

APRIL 15, 2012

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY EDITION

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

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PURPOSE OF STUDY ARTICLES

STUDY ARTICLE 1 PAGES 3-7

In what two basic ways did Jesus reveal the Father to his disciples and others? How can we imitate Jesus in revealing his Father to others? This article will help us to answer these questions.

STUDY ARTICLE 2 PAGES 8-12

Disloyalty is common in today's world, but it must not be allowed to disrupt the peace and unity of the Christian family and the congregation. This article will show that we can remain steadfast in our loyalty to God and to one another.

STUDY ARTICLE 3 PAGES 13-17

How do we demonstrate that our heart is complete toward Jehovah? Against what danger do we need to guard our heart? And what will help us to maintain a complete heart? You will find the answers in this article.

STUDY ARTICLES 4, 5 PAGES 22-31

During the "great tribulation," God's people will be the target of an all-out attack. (Matt. 24:21) Why can we be confident that Jehovah will deliver us? How does he help us to keep our integrity as we await the end? You will find the faith-strengthening answers in these articles.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

18 SEVENTY YEARS OF HOLDING ON TO THE SKIRT OF A JEW

32 DO YOU REMEMBER?



COVER: A sister offering a brochure in the Inuktitut language on the frozen banks of Frobisher Bay in Iqaluit, Nunavut, Canada

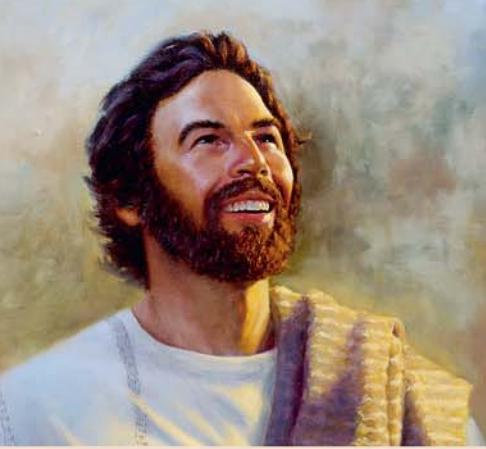


CANADA

POPULATION
34,017,000

PUBLISHERS
113,989

TRANSLATION WORK
The Canada branch oversees the translation of literature in 12 indigenous languages



*"Who the Father is,
no one knows but the
Son, and he to whom
the Son is willing to
reveal him."*

—LUKE 10:22.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

Why was Jesus in a unique position to reveal his Father?

How did Jesus reveal his Father to others?

In what ways can you imitate Jesus in revealing the Father?

'THE SON IS WILLING TO REVEAL THE FATHER'

WHOMO is God?" This question puzzles many. For instance, although most nominal Christians believe that God is a Trinity, many will admit that this doctrine is impossible to understand. One author and clergyman acknowledged: "This is a doctrine beyond the scope of man's finite mind. It lies outside the realm of natural reason or human logic." On the other hand, most who accept the theory of evolution believe that there is no God. They attribute all the wonders of creation to blind chance. Even so, instead of denying God's existence, Charles Darwin said: "The safest conclusion seems to me that the whole subject is beyond the scope of man's intellect."

² Most people, whatever their beliefs, have pondered over questions related to God's existence. However, when they failed to reach a satisfying conclusion, many eventually gave up on their search for God. Indeed, Satan has "blinded the minds of the unbelievers." (2 Cor. 4:4) Little wonder that the majority of mankind are left in ignorance and confusion as to the truth about the Father, the Creator of the universe!—Isa. 45:18.

³ Yet, it is vital that people learn the truth about God. Why? Because only those who call "on the name of Jehovah" will be saved. (Rom. 10:13) To call on God's name involves becoming acquainted with Jehovah as a Person. Jesus Christ disclosed to his disciples this vital knowledge. He revealed the Father to them. (*Read Luke 10:22.*) Why was Jesus able to reveal the Father as no one else could? How did

1, 2. What question has puzzled many, and why?

3. (a) Who has revealed the Creator to us? (b) What questions are we going to consider?

Jesus do so? And how can we imitate Jesus in revealing the Father to others? Let us consider these questions.

JESUS CHRIST —UNIQUELY QUALIFIED

4 Jesus was especially qualified to reveal his Father. Why? Because before all other forms of life were created, the spirit creature who later became the man Jesus already existed in heaven as “the only-begotten Son of God.” (John 1:14; 3:18) What a unique position! While no other creature existed, the Son basked in the warmth of his Father’s attention and learned about Him and His qualities. The Father and Son must have communicated extensively and developed deep affection for each other over aeons of time. (John 5:20; 14:31) What a wealth of insight into his Father’s personality the Son must have gained!—*Read Colossians 1:15-17.*

5 The Father designated the Son to be His spokesman, “The Word of God.” (Rev. 19:13) Therefore, Jesus was in a unique position to reveal the Father to others. Appropriately, Gospel writer John describes Jesus, “the Word,” as being “in the bosom position with the Father.” (John 1:1, 18) With that expression, John alludes to a custom that in his day was common at mealtimes. One guest would recline right in front of another person on the same couch. Being close together, these two could easily engage in conversation. So the Son, being “in the bosom position,” had intimate conversations with his Father.

6 The relationship between the Father

4, 5. Why was Jesus in a unique position to reveal his Father?

6, 7. How did the relationship between the Father and the Son keep developing?

and the Son kept developing. The Son “came to be the one [God] was specially fond of day by day.” (*Read Proverbs 8:22, 23, 30, 31.*) It is logical, then, that the bond between the two became stronger as they worked together and as the Son learned to imitate his Father’s qualities. With the creation of other intelligent creatures, the Son saw how Jehovah dealt with each one, and his appreciation for God’s personality surely deepened.

7 Even the challenge that Satan later launched against the rightfulness of Jehovah’s sovereignty gave the Son an opportunity to learn how Jehovah would exercise love, justice, wisdom, and power when He was confronted with a difficult situation. This would, in turn, no doubt have prepared Jesus to cope with the difficulties that he himself later encountered in his ministry on earth.
—John 5:19.

8 Because of his close relationship with Jehovah, the Son explained the Father in richer detail than anyone else could ever do. What better way could there be for us to come to know the Father than by considering what his only-begotten Son taught and did? To illustrate, think how difficult it would be for us to come to appreciate fully what the word “love” means by merely reading a dictionary definition. Yet, by reflecting on the vivid accounts of the Gospel writers about Jesus’ ministry and his ways of caring for others, we can gain much insight into the statement “God is love.” (1 John 4:8, 16) The same is true of God’s other qualities that Jesus revealed to his disciples while he was on earth.

8. How do the Gospel accounts help us to learn much about the Father’s qualities?



HOW JESUS REVEALED HIS FATHER

9 How did Jesus reveal the Father to his disciples and by extension to his future followers? He did so in two basic ways: through his teachings and through his conduct. Let us first consider Jesus' teachings. What Jesus taught his followers reflected his deep insight into his Father's thoughts, feelings, and ways. For example, Jesus likened his Father to a caring owner of a flock who goes off to look for one stray sheep. Jesus said that when the owner finds the lost sheep, "he rejoices more over it than over the ninety-nine that have not strayed." What was the application of that illustration? "Likewise," Jesus explained, "it is not a desirable thing with my Father who is in heaven for one of these little ones to perish." (Matt. 18: 12-14) What can you learn about Jehovah from this illustration? Even if you at

9. (a) In what two basic ways did Jesus reveal his Father? (b) Give an example that shows how Jesus revealed his Father through his teaching.

times feel that you are of little value and are forgotten, your heavenly Father is interested in you and cares for you. In his eyes, you are one of "these little ones."

10 The second way in which Jesus revealed the Father to his disciples was by means of his conduct. So when the apostle Philip asked Jesus: "Show us the Father," Jesus could rightly say: "He that has seen me has seen the Father also." (John 14:8, 9) Consider some examples of how Jesus demonstrated his Father's qualities. When a leper begged Jesus to cure him, Jesus touched the man who was "full of leprosy" and told him: "I want to. Be made clean." Upon being cured, the leper no doubt could see Jehovah's hand in what Jesus did. (Luke 5:12, 13) Also, at the time of Lazarus' death, the disciples must have felt the Father's compassion when Jesus "groaned in the spirit and became troubled" and "gave way to tears." Though Jesus knew that he was going to resurrect Lazarus, he felt the pain that was evident among Lazarus' family and friends. (John 11:32-35, 40-43) You no doubt have your favorite Bible accounts that enable you to see the merciful Father as exemplified by Jesus' actions.

11 However, what conclusion do you draw from Jesus' cleansing of the temple? Visualize the scene: Jesus made a whip of ropes, and he drove out those selling cattle and sheep. He scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. (John 2:13-17) That forceful action made the disciples

10. How did Jesus reveal his Father through his own conduct?

11. (a) When Jesus cleansed the temple, what did he reveal about his Father? (b) Why is the account of Jesus' cleansing of the temple reassuring to us?

recall the prophetic words of King David: "Sheer zeal for your house has eaten me up." (Ps. 69:9) By taking firm action, Jesus showed a strong desire to defend true worship. Do you see in that account the Father's personality? It reminds us that God has not only the unlimited power to wipe wickedness from the face of the earth but also the ardent desire to do so. This depiction of Jesus' strong reaction to wrongdoing reveals how the Father must feel as he looks at the wickedness that is rampant on earth today. How reassuring that is to us when we are coping with injustices!

