

THE WATCHTOWER

JUNE 1, 2000

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



What Is a Christian?



THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

June 1, 2000

Average Printing Each Issue: 22,398,000

Vol. 121, No. 11

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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Publication of *The Watchtower* is part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations.

The Bible translation used is the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References*, unless otherwise indicated.

The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) is published semimonthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; Milton G. Henschel, President; Lyman A. Swingle, Secretary-Treasurer; 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483. Periodicals Postage Paid at Brooklyn, NY, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Watchtower, Wallkill, NY 12589.

Changes of address should reach us 30 days before your moving date.
Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label).

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Semimonthly

ENGLISH

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Is the Word “Christian” Losing Its Meaning?



WHAT does it mean to be a Christian? How would you answer? A random selection of people in different countries were asked just that question, and here is a sampling of their responses:

“To follow Jesus and copy him.”

“To be a good person and to share with others.”

“To accept Christ as Lord and Savior.”

“To go to Mass, say the Rosary, and receive Holy Communion.”

“I don’t believe you have to go to church to be a Christian.”

Even dictionaries offer a bewildering array of definitions. One work, in fact, has ten entries under the word “Christian,” ranging from “believing in or belonging to the religion of Jesus Christ” to “a decent or presentable person.” It is not surprising that many find it difficult to explain what it means to be a Christian.

A Liberalizing Trend

Today, among professed Christians—even among those sharing the same pews—one can find a wide range of views on such subjects as the divine inspiration of the Bible, the theory of evolution, church involvement in politics, and the sharing of one’s faith with others. Moral issues, on topics such as abortion, homosexuality, and couples living together with-

out being married, often become a hotbed of controversy. The unmistakable trend is liberalization.

One Protestant church tribunal, for instance, recently voted to uphold the right of a church “to elect an openly gay elder to its governing board,” reports the journal *Christian Century*. Certain theologians have even proffered the view that faith in Jesus is not crucial to salvation. They believe that Jews, Muslims, and others “may be as likely to enter heaven [as Christians are],” says a report in *The New York Times*.

Imagine if you can, a Marxist advocating capitalism or a democrat promoting dictatorship or an environmentalist supporting deforestation. “That person could not really be a Marxist or a democrat or an environmentalist,” you say—and you would be right. Yet, when you consider the diversity of views held by today’s professed Christians, you see beliefs that are poles apart and that frequently contradict what the Founder of Christianity, Jesus Christ, taught. What does that say of their brand of Christianity?—1 Corinthians 1:10.

The urge to change Christian teachings to suit the spirit of the age has a long history, as we shall see. How do God and Jesus Christ feel about such changes? Can the churches that sponsor teachings that are not rooted in Christ rightly call themselves Christian? These questions will be considered in the next article.

The Changing Face of “Christianity”



Third from left: United Nations/Photo by Saw L

Acceptable to God?

SUPPOSE you commission an artist to do a portrait of you. When he is finished, you are thrilled; the likeness is perfect. You think of your children, grandchildren, and their grandchildren looking at the portrait with great pride.

Some generations later, however, one of your descendants feels that the receded hairline in the portrait is unflattering, so he has hair added. Another dislikes the shape of the nose, so he has that changed. Other “improvements” follow with succeeding generations, so that eventually the portrait bears little resemblance to you. If you knew this were to happen, how would you feel? No doubt indignant.

Sadly, the story of this portrait is, in essence, the story of the nominal Christian church. History shows that soon after the death of Christ’s apostles, the official face of “Christianity” began to change, just as the Bible foretold.—Matthew 13:24-30, 37-43; Acts 20:30.*

Of course, it is quite proper to apply Bi-

ble principles to various cultures and ages. It is an entirely different matter to change Bible teachings to suit popular thinking. Yet, that is precisely what has happened. Consider, for example, the changes that have been made in a number of important areas.

The Church Embraces the State

Jesus taught that his rulership, or Kingdom, is a heavenly one that would, in due time, destroy all human rulerships and rule over the entire earth. (Daniel 2:44; Matthew 6:9, 10) It would not rule through human political systems. “My kingdom is no part of this world,” Jesus said. (John 17:16; 18:36) Thus, Jesus’ disciples, while law-abiding, stayed out of politics.

However, by the time of Roman Emperor Constantine in the fourth century, many professed Christians had become impatient waiting for Christ’s return and for the establishment of God’s Kingdom. Gradually, their attitude toward politics changed. “Prior to Constantine,” says the book *Europe—A History*, “Christians had not sought to assume [political] power as a means of furthering their cause. After Constantine, Christianity and high politics went hand in hand.” The refashioned Christianity became the official “universal,” or “catholic,” religion of the Roman Empire.

* As Jesus revealed in the parable of the wheat and the weeds and in his illustration of the broad and the cramped roads (Matthew 7:13, 14), true Christianity would continue to be practiced by a few down through the ages. However, they would be overshadowed by a weedlike majority, who would promote themselves and their teachings as the true face of Christianity. This is the face to which our article refers.

The encyclopedia *Great Ages of Man* states that because of this Church-State marriage, "by A.D. 385, only 80 years after the last great wave of persecution of Christians, the Church itself was beginning to execute heretics, and its clerics were wielding power almost equivalent to that of the emperors." Thus began an era wherein the sword eclipsed persuasion as the means of conversion, and the titled, power-grasping clergy replaced the humble preachers of the first century. (Matthew 23:9, 10; 28:19, 20) Historian H. G. Wells wrote of "the profound differences between" fourth-century Christianity "and the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth." These "profound differences" even affected fundamental teachings about God and Christ.

Recasting God

Christ and his disciples taught that there is only "one God the Father," distinguished by his personal name, Jehovah, which appears some 7,000 times in early Bible manuscripts. (1 Corinthians 8:6; Psalm 83:18) Jesus was created by God; he is "the firstborn of every creature," says the Catholic Douay Version of the Bible at Colossians 1:15. Thus, as a created being, Jesus frankly stated: "The Father is greater than I am."—John 14:28.

But by the third century, certain influential clerics, enamored of the trinitarian teaching of pagan Greek philosopher Plato, began recasting God to fit the Trinitarian formula. In the following centuries, this doctrine unscripturally elevated Jesus to equality with Jehovah and made God's holy spirit, or active force, into a person.

Concerning the church's adoption of the pagan concept of the Trinity, the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* says: "The formulation 'one God in three Persons' was not solidly established, certainly not fully assimilated into Christian life and its profession of faith, prior to the end of the 4th century. But it is precisely this formulation that has first claim to the

title *the Trinitarian dogma*. Among the Apostolic Fathers, there had been nothing even remotely approaching such a mentality or perspective."

Similarly, *The Encyclopedia Americana* says: "Fourth century Trinitarianism did not reflect accurately early Christian teaching regarding the nature of God; it was, on the contrary, a deviation from this teaching." *The Oxford Companion to the Bible* calls the Trinity one of a number of "later creedal formulations." Yet, the Trinity was not the only pagan concept assimilated into the church.

Refashioning the Soul

It is commonly believed today that humans have an immortal soul that survives the death of the body. But did you know that this church teaching was also a later addition? Jesus affirmed the Biblical truth that the dead "are conscious of nothing at all," that they are asleep, as it were. (Ecclesiastes 9:5; John 11:11-13) Life would be restored by means of a resurrection—"a standing up again" from the sleep of death. (John 5:28, 29) An immortal soul, if it existed, would need no resurrection, since immortality precludes death.

Jesus even demonstrated the Biblical teaching of the resurrection by raising people from the dead. Take the example of Lazarus, who was dead for four days. When Jesus resurrected him, Lazarus came out from the tomb a living, breathing human. No immortal soul slipped back from heavenly bliss into his body when Lazarus awoke from the dead. If that were the case, Jesus would hardly have done him a favor by resurrecting him!—John 11:39, 43, 44.

What, then, is the source of the immortal-soul theory? *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology* says that the concept "owes more to Greek philosophy than to biblical revelation." *The Jewish Encyclopedia* explains: "The belief that the soul continues its existence after the dissolution of the body is

a matter of philosophical or theological speculation rather than of simple faith, and is accordingly nowhere expressly taught in Holy Scripture."

Often, one falsehood leads to another, and that is true of the immortal-soul teaching. It opened the way for the pagan notion of eternal torment in a fiery hell.* Yet, the Bible plainly states that "the wages sin pays is death"—not eternal torment. (Romans 6:23) Thus, describing the resurrection, the *King James Version* states: "The sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them." Likewise, the *Douay* Bible says that "the sea . . . and death and hell gave up their dead." Yes, simply put, those in hell are *dead*, 'asleep,' as Jesus said.—Revelation 20:13.

Do you sincerely believe that the teaching of eternal damnation in hell draws people to God? Hardly. In the minds of just and loving people, it is a repelling thought! The Bible, on the other hand, teaches that "God is love" and that cruelty, even to animals, is abhorrent to him.—1 John 4:8; Proverbs 12:10; Jeremiah 7:31; Jonah 4:11.

