

# The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

December 1, 1989

**GOD IS  
GOOD!**



# The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

December 1, 1989  
Vol. 110, No. 23

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

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# *Does God's goodness attract you?*

**D**O YOU have a very close friend? If so, did you ever reflect on what attracted you to that person? Was it his (or her) looks? Was it the fact that you were interested in the same things? Or was it deeper qualities, such as kindness or wisdom? If the quality that cemented your friendship was goodness, then you have a rich relationship indeed. Genuine goodness is rarely found today when, for the most part, people are "without love of goodness."—2 Timothy 3:3.

For a Christian, the most important relationship in life is not with another human but with God. So when you think of this relationship, have you ever considered: 'Which of God's qualities draws me most to God?'

## **God's Chief Attributes**

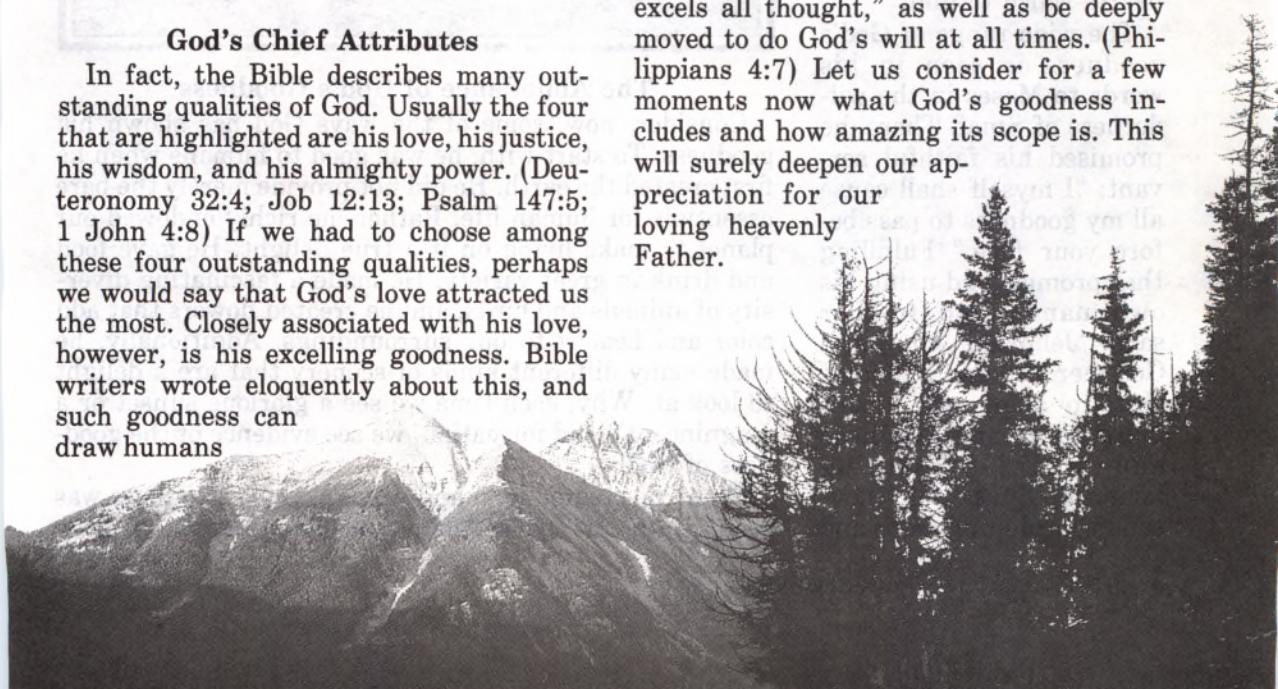
In fact, the Bible describes many outstanding qualities of God. Usually the four that are highlighted are his love, his justice, his wisdom, and his almighty power. (Deuteronomy 32:4; Job 12:13; Psalm 147:5; 1 John 4:8) If we had to choose among these four outstanding qualities, perhaps we would say that God's love attracted us the most. Closely associated with his love, however, is his excelling goodness. Bible writers wrote eloquently about this, and such goodness can draw humans

into a healthy, pleasant relationship with their Creator.

For example, late in the sixth century B.C.E., the prophet Zechariah exclaimed of Jehovah: "How great his goodness is, and how great his handsomeness is!" (Zechariah 9:17) Many years before Zechariah, Isaiah similarly praised God when he wrote: "The loving-kindnesses of Jehovah I shall mention, . . . even the abundant goodness to the house of Israel that he has rendered to them."—Isaiah 63:7.

Three centuries earlier, King David had written very movingly about God's goodness. David wrote from experience, having enjoyed this goodness all through his life. God was extremely good to David, especially after his very serious sins in connection with Bath-sheba and her husband Uriah, when God showed him mercy. (2 Samuel 12:9, 13) At Psalm 31:19, David declared with appreciation: "How abundant your goodness is, which you have treasured up for those fearing you!"

Do you value God's goodness as much as those ancient worshipers did? If so, you will experience the real "peace of God that excels all thought," as well as be deeply moved to do God's will at all times. (Philippians 4:7) Let us consider for a few moments now what God's goodness includes and how amazing its scope is. This will surely deepen our appreciation for our loving heavenly Father.



# The amazing scope

**G**OD is good! How many times have you heard that expression or even used it yourself? But did you ever reflect on the full scope of God's goodness in your behalf? Such meditation deepens our appreciation of the kind of God we worship.

First, though, we need to understand what goodness is. Goodness, of course, is the quality of being good as opposed to being wicked. But goodness is more than that. It is an active quality. A good person *does* good. And God, in his goodness, does so many good things for us that our hearts warm to him.

The wide range of God's goodness is seen in his words to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai. There, he promised his faithful servant: "I myself shall cause all my goodness to pass before your face." Fulfilling that promise and using his own name, God further says: "Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness and truth, preserving loving-kindness for thousands, pardoning error and

transgression and sin, but by no means will he give exemption from punishment."—Exodus 33:19; 34:6, 7.

Therefore, God's goodness includes his mercy as well as his graciousness, his loving-kindness, and his truth. In addition, his goodness is seen in that he is "slow to anger," long-suffering. That does not mean, though, that he is like an overindulgent parent, allowing sin to continue unchecked forever. "By no means will he give exemption from punishment" to unrepentant sinners. A good God cannot allow wickedness to exist unchecked.



## The Abundance of God's Goodness

Consider, now, some of the ways God has shown his goodness. To start with, he was good to humans when he first created the earth. He did not provide merely the bare essentials for human life. Rather, he richly endowed our planet to make living on it a true delight. He gave food and drink in great variety. He made a fascinating diversity of animals and birds, and he created flowers that add color and beauty to our surroundings. Additionally, he made many different kinds of scenery that are a delight to look at. Why, each time we see a glorious sunset or a magnificent cloud formation, we see evidence of the goodness of God!

When he created man and woman, God's goodness was seen again. He gave Adam and Eve perfect, healthy

# *of God's goodness*



bodies and set them in the garden of Eden. Then he gave them an exciting and challenging commission: "Fill the earth and subdue it." Thus, he set before them the prospect of enjoying life forever in a paradise earth among their many offspring. (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:7-9) What a wonderful wedding present for the first human couple!

Even when Adam and Eve rebelled, God did not totally abandon them. At that point, if he had punished them with instant death, he would have been doing only what was just. However, he was good to the now sinful human pair. He allowed them to live on for a while and to have children.—Genesis 5:1-5.

Moreover, God's goodness has continued toward fallen mankind since then. As King David said: "Jehovah is good to all, and his mercies are over all his works." (Psalm 145:9) He provides abundantly so that human life can continue on his property, the earth. Jesus said to the Jews of his day: "Your Father who is in the heavens . . . makes his sun rise upon wicked people and good and makes it rain upon righteous people and unrighteous." (Matthew 5:45) Any hunger or deprivation that exists is not because God has failed to provide for mankind. It is because of the corruption, cruelty, and inefficiency of humans.

God also allows mankind to exploit the earth's mineral wealth, and he has not concealed from them a measure of understanding of the starry heavens and the physical

makeup of things. Truly, Jehovah is good to mankind, even though many arrogantly say that there is no God, and others abuse his goodness for selfish ends, even to the extent of oppressing fellow humans.—Psalm 14:1.



## **God's Goodness to Believers**

If, though, God has been good to mankind in general, his dealings with believers truly warm the heart. To begin with, when Adam and Eve first rebelled, God prophesied that a "seed" would appear who would eventually overcome the bad effects of their sin. (Genesis 3:15) As time passed, many of Adam's descendants worshiped God faithfully despite their imperfection, and this early prophecy gave them the hope of a better future. One of these faithful worshipers, Abraham, was even called "Jehovah's friend."—James 2:23.

God promised Abraham that his descendants would grow into many nations and that the principal line of his offspring would

inherit the land of Canaan. In fulfillment of this, the Israelites, Abraham's descendants, were later organized into a nation. (Genesis 17:3-8; Exodus 19:6) Again, God was good to this new nation, delivering them from slavery in Egypt, protecting them in the wilderness, providing them a law code and a priesthood, and finally giving them the fertile land of Canaan as an inheritance.

Eventually, Israel became a kingdom, and Jehovah commissioned its third human king, Solomon, to build a temple in Jerusalem as a world center for His worship. When the temple was completed, there was a magnificent dedication ceremony and a joyous festival. Afterward, the record says, the Israelites "began to bless the king and to go to their homes, rejoicing and feeling merry of heart over all the goodness that Jehovah had performed." (1 Kings 8:66) There were other occasions too when the Israelites' hearts overflowed because of God's goodness to them.

Unhappily, though, they did not always appreciate their privilege of being worshipers of the one true God. Eventually, the Israelites as a whole became unfaithful, and in 607 B.C.E., Jehovah allowed them to be carried off as captives to Babylon. As God had said to Moses, because of His very goodness "by no means will he give exemption from punishment."—Exodus 34:7.

