

AUGUST 15, 2012

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY EDITION

STUDY ARTICLES

SEPTEMBER 24-30

“I Am With You”

PAGE 3 • SONGS: 65, 2

OCTOBER 1-7

**Carry On as
Kingdom Citizens!**

PAGE 11 • SONGS: 16, 98

OCTOBER 8-14

**Beware of
the Devil's Snares!**

PAGE 20 • SONGS: 61, 25

OCTOBER 15-21

**Stand Firm and
Avoid Satan's Traps!**

PAGE 25 • SONGS: 32, 83



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THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE, *The Watchtower*, is to honor Jehovah God, the Supreme Ruler of the universe. Just as watchtowers in ancient times enabled a person to observe developments from afar, so this magazine shows us the significance of world events in the light of Bible prophecies. It comforts people with the good news that God's Kingdom, which is a real government in heaven, will soon bring an end to all wickedness and transform the earth into a paradise. It promotes faith in Jesus Christ, who died so that we might gain everlasting life and who is now ruling as King of God's Kingdom. This magazine has been published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879 and is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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PURPOSE OF STUDY ARTICLES

STUDY ARTICLE 1 PAGES 3-7

Daniel's prophecy foretold that "the true knowledge" would become abundant in "the time of the end." (Dan. 12:4) This article explains how that prophecy has undergone a remarkable fulfillment. It also provides proof that Jesus is with those who serve Jehovah God.

STUDY ARTICLE 2 PAGES 11-15

Learn who really are Kingdom citizens. This article considers what is required of them. It also points out how they show their love for Jehovah's standards.

STUDY ARTICLES 3, 4 PAGES 20-29

Satan often uses cleverly disguised traps in an effort to subvert our faith. These articles discuss how we can protect ourselves from five of his traps: uncontrolled speech, fear and pressure, excessive guilt, materialism, and temptation to commit adultery.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

8 "THERE EXISTS A REWARD FOR YOUR ACTIVITY"

16 A MEETING MARKED BY UNITY AND THRILLING PLANS

30 DO YOU REMEMBER?

31 FROM OUR ARCHIVES



COVER: A Kingdom publisher witnessing to a shepherd in the Bafatá region of Guinea-Bissau



GUINEA-BISSAU

POPULATION
1,515,000

PUBLISHERS
120

BIBLE STUDIES
389



“I AM WITH YOU”

*“Many will rove
about, and the true
knowledge will
become abundant.”*

—DAN. 12:4.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

In modern times, how has
“the true knowledge” become
known?

How have those embracing
the truth become “many”?

In what ways has accurate
knowledge been made
“abundant”?

IMAGINE yourself in Paradise. Each morning, you awake feeling rested and eager to begin your day. You have no aches or pains. Any infirmities you once had are gone. All your senses—sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste—function perfectly. Your energy is abundant, your work is enjoyable, your friends are many, and all your worries are gone. Such will be the blessings you can enjoy under God’s Kingdom. Christ Jesus, the appointed King, will bless his subjects and educate them in the knowledge of Jehovah.

² Jehovah will be with his loyal servants as they engage in that future global educational work. God and his Son have been with faithful ones for centuries. Before ascending to heaven, Jesus assured his loyal disciples that he would be with them. (**Read Matthew 28:19, 20.**) To strengthen our faith in this assurance, let us examine just one sentence of a divinely inspired prophecy that was penned in ancient Babylon more than 2,500 years ago. Concerning “the time of the end” in which we now live, the prophet Daniel wrote: “Many will rove about, and the true knowledge will become abundant.” (Dan. 12:4) Viewed metaphorically and in harmony with the facts of our day, the Hebrew verb here translated “rove about” conveys the idea of a careful examination. What marvelous blessings such roving about would result in! Those carefully studying the Scriptures would be blessed with the true, or accurate, knowledge of God’s Word. The

1, 2. (a) How do we know that Jesus is with his subjects now and will be with them in the future? (b) According to Daniel 12:4, what would result from a careful study of the Scriptures?

prophecy also states that many would embrace “the true knowledge.” Moreover, such knowledge would be abundant. It would be widely distributed and readily available. As we examine how this prophecy has been fulfilled, we will see that Jesus is with his disciples today and that Jehovah is fully capable of carrying out all that he has promised.

“THE TRUE KNOWLEDGE” BECOMES KNOWN

³ Following the death of the apostles, foretold apostasy from genuine Christianity developed and spread like fire. (Acts 20:28-30; 2 Thess. 2:1-3) For centuries thereafter, “the true knowledge” was far from abundant not only among those who knew nothing of the Bible but also among professed Christians. Though claiming to believe in the Scriptures, the leaders of Christendom taught religious lies—“teachings of demons” that dishonored God. (1 Tim. 4:1) People in general were kept in spiritual ignorance. Apostate doctrines included the false teaching that God is a Trinity, that the soul does not die, and that some souls are tormented eternally in hellfire.

⁴ However, in the 1870’s—about four decades before “the last days” began—a small group of sincere Christians in Pennsylvania, U.S.A., met together to study the Bible diligently and to search for “the true knowledge.” (2 Tim. 3:1) They called themselves Bible Students. These were not “the wise and intellectual ones” from whom Jesus said that knowledge was to be hidden. (Matt. 11:

25) They were humble people who sincerely desired to do God’s will. Carefully and prayerfully, they read, discussed, and meditated on the Scriptures. They also compared Bible passages and examined the writings of others who had made a similar search. Gradually, these Bible Students came to discern truths that had been obscured for centuries.

⁵ Though the Bible Students were excited about the things they were learning, they did not allow their newfound knowledge to puff them up with pride; nor did they take credit for proclaiming something *new*. (1 Cor. 8:1) Instead, they published a series of tracts called *The Old Theology*. The objective was to acquaint readers with Scriptural truths that had been recorded in the Bible. The first of such tracts offered “further reading matter to assist in Bible study, with a view to getting rid of all false traditions of men and to the full recovery of the old theology of our Lord and the apostles.”—*The Old Theology*, No. 1, April 1889, p. 32.

⁶ What marvelous truths have been uncovered since that small beginning over 100 years ago!* These truths are not dull, academic matters to be debated by theologians. They are thrilling, liberating truths that give meaning to our lives and fill us with joy and hope. They help us to come to know Jehovah—his loving

* You will benefit from viewing the DVD presentations *Jehovah’s Witnesses—Faith in Action, Part 1: Out of Darkness* and *Jehovah’s Witnesses—Faith in Action, Part 2: Let the Light Shine*.

5. What was the objective of the series of tracts called *The Old Theology*?

6, 7. (a) What truths have we been helped to understand since the 1870’s? (b) What truths have you particularly appreciated learning?

3. What became of “the true knowledge” following the death of the apostles?

4. How did a group of Christians in the 1870’s begin to search for “the true knowledge”?

personality and his purposes. They also clarify Jesus' role, explain why he lived and died, and point out what he is doing now. These precious truths reveal why God permits evil, why we die, how we should pray, and how we can be truly happy.

⁷ We can now grasp the meaning of prophecies that remained a "secret" for ages but are now being fulfilled in this time of the end. (Dan. 12:9) These include those found throughout the Scriptures, especially in the Gospels and the book of Revelation. Jehovah has even helped us understand events that we could not see with our eyes—the enthronement of Jesus, the war in heaven, and the hurling of Satan down to the earth. (Rev. 12:7-12) God has also given us insight into the meaning of what we *can* see—wars, earthquakes, pestilences, food shortages, as well as godless people who contribute to these "critical times hard to deal with."—2 Tim. 3:1-5; Luke 21:10, 11.

⁸ It is easy for us to relate to what Jesus told his disciples: "Happy are the eyes that behold the things you are beholding. For I say to you, Many prophets and kings desired to see the things you are beholding but did not see them, and to hear the things you are hearing but did not hear them." (Luke 10:23, 24) We give credit to Jehovah God for enabling us to see and hear such things. And how grateful we are that "the helper," God's holy spirit, has been sent to guide Jesus' followers "into all the truth"! (**Read John 16:7, 13.**) May we always treasure "the true knowledge" and unselfishly share it with others!

8. To whom do we give credit for the things we have come to see and hear?

"MANY" EMBRACE "THE TRUE KNOWLEDGE"

⁹ In April 1881, less than two years after the first issue of the *Watch Tower* was published, this magazine put out a call for 1,000 preachers. The article read: "To those so situated that they can give one-half or more of their time exclusively to the work of the Lord, we have a plan to suggest . . . , viz: That you go forth into large or small cities, according to your ability, as Colporteurs or Evangelists, seek to find in every place the earnest Christians, many of whom you will find possessed of a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge; to these seek to make known the riches of Our Father's grace, and the beauties of His word."

¹⁰ That call showed that the Bible Students recognized that an essential work of true Christians is to preach the good news. But the call for 1,000 full-time preachers was optimistic, since only a few hundred attended the meetings of the Bible Students at that time. After reading a tract or a magazine, however, many people recognized the ring of truth and readily responded to the call. For example, after reading an issue of the *Watch Tower* and a booklet published by the Bible Students, in 1882 a reader from London, England, wrote: "Please instruct me how and what to preach so as to accomplish the blessed work God wishes done."

