The WATCHTOWER

"Have Tender Affection For One Another"

FEBRUARY 1, 1977

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

The WATCHTOWER

February 1, 1977
Vol. 98, Number 3

A watchtower enables a person to see far into the distance and announce to others what is coming. Can a magazine serve similarly in our day? Yes, from its first issue (July 1879) onward, *The Watchtower*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses, has done just that.

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We know that many sincere persons would appreciate a discussion of these things in their own home with a qualified person. One of Jehovah's Witnesses will be glad to call on you free of charge. To arrange for this, simply write the publishers of this magazine or contact Jehovah's Witnesses locally.

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IN THIS ISSUE

Does It Really Matter Who Your Friends Are? 67
"Have Tender Affection for One Another" 69
Telling Forth Jehovah's Praise in the Islands 72
Insight on the News 77
What Did the Wise Man Mean? 78
Do You Appreciate God's Patience Toward You? 80
Continue to Be Patient 85
The "Old Testament"—Necessary for Christians Today? 90
1977 District Assemblies of Jehovah's Witnesses 94
New Method of Conducting *Watchtower* Study 96

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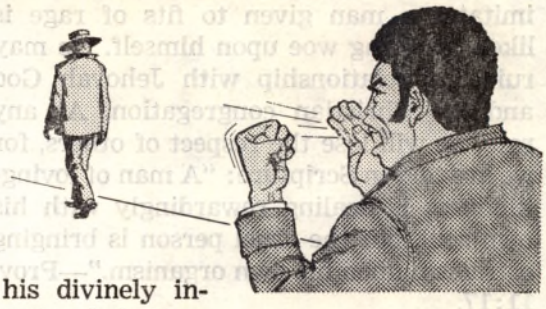
Does It Really Matter Who Your Friends Are?

PLACE a bar of gold next to one of silver. Press them together and let them remain in that position for several months. Then separate the bars. What will you see? Why, some gold will be found in the silver bar and some silver in the bar of gold! What has happened?

Close contact has played its part. "Particles of gold and silver have migrated across the boundary," says Selig Hecht in *Explaining the Atom.*

This well illustrates a Bible principle. A person's associates have an effect on him or her. Just as the silver could be seen in the gold bar and the gold in the silver bar after they had been in contact for a period of time, so your friends have an effect on you.

The Christian apostle Paul stated: "Do not be misled. Bad associations spoil useful habits." (1 Cor. 15:33) Paul was discussing the resurrection hope. As the strongest proof that God can raise the dead to life again, the apostle cited the resurrection of Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. 15: 12-32) But some men were denying this doctrine. Therefore, the apostle remarked that "bad associations spoil useful habits" and then urged: "Wake up to soberness in a righteous way and do not practice sin, for some are without knowledge of God. I am speaking to move you to shame." (1 Cor. 15:34) Those to whom Paul wrote his divinely inspired letter needed to wake up from the stupor of wrong doctrine, which was misleading certain ones and causing spiritual sickness and death. And why was this happening? Because some were associating with advocates of false doctrine.



Clearly, then, it really matters who your friends are. A person can be affected detrimentally in a spiritual way by those he chooses as his friends. However, this proves true in other matters as well.

The wise man Solomon said: "Do not have companionship with anyone given to anger; and with a man having fits of rage you must not enter in." Why? "That you may not get familiar with his paths and certainly take a snare for your soul." (Prov. 22:24, 25) Companionship with a person who is given to fits of anger can make an individual become just like him. This proves to be a snare, for it leads to involvement in arguments, sin and various unfavorable consequences.

Hence, a person's friends can affect him in more than one way. Not only can they have a bad effect on him spiritually; they can also induce him to manifest very undesirable personality traits. Both of these things can ruin a Christian's life.

On the one hand, associating with ad-

vocates of false doctrine and accepting their views can result in loss of a favored relationship with God and may lead to expulsion from the Christian congregation as an apostate. On the other hand, the person who yields to bad influences and imitates a man given to fits of rage is likely to bring woe upon himself. He may ruin his relationship with Jehovah God and the Christian congregation. At any rate, he will lose the respect of others, for we are told in Scripture: "A man of loving-kindness is dealing rewardingly with his own soul, but the cruel person is bringing ostracism upon his own organism."—Prov. 11:17.

Further, an individual may be led into a course of foolishness or calamity because he keeps company with unwise persons. Said Solomon: "He that is walking with wise persons will become wise, but he that is having dealings with the stupid ones will fare badly."—Prov. 13:20.

Here the Hebrew word for "stupid" does not merely denote one's lacking knowledge. Rather, it implies that the "stupid ones" are insensible to moral truth. They are ungodly persons. Accordingly, it is said in Proverbs 13:19: "It is something detestable to the *stupid ones* to turn away from bad." Obviously, a godly person would not want the ways of such ungodly "stupid ones" to 'rub off' on him.

The Christian wisely heeds the implied advice in the words, "he that is walking with wise persons will become wise." (Prov. 13:20) These "wise persons" are not specifically identified here. Elsewhere, however, we are told: "The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom." (Ps. 111:10) Hence, worshipers of the true God, those properly 'fearing Jehovah,' are really the wise ones with whom a person does well to associate.

What a contrast there is between associating with the ungodly and having companionship with those pursuing true worship! Whereas a teacher of false doctrine can lead a person to spiritual ruin, association with godly people in studying the Bible is spiritually strengthening. —Prov. 11:9.

Moreover, whereas one's association with a man "given to anger" can harm one's personality, friendship with individuals fearing Jehovah will have good effects. In what way? In that he will be stimulated to cultivate the fruits of God's spirit, those truly Christian qualities of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness and self-control.—Gal. 5: 22, 23.

Just as a person's friends and associates have a profound effect upon him, so too a close personal relationship with Jehovah God as His dedicated servant has a deep effect upon one, and always for one's good. Furthermore, his modestly 'walking with God' in this way results in happiness. (Mic. 6:8) The inspired psalmist declared: "*Happy* is everyone fearing Jehovah, who is walking in his ways."—Ps. 128:1.

There certainly is no danger of developing undesirable traits from walking with God, for "Jehovah is righteous; he does love righteous acts." (Ps. 11:7) By means of His Word and holy spirit, God imparts wisdom to those desiring it, and they become truly wise. Moreover, the consequences are pleasant indeed. "For," says the wise man, "to the man that is good before him he [Jehovah God] has given wisdom and knowledge and rejoicing."—Eccl. 2:26.

Yes, it *really* matters who your friends are. They affect you, even as gold and silver, in close contact, affect each other. How wise, then, it is to avoid bad associates and to seek the company of godly persons! Especially desirable is a close, friendly relationship with Jehovah, who 'gives wisdom, knowledge and rejoicing.'

"Have Tender Affection For One Another"

LISA was a very rebellious teen-ager—running with a rough crowd and dabbling in drugs. She stole her unbelieving father's tranquilizers and wrote letters to her friends defaming her Christian mother who tried to correct her.

Finally, Lisa's mother asked the elders of the local congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses to meet with the girl. How did Lisa feel about this? "I was sure that all they were going to do was to tell me how bad I was. My father, who is not interested in the Bible, told me to go ahead and meet with them and then tell them to 'get off my back!'"

Yet what was the outcome? Lisa relates: "Instead of their being mean, they were very, very kind. Was I surprised! They told me the reason that my mother counseled me so many times was simply because she loved me. They didn't say things like I thought they were going to. They had a very understanding way about them. The love that the elders showed resulted in my reviewing my associations and behavior."

Obviously, those elders convinced the girl of their genuine concern. They had the 'spirit' of Paul's counsel in Romans chapter 12: "Let your love be without hypocrisy. . . . In *brotherly love* have *tender affection* for one another." —Verses 9 and 10.

But how can we likewise display this spirit of kindness and affection? To what depth of feeling is the Bible here urging us? These are vital questions, for Jesus stated that *the mark* of his true disciples would be the love that they would have for one another.—John 13: 34, 35.

NOTE TO THE READER
You might enjoy reading the 12th chapter of Romans before considering this material.

WHAT IS THIS "TENDER AFFECTION"?

It is important to realize that the "tender affection" Paul encouraged at Romans 12:10 is not merely surface politeness. The Greek word *philóstorgos* there translated "have tender affection" means 'having love for affection,' being close in warm intimacy. Bible scholars note that it is the kind of love frequently expressed between children and parents. Does this not fit Jesus' statement that true Christians would gain 'brothers, sisters, mothers and children' from within the congregation?—Mark 10:29, 30.

Too, Jesus set us a fine example. He perfectly reflected the qualities of his Father, Jehovah, who is "very tender in affection and merciful." (Jas. 5: 11) The apostle Paul, who imitated Jesus Christ, revealed such tender affection in dealing with fellow believers. He writes at

1 Thessalonians 2:7 of 'cherishing' them as a "nursing mother" does her children—truly a picture of tenderness. And apparently this resulted in their having deep affection for Paul. The Ephesus elders, in a final farewell to him, wept and "fell upon Paul's neck and tenderly kissed him." (Acts 20:17, 36, 37) No, this was not like the farewell to a cold commanding general reviewing the troops. It was that of men of the same 'family'; they were brothers. —Matt. 23:8.

