

DECEMBER 15, 2015

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



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PARAGUAY

COVER: A special pioneer happily shares the good news with a mother and her young ones. Spanish and Guaraní are the official languages of the country, and the truth is being spread in both

POPULATION

6,800,236

PUBLISHERS

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STUDY ARTICLES

- **Jehovah, the God of Communication**
- **A Living Translation of God's Word**

For thousands of years, Jehovah has communicated with his servants in various languages. These articles show that his use of different languages has not hindered his communication with man. We will also see how the *New World Translation*, including the 2013 revision, has been a powerful tool to sanctify God's name and to make his will known.

- **Use the Power of Your Tongue for Good**

The ability to speak is a marvelous gift from God. This article discusses three aspects of our speech. It also encourages us to imitate Jesus' example in using this powerful gift to honor God and benefit others.

- **Jehovah Will Sustain You**

We all experience sickness; hence, how should we view healings recorded in the Bible? What should we consider when others make health recommendations? This article will help us to answer these questions and to make personal choices.

THE **WATCHTOWER**[®]
ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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Have you carefully read the recent issues of *The Watchtower*? Well, see if you can answer the following questions:

When the end comes, what are some things that will end?

Some of what will end are failing human governments, war and injustice, religions that have failed both God and men, and ungodly people.—5/1, pp. 3-5.

Who is Gog of Magog mentioned in the book of Ezekiel?

Rather than referring to Satan, it appears that Gog of Magog refers to a coalition of nations that will try to wipe out God's people after the great tribulation begins.—5/15, pp. 29-30.

What are six things that can help someone to age gracefully?

The Bible recommends that we be (1) modest, (2) balanced, (3) positive, (4) generous, (5) friendly, and (6) thankful. Reflecting those qualities can help one to age gracefully.—6/1, pp. 8-10.

How do Jesus' miracles illustrate his generosity?

At a wedding in Cana, Jesus turned some 100 gallons (380 L) of water into wine. Another time he miraculously fed over 5,000 people. (Matt. 14:14-21; John 2: 6-11) Both times, he was imitating his Father's generosity.—6/15, pp. 4-5.

Why can we, though imperfect, be sure that we can please God?

Such men as Job, Lot, and David made mistakes. Yet, they wanted to serve God, were sorry for their errors, and changed their ways. They gained God's approval, and we can too.—7/1, pp. 12-13.

Will the destruction of Babylon the Great result in the death of all the former members of false religions?

It does not seem so. Zechariah 13:4-6 suggests that even some clergymen will abandon their religious course and claim that they were not part of a false religion.—7/15, pp. 15-16.

Why did Barak agree to fight only if Deborah went with him?

Barak was a man of faith. Rather than ask Jehovah for more weapons, he wanted to have God's representative—Deborah—there to strengthen him and his men. (Judg. 4:6-8; 5:7) —8/1, p. 13.

What are some things that a Christian can meditate on?

Some of the things are Jehovah's creative works, the value of his inspired Word, our privilege of prayer, and his loving provision of the ransom.—8/15, pp. 10-13.

How does avoiding bad associations have a bearing on dating?

We are not unkind to unbelievers. Yet, it would be contrary to God's direction to date someone who is not dedicated to him and faithful to his standards. (1 Cor. 15:33)—8/15, p. 25.

How did Peter fail but then regain his faith?

In faith the apostle Peter walked on water toward Jesus. (Matt. 14:24-32) But on looking at the storm, Peter became afraid. Then he refocused on Jesus and accepted his help.—9/15, pp. 16-17.

Acts 28:4 says that the people of Malta thought that the apostle Paul was a murderer. Why would they think that?

When a viper bit Paul, they may wrongly have concluded that Dike, the goddess of justice, was punishing him.—10/1, p. 9.

What lesson is there in Martha's being distracted with many duties?

Once, Martha was distracted with the preparation of a large meal. Jesus said that her sister had chosen the better portion in listening to his teaching. We need to take care that nonessentials do not interfere with our spiritual activities.—10/15, pp. 18-20.



Jehovah, the God of Communication

“Please listen, and I will speak.”—JOB 42:4.

SONGS: 113, 114

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

Why does God simplify how he expresses his thoughts to humans?

Why has the use of different human languages not hindered God's communication with man?

What was the goal of Jehovah's organization in connection with the *New World Translation*?

THE eternal God created intelligent beings with whom to share life and happiness. (Ps. 36:9; 1 Tim. 1:11) The apostle John referred to God's first companion as “the Word” and “the beginning of the creation by God.” (John 1:1; Rev. 3:14) Jehovah God communicated his thoughts and feelings to this firstborn Son. (John 1:14, 17; Col. 1:15) The apostle Paul speaks of ‘the tongues of angels,’ a heavenly form of communication superior to human language.—1 Cor. 13:1.

² Jehovah has intimate knowledge of billions of intelligent creatures, earthly and heavenly. At any given moment, countless individuals may be praying to him in many languages. Not only does he listen to those prayers but he simultaneously gives direction to and communicates with heavenly beings. To accomplish this, his thoughts, language, and communication must be vastly superior to those of humans. **(Read Isaiah 55: 8, 9.)** Clearly, when Jehovah communicates with humans, he simplifies how he expresses his thoughts so that man can understand them.

³ We will now consider how this all-wise God has taken steps

1-3. (a) Why are God's language and communication superior to those of man? (b) What will we consider in this article?

to ensure clear communication with his people throughout history. We will also see how he adapts the means of communication according to the need and circumstances.

GOD'S WORD TO HUMANS

⁴ Jehovah communicated with Adam in the garden of Eden, using human language. God likely did so in an ancient form of Hebrew. He later made his thoughts known to Hebrew-speaking Bible writers, such as Moses, Samuel, and David, and they expressed these thoughts in their own words and style. Besides recording direct statements from God, they told of his dealings with his people, including accounts of their faith and love as well as those that revealed their failings and unfaithfulness. All this information is of great value today.—Rom. 15:4.

⁵ As circumstances changed, God did not restrict his communication with humans to Hebrew. After the Babylonian exile, Aramaic became the everyday language of some of God's people. Perhaps to indicate what was to come, Jehovah inspired the prophets Daniel and Jeremiah and the priest Ezra to record portions of their Bible books in Aramaic.—See the footnotes to Ezra 4:8; 7:12; Jeremiah 10:11; and Daniel 2:4.

⁶ Alexander the Great later conquered much of the ancient world, and common, or Koine, Greek became an international language. Many Jews be-

gan to speak that language, leading to the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek. This translation, thought to have been done by 72 translators, became known as the *Septuagint*. It was the first translation of the Bible and one of the most important.* The work of so many translators resulted in varied translation styles, from literal to rather free. Nevertheless, the *Septuagint* was viewed as God's Word by Greek-speaking Jews and later by Christians.

⁷ When God's firstborn came to earth, he likely spoke and taught in what the Bible calls Hebrew. (John 19:20; 20:16; Acts 26:14) First-century Hebrew was evidently influenced by Aramaic, so Jesus may have used some Aramaic expressions. However, he also knew the ancient Hebrew of Moses and the prophets, which was read each week in the synagogues. (Luke 4:17-19; 24:44, 45; Acts 15:21) In addition, Greek and Latin were spoken in Israel. The Scriptures are silent about whether Jesus also spoke those languages.

⁸ Jesus' early followers knew Hebrew, but after his death, his disciples spoke other languages. (**Read Acts 6:1.**) As Christianity spread, much communication among Christians was in Greek. In fact, the Gospels of Matthew, Mark,

* *Septuagint* means "Seventy." Translation reportedly began in Egypt in the third century B.C.E. and may have been finished by 150 B.C.E. This translation is still important, as it gives scholars insight into the meaning of certain obscure Hebrew words and passages.

4. (a) What language did Jehovah use to communicate with Moses, Samuel, and David? (b) What does the Bible contain?

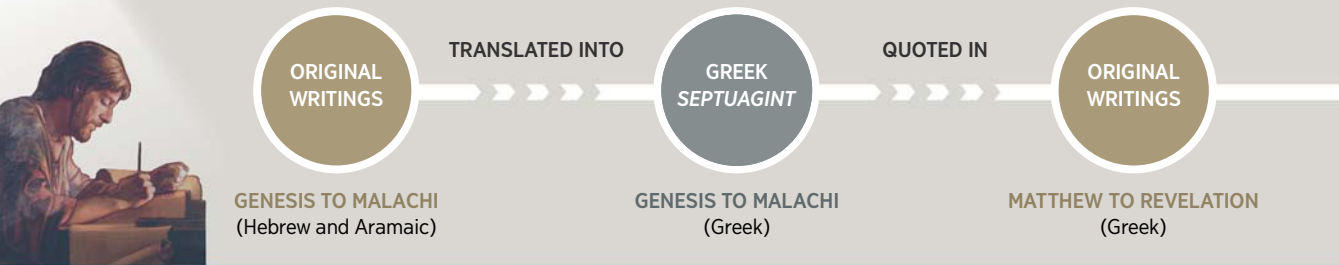
5. Did Jehovah insist that his people use only Hebrew? Explain.

