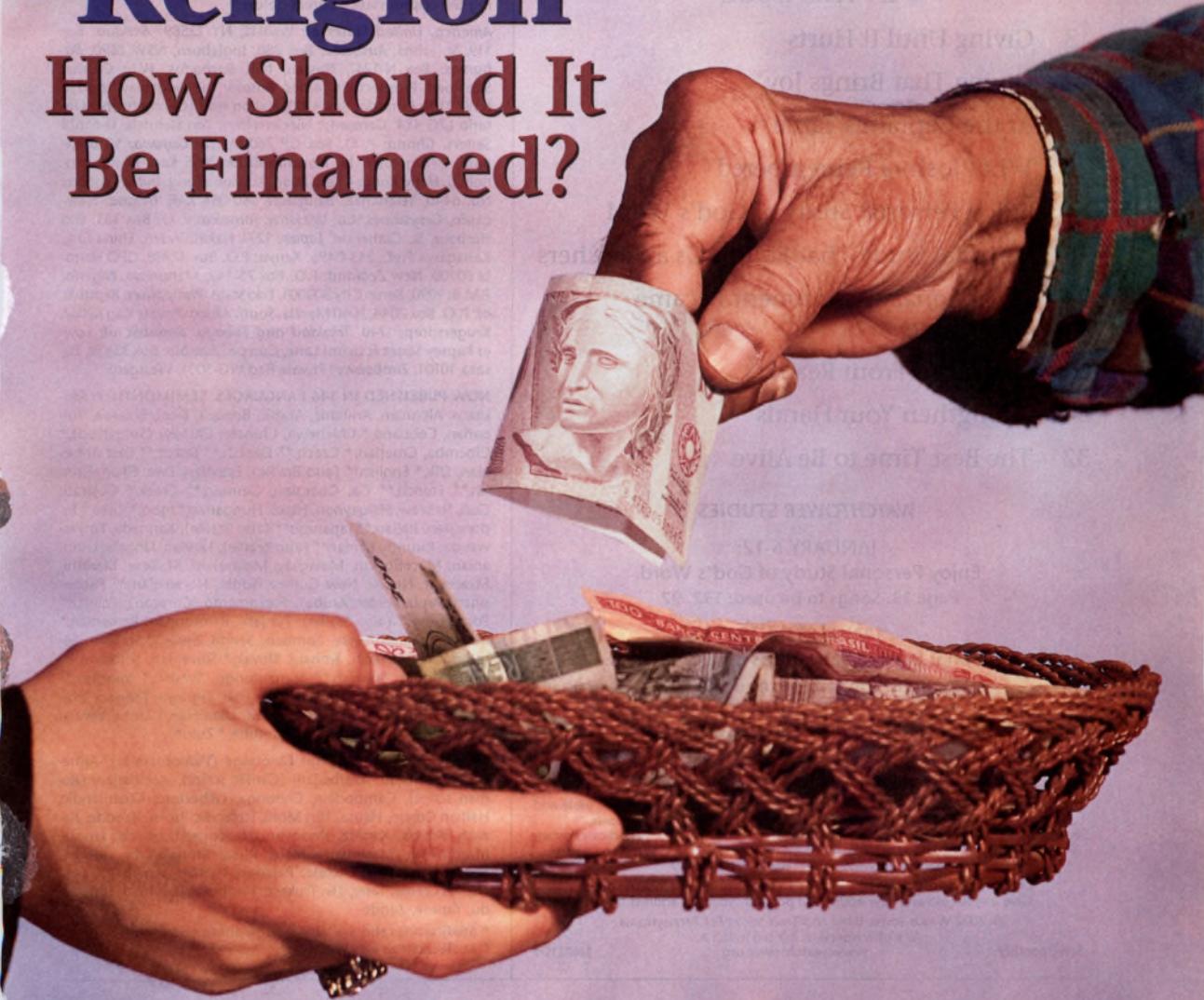


DECEMBER 1, 2002

THE WATCHTOWER ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

Religion How Should It Be Financed?



THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

December 1, 2002

Average Printing Each Issue: 24,147,000

Vol. 123, No. 23

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.

IN THIS ISSUE

- 3 Giving Until It Hurts
- 4 Giving That Brings Joy
- 8 At the Captain's Table
- 9 What Joshua Remembered
- 13 Enjoy Personal Study of God's Word
- 18 Personal Study That Equips Us as Teachers
- 24 A Missionary Assignment Became Our Home
- 29 Questions From Readers
- 30 Strengthen Your Hands
- 32 The Best Time to Be Alive

WATCHTOWER STUDIES

JANUARY 6-12:

- Enjoy Personal Study of God's Word.
Page 13. Songs to be used: 132, 92.

JANUARY 13-19:

- Personal Study That Equips Us as Teachers.
Page 18. Songs to be used: 29, 209.

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. Simoni, 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).

© 2002 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania.
All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A.
www.watchtower.org

Semimonthly

Would you welcome more information or a free home Bible study? Please send your request to Jehovah's Witnesses, using the appropriate address below.

America, United States of: Wallkill, NY 12589. **Antigua:** Box 119, St. Johns. **Australia:** Box 280, Ingleburn, NSW 1890. **Bahamas:** Box N-1247, Nassau, N.P. **Barbados, W.I.:** Crusher Site Road, Prospect, St. James. **Britain:** The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN. **Canada:** Box 4100, Halton Hills (Georgetown), Ontario L7G 4Y4. **Germany:** Niederselters, Am Steinfeil, D-65618 Selters. **Ghana:** P. O. Box GP 760, Accra. **Guyana:** 50 Brickdam, Georgetown 16. **Hawaii 96819:** 2055 Kam IV Rd., Honolulu. **Hong Kong:** 4 Kent Road, Kowloon Tong. **India:** Post Box No. 6440, Yelahanka, Bangalore 560 064 KAR. **Ireland:** Newcastle, Greystones, Co. Wicklow. **Jamaica:** P. O. Box 103, Old Harbour, St. Catherine. **Japan:** 1271 Nakashinden, Ebina City, Kanagawa Pref., 243-0496. **Kenya:** P.O. Box 47788, GPO Nairobi 00100. **New Zealand:** P.O. Box 75-142, Manurewa. **Nigeria:** P.M.B. 1090, Benin City 300001, Edo State. **Philippines, Republic of:** P. O. Box 2044, 1060 Manila. **South Africa:** Private Bag X2067, Krugersdorp, 1740. **Trinidad and Tobago, Republic of:** Lower Rapsey Street & Laxmi Lane, Curepe. **Zambia:** Box 33459, Lusaka 10101. **Zimbabwe:** Private Bag WG-5001, Westgate.

NOW PUBLISHED IN 146 LANGUAGES. SEMIMONTHLY: 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, * Gujarati, Hun, Hebrew, Hiligaynon, Hindi, Hungarian, * Igbo, * Iloko, * Indonesian, Italian, ** Japanese, * (also Braille), Kannada, Kiriyawanda, Kirundi, Korean, * (also Braille), Latvian, Lingala, Lithuanian, 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, Wallisian, Xhosa, Yoruba, * Zulu *

MONTHLY: American Sign Language (Videocassette), Armenian, Assamese, Azerbaijani (Cyrillic script), Azerbaijani (Roman script), Cambodian, Chitonga, Gilbertese, Greenlandic, Haitian Creole, Hausa, Hiri Motu, Icelandic, Isoko, Kaonde, Kazakh, Kiluba, Kirghiz, Kwanyama/Ndonga, Luganda, Luvala, Marshallese, Mauritian Creole, Mizo, Monokutuba, Moore, Niuean, Ossetian, Otetela, Palauan, Persian, Ponapean, Seychelles Creole, Tatar, Tiv, Trukese, Tumbuka, Tuvaluan, Umbundu, Yapese, Zande

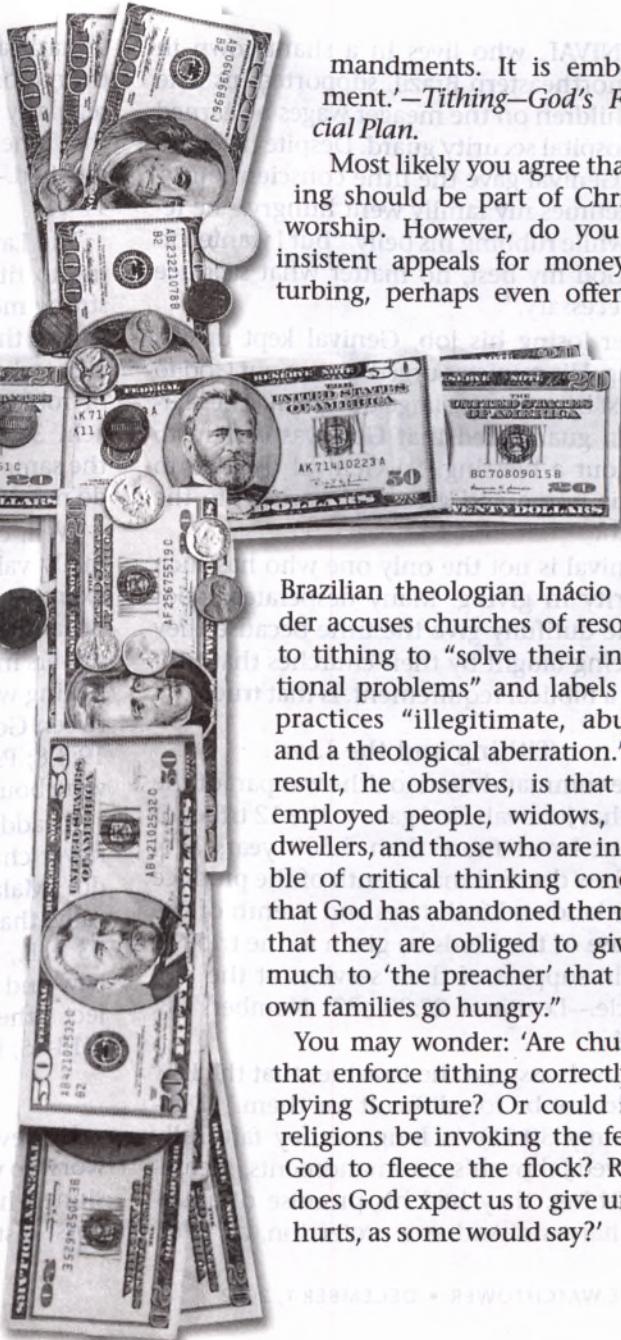
* Study articles also available in large-print edition.