¹¹ By 1885, about 300 Bible Students were sharing in the colporteur service.

9. What call went out in the April 1881 issue of this magazine?

10. How did people respond to the call for full-time preachers?

11, 12. (a) What objective do we have in common with the colporteurs? (b) How did the colporteurs establish "classes," or congregations?

Those full-time ministers had the same objective as we do today—that of making disciples of Jesus Christ. However, their methods differed from ours. Today, we typically study the Bible with one person at a time, providing individual instruction. We then invite the Bible student to associate with a congregation already established. In the early days, the colporteurs placed books and then gathered interested ones together to study the Scriptures as a group. Instead of studying with individuals, they established “classes,” or congregations.

¹² In 1907, for instance, one group of colporteurs canvassed a certain city to find those who already had copies of *Millennial Dawn* (also called *Studies in the Scriptures*). The *Watch Tower* reported: “These [interested ones] were gathered to a little meeting in one of their homes. The Colporteur talked over with them the Divine Plan of the Ages for a whole Sunday, and on the following Sunday he urged that they have regular meetings.”

Early Bible Students were humble people
who sincerely desired to do God’s will



In 1911, the brothers modified the procedure. Fifty-eight special traveling ministers gave public lectures throughout the United States and Canada. These brothers obtained the names and addresses of interested people who attended the lectures and organized them to meet together in private homes to form new “classes.” By 1914, there were 1,200 congregations of Bible Students worldwide.

¹³ Today, there are about 109,400 congregations throughout the world, and some 895,800 brothers and sisters serve as pioneers. Nearly eight million people now accept “the true knowledge,” applying it in their lives. (***Read Isaiah 60:22.***)* This is particularly impressive, since Jesus foretold that his disciples would be “objects of hatred by all people” because of his name. He added that his followers would be persecuted, imprisoned, and even killed. (Luke 21:12-17) Despite the opposition of Satan, his demons, and opposers among mankind, Jehovah’s people have enjoyed phenomenal success in carrying out their commission to make disciples. Today, they are preaching in “all the inhabited earth,” from tropical jungles to frigid tundra, in mountains, in deserts, in cities, and in the most remote countryside. (Matt. 24: 14) This could never have been accomplished without divine backing.

“THE TRUE KNOWLEDGE” BECOMES “ABUNDANT”

¹⁴ “The true knowledge” has become abundant through the many who are

* See *Isaiah’s Prophecy—Light for All Mankind II*, page 320.

13. What impresses you about the scope of “the true knowledge” today?

14. How has “the true knowledge” become widely known through the printed word?

proclaiming the good news. It has also become abundant through the printed word. In July 1879, the Bible Students published the first issue of this magazine, which bore the title *Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence*. That issue, printed by a commercial firm, had a printing of 6,000 copies in English only. Twenty-seven-year-old Charles Taze Russell was chosen to be the editor, with five other mature Bible Students serving as regular contributors. *The Watchtower* is now published in 195 languages. It is the most widely circulated magazine on earth, with a circulation of 42,182,000 copies each issue. In second place is its companion magazine *Awake!* with a circulation of 41,042,000 in 84 languages. Additionally, about 100 million books and Bibles are printed each year.

¹⁵ This mammoth work is financed by means of voluntary donations. (**Read *Matthew 10:8*.**) That alone is staggering to those in the printing industry who understand the cost of presses, paper, ink, and other materials. A brother who is involved in global purchasing said: "Business people who visit our printeries are amazed that such a technologically advanced, high-production facility can be financed by voluntary donations. They are equally impressed that our Bethel workforce is so young and happy."

KNOWLEDGE OF GOD WILL FILL THE EARTH

¹⁶ "The true knowledge" has become abundant for a good purpose. God's will is that "all sorts of men should be saved and come to an accurate knowl-

15. How is our printing operation financed?

16. What is the purpose of making "the true knowledge" known?



Jehovah values your efforts in spreading "the true knowledge" of God

edge of truth." (1 Tim. 2:3, 4) Jehovah wants people to come to know the truth so that they can worship him properly and receive his blessing. By making "the true knowledge" known, Jehovah has gathered a faithful remnant of anointed Christians. Out of "all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues," he is also gathering "a great crowd," who have the hope of living forever on earth. —Rev. 7:9.

¹⁷ The expansion of true worship over the past 130 years points to the overwhelming conclusion that God and his appointed King, Jesus Christ, have been with Jehovah's servants on earth —directing, protecting, organizing, and educating them. Their growth also underscores the certainty that Jehovah's promises for the future will be fulfilled. "The earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters are covering the very sea." (Isa. 11:9) What blessings mankind will then experience!

17. To what does the expansion of true worship point?



“There Exists a Reward for Your Activity”

AT THE head of his army, King Asa hastens down the deep valley from the Judean highlands to the coastal plain. Where the valley widens, Asa pauses and gasps. Below him is an enemy camp—and it is huge! Those Ethiopian troops must number one million—literally. Asa’s army totals a little over half that many men.

In the face of an impending battle, what occupies Asa more than anything else? Orders for his generals? Encouragement for his troops? Letters to his family? No, indeed! Faced with this crisis, Asa prays.

Before we review that prayer and examine what happened on this occasion, consider the kind of man Asa was. What made him act the way he did? Was he justified in seeking God’s help? What does the account regarding Asa tell us about how Jehovah blesses the activities of His servants?

ASA’S RECORD

During the 20 years that followed the division of Israel into two kingdoms, Judah had become thoroughly corrupted by pagan practices. When Asa became king in 977 B.C.E., even the royal court was tainted by the worship of Canaanite fertility gods. But the inspired chronicle of Asa’s reign says that he “proceeded to do what was good and right in the eyes of Jehovah his God.” Asa “removed the foreign altars and the high places and broke up the sacred pillars and cut down the sacred poles.” (2 Chron. 14:2, 3) Asa

also ousted from the kingdom of Judah “the male temple prostitutes,” who practiced sodomy in the name of religion. Asa did not limit himself to these purges. He also urged the people to “search for Jehovah the God of their forefathers” and to observe “the law and the commandment” of God.—1 Ki. 15:12, 13; 2 Chron. 14:4.

Pleased with Asa’s zeal for true worship, Jehovah rewarded him with years of peace. The king could thus say: “We have searched for Jehovah our God. We have searched, and he gives us rest all around.” The people made use of this situation by fortifying the cities of the kingdom of Judah. “They went building and proving successful,” says the Biblical account.—2 Chron. 14:1, 6, 7.

ON THE BATTLEFIELD

In view of Asa’s record, we should not be surprised that he prayed when confronted with the largest human army mentioned in the Scriptures. Asa knew that God rewards acts of faith. In his prayer, the king pleaded for Jehovah’s help. Asa recognized that if he relied on God and had his backing, it did not matter how numerous or powerful the enemy was. Jehovah’s name was involved in this conflict, and Asa therefore appealed to God on that basis. The king prayed: “Help us, O Jehovah our God, for upon you we do lean, and in your name we have come against this crowd. O Jehovah, you are our God. Do not let mortal man retain strength against you.” (2 Chron. 14:11) That was like saying: ‘The Ethi-



Jehovah rewards faithful ones who wage spiritual warfare

opian invasion is an attack on you, Jehovah. Do not allow your name to be dishonored by permitting weak humans to overthrow those who bear your name.’ So it was that “Jehovah defeated the Ethiopians before Asa and before Judah, and the Ethiopians took to flight.”—2 Chron. 14:12.

Today, Jehovah’s people face many powerful opponents. We will not fight them with material weapons on a literal battlefield. Yet, we can be sure that Jehovah will reward with victory all faithful ones who wage spiritual warfare in his name. Our personal battles may include exertion to resist the pervading spirit of moral laxity, to fight our own weaknesses, or to protect our family from defiling influences. Whatever adversity we face, however, we can find encouragement in Asa’s prayer. His victory was Jehovah’s victory. It showed what can be expected by all who rely upon God. No human power can withstand Jehovah.

ENCOURAGEMENT AND A WARNING

On his return from battle, Asa was met by Azariah. This prophet gave both encouragement and a warning: “Hear me, O Asa and all Judah and Benjamin! Jehovah is with you as long as you prove to be with him; and if you search for him, he will let himself be found by you, but if you leave him he will leave you. . . . Be courageous and do not let your hands drop down, because there exists a reward for your activity.”—2 Chron. 15:1, 2, 7.

These words can strengthen our faith. They show that Jehovah will be with us as long as we serve him faithfully. When we cry out to him for help, we can be confident that he hears us. “Be courageous,” said Azariah. It often takes great courage to do what is right, but we know that we can do so with Jehovah’s help.

Because Asa’s grandmother Maacah had made “a horrible idol to the sacred pole,” Asa faced the difficult task of removing her from her royal position as “lady.” He met the challenge and also burned her idol. (1 Ki. 15:13) Asa was blessed for his resolve and courage. We too must stick unflinchingly to Jehovah and his righteous standards whether our relatives are loyal to God or not. If we do, Jehovah will reward us for our faithful conduct.

