophers throughout history. There is a book, however, that contains the accurate history of the battle between God and the Devil. That book is the Bible. It sheds light on the issues involved in this conflict and provides the means of determining who has really won.

Soon after the creation of the first man and woman, an unseen spirit creature, Satan the Devil, challenged God's rulership. How? By subtly suggesting that God withheld good things from his creation and that humans would fare better independent of him.—Genesis 3:1-5; Revelation 12:9.

Later, in the days of the patriarch Job, Satan raised another issue. Seeking to break Job's integrity to God, Satan said: "Skin in behalf of skin, and everything that a man has he will give in behalf of his soul." (Job 2:4) What a sweeping claim that was! By using the general term "a man" instead of the name Job, Satan brought into the arena of doubt the integrity of every human. He, in effect, asserted: 'A man will do anything to save his life. Give me a chance, and I can turn anyone away from God.'

The victory in the battle between God and the Devil is determined by the answering of two questions: Is man successfully able to rule himself? Has the Devil managed to turn everyone away from the true God?

## Can Humans Successfully Rule Themselves?

For thousands of years, humans have experimented with various types of ruler-

ship. Different forms of government, such as monarchy, aristocracy, democracy, autocracy, Fascism, and Communism, have been tried in the course of history. Does not the very fact that there has been an ever-present need to experiment indicate that these different ways of governing are inadequate?

"The Roman people found themselves engaged almost unawares in a vast administrative experiment," writes H. G. Wells in *A History of the World*, published in 1922. He continues: "It was always changing, it never attained to any fixity. In a sense the experiment failed. In a sense the experiment remains unfinished, and Europe and America today are still working out the riddles of the worldwide statecraft first confronted by the Roman people."

The experiment in government continued through the 20th century. That century ended with democratic rule gaining greater acceptance than ever before. Democracy theoretically reaches out to embrace everyone. But has democracy shown that man can rule successfully without God? Jawaharlal Nehru, former prime minister of India, called democracy good but added: "I say this because other systems are worse." Former French president Valéry Giscard d'Estaing said: "We are witnessing a crisis of representative democracy."

Even in the fifth century B.C.E., the Greek philosopher Plato detected a weakness in the democratic way of ruling. According to the book *A History of Political Theory*, he attacked "the ignorance and incompetence of politicians, which is the special curse of democracies." Many of today's politicians lament

the difficulty in finding talented individuals who are qualified to serve in government. People "are annoyed by leaders who appear small at a time when the problems facing them are so big," said *The Wall Street Journal*. It continued: "They are disgusted with finding indecision and corruption when they look for direction."

Now consider the rulership of King Solomon of ancient Israel. Jehovah God gave Solomon outstanding wisdom. (1 Kings 4:29-34) How did the nation of Israel fare during Solomon's 40-year reign? "Judah and Israel were many," answers the Bible, "like the grains of sand that are by the sea for multitude, eating and drinking and rejoicing." The account also states: "Judah and Israel continued to dwell in security, everyone under his own vine and under his own fig tree, from Dan to Beer-sheba, all the days of Solomon." (1 Kings 4:20, 25) With a wise king ruling over them as the visible representative of the invisible Supreme Ruler, Jehovah God, the nation enjoyed unsurpassed stability, prosperity, and joy.

What a stark contrast between man's rulership and God's! Can anyone honestly say that Satan has won on the issue of rulership? No, for the prophet Jeremiah accurately declared: "I well know, O Jehovah, that to earthling man his way does not belong. It does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step."

—Jeremiah 10:23.

### Can Satan Turn Everyone Away From God?

"Has Satan been successful in his claim that he can turn everyone away from God? In chapter 11 of the Bible book of Hebrews, the

apostle Paul names a number of faithful men and women of pre-Christian times. Then he declares: "The time will fail me if I go on to relate about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David as well as Samuel and the other prophets." (Hebrews 11:32) Paul simply refers to these loyal servants of God as a 'great cloud of witnesses.' (Hebrews 12:1) The Greek word used here for "cloud" means, not a detached, sharply outlined cloud with definite size and shape, but a huge formless cloud mass. This is appropriate because the faithful servants of God in the past have been so numerous that they are like a huge cloud mass. Yes, down through the centuries, unnumbered multitudes of people have exercised their free will and chosen to give their allegiance to Jehovah God.—Joshua 24:15.

What do we find in our time? The number of Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide has increased to over six million despite the terrible persecution and opposition they experienced during the 20th century. An



*By keeping integrity,  
Jehovah's Witnesses  
have added  
to Satan's defeat*

additional nine million or so associate with them, and many of these are taking decisive steps to enter into a close personal relationship with God.

The ultimate answer to Satan's claim that he can turn humans away from Jehovah came from God's own Son, Jesus Christ. Not even excruciating pain on a torture stake broke his integrity. As Jesus took his last breath, he cried out: "Father, into your hands I entrust my spirit."—Luke 23:46.

Satan uses everything in his power—from temptations to outright persecution—to try to keep humans under his control. Using "the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the showy display of one's means of life" to tempt people, he seeks either to keep or to entice them away from Jehovah. (1 John 2:16) Satan has also 'blinded the minds of the unbelievers so that the illumination of the glorious good news about the Christ might not shine through.' (2 Corinthians 4:4) And Satan does not hesitate to resort to threats and to exploit fear of men to accomplish his aim.—Acts 5:40.

Those on God's side, however, are not overcome by the Devil. They have come to know Jehovah God and 'to love him with their whole heart and with their whole soul and with their whole mind.' (Matthew 22:37) Yes, the unwavering loyalty of Jesus Christ and of countless humans adds up to a colossal defeat for Satan the Devil.

### What Does the Future Hold?

Will human experiments in government go on indefinitely? The prophet Daniel foretold: "In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be brought to ruin. And the kingdom itself will not be passed on to any other people. It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indef-

inite." (Daniel 2:44) The Kingdom that the God of heaven sets up is a heavenly government in the hands of Jesus Christ. It is the same Kingdom that Jesus taught his followers to pray for. (Matthew 6:9, 10) That Kingdom will destroy all human governments at "the [upcoming] war of the great day of God the Almighty" and will affect the entire earth.—Revelation 16:14, 16.

What is in store for Satan? The Bible describes this future event: "[An angel of Jehovah] seized the dragon, the original serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. And he hurled him into the abyss and shut it and sealed it over him, that he might not mislead the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended." (Revelation 20:1-3) Only after Satan is hurled into the abyss of inactivity will the Thousand Year Reign of Jesus Christ begin.

What a delightful place this earth will then be! Gone will be wickedness and those who cause it. The Bible promises: "Evildoers themselves will be cut off . . . But the meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace." (Psalm 37:9-11) Their peace will not be threatened from any source—human or animal. (Isaiah 11:6-9) Even millions who, out of ignorance and because of lack of opportunity to know Jehovah, sided with the Devil over the course of history will be brought back to life and given divine education.—Acts 24:15.

By the end of the Thousand Year Reign, the earth will be brought into a paradisaic condition, and mankind upon it will have been brought to human perfection. Then Satan will be let loose for "a little while," only to be destroyed forever along with all opposers of God's rulership.—Revelation 20:3, 7-10.

## Whose Side Will You Take?

The 20th century was a time when Satan wreaked havoc upon the earth. Rather than indicating that he has won, however, the conditions on the earth constitute a sign that we are in the last days of this wicked world. (Matthew 24:3-14; Revelation 6:1-8) Neither the intensity of wickedness on earth nor the majority viewpoint is an issue in discerning who has won. The determining factors are whose way of ruling is best and whether anyone has served God out of love. On both counts, the victory belongs to Jehovah.

If the allowed time has already proved Satan wrong, why does God permit wickedness

**Jehovah has many loyal ones  
on his side**

to continue? Jehovah is showing patience "because he does not desire any to be destroyed but desires all to attain to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9) God's will "is that all sorts of men should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth." (1 Timothy 2:4) May you use the remaining time to study the Bible and 'take in knowledge of the only true God and of the one whom he sent forth, Jesus Christ.' (John 17:3) Jehovah's Witnesses will be happy to help you gain that knowledge so that you too can join the millions standing firm on the victorious side.



BEFORE AND AFTER

## God's Word at Work

**I**F YOU had met Tony in his early teens, you would have found a rough and aggressive boy frequenting some of the run-down parts of Sydney, Australia. He counted gang members among his friends. They were often involved in burglaries, gang warfare, and street shoot-outs.

Tony started smoking at age nine. By 14, he was a regular marijuana user and was leading an immoral life. By the time he was 16, he was a heroin addict, and this led to the use of cocaine, LSD—"in fact, anything I could get a high on," as Tony puts it. He then established drug-dealing contacts with two notorious crime syndicates. Soon Tony became known as one of the most reliable drug suppliers on the east coast of Australia.

Tony's heroin and marijuana habit cost him between \$160 (U.S.) and \$320 (U.S.) a day. But it was costing his family much more than that. "My wife and I," he says, "had shotguns and knives thrust in our faces on several occasions by criminals who were looking for the drugs and cash that we had on our premises." After being in prison three times, Tony felt compelled to examine the direction his life was taking.

Although he used to go to church, Tony felt alienated from a God who supposedly burned sinners in hell forever as punishment. When visited by two of Jehovah's Witnesses, though, Tony was surprised to learn that God is not like that. And Tony was glad that he could indeed put his life in order and receive blessings from God. Tony was moved by Jesus Christ's statement: "All things are possible with God."



(Mark 10:27) Especially was Tony touched by the heartening words: "Draw close to God, and he will draw close to you."—James 4:8.

Tony now faced the challenge of bringing his life into harmony with Bible standards. He says: "The first thing I gave up was smoking, something that I could never do before, although I had tried many times. With power from Jehovah, I was able to give up heroin and marijuana, drug habits that had gripped me for the previous 15 years. I never thought that it would be possible to break these habits."

Instead of fearing a God that torments people eternally in hell—a doctrine found nowhere in the Bible—Tony and his wife came to embrace the hope of living forever on a paradise earth. (Psalm 37:10, 11; Proverbs 2:21) "It took a lot of time and hard work for me to bring my life into line with God's standards," Tony admits, "but with Jehovah's blessing I have succeeded."