* Audio cassettes also available.

ENGLISH

Giving Until It Hurts

"YOU can call me a beggar; that doesn't bother me. I'm begging for Jesus." Those telling words of a Protestant minister underline the controversy that swirls around religious funding. Organized religion seems to be able to survive only with sizable



financial support. Salaries need to be paid, temples need to be built and maintained, evangelizing campaigns need to be financed. How is the necessary money to be found?

For many churches, the answer is the tithe.* "Tithing is God's way of financing His kingdom on the earth," claims evangelist Norman Robertson. "It is His system of economics which enables the Gospel to be preached." Not shy about reminding his followers of their responsibility to give, he emphatically states: "Tithing isn't something you do because you can afford it. It is an act of obedience. Not tithing is a clear violation of God's com-

mandments. It is embezzlement."—*Tithing—God's Financial Plan*.

Most likely you agree that giving should be part of Christian worship. However, do you find insistent appeals for money disturbing, perhaps even offensive?

Brazilian theologian Inácio Strieder accuses churches of resorting to tithing to "solve their institutional problems" and labels such practices "illegitimate, abusive, and a theological aberration." The result, he observes, is that "unemployed people, widows, slum dwellers, and those who are incapable of critical thinking conclude that God has abandoned them and that they are obliged to give so much to 'the preacher' that their own families go hungry."

You may wonder: 'Are churches that enforce tithing correctly applying Scripture? Or could some religions be invoking the fear of God to fleece the flock? Really, does God expect us to give until it hurts, as some would say?' ■

* The tithe has been defined as 10 percent of a person's gross income.

Giving That Brings Joy

GENIVAL, who lives in a shantytown in northeastern Brazil, supported his wife and children on the meager wages he earned as a hospital security guard. Despite his hardship, Genival gave the tithe conscientiously. "Sometimes my family went hungry," he recalls while rubbing his belly, "but I wanted to give God my best, no matter what sacrifice was necessary."

After losing his job, Genival kept up his tithing. His minister urged him to put God to the test by making a large donation. The clergyman guaranteed that God was certain to pour out a blessing. So Genival decided to sell his home and give the proceeds to the church.

Genival is not the only one who has such sincerity in giving. Many desperately poor people dutifully give the tithe because they are being taught by their churches that tithing is a Biblical requirement. Is that true?

Tithing and the Law

The commandment to tithe was part of the Law that Jehovah God gave to the 12 tribes of ancient Israel more than 3,500 years ago. That Law decreed that a tenth of the produce of the land and fruit trees and a tenth of the increase of the herds be given to the tribe of Levi in support of their services at the tabernacle.—Leviticus 27:30, 32; Numbers 18:21, 24.

Jehovah assured the Israelites that the Law 'would not be too difficult for them.' (Deuteronomy 30:11) As long as they faithfully observed Jehovah's commandments, including tithing, they had his promise of abundant harvests. And as a protection, an addi-

tional yearly tithe, normally consumed when the nation met for its religious festivities, was regularly set aside. Thus 'the alien resident, the fatherless boy, and the widow' could be satisfied.—Deuteronomy 14:28, 29; 28:1, 2, 11-14.

The Law did not specify a penalty for failing to tithe, but each Israelite was under a strong moral obligation to support true worship in this way. In fact, Jehovah accused Israelites who neglected tithing in Malachi's day of 'robbing him in tithes and offerings.' (Malachi 3:8, *New International Version*) Could the same charge be leveled at Christians who do not tithe?

Well, consider. National laws are not normally valid outside a country's borders. For example, the law that obliges motorists in Britain to drive on the left does not apply to drivers in France. Similarly, the law requiring tithing was part of an exclusive covenant between God and the nation of Israel. (Exodus 19:3-8; Psalm 147:19, 20) Only the Israelites were bound by that law.

In addition, although it is true that God never changes, his requirements sometimes do. (Malachi 3:6) The Bible states categorically that the sacrificial death of Jesus, in 33 C.E., "blotted out," or "abolished," the Law and with it the "commandment to collect tithes."—Colossians 2:13, 14; Ephesians 2:13-15; Hebrews 7:5, 18.

Christian Giving

However, contributions to support true worship were still needed. Jesus had commissioned his disciples 'to be witnesses to the most distant part of the earth.' (Acts 1:8) As

the number of believers grew, so did the need for Christian teachers and overseers to visit and strengthen the congregations. Widows, orphans, and other needy ones had to be cared for at times. How did the first-century Christians cover the costs involved?

About 55 C.E., an appeal went out to Gentile Christians in Europe and Asia Minor in behalf of the impoverished congregation in Judea. In his letters to the congregation in Corinth, the apostle Paul describes how this 'collection for the holy ones' was organized. (1 Corinthians 16:1) You may be surprised at what Paul's words reveal about Christian giving.

The apostle Paul did not cajole fellow believers to give. In fact, Macedonian Christians who were "under affliction" and in "deep poverty" had to 'keep begging him with

much entreaty for the privilege of kindly giving and for a share in the ministry destined for the holy ones.'—2 Corinthians 8:1-4.

True, Paul encouraged the more affluent Corinthians to imitate their generous brothers in Macedonia. Even so, observes one reference work, he 'declined to issue directives, preferring rather to request, suggest, encourage, or appeal. Spontaneity and warmth would be absent from the Corinthians' giving if coercion were present.' Paul knew that "God loves a cheerful giver," not one who gives "grudgingly or under compulsion."—2 Corinthians 9:7.

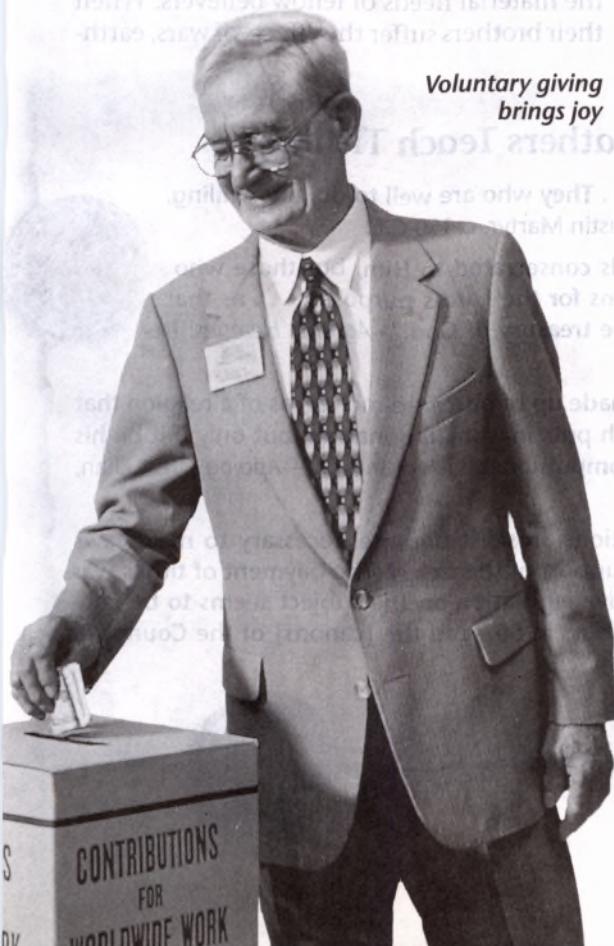
Abundant faith and knowledge together with genuine love for fellow Christians would have impelled the Corinthians to give spontaneously.—2 Corinthians 8:7, 8.

'As He Has Resolved in His Own Heart'

Rather than specifying an amount or a percentage, Paul merely suggested that "on the first day of every week, each one . . . should set aside *a sum of money* in keeping with his income." (Italics ours; 1 Corinthians 16:2, NIV) By planning and reserving an amount on a regular basis, the Corinthians would not feel pressured into giving begrudgingly or on emotional impulse when Paul arrived. For each Christian, the decision of how much to give was to be a private matter, one that 'he had resolved in his own heart.'—2 Corinthians 9:5, 7.

In order to reap generously, the Corinthians had to sow generously. No suggestion of giving until it hurts was ever made. 'I do not mean for it to be hard on you,' Paul assured them. Contributions were 'especially acceptable according to what a person had, not according to what a person did not have.' (2 Corinthians 8:12, 13; 9:6) In a later letter, the apostle warned: "If anyone does not provide for those . . . who are members of his household, he has disowned the faith and is worse than a person without faith."

Voluntary giving brings joy



(1 Timothy 5:8) Paul did not encourage giving that violated this principle.

It is significant that Paul supervised a 'collection for the holy ones' who were in need. We do not read in the Scriptures about Paul or the other apostles organizing collections or receiving tithes to finance their own ministries. (Acts 3:6) Always grateful to receive the gifts that the congregations sent him, Paul conscientiously avoided imposing "an expensive burden" on his brothers.—1 Thessalonians 2:9; Philippians 4:15-18.

Voluntary Giving Today

Clearly, during the first century, followers of Christ practiced voluntary giving, not tithing. However, you may wonder if this is still an effective way to finance the preaching of the good news and to care for Christians who are in need.

Consider the following. In 1879 the editors of this magazine stated openly that they

would "never beg nor petition men for support." Has that decision hindered the efforts of Jehovah's Witnesses to spread Bible truth?

Currently, the Witnesses distribute Bibles, Christian books, and other publications in 235 lands. *The Watchtower*, a Bible educational magazine, initially had a monthly distribution of 6,000 copies printed in one language. It has since become a semimonthly magazine with a printing of more than 24,000,000 copies available in 146 languages. To organize their global Bible education work, the Witnesses have built or acquired administrative centers in 110 countries. In addition, they have constructed thousands of local meeting places as well as large assembly halls to accommodate those interested in receiving further Bible instruction.

While caring for people's spiritual needs is a priority, Jehovah's Witnesses do not neglect the material needs of fellow believers. When their brothers suffer the effects of wars, earth-

Did the Early Church Fathers Teach Tithing?

"The wealthy among us help the needy . . . They who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit."—*The First Apology*, Justin Martyr, c. 150 C.E.

"The Jews had indeed the tithes of their goods consecrated to Him, but those who have received liberty set aside all their possessions for the Lord's purposes, . . . as that poor widow acted who cast all her living into the treasury of God."—*Against Heresies*, Irenaeus, c. 180 C.E.

"Though we have our treasure-chest, it is not made up of purchase-money, as of a religion that has its price. On the monthly day, if he likes, each puts in a small donation; but only if it be his pleasure, and only if he be able: for there is no compulsion; all is voluntary."—*Apology*, Tertullian, c. 197 C.E.

