

NOVEMBER 15, 2007

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



A Meaningful Life
Is Possible!



THE WATCHTOWER®

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November 15, 2007

Average Printing Each Issue: 28,578,000

Vol. 128, No. 22

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 fellow men 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.

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the modern-language *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References*.

The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) is published semimonthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; M. H. Larson, President; G. F. Simons, 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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NOW PUBLISHED IN 161 LANGUAGES. SEMIMONTHLY: Afrikaans, Albanian,* Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Bengali, Bicol, Bulgarian, Cebuano,* Chichewa,* Chinese, Chinese (Simplified),* Cibemba,* Croatian, Czech,** Danish,** Dutch,* Efik,* English** (also Braille), Estonian, Ewe, Fijian, Finnish,** French** (also Braille), Ga, Georgian,* German,** Greek,* Gun, Hebrew, Hiligaynon, Hungarian,** Igbo,* Ilokano,* Indonesian, Italian,* Japanese** (also Braille), Kinyarwanda, Kirundi, Korean** (also Braille), Lingala, Lithuanian, Luvale, Macedonian, Malagasy,* Malayalam, Maltese, Myanmar, Norwegian,* Pangasinan, Polish,** Portuguese** (also Braille), Punjabi, Rarotongan, Romanian,* Russian,* Samar-Leyte, Samoan, Sepedi, Serbian, Sesotho, Shona,* Silozi, Sinhala, Slovak,* Slovenian, Spanish** (also Braille), Sranantongo, Swahili,* Swedish,* Tagalog,* Tamil, Telugu, Thai, Tigrinya, Tok Pisin, Tongan, Tshiluba, Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Twi, Ukrainian,* Vietnamese, Xhosa, Yoruba,* Zulu*

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What Gives Meaning to Your Life?

KENNY had a job with a top brokerage firm, drove an expensive foreign car, and owned a penthouse in an affluent area of a major city. As a master skydiver, he enjoyed the thrill of plummeting from thousands of feet above the ground. A full life? According to *The Wall Street Journal*, he said: "Here I am, 45 years old, and my life isn't going anywhere . . . My life is empty."

Elyn worked hard to become an accomplished ice skater. She finally made it to the top. Elyn had the fame she wanted. "But where was all the happiness that I was supposed to feel?" she lamented. "I just felt terribly lonely. Old age would eventually catch up with me and, although I was financially secure, life would be pretty empty if this was all there was to living."

Known for his skillful use of colors, Hideo lived for his artistic achievements. He did not sell his works of art; he thought that to do so would compromise his artistic integrity. Toward the end of his life of 98 years, he donated most of his artwork to a museum. He devoted his life to artistic pursuits. Yet, he was not satisfied, thinking that it would take him forever to perfect his art.

Some people become very much involved in helping others. Take, for example, one film executive in Hollywood. As a vice president of one of the biggest film companies in the United States, he mingled with celebrities and lived in an exclusive residential area. When he visited Cambodia on vacation, a girl came up to him begging for money as he dined at a café in Phnom Penh. He gave her a dollar and a soft drink. The girl was pleased. However, the following night she was there

again, still begging. He saw that more than superficial help was needed.

A year later, this executive decided to make a career change—from working for the entertainment industry to helping the poor in Cambodia. He established a school that provides housing, meals, and education. Yet, he lives in a permanent state of conflicting emotions—delight and satisfaction with what he is accomplishing along with despair and frustration because of the mounting problems with which he must deal.

All four individuals just mentioned thought that they knew what they were living for. Still, they felt empty when they finally reached the goal they had worked hard to achieve. What are you living for? What comes first in your life? Are you sure that you will not later regret the way you are living your life?

A Meaningful Life Is Possible!

MANY people are living for money and for what it can buy. Some live to make a name in the world. Others live to perfect their artistic skills. There are also those who live to help others. But many do not know what they are living for or why they are here.

What about you? Have you seriously thought about the reason why you are here? Why not consider some human pursuits to see if they really bring a sense of accomplishment and a feeling of satisfaction? What makes a meaningful life possible?

Money and Pleasure Have Their Place

At Ecclesiastes 7:12, the Bible states: “Wisdom is for a protection the same as money is

for a protection; but the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom itself preserves alive its owners.” Yes, money has value. You need money to live, especially if you have the responsibility to provide for a family.—1 Timothy 5:8.

What is life without some of the pleasures that money can buy? Although Jesus Christ, the Founder of Christianity, admitted that he had nowhere to lay down his head, he did occasionally enjoy choice food and wine. Moreover, he did not refrain from wearing an expensive garment.—Matthew 8:20; John 2:1-11; 19:23, 24.

Yet, Jesus did not live to pursue pleasure. He had his priorities straight. Jesus said:



What was wrong with the reasoning of the rich man in Jesus' illustration?

"Even when a person has an abundance his life does not result from the things he possesses." He then went on to relate an illustration about a certain rich man who had a bumper crop and who reasoned to himself: "What shall I do, now that I have nowhere to gather my crops? . . . I will tear down my storehouses and build bigger ones, and there I will gather all my grain and all my good things; and I will say to my soul: 'Soul, you have many good things laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, enjoy yourself.'" What was wrong with this man's thinking? The illustration continues: "God said to [the rich man], 'Unreasonable one, this night they are demanding your soul from you. Who, then, is to have the things you stored up?'" Even if the man stored his crop, when he died he could not enjoy the riches he had accumulated. In conclusion, Jesus gave this lesson to his audience: "So it goes with the man that lays up treasure for himself but is not rich toward God."—Luke 12:13-21.

Yes, we do need some money, and enjoyment has its place. However, neither money

nor pleasure is the most important thing in life. To be rich toward God, that is, to live a life that results in divine favor, is by far the most important thing to pursue.

Is Making a Name Important?

Many people live to make a name for themselves. The desire to make a name, wanting to be remembered by others, is not necessarily bad. "A name is better than good oil," says the Bible, "and the day of death than the day of one's being born."—Ecclesiastes 7:1.

On the day of death, the record of the entire life of a man has been written, so to speak. If he has accomplished positive things, the day of that person's death is far better than the day of his birth when the record was totally blank.

The writer of the Bible book of Ecclesiastes was King Solomon. Solomon's older half brother Absalom wanted to make a name for himself. However, his three sons, through whom he could have passed his name on to later generations, apparently died young. So, what did Absalom do? The Scriptures state: "Absalom . . . proceeded to raise up for himself a pillar, which is in the Low Plain of the King, for he said: 'I have no son in order to keep my name in remembrance.' So he called the pillar by his own name." (2 Samuel 14:27; 18:18) The remains of this pillar have not been found. As for Absalom, he is known to students of the Bible as a notorious rebel who conspired to usurp the throne of his father, David.

Many today try to be remembered through what they accomplish. They seek glory in the eyes of people whose tastes fluctuate with each passing season. Yet, what happens to such fame? In the book *The Culture of Narcissism*, Christopher Lasch writes: "In our time, when success is so largely a

function of youth, glamour, and novelty, glory is more fleeting than ever, and those who win the attention of the public worry incessantly about losing it." As a result, many celebrities resort to the use of drugs and alcohol, often shortening their life. Indeed, it is futile to seek fame.

In whose eyes, then, should we gain a good reputation? Speaking of certain ones who kept his Law, Jehovah said through his prophet Isaiah: "I will even give to them in my house and within my walls a monument and a name . . . A name to time indefinite I shall give them, one that will not be cut off." (Isaiah 56:4, 5) Because of their obedience to God, those acceptable to him will have "a monument and a name." God will remember their name "to time indefinite" so that they will not be cut off. That is the kind of name the Bible encourages us to make—a fine reputation in the eyes of Jehovah, our Creator.

Isaiah was prophesying about the time when faithful individuals will receive everlasting life in Paradise on earth. "Everlasting life" in that Paradise is "the real life"—the type of life that God purposed for humans when he created them. (1 Timothy 6:12, 19) Rather than living a life that is fleeting and unsatisfying, should we not reach out for everlasting life?

Artistic or Philanthropic Pursuits Not Enough

Many artists have a desire to improve their work in order to reach what they consider perfection in their art. The present life is too short for that. When he was in his 90's, Hideo, the artist mentioned in the preceding article, worked to improve his artistic skills. Even if an artist reaches the point where he is satisfied with his own work, by then he might no longer be able to produce as much as he could have when he was in his prime.

But what if he had everlasting life? Think of all the possibilities to perfect his art!

What can be said about philanthropic pursuits in life? It is commendable for a person to turn his attention to the poor and use his resources to help the needy. The Bible states: "There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving." (Acts 20:35) Showing concern for the welfare of others may indeed be fulfilling. How much, though, can one person accomplish, even if he devoted his whole life to this pursuit? What we humans can accomplish in relieving the suffering of others is limited. No amount of material giving will satisfy a basic need that is ignored by most people and goes unfilled in their life. What need is that?

Filling an Inherent Need—A Must

In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus referred to an inborn fundamental need when he said: "Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need, since the kingdom of the heavens belongs to them." (Matthew 5:3) According to the Bible, then, true happiness does not depend upon wealth, fame, artistic accomplishments, or philanthropic pursuits. Rather, it depends on satisfying our spiritual need—the need to worship God.

The apostle Paul encouraged those who did not know the Creator to search for him. Paul said: "[God] made out of one man every nation of men, to dwell upon the entire surface of the earth, and he decreed the appointed times and the set limits of the dwelling of men, for them to seek God, if they might grope for him and really find him, although, in fact, he is not far off from each one of us. For by him we have life and move and exist."—Acts 17:26-28.