Disfiguring the "Portrait" in Modern Times

The disfiguring of God and Christianity continues today. A professor of religion recently described the struggle in his Protestant church as one "over the authority of Scripture and creed versus the authority of alien and humanistic ideologies, between the church's faithfulness to the lordship of Christ versus an accommodation and reformulation of Christianity to the spirit of the age. The issue at stake is this: Who sets the agenda for the

* "Hell" is a translation of the Hebrew word *Sheol* and the Greek word *Hades*, both of which simply mean "the grave." Thus, while the English translators of the *King James Version* translated *Sheol* 31 times as "hell," they also rendered it 31 times as "grave" and 3 times as "pit," thereby showing that these terms mean basically the same thing.

church . . . Holy Scripture or the dominant ideology of the day?"

Sadly, "the dominant ideology of the day" still tends to win out. It is no secret, for instance, that many churches have changed their stand on various issues so as to appear progressive and open-minded. Especially in moral matters, the churches have become quite liberal, as mentioned in the opening article. Yet, the Bible leaves no doubt that fornication, adultery, and homosexuality are gross sins in the eyes of God and that those practicing such sins "will not inherit God's kingdom."—1 Corinthians 6:9, 10; Matthew 5:27-32; Romans 1:26, 27.

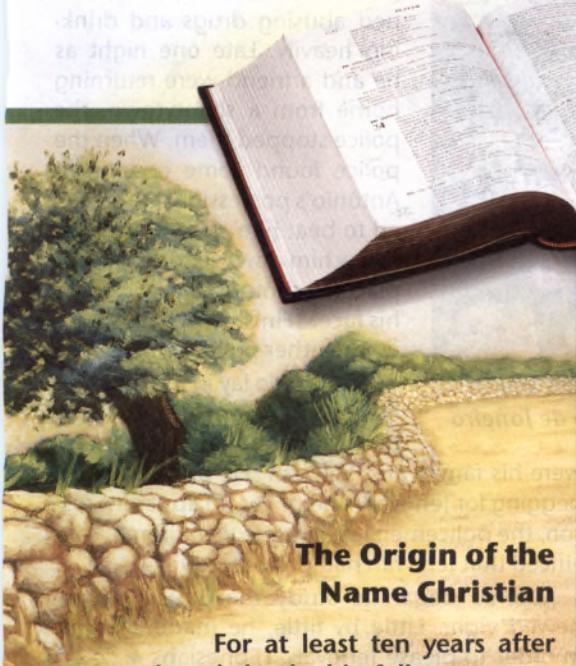
When the apostle Paul wrote the above-quoted words, the Greco-Roman world around him was rife with all forms of wickedness. Paul could have reasoned: 'Yes, God reduced Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes for gross sexual sins, but that was 2,000 years ago! Surely it does not apply in this enlightened age.' However, he did not rationalize; he refused to corrupt Bible truth.—Galatians 5:19-23.

Look to the Original "Portrait"

Speaking to the Jewish religious leaders of his day, Jesus said that their worship was 'in vain because they taught commands of men as doctrines.' (Matthew 15:9) Those clerics did the very same thing to Jehovah's Law through Moses that the clergy of Christendom did, and still do, to Christ's teaching—they splashed the "paint" of tradition over divine truth. But Jesus stripped away all falsehoods for the benefit of honesthearted people. (Mark 7:7-13) Jesus spoke the truth, whether it was popular or not. God's Word was always his authority.—John 17:17.

What a contrast Jesus presents to most professed Christians! Indeed, the Bible predicted: "People will be avid for the latest novelty and collect . . . teachers according to their own

tastes; and then, instead of listening to the truth, they will turn to myths." (2 Timothy 4:3, 4, *The Jerusalem Bible*) These "myths," of which we have considered a few, are spiritually destructive, whereas the truth of God's Word builds up, and it leads to everlasting life. This is the truth that Jehovah's Witnesses encourage you to examine.—John 4:24; 8:32; 17:3.

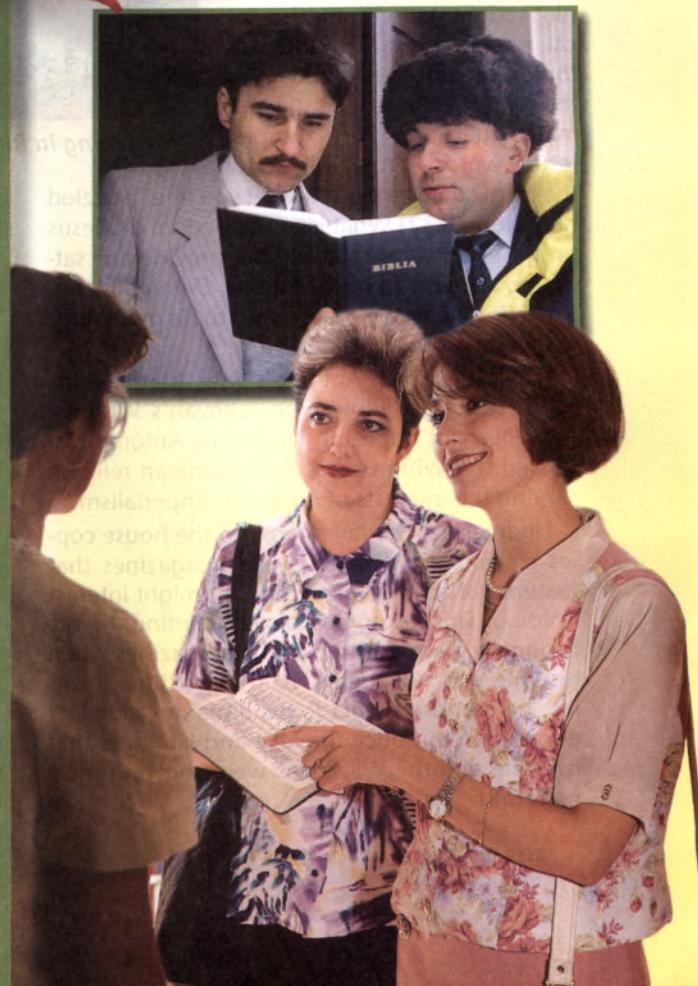


The Origin of the Name Christian

For at least ten years after Jesus' death, his followers were known as belonging to "The Way." (Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4) Why? Because their way of life was centered around faith in Jesus Christ, who is "the way and the truth and the life." (John 14:6) Then, sometime after 44 C.E., in Syrian Antioch, disciples of Jesus "were by divine providence called Christians." (Acts 11:26) This name quickly gained currency, even among public officials. (Acts 26:28) The new name did not alter the Christian way of life, which continued to be modeled on that of Christ.—1 Peter 2:21.



By their public ministry, Jehovah's Witnesses direct people to God's Word, the Bible



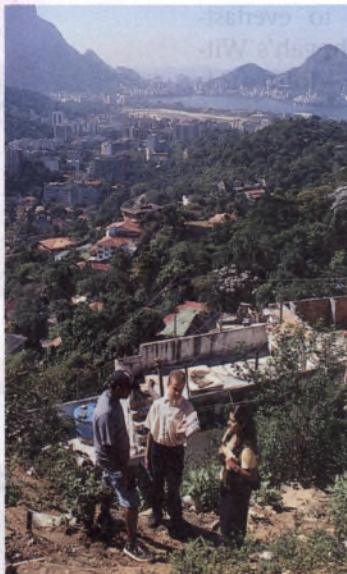
Getting to Know the Loving God

AT AGE 16, a Brazilian named Antônio was already disillusioned with life. Feelings of futility led him to drug abuse and alcoholism. He frequently thought about committing suicide. It was at these moments that he remembered what his mother had told him: "God is love." (1 John 4:8) But where was this loving God?

In an attempt to recover from his substance abuse, Antônio sought help from the local parish priest. Though Antônio became very active in the Catholic Church, he still had many questions. For example, Jesus' words, "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" puzzled him. (John 8:32) What kind of freedom did Jesus promise? The church could not provide any satisfying answers to his questions. Eventually, Antônio drifted away and reverted to his old habits. In fact, his addictions got worse.

About this time, Antônio's wife, Maria, started to study the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses. While not opposing her study, Antônio dismissed the Witnesses as "an American religion serving the interests of American imperialism."

Undeterred, Maria left around the house copies of *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines that featured articles that she thought might interest Antônio. Since Antônio enjoyed reading, he occasionally glanced through the magazines when his wife was not there. For the first time in his life, he found answers to his Bible questions. "I also began to notice the love and kindness that my wife and the Witnesses were showing me," he recalls.



Preaching in Rio de Janeiro

By mid-1992, Antônio decided that he too would like to study the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses. However, he continued abusing drugs and drinking heavily. Late one night as he and a friend were returning home from a shantytown, the police stopped them. When the police found some cocaine in Antônio's possession, they started to beat him. One policeman threw him down in the mud and placed a shotgun barrel close to his face. "Finish him off!" shouted the other policemen.

As Antônio lay in the mud, his life passed before him. The only good things he could remember were his family and Jehovah. He prayed briefly, begging for Jehovah's help. For no apparent reason, the policemen left him. He went home, convinced that Jehovah had protected him.

Antônio began to study the Bible with renewed vigor. Little by little, he made changes in order to please Jehovah. (Ephesians 4:22-24) By cultivating self-control, he began to deal with his drug problems. Even so, he needed medical help. Two months in a rehabilitation clinic gave him the opportunity to read several Bible publications, including the book *Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life*. Antônio then shared what he had learned from these books with other patients.

After Antônio left the clinic, he continued his study of the Bible with the Witnesses. Today, Antônio, Maria, their two daughters, and Antônio's mother serve Jehovah together as a happy and united family. Says Antônio: "Now I understand the true meaning of the words 'God is love.'"



