

June 15, 1985



# The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

**How to  
Read the Bible**



# The Watchtower®

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

June 15, 1985  
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THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER" is to exalt Jehovah God as the Sovereign of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as they fulfill Bible prophecy. It comforts all peoples with the good news that God's Kingdom will soon destroy those who oppress their fellowmen and that it will turn the earth into a paradise. It encourages faith in the now-reigning King, Jesus Christ, whose shed blood opens the way for mankind to gain eternal life. "The Watchtower," published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879, is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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- July 21: Digging Deeper Into God's Word. Page 8. Songs to Be Used: 203, 123.
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# Popular Misconceptions About the Bible

OVER 8,000,000 pounds sterling! What a fabulous price to pay for one book! Yet, when the auctioneer's gavel came down at the sale held in London during December 1983, that was the price paid by the buyer, representing the Federal Republic of Germany. What book could possibly be worth that much? It was a part of the Bible, actually a 12th-century illuminated book of the Gospels.

Whatever the reasons for paying this enormous sum for this manuscript book, it is of interest that such a price for a work of art should be for a portion of the Bible. It reflects the view of many people that the Bible is priceless. Others, however, consider the Bible with suspicion or even hostility. Why?

## Popular Misconceptions

Many people, particularly in Protestant lands, claim that the Bible is like an old fiddle that can be used to play many tunes. They feel that the Bible can be used to prove many conflicting doctrines. They say: 'It all depends upon the way you interpret it.' Is this correct?

Admittedly, the Bible *can* be quoted in attempted support of differing viewpoints. But if statements are taken out of context, cannot the work of any author be made to appear to contradict itself? Would



this be honest, though? Jehovah's Witnesses maintain that an honest reading of the Bible does not allow for conflicting interpretations of key doctrines.

The Bible itself states, "For you know this first, that no prophecy of Scripture springs from any private interpretation." (2 Peter 1:20) In other words, the force instigating the writing of the prophetic Scriptures was no mere native human force, but it was the holy spirit, or active force, of God. He is the first of all prophets and Inspirer of all true Bible prophecy by means of his invisible active force.

Another popular misconception is that, whereas the God of the inspired Christian Greek Scriptures is kind and loving, the God of the inspired Hebrew Scriptures is

cruel and vengeful. French essayist Stendhal wrote that God "is a despot, and, as such, is full of ideas of revenge; his Bible speaks only of dreadful punishment." This opinion is not surprising, coming from a man known as an atheistic libertine. Unfortunately, that same opinion is shared by many who call themselves Christians, including some clergymen.

The fact is that both in the portion originally written in Hebrew and in the portion written in Greek, the Scriptures state categorically that there is only "one God." (1 Corinthians 8:6; Deuteronomy 6:4) Both parts show God to be merciful, just, loving, and firm. (Exodus 34:6, 7; Psalm 103:6-8; 1 John 4:8; Hebrews 12: 28, 29) Some of the most tender passages of Scripture are found in the Hebrew part of the Bible, such as in the Psalms. Conversely, the "New Testament" contains striking descriptions of severe judgment meted out to the wicked. (2 Thessalonians 1:6-9; Revelation, chapters 18 and 19) The Bible from beginning to end holds out a wonderful hope to the righteous. (Genesis 22:17, 18; Psalm 37:10, 11, 29; Revelation 21:3, 4) Thus, the Bible is in agreement with itself from start to finish.

### A "Protestant Book"?

A misconception common among the world's hundreds of millions of Catholics is that the Bible is a "Protestant book." Sincere Catholics are not to be blamed for this view. For centuries the Roman Catholic Church forbade the reading of the Bible in any language other than Latin. This put the Scriptures beyond the reach of most lay Catholics. True, since 1897 and more particularly since the second Vatican Council (1962-1965), Catholics have had the right to read common-language Bibles approved by Rome. But traditions die hard. So in predominantly

Catholic countries, Bible reading is still associated with Protestantism.

Many of the practicing Catholics who in recent years have obtained a Bible cannot yet pick it up without some apprehension. Why is that? Because their church still teaches that reading the Bible can be dangerous. Why? Because the Roman Catholic Church says that the Bible does not contain the complete revelation of Christian truth; it needs to be completed by "tradition." In his book *La Parole de Dieu* (The Word of God), Georges Auzou, Catholic professor of Sacred Scripture, wrote: "Tradition precedes, envelops, accompanies and goes beyond the Scriptures. . . . [This] helps us to understand why the Church has never made Bible reading or Bible study a strict obligation or an absolute necessity."

### Why Read the Bible?

Nevertheless, many sincere Catholics the world over are procuring a Bible and are seeking help to understand it. The same is true of many disappointed Protestants and even of some who had placed their hopes in communism, socialism, or science.

Analyzing the reasons for the renewed interest in spiritual matters, religious correspondent Alain Woodrow wrote in the Paris daily *Le Monde*: "This is firstly a natural reaction to the disillusionment brought about by the failure of the great systems of thought, ideologies, politics, and science." He gave as further reasons "disappointment in the institutional churches because of their compromising with the political and financial powers of this world," and, lastly, what he called "apocalyptic fear."

You may be one of those who has begun reading the Bible. If so, you will need to know how to make your Bible reading fruitful.

# How to Make Your Bible Reading Fruitful



**B**LESSED are the poor in spirit." Such are the opening words of Jesus' celebrated Sermon on the Mount, according to several English-language Bibles. (Matthew 5:3, *Revised Standard Version*, Protestant and Catholic editions) Can you understand what Jesus really meant by "poor in spirit"? Was he referring to those who are discouraged? Or could he have meant the feeble-minded? The latter may seem unlikely, but surely it is important to know.

Jehovah's Witnesses, who are recognized even by their critics as excellent Bible students, have found that the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* admirably meets the requirements of clarity and accuracy. It renders that passage from the Sermon on the Mount: "Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need."

Some Bible commentaries admit that this is what "poor in spirit" means. Why, then, do many current versions, such as the Catholic *Jerusalem Bible* and the *New International Version*, persist in using the expression "poor in spirit"?

This example shows that in order to make one's Bible reading fruitful, it is necessary to choose a translation that is faithful, clear, and understandable.

## Proper Attitude

Fruitful Bible reading also requires a proper attitude on the part of the reader. Those same words of the Sermon on the Mount nicely sum up what our attitude should be, namely: "Happy are those con-

scious of their spiritual need." Is your life lacking a true spiritual dimension? Are you aware of the fact that you need to feed your mind and heart with spiritual food? The Bible can help you fill that need.

However, you will not find food for mind and heart in the Bible if you read it as you would any other piece of literature. You must approach it, "not as the word of men, but, just as it truthfully is, as the word of God." (1 Thessalonians 2:13) You will be reading, not human philosophy or nationalistic history, but God's thoughts and the history of his dealings with his servants on earth. It also contains amazing prophecies, some of these having already been fulfilled, while others are being fulfilled before our eyes or are yet due to come to pass for mankind's greatest good.

Since the Bible is the Word of God, to read it fruitfully a person should seek His help. Prayer to God is, therefore, an appropriate prelude to Bible reading. In simple words, expressed from your heart, ask him to help you to understand what you read and how to apply it in your personal life. Sometimes we lack the ability to use the

knowledge we have acquired, which ability is wisdom. The Bible itself counsels: "If any one of you is lacking in wisdom, let him keep on asking God, for he gives generously to all and without reproaching; and it will be given him. But let him *keep on asking in faith*, not doubting at all."

—James 1:5, 6.

### Reading With Faith

You may say: 'How can I pray in faith and read with faith if I lack faith?' Well, if you approach Bible reading 'conscious of your spiritual need,' your faith will increase as you gain knowledge of Jehovah God and his marvelous purposes centered upon Christ. True faith is not to be confused with blind credulity. The Bible itself defines faith as "the assured expectation of things hoped for, the evident demonstration of realities though not beheld."—Hebrews 11:1.

True faith requires an underlying basis of knowledge, and such knowledge makes the things promised by God become as real as though they were beheld. Faith is, therefore, something that can be acquired. It follows the reading and hearing of things pertaining to God and his wonderful purposes for mankind. As the apostle Paul puts it, "Faith follows the thing heard. In turn the thing heard is through the word about Christ."—Romans 10:17.\*

As your faith increases, your Bible reading will become more fruitful. Why? Because your "expectation of things hoped for" will become more "assured." This might be illustrated by a new friendship between you and another person. As time passes and you get to know the person better, your confidence in that one grows. Finally, after living through many situations in which your friend has never let you down, you come to put implicit trust in

\* See footnote, Reference Edition of the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, 1984.

that person. If he or she writes to you, you know how to get the spirit of what is meant. Even if a sentence is not too clear, you know the person so well that you have no difficulty in grasping the thought. You read that friend's letter in a trusting way, not with suspicion.

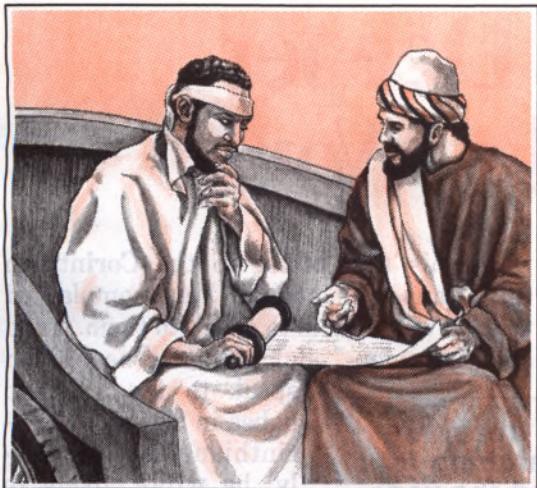
Similarly, the more you get to know the Bible and its Author, Jehovah God, the more trust you will have in both God and his Word. Even some episodes in Bible history that may seem difficult to understand will not shake that trust. For instance, even if the reason for drastic action by God against some person or nation is not immediately apparent, you will have confidence that it was necessary. It is much the way you might say of a trusted friend: 'Well, if he did that, there must have been a good reason.'