Satisfying the need to worship the true God is the key to gaining real happiness in

life. Filling our spiritual need also puts us in line for gaining "the real life." Consider the example of Teresa, who made television history in her country when she became the first African-American actress to star in her own one-hour drama series. Soon, however, she left all of that behind. Why? She said: "I am convinced that heeding the counsel of God's Word is the best way to live." Teresa did not want to jeopardize her relationship with God by playing a role in a television series that exalted sex and violence. She stepped out of the public eye but embarked on a truly satisfying life, for she served as a full-time preacher of the good news of God's Kingdom, trying to help others to gain a good relationship with God.

Concerning Teresa's decision to quit acting, one of her former associates was quoted as saying: "I was heartbroken because I hated to see her throw away what I thought she

had. But she obviously found something bigger and better." Teresa later died. After her death, though, the same former associate observed: "She was happy, and that's all you can ask for in life. How many of us can say the same thing?" For those who put their relationship with God first in life but are overtaken by death, there is the wonderful prospect of resurrection under Kingdom rule.—John 5:28, 29.

The Creator has a purpose for the earth and for mankind upon it. He wants you to understand this purpose and enjoy everlasting life in Paradise on earth. (Psalm 37:10, 11, 29) Now is the time to learn more about Jehovah, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and what he has purposed for you. Jehovah's Witnesses in your area will be happy to help you gain that knowledge. Please contact them, or write to the publishers of this magazine.

Would you like to enjoy everlasting life in Paradise on earth?



Jehovah's Word Is Alive

Highlights From the Books of Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah

THE Assyrian world power has already devastated Samaria, the capital of the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel. Assyria has also long been a menace to Judah. The prophet Nahum of Judah has a word regarding the Assyrian capital, Nineveh. Composed before 632 B.C.E., the Bible book of Nahum contains that message.

The next power to rise is the Babylonian Empire, sometimes ruled by Chaldean kings. The book of Habakkuk, perhaps completed in 628 B.C.E., foretells how Jehovah will use that world power as his agent for executing judgment and what will eventually befall Babylon.

The prophet Zephaniah of Judah predates both Nahum and Habakkuk. Prophesying more than 40 years before the destruction

of Jerusalem in 607 B.C.E., he proclaims a message of both doom and hope for Judah. The Bible book of Zephaniah also contains pronouncements against other nations.

"WOE TO THE CITY OF BLOODSHED" (Nahum 1:1–3:19)

"The pronouncement against Nineveh" is from Jehovah God, who is "slow to anger and great in power." Although Jehovah is "a stronghold in the day of distress" to those seeking refuge in him, Nineveh is to be destroyed.—Nahum 1:1, 3, 7.

"Jehovah will certainly gather [restore] the pride of Jacob." Like 'the lion tearing to pieces,' however, Assyria has terrorized the nation of God's people. Jehovah "will burn up [Nineveh's] war chariot in the smoke. And a sword will devour [her] own maned young lions." (Nahum 2:2, 12, 13) "Woe to



Nineveh's massive walls did not prevent the fulfillment of Nahum's prophecy

the city of bloodshed”—Nineveh. “All those hearing the report about [her] will certainly clap their hands” and rejoice.—Nahum 3:1, 19.

Scriptural Questions Answered:

1:9—What will “an outright extermination” of Nineveh mean for Judah? It will mean permanent relief from Assyria; “distress will not rise up a second time.” Speaking as if Nineveh were no more, Nahum writes: “Look! Upon the mountains the feet of one bringing good news, one publishing peace. O Judah, celebrate your festivals.”—Nahum 1:15.

2:6—What “gates of the rivers” were opened? These gates referred to the opening made in the walls of Nineveh by the waters of the Tigris River. In 632 B.C.E. when the joint forces of the Babylonians and the Medes came up against Nineveh, she did not feel particularly threatened. Secure behind her high walls, she considered herself to be an impenetrable city. However, heavy rains caused the Tigris to overflow. According to historian Diodorus, this “both inundated a portion of the city and broke down the walls for a distance.” The river gates were thus opened, and as foretold, Nineveh was taken as quickly as fire devours dry stubble.—Nahum 1:8-10.

3:4—How was Nineveh like a prostitute? Nineveh deceived nations by promising them friendship and help but actually bringing upon them the yoke of oppression. For example, Assyria gave Judean King Ahaz some help against the Syro-Israelite conspiracy. Eventually, though, “the king of Assyria came against [Ahaz] and caused him distress.”—2 Chronicles 28:20.

Lessons for Us:

1:2-6. Jehovah’s taking vengeance upon his enemies, who refuse to give him exclu-

sive devotion, shows that he expects nothing less than exclusive devotion from his worshippers.—Exodus 20:5.

1:10. Massive walls with hundreds of towers did not prevent the fulfillment of Jehovah’s word against Nineveh. The enemies of Jehovah’s people today will not be able to escape God’s adverse judgments.—Proverbs 2:22; Daniel 2:44.

‘THE RIGHTEOUS ONE WILL KEEP LIVING’ **(Habakkuk 1:1-3:19)**

The first two chapters of the book of Habakkuk are a dialogue between the prophet and Jehovah God. Distressed over what is taking place in Judah, Habakkuk asks God: “Why is it that you make me see what is hurtful, and you keep looking upon mere trouble?” In reply, Jehovah says: “I am raising up the Chaldeans, the nation bitter and impetuous.” The prophet expresses surprise that God would use “those dealing treacherously” to punish Judah. (Habakkuk 1:3, 6, 13) Habakkuk is assured that the righteous one will keep living, but the enemy will not escape punishment. Moreover, Habakkuk records five woes to be taken up against the Chaldean foe.—Habakkuk 2:4.

In a prayer for mercy, Habakkuk recounts “in dirges” such past demonstrations of Jehovah’s awesome power as those at the Red Sea, in the wilderness, and at Jericho. The prophet also foretells the marching forth of Jehovah with destructive anger at Armageddon. The prayer concludes with the words: “Jehovah the Sovereign Lord is my vital energy; and he will make my feet like those of the hinds, and upon my high places he will cause me to tread.”—Habakkuk 3:1, 19.

Scriptural Questions Answered:

1:5, 6—Why might the raising up of the Chaldeans against Jerusalem have seemed

unbelievable to the Jews? By the time Habakkuk began prophesying, Judah had come under the powerful influence of Egypt. (2 Kings 23:29, 30, 34) Although the Babylonians were on the rise, their army had not yet defeated Pharaoh Necho. (Jeremiah 46:2) Moreover, Jehovah's temple was in Jerusalem, and the Davidic dynasty had ruled uninterrupted from there. To the Jews back then, God's "activity" of allowing the Chaldeans to destroy Jerusalem would appear unthinkable. Regardless of how unbelievable Habakkuk's words may have sounded to them, though, the vision about Jerusalem's destruction by the Babylonians 'without fail came true' in 607 B.C.E.—Habakkuk 2:3.

2:5—Who is the "able-bodied man," and why "will [he] not reach his goal"? The Babylonians, who used their military prowess to conquer nations, were a composite "able-bodied man." The taste of victory made him like someone intoxicated with wine. He would not succeed in gathering to himself all the nations, however, because Jehovah would use the Medes and the Persians to cause his fall. The modern-day composite "man" is made up of political powers. He too is drunk with self-assurance and self-importance and has an insatiable appetite for expansion. But he does not reach his goal of "gathering to himself all the nations." Only God's Kingdom will unite mankind.—Matthew 6:9, 10.

Lessons for Us:

1:1-4; 1:12-2:1. Habakkuk asked sincere questions, and Jehovah answered him. The true God listens to the prayers of his faithful servants.

2:1. Like Habakkuk, we should remain spiritually alert and active. We should also be ready to adjust our thinking in line with

any "reproof," or correction, we may receive.

2:3; 3:16. As we wait in faith for the coming of Jehovah's day, let us not lose the sense of urgency.

2:4. To survive the coming day of Jehovah's judgment, we must endure in faithfulness.—Hebrews 10:36-38.

2:6, 7, 9, 12, 15, 19. Woe is certain upon the one who is greedy of dishonest gain, loving violence, practicing immorality, or engaging in idolatry. We must be on guard to avoid these traits and practices.

2:11. If we fail to expose the wickedness of this world, "a stone itself will cry out plaintively." It is important that we courageously keep on preaching the Kingdom message!

3:6. Nothing will be able to stand in the way of Jehovah when he executes his judgment, not even human organizations that seem as permanent as the mountains and the hills.

3:13. We have the assurance that the destruction at Armageddon will not be random. Jehovah will save his faithful servants.

3:17-19. Even though hardship may befall us before and during Armageddon, we can be confident that Jehovah will supply us with "vital energy" as we joyfully continue serving him.

"THE DAY OF JEHOVAH IS NEAR"

(Zephaniah 1:1-3:20)

Baal worship runs rampant in Judah. Jehovah says through his prophet Zephaniah: "I will stretch out my hand against Judah and against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem." Zephaniah warns: "The day of Jehovah is near." (Zephaniah 1:4, 7, 14) Only those meeting God's requirements will "be concealed" in that day.—Zephaniah 2:3.