KEEP YOUR “HOPE OF SALVATION” BRIGHT!

“Have on . . . as a helmet the hope of salvation.”—1 THESSALONIANS 5:8.

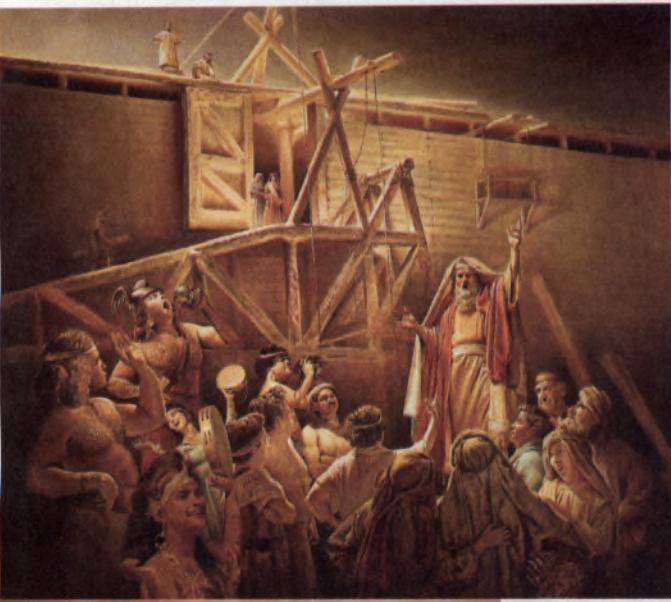
THE hope of being saved can help a person to hold on even in the direst of circumstances. A shipwreck victim afloat in a life raft can endure much longer if he knows that help is on the way. Similarly, for thousands of years, hope in “the salvation of Jehovah” has sustained men and women of faith in times of trouble, and this hope has never led to disappointment. (Exodus 14:13; Psalm 3:8; Romans 5:5; 9:33) The apostle Paul likened “the hope of salvation” to “the helmet” of a Christian’s

spiritual armor. (1 Thessalonians 5:8; Ephesians 6:17) Yes, our being confident that God will save us protects our thinking faculties, helping us to keep our senses despite adversity, opposition, and temptation.

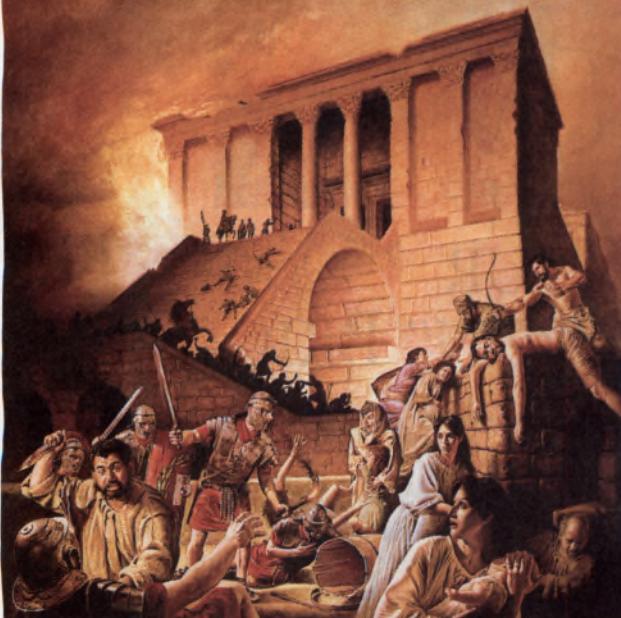
2 “Hope respecting the future was not a characteristic of the pagan world,” the world surrounding the first-century Christians, states *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. (Ephesians 2:12; 1 Thessalonians 4:13) Yet, “the hope of salvation” is a basic element of

1. How does “the hope of salvation” help in endurance?

2. In what ways is “the hope of salvation” basic to true worship?



true worship. How so? First, the salvation of Jehovah's servants is tied in with his own name. The psalmist Asaph prayed: "Help us, O God of our salvation, for the sake of the glory of your name; and deliver us." (Psalm 79:9; Ezekiel 20:9) Moreover, having confidence in Jehovah's promised blessings is essential to having a good relationship with him. Paul put it this way: "Without faith it is impossible to please him well, for he that approaches God must believe that he is and that he becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him." (Hebrews 11:6) Furthermore, Paul explained that the salvation of repentant ones was a key reason for Jesus' coming to earth. He declared: "Faithful and deserving of full acceptance is the saying that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." (1 Timothy 1:15) And the apostle Peter referred to salvation as 'the end [or, end result] of our faith.' (1 Peter 1:9) Clearly, it is proper to hope for salvation. But what really is salvation? And what is required to attain it?



Salvation means more than just deliverance from destruction

What Is Salvation?

³ In the Hebrew Scriptures, "salvation" usually means rescue or deliverance from oppression or from a violent,

3. What sort of salvation did Jehovah's servants of ancient times experience?



untimely death. For instance, calling Jehovah "the Provider of escape," David said: "My God is my rock. . . . My place for flight, my Savior; from violence you save me. On the One to be praised, Jehovah, I shall call, and from my enemies I shall be saved." (2 Samuel 22:2-4) David knew that Jehovah listens when His faithful servants cry for help.—Psalm 31:22, 23; 145:19.

⁴ Pre-Christian servants of Jehovah also entertained the hope of a future life. (Job 14:13-15; Isaiah 25:8; Daniel 12:13) In fact, many of the promises of rescue found in the Hebrew Scriptures were prophetic of a greater salvation—one leading to everlasting life. (Isaiah 49:6, 8; Acts 13:47; 2 Corinthians 6:2) In Jesus' day, many Jews hoped for everlasting life, but they refused to accept Jesus as the key to realizing their hope. Jesus told the religious leaders of his time: "You are searching the Scriptures, because you think that by means of them you will have everlasting life; and these are the very ones that bear witness about me."—John 5:39.

⁵ Through Jesus, God revealed the full scope of the meaning of salvation. It includes release from the rulership of sin, from bondage to false religion, from the world under Satan's control, from the fear of man, and even from the fear of death. (John 17:16; Romans 8:2; Colossians 1:13; Revelation 18:2, 4) Ultimately, for God's faithful servants, salvation by God means not only deliverance from oppression and distress but also the opportunity to have everlasting life. (John 6:40; 17:3) Jesus taught that for a "little flock," salvation means their being resurrected to heavenly life to share with Christ in Kingdom rule. (Luke 12:32) For the rest of mankind, salvation means a restoration to the perfect life and relationship with God that Adam and Eve enjoyed in the garden of Eden before they sinned. (Acts 3:21; Eph-

4. What hope for future life did pre-Christian servants of Jehovah entertain?

5. What does salvation ultimately mean?

sians 1:10) Everlasting life under such paradiseic conditions was God's original purpose for mankind. (Genesis 1:28; Mark 10:30) How, though, is a restoration to such conditions possible?

The Basis for Salvation—The Ransom

⁶ Everlasting salvation is possible only through Christ's ransom sacrifice. Why? The Bible explains that when Adam sinned, he "sold" himself and all his future descendants, including us, into sin—thus necessitating a ransom if mankind were to have any valid hope. (Romans 5:14, 15; 7:14) That God would provide a ransom for all mankind was foreshadowed by the animal sacrifices under the Mosaic Law. (Hebrews 10:1-10; 1 John 2:2) Jesus was the one whose sacrifice fulfilled those prophetic pictures. Jehovah's angel announced before Jesus' birth: "He will save his people from their sins."—Matthew 1:21; Hebrews 2:10.

⁷ Jesus was born miraculously to the virgin Mary, and as the Son of God, he did not inherit death from Adam. This fact along with his course of perfect faithfulness gave his life the value needed to repurchase mankind from sin and death. (John 8:36; 1 Corinthians 15:22) Unlike all other men, Jesus was not condemned to die because of sin. He purposely came to earth "to give his soul a ransom in exchange for many." (Matthew 20:28) Having done so, the now resurrected and enthroned Jesus is in a position to give salvation to all who meet God's requirements.—Revelation 12:10.

What Is Required to Gain Salvation?

⁸ Once, a rich young Israelite ruler asked Jesus: "What must I do to inherit everlasting life?" (Mark 10:17) His question may have

6, 7. What is Jesus' role in our salvation?

8, 9. (a) How did Jesus answer a rich young ruler's question about salvation? (b) How did Jesus use this occasion to teach his disciples?

reflected the prevailing Jewish thinking of his time—that God demands certain good works and that by performing enough of those works, one can earn salvation from God. But that kind of formal devotion could spring from selfish motives. Such works failed to provide a sure hope of salvation, since no imperfect human could really measure up to God's standards.

⁹ In answer to the man's question, Jesus simply reminded him that he should obey God's commandments. The young ruler quickly assured Jesus that he had kept them from his youth on. His response moved Jesus to feel love for him. Jesus said to him: "One thing is missing about you: Go, sell what things you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven, and come be my follower." The young man, however, went away grieved, "for he was holding many possessions." Jesus thereafter emphasized to his disciples that excessive attachment to this world's goods gets in the way of attaining salvation. He added that no one can gain salvation by his own efforts. But Jesus went on to reassure them: "With men it is impossible, but not so with God, for all things are possible with God." (Mark 10:18-27; Luke 18:18-23) How is salvation possible?