Of course, your faith in God will be strengthened if you *can* find the reason why he acted in such a way or why he sometimes appears to delay in acting against the wicked. But you may need help. That brings us to another important aspect of fruitful Bible reading.

### The Need for Help

It is an excellent thing to read the entire Bible. At the rate of one chapter a day, it would take you over three years to get through both the Hebrew and the Greek Scriptures. If you read three or four chapters a day, it will take you about a year. However, to get a general idea of what the Bible contains, you might start with Psalms and Proverbs. Then go back to Genesis, Exodus, and First Samuel before moving on to the Christian era, with Matthew, Acts, and a few of the letters written to the early Christians, such as Philippians, James, and First or Second Peter.

While doing this, you will come to realize that in order to get practical and spiritual benefit from the Bible, it is good to find out



The Ethiopian recognized what is needed to understand the Bible

what it says on a given subject. Passages bearing on one subject may be widely separated. You will likely feel the need for Bible study aids that will help you to learn what the Scriptures say, topic by topic. Also, since the books of the Bible are not arranged in strictly chronological order, such aids can help you to grasp the time sequence. Geographic and historical background material can also be very useful in understanding the Scriptures.

Where can such Bible study help be found? In recent years Catholic authors have published many books ostensibly meant to help Catholics in their Bible reading. But such authors find themselves on the horns of a dilemma. If such authors truly help Catholics to understand the Bible, the latter quickly discover that much Catholic dogma cannot be found in it. On the other hand, if the authors justify Catholic doctrine, they undermine the readers' confidence in the Bible because they subordinate Scripture to church tradition.  
—Compare Mark 7:13.

More and more sincere Catholics are

accepting help from Jehovah's Witnesses. In many lands, thousands of Catholic people are struggling to read the Bible with understanding but are receiving little or no help from their local priests. They resemble the Ethiopian official who was reading the book of Isaiah. When the evangelizer Philip asked if he really understood what he was reading, the Ethiopian humbly replied: "How can I, unless some one guides me?" (Acts 8:31, RS, Catholic edition) Philip helped him, and a little later this sincere man became a baptized Christian. Similarly, as they go from door to door Jehovah's Witnesses meet Catholics, and when these say that they have a Bible in their home, the Witnesses ask if they would like help to make their Bible reading really fruitful.

### Reading That Produces Fruitage

In their Bible educational work, Jehovah's Witnesses use a wide range of Bible study aids, such as *My Book of Bible Stories* (116 Bible accounts presented in simple language and in chronological order), *Is the Bible Really the Word of God?* (for scientific and historical evidence of the Bible's authenticity), "*All Scripture Is Inspired of God and Beneficial*" (a book-by-book summary of the Bible's contents, with geographic and historical background information), and *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth* (which gathers scriptures on 30 vital topics, including the wonderful hope God's Word sets before sincere Bible readers today).

These Bible study aids, together with the personal help that Jehovah's Witnesses will be happy to offer you free of charge, will make your Bible reading pleasurable and fruitful. You will find guidance for everyday living and a wonderful hope for life in God's promised New Order, where, at long last, the will of God will "be done, on earth as in heaven."—Matthew 6: 10, JB.

# Digging Deeper Into God's Word

**HAPPY** is the man that has found wisdom, and the man that gets discernment, for having it as gain is better than having silver as gain and having it as produce than gold itself. It is more precious than corals, and all other delights of yours cannot be made equal to it. Length of days is in its right hand . . . It is a tree of life to those taking hold of it, and those keeping fast hold of it are to be called happy.”—Proverbs 3:13-18.

<sup>2</sup> True Christians are happy, indeed, to have found wisdom. That means the ability to use their knowledge of God’s Word in their active worship, in solving their day-to-day problems, and in making decisions concerning their goals in life. Before being accepted for baptism by Jehovah’s Witnesses, each candidate’s basic Bible knowledge is tested by a comprehensive series of pointed questions. One of the concluding questions asks: “Following your baptism in water, why will it be vital for you to maintain a good schedule for personal study and to share regularly in the ministry?” This impresses on the mind of that baptismal candidate the need to continue to study beyond the elementary things and “press on to maturity.” (Hebrews 6:1) But do all heed this advice?

1. What is a true source of happiness, and why?
2. Why are Jehovah’s Witnesses happy, but what advice are they given from the time of their baptism?

**‘If as for hid treasures  
you keep searching for  
it, you will find the very  
knowledge of God.’**

—PROVERBS 2:4, 5.

<sup>3</sup> In his first letter to the Corinthian Christians, the apostle Paul complained that he was unable to speak to them “as to spiritual men,” but that he needed to speak to them “as to babes in Christ.” (1 Corinthians 3:1) Similarly, he wrote, likely to Christians living in Judea: “Concerning him we have much to say and hard to be ex-

plained, since you have become dull in your hearing. For, indeed, although you ought to be teachers in view of the time, you again need someone to teach you from the beginning the elementary things of the sacred pronouncements of God; and you have become such as need milk, not solid food. For everyone that partakes of milk is unacquainted with the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.”—Hebrews 5:11-13.

<sup>4</sup> Today, likewise, it would appear that some, when once they have acquired sufficient knowledge to dedicate themselves to Jehovah, with the hope of living forever in Paradise on earth, do not develop serious, long-term study habits. They may feel that they know enough to “get along,” spiritually speaking. They do not go beyond the “milk” stage. Paul states frankly that such ones remain “unacquainted with the word of righteousness,” that is, they

- 3, 4. (a) What did Paul state about some Christians in Corinth and in Judea? (b) What appears to be the case with some Christians today?

are unaccustomed to using "the word of righteousness" to test things out. Paul adds: "But solid food belongs to mature people, to those who through use have their perceptive powers trained to distinguish both right and wrong."—Hebrews 5:14.

### "Solid Food"

#### Needed for Growth

<sup>5</sup> How many years have you been a dedicated servant of Jehovah? Reflect on your spiritual growth over those years. Are you able to explain from the Bible only the basic truths, "the elementary things of the sacred pronouncements of God"? A few who have been in the Christian way for 10 or 20 years are still at the "milk" stage. What would people think of a child 10 years old, or of a young man or woman aged 20, who was still being bottle-fed on milk? Would this not be an anomaly? Would not such a milk diet stunt the person's growth? The individual might survive, but he or she would not grow into a strong and healthy adult. The same is true spiritually.

<sup>6</sup> Why are some who have been Christians for years not spiritually strong enough to take an active part in helping the normal "babes," those who have just taken their stand for Jehovah? These who have not advanced have for years received of the time and attention of Christian elders and other mature ones. Still, as Paul says, they themselves "ought to be teachers in view of the time." To become teachers, they must progress beyond the "milk" diet and get used to eating "solid

5, 6. (a) What is true of some who have been in the truth for years, and why is this abnormal? (b) What did Paul say to such ones, and so what should they do?



food." How can they do this?—Hebrews 5:12.

<sup>7</sup> Paul says that "solid food belongs to mature people," and he defines such as "those who *through use* have their perceptive powers trained to distinguish both right and wrong." In other words, those who make a habit of using whatever knowledge of God's Word they have to distinguish both right and wrong will gradually train their perceptive powers and will attain Christian maturity. They will become accustomed to using "the word of righteousness" to test things out and thus distinguish between what is wholesome and what is hurtful morally, spiritually, and even physically. By applying what they learn, they will no longer be "unacquainted with the word of righteousness." They will become "mature people," those to whom "solid food belongs."—Hebrews 5:13, 14.

### Develop Good "Eating" Habits

<sup>8</sup> Sick people who have been put on a milk diet over a long period of time have

7. According to Hebrews 5:14, for whom is "solid food" appropriate, and how does a Christian become one of such?

8. How could a Christian limit himself to a "milk" diet, but how can he change his spiritual "eating" habits?

to accustom their body to taking in solid food once more. Similarly, those who have developed the habit of "pecking" at the spiritual food served by "the faithful and discreet slave," leaving on the side of their plate, as it were, those choice morsels that require a little more "chewing" (thought and research), will need to put forth an effort to develop good spiritual "eating" habits. They will need to 'arouse their clear thinking faculties' and 'exert themselves vigorously.'—Matthew 24:45; 2 Peter 3:1, 2; Luke 13:24.

<sup>9</sup> Three things can help a person who has been sick to recover his appetite for solid, nourishing food: (1) proper motivation, that is, the desire to get well and strong again, (2) appetizing food served at regular intervals, and (3) sufficient fresh air and exercise. How could these points help someone who has lost his appetite for the deeper things of God's Word?

<sup>10</sup> Any person who has dedicated his life to Jehovah should have strong motivation for increasing his knowledge of God's Word. Our love for Jehovah moves us to become better acquainted with his wonderful qualities, his will, and his purposes. This requires deep study and meditation. (Psalm 1:1, 2; 119:97) Moreover, our hope to live forever in God's Paradise earth depends upon our continually 'taking in knowledge of the only true God and of his Son, Jesus Christ.' (John 17:3) But our desire for everlasting life should not be our primary motive for studying the Scriptures. That was the mistake some faithless Jews made. Our "searching the Scriptures" must be done primarily out of love for God and with the desire to do his will.—John 5:39-42; Psalm 143:10.

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9. What can help someone who has lost his appetite?
  10. What proper motivation should move us to increase our knowledge of God's Word?

<sup>11</sup> The abundance of appetizing spiritual food served regularly and "at the proper time" by "the faithful and discreet slave" should move all of us to show our appreciation by taking full advantage of the good things provided. (Matthew 24:45) We should develop good spiritual "eating" habits by setting aside sufficient time to read and study all the fine material published in the Watch Tower Society's books and magazines. Spiritual food is served at regular times at the five weekly meetings organized in the congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses throughout the world. Are you present at all these meetings and well prepared to assimilate the food served?