"Woe to . . . the oppressive city"—Jerusalem! "Keep yourselves in expectation of

me,' is the utterance of Jehovah, 'till the day of my rising up to the booty, for my judicial decision is to gather nations . . . in order to pour out upon them my denunciation.' " But God promises: "I shall make you people to be a name and a praise among all the peoples of the earth, when I gather back your captive ones before your eyes."—Zephaniah 3:1, 8, 20.

Scriptural Questions Answered:

2:13, 14—Whose “voice will keep singing” in completely desolated Nineveh? Since Nineveh was to become a place for wild animals and birds, the voice that would keep singing refers to birdsong and possibly to the sound of the wind in the windows of deserted buildings.

3:9—What is the “pure language,” and how is it spoken? It is the truth of God found in his Word, the Bible. It includes all Bible teachings. We speak it by believing the truth, by correctly teaching it to others, and by living in harmony with God's will.

Lessons for Us:

1:8. Some in Zephaniah's day were apparently seeking the acceptance of surrounding nations by "wearing foreign attire." How foolish it would be for Jehovah's worshippers today to try to conform to the world by similar means!

1:12; 3:5, 16. Jehovah kept sending his prophets to warn his people of his judicial decisions. He did so even though—like dregs congealed at the bottom of a wine vat—many Jews had settled down and were apathetic toward the message. As Jehovah's great day nears, instead of allowing the indifferent attitude of people to cause 'our hands to drop down' in slackness, we need to keep on declaring the Kingdom message without letup.

2:3. Only Jehovah can save us in the day of his anger. To remain in his favor, we need to

"seek Jehovah" by carefully studying his Word, the Bible; prayerfully asking for his guidance; and drawing close to him. We must "seek righteousness" by living a morally clean life. And we need to "seek meekness" by cultivating a meek and submissive attitude.

2:4-15; 3:1-5. On the day of the execution of Jehovah's judgment, Christendom and all the nations, which have oppressed God's people, will meet the same end as did ancient Jerusalem and surrounding nations. (Revelation 16:14, 16; 18:4-8) We should fearlessly continue to declare God's judgments.

3:8, 9. As we await the day of Jehovah, we prepare for survival by learning to speak the "pure language" and by 'calling upon God's name' by making a personal dedication to him. We also serve Jehovah "shoulder to shoulder" in association with his people and offer him "a sacrifice of praise" as a gift.—Hebrews 13:15.

"There Is a Hurrying of It"

The psalmist sang: "Just a little while longer, and the wicked one will be no more; and you will certainly give attention to his place, and he will not be." (Psalm 37:10) When we reflect upon what was foretold about Nineveh in the book of Nahum and about Babylon and apostate Judah in the book of Habakkuk, we have no doubt that the psalmist's words will come true. How much longer, though, must we wait?

"The great day of Jehovah is near," says Zephaniah 1:14. "It is near, and there is a hurrying of it very much." The book of Zephaniah also shows us how we may be concealed in that day and what we must do now to prepare for survival. Indeed, "the word of God is alive and exerts power."—Hebrews 4:12.



ANCIENT POTSHERDS CONFIRM THE BIBLICAL RECORD

THE Bible is the inspired Word of God. (2 Timothy 3:16) What it says about people, places, and religious and political situations of ancient times is accurate. The authenticity of the Scriptures by no means depends upon archaeological discoveries, although such findings do confirm or illuminate our understanding of the Biblical record.

The most numerous items found by archaeologists during excavations of ancient sites are potsherds, or broken pieces of pottery. These fragments of earthenware are also referred to as ostraca, from the Greek word for "shell, sherd." Pottery fragments served as inexpensive writing materials in many places in the ancient Middle East, including Egypt and Mesopotamia. Ostraca were used for recording contracts, accounts, sales, and so forth, just as memo pads and sheets of paper are used today. Generally written with ink, the texts on ostraca varied from just one word to several dozen lines or columns.

Archaeological excavations in Israel have uncovered numerous ostraca from Biblical times. Three collections dating back to the seventh and eighth centuries B.C.E. are of special interest because they confirm various details of historical information found in the Bible. They are the Samaria ostraca, the Arad ostraca, and the Lachish ostraca. Let us take a closer look at each of these collections.

The Samaria Ostraca

Samaria was the capital of the ten-tribe northern kingdom of Israel until the city was overthrown by the Assyrians in

740 B.C.E. Concerning Samaria's origin, 1 Kings 16:23, 24 states: "In the thirty-first year of Asa the king of Judah [947 B.C.E.], Omri became king over Israel . . . And he proceeded to buy the mountain of Samaria from Shemer for two talents of silver, and began to build on the mountain and call the name of the city that he built . . . Samaria." The city was in existence through Roman times, when its name was changed to Sebaste. It finally disappeared as a city in the sixth century C.E.

During an excavation of ancient Samaria in 1910, a team of archaeologists found a collection of ostraca, which they dated to the eighth century B.C.E. The text recorded shipments of oil and wine received in Samaria from various locations in its vicinity. Commenting on this discovery, the book *Ancient Inscriptions—Voices From the Biblical World* says: "The 63 ostraca found in 1910 . . . [are] justly regarded as one of the most important bodies of epigraphic [written] material to survive from ancient Israel. This importance does not derive from the content of the Samaria ostraca . . . but rather from their extensive inventory of Israelite personal names, clan names and geographic designations." How do these names confirm details in the Biblical record?

When the Israelites conquered the Promised Land and divided it among the tribes, the site of Samaria was located in the tribal territory of Manasseh. According to Joshua 17:1-6, ten clans of Manasseh, through his grandson Gilead, were allotted tracts of land in this area. They were Abiezer, Helek, Asriel,

Shechem, and Shemida. The sixth male, Hepher, had no grandsons but had five granddaughters—Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah—and each of them received a tract of land.—Numbers 27:1-7.

The Samaria ostraca preserve seven of these clan names—all five names of Gilead's sons and two of Hepher's granddaughters, Hoglah and Noah. "The clan names preserved on the Samaria Ostraca provide an extrabiblical link between the clans of Manasseh and the territory in which the Bible claims they settled," notes the *NIV Archaeological Study Bible*. Thus, this aspect of Israel's early tribal history as described in the Bible is confirmed by these ostraca.

The Samaria ostraca also appear to confirm the religious situation of the Israelites as it is described in the Bible. At the time when the Samaria ostraca were written, the Israelites associated the worship of Jehovah with that of the Canaanite god Baal. Hosea's prophecy, also written during the eighth century B.C.E., foretold a time when Israel would repentantly call Jehovah "My husband" and no longer "My baal," or "My owner." (Hosea 2:16, 17; footnote) Some personal names found on the Samaria ostraca meant "Baal is my father," "Baal sings," "Baal is strong," "Baal remembers," and the like. For every 11 personal names containing some form of the name Jehovah, there are 7 with the component "Baal."

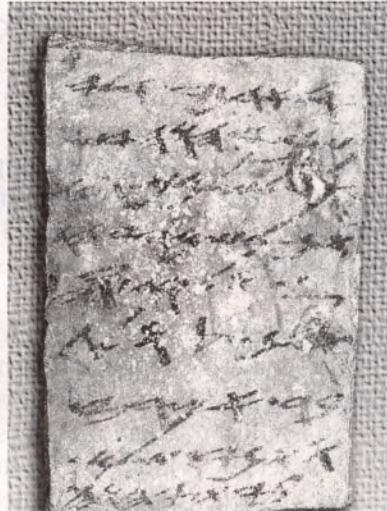
The Arad Ostraca

Arad was an ancient city located in the semiarid area called the Negeb, consider-

ably south of Jerusalem. Excavations at Arad revealed six successive Israelite fortresses, from the time of Solomon's kingship (1037-998 B.C.E.) down to the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem in 607 B.C.E. The excavators recovered from Arad the largest collection of ostraca from Biblical times. It includes more than 200 inscribed objects in Hebrew, Aramaic, and other languages.

Some of the Arad ostraca confirm the Biblical information about priestly families. For example, one potsherd mentions "the sons of Korah," referred to at Exodus 6:24 and Numbers 26:11. The superscriptions to Psalms 42, 44-49, 84, 85, 87, and 88 specifically attribute these psalms to "the sons of Korah." Other priestly families mentioned on the Arad ostraca are those of Pashhur and Meremoth.—1 Chronicles 9:12; Ezra 8:33.

Consider another example. In the ruins of a fortress dated to the period just before the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem, excavators found a potsherd addressed to the commander of the fort. According to the publication *The Context of Scripture*, it says in part: "To my lord Elyashib. May Yahweh [Jehovah] concern himself with your well-being. . . . As regards the matter concerning which you gave me orders: everything is fine now: he is staying in the temple of Yahweh." Many scholars believe that the temple referred to is the temple in Jerusalem, originally built in the time of Solomon.



A potsherd from the ruins of Arad addressed to a man named Elyashib

The Lachish Ostraca

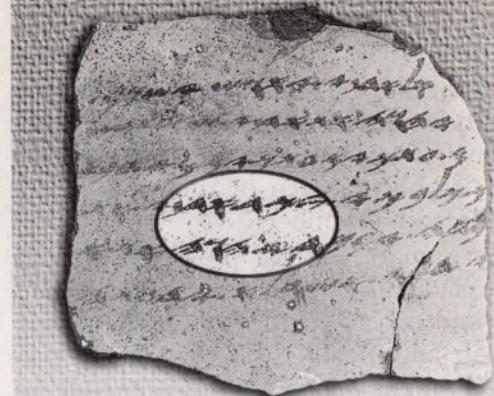
The ancient fortress city of Lachish was located 27 miles southwest of

Jerusalem. During excavations in 1930, a batch of ostraca was found, and at least 12 pieces are letters described as "extremely important . . . for their illumination of the political situation and general turmoil as Judah prepared for the inevitable attack by [Babylonian King] Nebuchadnezzar."

