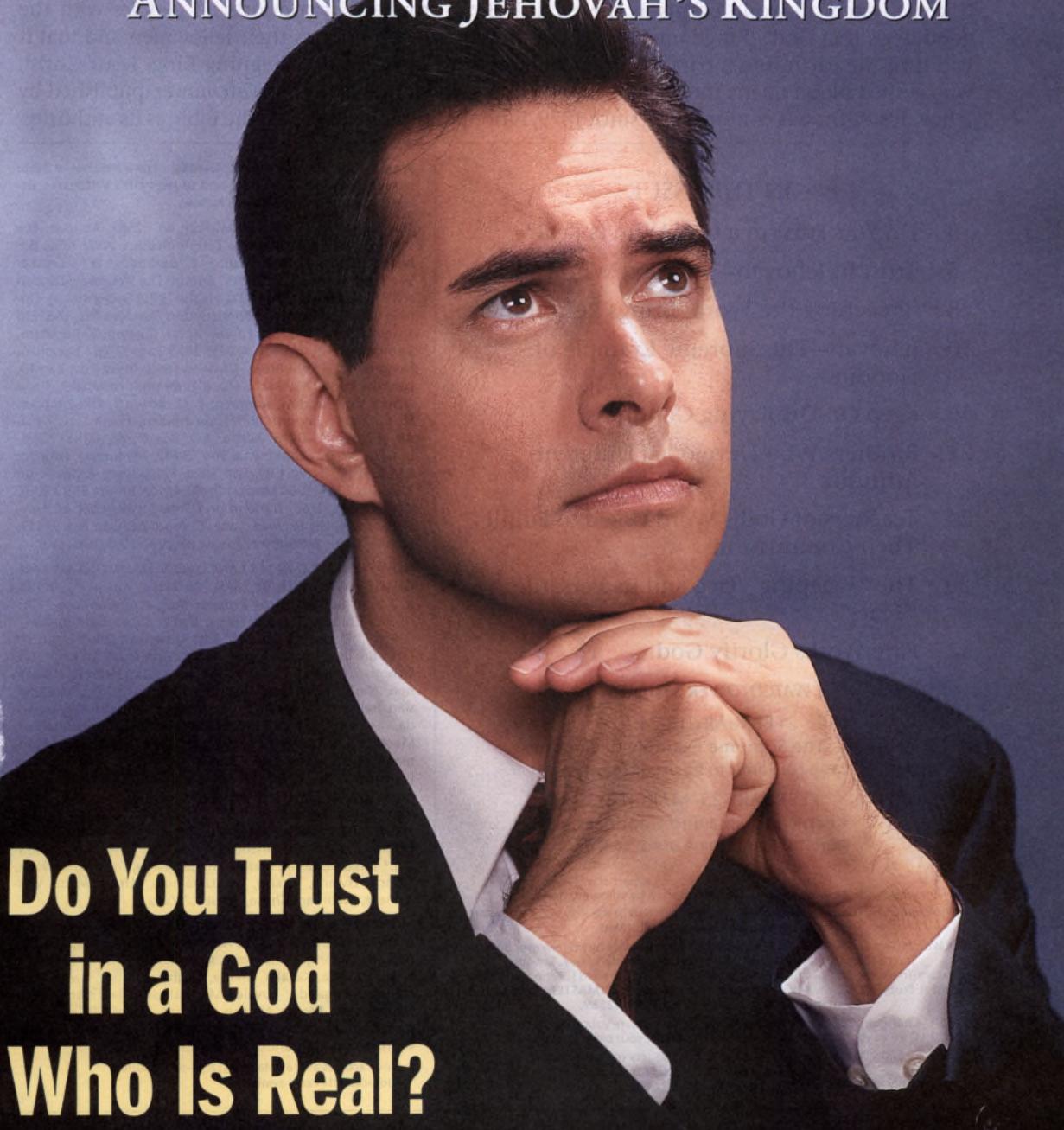




JANUARY 15, 2002

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



**Do You Trust
in a God
Who Is Real?**



THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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

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Do You Trust in a God Who Is Real?

An expedition commissioned by the American Museum of Natural History was on its way to study an Arctic land that explorer Robert E. Peary had reported seeing some seven years earlier, in 1906.

FROM Cape Colgate in the extreme northwestern part of North America, Peary had observed what seemed to be the white summits of a distant land. He named it Crocker Land after one of his financial backers. How thrilled the members of the follow-up expedition must have been when they caught a glimpse of an area ahead with hills, valleys, and snowcapped peaks! But they soon realized that they were looking at nothing more than an Arctic mirage. This optical atmospheric effect had fooled Peary, and now they had committed time, energy, and resources to explore something that was not real.

Today, many people give their devotion and their time to gods they believe are real. In the days of Jesus' apostles, such gods as Hermes and Zeus were worshiped. (Acts 14:11, 12) Today, gods worshiped by those of the Shinto, Hindu, and other religions of



*Peary's companion
Egingwah scans the
horizon for land*

Robert E. Peary

Egingwah: From the book *The North Pole: Its Discovery in 1909 Under the Auspices of the Peary Arctic Club*, 1910; Robert E. Peary: NOAA

the world number into the millions. Indeed, as the Bible says, "there are many 'gods' and many 'lords.'" (1 Corinthians 8:5, 6) Can all of these be real gods?

Gods Who "Cannot Save"

Consider, for example, the use of images or symbols in worship. To those trusting in them or praying through them, idols appear to be saviors possessing superhuman powers that can reward people or deliver them from danger. But can they really save? Concerning such objects, the psalmist sang: "The idols of the nations are silver and gold, the work of the hands of earthling man. A mouth they have, but they can speak nothing; eyes they have, but they can see nothing; ears they

have, but they can give ear to nothing. Also there exists no spirit in their mouth." Indeed, they are gods who "cannot save."—Psalm 135:15-17; Isaiah 45:20.

Granted, those making idols may credit the work of their hands with life and power. And those who worship idols place their trust in them. "They carry [an idol] upon the shoulder," said the prophet Isaiah, "they bear it and deposit it in its place that it may stand still." He added: "From its standing place it does not move away. One even cries out to it, but it does not answer; out of one's distress it does not save one." (Isaiah 46:7) The truth is that an idol remains lifeless no

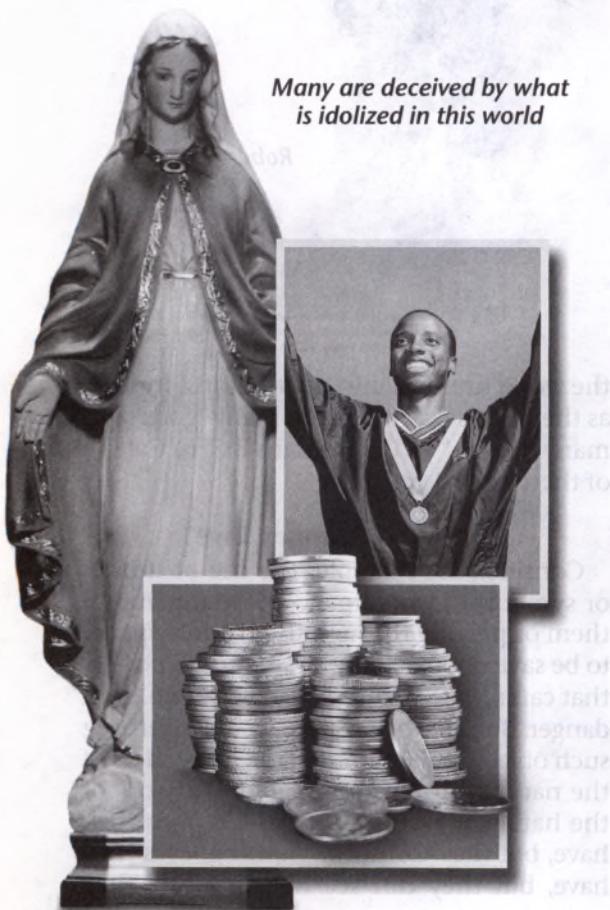
matter how fervent the belief of those trusting in it. Such carved images and molten statues are "valueless gods."—Habakkuk 2:18.

The idolizing, venerating, or adoring of entertainment personalities, sports figures, political systems, and certain religious leaders is also commonplace today. Moreover, money is a god to many. In each case, these idols are made out to be something they are not. They do not and cannot provide all that is hoped for by those believing in them. For example, wealth may appear to hold the answer to many problems, but the power of riches is deceptive. (Mark 4:19) One researcher asked: "How are we to account for the fact that something so eagerly desired by so many people, and believed in as a kind of cure-all, when obtained should have a range of effects varying from the disappointing to the traumatic?" Yes, the pursuit of wealth may require that a person sacrifice what is of real value, such as good health, a satisfying family life, close friendships, or a precious relationship with the Creator. His god turns out to be nothing more than an 'idol of untruth'!—Jonah 2:8.

"There Was No One Answering"

It is foolish to call real what is not real. Worshipers of the god Baal in the prophet Elijah's day learned this the hard way. They firmly believed that Baal had the power to cause fire to come down from heaven and consume an animal sacrifice. In fact, "they kept calling upon the name of Baal from morning till noon, saying: 'O Baal, answer us!'" Did Baal have ears that could hear and a mouth that could speak? The account continues: "There was no voice, and there was no one answering." Indeed, "there was no paying of attention." (1 Kings 18:26, 29) Baal was not real, alive, or active.

How essential that we recognize and worship a God who *is* real! But who is he? And how can trusting in him benefit us?



*Many are deceived by what
is idolized in this world*

Trust in Jehovah The God Who Is Real

Have you looked at the sky on a cloudless night and seen hundreds of stars? How do you account for their existence?

IN THE silence of the night, the stars spoke out to King David of ancient Israel, prompting him to write: "The heavens are declaring the glory of God; and of the work of his hands the expanse is telling." (Psalm 19:1) Yes, the Creator rather than the creation is worthy "to receive the glory and the honor and the power."—Revelation 4:11; Romans 1:25.

"He that constructed all things is God," says the Bible. (Hebrews 3:4) Indeed, the true God, 'whose name is Jehovah, is the Most High over all the earth.' (Psalm 83:18) And he is not an illusion—a mirage. Jesus Christ said concerning his heavenly Father, Jehovah: "He that sent me is real."—John 7:28.