<sup>12</sup> Love for God as well as love for neighbor should move us to study His Word. (Luke 10:27) A person who has lost his physical appetite can benefit from fresh air and exercise. So, too, the Christian who wants to build up an appetite for "solid food" can be helped by getting out in the preaching work and using his knowledge to spread "this good news of the kingdom" and to "make disciples of people of all the nations." (Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20) Remember, Paul said to those who had "become such as need milk," or spiritual babes, that they "ought to be teachers in view of the time." (Hebrews 5:12) Where do you stand, in view of the time you have been a true Christian? If you are a brother, have you advanced to the stage where you can be useful as a "teacher" in the field, and perhaps also as an elder in the congregation? If you are a Christian sister, are you able to conduct upbuilding Bible studies in the homes of people who show interest in God's truth or

- 
11. How are we served appetizing food at regular times?
  12. (a) What is another way in which a Christian can build up his spiritual appetite? (b) So, what questions may we ask ourselves?

## Factors that can help a person have spiritual health

1. **Proper motivation:** Develop a strong desire to become better acquainted with Jehovah
2. **Regular diet:** Take advantage of the spiritual food served regularly by "the faithful and discreet slave"
3. **Exercise:** Use knowledge to help others, such as by getting out in the preaching work

perhaps to help your Christian sisters in the witnessing work?

### Make Study a Pleasure

<sup>13</sup> It has been said that reading is a pleasure whereas studying is work. There is some truth in that. Much upbuilding reading can be done for pleasurable relaxation. What could be more enjoyable than an hour or two spent in a comfortable position reading a report from the *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses* or an issue of the *Awake!* magazine? Study, however, means work. A dictionary states: "Study implies sustained purposeful concentration with such careful attention to details as is likely to reveal the possibilities, applications, variations, or relations of the thing studied." Yes, study requires effort. But just as any work well done can be satisfying and remunerative, study can be pleasurable and spiritually rewarding. It is in our interest to make it so. How?

<sup>14</sup> For study to be enjoyable and really beneficial, it is necessary to devote sufficient time to it. Since "study implies sus-

tained purposeful concentration" and "careful attention to details," how often can you honestly say that you have *studied* your *Watchtower* or the publication used for your Congregation Book Study? Would it not be more accurate to say that often-times you skim through the study material and quickly underline the answers to the questions, without really getting down to the details and the *reasons* for the explanations given? If this is the case with you, probably the first step you should take to improve your spiritual "eating" habits is to 'buy out the opportune time' for study. (Ephesians 5:15-17) This may mean making drastic transfers of time from other less essential activities. But you may be surprised how enjoyable study can become when you have the time to do the material justice rather than having to rush through it.

<sup>15</sup> Not unrelated to the time factor is the matter of prayer. Jehovah's blessing is essential for study to be spiritually beneficial. We need to pray to him, in the name of Jesus, asking him to open up our minds and hearts and to make them really receptive to the truths to be studied. How often have you had to sit down hurriedly to prepare for a meeting, only to realize later that you forgot to ask Jehovah for his blessing and for wisdom to apply in your daily life the things learned? Why deprive yourself of Jehovah's help when it is there for the asking?—James 1:5-7.

### Digging Deeper

<sup>16</sup> Proverbs 2:4, 5 states: 'If as for hid treasures you keep searching for it, you will find the very knowledge of God.' The context of that passage speaks of the need

15. What else is indispensable for study to be both enjoyable and spiritually beneficial?

16. In line with the theme text for this study, what must we do to find knowledge, discernment, and understanding?

13. What is the difference between reading and studying?

14. What may you need to do to make your personal study more pleasurable and beneficial?

to seek out Jehovah's "sayings," "commandments," "wisdom," "discernment," and "understanding." Searching for treasures requires effort and perseverance. It calls for much digging. It is not different when searching for "the very knowledge of God," for "discernment," and for "understanding." This also requires much digging, or penetrating below the surface. Do not feel that it is sufficient to skim over the surface of God's Word.

<sup>17</sup> A psalmist exclaimed: "How great your works are, O Jehovah! Very deep your thoughts are." (Psalm 92:5) The apostle Paul wrote admiringly: "O the depth of God's riches and wisdom and knowledge!" (Romans 11:33) In another letter, he spoke of "the deep things of God." (1 Corinthians 2:10) True, as Paul explains, God reveals such deep things "through his spirit," which active force acts powerfully upon the anointed Christians appointed by Christ Jesus to provide spiritual food. We should be truly thankful for the spiritual digging that the "slave" class does to make clearer and clearer for us "the hidden depths of God's purposes."—1 Corinthians 2:10, Today's English Version.

<sup>18</sup> But that does not relieve each individual Christian of the responsibility to dig deeper into God's Word, for the purpose of getting the full depth of the thoughts explained. This involves looking up the scriptures cited. It means reading the footnotes in *Watchtower* articles, some of which refer the reader to an older publication that provides a fuller explanation of a certain passage or prophecy. It requires digging deeper, putting forth effort to lo-

17. What do the Scriptures say about Jehovah's thoughts, and so for what should we be thankful?
18. How can each Christian dig deeper into God's Word, and what special digging tools have been provided?

### By Way of a Reminder

- Why do some remain spiritual "babes"?
- What can help a person to become mature?
- How can we develop good spiritual "eating" habits?
- What can make our personal study more pleasurable?
- Why is it necessary to dig deep into God's Word?

cate that older publication and then studying the pages referred to. It consists of making full use of specialized Bible study aids that the "slave" class has made available over the years, such as indexes, concordances, *Aid to Bible Understanding*, and *"All Scripture Is Inspired of God and Beneficial."* Yes, Christians have been provided with excellent digging tools, the latest of which is the new English-language Reference Bible, which, in time, will be available in a number of other languages. Let us use these digging tools to good advantage.

### Study With a Purpose

<sup>19</sup> The purpose of our digging deeper into God's Word is not to make us feel superior to our brothers or to make a show of our knowledge. This is often the case with worldly people. In principle, what Paul wrote is true here: "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up." (1 Corinthians 8:1) Love will move us humbly to use our knowledge in the preaching and disciple-making work and in contributing discreetly to the spiritual value of Christian meetings.

19. What word of caution is vital about knowledge?

<sup>20</sup> Let us "no longer be babes," but "grow up in all things into him who is the head, Christ." (Ephesians 4:13-15) "Let us press on to maturity." (Hebrews 6:1) Let us be mature people, able to assimilate "solid food" that will make us spiri-

20. What exhortations does Paul give in this connection?

tually strong and useful within the Christian congregation. However, this involves more than taking in knowledge by study. It requires feeding upon Jehovah's utterances or published expressions with appreciation, which we will consider in the following article.—Psalm 110:1; Isaiah 56:8; 66:2.

# Sustaining Ourselves on the Fulfillment of Jehovah's Utterances

**J**EHOVAH is the Great Food Provider. He presented himself as such to man in the very first chapter of the Bible. (Genesis 1:29, 30) Much later, the psalmist David gratefully said to Jehovah: "To you the eyes of all look hopefully, and you are giving them their food in its season. You are opening your hand and satisfying the desire of every living thing." (Psalm 145:15, 16) Yes, Jehovah has provided an abundance of food for both man and animal. There is a difference though. Whereas animals require only physical food, Jesus showed that man needs more than physical bread, or food. He 'must live also on every utterance coming forth

**"Man must live, not on bread alone, but on every utterance coming forth through Jehovah's mouth."**

—MATTHEW 4:4.

through Jehovah's mouth.'—Matthew 4:4.

<sup>2</sup> Jesus made this statement in reply to Satan, who had tried to tempt Him into miraculously converting stones to bread.

The Devil did not press the point but quickly moved on to another temptation. Judging by the erroneous way he then applied Psalm 91: 11, 12, maybe Satan

did not even understand what Jesus meant in His reply to the first temptation. (Matthew 4:3-7) But we servants of Jehovah are very interested in what Jesus said. We who enjoy digging deeper into the Bible so as to get the maximum spiritual benefit can ask: Did Jesus mean that in order to lead a full life, man must study

1. How is Jehovah the Great Food Provider, but what statement did Jesus make about man's needs?

2. What should we know concerning the meaning of Jesus' words at Matthew 4:4?

and perhaps memorize "every utterance coming forth through Jehovah's mouth"? Or what did he mean?

### Jehovah's Utterances

<sup>3</sup> In rebutting Satan, Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 8:3 according to the Greek *Septuagint* version of this Hebrew scripture. The Greek word translated "utterance" (*rhe'ma*) has a twofold meaning. It is sometimes translated "word," "expression," or "utterance." But, like its Hebrew equivalent (*da-var'*), it can also mean "thing."

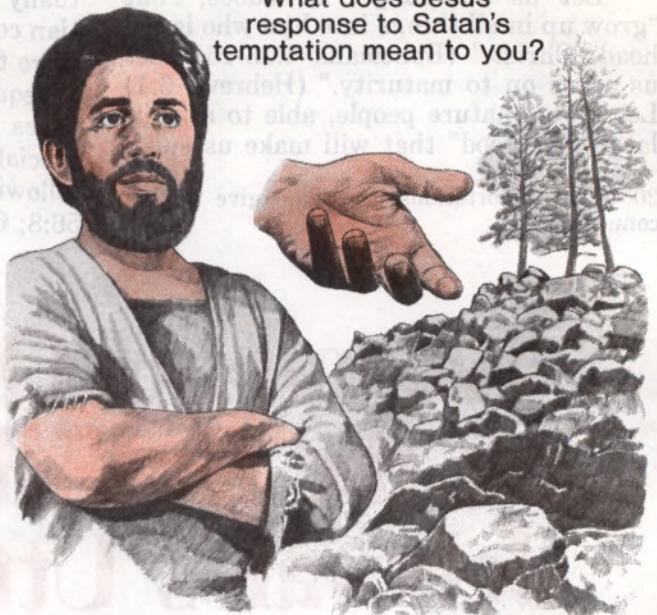
<sup>4</sup> In Luke 1:37 we read: "With God no declaration [*rhe'ma*] will be an impossibility." Luke 2:15 reads: "The shepherds began saying to one another: 'Let us by all means go clear to Bethlehem and see this thing [*rhe'ma*] that has taken place, which Jehovah has made known to us.' So, particularly as used in connection with Jehovah, this Greek word can imply a "word," a "declaration," or an "utterance" of God. Or it can imply a "thing," whether that refers to an "event," or "action" described, the *result* of what is said, the *word fulfilled*.