¹⁰ Salvation is a gift from God, but it does not come automatically. (Romans 6:23) There are certain basic conditions that each individual must meet to qualify for that gift. Jesus said: "God loved the world 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." And the apostle John added: "He that exercises faith in the Son has everlasting life; he that disobeys the Son will not see life." (John 3:16, 36) Clearly, God requires faith and obedience from each individual who hopes to obtain everlast-

10. What conditions must we meet to obtain salvation?

ing salvation. Each one must make the decision to accept the ransom and to follow in Jesus' footsteps.

¹¹ Since we are imperfect, it is not our natural inclination to obey and it is impossible for us to obey perfectly. That is why Jehovah provided a ransom to cover our sins. Nevertheless, we must continually strive to live in accord with God's ways. As Jesus told the rich young ruler, we must keep God's commandments. Doing so brings not only God's approval but also great joy, for "his commandments are not burdensome"; they are "a refreshment." (1 John 5:3; Proverbs 3:1, 8) Still, it is not easy to hold on to the hope of salvation.

"Put Up a Hard Fight for the Faith"

¹² The disciple Jude wanted to write to early Christians about "the salvation [they held] in common." However, the prevailing bad moral climate obliged him to counsel his brothers to "put up a hard fight for the faith." Yes, to gain salvation it is not enough to have faith, to stick to the true Christian faith, and to obey when everything is going along smoothly. Our devotion to Jehovah must be strong enough to help us resist temptations and immoral influences. Yet, sexual excesses and perversions, disrespect for authority, divisions, and doubts were taking a toll on the spirit of the first-century congregation. To help them combat such tendencies, Jude urged fellow Christians to keep clearly in mind their objective: "Beloved ones, by building up yourselves on your most holy faith, and praying with holy spirit, keep yourselves in God's love, while you are waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ with everlasting life in view." (Jude 3, 4, 8, 19-21) The hope of gaining salvation could strengthen them in their fight to remain morally clean.

-
11. How can an imperfect person gain Jehovah's approval?
 12. How does the hope of salvation strengthen a Christian to resist immoral temptations?

¹³ Jehovah God expects exemplary moral conduct on the part of those to whom he will grant salvation. (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10) Holding to God's moral standards, however, does not mean becoming judgmental of others. We are not the ones to decide the eternal destiny of our fellow humans. Rather, God will do so, as Paul told the Greeks in Athens: "He has set a day in which he purposed to judge the inhabited earth in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed"—Jesus Christ. (Acts 17:31; John 5:22) If we are living by faith in Jesus' ransom we have no need to fear a coming day of judgment. (Hebrews 10:38, 39) The important thing is that we must never "accept the undeserved kindness of God [our reconciliation to him through the ransom] and miss its purpose" by allowing ourselves to be tempted into wrong thinking and conduct. (2 Corinthians 6:1) Additionally, by helping others to gain salvation, we show that we have not missed the purpose of God's mercy. How can we help them?

Sharing the Hope of Salvation

¹⁴ Quoting the prophet Joel, Paul wrote: "Everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah will be saved." Then he added: "However, how will they call on him in whom they have not put faith? How, in turn, will they put faith in him of whom they have not heard? How, in turn, will they hear without someone to preach?" A few verses later, Paul points out that faith does not come spontaneously; rather, it "follows the thing heard," that is, "the word about Christ."—Romans 10:13, 14, 17; Joel 2:32.

¹⁵ Who will bring "the word about Christ" to the nations? Jesus assigned that work to his disciples—those who have already been taught that "word." (Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20; John

13. How can we show that we have not missed the purpose of God's undeserved kindness?

14, 15. Whom did Jesus assign to publish the good news of salvation?

17:20) When we engage in the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making work, we are doing just what the apostle Paul wrote about, this time quoting Isaiah: "How comely are the feet of those who declare good news of good things!" Even if many do not accept the good news we bring, our feet are still "comely" to Jehovah.—Romans 10:15; Isaiah 52:7.

¹⁶ Fulfilling this commission serves two important purposes. First, the good news must be preached so that God's name will be magnified and those who want salvation will know where to turn. Paul understood this aspect of the commission. He stated: "In fact, Jehovah has laid commandment upon us in these words, 'I have appointed you as a light of nations, for you to be a salvation to the extremity of the earth.'" Hence, as disciples of Christ, each of us must have a share in taking the message of salvation to the people.—Acts 13:47; Isaiah 49:6.

¹⁷ Second, the preaching of the good news lays the foundation for God's righteous judgment. About that judgment, Jesus said: "When the Son of man arrives in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit down on his glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another, just as a

16, 17. What two-fold purpose does our preaching work serve?

Can You Explain?

- Why must we keep our "hope of salvation" bright?
- What does salvation include?
- What must we do to receive the gift of salvation?
- What does our preaching work accomplish in line with God's purpose?

shepherd separates the sheep from the goats." Though the judging and separating will be done "when the Son of man arrives in his glory," the preaching work is providing people today with the opportunity to recognize Christ's spiritual brothers and thus to work in support of them for their own eternal salvation.—Matthew 25:31-46.

Maintain "the Full Assurance of the Hope"

¹⁸ Our active participation in the preaching work is also a means to help us keep our hope bright. Paul wrote: "We desire each one of you to show the same industriousness so as to have the full assurance of the hope down

18. How can we keep our "hope of salvation" bright?

to the end." (Hebrews 6:11) May each of us, then, put on "as a helmet the hope of salvation," thus remembering that "God assigned us, not to wrath, but to the acquiring of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thessalonians 5:8, 9) Let us also take to heart Peter's exhortation: "Brace up your minds for activity, keep your senses completely; set your hope upon the undeserved kindness that is to be brought to you." (1 Peter 1:13) All who do so will see their "hope of salvation" completely fulfilled!

¹⁹ In the meantime, what should be our view of the time that remains for this system? How can we use that time to gain salvation for ourselves and others? We will consider these questions in the following article.

19. What will we consider in the following article?

'SAVE YOURSELF AND THOSE WHO LISTEN TO YOU'

"Pay constant attention to yourself and to your teaching. . . . By doing this you will save both yourself and those who listen to you."—1 TIMOTHY 4:16.

IN AN isolated village in northern Thailand, a married couple who are Jehovah's Witnesses try their newly acquired language skills on members of a hill tribe. In order to share the good news of God's Kingdom with the villagers, the couple have recently taken up the Lahu language.

² "It is difficult to describe the joy and satisfaction we have, working among these interesting people," explains the husband. "We really feel involved with the fulfillment of Revelation 14:6, 7, declaring glad tidings 'to every nation and tribe and tongue.' There are few frontiers

1, 2. What motivates true Christians to continue in their lifesaving work?

left where the good news has not yet penetrated, and this is certainly one of them. We have almost more Bible studies than we can handle." Clearly, this couple hope to save not only themselves but also those who listen to them. As Christians, do we not all hope to do the same?

"Pay Constant Attention to Yourself"

³ The apostle Paul counseled Timothy, "Pay constant attention to yourself and to your teaching," and this applies to all Christians. (1 Timothy 4:16) Indeed, to help others gain salvation, we must first pay attention to our-

3. In order to save others, what must we first do?



Learning is enhanced by a dignified but friendly atmosphere

selves. How can we do this? For one thing, we must stay alert to the times in which we live. Jesus gave a composite sign so that his followers would know when "the conclusion of the system of things" had arrived. Yet, Jesus also said that we would not know precisely when the end would come. (Matthew 24:3, 36) How should we react to that fact?

⁴ Each of us might ask, 'Am I using whatever time remains for this system to save myself and those who listen to me? Or am I thinking, "Since we do not know exactly when the end

4. (a) What attitude should we adopt toward the time remaining in this system? (b) What attitude should we avoid?

will come, I will not concern myself with it'?" The latter attitude is dangerous. It runs directly counter to Jesus' exhortation: "Prove yourselves ready, because at an hour that you do not think to be it, the Son of man is coming." (Matthew 24:44) Surely this is not the time to lose our enthusiasm for Jehovah's service or to look to the world for security or satisfaction.

—Luke 21:34-36.

⁵ Another way that we can show that we are paying attention to ourselves is by faithfully enduring as Christians. God's servants in the past kept enduring, whether they expected

5. What examples did Jehovah's pre-Christian witnesses set?

immediate deliverance or not. After citing the examples of such pre-Christian witnesses as Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Sarah, Paul noted: "They did not get the fulfillment of the promises, but they saw them afar off and welcomed them and publicly declared that they were strangers and temporary residents in the land." They did not give in to any desires for a life of ease, nor did they succumb to the immoral pressures around them, but they eagerly looked forward to "the fulfillment of the promises."—Hebrews 11:13; 12:1.

⁶ First-century Christians also saw themselves as "aliens" in this world. (1 Peter 2:11) Even after being saved through the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E., true Christians did not stop preaching or fall back into a secular way of life. They knew that a grand salvation awaited those who remained faithful. In fact, as late as 98 C.E., the apostle John wrote: "The world is passing away and so is its desire, but he that does the will of God remains forever."—1 John 2:17, 28.

⁷ In modern times Jehovah's Witnesses have also persevered in the Christian work, even though they have experienced vicious persecution. Has their endurance been in vain? Certainly not, for Jesus assured us: "He that has endured to the end is the one that will be saved," whether that proves to be the end of the old system or the end of one's present life. In the resurrection, Jehovah will remember and reward all his faithful servants who have died.—Matthew 24:13; Hebrews 6:10.