Many Christian men and women know that for the words "brother" and "sister" to be meaningful, they should strive to increase their affection for fellow believers. They appreciate too that for this to be 'love free from hypocrisy,' there must be a *genuine growth* in affection. But some may ask, how is this motivated? How can we improve at demonstrating our brotherly love?

Valuable answers to such questions are found in the setting or context of Paul's urging us to show tender affection.

"BELONGING . . . TO ONE ANOTHER"

Early in Romans chapter 12 the apostle explains that the members of the Christian congregation 'belong to one another.' They are interdependent—they need one another. (Verse 5) He then supports this by mentioning several of the gifts given to different brothers within the congregational body, since "the members do not all have the same function." Together, all combined, the congregation makes up a whole or complete instrument that Jehovah can use to carry out his work on earth. —Verses 4, 6-8.

How, you might ask, do these facts affect our having tender affection? Well, if we do not see how much we need one another, we will probably fail to develop the feelings that Paul goes on to admonish us to have. However, recognizing our common need, both to assist one another and to accomplish Jehovah's will, serves as an inducement to draw close to one another. It motivates appreciation for our brothers and a 'family feeling.'

But there are barriers to this feeling of interdependency and brotherhood. Paul strongly attacks two of these—egotism and pride: "I tell everyone there among you not to think more of himself than it is necessary to think." (Verse 3) The Phillip's translation says in verse 16: "Don't become snobbish but take a real interest in ordinary people."

Snobbery is a form of pride, an assumed superiority. It puts emphasis on social position, accepting class distinctions or racial prejudices, disdaining the poorly educated. All of these act as barriers to the godly view of needing and caring for one's brothers. Really, when grave difficulties come or severe persecution arises, who will stand by you? Will it not be those who truly love God and Christ no matter what their background?

But besides avoiding snobbish or prejudicial views, what are some positive ways to show our tender affection?

'IN SHOWING HONOR, TAKE THE LEAD'

Paul gave another valuable guideline when, immediately after exhorting us to have tender affection, he wrote: "In showing honor to one another take the lead." (Verse 10) This command was not just aimed at the elders, for Paul's letter was written "to all those who are in Rome as God's beloved ones." (Rom. 1:7) Thus *all* are to be honored and these, in turn, are to honor others.

We honor our brother by showing him deep respect and by taking him seriously. If he expresses himself on some matter that is of concern to him, we would not simply listen to be polite and then ignore his opinion, but we would sincerely give consideration to what he says.

Likewise, sisters in the congregation

should be honored, treated respectfully. This contrasts sharply with the view of worldly men today who often dominate women by physical strength and assertiveness. The Christian brother appreciates that he can be manly yet gentle, taking a firm but kindly lead.—1 Pet. 3:7.

The principle of showing honor applies also to the children. For example, at the Kingdom Hall, are they viewed as young Christians or simply as 'obstacles' that tend to get underfoot?

A traveling overseer visiting a congregation in a rural area observed an eight-year-old boy who did not have a Bible but was listening intently to his talk. After the meeting, the overseer made a point of speaking with this young member of a newly interested family. Asking the youngster to come outside with him, he located a Bible in the trunk of his car and made the boy a gift of it. The lad was impressed, not only with the gift, but with the way the overseer treated him and the interest shown in his continuing to learn and progress.

Over twenty years later, the boy, now an elder himself, has worn out several copies of the Bible since that first one, but he has never forgotten that overseer's loving manner. Actually, with all age groups, our showing an interest in them and honoring them builds affection.

"PEACEABLE WITH ALL"

However, to continue showing affection, another quality that Paul stressed in Romans chapter 12 is vital—the quality of peaceableness. Since the apostle directs the Christian to "be peaceable with all men," how much more so should he strive to keep peaceful relations with his brothers. (Verse 18) One might become very disappointed with a brother over a matter, one perhaps involving gossip or unreliableness in a business arrangement. Even after the problem is straightened out, it would be easy to withhold affection and adopt an attitude of "I'll never trust him again."

"Never" is a strong word. How grateful we all can be that Jesus did not feel embittered toward his disciples who abandoned him at the most crucial hour and say: "I'll never trust those men again!" To the contrary, after seeing their repentance, he forgave them, loved and even honored them. (John 20:19-23; Acts 2:4, 14) Considering Jesus' 'largeness of heart,' should we not be ready to forgive and trust again?

Yet even when motivated to show tender affection, how can we know what is really needed in a particular circumstance?

KNOWING WHAT TO GIVE

We may *want* to help our brother, out of our keen interest in his spiritual well-being, but what is the best course to take? Why is it that some brothers and sisters seem to have such perception as to the loving thing to do? Undoubtedly, they have learned how to apply Paul's counsel at Romans 12:15: "Rejoice with people who rejoice; weep with people who weep."

What quality is here described? It is empathy. This means more than a sympathetic concern for others. Rather, it involves "projecting" ourselves into their circumstances—"participation in another's feelings." Obviously, if we really feel deeply the pain, anxiety or joy of another, we are in a far better position to know what he needs at the time. Too, since our own feelings are now involved, we can sincerely express them to the other person.

To illustrate, suppose a brother with a large family loses his job. Certainly a sympathetic remark to the brother reflecting concern would not be wrong. But the empathetic person will go beyond words—feeling the anxiety of his brother—he will think in terms of positive action. Is there a job opening where he himself is presently employed? Does the family need food or

transportation to Christian meetings? Thus, empathy, because of the depth of feeling, naturally leads to affection and loving action.—1 John 3:18.

Hence, when we review the desirable qualities that Paul describes in Romans chapter 12, we find, not only the command to have tender affection, but also the motivation and aids to help us genuinely to grow in love. If we ponder on these—

appreciating our interdependency,
showing honor to one another,
maintaining peaceful relations with all,
developing empathy leading to right action—

do they not all encourage brotherly love and tender affection? And, of course, these same principles can build affection in any relationship—between marriage mates, parents and children, or others.

Further, the power of this love to touch lives, and to bring about a new society, is assured. It is demonstrated both in God's Word and in what is taking place right now in Kingdom Halls around the globe. The international 'family' of Jehovah's Witnesses encourages you to investigate the depth of its brotherhood. In a time when people are frequently without natural affection, the tender affection of true Christians shines as a bright light, a testimony to the wisdom and love of our One Father.

Telling Forth Jehovah's Praise

In The Islands

"FOR his law the islands themselves will keep waiting. Let them attribute to Jehovah glory, and in the islands let them tell forth even his praise." (Isa. 42:4, 12) Just how much "the islands" have been waiting for Jehovah's law was made clear during my recent visit to the Madeira and Azores Islands. I was serving as a circuit overseer of Jehovah's Witnesses, and was accompanied by my wife. Our itinerary included a total of eight islands, one of them to be visited by Jehovah's Witnesses for the first time. Would you like to join us as we relive some of the experiences of this eventful trip?

MADEIRA—FIRST STOP

An hour and a half after leaving Lisbon, Portugal, our jet banks over the island of Madeira and we get a breathtaking view of the rugged coastline with its steep cliffs jutting up from the sea. The twenty-five-kilometer (16-mile) ride from the airport to Funchal, the principal city, reveals this to be an island of sugarcane, banana trees, dense vegetation, rich flora and mountainsides neatly terraced with grapevines. The presence of many trees helps us to grasp the significance of the island's name, for the Portuguese word *madeira* means "wood." It is in this setting that we spend the next five weeks.

Our activity begins with visiting the

three congregations in Funchal, a city of some 45,000 inhabitants. Since the Portuguese revolution on April 25, 1974, great changes have been seen in this previously Catholic-dominated island. Our fellow Witnesses tell us that there is virtually a whole new field for witnessing. Many have awakened to the fact that church leaders "hobnobbed" with the old dictatorial regime. In marked contrast with greatly diminished church attendance, how encouraging to see the new Kingdom Hall (dedicated in June of 1975) filled to capacity! Already plans are under way to enlarge its facilities. The rapid growth of Jehovah's Witnesses here in recent years can be seen from this comparison: It took nineteen years to reach the first hundred active field workers, but in the next four years, the number more than doubled. The latest peak is 274 active Witnesses.

Our final week on Madeira Island is climaxed with a "circuit assembly." City officials have offered the Municipal Theater free of charge. On Sunday we are thrilled to have 448 in attendance. The management of the theater expresses amazement at the fine Bible instruction offered. One theater employee states: "The priests should have attended your meeting to see how to teach the Bible to their parishioners," and requests a weekly Bible study in his own home.

SÃO MIGUEL ISLAND, AZORES

Next morning our plane takes off for the archipelago of the Azores, in the North Atlantic Ocean. This group of nine islands is of volcanic origin (like Madeira Island). The climate is mild, with little seasonal change. Cattle raising and fruit growing are important industries, and the islands produce excellent cheese and a wide variety of fruit. Life for the 280,000 inhabitants of this archipelago has not been greatly affected by the changing times of this modern world.