Part of Asa’s reward was to see many Israelites from the apostate northern kingdom flow into Judah when they observed that Jehovah was with him. They appreciated pure worship so much that they chose to leave their homes in order to live among servants of Jehovah. Asa and all Judah then joyfully entered into ‘a covenant to search for Jehovah with all their heart and soul.’ The result? God “let himself be found by them; and Jehovah continued to give them rest all around.” (2 Chron. 15:9-15) How we rejoice when lovers of righteousness embrace the pure worship of Jehovah!

However, there was also an ominous side to the words of the prophet Azariah. He warned: “If you leave [Jehovah] he will leave you.” Never may



Courage
is needed
to do what
is right in
Jehovah's
eyes

that happen to us, for the consequences can be tragic! (2 Pet. 2:20-22) The Scriptures do not reveal why Jehovah sent Asa this warning, but the king failed to heed it.

**“YOU HAVE ACTED
FOOLISHLY”**

In the 36th year of Asa's reign, King Baasha of Israel made hostile moves against Judah. Perhaps to prevent his subjects from expressing loyalty to Asa and pure worship, Baasha began to fortify the border city of Ramah, five miles (8 km) north of Jerusalem. Instead of seeking God's help as he had when facing the Ethiopian invasion, Asa sought human help. He sent a gift to the king of Syria, asking him to attack the northern kingdom of Israel. When the Syrians carried out some attacks, Baasha withdrew from Ramah.—2 Chron. 16:1-5.

Jehovah was not pleased with Asa and sent the prophet Hanani to tell him so. Being aware of how God had dealt with the Ethiopians, Asa should have learned that Jehovah's "eyes are roving about through all the earth to show his strength in behalf of those whose heart is complete toward him." Perhaps Asa received bad advice or did not consider Baasha and his forces to be such a great threat and thought that he could handle it on his own. In any case, Asa resorted to human reasoning and failed to rely upon Jehovah. "You have acted foolishly respecting this," said Hanani, "for from now on there will exist wars against you."—2 Chron. 16:7-9.

Asa reacted badly. In a rage, he threw the prophet Hanani into the stocks. (2 Chron. 16:10) Could Asa have thought, 'Do I deserve to be re-proved after being faithful for many years?' Now in his advancing years, had he lost some of his reasoning powers? The Bible does not say.

In the 39th year of his reign, Asa became very ill with an ailment in his feet. "Even in his sickness he searched not for Jehovah but for the healers," says the account. At that time, Asa seems to have been neglecting his spiritual health. Evidently in that condition and frame of mind, he died in the 41st year of his rule.—2 Chron. 16:12-14.

Nevertheless, Asa's good qualities and zeal for pure worship seem to have outweighed his errors. He never stopped serving Jehovah. (1 Ki. 15:14) From that standpoint, then, what can his life story teach us? It can help us to realize that we ought to reflect on how Jehovah helped us in the past, for such treasured memories can move us to pray for his assistance when we face new trials. Yet, we should not presume that we need no Scriptural counsel inasmuch as we have served God faithfully for years. Regardless of our record, Jehovah will reprove us if we err. We need to accept such correction mildly so that we benefit from it. Most important of all, our heavenly Father will be with us as long as we prove to be with him. Jehovah's eyes search the whole earth for those acting faithfully toward him. He rewards them by exerting his power in their behalf. Jehovah did that for Asa, and He can do it for us.



CARRY ON AS KINGDOM CITIZENS!

“Carry on as citizens.”

—PHIL. 1:27, ftn.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

Who can be Kingdom citizens?

What do we need to do regarding the Kingdom’s language, history, and laws?

How do Kingdom citizens show that they love God’s standards?

THE apostle Paul encouraged the congregation in Philippi to “behave in a manner worthy of the good news.” (*Read Philippians 1:27.*) The Greek expression that Paul used for the word “behave” may also be rendered “carry on as citizens.” That phrase had special significance for the congregation in Philippi. Why? Because it seems that Philippi was one of a select group of cities where the inhabitants had been granted a form of Roman citizenship. Roman citizens in Philippi and throughout the Roman Empire were proud of their status and enjoyed special protection under Roman law.

² Members of the congregation in Philippi had greater reason for being proud. Paul reminded them that as anointed Christians their citizenship existed “in the heavens.” (Phil. 3:20) They were citizens, not of a mere human empire, but of God’s Kingdom. As such, they enjoyed unparalleled protection and benefits.—Eph. 2:19-22.

³ Paul’s admonition to “carry on as citizens” applies principally to those who will rule with Christ in heaven. (Phil. 3:20) But by extension, it can be applied to those who will be the earthly subjects of God’s Kingdom. Why? Because all dedicated Christians serve the same King, Jehovah, and must live up to the same standards. (Eph. 4:4-6) Today, people work hard to qualify to become citizens of a prosperous country. How much more should we value the opportunity to be Kingdom citizens! To deepen our appreciation for that privilege, let us consider

1, 2. Why did Paul’s counsel to the congregation in Philippi have special significance?

3. (a) Who have the opportunity to be Kingdom citizens?
(b) What will we consider in this article?

some similarities between the requirements for becoming a citizen of a human government and a citizen of God's Kingdom. We will then examine three things we must do if we are to retain the honor of being Kingdom citizens.

REQUIREMENTS FOR CITIZENSHIP

4 Learn the language. Some human governments require that those applying for citizenship speak the dominant language of the country. Even after being granted citizenship, people may strive for years to master the new language. They may quickly learn the rules of grammar but may take some time to learn to pronounce the words correctly. Similarly, God's Kingdom requires that its citizens learn what the Bible calls the "pure language." (*Read Zephaniah 3:9.*) What is that language? It is the truth about God and about his purposes as found in the Bible. We "speak" the pure language when our conduct is in accord with God's laws and principles. Citizens of God's Kingdom may learn basic Bible teachings quickly and get baptized. Even after their baptism, however, they must strive to "speak" the pure language better and better. In what way? Each of us needs to close the gap between what we know about Bible principles and what we practice.

5 Study history. A person desiring to become a citizen of a human government might have to learn something about that government's history. Likewise, those desiring to be Kingdom citizens do well to learn all they can about God's Kingdom. Consider the example

4. What is the pure language, and how do we "speak" it?

5. Why should we learn all we can about the history of Jehovah's organization?



Like the sons of Korah, do you find delight in pure worship and its history?

set by the sons of Korah, who served in ancient Israel. They took great delight in Jerusalem and its place of worship and in recounting the city's history. It was not the stones and mortar that impressed them most but what the city and that place of worship represented. Jerusalem was "the town of the grand King," Jehovah, for it was the center of pure worship. It was there that Jehovah's Law was taught. It was to the people ruled by the King of Jerusalem that Jehovah expressed his loving-kindness. (*Read Psalm 48:1, 2, 9, 12, 13.*) Like them, do you have a desire to study and recount the history of the earthly part of Jehovah's organization? The more you learn about God's organization and how Jehovah supports his people, the more real God's Kingdom will be to you. Your

desire to preach the good news of the Kingdom will naturally intensify.—Jer. 9: 24; Luke 4:43.

⁶ **Know the laws.** Human governments require that their subjects learn and obey the laws of the land. It seems only reasonable, then, that Jehovah should expect us to learn and obey the laws and principles that govern all Kingdom citizens. (Isa. 2:3; John 15: 10; 1 John 5:3) Human laws are often flawed and may be unfair. In contrast, “the law of Jehovah is perfect.” (Ps. 19:7) Do we delight in God’s law and read his Word each day? (Ps. 1:1, 2) The only way we can learn God’s law is to study it for ourselves. Nobody else can do this for us.

KINGDOM CITIZENS LOVE GOD’S STANDARDS

⁷ To remain Kingdom citizens, we need not only to know God’s standards but also to love them. Many citizens of human governments *say* that they agree with the laws and standards of the country in which they live. However, when they find a requirement to be inconvenient and feel that nobody is looking, they break the law. Often, these people are “men pleasers.” (Col. 3:22) Kingdom citizens live by a higher standard. We gladly obey God’s laws, even when no other human is looking. Why? Because we love the Lawmaker.—Isa. 33: 22; *read Luke 10:27.*

⁸ How can you know whether you

6. Why is it reasonable that Jehovah requires us to learn and obey Kingdom laws and principles?

7. Kingdom citizens live by what higher standard?

8, 9. How can you know whether you truly love God’s laws?

truly love God’s laws? Examine the way you react when you receive counsel about what you feel is a personal preference—for example, on the matter of dress and grooming. Before becoming a Kingdom citizen, you may have preferred to dress sloppily or provocatively. As your love for God grew, you learned to dress in a way that honors him. (1 Tim. 2:9, 10; 1 Pet. 3:3, 4) You may feel that you now dress modestly. But what if an elder was to tell you that your preference in attire is causing serious offense to a number of publishers in the congregation? How would you respond? Would you become defensive, resentful, or stubborn? A foundation law of God’s Kingdom is that all citizens imitate Christ. (1 Pet. 2:21) Regarding Jesus’ example, the apostle Paul wrote: “Let each of us please his neighbor in what is good for his upbuilding. For even the Christ did not please himself.” (Rom. 15:2, 3) For the sake of peace in the congregation, a mature Christian is willing to yield without resentment to the consciences of others.—Rom. 14:19-21.

