

MAY 15, 2002

# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

# Who Is God?

# THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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

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ENGLISH

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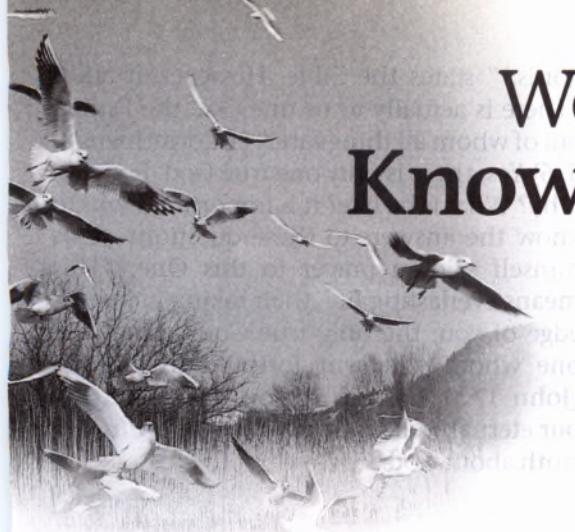
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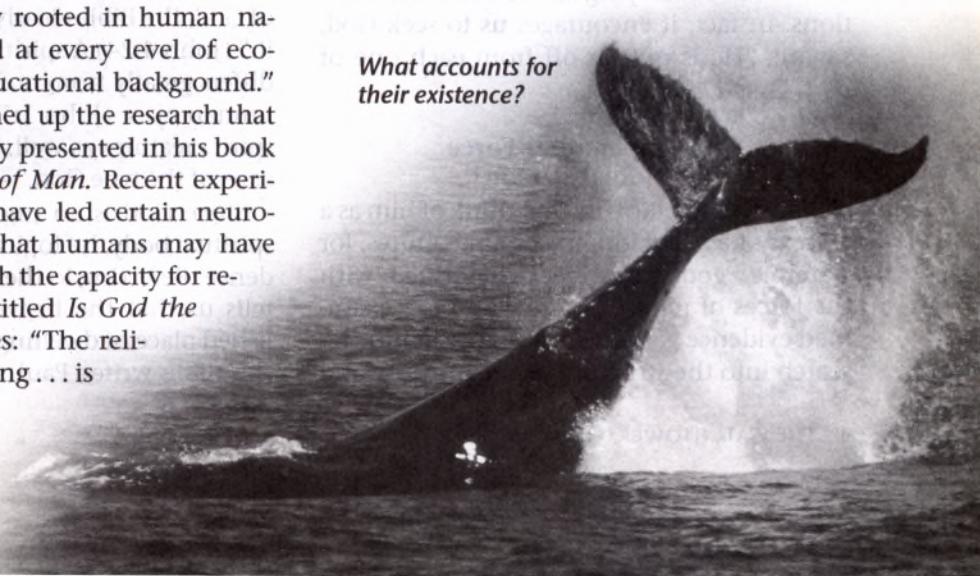
# We Need to Know Who God Is

the common experience in every culture and every age since the emergence of humankind."

Consider what a learned man concluded some 2,000 years ago. He wrote: "Every house is constructed by someone, but he that constructed all things is God." (Hebrews 3:4) In fact, the very first verse of the Bible states: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."—Genesis 1:1.

Who, though, is God? Mankind is divided on this question. When asked who God is, a Japanese teenager named Yoshi replied: "I am not sure. I am a Buddhist, and it has not been important for me to know who God is." Yoshi, though, admitted that Buddha himself is deified by many. Nick, a businessman in his 60's, believes in God and thinks of him as an all-powerful force. When asked to explain what he knows about God, Nick replied after a long pause: "That is a very difficult question, my friend. All I can say is that God is there. He exists."

*What accounts for their existence?*



**A**RE you not thrilled to see a star-studded sky on a cloudless night? Is not the fragrance of colorful flowers delightful? Do you not enjoy listening to the songs of birds and the sound of rustling leaves in a gentle breeze? And how fascinating are powerful whales and other creatures that inhabit the sea! Then there are humans with their faculty of conscience and an amazingly complex brain. How do you account for the existence of all the wonderful things that surround us?

Some believe that all of this is a product of blind chance. But if this is so, why are humans conscious of God? Why would an accidental combination of various chemicals produce creatures with a spiritual need?

"Religion is deeply rooted in human nature and experienced at every level of economic status and educational background." This statement summed up the research that Professor Alister Hardy presented in his book *The Spiritual Nature of Man*. Recent experiments on the brain have led certain neuroscientists to suggest that humans may have been "hardwired" with the capacity for religion. The book entitled *Is God the Only Reality?* observes: "The religious quest for meaning . . . is

Some people "worship and serve what God has created instead of the Creator himself." (Romans 1:25, *Today's English Version*) Millions worship dead ancestors, believing that God is too remote to be approached. In the Hindu religion, there are many gods and goddesses. Various deities, such as Zeus and Hermes, were worshiped in the days of Jesus Christ's apostles. (Acts 14:11, 12) Many churches of Christendom teach that God is a Trinity, consisting of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Indeed, "there are many 'gods' and many

'lords,'" states the Bible. However, it adds: "There is actually to us one God the Father, out of whom all things are." (1 Corinthians 8:5, 6) Yes, there is only one true God. But who is he? What is he like? It is important for us to know the answers to these questions. Jesus himself said in prayer to this One: "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ." (John 17:3) There is reason to believe that our eternal welfare depends on knowing the truth about God.

## Who Is God?

"**G**OD is the name commonly given to the ultimate source and power of the universe and the subject of religious devotion," says *The Encyclopedia Americana*. A dictionary defines the term "God" as "the supreme or ultimate reality." What is the nature of such an awesome reality?

Is God an impersonal force or a real person? Does he have a name? Is he a triune entity, a Trinity, as many believe? How can we come to know God? The Bible provides truthful and satisfying answers to these questions. In fact, it encourages us to seek God, saying: "He is not far off from each one of us."—Acts 17:27.

### An Impersonal Force or a Real Person?

Many who believe in God think of him as a force, not as a person. In certain cultures, for example, gods have been identified with the forces of nature. Some who have examined evidence gathered through scientific research into the structure of the universe and

the nature of life on earth have concluded that there has to be a First Cause. Nevertheless, they hesitate to attach a personality to this Cause.

Yet, does not the complexity of creation indicate that the First Cause must have had great intelligence? Intelligence requires a mind. The great mind responsible for all creation belongs to the person of God. Yes, God has a body, not a physical one like ours, but a spiritual body. "If there is a physical body," says the Bible, "there is also a spiritual one." (1 Corinthians 15:44) Explaining the nature of God, the Bible clearly states: "God is a Spirit." (John 4:24) A spirit has a form of life that differs greatly from ours, and it is invisible to human eyes. (John 1:18) There are invisible spirit creatures as well. They are angels—"the sons of the true God."—Job 1:6; 2:1.

Since God is an uncreated person with a spiritual body, he logically has a place of residence. Referring to the spirit realm, the Bible tells us that the heavens are God's "established place of dwelling." (1 Kings 8:43) Also, the Bible writer Paul states: 'Christ entered

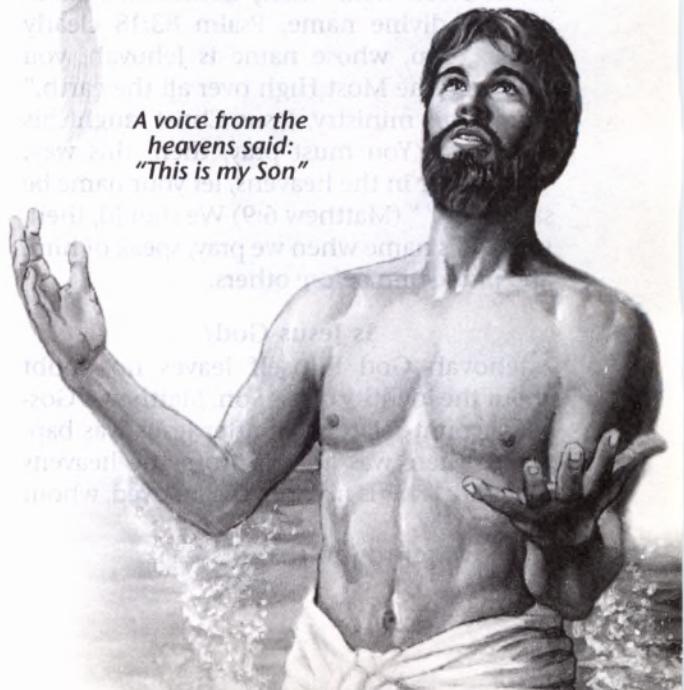


**God used his holy spirit to create the earth and to inspire men to write the Bible**

powerful proof that God exists, it is silent about the name of God. In fact, we could never know God's name unless God himself revealed it to us. And he has. "I am Jehovah," says the Creator, "that is my name."—Isaiah 42:8.

God's unique name, Jehovah, occurs nearly 7,000 times in the Hebrew Scriptures alone. Jesus Christ made that name known to others and praised it before them. (John 17:6, 26) That name is found in the last book of the Bible as a part of the expression "Hallelujah," meaning "praise Jah." And "Jah" is the shortened form of "Jehovah." (Revelation 19:1-6, footnote) Yet, many modern Bibles seldom use that name. They often use the word "LORD" or "GOD," written in all capital letters to set it apart from the common titles "Lord" and "God." Some scholars suggest that the divine name may have been pronounced Yahweh.

*A voice from the  
heavens said:  
"This is my Son"*



into heaven itself to appear before the person of God for us.'—Hebrews 9:24.

The word "spirit" is also used in the Bible in another sense. Addressing God in prayer, the psalmist said: "If you send forth your spirit, they are created." (Psalm 104:30) This spirit is not God himself but a force that God sends forth, or uses, to accomplish whatever he wishes. By means of it, God created the physical heavens, the earth, and all living things. (Genesis 1:2; Psalm 33:6) His spirit is called holy spirit. God used his holy spirit to inspire the men who wrote the Bible. (2 Peter 1:20, 21) Hence, the holy spirit is the invisible active force that God uses to fulfill his purposes.

### **God Has a Unique Name**

The Bible writer Agur asked: "Who has gathered the wind in the hollow of both hands? Who has wrapped up the waters in a mantle? Who has made all the ends of the earth to rise? What is his name and what the name of his son?" (Proverbs 30:4) In effect, Agur was asking, 'Do you know the name or family line of any man who has done these things?' Only God has the power to control natural forces. While the creation provides

Why such differing views about the name of the greatest Personage in the universe? The problem began centuries ago when the Jews superstitiously ceased to pronounce the divine name and started to substitute the Hebrew word for "Sovereign Lord" whenever they came to the divine name as they read the Scriptures. Since Biblical Hebrew was written without vowels, there is no way to know precisely how Moses, David, and others of ancient times pronounced the letters that make up the divine name. However, the English pronunciation, Jehovah, has been in use for centuries, and its equivalent in many languages is widely accepted today.—Exodus 6:3; Isaiah 26:4, *King James Version*.