Our first visit on São Miguel Island is with three "special pioneer" Witnesses working in the town of Ribeira Grande. The influence of the Catholic Church is immediately obvious. Most people are very suspicious of anyone who appears speaking about the Bible. So as we go from door to door many a householder makes fun of our activity, shouting for us to get out of town. Then, at one door, a dignified lady appears, asking who we are. "Jehovah's Witnesses," we answer. "Then please come in," she gestures politely. She tells us of being nasty to Jehovah's Witnesses in the past, then adds: "Although I am a practicing Catholic, I just do not know where the truth is anymore. The other day I asked the priest several questions and he could not answer *one* satisfactorily!"

She gets her Bible and an interesting conversation follows, only to be disturbed by neighbors who boldly enter her home. They show themselves visibly upset that she would listen to Jehovah's Witnesses. We are amazed when this God-fearing lady kindly tells her neighbors that she is learning many interesting things about God. She explains that there is no reason for them to be so prejudiced against God's Word, the Holy Bible, and that, for her part, she is determined to learn more. One by one, the neighbors begin to leave. What a joy to have started a home Bible study with this sheeplike woman who is truly hungering and thirsting for righteousness!

Shortly after leaving her home, we pass a crippled man sitting on a bench. He calls to us several times but we pay no attention, thinking he is ridiculing us as others have done. The man persists, though, shouting for us to speak with him, so finally we turn back. "What are you doing here?" he asks. As we explain the Kingdom message we see the man's eyes sparkle with interest. What a pleasant surprise for us on Sunday to welcome this man among the forty-two persons present at the public meeting! He has walked two kilometers (1.2 miles) on crutches to attend!

Our next visit is to Povoação, on the south side of the island some forty kilometers (25 miles) distant. What a pleasant trip, passing hot springs bubbling out boiling water from hidden cracks in the earth, and seeing tea plants and gentle mountain streams that abound with trout, black bass and perch! Upon our arriving, the "special pioneer" Witnesses there tell us that the local priest has been very disturbed by the interest some folk have shown in our studying the Bible with them. So he prohibited his parishioners to study the Bible with the Witnesses, saying that we do not believe in God or the Virgin Mary.

On the main street, I enter a barbershop and begin to speak with the owner. He listens closely, and soon everyone in the shop becomes attentive too. There is a taxi stand in front of the shop and shortly all the cab drivers come in to listen. Then some men from the café on the other side of the street join the growing crowd. With such a fine opportunity, I decide to improvise and end up by giving a "public talk" for close to one hour.

A lively discussion follows, with many of those present raising questions about the Bible. Every time someone enters the shop and begins talking, the others say: "Quiet! We are listening to an interesting explanation about the Bible. If you don't want to listen, then you can leave, because we want to hear what is being said." Finally satisfied with the Scriptural answers given, several make comments such as these: "This is not what the priest has been telling us!"; "He has been deceiving us!" and "He has not been preaching the truth!"

Later we are told that a group of at least thirty of those present at the barbershop discussion went to see the priest, complaining that he had not spoken the truth about Jehovah's Witnesses. Although there are threats of mob action against us on the part of some fanatical zealots, the week's activity is crowned with unexpected success. On Sunday there are fifty-two present to see the slide presentation entitled "A Close Look at the Churches."

Our visit on this island ends with a circuit assembly, the peak attendance being 240, and six persons are baptized. What a marvelous climax to a month of special activity on São Miguel Island!

ON TO TERCEIRA AND PICO ISLANDS

Terceira Island gets its name from the fact that it was the third island to be discovered in this archipelago, its name meaning "Third." It has a thriving fishing industry. There are two congregations here, one in the principal city of Angra do Heroismo and the other in Praia da Vitória. Average weekly attendance at meetings for the two congregations is over 200, and how everyone enjoys those meetings! One Witness who has an unbelieving husband and is the mother of six children regularly walks twelve kilometers (7 miles) to attend meetings. She has served as an "auxiliary pioneer" several times and during our visit she distributes 180 magazines in store-to-store activity.

We have no direct flight to our next island. So after landing at Horta, Faial Island, we must take a small boat across to Madalena, Pico Island. The boat trip lasts only half an hour, but it is unforgettable!

To say the least, the ocean is rough. One minute we are riding high the crest of a wave and the next we are in the very trough of the wave, eyes overwhelmed at the sight above. Getting off the boat is a real challenge. Our timing has to be just right. As the boat comes down on a wave and levels with the wharf—then we must jump!

Pico Island is rather unique. A moderately inclined plain rises from the shores, steeper and steeper, until it curves to a bell-shaped cone, some 2,350 meters (7,700 feet) above sea level. Here life is primitive. Many homes have no electricity. By hard toil, the people wrest food from the land and fish from the sea. Doors are always unlocked and everyone is very friendly.

There are two small congregations on this island. Some of the Witnesses regularly walk ten kilometers (six miles) to get to the meetings, and then they make the return trip home, following unlit footpaths. When it is rainy weather, they arrive thoroughly drenched, but they are used to it, so it does not hinder their enjoying a fine meeting.

Here also we visit the town of Lajes, which is isolated territory. Loaded with Bibles, books and magazines, we leave at five o'clock in the morning on the only bus that makes the trip daily. Our work begins as soon as we get off the bus. We are deeply moved when some householders plead with us, saying: "Please don't go today. We would like you to stay longer and help us to learn these marvelous things about God." That afternoon several persons come searching for us, as they were not at home in the morning when we visited their area. Oh, how they want the same Bible literature that their neighbors have obtained from us! In just one day we distribute 240 items of literature!

A circuit assembly program is adapted to the local circumstances on Pico Island, and the fifty-seven in attendance resolve to continue faithfully proclaiming the good news during whatever time is remaining of this "day of salvation."—2 Cor. 6:2.

FLORES AND FAIAL ISLANDS

We learn that there is air service only once every two weeks to Flores Island, but are happy that a boat is leaving right away for the port of Santa Cruz. Flores is a small island with abundant vegetation and several delightful cascades. Instead of stone walls dividing the farms, there are walls of hydrangeas! No wonder the island is called Flores, which means "Flowers"!

How did a congregation get established in this distant place? A zealous couple learned the truth in the United States and corresponded with relatives on this, their native island. In 1975 they returned expressly to help their friends to learn about God's provision for a new order. And how they have been blessed! There are already eight new Witnesses actively preaching the good news to the island's 5,500 inhabitants. An average of twenty persons attend meetings at their small Kingdom Hall.

Our return trip brings us again to Faial Island, where we now enjoy a short visit with the "special pioneer" Witnesses who have only recently begun working in this new assignment. Here are fine prospects for Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making, as a total of sixteen home Bible studies are being conducted already.

SAO JORGE ISLAND—VIRGIN TERRITORY

Now a special privilege awaits us. We will join a "special pioneer" couple in Angra do Heroismo and travel together by boat to inaugurate Kingdom service on São Jorge Island. This is a new assignment for the couple. We will share their joy in getting the work established.

Our boat leaves at eleven o'clock at night but no one can sleep as the waters are stormy. Taking advantage of the op-

portunity, we distribute free tracts to everyone on board. At breakfast time, we are surprised to have a Catholic priest join us at our table. Soon a lively conversation is under way about the Trinity and the immortality of the soul. Our discussion catches the attention of other passengers and before long there is a sizable audience listening as we show point by point what the Bible teaches. Suddenly the priest stands up, excuses himself by saying that he has to get some rest and quickly disappears.

At our destination, the first day of Kingdom service is truly productive. The four of us distribute a total of 343 books and other Bible literature. Best of all, several home Bible studies are started. An unusual experience takes place when an interested man eagerly accepts the book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life.* After reading several pages, he runs to tell his neighbors what a fine message the book contains, encouraging them to be sure to get a copy. Then after a short period, he reappears, requesting four copies of the book for his friends. It seems he has no sooner left us than he is back again, this time asking for five more copies for more of his *amigos.* This happens several times in the afternoon, and we think the first day of Kingdom service on this island truly has a fine start, as we already have a helper anxious to distribute the truth of God's Word.

Just how much the 'islands are crying for help' is again revealed as we visit people in the town of Velas. After I introduce myself at one door, the man says: "I have waited a long time for your visit! I read my Bible daily and I just knew that one day disciples of Jesus Christ would call at my door because the Bible says they would do such a work in these last days." Needless to say, we enjoy an excellent visit, and I start a home Bible study. He kindly offers me lunch, but this I have brought along. Later in the afternoon we meet again and this time he is carrying a huge sack of oranges. He says to me: "You couldn't accept my offer for lunch, so please accept this sack of oranges as a gift. Our Lord said that his disciples would not need to take along a purse or food pouch, for they are worthy of their wages." How we marvel at such genuine appreciation of the service we are engaged in!