6. How did God's Word become available in languages other than Hebrew?

7. What language did Jesus likely use to teach his disciples?

8, 9. As Christianity spread, why was Greek the primary language used among God's people, and what does this indicate about Jehovah?

COMMUNICATION AND TRANSLATION OF GOD'S WORD



Luke, and John, which contain inspired records of what Jesus taught and did, were widely distributed in Greek. Thus, the language of many disciples was Greek rather than Hebrew.* The letters of the apostle Paul and the other inspired books were also distributed in Greek.

⁹ It is noteworthy that when writers of the Christian Greek Scriptures quoted from the Hebrew Scriptures, they usually did so from the *Septuagint*. These quotations, which at times vary somewhat from the exact Hebrew wording, are now part of the inspired Scriptures. Thus, the work of imperfect human translators became part of the inspired Word of God, a God who does not favor one culture or language over another.—**Read Acts 10:34.**

¹⁰ Our brief review of God's communication with humans teaches us that Jehovah communicates according to need and circumstances. He does not insist that we learn a specific language in order for us to get to know him or his purposes. (**Read Zechariah 8:23; Revelation 7:9, 10.**) Jehovah directed the inspira-

* Some feel that Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew and that it was then translated into Greek, perhaps by Matthew himself.

10. What can we conclude about Jehovah's making his Word available to people?

tion of the Bible, but he allowed it to be presented in different styles.

PRESERVATION OF GOD'S MESSAGE

¹¹ Has God's communication with humans been hindered by the use of different languages and minor variations in translation? No. For example, we may be aware of only a few of the original-language words that Jesus used. (Matt. 27:46; Mark 5:41; 7:34; 14:36) However, Jehovah made sure that Jesus' message was transmitted in Greek and, in time, in other languages. Later, Bible manuscripts were copied again and again by Jews and Christians, preserving the holy writings. These were translated into many more languages. John Chrysostom of the fourth/fifth century C.E. said that by his day, Jesus' teachings had been translated into the languages of the Syrians, Egyptians, Indians, Persians, Ethiopians, and innumerable other peoples.

¹² Producing the Bible in many languages thwarted the efforts of such men as Roman Emperor Diocletian, who in 303 C.E. ordered that all copies of the Scriptures be destroyed. There were countless attacks on God's Word and on those who translated and distributed it.

11. Why have language differences not hindered God's communication with people?

12. How was the transmission of the Bible opposed?

→ TRANSLATED
INTO MANY
LANGUAGES



Old Latin
Latin Vulgate



ENGLISH VERSIONS
Tyndale
King James



*New World
Translation*
Revised
Edition 2013

NOW AVAILABLE
IN OVER

2,800
Languages



In the 16th century, William Tyndale set out to translate the Bible from Hebrew and Greek into English, declaring to a well-educated man: “If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plough shall know more of the Scripture than thou doest.” Tyndale had to flee from England to the European continent to translate and print his translation. Despite a campaign by the clergy to burn publicly all the Bibles that they could find, copies began to circulate in great numbers. Eventually, Tyndale was betrayed and was strangled and burned at the stake, but his Bible translation lived on. It was consulted extensively in the preparation of the widely distributed King James version of the Bible.—**Read 2 Timothy 2:9.**

¹³ Granted, some surviving ancient copies of the Bible contain minor mistakes and discrepancies. However, thousands of fragments, manuscripts, and ancient translations have been compared and painstakingly studied by Bible scholars. This study validated the contents of the vast majority of Bible passages. The few verses about which there is a degree of uncertainty do not change the overall message. A study of ancient manuscripts convinces sincere Bible students that they have what Jehovah origi-

13. What has the study of ancient manuscripts shown?

inally inspired Bible writers to record.—Isa. 40:8.*

¹⁴ Despite fierce opposition from enemies, Jehovah has seen to it that his Word is the most widely translated book in the history of mankind. Even at a time when many have little or no faith in God, the Bible remains a best seller and is now available, in whole or in part, in over 2,800 languages. No other work comes close to the Bible in breadth of distribution and availability. Some Bible translations are not as clear or as reliable as others. Still, it is possible to learn the Bible’s basic message of hope and salvation from nearly all translations.

NEED FOR A NEW BIBLE TRANSLATION

¹⁵ When early in the last century a small group of diligent Bible students was appointed as “the faithful and discreet slave,” much of their communication with the “domestics” was in English. (Matt. 24:45) That “slave” has put forth great effort to make spiritual food available in more and more languages;

* See Appendix A3 in the revised *New World Translation*; also *A Book for All People*, pp. 7-9, “How Did the Book Survive?”

14. To what extent has the Bible’s message become available?

15. (a) How have present-day language barriers been overcome? (b) How has English proved to be a practical language for the dispensing of spiritual food?

the number has now risen to over 700. Like Koine Greek in the first century, English has been a practical base language for translation because it is widely used as a language of commerce and education.

¹⁶ The basis of the spiritual food is the Bible. In the mid-20th century, the *King James Version* of 1611 was the most widely used English Bible. However, the language in it was largely outdated. And God's name appeared only a few times in the text, whereas ancient Bible manuscripts contained the divine name thousands of times. That version contained some translation errors as well as spurious verses that were not found in authoritative ancient manuscripts. Other available English Bible translations likewise had shortcomings.

¹⁷ There was a need for a Bible that would accurately convey in modern speech the intent of the original writings. The New World Bible Translation Committee was formed, and over a ten-year period from 1950 to 1960, their translation was released in six volumes. When releasing the first volume on August 2, 1950, Brother N. H. Knorr told a convention audience: "More and more the need has been felt for a translation in modern speech, in harmony with revealed truth, and yet furnishing us the basis for gaining further truth by faithfully presenting the sense of the original writings; a translation just as understandable to modern readers as the original writings of Christ's disciples were understandable to the sim-

ple, plain, common, lowly readers of their day." He expressed the hope that this translation would spread its spiritual help to millions of people.

¹⁸ That hope was realized in a significant way by 1963 when the *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures* was produced in six more languages—Dutch, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish. In 1989 the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses put in place a department at headquarters to facilitate Bible translation. Then in 2005, Bible translation was made a priority for the languages in which this journal is produced. As a result, the *New World Translation* is now available in whole or in part in over 130 languages.

¹⁹ As time passed, it became evident that the English edition of the *New World Translation* needed to be updated to reflect changes in the English language. On the weekend of October 5 and 6, 2013, an audience of 1,413,676 in 31 countries attended or were tied in to the 129th annual meeting of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. All were thrilled to hear a member of the Governing Body announce the release of the revised *New World Translation* in English. Many were moved to tears as the attendants passed out copies of the revised Bible. As the verses were read from the revised text, the audience discovered that the rendering of God's Word into English had never been better. The following article will discuss details about this revision, as well as its translation into other languages.

16, 17. (a) What need was felt by God's people? (b) How was this need filled? (c) What hope regarding the *New World Translation* was expressed back in 1950?

18. What decisions have sped up Bible translation?

19. What historic event took place in 2013, and what will the following article discuss?



A Living Translation of God's Word

"The word of God is alive."—HEB. 4:12.

JEHOVAH GOD endowed his creatures with the gift of communication. After settling Adam into his garden home, God gave him an assignment that involved language; he was to name the animals. Adam used his creativity and intellect to give each an appropriate name. (Gen. 2:19, 20) Since then, God's people have continued to use their ability to speak—to use language—to praise Jehovah and to make his will known to others. In recent times, a significant way to promote pure worship by the use of language has been through Bible translation.

² There are thousands of Bible translations, but they vary in how faithfully they convey the message from the original texts. In the 1940's, the New World Bible Translation Committee established principles of translation that have been followed in over 130 languages. These are: (1) Sanctify God's name by restoring it to its rightful place in the Scriptures. **(Read Matthew 6:9.)** (2) Translate the original inspired

1. (a) What kind of assignment did God give to Adam? (b) How have God's people used their language abilities since then?
2. (a) The New World Bible Translation Committee followed what principles in doing its work? (b) What will we consider in this article?

SONGS: 37, 116

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

Why should a Bible translation include God's name?

Why was the *New World Translation* revised?