⁸ Moreover, we are happy that faithful Christians of the past were not concerned only with their own salvation. Surely we who have learned about God's Kingdom through their efforts are grateful that they endured in carrying out Jesus' commission: "Go therefore and

6. How did the first-century Christians' view of salvation affect their way of living?
7. How have Jehovah's Witnesses shown endurance in modern times?
8. How can we show that we appreciate the endurance of Christians of the past?

make disciples of people of all the nations, . . . teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded." (Matthew 28:19, 20) As long as the opportunity remains open to us, we can demonstrate our gratitude by preaching to others who have not yet heard the good news. However, preaching is just the first step toward making disciples.

'Pay Attention to Your Teaching'

⁹ Our assignment includes not only preaching but also teaching. Jesus commissioned us to teach people to observe all the things he commanded. True, in some territories, few seem to want to learn about Jehovah. But having a negative view of the territory can impede our efforts to start Bible studies. Yvette, a pioneer in a territory that some had called fruitless, noticed that visitors to the area, who did not have such a negative attitude, started home Bible studies. After she adopted a more positive outlook, Yvette too found people who wanted to study the Bible.

¹⁰ Some Christians may hesitate to offer to study the Bible with interested ones because they do not feel that they could conduct a study. Granted, we have differing levels of ability. But we do not have to be highly skilled to succeed as teachers of God's Word. The pure message of the Bible is powerful, and Jesus said that sheeplike ones know the voice of the true Shepherd when they hear it. Our task, then, is simply to convey the message of the Fine Shepherd, Jesus, as clearly as we are able to.—John 10:4, 14.

¹¹ How can you convey Jesus' message more effectively? To begin with, familiarize yourself with what the Bible says about the topic under consideration. You have to understand a subject yourself before you can teach it to others. Also, try to maintain a dignified but friendly at-

9. How can a positive attitude help us to start Bible studies?
10. What is our basic role as Bible teachers?
11. How can you be more effective in helping a Bible student?

mosphere during the study. Students, including very young ones, learn better when they are relaxed and the teacher shows them respect and kindness.—Proverbs 16:21.

¹² As a teacher, you do not want merely to present facts for the student to repeat by rote. Help him to understand what he is learning. A student's education, life experience, and familiarity with the Bible will affect his comprehension of what you are saying. Therefore, you might ask yourself, 'Does he grasp the significance of the scriptures cited in the study material?' You can draw him out with questions that cannot be answered with a simple yes or no but that require an explanation. (Luke 9: 18-20) On the other hand, some students hesitate to question a teacher. Thus, they may go along without fully comprehending what they are being taught. Encourage the student to ask questions and to tell you when he does not fully understand some point.—Mark 4:10; 9: 32, 33.

¹³ An important purpose of conducting a Bible study is to help the student become a teacher. (Galatians 6:6) To that end, as a review of your study, you might ask him to explain a point to you in simple terms, as if he were explaining it to someone hearing it for the first time. Later, when he becomes qualified to participate in the ministry, you can invite him to join you in the field. He will likely feel comfortable working with you, and the experience will help him to grow in confidence until he is ready to go out in the ministry on his own.

Help the Student to Become Jehovah's Friend

¹⁴ The primary goal of every Christian teacher is to help the student to gain Jehovah's friendship. You will accomplish this not only

12. How can you make sure that the student understands what you are teaching him?
13. How can you help the student to become a teacher?
14. What is your primary goal as a teacher, and what will contribute to success in attaining it?

by your words but also by your example. Teaching by example has a powerful effect on the hearts of students. Actions really can speak louder than words, especially when it comes to instilling moral qualities and inspiring zeal in the student. If he sees that your words and actions spring from a good relationship with Jehovah, he may be more motivated to cultivate such a relationship himself.

¹⁵ You want the student to serve Jehovah not merely because he does not want to be destroyed at Armageddon but because he loves him. By helping him to develop such a pure motive, you will be building with fire-resistant materials that will survive tests of his faith. (1 Corinthians 3:10-15) A wrong motive, such as an inordinate desire to emulate you or any other human, will give him neither the strength to resist unchristian influences nor the courage to do what is right. Remember, you will not be his teacher forever. While you have the opportunity, you can encourage him to draw ever closer to Jehovah by reading God's Word every day and thinking about it. In this way he will continue to absorb "the pattern of healthful words" from the Bible and Bible-based publications long after your study with him is over.—2 Timothy 1:13.

¹⁶ You can also help the student to grow closer to Jehovah by teaching him to pray from the heart. How can you do this? Perhaps you might direct him to Jesus' model prayer, as well as to the many wholehearted prayers recorded in the Bible, such as those in the psalms. (Psalms 17, 86, 143; Matthew 6:9, 10) Additionally, when your student hears you pray to open and close the study, he will sense your feelings toward Jehovah. Thus, your prayers should always reflect sincerity and openness, as well as spiritual and emotional balance.

15. (a) Why is it important that the student develop the right motive for serving Jehovah? (b) How can you help the student to continue making spiritual progress?
16. How can you teach the student to pray from the heart?



Acting out Bible stories, such as Solomon judging the two harlots, makes family studies enjoyable

Working to Save Your Children

¹⁷ Among those whom we want to save, of course, are our family members. A great number of the children of Christian parents are sincere and "solid in the faith." Others, though, may not have the truth deeply rooted in their hearts. (1 Peter 5:9; Ephesians 3:17; Colossians 2:7) Many of these young people leave the Christian way when they approach or enter adulthood. If you are a parent, what can you do to make such an outcome less likely? First, you can work on creating a wholesome family atmosphere. A good family life lays the groundwork for a healthy view of authority, appreciation of proper values, and happy rela-

tions with others. (Hebrews 12:9) Thus, close bonds within the family can be the seedbed in which a child's friendship with Jehovah can grow. (Psalm 22:10) Strong families do things together as a unit—even if parents must sacrifice time that could be used to personal advantage. In this way you can by example teach your children to make right decisions in life. Parents, what your children need most from you is, not material advantages, but *you*—your time, energy, and love. Are you giving your children these things?

¹⁸ Christian parents must never assume that their children will automatically become Christians too. Daniel, an elder and father of

17. How can parents help their children to stay on the path to salvation?

18. What sort of questions must parents help their children to resolve?

five, observes: "Parents must take the time to help dispel the doubts that their children inevitably pick up at school and other places. They must patiently help their children work out the answers to such questions as: 'Are we actually living in the time of the end? Is there really only one true religion? Why is a certain seemingly nice schoolmate not good association? Is it always wrong to have sex before marriage?'" Parents, you can count on Jehovah to bless your efforts, for he too is interested in your children's welfare.

¹⁹ Some parents may feel inadequate when it comes to studying with their own children. However, you need not feel this way, for no one is in a better position to instruct your children than you are. (Ephesians 6:4) Studying with your own children will allow you to know firsthand what is in their hearts and minds. Are their expressions heartfelt or perfunctory? Do they really believe what they are learning? Is Jehovah real to them? You can find the answers to these and other vital questions only if you personally study with your children.—2 Timothy 1:5.

²⁰ How can you maintain your family study program once you have started it? Joseph, an elder and father of a young son and daughter, says: "Like all Bible studies, the family study should be enjoyable, something everyone looks forward to. To achieve that in our family, we can't be too rigid with regard to time. Our study may last an hour, but even if occasionally we have only ten minutes, we still study. One thing that makes our study a high point in the week for the children is that we act out scenes from *My Book of Bible Stories*.*

* Published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

19. Why is it best that parents themselves study with their children?

20. How can parents make the family study enjoyable and beneficial?

The depth of impression and the comprehension that result are far more important than how many paragraphs we cover."

²¹ Of course, teaching your children is not limited to formal study periods. (Deuteronomy 6:5-7) The Witness in Thailand mentioned at the outset says: "I vividly remember how Dad used to take me along in the preaching work, on our bicycles, to the far corners of our congregation territory. Definitely, it was our parents' fine example and their teaching us under all circumstances that helped us to decide to enter the full-time ministry. And the lessons must have stuck. I'm still working in the far corners of the field!"

²² One day soon, at just the right time, Jesus will come to execute God's judgment on this system. That great event will then pass into universal history, but Jehovah's faithful servants will keep right on serving him with eternal salvation in view. Do you hope to be among them, along with your children and Bible students? Then remember: "Pay constant attention to yourself and to your teaching. Stay by these things, for by doing this you will save both yourself and those who listen to you."—1 Timothy 4:16.

21. When may parents instruct their children?
22. What will result from your 'paying attention to yourself and to your teaching'?

Can You Explain?

- What should be our attitude, since we do not know the exact time of God's judgment?
- In what ways can we 'pay attention to our teaching'?
- How can you help a student to become Jehovah's friend?
- Why is it important that parents take time to teach their children?



HELPED TO OVERCOME MY SHYNESS

AS TOLD BY
RUTH L. ULRICH

I broke down and cried right on the clergyman's doorstep. He had just let loose a barrage of false accusations against Charles T. Russell, who served as the first president of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. Let me explain how I, as just a young girl, was making such calls on people.