"As the Church expanded and various institutions arose, it became necessary to make laws which would insure the proper and permanent support of the clergy. The payment of tithes was adopted from the Old Law . . . The earliest positive legislation on the subject seems to be contained in the letter of the bishops assembled at Tours in 567 and the [canons] of the Council of Macon in 585."—*The Catholic Encyclopedia*.

quakes, droughts, and storms, they are quick to provide medical supplies, food, clothing, and other necessities. These are financed by donations made by individual Christians and by congregations.

As well as being effective, contributing on a voluntary basis takes a load off the shoulders of those with limited means, such as Genival, mentioned earlier. Fortunately, before he could sell his home, Genival was visited by Maria, a full-time minister of Jehovah's Witnesses. "That conversation saved my family a lot of unnecessary hardship," recalls Genival.

Genival discovered that the Lord's work does not depend on tithes. In fact, tithing is no longer a Scriptural requirement. He learned that Christians are blessed when they give generously but that they are not obliged to give beyond their means.

Practicing voluntary giving has brought Genival true joy. He expresses it this way: "I may or may not give 10 percent, but I am happy with my contribution, and I am sure that Jehovah is happy too."

Voluntary contributions finance the preaching work, emergency relief, and the construction of meeting places





Robert G.
Smith



Charles T.
Russell

At the Captain's Table

INTERESTING people, good food, and enjoyable conversation make a meal at the captain's table aboard ship a delight. But a discussion at the table of Captain Robert G. Smith, of the White Star Line, shed light on a spiritual banquet.—Isaiah 25:6.

In 1894, at the age of 24, Robert took command of the sailing ship *Kinclune of Dundee* to make his first round-the-world voyage. Later he skippered White Star ships, such as the *Cedric*, the *Civic*, and the *Runic*.* While crossing the Atlantic from New York to Liverpool, England, on one of these ships, Robert was host at the captain's table to Charles Taze Russell. The conversation with Russell sparked Robert's interest in the Bible message, and to help him learn more, he gladly obtained from Russell copies of *Studies in the Scriptures*.

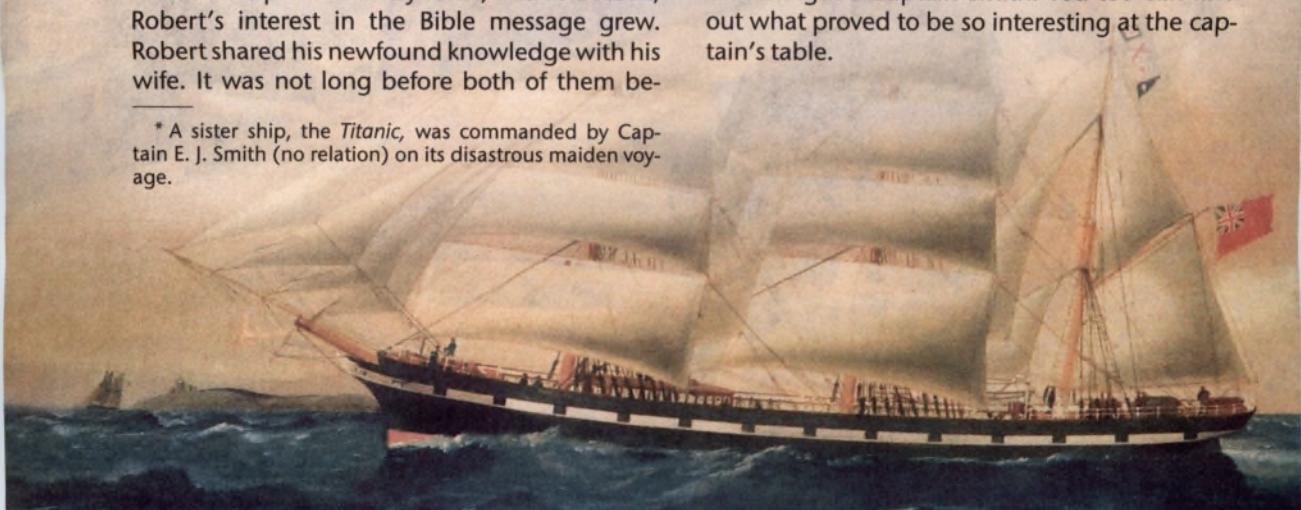
Russell kept in touch by letter, and as a result, Robert's interest in the Bible message grew. Robert shared his newfound knowledge with his wife. It was not long before both of them be-

came active Bible Students, as Jehovah's Witnesses were then known. Robert later had the privilege of presenting Bible discourses. In Brisbane, Australia, for example, he spoke on "The Balm of Gilead" and showed how God's Word contains a message that is an "antidote for all earthly woes." Back in England, his wife and young children helped in presenting the "Photo-Drama of Creation," playing the recordings of Russell's commentary as the slides were shown.

Robert passed on to his children the heritage of Kingdom truth that he had received. Today, five generations later, 18 family members busily share the good news with others, grateful for what was served at the captain's table.

Through their publications and their Bible educational work, Jehovah's Witnesses are helping people worldwide to learn the Bible message that intrigued Captain Smith. You too can find out what proved to be so interesting at the captain's table.

* A sister ship, the *Titanic*, was commanded by Captain E. J. Smith (no relation) on its disastrous maiden voyage.



What Joshua Remembered



MOSES my servant is dead," said Jehovah, "and now get up, cross this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them."

(Joshua 1:2) What a task lay before Joshua! He had been Moses' attendant for almost 40 years. Now he was told to step into his master's place and lead the often difficult sons of Israel into the Promised Land.

As Joshua surveyed what lay ahead, perhaps trials he had already faced and overcome raced through his mind. What Joshua remembered was doubtless an invaluable aid to him back then, and it can be for Christians today.

From Slave to Commander

Long years of slavery were part of Joshua's memories. (Exodus 1:13, 14; 2:23) Just what Joshua's experiences were during that period, we can only imagine, since the Bible is silent on the particulars. Joshua might have learned to be a good organizer during his service in Egypt, and he could have assisted in marshaling the flight of the Hebrews and the "vast mixed company" from that land.—Exodus 12:38.

Joshua belonged to a family of the tribe of Ephraim. His grandfather Elishama was the chieftain of the tribe and apparently led 108,100 armed men of one of the three-tribe divisions of Israel. (Numbers 1:4, 10, 16; 2:18-24; 1 Chronicles 7:20, 26, 27) Yet, when the Amalekites attacked Israel soon after Israel's departure from Egypt, Moses called on Joshua to organize the defense. (Exodus 17:8, 9a) Why Joshua and not, for

example, his grandfather or father? One suggestion is: "As a chief of the important tribe of Ephraim, and as one already well known for his skill in organization, and one thoroughly trusted by the people, to [Joshua] Moses turned as the leader best fitted to select and arrange the combatants."

Be that as it may, when chosen, Joshua did just as Moses commanded. Though Israel was totally inexperienced in warfare, Joshua was convinced of divine help. So when Moses told him, "tomorrow I am stationing myself upon the top of the hill, with the rod of the true God in my hand," that was enough. Joshua must have remembered that Jehovah had just annihilated the greatest military power of the day. The next day, when Moses lifted his hands and held them high until sunset, no enemy could stand against Israel, and the Amalekites were vanquished. Then Jehovah commanded Moses to write in a book and 'propound in Joshua's ears' the divine decree: "I shall completely wipe out the remembrance of Amalek from under the heavens." (Exodus 17:9b-14)

Yes, Jehovah would unfailingly execute that sentence.

Joshua and Caleb had confidence in Jehovah's power

Fellowship with Moses strengthened Joshua's faith

As Moses' Attendant

The episode with Amalek must have forged an even closer relationship between Joshua and Moses. Joshua had the honor of being Moses' personal attendant, or "minister," "from his young manhood" until Moses' death, a period of some 40 years.—Numbers 11:28.

That office meant privileges and responsibilities. For example, when Moses, Aaron, Aaron's sons, and 70 of the older men of Israel ascended Mount Sinai and saw a vision of Jehovah's glory, likely Joshua was among them. In his role as attendant, he accompanied Moses higher up the mountain and apparently remained at a distance while Moses entered the cloud symbolizing Jehovah's presence. Remarkably, Joshua seems to have stayed on the mountain for 40 days and 40 nights. He faithfully awaited his master's return, for when Moses began his descent with the tablets of the Testimony, Joshua was there to meet him.—Exodus 24:1, 2, 9-18; 32:15-17.

After the incident of Israel's idolatry with the golden calf, Joshua continued in attendance on Moses at the tent of meeting outside the camp. There Jehovah spoke to Moses face-to-face. But when Moses returned to the camp, Joshua "would not

Joshua's leadership inspired the people to stick to Jehovah

withdraw from the midst of the tent." Perhaps his presence there was required to prevent the Israelites from entering the tent in their unclean state. How seriously Joshua took that responsibility!—Exodus 33:7, 11.

Fellowship with Moses, who, according to historian Josephus, was 35 years older than Joshua, must have strengthened Joshua's faith immensely. Their relationship has been called "the contact of maturity and youth, of the master and the scholar," resulting in Joshua's becoming "a firm, solid-set man." We do not have prophets like Moses in our midst today, but congregations of Jehovah's people do include older ones who because of their experience and spirituality represent a real source of strength and encouragement. Do you appreciate them? And are you benefiting from their company?

A Spy in Canaan

A crucial episode in Joshua's life took place shortly after Israel received the Law. He was chosen to represent his tribe in spying out the Promised Land. The story is well-known. All 12 spies agreed that the land was indeed "flowing with milk and honey," just as Jehovah had promised. However, ten faithlessly feared that Israel could not dispossess the inhabitants of the land. Only Joshua and Caleb urged the people not to rebel out of fear, for Jehovah would surely be with them. At that, all the assembly protested and talked of pelting the two with stones. Perhaps they would have done so had Jehovah not intervened with a manifestation of his glory. For their lack of faith, God decreed that none of those registered in Israel from 20 years old upward would live to enter Canaan. Of these, only Joshua, Caleb, and the Levites survived.—Numbers 13:1-16, 25-29; 14:6-10, 26-30.