12 Let us consider another example—the way Jesus treated his disciples. They kept arguing about who was greater. (Mark 9:33-35; 10:43; Luke 9:46) From his long experience with the Father, Jesus knew how Jehovah feels about such prideful tendencies. (2 Sam. 22:28; Ps. 138:6) Moreover, Jesus had seen such inclinations manifested by Satan the Devil. That egotistic individual cared greatly about prominence and position. Hence, how grieved Jesus must have been to see an ambitious attitude continue among the disciples he had trained! It was even found among the ones he had chosen as apostles! They showed an ambitious attitude until the very last day of Jesus' life on earth. (Luke 22:24-27) Yet, Jesus kept on reproofing them with kindness, without ever losing hope that they would eventually learn to imitate his own humble mental attitude.—Phil. 2:5-8.

13 Can you see the Father's hand in the way Jesus patiently corrected wrong tendencies in his disciples? Do you see

12, 13. What can you learn about Jehovah from the way Jesus treated his disciples?

in Jesus' actions and words the Father, who does not forsake his people despite their repeated failures? With that knowledge of God's qualities in mind, are we not motivated to approach him to express our repentance when we make mistakes?

THE SON WILLINGLY REVEALED HIS FATHER

14 Many dictators try to keep people under control and in ignorance by withholding information from them. In contrast, Jesus was willing to share the information he had about the Father, revealing Him fully to others. (*Read Matthew 11:27.*) In addition, Jesus gave his disciples "intellectual capacity that [they might] gain the knowledge of the true one," Jehovah God. (1 John 5:20) What does that mean? Jesus opened up his followers' minds so that they could understand his teachings about the Father. He did not hide his Father in a cloud of mystery by teaching that He was part of an incomprehensible Trinity.

15 Did Jesus reveal everything that he knew about his Father? No, he wisely held back from sharing many things he knew. (*Read John 16:12.*) Why? Because at the time, his disciples were "not able to bear" such knowledge. As Jesus explained, though, a great deal of knowledge would be revealed upon the arrival of "the helper," the holy spirit, that would guide them "into all the truth." (John 16:7, 13) Just as wise parents may withhold some information from their children until the children become old enough to understand, so Jesus waited

14. How did Jesus show that he was willing to reveal his Father?

15. Why did Jesus hold back some information about his Father?

until the disciples became mature and able to comprehend certain facts about the Father. Jesus kindly took into account their limitations.

IMITATE JESUS BY HELPING OTHERS TO KNOW JEHOVAH

16 When you come to know someone well and appreciate his loving personality, are you not moved to tell others about him? When on earth, Jesus talked about his Father. (John 17:25, 26) Is it possible for us to imitate him in revealing Jehovah to others?

17 As we have considered, Jesus had far deeper knowledge of his Father than others did. Yet, he was willing to share some of what he knew, even giving his followers the intellectual capacity for grasping deeper aspects of God's personality. With the help of Jesus, have we not come to appreciate our Father in a way that most people today do not? How grateful we are that Jesus through his teachings and conduct willingly revealed his Father to us! In fact, we may properly boast in knowing the Father. (Jer. 9:24; 1 Cor. 1:31) As we have striven to draw close to Jehovah, he has drawn close to us. (Jas. 4:8) Therefore, we are now in a position to share our knowledge with others. How can we do that?

18 We need to imitate Jesus by revealing the Father by our words and deeds. Keep in mind that many we meet in field service do not know who God is. Their view of God may be obscured by false teachings. We may share with them what we know about God's name, his purpose for humans, and his per-

16, 17. Why are you in a position to reveal the Father to others?

18, 19. In what ways can you reveal the Father to others? Explain.



sonality as revealed in the Bible. Moreover, we may discuss with fellow believers some Bible accounts that reveal God's personality in a way that we did not appreciate before. That way, they too may benefit.

19 How about revealing the Father by your conduct as you strive to imitate Jesus? When people see in our actions the love of Christ, they will be drawn to the Father as well as to Jesus. (Eph. 5:1, 2) The apostle Paul encouraged us to 'become imitators of him, even as he was of Christ.' (1 Cor. 11:1) What a wonderful privilege we have of helping people to see Jehovah in the way we conduct ourselves! Yes, may we all keep on imitating Jesus by revealing the Father to others.



BETRAYAL AN OMINOUS SIGN OF THE TIMES!

"How loyal and righteous and unblamable we proved to be."

—1 THESS. 2:10.

ISOLATE THESE MAIN POINTS:

What warning lessons can we learn from the betrayals committed by Delilah, Absalom, and Judas Iscariot?

How can we imitate the loyalty displayed by both Jonathan and Peter?

How can we remain steadfast in our loyalty to our marriage mate and to Jehovah?

WHAT do Delilah, Absalom, and Judas Iscariot have in common? They were all disloyal—Delilah to the man who loved her, Judge Samson; Absalom to his father, King David; Judas to his Master, Christ Jesus. In each case, their deplorable actions wreaked havoc on others! But why should this be of concern to us?

² A modern-day author lists betrayal among today's most common vices. That is to be expected. When giving the sign of "the conclusion of the system of things," Jesus said: "Many . . . will betray one another." (Matt. 24:3, 10) "To betray" means "to give up to, or place in the power of an enemy, by treachery or disloyalty." Such a lack of loyalty confirms that we are living in "the last days" when, Paul foretold, people would be "disloyal, . . . betrayers." (2 Tim. 3:1, 2, 4) Even though authors and screenwriters often dramatize and romanticize treacherous acts in literature and in the movies, in real life disloyalty and betrayal cause pain and suffering. Indeed, such acts are an ominous sign of the times!

³ What lessons can we learn from the Bible about those who were disloyal in the past? What examples of people who proved their devotion to others can we imitate? And to whom must we remain steadfast in our loyalty? Let us see.

WARNING EXAMPLES FROM THE PAST

⁴ First, consider conniving Delilah, with whom Judge Samson had fallen in love. Samson was intent

1-3. (a) What is an ominous sign of the times, and what does it involve? (b) What three questions will we answer?

4. How did Delilah betray Samson, and why was that so contemptible?

on leading the fight against the Philistines on behalf of God's people. Perhaps knowing that Delilah had no loyal love for Samson, the five Philistine lords offered her a large bribe to find out the secret of his superior strength so that they could eliminate him. Mercenary Delilah accepted their offer, but her attempts to uncover Samson's secret failed three times. She then kept on pressuring him "with her words all the time and kept urging him." Finally, "his soul got to be impatient to the point of dying." So he told her that his hair had never been cut and that if it was, he would lose his power.* Knowing that, Delilah had Samson's hair shaved off while he was asleep on her lap, and then she turned him over to his enemies to do to him whatever they wanted. (Judg. 16:4, 5, 15-21) How contemptible her action was! All because of her greed, Delilah betrayed someone who loved her.

5 Next, consider treacherous Absalom. Inflamed with ambition, he was determined to usurp the throne of his father, King David. Absalom first 'stole the hearts of the men of Israel' by ingratiating himself with them, using sly promises and insincere expressions of affection. He would embrace and kiss them, as if he were truly interested in them and their needs. (2 Sam. 15:2-6) Absalom even won over David's trusted confidant Ahithophel, who turned traitor and joined the coup. (2 Sam. 15:31) In Psalms 3 and 55, David describes

* Not the hair itself, but what it stood for, that is, Samson's special relationship with Jehovah as a Nazirite, was the source of his strength.

5. (a) How did Absalom prove disloyal to David, and what did that expose about him? (b) How did David feel about Ahithophel's having turned traitor?

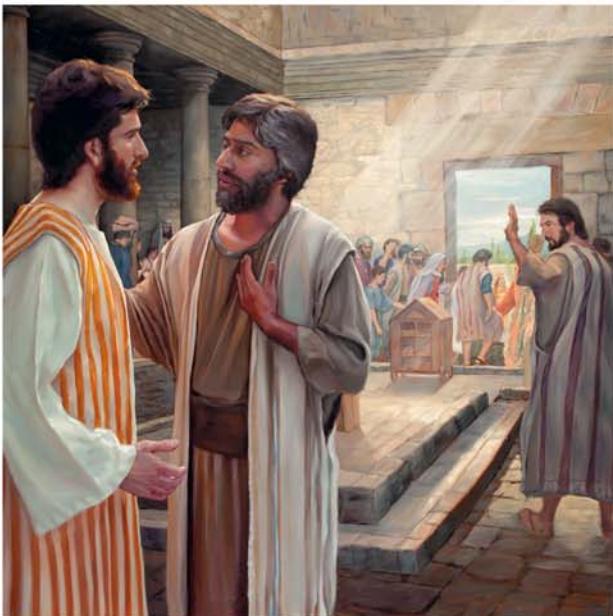
how such disloyalty affected him. (Ps. 3:1-8; *read Psalm 55:12-14.*) Absalom exposed his shameless disregard for God's sovereignty by his ambitious scheming and blatant conspiracy against Jehovah's appointed king. (1 Chron. 28:5) In the end, the uprising failed, and David continued to rule as the anointed of Jehovah.

6 Now think of what traitorous Judas Iscariot did to the Christ. At the last Passover that Jesus celebrated with his 12 apostles, he told them: "Truly I say to you, One of you will betray me." (Matt. 26:21) Later that night, Jesus announced to Peter, James, and John in the garden of Gethsemane: "Look! My betrayer has drawn near." Immediately, Judas appeared in the garden with his coconspirators, "and going straight up to Jesus he said: 'Good day, Rabbi!' and kissed him very tenderly." (Matt. 26:46-50; Luke 22:47, 52) Judas "betrayed righteous blood" and handed Jesus over to Christ's enemies. And for what did money-loving Judas do that? For a mere 30 pieces of silver! (Matt. 27:3-5) The name Judas has been synonymous with "traitor" ever since, especially one who betrays another under the guise of friendship.*

7 What have we learned from these warning examples? Absalom and Judas both met a shameful end because of their having turned traitor against the anointed of Jehovah. (2 Sam. 18:9, 14-17; Acts 1:18-20) Delilah's name will

* Hence, the term "Judas kiss" means "an act of betrayal."