<sup>5</sup> Thus understood, Luke 1:37 does not mean that God can say just anything. That could be true of a man, even if what he said was unlikely to occur or was meaningless. But regarding God's statements, the import of Luke 1:37 is that no word or declaration of Jehovah can go unfulfilled. The declaration that the angel had made to Mary was thus bound to come to pass. The thought behind the Hebrew and the

3, 4. What twofold meaning do the Greek and Hebrew words for "utterance" have? Illustrate.

5. What is the meaning of Luke 1:37?

What does Jesus' response to Satan's temptation mean to you?



Greek words used for Jehovah's "word," "utterance," "expression," or "declaration" is beautifully expressed in the book of Isaiah. Jehovah states: "For just as the pouring rain descends, and the snow, from the heavens and does not return to that place, unless it actually saturates the earth and makes it produce and sprout, and seed is actually given to the sower and bread to the eater, so my word [Hebrew, *da-var'*; Greek, *rhe'ma*] that goes forth from my mouth will prove to be. It will not return to me without results, but it will certainly do that in which I have delighted, and it will have certain success in that for which I have sent it."—Isaiah 55:10, 11.

### "Not on Bread Alone"

<sup>6</sup> Now, coming back to the point, what did Jesus mean when, quoting Deuteronomy 8:3, he said that "man must live, not

on bread alone, but on every *utterance* coming forth through Jehovah's mouth?" (Matthew 4:4) Was he saying that the godly man is sustained just by utterances, words, or declarations? Would head knowledge of such divine expressions be sufficient? Let us examine the historical context of the words Jesus quoted from Deuteronomy.

<sup>7</sup> The Bible study aid "*All Scripture Is Inspired of God and Beneficial*" informs us, on page 36: "The book of Deuteronomy contains a dynamic message for Jehovah's people. After wandering in the wilderness for forty years, the sons of Israel now stood on the threshold of the Land of Promise." The year was 1473 B.C.E. The place? The plains of Moab. In his second discourse to the assembled Israelites, Moses declared: "You must remember all the way that Jehovah your God made you walk these forty years in the wilderness, in order to humble you, to put you to the test so as to know what was in your heart, as to whether you would keep his commandments or not. So he humbled you and let you go hungry and fed you with the manna, which neither you had known nor your fathers had known; in order to make you know that not by bread alone does man live but by every expression of Jehovah's mouth does man live."—Deuteronomy 8:2, 3.

<sup>8</sup> Just imagine! Several million Israelites—old and young, men, women, and children—had been walking for 40 long years in "the great and fear-inspiring wilderness, with poisonous serpents and scorpions and with thirsty ground that [had] no water." (Deuteronomy 8:15) They had needed water to drink and food to eat. Jehovah had, at times, allowed them to be thirsty and hungry. Why? So as to im-

8. What had been the situation of the Israelites, and why had Jehovah allowed this?

press upon their minds that "not by bread alone does man live but by every expression of Jehovah's mouth."

<sup>9</sup> What was the connection between the Israelites' needs and the expressions, or utterances, coming forth from Jehovah's mouth? Well, what tangible things had come to pass among the Israelites as a result of Jehovah's utterances? Moses wrote: "Your mantle did not wear out upon you, nor did your foot become swollen these forty years. . . . [Jehovah] brought forth water for you out of the flinty rock; [and he] fed you with manna in the wilderness." (Deuteronomy 8:4, 15, 16) The connection is this: The Israelites would have received none of these things if Jehovah had not commanded them to take place. Thus, the Israelites had literally lived "by every expression [or, command] of Jehovah's mouth."

#### Sustained by Jehovah's Utterances

<sup>10</sup> Besides depending on Jehovah for such material benefits as food, water, and clothing, how else were the Israelites able to be sustained by Jehovah's utterances? There were spiritual benefits too. Moses told the Israelites that Jehovah had caused them to go through these experiences in the desert 'in order to humble them, to put them to the test so as to know what was in their heart, as to whether they would keep his commandments or not.' He added: "You well know with your own heart that just as a man corrects his son, Jehovah your God was correcting you . . . so as to do you good in your afterdays."—Deuteronomy 8:2, 5, 16.

<sup>11</sup> Yes, if the Israelites had taken full advantage of their experiences in the wilderness, they would have learned to 'live

9. How had the Israelites' needs been filled by Jehovah's utterances?

10, 11. In what other ways were the Israelites able to be sustained by Jehovah's utterances?



**The Israelites' living "by every expression of Jehovah's mouth" had direct physical benefits**

by every expression of Jehovah's mouth,' not only by learning to obey his written commandments but actually by experiencing the results of Jehovah's utterances in their life as a nation and in their individual lives. They had been given ample opportunity to "taste and see that Jehovah is good." (Psalm 34:8) These enriching experiences in connection with Jehovah's words—both uttered and fulfilled—should have sustained them spiritually.

<sup>12</sup> Joshua, who succeeded Moses as leader of Israel, informed himself of Jehovah's utterances by filling his mind with them. His faith was strengthened by observing their fulfillment. After Moses' death, Jehovah made this utterance to Joshua: "This book of the law should not depart from your mouth, and you must in an undertone read in it day and night, in

order that you may take care to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way successful and then you will act wisely."—Joshua 1:8.

<sup>13</sup> Toward the end of his life, after having faithfully obeyed Jehovah's word and observed its fulfillment upon Jehovah's people, Joshua was able to testify: "So Jehovah gave Israel all the land that he had sworn to give to their forefathers, and they proceeded to take possession of it and to dwell in it. Furthermore, Jehovah gave them rest all around, according to everything that he had sworn to their forefathers, and not one of all their enemies stood before them. All their enemies Jehovah gave into their hand. Not a promise [Hebrew, *da-var'*; Greek, *rhe'ma*] failed out of all the good promise that Jehovah had made to the house of Israel; it all came true." (Joshua 21:43-45) Joshua truly lived and was sustained, not on literal bread alone, "but on every utterance com-

12, 13. How did Joshua familiarize himself with Jehovah's utterances, and to what did he testify?

ing forth through Jehovah's mouth."—Matthew 4:4.

### Living Today by Jehovah's Utterances

<sup>14</sup> Having dug a little deeper into the above words quoted by Jesus in reply to the Devil's temptation, we are better able to understand what Jesus meant. The historical and geographic context of Moses' account, quoted from by Jesus, shows that the utterances of Jehovah by which godly men and women must live are not just words learned by rote. For those Israelites, "every expression of Jehovah's mouth" was linked with the manna, the water, and the clothing that did not wear out. Yes, the utterances included their fulfillment, the wonderful things Jehovah did for his people. It was their experiencing these things, in fulfillment of Jehovah's utterances, that strengthened the appreciative Israelites.

<sup>15</sup> Similarly today, what nourishes Jehovah's people is not simply reading and studying Jehovah's utterances, as necessary as this is. It is *experiencing*, collectively and individually, the wonderful way in which Jehovah deals with us and acts on our behalf. The more we are conscious of Jehovah's dealings with us, the more such fulfilled utterances will nourish us, strengthening our faith, our spirituality.

<sup>16</sup> A psalmist wrote: "I shall remember the *practices* of Jah; for I will remember your marvelous *doing* of long ago. And I shall certainly meditate on all your *activity*, and with your *dealings* I will concern myself." (Psalm 77:11, 12) If we concern

14. (a) By digging deeper into Matthew 4:4, how can we better understand what Jesus meant? (b) What strengthened appreciative Israelites?

15. How can Jehovah's utterances nourish us? 16. (a) With what did a psalmist concern himself? (b) How should we do likewise, and how will this help us?

ourselves with Jehovah's practices, doings, activities, and dealings on behalf of his people, realizing that they are a tangible expression of his utterances, these divine providences will be like spiritual bread for us. They will draw us into a closer personal relationship with Jehovah. We will be like Jesus. He refused to turn stones into loaves of bread at the Devil's bidding. Likewise we will take care not to allow material things or undue concern about material needs to cause us to fall into the Devil's trap and abandon Jehovah's worship.

<sup>17</sup> Jesus stated: "My food is for me to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work." (John 4:34) He was a wonderful example, showing us in a practical way that "man must live, not on bread alone, but on every utterance coming forth through Jehovah's mouth."—Matthew 4:4.

### Awaiting Further Instructions

<sup>18</sup> Jehovah, through his Son, has stated that "this good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth" before the end comes. (Matthew 24:14)

17. In what way was Jesus a wonderful example?

18. What divine utterance is now being fulfilled?

## In Our Next Issue

■ Captives of Superstition  
Find Freedom

■ Triumphing in  
"the Final Part of the Days"

■ Peaceable People  
Are Truly Needed!

That divine utterance is in course of fulfillment as a result of the worldwide preaching work of Jehovah's Witnesses. Are you 'living' on that utterance from Jehovah's mouth by having a full share in the preaching work and thus receiving spiritual sustenance because you are doing his will?

<sup>19</sup> Other utterances of Jehovah are due to cause exciting events in the near future. "The ten horns" and "the wild beast" will turn against "the harlot," Babylon the Great. Yes, the destruction of that world empire of false religion by antireligious elements within the United Nations will be an outstanding action resulting from the carrying out of one of Jehovah's utterances.—Revelation 17:16, 17.

<sup>20</sup> Another remarkable divine utterance will come to pass when Jehovah symbolically puts "hooks" in the jaws of Gog, or Satan, challenging him and his "military force" to attack His people on earth. (Ezekiel 38:2-4, 8-12) Yet another divine utterance will bring the destruction of Gog's hordes. (Ezekiel 39:1-6)\* This will mean "the war of the great day of God the Almighty" at Har-Magedon. (Revelation 16:14, 16; 19:11-21) How thrilling it will be for Jehovah's faithful people to observe the fulfillment of these divine utterances and, in the midst of the fray, to hear figuratively this further utterance: "Stand still and see the salvation of Jehovah in your behalf."—2 Chronicles 20:17.

<sup>21</sup> Then, carrying out another divine utterance, Christ will bind Satan and his

\* See chapters 19, 20 in "*The Nations Shall Know That I Am Jehovah*"—*How?* published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

19, 20. What other divine utterances will shortly cause exciting events?