The most important letters are correspondence between a subordinate officer and Yaosh, probably the military commander at Lachish. The language of the letters resembles that used in the writings of the contemporary prophet Jeremiah. Consider how two of these letters support the Biblical description of that crucial time period.

At Jeremiah 34:7, the prophet describes the time "when the military forces of the king of Babylon were fighting against Jerusalem and against all the cities of Judah that were left remaining, against Lachish and against Azekah; for they, the fortified cities, were the ones that remained over among the cities of Judah." The author of one of the Lachish Letters seems to describe the same events. He writes: "We are watching for the [fire] signals of Lachish . . . , for we cannot see Azeqah." Many scholars believe that this indicates that Azeqah, or Azekah, had fallen to the Babylonians and that Lachish was next to fall. An interesting detail in this text is the reference to "fire signals." Jeremiah 6:1 also mentions the use of such means of communication.

Another Lachish Letter is believed to support what the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel say about efforts by the king of Judah to get support from Egypt in the revolt against Babylon. (Jeremiah 37:5-8; 46:25, 26; Ezekiel 17:15-17) The Lachish Letter says: "Now your servant has received the following information: General Konyahu son of Elnatan has moved south in order to enter Egypt." Scholars generally interpret this action as an



A Lachish Letter showing God's name

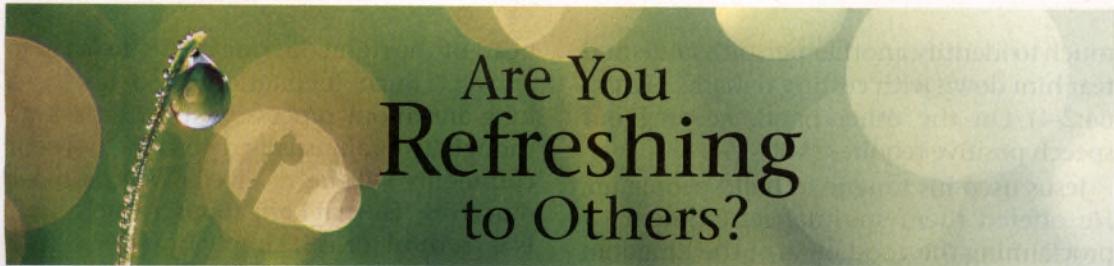
effort to obtain military assistance from Egypt.

The Lachish ostraca also mention a number of names found in the book of Jeremiah. They are Neriah, Jaazaniah, Gemariah, Elnathan, and Hoshaiah. (Jeremiah 32:12; 35:3; 36:10, 12; 42:1) Whether these names represent the same individuals cannot be known for certain. Inasmuch as Jeremiah lived during that period, however, the similarity is notable.

A Common Feature

The Samaria, Arad, and Lachish ostraca collections confirm a number of details recorded in the Bible. These include family names, geographic designations, and points regarding the religious and political climate of the times. There is an important feature, though, that is common to all three collections.

The letters found in the Arad and Lachish collections contain such phrases as "May Jehovah ask for your peace." In seven of the Lachish messages, God's name is mentioned a total of 11 times. Moreover, many Hebrew personal names found in all three collections contain the abbreviated form of the name Jehovah. These ostraca thus confirm that the divine name enjoyed everyday usage among the Israelites of that time.



Are You Refreshing to Others?

AT THE southern end of the Anti-Lebanon Mountain range stands Mount Hermon, with its majestic summit rising 9,232 feet above sea level. For most of the year, Hermon's peak is snowcapped, and this causes the warm night vapors passing over it to condense and produce dew. The dew descends on the fir and fruit trees on the lower slopes and on the vineyards down below. During ancient Israel's long dry season, such refreshing dew was the principal source of moisture for vegetation.

In a divinely inspired song, the refreshing unity among Jehovah's worshippers is likened to "the dew of Hermon that is descending upon the mountains of Zion." (Psalm 133:1, 3) Just as Mount Hermon supplies refreshing dew to the vegetation, we can spread refreshment to those whom we meet. How can we do so?

Jesus' Refreshing Example

Jesus Christ had a profound effect on others. Even a brief encounter with him could be very refreshing. For example, the Gospel writer Mark relates: "[Jesus] took the children into his arms and began blessing them, laying his hands upon them." (Mark 10:16) How refreshing that must have been for those young ones!

On his last night on earth as a human, Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. His humility must have touched their hearts. Jesus then told them: "I set the pattern for you, that, just as I did to you, you should do also." (John 13:1-17) Yes, they too needed to be

humble. Although the apostles did not immediately grasp the point and later that night began arguing about which one of them seemed to be the greatest, Jesus did not become provoked. Instead, he patiently reasoned with them. (Luke 22:24-27) Even "when he was being reviled, [Jesus] did not go reviling in return." In fact, "when he was suffering, he did not go threatening, but kept on committing himself to the one who judges righteously." Jesus' refreshing example is worthy of imitation.—1 Peter 2:21, 23.

Jesus said: "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am mild-tempered and lowly in heart, and you will find refreshment for your souls." (Matthew 11:29) Imagine being instructed by Jesus firsthand. After hearing him teach in their synagogue, those in his home territory were astounded and said: "Where did this man get this wisdom and these powerful works?" (Matthew 13:54) Reading about Jesus' life and ministry can teach us much about being refreshing to others. Let us consider how Jesus set an outstanding example through positive speech and by having a helpful attitude.

Maintaining Positive Speech

It is much easier to destroy a building than to put up a new one. That same principle of tearing down and building up applies to our speech. As imperfect humans, all of us have faults and shortcomings. King Solomon said: "There is no man righteous in the earth that keeps doing good and does not sin." (Ecclesiastes 7:20) It does not take

much to identify another person's faults and tear him down with cutting remarks. (Psalm 64:2-4) On the other hand, keeping our speech positive requires skill.

Jesus used his tongue to build people up. He offered them spiritual refreshment by proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom to them. (Luke 8:1) Jesus also refreshed those who became his disciples by revealing his heavenly Father to them. (Matthew 11:25-27) No wonder people were drawn to Jesus!

In contrast, the scribes and Pharisees did not consider the needs of others. "They like the most prominent place at evening meals and the front seats in the synagogues," said Jesus. (Matthew 23:6) In fact, they looked down on the common people, saying: "This crowd that does not know the Law are accursed people." (John 7:49) There certainly was nothing refreshing about that attitude!

Our speech is often a reflection of what we are inside and how we view others. Jesus said: "A good man brings forth good out of the good treasure of his heart, but a wicked man brings forth what is wicked out of his wicked treasure; for out of the heart's abundance his mouth speaks." (Luke 6:45) What, then, can we do to make sure that our speech is refreshing to others?

For one thing, we can pause and think before we speak. Proverbs 15:28 states: "The

heart of the righteous one meditates so as to answer." Such meditation need not be a long-drawn-out process. With a little forethought, we can usually determine how our comments will be received. We could ask ourselves: 'Is what I am about to say loving? Is it truthful, or is it simply hearsay? Is it "a word at its right time?" Will it refresh and buildup those with whom I share it?' (Proverbs 15:23) If we conclude that the thought is negative or untimely, let us make a conscientious effort to dismiss it. Better yet, why not try to replace it with something more positive and appropriate? Thoughtless words are like "the stabs of a sword," while positive comments are "a healing."—Proverbs 12:18.

Another help is to focus on what makes our fellow believers precious in God's eyes. Jesus said: "No man can come to me unless the Father, who sent me, draws him." (John 6:44) Jehovah sees positive qualities in each of his faithful servants—even those who we may feel have a challenging personality. By putting forth effort to identify their good qualities, we will have reason to speak positively about them.

Help Others

Jesus fully understood the plight of the oppressed. Indeed, "on seeing the crowds he felt pity for them, because they were skinned and thrown about like sheep with-



*The dew of Mount Hermon
—a refreshing source of moisture
for vegetation*



out a shepherd." (Matthew 9:36) But Jesus went beyond seeing their pitiable condition; he did something about it. He extended the invitation: "Come to me, all you who are toiling and loaded down, and I will refresh you." He also gave this assurance: "My yoke is kindly and my load is light."—Matthew 11:28, 30.

Today, we live in "critical times hard to deal with." (2 Timothy 3:1) Many people feel weighed down by "the anxiety of this system of things." (Matthew 13:22) Others have the burden of distressing personal circumstances. (1 Thessalonians 5:14) How can we supply refreshment to those in need? Like Christ, we can help to lighten their load.

Some people seek to unburden themselves by talking about their problems. If downhearted individuals come to us for help, do we take the time to listen carefully? Being an empathetic listener requires self-discipline. It involves staying focused on what the other person is saying, rather than thinking about how to respond or how to fix the problem. By listening closely, maintaining eye contact, and smiling when doing so is appropriate, we show that we care.

In the Christian congregation, there are many opportunities to encourage fellow believers. For instance, when attending meetings at the Kingdom Hall, we can seek out those who are struggling with health problems. Sometimes all it takes to build them up is a few minutes before or after the meeting to offer them words of encouragement. We might also make a mental note of those who are missing from the Congregation Book Study we attend. Perhaps we can reach them by telephone and express our interest in their welfare or offer assistance.—Philippians 2:4.