6. How did Judas betray Jesus, and with what has Judas' name become synonymous?
7. What lessons have we learned from the lives of (a) Absalom and Judas and (b) Delilah?



Peter was loyal to God's anointed Son even though others rejected Him

forever be associated with treachery and feigned love. (Ps. 119:158) How vital it is that we reject any tendency we may have toward blind ambition or greed, which would cause us to lose Jehovah's favor! Could any lessons be more powerful to help us reject the loathsome trait of disloyalty?

IMITATE THOSE WHO PROVED LOYAL

8 The Bible also describes many loyal individuals. Let us consider two of these and see what we can learn from them, starting with a man who proved his loyalty to David. Jonathan, King Saul's eldest son, would likely have been the heir to the throne of Israel—except for one thing. Jehovah chose David to be Israel's next king. Jonathan respected God's decision. He did not jealously view David as a rival. Rather, Jonathan's "soul be-

8, 9. (a) Why did Jonathan pledge his loyalty to David? (b) How can we imitate Jonathan?

came bound up with the soul of David" as he pledged his loyalty to him. He even gave David his garments, sword, bow, and belt, thus bestowing royal honors on him. (1 Sam. 18:1-4) Jonathan did all he could to 'strengthen David's hand,' even to the point of risking his own life to stand up for David in front of Saul. Jonathan loyally told David: "You yourself will be king over Israel, and I myself shall become second to you." (1 Sam. 20:30-34; 23:16, 17) It is no wonder that after Jonathan's death, David expressed his sorrow and his love for him in a mournful song.—2 Sam. 1:17, 26.

9 There was no conflict of loyalties on Jonathan's part. He was completely submissive to the Sovereign, Jehovah, and he fully supported David as the anointed of God. Likewise today, even if we may not have been given a special privilege in the congregation, we should willingly support the brothers who have been appointed to take the lead among us.—1 Thess. 5:12, 13; Heb. 13:17, 24.

10 The other good example we will consider is that of the apostle Peter, who avowed his loyalty to Jesus. When Christ used graphic, figurative language to emphasize the importance of exercising faith in his soon-to-be-sacrificed flesh and blood, many of his disciples found his words shocking, and they left him. (John 6:53-60, 66) So Jesus turned to his 12 apostles and asked: "You do not want to go also, do you?" It was Peter who responded: "Lord, whom shall we go away to? You have sayings of everlasting life; and we have believed and come to know that you are the Holy One of God." (John 6:67-69) Did this mean

10, 11. (a) Why did Peter loyally stay with Jesus? (b) How can we imitate Peter, and what should we be moved to do?

that Peter fully understood all that Jesus had just said about His coming sacrifice? Probably not. Even so, Peter was determined to be loyal to God's anointed Son.

11 Peter did not reason that Jesus must have the wrong view of things and that if given time, He would recant what He had said. No, Peter humbly recognized that Jesus had "sayings of everlasting life." Likewise today, how do we react if we encounter a point in our Christian publications from "the faithful steward" that is hard to understand or that does not match with our thinking? We should try hard to get the sense of it rather than merely expecting that there will be a change to conform to our viewpoint.—*Read Luke 12:42.*

REMAIN LOYAL TO YOUR MARRIAGE MATE

12 Betrayal in any form is a vile act that must not be allowed to disrupt the peace and unity of the Christian family and the congregation. With that in mind, let us consider how we can be steadfast in our loyalty to our marriage mate and to our God.

13 Adultery is one of the most devastating forms of betrayal. The adulterer has violated his fidelity to his marriage mate and shifted his attention to another person. The betrayed mate is suddenly left alone—with a life that is turned upside down. How does that happen between two people who once loved each other? Often, a first step in that direction is taken when marriage mates become emotionally distant from each other. Professor of Sociology Gabriella Turna-

12, 13. How might betrayal find a niche in a marriage, and why is a person's age not an excuse for that to happen?

turi explains that alternating "between being fully present in a relationship and not being fully present is where betrayal finds its niche." This distancing of oneself from a marriage mate has happened to some even during middle age. For example, a 50-year-old married man divorces his faithful wife of 25 years in order to join up with another woman to whom he has become attracted. Some excuse this as a midlife crisis. However, rather than making it sound as though it were unavoidable, let us call it what it really is—a midlife betrayal.*

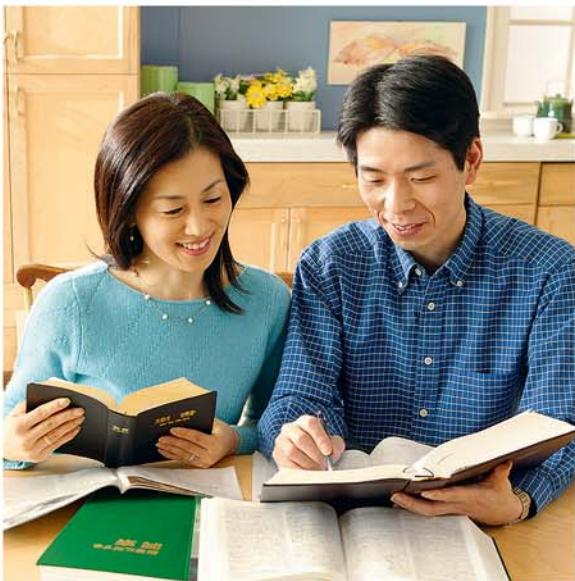
14 How does Jehovah feel about those who leave their mates without a Scriptural reason? Our God 'hates a divorcing,' and he has uttered strong words against those who abuse and abandon their marriage mates. (*Read Malachi 2: 13-16.*) In heart harmony with his Father, Jesus taught that one cannot drive away or cast off an innocent mate and act as if nothing has happened.—*Read Matthew 19:3-6, 9.*

15 How can those who are married remain loyal to their mates? God's Word says: "Rejoice with the wife [or husband] of your youth" and, "See life with the wife [or husband] whom you love." (Prov. 5:18; Eccl. 9:9) As both mates grow older, they must be "fully present" in their relationship, both physically and emotionally. That means being attentive to each other, spending time with

* For help in dealing with a marriage mate's disloyalty, see the article "Coping With a Spouse's Betrayal," in the June 15, 2010, issue of *The Watchtower*, pages 29-32.

14. (a) How does Jehovah feel about treachery in a marriage? (b) What did Jesus say about marital fidelity?

15. How can those who are married strengthen their loyalty to their mates?



each other, and drawing closer to *each other*. They have to focus on preserving their marriage and their relationship with Jehovah. To that end, couples need to study the Bible *together*, regularly work in the ministry *together*, and pray *together* for Jehovah's blessing.

REMAIN LOYAL TO JEHOVAH

16 There are members of the congregation who committed serious sins and who were reproved "with severity, that they may be healthy in the faith." (Titus 1:13) For some, their conduct has required that they be disfellowshipped. For "those who have been trained by it," the discipline has helped them to become spiritually restored. (Heb. 12:11) What if we have a relative or a close friend who is disfellowshipped? Now our loyalty is on the line, not to that person, but to God. Jehovah is watch-

16, 17. (a) How might our loyalty to God be put on the line in the family and the congregation? (b) What example illustrates that obeying God's command to quit associating with disfellowshipped relatives can lead to good results?

ing us to see whether we will abide by his command not to have contact with *anyone* who is disfellowshipped.—*Read 1 Corinthians 5:11-13.*

17 Consider just one example of the good that can come when a family loyally upholds Jehovah's decree not to associate with disfellowshipped relatives. A young man had been disfellowshipped for over ten years, during which time his father, mother, and four brothers "quit mixing in company" with him. At times, he tried to involve himself in their activities, but to their credit, each member of the family was steadfast in not having any contact with him. After he was reinstated, he said that he always missed the association with his family, especially at night when he was alone. But, he admitted, had the family associated with him even a little, that small dose would have satisfied him. However, because he did not receive even the slightest communication from any of his family, the burning desire to be with them became one motivating factor in his restoring his relationship with Jehovah. Think of that if you are ever tempted to violate God's command not to associate with your disfellowshipped relatives.

18 We live in a treacherous, disloyal world. Yet, all around us in the Christian congregation, we can find loyal examples to imitate. Their life course speaks for them, as if to say: "You are witnesses, God is also, how *loyal* and righteous and unblamable we proved to be to you believers." (1 Thess. 2:10) May we all remain ever steadfast in our loyalty to God and to one another.

18. After having reviewed the merits of loyalty versus the consequences of disloyalty, what is your resolve?



MAINTAIN A COMPLETE HEART TOWARD JEHOVAH

"My son, know the God of your father and serve him with a complete heart."

—1 CHRON. 28:9.

LOOK FOR THE ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS:

What is the figurative heart?

What method can we use to examine our heart?

How can we keep our heart complete toward Jehovah?

GOD'S WORD often refers in a figurative way to parts of the human body. For instance, the patriarch Job stated: "There is no violence upon my *palms*." King Solomon observed: "A report that is good makes the *bones* fat." Jehovah assured Ezekiel: "Harder than flint, I have made your *forehead*." And the apostle Paul was told: "You are introducing some things that are strange to our *ears*."
—Job 16:17; Prov. 15:30; Ezek. 3:9; Acts 17:20.