How have God's people benefited from the *New World Translation*?

message *literally* where possible, but convey the correct *sense* when a word-for-word rendering would distort the meaning. (3) Use easy-to-understand language that encourages reading.* **(Read Nehemiah 8:8, 12.)** Let us see how these principles have been applied in the *New World Translation*, the 2013 revision as well as the non-English editions.

HONORING THE NAME OF GOD

³ Those who study ancient Hebrew Bible manuscripts, such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, are struck by the many occurrences of the Tetragrammaton—the four Hebrew letters that represent God’s name. The divine name appears not only in those ancient Hebrew manuscripts but also in some copies of the Greek *Sep-tuagint* from the second century B.C.E. through the first century C.E.

⁴ Despite the clear evidence that the personal name of God belongs in the Bible, many translations completely omit the sacred name of God. In fact, just two years after the *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures* was released in 1950, the *Revised Standard Version* was published. That version omitted the name, reversing the policy of the editors of the *American Standard Version* of 1901. Why? The preface says: “The use of any proper name for the one and only God . . . is entirely inappropriate for the universal faith of the Christian Church.”

* See Appendix A1 of the revised *New World Translation* and the article “How Can You Choose a Good Bible Translation?” in *The Watchtower* of May 1, 2008.

3, 4. (a) What ancient manuscripts contain the Tetragrammaton? (b) What have many Bible translations done regarding God’s name?

That set a pattern for many subsequent translations, English and non-English.

⁵ Why is the inclusion or omission of God’s name significant? A skilled translator knows the importance of understanding the intent of an author; such knowledge affects many translation decisions. Countless Bible verses show the importance of God’s name and its sanctification. (Ex. 3:15; Ps. 83:18; 148:13; Isa. 42:8; 43:10; John 17:6, 26; Acts 15:14) Jehovah God—the Author of the Bible—inspired its writers to use his name freely. **(Read Ezekiel 38:23.)** Omitting the name, found thousands of times in ancient manuscripts, shows disrespect for the Author.

⁶ The evidence for retaining God’s name in the Bible has not diminished but grown. The 2013 revision of the *New World Translation* includes the name 7,216 times, which is 6 more than the 1984 edition. Five of the additional instances are found at 1 Samuel 2:25; 6:3; 10:26; 23:14, 16. These were restored primarily because the Dead Sea Scrolls, which predate the Hebrew Masoretic text by over 1,000 years, contain the name in these verses. Also, one occurrence at Judges 19:18 was restored as a result of further study of ancient manuscripts.

⁷ For true Christians, Jehovah’s name has great significance. The appendix of the 2013 revision of the *New World Translation* contains updated information on

5. Why is it important to retain God’s name in the Bible?

6. Why does the revised *New World Translation* have six additional occurrences of the divine name?

7, 8. What is the significance of the name meaning “He Causes to Become”?

this matter. The New World Bible Translation Committee understands that the name reflects the causative form of the Hebrew verb *ha-wah'*, meaning “He Causes to Become.”* Our publications had previously connected this meaning with Exodus 3:14, which says: “I Will Become What I Choose to Become.” This led to the view expressed in the 1984 edition that the name means He “causes *himself* to become the Fulfiller of promises.”# However, Appendix A4 of the revised edition of 2013 explains: “While the name Jehovah may include this idea, it is not limited to what he himself chooses to become. It also includes what he causes to happen with regard to his creation and the accomplishment of his purpose.”

⁸ Jehovah causes his creation to become whatever he chooses. In line with the meaning of his name, God caused Noah to be an ark builder, Bezalel to be a master craftsman, Gideon to be a victorious warrior, and Paul to be an apostle to the nations. Yes, God’s name has great meaning to his people. And the New World Bible Translation Committee would never undermine the name’s significance by omitting it from the Bible.

⁹ Over 130 language editions of the *New World Translation* honor God’s name by including it where it belongs in the sacred text. **(Read Malachi 3:16.)** In contrast, the current trend in Bible

translation is to omit the divine name, substituting a title such as “Lord” or the name of a local god. This is a prime reason why the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses has given priority to making available to as many people as possible a Bible that honors God’s name.

CLEAR, ACCURATE TRANSLATION

¹⁰ The process of rendering the sacred text into scores of languages presented many translation problems. For example, in the past, the English *New World Translation* followed the pattern of some other English Bibles that use the Hebrew expression “Sheol” in verses such as Ecclesiastes 9:10. That verse used to read: “There is no work nor devising nor knowledge nor wisdom in She’ol, the place to which you are going.” Translators of many non-English editions faced this problem: The term “Sheol” is unknown to most of their readers, it is not found in their dictionaries, and it sounds like some geographic location. Accordingly, approval was given to make the meaning of “Sheol” and the corresponding Greek term “Hades” clear by translating them accurately as “the Grave.”

¹¹ In some languages, translating the Hebrew word *ne’phesh* and the Greek *psy-khe’* consistently with a term similar to the English “soul” created some confusion. Why? Because the equivalent terms could give the impression that the “soul” is an immaterial part of man. That could reflect the mistaken view that it is something like a ghost and not

* Some reference works present this understanding, though not all scholars agree.

See the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References*, Appendix 1A “The Divine Name in the Hebrew Scriptures,” p. 1561.

9. What is one reason why priority has been given to translating the Bible into other languages?

10, 11. What were certain challenges facing the translators of some non-English editions of the *New World Translation*?

man himself. Hence, approval was given to render “soul” as indicated by the context, in line with the meanings already provided in the appendixes of the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References*. Yes, priority was given to making the text immediately understood, and helpful renderings were often put in footnotes.

¹² Questions from translators raised awareness that similar misunderstandings were possible. So in September 2007, the Governing Body gave approval to revise the English text. Thousands of questions from Bible translators were reviewed during the revision process. Obsolete English expressions were replaced, and a concerted effort was put forth to make the text clear and easy to understand without sacrificing accuracy. Applying what had been done in other languages sharpened the English text.—Prov. 27:17.

12. What are some changes that were made in the 2013 revision of the *New World Translation*? (See also the article “The 2013 Revision of the *New World Translation*,” found in this issue.)

GREAT APPRECIATION

¹³ What has been the effect of this revised English *New World Translation*? Thousands of letters of appreciation have been received at the Brooklyn headquarters of Jehovah’s Witnesses. The comments of one sister reflect the feelings of many: “The Bible is a treasure chest brimming over with valuable jewels. To read Jehovah’s words clearly by using the 2013 revision can be compared to examining each jewel, admiring its many facets, clarity, color, and beauty. The Scriptures conveyed in simple language have helped me to become better acquainted with Jehovah, who is like a father with his arms around me while he reads his soothing words to me.”

¹⁴ It is not just the revised English *New World Translation* that has had an impact. An elderly man from Sofia, Bulgaria, commented about the Bulgarian edition: “I have read the Bible for many

13. What has been the response to the 2013 revision?

14, 15. How has the *New World Translation* made a positive impact in languages other than English?



years, but I have never read a translation that is easier to understand and that goes right to the heart.” Likewise, after receiving her copy of the complete *New World Translation*, an Albanian sister commented: “How beautiful God’s Word sounds in Albanian! What a privilege to have Jehovah speak to us in our own language!”

¹⁵ In many lands, Bibles are expensive and not readily available, so just receiving a Bible is a great blessing. A report from Rwanda stated: “For a long time, many people with whom the brothers were studying had not progressed because they had no Bibles. They could not afford to purchase the local church edition. And they often could not clearly understand the meaning of certain verses, which hindered their progress.” Things changed when the *New World Translation* in their language became available. A Rwandan family with four teenagers said: “We really thank Jehovah and the faithful and discreet slave for giving us this Bible. We are very poor and had no money to purchase Bibles

for every member of the family. But now each of us has his own Bible. To show our gratitude to Jehovah, we read the Bible as a family every day.”