I WAS born into a very religious family on a farm in Nebraska, U.S.A., in 1910. Our family read the Bible together every morning and evening after meals. Father was the Sunday-school superintendent of the Methodist church in the small town of Winside, about four miles from our farm. We had a horse-drawn carriage with curtains at the windows, so that regardless of the weather, we could attend church Sunday morning.

When I was about eight, my baby brother became ill with infantile paralysis, and Mother took him to a sanatorium in Iowa for treatment. Despite her devoted care, my brother died while they were there. In the mean-

time, however, there in Iowa, Mother met a Bible Student, as Jehovah's Witnesses were then called. They had many conversations, and Mother even went with the lady to some meetings of the Bible Students.

When Mother returned home, she brought with her several volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures*, which were published by the Watch Tower Society. She was soon convinced that the Bible Students were teaching the truth and that the teachings of the immortality of the human soul and of eternal torment of the wicked were not true.—Genesis 2:7; Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10; Ezekiel 18:4.

Father, however, was very upset, and he op-



posed Mother's efforts to attend the meetings of the Bible Students. He kept taking me and my older brother, Clarence, to church with him. But when Father was not at home, Mother studied the Bible with us. As a result, we children had a good opportunity to compare the teachings of the Bible Students with those of our church.

Clarence and I regularly attended Sunday school at church, and he asked the teacher questions she could not answer. When we got home, we told our mother, and this led to long discussions on these subjects. Finally, I quit the church and began to attend meetings of the Bible Students with Mother, and not long afterward Clarence did the same.

Coping With Shyness

In September 1922, Mother and I attended the memorable convention of the Bible Students in Cedar Point, Ohio. I can still see that huge banner unfold as Joseph F. Rutherford, then president of the Watch Tower Society, urged the more than 18,000 in attendance, in the words on the banner: "Advertise the King and Kingdom." I was deeply moved and felt the urgency to tell others about the good news of God's Kingdom.—Matthew 6:9, 10; 24:14.

At the conventions held from 1922 to 1928, a series of resolutions were adopted, and the messages were incorporated into tracts that Bi-



With Mother and Clarence, who was visiting us from Bethel

ble Students distributed by the tens of millions to people throughout the world. I was lean and lanky—they called me the greyhound—and I rushed from house to house distributing these printed messages. I really enjoyed this work. Yet, talking at the doors, personally telling others about God's Kingdom, was another matter.

You see, I was so shy that I even dreaded it when Mother invited hordes of relatives each year. I disappeared into my bedroom and stayed there. One time, Mother wanted to take a photograph of the whole family, and she told me to come out. Not wanting to join them, I screamed as she literally dragged me out of my room.

The day came, however, when I determinedly put some Bible literature in a bag. Over and over I said, "I can't do it," but the next moment I told myself, "I must do it." Finally, I went preaching. Afterward, I was so happy that I had mustered up the courage to go. My greatest joy was in having done the work, not in actually doing it. It was about that time that I met the clergyman mentioned earlier and walked away crying. As time went on, with Jehovah's help I was able to talk to people at their doors, and my joy increased. Then, in 1925, I symbolized my dedication to Jehovah by water baptism.

Getting Started in the Full-Time Ministry

When I was 18, I purchased a car with money I inherited from an aunt and began pioneering, as the full-time ministry is called. Two years later, in 1930, a partner and I accepted a preaching assignment. By then Clarence had also begun to pioneer. Soon afterward he accepted an invitation to serve at Bethel, the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in Brooklyn, New York.

About that time our parents separated, so Mother and I had a house trailer built and began pioneering together. That was when the Great Depression came along in the United States. To continue in the pioneer work became quite a challenge, but we were determined not to quit. We traded Bible literature for chickens, eggs, and garden produce, as well

as such items as old batteries and discarded aluminum. The latter we turned into money to buy gasoline for the car and to meet other expenses. I also learned to lubricate the car and change oil to save money. We saw Jehovah, true to his promise, open the way to help us overcome obstacles.—Matthew 6:33.

Off to Missionary Assignments

In 1946, I was invited to attend the seventh class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead, which was located near South Lansing, New York. By then Mother and I had pioneered together for over 15 years, yet she did not want to interfere with my opportunity to receive training for missionary work. So she encouraged me to accept the privilege to attend Gilead School. After graduation, Martha Hess of Peoria, Illinois, and I became partners. We, along with two others, were assigned to Cleveland, Ohio, for one year while we waited for an assignment overseas.

That assignment came in 1947. Martha and I were assigned to Hawaii. Since it was easy to enter these islands, Mother came and lived near us in the city of Honolulu. Her health was deteriorating, so along with caring for my missionary activities, I helped Mother. I was able to take care of her until she passed away in Hawaii in 1956, at 77 years of age. When we arrived, there were about 130 Witnesses in Hawaii, but by the time Mother died, there were over a thousand, and missionaries were no longer needed.

Then Martha and I received a letter from the Watch Tower Society that offered us an assignment in Japan. Our first concern was whether at our age we could learn the Japanese language. I was by then 48 years old, and Martha was only four years younger. But we left the matter in Jehovah's hands and accepted the assignment.

Right after the 1958 international convention at New York City's Yankee Stadium and Polo Grounds, we were off to Tokyo by ship. We were buffeted by a typhoon as we ap-

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Perfect Life—Not Just a Dream!

"All You Are Brothers"

Do You Believe in
What You Cannot See?



Left: Me, Martha Hess, and mother, in Hawaii

*Members of our class
studying on the lawn at
Gilead School near South
Lansing, New York*

proached the port at Yokohama, where we were met by Don and Mabel Haslett, Lloyd and Melba Barry, and other missionaries. At that time, there were only 1,124 Witnesses in Japan.

We immediately began to study the Japanese language and to engage in the door-to-door ministry. Using the English alphabet, we wrote out our Japanese presentations, which we would read. In reply the householders would say, "Yoroshii desu" or, "Kekko desu," which we learned meant, "It's fine" or, "It's good." But we did not always know whether the householder was interested or not, since those words were also used to express refusal. The meaning depended on the tone of voice used or on the

person's facial expression. It took time for us to learn to interpret these.

Experiences That Warmed My Heart

Still struggling with the language, I called at a Mitsubishi Company dormitory one day and met a 20-year-old woman. She progressed well in Bible knowledge and was baptized in 1966. A year later she started pioneering and was soon thereafter appointed as a special pioneer. She has served as such ever since. It has always been an inspiration to me to see how she has used her time and energy from youth on in the full-time ministry.

Taking a stand for Bible truth is a challenge that is especially great for people who live in a non-Christian society. Yet, many thousands have met this challenge, including a number of those with whom I have studied the Bible. They have disposed of expensive Buddhist altars and Shinto shelves that are traditionally found in Japanese homes. Since relatives

*Right: Members
of our Tokyo
missionary home*



*Below: With
my longtime
partner,
Martha Hess*



of zu tei sunu kou ni mitekete labi ikuon z
sometimes misinterpret such actions as dis-
respect for dead ancestors, it takes courage for
the new ones to do this. Their courageous ac-
tions are reminiscent of those of early Chris-
tians who divested themselves of items associ-
ated with false worship.—Acts 19:18-20.

I remember one Bible student, a housewife, who was planning to move out of Tokyo with her family. She wanted to move into a new home that was free of objects having to do with pagan worship. So she told her husband of her wishes, and he willingly cooperated. She joyfully told me about it but then remembered that she had packed a large, expensive marble vase that she had purchased because it was said to ensure happiness in the home. Since she had a suspicion about its connec-
tions with false worship, she broke the vase with a hammer and discarded it.

Seeing this woman and others willingly get

rid of expensive objects connected with false worship and courageously start a new life of service to Jehovah has been a most rewarding, satisfying experience for me. I regularly thank Jehovah that I have been able to enjoy more than 40 years of missionary service in Japan.

Modern-Day "Miracles"

When I look back on my more than 70 years in the full-time ministry, I marvel at what appears to me to be modern-day miracles. As a youth afflicted with shyness, never would I have thought that I could spend my entire life taking the initiative to talk to people about a Kingdom that most do not want to hear anything about. Yet, not only have I been able to do that but I have seen hundreds, if not thousands, of others do the same. And they have done it with such effectiveness that the little more than one thousand Witnesses who were in Japan when I arrived in 1958 have grown to over 222,000 today!

When Martha and I first arrived in Japan, we were assigned to live at the branch office in Tokyo. In 1963 a new, six-story branch facility was constructed on that site, and we have been living there ever since. In November 1963 we were among the 163 who were present for the dedication talk by our branch overseer, Lloyd Barry. By then we had reached 3,000 Witnesses in Japan.

It has been a delight to see the Kingdom-preaching work grow dramatically, reaching more than 14,000 in 1972 when a new enlarged branch was completed in the city of Numazu. But by 1982 there were over 68,000 Kingdom proclaimers in Japan, and a much larger branch facility was constructed in the city of Ebina, some 50 miles from Tokyo.

Meanwhile, the former branch building in the heart of Tokyo was renovated. In time, it came to serve as a missionary home for over 20 missionaries who have served in Japan for 40 or 50 years or longer, including me and my longtime partner, Martha Hess. A doctor and his wife, who is a nurse, also live in our

*Our enlarged branch facilities
in Ebina were dedicated last
November*

home. They look after us, lovingly tending to our health needs. Recently, another nurse was added to the staff, and Christian sisters come in as nurse's aides during the day. Two members of the Bethel family in Ebina come on a rotation basis to prepare meals and clean our home. Indeed, Jehovah has been good to us.
—Psalm 34:8, 10.