21. The carrying out of Jehovah's utterances will bring about what developments?

demons and hurl them into the abyss for "a thousand years." (Revelation 20:1-3) That thousand years will allow for the fulfillment of other utterances of Jehovah, including the resurrection of the dead and "the curing of the nations," obedient mankind. (Revelation 20:11-15; 22:1, 2) During this thousand-year judgment period, Jehovah evidently will give additional instructions, unknown to us at present, as new "scrolls" are opened. (Revelation 20:12) How marvelous it will be for the survivors of the "great tribulation" and for the resurrected dead to gain instruction and guidance from these further instructions as set forth on these unrolled "scrolls" of Jehovah and to carry them out delightfully!

<sup>22</sup> With such a wonderful prospect before us, let us take full advantage of the opportunity we now have to acquaint ourselves with Jehovah's utterances and do deep personal study of his Word and participate in the preaching work with an ever-increasing consciousness of Jehovah's actions on our behalf.

22. What are we encouraged to do now?

### Can You Recall?

- How did the Israelites learn to live "by every expression of Jehovah's mouth"?
- How could the Israelites feed spiritually on Jehovah's utterances?
- How can we live today by Jehovah's utterances?
- What utterances of Jehovah are to be fulfilled?

# Insight on the News

## Hospitals Seek Witnesses

The press reports that a few California hospitals are now actively seeking Jehovah's Witnesses as patients. Some hospitals have been reluctant to operate on the Witnesses because they refuse blood transfusions on religious grounds. Why the change in attitude? Since the economy of the medical industry is in trouble, administrators are looking for additional sources of revenue. But another reason is given. "Recent medical advances making bloodless surgery—the term used to describe operations in which transfusions of blood or blood parts are withheld—less risky also have made the hospitals and doctors involved more willing to operate on Witnesses," reports the *Daily News* of Van Nuys, California. "Most forms of surgery can be performed without giving blood if you are very cautious and patient with the patient," admits general surgeon Dr. Sheldon N. Lipshutz.

Although Jehovah's Witnesses accept nonblood alternatives, such as saline solutions, they refuse to 'thrust aside their faith and good conscience' for a medical practice that is unscriptural. (1 Timothy 1:19; Acts 15:20) They have found that obeying God's laws is also medically sound. "Fifteen or 20 years ago, I didn't want (Witnesses) in my hospital," one administrator told the *Daily News*. "Today there are too many cases of AIDS and hepatitis

spreading through transfusions not to question the desirability of routine blood transfusions. The Jehovah's Witness point of view makes increasing sense."

## Learning to Do Good

Why did some in Nazi Germany risk their lives in order to save or help people in danger of persecution or death while others who could have helped turned the other way? Dr. Samuel Oliner, a sociologist at Humboldt State University in Arcata, California, along with his associates, is endeavoring to find out. Already, reports *The New York Times*, their findings "converge on the formative experiences people have in childhood, which seem to make them, many years later, more predisposed than others to come to the aid of the distressed."

Concurring is Ervin Staub, a psychologist at the University of Massachusetts. "The parents who transmit altruism most effectively," said Dr. Staub, "exert a firm control over their children. Although they are nurturant, they are not permissive. They use a combination of firmness, warmth and reasoning. They point out to children the consequences to others of misbehavior—and good behavior. And they actively guide the child to do good, to share, to be helpful."

It is no wonder, then, that parents are instructed to bring their children up "in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah" because "he that does good

originates with God."—Ephesians 6:4; 3 John 11.

## No "Truth"?

"You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free," Jesus stated at John 8:32. Yet a growing trend is to think that the goal of knowing the truth is unattainable. Note the remarks of Bishop John S. Spong, as quoted in *The Sunday Star-Ledger* of Newark, New Jersey: "We must . . . move from thinking we have the truth and others must come to our point of view to the realization that ultimate truth is beyond the grasp of all of us." He added: "Every religious tradition . . . revolves around a center none of us finally can claim or capture." Speaking to a convention of some 600 Episcopal clergymen and lay delegates, the bishop questioned "the traditional, imperialistic claims of Christianity."

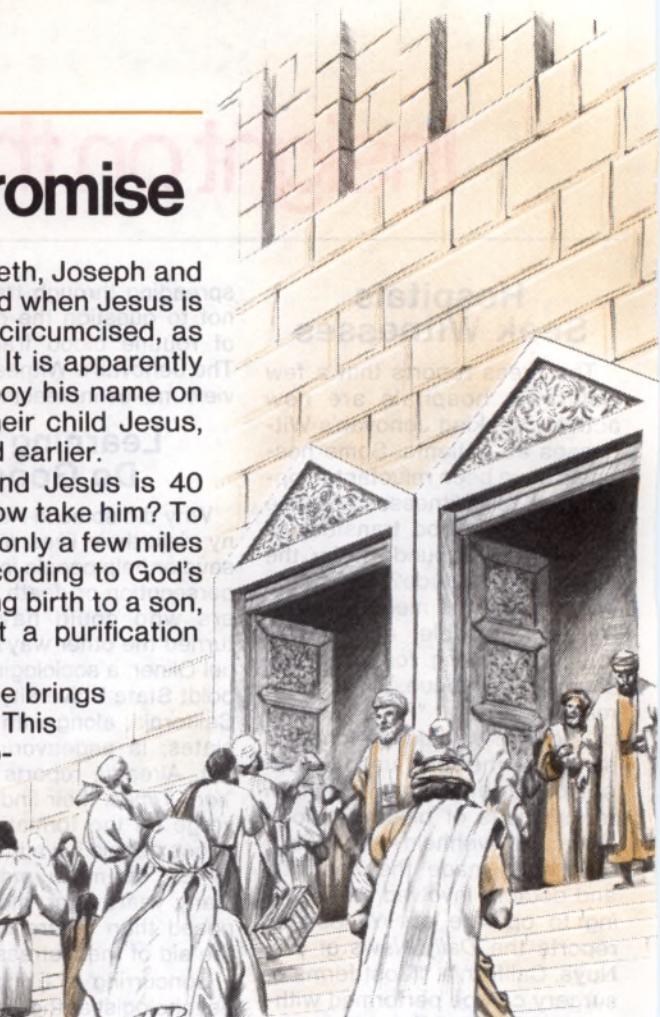
But if "ultimate truth" is not to be found, why did Jesus insist that God must be worshiped "with spirit and truth"? Or why did he state that his followers would be guided "into all the truth"? (John 4:23, 24; 16:13) And why would the apostle Paul state that it is God's will that individuals should "come to an accurate knowledge of truth"? (1 Timothy 2:3, 4) Or why did he speak of some doctrines as being a 'deviation from the truth'? (2 Timothy 2:18; 4:3, 4) Certainly, as with the early Christian congregation, a group of worshipers having the truth can be expected to be present today.

# The Child of Promise

INSTEAD of returning to Nazareth, Joseph and Mary remain in Bethlehem. And when Jesus is eight days old they have him circumcised, as God's Law to Moses commands. It is apparently the custom also to give a baby boy his name on the eighth day. So they name their child Jesus, as the angel Gabriel had directed earlier.

More than a month passes, and Jesus is 40 days old. Where do his parents now take him? To the temple in Jerusalem, which is only a few miles from where they are staying. According to God's Law to Moses, 40 days after giving birth to a son, a mother is required to present a purification offering at the temple.

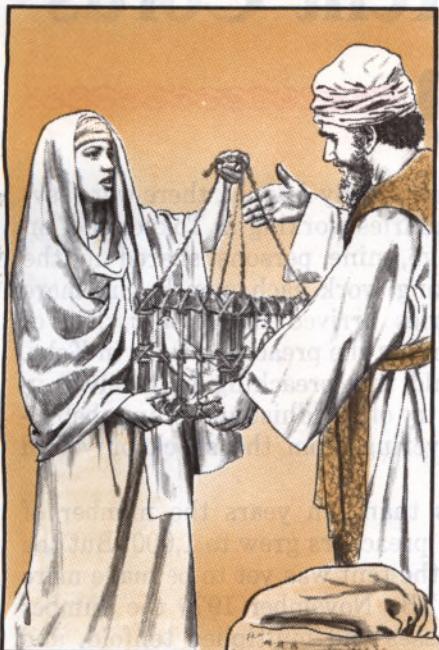
That is what Mary does. But she brings two small birds as her offering. This reveals something about the economic situation of Joseph and



Mary. The Law of Moses indicates that a young ram, which is much more valuable than birds, should be offered. But if the mother could not afford this, two turtledoves or pigeons would suffice.

In the temple an old man takes Jesus into his arms. His name is Simeon. God has revealed to him that he will not die before he has seen Jehovah's promised Christ, or Messiah. When Simeon comes to the temple on this day, he is directed by holy spirit to the child carried by Joseph and Mary.