Though there is uncertainty about how God's name was pronounced in ancient Hebrew, its meaning is not a complete mystery. His name means "He Causes to Become." Jehovah God thereby identifies himself as the Great Purposer. He always causes his purposes and promises to become reality. Only the true God, who has the power to do this, can rightfully bear that name.—Isaiah 55:11.

Unquestionably, the name Jehovah serves to distinguish Almighty God from all other gods. That is why that name appears so often in the Bible. While many translations fail to use the divine name, Psalm 83:18 clearly states: "You, whose name is Jehovah, you alone are the Most High over all the earth." During his ministry, Jesus Christ taught his followers: "You must pray, then, this way: 'Our Father in the heavens, let your name be sanctified!'" (Matthew 6:9) We should, then, use God's name when we pray, speak of him, and praise him before others.

### Is Jesus God?

Jehovah God himself leaves no doubt about the identity of his Son. Matthew's Gospel account relates that after Jesus was baptized, "there was a voice from the heavens that said: 'This is my Son, the beloved, whom

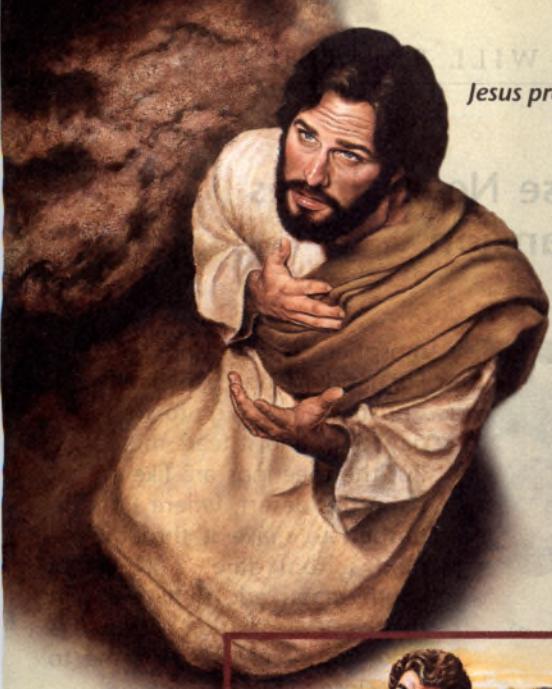
I have approved.' " (Matthew 3:16, 17) Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Yet, some religious people say that Jesus is God. Others say that God is a Trinity. According to this teaching, "the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, and yet there are not three Gods but one God." It is held that the three "are co-eternal and co-equal." (*The Catholic Encyclopedia*) Are such views correct?

Concerning Jehovah, the inspired Scriptures say: "Even from time indefinite to time indefinite you are God." (Psalm 90:2) He is "the King of eternity"—without beginning or end. (1 Timothy 1:17) Jesus, on the other hand, is "the firstborn of all creation," "the beginning of the creation by God." (Colossians 1:13-15; Revelation 3:14) Referring to God as his Father, Jesus said: "The Father is greater than I am." (John 14:28) Jesus also explained that there were some things neither he nor the angels knew but that were known only by God. (Mark 13:32) Moreover, Jesus prayed to his Father, saying: "Let, not my will, but yours take place." (Luke 22:42) To whom was he praying if not to a Personage superior to him? And it was God who resurrected Jesus from death, not Jesus himself.—Acts 2:32.

Scripturally, then, Jehovah is God Almighty, and Jesus is his Son. The two of them were not equal before Jesus came to the earth or during his earthly life; nor did Jesus become equal to his Father after being resurrected to heaven. (1 Corinthians 11:3; 15:28) As we have seen, the so-called third person of the Trinity, the holy spirit, is not a person. Rather, it is a force that God uses to accomplish whatever he wishes. The Trinity, then, is not a Scriptural teaching.\* "Jehovah our God is one Jehovah," says the Bible.—Deuteronomy 6:4.

\* For a detailed consideration of this subject, see the brochure *Should You Believe in the Trinity?*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses.



*Jesus prayed to God—the Personage who is superior to him*

ceived by the things made, even his eternal power and Godship." (Romans 1:20) One way to get to know God better is by observing and reflecting appreciatively on what he has created.

The creation, however, does not tell us all we need to know about God. For instance, to understand that he is a real spirit Person with a unique name, we need to look into the Bible. Studying the Bible is, in fact, the best way to come to know God better. In the Scriptures, Jehovah tells us much more about the kind of God he is. He also reveals his purposes to us and educates us in his ways. (Amos 3:7; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17) How glad we can be that God wants us to "come to an accurate knowledge of truth" so that we can benefit from his loving provisions! (1 Timothy 2:4) Let us, then, make every effort to learn all we can about Jehovah.



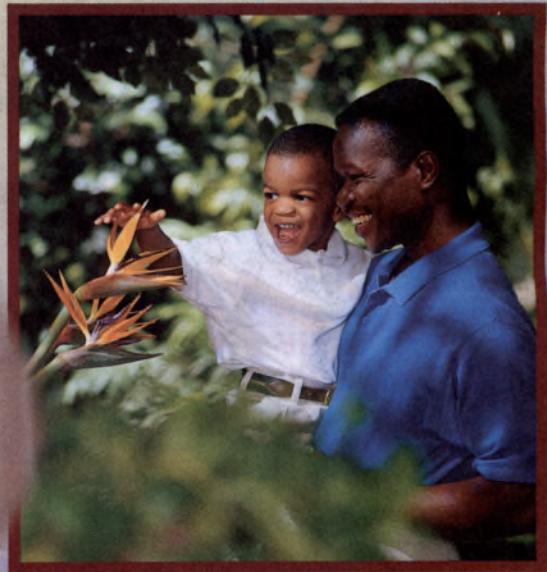
*Jesus made God's name known to others*

### Get to Know God Better

In order to love God and give him the exclusive devotion that he deserves, we need to know him as he truly is. How can we get to know God better? "His invisible qualities are clearly seen from the world's creation onward," says the Bible, "because they are per-



*We can get to know God better*



## Phenomenal Increase Necessitates Quick Expansion

**C**OME to me, . . . and I will refresh you," said Jesus Christ. (Matthew 11:28) What a heartwarming invitation from the Head of the Christian congregation! (Ephesians 5:23) When we reflect on those words, we cannot fail to appreciate a vital source of refreshment—association with our spiritual brothers and sisters at Christian meetings. We certainly agree with the psalmist who sang: "How good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!"—Psalm 133:1.

Indeed, our associates at those gatherings for worship are the best, and the spiritual at-

mosphere is safe and pleasant. For good reason, then, one young Christian said: "I go to school all day long, and it tears me down. But the meetings are like an oasis in the desert, where I am refreshed to make it through the next school day." A Nigerian youth remarked: "I have found that close association with others who love Jehovah helps me to stay close to him."

The local Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses fills a great need as a center for true worship in the community. In most places, meetings are held at the Kingdom Hall at least twice a week, and Bible students are encouraged to attend as soon as possible so as to benefit from refreshing association there.—Hebrews 10:24, 25.



①



### An Urgent Need

It is noteworthy, however, that not all of Jehovah's Witnesses enjoy the use of a suitable Kingdom Hall. Phenomenal increase in the ranks of Kingdom proclaimers worldwide has created an urgent need. Thousands of Kingdom Halls are still needed, especially in developing lands.—Isaiah 54:2; 60:22.

To illustrate: There were only ten Kingdom Halls for 290 congregations in the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo. That country had an urgent need for many Kingdom Halls. In Angola most of the congregations are meeting in the open because there are only a limited number of Kingdom Halls. Similar needs exist in many other countries.

Since 1999, therefore, an organized effort has been made to assist with Kingdom Hall construction in lands where limited resources are available. To help care for building projects in such lands, experienced Witnesses have volunteered their services. When such efforts are combined with the willing spirit and the availability of local volunteers, the results are very encouraging. In turn, local Witnesses are benefiting from the training they receive. All of this is helping to meet Kingdom Hall construction needs in their respective countries.

Practical assistance is thus provided in a flexible approach to Kingdom Hall construction that



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incorporates local methods and materials. The goal is not only to meet the tremendous need for Kingdom Halls but also to develop a maintenance program suited to local circumstances.—2 Corinthians 8:14, 15.

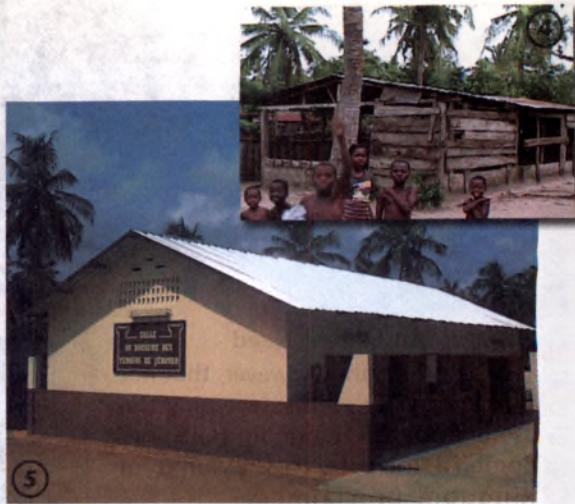
### Refreshing Developments

What is the effect of these efforts to provide places of worship? Early in 2001, a report from Malawi stated: "What has been accomplished in this country is really impressive. In the next two months, we will complete additional Kingdom Halls." (Pictures 1 and 2) In Togo volunteers were able to build a number of modest Kingdom Halls in recent months. (Picture 3) Fine work done by willing volunteers is also helping to provide suitable Kingdom Halls in Mexico, Brazil, and other lands.

Congregations find that when a Kingdom Hall is built, local people realize that Jehovah's Witnesses are there to stay. Many had seemingly been reluctant to associate with the Witnesses until a suitable place of worship was available. The Nafisi Congregation in Malawi

reports: "Now that we have a suitable Kingdom Hall, it is resulting in a fine witness. Therefore, it is easy to start Bible studies."