² One part of the human body, though, is referred to figuratively in the Bible far more often than any other. It is the one mentioned in a prayer by faithful Hannah: "My *heart* does exult in Jehovah." (1 Sam. 2:1) In fact, Bible writers mention the heart nearly a thousand times, almost always in a figurative sense. It is of utmost importance that we understand what the heart represents because the Bible states that we need to safeguard it.—*Read Proverbs 4:23.*

THE FIGURATIVE HEART—WHAT IS IT?

³ Though God's Word does not provide a dictionary definition of the word "heart," it allows us to discern the meaning of that word. How? To illustrate, think of an exquisite wall mosaic that is made up of a thousand closely set small pebbles. By stepping back to look at the entire mosaic, one sees that all the carefully placed pebbles together form a pattern, or picture. Similarly, if we were to step back and look at the many instances where "heart" is used in the Bible, we could discern that taken

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- 1, 2.** (a) What part of the body is referred to figuratively in God's Word more often than any other? (b) Why is it important that we understand the meaning of the figurative heart?
 - 3.** How can we discern the meaning of "heart" in the Bible? Illustrate.

together these references form a pattern, or picture. What picture?

⁴ Bible writers use “heart” to describe man’s entire inner self. It encompasses such aspects as our desires, thoughts, disposition, attitudes, capabilities, motivations, and goals. (*Read Deuteronomy 15:7; Proverbs 16:9; Acts 2:26.*) As one reference work states, it is “the sum total of the interior man.” In some cases, “heart” has a narrower meaning. For example, Jesus said: “You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind.” (Matt. 22:37) In this instance, “heart” refers to the emotions, desires, and feelings of the inner person. By mentioning heart, soul, and mind separately, Jesus emphasized that we must express our love for God in our feelings as well as by the way we lead our life and use our mental faculties. (John 17:3; Eph. 6:6) But when “heart” is mentioned by itself, it stands for the total inner person.

WHY WE NEED TO GUARD OUR HEART

⁵ Regarding the heart, King David reminded Solomon: “My son, know the God of your father and serve him with a complete heart and with a delightful soul; for all hearts Jehovah is searching, and every inclination of the thoughts he is discerning.” (1 Chron. 28:9) Indeed, Jehovah is the Examiner of *all* hearts, including ours. (Prov. 17:3; 21:2) And what he finds in our heart has a strong bearing on our relationship with him and on our future. Thus, we have good

4. (a) What does “heart” represent? (b) What is the meaning of Jesus’ words as recorded at Matthew 22:37?

5. Why do we want to do our utmost to serve Jehovah with a complete heart?

reason to follow David’s inspired counsel by doing our utmost to serve Jehovah with a complete heart.

⁶ Our zealous activities as Jehovah’s people show that we have, indeed, a deep desire to serve God with a complete heart. At the same time, we realize that the pressures of Satan’s wicked world and the sinful inclinations of our own flesh are powerful forces that can undermine our resolve to serve God wholeheartedly. (Jer. 17:9; Eph. 2:2) Hence, to check that our resolve to serve God is not weakening—that we are not letting our guard down—we need to peer regularly into our heart. How can we do that?

⁷ Obviously, our inner personality is unseen—much as the core, or heart, of a tree cannot be seen. Still, as Jesus mentioned in the Sermon on the Mount, just as fruits reveal the condition of a tree, so our activities demonstrate the true condition of our heart. (Matt. 7:17-20) Let us consider one such outward action.

A TANGIBLE METHOD FOR EXAMINING OUR HEART

⁸ Earlier, in the same sermon, Jesus told his listeners what specific action on their part would demonstrate their inner desire to serve Jehovah wholeheartedly. He said: “Keep on, then, seeking *first* the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you.” (Matt. 6:33) Indeed, by what we put first in our life, we make manifest what we are desiring, thinking, and

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6. What should we realize about our resolve to serve Jehovah?
 7. What demonstrates the condition of our heart?
 8. Jesus’ words found at Matthew 6:33 have what relationship to what is in our heart?

planning deep down in our heart. Examining our priorities in life is thus a tangible way to check whether we are serving God with a complete heart.

⁹ Not long after Jesus urged his followers to “keep on . . . seeking first the kingdom,” an incident happened that illustrates how a man’s heart condition is indeed revealed by what he puts first in life. Gospel writer Luke introduces the incident by stating that Jesus “firmly set his face to go to Jerusalem” even though he well knew what eventually awaited him there. While he and his apostles “were going on the road,” Jesus met some men to whom he extended the invitation: “Be my follower.” Those men were willing to accept Jesus’ invitation—but on certain conditions. One man replied: “Permit me *first* to leave and bury my father.” Another said: “I will follow you, Lord; but *first* permit me to say good-bye to those in my household.” (Luke 9:51, 57-61) What a contrast there was between Jesus’ firm, whole-hearted resolve and those men’s weak, conditional offers! By placing their own concerns first, above Kingdom interests, they revealed that their heart was not complete toward God.

¹⁰ Unlike those would-be disciples, we have wisely accepted Jesus’ invitation to be his followers and are now serving Jehovah every day. In this way, we demonstrate how we feel in our heart about Jehovah. Yet, even though we are active in the congregation, we still need to be aware of a potential risk to our heart condition. What is it? In the

same conversation with those would-be disciples, Jesus revealed that danger, saying: “No man that has put his hand to a plow and looks at the things behind is well fitted for the kingdom of God.” (Luke 9:62) What lesson can we draw from that illustration?

DO WE “CLING TO WHAT IS GOOD”?

¹¹ To make the lesson from Jesus’ brief illustration stand out clearly, let us add some color and details to this word picture. A field laborer is busy plowing. While plowing, though, he cannot stop thinking about his home where there are family, friends, food, music, laughter, and shade. He longs for them. After plowing a good stretch of land, the laborer’s desire for those pleasant things in life becomes so overwhelming that he turns around to look at “the things behind.” Though there is still much work to be done before the field is planted, the laborer is distracted and his work suffers. Of course, the laborer’s master is disappointed by the worker’s lack of perseverance.

¹² Now consider a parallel with a modern-day situation. The farmer could represent any Christian who seems to be doing well but actually is in spiritual danger. For comparison’s sake, let us imagine a brother who keeps busy in the ministry. However, though attending meetings and sharing in field service, he cannot stop thinking of certain aspects of the world’s way of life that he finds appealing. Deep down in his heart, he longs for them. Eventually,

9. What invitation did Jesus extend to some men, and what was revealed by their reactions?

10. (a) How have Christ’s followers reacted to Jesus’ invitation? (b) Jesus related what brief illustration?

11. What happened to the laborer’s work in Jesus’ illustration, and why?

12. What parallel could we draw between the laborer in Jesus’ illustration and some Christians today?

THREE FACTORS THAT AFFECT OUR HEART

Just as we can take measures to benefit the condition of our literal heart, so we can take steps to help us maintain a healthy figurative heart. Consider these three important factors:

1 Nourishment: Our literal heart needs to receive sufficient amounts of healthful nourishment. Likewise, we need to make sure that we get sufficient amounts of wholesome spiritual food through regular personal study, meditation, and meeting attendance.—Ps. 1:1, 2; Prov. 15:28; Heb. 10:24, 25.

2 Exercise: To be healthy, our literal heart at times needs to pump vigorously. Similarly, zealous participation in the ministry—perhaps exerting ourselves by stepping up our activities—keeps our figurative heart in good condition.
—Luke 13:24; Phil. 3:12.

3 Environment: The ungodly environment in which we must work and live can put our literal and our figurative heart under heavy stress. However, we can reduce such stress by associating as often as possible with fellow believers, who genuinely care for us and whose hearts are complete toward God.—Ps. 119:63; Prov. 13:20.

after he carries out his ministry for several years, his desire for some things of this world becomes so overwhelming that he turns back and looks at “the things behind.” Though there is still much work to be done in the ministry, he does not keep “a tight grip on the word of life,” and his share in theocratic activities suffers. (Phil. 2:16) Jehovah, “the Master of the harvest,” is saddened by any such lack of endurance.—Luke 10:2.

13 The lesson is obvious. It is commendable if we share regularly in such wholesome and satisfying activities as attending congregation meetings and participating in field service. But serving Jehovah with a complete heart involves more. (2 Chron. 25:1, 2, 27) If deep down in his heart a Christian continues to love “the things behind”—that is, certain aspects of the world’s way of life—he is in danger of losing his good standing with God. (Luke 17:32) Only if we truly “abhor what is wick-

ed [and] cling to what is good” will we be “well fitted for the kingdom of God.” (Rom. 12:9; Luke 9:62) All of us, therefore, need to make sure that nothing in Satan’s world, no matter how useful or pleasant it may seem to be, holds us back from being wholehearted in caring for Kingdom interests.—2 Cor. 11:14; *read Philippians 3:13, 14.*

REMAIN ALERT!

14 Love for Jehovah moved us to dedicate ourselves to him. Since then, many of us have proved for years that we are determined to keep our heart complete toward Jehovah. However, Satan has not given up on us. Our heart is still his target. (Eph. 6:12) Of course, he may realize that we will not simply abandon Jehovah abruptly. Therefore, he slyly employs “this system of things” in an effort to weaken our heartfelt zeal for God gradually. (*Read Mark 4:18, 19.*) Why is that method of Satan so effective?

14, 15. (a) How is Satan trying to affect our heart condition? (b) Illustrate what makes Satan’s method so dangerous.