As Simeon holds Jesus he thanks God, saying: 'You have kept your promise, for I

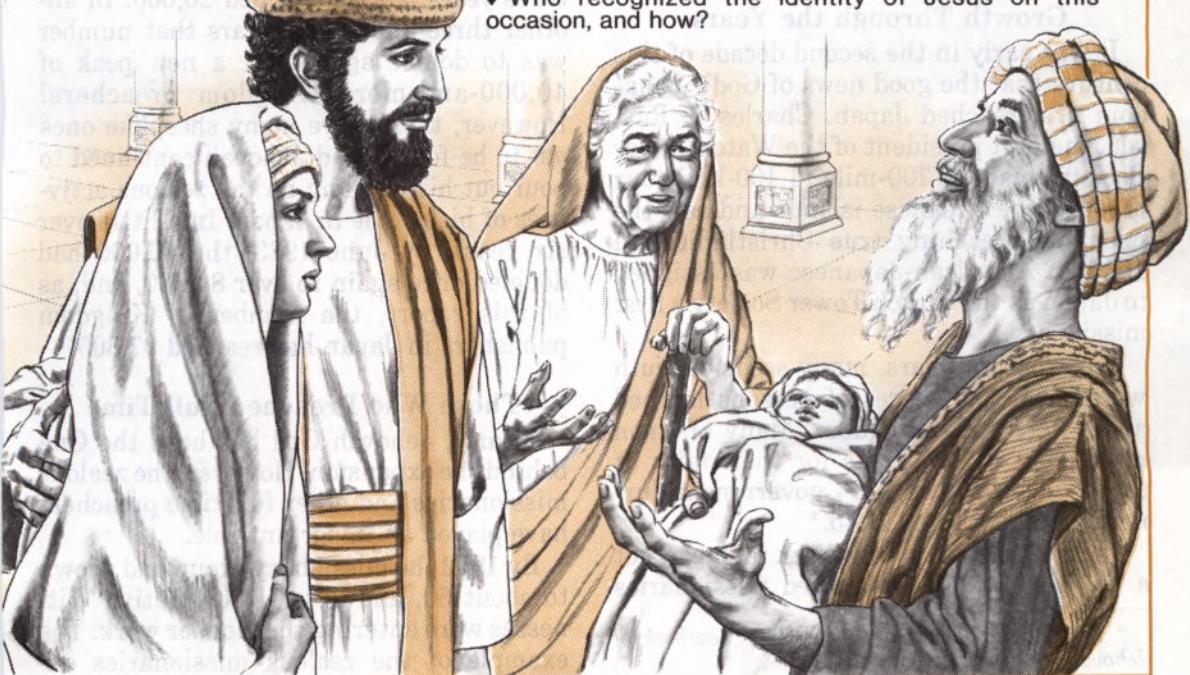


have seen with my own eyes the means of salvation that you have prepared.' Joseph and Mary are amazed when they hear this. Then Simeon blesses them and says to Mary that her son "is laid for the fall and the rising again of many in Israel" and that sorrow, like a sharp sword, will pierce her soul.

Present on this occasion is the 84-year-old prophetess named Anna. In fact, she is never missing from the temple. In that very hour she comes near and begins giving thanks to God and speaking about Jesus to all those who will listen.

How happy these events at the temple have made Joseph and Mary! Surely, it only confirms to them that the child is the Promised One of God. **Luke 2:21-38; Leviticus 12:1-8.**

- ♦ When was it apparently the custom to give a baby Israelite boy his name?
- ♦ What was required of an Israelite mother when her son was 40 days old, and how did the fulfilling of this requirement reveal Mary's economic situation?
- ♦ Who recognized the identity of Jesus on this occasion, and how?



# 'Lengthening the Tent Cords' in Japan

**M**AKE the place of your tent more spacious. And let them stretch out the tent cloths of your grand tabernacle. Do not hold back. Lengthen out your tent cords, and make those tent pins of yours strong."—Isaiah 54:2.

By those words, the prophet Isaiah pointed to the time when true worship of Jehovah God would undergo rapid expansion. Today, in one country after another around the world, we are witnessing just such marvelous theocratic expansion. This is, perhaps, nowhere more evident than in Japan, where there are some 96,000 worshipers of the true God.

## Growth Through the Years

It was early in the second decade of this century that the good news of God's Kingdom first reached Japan. Charles T. Russell, the first president of the Watch Tower Society, made a 700-mile (1,100-km) tour through the Japanese islands and saw the need for preaching true Christianity. In 1926 an American-Japanese was assigned to Japan as the Watch Tower Society's first missionary.

For some 20 years, many seeds of truth were sown and scores of persons learned about Jehovah's Kingdom. Many of them underwent severe trials for their faith at the hands of the military government during the period of 1933-45.\*

In 1949 the preaching work in Japan got a fresh start. Gilead-trained missionaries

\* For a detailed account, see 1973 *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses*, pages 214-22.

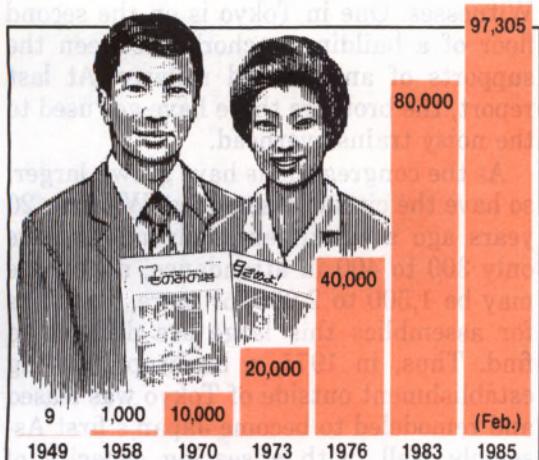
began arriving. By August, there were seven missionaries working in Tokyo, and, on an average, nine persons shared in the evangelizing work each month. Six more missionaries arrived in October, five of these starting the preaching work in Kobe. How would this preaching be received in this country of Buddhist and Shinto believers, recovering from the shock of World War II?

In less than ten years the number of Kingdom preachers grew to 1,000. But the 'place of the tent was yet to be made more spacious.' By November 1970 the number of Witnesses had multiplied tenfold, and three years later it reached 20,000. In another three and a half years that number was to double again—for a new peak of 40,000-and-more Kingdom preachers! However, there were many sheeplike ones yet to be found, and Jehovah continued to pour out his blessing on the zealous activities of his people in Japan. In a little over six years, by June 1983, the 40,000 had doubled once again to over 80,000, and, as of this report, the number of Kingdom publishers in Japan has reached 97,305!

## Those Who Preached Full Time

Clearly, Jehovah God has been the One behind the expansion. However, the zealous missionaries and other full-time preachers have played an important role.

By 1952 the missionary group had grown to about 50, and several new native Witnesses were entering the pioneer work. The example of the zealous missionaries en-



Growth in Kingdom publishers in Japan in the past 37 years

couraged more and more of their newly baptized companions to devote themselves full time to Jehovah's service. Today, 37 years after the first missionaries entered the country, nearly 40 percent of all Witnesses in Japan are in the full-time (pioneer) work each month, with 36,118 reporting even in the short midwinter month of February 1985. Many of the missionaries who shared in this expansion from the start are still serving there, but the present group of 76 missionaries is now like a small 'drop in the ocean' of tens of thousands of local pioneers.

Would you like to meet some of these zealous ones? Let us get acquainted with at least a few, representing the spectrum of these pioneers.

First, meet some of the old-timers. Iwako Kono is our oldest special pioneer. At age 70 she has enjoyed this privilege of service for about 28 years and has helped almost 50 persons to dedication and baptism. Then there is Sadakichi Shimada. At 87 years of age he is the oldest regular pioneer in Japan. Toyoko Umemoto was 26 years old when she started to special pioneer. Now,

with more than 29 years of faithful service, she has served the longest of any native Japanese special pioneer.

At the other end of the scale, there are many young ones who are using their youth to serve Jehovah. Meri Aida was 14 years old when she received her appointment to serve as a regular pioneer. Before that she had shared in auxiliary pioneer service for 41 months since her baptism at age 11. She did so while going to school.

Akiko Goto was seven years old when her mother started to do regular pioneer work, in spite of caring for two babies. Akiko followed her mother's fine example and became a regular pioneer when she was 18, and then two years later she became the youngest special pioneer in Japan. Hisako Wakui was 21 when she started as a special pioneer. Now, after some 28 years, she has had the privilege of helping at least 37 persons to become worshipers of Jehovah.

Many have gone out from the big cities to the small towns and villages to bring the "good news of the kingdom" to all the deserving ones. Interestingly, about 60 percent of all regular pioneers are housewives, and the majority of them do not have believing husbands. This marvelous pioneer spirit has spearheaded the growth of Kingdom interests in Japan.

### The Urgent Need for Meeting Places

The Japanese Witnesses fully appreciate the Bible command not to 'forsake the gathering of ourselves together, and all the more so as we behold the day drawing near.' (Hebrews 10:25) In the early years, most congregations held their meetings in small rooms in labor halls or civic auditoriums. Many of these were rented on a weekly basis. Often the brothers would arrive for their meetings only to be told that the room would not be available that day. This meant scurrying around to find another



Toyoko Umemoto has the longest record of special pioneering

location and then, in less than an hour, setting it up for the meetings!

Happily, most of that is in the past. The majority of the congregations now have their own meeting places. Some rent on a yearly basis while others have renovated vacant buildings or warehouses. But the price of land in Japan is so high—ranging anywhere from \$35 to \$50 (U.S.) per square foot—that few congregations can afford to own the land where their Kingdom Halls stand. Some brothers who own property have torn down their houses and rebuilt with a Kingdom Hall on the first floor and their residence above. In several unusual cases, persons who are not Jehovah's Witnesses or not even interested in Christianity have offered to build Kingdom Halls on their property and rent them to Jehovah's Witnesses, even asking the Witnesses to submit plans for their hall. This has resulted in some truly unusual Kingdom Halls.

For example, in Yokohama, a parking-lot owner agreed to build a Kingdom Hall on stilts over his lot and to rent the hall to the

Witnesses. One in Tokyo is on the second floor of a building anchored between the supports of an elevated railway. At last report, the brothers there have got used to the noisy trains overhead.

As the congregations have grown larger, so have the circuit assemblies. Whereas 20 years ago a circuit assembly might have only 300 to 400 in attendance, now there may be 1,500 to 2,000, or more. Facilities for assemblies this large are difficult to find. Thus, in 1975, a bankrupt bowling establishment outside of Tokyo was leased and remodeled to become Japan's first Assembly Hall, with a seating capacity of 1,200. The second one, a fine ferroconcrete building, followed in 1982. It is in the central (Kansai) area of Japan and was built entirely by the volunteer labor of Witness men, women, and children. It seats 1,800. The third Assembly Hall has been built by volunteer workers on the property of the Watch Tower Society's branch headquarters in Ebina. It will seat 3,000.

The last time all the publishers in Japan came together for one assembly was at the international convention at Ōsaka in 1973, with 31,263 in attendance. Since then, due to lack of suitable facilities, smaller conventions have proved to be more practical, and a Kingdom witness can be given in more places. Twenty-four such conventions were held in 1984, with 179,439 attending and 3,236 being baptized.