Members of the Krake Congregation in Benin endured much ridicule in the past because the former Kingdom Hall was primitive compared with some churches. (Picture 4) Now the congregation has a fine new Kingdom Hall that represents true worship in a modest yet dignified manner. (Picture 5) This congregation had 34 Kingdom publishers with an average attendance of 73 at Sunday meetings, but 651 attended the Kingdom Hall dedication. Most of them were townspeople who were favor-

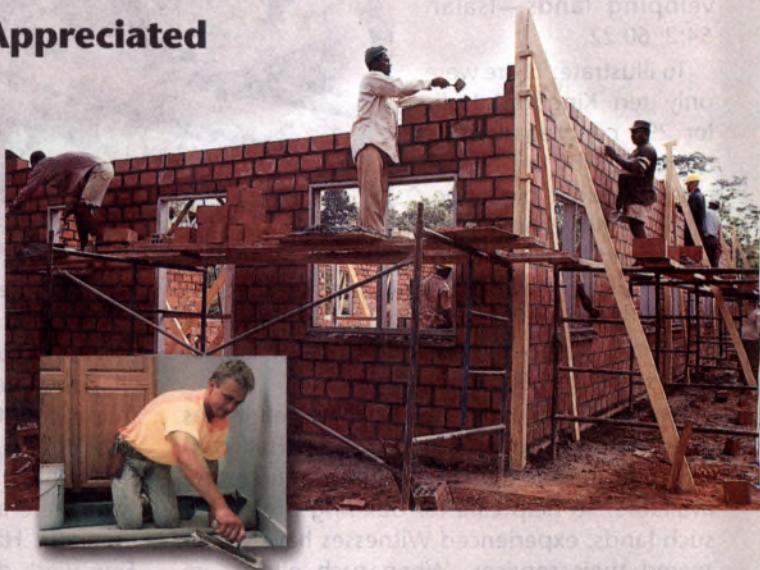


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## Generous Support Appreciated

Jehovah's Witnesses are thrilled to see the rapid progress that has been made to meet the urgent need for new Kingdom Halls around the globe. The steady increase in the number of Jehovah's worshipers in various countries requires that many new Kingdom Halls be built in the future. Why, on an average, during the 2001 service year, 32 new congregations were formed every week! Such congregations need places to meet and worship.

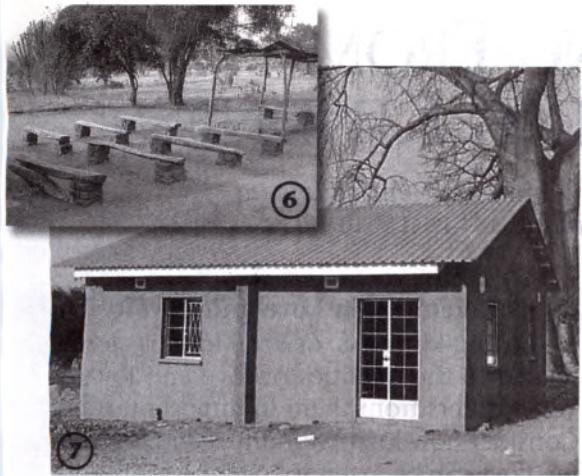
The question may arise, 'How do we finance such projects as the construction of new Kingdom Halls, especially in countries where the brothers have limited financial resources?' The answer involves both divine support and human generosity.



True to his promise, Jehovah pours out his holy spirit upon his servants, enabling them "to work at good, to be rich in fine works, to be liberal, ready to share." (1 Timothy 6:18) God's spirit impels Jehovah's Witnesses to support the

Kingdom-preaching work in every way—devoting their time, energy, personal labor, and other resources to Christian activities.

A spirit of generous giving motivates Witnesses and others who assist with the expansion and construction work



ably impressed upon seeing that the Witnesses were able to build a hall in just a short time. Reflecting on past developments in this regard, the Zimbabwe branch wrote: "Within one month of building a new Kingdom Hall, attendance usually doubles."—Pictures 6 and 7.

Without a doubt, the many new Kingdom Halls help to provide places for the spiritual refreshment of both dedicated Christians and interested people. "We feel a great joy," said a Witness in Ukraine after the local congregation started using its new Kingdom Hall. "We saw with our own eyes how Jehovah helps his people."

**in a financial way.** Apart from helping to defray the regular expenses of the local congregation, they contribute toward construction work in other parts of the earth.

In each congregation, there are boxes clearly labeled "Contributions for the Worldwide Work—Matthew 24:14." There individuals can deposit voluntary donations if they so desire. (2 Kings 12:9) All donations, large and small, are appreciated. (Mark 12:42-44) These funds are used in a variety of ways according to the need, including the construction of Kingdom Halls. Such funds are not used to pay salaried executives because Jehovah's Witnesses have none.

Do contributions to the worldwide work accomplish their purpose? Yes, they do.



The branch in Liberia—a country ravaged by civil war—reports that the majority of the local Witnesses face unemployment and serious financial problems. How could Jehovah's people in this country obtain suitable places of worship? "The generous

contributions of the brothers in other lands will be used to finance the work," notes the branch office. "What a wise and loving arrangement!"

The local brothers contribute too, despite their limited means. The African country of Sierra Leone reports: "The local brothers are behind the effort and are happy to give of their labor and whatever financial contributions they can to support the construction of Kingdom Halls."

Ultimately, this building effort brings praise to Jehovah. The brothers from Liberia say enthusiastically: "The construction of suitable places of worship throughout the country will show the people that true worship is here to stay and will dignify and adorn our God's great name."

# BENEFITING FROM JEHOVAH'S LOVING-KINDNESS

*"Who is wise? He will . . . show himself attentive toward Jehovah's acts of loving-kindness."*—PSALM 107:43.

SOME 4,000 years ago, Abraham's nephew Lot said of Jehovah: "You are magnifying your loving-kindness." (Genesis 19:19) This is the first time the expression "loving-kindness" appears in the Bible. Jacob, Naomi, David, and other servants of God also spoke about this quality of Jehovah. (Genesis 32:10; Ruth 1:8; 2 Samuel 2:6) In fact, the terms "loving-kindness" and "loving-kindnesses" occur some 250 times in the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*. But what is Jehovah's loving-kindness? To whom was it shown in the past? And how do we benefit from it today?

<sup>2</sup> In the Scriptures, "loving-kindness" is a translation of a Hebrew term so rich in meaning that most languages have no single word exactly expressing its full sense. Thus, such renderings as "love," "mercy," and "faithfulness" do not capture its complete breadth of meaning. However, the more comprehensive rendering "loving-kindness" is "not far from the fulness of meaning of the word," notes the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. The *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References* appropriately gives "loyal love" as an alternate rendering of the Hebrew term translated "loving-kindness."—Exodus 15:13; Psalm 5:7; footnote.

1. When was the expression "loving-kindness" first used in the Bible, and what questions regarding this quality will we consider?
2. Why is the Hebrew word translated "loving-kindness" so hard to define, and what is an appropriate alternate rendering of it?

## Different From Love and Loyalty

<sup>3</sup> Loving-kindness, or loyal love, is closely related to the qualities of love and loyalty. Yet, it differs from them in important ways. Consider how loving-kindness and love differ. Love can be extended to things and concepts. The Bible speaks of "loving wine and oil" and "loving wisdom." (Proverbs 21:17; 29:3) But loving-kindness has to do with people, not concepts or inanimate things. For instance, people are involved when Exodus 20:6 says that Jehovah is "exercising loving-kindness toward the thousandth generation."

<sup>4</sup> The Hebrew word rendered "loving-kindness" is also more encompassing than the word "loyalty." In some languages, "loyalty" is often used for the attitude a subordinate should show toward a superior. But as one researcher notes, from a Biblical standpoint, loving-kindness "refers more often to just the opposite direction of relationship: the powerful is loyal to the weak or needy or dependent." King David could therefore petition Jehovah: "Do cause your face to shine upon your servant. Save me in your loving-kindness." (Psalm 31:16) Jehovah, the powerful one, is asked to show loving-kindness, or loyal love, to the needy one, David. Since the needy have no authority over the powerful, the loving-kindness shown in such a case is displayed willingly, not under compulsion.

3. How does loving-kindness differ from love?
4. How does loving-kindness differ from loyalty?



**Do you know how God showed loving-kindness to Lot?**

<sup>5</sup> "Who is wise?" asked the psalmist. "He will . . . show himself attentive toward Jehovah's acts of loving-kindness." (Psalm 107:43) Jehovah's loving-kindness can result in deliverance and preservation. (Psalm 6:4; 119:88, 159) It is a protection and a factor bringing relief from troubles. (Psalm 31:16, 21; 40:11; 143:12) Because of this quality, recovery from sin is possible. (Psalm 25:7) By reviewing certain Scriptural narratives and noting other Bible texts, we will see that Jehovah's loving-kindness is (1) expressed by specific actions and (2) experienced by his faithful servants.

5. (a) What characteristics of God's loving-kindness stand out in his Word? (b) What expressions of Jehovah's loving-kindness will we consider?

**Deliverance—An Expression of Loving-Kindness**

<sup>6</sup> Perhaps the best way to determine the scope of Jehovah's loving-kindness is to examine Scriptural accounts involving this quality. At Genesis 14:1-16, we find that Lot, the nephew of Abraham, was carried off by enemy forces. But Abraham rescued Lot. Lot's life was again in danger when Jehovah decided to destroy the wicked city of Sodom, where Lot and his family were living.—Genesis 18:20-22; 19:12, 13.

<sup>7</sup> Just before the destruction of Sodom, Jehovah's angels escorted Lot and his family

6, 7. (a) How did Jehovah magnify his loving-kindness in Lot's case? (b) When did Lot make mention of Jehovah's loving-kindness?

out of the city. At that time, Lot said: "Your servant has found favor in your eyes so that you are magnifying your loving-kindness, which you have exercised with me to preserve my soul alive." (Genesis 19:16, 19) With these words Lot acknowledged that Jehovah had shown exceptional loving-kindness by rescuing him. In this case, God's loving-kindness was expressed through deliverance and preservation.—2 Peter 2:7.

### Jehovah's Loving-Kindness and His Guidance

<sup>8</sup> In Genesis chapter 24, we read about another expression of divine loving-kindness, or loyal love. The account relates that Abraham commissioned his servant to travel to the country of Abraham's relatives to find a wife for his son Isaac. (Verses 2-4) The mission was difficult, but the servant was assured that Jehovah's angel would guide him. (Verse 7) Eventually the servant reached a well outside "the city of Nahor" (either Haran or a nearby place) just when the women were approaching to draw water. (Verses 10, 11) When he saw the women coming closer, he knew that the crucial moment of his mission had arrived. But how could he ever single out the right woman?

<sup>9</sup> Aware that he needed divine help, Abraham's servant prayed: "Jehovah the God of my master Abraham, cause it to happen, please, before me this day and perform loving-kindness with my master Abraham." (Verse 12) How would Jehovah express his loving-kindness? The servant asked for a

8, 9. (a) What was the commission of Abraham's servant? (b) Why did the servant pray for God's loving-kindness, and what happened while he was praying?

specific sign by which he could identify the young woman of God's choosing. (Verses 13, 14) One woman did exactly what he had asked of Jehovah. Why, it was as if she had overheard his prayer! (Verses 15-20) Astounded, the servant "was gazing at her in wonder." Still, some vital facts needed to be determined. Was this good-looking woman one of Abraham's relatives? And was she still unmarried? So the servant remained "silent to know whether Jehovah had made his trip successful or not."—Verses 16, 21.