⁹ Consider two more topics of vital concern: our attitude toward sex and our view of marriage. Those who are not yet citizens of God’s Kingdom may condone homosexuality, consider pornography to be harmless fun, and think that adultery and divorce are purely personal matters. Kingdom citizens have abandoned such shortsighted, self-centered attitudes. Although many Christians formerly had an immoral lifestyle, they now view sex and marriage as gifts from God. They treasure Jehovah’s high standards and wholeheartedly agree that those who continue to engage in sexual misconduct are not worthy of being

Kingdom citizens. (1 Cor. 6:9-11) However, they also recognize that the heart is treacherous. (Jer. 17:9) So they appreciate receiving specific warnings that help them to maintain high moral standards.

KINGDOM CITIZENS APPRECIATE WARNINGS

¹⁰ Human governments may provide health alerts regarding foods and medicines. Obviously, not all foods and medicines are bad. But if a specific product poses a threat, the government may issue balanced warnings to protect its citizens. If the government did not do

Do you heed Bible-based warnings about the Internet?

so, it would be guilty of negligence. Similarly, God's Kingdom issues timely warnings about specific moral and spiritual dangers. For instance, the Internet has become a useful way to provide communication, education, and entertainment. God's organization makes use of the Internet and accomplishes much good with it. However, many sites on the Internet are morally and spiritually dangerous. Web sites that promote pornography pose an obvious threat to the spiritual health of Kingdom citizens. For decades, the faithful slave class has warned us about such sites. How grateful we are for these spiritual health alerts!

10, 11. What timely warnings does God's Kingdom issue, and how do you feel about such warnings?

¹¹ In recent years, another type of site has become very popular—one that can be useful if used with great caution. But these sites, known as social networking Web sites, also have the potential for being destructive. They can expose a person to bad associations. (1 Cor. 15:33) Little wonder, then, that God's organization has issued balanced warnings about the use of such sites. Have you read all the recent material published by the faithful slave about the use of social networking sites? How unwise it would be to use such sites without reading that material!* It would be like taking a powerful medicine without reading the warning label on the bottle.

¹² Those who ignore warnings issued by the faithful slave inevitably cause harm to themselves and to their loved ones. Some have become addicted to viewing pornography or have committed immorality and then deluded themselves into thinking that Jehovah cannot see what they are doing. How foolish to believe that we can hide our conduct from Jehovah! (Prov. 15:3; *read Hebrews 4:13.*) God wants to help such ones and prompts his earthly representatives to try to assist them. (Gal. 6:1) However, just as human governments can revoke the citizenship of a person who commits certain acts, Jehovah will revoke the citizenship of those who unrepentantly break his standards.[#] (1 Cor. 5:11-13) Nevertheless, he is merciful. Those who repent and change their course of conduct can regain a good standing with Je-

* For example, see *Awake!* July 2011, pages 24-27; August 2011, pages 10-13; and February 2012, pages 3-9.

[#] See *The Watchtower* of March 15, 2012, pages 30-31.

12. Why is it foolish to ignore warnings?

hovah and remain as Kingdom citizens. (2 Cor. 2:5-8) What an honor we have to serve such a loving King!

KINGDOM CITIZENS VALUE EDUCATION

¹³ Many human governments work hard to educate their citizens. They organize schools that promote literacy and teach practical work skills. Kingdom citizens appreciate these secular schools and diligently learn to read, write, and support themselves financially. They value even more highly the education they receive as citizens of God's Kingdom. Through the Christian congregation, Jehovah promotes literacy. Parents are encouraged to read to their young children. Each month, the faithful slave publishes a number of pages of Bible-based material in *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* If you read a couple of pages each day of the month, you will be keeping up with this vital channel of Kingdom education.

¹⁴ Each week, Kingdom citizens receive training at their congregation meetings. For example, the Theocratic Ministry School has for over six decades helped students to be effective teachers of God's Word. Are you enrolled in this school? In recent years the faithful slave has particularly promoted the weekly Family Worship evening. This arrangement strengthens the family unit. Have you been able to apply the suggestions published in our literature?*

* See *The Watchtower*, August 15, 2011, pages 6-7 and *Our Kingdom Ministry*, January 2011, pages 3-6.

13. How do Kingdom citizens show that they value education?

14. (a) What training do we receive? (b) What suggestions for Family Worship evening have you enjoyed applying?



Your Family Worship evening can do much to make you and your loved ones fine Kingdom citizens

¹⁵ Citizens of human governments will publicly rally support for a political party, even going from door to door to do so. On a much larger scale, Kingdom citizens vigorously support God's Kingdom both on the street and from door to door. In fact, as mentioned in the preceding study article, *The Watchtower*, which announces Jehovah's Kingdom, is now the most widely distributed journal on earth! One of the greatest privileges we have is that of telling others about God's Kingdom. Are you zealously engaging in the preaching work?—Matt. 28:19, 20.

¹⁶ Soon God's Kingdom will be the only government ruling the earth. It will oversee all aspects of daily life, not only spiritual but also civil. Will you be a good citizen of God's Kingdom at that time? Now is the time to prove that you will be. In all the decisions you make each day, do all things for Jehovah's glory and thus prove that you are carrying on as a good citizen of God's Kingdom.—1 Cor. 10:31.

15. What is one of the greatest privileges that we have?

16. How can you prove that you are a good citizen of God's Kingdom?

A Meeting Marked by Unity and Thrilling Plans

ANNUAL meetings of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania always generate excitement. How true that was of the 127th annual meeting, held on Saturday, October 1, 2011! Invited guests from all over the world gathered at the Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses in Jersey City, New Jersey, U.S.A.

Gerrit Lösch of the Governing Body welcomed the happy throng. He told the delegates from some 85 countries that they enjoy unique international unity. Such unity is a good witness and glorifies Jehovah. Actually, unity was a recurring theme of this meeting.

A GOOD REPORT FROM MEXICO

The first part on the program exemplified the unity of Jehovah's people. Baltasar Perla interviewed three fellow members of the Mexico Bethel family regarding the merger of six Central American branch offices with the Mexico branch. Because of this merger, the Bethel fami-

ly in Mexico has become more multicultural and international. The influx of fellow believers from different lands has resulted in an interchange of encouragement. It is as if God took a huge eraser and eliminated national borders.

One challenge the merger presented was that of helping publishers feel that they are not isolated from Jehovah's organization even though branch offices no longer function in their countries. To that end, each congregation has a secure e-mail connection so that even those in isolated areas can communicate directly with the branch office.

AN UPDATE FROM JAPAN

James Linton from the Japan branch explained how our brothers were affected by the earthquake and tsunamis that struck that land in March 2011. Many Witnesses lost their loved ones as well as their belongings. Over 3,100 homes and hundreds of vehicles were offered by Witnesses outside the affected area. Volunteers associated with Regional Building Committees worked nonstop to repair brothers' homes. More than 1,700 volunteered to serve wherever needed. A team of volunteers from the United States assisted with Kingdom Hall restoration, and 575 volunteers worked on this project.

Much attention has been given to the spiritual and emotional well-being of those affected. Over 400 elders have served where shepherding was needed. The Governing Body's concern was evident when two zone overseers from world headquarters traveled to the disaster area to offer encouragement. Expressions of concern on the part of Witnesses worldwide have been a source of great comfort.

Six branches were combined under the direction of the Mexico branch



LEGAL VICTORIES

The audience paid rapt attention as Stephen Hardy from the Britain branch led a discussion of recent legal victories. For instance, the French government was demanding \$82 million (U.S.) in taxes from the association we use in France. The issue was resolved when the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruled in our favor, stating that the French government had violated Article 9 of the European Convention, which protects religious freedom. The wording of the decision shows that this case was not about money, for it read: "Refusing to recognize a religious association, bringing about its dissolution, the use of derogatory language toward a religious movement, are all examples of interference with the right guaranteed by Article 9 of the Convention."

The ECHR also ruled in our favor in a case involving Armenia. Since 1965 the ECHR had held that the European Convention did not protect individuals from obligatory military service. The Grand Chamber—the highest level of the European Court—ruled that "opposition to military service, where it is motivated by a serious and insurmountable conflict," ought to be guaranteed by the European Convention. This decision obligates Armenia and such countries as Azerbaijan and Turkey to recognize the same right.

CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

Guy Pierce of the Governing Body spoke next and acknowledged that all present were curious about our construction projects in New York State. He introduced a video showing developments at Wallkill, Patterson, and recently acquired sites in Warwick and Tuxedo, New York. At Wallkill, a new residence due to be completed in 2014 will provide over 300 additional rooms.