Had not all the people seen Jehovah's mighty acts in Egypt? What, then, enabled Joshua to have faith in God's help while the majority doubted? Joshua must have kept

clear in his mind all that Jehovah had promised and done, and he meditated on these. Years later he could say that 'not one word of all the good words that Jehovah had spoken to Israel had failed. They had all come true.' (Joshua 23:14) Joshua thus had faith that all the promises that Jehovah had made with regard to the future would also without fail be fulfilled. (Hebrews 11:6) This should move a person to ask: 'What about me? Has the effort I have devoted to studying and pondering Jehovah's promises convinced me of their trustworthiness? Do I believe that God can protect me along with his people during the coming great tribulation?'

Not only did Joshua exercise faith but he also displayed moral courage. He and Caleb stood alone, and *all* the assembly talked of stoning them. How would you have felt? Intimidated? Not Joshua. He and Caleb firmly said what they believed. Loyalty to Jehovah may require that we do the same one day.

The story of the spies also informs us that Joshua's name was changed. To his original name, Hoshea, meaning "Salvation," Moses added the syllable denoting the divine name and called him Jehovah, or Joshua—"Jehovah Is Salvation." The *Septuagint* renders his name "Jesus." (Numbers 13:8, 16, footnote.) True to that great name, Joshua boldly declared that Jehovah is salvation. Joshua's name change could not have been done casually. It reflected Moses' esteem of Joshua's character and corresponded with the privileged role Joshua would fulfill in leading a new generation into the Promised Land.

As their fathers died off, the Israelites wandered in the wilderness for 40 wearisome years. We know nothing of Joshua during that period. However, it must have taught him much. He likely witnessed God's judgment on the rebels Korah, Dathan, and Abiram and on their followers and those who engaged in debased worship of the Baal of Peor. No doubt with great sadness Joshua

learned that because of Moses' failing to sanctify Jehovah concerning the waters of Meribah, Moses too would be excluded from the land of promise.—Numbers 16:1-50; 20:9-13; 25:1-9.

Commissioned as Moses' Successor

When Moses' death drew near, he asked God to appoint his successor so that Israel might not become "like sheep that have no shepherd." Jehovah's response? Joshua, "a man in whom there is spirit," was to be commissioned before all the assembly. They were to listen to him. What a recommendation! Jehovah had seen Joshua's faith and ability. Israel's leadership could not have been entrusted to more qualified hands. (Numbers 27:15-20) Still, Moses knew that Joshua faced enormous challenges. So Moses urged his successor to be "courageous and strong," for Jehovah would continue with him.—Deuteronomy 31:7, 8.

God himself repeated the same encouragement to Joshua and added: "Take care to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn aside from it to the right or to the left, in order that you may act wisely everywhere you go. This book of the law should not depart from your mouth, and you must in an undertone read in it day and night, in order that you may take care to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way successful and then you will act wisely. Have I not commanded you? Be courageous and strong. Do not suffer shock or be terrified, for Jehovah your God is with you wherever you go."—Joshua 1:7-9.

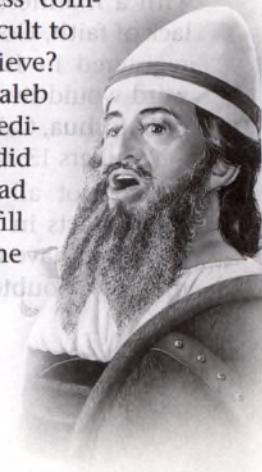
With Jehovah's words ringing in his ears and with the experience he had already accumulated, how could Joshua doubt? Conquest of the land was assured. Difficulties would arise, of course, not least of which was the very first challenge, fording the Jordan River

at flood stage. Yet, Jehovah himself had commanded: "Get up, cross this Jordan." So, what problem could there be?—Joshua 1:2.

Successive events in Joshua's life—the conquest of Jericho, the progressive subjugation of their enemies, and the apportioning of the land—reveal that he never lost sight of God's promises. Close to the end of his days, when Jehovah had given Israel rest from their enemies, Joshua assembled the people to review God's dealings with them and to urge them to serve Him wholeheartedly. As a result, Israel solemnly renewed its covenant with Jehovah, and no doubt inspired by the example of their leader, "Israel continued to serve Jehovah all the days of Joshua."—Joshua 24:16, 31.

Joshua provides an excellent example for us. Christians today face numerous tests of faith. Meeting them successfully is vital to maintaining Jehovah's approval and ultimately to inheriting his promises. Joshua's success depended on his strong faith. True, we have not seen God's mighty acts as Joshua did, but if anyone should doubt, the Bible book bearing Joshua's name provides eyewitness testimony to the trustworthiness of Jehovah's word. We, like Joshua, are assured wisdom and success if we read God's Word daily and take care to put it into practice.

Are you sometimes hurt by the conduct of fellow Christians? Think of Joshua's endurance during the 40 years he was obliged, through no fault of his own, to wander in the wilderness with faithless companions. Do you find it difficult to stand up for what you believe? Recall what Joshua and Caleb did. For their faith and obedience, they received a splendid reward. Yes, Joshua truly had faith that Jehovah would fulfill all his promises. May the same be true of us.—Joshua 23:14.



ENJOY PERSONAL STUDY OF GOD'S WORD

"I shall certainly meditate on all your activity,

and with your dealings I will concern myself."—PSALM 77:12.

AS DISCIPLES of Jesus Christ, we should be deeply concerned about our relationship with God and our reasons for serving Him. Today, however, most people live at such a fast pace that they allow no time for meditation. They are totally wrapped up in the hustle and bustle of materialism, consumerism, and mindless pleasure-seeking. How can we avoid such an exercise in futility? Even as we set aside specific time each day for essential activities, such as eating and sleeping, we must likewise allow time each day to meditate on Jehovah's activities and dealings.

—Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 4:4.

² Do you ever stop to meditate? What does it mean to meditate? One dictionary defines the word as "to focus one's thoughts on: reflect on or ponder over." And the word "ponder" means "to think about: reflect on . . . to think or consider especially quietly, soberly, and deeply." What meaning does this have for us?

³ For one thing, it should remind us of what the apostle Paul wrote to his fellow ser-

1, 2. (a) Why must we set aside time for meditation? (b) What is meant by "meditate" and "ponder"?

3. To what is making spiritual advancement directly related?



vant Timothy: "While I am coming, continue applying yourself to public reading, to exhortation, to teaching. . . . Ponder over these things; be absorbed in them, that your advancement may be manifest to all persons." Yes, advancement and progress were expected, and Paul's words showed that there was a direct relationship between pondering over spiritual matters and making advancement. The same is true today. To enjoy the satisfaction of making spiritual advancement, we must still "ponder over" and "be absorbed" in things having to do with God's Word.—1 Timothy 4:13-15.

⁴ The best time for you to meditate depends on you and your family routine. Many ponder on a Bible text early in the morning when they read from the booklet *Examining the Scriptures Daily*. In fact, some 20,000 volunteers in Bethel homes around the world start their day with a 15-minute consideration of the Bible text for the day. While only a few in the Bethel family give a verbal comment each morning, the rest ponder on what is being said and read. Other Witnesses ponder on Jehovah's Word while on their way to work. They listen to the audiocassettes of the

4. What provisions can you utilize to help you ponder on Jehovah's Word regularly?

Bible and the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines that are available in some languages. Many housewives do this while working around the house. In effect, they are imitating the psalmist Asaph, who wrote: "I shall remember the practices of Jah; for I will remember your marvelous doing of long ago. And I shall certainly meditate on all your activity, and with your dealings I will concern myself."—Psalm 77:11, 12.

Right Attitude Brings Positive Results

⁵ In our modern era of TV, videos, and computers, reading has suffered a serious, if not debilitating, setback. That certainly should not be true among Jehovah's Witnesses. After all, reading the Bible is like a life-line linking us to Jehovah. Thousands of years ago, Joshua succeeded Moses as the leader of Israel. To gain Jehovah's blessing, Joshua had to read God's Word for himself. (Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:1, 2) That is still a requirement today. Because of limited education, however, some may have difficulty reading or find it laborious. So, what can help us to want to read and study God's Word? The answer can be found in King Solomon's words recorded at Proverbs 2:1-6. Please open your Bible and read these verses. Then we will discuss them together.

⁶ To begin with, we find this exhortation: "My son, if you will receive my sayings and treasure up my own commandments with yourself, so as to pay attention to wisdom with your ear, that you may incline your heart to discernment; . . ." (Proverbs 2:1, 2) What do we learn from these words? That the responsibility falls on us individually. Note the supposition "if you will receive my sayings." That is a big "if" because most of mankind pay no attention to God's Word. For us to find joy in studying God's Word, we must

5. Why should personal study be important to us?
6. What attitude should we show toward knowledge of God?

be willing to receive Jehovah's sayings and treat them like a treasure that we do not wish to lose. We should never allow our daily routine to cause us to become so busy or distracted that we begin to treat God's Word with indifference, even with misgivings.—Romans 3:3, 4.

⁷ Do we really "pay attention" and listen carefully when God's Word is being expounded at our Christian meetings? (Ephesians 4:20, 21) Do we 'incline the heart' so as to get discernment? Perhaps the speaker is not the most experienced, but while he is handling the Word of God, he is worthy of our careful attention. Of course, in order to pay attention to Jehovah's wisdom, we must, whenever possible, be present at Christian meetings. (Proverbs 18:1) Imagine the disappointment of any who might have missed the meeting in the upper room in Jerusalem at Pentecost 33 C.E.! Though our meetings are not as spectacular as that one, the Bible, our basic textbook, is discussed. Thus, every meeting can be a blessing for us if we pay attention and follow along in our Bibles.—Acts 2:1-4; Hebrews 10:24, 25.

⁸ The wise king's next words are: "If, moreover, you call out for understanding itself and you give forth your voice for discernment itself, . . ." (Proverbs 2:3) What attitude or spirit do these words communicate to us? Why, an earnest desire to understand Jehovah's Word! They imply a willingness to study with a view to gaining discernment, to perceiving what Jehovah's will is. This, of course, requires effort, and that leads us to Solomon's next words and illustration.—Ephesians 5: 15-17.

⁹ He continues: "If you keep seeking for it [understanding] as for silver, and as for hid

7. Whenever possible, why should we be present and pay attention at Christian meetings?

8, 9. (a) What does personal study require of us? (b) How would you compare the value of gold to understanding the knowledge of God?