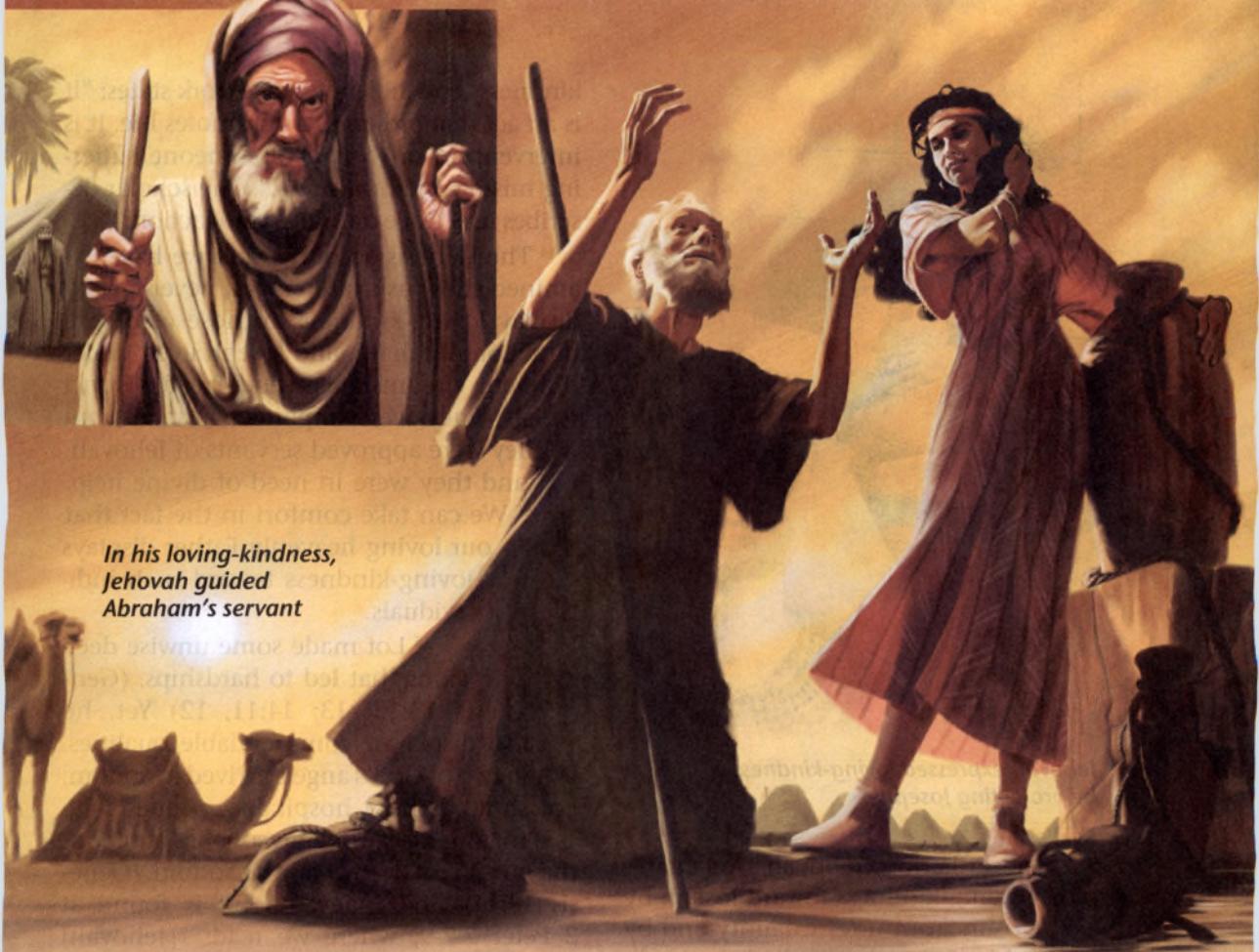
<sup>10</sup> Shortly thereafter, the young woman identified herself as "the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, whom she bore to [Abraham's brother] Nahor." (Genesis 11:26; 24:24) At that moment the servant realized that Jehovah had answered his prayer. Overwhelmed, he bowed down and said: "Blessed be Jehovah the God of my master Abraham, who has not left his loving-kindness and his trustworthiness toward my master. I being on the way, Jehovah has led me to the house of the brothers of my master." (Verse 27) By providing guidance, God showed loving-kindness to the servant's master, Abraham.



### God's Loving-Kindness Brings Relief and Protection

<sup>11</sup> Next, let us consider Genesis chapter 39. It centers on Abraham's great-grandson Joseph, who was sold into slavery in Egypt. Nevertheless, "Jehovah proved to be with Joseph." (Verses 1, 2) In fact, even Joseph's

10. Why did Abraham's servant conclude that Jehovah had expressed loving-kindness to his master? 11, 12. (a) During what trials did Joseph experience Jehovah's loving-kindness? (b) How was God's loving-kindness expressed in Joseph's case?

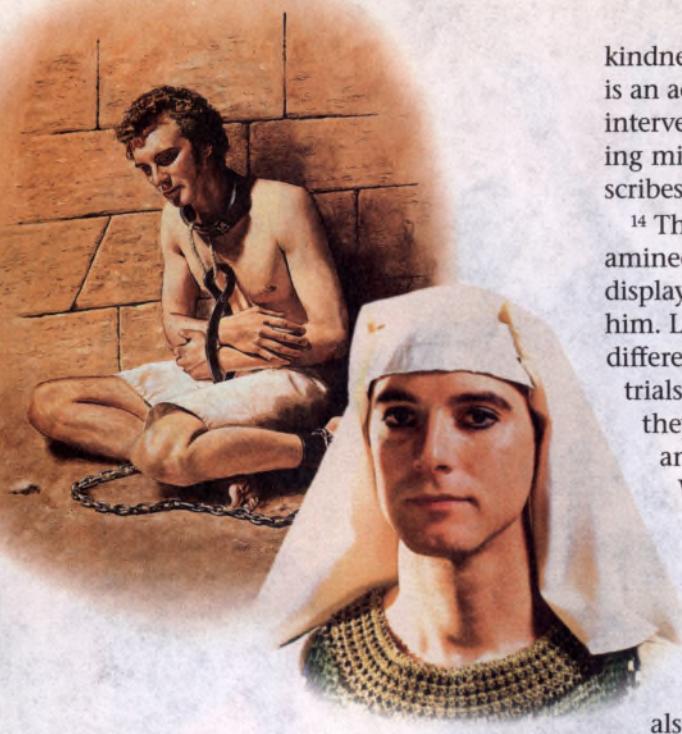


*In his loving-kindness,  
Jehovah guided  
Abraham's servant*

Egyptian master, Potiphar, concluded that Jehovah was with Joseph. (Verse 3) However, Joseph faced a very serious test. He was falsely accused of sexually assaulting Potiphar's wife and was imprisoned. (Verses 7-20) It was "in the prison hole" that "with fetters they afflicted his feet, into irons his soul came."—Genesis 40:15; Psalm 105:18.

<sup>12</sup> What happened during that particularly trying experience? "Jehovah continued with Joseph and kept extending loving-kindness to him." (Verse 21a) A particular act of loving-kindness set in motion a series of events that later led to relief from the troubles Joseph was experiencing. Je-

hovah granted Joseph "to find favor in the eyes of the chief officer of the prison house." (Verse 21b) Consequently, the officer assigned Joseph a responsible position. (Verse 22) Next, Joseph met the man who eventually brought him to the attention of Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt. (Genesis 40:1-4, 9-15; 41:9-14) In turn, the king elevated Joseph to the position of second ruler in Egypt, resulting in his performing a life-saving work in the famine-stricken land of Egypt. (Genesis 41:37-55) Joseph's suffering began when he was 17 years old and lasted for more than a dozen years! (Genesis 37:2, 4; 41:46) But throughout all those years of



*Jehovah expressed loving-kindness by protecting Joseph*

distress and affliction, Jehovah God manifested his loving-kindness toward Joseph by protecting him from utter calamity and by preserving him for a privileged role in the divine purpose.

#### **God's Loving-Kindness Never Fails**

<sup>13</sup> Jehovah repeatedly expressed his loving-kindness toward the Israelites as a people. Psalm 136 relates that in his loving-kindness, he granted them deliverance (Verses 10-15), guidance (Verse 16), and protection. (Verses 17-20) God has also displayed his loving-kindness toward individuals. A person who shows loving-kindness to fellow humans does so by voluntary deeds intended to fill a crucial need. Concerning loving-

13. (a) What expressions of Jehovah's loving-kindness are found in Psalm 136? (b) What is the nature of loving-kindness?

kindness, one Bible reference work states: "It is an act that preserves or promotes life. It is intervention on behalf of someone suffering misfortune or distress." One scholar describes it as "love translated into action."

<sup>14</sup> The Genesis accounts that we have examined show us that Jehovah never fails to display loving-kindness to those who love him. Lot, Abraham, and Joseph lived under different circumstances and faced distinct trials. They were imperfect humans, but they were approved servants of Jehovah, and they were in need of divine help.

We can take comfort in the fact that our loving heavenly Father displays loving-kindness toward such individuals.

<sup>15</sup> Lot made some unwise decisions that led to hardships. (Genesis 13:12, 13; 14:11, 12) Yet, he also displayed commendable qualities. When two of God's angels arrived in Sodom, Lot showed them hospitality. (Genesis 19:1-3) In faith he warned his sons-in-law about the imminent destruction of Sodom. (Genesis 19:14) God's view of Lot is found at 2 Peter 2:7-9, where we read: "[Jehovah] delivered righteous Lot, who was greatly distressed by the indulgence of the law-defying people in loose conduct—for that righteous man by what he saw and heard while dwelling among them from day to day was tormenting his righteous soul by reason of their lawless deeds—Jehovah knows how to deliver people of godly devotion out of trial." Yes, Lot was a righteous man, and the wording here implies that he was a person of godly devotion. Like him, we enjoy God's loving-kindness as we engage in "holy acts of conduct and deeds of godly devotion." —2 Peter 3:11, 12.

14, 15. Why can we be certain that Lot was an approved servant of God?

<sup>16</sup> The account in Genesis chapter 24 leaves no doubt about Abraham's bond with Jehovah. The first verse states that "Jehovah had blessed Abraham in everything." Abraham's servant called Jehovah "the God of my master Abraham." (Verses 12, 27) And the disciple James says that Abraham was "declared righteous" and "came to be called 'Jehovah's friend.'" (James 2:21-23) Much the same is true of Joseph. The close relationship between Jehovah and Joseph is emphasized throughout Genesis chapter 39. (Verses 2, 3, 21, 23) Moreover, regarding Joseph, the disciple Stephen said: "God was with him."—Acts 7:9.