Jehovah—The Fulfiller of His Purposes

God's unique name, Jehovah, appears almost 7,000 times in the Hebrew Scriptures alone. That very name points to the fact that he is real. God's name literally means "He Causes to Become." Jehovah God thereby identifies himself as the Fulfiller of his purposes. When Moses asked God his name, Je-



hovah elaborated on its meaning in this way: "I shall prove to be what I shall prove to be." (Exodus 3:14) Rotherham's translation pointedly states: "I Will Become whatsoever I please." Jehovah proves to be, or chooses to become, whatever is needed to make his righteous purposes and promises a reality. Thus, he bears an impressive array of titles, such as Creator, Father, Sovereign Lord, Shepherd, Jehovah of armies, Hearer of prayer, Judge, Grand Instructor, Repurchaser.—Judges 11:27; Psalm 23:1; 65:2; 73:28; 89:26; Isaiah 8:13; 30:20; 40:28; 41:14.

Only the true God can rightly bear the name Jehovah, for humans can never be sure that their plans will succeed. (James 4:13, 14) Jehovah alone can say: "Just as the pouring rain descends, and the snow, from the heavens and does not return to that place, unless it actually saturates the earth and makes it produce and sprout, and seed is actually given to the sower and bread to the eater, so my word that goes forth from my mouth will prove to be. It will not return to me without results, but it will certainly do that in which I have delighted, and it will have certain success in that for which I have sent it."—Isaiah 55:10, 11.

Jehovah carries out his purpose with such certainty that even what may seem unreal to humans is real from his viewpoint. Long after Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had died, Jesus

mentioned them and said: "He [Jehovah] is a God, not of the dead, but of the living, for they are all living to him." (Luke 20:37, 38) The three faithful patriarchs were dead, but God's purpose to resurrect them was so sure to be fulfilled that to him they were as good as alive. Bringing these faithful servants of old back to life is no more difficult for Jehovah than it was to create the first man from the dust of the ground.

—Genesis 2:7.

The apostle Paul provides another example of the fact that God causes what he purposed to be carried out. In the Scriptures, Abraham is called "a father of many nations." (Romans 4:16, 17) While Abram was yet childless, Jehovah changed his name to Abraham, which means "Father of a Crowd (Multitude)." Jehovah caused the meaning of that name to become a reality by miraculously restoring the procreative powers of elderly Abraham and his aged wife, Sarah.

—Hebrews 11:11, 12.

Invested with much power and authority, Jesus Christ spoke of realities from a higher point of view than that of humans. Although his close friend Lazarus had died, Jesus told his disciples: "Lazarus our friend has gone to rest, but I am journeying there to awaken him from sleep." (John 11:11) Why did Jesus speak of a dead man as merely sleeping?

When Jesus reached Lazarus' hometown of Bethany, he went to the tomb and directed that the stone closing its entrance be taken away. After praying aloud, he commanded: "Lazarus, come on out!" And with the

eyes of the onlookers fixed on the tomb, "the man that had been dead came out with his feet and hands bound with wrappings, and his countenance was bound about with a cloth." Jesus then said: "Loose him and let him go." (John 11:43, 44) Jesus resurrected Lazarus—restoring life to a man who had been dead for four days! Christ did not misrepresent the truth when he said that his friend was sleeping.

From the standpoint of Jehovah and Jesus, dead Lazarus was as though merely asleep. Yes, Jesus and his heavenly Father deal in realities.

Jehovah Can Turn Our Hopes Into Realities

What a contrast exists between deceptive idols and the real God! Idol worshipers wrongly attribute superhuman powers to their objects of veneration. No amount of reverence, though, can impart miraculous abilities to these idols. On the other hand, Jehovah God can rightly refer to his long-dead servants as though they were living, for he is able to give them life again.

"Jehovah is in truth God," and he never deceives his people.—Jeremiah 10:10.

How comforting it is to know that in Jehovah's due time, the dead who are in his memory will be resurrected—restored to life! (Acts 24:15) Yes, resurrection involves a restoration of the life pattern of the individual. Remembering the life patterns of dead ones and resurrecting them is not a problem for the Creator, who is infinite in wisdom and power. (Job 12:13; Isaiah 40:26) Since Jehovah abounds in love, he will use his perfect mem-



From the standpoint of Jehovah and Jesus, Lazarus was only asleep

ory to bring the dead back to life on a paradise earth with the personality they had before they died.—1 John 4:8.

As the end of Satan's world nears, the future certainly is bright for those trusting in the true God. (Proverbs 2:21, 22; Daniel 2:44; 1 John 5:19) The psalmist assures us: "Just a little while longer, and the wicked one will be no more; . . . but the meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace." (Psalm 37:10, 11) Crime and violence will be things of the past. Justice will prevail, and economic hardships will be gone. (Psalm 37:6; 72:12, 13; Isaiah 65:21-23) All traces of social, racial, tribal, and ethnic

discrimination will be erased. (Acts 10:34, 35) Wars and weapons of warfare will be no more. (Psalm 46:9) At that time "no resident will say: 'I am sick.'" (Isaiah 33:24) Everyone will enjoy perfect and vibrant health. (Revelation 21:3, 4) Paradise on earth will soon become a reality. Jehovah has purposed it!

Yes, all Bible-based hopes are soon to be fulfilled. Why should we allow ourselves to be deceived by what is idolized in this world when we can place our full confidence in Jehovah? It is his will that "all sorts of men should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth." (1 Timothy 2:3, 4) Rather than committing our time and resources to the illusions, or mirages, of this system of things and its gods, let us grow in knowledge of the God who is real and trust in him with all our heart.—Proverbs 3:1-6; John 17:3.

Paradise on earth will soon become a reality



'Preaching the Word' Brings Refreshment

HE WAS a perfect man on an important mission. So effective were his methods of instruction that "the crowds were astounded at his way of teaching." (Matthew 7:28) He was also a tireless preacher. His time, energy, and resources were directed primarily toward preaching about God's Kingdom. Indeed, Jesus Christ traveled the length and breadth of his homeland as an incomparable preacher and teacher.—Matthew 9:35.

Jesus' urgent mission was to preach "the good news of the kingdom" to his contemporaries and to groom his disciples for the same work on a global scale. (Matthew 4:23; 24:14; 28:19, 20) Would the weight of their preaching commission and its urgency as well as the sheer immensity of such activity crush his imperfect and limited followers?

Absolutely not! After instructing his disciples to pray to "the Master of the harvest," Jehovah God, for more workers, Jesus sent them out to educate the people. (Matthew 9:38; 10:1) He then offered his assurance that the responsibility of being his follower—including the commission to preach—would bring genuine relief and comfort. Said Jesus: "Come to me, . . . and I will refresh you."—Matthew 11:28.

A Source of Joy

How compassionate, loving, and kind that invitation is! It expresses Jesus' sensitive concern for his followers. His disciples do find refreshment in fulfilling their responsibility to preach "the good news" of God's Kingdom. This brings them real joy and satisfaction.—John 4:36.



Long before Jesus was on the earth, the Scriptures stressed that joy must be a feature of sacred service to God. This was made clear when the psalmist sang: "Shout in triumph to Jehovah, all you people of the earth. Serve Jehovah with rejoicing. Come in before him with a joyful cry."

(Psalm 100:1, 2) Today, people of all nations exult in Jehovah, and their expressions of praise are like the triumphant shout of a victorious army. Those truly devoted to God come into his presence "with a joyful cry." And that is fitting, indeed, for Jehovah is "the happy God," who wants his servants to find joy in carrying out their dedication to him.—1 Timothy 1:11.

Refreshed Ministers

How is it possible that hard work in the field ministry does not wear us down but is actually refreshing? Well, doing Jehovah's work was like reinvigorating food for Jesus. He said: "My food is for me to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work."—John 4:34.

Similarly, zealous Christian preachers today find joy as they "preach the word." (2 Timothy 4:2) Connie, a middle-aged Christian woman who spends more than 70 hours a month in the preaching work, states: "After engaging in the ministry, I have a feeling of satisfaction and a sense of well-being, even if I am tired at the end of the day."

What if the Kingdom message is not favorably received? Connie continues: "Regardless of the response, never has there been a time when I have regretted sharing in the ministry. Besides knowing that I am doing what pleases Jehovah, I consider it a pleasure to speak about the truth

because as I do so, the marvelous hope from the Bible is reinforced in my heart."

Others find that helping people to acquire accurate knowledge of God gives meaning to their own life. Meloney, a young woman who regularly spends more than 50 hours a month in the preaching work, remarks: "The ministry is refreshing because it gives my life direction and purpose. Personal problems and everyday stresses fade into the background when I share in the service."

Millicent, another zealous minister of Jehovah's Witnesses, comments: "The ministry gives value to each day I spend talking to others about God's purpose for mankind and explaining how Paradise will be restored on earth. It makes Jehovah real to me on a daily basis and gives me peace and a measure of inward happiness that cannot be attained by any other means."

Refreshed Recipients

Kingdom preachers certainly are refreshed by the Christian ministry, and those who accept the life-giving message are comforted by it. Although a schoolteacher in Portugal had been trained by nuns and priests, she felt that her spiritual needs were not filled by her church. Her Bible questions remained unanswered. A regular Bible study conducted by one of Jehovah's Witnesses brought her one Scriptural insight after another. The schoolteacher

was excited. "I eagerly awaited my study every Wednesday," she said, "as my questions were answered one by one with convincing Bible proof." Today, this woman is a dedicated servant of Jehovah, and she too is refreshing others with Bible truth.

It is clear, then, that Jehovah's Witnesses are not overwhelmed by the seriousness of their preaching commission or the vastness of their global territory. Neither apathy nor opposition dampen their spirits. They have vigorously applied themselves to fulfill their Kingdom-preaching commission. They share the good news with people wherever they may be found—at a truck stop in the United States (1), at a Korean airport (2), in the Andes (3), or at a London market (4). Jesus' present-day followers joyfully carry on their rewarding work worldwide. And true to his promise,

he has refreshed them and has used them to refresh many others.—Revelation 22:17.



JEHOVAH —THE SUPREME EXAMPLE OF GOODNESS

"Laud Jehovah of armies, for Jehovah is good!"—JEREMIAH 33:11.

JEHOVAH GOD is good in the absolute sense. "O how great his goodness is!" exclaimed the prophet Zechariah. (Zechariah 9:17) Indeed, goodness is reflected in everything God did to prepare the earth for our enjoyment. (Genesis 1:31) We will never be able to comprehend all the intricate laws that God put into operation when he created the universe. (Ecclesiastes 3:11; 8:17) But the little we do know moves us to praise God for his goodness.