#### Expansion at the Branch

To keep pace with the rapid growth in the field, the Society's branch office has undergone tremendous expansion through the years. From 1949 to 1962 the office was located in a two-story Japanese-style house in Minato Ward, Tokyo. It was finally replaced by a seven-story building that served as the headquarters until 1972. By

then the Society saw the need to do its own printing. So a new factory and a Bethel home were built on an acre (0.4 ha) of land in Numazu City, 75 miles (120 km) southwest of Tokyo.

Within five years, however, the facilities at Numazu were taxed to the limit. Thus, 18 acres (7 ha) were purchased in Ebina, and a fine factory and a Bethel home, three times the size of the facilities in Numazu, were built. This complex, constructed entirely by the Witnesses themselves, was dedicated on May 15, 1982.

Magazine production was started with a new rotary offset printing press while construction was still in progress. After construction was completed, another four-color rotary offset press was added. The brothers were especially excited when tens of thousands of copies of the Japanese *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* rolled off the Society's press in 1982. To keep up with the increasing demand for magazines and other literature, a five-unit rotary offset press was installed in January 1984. It can produce a thousand magazines a minute and can print *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* simultaneously.

To do all this printing and shipping and to look after the needs of the workers, the Bethel family has grown to 345 members. In addition, 165 have been working on the new construction project. Interestingly, there are 19 sets of fleshly brothers in this family.

Even though it was just three years ago that the Ebina facilities were dedicated, work is already under way for further expansion. Under construction on the same property are a new eight-story Bethel home, which will house 250 persons, and a six-story factory addition. Indeed, the "tent cords" are being extended beyond all anticipation.



Sadakichi Shimada is the oldest regular pioneer in Japan

### Future Prospects

In this land of Buddhist and Shinto beliefs, there are many people who are looking for something in which they can put faith. How many will yet come to Jehovah's "tent" remains to be seen. An indication of further progress is the fact that 224,696 persons met together on April 15, 1984, to commemorate Jesus' death. And a concerted effort is being put forth to help the interested ones. Each month, some 142,000 home Bible studies are being conducted.

When the first missionaries arrived in 1949, who could have imagined that after 37 years there would be over 97,000 active praisers of Jehovah in this land? Yet, Jehovah has brought it about. True to his promise, he has indeed 'stretched out the tent cloths' and 'lengthened the tent cords' for his people. His Witnesses will continue to work hard and look to him to bring in the harvest before the end of this system of things.

# Finding Joy in a Trouble-Filled World

**A**LWAYS rejoice in the Lord," commanded the apostle Paul. "Once more I will say, Rejoice!" (Philippians 4:4) But for many, such joy seems elusive. 'How can you be joyful when you have to put up with poverty, unemployment, unruly workmates, immoral enticements, or pressures at school?' wonder some.

It would hardly be reasonable for God to expect his people to be in a perpetual state of jubilance. God himself inspired Paul to predict that these would be "critical times hard to deal with." (2 Timothy 3:1-5) Nevertheless, the Bible does clearly show that even in the worst of circumstances, one can have at least a *measure* of joy. Jesus, for example, "endured a torture stake" and "contrary talk by sinners." Certainly there was little joy in being painfully nailed to a stake or in being jeered at by crowds. Paul even speaks of Christ's agonies as being so intense that he had to petition God "with strong outcries and tears." Yet Jesus was able to endure all of this "for the joy that was set before him." —Hebrews 12:2, 3; 5:7.

Early Christians likewise "endured a great contest under sufferings, sometimes while [they] were being exposed as in a theater both to reproaches and tribulations." Yet, Paul says, they "joyfully took the plundering of [their] belongings." (He-



brews 10:32-34) But how was this possible?

## Joy—From Without or Within?

Joy is not something external. It is a quality of the heart. (Compare Proverbs 17:22.) True, external things such as family, friends—even a favorite food—can to a limited extent bring a feeling of joy. (Acts 14:16, 17) Why, just *anticipating* something good can bring joy! (Compare Proverbs 10:28.) However, the joy a person derives from external circumstances or material things can be short-lived.

On the other hand, external circumstances at times seem to rob us of joy. For example, a young man named Jim expresses how his secular job affected him: "I hated my job . . . I couldn't see spending my life just to advance some company that didn't seem to really care about me as a person. Plus, many of the people I worked with were backstabbing, insincere people." Trying to induce joy artificially likewise

proved a dead end. Recalls Jim: "I've been involved with drugs of all kinds since I was ten years old. But I became a very mixed-up person. I was sick of the life I was leading: drinking, taking drugs, and partying. Life had no meaning or purpose. I asked myself, 'Where can I find something better?'"

Jim's experience in this regard reminds us of that of King Solomon. He, too, learned the futility of trying to find joy through self-indulgence:

"I said, even I, in my heart: 'Do come now, let me try you out with rejoicing. Also, see good.' And, look! that too was vanity. I said to laughter: 'Insanity!' and to rejoicing: 'What is this doing?' I explored with my heart by cheering my flesh even with wine, while I was leading my heart with wisdom, even to lay hold on folly until I could see what good there was to the sons of mankind in what they did under the heavens for the number of the days of their life. I engaged in greater works. I built houses for myself; I planted vineyards for myself. I made gardens and parks for myself . . . And anything that my eyes asked for I did not keep away from them. . . . And I, even I, turned toward all the works of mine that my hands had done and toward the hard work that I had worked hard to accomplish, and, look! everything was vanity and a striving after wind."—Ecclesiastes 2:1-5, 10, 11.

Is there a way of life that is not vain, one that brings joy even under the direst of circumstances?

### The Source of Real Joy

"The joy of Jehovah is your stronghold," said Nehemiah. (Nehemiah 8:10) Yes, joy emanates from Almighty God because, for one thing, he is the Creator of all good things that can bring true joy. "Strength and joy are at his place," says the Bible. (1 Chronicles 16:27) The real way to at-

tain joy, therefore, is to have a friendship, a relationship, with the Creator himself such as Abraham enjoyed! (James 2:23) Can such a friendship bring joy? Consider what the psalmist said: "Your [God's] friendship is better than life." (Psalm 63:3, *The Bible in Living English*) In passing let it be noted that Jim in time came to appreciate these facts. Today he is a joyful Christian.

How could friendship with God bring joy? For one thing, God is "the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him." (Hebrews 11:6) In serving God, one need not fear that one's efforts are in vain or go unnoticed. The smallest acts of devotion are deeply appreciated by him. (Compare Mark 12:41-44.) And when Jehovah blesses his faithful friends, his blessing "makes rich, and he adds no pain with it." (Proverbs 10:22) In fact, lovers of God look forward to enjoying the reward of eternal life in his New Order where "righteousness is to dwell." (2 Peter 3:13) Such a hope is a real cause of joy for Christians!

Another thing to consider is that "joy" is a fruit of God's spirit. Yet God generously gives his spirit to his friends upon request. (Galatians 5:22; Luke 11:13) What is the result? The psalmist proclaimed, "Happy is the people whose God is Jehovah!"—Psalm 144:15.

### Keeping Our Joy

Nevertheless, even anointed Christians in Paul's day felt low at times. (1 Thessalonians 5:14) And today the stresses and strains of life exact an even greater toll. But since joy is a quality that dwells deep in one's heart, these pressures need not cause you to lose your joy. Consider, for example, Jesus Christ. We earlier observed that "for the joy that was set before him he endured a torture stake." (Hebrews 12:2) Though being impaled was obviously a wretched experience, Jesus'

relationship with his Father was far too strong to allow him to focus his thoughts on self-pity. The dominant thought in Jesus' mind was clearly "the joy that was set before him": the privilege of vindicating Jehovah's name, the prospect of rescuing the entire human race from sin, the honor of serving as the King of God's Kingdom! Even in his darkest moments, Christ could reflect upon these things and have feelings of intense joy!

Early Christians likewise could endure persecution, even 'joyfully taking the plundering of their belongings,' not because they derived some masochistic pleasure from misery, but because their minds were focused on *why* they had to endure these things. They could rejoice "because they had been counted worthy to be dishonored in behalf of his name." They could rejoice because of the 'hope of everlasting' life set before them.—Acts 5:41; Titus 1:2.

Today we also can maintain our joy, even when confronted with serious problems. Rather than withdrawing into ourselves and dwelling on our problems, we can try to remind ourselves of the blessings of having a friendship with Jehovah and the support of loving brothers and sisters. Often this is enough to make our suffering seem insignificant. Jesus illustrated the matter this way: "A woman, when she is giving birth, has grief, because her hour has arrived; but when she has brought forth the young child, she remembers the tribulation no more because of the joy that a man has been born into the world."—John 16:21.

In the Christian congregation today are many fine examples of individuals who allow joy to overshadow their problems. A Christian woman named Evelyn, for example, has suffered a variety of illnesses, including cancer. She walks with difficulty and is often visibly in pain. Yet she is

regular in attendance at meetings and usually has a radiant smile on her face. The secret of her joy? "I lean on Jehovah," she is fond of saying. Yes, rather than dwelling on her misery, she makes an effort to focus her mind on the reasons she has to be joyful. This gives her the strength to cope with her illnesses.

Of course, we can easily lose our joy. Some become consumed with a desire for material things or recreation. They neglect Christian meetings, personal study, and field service. Rather than bringing joy into his life, the one who lusts for material riches 'stabs himself all over with many pains.'—1 Timothy 6:10.

Pursuing the selfish "works of the flesh" is another way of destroying one's joy. Fornication, uncleanness, or loose conduct may bring momentary pleasure, but they are diametrically opposed to God's spirit, which produces joy. (Galatians 5:19-23) The one who indulges in wrongdoing risks cutting himself off from the Source of joy—Jehovah!

How much better it is, therefore, for a Christian jealously to safeguard his joy. If, for some reason, you find yourself lacking joy, see what you can do to regain it. Perhaps there is a need on your part for further study and meditation on the Bible. It is only by constantly reminding ourselves of our hope that we can "rejoice in the hope" ahead, even when suffering difficulties. (Romans 12:12) Or perhaps there is a need to have a greater share in preaching the "good news of the kingdom." (Matthew 24:14) "Giving" in this way almost inevitably brings a greater measure of joy!—Acts 13:48, 52; 20:35.