<sup>17</sup> The recipients of divine loving-kindness whom we have just considered were individuals who had a good relationship with Jehovah God and served the divine purpose in certain ways. They faced obstacles that they could not have overcome by themselves. At stake were the preservation of Lot's life, the continuation of Abraham's family line, and the securing of Joseph's role. Only Jehovah could fill the needs of these godly men, and he did just that by intervening with acts of loving-kindness. If we are to experience Jehovah God's loving-kindness forever, we too must have a close personal relationship with him, and we must continue to do his will.  
—Ezra 7:28; Psalm 18:50.

### God's Servants Are Favored

<sup>18</sup> Jehovah's loving-kindness "has filled the earth," and how we appreciate this quality of God! (Psalm 119:64) We wholeheartedly respond to the psalmist's refrain: "O let people give thanks to Jehovah for his loving-

16. In what favorable terms does the Bible speak about Abraham and Joseph?
17. What can we learn from the examples of Lot, Abraham, and Joseph?
18. What do various Bible texts indicate about Jehovah's loving-kindness?

kindness and for his wonderful works to the sons of men." (Psalm 107:8, 15, 21, 31) We rejoice that Jehovah extends his loving-kindness to his approved servants—either as individuals or as a group. In prayer, the prophet Daniel addressed Jehovah as "the true God, the great One and the fear-inspiring One, keeping the covenant and the loving-kindness to those loving him and to those keeping his commandments." (Daniel 9:4) King David prayed: "Continue your loving-kindness to those knowing you." (Psalm 36:10) How grateful we are that Jehovah expresses loving-kindness toward his servants!—1 Kings 8:23; 1 Chronicles 17:13.

<sup>19</sup> Truly, we are favored as Jehovah's people! In addition to benefiting from God's love shown to mankind in general, we enjoy distinctive blessings resulting from our heavenly Father's loving-kindness, or loyal love. (John 3:16) Especially in time of need do we benefit from this precious quality of Jehovah. (Psalm 36:7) But how can we imitate the loving-kindness of Jehovah God? Are we individually displaying this remarkable quality? These and related questions will be considered in the next article.

19. In the following article, we will consider what questions?

### Do You Recall?

- What is an alternate Scriptural rendering of "loving-kindness"?
- How does loving-kindness differ from love and loyalty?
- In what ways did Jehovah show loving-kindness to Lot, Abraham, and Joseph?
- What assurance can we derive from Jehovah's past expressions of loving-kindness?

# SHOW LOVING-KINDNESS TO THOSE IN NEED

*"Carry on with one another loving-kindness."*—ZECHARIAH 7:9.

JEHOVAH GOD'S Word exhorts us to love "loving-kindness." (Micah 6:8, footnote) It also gives us reasons why we should do so. For one thing, "a man of loving-kindness is dealing rewardingly with his own soul." (Proverbs 11:17) How true! Showing loving-kindness, or loyal love, forges warm and lasting bonds with others. As a result, we will have loyal friends—a precious reward indeed!

—Proverbs 18:24.

<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the Scriptures tell us: "He that is pursuing righteousness and loving-

- 1, 2. (a) Why should we display loving-kindness?  
(b) What questions will we consider?

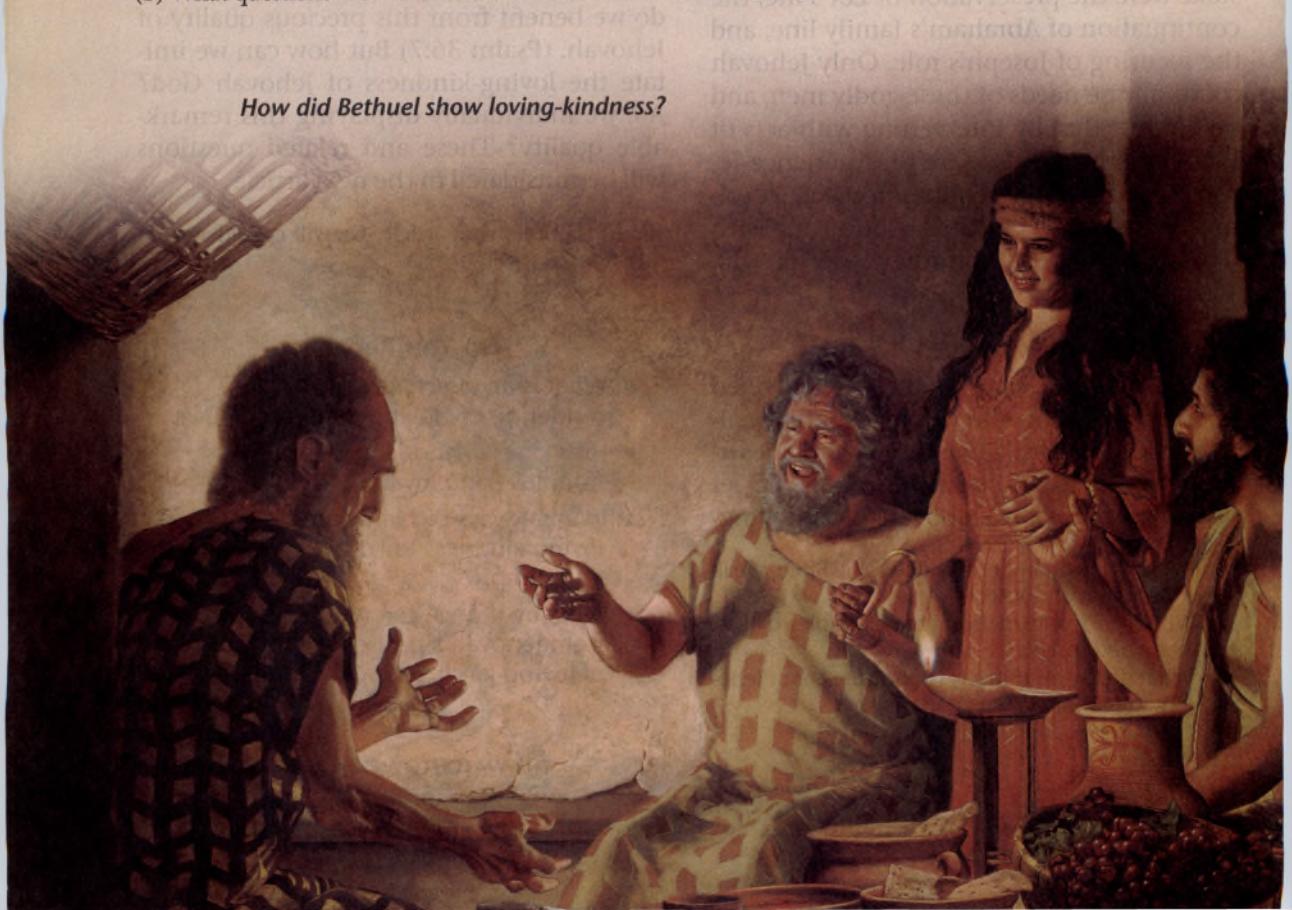
*How did Bethuel show loving-kindness?*

kindness will find life." (Proverbs 21:21) Yes, our pursuing loving-kindness will endear us to God and will put us in line for future blessings, including life everlasting. But how can we show loving-kindness? To whom should we extend it? And does loving-kindness differ from normal human kindness or from kindness in general?

## Human Kindness and Loving-Kindness

<sup>3</sup> Normal human kindness and loving-kindness differ in various ways. For example,

3. How does loving-kindness differ from human kindness?



those showing human kindness often do so without having a deep and personal involvement, or relationship, with the individuals they treat kindly. If we show loving-kindness to someone, however, we lovingly attach ourselves to that person. In the Bible, expressions of loving-kindness between humans may be based on already existing relationships. (Genesis 20:13; 2 Samuel 3:8; 16:17) Or they may be founded on relationships resulting from prior acts of kindness. (Joshua 2:1, 12-14; 1 Samuel 15:6; 2 Samuel 10:1, 2) To illustrate this difference, let us compare two Bible examples, one of kindness and one of loving-kindness expressed between humans.

<sup>4</sup> One example of human kindness relates to a group of shipwrecked people, including the apostle Paul. They were washed ashore on the island of Malta. (Acts 27:37-28:1) Although the Maltese had neither a prior commitment to the stranded voyagers nor an existing relationship with them, the islanders received the strangers hospitably, showing them "extraordinary human kindness." (Acts 28:2, 7) Their hospitality was kind, but it was incidental and shown to strangers. Therefore, it was human kindness.

<sup>5</sup> By comparison, consider the hospitality that King David showed to Mephibosheth, the son of his friend Jonathan. David told Mephibosheth: "You yourself will eat bread at my table constantly." Explaining why he was making this provision, David told him: "Without fail I shall exercise loving-kindness toward you for the sake of Jonathan your father." (2 Samuel 9:6, 7, 13) David's enduring hospitality is rightly referred to as an exercise of loving-kindness, not merely kindness, for it was an evidence of his loyalty to an established relationship. (1 Samuel 18:3; 20:15, 42) Similarly today, God's servants show hu-

4, 5. How do two Bible examples cited here illustrate the difference between human kindness and loving-kindness?

man kindness to mankind in general. Yet, they express enduring loving-kindness, or loyal love, to those with whom they share a God-approved relationship.—Matthew 5:45; Galatians 6:10.

<sup>6</sup> To identify some additional characteristics of loving-kindness, we will briefly consider three Bible accounts that feature this quality. From these we will note that loving-kindness extended by humans is (1) expressed by specific actions, (2) extended willingly, and (3) shown especially to those having a need. Moreover, these accounts illustrate how we may exercise loving-kindness today.

### A Father Shows Loving-Kindness

<sup>7</sup> Genesis 24:28-67 relates the rest of the story of Abraham's servant, mentioned in the preceding article. After meeting Rebekah, he was invited into the home of her father, Bethuel. (Verses 28-32) There the servant recounted in detail his search for a wife for Abraham's son. (Verses 33-47) He stressed that he viewed the success he thus far had met with as a sign from Jehovah, "who had led me in the true way to take the daughter of the brother of my master for his son." (Verse 48) The servant no doubt hoped that his heartfelt recounting of the incident would convince Bethuel and his son Laban that Jehovah was behind this mission. Finally, the servant said: "If you are actually exercising loving-kindness and trustworthiness toward my master, tell me; but if not, tell me, that I may turn to the right hand or to the left."—Verse 49.

<sup>8</sup> Jehovah had already shown loving-kindness to Abraham. (Genesis 24:12, 14, 27)

6. What characteristics of loving-kindness expressed between humans stand out in God's Word?
7. What did Abraham's servant tell Bethuel and Laban, and what issue did the servant raise?
8. What was Bethuel's reaction to matters involving Rebekah?