Christian elders carry a heavy load of responsibility in the congregation. We can do



An empathetic listener refreshes others

much to help lighten their load by being cooperative and by humbly following through on any assignment that we may receive. God's Word urges us: "Be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you and be submissive, for they are keeping watch over your souls as those who will render an account; that they may do this with joy and not with sighing, for this would be damaging to you." (Hebrews 13:17) By displaying a willing spirit, we can refresh those "who preside in a fine way."—1 Timothy 5:17.

Abound in Positive Speech and Helpful Deeds

Refreshing dew results from thousands of tiny water droplets that gently descend, seemingly out of nowhere. Likewise, bringing refreshment to others is not as likely to result from just one noble act as it is from the cumulative effects of our displaying Christ-like qualities at all times.

"In brotherly love have tender affection for one another," wrote the apostle Paul. "In showing honor to one another take the lead." (Romans 12:10) Let us apply Paul's counsel. By our speech and actions, may we really be refreshing to others.

Luke

A BELOVED FELLOW WORKER

THE year was 65 C.E. The place was Rome. Luke knew the risks of identifying himself as a friend of the apostle Paul, then on trial because of his faith. It seemed that Paul would receive the death sentence. But at that critical time, Luke—and Luke alone—was with the apostle.—2 Timothy 4:6, 11.

The name Luke is familiar to Bible readers because the Gospel he penned bears his name. Luke traveled long distances with Paul, who called him “the beloved physician” and a ‘fellow worker.’ (Colossians 4:14; Philemon 24) The Scriptures provide little information about Luke, mentioning his name only three times. As you examine what research indicates about Luke, however, you are likely to share Paul’s appreciation for this faithful Christian.

Writer and Missionary

Luke’s Gospel and the book Acts of Apostles are addressed to Theophilus, indicating that Luke compiled both of these divinely inspired documents. (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1) Luke does not claim to have been a witness to Jesus Christ’s ministry. Rather, Luke says that he received information from eyewitnesses and “traced all things from the start with accuracy.” (Luke 1:1-3) So it is likely that Luke became a follower of Christ sometime after Pentecost 33 C.E.

Some suppose that Luke was from Antioch in Syria. They note that Acts gives details of events occurring in that city and that



the book singles out one of seven “certified men” as “a proselyte of Antioch,” whereas the cities of the other six are left unspecified. Of course, we cannot be sure that this indicates special interest in Antioch as Luke’s home city.—Acts 6:3-6.

Although Luke is not named in Acts, certain passages use the pronouns “we,” “our,” and “us,” indicating that he participated in some of the events described in the book. When Luke traces the route taken by Paul and his companions through Asia Minor, he says: “*They* passed Mysia by and came down to Troas.” It was in Troas that Paul had a vision of a Macedonian man who made the entreaty: “Step over into Macedonia and help us.” Luke adds: “Now as soon as he had seen the vision, *we* sought to go forth into Macedonia.” (Acts 16:8-10) The switch from “they” to “we” suggests that Luke joined Paul’s party in Troas. Luke then described the preaching activity in Philippi in the first person plural, indicating that he participated in it. “On the sabbath day,” he writes, “we went forth outside the gate beside a river, where we were thinking there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and began speaking to the women that had assembled.” As a result, Lydia and all her household accepted

the good news and were baptized.—Acts 16:11-15.

Opposition was encountered in Philippi, where Paul healed a servant girl who had been making predictions under the influence of “a demon of divination.” When her masters saw that their means of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas, who were then beaten and jailed. Luke apparently avoided arrest, for he describes his companions’ ordeal in the third person. On their release, “they [Paul and Silas] encouraged [the brothers] and departed.” Luke reverted to the first person only when Paul returned to Philippi at a later time. (Acts 16:16-40; 20:5, 6) Perhaps Luke had remained in Philippi to oversee the work there.

Collecting Information

How did Luke obtain material for his Gospel and the book of Acts? The first-person sections of Acts—those in which Luke included himself in the narrative—indicate that he accompanied Paul from Philippi to Jerusalem, where the apostle was again ar-

rested. En route, Paul’s party stayed with Philip the evangelizer in Caesarea. (Acts 20:6; 21:1-17) Luke could have gathered information for his account about early missionary activities in Samaria from Philip, who had spearheaded the preaching work there. (Acts 8:4-25) But who were Luke’s other sources?

The two years that Paul spent imprisoned in Caesarea likely afforded Luke opportunity to do research for his Gospel account. Not far away was Jerusalem, where he could consult records of Jesus’ genealogy. Luke recorded many events of Jesus’ life and ministry that are unique to his Gospel. One scholar has noted as many as 82 of such unique passages.

It is possible that Luke learned things about John’s birth from Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptizer. Details regarding Jesus’ birth and early life may have been obtained from Jesus’ mother, Mary. (Luke 1:5-2:52) Perhaps Peter, James, or John told Luke about the miraculous catch of fish. (Luke 5:4-10) Only in Luke’s Gospel do we

WHO WAS THEOPHILUS?

Luke addressed both his Gospel and Acts of Apostles to Theophilus. In Luke’s Gospel, this man is called “most excellent Theophilus.” (Luke 1:3) “Most excellent” was a form of address for a prominent individual of great wealth and for high officials in the Roman government. The apostle Paul addressed Festus, the Roman procurator of Judea, in a similar way.—Acts 26:25.

Evidently, Theophilus had heard the message about Jesus and was interested in it. Luke hoped that his Gospel account would enable Theophilus to “know fully the certainty of the things that [he had] been taught orally.”—Luke 1:4.

According to Greek scholar Richard Lenski, it is unlikely that Theophilus was a believer when Luke called him “most excellent,” for “in all Christian literature, . . . no brother Christian is ever addressed by such a title of earthly distinction.” When Luke later wrote the book of Acts, he did not use the title “most excellent” but simply said: “O Theophilus.” (Acts 1:1) Lenski concludes: “When Luke wrote his Gospel to Theophilus, this distinguished man was not yet a Christian but was greatly interested in things Christian; but when Luke sent the Acts to him, Theophilus had become a convert.”

learn about some of Jesus' parables, such as the neighborly Samaritan, the narrow door, the lost drachma coin, the prodigal son, and the rich man and Lazarus.—Luke 10:29-37; 13:23; 24; 15:8-32; 16:19-31.

Luke showed keen interest in people. He recorded Mary's purification offering, the resurrection of a widow's son, and a woman's anointing of Jesus' feet. Luke mentions the women who ministered to Christ and tells us that Martha and Mary entertained Him. The Gospel of Luke relates the healing of a woman bent double and of a man with dropsy as well as the cleansing of ten lepers. Luke tells us about small Zacchaeus, who climbed a tree to get a view of Jesus, and notes the repentant attitude of one evildoer impaled alongside Christ.—Luke 2:24; 7:11-17, 36-50; 8:2, 3; 10:38-42; 13:10-17; 14:1-6; 17:11-19; 19:1-10; 23:39-43.

It is noteworthy that Luke's Gospel mentions the treatment of a wound by the neighborly Samaritan of Jesus' illustration. Evidently with a doctor's interest, Luke records Jesus' description of the aid administered, including wine as an antiseptic, oil for its soothing qualities, and bandaging.—Luke 10:30-37.

A Prisoner's Companion

Luke was concerned about the apostle Paul. When Paul was in custody at Caesarea,

the Roman procurator Felix ordered that "no one of [Paul's] people" be forbidden "to wait upon him." (Acts 24:23) Luke was likely among those attendants. Since Paul was not always in good health, caring for him may have been one of the ministrations of "the beloved physician."—Colossians 4:14; Galatians 4:13.

When Paul appealed to Caesar, Roman procurator Festus sent the apostle to Rome. Luke loyally accompanied the prisoner on the long voyage to Italy and penned a vivid account of the shipwreck they experienced. (Acts 24:27; 25:9-12; 27:1, 9-44) While under house arrest in Rome, Paul wrote a number of inspired letters, referring to Luke in two of them. (Acts 28:30; Colossians 4:14; Philemon 24) It was probably during this two-year period that Luke wrote the book of Acts.

Paul's quarters in Rome must have buzzed with spiritual activity. There Luke would have been in contact with some of Paul's other fellow workers—Tychicus, Aristarchus, Mark, Justus, Epaphras, and Onesimus, to mention a few.—Colossians 4:7-14.

During Paul's second imprisonment, when he felt that death was near, loyal and courageous Luke was at his side, even though others had deserted the apostle. Luke may have stayed at the risk of losing his own freedom. Perhaps acting as a scribe, Luke may have penned Paul's words: "Luke alone is with me." Tradition has it that soon thereafter Paul was beheaded.—2 Timothy 4:6-8, 11, 16.

Luke was self-sacrificing and modest. He did not parade his learning or thrust himself into the limelight. Yes, he could have pursued the life of a physician, but he chose to promote Kingdom interests. Like Luke, may we selflessly declare the good news and humbly serve for the glory of Jehovah.—Luke 12:31.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

People Worldwide Are Being United—How?

Teach Your Child to Be Peaceable

Are You for Jehovah's Sovereignty?

CULTIVATE QUALITIES THAT CAN HELP YOU MAKE DISCIPLES

"Go . . . and make disciples of people of all the nations."—MATTHEW 28:19.