Yes, this former drug addict became a Christian. Volunteering their time and resources, he and his wife have spent thousands of hours in Bible educational work. They are also busy raising two God-fearing children. This radical change was accomplished through the irresistible power of God's Word, the Bible. Indeed, as the apostle Paul says, "the word of God is alive and exerts power."—Hebrews 4:12.

Despite such positive examples, some unjustifiably contend that the Bible-based educational work of Jehovah's Witnesses destroys families and erodes wholesome values in young people. Tony's case certainly refutes that assertion.

Like Tony, many have learned that deadly addictions can be overcome. How? By faith in God and reliance on him and his Word, as well as through the support of concerned and loving Christian associates. Tony happily concludes: "I have seen how the principles of the Bible have protected my children. Bible teachings have saved my marriage. And my neighbors sleep easier because I am no longer a threat to them."

► *'With power from Jehovah, I was able to give up a drug habit that had gripped me for 15 years'*

#### ◀ Bible Principles at Work ▶

Various Bible principles have helped many a drug addict to steer away from this debilitating habit. Among these principles are the following:

*"Let us cleanse ourselves of every defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in God's fear." (2 Corinthians 7:1)* Taking drugs is against God's law.

*"The fear of Jehovah is the start of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Most Holy One is what understanding is." (Proverbs 9:10)* Reverence for Jehovah based on accurate knowledge of him and his ways has helped many to break free from the influence of drugs.

*"Trust in Jehovah with all your heart and do not lean upon your own understanding. In all your ways take notice of him, and he himself will make your paths straight." (Proverbs 3:5, 6)* Devastating habits can be broken by heartfelt trust in God and full reliance upon him.



# DO YOU REALLY HAVE FAITH IN THE GOOD NEWS?

*"The kingdom of God has drawn near. Be repentant, you people, and have faith in the good news."—MARK 1:15.*

IT WAS the year 30 C.E. Jesus Christ had embarked on his great ministry in Galilee. He was preaching "the good news of God," and many Galileans were moved by his statement: "The appointed time has been fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has drawn near. Be repentant, you people, and have faith in the good news."—Mark 1:14, 15.

<sup>2</sup> "The appointed time" had come for Jesus to begin his ministry and for people to make a decision that would bring them divine approval. (Luke 12:54-56) 'God's kingdom had drawn near' because Jesus was on hand as King-Designate. His preaching work moved righthearted ones to repent. But how did they—and how do we—display "faith in the good news"?

<sup>3</sup> Like Jesus, the apostle Peter urged people to be repentant. Addressing Jews in Jerusalem at Pentecost 33 C.E., Peter said: "Repent, and let each one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the free gift of the holy spirit." Thousands repented, were baptized, and became Jesus' followers. (Acts 2:38, 41; 4:4) In 36 C.E., repentant Gentiles took similar steps. (Acts 10:1-48) In our day, faith in the

1. 2. How would you explain Mark 1:14, 15?
3. By doing what have people shown that they have faith in the good news?



good news is moving thousands to repent of their sins, make a dedication to God, and be baptized. They have accepted the good news of salvation and are exercising faith in Jesus' ransom sacrifice. Moreover, they are practicing righteousness and have taken their stand on the side of God's Kingdom.

<sup>4</sup> But what is faith? The apostle Paul wrote: "Faith is the assured expectation of things hoped for, the evident demonstration of realities though not beheld." (Hebrews 11:1) Our faith makes us sure that everything God promises in his Word is as good as done. It is as though we possessed a deed proving that we own certain property.

Faith is also "the evident demonstration," or evidence for conviction, regarding unseen things. Our mental perception and heart appreciation convince us that such things are real, although we have not seen them.—2 Corinthians 5:7; Ephesians 1:18.

## We Need Faith!

<sup>5</sup> We were born with a spiritual need but not with faith. In fact, "faith is not a possession of all people." (2 Thessalonians 3:2) However, Christians must have faith in order to inherit God's promises. (Hebrews 6:12) After citing many examples of faith, Paul wrote:

4. What is faith?
5. Why is faith so important?

"Because we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also put off every weight and the sin that easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, as we look intently at the Chief Agent and Perfecter of our faith, Jesus." (Hebrews 12:1, 2) What is "the sin that easily entangles us"? It is lack of faith, even a loss of faith once possessed. To maintain strong faith, we must 'look intently at Jesus' and follow his example. We also need to reject immorality, combat the works of the flesh, and avoid materialism, worldly philosophies, and unscriptural traditions. (Galatians 5:19-21; Colossians 2:8; 1 Timothy 6:9, 10; Jude 3, 4) Moreover, we must believe that God is with us and that the counsel in his Word really works.

<sup>6</sup> We cannot create faith within ourselves by our own willpower. Faith is part of the fruitage of God's holy spirit, or active force. (Galatians 5:22, 23) So, what if our faith needs to be strengthened? Jesus said: "If you . . . know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more so will the Father in heaven give holy spirit to those asking him!" (Luke 11:13) Yes, let us pray for holy spirit, for it can produce in us the faith needed to do God's will even under the most trying circumstances.—Ephesians 3:20.

<sup>7</sup> It is proper to pray for more faith. When Jesus was about to cast a demon out of a young boy, the lad's father pleaded: "I have faith! Help me out where I need faith!" (Mark 9:24) "Give us more faith," said Jesus' disciples. (Luke 17:5) Therefore, let us pray for faith, confident that God answers such prayers.—1 John 5:14.

### Faith in God's Word Vital

<sup>8</sup> Shortly before his sacrificial death, Jesus told his followers: "Do not let your hearts be

- 6, 7. Why is it proper to pray for faith?  
8. How can faith in God's Word help us?

troubled. Exercise faith in God, exercise faith also in me." (John 14:1) As Christians, we have faith in God and in his Son. But what about God's Word? It can exert a powerful force for good in our life if we study and apply it in full faith that it provides the best counsel and direction available to us.—Hebrews 4:12.

<sup>9</sup> Our life as imperfect humans is filled with trouble. However, faith in God's Word can truly help us. (Job 14:1) For instance, suppose we do not know how to deal with a certain trial. God's Word gives us this counsel: "If any one of you is lacking in wisdom, let him keep on asking God, for he gives generously to all and without reproaching; and it will be given him. But let him keep on asking in faith, not doubting at all, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven by the wind and blown about. In fact, let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from Jehovah; he is an indecisive man, unsteady in all his ways."—James 1:5-8.

<sup>10</sup> Jehovah God will not reproach us for lacking wisdom and praying for it. Instead, he will help us to view the trial properly. Helpful scriptures may be brought to our attention by fellow believers or while we are studying the Bible. Or we may be guided by Jehovah's holy spirit in some other way. Our heavenly Father will grant us the wisdom to cope with trials if we "keep on asking in faith, not doubting at all." If we were like a wind-driven wave of the sea, we could not expect to receive anything from God. Why? Because this would mean that we were indecisive and unsteady in prayer or in other ways—yes, even in the exercising of faith. We therefore need to have firm faith in God's Word and in the guidance it provides. Let us consider some examples of how it gives help and direction.

- 9, 10. How would you explain what is said about faith at James 1:5-8?

## Faith and Sustenance

<sup>11</sup> What if we are now suffering privation or poverty? Faith in God's Word gives us the assured expectation that Jehovah will care for our daily needs and will eventually make abundant provision for all who love him. (Psalm 72:16; Luke 11:2, 3) We may find it encouraging to reflect on how Jehovah provided food for his prophet Elijah during a famine. Later, God miraculously sustained a supply of flour and oil that kept a woman, her son, and Elijah alive. (1 Kings 17:2-16) Jehovah similarly provided for the prophet Jeremiah during the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem. (Jeremiah 37:21) Although Jeremiah and Elijah had little to eat, Jehovah took care of them. He does the same for those exercising faith in him today.—Matthew 6:11, 25-34.

<sup>12</sup> Faith coupled with the application of Bible principles will not make us materially wealthy, but it will help us to put bread on the table. To illustrate: The Bible counsels us to be honest, capable, hardworking individuals. (Proverbs 22:29; Ecclesiastes 5:18, 19; 2 Corinthians 8:21) Never should we underestimate the value of having a fine reputation as a worker. Even in places where good jobs are scarce, the honest, skillful, industrious workers fare better than others. Although such workers may have little materially, they usually have the basic necessities and the satisfaction of eating food that they themselves earn.—2 Thessalonians 3:11, 12.

## Faith Helps Us to Endure Grief

<sup>13</sup> God's Word realistically shows that it is natural to experience grief when a loved one dies. The faithful patriarch Abraham mourned the death of his beloved wife, Sarai.

11. Faith in God's Word gives us what assurance regarding our daily needs?
12. How will faith help to put bread on the table?
- 13, 14. How does faith help us to endure grief?



*Jehovah sustained  
Jeremiah and Elijah  
because they had faith*

rah. (Genesis 23:2) David was grief-stricken after hearing that his son Absalom was dead. (2 Samuel 18:33) Even the perfect man Jesus wept over the death of his friend Lazarus. (John 11:35, 36) When a loved one dies, we may experience nearly overwhelming sorrow, but faith in the promises in God's Word can help us to endure such grief.

<sup>14</sup> 'I have hope toward God,' said Paul, 'that there is going to be a resurrection of the righteous and the unrighteous.' (Acts 24:15) We need to have faith in God's provision for multitudes to be raised to life. (John 5:28, 29) Among them will be Abraham and Sarah,



Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah—all now sleeping in death and awaiting a resurrection into God's new world. (Genesis 49:29-32) What joy there will be when loved ones are awakened from death's sleep to live here on earth! (Revelation 20:11-15) In the meantime, faith will not remove all sorrow, but it will keep us close to God, who helps us to endure bereavement.—Psalm 121:1-3; 2 Corinthians 1:3.