13. Serving Jehovah with a complete heart involves what?

15 To answer, imagine that you are reading a book by the light of a 100-watt bulb, but then the bulb fails. Since you are left in the dark, you immediately notice what happened and replace the burned-out bulb with a new one. Light fills the room again. The next evening, you are reading with the help of the same lamp. However, unbeknownst to you, someone replaced the new 100-watt bulb with a 95-watt bulb. Would you notice the difference? Probably not. And what if the next day someone put a 90-watt bulb in your lamp? Likely, you would still not notice it. Why not? The lamp's light is diminishing so gradually that you are not aware of it. Similarly, the influences of Satan's world may cause our zeal to diminish little by little. If that happens, it is as if Satan succeeded in reducing 100-watt heartfelt zeal for Jehovah's service to something less. If not alert, a Christian may not even notice the gradual change.

—Matt. 24:42; 1 Pet. 5:8.

PRAYER IS VITAL

16 How can we protect ourselves against such schemes of Satan and maintain a complete heart toward Jehovah? (2 Cor. 2:11) Prayer is vital. Paul encouraged fellow believers to "stand firm against the machinations of the Devil." Then he urged them: "With every form of prayer and supplication . . . , carry on prayer on every occasion."—Eph. 6: 11, 18; 1 Pet. 4:7.

17 To stand firm against Satan, we are wise to imitate the prayerful attitude of Jesus, which reflected his deep desire to maintain a complete heart toward Jeho-

16. How can we protect ourselves against Satan's schemes?

17. Jesus' prayers teach us what lesson?

vah. Note, for instance, what Luke recorded about the way Jesus prayed on the night before his death: "Getting into an agony he continued praying more earnestly." (Luke 22:44) Jesus had prayed earnestly before, but on this occasion, faced with the most severe test of his earthly life, he prayed "*more earnestly*"—and his prayer was answered. Jesus' example shows that prayers have degrees of intensity. Therefore, the more severe our trials are and the more insidious Satan's schemes are, the "*more earnestly*" we should pray for Jehovah's protection.

18 How will such prayers affect us? Paul stated: "In everything by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God; and the peace of God that excels all thought will *guard your hearts*." (Phil. 4:6, 7) Yes, we have to pray fervently and frequently in order to maintain a complete heart toward Jehovah. (Luke 6:12) Hence, ask yourself, 'How earnest and frequent are my prayers?' (Matt. 7:7; Rom. 12:12) Your answer reveals much about the depth of your heartfelt desire to serve God.

19 As we have considered, the priorities we set in life can tell us much about the condition of our heart. We want to make sure that neither the things we left behind nor Satan's wily schemes will sap our resolve to serve Jehovah with a complete heart. (*Read Luke 21: 19, 34-36.*) Therefore, like David, we keep on supplicating Jehovah: "Unify my heart."—Ps. 86:11.

18. (a) What should we ask ourselves about prayer, and why? (b) What factors affect our heart, and in what ways? (See box on page 16.)

19. What will you do to maintain a complete heart toward Jehovah?

Seventy Years of Holding On to the Skirt of a Jew

AS TOLD BY LEONARD SMITH



When I was in my early teens, two Bible passages struck me. Today, over 70 years later, I can still remember the time when I grasped the meaning of Zechariah 8:23, which speaks of “ten men” taking hold of “the skirt of a man who is a Jew.” They tell the Jew: “We will go with you people, for we have heard that God is with you people.”

THE Jewish man symbolizes anointed Christians, and the “ten men” represent the “other sheep,” or “Jonadabs,” as they were known back then.* (John 10:16) When I understood that truth, I realized how much the fulfillment of my hope to live forever on earth depends upon my loyal support of the anointed class.

Jesus’ illustration of “the sheep” and “the goats,” found at Matthew 25:31-46, also deeply impressed me. “The sheep” picture those who receive a favorable judgment during the time of the end because they do good to Christ’s anointed brothers still on earth. As a young Jonadab, I said to myself, ‘Len, if you want to be viewed by Christ as a sheep, you’ve got to support his anointed brothers, accepting their leadership because God is with them.’ That understanding has guided me during more than seven decades.

‘WHERE IS MY PLACE?’

My mother was baptized in 1925 in the meeting hall at Bethel. That hall was called London

Tabernacle and was used by the brothers in the area. I was born on October 15, 1926. In March 1940, I took the step of baptism during an assembly in Dover on the coast of England. I grew to love Bible truth. Since Mother was an anointed Christian, the first ‘skirt of a Jew’ I held on to, as it were, was that of my mother. At that time, my father and my older sister did not serve Jehovah. We were part of the Gillingham Congregation in southeast England, which was composed mostly of anointed Christians. Mother set a fine example of zeal for the preaching work.

In September 1941, at a convention in the city of Leicester, a discourse entitled “Integrity” considered the issue of universal domination. That talk helped me to understand for the first time that we are involved in the issue between Jehovah and Satan. Therefore, we need to take our stand for Jehovah and maintain our integrity to him as Universal Sovereign.

At that convention, much emphasis was placed on the pioneer service, and youngsters were encouraged to make it their goal. The talk entitled “Pioneer’s Place in the Organization”

* For the term “Jonadab,” see *Jehovah’s Witnesses—Proclaimers of God’s Kingdom*, pages 83, 165, 166.

made me wonder, 'Where is my place?' That convention convinced me that it was my duty as a Jonadab to help the anointed class to the best of my ability in the preaching work. Right there in Leicester, I filled in my application to join the ranks of the pioneers.

PIONEER SERVICE DURING THE WAR

On December 1, 1941, at the age of 15, I was appointed as a special pioneer. Mother was my first pioneer partner, but after about a year, she had to relinquish her pioneer service for health reasons. The London branch office then teamed me up with Ron Parkin, who presently serves on the Branch Committee in Puerto Rico.

We were sent to the coastal towns of Broadstairs and Ramsgate in the county of Kent, where we rented a room. The special pioneer monthly allowance was 40 shillings (then about \$8, U.S.). So by the time we paid our rent, we had little to live on, and we were not always sure where our next meal would come from. But in one way or another, Jehovah always provided for our needs.

We cycled a lot, pushing our heavily loaded bicycles against strong winds coming from the North Sea. We also had to cope with air raids and German V-1 missiles that flew quite low over Kent to bomb London. I once had to jump off my bike and throw myself into a ditch when a bomb glided over my head and exploded in a nearby

field. Even so, our years of pioneering in Kent were happy ones.

I BECOME A "BETHEL BOY"

My mother had always spoken of Bethel with admiration. "I can wish nothing better than that you become a Bethel boy," she would say. So imagine my joy and surprise when, in January 1946, I received an invitation to go to Bethel in London to help with the work there for three weeks. At the end of those weeks, Pryce Hughes, the branch servant, asked me to stay at Bethel. The training I received there molded me for the rest of my life.

There were about 30 members in the London Bethel family at that time, mostly young single brothers but also several anointed brothers, including Pryce Hughes, Edgar Clay, and Jack Barr, who became a member of the Governing Body. What a privilege it was to support Christ's brothers by working as a youngster under the spiritual oversight of these "pillars"!—Gal. 2:9.

One day at Bethel, a brother told me that there was a sister at the front door who wanted to see me. To my surprise, it was my mother with a parcel under her arm. She said that she would not come in so as not to interrupt my work, but she gave me the parcel and left. It contained a warm overcoat. Her loving gesture reminded me of Hannah bringing her young son Samuel a coat while he was serving at the tabernacle.
—1 Sam. 2:18, 19.

GILEAD—AN UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE

In 1947, five of us serving at Bethel were invited to attend Gilead School in the United States, and the following year we attended the 11th class. When we arrived, it was bitterly cold in upstate



(Left) My mother and father

(Right) On the Gilead campus in 1948, wearing the warm coat Mother gave me

New York, where the school was located. How glad I was to have that warm coat my mother had brought me!

The six months I spent at Gilead were unforgettable. Mingling with fellow students from 16 different countries broadened my view. In addition to spiritual enrichment from the school, I benefited from fellowship with mature Christians. One of my fellow students, Lloyd Barry; one of the instructors, Albert Schroeder; and John Booth, overseer of Kingdom Farm (where Gilead School was located) later became members of the Governing Body. I treasure the loving counsel that these brothers gave me and their fine example of loyalty to Jehovah and his organization.

CIRCUIT WORK AND BACK TO BETHEL

Upon leaving Gilead, I was assigned to do circuit work in the state of Ohio, U.S.A. I was only 21 years of age, but the brothers accepted with warmth my youthful enthusiasm. In that circuit, I learned much from experienced older men.

After a few months, I was invited to return to Brooklyn Bethel for further training. During that time, I got to know such pillars as Milton Henschel, Karl Klein, Nathan Knorr, T. J. (Bud) Sullivan, and Lyman Swingle, all of whom once served on the Governing Body. It was an enriching experience to see them at work and observe their Christian ways. My confidence in Jehovah's organization increased a hundredfold. Then I was sent back to Europe to continue my ministry there.

My mother died in February 1950. After the funeral, I had a frank discussion with my father and my sister, Dora. I asked them what they intended to do about the truth now that Mother was gone and I had left home. They knew and respected an elderly anointed brother, Harry Browning, and agreed to discuss the truth with

him. Within a year, Dad and Dora were baptized. Dad was later appointed as a servant in the Gillingham Congregation. After Father's death, Dora married a faithful elder, Roy Moreton, and served Jehovah loyally until her death in 2010.

HELPING OUT IN FRANCE

At public school, I had studied French, German, and Latin, and of the three, French was the language I had the most trouble with. So I had mixed feelings when I was asked to go to help out at the Paris Bethel in France. There, I had the privilege of working with branch servant Henri Geiger, an elderly anointed brother. The assignment was not always easy, and I doubtless made many mistakes, but I learned a lot about human relations.