However, after 70 years God kindly brought a faithful remnant of Israelites back to their own land. What moved him to do so? His goodness. Jeremiah wrote prophetically of the Israelites' return from Babylon: "They will certainly come and cry out joyfully on the height of Zion and become radiant over the goodness of Jehovah." The prophet went on: "'With my goodness my own people will become satisfied,' is the utterance of Jehovah."—Jeremiah 31:12, 14.

Eventually, Jesus came to earth and proved to be the "seed" foretold in that prophecy uttered back in Eden. (Genesis 3:15) The Bible says: "God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) The death of Jesus provided a ransom to buy humans out of sin and restore them to perfection. Thus, the bad effects of Adam's sin would finally be overcome. As Paul wrote to the Romans: "Through the disobedience of the one man many were constituted sinners, likewise also through the obedience of the one person many will be constituted righteous." (Romans 5:19) Thanks to God's goodness, righthearted humans now had the hope of attaining everlasting life. They may even become friends of God, as Abraham did.

God continues to show goodness even today to those who worship him. He gives counsel through the Bible to help them handle their problems. (Psalm 119:105) He offers the free gift of his spirit to help them measure up to his righteous standards. And he reveals his purposes, so that true Christians look forward to a new world of righteousness that will be ushered in after this old world passes away. (Proverbs 4:18; 2 Peter 3:13) Christians are confident about such things because God, in his goodness, has revealed them in his infallible Word.—2 Timothy 3:16.

Yes, a consideration of God's goodness surely warms our hearts toward him. But it also raises a question:

### How Much Will You Benefit From God's Goodness?

In fact, whoever you are, you already benefit from God's goodness. You breathe, you eat, you drink, you enjoy life—all gifts from God. But do you benefit as fully as possible? Remember, God's goodness to

Adam and Eve was limited after they sinned. Similarly, he will limit his bounty to us unless we respond in the right way to his kindnesses. How can we do this?

The psalmist prayed: "Teach me goodness, sensibleness and knowledge themselves, for in your commandments I have exercised faith." (Psalm 119:66) That should be our prayer too. As God is good, we need to learn to be good like him. Paul urged: "Become imitators of God, as beloved children."—Ephesians 5:1.

We do this, first by studying the Bible to learn what goodness is. Then, we ask for God's help in developing this quality. Goodness is a fruit of the spirit, along with "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, . . . faith, mildness, [and] self-control." (Galatians 5:22, 23) We can cultivate all these qualities by relying on God's spirit, studying the Bible that was inspired of God, praying to him for help, and associating with like-minded Christians.—Psalm 1:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Hebrews 10:24, 25.

The Bible also says: "With the mention of the abundance of your goodness they will bubble over, and because of your righteousness they will cry out joyfully." (Psalm 145:7) Yes, God expects us to tell others about his goodness. We should talk freely about our heavenly Father.

Finally, we should not presume on God's

goodness. True, Jehovah forgives sinners. King David was confident of a favorable answer when he prayed: "The sins of my youth and my revolts O do not remember. According to your loving-kindness do you yourself remember me, for the sake of your goodness, O Jehovah." (Psalm 25:7) Does that mean that we can allow ourselves to commit sins in the confident expectation of God's forgiveness? By no means. Remember, God's goodness means that "by no means will he give exemption from punishment" to unrepentant sinners.

### Enjoying God's Goodness

Once we fully experience God's goodness, how our hearts warm toward him! We are encouraged to follow the fine admonition of the apostle Paul: "Go on walking as children of light, for the fruitage of the light consists of every sort of goodness and righteousness and truth."—Ephesians 5:8, 9.

Every day, we are conscious of God's loving concern for us. Even under the most difficult circumstances, we know he does not abandon those who love him. Yes, we experience the sublime peace of mind of the psalmist: "Surely goodness and loving-kindness themselves will pursue me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of Jehovah to the length of days."—Psalm 23:6.



## God's Voice Heard a Third Time

**W**HILE at the temple, Jesus has been agonizing over the death that he soon must face. His main concern is how his Father's reputation will be affected, so he prays: "Father, glorify your name."

At that, a mighty voice comes from the heavens, proclaiming: "I both glorified it and will glorify it again."

The crowd standing around are bewildered. "An angel has spoken to him," some begin to say. Others claim that it thundered. But, indeed, it is Jehovah God who spoke! This, however, is not the first time God's voice was heard in connection with Jesus.

At Jesus' baptism, three and a half years earlier, John the Baptizer heard God say of Jesus: "This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved." Then, sometime after the previous Passover, when Jesus was transfigured before them, James, John, and Peter heard God declare: "This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved; listen to him." And now, for the third time, on Nisan 10, four days before Jesus' death, God's voice is again heard by men. But this time Jehovah speaks so that multitudes can hear!

Jesus explains: "This voice has occurred, not for my sake, but for your sakes." It provides proof that Jesus is indeed God's Son, the promised Messiah. "Now there is a judging of this world," Jesus continues, "now the ruler of this world will be cast out." Jesus' faithful life course, in effect, confirms that Satan the Devil, the ruler of the world, deserves to be "cast out," executed.

Pointing to the consequences of his approaching death, Jesus says: "And yet I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw men of all sorts to me." His death is in no way a defeat, for by means of it, he will draw others to himself so that they may enjoy everlasting life.

But the crowd protests: "We heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever; and how is it you say that the Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man?"

Despite all the evidence, including hearing God's own voice, most do not believe that Jesus is the *true* Son of man, the promised Messiah. Yet, as he did six months earlier at the Festival of Tabernacles, Jesus again speaks of himself as "the light" and encourages his listeners: "While you have the light, exercise faith in the light, in order to become sons of light." After saying these things, Jesus goes off and hides, evidently because his life was in danger.

The Jews' lack of faith in Jesus fulfills the words of Isaiah about the 'eyes of people being blinded and their hearts being hardened so that they do not turn around to be healed.' Isaiah saw in vision the heavenly courts of Jehovah, including Jesus in his prehuman glory along with Jehovah. Yet, the Jews, in fulfillment of what Isaiah wrote, stubbornly reject the evidence that this One is their promised Deliverer.

On the other hand, many even of the rulers (evidently members of the Jewish high court, the Sanhedrin) actually put faith in Jesus. Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea are two of *these rulers*.

But the rulers, at least for the present, fail to declare their faith, for fear of being expelled from their positions in the synagogue. How much such ones miss out on!

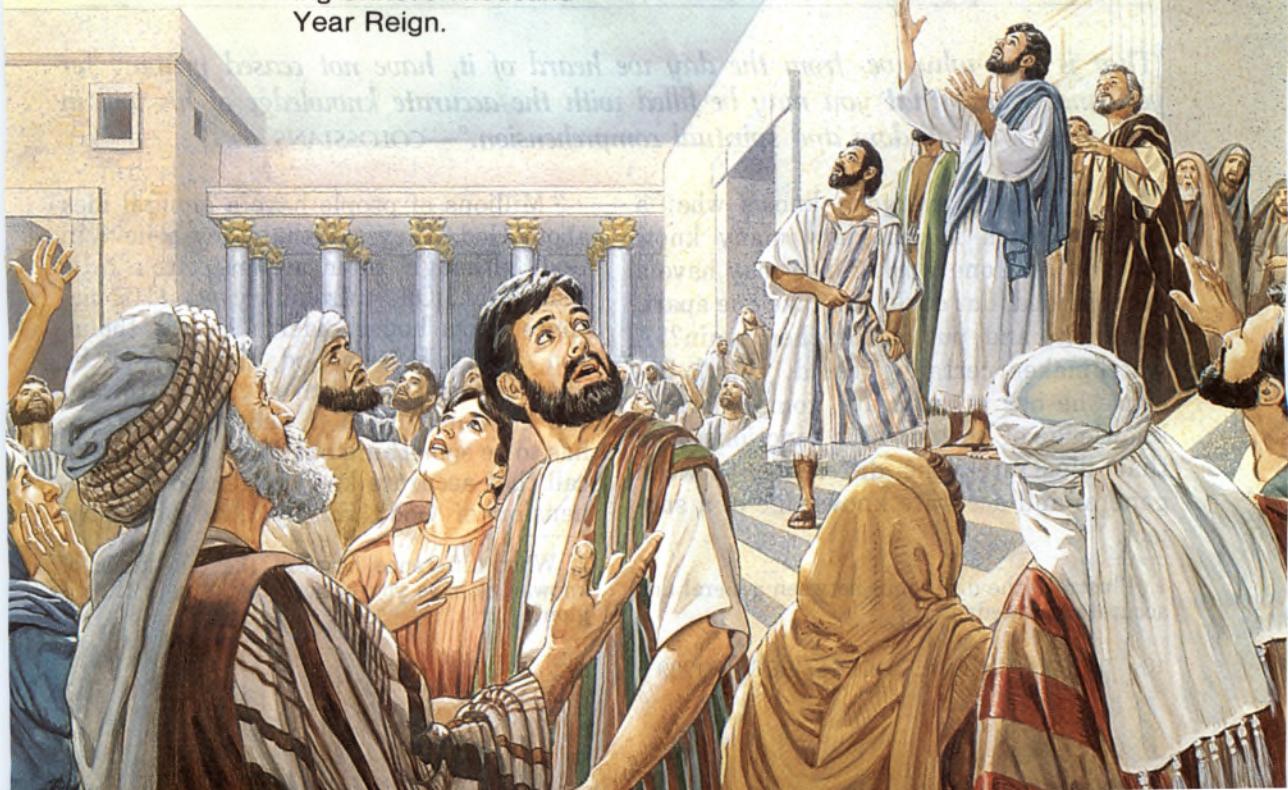
Jesus goes on to note: "He that puts faith in me puts faith, not in me only, but in him also that sent me; and he that beholds me beholds also him that sent me. . . . But if anyone hears my sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I came, not to judge the world, but to save the world. . . . The word that I have spoken is what will judge him in the last day."