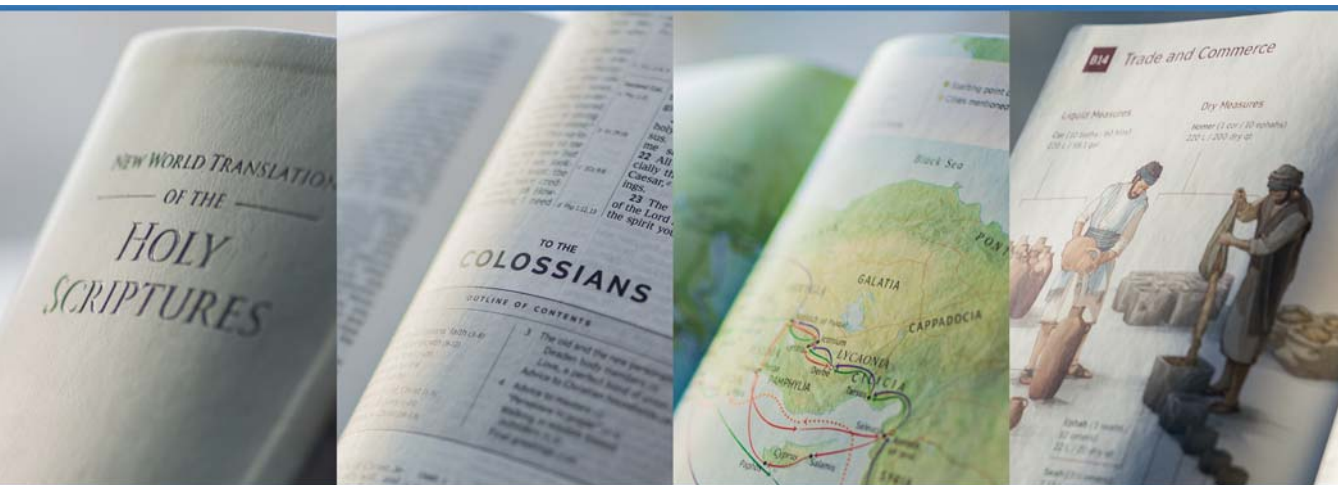
¹⁶ In time, the revised *New World Translation* will be made available in more languages. Satan tries to block such efforts, but we trust that Jehovah wants to have all his people listen as he speaks to them in clear, understandable language. **(Read Isaiah 30:21.)** The time will come when “the earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters cover the sea.”—Isa. 11:9.

¹⁷ May we be determined to take advantage of every gift from Jehovah, including this translation that honors his name. Let him speak with you every day through his Word. His limitless abilities allow him to listen attentively to our prayers. This communication will help us to come to know Jehovah ever more intimately as our love for him keeps growing.—John 17:3.

16, 17. (a) What does Jehovah want for his people? (b) What should be our determination?



“What a privilege to have Jehovah speak to us in our own language!”



The 2013 Revision of the *New World Translation*

OVER the years, the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* has been revised a number of times, but the 2013 revision was by far the most extensive. For example, there are now about 10 percent fewer English words in the translation. Some key Biblical terms were revised. Certain chapters were changed to poetic format, and clarifying footnotes were added to the regular edition. It would be impossible in this article to discuss all the changes, but let us consider a few of the main adjustments.

Which key Biblical expressions were changed?

As was mentioned in the preceding article, the renderings for “Sheol,” “Hades,” and “soul” were revised. Additionally, though, a number of other terms were adjusted.

For example, “impaled” was changed to “executed on a stake” or “nailed to the stake” to avoid giving a wrong impression about how Jesus was executed. (Matt. 20:19; 27:31) “Loose conduct” was adjusted to “brazen conduct,” which conveys

the contemptuous attitude embodied in the Greek term. The expression “long-suffering,” as previously used, could be misunderstood to mean suffering for a long time; “patience” better conveys the right sense. “Revelries” was replaced with “wild parties,” which would be better understood today. (Gal. 5:19-22) In place of “loving-kindness,” the thought is accurately rendered “loyal love.” That captures the meaning of a Bible term often used in parallel with “faithfulness.” —Ps. 36:5; 89:1.

Some terms that had consistently been translated with one expression are now translated according to context. For example, the Hebrew *‘oh-lam’*, previously rendered “time indefinite,” can have the sense of “forever.” Compare how this affects the rendering of such verses as Psalm 90:2 and Micah 5:2.

The Hebrew and Greek terms translated “seed” appear often in the Scriptures, both in an agricultural sense and with the figurative meaning of

“offspring.” Past editions of the *New World Translation* consistently used “seed,” including at Genesis 3:15. However, using the term “seed” in the sense of “offspring” is no longer common in English, so the revision uses “offspring” at Genesis 3:15 and related verses. (Gen. 22:17, 18; Rev. 12:17) Other occurrences are translated according to context.—Gen. 1:11; Ps. 22:30; Isa. 57:3.

Why have many literal renderings been adjusted? Appendix A1 of the 2013 revision says that a good Bible translation will “communicate the correct sense of a word or a phrase when a literal rendering would distort or obscure the meaning.” When the original-language idioms make sense in other languages, they are rendered literally. Following this approach, the expression “searches the . . . hearts” at Revelation 2:23 makes sense in many languages. However, in the same verse, “searches the kidneys” may not be readily understood, so “kidneys” was revised to “innermost thoughts,” thus reflecting the original sense. Similarly, at Deuteronomy 32:14, the literal idiom “the kidney fat of wheat” is rendered more clearly as “the finest wheat.” For a similar reason, “I am uncircumcised in lips” is not nearly as clear in most languages as “I speak with difficulty.”—Ex. 6:12.

Why are the expressions “sons of Israel” and “fatherless boys” now translated “Israelites” and “fatherless children”? In Hebrew, the masculine gender or the feminine gender usually identifies whether the reference is to a male or to a female. However, some masculine terms may include both males and females. For example, the context of some verses suggests that “the sons of Israel” included both men and women, so this expression is now usually rendered “the Israelites.”—Ex. 1:7; 35:29; 2 Ki. 8:12.

Along the same lines, the Hebrew masculine term meaning “sons” at Genesis 3:16 was translated “children” in earlier editions of the *New World Translation*. But at Exodus 22:24, the same word has now been revised to read: “Your *children* [He-

brew, “sons”] will be fatherless.” Applying this principle in other cases, “fatherless boy” has been changed to “fatherless child” or “orphan.” (Deut. 10:18; Job 6:27) That is similar to the rendering in the Greek *Septuagint*. This also resulted in the phrase “the days of your youth” instead of “the days of your young manhood” at Ecclesiastes 12:1.

Why has the rendering of many Hebrew verbs been simplified? The two main Hebrew verb states are the imperfect, denoting continuous action, and the perfect, denoting completed action. Past editions of the *New World Translation* consistently rendered Hebrew imperfect verbs with a verb and an auxiliary term, such as “proceeded to” or “went on to” in order to show continuous or repeated action.* Emphatic expressions such as “certainly,” “must,” and “indeed” were used to show the completed action of perfect verbs.

In the 2013 revision, such auxiliary expressions

* See the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References*, Appendix 3C “Hebrew Verbs Indicating Continuous or Progressive Action.”

In keeping with the poetic writing style of the original text, more chapters are now in poetic format

Each will devour the flesh of his own arm, 21 Ma-nas'seh will devour E'phra-im, And E'phra-im Ma-nas'seh. Together they will be against Judah. ^c In view of all this, his anger has not turned back, But his hand is still stretched out to strike. ^d 10 Woe to those who enact harmful regulations, ^e Who constantly draft oppressive decrees, 2 To deny the legal claim of the poor, To deprive the lowly among my people of justice, ^f 9:17 *Or “their orphans.”	Isa 8:3, 4 Isa 10:24 h 2Ki 17:6 i De 28:45, 63 2Ki 17:22, 23 j 2Ki 18:19, 24 k Am 6:2 l 2Ch 35:20 m 2Ki 17:24 n 2Ki 19:11, 13 o 2Ki 17:5 2Ki 18:9, 10 p 2Ki 16:8, 9	And to trample mud in the s 7 But he will not this way And his heart scheme this For it is in his annihilate, To cut off mar not a few. 8 For he says, 'Are not my pr kings? ^l 9 Is not Cal'no ^k j Car'che-mish Is not Ha'math Is not Sa-mar'a Damascus? ^p 10:2 *Or “And orp “punishment.” #Or “
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Question 4

Is the Bible scientifically accurate?

"It stretches out the northern day over empty space, surrounding the earth upon nothing."

Job 38:7 (par vs)

"All the streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is not full. To the place where the streams flow, there they return or go to flow again."

Ecclesiastes 1:7 (par vs)

"There is One who dwells above the circle of the earth."

Isaiah 65:2 (par vs)

Question 5

Why do humans suffer?

"The earth did not always win the race, nor did the mighty win the battle, nor do the wise always have the final say. In the end, the ignorant always have the edge, nor do those with knowledge always have success, because time and unexpected events overtake them all."

Ecclesiastes 9:11 (par vs)

"Though one man sins and entered into the world and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because they had all sinned—"

Romans 5:12 (par vs)

"For this purpose the Son of God was made manifest, to break the works of the Devil."

1 John 3:8 (par vs)

"The whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one."