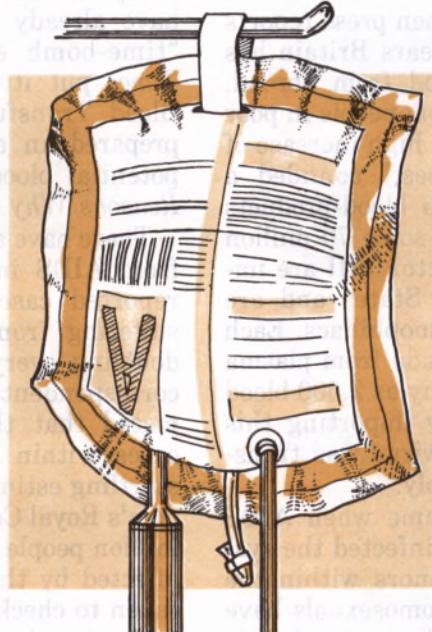
Our problem-filled world will continue to cause us trouble. But by drawing close to our heavenly Friend, we can hold on to our joy and gain entrance into God's New Order where all the obstacles to joy will be forever removed!—Revelation 21:3, 4.

EXACTLY two years ago, *The Watchtower* published the article "Jehovah's Standards Help Us." (Psalm 20:4) It gave as one example of the help available from God's safe and sure guidelines, the protection coming to Christians who obey his law against taking in blood. At that time in the United States attention was just beginning to be focused on a new health threat—AIDS. There were suspicions that this fatal syndrome might be spread through blood transfusions. However, readers in Europe and elsewhere might then have felt that this threat from violating God's law was limited to some distant location. As an update two years later, consider this recent information from Great Britain.

# Britain, Blood, and AIDS

"**M**Y SISTER needs to have an operation but is terrified of contracting AIDS. We are not Jehovah's Witnesses, but can you please help by recommending a surgeon who would operate without the use of blood?" That was just one of the heartfelt requests received recently by Jehovah's Witnesses at their London, England, headquarters. What lies behind these appeals?

Since its inception, the British Blood Transfusion Service has prided itself on its blood supply from voluntary donors. "A rest after the donation [of a unit of blood], a drink and biscuits, and back to work. Why not give it a try?" encourages their advertising leaflet. As a result, two million *voluntary* donations are made each year by 3 percent of the population. "Blood collected from unpaid volunteers, as it is in Britain, is qualitatively



superior to that collected from people who are paid for it," claims *The Guardian*. In other words, the view has long been that Britain has avoided the risk of infection from blood *purchased* from alcoholics or others who have little else to sell. But recent events have revealed serious flaws in this picture, resulting in an unprecedented loss of public confidence. Following the death of two haemophiliacs, a spokesman for the Haemophiliac Society said that National Health Service 'blood supplies can no longer be regarded as safe.' What happened?

Although it has been well known for years that it is impossible to screen blood for every disease and that serious infections, such as hepatitis or malaria, can be passed by transfusion, such dangers were

## What Is AIDS?

AIDS is an acronym derived from Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. AIDS itself does not kill. But, as its name implies, the victim is left with a crippled immune system. Lacking this protection, a person with the disease will usually die from an infection, such as a unique type of pneumonia or a rare form of skin cancer, Kaposi's sarcoma. Research into detection and diagnosis is in its early stages, and there is, as yet, no known cure for AIDS.

not widely publicized in Britain. The inference always was that donated blood gives no cause for alarm. But two shocking factors have combined, causing *The Daily Telegraph* to conclude: "Britain has lost the battle to prevent the Aids virus infiltrating blood supplies."

The first shock came when press reports revealed that for many years Britain has in fact been buying blood from abroad. "Blood is being bought from people in poor countries where there is a high increase of blood-transmitted diseases," confided a union representative at a blood-products laboratory. Furthermore, some 70 million units of concentrated Factor VIII are imported from the United States and are used to treat British haemophiliacs. Each batch of Factor VIII is made from plasma that is pooled from as many as 2,500 blood donors. It seems that by importing this blood product the AIDS virus was transferred to the British supply.

An additional shock came when AIDS was confirmed as having infected the system from homosexual donors within the British Isles. Although homosexuals have been among those asked not to donate blood because of their higher risk of having AIDS, the warning was not as strongly worded as it should have been, admitted the Department of Health. The warning in their pamphlet on AIDS referred only to "Homosexual men who have many different partners." A current overprinting of the leaflet *A.I.D.S. and how it concerns blood donors* specifies that "Practising male homosexuals and bisexuals" are "par-

ticularly susceptible" to AIDS. But the warning came too late. By the beginning of 1985 more than 40 individuals, including a newborn baby, were infected. Furthermore, there is the troubling fact that the AIDS virus has an incubation period of up to two years. So how many more have already been infected? There is a "time-bomb element," as *The Sunday Times* put it. Accordingly, the National Blood Transfusion Service has recently prepared an additional pamphlet for all potential blood donors in Britain, *Some Reasons Why You Should Not Give Blood*.

There have already been some 50 deaths from AIDS in Britain, out of over 100 reported cases. The number of people suffering from the disease is presently doubling every eight months. A medical correspondent for *The Sunday Times* estimated that there could be over 12,000 cases within five years. An even more startling estimate out of the United Kingdom's Royal College of Nursing is that one million people in the British Isles could be affected by the year 1991 if no action is taken to check the spread of AIDS.

The inquirer mentioned above said: "It seems to me that you Jehovah's Witnesses are being proved right on this matter of blood transfusion." More accurately, of course, it is Jehovah God, through his Word, the Bible, who is being vindicated. Centuries ago he commanded Christians to 'abstain from blood.' (Acts 15:29; 21:25) His counsel and standards have certainly proved to be a protection for his people and will continue to be.

# Questions From Readers

- Was Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, raped by Shechem, and was it solely an act of violence, or did he want to marry her?

Evidently Shechem had sex relations with Dinah against her will. He raped her. However, her frequent, friendly visits with the Canaanites put her in a compromising situation and evidently had led to his strong attachment to her and his desire to have her as his wife.

The account at Genesis 34:1-3 reads: "Now Dinah . . . used to go out to see the daughters of the land. And Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, a chieftain of the land, got to see her and then took her and lay down with her and violated her. And his soul began clinging to Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he fell in love with the young woman." Despite the efforts of her father to discourage association with the immoral people of Canaan by pitching his camp *outside* the city of Shechem and establishing a separate water supply, Dinah still "used to go out to see the daughters of the land." (Genesis 33:18; John 4:12) The Hebrew verb translated "used to go out" is in the imperfect tense, which indicates continuous action. This verb in the same tense is also rendered, according to the setting, "regularly went out" and "customarily came up." (1 Samuel 18:13; 1 Kings 10:29) So Dinah's venture was not her first outing. She apparently wanted to "see," become better acquainted with, her neighbors in the city.

On one occasion during her regular visits, Shechem "took [Dinah] and lay down with her and violated her." Regarding the Hebrew word rendered "violated,"

*A Hebrew and English Lexicon* by William Gesenius states: "to deflower a woman, usually by force." This same word at Judges 19:24 and 20:5 is rendered "raped." However, a measure of consent on the part of the woman is indicated at Deuteronomy 22:24 where this same Hebrew word is used. Perhaps at the outset neither Shechem nor Dinah had in mind sex relations, but as his passion became aroused by the charms of this young, inquisitive virgin he, without any godly moral restraints, did what most Canaanite men would have considered natural. After all, she had come into *his* environment! When Dinah evidently objected to "going that far," he simply overpowered her.

Even if there was no measure of consent by Dinah, she still bore some responsibility for losing her virginity. Though she only visited "the daughters of the land," just imagine the morals of these. The fact that Esau's Hittite (or, Canaanite) wives were "a source of bitterness of spirit" to godly Isaac and Rebekah is certainly an indication of the badness already manifest among "the daughters of the land." (Genesis 26:34, 35; 27:46) Sexual immorality, including incest, homosexuality, sodomy, and bestiality eventually became a part of "the way the land of Canaan" did. (Leviticus 18:2-25) So what did Dinah talk about during such visits? Did she really believe she could avoid fellowship with the girls' brothers and boyfriends? For a woman to mingle, apparently unattended,

among such immoral people was inviting trouble. Dinah knew what happened to her ancestors Sarah and Rebekah while in Canaan. In the eyes of the depraved men of Canaan, Dinah became legitimate prey. She put herself in a compromising situation and paid for such with the loss of her virginity, despite any last-minute resistance.—Genesis 20:2, 3; 26:7.

After the affair Shechem detained Dinah in his home and "kept speaking persuasively" to her, as it were 'to her heart.' His father said: "His soul is attached to [Dinah]." It is unlikely that such ardent attachment would have developed simply from one encounter. He apparently had noticed her good qualities previously, perhaps during her frequent visits. Now he wanted to marry her. He and his father also may have felt that the marriage proposals would somehow atone for the son's deed and correct the situation, keeping peaceful relations with the prosperous household of Jacob.—Genesis 34:3, 8.

This whole episode led to the massacre of Shechem, his father, and all the males of the city. This brought ostracism on Jacob's household and led to his stern denunciation of his sons' anger many years later. (Genesis 34:30; 49:5-7) What a horrendous chain of events, and all because Dinah failed to guard her associations. This episode in the inspired record is a warning to young Christian women today who may, out of curiosity, be tempted to mingle socially with those who are not servants of God.—Proverbs 13:20.



## 'I've Listened to Them Dozens of Times'

**TO WHAT?** To dramatized Bible accounts on cassette tapes. An appreciative listener from Albuquerque, New Mexico, writes:

"I've listened to the tape 'Beware of Losing Faith by Drawing Away From Jehovah' in my car at least 25 times. It gives me so many things to ponder over. It's helped me to see issues much more clearly in my life by hearing the Israelites' discussions—they are such real people, and it becomes so obvious what they should or should not do.

"Different phrases, such as 'it's such a little thing' or 'you take the Law so literally . . . your view is narrow and restricted,' ring in my mind over and over. It makes me joyful because it's helped me take a firm stand (like Moses, Aaron, and Joshua) for what's right—not even desiring to compromise, thus beginning to draw away from Jehovah."

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