Jehovah's love for the world of mankind moved him to send Jesus so that those who put faith in him might be saved. Whether people are saved will be determined by whether they obey the things God instructed Jesus to speak. The judgment will take place

"in the last day," during Christ's Thousand Year Reign.

Jesus concludes by saying: "I have not spoken out of my own impulse, but the Father himself who sent me has given me a commandment as to what to tell and what to speak. Also, I know that his commandment means everlasting life. Therefore the things I speak, just as the Father has told me them, so I speak them." John 12:28-50; 19:38, 39; Matthew 3:17; 17:5; Isaiah 6:1, 8-10.

- ♦ On what three occasions was God's voice heard with regard to Jesus?
- ♦ How did the prophet Isaiah see Jesus' glory?
- ♦ Who are the rulers that put faith in Jesus, but why do they not confess him?
- ♦ What is "the last day," and by what means will people be judged then?





## Why we need ACCURATE KNOWLEDGE

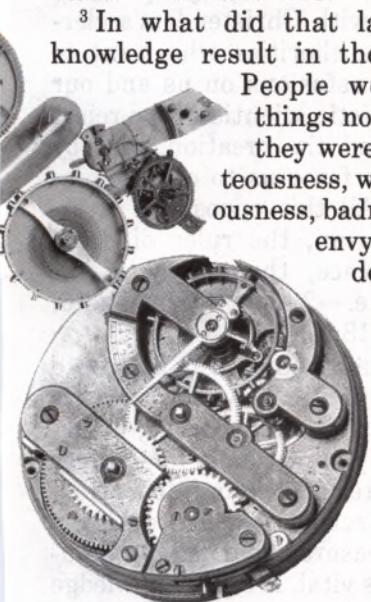
*"That is also why we, from the day we heard of it, have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the accurate knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual comprehension."—COLOSSIANS 1:9.*

**N**EARLY everyone knows what a watch is, but how many know how one works? You may have a general idea, but could you take one apart, repair it, and put it together again? A watchmaker certainly could. Why? Because he has an accurate, comprehensive knowledge of how a watch functions. And that illustrates the difference between general and accurate knowledge of a subject.

1. Illustrate the difference between general and accurate knowledge.

<sup>2</sup> Millions of people have a general idea about God. They say that they believe in God, although their actions often belie that claim. One missionary would sometimes ask a householder: "As a Catholic, you must believe in God, right?" And the answer would be, with a gesture toward the heavens: "Well, I believe that there has to be something out there." Would you call that accurate knowledge and comprehension of God? Hardly. And often the

2. What difference between the two kinds of knowledge have you noticed in the field of religion?



result of such vagueness is that the conduct of those professing to be Christians is not Christian. (Compare Titus 1:16.) The resulting situation is as Paul described it: "Just as they did not approve of holding God in accurate knowledge, God gave them up to a disapproved mental state."—Romans 1:28.

<sup>3</sup> In what did that lack of accurate knowledge result in the first century?

People were doing "the things not fitting, filled as they were with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, badness, being full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malicious disposition, being whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, insolent, haughty, self-assuming, inventors of injurious things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, false

to agreements, having no natural affection, merciless." Their lack of accurate knowledge meant that their hearts were not motivated toward righteous acts.

—Romans 1:28-31; Proverbs 2:2, 10.

### What Is the Difference?

<sup>4</sup> This difference between general and accurate knowledge is implied in the Greek Scriptures. The original Greek speaks of *gno'sis*, knowledge, and *e-pi'gno-sis*, accurate knowledge. The first, accord-

3. What results when people reject accurate knowledge of God's will?

4, 5. According to Greek scholars, what are some differences between *gno'sis* and *e-pi'gno-sis*?

ing to Greek scholar W. E. Vine, means "primarily a seeking to know, an enquiry, investigation," especially of spiritual truth in the context of the Scriptures.

<sup>5</sup> *E-pi'gno-sis*, according to Greek scholar Thayer, means "precise and correct knowledge." And in the verb form, it means "to become thoroughly acquainted with, to know thoroughly; to know accurately, know well." W. E. Vine states that *e-pi'gno-sis* "denotes exact or full knowledge, discernment, recognition." He adds that it expresses "a fuller or a full knowledge, a greater participation by the knower in the object known, *thus more powerfully influencing him*." (Italics ours.) As we will see, this last expression is of vital importance to a Christian.

<sup>6</sup> Only two Bible writers use the Greek word *e-pi'gno-sis*. They are Paul and Peter, who employ the word a total of 20 times.\* Apart from Luke, they are also the only ones to use the word *gno'sis*, Paul using it 23 times and Peter 4 times. Their writings are therefore a valuable guide as to the importance of accurate knowledge with a view to salvation. As Paul stated to Timothy: "This is fine and acceptable in the sight of our Savior, God, whose will is that all sorts of men should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth."

—1 Timothy 2:3, 4.

### Why Accurate Knowledge Is Important

<sup>7</sup> Therefore, gaining accurate knowledge

\* As listed in the *Comprehensive Concordance of the New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, page 17; also Philemon 6 (See *The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures*).

6. Which Bible writers use the words for "knowledge" and "accurate knowledge," and why is accurate knowledge important?

7. (a) To be of value, how must knowledge affect us? (b) What danger exists if we neglect knowledge?

of the truth as taught in the Bible is a key to salvation. However, that knowledge must reach the heart, the seat of motivation. It cannot remain as an intellectual or academic exercise. Moreover, once it has been gained, knowledge of the truth has to be used and replenished. Why is that? Because the memory, like an unused muscle, may become weak and deficient, in which case we may easily neglect our spirituality and begin to drift and waver in our faith. We may loosen our grip on "the very knowledge of God." Soon, this wavering may be reflected in lax thinking ability and even unchristian conduct.—Proverbs 2:5; Hebrews 2:1.

<sup>8</sup> We appreciate, then, why Solomon, when he was faithful, highly esteemed wisdom, discernment, and thinking ability. He wrote: "When wisdom enters into your heart and knowledge itself becomes pleasant to your very soul, thinking ability itself will keep guard over you, discernment itself will safeguard you, to deliver you from the bad way."\* (Proverbs 2: 10-12) These words imply that we must develop a fervent desire for accurate knowledge, which can affect the heart and the very soul. Furthermore, it is a foundation for good thinking ability. And why is this so important today?

<sup>9</sup> We are living in "the last days" when, as Paul prophesied, there have "come times of stress" or "a time of troubles." (2 Timothy 3:1, Revised Standard Version; *The New English Bible*) It is becom-

\* To get a better understanding of the shades of meaning of the words "knowledge," "thinking ability," "wisdom," and others found in Proverbs, see *Insight on the Scriptures*, Volume 2, pages 180, 1094, 1189, published in English by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

8. What value did Solomon see in wisdom and knowledge?
9. Who are some enemies of Christian spirituality?

ing harder and harder to maintain our Christian integrity in this degraded world. Christian ethics, values, and standards are scorned and disdained. The faith of Jehovah's Witnesses is under attack from all sides—by the clergy of Christendom who hate the Kingdom message we take from house to house, by apostates who collaborate with Christendom's clergy, by medical authorities who want to impose blood transfusions on us and our children, by atheistic scientists who reject belief in God and the creation, and by those who try to force us to compromise our neutrality. All this opposition is orchestrated by Satan, the ruler of darkness and ignorance, the enemy of accurate knowledge.—2 Corinthians 4:3-6; Ephesians 4:17, 18; 6:11, 12.

<sup>10</sup> Pressures may mount in daily life to influence a Christian to do what others are doing, whether it be taking drugs, drinking immoderately, practicing immorality and violence, stealing, lying, cheating, dropping out of school, or just seeking a life of selfish pleasure. That is why accurate knowledge is vital. A fuller knowledge of God's Word and purpose can more powerfully influence our thinking and our actions in a positive way.—Romans 12:1, 2.

### A Modern Prodigal Son

<sup>11</sup> We can illustrate this by the real-life case of a young man who, when he was about 14 years of age and already a baptized Christian, had his love of the truth tested. Like many young people, he loved sports, especially soccer. But there was a problem. His school played soccer the same night that the congregation had its meetings. His spirituality was not strong

10. What pressures may mount against us, and what do we need to counteract them?
- 11, 12. What real-life experience illustrates the folly of rejecting accurate knowledge of the truth?

enough for him properly to evaluate the superficial value of soccer as compared to the lasting value of attending Christian meetings with his widowed mother and his younger brother and sister. So he ceased to act according to accurate knowledge and decided to drop out of the truth. Eventually, he was disfellowshipped. Later, he went on to do military service, where he got involved with drugs.

<sup>12</sup> In 1986, when this young man was released from the army, he came to his senses, and he wrote a letter to a friend of the family who had served on the judicial committee that disfellowshipped him. In it he stated: "I am happy to be able to tell you some important news: I have come back to the truth. . . . I have come to realize what the apostle Paul said at 2 Corinthians 4:4, that there is a god of this system of things who is blinding the mind. For a long time, I have been blind spiritually to the things that were happening around me. When I left the truth, I did not know what a risk I was running. But with time, and thanks to Jehovah God, I have been able to appreciate clearly that I was wrong in my bad course of action."—Compare Luke 15:11-24.

<sup>13</sup> This young man has returned to the pathway of accurate knowledge. Now he is able "to walk worthily of Jehovah to the end of fully pleasing him." He can also "go on bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the accurate knowledge of God" as he pursues his association with the Christian congregation. And what a refreshing blessing he has become to his family by once again becoming a follower of Christ! Do you know of similar examples?—Colossians 1:9, 10; Matthew 11:28-30.