In addition, the first postwar international convention in Paris was planned for 1951, and I was involved in organizing it. A young traveling overseer, Léopold Jontès, came to Bethel to help me. Later, Léopold was appointed branch overseer. The convention was held in the Palais des sports, near the Eiffel Tower. Delegates came from 28 lands. On the last day, the 6,000 French Witnesses were overjoyed to see 10,456 in attendance!

When I first arrived in France, my French was far from adequate. To make matters worse, I



Interpreting for Brother Lloyd Barry at the dedication of the France branch, 1997



(Left) With Esther on our wedding day
(Right) In the witnessing work together



made the big mistake of opening my mouth to speak only when I was sure of my French. But if you do not make mistakes, you are never corrected and you do not progress.

I decided to remedy the situation by enrolling in a school that taught French to foreigners. I attended classes on evenings when there were no meetings. I began to love the French language, and that love has grown over the years. This has proved useful because I have been able to help the France branch with translation work. In time, I became a translator myself, translating from English into French. It was a privilege to help in transmitting to the French-speaking brothers throughout the world the rich spiritual food provided by the slave class.—Matt. 24:45-47.

MARRIAGE AND FURTHER PRIVILEGES

In 1956, I married Esther, a Swiss pioneer whom I had met a few years earlier. We were married in the Kingdom Hall next to London Bethel (the old London Tabernacle, where my mother was baptized). Brother Hughes gave our marriage talk. Esther's mother was present, and she too had the heavenly hope. Not only did my marriage provide me with a lovely and loy-

al companion but it gave me many hours of precious fellowship with my fine, spiritually-minded mother-in-law until she finished her earthly course in 2000.

After our wedding, Esther and I lived outside Bethel. While I continued to translate for Bethel, Esther served as a special pioneer in the suburbs of Paris. She was able to help several people to become servants of Jehovah. In 1964 we were invited to live at Bethel. Then in 1976, when Branch Committees were first formed, I was appointed as a member. Over the years, Esther has always given me her loving support.

"YOU WILL NOT ALWAYS HAVE ME"

I have had the privilege of periodically returning to world headquarters in New York. During those visits, I received good advice from different members of the Governing Body. For example, one time when I expressed my concern about meeting a certain deadline for work, Brother Knorr smiled and said: "Don't worry. Work!" Many times since then, when assignments pile up, instead of panicking, I set to work on one job after another and the work gets done, generally on time.

*Brother Knorr
smiled and said:
"Don't worry. Work!"*

Just before his death, Jesus told his disciples: "You will not always have me" with you. (Matt. 26:11) We other sheep are also aware that we will not always have Christ's anointed brothers among us on earth. I count it, therefore, an inestimable privilege to have been closely associated for over 70 years with many of the anointed—gratefully holding on to the skirt of a Jew.



JEHOVAH KNOWS HOW TO DELIVER HIS PEOPLE

"Jehovah knows how to deliver people of godly devotion out of trial."

—2 PET. 2:9.

WHY CAN WE BE CONFIDENT THAT JEHOVAH:

Knows the timing of events in the outworking of his purpose?

Will use his power to intervene in behalf of his people?

Knows how climactic events will unfold?

THE execution of God's judgment upon Satan's world will break out with striking suddenness. (1 Thess. 5:2, 3) As "the great day of Jehovah" unfolds, earthly society will descend into chaos. (Zeph. 1:14-17) Hardships and deprivations will be the order of the day. It will be a time of distress "such as has not occurred since the world's beginning until now."—*Read Matthew 24:21, 22.*

² As the "great tribulation" moves toward its climax, God's people will be the target of an all-out attack by "Gog of the land of Magog." During this attack, "a numerous military force" will come against God's people "like clouds to cover the land." (Ezek. 38:2, 14-16) No human agency will come to the defense of Jehovah's people. Their survival will depend on God alone. How will they react when staring extermination in the face?

³ If you are a servant of Jehovah, do you have faith that Jehovah can and will preserve his people alive through the great tribulation? The apostle Peter wrote: "Jehovah knows how to deliver people of godly devotion out of trial, but to reserve unrighteous people for the day of judgment to be cut off." (2 Pet. 2:9) Meditating on Jehovah's past acts of deliverance can fortify us for what lies ahead. Let us consider three examples that will instill in us confidence in Jehovah's ability to deliver his people.

SURVIVING A GLOBAL DELUGE

⁴ First, consider the account of the Flood of

1. What conditions will accompany the "great tribulation"?
- 2, 3. (a) What will God's people face during the "great tribulation"? (b) What can fortify us for what lies ahead?
4. Why was timing important in connection with the Flood?

Noah's day. For Jehovah's will to be accomplished, timing was important. The colossal task of building the ark had to be completed and the animals had to be safely loaded on board before the floodwaters fell. The Genesis account reveals that Jehovah did not have the ark built and then decide when to bring the floodwaters, as if he needed to keep the timing of the start of the Flood flexible in case the construction project ran behind schedule. Rather, long before he said anything to Noah about building an ark, God fixed the time for the Flood to begin. How do we know that?

⁵ The Bible tells us that Jehovah issued a decree in heaven. According to Genesis 6:3, he said: "My spirit shall not act toward man indefinitely in that he is also flesh. Accordingly his days shall amount to a hundred and twenty years." This was not a statement regarding the average human lifespan. It was a judicial decree in which Jehovah declared when he would act to cleanse the earth of ungodliness.* Since the Flood began in 2370 B.C.E., we infer that God made this pronouncement in 2490 B.C.E. At that time, Noah was 480 years old. (Gen. 7:6) Some 20 years later, in the year 2470 B.C.E., Noah's sons began to be born. (Gen. 5:32) About one hundred years remained before the Flood was to begin, but Jehovah had still not revealed to Noah the special role he would play in preserving the human family. How long would God wait before he told Noah?

* See *The Watchtower*, December 15, 2010, pages 30-31.

5. What did Jehovah declare in the pronouncement recorded at Genesis 6:3, and when was this decree issued?

⁶ Jehovah apparently waited decades before revealing to Noah what He was going to do. On what basis do we draw this conclusion? The inspired record indicates that Noah's sons were already grown and married when God commanded Noah to build the ark. Jehovah told him: "I do establish my covenant with you; and you must go into the ark, you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you." (Gen. 6:9-18) It is possible, therefore, that when Noah received the commission to build the ark, only 40 or 50 years remained before the Flood.

⁷ As the work of constructing the ark progressed, Noah and his family must have wondered how God would accomplish his purpose and when the Flood would begin. Yet, their lack of knowledge of these details did not stop them from getting the ark built. The Scriptural record states: "Noah proceeded to do according to all that God had commanded him. He did just so." (Gen. 6:22) Seven days before the floodwaters fell—just enough time for Noah and his family to load the animals into the ark—Jehovah finally told Noah exactly when the Flood would begin. Hence, when the floodgates of the heavens were opened "in the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month," everything was ready.—Gen. 7:1-5, 11.

⁸ The account of the Flood testifies to Jehovah's skill not only as a Timekeeper

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6. When did Jehovah command Noah to build the ark?
7. (a) How did Noah and his family demonstrate faith? (b) When did God finally tell Noah exactly when the Flood would begin?
8. How does the account of the Flood instill confidence that Jehovah knows when to deliver his people?

but also as a Deliverer. As he counts down to the end of the present system of things, we can be sure that everything Jehovah has purposed will take place at his appointed time, to the very "day and hour."—Matt. 24:36; *read Habakkuk 2:3.*

DELIVERED AT THE RED SEA

9 Thus far, we have seen that Jehovah is in full control of the timing of events in the outworking of his purpose. The second example that we will consider highlights yet another reason we can trust in Jehovah to deliver his people: He will use the unlimited power at his disposal to make sure that his will takes place. So certain is Jehovah's ability to deliver his servants that he at times has used them to lure his enemies into a trap. That was the case when he liberated the Israelites from Egyptian bondage.

9, 10. How did Jehovah use his people to lure the military forces of Egypt into a trap?

10 The Israelites who departed from Egypt may have numbered some three million people. Jehovah had Moses lead them in a way that caused Pharaoh to think that they were wandering in confusion. (*Read Exodus 14:1-4.*) Unable to resist the bait, Pharaoh led his military forces in pursuit of the former slaves, trapping them at the Red Sea. There seemed to be no way out. (Ex. 14:5-10) Actually, though, the Israelites were not in any danger. Why not? Because Jehovah was about to intervene in their behalf.

11 "The pillar of cloud" that was leading the Israelites moved to their rear, blocking the approach of Pharaoh's army and throwing them into darkness. For the Israelites, however, the pillar miraculously lit up the night. (*Read Exodus 14:19, 20.*) Jehovah then split the

11, 12. (a) How did Jehovah intervene in behalf of his people? (b) What was the outcome of God's intervention, and what does this account teach us about Jehovah?

Were the Israelites ever in any danger from Pharaoh's army?



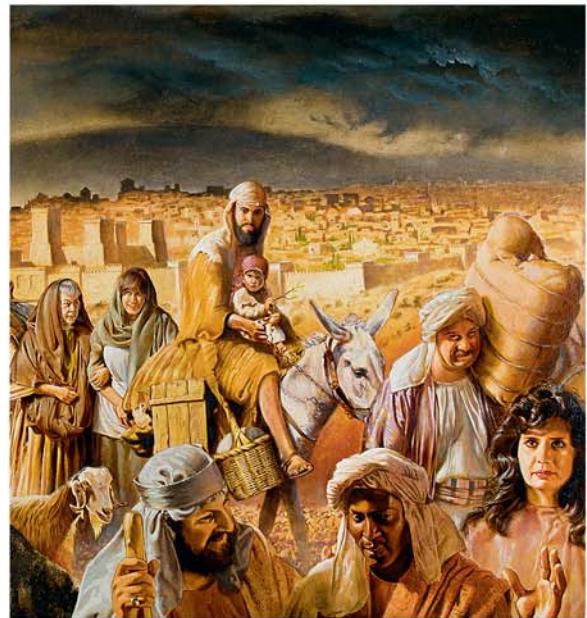
sea apart by means of a strong east wind, "converting the sea basin into dry ground." This no doubt took considerable time, for the account says: "*At length* the sons of Israel went through the midst of the sea on dry land." Compared with Pharaoh's military forces in their war chariots, the Israelites moved at a ponderous pace. Yet, there was no possibility that the Egyptians would overtake them, for Jehovah was fighting for Israel. "He went throwing the camp of the Egyptians into confusion. And he kept taking wheels off their chariots so that they were driving them with difficulty."—Ex. 14:21-25.