There are plans to develop a 248-acre (100 ha) property at Warwick. "Although we are not yet certain of Jehovah's will regarding Warwick," said Brother Pierce, "we are proceeding to develop the site with the intention of relocating the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses there." Plans are also being made to use a 50-acre



Prospective design of world headquarters
of Jehovah's Witnesses at Warwick, New York

(20 ha) parcel of land situated six miles (10 km) north of Warwick to facilitate the staging of machinery and building material. "Once construction is permitted, we hope to complete the entire project within four years," said Brother Pierce. "Then our property in Brooklyn can be sold."

"Has the Governing Body changed its mind about the closeness of the great tribulation?" asked Brother Pierce. "Not at all," he answered. "If the great tribulation interrupts our plans, that will be wonderful, absolutely wonderful!"

BEWARE OF THE ROARING LION

Stephen Lett, another member of the Governing Body, next discussed 1 Peter 5:8: "Keep your senses, be watchful. Your adversary, the Devil, walks about like a roaring lion, seeking to devour someone." Brother Lett stated that several characteristics of lions make Peter's illustration an apt description of the Devil.

Since lions are stronger and faster than humans, we should not try to fight or outrun Satan in our own strength. We need Jehovah's help. (Isa. 40:31) A lion hunts stealthily, so we must avoid the spiritual darkness in which Satan seeks his prey. Just as a lion kills a harmless antelope or a sleeping baby zebra, so Satan is merciless and would love to kill us. And after a lion has satisfied

its hunger, the victims are often unrecognizable, just as “the final conditions” of Satan’s spiritual victims “become worse for them than the first.” (2 Pet. 2:20) So we need to take our stand against Satan and hold firmly to the Bible principles we have learned.—1 Pet. 5:9.

APPRECIATE YOUR PLACE IN JEHOVAH’S HOUSE

“We all have a place in Jehovah’s house,” said the next speaker, Samuel Herd of the Governing Body. All Christians have a place in God’s “house”—his spiritual temple—the arrangement to worship him on the basis of Jesus’ ransom sacrifice. It is a place to be cherished as a precious privilege. Like David, we desire to “dwell in the house of Jehovah all the days of [our] life.”—Ps. 27:4.

Brother Herd referred to Psalm 92:12-14 and asked, “How does Jehovah enable us to flourish?” He answered: “In the spiritual paradise, God keeps us warm, protects us, and gives us refresh-

ing waters of truth. Let us thank him for that.” Brother Herd then urged the audience: “Let us be content to stay in Jehovah’s house—not just for a short while but forever.”

CHRISTIANS RESPECT GOD’S WORD

David Splane, also of the Governing Body, explained in the next talk that true Christians have always respected God’s Word. In the first century, they relied on it to settle the circumcision issue. (Acts 15:16, 17) But some nominal second-century Christians who had been trained in Greek philosophy began to put their intellectual satisfaction ahead of the Scriptures. Later, others replaced Bible teachings with the opinions of the so-called Church Fathers and Roman emperors, spawning many false doctrines.

Brother Splane pointed out that in an illustration, Jesus indicated that there would continue to be genuine anointed Christians on earth to defend the truth. (Matt. 13:24-30) We cannot say for sure who they were. Through the centuries,



GETTING BETTER ACQUAINTED

The program also featured an interview with five of the nine surviving widows of Governing Body members. Sisters Marina Sydlik, Edith Suiter, Melita Jaracz, Melba Barry, and Sydney Barber told how they learned the truth and entered the full-time service. Each one shared with the audience treasured memories, thoughts about her husband, and the blessings they enjoyed together. As a moving conclusion to these interviews, the audience sang song number 86, entitled “Faithful Women, Christian Sisters.”

however, many have denounced unscriptural beliefs and practices. Some of these were Archbishop Agobard of Lyons in the 9th century, Peter of Bruys, Henry of Lausanne, and Valdès (or, Waldo) in the 12th century, John Wycliffe in the 14th century, William Tyndale in the 16th century, and Henry Grew and George Storrs in the 19th century. Jehovah's Witnesses today continue to uphold Scriptural standards and recognize the Bible as the foundation of truth. That is why the Governing Body has chosen as our 2012 year-text John 17:17: "Your word is truth."

THRILLING ADJUSTMENTS FOR TRAINING AND SERVICE

An announcement made by Anthony Morris of the Governing Body outlined adjustments for missionaries and special pioneers. As of September 2012, classes of the Bible School for Christian Couples will be held in selected countries. The focus of Gilead School has been changed. Starting last October, all those trained at Gilead will

already have been in some form of special full-time service—as missionaries who have not been to Gilead, special pioneers, traveling overseers, or Bethelites. Graduates will be used to strengthen and stabilize God's people either from branch offices, in the traveling work, or in densely populated areas where they can encourage congregations in the preaching work.

Additional special pioneers will open up territories in remote and isolated areas. As of January 1, 2012, some graduates of the Bible School for Single Brothers and the Bible School for Christian Couples were to be assigned as temporary special pioneers and used to open up and expand the work in remote areas. They were to have special pioneer assignments one year at a time for up to three years. Those proving effective may receive permanent assignments.

The 2011 annual meeting was a time of joy. We look to Jehovah to bless the new arrangements to intensify our preaching activity and further unify the brotherhood—all to his glory and praise.



(Top) Daniel and Marina Sydlik;
Grant and Edith Suiter;
Theodore and Melita Jaracz



(Bottom) Lloyd and Melba Barry;
Carey and Sydney Barber





*“Come . . . out
from the snare
of the Devil.”*

—2 TIM. 2:26.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

What self-examination is needed if you are inclined to be unduly critical of others?

From the examples of Pilate and Peter, what can you learn about not giving in to fear and pressure?

How can you avoid the feeling of excessive guilt?

BEWARE OF THE DEVIL’S SNARES!

THE Devil stalks Jehovah’s servants. His goal is not necessarily to destroy them, as a big-game hunter kills prey. Rather, the Devil’s main goal is to capture his quarry alive and use the person as he sees fit.—*Read 2 Timothy 2:24-26.*

² To catch prey alive, a trapper may use a snare of some sort. He may try to get the animal to come out into the open where he can capture it with a noose. Or he may use a hidden trap that has a trigger and takes the animal by surprise. The Devil uses similar snares to catch God’s servants alive. If we want to avoid being caught, we must be alert and heed warning signs indicating that one of Satan’s snares, or traps, is nearby. This article will consider how we can guard against three of the traps that the Devil has used with a measure of success. These are (1) uncontrolled speech, (2) fear and pressure, and (3) excessive guilt. The next article will consider two additional traps, or snares, of Satan.

QUENCH THE FIRE OF UNCONTROLLED SPEECH

³ To flush animals out of hiding, a hunter may set a section of vegetation ablaze, catching the animals as they try to escape. In a figurative sense, the Devil would like to set the Christian congregation ablaze. If he succeeds, he can drive its members away from that safe haven right into his clutches. How might we unwittingly collaborate with him and thus be entrapped by him?

1, 2. What snares of the Devil will we consider in this article?

3, 4. Failure to control our tongue could result in what? Give an example.

⁴ The disciple James likened the tongue to a fire. (*Read James 3:6-8.*) If we fail to control our tongue, we could start a figurative wildfire in the congregation. How might this happen? Consider the following scenario: At a congregation meeting, an announcement is made that a certain sister has been appointed a regular pioneer. After the meeting, two publishers discuss this announcement. One expresses joy and has good wishes for the new pioneer. The other questions the pioneer's motives and implies that she is merely seeking prominence in the congregation. Which of those two publishers would you like to have as a friend? It is not hard to see which one is more likely to set the congregation ablaze through her speech.

Uncontrolled speech can set the congregation ablaze with problems



⁵ How can we quench the fire of uncontrolled speech? Jesus said: "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." (Matt. 12:34) So the first step is to examine our own heart. Do we shun the bad feelings that fuel destructive speech? For example, when we hear that a brother is reaching out for some privilege of service, do we readily believe that his motives are pure, or do we suspect that he is driven by self-interest? If we have a tendency to be cynical, it is good to remember that the Devil questioned the motives of God's faithful servant Job. (Job 1:9-11) Rather than being suspicious of our brother, we would do well to consider why we are critical of him. Do we really have good reason for being that way? Or has our heart been poisoned by the unloving spirit so prevalent during these last days?—2 Tim. 3:1-4.

⁶ Consider some other reasons why we might be critical of others. One could be that we desire to make our own accomplishments more noticeable. In effect, we may be attempting to look taller by pushing others down. Or we may be trying to excuse our own failure to take positive action. Whether pride, envy, or insecurity is driving us, the result is destructive.

⁷ It could be that we feel justified in speaking critically of someone. Perhaps we have been the victim of his or her uncontrolled speech. If that is the case, retaliating in kind is not the answer. Doing so only adds fuel to the fire and works in harmony with the Devil's will, not

5. To quench the fire of uncontrolled speech, what self-examination would we do well to conduct?

6, 7. (a) What are some reasons why we might be critical of others? (b) How should we respond if we are reviled?