Would Bethuel be willing to do the same by allowing Rebekah to go with Abraham's servant? Would divine loving-kindness be complemented with human loving-kindness? Or would the servant's long journey have been in vain? It must have been very comforting to Abraham's servant to hear Laban and Bethuel say: "From Jehovah this thing has issued." (Verse 50) They recognized Jehovah's hand in matters and unhesitatingly accepted his decision. Next, Bethuel expressed his loving-kindness by adding: "Here is Rebekah before you. Take her and go, and let her become a wife to the son of your master, just as Jehovah has spoken." (Verse 51) Rebekah willingly accompanied Abraham's servant, and she soon became Isaac's beloved wife.—Verses 49, 52-58, 67.

### Loving-Kindness Shown by a Son

<sup>9</sup> Abraham's grandson Jacob also received loving-kindness. As Genesis chapter 47 relates, Jacob was then living in Egypt, and "the days approached for [him] to die." (Verses 27-29) He was concerned because he was going to die outside the land that God had promised to Abraham. (Genesis 15:18; 35:10, 12; 49:29-32) Jacob did not want to be buried in Egypt, however, so he made provisions for his remains to be taken to the land of Canaan. Who would be in a better position to make sure that his wish would be carried out than his influential son, Joseph?

<sup>10</sup> The account states: "So [Jacob] called his son Joseph and said to him: 'If, now, I have found favor in your eyes, . . . you must exercise loving-kindness and trustworthiness toward me. (Please, do not bury me in Egypt.) And I must lie with my fathers, and you must carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their grave.'" (Genesis 47:29, 30) Joseph promised

9, 10. (a) Jacob asked his son Joseph to do what for him? (b) How did Joseph show loving-kindness to his father?

to comply with this request, and shortly thereafter Jacob died. Joseph and Jacob's other sons carried his body "into the land of Canaan and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, the field that Abraham had purchased." (Genesis 50:5-8, 12-14) Thus Joseph exercised loving-kindness toward his father.

### Loving-Kindness From a Daughter-in-Law

<sup>11</sup> The book of Ruth relates how the widow Naomi received loving-kindness from her Moabite daughter-in-law Ruth, who was also a widow. When Naomi decided to return to Bethlehem in Judah, Ruth displayed loving-kindness and determination, saying: "Where you go I shall go, and where you spend the night I shall spend the night. Your people will be my people, and your God my God." (Ruth 1:16) Ruth later expressed her loving-kindness when she indicated her willingness to marry Naomi's elderly relative Boaz.\* (Deuteronomy 25:5, 6; Ruth 3:6-9) He told Ruth: "You have expressed your loving-kindness better in the last instance than in the first instance, in not going after the young fellows whether lowly or rich."—Ruth 3:10.

<sup>12</sup> "The first instance" of Ruth's loving-kindness referred to the time when she left her people and stuck with Naomi. (Ruth 1:14; 2:11) Even that act was surpassed by "the last instance" of loving-kindness—Ruth's willingness to marry Boaz. Ruth would now be able to provide an heir for Naomi, who was beyond the age of childbearing. The marriage took place, and when Ruth later

\* For details on the type of marriage involved here, see Volume 1, page 370, of *Insight on the Scriptures*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

11, 12. (a) How did Ruth show loving-kindness to Naomi? (b) In what way was "the last instance" of Ruth's loving-kindness better than "the first"?



### *Ruth's loyal love was a blessing to Naomi*

gave birth, the women of Bethlehem cried out: "A son has been born to Naomi." (Ruth 4:14, 17) Ruth truly was "an excellent woman," who thus was rewarded by Jehovah with the wonderful privilege of becoming an ancestress of Jesus Christ.—Ruth 2:12; 3:11; 4:18-22; Matthew 1:1, 5, 6.

#### **Expressed by Actions**

<sup>13</sup> Did you notice how Bethuel, Joseph, and Ruth expressed their loving-kindness? They did so not only with kind words but with specific actions. Not only did Bethuel say, "Here is Rebekah" but he actually "sent off Rebekah." (Genesis 24:51, 59) Not only did Joseph say, "I myself shall do in keeping with your word" but he and his brothers did for Jacob "exactly as he had commanded them." (Genesis 47:30; 50:12, 13) Not only did Ruth say, "Where you go I shall go" but she left her people and accompanied Naomi, so that "they both continued on their way until they came to Bethlehem." (Ruth 1:16, 19) In Judah, Ruth again acted "according to

13. How did Bethuel, Joseph, and Ruth exercise their loving-kindness?

all that her mother-in-law had commanded her." (Ruth 3:6) Yes, Ruth's loving-kindness, like that of others, was expressed by actions.

<sup>14</sup> It is heartwarming to see how God's servants today continue to express loving-kindness by actions. For example, think of those who provide enduring emotional support to infirm, depressed, or grief-stricken fellow believers. (Proverbs 12:25) Or consider the many Witnesses of Jehovah who faithfully drive the elderly to the Kingdom Hall to attend weekly congregation meetings. Anna, aged 82 and plagued by arthritis, speaks for many others when she says: "Being driven to all meetings is a blessing from Jehovah. I thank him from the bottom of my heart for giving me such loving brothers and sisters." Are you sharing in such acts in your congregation? (1 John 3:17, 18) If you are, be assured that your loving-kindness is deeply appreciated.

#### **Exercised Willingly**

<sup>15</sup> The Bible narratives that we have considered also show that loving-kindness is extended freely and willingly, not under compulsion. Bethuel willingly cooperated with Abraham's servant, and so did Rebekah. (Genesis 24:51, 58) Joseph showed his loving-kindness without outside prodding. (Genesis 50:4, 5) Ruth "was persistent about going with [Naomi]." (Ruth 1:18) When Naomi suggested that Ruth approach Boaz, loving-kindness moved the Moabitess

14. (a) How do God's present-day servants show loving-kindness by actions? (b) What acts of loving-kindness do you know of among Christians in your area?

15. What characteristic of loving-kindness is further highlighted by the three Bible accounts we have considered?

to declare: "All that you say to me I shall do."  
—Ruth 3:1-5.

<sup>16</sup> The loving-kindness shown by Bethuel, Joseph, and Ruth is especially significant because Abraham, Jacob, and Naomi were in no position to bring outside pressure on them. After all, Bethuel was under no legal obligation to part with his daughter. He could easily have told Abraham's servant: 'No, I want to keep my industrious girl close by.' (Genesis 24:18-20) Likewise, Joseph was free to decide whether to act on his father's request or not, for Jacob would be dead and could not compel him to keep his word. Naomi herself indicated that Ruth was free to stay in Moab. (Ruth 1:8) Ruth was also free to marry one of "the young fellows" instead of aged Boaz.

<sup>17</sup> Bethuel, Joseph, and Ruth showed loving-kindness willingly; they were moved to do so from within. They felt a moral responsibility to display this quality toward those with whom they had a relationship, even as King David later felt obliged to manifest it with regard to Mephibosheth.

<sup>18</sup> Loving-kindness is still a mark of God's people, including the men who shepherd

God's flock. (Psalm 110:3; 1 Thessalonians 5:12) Such elders, or overseers, feel a responsibility to live up to the trust conferred upon them by reason of their appointment. (Acts 20:28) Even so, their shepherding work and other acts of loving-kindness in behalf of the congregation are carried out, "not under compulsion, but willingly." (1 Peter 5:2) The elders shepherd the flock because they have both a responsibility and a desire to do so. They express loving-kindness toward Christ's sheep because they ought to and want to do this. (John 21:15-17) "I love to make visits at the homes of brothers or call them for no other reason than to show I was thinking of them," says one Christian elder. "Helping the brothers is a great source of joy and satisfaction to me!" Caring elders everywhere wholeheartedly agree.

### Show Loving-Kindness to Those in Need

<sup>19</sup> The Bible accounts we have discussed also underscore the fact that loving-kindness is to be shown to those who have a need that they themselves cannot fill. In order to continue his family line, Abraham needed Bethuel's cooperation. To have his remains taken to Canaan, Jacob needed Joseph's help. And to produce an heir, Naomi needed Ruth's assistance. Neither Abraham, Jacob, nor Naomi could fill those needs without help. Similarly today, loving-kindness should especially be shown to those in need. (Proverbs 19:17) We should imitate the patriarch Job, who gave attention to "the afflicted one crying for help, and the fatherless boy and anyone that had no helper" as well as to "the one about to perish." Job also 'made glad the heart of the widow' and became 'eyes to the blind and feet to the lame.'—Job 29:12-15.

19. What fact about loving-kindness is underscored by the Bible accounts discussed in this article?

### How Would You Answer?

- How does loving-kindness differ from human kindness?
- In what ways was loving-kindness exercised by Bethuel, Joseph, and Ruth?
- With what attitude should we display loving-kindness?
- Who need our expressions of loving-kindness?



*Human loving-kindness is extended willingly, is shown by specific action, and is displayed to those in need*

<sup>20</sup> Actually, there are 'afflicted ones crying for help' in every Christian congregation. This may be the result of such factors as loneliness, discouragement, feelings of unworthiness, disappointment in others, serious illness, or the death of a loved one. No matter what the cause, all such dear ones have needs that can and should be filled by our will-

<sup>20, 21.</sup> Who are in need of our expressions of loving-kindness, and what should each of us be determined to do?

ing and enduring acts of loving-kindness.  
—1 Thessalonians 5:14.

<sup>21</sup> So, then, let us continue to imitate Jehovah God, who is "abundant in loving-kindness." (Exodus 34:6; Ephesians 5:1) We can do so by willingly taking specific action, particularly in behalf of those in need. And surely we will honor Jehovah and experience great joy as we "carry on with one another loving-kindness."—Zechariah 7:9.

# INTEGRITY LEADS THE UPRIGHT ONES

**M**AN, born of woman, is short-lived and glutted with agitation," says the Bible. (Job 14:1) Pain and suffering seem to be the common lot of human existence. Why, even everyday life can be full of anxieties and turmoil! What will guide us successfully through trying circumstances and help us maintain a righteous standing with God?