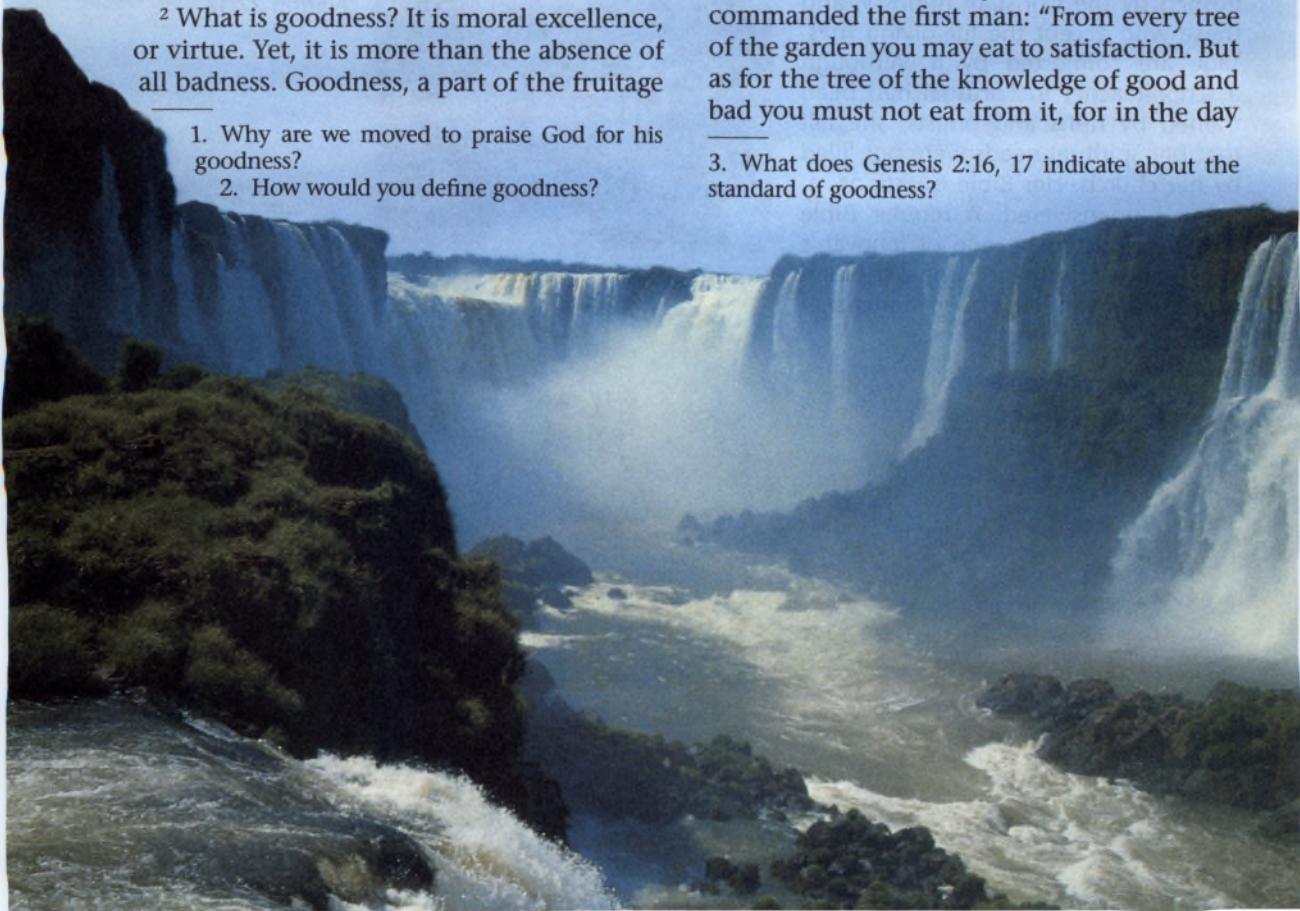
² What is goodness? It is moral excellence, or virtue. Yet, it is more than the absence of all badness. Goodness, a part of the fruitage

1. Why are we moved to praise God for his goodness?
2. How would you define goodness?

of the spirit, is a positive quality. (Galatians 5:22, 23) We display goodness when we perform good and beneficial acts toward others. In this system of things, what is considered good in some circles may be viewed as bad in others. If we are to enjoy peace and happiness, however, there must be one standard of goodness. Who can rightly establish this standard?

³ God sets the standard of goodness. At the outset of human history, it was Jehovah who commanded the first man: "From every tree of the garden you may eat to satisfaction. But as for the tree of the knowledge of good and bad you must not eat from it, for in the day

3. What does Genesis 2:16, 17 indicate about the standard of goodness?



you eat from it you will positively die." (Genesis 2:16, 17) Yes, humans need to look to their Creator for the knowledge of good and bad.

Unmerited Manifestation of Goodness

⁴ Mankind's prospect for eternal happiness in perfection was threatened when Adam sinned and refused to acknowledge God's right to set standards of goodness. (Genesis 3: 1-6) Before Adam's offspring were born as inheritors of sin and death, however, God foretold the coming of a perfect Seed. Actually addressing "the original serpent," Satan the Devil, Jehovah declared: "I shall put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed. He will bruise you in the head and you will bruise him in the heel." (Revelation 12:9; Genesis 3: 15) It was Jehovah's purpose to redeem sinful mankind. In an unmerited manifestation of goodness, Jehovah has indeed made such a provision for the salvation of those who exercise faith in his dear Son's ransom sacrifice.

—Matthew 20:28; Romans 5:8, 12.

⁵ Because of Adam's sin, of course, we have inherited a bad inclination of the heart. (Genesis 8:21) Happily, though, Jehovah helps us to display a measure of goodness. Continuing in the things learned from his precious holy writings not only 'makes us wise for salvation' and 'equips us for every good work' but also enables us to do what is good in his eyes. (2 Timothy 3:14-17) To benefit from Scriptural instruction and to display goodness, though, we must have the attitude of the psalmist who sang: "You [Jehovah] are good and are doing good. Teach me your regulations."—Psalm 119:68.

4. What has God done for mankind since Adam sinned?

5. Though we have inherited a bad inclination of the heart, why can we display a measure of goodness?

Jehovah's Goodness Is Extolled

⁶ King David of ancient Israel acknowledged God's goodness and sought His guidance. "Good and upright is Jehovah," said David. "That is why he instructs sinners in the way." (Psalm 25:8) Divine instruction given to the Israelites included ten important laws—the Ten Commandments—written on two stone tablets and kept in a sacred chest called the ark of the covenant. After David had the Ark brought to Israel's capital city, Jerusalem, Levites sang a song that included



this expression: "Give thanks to Jehovah, you people, for he is good, for to time indefinite is his loving-kindness." (1 Chronicles 16:34, 37-41) How delightful it must have been to hear those words from the lips of Levite singers!

⁷ The same words of praise were given prominence during the dedication of Jehovah's temple built by David's son Solomon. After the ark of the covenant had been placed in the Most Holy of the newly built temple, the Levites began praising Jehovah, "for he is good, for to time indefinite is his loving-kindness." On that occasion the temple was miraculously filled with a cloud symbolizing

6. After King David had the ark of the covenant brought to Jerusalem, Levites sang a song containing what expression?

7. What happened after the Ark was brought into the Most Holy and following Solomon's prayer of dedication?

Jehovah disciplined his ancient people because they did not live up to their expressions of praise

Jehovah's glorious presence. (2 Chronicles 5:13, 14) Following Solomon's dedication prayer, "fire itself came down from the heavens and proceeded to consume the burnt offering and the sacrifices." At the sight of this, "all the sons of Israel . . . immediately bowed low with their faces to the earth upon the pavement and prostrated themselves and thanked Jehovah, 'for he is good, for his loving-kindness is to time indefinite.'" (2 Chronicles 7:1-3)

After a 14-day festival, the Israelites returned to their homes "joyful and feeling good at heart over the goodness that Jehovah had performed toward David and toward Solomon and toward Israel his people." —2 Chronicles 7:10.

⁸ Sadly, the Israelites did not continue to live in harmony with their songs of praise to God. In time, the people of Judah 'glorified Jehovah merely with their lips.' (Isaiah 29:13) Rather than conform to God's standards of goodness, they began practicing what was bad. And of what did their badness consist? Why, they became guilty of idolatry, immorality, oppression of the poor, and other gross sins! As a result, Jerusalem was destroyed and inhabitants of Judah were taken captive to Babylon in 607 B.C.E.

^{8, 9. (a)} Although the Israelites praised Jehovah for his goodness, what course did they eventually pursue? (b) What was foretold for Jerusalem through Jeremiah, and how was that prophecy fulfilled?



A faithful remnant returned to Jerusalem

⁹ God thus disciplined his people. Through the prophet Jeremiah, however, he foretold that in Jerusalem there would yet be heard the voice of those saying: "Laud Jehovah of armies, for Jehovah is good; for to time indefinite is his loving-kindness!" (Jeremiah 33:10, 11) And so it proved to be. After a 70-year desolation of the land, in 537 B.C.E., a Jewish remnant returned to Jerusalem. (Jeremi-

ah 25:11; Daniel 9:1, 2) They rebuilt the altar at the temple site on Mount Moriah and began to offer sacrifices there. The temple's foundation was laid in the second year of their return. What a thrilling time! "When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of Jehovah," said Ezra, "then the priests in official clothing, with the trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph, with the cymbals, stood up to praise Jehovah according to the direction of David the king of Israel. And they began to respond by praising and giving thanks to Jehovah, 'for he is good, for his loving-kindness toward Israel is to time indefinite.'"—Ezra 3:1-11.

¹⁰ A similar expression of praise regarding Jehovah's goodness appears in a number of psalms. Among them is Psalm 118, sung by Israelite households to conclude the Passover observance. That psalm begins and ends with the words: "Give thanks to Jehovah, you people, for he is good; for his loving-kindness is to time indefinite." (Psalm 118:1, 29) These may well have been the last words of praise that Jesus Christ sang with his faithful apostles on the night before his death in 33 C.E.—Matthew 26:30.

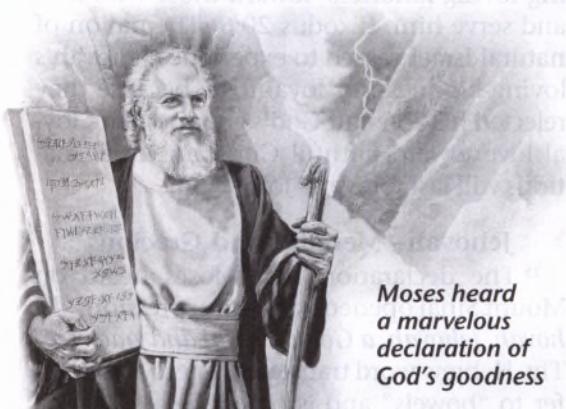
"Cause Me to See, Please, Your Glory"

¹¹ A link between Jehovah's goodness and his loving-kindness was first made centuries before Ezra's time. Shortly after the Israelites worshiped the golden calf in the wilderness and the wrongdoers had been executed, Moses petitioned Jehovah: "Cause me to see, please, your glory." Recognizing that Moses could not see His face and yet live, Jehovah said: "I myself shall cause all my goodness to pass before your face."—Exodus 33:13-20.