God's. (2 Tim. 2:26) We do well to imitate Jesus in this regard. When he was being reviled, "he did not go reviling in return." Instead, he "kept on committing himself to the one who judges righteously." (1 Pet. 2:21-23) Jesus was confident that Jehovah would take care of matters in His own way and time. We should have the same trust in God. When we use our speech to heal, we help to preserve "the uniting bond of peace" in our congregation.—*Read Ephesians 4:1-3.*

ESCAPE THE NOOSE OF FEAR AND PRESSURE

⁸ An animal caught in a snare loses control over its freedom of movement. Similarly, a person who succumbs to fear and related pressure has given up at least some control of his life. (*Read Proverbs 29:25.*) Let us consider the examples of two very different men who yielded to pressure and to fear and see what we can learn from their experience.

⁹ The Roman Governor Pontius Pilate knew that Jesus was an innocent man and apparently did not want to harm him. In fact, Pilate said that Jesus had done "nothing deserving of death." Nevertheless, Pilate condemned him to death. Why? Because Pilate succumbed to pressure from the mob. (Luke 23: 15, 21-25) "If you release this man, you are not a friend of Caesar," cried those opposers, thus applying pressure in order to get their way. (John 19:12) Pilate may have feared that he would lose his position—or possibly his life—if he sided with Christ. So he allowed himself to be led into doing the Devil's will.

¹⁰ The apostle Peter was one of Jesus' closest associates. He publicly declared

that Jesus was the Messiah. (Matt. 16:16) Peter remained loyal when other disciples did not grasp the meaning of what Jesus said and abandoned Him. (John 6: 66-69) And when enemies came to arrest Jesus, Peter used a sword to defend his Master. (John 18:10, 11) Later, however, Peter succumbed to fear and denied even knowing Jesus Christ. For a brief time, the apostle was caught in the snare of fear of man and allowed it to restrain him from taking a courageous course.—Matt. 26:74, 75.

¹¹ As Christians, we need to resist pressure to do things that would displease God. Employers or others may try to coerce us into being dishonest or may seek to induce us to engage in sexual immorality. Students may have to deal with peers who try to pressure them to cheat on exams, to view pornography, to smoke, to use drugs, to abuse alcohol, or to engage in sexual misconduct. So, what can help us to escape the snare of fear and of pressure to do what displeases Jehovah?

¹² Let us see what we can learn from the examples of Pilate and Peter. Pilate had little knowledge about Christ. Still, he knew that Jesus was innocent and was no ordinary man. But Pilate lacked humility and love for the true God. The Devil easily caught him alive. Peter had both accurate knowledge and love for God. At times, though, he lacked modesty, became fearful, and succumbed to pressure. Prior to Jesus' arrest, Peter boasted: "Even if all the others are stumbled, yet I will not be." (Mark 14: 29) The apostle would have been better prepared for the tests ahead had he

¹¹. We may have to contend with what negative influences?

¹². What lessons can we learn from Pilate and Peter?

8, 9. Why did Pilate condemn Jesus?

10. What induced Peter to deny Christ?

taken the same position as that of the psalmist who put his confidence in God and sang: “Jehovah is on my side; I shall not fear. What can earthling man do to me?” (Ps. 118:6) On the final night of His earthly life, Jesus took Peter and two other apostles with him deep into the garden of Gethsemane. Instead of remaining alert, however, Peter and his companions fell asleep. Jesus awakened them and said: “Men, keep on the watch and praying, in order that you do not come into temptation.” (Mark 14:38) But Peter fell asleep again and later gave in to fear and pressure.

¹³ The examples of Pilate and Peter can teach us another vital lesson: Success in resisting pressure involves a combination of such elements as accurate knowledge, humility, modesty, love for God, and fear of Jehovah, not humans. If our faith is built on accurate knowledge, we will courageously speak about our beliefs with conviction. This will help us to resist pressure and conquer fear of man. Of course, we must never overestimate our own strength. Instead, we should humbly recognize that we need God’s power in order to resist pressure. We need to pray for Jehovah’s spirit and must let love for him motivate us to uphold his name and standards. Moreover, we need to prepare for pressure before we face a test. For instance, advance preparation along with prayer can help our children to respond effectively when their peers try to induce them to do something wrong.—2 Cor. 13:7.*

* Parents would do well to discuss with their children the “Peer-Pressure Planner” that appears in the book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*, Volume 2, pages 132-133. This material might be used as part of the Family Worship evening.

13. How can we resist pressure to do something wrong?

AVOID THE TRAP THAT CRUSHES—EXCESSIVE GUILT

¹⁴ Sometimes an animal trap consists of a heavy log or stone suspended over a path where prey often move about. An unwary animal hits the trip wire, causing the log or stone to fall, crushing the victim. Inordinate feelings of guilt may be likened to that heavy load that crushes. When thinking about a past mistake, we may feel “crushed to an extreme degree.” (*Read Psalm 38:3-5, 8.*) Satan would like to have us conclude that we are beyond the reach of Jehovah’s mercy and are incapable of meeting His requirements.

¹⁵ How can you avoid this trap that crushes? If you have become involved in serious sin, act now to restore your friendship with Jehovah. Contact the elders, and ask for their help. (Jas. 5:14-16) Do what you can to right the wrong. (2 Cor. 7:11) If you receive discipline, do not become downhearted. Discipline is a sure sign that Jehovah loves you. (Heb. 12:6) Be determined not to repeat the steps that led to the sin, and act on that resolve. After you have repented and turned around, have faith that the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ really can cover your errors.—1 John 4:9, 14.

¹⁶ Some individuals continue to harbor guilt over sins for which they have actually been forgiven. If that is true of you, remember that Jehovah forgave Peter and the other apostles for abandoning His beloved Son in Jesus’ greatest hour of need. Jehovah forgave the man who was expelled from the

14. Concerning our past mistakes, what would the Devil like us to conclude?

15, 16. How can you avoid the trap of succumbing to excessive guilt?



You can shed the burden of excessive guilt

congregation in Corinth for flagrant immorality but who later repented. (1 Cor. 5:1-5; 2 Cor. 2:6-8) God's Word speaks of gross sinners who repented and were forgiven by God.—2 Chron. 33:2, 10-13; 1 Cor. 6:9-11.

¹⁷ Jehovah will forgive and forget your past errors if you are truly repentant and accept his mercy. Never feel that Jesus' ransom sacrifice cannot cover your sins. To do so would be to fall victim to one of Satan's snares. Despite what the Devil wants you to believe, the ransom can cover the sins of all who have fallen into sin and have repented. (Prov. 24:16) Faith in the ransom can lift the burden of excessive guilt from your shoulders and can give you strength to serve God

17. What can the ransom do for us?

with your whole heart, mind, and soul.
—Matt. 22:37.

WE ARE NOT IGNORANT OF SATAN'S DESIGNS

¹⁸ Satan does not care which trap ensnares us, as long as we are caught by him. Since we are not ignorant of Satan's designs, we can avoid being overreached by the Devil. (2 Cor. 2:10, 11) We will not be caught in his snares, or traps, if we pray for wisdom to deal with our trials. "If any one of you is lacking in wisdom," wrote James, "let him keep on asking God, for he gives generously to all and without reproaching; and it will be given him." (Jas. 1:5) We need to act in harmony with our prayers by engaging in regular personal study and by applying God's Word. The Bible study aids provided by the faithful and discreet slave class shed light on the traps set by the Devil and help us to avoid them.

¹⁹ Prayer and Bible study promote in us a love for what is good. But it is equally important that we develop a hatred for what is bad. (Ps. 97:10) Meditating on the consequences of pursuing selfish desires can help us to avoid them. (Jas. 1:14, 15) When we learn to hate what is bad and truly love what is good, the bait that Satan places in his traps repels us; it holds no allure.

²⁰ How thankful we are that God helps us so that we are not overreached by Satan! By means of His spirit, Word, and organization, Jehovah delivers us "from the wicked one." (Matt. 6:13) In the following article, we will learn how to avoid two more traps that the Devil has found to be effective in catching God's servants alive.

18. How can we avoid the Devil's snares?

19, 20. Why should we hate what is bad?



“Stand firm against the machinations of the Devil.”—EPH. 6:11.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

How can a servant of Jehovah avoid being caught in the trap of materialism?

What can help a married Christian not to fall into the pit of adultery?

Why do you believe that it is beneficial to take a firm stand against materialism and sexual immorality?

STAND FIRM AND AVOID SATAN’S TRAPS!

SATAN THE DEVIL has no compassion for humans, especially for those who serve Jehovah. In fact, Satan is waging war on the anointed remnant. (Rev. 12:17) Those stalwart Christians have spearheaded the modern-day Kingdom-preaching work and have exposed Satan as the ruler of this world. The Devil also has no love for the “other sheep,” who support the anointed and are in line for everlasting life—a prospect that Satan no longer has. (John 10:16) No wonder he is wrathful! Whether we have the heavenly hope or the earthly hope, Satan certainly has no interest in our welfare. His goal is to make us his victims.—1 Pet. 5:8.

² To accomplish his aim, Satan has set various traps, or snares. Since he “has blinded the minds” of unbelievers, they do not accept the good news and cannot see these traps. However, the Devil also ensnares some who have accepted the Kingdom message. (2 Cor. 4:3, 4) The preceding article showed how we can avoid three of Satan’s traps: (1) uncontrolled speech, (2) fear and pressure, and (3) inordinate guilt. Let us now consider how we can stand firm against two other satanic traps or snares—materialism and temptation to commit adultery.