12 Once all Israel was safely ashore on the other side, Jehovah directed Moses: "Stretch your hand out over the sea, that the waters may come back over the Egyptians, their war chariots and their cavalrymen." As the soldiers tried to flee the onrushing waters, "Jehovah shook the Egyptians off into the midst of the sea." There was no escape. "Not so much as one among them was let remain." (Ex. 14:26-28) Jehovah thus showed that he has the power to deliver his people from any situation.

ESCAPING JERUSALEM'S DESTRUCTION

13 Jehovah knows exactly how events will unfold to fulfill his purpose. The importance of this is highlighted in the third example we will consider: the first-century siege of Jerusalem. By means of his Son, Jehovah provided instructions for survival to Christians who were living in Jerusalem and Judea prior to the city's destruction in 70 C.E. Jesus said: "When you catch sight of the disgusting

13. What instructions did Jesus give, and what might his followers have wondered?



thing that causes desolation, as spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in a holy place, . . . then let those in Judea begin fleeing to the mountains." (Matt. 24:15, 16) But how would Jesus' followers recognize when this prophecy was being fulfilled?

14 As events unfolded, the meaning of Jesus' words became clear. In 66 C.E., Roman armies under Cestius Gallus arrived in Jerusalem to quell a Jewish rebellion. When the Jewish rebels, known as the Zealots, sought refuge inside the temple fortress, Roman soldiers began to undermine the temple wall. For alert Christians, the meaning was plain to see: A pagan army with its idolatrous standards ("the disgusting thing") got as far as the temple wall ("a holy place"). It was time for Jesus' followers to "begin fleeing to the mountains." But how would they get out of a city that was under siege? Events were about to take an unexpected turn.

14. How did the unfolding of events make the meaning of Jesus' instructions clear?

15 For no apparent reason, Cestius Gallus and his troops withdrew from Jerusalem and began retreating. The Zealots gave chase. With the warring parties away, Jesus' followers suddenly had an opportunity to flee. Jesus had specifically instructed them to leave their material possessions behind and depart without delay. (*Read Matthew 24:17, 18.*) Was prompt action really necessary? The answer soon became clear. Within days, the Zealots returned and began forcing the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judea to join the rebellion. Conditions within the city rapidly deteriorated as rival Jewish factions struggled for control. Flight became increasingly difficult. When the Romans returned in 70 C.E., flight became impossible. (Luke 19:43) Any who had lingered were trapped! For the Christians who had fled to the mountains, heeding Jesus' instructions meant saving their lives. They saw firsthand that Jehovah knows how to deliver his people. What lesson can we learn from this account?

16 As events unfold during the great tribulation, Christians will need to heed instructions from God's Word and organization. For example, Jesus' command to "begin fleeing to the mountains" has a modern-day application. Just what form our flight will take remains to be seen.* However, we can be sure that Jehovah will make clear the meaning of those instructions when the time comes for us to follow them. Since our deliverance will depend on obedience, we do

* See *The Watchtower*, May 1, 1999, page 19.

15, 16. (a) What specific instruction did Jesus give, and why was it vital that his followers obey it? (b) On what will our deliverance depend?

well to ask ourselves: 'How do I respond to instructions that Jehovah provides for his people now? Am I quick to respond, or do I hesitate to obey?'—Jas. 3:17.

FORTIFIED FOR WHAT LIES AHEAD

17 Let us now return to the all-out attack by Gog mentioned at the outset. In a related prophecy, Habakkuk said: "I heard, and my belly began to be agitated; at the sound my lips quivered; rottenness began to enter into my bones; and in my situation I was agitated, that I should quietly wait for the day of distress, for his [God's] coming up to the people [the menacing armies], that he may raid them." (Hab. 3:16) Just hearing the report of the coming attack against God's people caused the prophet's stomach to churn, his lips to tremble, and his strength to fail. Habakkuk's reaction indicates how dire our predicament will seem to be when Gog's hordes come storming against us. Yet, the prophet was willing to wait quietly for Jehovah's great day, trusting that Jehovah would deliver his people. We can have the same confidence.—Hab. 3:18, 19.

18 The three examples that we have considered demonstrate without question that Jehovah knows how to deliver his people. His purpose cannot fail; victory is certain. To share in that glorious triumph, however, we must remain faithful to the end. How does Jehovah help us to maintain our integrity now? That is the subject of the next article.

17. What does Habakkuk's prophecy reveal about the coming attack on God's people?

18. (a) Why do we have reason not to fear the coming attack? (b) What will we consider next?



JEHOVAH SAFEGUARDS US FOR SALVATION

"You . . . are being safeguarded by God's power through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last period of time."

—1 PET. 1:4, 5.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

How did Jehovah draw us to true worship?

How can we allow Jehovah to lead us with his counsel?

How does Jehovah provide us with encouragement?

HE THAT has endured to the end is the one that will be saved." (Matt. 24:13) With those words, Jesus made it clear that for us to be preserved alive when God executes judgment on Satan's world, we must maintain our integrity to the end. But this does not mean that Jehovah expects us to endure in our own wisdom or strength. The Bible assures us: "God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear, but along with the temptation he will also make the way out in order for you to be able to endure it." (1 Cor. 10:13) What do those words imply?

2 For Jehovah to make sure that we are not tempted beyond what we can bear, he has to know everything about us, including the challenges we face, our individual makeup, and just how much we can take. Does God really know us that well? Yes. The Scriptures reveal that Jehovah knows each of us intimately. He is familiar with our daily routine and habits. He can even discern our thoughts and the intentions of our heart.—*Read Psalm 139:1-6.*

3 Does it seem farfetched that God would take such an interest in lowly humans? The psalmist David pondered this question, saying to Jehovah: "When I see your heavens, the works of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have prepared, what is mortal man that you keep him in mind?" (Ps. 8:3, 4) Perhaps this question was prompted by

1, 2. (a) What assurance do we have that God will help us to keep our integrity? (b) How well does Jehovah know each of us?

3, 4. (a) How does David's experience indicate that Jehovah pays attention to individuals? (b) What remarkable work is Jehovah accomplishing today?

David's own experience. In him, the youngest son of Jesse, Jehovah had found "a man agreeable to his heart" and had taken him "from following the flock to become a leader" over Israel. (1 Sam. 13:14; 2 Sam. 7:8) Imagine how David must have felt upon realizing that the Creator of the universe had paid attention to his private meditations, the musings of a shepherd boy!

4 It is no less astonishing to contemplate the remarkable personal interest that Jehovah is showing in us today. He is collecting together in true worship "the desirable things of all the nations," and he is helping his servants to maintain their integrity. (Hag. 2:7) To understand better how Jehovah helps us to keep our integrity, let us reflect on how he draws people to true worship in the first place.

DRAWN BY GOD

5 Jesus said: "No man can come to me unless the Father, who sent me, draws him." (John 6:44) Those words imply that to become a disciple of Christ, we must have God's help. How does Jehovah draw sheeplike ones to his Son? Through the preaching of the good news and the operation of holy spirit. For example, when Paul and his missionary companions were in Philippi, they met a woman named Lydia and began sharing the good news with her. The inspired record states: "Jehovah opened her heart wide to pay attention to the things being spoken by Paul." Yes, God provided his spirit to help her get the sense of the message, with the result that she and her household got baptized.—Acts 16:13-15.

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5. How does Jehovah draw people to his Son? Illustrate.

6 Was Lydia's experience unique? By no means. If you are a dedicated Christian, you too were drawn by God to true worship. Just as our heavenly Father saw something valuable in the heart of Lydia, he saw something good in you. When you began listening to the good news, Jehovah helped you to grasp it by supplying holy spirit. (1 Cor. 2:11, 12) When you endeavored to apply what you learned, he blessed your efforts to do his will. When you dedicated your life to him, his heart rejoiced. Indeed, ever since you started on the road to life, Jehovah has been with you each step of the way.

7 Having helped us to begin walking with him, Jehovah does not now leave us to our own devices to remain faithful. He knows that just as we did not come into the truth on our own, we will not stay in the truth on our own. Writing to anointed Christians, the apostle Peter said: "You . . . are being safeguarded by God's power through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last period of time." (1 Pet. 1:4, 5) Those words

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6. How were all of us drawn by God to true worship?
 7. How do we know that God will help us to remain faithful?
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You too have been drawn by Jehovah



apply in principle to all Christians and should be of interest to each of us today. Why? Because we all need God's help to remain faithful to him.

RESTRAINED FROM TAKING A FALSE STEP

8 The pressures of life and our own imperfections could cause us to lose our spiritual focus and put us in danger of taking a false step without our even being aware of it. (*Read Galatians 6:1.*) This is illustrated by an incident that took place in the life of David.