LAST STOP—SANTA MARIA ISLAND

A young baptized Witness had been transferred from Portugal to work for his employer on this island. He zealously seized the opportunity to make known Jehovah's purposes among the population. When we arrive here, do we find him feeling lonely and abandoned? Rather, he is bubbling over to tell us one experience after another. He is conducting eighteen home Bible studies on weekends and evenings, and many months he spends 90 to 100 hours in Kingdom service, while holding down a full-time job at the same time. Our visit proves to be a grand "interchange of encouragement." (Rom. 1:12) Truthfully, his example is faith-strengthening to us.

It is hard to believe that our trip has come to an end. Firsthand we have seen the marvelous work Jehovah is accomplishing in these "last days." We deeply treasure the example that fifteen "special pioneer" Witnesses are setting, serving as real missionaries in the Azores Islands. A total of 267 publishers and pioneers have been conducting as many as 271 home Bible studies on these islands. How glad we are that we could follow the example of Paul and Barnabas in 'visiting the brothers, to see how they are' in all these islands where "the word of Jehovah" is now being published so zealously! (Acts 15:36)—*Contributed.*

Insight on the News

Priest: 'Sermons a Shame'

● The headline of an article by Catholic priest Andrew Greeley declared: "Catholic Sermons Are A Shame." The outspoken priest said that the quality of sermons by Catholic priests is shameful. He stated: "Preaching rotten sermons defrauds those who pay for the training and support of the clergy."

Greeley noted that "anger, despair, frustration, outrage—all are mild words to describe the feeling of the laity that they are being shortchanged." He warned the clergy that things have changed from the time when they "had a captive audience," when people felt that they had to come to church. "Now a lot of Catholics think differently, but the word that the captive audience has flown the coop apparently hasn't gotten around to many rectories yet," Greeley said. He added: "How dare a priest [himself] write these things about other priests? That's easy: it's true."

The prophet Jeremiah wrote about those who professed to be God's representatives: "Look! They have rejected the very word of Jehovah, and what wisdom do they have?" (Jer. 8:9) The result? God's Word says: "I will send a famine into the land, a famine, not for bread, and a thirst, not for water, but for hearing the words of Jehovah." (Amos 8:11) That situation now exists in Christendom, due primarily to the clergy's having abandoned the clear Word of God.

Reading to Your Children

● Good reading ability is a key to knowledge in many fields. But today, increasing numbers of children who graduate from school are very poor readers.

Jehovah's Witnesses have found that great benefits come to their children by reading aloud to them even *before they go* to school. Later, when their children learn to read, the parents continue reading along with them on a regular basis.

Jane Bingham, an associate professor of children's literature in Michigan, says that when a parent reads aloud to a child it "can give the child things, the interest and the personalization," that it cannot get in school. She also recommends: "If at all possible, when reading to a child, let the child sit close to you, or on your lap, or put your arm around him or her." This adds to the child's security and joy, and helps it to learn that reading from books can be a pleasant experience. Reading in an interesting manner is helpful too: "They'll listen to you read the telephone directory, if you do it dramatically," Jane Bingham states.

This parental reading, coupled with children's literature that explains the high moral principles of the Bible, provides a foundation of great value. It will help the child for the rest of its life, and makes up for poor school training. Too, it is in harmony with the principles of teaching found in God's Word. —Deut. 6:7; Neh. 8:8; 1 Tim. 4:12, 13.

More Violent Films

● In recent years, the trend in motion pictures and television is toward ever more violence. The New Haven, Connecticut, "Register" observes that what is different now "is not just the filmmaker's emphasis on violence, but the sensationally graphic portrayal of it, down to the last bit of brain being blown out of [the] victim's head—on camera."

New York film critic Vincent Canby asked: "Are audiences so bloodthirsty that they demand this realism?" The answer appears to be Yes. He observed that just as the public "has come to accept the existence of pornographic films in the last decade, so has it come to accept films that are more and more brutally violent."

Movies and television are media of mass entertainment and information. They have a great effect in conditioning the minds of vast audiences. Thus, no doubt part of the large increase of brutal assaults on life and property can be attributed to such conditioning over a period of time.

This breakdown of morality and law and order was long ago foretold by Jesus Christ and his apostles. It is one feature of the sign of the times that tells us that we are in the "last days" of this present system. (Matt. 24:3, 12; 2 Tim. 3:1-3) Under the influence of demonic forces, the people are being conditioned for the time when each man's hand "will actually come up against the hand of his companion."—Zech. 14:13.

What Did the Wise Man Mean?

What Can You Do Compared to a King?

King Solomon made a careful investigation of human affairs. He had the time, assets and insight to be thorough in his search. That is why a person can get immeasurable benefit by reviewing Solomon's findings as recorded in the book of Ecclesiastes.

Calling attention to the uselessness of others' attempting to undertake a similar study, the wise man writes: "I, even I, turned to see wisdom and madness and folly; for what can the earthling man do who comes in after the king? The thing that people have already done." (Eccl. 2:12) Yes, with far fewer advantages and resources than those of a king, just what can the ordinary man do? For him to try what Solomon did would only be covering *some* of the same ground, doing what people have already done. Nothing new would be learned as to what makes life truly satisfying.

What, then, did Solomon establish? He continues: "I saw, even I, that there exists more advantage for wisdom than for folly, just as there is more advantage for light than for darkness." (Eccl. 2:13) The person who has wisdom is certainly better off than the one who lacks it. Wisdom enables the individual to cope with the problems of life and to use his energies and abilities more purposefully than if he had very limited insight. Far more can be accomplished in the light than in total darkness.

"As regards anyone wise," wrote Solomon, "his eyes are in his head; but the stupid one is walking on in sheer darkness." (Eccl. 2:14) The wise person keeps his eyes open. They are in his "head" in the sense of serving his intellectual powers. So he is able to see a matter through and does not flounder about in futile attempts to reach a certain goal. The stupid one, however, is in darkness; his eyes are closed and of no value in discerning the right course to take.

Nevertheless, the advantage of wisdom over foolishness does not mean that human wisdom can bring genuine happiness and lasting satisfaction. This is what Solomon next acknowledged: "I have come to know, I too, that there is one eventuality that eventuates to them all. And I myself said in my heart: 'An eventuality like that upon the stupid one will eventuate to me, yes, me.' Why, then, had I become wise, I overmuch so at that time? And I spoke in my heart: 'This too is vanity.' For there is no more remembrance of the wise one than the stupid one to time indefinite. In the days that are already coming in, everyone is certainly forgotten; and how will the wise one die? Along with the stupid one." (Eccl. 2:14-16) So as regards death, there is no apparent benefit in having worldly wisdom. All one's works and ac-

tivities are brought to nothingness. Eventually the dead person, regardless of how wise he may have been, is forgotten by the living.

But is there not an advantage in a person's being able to leave behind an inheritance for his offspring as a result of his wise use of resources? This, too, is something no one can be sure about. Solomon comments: "I hated life, because the work that has been done under the sun was calamitous from my standpoint, for everything was vanity and a striving after wind. And I, even I, hated all my hard work at which I was working hard under the sun, that I would leave behind for the man who would come to be after me. And who is there knowing whether he will prove to be wise or foolish? Yet he will take control over all my hard work at which I worked hard and at which I showed wisdom under the sun. This too is vanity. And I myself turned around toward making my heart despair over all the hard work at which I had worked hard under the sun. For there exists the man whose hard work has been with wisdom and with knowledge and with proficiency, but to a man that has not worked hard at such a thing will be given the portion of that one. This too is vanity and a big calamity."—Eccl. 2:17-21.

There really is no way to know just what will happen to the inheritance a person may leave behind. Those receiving the inheritance, because of not having worked hard for it, may not appreciate its value and may soon squander everything. Of what benefit, then, would be all the hard work that went into acquiring possessions? Still worse is the situation if the hard worker experienced much pain and vexation and was unable to get even a good night's rest because of all his worries and anxieties. Solomon put it this way: "For what does a man come to have for all his hard work and for the striving of his heart with which he is working hard under the sun? For all his days his occupation means pains and vexation, also during the night his heart just does not lie down. This too is mere vanity."—Eccl. 2:22, 23.

In view of this situation, what can you do? Solomon answers: "With a man there is nothing better than that he should eat and indeed drink and cause his soul to see good because of his hard work. This too I have seen, even I, that this is from the hand of the true God. For who eats and who drinks better than I do?" (Eccl. 2:24, 25) A person should enjoy the fruits of his work during his lifetime. Of course, it is only natural for parents also to think about their children. The Christian apostle Paul wrote: "The children ought not to lay up for their parents, but the parents for their children." (2 Cor. 12:14) However, this does not mean that parents should lay up material possessions for their children to the extent of depriving themselves of life's necessities or making their life needlessly austere. Parents need to keep in mind that, regardless of how good or how wise their children may be, material possessions can still be lost, stolen, misused or destroyed. So it is truly best to enjoy good things in a wholesome way while one can, instead of going to extremes in piling up possessions for children without getting any real benefit from these possessions during one's own lifetime.

IN COMING ISSUES

- **Why Love of Money Is Destructive.**
- **Will Injustice Ever End?**
- **Thank Jehovah for His Loving-kindness.**

DO YOU APPRECIATE *God's Patience* TOWARD YOU?