Members of the Bethel family find it spiritually strengthening to start each day by considering a Bible text

treasures you keep searching for it, . . ." (Proverbs 2:4) This makes us think of the mining exploits of men who over the centuries have searched for the so-called precious metals silver and gold. Men have killed for gold. Others have spent a lifetime trying to find it. What true value, though, does gold have? If you were lost in a desert and dying of thirst, which would you prefer: a bar of gold or a glass of water? Yet, with what zeal men have sought gold, with its artificial and arbitrary value!* With how much more zeal we should seek wisdom, discernment, and understanding of God and his will! But what are the benefits of such a search?—Psalm 19:7-10; Proverbs 3:13-18.

¹⁰ Solomon's exposition continues: "In that case you will understand the fear of Jehovah, and you will find the very knowledge of God." (Proverbs 2:5) What a staggering thought—that we sinful humans can find "the very knowledge of God," Jehovah, the Sovereign Lord of the universe! (Psalm 73:28; Acts 4:24) The philosophers and so-called wise men of the world have for centuries tried to understand the mysteries

* Since 1979 the value of gold has fluctuated between a high of \$850.00 per ounce in 1980 to a low of \$252.80 per ounce in 1999.

10. What can we find if we study God's Word?

of life and of the universe. However, they have failed to find "the very knowledge of God." Why? Although it has been available for thousands of years in God's Word, the Bible, they dismiss it as too simple and thus fail to accept and grasp it.—1 Corinthians 1:18-21.

¹¹ Here is another incentive that Solomon highlights: "Jehovah himself gives wisdom; out of his mouth there are knowledge and discernment." (Proverbs 2:6) Jehovah freely and generously gives wisdom, knowledge, and discernment to anyone who is willing to search for them. Surely we have every reason to appreciate personal study of God's Word, even if it does require effort, discipline, and sacrifice. At least we have printed copies of the Bible and do not have to make handwritten copies, as some in ancient times did!—Deuteronomy 17:18, 19.

11. What are some benefits of personal study?

Valuable time can be redeemed by listening to Bible tapes while we travel



To Walk Worthily of Jehovah

¹² What should be the motive behind our personal study? To appear to be better than others? To display superior knowledge? To become, in effect, walking Bible encyclopedias? No. Our aim is to be walking, talking, practicing Christians, always ready to help others, in the refreshing spirit of Christ. (Matthew 11:28-30) The apostle Paul warned: "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up." (1 Corinthians 8:1) Therefore, we should have the humble attitude that Moses displayed when he said to Jehovah: "Make me know, please, your ways, that I may know you, in order that I may find favor in your eyes." (Exodus 33:13) Yes, we should desire knowledge in order to please God, not to impress men. We want to be worthy, humble servants of God. How can we attain that goal?

¹³ Paul counseled Timothy about how to please God, saying: "Do your utmost to present yourself approved to God, a workman with nothing to be ashamed of, handling the word of the truth aright." (2 Timothy 2:15)

12. What should be our motive in our pursuit of the knowledge of God?

13. What is needed for one to become a worthy servant of God?

*Men worked hard and long to obtain gold.
How much effort do you put forth
to study God's Word?*



Courtesy of California State Parks, 2002

The expression "handling . . . aright" is from a compound Greek verb that originally meant "straightly cutting," or 'to cut straight.' (*Kingdom Interlinear*) According to some, this suggests the idea of a tailor cutting fabric according to a pattern, of a farmer plowing furrows in a field, and so forth. In any case, the end result must be true, or straight. The point is that to be a worthy and approved servant of God, Timothy had to 'do his utmost' to be sure that his teaching and his conduct were in accordance with the word of truth.—1 Timothy 4:16.

¹⁴ Paul made the same point when he urged fellow Christians in Colossae "to walk worthily of Jehovah to the end of fully pleasing him" by "bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the accurate knowledge of God." (Colossians 1:10) Here Paul relates being worthy of Jehovah to "bearing fruit in every good work" as well as "increasing in the accurate knowledge of God." In other words, what counts with Jehovah is not only how much we value knowledge but also how closely we adhere to God's Word in what we do and say. (Romans 2:21, 22) This means that our personal study must affect our thinking and our conduct if we want to please God.

¹⁵ Today, Satan is bent on destroying our spirituality by promoting a battle of the mind. (Romans 7:14-25) Therefore, we must protect and control our mind and thoughts in order to prove worthy of our God, Jehovah. The weapon we have is "the knowledge of God," which is capable of "bringing every thought into captivity to make it obedient to the Christ." This is all the more reason for us to pay attention to daily Bible study, as we want to flush out selfish, fleshly thoughts from our mind.—2 Corinthians 10:5.

14. How should our personal study affect what we do and say?

15. How can we protect and control our mind and thoughts?

Aids to Understanding

¹⁶ Jehovah's teaching brings spiritual and physical benefits. It is not sterile, academic theology. Thus, we read: "I, Jehovah, am your God, the One teaching you to benefit yourself, the One causing you to tread in the way in which you should walk." (Isaiah 48:17) How does Jehovah cause us to walk in his beneficial way? First, we have his inspired Word, the Holy Bible. This is our basic textbook, to which we refer constantly. That is why it is good to follow along at Christian meetings with an open Bible. The beneficial results of doing so can be seen by the account of the Ethiopian eunuch, recorded in Acts chapter 8.

¹⁷ The Ethiopian eunuch was a convert to Judaism. He was a sincere believer in God, and he studied the Scriptures. Traveling in his chariot, he was reading the text of Isaiah when Philip ran alongside him and asked: "Do you actually know what you are reading?" How did the eunuch answer? "'Really, how could I ever do so, unless someone guided me?' And he entreated Philip to get on and sit down with him." Then Philip, directed by holy spirit, helped the eunuch to understand the prophecy of Isaiah. (Acts 8:27-35) What does this illustrate? That our private reading of the Bible is not enough. Jehovah, by his spirit, uses the faithful and discreet slave class to help us to understand his Word at the right time. How is this done?—Matthew 24:45-47; Luke 12:42.

¹⁸ Although the slave class is defined as "faithful and discreet," Jesus did not say that

16. How can we benefit ourselves as Jehovah teaches us?
17. What happened in the case of the Ethiopian eunuch, and what does this illustrate?
18. How does the faithful and discreet slave class help us?

The Bible is a treasure that can lead to everlasting life



it would be infallible. This group of faithful anointed brothers still consists of imperfect Christians. Even with the best of intentions, they can be mistaken, as such men sometimes were in the first century. (Acts 10:9-15; Galatians 2:8, 11-14) However, their motive is pure, and Jehovah is using them to supply us with Bible study aids to build up our faith in God's Word and promises. The basic provision for personal study that the slave has given us is the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*. It is now available, in whole or in part, in 42 languages, and 114 million copies in several editions have been printed. How can we use it effectively in our personal study?—2 Timothy 3:14-17.

¹⁹ Take, for example, the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References*. It has columns of cross-references, footnotes,

19. What are some features of the *New World Translation—With References* that can be helpful in personal study?

a miniconcordance in the form of "Bible Words Indexed" and "Footnote Words Indexed," and an Appendix with an extensive coverage of 43 subjects, including maps and charts. There is also the "Introduction," with its explanation of the many sources used for this unique translation of the Bible. If it is available in a language that you can understand, by all means get well acquainted with these features and make use of them. In any case, the Bible is the starting point for our study program, and in the *New World Translation*, we have a version that properly emphasizes the divine name as it highlights God's Kingdom rule.—Psalm 149:1-9; Daniel 2:44; Matthew 6:9, 10.

²⁰ Now, we might ask: 'What further help

20. What questions about personal study now require an answer?

do we need to understand the Bible? How can we make time for personal study? How can we make our study more effective? How should our study affect others?²¹ The next article will consider these vital aspects of our Christian advancement.

Do You Recall?

- What does it mean to "meditate" and to "ponder"?
- What attitude should we have toward study of God's Word?
- What motive should we have in our personal study?
- What aids to Bible understanding do we have?

PERSONAL STUDY THAT EQUIPS US AS TEACHERS

"Ponder over these things; be absorbed in them, that your advancement may be manifest to all persons. Pay constant attention to yourself and to your teaching."

—1 TIMOTHY 4:15, 16.

"FOR everything there is an appointed time," says the Bible at Ecclesiastes 3:1. That is certainly true of personal study. Many find it difficult to ponder over spiritual things if it is the wrong time or the wrong place. For example, after a hard day's work and a big evening meal, would you feel like studying, especially if you are reclining in your favorite easy chair in front of the TV? Not likely. So, what is the solution? Clearly, we have to choose when and where to study with a view

1. What is true about time and personal study?

to deriving the maximum benefit from our efforts.

² Many find that their best time for study is first thing in the morning when they are normally most alert. Others use a midday break for a short study period. Note the reference to time for important spiritual activities in the following examples. King David of ancient Israel wrote: "In the morning cause me to hear your loving-kindness, for in you I have put my trust. Make known to me the way in

2. What is often the best time for personal study?

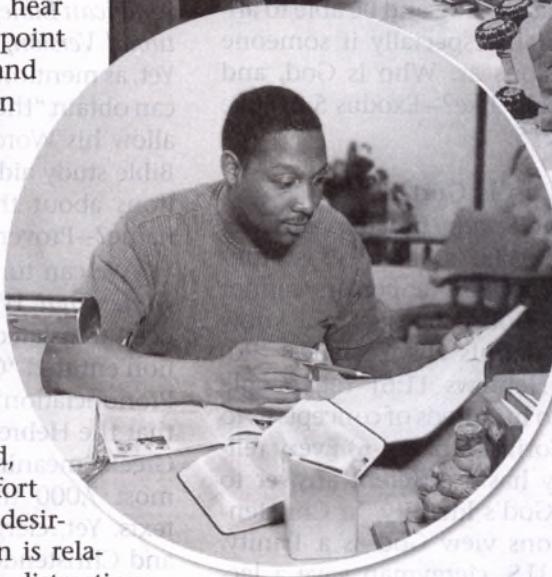
which I should walk, for to you I have lifted up my soul." (Psalm 143:8) The prophet Isaiah showed similar appreciation when he said: "The Sovereign Lord Jehovah himself has given me the tongue of the taught ones, that I may know how to answer the tired one with a word. He awakens morning by morning; he awakens my ear to hear like the taught ones." The point is that we need to study and commune with Jehovah when we are mentally sharp, whatever time of day that may be.
—Isaiah 50:4, 5; Psalm 5:3; 88:13.

³ Another factor in effective study is that we should not choose to sit in the most comfortable chair or sofa. This is not the way to remain alert. When we are studying, our mind must be stimulated, and too much physical comfort seems to do the opposite. Also desirable for study and meditation is relative quiet and freedom from distractions. Trying to study with the radio, TV, or children competing for your attention will not give the best results. When Jesus wanted to meditate, he went off to a quiet spot. He also spoke about the value of finding a private place for praying.—Matthew 6:6; 14:13; Mark 6:30-32.