MATERIALISM—THE TRAP THAT CHOKES

³ In one of his illustrations, Jesus mentioned seed sown among thorns. He pointed out that a person may hear the word, “but the anxiety of this system of things and the deceptive power of riches choke

1, 2. (a) Why does Satan not have compassion for the anointed and the “other sheep”? (b) What traps of Satan will be discussed in this article?

3, 4. How might the anxieties of this system of things lead to materialism?

the word, and he becomes unfruitful.” (Matt. 13:22) Yes, materialism is one snare used by our enemy Satan.

⁴ When combined, two factors choke the word. One factor is *“the anxiety of this system of things.”* In these “critical times hard to deal with,” there is much that could make you anxious. (2 Tim. 3:1) With the high cost of living and rising unemployment rates, you may find it difficult to make ends meet. You may also be anxious about the future and wonder, ‘Will I have enough income after I retire?’ Because of such anxiety, some have been led to pursue riches, thinking that money will guarantee security.

⁵ Jesus spoke of the other factor—*“the deceptive power of riches.”* That element combined with anxiety can choke the word. The Bible acknowledges that “money is for a protection.” (Eccl. 7:12) However, the pursuit of riches is not wise. Many have found that the more they struggle to acquire riches, the more materialism entraps them. Some have even become slaves to riches.—Matt. 6:24.

⁶ The desire for riches may begin innocently. For example, consider this scenario. Your employer approaches you and says: “I have good news! The company has won a huge contract. This will mean working overtime quite often for the next few months. But I can assure you that the pay will make it well worth your effort.” How would you react to such an offer? Of course, the need to

provide materially for your family is a serious responsibility, but it is not the only responsibility you have. (1 Tim. 5:8) There are several other concerns you have to take into account. How much overtime will be involved? Will your secular work interfere with your spiritual activities, including congregation meetings and your Family Worship evening?

⁷ In weighing your decision, what would you consider to be foremost—how the overtime work would affect your bank account or how it might affect your spirituality? Would eagerness to make more money cause you to stop putting Kingdom interests first in life? Can you see how materialism would affect you if you were to neglect your own spiritual health and that of your fami-

Materialism can choke a person spiritually.
Do not let that happen to you



5. In what way can the “power of riches” be deceptive?

6, 7. (a) How might materialism prove to be a danger at one’s place of employment? (b) What concerns should a Christian consider when the possibility of overtime work is presented to him?

ly? If that is happening to you right now, how can you stand firm and avoid being choked by materialism?—*Read 1 Timothy 6:9, 10.*

⁸ To avoid being strangled by materialism, periodically reappraise your lifestyle. Never would you want to be like Esau, who showed by his actions that he despised spiritual things! (Gen. 25:34; Heb. 12:16) And surely you should not be like the rich man who was invited to sell his belongings, give to the poor, and follow Jesus. Instead of doing so, the man “went away grieved, for he was holding many possessions.” (Matt. 19:21, 22) Ensnared by riches, that man lost out on a great privilege—that of being able to follow the greatest man who ever lived! Be careful not to lose out on the privilege of being a disciple of Jesus Christ.

⁹ To counteract undue worry about material things, heed Jesus’ admonition: “Never be anxious and say, ‘What are we to eat?’ or, ‘What are we to drink?’ or, ‘What are we to put on?’ For all these are the things the nations are eagerly pursuing. For your heavenly Father knows you need all these things.”—Matt. 6:31, 32; Luke 21:34, 35.

¹⁰ Rather than fall victim to the deceptive power of riches, strive to adopt the viewpoint of the Bible writer Agur, who stated: “Don’t let me be too poor or too rich. Give me just what I need.” (Prov. 30:8, *Contemporary English Version*) Clearly, Agur understood the protective value of money as well as the deceptive power of riches. Realize that the

anxieties of this system and the deceptive power of riches can result in spiritual ruin. Undue worry about material things can consume your time, sap your energy, and leave you with little or no motivation to pursue Kingdom interests. Therefore, make it your resolve not to be caught in Satan’s trap of materialism!—*Read Hebrews 13:5.*

ADULTERY

—A CLEVERLY CONCEALED PIT

¹¹ Hunters who want to catch a strong animal may dig a pit on a path often traveled by the prey. The pit is usually camouflaged with a thin covering of sticks and soil. One of Satan’s most successful temptations resembles that type of trap. It is the sin of immorality. (Prov. 22:14; 23:27) A number of Christians have fallen into that pit by letting themselves get into situations in which compromise is all too easy. Some married Christians have succumbed to committing adultery after developing an improper romantic relationship.

¹² An improper romantic relationship could develop at your place of employment. In fact, a secular study revealed that more than half of adulterous women and nearly 3 out of 4 adulterous men had illicit relations with a workmate. Does your secular work require that you associate with members of the opposite sex? If so, what is the nature of your relationship with them? Do you have boundaries in place that keep it professional and that do not allow it to become something more? For example, after repeated casual conversations with a male coworker, a Christian sister might make him her confidant,

8. Considering what Scriptural examples can help us to reappraise our lifestyle?

9, 10. What would you say is the Scriptural view of material things?

11, 12. How might a Christian fall victim to adultery at his or her place of work?

even telling him about her marital problems. In another situation, after becoming friendly with a female coworker, a Christian man might reason: "She values my opinion and really listens when I talk to her. And she *appreciates* me. I wish I got more of this kind of treatment at home!" Can you see how Christians in such situations could be vulnerable to committing adultery?

¹³ An improper romantic relationship could develop within the congregation. Consider this true-life example. Daniel and his wife, Sarah,* were regular pioneers. Daniel was also "a never-say-no elder," as he puts it. He eagerly accepted every privilege that came his way. As part of his ministry, Daniel conducted five Bible studies with young men—three of whom got baptized. These newly baptized brothers needed considerable help. When Daniel was busy with his various theocratic assignments, Sarah often provided that help. Soon this pattern developed: Daniel's former Bible students needed emotional support, and they received it from Sarah. She needed attention, and she got it from Daniel's Bible students. A deadly trap had been set. "Months of my wife's giving of herself drained her spiritually and emotionally," says Daniel. "This, coupled with the fact that I had been neglecting her, led to a disastrous turn of events. My wife committed adultery with one of my former students. She had become spiritually weak right under my nose, and I was too concerned about all my privileges even to notice it." How can you avoid such a tragedy?

* Names have been changed.

13. How could an improper romantic relationship develop within the congregation?

¹⁴ To avoid the pit of adultery, reflect on the meaning of marital commitment. Jesus said: "What God has yoked together let no man put apart." (Matt. 19:6) Never think that your theocratic privileges are more important than your spouse. Moreover, be aware that frequently spending time away from your mate for nonessential activities may indicate a weakness in your marriage and can lead to temptation and possibly to serious sin.

¹⁵ If you are an elder, though, what about the flock? The apostle Peter wrote: "Shepherd the flock of God in your care, not under compulsion, but willingly; neither for love of dishonest gain, but eagerly." (1 Pet. 5:2) Congregation members in your care certainly should not be ignored. However, you should not fulfill your role as a shepherd at the expense of your role as a husband. It would be pointless—even dangerous—to focus all your attention on feeding the congregation while your mate is "starving" at home. Daniel states, "There is much more to life than struggling to care for privileges to the detriment of your own family."

¹⁶ Much good counsel has appeared in the pages of *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* to help married Christians resist falling into the trap of adultery. For instance, *The Watchtower* of September 15, 2006, offered this advice: "In the workplace and elsewhere, beware of situations that might foster intimacy. For example, spending extra hours work-

14, 15. What factors can help married Christians to avoid the pit of adultery?

16, 17. (a) What practical measures can married Christians take at the workplace to send a clear signal that they are not available romantically? (b) Give an example of published material that can help Christians to avoid adultery.



Flirting—or responding to it—can lead to becoming a victim of adultery

ing closely with someone of the opposite sex can set the stage for temptation. As a married man or woman, you should make it clear by your speech and your demeanor that you are simply not available. As one who pursues godly devotion, you would certainly not want to invite undue attention by flirting or by being immodest in your dress and grooming. . . . Having photos of your marriage mate and children around the workplace will serve as a visual reminder to you and to others that you have priorities. Be determined never to encourage—or even tolerate—seductive overtures from another.”

¹⁷ The article entitled “Marital Fidelity—What Does It Really Mean?” in *Awake!* of April 2009 warned against sexual fantasies involving someone oth-

er than your marriage mate. The article indicated that engaging in sexual fantasies will increase the likelihood of your committing adultery. (Jas. 1:14, 15) If you are married, it would be wise for you and your spouse to review such information together from time to time. Marriage is an arrangement instituted by Jehovah himself, and it is sacred. Setting aside time to talk to your mate about your marriage is a fine way to show that you value sacred things. —Gen. 2:21-24.