"Jehovah . . . is patient with you because he does not desire any to be destroyed but desires all to attain to repentance."
—2 Pet. 3:9.

ARE we not glad when people deal patiently with us, not treating us harshly? We appreciate it when they take into consideration our problems and circumstances, kindly assisting us to the extent of their ability. Life today is accompanied by enough problems without one's being subjected to needless pressure from impatient persons. Moreover, if we were to become impatient ourselves, this would not make our life more enjoyable. Rather, we would be irritating others and making it more difficult for them to deal kindly with us. Our impatience could even hurt persons to whom we look for help and encouragement.

[2] But how can one remain patient when one sees injustice and oppression, and when godless people seem to prosper? It calls for faith. Yes, we must be convinced that Jehovah God will set all things straight. This is in keeping with what King Solomon observed and was inspired to record: "Although a sinner may be doing bad a hundred times and continuing a long time as he pleases, yet I am also aware that it will turn out well with those fearing the true God, because they were in fear of him. But it will not turn out well at all with the wicked one, neither will he prolong his days that are like a shadow, because he is not in fear of God."—Eccl. 8:12, 13.

[3] Human justice may be lax and criminals may be able to escape punishment through some legal loophole. Lawless persons may think that they are getting away with something. But, as Solomon pointed out, their badness brings no reward. Their life passes quickly, "like a shadow," and all their shrewdness and scheming will be of no benefit in lengthening it. On the other hand, fearers of God are not really put at a disadvantage. They preserve a clean conscience, find satisfaction in doing what they know to be right and, even if they should die, have the hope of being raised to life. In the final analysis, 'it does indeed turn out well with those fearing the true God.'

[4] Further, true Christians do well to keep in mind that the lawlessness that is disturbing to them is also distressing to

1. (a) Why do we appreciate persons who are patient with us? (Prov. 25:15) (b) What can result when we become impatient with others?
2, 3. (a) What conviction is vital for us to remain patient when seeing godless people prosper? (Ps. 37:1-6; Heb. 11:6) (b) How does Ecclesiastes 8:12, 13 show that it is always best to be a person who fears Jehovah?
4. Whenever we are disturbed by what we see going on in the world, what should we keep in mind, as highlighted in Genesis 6:5, 6 and Habakkuk 1:13?

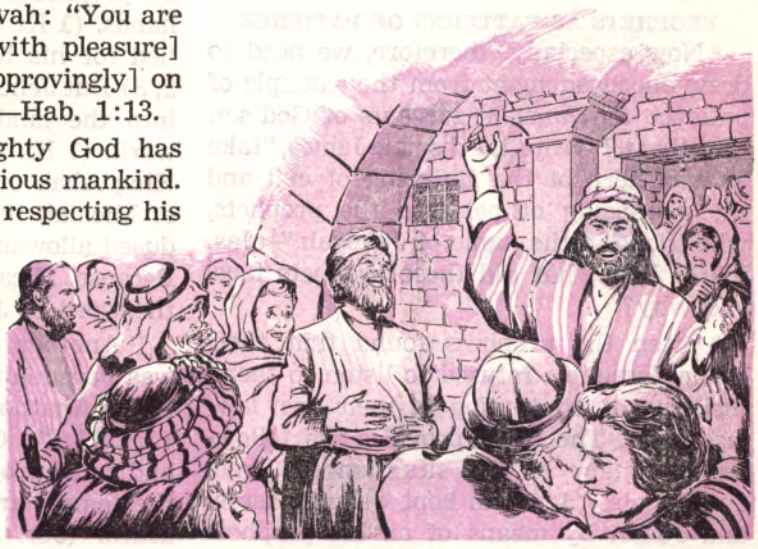
Jehovah God. We know this because of what the Bible says about the way he felt toward the violent world of Noah's time. We read: "Jehovah saw that the badness of man was abundant in the earth and every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only bad all the time. And Jehovah felt regrets that he had made men in the earth, and he felt hurt at his heart." (Gen. 6:5, 6) Yes, Jehovah regretted that mankind had turned out so bad that he was obliged to destroy them. He was deeply hurt over the fact that they misused their life and his abundant provisions for their existence. Centuries later, the prophet Habakkuk wrote of Jehovah: "You are too pure in eyes to see [with pleasure] what is bad; and to look [approvingly] on trouble you are not able."—Hab. 1:13.

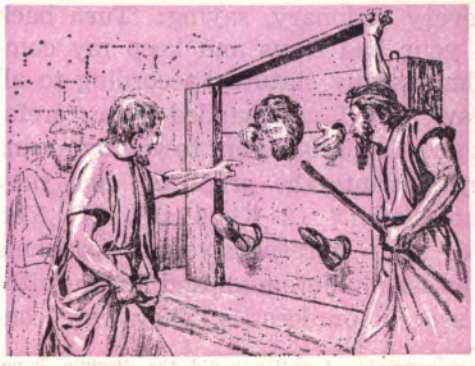
[5] Nevertheless, the Almighty God has patiently put up with rebellious mankind. Why? "Jehovah is not slow respecting his promise, as some people consider slowness, but he is patient with you because he does not desire any to be destroyed but desires all to attain to repentance." (2 Pet. 3:9) Note that God's patience has been for the benefit of Christians, for the apostle Peter addressed fellow believers with the words, "he is patient with you." Just what does this mean?

[6] The apostle was showing that what some people interpreted as slowness on God's part should be viewed in an entirely different light. The fact that Jehovah's day of vengeance has not yet come proves that he loves mankind, that he wants people to live, not to die. At one time Christians were unbelievers and, hence, did not have an approved standing before him. Had the Most High executed his judgment against the ungodly world then, they, too, would have perished. So God's patience has worked to the salvation of Christians, even as it opens up to all the opportunity for salvation. Should we not be grateful that this has been the case?

[7] Of course, the time is fast approaching for Jehovah God to bring to a close the present 'day of opportunity' for those now

7. (a) Will Jehovah be patient with disobedient mankind indefinitely? (Isa. 55:6, 7; Zeph. 2:2, 3) (b) What proves that we are living in the "last days"? (c) Why do we especially have to exercise patience?





Though suffering much at the hands of his fellow Israelites, the prophet Jeremiah continued to exercise patience

5. According to 2 Peter 3:9, why has Jehovah exercised patience?
6. Why can it be said that Jehovah's patience has been for the benefit of true Christians?

living to come into an approved relationship with him. (2 Cor. 6:2) Bible prophecy and Bible chronology point to the time since 1914 C.E., with its increasing crime and violence, wars, food shortages, earthquakes, fear and unrest, as the "last days" for this ungodly world. (Mark 13:3-37; Luke 21:7-36; 2 Tim. 3:1-5) As long as this system continues in its "last days," Christians must keep on exercising patience, confidently looking to Jehovah God to bring relief through his Son Jesus Christ. (2 Thess. 1:6-9) This is so because these "last days" will continue to be "critical times hard to deal with."—2 Tim. 3:1.

PROPHETS AS PATTERNS OF PATIENCE

[8] Now especially, therefore, we need to draw encouragement from the example of patience that ancient servants of God set. "Brothers," wrote the disciple James, "take as a pattern of the suffering of evil and the exercising of patience the prophets, who spoke in the name of Jehovah." (Jas. 5:10) Just what did these prophets face, and why?

[9] Often the prophets found that their fellow Israelites refused to listen to them, insisting on continuing in their own lawless ways. The Bible provides the following summary of the situation in Israel and Judah: "Jehovah kept warning Israel and Judah by means of all his prophets and every visionary, saying: 'Turn back from your bad ways and keep my commandments, my statutes, according to all the law that I commanded your forefathers and that I have sent to you by means of my servants the prophets'; and they did not listen." (2 Ki. 17:13, 14) Yet, despite such unresponsiveness, prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah and Micah faithfully served for decades. They were concerned about the welfare of their countrymen, appreciating that acting in harmony with the prophetic warnings meant life.

[10] The people's general failure to listen was not the only obstacle with which the prophets had to contend patiently. Many were reviled, physically abused and even killed. In the time of Israelite King Ahab, for example, all prophets of Jehovah that his Baal-worshiping queen Jezebel could seize were put to death. One hundred others, helped by God-fearing Obadiah, escaped by hiding in caves. (1 Ki. 18:4, 13) During the same time, Jehovah, because of what he had in mind for him, protected his prophet Elijah from falling into Ahab's hands. (1 Ki. 18:10-12) Later, even Elijah fled for his life from Jezebel. (1 Ki. 19:2, 3) But Jehovah God sent him right back into the land to continue his prophetic work. (1 Ki. 19:9, 15-18) At another time King Ahab ordered that Jehovah's prophet Micaiah be put into prison with a reduced allowance of food and drink. Why? Because Micaiah had truthfully declared the word of Jehovah.—1 Ki. 22:26, 27.