Personal Study That Equips Us to Answer

⁴ Personal study is satisfying when we use various Bible aids in order to dig deeper into a subject, especially when we do so to answer someone's sincere questions. (1 Timothy 1:4;

3. What conditions are desirable for effective study? 4, 5. In what ways is the *Require* brochure a practical help?



For effective personal study, you need the right setting with minimal distractions

2 Timothy 2:23) As a starting point, many new ones are studying the brochure *What Does God Require of Us?*,* which is now available in 261 languages. It is a very simple but precise publication based entirely on the Bible. It helps its readers to appreciate quickly what God's requirements are for true worship. However, its format does not allow space for a detailed study of each subject. If your Bible student raises serious questions about certain Bible subjects under discussion, how can you go about finding more

* Normally, a newly interested person who is studying the *Require* brochure would move on to the book *Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life*, both published by Jehovah's Witnesses. Suggestions given here will help clear up obstacles to spiritual progress.

Bible information that will help him answer those questions?

⁵ For those who have *Watchtower Library* on CD-ROM in their language, it is easy to access a wide range of sources of information on a computer. But what about those people who do not have this equipment? Let us examine two topics that are considered in the *Require* brochure in order to see how we can expand our understanding and be able to answer in more detail—especially if someone raises such questions as, Who is God, and what was Jesus really like?—Exodus 5:2; Luke 9:18-20; 1 Peter 3:15.

Who Is God?

⁶ Lesson 2 in the *Require* brochure answers the vital question, Who is God? This is a fundamental point because a person cannot worship the true God if he does not know Him or perhaps doubts His existence. (Romans 1:19, 20; Hebrews 11:6) Yet, people worldwide hold to hundreds of concepts as to who God is. (1 Corinthians 8:4-6) Every religious philosophy has a different answer to the question of God's identity. In Christendom most religions view God as a Trinity. One prominent U.S. clergyman gave a lecture entitled "Do You Know God?" but not once in the speech did he mention the divine name, even though he quoted from the Hebrew Scriptures several times. Of course, he read from a Bible translation that used the ambiguous and anonymous "Lord" rather than Jehovah or Yahweh.

⁷ What a vital point that clergyman missed when he quoted Jeremiah 31:33, 34: "No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord' [Hebrew, "Know Jehovah"], for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,' says the Lord

6, 7. (a) What question arises regarding God? (b) What grave omission did one clergyman make in a lecture?

[Hebrew, Jehovah]." The translation that he used omitted the distinctive divine name, Jehovah.—Psalm 103:1, 2.

⁸ Psalm 8:9 illustrates why the use of Jehovah's name is so significant: "O Jehovah our Lord, how majestic your name is in all the earth!" Compare that with: "O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!" (*King James Version*; see also *The New American Bible*, *The Holy Bible—New International Version*, *Tanakh—The Holy Scriptures*) Yet, as mentioned in the preceding article, we can obtain "the very knowledge of God" if we allow his Word to illuminate us. But which Bible study aid will readily answer our questions about the importance of the divine name?—Proverbs 2:1-6.

⁹ We can turn to the brochure *The Divine Name That Will Endure Forever*, which has been translated into 69 languages.* The section entitled "God's Name—Its Meaning and Pronunciation" (pages 6-11) shows clearly that the Hebrew Tetragrammaton (from the Greek, meaning "four letters") appears almost 7,000 times in the ancient Hebrew texts. Yet, clergy and translators of Judaism and Christendom have deliberately omitted it from the majority of their Bible translations.[#] How can they claim to know God and have an acceptable relationship with him if they refuse to acknowledge him by his name? His true name opens the way to understanding what his purposes are and who he is. Fur-

* Published by Jehovah's Witnesses. Those who have *Insight on the Scriptures* in their language can consult Volume 2, under the heading "Jehovah."

[#] Several Spanish and Catalonian translations are notable exceptions in their rendering of the Hebrew Tetragrammaton, using "Yavé," "Yahveh," "Jahvè," and "Jehová."

8. What illustrates the importance of using God's name?

9. (a) Which publication can help us to explain the importance of using the divine name? (b) How have many translators failed to show respect for God's name?

thermore, of what value is the part of Jesus' model prayer "our Father in the heavens, let your name be sanctified" if God's name is not even used?—Matthew 6:9; John 5:43; 17:6.

Who Is Jesus Christ?

¹⁰ Lesson 3 in the *Require* brochure is entitled "Who Is Jesus Christ?" In just six paragraphs, it gives a very brief outline of Jesus, his origin, and his purpose in coming to the earth. However, if you want a complete account of his life, there is none better—aside from the Gospel accounts themselves—than *The Greatest Man Who Ever Lived*, which is available in 111 languages.* This book presents a complete chronological account of Christ's life and teachings, based on the four Gospels. Its 133 chapters cover the events of Jesus' life and ministry. For a different, analytical approach, you can refer to *Insight*, Volume 2, under the heading "Jesus Christ."

¹¹ In Christendom the controversy regarding Jesus centers on whether he is "the Son of God" as well as "God the Son"—in other words, the dispute over what the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* calls "the central mystery of Christian faith," the Trinity. Standing apart from the religions of Christendom, Jehovah's Witnesses believe that Jesus is of divine origin but is not God. An excellent exposition on this subject is found in the brochure *Should You Believe in the Trinity?*, translated into 95 languages.* Among the numerous scriptures it uses to refute the Trinity doctrine are Mark 13:32 and 1 Corinthians 15:24, 28.

¹² The discussions above regarding God and Jesus Christ serve to illustrate ways in

* Published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

10. In what ways can we get a complete picture of the life and ministry of Jesus?

11. (a) What makes Jehovah's Witnesses different in their belief about Jesus? (b) What are some Bible texts that clearly refute the Trinity doctrine, and what publication is helpful in this regard?

12. What further question deserves our attention?

which we can do personal study with a view to helping those unacquainted with Bible truth to gain accurate knowledge. (John 17:3) What, though, about those who have been associated with the Christian congregation for many years? With their background of accumulated Bible knowledge, do they still need to pay attention to their personal study of Jehovah's Word?

Why "Pay Constant Attention"?

¹³ Some who have been members of the congregation for many years may fall into the habit of just relying on the Bible knowledge they acquired in their first few years as Jehovah's Witnesses. It is easy to reason: "I do not need to study as seriously as the newer ones. After all, look at the number of times I have been through the Bible and Bible publications over the years." This would be similar to saying: "I do not really need to pay much attention to my diet now, for look at all the meals I have eaten in the past." We know that the body requires constant nourishment from good, properly prepared food in order to keep it healthy and active. How much more so that is true of maintaining our spiritual health and strength!—Hebrews 5:12-14.

¹⁴ Therefore, all of us, whether longtime Bible students or not, need to heed Paul's counsel to Timothy, who was by then a mature, responsible overseer: "Pay constant attention to yourself and to your teaching. Stay by these things, for by doing this you will save both yourself and those who listen to you." (1 Timothy 4:15, 16) Why should we take Paul's advice to heart? Remember, Paul also pointed out that we have a fight against "the machinations [“crafty acts,” footnote] of the Devil" and "against the wicked spirit forces in

13. What mistaken view might some have about personal study?

14. Why do we need to pay constant attention to ourselves?

the heavenly places." And the apostle Peter warned that the Devil is "seeking to devour someone," and that "someone" could be any one of us. Our complacency can be just the sort of opening that he is looking for.—Ephesians 6:11, 12; 1 Peter 5:8.

¹⁵ So, what defense do we have? The apostle Paul reminds us: "Take up the complete suit of armor from God, that you may be able to resist in the wicked day and, after you have done all things thoroughly, to stand firm." (Ephesians 6:13) The effectiveness of that spiritual suit of armor depends not only on its initial quality but also on regular maintenance. That complete equipment from God must, therefore, include up-to-date knowledge of God's Word. This points to the importance of keeping up with our understanding of the truth as revealed by Jehovah through his Word and through the faithful and discreet slave class. Regular personal study of the Bible and Bible publications is vital to the maintenance of our spiritual armor.

—Matthew 24:45-47; Ephesians 6:14, 15.

¹⁶ Paul highlights as an essential part of our defensive armor "the large shield of faith,"

15. What spiritual defense do we have, and how can we maintain it?

16. What can we do to be sure that our "large shield of faith" is in good working order?

Do You Remember?

- What circumstances contribute to effective personal study?
- What error do many Bible translations make regarding God's name?
- What Bible texts would you use to refute the teaching of the Trinity?
- What must we do to protect ourselves from Satan's machinations, even if we have been true Christians for many years?

with which we can deflect and extinguish Satan's burning missiles of false accusations and apostate teachings. (Ephesians 6:16) So it is essential that we check how strong our shield of faith is and what steps we take to maintain and strengthen it. You might ask, for example: 'How do I prepare for the weekly Bible study with the use of *The Watchtower*? Have I studied sufficiently to be able to "incite to love and fine works" by giving well-thought-out answers during the meeting? Do I open the Bible and read the scriptures that are cited but not quoted? Do I encourage others by my enthusiastic involvement in the meetings?' Our spiritual food is solid, and thorough digestion is needed for us to benefit fully.—Hebrews 5:14; 10:24.

¹⁷ Satan knows the weaknesses of the fallen flesh, and his machinations are insidious. One of the ways he spreads his evil influence is by making pornography ever so easily available on TV, the Internet, videos, and in printed publications. Some Christians have allowed this poison to penetrate their weakened defenses, and it has led to loss of privileges in the congregation or even more serious consequences. (Ephesians 4:17-19) What is the antidote to Satan's spiritual venom? We must not neglect our regular personal Bible study, our Christian meetings, and the complete suit of armor from God. Together, these give us the ability to distinguish between right and wrong and to hate that which God hates.—Psalm 97:10; Romans 12:9.

¹⁸ If we maintain our regular Bible study habits, we will have not only the solid defense provided by our accurate knowledge of God's Word but also the effective offense by means of "the sword of the spirit, that is,

17. (a) What poison is Satan using to try to undermine our spirituality? (b) What is the antidote to Satan's venom?