10. With what significant expression does Psalm 118 begin and end?

11, 12. When Moses got a glimpse of God's glory, what declaration did he hear?

¹² Jehovah's goodness passed before Moses' face the next day on Mount Sinai. At that time, Moses got a glimpse of God's glory and heard this declaration: "Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness and truth, preserving loving-kindness for thousands, pardoning error and transgression and sin, but by no means will he give exemption from punishment, bringing punishment for the



Moses heard a marvelous declaration of God's goodness

error of fathers upon sons and upon grandsons, upon the third generation and upon the fourth generation." (Exodus 34:6, 7) These words indicate that Jehovah's goodness is related to his loving-kindness and other aspects of his personality. Considering these will help us to display goodness. Let us first consider the quality mentioned twice in this marvelous declaration of God's goodness.

"A God . . . Abundant in Loving-Kindness"

¹³ "Jehovah [is] a God . . . abundant in loving-kindness . . . , preserving loving-kindness for thousands." The Hebrew word translated "loving-kindness" also means "loyal love." It is the only quality listed twice in God's declaration to Moses. How fitting, since Jehovah's

13. In the declaration of God's goodness, what quality is mentioned twice, and why is this fitting?

dominant quality is love! (1 John 4:8) The well-known expression of praise to Jehovah "for he is good, for his loving-kindness is to time indefinite" highlights this quality.

¹⁴ One manifestation of Jehovah's goodness is that he is "abundant in loving-kindness." This is especially evident in the tender care that he gives his dedicated, faithful human servants. (1 Peter 5:6, 7) As Witnesses of Jehovah can testify, he is 'preserving loving-kindness' toward those who love and serve him. (Exodus 20:6) The nation of natural Israel ceased to experience Jehovah's loving-kindness, or loyal love, because they rejected his Son. But God's goodness and loyal love toward faithful Christians of all nations will last forever.—John 3:36.

Jehovah—Merciful and Gracious

¹⁵ The declaration that Moses heard on Mount Sinai opened with the expression: "*Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious.*" The Hebrew word translated "mercy" may refer to "bowels" and is closely related to the term for "womb." Mercy therefore involves feelings of tender compassion that are deep inside a person. But mercy includes more than genuine pity. It should motivate us to do something to relieve the suffering of others. For instance, loving Christian elders see the need to be merciful toward fellow believers, 'showing mercy with cheerfulness' when this is appropriate.—Romans 12:8; James 2:13; Jude 22, 23.

¹⁶ God's goodness is also manifested in his graciousness. A gracious person is "markedly considerate of another's feelings" and displays an 'endearing kindness especially to inferiors.' Jehovah is the finest example of

14. Who especially enjoy God's goodness and loving-kindness?

15. (a) The declaration heard by Moses on Mount Sinai opened with what expression?
(b) What does mercy involve?

16. Why can it be said that Jehovah is gracious?

graciousness in dealing with his faithful servants. By means of angels, for instance, God graciously strengthened the aged prophet Daniel and informed the virgin girl Mary of the privilege she was to have of giving birth to Jesus. (Daniel 10:19; Luke 1:26-38) As Jehovah's people, we surely appreciate his gracious way of appealing to us through the pages of the Bible. We praise him for this manifestation of his goodness and seek to be gracious in our dealings with others. When those having spiritual qualifications readjust a fellow believer "in a spirit of mildness," they try to be gentle, gracious.—Galatians 6:1.

A God Slow to Anger

¹⁷ "*A God...slow to anger.*" Those words call attention to yet another manifestation of Jehovah's goodness. Jehovah patiently puts up with our failings and gives us time to overcome serious weaknesses and make spiritual advancement. (Hebrews 5:12-6:3; James 5:14, 15) God's patience also benefits those who have not yet become his worshipers. They still have time to respond to the Kingdom message and repent. (Romans 2:4) Although Jehovah is patient, however, his goodness sometimes moves him to express his anger, as he did when the Israelites worshiped the golden calf at Mount Sinai. God's anger will soon be expressed in an even greater way when he brings an end to Satan's wicked system.—Ezekiel 38:19, 21-23.

¹⁸ "*Jehovah [is] a God . . . abundant in . . . truth.*" How Jehovah differs from human leaders, who make big promises and then fail to live up to them! By contrast, Jehovah's worshipers can rely on everything said in his inspired Word. Since God is *abundant* in truth, we can always trust in his promises. In his goodness, our heavenly Father unfailing-

17. Why are we grateful that Jehovah is "slow to anger"?

18. With regard to truth, what contrast is there between Jehovah and human leaders?

ly answers our prayers for spiritual truth by providing it in abundance.—Psalm 43:3; 65:2.

¹⁹ “*Jehovah [is] a God . . . pardoning error and transgression and sin.*” In his goodness, Jehovah is ready to forgive repentant sinners. We surely are very grateful that our loving heavenly Father has made provision for forgiveness through Jesus’ sacrifice. (1 John 2: 1, 2) We are happy, indeed, that all who exercise faith in the ransom are able to enjoy a favored relationship with Jehovah, with the hope of endless life in his promised new world. What outstanding reasons to praise Jehovah for displaying goodness toward mankind!—2 Peter 3:13.

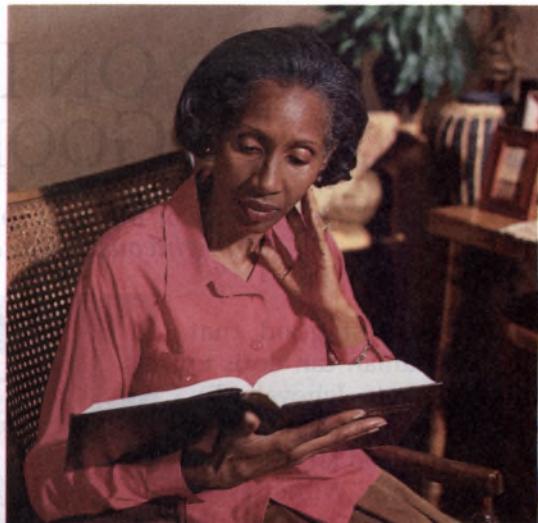
²⁰ “*By no means will [Jehovah] give exemption from punishment.*” This is actually another reason to laud Jehovah for his goodness. Why? Because a vital aspect of goodness is that it does not condone badness in any way. Moreover, “at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with his powerful angels,” vengeance will be brought “upon those who do not know God and those who do not obey the good news.” They “will undergo the judicial punishment of everlasting destruction.” (2 Thessalonians 1:6-9) The surviving worshipers of Jehovah will then be able to enjoy life to the full without being disturbed by un-

19. What outstanding display of goodness has Jehovah shown toward repentant sinners?

20. What proof do we have that God does not condone badness?

How Would You Answer?

- What is goodness?
- What Scriptural expression highlights the goodness of God?
- What are some manifestations of Jehovah’s goodness?
- Why should we imitate Jehovah’s example of goodness?



Jehovah’s goodness is seen in the way he appeals to us through the pages of the Bible

godly men, who are “without love of goodness.”—2 Timothy 3:1-3.

Imitate Jehovah’s Goodness

²¹ We unquestionably have many reasons for praising and thanking Jehovah for his goodness. As his servants, should we not do our utmost to display this quality? Yes, for the apostle Paul urged fellow Christians: “Become imitators of God, as beloved children.” (Ephesians 5:1) Our heavenly Father consistently displays goodness, and so should we.

²² If we are wholeheartedly dedicated to Jehovah, undoubtedly we keenly desire to imitate his goodness. Because we are descendants of sinful Adam, we do not find it easy to do what is good. In the following article, however, we will see why it is possible for us to display goodness. We will also consider various ways in which we can and should imitate Jehovah—the supreme example of goodness.

21. Why should we display goodness?

22. What will we consider in the next article?

KEEP ON DISPLAYING GOODNESS

"The fruitage of the light consists of every sort of goodness and righteousness and truth."—EPHESIANS 5:9.

THE greatest good that any human can do is to bring glory to Jehovah. Today, millions are doing this by praising God for his goodness. As loyal Witnesses of Jehovah, we wholeheartedly agree with the psalmist who sang: "How abundant your goodness is, which you have treasured up for those fearing you!"—Psalm 31:19.

² Reverential fear of Jehovah motivates us to praise him for his goodness. It also moves us to 'laud Jehovah, bless him, and make known the glory of his kingship.' (Psalm 145:10-13) That is why we share zealously in the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making work. (Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20) Of course, our preaching activity must be backed up by good conduct. Otherwise, we could bring reproach on Jehovah's holy name.

³ Many people profess to worship God, but their conduct does not conform to the standards set forth in his inspired Word. Regarding some who were not living up to their claims of doing good, the apostle Paul wrote: "Do you, . . . the one teaching someone else, not teach yourself? You, the one preaching 'Do not steal,' do you steal? You,



the one saying 'Do not commit adultery,' do you commit adultery? . . . 'The name of God is being blasphemed on account of you people among the nations'; just as it is written."—Romans 2:21, 22, 24.

⁴ Instead of bringing reproach upon Jehovah's name, we strive to glorify it by our good conduct. This has a positive effect on those outside the Christian congregation. For one thing, it helps us to silence our opposers. (1 Peter 2:15) More important, our good conduct draws people to Jehovah's organization, opening the way for them to bring him glory and to gain everlasting life.—Acts 13:48.

⁵ Since we are imperfect, how can we avoid conduct that could dishonor Jehovah and stumble truth seekers? Indeed, how can we succeed in displaying goodness?

A Fruit of the Light

⁶ As dedicated Christians, we enjoy something that helps us to avoid "unfruitful works that belong to the darkness." These include such God-dishonoring works as lying, stealing, abusive speech, unwholesome talk about

4. Our good conduct has what effect?
5. What questions should we now consider?
6. What are some of "the unfruitful works that belong to the darkness," but what fruitage should be evident among Christians?

1. How do millions now show that they agree with Psalm 31:19?

2, 3. What could happen if our disciple-making work was not backed up by good conduct?

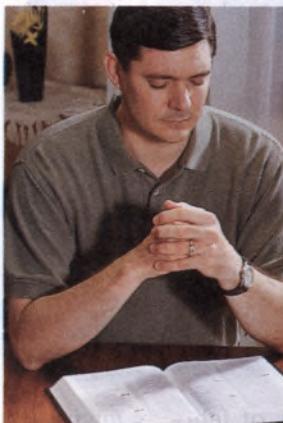
sex, shameful conduct, obscene jesting, and drunkenness. (Ephesians 4:25, 28, 31; 5:3, 4, 11, 12, 18) Instead of involving ourselves in such works, we “go on walking as children of light.” The apostle Paul says that “the fruitage of the light consists of every sort of goodness and righteousness and truth.” (Ephesians 5: 8, 9) So it is by walking in the light that we are able to keep on displaying goodness. But what kind of light is this?