A highlight of my missionary life occurred last November, 36 years after the dedication of the building in which so many of us longtime missionaries now live. On November 13, 1999, I was among the 4,486, including hundreds of longtime Witnesses from 37 countries, who attended the dedication of the expanded facilities at the Japan branch of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society in Ebina. Presently, there are about 650 in that branch family.

During the nearly 80 years since I timidly began going from house to house delivering Bible messages, Jehovah has been a strengthening aid to me. He has helped me to overcome my shyness. I firmly believe that Jehovah can use anyone who puts trust in him, even those who are extremely shy like me. And what a satisfying life I have had in talking to strangers about our God, Jehovah!



 Music has been described as "the oldest and most natural of all the fine arts." Like language, it is a remarkable gift that sets humans apart from beasts. Music stirs the emotions. It can delight the ear and linger in the mind. Above all, music can please God.

Music That Pleases God

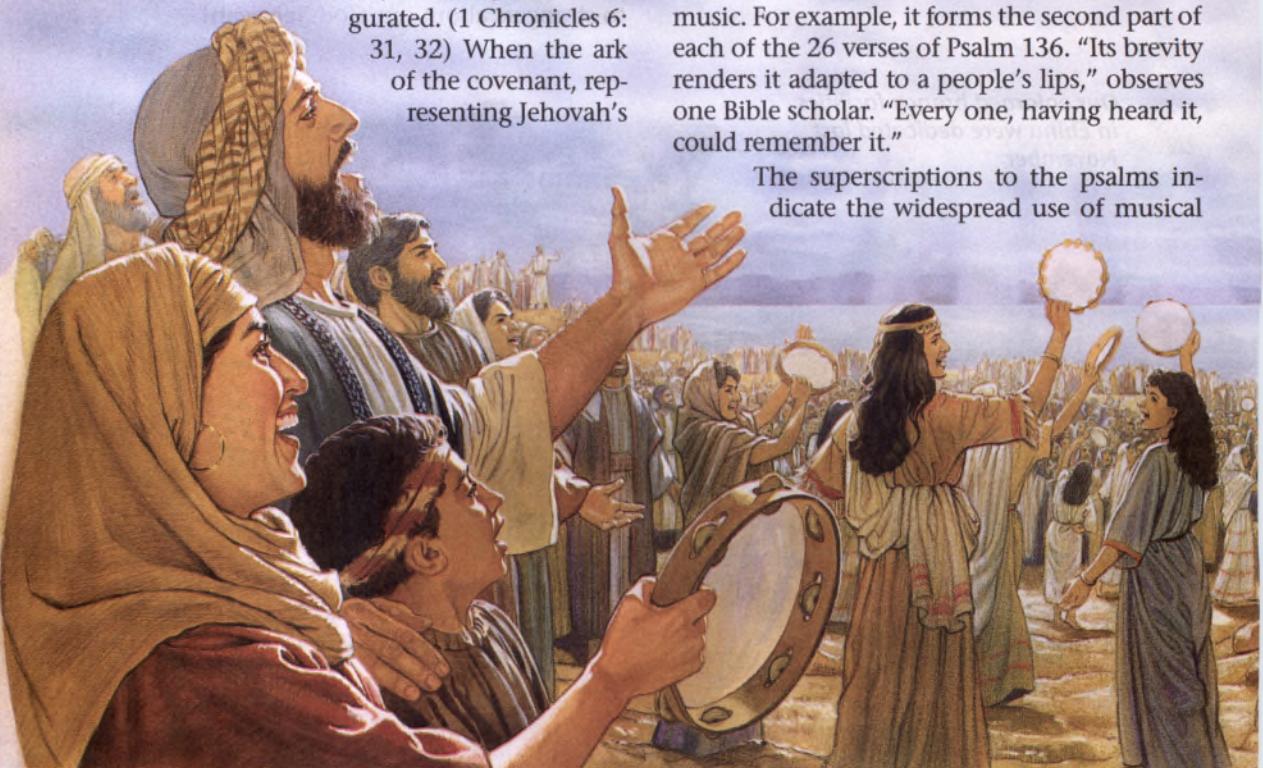
AS THE Bible shows, the Israelites were a musical people. Music was "a prominent art in ancient Biblical times," comments *Unger's Bible Dictionary*. As a part of everyday life, both vocal and instrumental music featured in their worship. But it was the human voice that was used most prominently.

King David appointed representatives among the Levites "for the direction of the singing" at the tabernacle, before the temple built by Solomon, his son, was inaugurated. (1 Chronicles 6: 31, 32) When the ark of the covenant, representing Jehovah's

presence, arrived at Jerusalem, David arranged for some of the Levites "to call to remembrance and to thank and praise Jehovah." They accompanied their vocal praise "with instruments of the string type and with harps, . . . with the cymbals playing aloud, . . . with the trumpets." These men were "designated by names to thank Jehovah, because 'to time indefinite is his loving-kindness.'"—1 Chronicles 16:4-6, 41; 25:1.

The refrain "[Jehovah's] loving-kindness is to time indefinite" appears many times in the Psalms, the Bible book most associated with music. For example, it forms the second part of each of the 26 verses of Psalm 136. "Its brevity renders it adapted to a people's lips," observes one Bible scholar. "Every one, having heard it, could remember it."

The superscriptions to the psalms indicate the widespread use of musical



instruments. Psalm 150 makes mention of the horn, harp, tambourine, pipe, and cymbals, in addition to strings. Nevertheless, the primary appeal is to the human voice. Verse 6 exhorts: "Every breathing thing—let it praise Jah. Praise Jah, you people!"

Since music expresses our feelings, mournful thoughts in Bible times prompted dirges or chants. This form of singing, however, was limited in the repertoire of Israel's music. "Only in a dirge or lamentation would the chanting style be preferable to either the melody of music or the modulation and oral emphasis of pure speech," observes the Bible encyclopedia *Insight on the Scriptures*.*

Jesus and his faithful apostles sang praises to Jehovah on the night before Jesus' death, doubtless intoning the words of the Hallel Psalms. (Psalms 113-118) How this must have strengthened Jesus' disciples to face up to the loss of their Master! More than that, their resolve to remain faithful servants of the Supreme Sovereign of the universe, Jehovah, must have deepened as they five times sang the refrain "for his loving-kindness is to time indefinite."—Psalm 118:1-4, 29.

The early Christians of Ephesus and Colossae sang "psalms and praises to God" (literally, "hymns"). To these they added "spiritual songs" that were sung in their hearts. (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16) By both song and speech, they fittingly used their mouths to express praise. Had not Jesus declared that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks"?—Matthew 12:34.

Music That Displeases God

Not all music mentioned in the Bible pleased God. Consider the incident that occurred at Mount Sinai, where Moses was receiving the Law, including the Ten Commandments. When Moses descended the mountain, what did he hear? "Not the sound of the sing-

* Published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

ing over mighty performance," "not the sound of the singing of defeat," but "the sound of other singing." This was music associated with idolatry, a practice that evoked God's displeasure and resulted in the death of about 3,000 of those music makers.—Exodus 32:18, 25-28.

Although humans can compose, play, and enjoy all manner of music, it does not follow that all of it pleases God. Why not? The Christian apostle Paul explains: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23) Pagan fertility rites, the doctrine of the immortality of the human soul, and the veneration of Mary as "mother of God" are often featured as themes of musical compositions. Yet, these beliefs and practices dishonor the God of truth, for they are contrary to what is revealed in his inspired Word, the Bible.—Deuteronomy 18:10-12; Ezekiel 18:4; Luke 1:35, 38.

Making a Wise Choice of Music

The choice of available music is bewildering. The covers of compact discs are designed to move customers to purchase all manner of musical recordings. But if the worshiper of God wishes to please Him, he will exercise caution and select wisely to avoid vocal and instrumental music that is inspired by false religious beliefs or that focuses on immorality and demonism.

Albert, who once served as a Christian missionary in Africa, admits that he had little opportunity to play the piano there. He did, however, listen over and over again to the few long-playing recordings he had taken with him. Back in his home country, Albert now visits Christian congregations as a traveling overseer. His time for listening to music is limited. "My favorite composer is Beethoven," he observes. "Through the years, I have collected recordings of his symphonies, concertos, sonatas, and quartets." Listening to these has brought him a great deal of enjoyment. Of course, each person has his own taste in music, but as Christians we bear in mind Paul's



counsel: "Whether you are eating or drinking or doing anything else, do all things for God's glory."—1 Corinthians 10:31.

Music and Dedication

Susie's first love was music. "I started to play the piano at the age of 6, the violin at 10, and finally the harp at 12," she explains. Susie later attended the Royal College of Music in London, England, to study the harp. She studied for four years with a famous Spanish harpist and a further year at the Paris Conservatoire, gaining an honors degree in music as well as diplomas for playing the harp and teaching the piano.

Susie became associated with a congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses in London. There she found genuine interest and love among fellow Witnesses. Gradually, her love for Jehovah grew, and her zeal for his service prompted her to seek ways to serve him. This led to dedication and baptism. "Having music as a career is a dedicated way of life, so a life of dedication was not unfamiliar to me," Susie observes. Her time for concert performances decreased as she engaged in the Christian ministry of preaching the good news of God's Kingdom in obedience to Jesus' instructions.—Matthew 24:14; Mark 13:10.