13. If they truly repent, what may be the positive outcome for some who have fallen by the wayside? (2 Timothy 2:24-26)

### Dire Results of Spiritual Neglect

<sup>14</sup> What lesson can be learned from this and similar cases? That once we have gained accurate knowledge of the truth, we need constantly to renew the spiritual circuits of the mind so as not to fall away. Our spiritual resources may become weak if we neglect personal and family study, Christian meetings, and the ministry. Then what may happen? A once strong Christian may drift away from the faith, perhaps even falling into wrong conduct, such as immorality, or slipping down the slippery slide of doubt and misinformation into apostasy. (Hebrews 2:1; 3:12; 6:11, 12) Foolishly, some have even returned to the Babylonish teachings of the Trinity and the immortality of the soul!

<sup>15</sup> Peter's words are surely appropriate: "Certainly if, after having escaped from the defilements of the world by an accurate knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they get involved again with these very things and are overcome, the final conditions have become worse for them than the first. For it would have been better for them not to have accurately known the path of righteousness than after knowing it accurately to turn away from the holy commandment delivered to them. The saying of the true proverb has happened to them: 'The dog has returned to its own vomit, and the sow that was bathed to rolling in the mire.'"—2 Peter 2:20-22.

<sup>16</sup> Those who reject an accurate knowledge of the truth often choose the pathway of expediency. They no longer accept the responsibility of regularly attending Christian meetings or of participating in

14. (a) To avoid falling away, what must we do?  
(b) What has happened to some Christians?

15. What warning did Peter give about falling away?

16. (a) How have some been misled in recent times? (b) Into what acts of conduct have misled ones fallen?

the house-to-house ministry. Some even go back to smoking! Others are happy that they no longer have to stand out as different over the issue of Christian neutrality and the misuse of blood. Oh, what freedom! Now they can even vote for one of the political parties of the "wild beast." (Revelation 13:1, 7) Thus, as unsteady souls, some have been seduced and misled from the straight path of accurate knowledge by those who, while 'promising them freedom, are themselves existing as slaves of corruption.'—2 Peter 2:15-19.

<sup>17</sup> Unless such ones repent and return to the truth, they expose themselves to the judgment that Paul outlined: "For if we practice sin willfully after having received the accurate knowledge of the truth, there is no longer any sacrifice for sins left, but there is a certain fearful expectation of judgment and there is a fiery jealousy that is going to consume those in opposition." How unwise and shortsighted it is to abandon the accurate knowledge of Jehovah God and Christ Jesus for the apostate teachings of Christendom!—Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:26, 27.

17. What danger exists for those who fall away from accurate knowledge of the truth?

#### Questions to Answer

- What is the difference between "knowledge" and "accurate knowledge"?
- Why is accurate knowledge so important in these last days?
- How might some be tempted to fall away from the truth?
- What warning does Peter give us about rejecting accurate knowledge?
- What must we do to obtain and retain accurate knowledge?

#### Zeal With Accurate Knowledge

<sup>18</sup> The Jewish clergy of Paul's day certainly had knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures. But was it accurate knowledge? Did it draw them toward Christ as the promised Messiah? Paul argues that they were so committed to establishing their own righteousness by means of the Law that they would not subject themselves to "Christ [who] is the end of the Law." Therefore Paul could say of them: "For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God; but not according to accurate knowledge."—Romans 10:1-4.

<sup>19</sup> So how can we obtain this accurate knowledge? By personal study and meditation, along with prayer and meeting attendance. This means a constant recharging of our spiritual batteries, as it were. We cannot afford to rely only on the knowledge we initially gained when we accepted the truth. Continually, we have to take in solid spiritual food, accurate knowledge, by means of conscientious personal study. Thus Paul's counsel is appropriate: "Solid food belongs to mature people, to those who through use have their perceptive powers trained to distinguish both right and wrong. For this reason, now that we have left the primary doctrine about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying a foundation again, namely, repentance from dead works, and faith toward God . . . And this we will do, if God indeed permits."—Hebrews 5:14-6:3.

<sup>20</sup> The questions now are, What tools do we have to help us to obtain accurate knowledge? And in view of our busy lives, when can we study God's Word? The following article will consider these and related subjects.

18. According to Paul, why did the Jewish clergy fail to accept Christ?

19, 20. (a) How can we obtain accurate knowledge? (b) What questions remain to be answered?



## Do you seek HIDDEN TREASURES?

*"May undeserved kindness and peace be increased to you by an accurate knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord."—2 PETER 1:2.*

**W**HY is gold so expensive? It is only a soft metal, yet its value goes into hundreds of dollars per ounce. True, it is malleable and makes an attractive adornment in the form of a ring or a bracelet. (1 Timothy 2:9; James 2:2) Yet, if you were lost in a desert, dying of hunger and thirst, you could not eat it or drink it. In that circumstance a loaf of

1, 2. What factors make gold valuable and expensive?

bread or a plate of rice with a drink of water would be worth far more than gold.

<sup>2</sup> Why, then, is gold so highly valued? For one thing, it is scarce and difficult to obtain. For example, when the Empire gold mine in northern California closed down in 1957 because it was no longer profitable, miners were digging at a vertical depth of over 5,000 feet but had to descend two miles diagonally to reach the gold. Up to that point, the high price of gold had made

it worth the huge effort to keep on searching for it.

<sup>3</sup> We, though, can dig for something far more valuable than gold. What is it? Wise King Solomon gave an answer some 3,000 years ago: "If, moreover, you call out for understanding itself and you give forth your voice for discernment itself, if you keep seeking for it as for silver, and as for hid treasures you keep searching for it, in that case you will understand the fear of Jehovah, and you will find the very knowledge of God." Imagine puny humans being able to find "the very knowledge of God"! —Proverbs 2:3-5.\*

### Why All Need Accurate Knowledge

<sup>4</sup> Since the time of Christ, that essential knowledge has expanded to include much more than what was available to the faithful Hebrew men and women of old. As Paul expressed it: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the accurate knowledge of him; the eyes of your heart having been enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he called you, what the glorious riches are which he holds as an inheritance for the holy ones."—Ephesians 1:17, 18.

<sup>5</sup> Back then, this was direct counsel for the holy anointed brothers of Christ, and it still is today. As the secondary part of the "seed" of promise, such ones are special targets for Satan's spiritual subversion. (Galatians 3:26-29; Ephesians 6:

\* Interestingly, at Proverbs 2:5 the expression "the very knowledge of God" appears in the Greek Septuagint as *e·pi'gno·sis*, or "accurate knowledge," one of the eight uses of that Greek word in the Septuagint.

3. What treasure can we seek?
4. What should be included in a Christian's accurate knowledge?
5. Why do the anointed need to pay constant attention to their knowledge of God's will?

11, 12) Anointed ones, especially, must make their calling sure by not neglecting the free gift of God's undeserved kindness. That is why they must constantly strengthen their spiritual resources by refurbishing their accurate knowledge of God's will and Word.—Ephesians 3:7; Hebrews 6:4-6; 2 Peter 1:9-12.

<sup>6</sup> What about those whose hope is everlasting life on earth? Why is accurate knowledge vital for them? Because there are no degrees of Christian integrity, as if there were a higher standard for the anointed, who have a heavenly hope, than for the other sheep, who have an earthly hope. (John 10:16; 2 Peter 3:13) Christian principles apply equally to all. For that reason, all of us need to recharge our spiritual batteries with accurate knowledge on a regular basis. But time and effort are involved. We must engage in spiritual digging, as if for hidden treasures.—Psalm 105:4, 5.

### Buying Out Time to Dig

<sup>7</sup> Most people today lead busy lives, and as Christians we seem to be even busier than most with our schedules for Bible meetings, field service, secular work, housework, schoolwork, and so forth. Yet, just as we schedule time each day to eat, so we must set aside time to feed our mind and our spirituality. It was no idle remark that Jesus made when he quoted Deuteronomy 8:3: "It is written, 'Man must live, not on bread alone, but on every utterance coming forth through Jehovah's mouth.'" (Matthew 4:4) If we neglect our spirituality, we neglect our spiritual values and our hope for the future.

6. (a) Why do all of us need accurate knowledge, regardless of whether our hope is heavenly or earthly? (b) What is required to obtain accurate knowledge?

7. (a) What difficulties exist that might impede our obtaining accurate knowledge? (b) What may be the consequences of spiritual neglect?

Then we may begin to slip and waver. So how can we make time for regular personal Bible study?

<sup>8</sup> The apostle Paul's words are very appropriate: "Keep strict watch that how you walk is not as unwise but as wise persons, buying out the opportune time for yourselves, because the days are wicked. On this account cease becoming unreasonable, but go on perceiving what the will of Jehovah is." We can perceive what Jehovah's will is only if we pay attention to his Word by means of our personal study. And that means we must 'buy out the opportune time' or 'make the best use of our time.' —Ephesians 5:15-17; Phillips.

<sup>9</sup> If we analyze our nonessential activities of each day, how do we find that much of our free time is spent? Is it in front of the television set? That hypnotic apparatus can steal anything from two to five hours each evening from our life! How many hours per day do you personally spend watching television? Often, what is presented is, by its emphasis on violence and sex, degrading. And frequently it is designed to appeal to "the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the showy display of one's means of life." (1 John 2:15-17) Yet, many lack the will-power to turn the television off. Yes, this modern invention can consume our most precious asset, time.

<sup>10</sup> If we are honest with ourselves, we will recognize that it is usually possible to redeem time for essential activities such as Bible study. And personal Bible study that leads to accurate knowledge is essential for a Christian in these critical times. Yet, with over 41,000 disfellowshipped last

8. What Scriptural counsel gives us a proper perspective on personal study?

9. Where might we be losing time that can be redeemed for personal study? Give personal experiences.

10. Why is it so important today that we use our time wisely?

year, it is clear that many brothers and sisters have neglected their spirituality. Wearing and maintaining "the complete suit of armor from God" is not just a casual exercise. Even as in the case of a soldier wearing literal armor, it is a daily duty.—Ephesians 6:10-18; Romans 1:28-32; 2 Timothy 3:1.