⁷ Despite our imperfections, we can display goodness if we walk in spiritual light. “Your word is a lamp to my foot, and a light to my roadway,” sang the psalmist. (Psalm 119:105) If we want to keep on displaying “the fruitage of the light” through “every sort of goodness,” we must consistently take advantage of spiritual light that is found in God’s Word, is carefully examined in Christian publications, and is regularly discussed at our meetings for worship. (Luke 12:42; Romans 15:4; Hebrews 10:24, 25) We also need to give special attention to the example and teachings of Jesus Christ, “the light of the world” and “the reflection of [Jehovah’s] glory.”—John 8:12; Hebrews 1:1-3.

A Fruit of the Spirit

⁸ Spiritual light unquestionably helps us to display goodness. In addition, we are able to manifest this quality because we are led by God’s holy spirit, or active force. Goodness is part of “the fruitage of the spirit.” (Galatians 5:22, 23) If we yield to the guidance of Jehovah’s holy spirit, it will produce in us its wonderful fruit of goodness.

7. What must we do to continue displaying the fruit of goodness?
8. Why can we display goodness?



God’s Word and his holy spirit help us to display goodness

⁹ Our keen desire to please Jehovah by displaying the spirit’s fruit of goodness should move us to act in harmony with Jesus’ words: “Keep on asking, and it will be given you; keep on seeking, and you will find; keep on knocking, and it will be opened to you. For everyone asking receives, and everyone seeking finds, and to everyone knocking it will be opened. Indeed, which father is there among you who, if his son asks for a fish, will perhaps hand him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he also asks for an egg, will hand him a scorpion? Therefore, if you, although being [imperfect and thus comparatively] wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more so will the Father in heaven give holy spirit to those asking him!” (Luke 11:9-13) Let us follow Jesus’ counsel by praying for Jehovah’s spirit so that we can keep on displaying its fruit of goodness.

“Keep Doing Good”

¹⁰ With spiritual light from God’s Word and with the help of God’s holy spirit, we can “keep doing good.” (Romans 13:3) Through regular Bible study, we learn more and more about how we can imitate Jehovah’s goodness. The preceding article considered aspects of God’s goodness cited in the declaration to Moses recorded at Exodus 34:6, 7, where we read: “Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness and truth, preserving loving-kindness for thousands, pardoning error and transgression and sin, but by no means will he give exemption from punishment.” A

9. How can we act in harmony with Jesus’ words recorded at Luke 11:9-13?
10. What aspects of Jehovah’s goodness are cited at Exodus 34:6, 7?



Displaying goodness brings fine results



closer look at these manifestations of Jehovah's goodness will help us to "keep doing good."

¹¹ This divine declaration alerts us to the need to imitate Jehovah by being *merciful* and *gracious*. "Happy are the merciful," said Jesus, "since they will be shown mercy." (Matthew 5:7; Luke 6:36) Aware that Jehovah is *gracious*, we are moved to be gracious and pleasant in our dealings with others, including those to whom we preach. This harmonizes with Paul's counsel: "Let your utterance be always with graciousness, seasoned with salt, so as to know how you ought to give an answer to each one."—Colossians 4:6.

¹² Since God is *slow to anger*, our desire to "keep doing good" moves us to put up with the minor failings of fellow believers and to

11. How should we be affected by the knowledge that Jehovah is merciful and gracious?

12. (a) Since God is slow to anger, how should we act toward others? (b) Jehovah's loving-kindness motivates us to do what?

focus on their good qualities. (Matthew 7:5; James 1:19) Jehovah's *loving-kindness* motivates us to display loyal love, even under the most trying circumstances. This certainly is very desirable.—Proverbs 19:22.

¹³ Since our heavenly Father is '*abundant in truth*', we seek to 'recommend ourselves as his ministers by truthful speech.' (2 Corinthians 6:3-7) Among seven things detestable to Jehovah are "a false tongue" and "a false witness that launches forth lies." (Proverbs 6:16-19) So our desire to please God has moved us to 'put away falsehood and speak truth.' (Ephesians 4:25) May we never fail to manifest goodness in this vital way.

¹⁴ God's declaration to Moses should also motivate us to be forgiving, for Jehovah is *ready to forgive*. (Matthew 6:14, 15) Of course, Jehovah does bring punishment upon unrepentant sinners. We must therefore uphold his standards of goodness when it comes to maintaining the spiritual cleanliness of the congregation.—Leviticus 5:1; 1 Corinthians 5:11, 12; 1 Timothy 5:22.

"Keep Strict Watch"

¹⁵ To pursue a course of goodness despite the evil that surrounds us, we need to be filled with God's spirit and watch how we walk. Accordingly, Paul urged Christians in Ephesus: "Keep strict watch that how you walk is not as unwise but as wise persons, buying out the opportune time for yourselves, because the days are wicked. On this account cease becoming unreasonable, but

13. How should we act to reflect that Jehovah is '*abundant in truth*'?

14. Why should we be forgiving?

15, 16. How can Paul's counsel recorded at Ephesians 5:15-19 help us to continue practicing goodness?

go on perceiving what the will of Jehovah is. Also, do not be getting drunk with wine, in which there is debauchery, but keep getting filled with spirit, speaking to yourselves with psalms and praises to God and spiritual songs, singing and accompanying yourselves with music in your hearts to Jehovah." (Ephesians 5:15-19) This counsel surely is appropriate for us in these critical last days.—2 Timothy 3:1.

¹⁶ If we are to continue practicing goodness, we must keep strict watch that we walk as those exercising godly wisdom. (James 3:17) We must avoid gross sins and must be filled with holy spirit, allowing ourselves to be guided by it. (Galatians 5:19-25) By applying the spiritual instruction imparted at Christian meetings, assemblies, and conventions, we can keep on doing what is good. Paul's words to the Ephesians may also remind us that at most of our gatherings for worship, we benefit from our heartfelt singing of "spiritual songs"—many of them dealing with spiritual qualities, such as goodness.

¹⁷ What about our fellow believers who are unable to attend Christian meetings regularly because of a serious chronic illness? They may feel crushed because they cannot always worship Jehovah in direct association with their spiritual brothers and sisters. But they can be sure that Jehovah understands their circumstances, will keep them in the light, will give them his holy spirit, and will help them to keep on doing what is good.—Isaiah 57:15.

¹⁸ Pursuing a course of goodness requires that we guard our associations and turn away from those who are "without love of goodness." (2 Timothy 3:2-5; 1 Corinthians 15:33) Applying such counsel helps us to avoid

17. If their circumstances prevent them from attending meetings regularly, of what may seriously ill Christians be certain?

18. What will help us to pursue a course of goodness?

"grieving God's holy spirit" by acting contrary to its leadings. (Ephesians 4:30) Moreover, we are helped to do what is good if we develop close ties to those whose lives give evidence that they are lovers of goodness and are led by Jehovah's holy spirit.—Amos 5:15; Romans 8:14; Galatians 5:18.

Goodness Brings Fine Results

¹⁹ Walking in spiritual light, yielding to the direction of God's spirit, and watching how we walk will help us to avoid what is bad and to "keep doing good." In turn, this can produce fine results. Consider the experience of Zongezile, one of Jehovah's Witnesses in South Africa. On his way to school one morning, he checked the amount of his small savings. The slip from the automatic teller machine erroneously reflected an excess of R42,000 (\$6,000, U.S.). A bank security guard and others urged him to withdraw the money and deposit it for himself in another bank. Only the Witness couple with whom he lived commended him for not withdrawing any of the money.

²⁰ On the next working day, Zongezile reported the mistake to the bank. It was discovered that he had an account number that was similar to that of a rich businessman who had mistakenly deposited funds in the wrong account. Amazed that Zongezile had not spent any of this money, the businessman asked him: "What is your religion?" Zongezile explained that he was one of Jehovah's Witnesses. He was warmly commended by the bank officials, who said: "We wish that all people were as honest as Jehovah's Witnesses." Truly, acts of honesty and goodness can cause others to glorify Jehovah.—Hebrews 13:18.

²¹ Acts of goodness do not have to be dramatic in order to have a fine effect. To illustrate: A young Witness who serves as a

19-21. Relate experiences that show the effect of displaying goodness.

full-time evangelizer on one of the islands of Samoa had to go to the local hospital. People were waiting to see a doctor, and the Witness noticed that an elderly woman next to him was very sick. He arranged for the lady to take his turn so that she could get attention sooner. On a later occasion, the Witness met this elderly woman at the market. She remembered him and his good deed at the hospital. "Now I know that Jehovah's Witnesses truly love their neighbor," she said. Whereas she had formerly been unresponsive to the Kingdom message, the goodness shown her by the Witness had a fine effect. She accepted the offer of a home Bible study and began to take in knowledge of God's Word.

²² Very likely, you can relate experiences that show the value of displaying goodness. One especially significant way to "keep doing good" is to have a regular share in proclaiming the good news of God's Kingdom. (Matthew 24:14) May we keep on zealously engaging in this privileged activity, realizing that this is one way to do good, especially to those who respond favorably. Most important, our ministry and good conduct glorify Jehovah, the very fountainhead of goodness.—Matthew 19:16, 17.

Continue to "Work What Is Good"

- ²³ Our ministry unquestionably is a good
-
22. What is one especially significant way to "keep doing good"?
 23. Why is the Christian ministry a good work?

How Would You Answer?

- How can we accomplish the greatest good?
- Why is goodness called a 'fruit of the light'?
- Why is goodness called a 'fruit of the spirit'?
- Our good conduct has what effect?

work. It can result in salvation for us and for those who listen to the Bible's message and thus get on the road leading to everlasting life. (Matthew 7:13, 14; 1 Timothy 4:16) When we are faced with decisions, then, the desire to do what is good may well cause us to ask ourselves: 'How will this decision affect my Kingdom-preaching activity? Is the course I am considering really good? Will it help me to assist others to accept the "everlasting good news" and come into a close relationship with Jehovah God?' (Revelation 14:6) Great happiness will result from a decision that promotes Kingdom interests.—Matthew 6:33; Acts 20:35.

²⁴ Let us never underestimate the beneficial effects of goodness. We can keep on displaying this quality by supporting the Christian congregation and doing what we can to look after its interests and welfare. Surely we do good when we regularly attend and participate in Christian meetings. Our very presence encourages fellow worshipers, and our well-prepared comments build them up spiritually. We also do good when we use our resources to maintain the Kingdom Hall and when we help to take proper care of it. (2 Kings 22:3-7; 2 Corinthians 9:6, 7) Indeed, "as long as we have time favorable for it, may we work what is good toward all, but especially toward those related to us in the faith."

—Galatians 6:10.