### Faith Strengthens the Depressed

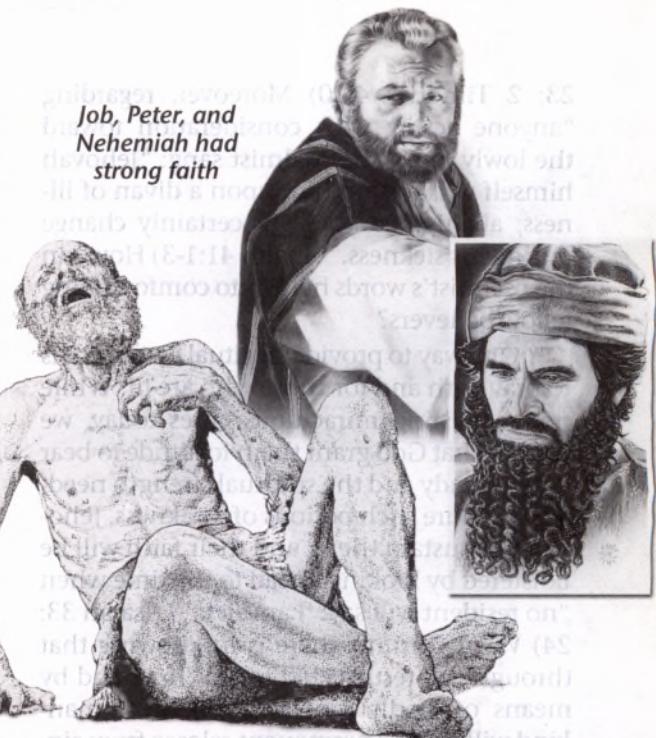
<sup>15</sup> God's Word also shows that even those who exercise faith may become victims of depression. During his severe test, Job felt that God had abandoned him. (Job 29:2-5) The devastated state of Jerusalem and its walls made Nehemiah gloomy. (Nehemiah 2:1-3) So devastated was Peter after denying Jesus that he "wept bitterly." (Luke 22:62) And Paul urged fellow believers in the congregation in Thessalonica to "speak consolingly to the depressed souls." (1 Thessalonians 5:14) Therefore, depression on the part of those exercising faith today is not without parallel. What, then, can we do to cope with depression?

<sup>16</sup> We may be depressed because we are facing several serious problems. Instead of viewing them as one major plight, we may be able to resolve them one at a time by applying Bible principles. This may help to lessen our depression. Balanced activity and adequate rest may also be helpful. One thing is sure: Faith in God and his Word promotes spiritual well-being because it strengthens our conviction that he really cares about us.

<sup>17</sup> Peter gives us this comforting assurance: "Humble yourselves under the mighty

15, 16. (a) Why can we say that depression is not without parallel among those exercising faith? (b) What can be done to deal with depression? 16, 17. How do we know that Jehovah cares about us?

*Job, Peter, and Nehemiah had strong faith*



hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time; while you throw all your anxiety upon him, because he cares for you." (1 Peter 5:6, 7) The psalmist sang: "Jehovah is giving support to all who are falling, and is raising up all who are bowed down." (Psalm 145:14) We should believe these assurances, for they are found in God's Word. While depression may persist, how faith strengthening it is to know that we can cast all our anxiety upon our loving heavenly Father!

### Faith and Other Trials

<sup>18</sup> We may experience a great test of our faith when we or our loved ones suffer serious illness. Though the Bible reports no miraculous healing of such Christians as Epaphroditus, Timothy, and Trophimus, undoubtedly Jehovah helped them to endure. (Philippians 2:25-30; 1 Timothy 5:

<sup>19</sup> How does faith help us to cope with illness and to comfort ailing fellow believers?

23; 2 Timothy 4:20) Moreover, regarding "anyone acting with consideration toward the lowly one," the psalmist sang: "Jehovah himself will sustain him upon a divan of illness; all his bed you will certainly change during his sickness." (Psalm 41:1-3) How can the psalmist's words help us to comfort ailing fellow believers?

<sup>19</sup> One way to provide spiritual assistance is to pray with and for those who are ill. While not requesting miraculous cures today, we can ask that God grant them fortitude to bear their malady and the spiritual strength needed to endure such periods of weakness. Jehovah will sustain them, and their faith will be bolstered by looking ahead to the time when "no resident will say: 'I am sick.'" (Isaiah 33:24) What comfort there is in knowing that through the resurrected Jesus Christ and by means of God's Kingdom, obedient mankind will receive permanent release from sin, disease, and death! For these grand prospects, we thank Jehovah, 'who will heal all our maladies.'—Psalm 103:1-3; Revelation 21:1-5.

<sup>20</sup> Faith can also carry us through "the calamitous days" of old age, when health and strength are declining. (Ecclesiastes 12:1-7) So the elderly among us can pray as did the

20. Why can it be said that faith can carry us through "the calamitous days" of old age?

### How Would You Answer?

- What is faith, and why do we need this quality?
- Why is it vital that we have faith in the good news and the entire Word of God?
- How does faith help us to meet various trials?
- What will assist us to maintain faith?

aging psalmist who sang: "You are my hope, O Sovereign Lord Jehovah . . . Do not throw me away in the time of old age; just when my power is failing, do not leave me." (Psalm 71:5, 9) The psalmist felt the need for Jehovah's support, as do our many fellow Christians who have grown old in God's service. Because of their faith, they may be certain that they have the unfailing support of Jehovah's everlasting arms.—Deuteronomy 33:27.

### Maintain Faith in God's Word

<sup>21</sup> Faith in the good news and the entire Word of God helps us to draw ever closer to Jehovah. (James 4:8) True, he is our Sovereign Lord, but he is also our Creator and Father. (Isaiah 64:8; Matthew 6:9; Acts 4:24) "You are my Father, my God and the Rock of my salvation," sang the psalmist. (Psalm 89:26) If we exercise faith in Jehovah and his inspired Word, we too can regard him as 'the Rock of our salvation.' What a heartwarming privilege!

<sup>22</sup> Jehovah is the Father of spirit-begotten Christians and of their companions with an earthly hope. (Romans 8:15) And faith in our heavenly Father never leads to disappointment. David said: "In case my own father and my own mother did leave me, even Jehovah himself would take me up." (Psalm 27:10) Moreover, we have this assurance: "Jehovah will not desert his people for the sake of his great name."—1 Samuel 12:22.

<sup>23</sup> To enjoy a lasting relationship with Jehovah, of course, we must have faith in the good news and accept the Scriptures for what they truthfully are—the Word of God. (1 Thessalonians 2:13) We must have implicit faith in Jehovah and let his Word light our roadway. (Psalm 119:105; Proverbs 3:5, 6)

21, 22. If we have faith, how does that affect our relationship with God?

23. What is required for us to enjoy a lasting relationship with Jehovah?



*To enjoy a lasting relationship with Jehovah, we must have faith in the good news*

Our faith will grow as we pray to him with confidence in his compassion, mercy, and support.

<sup>24</sup> Faith moved us to make a dedication to God for all eternity. Having strong faith, even

24. What comforting thought is presented at Romans 14:8?

if we should die, we are his dedicated servants with a resurrection hope. Yes, "both if we live and if we die, we belong to Jehovah." (Romans 14:8) Let us keep that comforting thought in our heart as we maintain our confidence in God's Word and continue to have faith in the good news.

## HOW STRONG IS YOUR FAITH?

*"It is by your faith that you are standing."*—2 CORINTHIANS 1:24.

JEHOVAH'S servants know that they must have faith. In fact, 'without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing to God.' (Hebrews 11:6) Therefore, we wisely pray for holy spirit and for faith, which is part of its blessed fruitage. (Luke 11:13; Galatians 5:22, 23) Imitating the faith of fellow believers can also strengthen this quality in us.—2 Timothy 1:5; Hebrews 13:7.

<sup>2</sup> Our faith will become stronger if we persist in pursuing the course that God's Word sets out for all Christians. Increased faith can

1, 2. Why must we have faith, and how can it become stronger?

result from daily Bible reading and diligent study of the Scriptures with the help of publications provided through "the faithful steward." (Luke 12:42-44; Joshua 1:7, 8) We are encouraged by one another's faith through our regular presence at Christian meetings, assemblies, and conventions. (Romans 1:11, 12; Hebrews 10:24, 25) And our faith is strengthened when we speak to others in the ministry.—Psalm 145:10-13; Romans 10:11-15.

<sup>3</sup> By offering Scriptural counsel and encouragement, loving Christian elders help us to

3. With respect to faith, what help do we get from loving Christian elders?



*Faith gave Noah and Enoch the courage to declare Jehovah's messages*



build up our faith. They have a spirit like that of the apostle Paul, who told the Corinthians: "We are fellow workers for your joy, for it is by your faith that you are standing." (2 Corinthians 1:23, 24) Another translation reads: "We are working with you to make you glad, because your faith is strong." (*Contemporary English Version*) The righteous live by reason of faith. Of course, nobody else can exercise faith for us or make us loyal integrity keepers. In this respect, 'we must carry our own load.'—Galatians 3:11; 6:5.

<sup>4</sup> The Scriptures abound with accounts of those who had faith. We may be acquainted with many of their outstanding deeds, but what about the faith they displayed from day to day, perhaps throughout a long life? Reflecting now on how they exhibited this quality in circumstances similar to our own can help to strengthen our faith.

#### **Faith Gives Us Courage**

<sup>5</sup> Faith strengthens us to declare God's word with courage. Enoch courageously foretold the execution of divine judgment. "Look!" he said, "Jehovah came with his holy myriads, to execute judgment against

4. How can Scriptural accounts of faithful servants of God help to strengthen our faith?
5. What Scriptural evidence is there that faith strengthens us to declare God's word courageously?

all, and to convict all the ungodly concerning all their ungodly deeds that they did in an ungodly way, and concerning all the shocking things that ungodly sinners spoke against him." (Jude 14, 15) Upon hearing such words, Enoch's godless enemies surely wanted to kill him. Yet, he boldly spoke out in faith, and God "took him" by putting him to sleep in death, apparently without allowing him to suffer its pangs. (Genesis 5:24; Hebrews 11:5) We do not experience such miracles, but Jehovah answers our prayers so that we can declare his word with faith and courage.—Acts 4:24-31.

<sup>6</sup> By faith Noah "constructed an ark for the saving of his household." (Hebrews 11:7; Genesis 6:13-22) Noah was also "a preacher of righteousness" who courageously declared God's warning to his contemporaries. (2 Peter 2:5) They must have scoffed at his message about a coming Deluge, even as some scoff when we provide Scriptural proof that the present system of things will soon be destroyed. (2 Peter 3:3-12) Like Enoch and Noah, however, we can deliver such a message because of our God-given faith and courage.