JEOHOVAH'S servants must sometimes develop skills and attitudes that will help them to do his will. At God's command, for instance, Abraham and Sarah left the prosperous city of Ur and eventually needed the qualities and abilities required of tent dwellers. (Hebrews 11:8, 9, 15) Leading the Israelites into the Promised Land demanded that Joshua have courage, confidence in Jehovah, and knowledge of his Law. (Joshua 1:7-9) And whatever skills Bezalel and Oholiab may

1. What skills and attitudes were needed by some of God's servants in the past?

By making disciples, Christians demonstrate their deep love for God



already have had were certainly enhanced or further developed by God's spirit so that those men could successfully share in and oversee the construction of the tabernacle and related work.—Exodus 31:1-11.

² Centuries later, Jesus Christ gave his followers this commission: "Go . . . and make disciples of people of all the nations, . . . teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:19, 20) Never before had people been given the privilege of doing anything quite like this. What qualities are needed for the disciple-making work? How can we cultivate such traits?

Manifest Deep Love for God

³ Approaching people and endeavoring to persuade them to worship the true God requires that we have deep love for Jehovah. The Israelites could prove their love for God by wholeheartedly obeying his commandments, offering acceptable sacrifices, and extolling him in song. (Deuteronomy 10:12, 13; 30:19, 20; Psalm 21:13; 96:1, 2; 138:5) As disciple makers, we too keep God's laws, but we also express our love for Jehovah by telling others about him and his purposes. We need to speak with conviction, choosing the right words to express our heartfelt feelings about our God-given hope.—1 Thessalonians 1:5; 1 Peter 3:15.

2. We will discuss what questions related to the disciple-making work?
3. The command to make disciples gives us what opportunity?

⁴ Because he had deep love for Jehovah, Jesus found great pleasure in talking about God's purposes, the Kingdom, and true worship. (Luke 8:1; John 4:23, 24, 31) In fact, Jesus said: "My food is for me to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work." (John 4:34) These words of the psalmist apply to Jesus: "To do your will, O my God, I have delighted, and your law is within my inward parts. I have told the good news of righteousness in the big congregation. Look! My lips I do not restrain. O Jehovah, you yourself know that well."—Psalm 40:8, 9; Hebrews 10:7-10.

⁵ Motivated by love for God, new ones who have just learned Bible truth sometimes speak about Jehovah and the Kingdom with such conviction that they are quite effective in convincing others to examine the Scriptures. (John 1:41) Love for God is the key factor that motivates us to engage in the disciple-making work. Let us therefore keep that love alive by regularly reading and meditating on his Word.—1 Timothy 4:6, 15; Revelation 2:4.

⁶ Love for Jehovah unquestionably helped to make Jesus Christ a zealous teacher. But that was not the only reason for his effectiveness as a Kingdom proclaimer. What, then, is another quality that made Jesus a successful disciple maker?

Show Loving Concern for People

⁷ Jesus was concerned about people and showed keen interest in them. Even during his prehuman existence as God's "master worker," he was fond of things associated with mankind. (Proverbs 8:30, 31) As a man on earth, Jesus had compassion for people, refreshing those who came to him. (Matthew

4. Why did Jesus enjoy teaching people about Jehovah?

5, 6. What is the key quality needed by disciple makers?

7, 8. How did Jesus view people?

11:28-30) Jesus reflected Jehovah's own love and compassion, and this attracted people to the worship of the only true God. Individuals of all kinds listened to Jesus because he showed loving concern for them and their circumstances.—Luke 7:36-50; 18:15-17; 19:1-10.

⁸ When a certain man asked what he needed to do to inherit everlasting life, "Jesus looked upon him and felt love for him." (Mark 10:17-21) Concerning certain individuals taught by Jesus at Bethany, we read: "Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus." (John 11:1, 5) Jesus cared so much about people that he gave up needed rest in order to teach them. (Mark 6:30-34) Such deep and loving concern for fellow humans made Jesus more effective than anyone else in drawing individuals to true worship.

⁹ The apostle Paul too was deeply concerned about people to whom he preached. For instance, he told those who had become Christians in Thessalonica: "Having a tender affection for you, we were well pleased to impart to you, not only the good news of God, but also our own souls, because you became beloved to us." As a result of Paul's loving efforts, some in Thessalonica 'turned away from their idols to slave for the living God.' (1 Thessalonians 1:9; 2:8) If we have genuine concern for people, as Jesus and Paul did, we too may experience the joy of seeing the good news reach the hearts of those "rightly disposed for everlasting life."—Acts 13:48.

Display a Self-Sacrificing Spirit

¹⁰ Effective disciple-makers have a self-sacrificing spirit. They surely do not view the acquisition of wealth to be of utmost importance. In fact, Jesus told his disciples: "How difficult a thing it will be for those with mon-

9. What attitude did Paul have as a disciple maker?

10, 11. Why is a self-sacrificing spirit needed when we are trying to make disciples?



Why must disciple-makers be interested in others?

ey to enter into the kingdom of God!" The disciples were surprised to hear this, but Jesus added: "Children, how difficult a thing it is to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." (Mark 10:23-25) Jesus recommended a simple way of life to his followers in order for them to concentrate on making disciples. (Matthew 6:22-24, 33) Why does a spirit of self-sacrifice help us to make disciples?

¹¹ Teaching all the things Jesus commanded requires much effort. A disciple-maker generally strives to conduct a Bible study with an interested person every week. To increase their opportunities of finding sincere ones, some Kingdom proclaimers have changed from full-time to part-time employment. Thousands of Christians have learned another language in order to reach certain ethnic groups in their area. Other disciple-makers have left home and moved to another area or country to share more fully in the harvest. (Matthew 9:37, 38) All of this calls

for a self-sacrificing spirit. But more is needed to be an effective disciple maker.

Be Patient Without Wasting Time

¹² Patience is another quality that helps us to make disciples. Our Christian message calls for urgent action, but making disciples often takes considerable time and requires patience. (1 Corinthians 7:29) Jesus was not impatient with his half brother James. Although James apparently was well-acquainted with Jesus' preaching activities, for a time something held him back from becoming a disciple. (John 7:5) In the short period between Christ's death and Pentecost 33 C.E., however, James evidently became a disciple, for the Scriptures suggest that he met for prayer together with his mother, his brothers, and the apostles. (Acts 1:13, 14) James made fine spiritual progress, later shouldering weighty responsibilities in the Christian congregation.—Acts 15:13; 1 Corinthians 15:7.

¹³ Like farmers, Christians are cultivating things that often grow slowly—understanding of God's Word, love for Jehovah, and a Christlike spirit. This calls for patience. James wrote: "Exercise patience . . . , brothers, until the presence of the Lord. Look! The farmer keeps waiting for the precious fruit of the earth, exercising patience over it until he gets the early rain and the late rain. You too exercise patience; make your hearts firm, because the presence of the Lord has drawn close." (James 5:7, 8) James was urging fellow believers to 'exercise patience until the Lord's presence.' If the disciples did not understand something, Jesus patiently explained or illustrated matters. (Matthew 13:10-23; Luke 19:11; 21:7; Acts 1:6-8) Now that the Lord is present, there is a similar need for patience as we endeavor to make

12, 13. Why is patience so important in making disciples?

disciples. Those who become Jesus' followers in our day require patient instruction.—John 14:9.

¹⁴ Even though we are patient, the word does not bear fruit in most people with whom we start to study the Bible. (Matthew 13:18-23) After making reasonable efforts to assist them, therefore, we wisely stop spending time with such individuals and seek to find those who are more likely to value Bible truth. (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 6) Of course, even appreciative people may need extended help to change their views, attitudes, and priorities in life. So we are patient, just as Jesus was patient with the disciples who had difficulty developing a proper attitude.—Mark 9:33-37; 10:35-45.

Develop the Art of Teaching

¹⁵ Love for God, concern for people, a self-sacrificing spirit, and patience are important factors in successful disciple making. Teaching skills also need to be developed, for they enable us to explain matters in a clear, uncomplicated way. For example, many sayings of the Great Teacher, Jesus Christ, were espe-

14. Although we are patient, how can we use our time wisely as disciple makers?

15, 16. Why are simplicity and good preparation important when we make disciples?

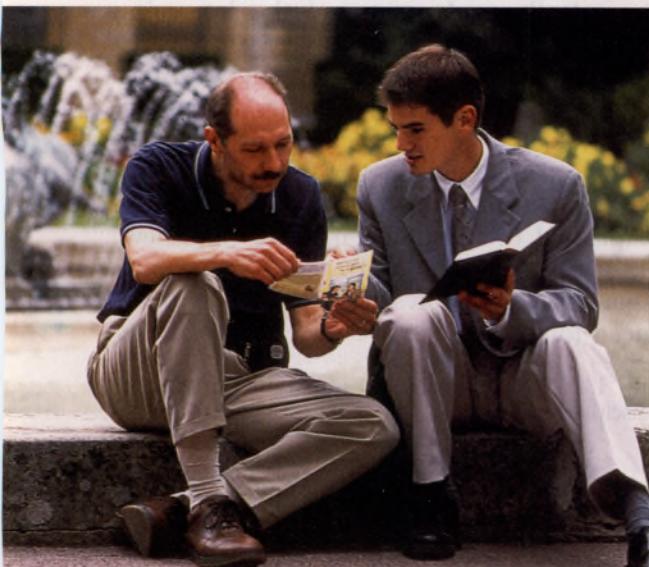
cially powerful because of their simplicity. Likely you recall such statements of Jesus as these: "Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven." "Do not give what is holy to dogs." "Wisdom is proved righteous by its works." "Pay back . . . Caesar's things to Caesar, but God's things to God." (Matthew 6:20; 7:6; 11:19; 22:21) Of course, Jesus did not make only short statements. He taught with clarity and explained things when doing so was appropriate. How can you imitate Jesus' style of teaching?