18. How can "the sword of the spirit" help us in our spiritual fight?



God's word." The word of God is "sharper than any two-edged sword and pierces even to the dividing of soul and spirit, and of joints and their marrow, and is able to discern thoughts and intentions of the heart." (Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12) If we become skilled in the use of that "sword," then when we face temptations, we will be able to cut through what may appear to be harmless, or even appealing, and expose it as a death-dealing trap of the wicked one. Our storehouse of Bible knowledge and understanding will help us to reject what is wicked and to do what is fine. So all of us need to ask ourselves: 'Is my sword trusty, or is it rusty? Do I have a hard time recalling Bible texts that can strengthen the offense?' Let us maintain our

good habits of personal Bible study and thus resist the Devil.—Ephesians 4:22-24.

¹⁹ Paul wrote: "All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching, for reproofing, for setting things straight, for disciplining in righteousness, that the man of God may be fully competent, completely equipped for every good work." If we take to heart Paul's words to Timothy, we can strengthen our own spirituality and we can make our ministry more effective. Spiritual elders and ministerial servants can be of greater benefit to the congregation, and we can all remain solid in the faith.—2 Timothy 3:16, 17; Matthew 7:24-27.

19. What benefits can be ours if we apply ourselves in personal study?



A MISSIONARY ASSIGNMENT BECAME OUR HOME

AS TOLD BY
DICK WALDRON

It was a Sunday afternoon in September 1953. We were new arrivals in South-West Africa (now Namibia). We had been in the country less than a week and were about to conduct a public meeting in the capital, Windhoek. What had brought us all the way from Australia to this African land? My wife and I, together with three young women, had come as missionaries of the good news of God's Kingdom.—Matthew 24:14.

MY LIFE started in a distant part of the earth, in Australia, in the fateful year 1914. My teenage years coincided with the Great Depression, and I had to do my share to keep the family alive. There was no work, but I devised a way to hunt wild rabbits, of which there were many in Australia. Thus, one of my main contributions to the family pantry was a steady supply of rabbit meat.

By the time the second world war broke out in 1939, I had managed to get a job working on the trams and buses in the city of Mel-

bourne. There were some 700 men working shifts on the buses, and on every shift I met a different driver or conductor. I often asked them, "What is your religion?" and had them explain their beliefs. The only person who could give me satisfying answers was one of Jehovah's Witnesses. He explained to me the Bible-based message of a paradise earth, where God-fearing humans would live forever.—Psalm 37:29.

Meanwhile, my mother also came in touch with Jehovah's Witnesses. Often, when I

came off the late shift, my food was waiting for me together with a copy of the *Consolation* magazine (now called *Awake!*). What I read sounded good. In time, I concluded that this was the true religion, and I became actively involved and was baptized in May 1940.

In Melbourne there was a pioneer home, where some 25 full-time ministers of Jehovah's Witnesses lived. I moved in with them. Day after day I listened to their exciting experiences in the preaching work, and a desire developed in my heart to join their ranks. Eventually, I applied for the pioneer service. I was accepted and was called to serve at the Australia branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses. Thus I became part of the Bethel family.

Imprisonment and Ban

One of my assignments at Bethel was to operate a sawmill. There we cut timber to make charcoal for gas. This was used for the vehicles at the branch because commercial gasoline was in short supply on account of the war. There were 12 of us working at the sawmill, all subject to military conscription. It was not long before we were sentenced to six months in prison for our Bible-based refusal of military service. (Isaiah 2:4) We were sent to a prison farm for forced labor. What did they give us to do? Of all things, we had to cut wood, the very thing we had been trained to do at Bethel!

We did so well at woodcutting that the governor of the prison gave us a Bible and our Bible literature, in spite of strict orders that we should be denied such items. It was during this time that I learned a useful lesson in human relations. While I was working at Bethel, there was one brother with whom I just could not get along. Our personalities were simply too different. Well, who do you think was put in the same prison cell with me? Yes, that very brother. Now we really had time to get to

know each other, and the result was that we developed a close and lasting friendship.

In time, the work of Jehovah's Witnesses was banned in Australia. All the funds were confiscated, and the Bethel brothers had very little financially. On one occasion, one of them came to me and said: "Dick, I want to go and do some witnessing in town, but I have no shoes, just work boots." I was happy to help him, and he set off to town in my shoes.

Later, word came back that he had been arrested and imprisoned for preaching. I just could not resist sending him a little note: "Sorry for you. Glad I was not in my shoes." But soon I too was arrested and imprisoned for the second time because of my neutral stand. After my release, I was assigned to look after the farm that supplied food to the Bethel family. By then we had won a court decision, and the ban on the activities of Jehovah's Witnesses was lifted.

Marriage to a Zealous Evangelizer

While at the farm, I started thinking seriously of marriage and became attracted to a young pioneer sister, Coralie Clogan. Coralie's grandmother had been the first one in her family to show interest in the Bible's message. On her deathbed, she had said to Coralie's mother, Vera: "Bring up your children to love and serve God, and one day we'll meet in the Paradise earth." Later, when a pioneer came to Vera's door with the publication *Millions Now Living Will Never Die*, those words started to make sense. The booklet convinced Vera that it was God's purpose for mankind to enjoy life on a paradise earth. (Revelation 21:4) She was baptized in the early 1930's, and just as her mother had encouraged, she helped her three daughters—Lucy, Jean, and Coralie—to develop a love for God. Coralie's father, however, was strongly opposed to his family's religious interests, just as Jesus

warned might happen within families.—Matthew 10:34-36.

The Clogans were a musical family; each of the children played an instrument. Coralie played the violin, and in 1939, at the age of 15, she was awarded a diploma in music. The outbreak of World War II made Coralie think seriously about her future. The time had come for her to make a decision about what she was going to do with her life. On the one hand, there was the possibility of a career in music. Already there had been an invitation to play in the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. On the other hand, there was the possibility of devoting her time to the grand work of preaching the Kingdom message. After some hard thinking, Coralie and her two sisters got baptized in 1940 and made preparations to enter the full-time evangelizing work.

Coralie had no sooner made up

her mind about the full-time ministry when she was approached by a responsible brother from the Australia branch, Lloyd Barry, who later served as a member of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses. He had just given a talk in Melbourne and said to Coralie: "I am going back to Bethel. Why don't you come back on the train with me and join the Bethel family?" She willingly accepted.

Coralie and the other sisters of the Bethel family filled a vital role in supplying Bible publications to the brothers in Australia during the ban of the war years. They actually did most of the printing, under the oversight of Brother Malcolm Vale. The books *The New World* and *Children* were being printed and bound, and not a single issue of the *Watchtower* magazine was missed during the more than two years that the ban was in place.

The printery had to be moved some 15 times in order to evade the police. In one case, Bible literature was printed in the basement of a building in which printing of a different kind was done as a front. The sister in the reception area could press a button that rang a bell down in the basement

Moving to our assignment in Rockhampton, Australia

when any danger threatened, so that the sisters there could hide the publications before anyone could start an inspection.

During one such inspection, some of the sisters were horrified when they realized that a copy of *The Watchtower* was lying on top of a table for all to see. The policeman came in, put down his briefcase right on top of *The Watchtower*, and proceeded with the search. Finding nothing, he picked up his briefcase and walked out!

After the ban was lifted and the branch property restored to the brothers, many of them were given the opportunity to go out in the field as special pioneers. That was when Coralie volunteered to go to Glen Innes. I joined her there when we got married on January 1, 1948. By the time we left that assignment, a flourishing congregation was established there.

Our next assignment was Rockhampton, but we could not find any accommodations there. So we put up a tent on an open piece of ground on the farm of an interested person. That tent was to be our home for the next nine months. It might well have been longer, but when the rainy season came, a tropical



storm tore the tent to shreds, and the monsoon showers washed it away.*

Our Move to a Foreign Assignment

While in Rockhampton, we received an invitation to attend the 19th class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead for missionary training. And that was how, after

On the dock en route to Gilead School



graduating in 1952, we were sent to what was then known as South-West Africa.

Without delay, the clergy of Christendom showed how they felt about our missionary work. Each Sunday for six consecutive weeks, they warned their congregations about us from the pulpit. They told the people not to open the door to us and not to allow us to read from the Bible, as it would confuse them.

* A thrilling, anonymous account of how the Waldrons endured in this difficult assignment was related in *The Watchtower*, December 1, 1952, pages 707-8.

In one area, we placed several publications, but the minister followed us from house to house and collected them. One day we had a discussion in the minister's study and saw that he had quite a stock of our books.

It was not long before the local authorities also started to show their concern about our activities. No doubt at the instigation of the clergy, they suspected that we might have Communist connections. So we were finger-printed, and some of the people on whom we called were interrogated. Despite all this opposition, attendance at our meetings steadily grew.

From the beginning of our stay, we developed a burning desire to spread the Bible's message among the indigenous population of Ovambo, Herero, and Nama. However, this was not easy. Back in those days, South-West Africa fell under the jurisdiction of the apartheid government of South Africa. As whites, we were not allowed to witness in black areas without a government permit. From time to time, we applied, but the authorities simply refused to give us permission.

After two years in our foreign assignment, we had a surprise. Coralie was pregnant. In October 1955, our daughter, Charlotte, was born. Although we could no longer continue as missionaries, I was able to get a part-time job and continue for a while as a pioneer.

An Answer to Our Prayers

In 1960 we faced another challenge. Coralie received a letter stating that her mother was so ill that if Coralie did not come home, she may never see her mother again. So we planned to leave South-West Africa and move back to Australia. Then it happened—the very

week that we were due to leave, I received from the local authorities the permit to enter the black township, Katutura. What would we do now? Hand the permit back after struggling for seven years to get it? It was easy to reason that others could pick up where we left off. But was this not a blessing from Jehovah, an answer to our prayers?

My mind was quickly made up. I would stay behind, for fear that our struggle for permanent residence would be put in jeopardy if we all left for Australia. The next day, I canceled my boat booking and sent Coralie and Charlotte off to Australia on an extended vacation.

While they were away, I started to witness to the residents of the black township. The interest shown was tremendous. When Coralie and Charlotte returned, a number of people from the black township were attending our meetings.

By this time, I had an old car with which I was able to bring interested ones to the meetings. I made four or five trips for each meeting, taking seven, eight, or nine people per trip. When the last person got out, Coralie would jokingly ask: "How many more have you got under the seat?"