#### **Faith Makes Us Patient**

<sup>7</sup> We need faith and patience, especially as we await the end of this wicked system. Among those 'who through faith and patience will inherit the promises' is the God-fearing patriarch Abraham. (Hebrews 6:11, 12) By faith he left the city of Ur, with all its advantages, and became an alien in a foreign land promised to him by God. Isaac and Jacob were heirs of the very same promise.

6. How did God-given faith and courage help Noah?
7. How did Abraham and others display faith and patience?

However, "in faith all these died, although they did not get the fulfillment of the promises." By faith they 'reached out for a better place, that is, one belonging to heaven.' Accordingly, God "has made a city ready for them." (Hebrews 11:8-16) Yes, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—and their godly wives—patiently awaited God's heavenly Kingdom, under which they will be resurrected to life on earth.

<sup>8</sup> Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did not lose faith. The Promised Land did not come under their control, and they did not see all nations bless themselves by means of Abraham's seed. (Genesis 15:5-7; 22:15-18) Though the 'city built by God' would not become a reality until centuries had passed, these men continued to display faith and patience throughout their lives. Surely we should do no less now that the Messianic Kingdom is a reality in heaven.—Psalm 42:5, 11; 43:5.

### Faith Gives Us the Highest Goals

<sup>9</sup> The faithful patriarchs never adopted the degraded Canaanite life-style, for they had

8. Despite what did Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob manifest patience and faith?

9. What bearing does faith have on goals and objectives?

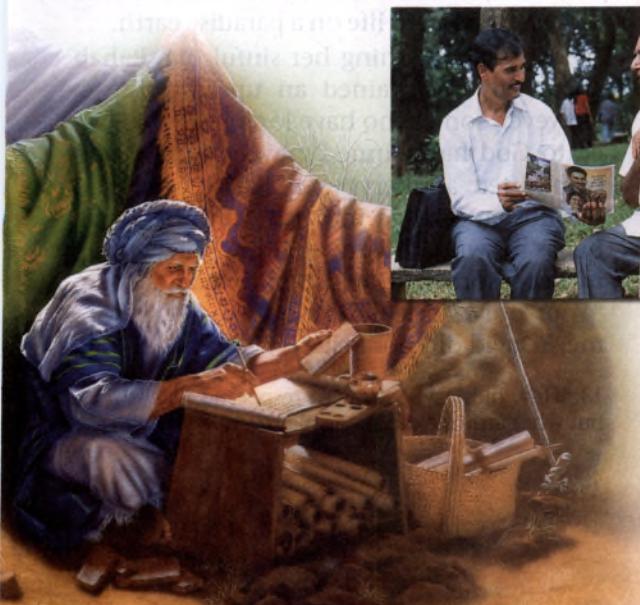
far higher goals and objectives. Faith similarly gives us spiritual goals that enable us to resist assimilation into the world lying in the power of the wicked one, Satan the Devil. —1 John 2:15-17; 5:19.

<sup>10</sup> By divine providence, Jacob's son Joseph served as Egypt's food administrator, but it was not his goal to be a great man of this world. With faith in the fulfillment of Jehovah's promises, 110-year-old Joseph told his brothers: "I am dying; but God will without fail turn his attention to you, and he will certainly bring you up out of this land to the land about which he swore to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob." Joseph asked to be buried in the land of promise. At death, he was embalmed and laid in a coffin in Egypt. But when the Israelites were delivered from Egyptian bondage, the prophet Moses had Joseph's bones taken along for burial in the Promised Land. (Genesis 50:22-26; Exodus 13:19) Faith like that of Joseph should move us to pursue goals far higher than worldly prominence.—1 Corinthians 7:29-31.

<sup>11</sup> Moses 'chose ill-treatment with God's people rather than the temporary enjoyment

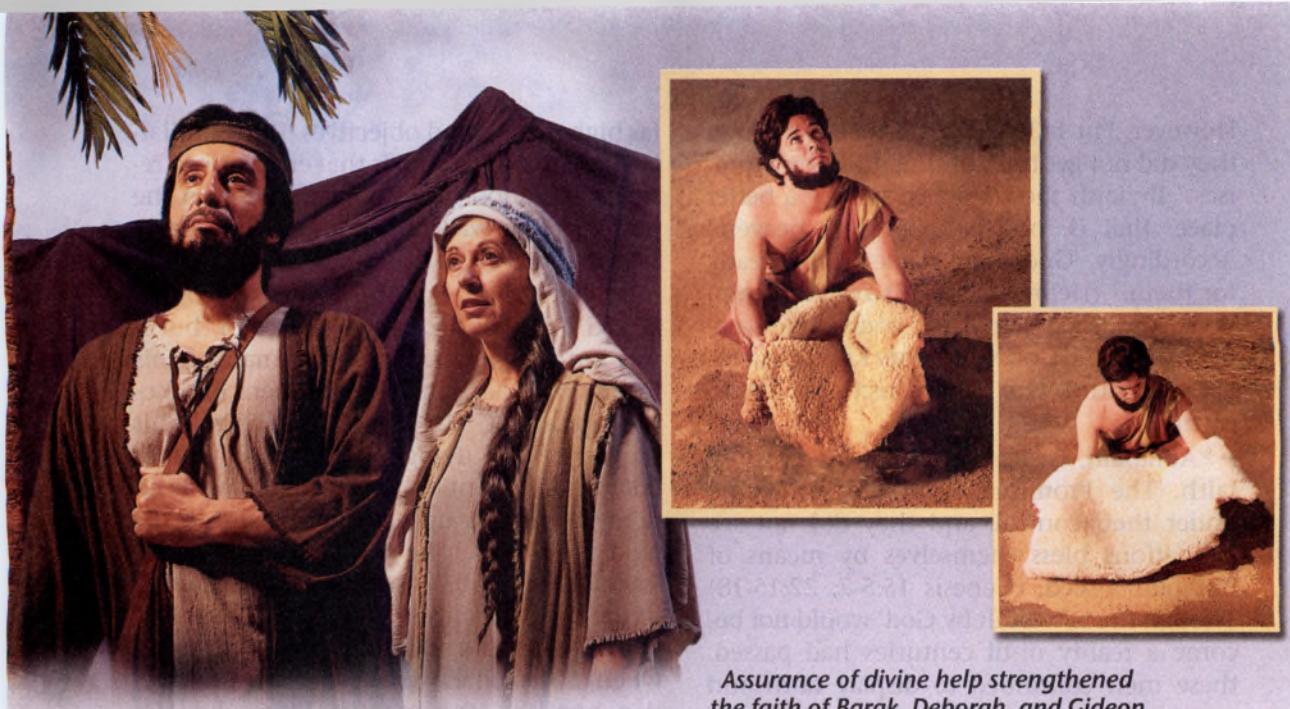
10. How do we know that Joseph pursued a goal far higher than that of worldly prominence?

11. In what way did Moses give evidence that he had spiritual goals?



*Faith like that of Moses moves us to pursue spiritual goals*





*Assurance of divine help strengthened the faith of Barak, Deborah, and Gideon*

of sin' as a well-educated member of Egypt's royal family. (Hebrews 11:23-26; Acts 7:20-22) This cost him worldly prestige and perhaps a grand burial in an ornate coffin at some renowned Egyptian site. But of what value would that have been compared with the privilege of being a "man of the true God," the mediator of the Law covenant, Jehovah's prophet, and a Bible writer? (Ezra 3:2) Is prestigious secular advancement what you desire, or has faith given you much higher spiritual goals?

### Faith Results in a Rewarding Life

<sup>12</sup> Faith gives people not only the highest goals but also a rewarding life. Rahab of Jericho must have found little meaning in her life as a harlot. Yet, how that changed when she exercised faith! She was "declared righteous by works [of faith], after she had received the [Israelite] messengers hospitably and sent them out by another way," so that they eluded their Canaanite enemies. (James

12. What effect did faith have on Rahab's life?

2:24-26) Recognizing Jehovah as the true God, Rahab displayed faith also by abandoning her life of prostitution. (Joshua 2:9-11; Hebrews 11:30, 31) She married a servant of Jehovah, not an unbelieving Canaanite. (Deuteronomy 7:3, 4; 1 Corinthians 7:39) Rahab had the grand privilege of becoming an ancestress of the Messiah. (1 Chronicles 2:3-15; Ruth 4:20-22; Matthew 1:5, 6) Like others, some of whom have abandoned an immoral life, she will receive yet another reward—a resurrection to life on a paradise earth.

<sup>13</sup> After abandoning her sinful life, Rahab apparently maintained an upright course. However, some who have long been dedicated to God have sinned gravely. King David committed adultery with Bath-sheba, had her husband killed in battle, and then took her as his wife. (2 Samuel 11:1-27) Repenting in deep sorrow, David petitioned Jehovah: "Your holy spirit O do not take away from me." David did not lose God's spirit. He had

13. How did David sin with respect to Bath-sheba, but what attitude did he display?

faith that Jehovah, in his mercy, would not despise "a heart broken and crushed" over sin. (Psalm 51:11, 17; 103:10-14) Because of their faith, David and Bath-sheba enjoyed a rewarding place in the Messiah's lineage.—1 Chronicles 3:5; Matthew 1:6, 16; Luke 3:23, 31.

### Faith Bolstered by Assurance

<sup>14</sup> Although we walk by faith, we may sometimes need assurance of divine help. That was true of Judge Gideon, one of those "who through faith defeated kingdoms in conflict." (Hebrews 11:32, 33) When the Midianites and their allies invaded Israel, God's spirit enveloped Gideon. Desiring assurance that Jehovah was with him, he proposed tests involving a fleece of wool exposed on a threshing floor overnight. In the first test, dew formed only on the fleece, while the earth stayed dry. The situation was reversed in the second test. Bolstered by these assurances, cautious Gideon acted in faith and defeated Israel's foes. (Judges 6:33-40; 7:19-25) If we seek assurance when facing a decision, it does not mean that we lack faith. We actually show faith by consulting the Bible and Christian publications and by praying for the guidance of holy spirit when making decisions.—Romans 8:26, 27.