<sup>11</sup> Around the world the more than 9,000 members of the 95 Bethel families at the branch offices of the Watch Tower Society have their family study every Monday evening. They study *The Watchtower* in preparation for the weekend meeting, and on many occasions they also have a Bible lecture or a classroom session for newer members of the family. Yes, Monday is the worldwide Bethel family study night. When is your personal or family study period?—Hebrews 10:24, 25.

### Tools and How to Use Them

<sup>12</sup> Just as a miner has tools for his trade, so we have tools with which to dig into the gold mine of God's Word. Consider, for example, the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References*. It is presently published in Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, and Spanish. Therefore, most of Jehovah's Witnesses have available a marvelous tool for obtaining accurate knowledge of the true God. This Bible edition incorporates thousands of marginal references and copious footnotes. It also has a 36-page appendix with detailed information on a variety of important Bible questions.\*

\* For a detailed explanation of how to get the most out of the *Reference Bible*, see *The Watchtower* of November 1, 1985, pages 27-30.

11. What example does the Bethel family set in being organized for family study?

12. What are some of the outstanding study features of the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References*?

<sup>13</sup> In the back, the *Reference Bible* has a list of principal "Bible Words Indexed." How can we use that? If you check your copy for the expression "accurate knowledge," you will find ten texts listed. But none of these are in the Hebrew Scriptures. Does that mean that the Hebrew Scriptures do not highlight the need for such knowledge? No. For under the word "knowledge," there are 24 references, including 18 from the Hebrew Scriptures. However, the Hebrew language does not have a special word for "accurate knowledge." So, as you will see from the references, it sometimes highlights the need for more than just general knowledge by linking "knowledge" with words such as "discernment" and "insight" or speaking of knowledge as being "abundant."—Daniel 1:4; 12:4; Jeremiah 3:15.

<sup>14</sup> As we learned in the preceding article, Bible Greek conveyed a subtle difference between the two degrees of knowledge. And as we dig, we want to know more about the difference between these two expressions as they apply to Christians. Why are knowledge, *gno'sis*, and accurate knowledge, *e-pi'gno-sis*, essential for Christians? Where can we find the answer? In the Bible encyclopedia *Insight on the Scriptures*. What a treasure house these volumes are! Look for the heading "Knowledge." There you will find a complete article on the terms we are considering and on the related attributes wisdom, understanding, discernment, and thinking ability. And we have found all this "gold," this information, just by using a few Bible study aids! But there is more.—Psalm 19:9, 10.

13. What interesting facts are presented regarding the use of "knowledge" and "accurate knowledge" in the Hebrew Scriptures and the Greek Scriptures?

14. What interesting highlights are there under "knowledge" in *Insight on the Scriptures*?

<sup>15</sup> If you wanted to pursue a more exhaustive study of "knowledge" and related terms, you could use the Indexes of the Watch Tower Society's publications, which are available in a number of languages. And just as we have traced out the theme of knowledge, you can follow the same procedure for hundreds of other subjects. Imagine the wealth of information under Jehovah's name! What an abundance of accurate knowledge there is about the Sovereign Lord of the universe!—Psalm 68:19, 20; Acts 4:24.

<sup>16</sup> With these and other study aids published by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, what beautiful "hid treasures" we can find! Do you want the "gold"? Do you think it is worthwhile? Will you make the time to dig for it?—Proverbs 2:1-5.

### Who Takes the Lead in Spiritual Mining?

<sup>17</sup> What is the key to obtaining this precious knowledge of God and Christ? Motivation—a yearning to have an approved standing with Jehovah and his Son and a desire to receive the gift of everlasting life. Jesus put it this way: "Keep on asking, and it will be given you; keep on seeking, and you will find; keep on knocking, and it will be opened to you. For everyone asking receives, and everyone seeking finds, and to everyone knocking it will be opened." But notice the condition. Jesus said, 'Keep on asking, seeking, and knocking.' It is not just a onetime thing. The search for knowledge must be persistent.—Matthew 5:6; 7:7, 8.

<sup>18</sup> In a Christian family, who must take

15. What other research tools do we have, and how can they be used?

16. What do the Scriptures say as to searching?

17. What must we do to obtain knowledge of God and Christ?

18. In a family, who should take the lead in seeking accurate knowledge, and why?

the lead in digging for accurate knowledge? Paul answers: "You, fathers, do not be irritating your children, but go on bringing them up in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah." Yes, the parents, especially the father, must take the lead in showing appreciation for spiritual values. And that reminds us again of the need for a regular arrangement that the family can expect and look forward to.

—Ephesians 6:4.

<sup>19</sup> Family study periods can be made interesting. For example, if you have children, why not have them choose a theme and then assign them to do research in different publications according to their age and ability. Then after half an hour or so, come together and see what each one has discovered on the assigned subject. If a concordance is available, a youngster can count how many times a certain word appears in the Hebrew Scriptures and the Greek Scriptures. Perhaps an older one will locate some gems in the *Insight* volumes. Parents know their children's capabilities and their attention span and should build the session around those factors. Be flexible and appreciative. Encourage your family in their spiritual digging—and have the right motive.

### Digging With the Right Motive

<sup>20</sup> Modesty is a Christian virtue. (Proverbs 11:2; 1 Timothy 2:9) Should we, then, be studying in order to boast of what we have learned? Or should we make a public display of our knowledge and perhaps show others up as ignorant? Or should we proclaim our own interpretations or speculations? Paul counseled: "For through the undeserved kindness given to me I tell everyone there among

19. How can family study periods be made interesting? What is your family's experience?  
20. What wrong motive should we avoid in our personal study?

you not to think more of himself than it is necessary to think; but to think so as to have a sound mind, each one as God has distributed to him a measure of faith."

—Romans 12:3.

<sup>21</sup> Earnest effort and the application of accurate knowledge can lead to faith, virtue, self-control, endurance, godly devotion, brotherly affection, and love. Peter showed the importance of these when he wrote: "For if these things exist in you and overflow, they will prevent you from being either inactive or unfruitful regarding the accurate knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."—2 Peter 1:2-8.

<sup>22</sup> Our knowledge should affect the heart. It should move us to show love for God and for neighbor and to become productive Christians in our conduct and ministry. This will result in unity and a fuller understanding of the example of Christ. (Ephesians 4:13) What a fine reward for seeking hidden treasures!

21, 22. How should our accurate knowledge affect us?

### Questions to Ponder

- According to King Solomon, what is more valuable than hidden treasures?
- Why is accurate knowledge vital for the anointed and for the other sheep?
- How can we buy out time for personal study?
- What special tools do we have for digging for accurate knowledge?
- Who should take the lead in family study, and with what motive should we study?

# The best help for knowing the future

By One Who Found the Road to Life

**R**ELIGION played an important part in the life of my family. My father was a Jew, and even though he had converted to Catholicism to marry my mother, he still had great respect for the Bible. Mother came from a family with deeply rooted Catholic traditions—two of her sisters were nuns, a cousin was a monsignor, and two nephews were friars.

During the second world war, the anxieties, fears, and ever-present threat of being deported to a concentration camp for being a Jew brought my father to an early death. Firmly believing in the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, my mother took part in spiritistic séances, trying to get in contact with my father.

When I reached adulthood, traditional religion continued to be part of my life. I remained a "good Catholic." Nevertheless, Catholicism could not explain what the future held for me. Whom could I turn to for help in finding out?

Just as my mother had once done, I also consulted spirit mediums. Since they began every sitting with the sign of the cross and prayers, I was convinced that the strange happenings I witnessed were from God. It was at this time that I, wanting to do something to relieve the sufferings of others, joined a Catholic association that organized trips to the Mar-

ian sanctuary at Lourdes, where the sick hoped for miraculous healings.

I had never heard of Jehovah's Witnesses until the day when my husband accepted two magazines that I found very interesting. What impressed me most was that the Bible was quoted in support of comments in the magazines. At once I realized that these publications would be very useful in acquiring a knowledge of God's Word. I wrote asking for a subscription to both magazines. Jehovah's Witnesses visited me, and I began to study the Bible.

I was very enthusiastic about the Bible truths I was learning and began to speak about them to acquaintances. I was shocked by the reaction of a friend, the one who organized the religious pilgrimages, when I told her I was examining the Bible with the Witnesses. She became very angry and said such bad things about them that I left. Then I had to face opposition from my husband. (Matthew 10:36) At first it was difficult, but the more I put into practice the things I was learning, the more my family life changed for the better. I was baptized in 1977.

I realized that I would never have found the road to life if Jehovah's Witnesses had not shown an interest by trying to help me come to know the Bible's marvelous truths. I knew that I too was under obligation to do all I could to help others come to know about Jehovah and his marvelous purpose for the future. How was I going to do this? The best way was to take up the full-time ministry. Since I lived in a religiously divided household, this was not easy for me. But I trusted in Jehovah's support and guidance and took refuge in him. Now, I am living the happiest years of my life as a regular pioneer. I am more convinced than ever that "Jehovah is good" and that anyone "*that takes refuge in him*" is happy.—Psalm 34:8.

# "Things Building Up Our Expectations"

IT WAS a warm Sunday morning, September 10, when 4,155 gathered in the beautiful Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses in Jersey City, New Jersey, for the graduation exercises of the 87th class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead. In attendance were the 24 students and their invited guests along with members of the Bethel family from Brooklyn and the Society's farms.

The audience was brought to order promptly at 10:00 a.m. by Albert Schroeder, who served as chairman for the day. After an opening song, prayer was offered by John Barr. Both brothers are members of the Governing Body. Brother Schroeder presented a brief profile of the class and remarked that the graduates were "prepared to share in the globalized activity of Jehovah's Witnesses, now in 210 lands." He then proceeded to introduce seven speakers.