1 John 5:19 (par vs)

19

TIME	PLACE	EVENT	METHOD	DATE	LINE	ZONE
08:40	Capitane	Arrive Galleo Mangrove National Park	01:57	01:34	04:03	
08:45	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	02:00	01:34	04:03	
08:50	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	02:03	01:30	04:03	
08:55	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	02:06	01:30	04:03	
09:00	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	02:09	01:30	04:03	
09:05	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	02:12	01:30	04:03	
09:10	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	02:15	01:30	04:03	
09:15	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	02:18	01:30	04:03	
09:20	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	02:21	01:30	04:03	
09:25	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	02:24	01:30	04:03	
09:30	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	02:27	01:30	04:03	
09:35	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	02:30	01:30	04:03	
09:40	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	02:33	01:30	04:03	
09:45	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	02:36	01:30	04:03	
09:50	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	02:39	01:30	04:03	
09:55	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	02:42	01:30	04:03	
10:00	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	02:45	01:30	04:03	
10:05	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	02:48	01:30	04:03	
10:10	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	02:51	01:30	04:03	
10:15	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	02:54	01:30	04:03	
10:20	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	02:57	01:30	04:03	
10:25	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	03:00	01:30	04:03	
10:30	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	03:03	01:30	04:03	
10:35	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	03:06	01:30	04:03	
10:40	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	03:09	01:30	04:03	
10:45	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	03:12	01:30	04:03	
10:50	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	03:15	01:30	04:03	
10:55	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	03:18	01:30	04:03	
11:00	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	03:21	01:30	04:03	
11:05	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	03:24	01:30	04:03	
11:10	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	03:27	01:30	04:03	
11:15	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	03:30	01:30	04:03	
11:20	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	03:33	01:30	04:03	
11:25	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	03:36	01:30	04:03	
11:30	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	03:39	01:30	04:03	
11:35	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	03:42	01:30	04:03	
11:40	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	03:45	01:30	04:03	
11:45	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	03:48	01:30	04:03	
11:50	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	03:51	01:30	04:03	
11:55	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	03:54	01:30	04:03	
12:00	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	03:57	01:30	04:03	
12:05	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	04:00	01:30	04:03	
12:10	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	04:03	01:30	04:03	
12:15	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	04:06	01:30	04:03	
12:20	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	04:09	01:30	04:03	
12:25	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	04:12	01:30	04:03	
12:30	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	04:15	01:30	04:03	
12:35	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	04:18	01:30	04:03	
12:40	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	04:21	01:30	04:03	
12:45	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	04:24	01:30	04:03	
12:50	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	04:27	01:30	04:03	
12:55	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	04:30	01:30	04:03	
13:00	Capitane	Arrive at water tower	04:33	01:30	04:03	

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

Maps, diagrams, and other study aids

are not used unless they add to the meaning. For example, there is no need to emphasize that God repeatedly said, “Let there be light,” so in the revision the imperfect verb “say” is not rendered as continuous. (Gen. 1:3) However, Jehovah evidently called to Adam repeatedly, so this is still highlighted at Genesis 3:9 with the rendering “kept calling.” Overall, verbs are rendered in a simpler way, focusing on the action rather than on the incomplete or complete aspects reflected in the Hebrew. A related benefit is that this helps to recapture, to an extent, the terseness of the Hebrew.

Why are more chapters now in poetic format?

Many parts of the Bible were originally written as poetry. In modern languages, poetry is often distinguished by rhyme, whereas in Hebrew poetry, the most important formal elements are parallelism and contrast. Rhythm is achieved in Hebrew poetry, not by rhyming words, but by the logical order of the thoughts.

Previous editions of the *New World Translation* formatted Job and Psalms in verse format to show that they were originally meant to be sung or recited. This format highlights the poetic elements for emphasis and serves as a memory aid. In the 2013 revision, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, and many chapters of the prophetic books are also now in verse format to show that the passages were written as poetry and to highlight the parallelism and contrasts. An example of this is Isaiah 24:2, where each line contains a contrast, and one line builds on another to emphasize that no one would be excluded from God’s judgment. Recognizing such passages as poetry shows the reader that the Bible writer was not simply repeating himself; rather, he was using a poetic technique to emphasize God’s message.

The distinction between Hebrew prose and poetry may not always be clearly evident, so there are differences among Bible translations as to which passages are poetic. The translators’ judgment is involved in deciding which verses are

printed as poetry. Some contain prose that is poetic in wording, freely using pictorial language, wordplay, and parallelism to drive home a point.

A new feature, the Outline of Contents, is especially useful in identifying the frequent change of speakers in the ancient poem The Song of Solomon.

How did study of the original-language manuscripts affect the revision? The original *New World Translation* was based on the Hebrew Masoretic text and the respected Greek text by Westcott and Hort. The study of ancient Bible manuscripts has continued to advance, shedding light on the reading of certain Bible verses. Readings from the Dead Sea Scrolls have become available. More Greek manuscripts have been studied. Much updated manuscript evidence is available in computer format, making it easier to analyze the differences between manuscripts to determine which reading of the Hebrew or Greek text is best supported. The New World Bible Translation Committee took advantage of these developments to study certain verses, resulting in some changes.

For example, at 2 Samuel 13:21, the Greek *Septuagint* contains the equivalent of the words: “But he would not hurt the feelings of Amnon his son, because he loved him, for he was his firstborn.” Earlier versions of the *New World Translation* did not include these words because they are not in the Masoretic text. However, the Dead Sea Scrolls do contain these words, which are now included in the 2013 revision. For similar reasons, God’s name was restored five times in the book of First Samuel. Study of Greek texts also resulted in a change in the order of ideas at Matthew 21:29-31. Thus, some changes were based on the weight of manuscript evidence rather than on the strict adherence to a single master Greek text.

These are but a few of the changes that have enhanced reading and understanding for many who view the *New World Translation* as a gift from the God of communication.



Use the Power of Your Tongue for Good

“May the words of my mouth . . . be pleasing to you, O Jehovah.”—PS. 19:14.

SONGS: 82, 77

HOW WILL FOLLOWING JESUS’ EXAMPLE HELP US TO . . .

choose the right time to speak?

select the correct words?

be gracious in our speech?

IN EARLY October 1871, what has been described as the most deadly forest fire in U.S. history engulfed the dry woodlands of northeastern Wisconsin. As the fire raged on, the flames and intense heat killed more than 1,200 people and consumed some two billion trees. The inferno may have been started by mere sparks from passing trains. How true are the words of James 3:5: “See how small a fire it takes to set a great forest ablaze!” Why did the Bible writer make such a statement?

² The point of James’ illustration is made clear in verse 6. “The tongue is also a fire.” The tongue represents our ability to speak. Like fire, our speech has the potential for causing great harm. The Bible even says that “death and life are in the power of the tongue.” (Prov. 18:21) Of course, we do not stop talking just out of concern that we might say something harmful, any more than we refuse to use fire because we fear the damage it might cause. The key is control. If we control fire, we can use it to cook our food, warm our bodies, and light up a dark night. If we tame our tongue, we can

1, 2. Why is fire an appropriate illustration of the power of the tongue?

use its power to honor God and to benefit others.—Ps. 19:14.

³ Whether we use sounds from our mouth or signs with our hands, the ability to communicate our thoughts and feelings is a marvelous gift from God. How can we use this gift to build up, not tear down? **(Read James 3:9, 10.)** We will consider three important aspects of speech: when to speak, what to speak, and how to speak.

WHEN TO SPEAK

⁴ Speech is part of our daily life, but we do not need to talk all the time. In fact, the Bible says that there is “a time to be silent.” (Eccl. 3:7) Maintaining silence when others are speaking can be a mark of respect. (Job 6:24) Controlling our tongue to keep quiet about a confidential matter gives evidence of discretion and discernment. (Prov. 20:19) Restraining our tongue when we are provoked is the course of wisdom.—Ps. 4:4.

⁵ On the other hand, the Bible also says that there is “a time to speak.” (Eccl. 3:7) If a friend gave you a beautiful present, you would probably not store it out of sight. Rather, you would show your appreciation by putting it to good use. We show our gratitude for Jehovah’s gift of speech by using it wisely. That might include expressing our feelings, communicating our needs, sharing words of encouragement, and giving God praise. (Ps. 51:15) How can we determine the best “time to speak”?

3. What three aspects of speech will we consider?

4. Give examples of “a time to be silent.”

5. How can we show appreciation for God’s gift of speech?

⁶ The words of Proverbs 25:11 illustrate the importance of choosing the right time to speak: “Like apples of gold in silver carvings is a word spoken at the right time.” Golden apples by themselves would be beautiful. Placing them against the background of silver carvings would enhance their beauty. Similarly, carefully picking a suitable time to speak can make our speech more appealing and effective. How?