<sup>15</sup> The faith of Judge Barak was bolstered by assurance in the form of encouragement. The prophetess Deborah spurred him on to take the initiative in freeing the Israelites from oppression by Canaanite King Jabin. In faith and with reassurance of divine support, Barak led 10,000 poorly equipped men into battle and triumphed over Jabin's far greater forces commanded by Sisera. That victory was celebrated in the thrilling song of Deborah and Barak. (Judges 4:1-5:31) Debo-

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14. What assurances did Gideon receive, and how may this account affect our faith?
  15. How may we be helped by reflecting on the faith of Barak?

rah encouraged Barak to act as Israel's God-appointed leader, and he was one of Jehovah's servants who through faith "routed the armies of foreigners." (Hebrews 11:34) Reflecting on how God blessed Barak for acting in faith may well move us to action if we are somewhat hesitant about fulfilling a challenging assignment in Jehovah's service.

### Faith Promotes Peace

<sup>16</sup> Just as faith helps us to fulfill difficult assignments in God's service, so it promotes peace and tranquillity. Elderly Abraham let his younger nephew Lot choose the best pasturelands when their herdsmen quarreled and a separation became necessary. (Genesis 13:7-12) Abraham must have prayed in faith for God's help in solving this problem. Rather than put his own interests first, he settled things peaceably. If we find ourselves in a dispute with our Christian brother, let us pray in faith and "seek peace," bearing in mind Abraham's example of loving consideration.—1 Peter 3:10-12.

<sup>17</sup> Consider how applying Christian principles in faith can help us to promote peace. When Paul was about to embark on his second missionary journey, Barnabas agreed to the proposal that they revisit the congregations in Cyprus and Asia Minor. However, Barnabas wanted to take along his cousin Mark. Paul disagreed because Mark had abandoned them in Pamphylia. "A sharp burst of anger" occurred, and this dispute caused a separation. Barnabas took Mark with him to Cyprus, whereas Paul chose Silas as his associate and "went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the congregations." (Acts 15:36-41) In time, the apparent breach was healed, for Mark was with Paul in Rome, and

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16. What fine example did Abraham set in pursuing peace with Lot?
  17. Why can we say that an apparent breach involving Paul, Barnabas, and Mark was healed in a peaceable way?

the apostle spoke favorably of him. (Colossians 4:10; Philemon 23, 24) When Paul was a prisoner in Rome in about 65 C.E., he told Timothy: "Take Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministering." (2 Timothy 4:11) Paul had apparently made his relationship with Barnabas and Mark a subject of his prayers of faith, and this resulted in the tranquillity that is linked with "the peace of God."—Philippians 4:6, 7.

<sup>18</sup> Being imperfect, of course, "we all stumble many times." (James 3:2) Difficulties arose between two Christian women, about whom Paul wrote: "Euodia I exhort and Syntyche I exhort to be of the same mind in the Lord. . . . Keep assisting these women who have striven side by side with me in the good news." (Philippians 4:1-3) It is most likely that these godly women resolved their problem in a peaceful manner by applying such counsel as that recorded at Matthew 5:23, 24. Application of Scriptural principles in faith will do much to promote peace today.

### Faith Enables Us to Endure

<sup>19</sup> By faith we can also endure adversity. Perhaps we are distressed because a baptized member of our family has disobeyed God by marrying an unbeliever. (1 Corinthians 7:39) Isaac and Rebekah suffered because of their son Esau's marriage to ungodly women. His Hittite wives "were a source of bitterness of spirit" to them—so much so that Rebekah said: "I have come to abhor this life of mine because of the daughters of Heth. If Jacob ever takes a wife from the daughters of Heth like these from the daughters of the land, of what good is life to me?" (Genesis 26:34, 35; 27:46) Yet, this trying situation never destroyed the faith of Isaac and Rebekah. May

18. What likely happened in the case of Euodia and Syntyche?
19. What trying situation never destroyed the faith of Isaac and Rebekah?

we maintain strong faith if difficult circumstances become a challenge to us.

<sup>20</sup> The aging widow Naomi was a Judean and knew that certain women of Judah might bear sons who would be forefathers of the Messiah. Inasmuch as her sons had died childless and she was past the childbearing age, however, the possibility that her family might contribute to Messianic lineage was remote indeed. Nevertheless, her widowed daughter-in-law Ruth became the wife of elderly Boaz, bore him a son, and became an ancestress of Jesus, the Messiah! (Genesis 49:10, 33; Ruth 1:3-5; 4:13-22; Matthew 1:1, 5) The faith of Naomi and Ruth outlasted adversity and brought them joy. Great joy will be ours too if we maintain faith in the face of adversity.

<sup>21</sup> Although we cannot say what a day will bring forth for us individually, by faith we can meet any challenge. Faith makes us courageous and patient. It gives us the highest goals and a rewarding life. Faith has positive effects on our relationship with others and outlasts adversity. May we therefore be "the sort that have faith to the preserving alive of the soul." (Hebrews 10:39) In the strength of our loving God, Jehovah, and to his glory, let us continue to exercise strong faith.

20. What examples of faith do we have in Naomi and Ruth?

21. What does faith do for us, and what should be our determination?

### How Would You Answer?

- What Scriptural proof is there that faith can make us courageous?
- Why can we say that faith gives us a rewarding life?
- How does faith promote peace?
- What proof is there that faith enables us to endure adversity?

## Questions From Readers

**Is it Scripturally acceptable for a Christian to place his hand on the Bible and swear to tell the whole truth in court?**

Each individual must make a personal decision in this regard. (Galatians 6:5) However, there is no Biblical objection to taking an oath to tell the truth in court.

Oath taking has long been a widespread practice. In ancient times, for instance, the Greeks raised a hand toward heaven or touched an altar while taking an oath. When a Roman juror took an oath, he held a stone in his hand and swore: "If I knowingly deceive, while he saves the city and citadel, may [the god] Jupiter cast me away from all that is good, as I do this stone."—*Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, by John McClintock and James Strong, Volume VII, page 260.

Such acts were indications of mankind's inclination to recognize the existence of a divine power who is able to observe humans and to whom they are accountable. From ancient times, true worshipers of Jehovah realized that he knew what they said and did. (Proverbs 5:21; 15:3) They took oaths in the presence of God, as it were, or with him as a witness. For example, this was done by Boaz, David, Solomon, and Zedekiah. (Ruth 3:13; 2 Samuel 3:35; 1 Kings 2:23, 24; Jeremiah 38:16) Worshipers of the true God also allowed others to put them under oath. That was so in the case of Abraham and of Jesus Christ.—Genesis 21:22-24; Matthew 26:63, 64.

A person taking an oath before Jehovah sometimes made an accompanying gesture. Abram (Abraham) told the king of Sodom: "I do lift up my hand in an oath to Jehovah the Most High God, Producer of heaven and earth." (Genesis 14:22) An angel speaking to the prophet Daniel "proceeded to raise his right hand and his left hand to the heavens and to swear by the One who is alive for time indefinite." (Daniel 12:7) Even God is referred to as symbolically raising his hand in an oath.—Deuteronomy 32:40; Isaiah 62:8.

There is no Scriptural objection to taking an oath. However, a Christian does not have to take an oath so as to back up every statement that he makes. Jesus said: "Just let your word Yes mean Yes, your No, No." (Matthew 5:33-37) The disciple James made a similar point. When he said "stop swearing," he was warning against frivolous oath taking. (James 5:12) Neither Jesus nor James said that it is wrong to take an oath to tell the truth in court.

What, then, if a Christian in court is asked to swear that his testimony is truthful? He may feel that he can take such an oath. Otherwise, he may be permitted to give an affirmation that he is not lying.—Galatians 1:20.

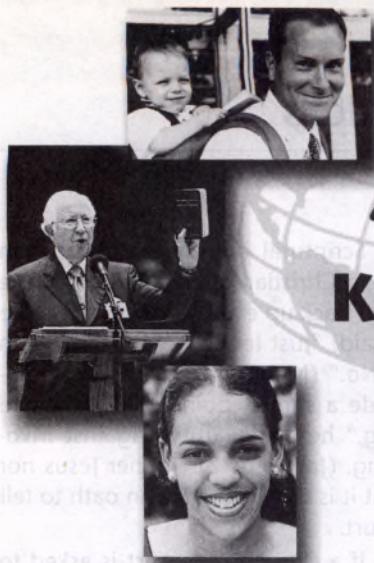
When courtroom procedure involves either raising a hand or placing it on the Bible when swearing, a Christian may choose to comply. He may have in mind the Scriptural examples of accompanying an oath with a gesture. For a Christian, more important than making a certain gesture when taking an oath is that he remembers that he is swearing before God to tell the truth. Such an oath is a serious matter. If a Christian feels that he can and should answer a question put to him in such circumstances, then he should bear in mind that he is under oath to tell the truth, which, of course, is what a Christian wants to speak at all times.

### IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

How to Cultivate a Balanced View of Work

"Keep Bearing Much Fruit"

Tested in a Fiery Furnace of Affliction



# "Zealous Kingdom Proclaimers" *Joyfully Assemble*

**M**ORAL, economic, and political crises are shaking the world. Amid all this unrest, however, Jehovah's Witnesses gathered for peaceful three-day "Zealous Kingdom Proclaimers" District Conventions. Beginning in May 2002, these gatherings were held around the globe.

The conventions proved to be joyful occasions indeed. Let us briefly review the up-building Bible-based program.

## **Day One Stresses Jesus' Zeal**

The theme of the convention's first day was "Imitate the Zeal of Our Lord, Jesus." (John 2:17) The talk "Rejoice in Coming Together as Kingdom Proclaimers" warmly invited those present to share in the joy that has always characterized conventions of God's people. (Deuteronomy 16:15) This talk was followed by interviews with zealous preachers of the good news.