Robert Wallen, who works in the Executive Offices at the Brooklyn headquarters, based his theme, "Have Intense Love for One Another," on 1 Peter 4:8. He said that missionaries need to help one another, and since all the students of this class were married, he directed his comments especially to married couples. "A wife must love her husband even though she may learn a foreign language faster than he does," he counseled. "She should be understanding and compassionate. Also, she must try to understand him when he has his weekly cook day!" (Usually, each missionary is assigned a regular day to prepare that day's meals for all living in the missionary home.) Then the speaker

described the frustrations and humorous experiences some husbands have when learning to cook, such as the experience of the husband who used baking soda instead of baking powder. Brother Wallen also pointed out that the husband should "be perceptive of his wife's needs," since so much of the husband's time may be spent taking care of congregation responsibilities. To both husbands and wives, he said: "Always be upbuilding; do not make negative remarks, even to each other. Avoid isolating yourselves. And when you make mistakes, admit them."

The next speaker, Daniel Sydlik, a member of the Governing Body, chose the theme: "Keep Alive the Fire of God's Spirit," based on 1 Thessalonians 5:19. "Fire can both warm and destroy," he said. "Sometimes missionaries encourage and sometimes they intimidate. An old African man once said: 'Blow gently,' as on a spark you are trying to bring to life! When talking about the things you may find in your assignment—open sewers, flies, noisy traffic, a new country, an unfamiliar religion—show respect. You catch more flies with honey than with vinegar. Learn to 'blow gently' and keep alive the fire of Jehovah's spirit."

Then the theme "Bound Into Your Assignment With Enthusiasm and Caution" was developed by Kenneth Flodin, overseer of the Bethel Home at Watchtower Farms. Since Gilead School is now located at Watchtower Farms, all the graduates were well-acquainted with Brother Flodin. Two areas of caution were developed in his talk: (1) materialism and

(2) negative talk and negative thinking. "Avoid selfishness and be selfless" was the counsel. "Look ahead to comforts and nice things in the new world; don't be seeking them now," he said. To help the students avoid negativism, the speaker quoted Numbers 13:28, 32. "Sometimes," he said, "people see the same thing, and some will have a negative view, others a positive view. Like Caleb of old, trust in Jehovah. Tell others your positive thoughts. And if negative talk is encountered, change the subject to avoid negative thoughts."

Lloyd Barry, a member of the Governing Body and himself a former missionary, gave practical advice. "Love, joy, and peace are essential qualities for new missionaries," he said. "You will be cognizant of the weaknesses of others in your missionary home, but focus on your own weaknesses." He recalled his early days in Japan when the missionaries enjoyed fish every day, but then new missionaries arrived who were allergic to fish. So the menu changed out of love for the new ones. He also advised: "Keep your sense of humor; never let the sun set on any problems you are having. Keep peace in the home, and you will be happy in your missionary life."—Ephesians 4:26.

Jack Redford, one of the Gilead instructors, then spoke on the subject: "Jehovah Will Finish Your Training," basing his remarks on 1 Peter 5:10. He said: "Jehovah can train you by permitting situations to arise that are difficult to handle. As he trained the apostles to handle personality conflicts, he will train you. Do not despair when there are differences of opinion. Be ready to adjust your personality. Pride makes this difficult, but humility makes it possible. Learn to be flexible. Jehovah will also train you to get along with others. Just 'do not give your

heart to all the words that people may speak' about you." (Ecclesiastes 7:21, 22) Persecution also serves as training. Missionaries who have endured persecution are happy and have no regrets, only joy at having been trained by the persecution.

Ulysses Glass, another instructor, then gave his final words to the graduates. He focused on Ephesians 4:1-3, commanding the class for demonstrating the uniting qualities described therein and encouraging them to continue to do so, saying: "Peace is a bonding agent, and it is necessary for unity." He then continued with Ephesians 4:4-6 and reviewed the awesomeness of God's spirit, reminding all that "Jehovah is the Source of all dynamic energy. We should stand in awe of him; it is a fearful thing to fall into his hands." —Hebrews 10:31.

### High Expectations

Then all listened with keen interest to Theodore Jaracz, a member of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses, who spoke on the featured theme: "Things Building Up Our Expectations." Reasoning on 1 Corinthians 2:9, he said: "This verse is not talking about things of a material kind, for the next verse, 1 Corinthians 2:10, speaks of 'the deep things of God.' This involved 'God's wisdom' in relation to the 'sacred secret,' his 'hidden wisdom' that had come from beyond this solar system, yes, from God himself." (1 Corinthians 2:7) The audience was then referred to Isaiah 64:4, which was a reminder to 'keep in expectation' of God and of the things that he has prepared.

What expectations God's people really have! Brother Jaracz pointed out the following: "In 1919 there was the fall of Babylon the Great; in 1922 the thrilling



### 87th Graduating Class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead

In the list below, rows are numbered from front to back, and names are listed from left to right in each row.  
(1) Heindel, E.; Andrews, D.; Casavant, D.; Montanez, E.; Nale, P.; Koukaras, S. (2) Miell, T.; Heithaus, M.; Melton, T.; Hagberg, N.; Kettinen, M. (3) Kettinen, L.; Andrews, W.; Koukaras, E.; McCollough, S.; Melton, G.; McCollough, J. (4) Heindel, W.; Casavant, G.; Miell, G.; Montanez, J.; Nale, M.; Hagberg, I.; Heithaus, K.

exhortation to 'advertise the King and the Kingdom,' to preach the established Kingdom worldwide; in 1935 God's people learned the significance of the 'great crowd' at Revelation 7:9; in 1943 they saw Gilead School begin sending out missionaries to the ends of the earth; today, in 1989, you graduates have the privilege of telling good things to people in your assignments who are eager to hear."

After the diplomas were awarded, one of the students read a heart-touching letter of appreciation from the class.

In the afternoon, Lon Schilling, coordinator of the Watchtower Farms Committee, conducted an abbreviated *Watchtower Study*. Then the students presented a delightful musical program and enacted

### CLASS STATISTICS

Number of countries represented: 5  
Number of countries assigned to: 10  
Number of married couples: 12  
Total number of students: 24  
Average age: 30.9  
Average years in truth: 13.4  
Average years in full-time ministry: 9.2

some of their field service experiences. Following this, local publishers presented a timely drama entitled: "Coping With Satan's Crafty Acts." Finally, after listening to interviews of six of the new graduates, the happy throng sang a closing song and were delighted to join in prayer with the 96-year-old president of Gilead School, Frederick Franz.

# "A TEST OF THE GENUINENESS OF YOUR LOVE"

**W**HAT do the above words bring to your mind? Persecution and hardship? Martyrdom? Those words were originally penned by the apostle Paul in a letter to Christians in ancient Corinth. They are of great importance to Jehovah's people today in that the 'genuineness of their love' is being similarly tested. But how? In answer, let us examine the setting of Paul's words.

## The Basis for the Test

Some two decades after the founding of Christianity, the congregation in Jerusalem was in dire financial straits. Dwelling in that stronghold of Jewish opposition and prejudice, Christians had over the years "endured a great contest under sufferings," even experiencing a 'plundering of their belongings.' (Hebrews 10:32-34) Outside help had become imperative.

Certainly, their Gentile brothers should have been moved to respond to their plight. After all, they owed a special "debt" to the Christians in Jerusalem. Was it not from Jerusalem that the good news had spread to the Gentiles? Paul reckoned: "If the Jewish Christians shared their spiritual treasures with the Gentiles, the Gentiles have a clear duty to contribute to their material needs."—Romans 15:27, *The New English Bible*.

## Organizing the Collection

Paul had been directed by the governing body to "keep the poor [Christians] in mind." (Galatians 2:10) So he sent word to Christians in Europe and Asia Minor regarding the situation in Jerusalem. Here

are Paul's instructions: "Now concerning the collection that is for the holy ones, just as I gave orders to the congregations of Galatia, do that way also yourselves. Every first day of the week let each of you at his own house set something aside in store as he may be prospering, so that when I arrive collections will not take place then."—1 Corinthians 16:1, 2.

By budgeting their money in this way, no one would feel compelled or pressured when the collection was actually taken up. The brothers did not have any fear that their money would be misappropriated or wasted. Only 'approved men' would be allowed to deliver the collected funds, Paul accompanying them himself if deemed necessary.—1 Corinthians 16:3-5.

The Corinthians' response? Though the brothers apparently reacted favorably to Paul's admonition, the collection was never sent. (2 Corinthians 8:6, 10, 11) Perhaps the elders became preoccupied with ridding the congregation of dissension, immorality, and other problems Paul had written them about.

## 'Abound in Kind Giving'

At any rate, Paul wrote them another letter saying: "Now we let you know, brothers, about the undeserved kindness of God that has been bestowed upon the congregations of Macedonia, that during a great test under affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty made the riches of their generosity abound. For according to their actual ability, yes, I testify, beyond their actual ability this was, while they of their own accord kept beg-

ging us with much entreaty for the privilege of kindly giving and for a share in the ministry destined for the holy ones. And not merely as we had hoped, but first they gave themselves to the Lord and to us through God's will. This led us to encourage Titus that, just as he had been the one to initiate it among you, so too he should complete this same kind giving on your part. Nevertheless, just as you are abounding in everything, in faith and word and knowledge and all earnestness and in this love of ours to you, may you also abound in this kind giving."—2 Corinthians 8:1-7.

The example of the self-sacrificing Macedonians gave the Corinthians much food for thought. Corinth was proverbial for its wealth, luxury, and commerce. Some of the brothers there may have been relatively poor, yet, as a whole, the congregation no doubt was better off than the Macedonian Christians who were in "deep poverty." Yet, the Macedonians had contributed "beyond their actual ability." They had needed no prompting from Paul to contribute. Why they 'begged' Paul 'with entreaty' to have a share in this contribution! This was evidence that the Macedonian Christians truly "gave themselves to the Lord [in unreserved dedication] and to [Paul and his companions]," submitting to their theocratic direction.

#### Tested as to Their Love and Generosity

Would the Corinthians likewise be moved to 'abound in kind giving'? When first visiting Corinth, Paul had been forced to support himself as a tentmaker. (Acts 18:1-3) He continued this policy of self-support even as a congregation developed there, refraining from using his "authority" as a full-time evangelizer to receive financial support.—1 Corinthians 9:3-12.