⁷ Our words may be just what our hearer truly needs, but unless we discern the best time to speak, their meaning could be lost. **(Read Proverbs 15:23.)** For example, in March 2011 an earthquake and tsunami devastated parts of eastern Japan, wiping out entire cities. More than 15,000 lost their lives. Although Jehovah’s Witnesses in the area suffered along with their neighbors, they took advantage of every opportunity to use the Bible to comfort those who were mourning. However, many of the local people have deep-rooted Buddhist beliefs and little or no knowledge of Bible teachings. Our brothers discerned that immediately following the tsunami was not necessarily the best time to tell the grief-stricken victims about the resurrection hope. Instead, they used their gift of speech to focus on giving emotional support and explaining from the Bible why such terrible things happen to innocent people.

⁸ Jesus knew when not to speak, but he also knew when it was the right time to speak. (John 18:33-37; 19:8-11)

6. How does the Bible illustrate the importance of choosing the right time to speak?

7, 8. How did our brothers in Japan imitate Jesus’ example by choosing the right time to speak about the resurrection?

He once told his disciples: “I still have many things to say to you, but you are not able to bear them now.” (John 16: 12) The Witnesses in eastern Japan followed Jesus’ example. Two and a half years after the tsunami, they shared in a worldwide campaign to distribute *Kingdom News* No. 38, entitled “Can the Dead Really Live Again?” At that time, more people were ready to be comforted by the heartwarming message of the resurrection, and many householders readily accepted their personal copy of the tract. Of course, cultures and religious beliefs vary greatly, so we need to be discerning when it comes to choosing the right time to speak.

⁹ There definitely are occasions when we need to discern the right time to speak. For example, someone may offend us, even with well-intentioned words. It would be prudent on our part to take time to reflect on whether the matter is serious enough to say something. If we must speak, it would not be wise to approach the offender when we are upset and perhaps might speak a bit rashly. **(Read Proverbs 15:28.)** Similarly, we need to be discerning when speaking about the truth to our unbelieving relatives. We want them to come to know Jehovah, but we must be patient and perceptive. Speaking the right words at the right time may help to open their hearts.

WHAT TO SPEAK

¹⁰ Words have the power to hurt as

9. In what situations will selecting the right time to speak make our speech more effective?

10. (a) Why should we be careful to select the proper words? (b) Give an example of harmful speech.

well as to heal. **(Read Proverbs 12:18.)**

Using words to inflict pain is common in Satan’s world. The field of entertainment incites many to “sharpen their tongue just like a sword” and to “aim their cruel words like arrows.” (Ps. 64:3) A Christian needs to avoid this harmful practice. One example of “cruel words” is sarcasm, stinging remarks intended to belittle or rebuke others. Sarcasm is often meant to be humorous, but it can quickly deteriorate into disrespectful, insulting speech. Cruel sarcasm is one form of abusive speech that Christians should “put away.” Humor can add spice to our speech, but we need to avoid the trap of trying to evoke a laugh by resorting to cutting, sarcastic quips that hurt or humiliate others. The Bible admonishes us: “Let a rotten word not come out of your mouth, but only what is good for building up as the need may be, to impart what is beneficial to the hearers.”—Eph. 4:29, 31.

¹¹ Jesus taught that “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.” (Matt. 12:34) Therefore, choosing the appropriate words begins in the heart. Our speech usually reflects how we truly feel about others. If our hearts are full of love and compassion, our speech will likely be positive and upbuilding.

¹² Selecting the proper words also involves mental effort and good judgment. Even wise King Solomon “pondered and made a thorough search” in order to “find delightful words and to record accurate words of truth.” (Eccl. 12:9, 10) Do you find that it is often a

11. How is our heart involved in selecting the correct words?

12. How can we enhance our ability to select the right words?

challenge to come up with “delightful words”? If so, you may need to enlarge your vocabulary. One way to do this is to take note of how words are used in the Bible and in our Christian publications. Learn the meanings of unfamiliar expressions. More important, learn how to use words in a way that helps others. Regarding the relationship between Jehovah and his firstborn Son, we read: “Jehovah has given me [Jesus] the tongue of those taught, so that I may know how to answer the tired one with the right word.” (Isa. 50:4) Taking time to meditate on what we are going to say can help us to find the right words. (Jas. 1:19) We could ask ourselves, ‘Will these words really convey what I want to say? What effect will my choice of words have on my listener?’

¹³ Trumpets were used in Israel to assemble the camp and to disperse it, as well as to spur the army to do battle. Fittingly, the Bible uses the trumpet blast to illustrate the need for speech that is easily understood. An indistinct trumpet call could be disastrous for an advancing army. In the same way, if our speech is unduly vague or indirect, it may well be confusing or misleading. Of course, in our effort to keep our words crisp and clear, we would not want to be blunt or tactless.—**Read 1 Corinthians 14:8, 9.**

¹⁴ Jesus set the finest example of appropriate word selection. Consider his short yet powerful discourse recorded in Matthew chapters 5 through 7. Jesus did not use flowery or ambiguous

speech; nor did he employ harsh or hurtful language. Instead, he chose clear, simple expressions to reach the hearts of his listeners. For example, to allay the people’s anxieties over their daily need for food, he referred to how Jehovah provides for the birds of heaven. Then, comparing his hearers to birds, he asked: “Are you not worth more than they are?” (Matt. 6:26) What a loving appeal in simple, understandable words that touch the heart! Let us now consider the third important aspect of our speech.

HOW TO SPEAK

¹⁵ How we say something can be as important as what we say. When Jesus spoke in the synagogue of his hometown of Nazareth, the people were “amazed at the gracious words coming out of his mouth.” (Luke 4:22) Gracious speech appeals to the heart and in no way weakens the power of our tongue. In fact, graciousness can make our speech more persuasive. (Prov. 25:15) We can imitate Jesus’ gracious speech by being kind, courteous, and considerate of others’ feelings. Seeing the effort a crowd made to hear him speak, Jesus was moved with pity and “started to teach them many things.” (Mark 6:34) Even when he was being insulted, Jesus did not resort to harsh speech.—1 Pet. 2:23.

¹⁶ Speaking with mildness and tact can be a challenge when our listener is someone whom we know very well. We might feel at liberty to be very frank. That can

15. Why must we be gracious when speaking?

16, 17. (a) When we are speaking with family members and close friends in the congregation, how can we imitate Jesus? (See opening image.) (b) Give an example of the benefits of gracious speech.

13. Why is easily understood speech important?

14. Give an example of Jesus’ use of easily understood speech.

be true whether we speak with a family member or a close friend in the congregation. Did Jesus feel that his close relationship with his disciples granted him liberty to speak harshly to them? Not at all! When his closest followers continued to argue over who was greater, Jesus corrected them with kind words and an illustration of a young child. (Mark 9: 33-37) Elders can imitate Jesus' example by giving counsel "in a spirit of mildness."—Gal. 6:1.

¹⁷ Even when someone says something offensive, responding with gracious words can have positive results. (Prov. 15:1) For example, the teenage son of a single mother was leading a double life. A well-meaning Christian sister said to the mother: "It's too bad you have failed at child training." The mother thought for a moment and responded: "It's true that things are not going well right now, but his training is a work in progress. Talk to me

after Armageddon; then we will know for sure." This mild response helped to maintain peace between the sisters, and it encouraged the son, who overheard the conversation. He realized that his mother had not given up on him. This moved him to stop his bad associations. In time, he got baptized, and he later served at Bethel. Whether in the company of our brothers, our family, or strangers, we should always let our words "be gracious, seasoned with salt."—Col. 4:6.

¹⁸ The ability to express our thoughts and feelings in words is truly a marvel. May we follow Jesus' example by choosing the right time, striving to select the proper words, and putting forth effort to be gracious. Then the power of our tongue will be a healing to our listeners and pleasing to Jehovah, the Giver of the precious gift of speech.

18. How will following Jesus' example of speaking help us to use the power of our tongue for good?

USE THE POWER OF THE TONGUE FOR GOOD

WHEN: Choose the right time to speak

WHAT: Select the proper words

HOW: Strive to be gracious





Jehovah Will Sustain You

“Jehovah will sustain him on his sickbed.”—PS. 41:3.

HAVE you ever wondered: ‘Will I recover from this sickness?’ Or you may have wondered if a beloved family member or friend will recover from an illness. It is a normal concern when someone faces serious health problems. Similar concern was expressed by two kings in the days of the prophets Elijah and Elisha. King Ahaziah, son of Ahab and Jezebel, had a bad fall, so he asked: ‘Will I recover from this injury?’ Later, King Ben-hadad of Syria was very ill, and he asked: “Will I recover from this sickness?”—2 Ki. 1:2; 8:7, 8.