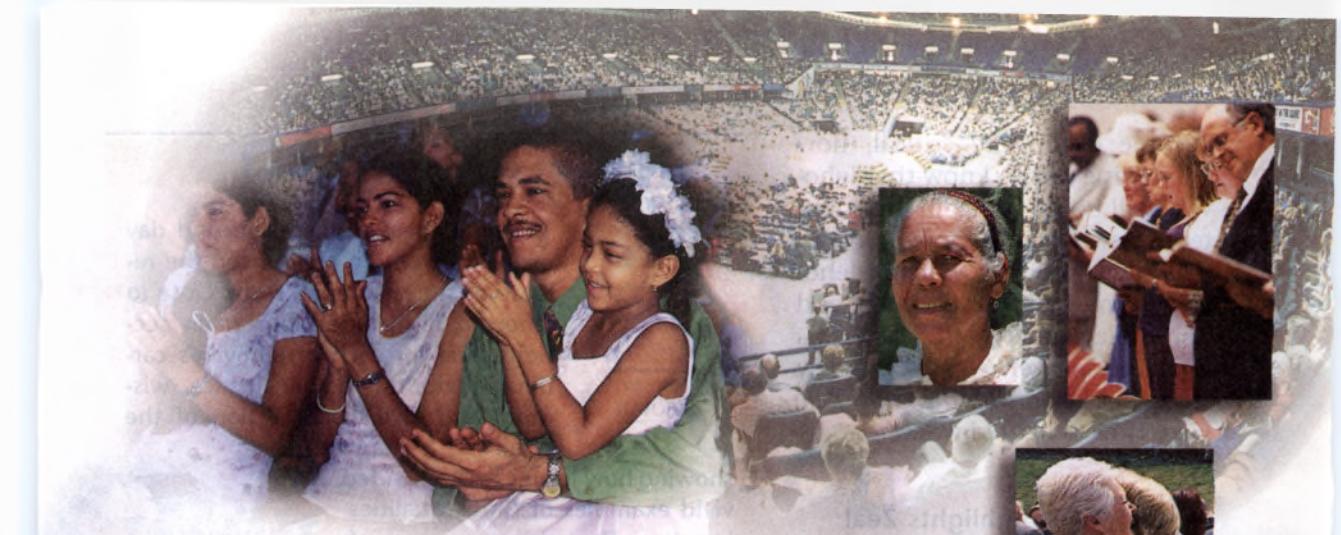
The talk "Take Exquisite Delight in Jehovah Himself" covered Psalm 37:1-11 verse by verse. We were urged not to become "heated up" over the seeming success of the wicked. Although evil ones may misrepresent us, in time Jehovah will make clear who really are his faithful people. The talk "Show Your-

selves Thankful" discussed how we can show gratitude to God. All Christians must offer "a sacrifice of praise" to Jehovah. (Hebrews 13:15) Of course, the amount of time we devote to Jehovah's service depends on our appreciation and circumstances.

The keynote address was entitled "Kingdom Proclaimers Fired With Zeal." It pointed to Jesus Christ as our finest example of zeal. After the heavenly Kingdom was established in 1914, true Christians needed zeal to announce that good news. The speaker referred to the convention at Cedar Point, Ohio, U.S.A., in 1922 and reminded us of the historic call: "Advertise the King and his Kingdom!" With the passing of time, the zeal of God's faithful servants moved them to declare the marvelous Kingdom truths to all the nations.

The talk "Be Fearless in Knowing That Jehovah Is With Us," delivered on the afternoon of the first day, showed that God's people are a special target of Satan. Despite the opposition we encounter, however, our reflecting on the many Biblical and modern examples of faith gives us the courage to face tests and temptations fearlessly.—Isaiah 41:10.

Next on the program came a three-part symposium on the theme "Micah's Prophecy Strengthens Us to Walk in Jehovah's Name."



The first speaker compared the moral breakdown, religious apostasy, and materialism of Micah's day with our own times. He stated: "Our hope for the future will be sure if we cultivate an obedient heart and ensure that our conduct is holy and our life filled with deeds of godly devotion—and if we never forget that Jehovah's day *will* come."—2 Peter 3: 11, 12.

The second speaker on the symposium noted Micah's condemnation of Judah's leaders. They abused the poor, defenseless people. But Micah also foretold the triumph of true worship. (Micah 4:1-5) Empowered by Jehovah's holy spirit, we are resolved to proclaim this refreshing message of hope. But

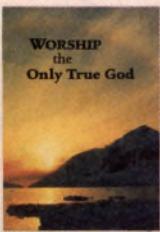
what if we feel hampered by infirmities or feel limited in some other way? The third speaker said: "Jehovah's requirements are reasonable as well as, reachable." He went on to discuss various aspects of Micah 6:8, where we read: "What is Jehovah asking back from you but to exercise justice and to love kindness and to be modest in walking with your God?"

Since the world's moral decay can affect Christians, all of us benefited from the talk entitled "Maintain Chastity by Safeguarding Your Heart." For instance, our keeping chaste will help us to have a happy marriage. As Christians, we must never entertain even the thought of engaging in sexual immorality.—1 Corinthians 6:18.

The talk "Guard Against Deception" showed that we wisely treat as poison the distortions, half-truths, and outright falsehoods propagated by apostates. (Colossians 2:8) Likewise, we must not deceive ourselves into thinking that we can indulge our sinful desires without dire consequences.

"Worship the Only True God" was the title of the first day's concluding talk. As conditions in the world

## A New Study Aid!



At the conclusion of the convention's first day, those present were delighted by the release of the new book *Worship the Only True God*. It is designed to be studied with those who have completed a study of the book *Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life* and will undoubtedly strengthen the faith of those "rightly disposed for everlasting life."—Acts 13:48.

Image on book cover: U.S. Navy photo

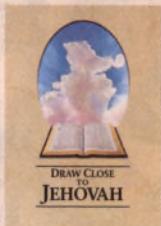
become ever more critical, how heartening it is to know that Jehovah will soon bring in his righteous new world! Who will live in it? Only those who worship Jehovah. To help us, our children, and our Bible students to reach this goal, the speaker released the new study book *Worship the Only True God*. How delighted we were to receive it!

### Day Two Highlights Zeal for What Is Good

The convention's second day had the theme "Be Zealous for What Is Good." (1 Peter 3:13) The first speaker discussed the day's Bible text. He emphasized that a regular, meaningful consideration of the daily text increases our zeal.

Then came the symposium "Kingdom Proclaimers Who Glorify Their Ministry." The first part stressed the need to handle God's Word aright. (2 Timothy 2:15) Our making good use of the Bible opens the way for it to 'exert power' in people's lives. (Hebrews 4:12) We should direct attention to the Bible and reason on it convincingly. The sympo-

### Help to Get Closer to God



The final speaker on the second day of the convention announced the release of the new book *Draw Close to Jehovah*. It includes four main sections, one for each of Jehovah's cardinal attributes—power, justice, wisdom, and love. Each section of the book has a chapter

showing how Jesus Christ provided vivid examples of God's qualities in action. The primary purpose of this new book is to help us and our Bible students to build a closer and stronger relationship with Jehovah God.



sium's second part urged us to call back on interested people again and again. (1 Corinthians 3:6) Preparation and boldness are needed to follow up on all interest promptly. The third part recommended viewing each person we meet as a potential disciple and showed that offering a Bible study on the initial call can lead to the joy of helping individuals to become disciples.



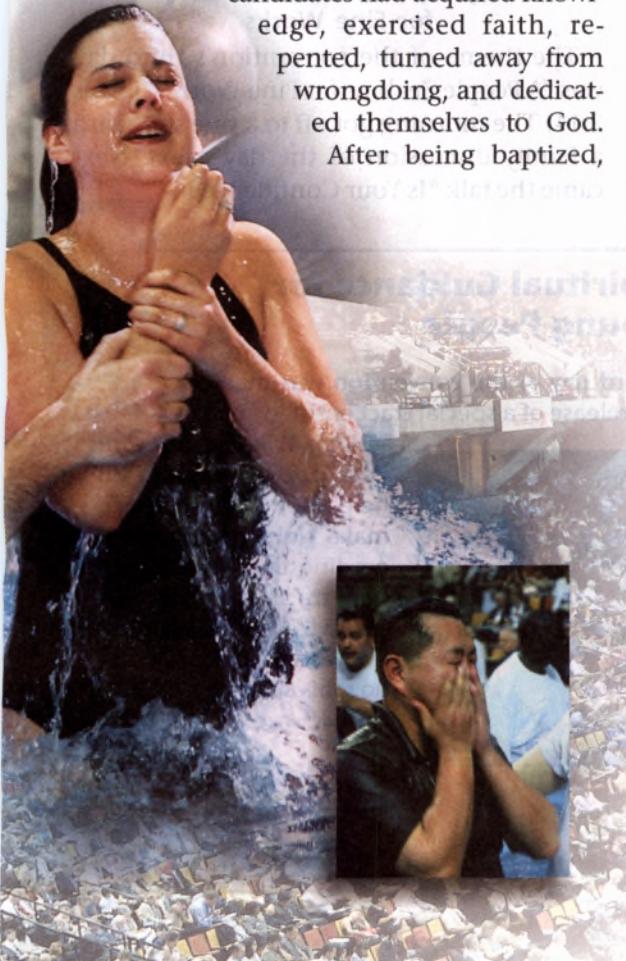
"Why 'Pray Incessantly' " was the theme of the next talk. The Bible exhorts Christians to look to God for guidance in all aspects of life. We need to make time for private prayer. Moreover, we must persevere in prayer, for Jehovah may allow us to keep on praying for a time before his response becomes apparent.—James 4:8.

The talk "Spiritual Conversation Builds Up" urged us to use our gift of speech to benefit ourselves and others. (Philippians 4:8) Marriage mates and children need some spiritual conversation daily. To that end, families should try to eat at least one meal together each day, thus allowing for upbuilding conversation.

The morning program ended with the heartwarming talk "How Dedication and

Baptism Lead to Salvation." Baptismal candidates had acquired knowledge, exercised faith, repented, turned away from wrongdoing, and dedicated themselves to God.

After being baptized,



noted the speaker, they must continue to grow spiritually and to maintain their zeal and fine conduct.—Philippians 2:15, 16.

That afternoon, two main points were stressed in the talk "Be Modest, and Keep Your Eye Simple." Being modest means having a realistic view of our limitations and our position before God. Modesty helps us to keep our eye "simple"—focused on God's Kingdom, not on material things. If we do this, we need not be anxious, for Jehovah will supply our needs.—Matthew 6:22-24, 33, 34.

The next speaker showed why we should "Trust Jehovah Completely in Times of Distress." How can we cope with such things as personal weaknesses and financial or health problems? Let us ask Jehovah for practical wisdom and request help from others. Rather than succumb to panic or despair, we should bolster our trust in God by reading his Word.—Romans 8:35-39.

The final symposium of the convention had the theme "The Quality of Our Faith Tested by Various Trials." The first part reminded us that all true Christians face persecution. It serves as a witness, strengthens our faith, and affords us an opportunity to demonstrate our loyalty to God. Though we do not needlessly jeopardize our lives, we would never use unscriptural means to avoid persecution.—1 Peter 3:16.