Says Bible commentator Thomas Scott: "Probably, he had witnessed some things in the disposition of the Corinthian Christians, which first induced him to decline receiving any support from them." Perhaps influenced by the selfish materialism surrounding them, the relatively affluent Corinthians may simply have been disinclined to be generous. Paul may also have feared that the commerce-minded Corinthians would question his motive if he accepted financial support. There might even have been those who, like some in Thessalonica, were lazy and wanted an excuse to live off their fellow Christians.—2 Thessalonians 3:7-12.

Whatever the case, Paul and his companions chose to support themselves, "in order that we might not offer any hindrance to the good news about the Christ." (1 Corinthians 9:12) In time, though, Paul fell into financial straits, word of which reached the poor brothers living in Philippi. Paul told the Corinthians: "Other congregations I robbed by accepting provisions in order to minister to you; and yet when I was present with you and I fell in need, I did not become a burden to a single one, for the brothers that came from Macedonia [apparently Philippi] abundantly supplied my deficiency. Yes, in every way I kept myself unburdensome to you and will keep myself so."—2 Corinthians 11:8, 9; compare Philippians 4:15, 16.

True, Paul himself admitted that he would not 'accept provisions' from the Corinthians. But when Paul had tried to turn down the hospitality of the Philippian woman Lydia, 'she just made them come.' (Acts 16:15) Did the Corinthians show the same persistent concern for Paul's material welfare? One wonders. At any rate, Paul discerned that the situation involving the Jerusalem congregation presented an opportunity to test whether the Corinthians had a tendency to be

## HOW SOME CONTRIBUTE TO THE KINGDOM WORK

□ **GIFTS:** Voluntary donations of money may be sent directly to the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, New York 11201, or to the Society's local branch office. Property such as real estate, as well as jewelry or other valuables, can also be donated. A brief letter stating that such is an outright donation should accompany these contributions.

□ **CONDITIONAL-DONATION ARRANGEMENT:**

Money may be given to the Watch Tower Society to be held in trust, with the provision that in case of personal need, it will be returned to the donor.

□ **INSURANCE:** The Watch Tower Society may be named as the beneficiary of a life-insurance policy or in a retirement/pension plan. The Society should be informed of any such arrangements.

□ **TRUSTS:** Bank savings accounts can be placed *in trust* for the Society. If this is done, please inform the Society. Stocks, bonds, and property can also be donated under an arrangement to benefit the donor during his or her lifetime. This method eliminates the expense and uncertainties of probate of will, while ensuring that the Society receives the property in the event of death.

□ **WILLS:** Property or money may be bequeathed to the Watch Tower Society by means of a legally executed will. A copy should be sent to the Society.

For more information and advice regarding such matters, write to the **Treasurer's Office, Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, New York 11201**, or to the Society's local branch office.

closefisted or whether they had grown in generosity. He thus exhorted:

"It is not in the way of commanding you, but . . . to make a test of the genuineness of your love, that I am speaking. For I do not mean for it to be easy for others, but hard on you [that is, not that others would be relieved and you would suffer]; but that by means of an equalizing your surplus just now might offset their deficiency, in order that their surplus might also come to offset your deficiency, that an equalizing might take place. Just as it is written: 'The person with much did not have too much, and the person with little did not have too little.'" —2 Corinthians 8:8, 13-15.

Evidently, the Corinthians passed their test. Some time later Paul reported:

"Those in Macedonia and Achaia [where Corinth was situated] have been pleased to share up their things by a contribution to the poor of the holy ones in Jerusalem." —Romans 15:26.

### Meeting the Test Today

Are we, however, passing tests of love and generosity that present themselves today? We are living in "critical times hard to deal with." (2 Timothy 3:1-5) Financial pressures weigh upon many of us. And at times "the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the showy display of one's means of life" create their own pressures. (1 John 2:16) How easy it is to become self-centered, insensitive to the needs of others!

On the whole, Jehovah's Witnesses today have met tests of their brotherly love

in an outstanding way. For example, on March 3, 1985, an earthquake struck Santiago, Chile. Hundreds of brothers lost their homes and possessions. Immediately, congregations organized relief efforts. "Within hours," report the brothers, "some began arriving with food, clothing, blankets and other useful items." Contributions also came in from around the world. Similar events have occurred numerous times over the years.

But we need not wait for disaster to prove our brotherly love. If a fellow Christian suffers a financial hardship, we can be sensitive to his needs, doing more than saying, "Keep warm and well fed." (James 2:15, 16) And what of those in full-time service who "live by means of the good news." Like Paul, such ones neither demand nor expect financial assistance from those whom they serve. Nevertheless, many have been moved to show generosity toward those who labor to 'sow spiritual things' in their behalf.—1 Corinthians 9:11, 14.

And what of the needs of the worldwide organization of Jehovah's Witnesses? The 1989 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses reports that "during the 1988 service year the Watch Tower Society spent \$29,834,676.97 in caring for special pioneers, missionaries, and traveling overseers in their field service assignments." Great expenses

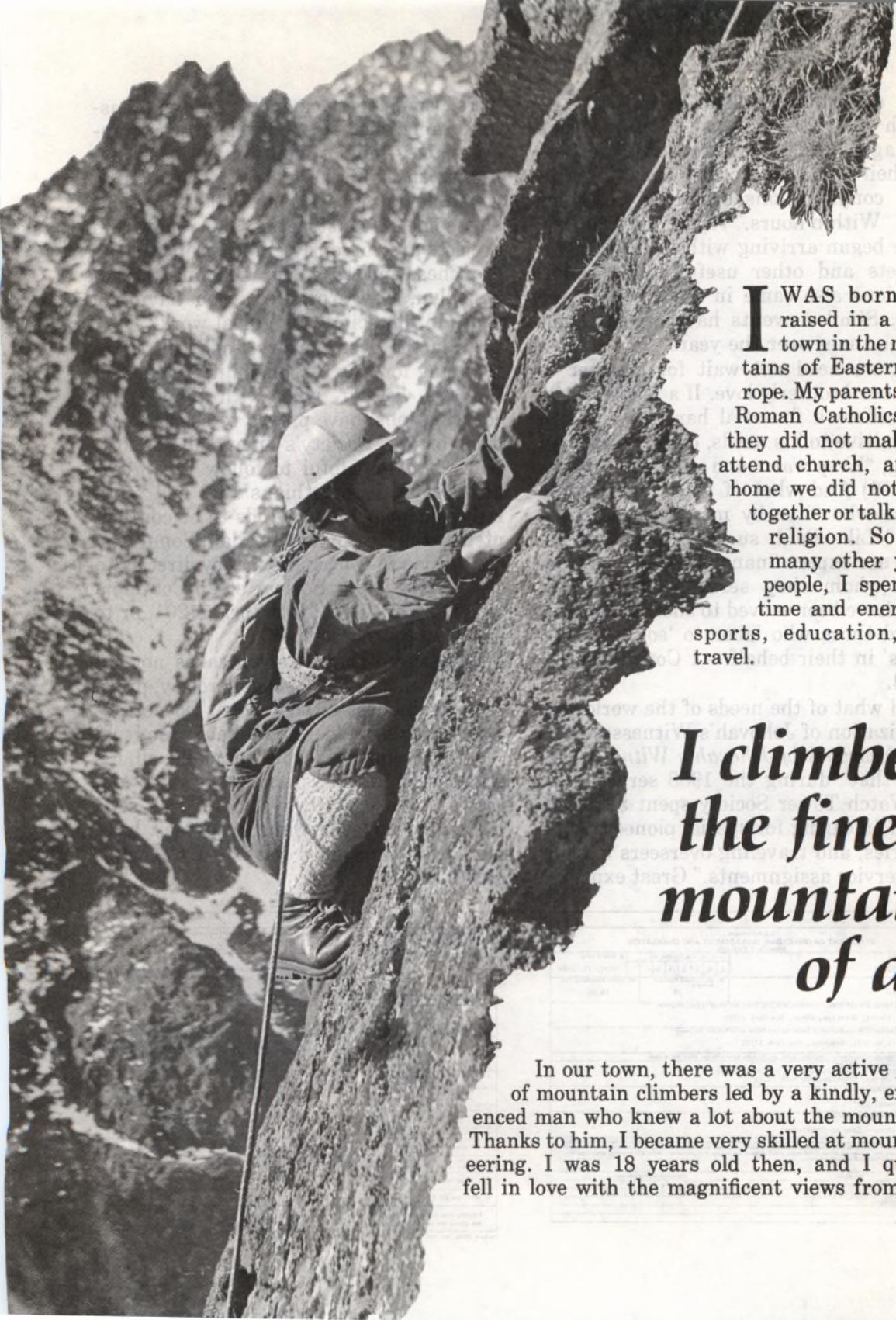
were also incurred caring for and purchasing branch facilities, equipment, machinery, paper—not to mention the basic living expenses of the global Bethel family, which now numbers over 9,000! Additionally, some 18 construction and renovation projects are currently going on in various branches, and 19 at our headquarters in Brooklyn, New York. Are you having a share in financing this global work?

As in the first century, today all share in caring for this responsibility, including the less well-off, who, with their small contributions, have proved to be the backbone of the Society's financial support. Some find it helpful to follow the precedent set at 1 Corinthians 16:2 and regularly budget personal funds to be contributed at the local Kingdom Hall. Some may also decide to contribute money directly to the Watch Tower Society at 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, New York 11201, or to one of its branch offices.

Be assured that Jehovah takes note of those who, through their generosity, prove the genuineness of their love. Do not deprive yourself of blessings! Paul promised: "God, moreover, is able to make all his undeserved kindness abound toward you, that, while you always have full self-sufficiency in everything, you may have plenty for every good work."—2 Corinthians 9:8.