²⁵ We cannot anticipate every situation that would call for a display of goodness. As we face new challenges, then, let us seek light from the Scriptures, pray for Jehovah's holy spirit, and do our very best to carry out his good and perfect will. (Romans 2:9, 10; 12:2) We can be confident that Jehovah will bless us abundantly as we keep on displaying goodness.

24, 25. What are some ways to do good in the congregation, and of what can we be sure if we keep on displaying goodness?

BROTHERS WHO DEVELOPED

Different Attitudes

DECISIONS made by parents inevitably affect their children. That is as true today as it was back in the garden of Eden. The rebellious course of Adam and Eve had a profound impact on all mankind. (Genesis 2:15, 16; 3:1-6; Romans 5:12) Yet, each of us has the opportunity to build a good relationship with our Creator if we choose to do so. This is illustrated by the account of Cain and Abel, the first brothers in human history.

There is no Scriptural record that God spoke to Adam and Eve after their expulsion from Eden. Still, Jehovah did not conceal himself from their sons. From their parents, Cain and Abel no doubt learned what had occurred. They could see "the cherubs and the flaming blade of a sword that was turning itself continually to guard the way to the tree of life." (Genesis 3:24) These men also witnessed the truthfulness of God's declaration that sweat and pain would become the realities of life.—Genesis 3:16, 19.

Cain and Abel must have been aware of Jehovah's words to the serpent: "I shall put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed. He will bruise you in the head and you will bruise him in the heel." (Genesis 3:15) What Cain and Abel knew about Jehovah would enable them to develop an approved relationship with him.

Reflecting upon Jehovah's prophecy and his qualities as a loving Benefactor must have generated in Cain and Abel a desire for divine approval. But to what extent would they

cultivate that desire? Would they respond to their innate desire to worship God and develop their spirituality to the point of exercising faith in him?—Matthew 5:3.

The Brothers Bring Offerings

In due course, Cain and Abel brought offerings to God. Cain presented fruits of the ground, and Abel offered firstlings of his flock. (Genesis 4:3, 4) These men may then have been about 100 years old, for Adam was 130 when he became father to his son Seth. —Genesis 4:25; 5:3.

Their offerings indicated that Cain and Abel recognized their sinful state and desired God's favor. They must have given at least some thought to Jehovah's promise concerning the serpent and the Seed of the woman. Just how much time and effort Cain and Abel devoted to developing an approved relationship with Jehovah is not stated. But God's reaction to their offerings provides insight into each one's inmost thoughts.

Some scholars suggest that Eve viewed Cain as the "seed" that would destroy the serpent, for at Cain's birth she said: "I have produced a man with the aid of Jehovah." (Genesis 4:1) If Cain shared this belief, he was totally wrong. On the other hand, faith accompanied Abel's sacrifice. Thus, "by faith Abel offered God a sacrifice of greater worth than Cain."—Hebrews 11:4.

Abel's spiritual insight and Cain's lack of it was not the only difference between these brothers. There was a difference in attitudes

THE FARMER AND THE SHEPHERD

Cultivating the earth and caring for the animals were some of Adam's original God-given responsibilities. (Genesis 1:28; 2:15; 3:23) His son Cain took up farming, and Abel became a shepherd. (Genesis 4:2) Since mankind's food consisted exclusively of fruits and vegetables until after the Flood, however, why raise sheep? —Genesis 1:29; 9:3, 4.

In order to thrive, sheep need human care. Abel's occupation testifies that man raised these domestic animals from the outset of mankind's history. The Scriptures do not say whether the earliest humans used animal milk as a source of food, but even those with a vegetarian diet can use sheep's wool. And when sheep die, their hides serve

useful purposes. To clothe Adam and Eve, for instance, Jehovah provided "long garments of skin."—Genesis 3:21.

In any case, it seems reasonable to assume that Cain and Abel originally cooperated with each other. They produced something that others in the family needed in order to keep clothed and well fed.

as well. Therefore, "while Jehovah was looking with favor upon Abel and his offering, he did not look with any favor upon Cain and upon his offering." It is likely that Cain gave little more than superficial thought to his offering and merely went through the motions of presenting it. But God did not approve of mere formal worship. Cain had developed a bad heart, and Jehovah discerned that he had wrong motives. Cain's reaction to the rejection of his sacrifice reflected his true spirit. Rather than seeking to set matters straight, "Cain grew hot with great anger, and his countenance began to fall." (Genesis 4:5) His bearing betrayed wicked ideas and intentions.

Warning and Reaction

Knowing Cain's attitude, God counseled him, saying: "Why are you hot with anger and why has your countenance fallen? If you turn to doing good, will there not be an exaltation? But if you do not turn to doing good, there is sin crouching at the entrance, and for you is its craving; and will you, for your part, get the mastery over it?"—Genesis 4:6, 7.

There is a lesson in this for us. In effect, sin lurks at the door ready to devour us. Yet, God has given us free will, and we can choose to do what is right. Jehovah invited Cain to "turn to doing good," but He did not force him to change. Cain chose his own way.

The inspired account continues: "After that Cain said to Abel his brother: 'Let us go over into the field.' So it came about that while they were in the field Cain proceeded to assault Abel his brother and kill him." (Genesis 4:8) Cain thus became a disobedient, cold-blooded murderer. He showed not even an inkling of remorse when Jehovah asked: "Where is Abel your brother?" Rather, in a callous and insolent manner, Cain retorted: "I do not know. Am I my brother's guardian?" (Genesis 4:9) That outright lie and denial of responsibility exposed Cain's heartlessness.

Jehovah cursed Cain and banished him from the environs of Eden. The curse already pronounced on the ground apparently would be more pronounced in Cain's case, and the earth would not respond to his cultivating of it. He was to be a wanderer and

a fugitive in the earth. Cain's complaint at the severity of his sentence expressed anxiety that his brother's murder would be avenged upon him, but he manifested no sincere repentance. Jehovah set up "a sign" for Cain—likely a solemn decree known and observed by others and intended to prevent his being killed out of revenge.

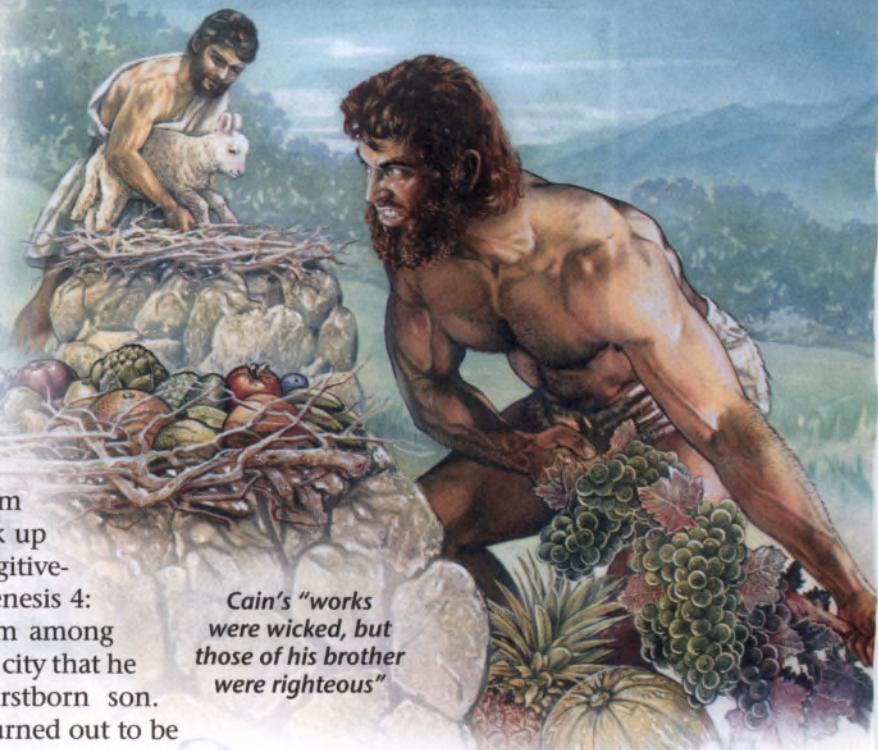
—Genesis 4:10-15.

Cain then "went away from the face of Jehovah and took up residence in the land of Fugitiveness to the east of Eden." (Genesis 4:16) Having taken a wife from among his sisters or nieces, he built a city that he named after Enoch, his firstborn son. Cain's descendant Lamech turned out to be as violently inclined as his ungodly forebear. But the family line of Cain was wiped out in the Flood of Noah's day.—Genesis 4:17-24.

Lessons for Us

We can learn from the accounts of Cain and Abel. The apostle John exhorts Christians to love one another, "not like Cain, who originated with the wicked one and slaughtered his brother." Cain's "works were wicked, but those of his brother were righteous." John also states: "Everyone who hates his brother is a manslayer, and you know that no manslayer has everlasting life remaining in him." Yes, the way we treat our fellow Christians has a bearing on our relationship with God and our life prospects. We cannot be hating any of our fellow believers and yet enjoy God's approval.—1 John 3:11-15; 4:20.

Cain and Abel must have had a similar upbringing, but Cain lacked faith in God. In fact, he manifested the spirit of the Devil, the original 'manslayer and father of the lie.'



*Cain's "works
were wicked, but
those of his brother
were righteous"*

(John 8:44) Cain's course shows that we all have a choice, that those who choose to sin separate themselves from God, and that Jehovah executes his judgments upon the unrepentant.

Abel, on the other hand, exercised faith in Jehovah. Indeed, "by faith Abel offered God a sacrifice of greater worth than Cain, through which faith he had witness borne to him that he was righteous, God bearing witness respecting his gifts." Although the Scriptures do not contain one word uttered by Abel, by means of his exemplary faith, he "yet speaks."—Hebrews 11:4.

Abel was the first in a long line of integrity keepers. His blood, which 'cried out to Jehovah from the ground,' has not been forgotten. (Genesis 4:10; Luke 11:48-51) If we exercise faith as Abel did, we too can enjoy a precious and lasting relationship with Jehovah.



TEACHERS of GOD'S WORD

Urged to Fulfill Their Commission

HUNDREDS of thousands of teachers convened for instruction in recent months. Starting last May, they gathered at hundreds of "Teachers of God's Word" District Conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses throughout the world. The delegates were urged to teach themselves, to become even better qualified, and to fulfill their commission as teachers.

Did you attend one of these conventions? If so, you no doubt appreciated the fine spiritual food that was dispensed at these gatherings for worship of the true God, Jehovah. Why not join us now in reviewing the instructive program of the convention?

Day One—Inspired Scriptures Beneficial for Teaching

The convention chairman warmly welcomed the delegates with the talk "Be Instructed, You Teachers of God's Word." Learning from Jehovah, the "Grand Instructor," Jesus Christ became the Great Teacher. (Isaiah 30:20; Matthew 19:16) If we are to progress as teachers of God's Word, we too must be instructed by Jehovah.