Consider the example of a wealthy man named Job, who lived some 3,500 years ago in what is now Arabia. What calamity Satan brought upon this God-fearing man! He lost all his livestock and suffered the loss of his beloved children in death. Shortly thereafter, Satan struck Job with malignant boils from head to foot. (Job, chapters 1, 2) Job had no knowledge of why bad things were happen-

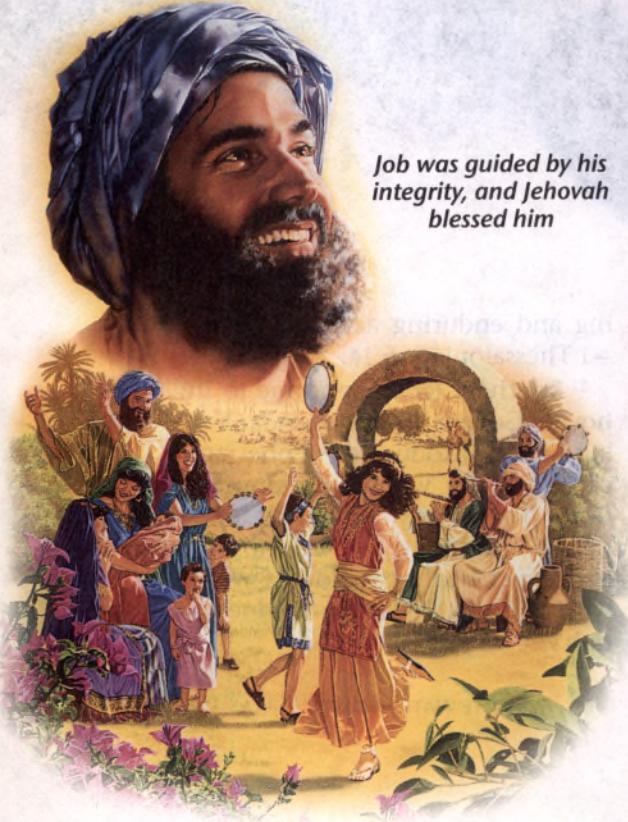
ing to him. Yet, "Job did not sin with his lips." (Job 2:10) "Until I expire I shall not take away my integrity from myself!" he said. (Job 27:5) Yes, Job's integrity guided him through his trials.

Integrity is defined as moral soundness or completeness and involves being blameless and faultless in the sight of God. However, it does not imply perfection of speech and action by imperfect humans, who cannot possibly measure up completely to God's standards. Rather, human integrity denotes wholeness or completeness of heart devotion to Jehovah and to his will and purpose. Such godly devotion guides, or leads, the upright ones under all conditions and at all times. The first part of the 11th chapter of the Bible book of Proverbs shows how our integrity can guide us in various areas of life and assures us of the blessings that will follow. With keen interest, then, let us turn to what is recorded there.

## Integrity Leads to Honesty in Business

Highlighting the principle of honesty, using poetic words rather than legal terms, King Solomon of ancient Israel says: "*A cheating pair of scales is something detestable to Jehovah, but a complete stone-weight is a pleasure to him.*" (Proverbs 11:1) This is the first of four occurrences in the book of Proverbs where scales and weights are used to denote that Jehovah desires his worshipers to be honest in their business dealings.—Proverbs 16:11; 20:10, 23.

The prosperity of those resorting to a cheating pair of scales—or to dishonesty



*Job was guided by his integrity, and Jehovah blessed him*

ty—may be enticing. But would we really want to forsake God's standards of good and bad by engaging in unethical business practices? Not if we are guided by integrity. We shun dishonesty because a complete stone-weight, a just weight signifying honesty, delights Jehovah.

### "Wisdom Is With the Modest Ones"

King Solomon continues: "*Has presumptuousness come? Then dishonor will come; but wisdom is with the modest ones.*" (Proverbs 11:2) Presumptuousness—whether it manifests itself as pride, disobedience, or envy—brings disgrace. On the other hand, humble recognition of our limitations is the course of wisdom. How well Scriptural examples illustrate the truth of this proverb!

An envious Levite, Korah, led a rebellious mob against the authority of Jehovah's appointed servants Moses and Aaron. What was the outcome of that presumptuous act? 'The earth opened its mouth and proceeded to swallow up' some of the rebels, while others, including Korah, were consumed by fire. (Numbers 16:1-3, 16-35; 26:10; Deuteronomy 11:6) What dishonor! Consider also Uzzah, who presumptuously reached out and grabbed hold of the ark of the covenant to prevent it from falling. He was struck dead on the spot. (2 Samuel 6:3-8) How vital that we shun presumptuousness!

A humble and modest person does not suffer dishonor even when he errs. Job, though exemplary in many ways, was imperfect. His trials revealed a serious flaw in some of his thinking. In defending himself against his accusers, Job became somewhat unbalanced. He even implied that he was more righteous than God. (Job 35:2, 3) How did Jehovah correct Job's thinking?

Pointing to the earth, the sea, the starry heavens, some of the animals, and other marvels of creation, Jehovah gave Job a lesson in man's littleness compared with God's



*Uzzah died for his presumptuousness*

greatness. (Job, chapters 38-41) Nowhere in his speech did Jehovah state why Job was suffering. He did not need to. Job was modest. He humbly recognized the great difference between him and God, between his own imperfection and weaknesses and Jehovah's righteousness and power. "I make a retraction," he said, "and I do repent in dust and ashes." (Job 42:6) Job's integrity led him to accept the reproof readily. What about us? Led by integrity, would we readily accept reproof or correction when needed?

Moses too was modest and humble. When he was wearing himself out in caring for the problems of others, his father-in-law, Jethro, offered a practical solution: Share some responsibility with other qualified men. Recognizing his own limitations, Moses wisely accepted the suggestion. (Exodus 18:17-26; Numbers 12:3) A modest man is not reluctant to delegate authority to others, nor does he fear that he somehow loses control by sharing appropriate responsibilities with other qualified men. (Numbers 11:16, 17, 26-29) Rather, he is eager to help them to progress spiritually. (1 Timothy 4:15) Should that not be true of us also?

## 'The Way of the Blameless One Is Straight'

Recognizing that integrity does not always shield the upright from danger or calamity, Solomon states: "*The integrity of the upright ones is what leads them, but distortion by those dealing treacherously will despoil them.*" (Proverbs 11:3) Integrity indeed guides the upright to do what is right in God's eyes, even under difficult circumstances, and brings benefits in the long run. Job refused to abandon his integrity, and Jehovah "blessed the end of Job afterward more than his beginning." (Job 42:12) Those who deal treacherously may feel that they are bettering themselves at the expense of someone else and may even seem to prosper for a time. But sooner or later their own deceit will destroy them.

### HOW FOOLISH TO SLAVE FOR MATERIAL GAIN BUT NEGLECT THEOCRATIC ACTIVITIES!

"*Valuable things will be of no benefit on the day of fury,*" says the wise king, "*but righteousness itself will deliver from death.*" (Proverbs 11:4) How foolish to slave for material gain but fail to make room for personal study, prayer, meeting attendance, and the field ministry—the very activities that deepen our love for God and strengthen our devotion to him! No amount of wealth will bring deliverance through the upcoming great tribulation. (Matthew 24:21) Only the righteousness of the upright will. (Revelation 7:9, 14) We are wise, therefore, to take to heart Zephaniah's entreaty: "Before there comes upon you the day of Jehovah's anger, seek Jehovah, all you meek ones of the earth, who have practiced His own judicial deci-

sion. Seek righteousness, seek meekness." (Zephaniah 2:2, 3) Meanwhile, let us make it our aim to 'honor Jehovah with our valuable things.'—Proverbs 3:9.

Emphasizing further the value of pursuing righteousness, Solomon contrasts the outcome of the blameless with that of the wicked, saying: "*The righteousness of the blameless one is what will make his way straight, but in his own wickedness the wicked one will fall. The righteousness of the upright ones is what will deliver them, but by their craving those dealing treacherously will themselves be caught. When a wicked man dies, his hope perishes; and even expectation based on powerfulness has perished. The righteous is the one rescued even from distress, and the wicked one comes in instead of him.*" (Proverbs 11:5-8) The blameless one neither falls in his own ways nor gets tangled up in his own dealings. His way is straight. In the end, the upright are rescued from distress. The wicked may seem powerful, but no such deliverance awaits them.

### "A Town Is Elated"

The integrity of the upright and the wickedness of evildoers also have an effect on other people. "*By his mouth the one who is an apostate brings his fellowman to ruin,*" says the king of Israel, "*but by knowledge are the righteous rescued.*" (Proverbs 11:9) Who will deny that slander, harmful gossip, obscene talk, and idle chatter are damaging to others? A righteous one's speech, on the other hand, is pure, well-thought out, and considerate. By knowledge he is rescued because his integrity furnishes him with the points of reasoning needed to show that his accusers are lying.

"*Because of the goodness of the righteous ones a town is elated,*" continues the king, "*but when the wicked ones perish there is a joyful cry.*" (Proverbs 11:10) The righteous generally are loved by others, and they make their neighbors feel elated—happy and joyful. No

one is really fond of "wicked ones." When the wicked die, they are not usually mourned by people in general. There certainly will be no sorrow when Jehovah 'cuts off the wicked from the earth and tears away the treacherous from it.' (Proverbs 2:21, 22) Rather, there will be joy because they have been removed from the scene. But what about us? We do well to consider if the way we conduct ourselves contributes to the joy of others.

### "A Town Is Exalted"

Further contrasting the effect of the upright and the wicked on a community, Solomon states: "*Because of the blessing of the upright ones a town is exalted, but because of the mouth of the wicked ones it gets torn down.*" —Proverbs 11:11.

Townspeople who follow an upright course promote peace and well-being and build up others in the community. Thus, a town is exalted—it prospers. Those who speak slanderous, hurtful, and wrong things cause unrest, unhappiness, disunity, and trouble. This is particularly so if these individuals are in a position of influence. Such a town suffers disorder, corruption, and moral and perhaps economic deterioration.

The principle stated at Proverbs 11:11 applies with equal force to Jehovah's people as they associate with one another in their townlike congregations. A congregation in which spiritual people—upright ones led by their integrity—have influence is an assembly of happy, active, and helpful people, bringing honor to God. Jehovah blesses the congregation, and it prospers spiritually. Here and there, the few who may be disgruntled and dissatisfied, who find fault and speak bitterly about the way things are done, are like a "poisonous root" that can spread and poison others who initially were unaffected. (Hebrews 12:15) Such ones often want more authority and prominence. They stir up ru-

mors that there is injustice, ethnic prejudice, or the like, in the congregation or on the part of the elders. Their mouth, indeed, can cause a division in the congregation. Should we not turn a deaf ear to their talk and strive to be spiritual people who contribute to peace and unity in the congregation?

Continuing, Solomon says: "*The one in want of heart has despised his own fellowman, but the man of broad discernment is one that keeps silent. The one walking about as a slanderer is uncovering confidential talk, but the one faithful in spirit is covering over a matter.*" —Proverbs 11:12, 13.

What great harm is caused by someone who lacks good judgment, or is "in want of heart"! He carries on his loose talk to the point of slander or reviling. The appointed elders must be quick to put an end to such an unwholesome influence. Unlike "the one in want of heart," a man of discernment knows when to keep silent. Rather than betray a confidence, he covers over the matter. Knowing that an unguarded tongue can cause much harm, a discerning person is "faithful in spirit." He is loyal to fellow believers and does not divulge confidential matters that might endanger them. What a blessing such integrity-keepers are to the congregation!