[11] Another prophet who endured much was Jeremiah. Men from his own hometown Anathoth threatened to kill him. (Jer. 11:21) Once a mob, including priests and false prophets, seized the prophet in the temple area and threatened him with death. (Jer. 26:8-11) The Bible reports that he was "struck" by the temple commissioner, priest Pashhur. This may mean that Pashhur ordered that the prophet be beaten. With such a high official taking the lead in abusing Jeremiah, the rest of the people must have been emboldened to heap jeers, ridicule and abuse on the prophet. Then, like a criminal, Jeremiah was put in stocks overnight. (Jer. 20:2, 3, 7, 8) Arrested under the false charge of having fallen away to the Chaldeans,

8. Whose example of patience did the disciple James point to, and what question might this raise?
9. (a) What kind of response did the prophets receive from their countrymen? (b) Why did they continue showing patience toward the Israelites for many years?
10. What kind of suffering did the prophets experience during the reign of King Ahab?
11. What suffering faced Jeremiah during his many years of prophesying?

Jeremiah was imprisoned in the "house of fetters" under such bad conditions that his life was in jeopardy. He appealed to King Zedekiah, who thereafter had him put in custody in the Courtyard of the Guard. (Jer. 37:11-16, 20, 21) Later, Zedekiah yielded to the demands of the princes to have Jeremiah turned over to them. These princes sought to kill the prophet by throwing him into a miry cistern.—Jer. 38:5, 6.

[12] Truly, Jeremiah suffered much evil at the hands of his countrymen. But he continued to exercise patience, not becoming embittered toward them. For instance, after King Zedekiah had turned him over to the princes who were seeking his death, the prophet showed concern for that weak monarch's welfare. Jeremiah pleaded with him: "Obey, please, the voice of Jehovah in what I am speaking to you, and it will go well with you, and your soul will continue to live." (Jer. 38:20) Earlier, when contemplating the terrible judgment to come upon Judah and Jerusalem, Jeremiah had expressed, not feelings of vindictiveness, but sorrow. He said: "Over the breakdown of the daughter of my people I have become shattered. I have grown sad. Outright astonishment has seized hold of me. Is there no balsam in Gilead? Or is there no healer there? Why is it, then, that the recuperation of the daughter of my people has not come up? O that my head were waters, and that my eyes were a source of tears! Then I could weep day and night for the slain ones of the daughter of my people." (Jer. 8:21–9:1) What patience, what love, Jeremiah *displayed* toward his people, the Israelites!

[13] We should never forget, however, that Jeremiah and the other faithful prophets keenly sensed the terrible injustices and oppression that were being carried on in the land. They longed for relief. The prophet Habakkuk, for example, was moved to exclaim: "Why is it that you make me see what is hurtful, and you keep looking upon mere trouble? And why are despoiling and violence in front of me, and why does quarreling occur, and why is strife carried on? Therefore law grows numb, and justice never goes forth. Because the wicked one is surrounding the righteous one, for that reason justice goes forth crooked."—Hab. 1:3, 4.

[14] Nevertheless, the faithful prophets did not allow their personal desires for relief to cause them to become impatient with Jehovah or to stop proclaiming his message. As long as Jehovah was exercising patience for a purpose, they were willing to bear reproach as they proclaimed his message: "Turn back, turn back from your bad ways, for why is it that you should die, O house of Israel?"—Ezek. 33:11.

FINE EXAMPLES IN PATIENCE SHOULD STIR US TO ACTION

[15] Surely, if the ancient Hebrew prophets could be so patient when faced with great hardships, we have even greater reason to be patient. Why? Because we have so much more than the prophets had. The prophets were looking forward in faith to the coming of the Messiah but knew that they would not be alive to see that grand event. Jesus Christ told the Jews: "I truly say to you, Many prophets and righteous men desired to see the things you are beholding and did not see them, and to hear the things you are hearing and did not hear them." (Matt. 13:17) Many of the things the prophets were awaiting in faith

12. What does Jeremiah 38:20 and 8:21–9:1 reveal as to Jeremiah's exercise of patience?
13. What shows that the prophets were distressed by the conditions that they saw? (Jer. 5:3, 4)
14. While faithful prophets desired relief from bad conditions, what did they not do with reference to Jehovah and his message? (Jer. 20:9; Mic. 3:8)
15. Why do we have even greater reason to be patient than did the Hebrew prophets?

were fulfilled centuries ago. Moreover, many living today have personally witnessed the fulfillment of yet other prophecies. (Rev. 6:1-8; 17:8) By giving his life in sacrifice, Jesus Christ furnished an unchangeable guarantee that all of God's promises will be fulfilled. (2 Cor. 1:20, 21) Daily we see evidence that we are living in the "time of the end." (Dan. 11:40-43; 12:1, 4; Matt. 24:7-14) Hence, Jesus Christ's encouragement applies to us: "Raise yourselves erect and lift your heads up, because your deliverance is getting near." (Luke 21:28) Yes, soon the Son of God as "King of kings and Lord of lords" will take action against the ungodly, bringing welcome relief from all suffering and oppression.—Rev. 19:11-21.

16 Should we not patiently wait for that great day, especially since it is so near? Should we not want to help as many as possible to learn of God's way of salvation? And when it comes to the shortcomings of others, should we not be willing to put up with these patiently? If we sincerely appreciate that God's patience has meant salvation for us, we will be stirred at heart to do so.

THE PRECIOUS FRUITAGE OF PATIENCE

17 Our continuing to exercise patience, in imitation of the faithful prophets, can lead to our seeing fine fruitage. This is evident from what the disciple James wrote: "Exercise patience . . . , brothers, until the presence of the Lord. Look! The farmer keeps waiting for the precious fruit of the earth, exercising patience over it until he gets the early rain and the late rain. You too exercise patience; make your hearts firm."—Jas. 5:7, 8.

16. How can we demonstrate that we appreciate Jehovah's patience toward us?

17. What illustration found at James 5:7, 8 shows that exercising patience is essential if we are going to see fine fruitage?

18 The farmer can do nothing to hasten the rain or the growing of his crops. He can do his job as an industrious agriculturalist in preparing the soil, sowing the seed and caring for the cultivated field. But he has no control over the rains, nor can he change the Creator's fixed laws relative to the growth of his crops. His waiting in circumstances that he cannot change, waiting in harmony with Jehovah's laws, is referred to as the 'exercising of patience.' Eventually, as the farmer continues doing what he can, the plants grow and there is fruitage.

19 So it is with true Christians today. It is our responsibility to proclaim the "good news" to others and to teach God's Word to interested persons. (1 Cor. 9:16; Matt. 28:19, 20) But, by our ingenuity or methods that we might devise, we cannot produce or speed up spiritual growth. For this, we must wait on Jehovah while we patiently do our part, acting in full harmony with his Word. The apostle Paul made this clear when he wrote: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God kept making it grow; so that neither is he that plants anything nor is he that waters, but God who makes it grow. Now he that plants and he that waters are one, but each person will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers." (1 Cor. 3:6-9) Jehovah God will not fail to do his part. May we, therefore, prove to be faithful fellow workers of his, thereby showing that we appreciate Jehovah's patience toward us. Then, how happy we will be to see some of *what we* have planted and watered coming to full Christian growth! Yes, there will be fruitage in the form of genuine disciples of Jesus Christ.

18. While the farmer cannot hasten the rain or the growing of crops, what can he do in anticipation of a harvest?

19. How does patience enter the picture when it comes to producing fruitage in the form of genuine disciples?

Continue to BE PATIENT

"It is for Jehovah that I shall keep on the lookout. I will show a waiting attitude for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me."
—Mic. 7:7.

PATIENCE does indeed bring rich dividends. God's exercise of patience has opened up to mankind the grand opportunity of everlasting life as his approved servants. (John 17:3; 2 Pet. 3:9; 1 Tim. 2:3, 4) It has provided individuals with time to learn about his requirements and to begin conforming to these. Many have done so. As a result, these persons are even now enjoying a meaningful life, avoiding the frustrations and troubles that come upon people who ignore God's righteous standards.

[2] On the individual level, too, exercising patience is rewarding. The patient person does not allow himself to get upset quickly and, hence, is less likely to act rashly. Thus he preserves a good conscience and avoids needless quarreling and fighting. There is also a health benefit. A Bible proverb says: "A calm heart is the life of the fleshly organism." (Prov. 14:30) Calmness and patience, even in the face of trying circumstances, further the well-being of the entire body. On the other hand, continued upsets and irritations are like a disease that can weaken the human frame. In view of the benefits that come from showing patience, we should certainly want to display this fine quality.

[3] There is still another good reason for being patient. We should consider it an obligation. Why? Note the principle stated by Jesus Christ: "All things . . . that you want men to do to you, you also must likewise do to them." (Matt. 7:12) Now, do we not want men to be patient with us? We appreciate it when others listen to us patiently regarding important matters. There is pleasure in associating with those who patiently explain things that we do not understand. It is much easier for us to deal with people who are willing to overlook our minor shortcomings, who are patient with us despite our repeated failings. So, then, are these not also areas in which we should want to exercise patience?