² We hope, of course, that there will be a good outcome for us and for those whom we care about. Still, many have wondered what God will do to help. During the lives of those kings, God occasionally performed miracles involving the life and health of humans. By means of his prophets, Jehovah even performed resurrections. (1 Ki. 17:17-24; 2 Ki. 4:17-20, 32-35) Is there reason to expect that he might do something similar in our time?

³ There is no doubt that God has the power to affect

1, 2. What may we at times wonder, and what examples in the Bible come to mind?

3-5. What power do God and Jesus have, leading to what questions?

SONGS: 23, 138

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

When we are sick, what encouragement can we draw from Psalm 41:3?

Why do we not expect miraculous cures at this time?

What caution is appropriate in regard to recommendations about health issues?

someone's health. The Bible confirms that. At times, he punished individuals with sickness, such as the Pharaoh in Abraham's day and later Moses' sister, Miriam. (Gen. 12:17; Num. 12:9, 10; 2 Sam. 24:15) God warned that if the Israelites proved unfaithful, he would afflict them with "every sickness or plague." (Deut. 28:58-61) On the other hand, Jehovah could remove diseases or prevent sickness. (Ex. 23:25; Deut. 7:15) Also, he could heal people. After Job had been so sick that he longed to die, God healed him!—Job 2:7; 3:11-13; 42:10, 16.

⁴ Yes, God definitely has the power to intervene and heal a sick person. It is similar with his Son. We read that Jesus miraculously cured lepers, epileptics, and blind or paralyzed ones. (**Read Matthew 4:23, 24; John 9:1-7**) How strengthening it is to think that the healings Jesus performed are a foregleam of what he will do on a grand scale in the new world. Then "no resident will say: 'I am sick.'"—Isa. 33:24.

⁵ But should we look to God or Jesus for a miraculous cure now? How should we view grave illnesses or infirmities, and what should we do about them?

SUSTAINED ON A SICKBED

⁶ We know from the Bible that in the first century, God enabled some anointed Christians to work miracles. (Acts 3:2-7; 9:36-42) Among the "different gifts" of the spirit were "gifts of healing." (1 Cor. 12:4-11) But those and other gifts, such as speaking in tongues and prophesying, would soon come to an end. (1 Cor. 13:8) They are not available today. Thus, we have no basis for expecting God to per-

6. What do we know about the "gifts of healing" that some early Christians had?

form miraculous healings for us or our loved ones.

⁷ Still, if we are ill, we can look to God for comfort, wisdom, and support, as did true worshippers in the past. King David wrote: "Happy is anyone who shows consideration to the lowly one; Jehovah will rescue him in the day of calamity. Jehovah will guard him and keep him alive." (Ps. 41:1, 2) We know that an individual living in David's day who showed consideration to a lowly one did not keep living without end. Hence, David could not have meant that such a considerate individual would be kept alive miraculously, thus gaining everlasting life. We can take those inspired words to mean that God would help the loyal considerate one. How? David explained: "Jehovah will sustain him on his sickbed; during his sickness you will completely change his bed." (Ps. 41:3) Yes, an individual who showed consideration to a lowly one could be certain that God was aware of him and his faithful course. And the recuperative power of his God-given body might help him to get better, to recover from his sickness.

⁸ David spoke from experience: "I said: 'O Jehovah, show me favor. Heal me, for I have sinned against you.'" (Ps. 41:4) He may have written that regarding the time when Absalom tried to usurp the throne while David was ill and unable to handle the situation. Despite having received God's forgiveness, David did not forget his own sin with Bath-sheba and its consequences. (2 Sam. 12:7-14) Still, the king was sure that God would sustain him

7. Psalm 41:3 provides what encouraging assurance?

8. According to Psalm 41:4, what did David seek from Jehovah?

on his sickbed. But was David asking for a miraculous healing and an extension of life?

⁹ Years later, God chose to heal King Hezekiah, who “became sick and was at the point of death.” In that unusual case, God intervened. Hezekiah recovered and lived on for 15 years. (2 Ki. 20: 1-6) David, on the other hand, did not pray for God to heal him miraculously. The context suggests that David asked Jehovah to help him in the same way that He would help an individual who showed consideration to a lowly one. That included being sustained “on his sickbed.” Because David’s sin had been forgiven, he could ask that God would comfort and support him and that the physical resources of his body might enable him to recover. (Ps. 103:3) We can do likewise.

¹⁰ Just as David did not receive a miraculous cure and a greatly extended life, neither did Trophimus, one of the apostle Paul’s coworkers. We know that Paul was on occasion empowered to heal the sick. **(Read Acts 14:8-10.)** He did so for “the father of Publius [who] was lying in bed sick with fever and dysentery.” Paul “prayed, laid his hands on him, and healed him.” (Acts 28:8) Yet, Paul did not do the same for Trophimus, who had traveled with him on a missionary journey. (Acts 20:3-5, 22; 21:29) When Trophimus fell ill and could not continue on with Paul, the apostle did not heal him; he left him at Miletus to recover. (2 Tim. 4:20) Similarly, when Epaphroditus fell “sick nearly to the point of

death,” there is no indication that Paul used some miraculous power to heal his good friend.—Phil. 2:25-27, 30.

TAKE REASONABLE STEPS

¹¹ “Luke, the beloved physician,” writer of the book of Acts, also traveled with Paul. (Col. 4:14; Acts 16:10-12; 20:5, 6) It is reasonable to believe that Luke gave Paul medical advice and rendered medical services to him and to others in his missionary group. Why would Luke need to do that? Because even Paul got sick while traveling. (Gal. 4:13) Luke could provide medical help that was in line with what Jesus had said: “Those who are healthy do not need a physician, but those who are ill do.”—Luke 5:31.

¹² The Bible does not indicate where or when Luke received his medical training. It has been suggested that Paul mentioned to Christians in Colossae the role of Luke as a physician because they knew him. Interestingly, there was a medical school in nearby Laodicea. In any event, Luke was not some untrained layman spouting health recommendations; he was a physician. That is evident both from the specific medical language that Luke used in his Gospel and in the book of Acts and from the way he focused on Jesus’ healings of others.

¹³ We do not live at a time when a fellow Christian can use “gifts of healing” to cure us. But some well-intentioned brothers give unsolicited health recommendations. Granted, someone might simply offer general, practical suggestions. Paul

9. (a) How did David’s case differ from that of King Hezekiah? (b) What could David expect from Jehovah?

10. What can we conclude from the experiences of Trophimus and Epaphroditus?

11, 12. Why was Luke able to be of genuine help to Paul, and what can we say about Luke’s qualifications?

13. What balanced view of health recommendations is advisable?

did so when Timothy was experiencing stomach problems, perhaps because the local water was polluted.* **(Read 1 Timothy 5:23.)** That, however, is quite different from trying to persuade a fellow Witness to use some herb, remedy, or diet that may not be effective or in some cases may even be harmful. At times, some have tried to persuade others with an explanation: ‘My relative had a similar disease, and he took . . . Then he got well.’ No matter how sincere the suggestion, we do well to keep in mind that there may be risks even with widely used medications and treatments.—**Read Proverbs 27:12.**

THE WISDOM OF CAUTION

¹⁴ We Christians have a normal desire to be healthy so that we can enjoy life and share fully in God’s service. Nonetheless, we have inherited imperfection, as shown by our being subject to illnesses. When we get sick, there might be various approaches or treatments. Each person has the right to choose which to accept or employ. Sadly, in this greedy world, there are those who seize on people’s illness as an opportunity to make money. Some sell “treatments” or “cures” backed with false claims or supposed testimonials. Other individuals or companies stress the use of products that are high-priced in order to make large profits. To a sick person who desperately seeks relief or a way to stay alive longer,

* The book *The Origins and Ancient History of Wine* reports: “It has been shown experimentally that living typhoid and other dangerous microbes rapidly die when mixed with wine.”

14, 15. (a) Some people view the sickness of others as an opportunity to do what? (b) How is Proverbs 14:15 helpful when it comes to health recommendations?

these “cures” may seem appealing. Let us not forget, however, that God’s Word advises us: “The naive person believes every word, but the shrewd one ponders each step.”—Prov. 14:15.

¹⁵ “The shrewd one” will be particularly cautious if the “word,” or recommendation, comes from someone whose qualifications are questionable. “The shrewd one” might reason: ‘He says that this vitamin, herb, or diet supposedly helped someone, but are there adequate witnesses to establish the matter? People differ. Is there valid reason to trust that it will help me? Should I do more research or even consult with some who are known to be trained or qualified in this field?’—Deut. 17:6.