To help us walk in the way of the blameless ones, Jehovah provides an abundant supply of spiritual food prepared under the direction

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of "the faithful and discreet slave." (Matthew 24:45) We also receive much personal assistance through Christian elders in our town-like congregations. (Ephesians 4:11-13) We are indeed grateful for these, for "*when there*

*is no skillful direction, the people fall; but there is salvation in the multitude of counselors.*" (Proverbs 11:14) Come what may, let us be firmly determined to 'walk in our integrity.' —Psalm 26:1.

## Questions From Readers

### Would it be advisable for a true Christian to attend a funeral or a wedding in a church?

Our taking part in any form of false religion is displeasing to Jehovah and must be avoided. (2 Corinthians 6:14-17; Revelation 18:4) A church funeral is a religious service that likely involves a sermon advocating such unscriptural ideas as the immortality of the soul and a heavenly reward for all good people. It may also include such practices as making the sign of the cross and joining in prayer with the priest or minister. Prayers and other religious exercises contrary to Bible teaching may also be a part of a religious wedding ceremony held in a church or elsewhere. Being in a group where everyone else is engaging in a false religious act, a Christian may find it difficult to resist the pressure to join in. How unwise to expose oneself to such pressure!

What if a Christian feels obligated to attend a funeral or a wedding held in a church? An unbelieving husband, for example, may urge his Christian wife to be with him on such an occasion. Could she join him as a quiet observer? Out of regard for her husband's wishes, the wife may decide to go with him, being determined not to share in any religious ceremonies. On the other hand, she may decide not to go, reasoning that the emotional pressure of the circumstances could prove to be too much for her, perhaps causing her to compromise godly principles. The decision would be hers to make. She definitely would want to be settled in her heart, having a clean conscience.—1 Timothy 1:19.

In any case, it would be to her advantage to explain to her husband that she could not conscientiously share in any religious ceremonies or join in the singing of hymns or bow her head when prayer is offered. On the basis of her explanation, he may conclude that his wife's presence could give rise to a situation that might be unpleasant to him. He may choose to go alone out of love for his wife, respect for her beliefs, or a desire to avoid any embarrassment. But if he insists that she go with him, she might go as a mere observer.

Not to be overlooked is the effect our attending a service in a religious building might have on fellow believers. Could it injure the conscience of some? Might their resistance to avoid engaging in idolatry be weakened? "Make sure of the more important things," admonishes the apostle Paul, "so that you may be flawless and not be stumbling others up to the day of Christ."—Philippians 1:10.

If the occasion involves a close fleshly relative, there may be additional family pressures. In any case, a Christian must carefully weigh all the factors involved. Under certain circumstances he or she may conclude that no difficulties would arise from attending a church funeral or wedding as an observer. However, the circumstances may be such that by attending, the likely injury to one's own conscience or to that of others would outweigh the possible benefits of being present. Whatever the situation, the Christian should make sure that the decision will not interfere with his preserving a good conscience before God and men.

# The Paradox of TERTULLIAN

WHERE is there any likeness between the Christian and the philosopher? between one who corrupts the truth, and one who restores and teaches it? What concord is there between the Academy and the Church?" Such bold questions were raised by Tertullian, a writer in the second and third centuries C.E.

He came to be known as "one of the most prolific sources of the history of the Church and of the doctrines which were taught in his time." Virtually no aspect of religious life escaped his attention.

Tertullian was perhaps best known for his paradoxical, or seemingly contradictory, statements, such as these: "God is then especially great, when He is small." "[The death of God's Son] is by all means to be believed, because it is absurd." "[Jesus] was buried, and rose again; the fact is certain, because it is impossible."

There is more to the paradox of Tertullian than his statements. Though he intended that his writings defend the truth and uphold the integrity of the church and her doctrines, he actually corrupted true teachings. His key contribution to Christendom turned out to be a theory upon which later writers built the doctrine of the Trinity. To gain insight into how this happened, let us first get a glimpse of Tertullian himself.

## "Incapable of Being Dull"

Very little is known about the life of Tertullian. Most scholars agree that he was born

about 160 C.E. in Carthage, North Africa. Evidently, he was well-educated and thoroughly familiar with the main schools of philosophy of his day. Apparently, what attracted him to Christianity was the willingness of professed Christians to die for their faith.

Concerning Christian martyrdom, he asked: "For who that contemplates it, is not excited to inquire what is at the bottom of it? who, after inquiry, does not embrace our doctrines?"

After his conversion to nominal Christianity, Tertullian became an inventive writer with a flare for terse and witty statements. "[He] possessed an ability rare among theologians," observes the book

*The Fathers of the Church*. "He is incapable of being dull." One scholar said: "Tertullian [had] a gift for words rather than sentences and it is much easier to appreciate his sallies than it is to follow his arguments. Perhaps this is why he is so often quoted and so infrequently quoted at length."

## To the Defense of Christianity

Tertullian's most famous work is *Apology*, considered to be one of the most powerful literary defenses of nominal Christianity. It was written during a time when Christians were often victims of superstitious mobs. Tertullian came to the defense of these Christians and protested the irrational treatment of them. He said: "[Opposers] consider that the Christians are the cause of every public



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*Tertullian criticized philosophy  
but used it to advance his own ideas*

calamity and every misfortune of the people. . . . If the Nile does not rise to the fields, if the weather will not change, if there is an earthquake, a famine, a plague—straightway the cry is heard: ‘Toss the Christians to the lion!’”

Although Christians were often accused of disloyalty to the State, Tertullian endeavored to show that they were actually the most trustworthy citizens in the realm. After calling attention to several attempts that were made to overthrow the government, he reminded his antagonists that those conspirators arose from the ranks of the pagans, not the Christians. Tertullian pointed out that when Christians were executed, the real loss was sustained by the State.

Other works of Tertullian dealt with Christian living. For example, in his exposition *On the Shows*, Tertullian counseled against being

present at certain places of entertainment, pagan games, and theatrical events. Apparently, there were new converts who saw no inconsistency in meeting for Bible instruction and then attending the pagan games. Trying to stir up their thinking ability, Tertullian wrote: “How monstrous it is to go from God’s church to the devil’s—from the sky to the sty.” He said: “What you reject in deed, you are not to bid welcome to in word.”

### **Corrupts the Truth While Defending It**

Tertullian began his essay entitled *Against Praxeas* saying: “In various ways has the devil rivalled and resisted the truth. Sometimes his aim has been to destroy the truth by defending it.” The man named Praxeas of this essay is not clearly identified, but Tertullian took issue with his teachings concerning God and Christ. He viewed Praxeas as a pawn of Satan covertly trying to corrupt Christianity.

A crucial issue among professed Christians at that time was the relationship between God and Christ. Some among them, particularly those of Greek background, found it difficult to reconcile belief in one God with the role of Jesus as Savior and Redeemer. Praxeas attempted to solve their dilemma by teaching that Jesus was just a different mode of the Father and there was no difference between the Father and the Son. This theory, known as modalism, alleges that God revealed himself “as the Father in Creation and in the giving of the Law, as the Son in Jesus Christ, and as the Holy Spirit after Christ’s ascension.”

Tertullian showed that the Scriptures made a clear distinction between the Father and the Son. After quoting 1 Corinthians 15: 27, 28, he reasoned: “He who subjected (all things), and He to whom they were subjected—must necessarily be two different Beings.” Tertullian called attention to Jesus’ own words: “The Father is greater than I am.” (John 14:28) Using portions of the Hebrew

Scriptures, such as Psalm 8:5, he showed how the Bible describes the "inferiority" of the Son. "Thus the Father is distinct from the Son, being greater than the Son," Tertullian concluded. "Inasmuch as He who begets is one, and He who is begotten is another; He, too, who sends is one, and He who is sent is another; and He, again, who makes is one, and He through whom the thing is made is another."

Tertullian viewed the Son as subordinate to the Father. However, in his attempt to counteract modalism, he went "beyond the things that are written." (1 Corinthians 4:6) As Tertullian erroneously sought to prove the divinity of Jesus by means of another theory, he coined the formula "one substance in three persons." Using this concept, he attempted to show that God, his Son, and the holy spirit were three distinct persons existing in one divine substance. Tertullian thus became the first to apply the Latin form of the word "trinity" to the Father, the Son, and the holy spirit.

### Beware of Worldly Philosophy

How was Tertullian able to devise the theory of "one substance in three persons"? The answer lies in yet another paradox about the man—his view of philosophy. Tertullian called philosophy "the doctrines' of men and 'of demons.'" He openly criticized the practice of using philosophy to support Christian truths. "Away with all attempts to produce a mottled Christianity of Stoic, Platonic, and dialectic composition," he stated. Yet, Tertullian himself made liberal use of secular philosophy when it harmonized with his own ideas.

—Colossians 2:8.

One reference work states: "Trinitarian theology required the aid of Hellenistic concepts and cat-

egories for its development and expression." And the book *The Theology of Tertullian* notes: "[It was] a curious blend of juristic and philosophic ideas and terms, which enabled Tertullian to set out the trinitarian doctrine in a form which, despite its limitations and imperfections, supplied the framework for the later presentation of the doctrine at the Council of Nicaea." Hence, Tertullian's formula—three persons in one divine substance—played a major role in the spreading of religious error throughout all of Christendom.

Tertullian accused others of destroying the truth while they were trying to defend it. Ironically, however, by mixing divinely inspired Bible truth and human philosophy, he fell into the same trap. Let us therefore take to heart the Scriptural warning against "paying attention to misleading inspired utterances and teachings of demons."—1 Timothy 4:1.

**True Christians avoid mixing Bible truth with human philosophy**



# Do You Appreciate God's Love?

THE man Job once described the imperfect human condition in these words: "Man, born of woman, is short-lived and glutted with agitation. Like a blossom he has come forth and is cut off, and he runs away like the shadow and does not keep existing." (Job 14:1, 2) Life, as Job was then experiencing it, was fraught with anguish and sorrow. Have you ever felt that way?

Despite all the difficulties and problems we may face, however, a well-founded hope exists, one that is based on God's compassion and love. First of all, our merciful heavenly Father has provided the ransom sacrifice to redeem mankind from their fallen, sinful condition. According to John 3:16, 17, Jesus Christ stated: "God loved the world [of mankind] so much

that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life. For God sent forth his Son [Jesus] into the world, not for him to judge the world, but for the world to be saved through him."

Also consider God's kind attitude toward us imperfect humans. The apostle Paul declared: "He made out of one man every nation of men, to dwell upon the entire surface of the earth, and he decreed the appointed times and the set limits of the dwelling of men, for them to seek God, if they might grope for him and really find him, although, in fact, he is not far off from each one of us." (Acts 17:26, 27) Think of it! Although we are imperfect humans, we can still enjoy a personal relationship with our loving Creator, Jehovah God.

Confidently, then, we can face the future, knowing that God cares for us and has lovingly made provision for our lasting benefit. (1 Peter 5:7; 2 Peter 3:13) Surely, then, we have every reason to learn more about our loving God through a study of his Word, the Bible.