[4] For us Christians, the strongest reason for wanting to be patient should be our desire to please Jehovah God. Since he is patient, we are called upon to imitate

1. What fine benefits have resulted from Jehovah's exercise of patience?
2. If we exercise patience in dealing with others, how are we benefited now?
3. Why should we view being patient with others as an obligation?
4. What should be our prime reason for wanting to be patient?

him in this respect. The Bible urges us: "Become imitators of God, as beloved children." (Eph. 5:1) But what will help us to reflect God's patience to a greater degree?

RECOGNIZE THE SERIOUSNESS OF IMPATIENCE

5 We should avoid viewing undue impatience lightly. The Bible says: "Better is one who is patient than one who is haughty in spirit. Do not hurry yourself in your spirit to become offended, for the taking of offense is what rests in the bosom of the stupid ones." (Eccl. 7:8, 9) Note that the patient person is here contrasted with the one who is haughty, proud. The proud person may reason: Why should *I* have to put up with irritations and annoyances caused by the stupidity and selfishness of others? Who do they think I am? Also, the haughty one is quick to take everything personally and to lash out against anyone who might correct him. He nurtures resentment, keeping it close to him as if in his own "bosom."

6 Truly, such a person is "stupid." His haste in taking offense results in rash words or actions, to his own hurt and that of others. He is also unbalanced in his view of himself. This is evident from the apostle Paul's counsel at Romans 12:3: "I tell everyone there among you not to think more of himself than it is necessary to think; but to think so as to have a sound mind." Furthermore, the person who permits haughtiness and impatience to gain the mastery over him may jeopardize his standing with Jehovah God. Why? "Because God opposes the haughty ones, but he gives undeserved kindness to the humble ones."—1 Pet. 5:5.

7 Of course, not all forms of impatience are rooted in pride. For example, a family may have an appointment for dinner at a specific time in the home of friends. The father and mother may be ready to go in ample time to get there without hurrying. However, the daughter, because of not being enthusiastic about going, or for some other reason, may have delayed making the needed preparations to leave. The parents may, therefore, urge her to get ready more quickly so that they will not be late. Any impatience they may reflect in their tone of voice cannot be attributed to pride. Rather, they may be troubled about their daughter's failure to be considerate, and they may be concerned about the disturbing effect that their being late could have on their hosts. This also illustrates the importance of avoiding situations that could give valid reasons for others to become impatient with us. Here, too, the principle applies: "Just as you want men to do to you, do the same way to them."—Luke 6:31.

8 So while there may be just cause to become impatient at times, we need to recognize the seriousness of impatience that stems from pride or that can cause us to act rashly. The danger of allowing impatience to get the better of us is well illustrated in the case of King Saul. After Saul's son Jonathan struck down the Philistine garrison at Geba, the Philistines, in retaliation, assembled a mighty force and encamped at Michmash. In the meantime Saul was at Gilgal in the Jordan valley, waiting for the prophet Samuel. When the prophet did not arrive at the expected time, Saul became impatient. He feared that the Philistines would come against him before he could secure the help of Jehovah by offering up a burnt sacrifice. Also, in view of the fact that his men were deserting him, he was concerned about any further delay that could lead to his losing

5. With what undesirable trait does Ecclesiastes 7:8 associate impatience, and how may this manifest itself?
6. Why can it be said that the haughty, impatient person is also "stupid"?
7. Should we attribute all impatience to pride? Why, or why not?
8. What do we learn from 1 Samuel 13:3-14 about the danger of impatience?

the entire army. Yielding to impatience, Saul presumptuously went ahead with the sacrifice, disregarding the command of Jehovah, through Samuel, to wait. Soon thereafter Samuel arrived. (1 Sam. 13:3-12) That one rash act had serious consequences. Samuel told Saul: "You have acted foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of Jehovah your God that he commanded you, because, if you had, Jehovah would have made your kingdom firm over Israel to time indefinite. And now your kingdom will not last." (1 Sam. 13:13, 14) Think of it! Saul's impatience, leading to a sinful act, was one of the principal reasons for Jehovah's removing kingship from his line of descent. So we should never underestimate the trouble that undue impatience may bring upon us.

LEARN FROM JEHOVAH'S EXAMPLE

[9] Our being patient often involves a willingness to forgive others' trespasses against us. In this regard, our reflecting on Jehovah's example of forgiveness can help us greatly in being patient with fellow humans. An illustration given by Jesus Christ makes the point very forcefully. The apostle Peter had raised the question: "How many times is my brother to sin against me and am I to forgive him? Up to seven times?" Jesus replied: "I say to you, not, Up to seven times, but, Up to seventy-seven times." Then he related the illustration of two slaves. One of these owed the king 60,000,000 denarii. When time came for settling accounts, this slave pleaded: "Be patient with me and I will pay back everything to you." Moved with *pity*, the king canceled the entire debt. But this slave then approached a fellow slave, demanding that he repay a 100-denarii debt. That slave pleaded: "Be patient with me and I will pay you back." But the slave whose far larger debt had been canceled was unwilling to be patient. He had his fellow slave imprisoned. Hearing this, the king changed his mind and had the impatient, merciless slave committed to jail. Applying the illustration, Jesus said: "In like manner my heavenly Father will also deal with you if you do not forgive each one his brother from your hearts."—Matt. 18:21-35.

[10] Compared with the large debt of sin that Jehovah God has forgiven us on the basis of his Son's sacrifice, whatever transgression may be committed against us by a Christian brother is small indeed. So if he is repentant, what right do we have to become impatient with him or to want him to suffer for what he may have done against us?

[11] Never should we lose sight of the fact that the basis on which Jehovah God grants forgiveness was provided by him at great cost to himself. He loved his Son deeply. Jesus Christ himself said: "The Father has affection for the Son." (John 5:20) Still, the Most High was willing to give him for the world of mankind as a "propitiatory sacrifice" for our sins. (John 3:16; 1 John 2:2) No human has ever sacrificed that much in providing a basis for restoring good relations with someone who has sinned against him. What a superlative example Jehovah has set in encouraging us to be patient with those who may sin against us!

RIGHT ATTITUDE TOWARD OTHERS

[12] Also helpful in cultivating patience is the right attitude toward others. We need

9. (a) How does Jesus' illustration about the two slaves and their debts illustrate a relationship of forgiveness to patience? (b) What can we not expect Jehovah to do for us if we become impatient and merciless toward our brothers?

10. How should we view our brothers' shortcomings in the light of God's forgiveness of our sins?

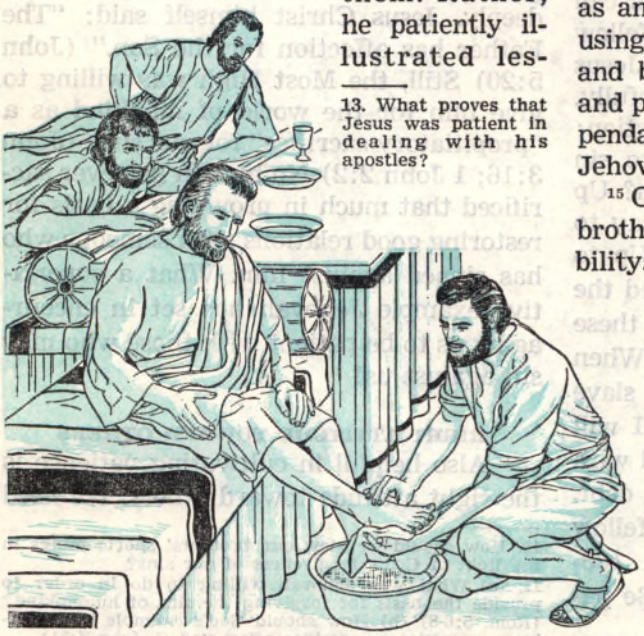
11. (a) What was Jehovah willing to do in order to provide the basis for forgiving the sins of humankind? (Rom. 5:6-8) (b) How should God's example in providing a propitiatory sacrifice affect us? (1 John 4:11)

12. (a) What lesson about our brothers can we draw from Romans 12:4-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:14-26, and how can this help us to be patient with them? (b) How can the counsel of Philippians 2:3 aid us to be patient?

to take into consideration that people and circumstances vary. Some, for example, may be slow to grasp things, but others may comprehend detailed instructions very quickly. Yet, this does not make inferior persons of those who are slow or more methodical! They may well excel in other areas of life—kindness, friendliness and generosity. So we do well to look at persons as a whole. The apostle Paul's counsel to the Philippians is most appropriate: Consider "that the others are superior to you." (Phil. 2:3) True, no imperfect human has all the desirable qualities. If he is humble, he will readily see that others excel in areas wherein he is weak and that he, too, may try their patience at times.

[13] Jesus Christ certainly demonstrated just what it means to have the right attitude toward others. He patiently put up with his apostles—their petty rivalries and their slowness to comprehend. Never did he lose his temper in dealing with them. Rather, he patiently illustrated lessons he wanted them to learn. (Mark 9:33-37; John 13:5-17) We have no record that Jesus Christ ever gave his associates a tongue-lashing. How fine it would be for us to imitate his perfect example!