To be more effective in the preaching work, we needed literature in the language of the indigenous people. So I had the privilege of arranging for the tract *Life in a New World* to be translated into four local languages: Herero, Nama, Ndonga, and Kwanyama. The translators were educated people with whom we were studying the Bible, but I had to sit with them to make sure that each sentence was translated correctly. Nama is a language with a limited vocabulary. For instance, I was trying to get across the point: "In the be-

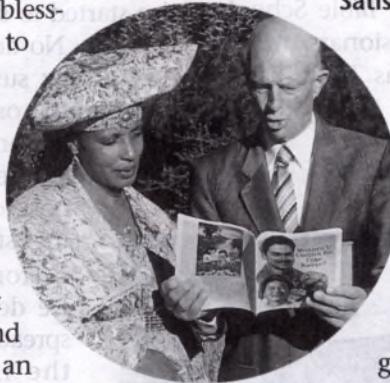
ginning Adam was a perfect man." The translator scratched his head and said that he could not recall the Nama word for "perfect." "I've got it," he finally said. "In the beginning Adam was like a ripe peach."

Satisfied With Our Assigned Home

Some 49 years have passed since we first arrived in this country, now called Namibia. It is no longer necessary to obtain a permit to enter black communities. Namibia is ruled by a new government based on a nonracial constitution. Today, in Windhoek we have four large congregations that meet in comfortable Kingdom Halls.

We have often thought of the words we heard at Gilead: "Make your foreign assignment your home." From the way Jehovah has maneuvered matters, we are convinced that it was his will that this foreign land become our home. We have come to love the brothers, with their interesting variety of cultures. We have laughed with them in their joys and cried with them in their sorrows. Some of those new ones whom we used to cram into our car and take to the meetings now serve as pillars in their congregations. When we arrived in this vast land in 1953, there were fewer than ten local publishers preaching the good news. From those small beginnings, our numbers have grown to over 1,200. True to his promise, Jehovah has given the growth where we and others have 'planted and watered.'—1 Corinthians 3:6.

As we look back over many years of service, first in Australia and now in Namibia, Coralie and I have a feeling of deep satisfaction. We hope and pray that Jehovah will continue to give us the strength to do his will now and forever.



Witnessing in Namibia brings us much joy

Questions From Readers

Should we conclude from Revelation 20:8 that there will be a vast number of people misled by Satan at the final test?

Revelation 20:8 describes the final assault by Satan on the people living on earth at the end of the thousand-year rule of the Messianic Kingdom. Speaking of Satan, the verse says: "He will go out to mislead those nations in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war. The number of these is as the sand of the sea."

In spite of advances in scientific methods and instrumentation, "the sand of the sea" remains an unknown quantity or number. Thus, it can be said that the expression represents an unknown, undetermined number. But does it imply an immense, overwhelming, even astronomical number, or is it simply one that is unknown yet substantial, or considerable?

In the Bible, the expression "as the sand of the sea" is used in a number of ways. For example, at Genesis 41:49, we read: "Joseph continued piling up grain in very great quantity, like the sand of the sea, until finally they gave up counting it, because it was without number." Here the emphasis is on its being uncountable. Likewise, Jehovah stated: "Just as the army of the heavens cannot be counted, neither the sand of the sea be measured, so I shall multiply the seed of David my servant." As surely as the stars in heaven and the sand of the sea are uncountable, just as surely Jehovah is to fulfill his promise to David.—Jeremiah 33:22.

Often the expression "the sand of the sea" refers to something of a substantial and impressive quantity or size. The Israelites at Gilgal were greatly agitated by the Philistine army gathered at Michmash, which was "like the grains of sand that are upon the seashore for multitude." (1 Samuel 13:5, 6; Judges 7:12) And "God continued giving Solomon wisdom and understanding in very great measure and a

broadness of heart, like the sand that is upon the seashore." (1 Kings 4:29) Though what was spoken of in each case was substantial, it was still finite.

"The sand of the sea" can also stand for an unknown number, without suggesting its being immense. Jehovah told Abraham: "I shall surely multiply your seed like the stars of the heavens and like the grains of sand that are on the seashore." (Genesis 22:17) In repeating this promise to Abraham's grandson Jacob, Jehovah used the expression "the dust particles of the earth," which Jacob restated as "the grains of sand of the sea." (Genesis 28:14; 32:12) As matters turned out, aside from Jesus Christ, Abraham's "seed" numbers 144,000, which Jesus called the "little flock."—Luke 12:32; Galatians 3:16, 29; Revelation 7:4; 14:1, 3.

What do we learn from these examples? That the expression "as the sand of the sea" does not always mean an infinite, astronomical number; nor is it always used to describe something immense or overwhelming in size. Often it represents a number unknown but sizable. Thus, it is reasonable to believe that the rebellious crowd supporting Satan in his final assault on God's people will be, not vast, or immense, but substantial and large enough to pose a threat. The number, however, remains unknown for now.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Lessons From the Record
of Jesus' Birth

"Draw Close to God"

Express Affection in the Family Circle

Strengthen Your Hands

IN THE Bible, the hand is mentioned more than 1,800 times. Idioms involving the hand are used in a variety of ways. For example, a clean hand denotes innocence. (2 Samuel 22:21; Psalm 24:3, 4) Opening the hand means to show generosity toward others. (Deuteronomy 15:11; Psalm 145:16) One who risks his life is said to put his soul in his hand. (1 Samuel 19:5) To let one's hands drop down means to be discouraged. (2 Chronicles 15:7) And to strengthen one's hand is to be fortified and empowered for action.—1 Samuel 23:16.

Today there is a pressing need to strengthen our hands. We are living in "critical times hard to deal with." (2 Timothy 3:1) When we become discouraged, the human tendency is to give up, to let our hands drop down. It is common to see teenagers quit school, husbands leave their family, and mothers abandon their children. As Christians, we need to strengthen our hands in order to endure the trials that we face in our service to God. (Matthew 24:13) Doing so, we make Jehovah's heart glad.—Proverbs 27:11.

How Hands Are Strengthened

The Jews in Ezra's day needed to strengthen their hands in order to complete the reconstruction of Jehovah's temple in Jerusalem. How were their hands strengthened? The account says: "They went on to hold the festival of unfermented cakes seven days with rejoicing; for Jehovah caused them to rejoice, and he had turned the heart of the king of Assyria around toward them to strengthen their hands in the



work of the house of the true God, the God of Israel." (Ezra 6:22) Clearly, it was by his active force that Jehovah roused "the king of Assyria" to allow God's people to return, and He moved the spirit of the people, so that they finished the work they had begun.

Later, when Jerusalem's walls required repair, Nehemiah strengthened the hands of his brothers for the task. We read: "I went on to tell them of the hand of my God, how it was good upon me, and also of the king's words that he had said to me. At this they said: 'Let us get up, and we must build.' So they strengthened their hands for the good work." With strengthened hands, Nehemiah and his fellow Jews were able to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem in a remarkable 52 days!—Nehemiah 2:18; 6:9, 15.

Similarly, Jehovah strengthens our hands to preach the good news of the Kingdom. (Matthew 24:14) He does so by 'equipping us with every good thing to do his will.' (Hebrews 13:21) He has put in our hands tools of the highest quality. We have the Bible and Bible-based books, magazines, brochures, tracts, and audio and video recordings for our use in reaching people around the world. In fact, our publications are available in some 380 languages. In

addition, through congregation meetings, assemblies, and conventions, Jehovah provides theocratic education and training on how to use this fine equipment in accomplishing our ministry.

Though Jehovah strengthens our hands in so many ways, he also expects us to exert ourselves. Recall what the prophet Elisha told King Jehoash, who had come to Elisha for help to fight against Syrian invaders. Elisha told the king to take some arrows and strike the earth with them. The Bible account says: "He struck three times and stopped. And the man of the true God grew indignant at him; hence he said: 'It was meant to strike five or six times! In that case you would certainly be striking down Syria to the finishing point, but now it is three times that you will strike down Syria.'" (2 Kings 13:18, 19) Failing to exert himself zealously, Jehoash had only limited success in fighting the Syrians.

The same principle applies to us if we want to accomplish what Jehovah has given us to do. Rather than worry about the obstacles that are

*Failing to exert himself zealously,
Jehoash had only limited success
in fighting against the Syrians*



in our way or about how difficult the assignment may be, we should work at it zealously and wholeheartedly. We need to strengthen our hands and look to Jehovah for help.—Isaiah 35:3, 4.

Jehovah Will Strengthen Our Hands

Jehovah will not fail to help us and strengthen our hands to do his will. Of course, God will not perform a miracle and do everything for us. He expects us to do our part—reading the Bible daily, preparing for and attending the meetings regularly, participating in the ministry as often as possible, and praying to him constantly. If we faithfully and diligently do our part while we have the opportunity, Jehovah will give us the strength to do what he expects of us.—Philippians 4:13.

Consider the case of one Christian who lost both his wife and his mother in death within one year. His pain was still fresh when his daughter-in-law left his son and abandoned the Christian way of life. "I learned that we cannot choose our tests, neither their time nor their frequency," said this brother. How does he find the strength to carry on? "Prayer and personal study have been a life jacket that has kept my head above water. And the support of my spiritual brothers and sisters has brought me much comfort. More than anything, I have come to realize the importance of developing a good personal relationship with Jehovah before difficult situations arise."

Whatever your experience in life, be determined to put full trust in Jehovah and to make good use of all the provisions that he makes for strengthening your hands. Then you will be able to offer service of the highest quality to Jehovah and thereby bring praise and honor to his precious name.—Hebrews 13:15.

The Best Time to Be Alive

WHEN faced with trying circumstances, do you long for "the good old days"? Then consider the words of wise King Solomon: "Do not say: 'Why has it happened that the former days proved to be better than these?' for it is not due to wisdom that you have asked about this."—Ecclesiastes 7:10.

Why did Solomon give this advice? Because he knew that having a realistic view of the past is a valuable aid in coping with the unpleasant situations of the present. Those who yearn for "the good old days" may actually forget that those days were also filled with problems and troubles and that life was never truly ideal. Some things in the past may have been better, but most likely others were not. As Solomon noted, there is no wisdom in

unrealistically dwelling on the past, since it is evident that we cannot turn the clock back.

Can there be any harm in nostalgically looking to the past? Yes, if it keeps us from being flexible and adapting to the present or if it prevents us from appreciating the times in which we live and the hope that can be ours.

Actually, now is the best time to be alive, in spite of increasing world problems. Why? Because we are nearing the fulfillment of God's purpose regarding our earth and the blessings of the peaceful reign of his Kingdom. The Bible promises: "He will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away." (Revelation 21:4) Then, with conditions so much better, no one will

have reason to yearn for "the good old days."