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I WAS born and raised in a small town in the mountains of Eastern Europe. My parents were Roman Catholics, but they did not make me attend church, and at home we did not pray together or talk about religion. So, like many other young people, I spent my time and energy in sports, education, and travel.

## *I climbed the finest mountain of all*

In our town, there was a very active group of mountain climbers led by a kindly, experienced man who knew a lot about the mountains. Thanks to him, I became very skilled at mountaineering. I was 18 years old then, and I quickly fell in love with the magnificent views from high

peaks, the excitement of facing up to and surviving dangerous situations, and the friendships with others who shared such dangers.

I remember one occasion after I had been in the group for five years. I was climbing on a mountain where the terrain was easy, and I relaxed my concentration just at the moment when I was reaching the summit. As I neared the top of a rock-mass, it started to come loose. All I could do was jump aside and shout a warning to my fellow climber. A falling rock cut the rope that linked us together, and I fell. Happily, my fall was arrested by a small grass plateau just 12 feet below. However, things do not always turn out so well in this sport!

At 24 years of age, I graduated from university and assumed the leadership of the small group of mountaineers in my hometown. After a while, we got together some money to buy a minibus so that we could get ourselves and our equipment to more distant mountains. But the vehicle was in bad condition, and I spent three months, day and night, fixing it up. When it was ready, all of us looked around for dangerous jobs that paid well, such as high work in construction, and in this way we eventually collected enough money to make a trip to Iran. There, in 1974, we climbed an 18,900-foot-high volcano named Damavand. While the climb started quite easily, toward the top we had to endure deep snow, shortage of breath because of altitude, and noxious fumes from volcanic vents.

On the way back home in the minibus, we planned an ascent of Mount Ararat but had to cancel it because of political tensions. In 1975 we went skiing in the Austrian Alps, and at the same time, we founded a nationwide photographic competition that we named "Men and Mountains." This competition is still run each

year. All of us had the feeling that our lives were full and satisfying.

### Disenchantment

However, when I got to be about 30, I began to get bored with mountaineering and wondered: 'Is this really all there is to life?' Some told me to get married, but I had friends who were married, and they did not seem very happy. Even couples whose relationship was forged in the danger and excitement of mountaineering seemed to lose their happiness in the reality of day-to-day living. I did not know why their marriages were not happy, but much as I would have liked to be married myself, I did not want to be unhappy like them.

Additionally, I noticed a change in the young people who went mountaineering. Before, there had always been a spirit of discipline, cooperation, and friendship in Alpine mountaineering camps. Now, young and inexperienced boys were undisciplined and not content to make progress gradually. They wanted to show off and take on climbs that were far too difficult and dangerous for them. Feeling more and more disenchanted, I had long, deep discussions with my friend Bonjo. He finally suggested that I speak with a fellow mountaineer, Henry.

Henry lent me a book, *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*, and upon reading it, I was astonished to see how it discussed questions that I had been wondering about in my heart. It turned out that Henry was studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses, so I asked if I could join in. He agreed, and for two years I engaged in an intensive study of the Bible and of any Bible literature I could get my hands on.

### Bible Study

As my knowledge deepened, I felt an increasing joy. I was only superficially acquainted with the Roman Catholic

religion, but I was astonished to see that the Christianity of the Bible did not rely on ceremonies, traditions, and unreasoning emotions. Rather, it involved high moral principles that affected every aspect of the Christian's life. Additionally, I was astounded to see that the Bible is very logical and does not contradict scientific theories that are solidly proved.

The Witness who led the discussions with Henry and me did not force us to change our opinions and our way of life. All he did was explain clearly what the Bible says. Hence, I kept up mountaineering for those first two years of study. But as my knowledge deepened, I came to realize that for me mountaineering was like an addiction. The accident with the falling rock also reminded me of Jesus' words to Satan when Satan challenged him to hurl himself off the battlement of the temple: "You must not put Jehovah your God to the test." (Matthew 4:5-7) I realized that this activity showed disrespect for the life that Jehovah had given me.

I therefore handed responsibility for our group of mountaineers over to another experienced climber and found that it was not difficult to cross over from mountaineering to Christianity. As I gave away or sold all my equipment—skis, climbing irons, carabiners, hammers, hooked nails, and ice ax—I can honestly say, in the apostle Paul's words, that to me they were now just "a lot of refuse." (Philippians 3:8) A feeling of deep contentment came over me as I was able to join in the grand work of praising God's name in public. In 1977 both Henry and I symbolized our dedication to Jehovah by water baptism.

### **Witnessing to Others**

At that time, there were about 15 members of the mountaineering group in our town, and gradually Henry and I witnessed to all of them. What a joy it was when my brother, who was also a member,

together with his wife, began to study the Bible and was baptized in 1981. Some time later, Bonjo joined us, as well as one other, the fifth of the mountaineers' club. We did not have to climb high mountains anymore. Our greatest pleasure was to visit people in the valley who appreciated Bible truth. This change was also received with great relief by my mother, who had been very nervous about the climbing activities of my brother and me. Eventually, she too joined us in the clean worship of Jehovah.

Now my desire to get married had lost its urgency. Thanks to God's Word, I knew the principles that would help me make a success of marriage, but now I was happy being single and serving Jehovah without distraction. Solomon declared: "A discreet wife is from Jehovah." (Proverbs 18:22; 19:14) Therefore, I decided to wait patiently for Jehovah to give me this gift, meantime living in such a way that I would be a worthy husband when it happened. It was in 1982 that Jehovah gave me the wonderful blessing of a fine wife.

My wife and I still live in the mountains, and I still love them. But our main concern now is to help people to climb another mountain. Which mountain is that? The one mentioned in the prophecy of Isaiah: "It must occur in the final part of the days that the mountain of the house of Jehovah will become firmly established above the top of the mountains, and it will certainly be lifted up above the hills; and to it all the nations must stream. And many peoples will certainly go and say: 'Come, you people, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will instruct us about his ways, and we will walk in his paths.' For out of Zion law will go forth, and the word of Jehovah out of Jerusalem." (Isaiah 2:2, 3) What a joy to have been able to ascend this, the finest mountain of all! —Contributed.

# Questions From Readers

■ In view of the new information about unbaptized ones starting out in the public ministry, may a Bible student be invited along for a while to see how the work is done?

Basically, unbaptized ones who accompany Jehovah's Witnesses in the field ministry are persons who have qualified as publishers of the good news.

Many of the public respect Jehovah's Witnesses for their unique and fine work of 'making disciples, teaching them' from door to door and through home Bible studies. (Matthew 28: 19, 20) What, then, would the public conclude about a person accompanying a Witness in this ministry? They reasonably would conclude that the companion also is a minister or very close to being such.

Granted, a few exceptions might come to mind.

On rare occasions appropriate elders have permitted a news reporter, college professor, or the like to accompany a Witness in the house-to-house ministry so as to see how it is done. Of course, the person's appearance and actions on such occasions should not conflict with our standards. And the Witness might want to mention to householders that the companion is a reporter or a professor who is interested in observing how we do our important Bible work.

Also, Christian parents bring their children with them in the ministry even if these are too young or otherwise not ready to become unbaptized publishers. These parents thus do not leave their children unattended. Having them along in the field service allows the parents to speak

to their children about God's Word and ways as they "walk on the road." (Deuteronomy 6:4-7) But this is an aspect of Christian family life, not a matter of a Witness bringing another person along as a mere observer. Of course, such parental training prepares the children for the time when they will praise Jehovah as publishers.—Matthew 21:15, 16; compare *Organized to Accomplish Our Ministry*, pages 99, 100.

What, though, about a person with whom a Witness is conducting a Bible study, a person who is on the way to becoming a disciple? He has good reason to tell relatives, workmates, neighbors, and others about "the magnificent things of God" that he has learned from the Scriptures. (Acts 2:11) Hopefully, there will come a point when he sees the need to share with Jehovah's Witnesses in organized arrangements for "publishing the word of God."—Acts 13:5.

The Watchtower recently outlined appropriate steps before such a student joins with local Witnesses in the ministry, becoming an unbaptized publisher. It is only logical that he should have a basic knowledge of the Bible, should understand and be in harmony with God's moral standards, and should personally desire to participate in the public ministry with Jehovah's Witnesses. So two congregation elders can have a helpful and encouraging discussion of

such points with him and the Witness who is studying the Bible with him.\* This should be done before the Bible student is invited to accompany the publisher in the field ministry to receive progressive training.

Understandably, when a student qualifies to go out in the field ministry and then first does so, he may for a few times want to go along with the publisher to learn how the preaching work is actually done. The minister with him may provide some gradual training, such as asking him to assist for a while by reading scriptures, then in time have him take the lead in witnessing to a householder. Thus, he can turn in his first field service report when he actually shares in field witnessing. His progressively having an increased share in the work accords with Jesus' words: "A pupil is not above his teacher, but everyone that is perfectly instructed will be like his teacher."—Luke 6:40.

\* For details, see *The Watchtower* of November 15, 1988, page 17.

## In Our Next Issue

■ Peace—Will It Come  
by Disarmament?

■ Jehovah Is My Helper

■ "St. Nicholas Day"  
—Where Did It Come From?

# 'Helped Our Daughters to Be Closer'

Writing to the Watch Tower Society branch office last year, a schoolteacher in Murewa, Zimbabwe, said that this is what *My Book of Bible Stories* accomplished. She received the publication from a fellow teacher and reported:

"I followed his advice on how to get the best out of that book, first with my youngest 8-year-old daughter and then with two others, aged 16 and 18, who were at a local Boarding Secondary School. I have great pleasure to let you know that the response from all three of my daughters has indeed been very encouraging. Their moral behaviour has since been noticeably changing for the better." The mother added: "The book has successfully helped our daughters to be closer to us, their parents, than ever before."



## Our Next Issues

- October—My Helper
- November—How to Help Others
- December—My Family
- January—My Choices
- February—My Helper

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***My Book  
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