¹⁸ If you find yourself tempted to develop an improper romantic relationship, meditate on the damaging consequences of fornication and adultery. (Prov. 7:22, 23; Gal. 6:7) Those who commit immorality displease Jehovah and hurt their spouse and themselves. (**Read Malachi 2:13, 14.**) In contrast, contemplate the benefits that come to those who maintain chaste conduct. Not only do they have the hope of living forever but they also enjoy the best life now, including a clean conscience. —**Read Proverbs 3:1, 2.**

¹⁹ The psalmist sang: “Abundant peace belongs to those loving your [God’s] law, and for them there is no stumbling block.” (Ps. 119:165) So love the truth, and “keep strict watch that how you walk is not as unwise but as wise persons” in these wicked times. (Eph. 5:15, 16) The paths we follow are rife with traps set by Satan to ensnare true worshippers. But we are well-equipped to protect ourselves. Jehovah has given us what we need to “stand firm” and “quench all the wicked one’s burning missiles”—Eph. 6:11, 16.

18, 19. (a) What are the consequences of adultery? (b) Marital faithfulness results in what benefits?

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

Did Samson's hair give him strength?

Samson's hair in itself did not give him strength. His hair stood for the special relationship that he as a Nazirite had with God. That relationship was affected when Delilah had his hair shaved off.—4/15, page 9.

In comparison with our literal heart, what three things can favorably impact our figurative heart?

(1) *Nourishment*. As our literal heart needs healthful food, we need sufficient amounts of wholesome spiritual food. (2) *Exercise*. Zealously sharing in the ministry can keep our spiritual heart in good condition. (3) *Environment*. We can reduce stress by associating with fellow believers, who care about us.—4/15, page 16.

After one marriage partner has been unfaithful, how can mates rebuild trust?

They should (1) be honest with each other; (2) work as a team; (3) replace old habits with new ones; and (4) know when to let go of resentment, seeking to heal the breach.—5/1, pages 12-15.

Why should a funeral speaker not apply Psalm 116:15 to the deceased?

The text says: "Precious in the eyes of Jehovah is the death of his loyal ones." This means that God counts the death of *all* his loyal ones as too costly to let it occur. He will not permit his servants *as a group* to be removed from the earth.—5/15, page 22.

Who were the colporteurs?

Before 1931, the term "colporteurs" was applied to those who are now called pioneers.—5/15, page 31.

What are some factors showing that the Bible is not just another book written by men?

The Bible contains numerous prophecies that were fulfilled. It records accurate history, not myth. It is in accord with accurate science, and its books are harmonious. It is practical today.—6/1, pages 4-8.

Who make up "all these kingdoms" mentioned at Daniel 2:44?

The reference is to the kingdoms, or governments, pictured by the various parts of the metal image explained by Daniel.—6/15, page 17.

When did the Anglo-American World Power become the seventh world power of Bible prophecy?

This combined world power came into being when Britain and the United States acted together in a significant way during World War I.—6/15, page 19.

How does God forgive and forget the sins of repentant ones?

Jehovah says of those he favors: "Their sin I shall remember no more." (Jer. 31:34) He can forgive sins on the basis of the ransom. When he does, God forgets in the sense that he will not remember those sins in order to punish again.—7/1, page 18.

Why can we believe the miracles recorded in the Bible?

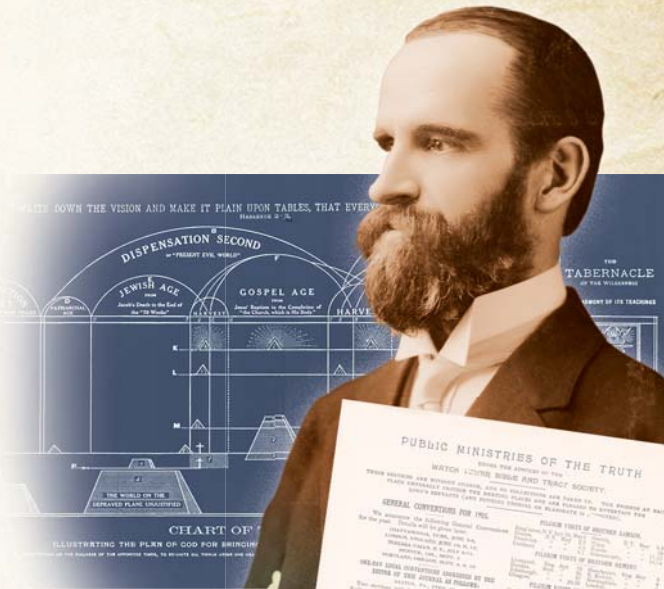
Often they were performed in public, not in secret. They were marked by simplicity, with no special props. They were performed to bring glory to God, not to men. A great variety of miracles were performed, and opposers of the time did not question that they occurred. These are reasons for us to have confidence in the Bible's record of miracles.—8/1, pages 7-8.

On the Road With the Pilgrims

“I JUST can’t go from door to door!” How many new Bible students have felt that way about the prospect of preaching to strangers! This objection, though, came from an experienced public speaker and Bible teacher called a pilgrim.

Many readers of *Zion’s Watch Tower* who left their churches longed for fellowship with those who shared their thirst for Bible truth. The magazine urged its readers to seek out others of like precious faith and gather regularly for Bible study. Beginning about 1894, the Watch Tower Society sent out traveling representatives to meet with groups requesting a visit. Later called pilgrims, these experienced, hardworking men were selected for having meekness, Bible knowledge, and fine speaking and teaching ability, and for demonstrating fidelity to the ransom. The typical visit lasted only one or two busy days. Many Bible Students got their first taste of field service by distributing handbills for a pilgrim’s public talk. After his evening discourse in a school, Hugo Riemer, who later became a member of the Governing Body, answered Bible questions until past midnight. Weary but happy, he declared that the meeting was “beautiful.”

The *Watch Tower* stated that the “chief good” of pilgrim visits was to build up “the household of faith” by means of parlor meetings in the homes of believers. Bible Students from surrounding areas came for the talks and question-and-answer sessions. Then came time for Christian hospitality. As a girl, Maude Abbott attended a morning talk, after which all gathered around a long table in the yard. “So much wonderful food—country ham, fried chicken, breads of many kinds, pie, and cake! Everybody ate all he could, and about two o’clock we assembled for another talk.” But she admits, “By then everybody was



Benjamin Barton's 1905 itinerary had some 170 stops

about half asleep.” Longtime pilgrim Benjamin Barton once remarked, ‘If I had eaten all the rich things offered me, I would have finished my pilgrimage long ago.’ A letter from headquarters in Brooklyn eventually advised well-meaning sisters that it would be better for all concerned to provide the pilgrim with “every-day, plain cooking” and “undisturbed sleep.”

The pilgrims excelled at teaching and using charts, models, or whatever they had at hand to make their subject come alive. R. H. Barber’s talks “were always spiritually spicy.” Fatherly W. J. Thorn spoke “like a patriarch in times of old.” One day while riding in a Model A Ford, Shield Toutjian abruptly cried out, “Stop!” He jumped out of the car, plucked some wildflowers, and gave his companions an impromptu lesson on Jehovah’s creation.

The rigors of pilgrim work brought many challenges, especially for those in or past middle age. For some, however, the biggest test proved to be a change in the focus of their work. They would

Walter J. Thorn

was a pilgrim, affectionately known as Pappy because of his fatherly, Christlike disposition

**J. A. Browne**

was sent to Jamaica as a pilgrim in about 1902 to strengthen and encourage 14 small groups



now be expected to take the lead in preaching from house to house. The March 15, 1924, *Watch Tower* stated that “one of the chief commissions” of true Christians “is to give a witness to the kingdom. Pilgrims are sent out for this purpose.”

Certain pilgrims apparently resented the change, for they left the traveling work, some disgruntled ones even forming their own following. Robie D. Adkins recounted that one pilgrim who was an excellent speaker lamented bitterly: “All I know is how to preach from the platform. I just can’t go from door to door!” Brother Adkins recalled: “I next saw him at the 1924 convention in Columbus, Ohio. He was the most miserable looking person there, standing alone in the shade of a small tree, forlorn among thousands of joyful brothers. I never saw him again. He left the organization soon afterward.” On the other hand, “many happy brothers were passing by carrying books to their cars,” obviously eager to witness from house to house.—Acts 20:20, 21.

Many pilgrims, though perhaps as nervous as those they had been sent to train, put their heart into the work. Regarding house-to-house witnessing, German-speaking pilgrim Maxwell G.

Friend (Freschel) wrote, “This part of the pilgrim work adds to the blessings of the trip.” Pilgrim John A. Bohnet reported that the brothers in general heartily approved the emphasis on Kingdom preaching. According to him, the large majority were “burning with zeal to be in the front ranks of battle.”

Throughout the years, faithful traveling brothers have been a force for good. “The value and benefit of the pilgrims was unquestionable, even as I observed as a boy,” said longtime Witness Norman Larson. “They did much to mold me in the right way.” To this very day, such self-sacrificing and loyal traveling overseers are helping fellow believers to say, “We *can* go from door to door!”

The pilgrim work built faith, strengthened Christian unity, and brought the brothers close to the organization



*It was a happy day
when the pilgrim
came around!*