¹⁶ Careful preparation is the key to simplicity and clarity. An unprepared minister tends to talk too much. He may virtually drown the main points in an excessive flow of words, saying everything he knows on a subject. In contrast, the well-prepared minister thinks about the person he is instructing, meditates on the topic, and presents clearly just what is needed. (Proverbs 15:28; 1 Corinthians 2:1, 2) He considers how much the student already knows and what points should be emphasized during the study. The minister may know many interesting details about the subject, but clarity comes from pruning away unnecessary information.

¹⁷ Jesus also helped people to reason, instead of simply giving them facts. On one occasion, for example, he asked: "What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth receive duties or head tax? From their sons or from the strangers?" (Matthew 17:25) We may enjoy explaining the Bible so much that we have to exercise self-control in order to let the student express himself or explain a matter being considered during a home Bible study. Naturally, we should not overwhelm people with questions. Instead, with tact, good illustrations, and thoughtful questions, we can help them to appreciate

17. How can we help people to reason on the Scriptures?

What are some of the qualities needed by disciple makers?





All Christians are thrilled to see the fine results of disciple making

the Scriptural points presented in our Bible-based publications.

¹⁸ The Scriptures speak of the "art of teaching." (2 Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:9) Such teaching ability involves much more than helping someone to memorize facts. We should try to assist a Bible student to understand the difference between truth and error, good and bad, wisdom and foolishness. As we do this and endeavor to cultivate love for Jehovah in the person's heart, he may see why he should obey Him.

Have a Zealous Share in Disciple Making

¹⁹ The Christian congregation is a disciple-making organization. When a new one becomes a disciple, the Witness of Jehovah who found him and helped him to learn what the Bible teaches is not the only one with reason for rejoicing. When people organize a search party to locate a lost child, only one member

18. What is involved in developing the "art of teaching"?

19. How do all Christians contribute to the making of disciples?

of the group may actually find the youngster. But when the child is reunited with his parents, everyone involved in the search rejoices. (Luke 15:6, 7) Similarly, disciple-making is a team effort. All Christians share in searching for those who may become Jesus' disciples. And when a new one starts to attend meetings at the Kingdom Hall, every Christian present contributes to building his appreciation for true worship. (1 Corinthians 14:24, 25) Thus, *all* Christians

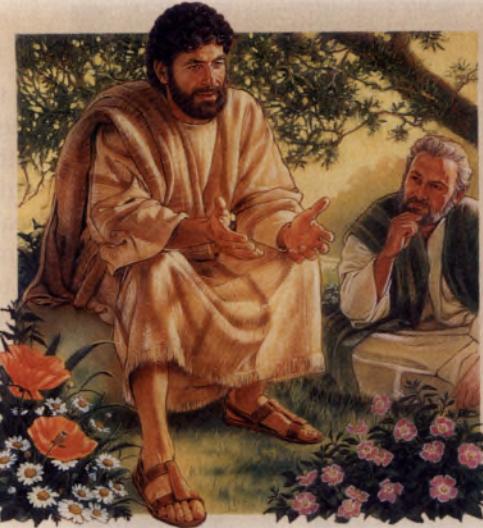
can rejoice that hundreds of thousands of new disciples are made each year.

²⁰ Many faithful Christians would be delighted to teach someone about Jehovah and true worship. Despite their best efforts, though, they may not have been able to do so. If that is your situation, continue to strengthen your love for Jehovah, be concerned about people, be self-sacrificing, exercise patience, and seek to enhance your teaching skills. Above all, make your desire to teach the truth a matter of prayer. (Ecclesiastes 11:1) Find comfort in the knowledge that everything you do in Jehovah's service contributes to the disciple-making work that glorifies God.

20. What should you do if you want to teach others Bible truth?

Can You Explain?

- Why does disciple-making test our love for God?
- What qualities are needed by disciple makers?
- What is involved in the "art of teaching"?



IMITATE THE GREAT DISCIPLE MAKER

"Pay attention to how you listen."—LUKE 8:18.

JESUS CHRIST was fulfilling his role as the Great Teacher and Disciple Maker when he told his followers: "Pay attention to how you listen." (Luke 8:16-18) That principle applies to your ministry as a Christian. If you pay attention to spiritual instruction, you will act on it and be an effective Kingdom proclaimer. Of course, you cannot hear the voice of Jesus today, but you can read about what he said and did, as revealed in the Scriptures. What do they disclose about the way Jesus dealt with people during his ministry?

² Jesus was an excellent preacher of the good news and an outstanding teacher of Scriptural truth. (Luke 8:1; John 8:28) The work of making disciples involves both preaching and teaching, yet some Christians who are commendable preachers

find it difficult to teach people effectively. Whereas preaching involves proclaiming a message, teaching people about Jehovah and his purposes usually requires that a disciple-maker build a relationship with them. (Matthew 28:19, 20) This can be done by imitating Jesus Christ, the Great Teacher and Disciple Maker.—John 13:13.

³ If you imitate Jesus' teaching methods, you will be complying with the apostle Paul's admonition: "Go on walking in wisdom toward those on the outside, buying out the opportune time for yourselves. Let your utterance be always with graciousness, seasoned with salt, so as to know how you ought to give an answer to each one." (Colossians 4:5, 6) Imitating Jesus in the work of making disciples calls for effort, but it will make your teaching effective because it will

1, 2. Why should you pay attention to how Jesus dealt with people during his ministry?
3. Imitating Jesus can have what effect on your efforts to make disciples?

help you “to give an answer to each one” according to his individual need.

Jesus Encouraged Others to Speak

⁴ From childhood on, Jesus had the custom of listening to people and encouraging them to express their views. When he was 12 years old, for example, his parents found him in the midst of the teachers in the temple, “listening to them and questioning them.” (Luke 2:46) Jesus did not go to the temple to embarrass the teachers with his knowledge. He went there to listen, although he also asked questions. His inclination to be a good listener may have been one quality that gained him favor with God and men.—Luke 2:52.

⁵ After his baptism and anointing as the Messiah, Jesus maintained his interest in listening to people. He did not become so absorbed in what he was teaching that he forgot about those who came to hear him speak. Often, he would pause, ask what they thought, and listen to their response. (Matthew 16:13-15) For example, after the death of Martha’s brother, Lazarus, Jesus told her: “Everyone that is living and exercises faith in me will never die at all.” He then asked her: “Do you believe this?” And Jesus surely listened as Martha replied: “Yes, Lord; I have believed that you are the Christ the Son of God.” (John 11:26, 27) How satisfying it must have been to hear Martha express her faith in that way!

⁶ When many disciples abandoned Jesus, he was interested in hearing the viewpoint of his apostles. So he asked: “You do not want to go also, do you?” Simon Peter answered: “Lord, whom shall we go away to? You have sayings of everlasting life; and we

4. Why can it be said that Jesus was a good listener?

5, 6. How do we know that Jesus listened to the expressions of those whom he taught?

have believed and come to know that you are the Holy One of God.” (John 6:66-69) How those words must have pleased Jesus! A Bible student’s similar expression of faith will certainly delight you.

Jesus Listened With Respect

⁷ Another reason why Jesus was an effective disciple-maker is that he cared about people and listened to them with respect. On one occasion, for instance, Jesus witnessed to a Samaritan woman near Jacob’s fountain at Sychar. During that discussion, Jesus did not do all the talking; he listened to what she had to say. While listening to her, Jesus noted her interest in worship and told her that God was looking for those who would worship Him with spirit and truth. Jesus showed respect and concern for this woman, whereupon she told others about him, and “many of the Samaritans out of that city put faith in him on account of the word of the woman.”—John 4:5-29, 39-42.

⁸ People usually enjoy expressing their views. For example, residents of ancient Athens enjoyed giving their opinions and listening to something new. This led to the apostle Paul’s effective discourse on the Areopagus in that city. (Acts 17:18-34) When starting a conversation with a householder in your ministry today, you might say, “I am visiting you because I am interested in your opinion regarding [a certain topic].” Listen to the person’s viewpoint, and comment on it, or ask a question about it. Then kindly show what the Bible says on the subject.

7. Why did many Samaritans come to put faith in Jesus?

8. How can the tendency of people to give their opinions help you to start conversations in the ministry?

Jesus Knew What to Say

⁹ Jesus was never at a loss for words. Besides being a good listener, he was often aware of what people were thinking, and he knew exactly what to say. (Matthew 9:4; 12:22-30; Luke 9:46, 47) To illustrate: Shortly after Jesus' resurrection, two of his disciples were walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus. "As they were conversing and discussing," says the Gospel account, "Jesus himself approached and began walking with them; but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. He said to them: 'What are these matters that you are debating between yourselves as you walk along?' And they stood still with sad faces. In answer the one named Cleopas said to him: 'Are you dwelling as an alien by yourself in Jerusalem and so do not know the things that have occurred in her in these days?' And he said to them: 'What things?'" The Great Teacher listened as they explained that Jesus the Nazarene taught people, performed miracles, and was executed. Now some were saying that he had been raised from the dead. Jesus let Cleopas and his companion express themselves. Then he explained what they needed to know, "fully opening up the Scriptures" to them.—Luke 24:13-27, 32.