Now that she spends only a limited time performing music, how does she feel? "Sometimes a little frustrated that I don't have more time to practice," she admits, "but I still play my instruments and enjoy music. Music is a gift from Jehovah. I enjoy it more now that I have put his service first in my life."—Matthew 6:33.

Music That Praises God

Albert and Susie along with the nearly six million other Witnesses of Jehovah regularly praise Jehovah God with music. At Christian meetings held in Kingdom Halls in 234 lands, they begin and end their meetings, where possible, by singing songs to Jehovah. In major and minor key, beautiful melodies carry Scripturally based lyrics in praise of Jehovah God.



Singing praises to Jehovah

All in attendance raise their voices to sing warmly that Jehovah is a caring God (Song 44). They sing a song of praise to Jehovah (Song 190). Their songs recognize the joys and responsibilities of Christian brotherhood, Christian living, and Christian qualities. Adding to their delight is the variety of musical styles that Witnesses from Asia, Australia, Europe, and North and South America used when composing the melodies.*

"Sing to Jehovah a new song. Sing to Jehovah, all you people of the earth. Sing to Jehovah, bless his name," are the opening words of a grand royal anthem penned in the psalmist's day. "From day to day tell the good news of salvation by him. Declare among the nations his glory, among all the peoples his wonderful works." (Psalm 96:1-3) This is what Jehovah's Witnesses are doing in your locality, and they invite you to join in singing this praise. You will be welcome at their Kingdom Halls, where you can learn how to praise Jehovah with music that pleases him.

* These songs are featured in the book *Sing Praises to Jehovah*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

Where Can You Turn for Good Advice?

The "advice industry" has now become a multibillion-dollar-a-year business. People want help. Mental-health professional Heinz Lehmann observes: "[In today's society] there are educational and social deficits. Religious values are not what they used to be. Families are much less stable . . . , and consequently people flounder." Author Eric Maisel says: "Those who once turned to their tribal shaman, pastor or family doctor for help with mental, spiritual and physical problems now look to self-help nonfiction to provide the answers."

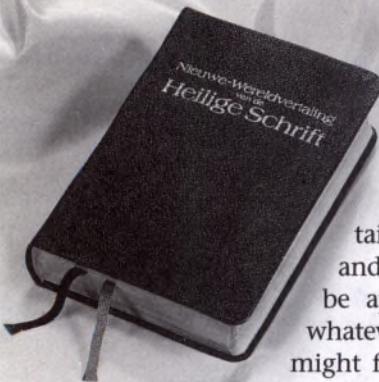
THE American Psychological Association set up a task force to investigate this booming industry. They said that while there is "tremendous potential to help individuals understand themselves and others . . . , the promotional claims and titles that accompany these programs are increasingly exaggerated and sensationalized." A *Toronto Star* writer says: "Be aware of the amount of religio-spiritual counterfeits. . . . Beware especially of all self-help books, tapes or seminars that offer far too much, in far too short a time, for far too little effort or self-discipline." Granted, there are a great many who are genuinely looking to support those in need. However, the sad reality exists that a number of unscrupulous individuals are capitalizing on people's loneliness and suffering, offering no real help or solutions.

In view of this, what is a key source of help we can trust? Where can we find practical counsel that will consistently work?

Source of Unfailing Guidance

The 19th-century American preacher Henry Ward Beecher said: "The Bible is God's chart for you to steer by, to keep you from the bottom of the sea, and to show you where the harbor is, and how to reach it without running on rocks or bars." Another man said of the Bible: "Nobody ever outgrows Scripture; the book widens and deepens with our years." Why should you give serious consideration to this source?

Recommending itself, the Bible says: "All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching, for reproofing, for setting things straight, for disciplining in righteousness, that the man of God may be fully competent, completely equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16, 17) The Bible's contents originate with the very Source of life, Jehovah God. (Psalm 36:9) As such, he is intimately aware of our makeup, as Psalm 103:14 reminds us: "He himself well knows the formation of us, remembering that we



are dust." We can, therefore, have full confidence in the Bible's value.

In fact, the Bible contains a host of principles and guidelines that can be applied beneficially in whatever circumstance you might find yourself. Through it God says to us: "This is the way. Walk in it, you people." (Isaiah 30:21) Can the Bible really meet the needs of individuals today? Let us see.

The Bible Meets Our Needs . . .

In Coping With Anxieties. The Bible tells us: "Do not be anxious over anything, but 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 and your mental powers by means of Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6, 7) Has prayer proved to be effective in coping with the emotional anxieties associated with economic hardship, sexual and verbal abuse, or the death of a loved one? Consider the following experience.

Jackie, after learning of the sexual abuse of her daughter, acknowledges: "The feeling of guilt at being powerless to protect one's child is beyond words. I have had to fight feelings of bitterness, resentment, and anger. These feelings were beginning to poison my life. I desperately needed Jehovah to guard my heart." After reading and rereading Philippians 4:6, 7, she worked hard to apply its counsel. "I pray every day, repeatedly asking that I not let myself be destroyed by negative feelings, and Jehovah has helped me to develop a calm and happy heart. I truly feel peace within myself," Jackie relates.

You too may find yourself in a situa-

tion that is beyond your ability to control or resolve and that brings with it emotional anxieties. By following the Bible's admonition to pray, you can cope effectively. The psalmist encourages us with these words: "Roll upon Jehovah your way, and rely upon him, and he himself will act."—Psalm 37:5.

For Encouragement. The psalmist made this expression of appreciation: "Jehovah, I have loved the dwelling of your house and the place of the residing of your glory. My own foot will certainly stand on a level place; among the congregated throngs I shall bless Jehovah." (Psalm 26:8, 12) We are encouraged in the Bible to assemble together regularly to worship Jehovah. How can this association fill your needs? What have others found?

Becky relates: "My parents do not serve Jehovah, so they give me a hard time when I try to do anything that has to do with service to God. It takes great effort for me to attend the meetings." Becky feels that many blessings have come to her because she has exerted herself to attend Christian meetings regularly. "The meetings strengthen my faith, so that I can withstand the day-to-day pressures as a student, daughter, and servant of Jehovah. The people at the Kingdom Hall are so different from the students at school! They are caring and helpful, and our conversations are always encouraging. They are real friends."

Yes, by following the Bible's direction to meet together regularly, we can have Jehovah fill our need for encouragement. Here is where we experience the truthfulness of the psalmist's words: "God is for us a refuge and strength, a help that is readily to be found during distresses."—Psalm 46:1.

For Satisfying and Worthwhile Work. "Become steadfast, unmovable, always having plenty to do in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in connection with the Lord," advocates the Bible. (1 Corinthians 15:58) Is "the work of the Lord" truly satisfying? Does the Christian ministry accomplish something worthwhile?



Following Bible counsel makes life satisfying and fulfilling



Amelia expresses how she feels: "I studied the Bible with a couple who were on the verge of a breakup. I also helped a woman whose daughter was violently killed. The woman was tormented by the uncertainty of the condition of the dead. In both of these cases, the application of Bible principles brought peace and hope into their lives. I feel a great sense of joy and satisfaction because I have had a part in helping them." Scott says: "If you have a good experience in the field ministry, start a new Bible study, or enjoy some success from witnessing informally, you will talk about it for years to come. The same feelings and excitement are relieved with each recounting! The ministry is where the greatest and lasting joy comes from."

Clearly, applying the Bible's direction to become active ministers has filled the need of these individuals for satisfying and worth-

while work. You too are invited to share in this work of educating others about God's ways and principles, at the same time benefiting yourself.—Isaiah 48:17; Matthew 28:19, 20.

Profiting From God's Word

Unquestionably, the Bible is a trustworthy source of workable directions in today's world. To benefit from it, we need to put forth consistent effort. We must regularly read it, study it, and meditate on it. Paul admonished: "Ponder over these things; be absorbed in them, that your advancement may be manifest to all persons." (1 Timothy 4:15; Deuteronomy 11:18-21) God guarantees that if you work to apply his counsel as found in the Bible, you will be successful. He promises: "Trust in Jehovah . . . In all your ways take notice of him, and he himself will make your paths straight."—Proverbs 3:5, 6.

REMAINING LOYAL TO JEHOVAH

LOYALTY, though a rare commodity today, is a quality that characterizes servants of the true God, Jehovah. The loyal person remains steadfast through trials and unwavering despite the passing of time. Consider good King Hezekiah. "After him there proved to be no one like him among all the kings of Judah, even those who had happened to be prior to him," the Bible states. What made Hezekiah unique? He "kept sticking to Jehovah," even though he was surrounded by worshipers of the false god Molech. Yes, Hezekiah "did not turn aside from following [Jehovah], but he continued keeping his commandments."—2 Kings 18:1-6.

The apostle Paul was another person who remained loyal to Jehovah. The record of his ministry as found in the Christian Greek Scriptures bears eloquent testimony to Paul's constancy in rendering whole-souled service to God. Toward the end of his earthly life, Paul could say of himself: "I have fought the fine fight, I have run the course to the finish, I have observed the faith."—2 Timothy 4:7.

What fine examples of loyalty we have in Hezekiah and Paul! May we imitate their faith by remaining loyal to our Grand God, Jehovah.—Hebrews 13:7.