—*“Draw Close to Jehovah”*

The second speaker in this symposium addressed questions relating to neutrality. Early Christians were not pacifists, but they recognized that their prime allegiance was to God. Likewise today, Jehovah's Witnesses hold firmly to the principle: "You are no part of the world." (John 15:19) Since tests of our neutrality can arise quickly, families ought to make time to review the Bible's guidelines on this subject. As the third talk in this symposium pointed out, Satan's aim is, not necessarily to kill us, but to pressure us into becoming unfaithful. By faithfully enduring ridicule, immoral pressures, emotional pain, and infirmities, we bring praise to Jehovah.

The warm invitation "Draw Close to Jehovah" served as the title of the day's final talk. Understanding Jehovah's cardinal attributes attracts us to him. He uses his limitless *power* to protect his people, especially spiritually. His *justice* is not harsh but moves him to make endless life available to everyone who works righteousness. God's *wisdom* is evident in the way he used imperfect humans to write the Bible. Most endearing is his *love*, which moved him to make

provision for mankind's salvation through Jesus Christ. (John 3:16) The speaker concluded with the release of the heartwarming new book *Draw Close to Jehovah*.

### Day Three Focuses on Zeal for Fine Works

The theme of the convention's third day was "A People Zealous for Fine Works." (Titus 2:14) The morning got off to a fine start with a family discussion of the day's text. Next came the talk "Is Your Confidence in



### Spiritual Guidance for Young People

The third day of the convention was marked by the release of a special tract entitled *Youths*



*—What Will You Do With Your Life?* Designed to help young Witnesses to make right decisions regarding their future, this new tract gives Scriptural advice on building an everlasting career in Jehovah's service.

Jehovah?" The nations have misplaced their confidence by relying on their own wisdom and strength. In contrast, however, Jehovah's servants courageously and joyfully rely on him despite calamities.—Psalm 46:1-3, 7-11.

The part entitled "Youths—Build for the Future With Jehovah's Organization" addressed this question: How can a young person really get the best out of life? This is not possible by pursuing money, possessions, and prestige. Our Creator lovingly urges youths to remember him while they are still young. The speaker interviewed some who have reached out in Christian service during youth, and we could sense their joy. And how beneficial it was to receive the new tract, *Youths—What Will You Do With Your Life?*, designed to help young Witnesses to lay the foundation for an everlasting future with Jehovah's organization!

Next came the absorbing Bible drama "Stand Firm in Troublesome Times." It traced Jeremiah's long career from his youth to Jerusalem's destruction, which he had zealously prophesied. Jeremiah felt unqualified for his assignment, but he fulfilled it in the face of opposition, and Jehovah delivered him.—Jeremiah 1:8, 18, 19.

The drama was followed by the talk "Be Like Jeremiah—Fearlessly Proclaim the Word of God." Present-day Kingdom proclaimers are often the target of misinformation and malicious propaganda. (Psalm 109:1-3) Like Jeremiah, though, we can deal with discouragement by taking delight in Jehovah's Word. And we are confident that those who fight against us will not prevail.

Timely, indeed, was the public discourse, entitled "The Scene of This World Is Changing." Our day has been marked by dramatic change. The Bible foretold that such conditions, including a cry of "peace and security," would lead up to God's fear-inspiring day of



judgment. (1 Thessalonians 5:3) It will bring about wonderful changes—the end of all wars, crime, violence, and even disease. Rather than trust in this system of things, then, this is the time to pursue godly devotion and maintain chaste conduct.

A summary of the week's *Watchtower* lesson was followed by the final convention talk, entitled "Abound in Fine Works as Zealous Kingdom Proclaimers." The speaker pointed out how the program had stimulated us spiritually and encouraged us to rely on Jehovah. In conclusion, we were urged to be clean, loving, and zealous proclaimers of God's Kingdom.—1 Peter 2:12.

With a spirit like that of Jehovah's servants in Nehemiah's day, we surely returned home rejoicing over the spiritual blessings received at the "Zealous Kingdom Proclaimers" District Conventions. (Nehemiah 8:12) Has not this stirring convention filled you with joy and determination to press on as a zealous Kingdom proclaimer?

# 'One That Is Good GETS GOD'S APPROVAL'

ALL life originates with Jehovah God. (Psalm 36:9) Yes, "by him we have life and move and exist." (Acts 17:28) And does not our heart swell with gratitude when we consider the reward he bestows upon those who have a close relationship with him? Why, "the gift God gives is everlasting life." (Romans 6:23) How vital that we seek Jehovah's approval!

The psalmist assures us that 'favor is what God gives.' (Psalm 84:11) But to whom does he give it? People today often show favor to others on the basis of education, wealth, skin color, ethnic background, and the like. Whom does God favor? King Solomon of ancient Israel answers: "*One that is good gets approval from Jehovah, but the man of wicked ideas he pronounces wicked.*"—Proverbs 12:2.

Clearly, Jehovah is pleased with one who is good—a virtuous person. The virtues of a good man include such qualities as self-discipline, fairness, humility, compassion, and prudence. His thoughts are righteous, his words encouraging, his deeds just and beneficial. The first part of the 12th chapter of the Bible book of Proverbs shows us how goodness should influence our everyday life and points out the benefits that result from displaying this quality. Considering what is stated there will give us "insight for doing good." (Psalm 36:3) Applying its wise counsel will help us to gain God's approval.

## Discipline Vital

"*A lover of discipline is a lover of knowledge,*" states Solomon, "*but a hater of reproof is unreasoning.*" (Proverbs 12:1) Eager to make personal improvement, a good man craves discipline. He is quick to apply the counsel he receives at Christian meetings or in personal conversations. The words in the Scriptures and in Bible-based publications are like oxgoads that prod him to follow an upright course. He seeks out knowledge and uses it to make his paths straight. Yes, a lover of discipline is also a lover of knowledge.

How necessary discipline is to true worshipers—particularly self-discipline! We can wish that we had a deeper knowledge of God's Word. We may desire to be more effective in the Christian ministry and to be better teachers of God's Word. (Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20) But it takes self-discipline to make such wishes a reality. Self-discipline is also needed in other areas of life. For example, material designed to arouse illicit desires is plentiful today. Does it not call for self-discipline to restrain the eye from focusing on improper sights? Moreover, since "the inclination of the heart of man is bad from his youth up," an immoral thought can indeed originate in the recesses of the mind. (Genesis 8:21) Self-discipline is needed in order not to dwell upon such a thought.

The hater of reproof, on the other hand, loves neither discipline nor knowledge. Yielding to the sinful human tendency to resent reproof, he degrades himself to the level of an unreasoning animal—a brute—lacking moral discrimination. We must firmly resist this inclination.

### **"Roots That Cannot Be Dislodged"**

A good man cannot, of course, be unrighteous or unjust. So righteousness is also necessary for gaining Jehovah's approval. King David sang: "You yourself will bless anyone righteous, O Jehovah; as with a large shield, with approval you will surround them." (Psalm 5:12) Contrasting the condition of the righteous with that of the wicked, Solomon says: "*No man will be firmly established by wickedness; but as for the root-foundation of the righteous ones, it will not be caused to stagger.*"—Proverbs 12:3.

The wicked may seem to prosper. Consider the experience of the psalmist Asaph. "As for me," he says, "my feet had almost turned aside, my steps had nearly been made to slip." Why? Asaph answers: "I became envious of the boasters, when I would see the very peace of wicked people." (Psalm 73:2, 3) But as he proceeded to come into the temple sanctuary of God, he came to realize that on slippery ground is where Jehovah had placed them. (Psalm 73:17, 18) Any success that the wicked may seem to achieve is temporary. Why should we be envious of them?

In contrast, the one who has Jehovah's approval is stable. Using the metaphor of a strong root system of a tree, Solomon says: "Good men have roots that cannot be dislodged." (Proverbs 12:3, *The New English Bible*) The unseen roots of a giant tree, such as the sequoia of California, may cover an area of several acres and can provide solid anchorage in the face of flood and high winds. A

towering sequoia can even withstand a powerful earthquake.

Like such roots in earth's nourishing soil, our minds and hearts need to delve expansively into God's Word and draw from its life-giving waters. Our faith thus becomes firmly rooted and strong, our hope sure and firm. (Hebrews 6:19) We will not be "carried hither and thither by every wind of [false] teaching." (Ephesians 4:14) Of course, we will feel the effects of stormy trials and may even tremble in the face of adversity. But our 'root-foundation will not be caused to stagger.'

### **"A Capable Wife Is a Crown to Her Owner"**

Many people know the saying, "Behind every successful man there is a good woman." Pointing to the importance of a supportive woman, Solomon says: "*A capable wife is a crown to her owner, but as rottenness in his bones is she that acts shamefully.*" (Proverbs 12:4) The word "capable" sums up many elements of goodness. The virtues of a good wife, as described in detail in Proverbs chapter 31, include industriousness, faithfulness, and wisdom. A woman having these attributes is a crown to her husband because her good conduct brings honor to him and raises him in the estimation of others. Never does she ambitiously push ahead or compete with him for recognition. Rather, she is a complementary helper to her husband.

How might a woman act shamefully, and with what results? This shameful conduct may range from contentiousness to adultery. (Proverbs 7:10-23; 19:13) Such actions on the part of a wife succeed only in tearing down her husband. She is like "rottenness in his bones" in the sense that "she brings him to ruin, like a disease which weakens the bodily frame," says one reference work. "A modern equivalent expression might be 'a cancer'—some disease which progressively saps a

person's vitality," states another. May Christian wives endeavor to win God's approval by reflecting the virtues of a capable wife.

### From Thoughts to Actions to Consequences

Thoughts lead to actions, and deeds to consequences. Solomon next presents a progression from thoughts to actions, comparing the righteous ones with the wicked. He states: "*The thoughts of the righteous ones are judgment; the steering by the wicked ones is deception. The words of the wicked ones are a lying in wait for blood, but the mouth of the upright ones is what will deliver them.*"—Proverbs 12:5, 6.