¹⁶ God’s Word admonishes us “to live with soundness of mind . . . amid this present system of things.” (Titus 2:12) Having “soundness of mind,” or being sober-minded, should certainly come into play when the explanation of a diagnostic method or therapy seems strange or mysterious. Can the practitioner or the one promoting it explain *satisfactorily* how it works? Is it in accord with known facts, and do numerous qualified people view it as credible? (Prov. 22:29) Or is the main appeal to the emotions? Perhaps the claim is that it was discovered or used in a distant or remote place, as if hidden from modern research. Does such a claim prove anything or even seem reasonable? Some diagnostic devices or forms of treatment are described as using a ‘secret substance’ or ‘body force.’ That warrants serious caution because God warned against “the use of magical pow-

16. Considering what questions could help us to demonstrate “soundness of mind” regarding health recommendations?



We want to prosper and be strong as we serve God
(See paragraph 17)

er” and spirit mediums.—Isa. 1:13; Deut. 18:10-12.

“GOOD HEALTH TO YOU!”

¹⁷ The first-century governing body sent an important letter to the congregations. After listing things that Christians must avoid, the letter concluded: “If you carefully keep yourselves from these things, you will prosper. Good health to you!” (Acts 15:29) The final words, a type of complimentary close, can also be rendered “be strong.” We definitely want to prosper in “good health” and be strong as we serve our great God.

¹⁸ As long as the present system of things remains and we are imperfect, sickness is a fact that we must face.

17. We should have what reasonable desire?

18, 19. What can we look forward to in the new world?

We cannot expect now to be cured miraculously. However, Revelation 22:1, 2 points to the time when we will be healed completely. The apostle John saw in vision “a river of water of life” and “trees of life” with leaves “for the healing of the nations.” This does not refer to any herbal remedy now or in the future. Rather, it points to Jehovah’s provision through Jesus for giving everlasting life to obedient mankind—truly something we can look forward to.—Isa. 35:5, 6.

¹⁹ As we await that glorious future, we know that Jehovah is interested in each of us personally, even when we are ill. We can be confident, just as David was, that our God will sustain us during any time of sickness. And with David we can say: “As for me, you uphold me because of my integrity; you will keep me in your presence forever.”—Ps. 41:12.



I Found Peace With God and With My Mother

AS TOLD BY MICHIO KUMAGAI

“AND just why won’t you worship your ancestors?” my mother asked. “Don’t you realize that it’s because of them that you have life? Will you show them no gratitude? How can you cast off customs handed down for generations? Refusing to honor our ancestors is saying that our worship is foolish.” Then Mom broke down and cried.

It was not like Mom to speak this way. Besides, she had arranged for me to study the Bible, although she did that as a gentle way to refuse a study for herself. I had always obeyed her, and now I found it hard to refuse to follow her guidance. This time, though, I had to in order to please Jehovah. Without strength from him, I could not have done it.

BECOMING A CHRISTIAN

Like most people in Japan, we were Buddhists. But just two months of study with Jehovah’s Witnesses convinced me that the Bible is true. Discovering that I had a heavenly Father, I yearned to come to know him.

Mom and I happily discussed what I was learning. I began attending Sunday meetings at the Kingdom Hall. As my knowledge of the truth increased, I told Mom that I would no longer share in Buddhist rites. Suddenly, her attitude changed. “Having someone in the family who has no love for our ancestors is a disgrace” were her words. She demanded that I quit studying the Bible and attending meetings. Never had I imagined that my mother would say this! She was like a different person.

From Ephesians chapter 6, I learned that Jehovah wanted me to obey my parents. Dad took Mom’s side. Initially, I reasoned that if I listened to them, they would listen to me and peace in our family would be restored. Besides this, examinations to enter high school were coming up, and I needed to prepare. So I agreed to do as they said for three months, but I promised Jehovah that I would attend the meetings again when that time was up.

My decision proved to be bad in two ways. First, I thought that my feelings would not change in three months’ time. Instead, I quickly began to feel spiritually starved,

slipping further away from Jehovah. Second, instead of meeting me halfway, Mom and Dad put even more pressure on me to quit everything that had to do with true worship.

HELP AND OPPOSITION

At the Kingdom Hall, I had met many who were experiencing family opposition. They had assured me that Jehovah would strengthen me. (Matt. 10:34-37) They impressed on me that I was my family's main link to their gaining salvation. So I began to pray earnestly, wanting to learn how to rely on Jehovah.

In the family, opposition took many forms. Mom tried both pleading and reasoning. Usually, I kept quiet. When I spoke

up, we often became emotional, as we each focused on making our point. I should have acknowledged Mom's feelings and beliefs more, which might have calmed things. My parents increased my chores in an attempt to keep me indoors. Sometimes I was locked out of the house or no food was left for me.

Mom turned to others for support. She appealed to my schoolteacher, who remained neutral. Mom took me to her manager at work so that he could try to convince me that all religions are useless. At home, Mom telephoned various relatives and tearfully pleaded for help. That upset me, but at the meetings the elders urged me to think of all the people to whom Mom was inadvertently giving a witness.



Serving in several countries taught me a lot about Jehovah



Jehovah helped me to put my thinking straight and to see the way to go

Then I faced the issue of going to university. My parents planned to give me what they considered to be the best start in life. They hoped that I could find a good job. We were too emotional to discuss matters calmly, so I wrote Mom and Dad several letters to explain my goals. Furious, Dad threatened: “If you think that you can find a job, find it by tomorrow or else you leave this house.” I took the matter to Jehovah in prayer. The next day while I was in the ministry, two different sisters, independent of each other, asked me to tutor their children. Dad was not happy with this development and stopped talking to me altogether; actually, he began to ignore me. Mom said that she would rather I be a delinquent than one of Jehovah’s Witnesses.

Sometimes I wondered whether Jehovah wanted me to resist my parents’ wishes to this extent. But more prayer and reflection on Bible texts about Jehovah’s love enabled me to view opposition objectively and to understand that, in part, it stemmed from my parents’ concern for me. Jehovah helped me to put my thinking straight and to see the way to go. Also, the more I shared in the ministry, the more I enjoyed it. Yes, pioneering became my goal.

SERVING AS A PIONEER

Knowing that I wanted to pioneer, some sisters advised me to wait until my parents calmed down. I prayed for wisdom, did research, examined my motives, and talked to

mature brothers and sisters. I concluded that I wanted to please Jehovah. In addition, delaying pioneering was no guarantee that my parents’ attitude would change.

I began my pioneer service during my last year of high school. After pioneering for a while, I had the goal of serving where the need was greater. But Mom and Dad did not want me to leave home. So I waited until I was 20 years old. Then, to ease Mom’s mind, I asked the branch office for an assignment in southern Japan, where we had relatives.

In that assignment, I was blessed to see several people with whom I studied get baptized. Meanwhile, I studied English with a view to expanding my service. Two special pioneer brothers were in the same congregation. I could see their zeal and how they helped others. Thus, special pioneering became my goal. During this time, Mom twice experienced serious health problems. On each occasion, I returned home to care for her. This surprised her, and her attitude softened slightly.

BLESSINGS UPON BLESSINGS

After seven years, I received a letter from Atsushi, one of the special pioneer brothers mentioned earlier. He said that he was thinking of marriage and wondered about my situation and feelings. I had never had romantic feelings for Atsushi, nor did I think that he had any toward me. A month later, I replied that I was willing for us to get better acquainted. We discovered that we had much in common, both of us wanting to pursue the full-time ministry and being willing to serve in any capacity. In time, we got married. How happy I was to have Mom, Dad, and several relatives attend our wedding!

Before long, while we were serving as regular pioneers, Atsushi was appointed a substitute circuit overseer. Soon other bless-

ings came. We were appointed as special pioneers and then to the regular circuit work. After we had served all the congregations in the circuit one time, we received a telephone call from the branch office. The question? ‘Would we accept an assignment to circuit work in Nepal?’

I wondered how my parents would feel about my going that far away. So I telephoned them. Dad answered, and his response was: “You’ll be going to a nice place.” Just a week before, one of his friends had given him a book about Nepal, and Dad had even been thinking that it would be a nice place to visit.

As we served happily among the friendly Nepalese, another blessing came our way. Our circuit was to include Bangladesh, a place so close yet so different in many re-

spects. Field service was quite diversified. After five years, we were assigned back to Japan, where we now enjoy the circuit work.

Japan, Nepal, Bangladesh—serving in these countries has taught me so much about Jehovah! Each country has its unique background and culture. And within each country, every person is unique. I have seen how Jehovah cares for people individually, accepts them, helps and blesses them.

On a personal level, Jehovah has blessed me with knowledge of him, work to do, and a fine Christian husband. God has guided me to make right decisions, and I now have a good relationship with him and with my family. Thanks to Jehovah, Mom and I are once again good friends. I am deeply grateful that I found peace with God and with my mother.

We find much joy in the circuit work



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