Next came the part "Kingdom Teaching Bears Fine Fruitage." Through interviews with experienced teachers of God's Word, the joys and blessings of disciple-making were highlighted.

A motivating talk entitled "Stirred by 'the



Magnificent Things of God'" followed. In the first century, "magnificent things" involving God's Kingdom roused people to action. (Acts 2:11) We too can stir people to action by declaring such "magnificent things" as Scriptural teachings about the ransom, the resurrection, and the new covenant.

The next talk encouraged all to "Find Delight in Jehovah's Righteousness." (Psalm 35:27) We are helped to pursue righteousness by learning to love what is righteous and hate what is bad, by studying the Bible, by actively resisting spiritually harmful influences, and by cultivating humility. Such steps will help to protect us from unwholesome associations, from the world's materialistic values, and from immoral and violent entertainment.

The keynote address, entitled "Completely Equipped as Teachers of God's Word," reminded us that Jehovah makes us his qualified ministers by means of his Word, his holy spirit, and his earthly organization. With regard to the use of God's Word, the speaker ad-

monished us: "Our goal is to lift the Bible's message off the printed page and impress it upon the hearts of our listeners."

The first symposium of the convention was entitled "Teaching Ourselves While Teaching Others." The opening part stressed that we should observe the same high standard of Christian morality that we teach to others. The next part admonished us to 'handle the word of the truth aright.' (2 Timothy 2:15) To teach ourselves, regular and diligent personal study of the Bible is vital, no matter how long we have served God. The final part of the symposium showed that the Devil is watching us, looking for such attitudes as pride, an independent spirit, a sense of self-importance, jealousy, envy, bitterness, resentment, and faultfinding. However, if we vigorously oppose the Devil, he will flee from us. In order to oppose him, we need to draw close to God.—James 4:7, 8.

The timely talk "Abhor the Worldly Plague of Pornography" showed us how to cope with that debasing threat to our spirituality.

The prophet Habakkuk said of Jehovah: "You are too pure in eyes to see what is bad; and to look on trouble you are not able." (Habakkuk 1:13) We should "abhor what is wicked." (Romans 12:9) Parents were admonished to monitor their children's Internet use and television viewing. Those who are drawn to pornography, the speaker said, should get help from a spiritually mature friend. It would also be helpful to meditate on and commit to memory such scriptures as Psalm 97:10; Matthew 5:28; 1 Corinthians 9:27; Ephesians 5:3, 12; Colossians 3:5; and 1 Thessalonians 4:4, 5.

The next talk, "Let the Peace of God Safeguard You," comforted us with the assurance that when we are weighed down by anxiety, we can throw our burden upon Jehovah. (Psalm 55:22) If we pour our hearts out in prayer, Jehovah will give us "the peace of God," the calmness and inner tranquillity that result from our precious relationship with him.—Philippians 4:6, 7.

The first day ended on an especially happy note with the talk "Jehovah Beautifies His People With Light," which explained the fulfillment of Isaiah chapter 60. Amid the world's present darkness, "foreigners"—the emerging great crowd of sheeplike ones—enjoy Jehovah's light together with the anointed Christians. Referring to verses 19 and 20, the speaker explained: "Jehovah will not 'set'

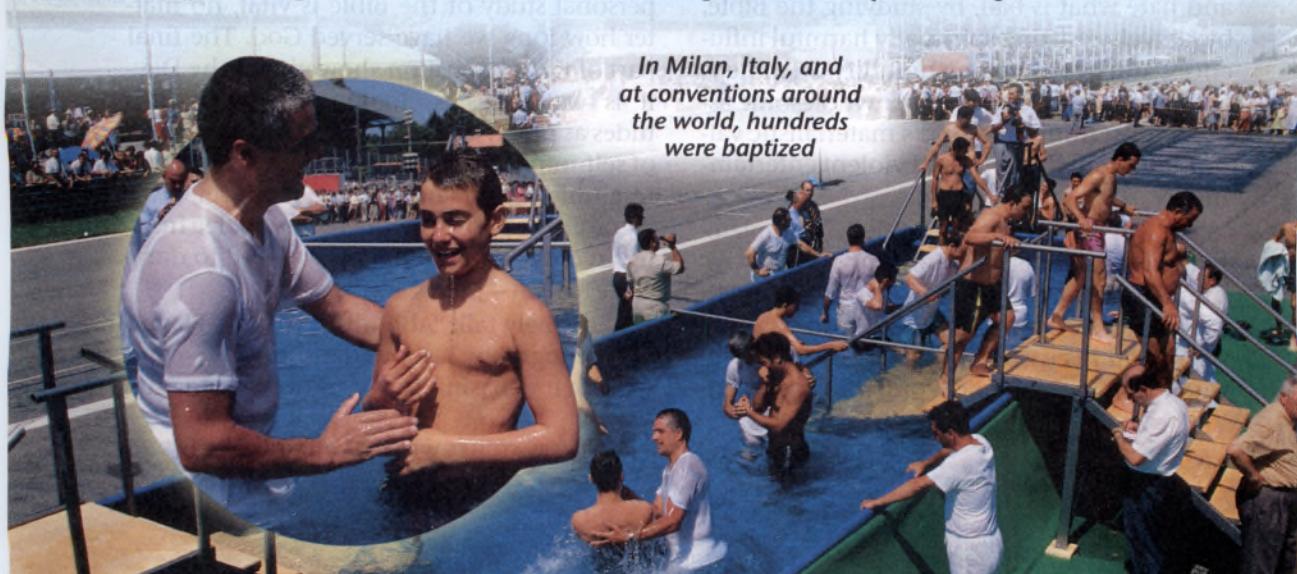
like the sun or 'wane' like the moon. He will continue to beautify his people by shedding light upon them. What a wonderful assurance that is for us as we live through the last days of this bedarkened world!" At the conclusion of the talk, the speaker announced the release of the book *Isaiah's Prophecy—Light for All Mankind*, Volume Two. Have you finished reading this new publication?

Day Two—Adequately Qualified to Teach Others

Following the discussion of the day's text on the second day, we listened with keen interest to the convention's second symposium, "Ministers Through Whom Others Become Believers." The speakers on this three-part symposium highlighted each of the three stages involved in helping people to become believers—spreading the Kingdom message, cultivating interest found, and teaching interested ones to observe what Christ commanded. With the help of interviews and reenactments, we were able to see specifically how we can teach others to become disciples.

The next part was on the theme "Add to Your Endurance Godly Devotion." The speaker showed that what ultimately counts is our 'enduring to the end.' (Matthew 24:13) We should use all of God's provisions—prayer, personal study, meetings, and the minis-

In Milan, Italy, and at conventions around the world, hundreds were baptized



try—to build godly devotion. We need to prevent worldly desires and activities from encroaching on or destroying our godly devotion.

How can people who are toiling and loaded down find refreshment today? The talk "Finding Refreshment Under Christ's Yoke" answered that question. Jesus kindly invited his followers to come under his yoke and to learn from him. (Matthew 11:28-30) We can come under Jesus' yoke by closely following his example of living a simple, balanced life. The main points of this presentation were enhanced by interviews with those who have simplified their lives.

One of the highlights of large gatherings of Jehovah's Witnesses is the baptism of newly dedicated servants of God. The brother delivering the discourse "Baptism Leads to Greater Teaching Privileges" warmly welcomed the baptismal candidates and invited them to have a share in greater privileges of service. Newly baptized teachers of God's Word who meet Scriptural qualifications can reach out for various responsibilities in the congregation.

"Imitate the Great Teacher" was the title of the first talk that afternoon. For aeons in heaven, Jesus carefully observed and imitated his Father, thus becoming the Great Teacher. While on earth, he used effective teaching techniques, such as penetrating questions and simple but vivid illustrations. Jesus based his teaching on God's Word and spoke with enthusiasm, warmth, and authority. Were we not moved to imitate the Great Teacher?

Another stirring talk, "Are You Willing to Serve Others?", encouraged us to imitate Jesus' example in serving other people. (John 13:12-15) The speaker directly urged qualified men to be like Timothy in seizing opportunities to assist others. (Philippians 2:20, 21) Parents were encouraged to imitate Elkanah and Hannah in helping their children to pur-

sue the full-time ministry. And young ones were admonished to imitate the examples of Jesus Christ and young Timothy by willingly giving of themselves. (1 Peter 2:21) We were also moved by the words of those who have taken advantage of opportunities to serve others.

The theme of the third symposium was "Benefit More Fully From Theocratic Education." The first speaker emphasized the importance of increasing our attention span. To accomplish that goal, we can start with short personal study sessions and try to lengthen them. He also encouraged the audience to look up scriptures and to take notes during the meetings. The second speaker alerted us to the need for holding fast to "the pattern of healthful words." (2 Timothy 1:13, 14) To protect ourselves from immoral media presentations, human philosophies, higher criticism, and apostate teachings, we must buy out time for personal study and for meeting attendance. (Ephesians 5:15, 16) The final speaker of the symposium highlighted the need for practicing the things learned so that we can benefit fully from theocratic education.—Philippians 4:9.

How excited we were to hear the talk "New Provisions for Our Spiritual Advancement"! We rejoiced to learn that a new book entitled *Benefit From Theocratic Ministry School Education* will be published soon. Our expectations ran high as the speaker outlined its

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Cleanliness—What Does It
Really Mean?

Learn a Lesson From Nicodemus

Are You Among Those Loved by God?

contents. Regarding the book's section containing a number of speech counsel points, he said: "This new textbook does not take a secular approach to presenting the 53 aspects of good reading, speaking, and teaching. The approach is based on Scriptural principles." The book will show how the prophets, Jesus, and his disciples demonstrated good teaching skills. Yes, this textbook and new features of the Theocratic Ministry School will certainly assist us to be better teachers of God's Word.

Day Three—Be Teachers in View of the Time

After a discussion of the day's text on the final day, all paid keen attention to the convention's last symposium, "Malachi's Prophecy Prepares Us for Jehovah's Day." Malachi prophesied approximately a hundred years after the Jews returned from Babylon. They had again drifted into apostasy and wickedness, dishonoring Jehovah's name by ignoring his righteous laws and by bringing blind, lame, and sick animals for sacrifice. Moreover, they were divorcing the wives of their youth, possibly to marry foreign women.

The first chapter of Malachi's prophecy assures us of Jehovah's love for his people. It highlights the need for having reverential fear of God as well as appreciation for sacred things. Jehovah expects us to give him our best, worshiping him out of unselfish love. Our sacred service should not be a mere formality, and we must render an account to God.