The very thoughts of good people are morally sound and directed toward what is fair and just. Since righteous ones are motivated by love for God and for fellow humans, their intentions are good. The wicked, on the other hand, are motivated by selfishness. Consequently, their designs—their methods of reaching their objectives—are deceitful. Their actions are treacherous. They do not hesitate to lay a trap for the innocent, perhaps in a court of law, by false accusations. Their words are "a lying in wait for blood" because they want to harm their innocent victims. The upright ones, having knowledge of the wicked plots and the wisdom needed to be cautious, are able to avoid this danger. They may even be able to warn the unwary and deliver them from the deceitful schemes of the wicked.

How will the righteous and the wicked fare? "*There is an overthrowing of the wicked ones and they are no more,*" answers Solomon, "*but the very house of the righteous ones will keep standing.*" (Proverbs 12:7) The house, says one reference work, "stands for the household and everything precious to the individual, making it possible for him to truly live." It can even refer to the family and

the descendants of the righteous. In any case, the point of the proverb is clear: The righteous will stand firm under adversity.

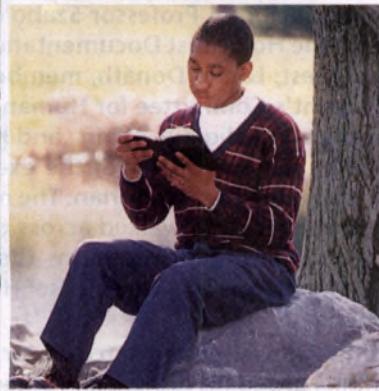
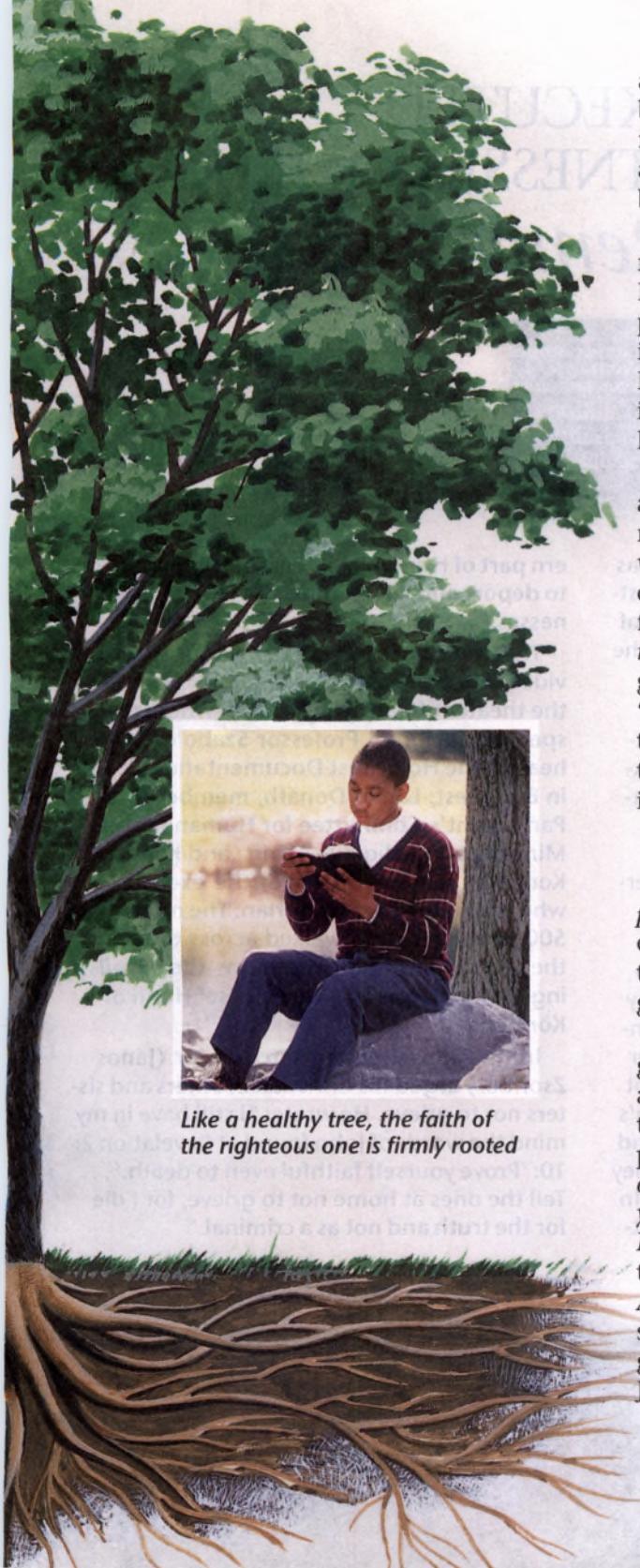
### The Humble One Is Better Off

Emphasizing the value of discernment, the king of Israel states: "*For his mouth of discretion a man will be praised, but one who is twisted at heart will come to be for contempt.*" (Proverbs 12:8) A discerning person does not allow words to flow out of his mouth hastily. He thinks before speaking and enjoys peaceful relations with others because a "mouth of discretion" leads him to choose his words carefully. When faced with foolish or speculative questioning, a man of discernment is able to 'hold back his sayings.' (Proverbs 17:27) Such a man is praised and is pleasing to Jehovah. How different he is from the one with twisted opinions emanating from a 'twisted heart'!

Yes, a man of discretion is praised, but the next proverb teaches us the value of humility. It says: "*Better is the one lightly esteemed but having a servant than the one glorifying himself but in want of bread.*" (Proverbs 12:9) Solomon seems to be saying that it is better to be a humble one of little means, having merely one servant, than to spend what is needed for life's necessities in an effort to maintain a high social status. What sound advice this is for us—to live within our means!

### Agricultural Life Provides Lessons in Goodness

Drawing upon the agricultural way of life, Solomon teaches two lessons in goodness. "*The righteous one is caring for the soul of his domestic animal,*" he says, "*but the mercies of the wicked ones are cruel.*" (Proverbs 12:10) The righteous man treats his animals with kindness. He knows their needs and has concern for their welfare. A wicked person may say that he is concerned about animals, but he is not stirred by their needs. His motives



**Like a healthy tree, the faith of the righteous one is firmly rooted**

are selfish, and his treatment of animals is based on the profit that he might make from them. What such a person considers adequate care for animals might actually be cruel treatment.

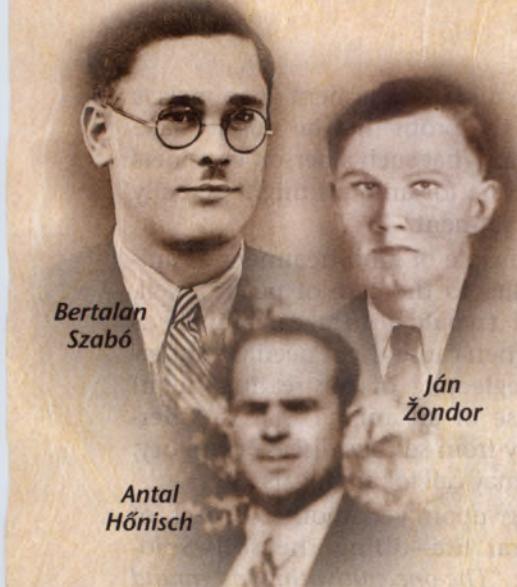
The principle of kind treatment of animals applies to the care of pets as well. How cruel it would be to take in animals as pets and then cause them needless suffering by neglecting or mistreating them! In the case of an animal that is suffering greatly from serious disease or injury, kindness may call for ending its life.

Drawing upon yet another aspect of agricultural life—tilling the soil—Solomon says: “*The one cultivating his ground will himself be satisfied with bread.*” Indeed, meaningful hard work reaps benefits. “*But the one pursuing valueless things is in want of heart.*” (Proverbs 12:11) Lacking good judgment or understanding, the one “in want of heart” pursues idle, speculative, and valueless ventures. The lessons in these two verses are clear: Be merciful and industrious.

### **The Righteous One Flourishes**

“*The wicked one has desired the netted prey of bad men,*” says the wise king. (Proverbs 12:12a) How does the wicked one do that? Apparently by desiring the spoils gained by evil means.

What can be said of the one who is good? Such a person is a lover of discipline and is firmly rooted in the faith. He is righteous and just, discreet and humble, compassionate and diligent. And “*as for the root of the righteous ones,*” Solomon states, “*it yields*,” or “*flourishes.*” (Proverbs 12:12b; New International Version) “*The root of the righteous will remain forever,*” says An American Translation. Such a person is stable and secure. Indeed, ‘one that is good gets God’s approval.’ Let us, then, “trust in Jehovah and do good.”—Psalm 37:3.



# EXECUTED WITNESSES OF JEHOVAH *Remembered*

Bertalan  
Szabó

Ján  
Žondor

Antal  
Hónisch



ON March 7, 2002, a memorial plaque was unveiled in the town of Körmend in western Hungary. It commemorated the death of three of Jehovah's Witnesses murdered by the Nazis in 1945.

The plaque is fastened to the wall of the present-day headquarters of the fire department on Hunyadi Road, where the public executions took place. The plaque was dedicated to the memory of 'Christians who were executed as conscientious objectors in March 1945. Antal Hónisch (1911-1945), Bertalan Szabó (1921-1945), János Žondor (1923-1945), 2002, Jehovah's Witnesses.'

The executions were carried out only two months before the end of World War II. Why were these Christians put to death? The Hungarian newspaper *Vas Népe* explains: "After Hitler's ascension to power in Germany, not just the Jews but also the faithful of Jehovah's Witnesses were lined up for persecution and torture, concentration camp and death if they did not deny their religious conviction. . . . In March 1945, total terror reigned in the west-

ern part of Hungary. . . . Part of this terror was to deport and kill members of Jehovah's Witnesses."

The program involving the plaque was divided into two parts. The first took place at the theater of Batthyány Castle, where the speakers included Professor Szabolcs Szita, head of the Holocaust Documentation Center in Budapest; László Donáth, member of the Parliament's Committee for Human Rights, Minority and Religious Affairs; and Kálmán Komjáthy, an eyewitness of the executions who is now the town historian. The more than 500 people present walked across town for the second part of the program—the unveiling of the plaque by Mayor József Honfi of Körmend.

In his farewell letter, Ján Žondor (János Žondor) urged his Christian brothers and sisters not to grieve. He wrote: "I still have in my mind the words of John found at Revelation 2: 10: 'Prove yourself faithful even to death.' . . . Tell the ones at home not to grieve, for I die for the truth and not as a criminal."