9 While being hunted by King Saul, David had shown admirable restraint in not retaliating against that jealous monarch. (1 Sam. 24:2-7) But soon thereafter, David's imperfect impulses got the better of him. He was in need of provisions for his men and respectfully asked for assistance from a fellow Israelite named Nabal. When Nabal responded with insults, David became enraged and set out to avenge himself on the men of Nabal's entire household, failing to discern that killing innocent people would make him bloodguilty before God. Only the timely intervention of Abigail, Nabal's wife, saved David from making a calamitous mistake. Recognizing Jehovah's hand in the matter, David said to her: "Blessed be Jehovah the God of Israel, who has sent you this day to meet me! And blessed be your sensibleness, and blessed be you who have restrained me this day from entering into blood-guilt and having my own hand come to my salvation."—1 Sam. 25:9-13, 21, 22, 32, 33.

8. Why do we need to beware of taking a false step?

9, 10. How did Jehovah restrain David from taking a false step, and what does He do for us today?

10 What lesson can we learn from this account? Jehovah used Abigail to restrain David from taking a false step. He does much the same for us today. Of course, we should not expect that God will send someone to intervene whenever we are about to make a mistake; nor can we presume to know precisely how God will act in any given situation or what he will allow in the outworking of his purpose. (Eccl. 11:5) Nonetheless, we can be confident that Jehovah is always aware of our circumstances and will help us to remain faithful to him. He assures us: "I shall make you have insight and instruct you in the way you should go. I will give advice with my eye upon you." (Ps. 32:8) How does Jehovah give us advice? How can we benefit from it? And why can we be sure that Jehovah is leading his people today? Note how those questions are answered in the book of Revelation.

SAFEGUARDED BY COUNSEL

11 In the vision recorded in Revelation chapters 2 and 3, the glorified Jesus Christ inspects the seven congregations of Asia Minor. The vision reveals that Christ sees not just general trends but specific situations. In some instances, he even mentions individuals, and in each case, he gives appropriate commendation or counsel. What does this indicate? In the fulfillment of the vision, the seven congregations represent anointed Christians after 1914, and the counsel given to the seven congregations applies in principle to all the congregations of God's people today earth wide. Thus, it is safe to conclude that Jehovah by means of his Son is actively leading his people. How can we benefit from that guidance?

11. To what extent is Jehovah aware of what is taking place in the congregations of his people?



We are safeguarded by applying God's counsel

12 One way we can benefit from Jehovah's loving direction is through personal study. By means of the publications of the faithful and discreet slave class, Jehovah provides a wealth of Scriptural counsel. (Matt. 24:45) To benefit from it, however, we must take the time to study it and apply what we learn. Personal study is one means by which Jehovah can "guard [us] from stumbling." (Jude 24) Have you ever studied something in our literature that seems to have been written just for you? Accept the correction as coming from Jehovah. Just as a friend might tap you on the shoulder to bring something to your attention, Jehovah can use his spirit to draw your attention to an aspect of your conduct or personality that you—and no doubt many others like you—need to improve. By being sensitive to the leadings of the spirit, we allow Jehovah to guide our steps. (*Read Psalm 139:23, 24.*) In this regard, we do well to examine our study habits.

13 Excessive time spent on entertainment can rob us of time needed for per-

12. How can we allow Jehovah to guide our steps?

13. Why would it be wise for us to examine our study habits?

sonal study. One brother observes: "It is so easy to let personal study slip. Entertainment is more available now than ever before, and it is less expensive than ever before. It is available on TV, on the computer, and on the phone. We are surrounded by it." Unless we are careful, time needed for in-depth personal study can gradually diminish until it all but disappears. (Eph. 5:15-17) Each of us does well to ask: 'How often do I take time to dig deeper in my study of God's Word? Is it only when I have a talk or a meeting part to prepare?' If so, perhaps we could make better use of the evening set aside for family worship or personal study to treasure up the spiritual wisdom that Jehovah provides to safeguard us for salvation.—Prov. 2:1-5.

SUSTAINED BY ENCOURAGEMENT

14 David faced many distressing circumstances in his life. (1 Sam. 30:3-6) His inspired words reveal that Jehovah knew his feelings. (*Read Psalm 34:18; 56:8.*) God knows our feelings as well. When we are "broken at heart" or "crushed in spirit," he draws near to us. This in itself may give us a measure of comfort, as it did David, who sang: "I will be joyful and rejoice in your loving-kindness, in that you have seen my affliction; you have known about the distresses of my soul." (Ps. 31:7) But Jehovah does more than just notice our distress. He sustains us by providing comfort and encouragement. One way he does this is by means of Christian meetings.

15 One benefit of attending meetings is illustrated by the experience of the

14. How do the Scriptures show that Jehovah pays attention to our feelings?

15. What lesson can we learn from Asaph's experience?

psalmist Asaph. Dwelling on injustices caused Asaph to question the value of serving God. Asaph grew discouraged. He described his feelings this way: "My heart was soured and in my kidneys I was sharply pained." As a result, he almost stopped serving Jehovah. What helped Asaph to regain his balance? "I proceeded to come into the grand sanctuary of God," he said. There, among fellow worshippers of Jehovah, he regained the proper perspective. He saw that the success of the wicked was only temporary, that Jehovah would without fail set matters right. (Ps. 73:2, 13-22) It is similar with us. The stress of dealing with the injustices of Satan's world can wear us down. Meeting together with our brothers refreshes us and helps us retain our joy in serving Jehovah.

16 What, though, if a situation in the congregation makes it difficult for you to attend meetings? Perhaps you have had to relinquish a privilege of service and are embarrassed, or you have had a difference of opinion with a brother or sis-

16. How can we benefit from the example of Hannah?

We are sustained by the encouragement we receive



ter. If so, you may find the example of Hannah helpful. (*Read 1 Samuel 1:4-8*) Recall that she was sorely vexed over a family situation involving her rival wife, Peninnah. The situation became especially acute each year when the family went to offer sacrifices to Jehovah at Shiloh. It was so distressing to Hannah that "she would weep and not eat." Yet, she did not allow this to keep her away from occasions for worshipping Jehovah. Jehovah took notice of her faithfulness and blessed her.—1 Sam. 1:11, 20.

17 Christians today have good reason for imitating Hannah's example. We need to be faithful in attending meetings. As we all have experienced, meetings provide vital encouragement. (Heb. 10:24, 25) The warmth of Christian fellowship comforts us. A simple expression made in a talk or comment may touch our heart. In conversation before or after a meeting, a fellow believer may give us a listening ear or share consoling words. (Prov. 15:23; 17:17) As we raise our voices in song to Jehovah, our spirits are uplifted. Especially when we are beset by "disquieting thoughts" do we need the encouragement that we receive at meetings, where Jehovah sustains us with his "own consolations" and supports us in our determination to remain faithful.—Ps. 94:18, 19.

18 Secure in our God's tender care, we feel as did the psalmist Asaph, who sang to Jehovah: "You have taken hold of my right hand. With your counsel you will lead me." (Ps. 73:23, 24) How grateful we are that Jehovah safeguards us for salvation!

17, 18. (a) In what ways do we receive encouragement at congregation meetings? (b) How do you feel about the tender care Jehovah provides to help us attain salvation?

DO YOU REMEMBER?

Have you carefully read the recent issues of *The Watchtower*?

See if you can answer the following questions:

In what sense can Solomon be a warning example for us?

God blessed and used King Solomon. During his rule, however, Solomon deviated from divine counsel. He wed Pharaoh's pagan daughter, he took many wives, and he allowed pagan women gradually to lead him into false worship. We need to avoid gradually developing wrong attitudes or tendencies. (Deut. 7:1-4; 17:17; 1 Ki. 11:4-8)—12/15, pages 10-12.

Why can we view Sarah as a godly woman and a precious wife?

When God commanded Abraham to leave Ur, it meant leaving family, friends, and a way of life for a destination unknown. Yet Sarah cooperated, trusting that God would bless her. She respected Abraham, displaying beautiful qualities.—1/1, page 8.

Why did Jehovah ask Abraham to sacrifice his beloved son?

It is important to remember that God did not actually allow Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. This drama was a pattern of how God would, at great cost to himself, sacrifice his Son, Jesus.—1/1, page 23.

What indicates that from the first century onward, there have always been some genuine anointed Christians on the earth?

In Jesus' parable about "the wheat" and "the weeds," "the fine seed" meant "the sons of the kingdom." (Matt. 13:24-30, 38) The weeds would grow alongside the wheat until the harvest. Thus, although we cannot say for certain who were of the wheat class, there must always have been some down to our time.—1/15, page 7.

What events will lead directly to Armageddon?

The nations will issue a significant declaration of "Peace and security!" (1 Thess. 5:3) Governments will move against false religion. (Rev. 17:15-18) There will be an assault on true worshippers. Then the end will come.—2/1, page 9.

How can we work to overcome a tendency to envy?

Steps that can help us are as follows: Strive to develop love and brotherly affection, associate with godly people, seek to do good, 'rejoice with those who rejoice.' (Rom. 12:15)—2/15, pages 16-17.

Who speak the Nahuatl language, and what is being done for them?

It was the language of the ancient Aztecs, and it is still spoken by 1.5 million people in Mexico. Witnesses are preaching in Nahuatl, and some of our literature is available in it.—3/1, pages 13-14.

When giving advice, what principles should we keep in mind?

Discern the real situation involved. Avoid responding hastily. Humbly apply God's Word. If possible, make use of a theocratic library. Avoid making decisions for others.—3/15, pages 7-9.

Jesus urged his listeners to go the second mile. (Matt. 5:41) What was his point?

At that time in Israel, the occupying Romans might press a man into service. In urging his listeners to go the second mile, Jesus meant that without resentment they were to perform services that those in authority might legitimately demand.—4/1, page 9.