Applying the second chapter of Malachi to our day, the second symposium speaker asked: "Are we personally alert that 'no unrighteousness be found on our lips'?" (Malachi 2:6) Those taking the lead in teaching should be sure that what they say is soundly based on God's Word. We should hate such treachery as obtaining unjust divorces.—Malachi 2:14-16.

Speaking on the theme "Who Will Survive the Day of Jehovah?" the final speaker of the symposium helped to prepare us for Jehovah's day. "How comforting it is for Jehovah's servants to know that Malachi chapter 3, verse 17, is finding its major fulfillment upon them!" exclaimed the speaker. "It says: 'They will certainly become mine,' Jehovah of armies has said, 'at the day when I am

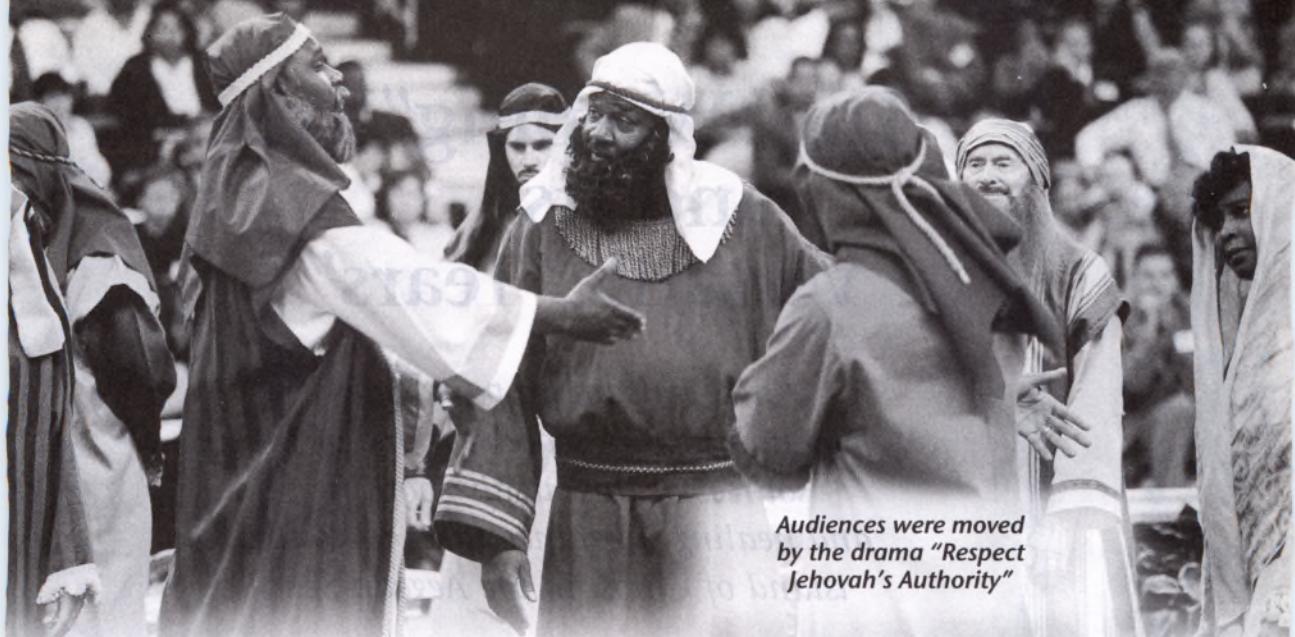
NEW PUBLICATIONS TO MEET SPECIAL NEEDS



Delegates to the "Teachers of God's Word" District Convention enthusiastically received two publications that should be very helpful in teaching Scriptural truth to people in certain parts of the world. The tract entitled *Do You Have an Immortal Spirit?* will be a handy tool in striking up conversations with those who live in lands where local languages make no distinction between "soul" and "spirit." The new tract clearly shows that a spirit force is different from a spirit creature and that people do not become spirit creatures when they die.

The brochure *A Satisfying Life—How to Attain It* was released at the end of the convention's second day. This brochure was prepared for the purpose of starting Bible studies with those who have no concept of a Creator having personality and of a divinely inspired book. Have you been able to use these new publications in your ministry?





*Audiences were moved
by the drama "Respect
Jehovah's Authority"*

producing a special property. And I will show compassion upon them, just as a man shows compassion upon his son who is serving him.''"

Another highlight of the convention was the full-costume drama "Respect Jehovah's Authority," which portrayed the sons of Korah. Despite their father's rebellious attitude toward Moses and Aaron, they remained loyal to Jehovah and his representatives. While Korah and his followers perished, Korah's sons survived. The following talk, "Loyally Submit to Godly Authority," applied the content of the drama to each of us. The speaker warned of six areas wherein Korah and his followers failed: not loyally supporting Jehovah's authority; letting pride, ambition, and jealousy get the best of them; focusing on the imperfections of those appointed by Jehovah; developing a complaining attitude; becoming dissatisfied with their privileges of service; and letting friendship or family ties take precedence over loyalty to Jehovah.

"Who Are Teaching All Nations the Truth?" was the theme of the public address. The truth that was discussed was, not truth in general, but the truth about Jehovah's purpose to

which Jesus Christ bore witness. The speaker considered the truth relating to beliefs, the truth pertaining to manner of worship, and the truth respecting personal conduct. By this comparison of the first-century Christians with Jehovah's Witnesses today, our conviction that 'God is really among us' was indeed strengthened.—1 Corinthians 14:25.

After a summary of the *Watchtower* study article for the week, all teachers of God's word in attendance were moved to action through the concluding talk, "Urgently Fulfilling Our Teaching Commission." A brief review of the program emphasized the importance of using the Scriptures in teaching, the ways in which we can become qualified teachers, and the need to have confidence in the truth that we teach others. The speaker admonished us to make 'our advancement manifest' and to 'pay constant attention to ourselves and to our teaching.'—1 Timothy 4:15, 16.

What a spiritual feast we enjoyed at the "Teachers of God's Word" District Convention! May we imitate our Grand Instructor, Jehovah, and our Great Teacher, Jesus Christ, in teaching others the word of God.



The “Weeping” Tree and Its Versatile “Tears”

'Take balsam for pain,' says Jeremiah 51:8. A search for one of the sources of this highly soothing and healing substance takes us to the island of Chios, in the Aegean Sea.

IN EARLY summer, farmers on Chios prepare for harvest in a very unusual way. After they sweep the ground, they make a flat base of white clay around shrublike evergreens called mastic trees.

The farmers then make incisions in the bark, causing the trees to “weep.” Pale “tears” of resin start to ooze out. After two or three weeks, the drops of resin coagulate and the farmers collect them, either directly from the trunk or from the clay surface below. These “tears,” called gum mastic, have been used to make balsam.

Before harvesting, however, patience and hard work are required. The twisted, gray tree trunks grow very slowly. It takes 40 to 50 years for a tree to reach full growth—normally a height of from six to ten feet.

Besides the labor of cutting the trunks and gathering the “tears,” further work is required to produce mastic. After farmers have collected the mastic “tears,” they

sift, wash, and sort these by size and quality. Later, the mastic is further cleaned and can then be put to many uses.

The History of a Precious Plant

The Greek word for “mastic” is related to a term that means “to gnash the teeth.” This name suggests that from ancient times, mastic resin has been used as a chewing gum to freshen the breath.

The oldest information on mastic comes from Herodotus, Greek historian of the fifth century B.C.E. Other ancient authors and physicians—including Apollodorus, Dioscorides, Theophrastus, and Hippocrates—mentioned mastic’s medical uses. Although mastic trees grow all along the Mediterranean Coast, since about 50 C.E., the production of mastic has been confined almost exclusively to Chios. And mastic was the main interest of those who conquered Chios, from the Romans to the Genoese to the Ottomans.

Versatile Mastic

Ancient Egyptian physicians used mastic to treat various ailments, including diarrhea



Chios



*Harvesting
the mastic*



and arthritis. They also used it as incense and in mummification. The mastic tree may have been one of the sources of the 'balsam of Gilead,' noted in the Bible for its medicinal properties and for its use in cosmetics and embalming. (Jeremiah 8:22; 46:11) It has even been suggested that the tree yielding stacte, one of the ingredients of the perfumed holy incense limited to sacred use, might belong to the family of mastic trees. —Exodus 30:34, 35.

Today, mastic is found in varnishes that protect oil paintings, furniture, and musical instruments. It is used as an insulating and

Chios and harvest line art: Courtesy of Korais Library; all others: Kostas Stamoulis

waterproofing material, and it is considered one of the best color stabilizers for clothing dyes and artists' paints. Mastic has also been used in adhesives and in leather tanning. Because of its pleasant aroma and other properties, mastic is used in soap, cosmetics, and perfumes.

Mastic has been described in 25 official lists of medicines worldwide. It is still frequently used in traditional medicines in the Arab world. Mastic also finds a place in dental cements and in the internal coatings of drug capsules.

As a source of balsam, the versatile "tears" of the "weeping" mastic tree have soothed and healed for centuries. For good reason, then, Jeremiah's prophecy says: "Take balsam for pain."

*Mastic "tears" are
carefully collected*



Fine Works Glorify God

BY THEIR fine conduct and exemplary works, true Christians bring glory to God. (1 Peter 2:12) This can be seen by what has happened in Italy in recent years.

In September 1997, a violent earthquake struck various parts of the Marche and Umbria regions, damaging almost 90,000 homes. Groups of Jehovah's Witnesses immediately offered assistance to fellow believers and others. Trailers, sleeping bags, stoves, generators, and other needed items were provided. These relief efforts did not go unnoticed.

The newspaper *Il Centro* reported: "The first to arrive with relief supplies in the affected areas were the Jehovah's Witnesses of Raseto [in the province of Teramo] . . . Besides meeting periodically to pray, those faithful to Jehovah work in a practical way, holding out a hand to those who suffer, without worrying about which religion they belong to."

The mayor of Nocera Umbra, one of the towns most affected, wrote to the Witnesses: "I thank you heartily and personally for the aid offered to the population of Nocera. I am sure that I express the sentiments of all its citizens." Additionally, the Ministry of the Interior awarded the *Congregazione Cristiana dei Testimoni di Geova* (Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses) a certificate of merit and a medal "to testify to the work done and diligence offered in activities connected with the emergency that arose



in the Umbria and Marche regions."

In October 2000, a disastrous flood struck the Piedmont region in northern Italy. Again, the Witnesses promptly went into action to help provide relief. These fine works also did not go unnoticed. The Piedmont Region awarded them a plaque for their "precious voluntary work in support of the Piedmontese population affected by the flooding."

Jesus Christ instructed his disciples: "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your fine works and give glory to your Father who is in the heavens." (Matthew 5:16) Jehovah's Witnesses happily glorify God, not themselves, by performing "fine works" that help their neighbors spiritually and in other ways.