¹⁰ You may know nothing about the religious viewpoint of a certain householder. To find out what it is, you might say that you enjoy listening to what people think about prayer. Then you might ask, "Do you think anyone really listens to prayers?" The answer may reveal a lot about the person's viewpoint and religious background. If he is religiously inclined, you may be able to draw him out further by asking, "Do you

9. What did Jesus do before "fully opening up the Scriptures" to Cleopas and his companion?

10. How might you find out the religious viewpoint of a person whom you meet in your ministry?



When preaching, be sure to listen

think God listens to *all* prayers, or might there be some prayers he does not approve of?" Such questions can lead to a relaxed conversation. When it is appropriate to share a Scriptural thought, you will want to do so tactfully, not attacking what the person believes. If he enjoys listening to you, he may be pleased to have you come back. But suppose he asks a question you cannot answer? You can do some research and return prepared to provide 'a reason for your hope, doing so with a mild temper and deep respect.'—1 Peter 3:15.

Jesus Taught Deserving Ones

¹¹ The perfect man Jesus had discernment that enabled him to identify those who deserved to be taught. We find it much more of a challenge to locate those "rightly disposed for everlasting life." (Acts 13:48) So did the apostles to whom Jesus said: "Into whatever city or village you enter, search out

11. What will help you to find those who deserve to be taught?

who in it is deserving." (Matthew 10:11) Like Jesus' apostles, you must search for people who are willing to listen and to be taught Scriptural truth. You can find deserving ones by listening carefully to one person after another, taking note of the attitude of each individual.

¹² After leaving a person who has shown some interest in the Kingdom message, you will do well to continue thinking about his spiritual needs. If you write down what you have learned after conversing with someone about the good news, this will help you to keep on assisting the person spiritually. During return visits, you need to listen carefully if you are to learn more about the individual's beliefs, attitude, or circumstances.

¹³ How can you encourage people to tell you how they feel about God's Word? In some areas, it is effective to ask, "Have you found the Bible hard to understand?" The answer to that question often reveals a person's attitude toward spiritual matters. Another way is to read a scripture and ask, "How does that sound to you?" Like Jesus, you may accomplish much in your ministry by using good questions. However, a word of caution is in order.

Jesus Used Questions Effectively

¹⁴ Show interest in the viewpoint of others without making them uncomfortable. Follow Jesus' method. He was not a tactless interrogator, but he used thought-provoking questions. Jesus was also a kind listener who refreshed sincere people and put them at ease. (Matthew 11:28) All sorts of people felt

12. How can you continue to help an interested person?
13. What may help you to discern a person's feelings about the Bible?
14. Without interrogating people, how can you show interest in their viewpoint?

free to approach him with their concerns. (Mark 1:40; 5:35, 36; 10:13, 17, 46, 47) If individuals are to feel at ease telling you what they think about the Bible and its teachings, you must avoid interrogating them.

¹⁵ In addition to using questions effectively, you can encourage conversation by saying something interesting and then listening to the response. For instance, Jesus told Nicodemus: "Unless anyone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3) Those words were so intriguing that Nicodemus could not hold back from responding and listening to Jesus. (John 3:4-20) You may be able to draw people into conversations in a similar way.

¹⁶ Today, the appearance of many new religions is a talking point in such places as Africa, Eastern Europe, and Latin America. In places like these, you can often start a conversation by saying: "I am concerned that there are so many religions. But I hope soon to see people from all nations united in true worship. Does that sound good to you?" By saying something surprising about your hope, you may be able to get people to express their view. And questions are easier to answer when there are two possible replies. (Matthew 17:25) After a householder has commented on your question, answer it yourself with a scripture or two. (Isaiah 11:9; Zephaniah 3:9) By listening carefully and noting the person's response, you may be able to determine what to discuss the next time you call.

Jesus Listened to Children

¹⁷ Jesus was interested not only in adults but also in children. He knew about the

- 15, 16. How can you draw people into conversations about religious matters?
17. What shows that Jesus was interested in children?



We imitate Jesus when we help children spiritually

games youngsters played and the things they said. Sometimes he would invite children to come to him. (Luke 7:31, 32; 18:15-17) Many children were among the crowds listening to Jesus. When young boys shouted out in praise of the Messiah, Jesus took note and showed that the Scriptures had foretold this. (Matthew 14:21; 15:38; 21:15, 16) Today, many children are becoming disciples of Jesus. So how can you help them?

¹⁸ To help your child spiritually, you must listen to him. You need to understand what ideas he has that may be out of harmony with Jehovah's thinking. Regardless of what your child says, it is wise to respond first with a positive remark. Then you can use appropriate scriptures to help your child understand Jehovah's view of matters.

¹⁹ Questions have their place. But children do not enjoy being interrogated any more than adults do. Rather than place on your child the burden of answering a num-

ber of difficult questions, why not make a brief statement about yourself? Depending on the matter under discussion, you might say that you used to feel a certain way and explain why. Then you might ask, "Do you feel that way too?" Your child's response may well lead to a helpful and encouraging Scriptural discussion.

Keep On Imitating the Great Disciple Maker

²⁰ Whether you are discussing a subject with your child or anyone else, good listening is vital. Indeed, it is an expression of love. By listening, you are acting in a humble way, and the one speaking is being shown respect and loving consideration. Of course, listening requires that you pay attention to the person's expressions.

²¹ As you engage in the Christian ministry, keep on listening carefully to the house-holders. If you pay close attention to what they say, you are likely to discern which aspects of Bible truth will be especially appealing to them. Then endeavor to help them by employing Jesus' various methods of teaching. As you do so, you will be rewarded with joy and satisfaction because you are imitating the Great Disciple Maker.

20, 21. Why should you be a good listener in your work as a disciple maker?

How Would You Answer?

- How did Jesus encourage others to express their thoughts?
- Why did Jesus listen to those whom he taught?
- How can you use questions in your ministry?
- What can you do to help children spiritually?

Questions From Readers

Is it proper for one of Jehovah's Witnesses to attend the wedding of a non-Witness relative or acquaintance?

Weddings are joyous occasions, and it is understandable that a Christian would like to share in that joy. Of course, minors invited to attend should defer to their parents or guardians, who have the final say on the matter. (Ephesians 6:1-3) But what if a man who is not one of Jehovah's Witnesses asks his Christian wife to accompany him to a church wedding? Her conscience might allow her to go merely as an observer determined not to share in any religious acts associated with the occasion.

Basically, then, whether to be present at a certain wedding or not is a matter for personal decision. However, each Christian should be aware of his accountability to Jehovah and ought to consider a number of Scriptural principles when making a decision about attending the wedding of a non-Witness.

Foremost on a Christian's mind should be a desire to have God's approval. Jesus said: "God is a Spirit, and those worshiping him must worship with spirit and truth." (John 4:24) Thus, Jehovah's Witnesses do not engage in interfaith activities, such as prayers, rituals, or ceremonies that are in conflict with Bible truth.—2 Corinthians 6:14-17.

A Christian recognizes that his or her decision could also affect others. If you decide to attend, will your relatives be offended if you do not fully participate in the wedding festivities? The potential effect on fellow believers also needs to be taken into account. (Romans 14:13) Even if you or other members of your household conclude that attending a non-Witness wedding does not pose a problem, could your spiritual brothers and sisters be

adversely affected? Could it injure the conscience of some?

Wedding ceremonies involving non-Witness relatives can present challenging situations. What if you are asked to be a member of the bridal party? Or what if your mate is not a Witness and wants to participate fully? If the wedding is a civil ceremony conducted by a judge or a secular officer, attending it may involve little more than witnessing a legal proceeding.

However, a wedding ceremony held in a religious building or performed by a clergyman raises additional concerns. In order to follow your Bible-trained conscience and avoid compromising your religious convictions or doing something that might prove embarrassing to the wedding party, you may decide to refrain from attending. (Proverbs 22:3) You could spare your family and yourself much stress by explaining your Bible-based convictions beforehand, indicating to what extent you are willing to participate or perhaps suggesting an alternative course of action.

After carefully weighing all the factors, some Christians may decide that it would not be improper to attend a non-Witness wedding as a quiet observer. But if a Christian reasons that by being present, he might be tempted to compromise godly principles, he may conclude that the risk outweighs the possible benefits. If he decides not to attend the wedding but to go as an invited guest to the festivities held thereafter, he should be determined to "do all things for God's glory." (1 Corinthians 10:31) In making such decisions, "each one will carry his own load" of responsibility. (Galatians 6:5) Whatever you decide, therefore, remember that preserving a good conscience before Jehovah God is vital.



"PLEASE ACCEPT MY HUMBLE GIFT"

THESE words were written in a letter received by the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia. A large box full of woolen socks accompanied the letter.

The gift was sent by 67-year-old Alla, one of Jehovah's Witnesses serving in a congregation in the Far East of Russia. Alla has been serving Jehovah for over ten years, zealously preaching the good news of the Kingdom. However, a stroke suddenly left her partially paralyzed. Motivated by love, though, Alla has followed a course similar to that of the first-century Christian woman Dorcas, who made garments for fellow believers.—Acts 9:36, 39.

In her letter, Alla wrote: "I cannot move my legs, but I can still move my hands. So I preach by writing letters." She added: "I decided that while I am still able to move my hands, I will knit a few pairs of warm socks. I would like these socks to be given to brothers and sisters who are going to build Kingdom Halls in cold places, such as the Far East and Siberia."

Regarding his genuine followers, Jesus Christ said: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves." (John 13:35) Love like that showed by Alla is an identifying mark of Jesus' true disciples.