13. What proves that Jesus was patient in dealing with his apostles?



Jesus set the perfect example in being patient, putting up with his apostles' faults, even illustrating lessons he wanted them to learn

WILLINGNESS TO WAIT

[14] However, it is not just the shortcomings of others or their limitations that may put our patience to the test. Often it is a matter of being willing to wait for what is desirable to take place. The question is: Will we be impatient like a child that wants everything right away, or will we be willing to wait patiently until the appropriate time? Perhaps you are a brother in the Christian congregation. Because of not being a ministerial servant, do you find it hard to wait until such time as you have truly been "tested as to fitness"? (1 Tim. 3:10) If you have been a ministerial servant for perhaps a year or so, do you feel that it is about time that consideration be given to recommending you as an elder? Or, are you willing to wait, using your time well in getting a deeper and better understanding of God's Word and proving yourself to be cooperative, dependable, considerate and fully devoted to Jehovah's service?

[15] Of course, it is commendable when brothers 'reach out' for greater responsibility. The apostle Paul wrote: "That statement is faithful. If any man is reaching out for an office of overseer, he is desirous of a fine work." (1 Tim. 3:1) Nevertheless, with responsibility comes greater accountability. Jesus Christ stated the rule: "The one whom people put in charge of much, they will demand more than usual of him." (Luke 12:48)

14. When it comes to congregation responsibility, why might some brothers become impatient?

15. (a) Why does wanting to be entrusted with responsibility also call for sober self-examination? (Jas. 3:1, 2) (b) What might a brother desiring to share in shepherding the flock ask himself?

Hence, if you desire greater responsibility, you should first examine whether your life as a Christian could come under closer scrutiny by other members of the congregation without raising questions as to the kind of example you are setting. You might also ask yourself: Do I really want to serve my brothers? Do I have the godly wisdom and insight to judge matters involving people's lives? Could I give sound Scriptural counsel that would help others with their personal and family problems? Do others really view me as an "older man" by reason of my experience in Christian living? Such sober self-examination may calm any tendency toward impatience. It may impress upon you the importance of waiting patiently until such time as you can really serve your brothers well.

[16] It may also help you to consider the weighty responsibility that falls upon elders who make recommendations for brothers to serve as overseers. The apostle Paul counseled Timothy: "Never lay your hands hastily upon any man; neither be a sharer in the sins of others; preserve yourself chaste." (1 Tim. 5:22) If Timothy failed to make sure that the one appointed was really measuring up to the Scriptural requirements, he would bear a certain accountability for any wrongs that the unqualified man might commit. The same holds true today. So why not wait humbly and patiently until such time as others can see your fine works? Remember, just as wrongs eventually come to light, so, too, fine works will not remain hidden. The apostle Paul pointed this out to Timothy when he wrote: "The sins of some men are publicly manifest, leading directly to judgment, but as for other men their sins also become manifest later. In the same way also the fine works are publicly manifest and those that are otherwise cannot be kept hid."—1 Tim. 5: 24, 25.

[17] Really, in all areas of life, we should want to heed the Scriptural encouragement, "wait for Jehovah from now on and to time indefinite." (Ps. 131:3) Let us not become impatient because God's great day for executing judgment has not yet arrived. Instead, we should want to voice the kind of confidence that Micah expressed: "It is for Jehovah that I shall keep on the lookout. I will show a waiting attitude for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me." (Mic. 7:7) Moreover, may we continue to show patience toward all, forgiving their minor transgressions against us and taking into consideration their limitations and circumstances. Yes, may we never allow impatience, coupled with pride, to jeopardize our relationship with our patient God, Jehovah.

16. How might the apostle Paul's words at 1 Timothy 5:22, 24, 25 help a brother to wait humbly and patiently until others can see that he qualifies for greater responsibilities?

17. What attitude of the prophet Micah should we seek to cultivate, and in what areas of life should we want to be patient?

"In the Valley of Deep Shadow"

● The psalmist David declared: "Even though I walk in the valley of deep shadow, I fear nothing bad." (Ps. 23:4) As a shepherd boy David had become well familiar with the perils that face sheep. Wild beasts might be lurking in a dark valley or ravine. Or there might be bandits lying in wait. There might also be a number of deep pits. Without the attention and care of a shepherd, a sheep would, therefore, be in grave danger. Similarly, David came into dangerous situations. But because of his trust in Jehovah, the Great Shepherd, David felt secure.

THE "OLD TESTAMENT" —NECESSARY FOR CHRISTIANS TODAY?

THE Holy Bible is the world's "best seller." It has penetrated into every land on the face of the earth and is read by people of all races. In whole or in part the Bible is available today in more than 1,575 languages.

According to the most common division of the Bible's sixty-six books, over half of them make up what is called the "Old Testament." This collection of Scriptural writings, produced in Hebrew and Aramaic, was completed about 443 years before the Common Era. Is there need for Christians today to study the Hebrew Scriptures?

If you enjoy reading the Christian Greek Scriptures, usually designated the "New Testament," likely you have noticed how frequently Christian Bible writers quoted from or alluded to the Hebrew Scriptures. They viewed those writings as of the utmost importance for Christians. Concerning historical accounts of God's dealings with the ancient Israelites, the apostle Paul wrote: "Now these things went on befalling them as examples, and they were written for a warning to us." —1 Cor. 10:11.

Besides meaningful history, the Hebrew Scriptures contain hundreds of prophecies of future events. Were these written merely for Jews who lived centuries before the Common Era? By no means. The apostle Peter says of the Hebrew prophets:

> "They kept on investigating what particular season or what sort of season the spirit in them was indicating concerning Christ when it was bearing witness beforehand about the sufferings for Christ and about the glories to follow these. It was revealed to them that, *not to themselves, but to you,* they were ministering the things that have now been announced to you through those who have declared the good news to you with holy spirit sent forth from heaven."—1 Pet. 1:11, 12.

Among books of the Christian Greek Scriptures especially noted for numerous quotations from the "Old Testament" is the book of Hebrews. Concerning this, Bible scholar B. F. Westcott observes:

> "Several reflections at once offer themselves to the student who considers these quotations as a whole. (1) It is assumed that a Divine counsel was wrought out in the course of the life of Israel. We are allowed to see in 'the people of God' signs of the purpose of God for humanity. The whole history is prophetic. It is not enough to recognise that the O[ld] T[estament] contains prophecies: the O[ld] T[estament] is one vast prophecy."

With this in mind it will be instructive to consider how Jesus and writers of the Christian Greek Scriptures quoted from and applied the pre-Christian inspired Bible writings.

"IT IS WRITTEN"

You are probably familiar with the gospel accounts of Jesus' being "tempted by the Devil." (Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13) How did Jesus respond to this trialsome experience? Note his reply to each aspect of the threefold temptation:

> "But in reply he said: 'It is written, "Man must live, not on bread alone, but on every utterance coming forth through Jehovah's mouth."' [Deut. 8:3] . . . Jesus said to him: 'Again it is written, "You must not put Jehovah your God to the test."' [Deut. 6:16]

. . . Then Jesus said to him: 'Go away, Satan! For it is written, "It is Jehovah your God you must worship, and it is to him alone you must render sacred service."' [Deut. 6:13]." —Matt. 4:4, 7, 10.

Jesus based his actions solidly on the inspired Hebrew Scriptures, for he knew that these contained God's viewpoint on matters. Interesting, too, is Jesus' reasoning when certain Pharisees "took counsel together in order to trap him in his speech":

"Now while the Pharisees were gathered together Jesus asked them: 'What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?' They said to him: 'David's.' He said to them: 'How, then, is it that David by inspiration calls him "Lord," saying, "Jehovah said to my Lord: 'Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies beneath your feet'"? [Ps. 109:1, *Septuagint* (110:1, Hebrew)] If, therefore, David calls him "Lord," how is he his son?' And nobody was able to say a word in reply to him, nor did anyone dare from that day on to question him any further."—Matt. 22:15, 41-46.

So familiar were Jesus and his disciples with the "Old Testament," that on occasion they would prove a point of Christian teaching by either quoting from memory or paraphrasing a whole series of Scripture texts. For example, we read, at Romans 3:9-18:

"Above we have made the charge that Jews as well as Greeks are all under sin; just as it is written: 'There is not a righteous man, not even one; there is no one that has any insight, there is no one that seeks for God. All men have deflected, all of them together have become worthless; there is no one that does kindness, there is not so much as one.' [Ps. 13:1-3, *Septuagint* (14:1-3, Hebrew)] 'Their throat is an opened grave, they have used deceit with their tongues.' [Ps. 5:9] 'Poison of asps is behind their lips.' [Ps. 139:3, *Septuagint* (140:3, Hebrew)] 'And their mouth is full of cursing and bitter expression.' [Ps. 9:27, *Septuagint* (10:7, Hebrew)] 'Their feet are speedy to shed blood.' 'Ruin and misery are in their ways, and they have not known the way of peace.' [Isa. 59:7, 8] 'There is no fear of God before their eyes.' [Ps. 35:1, *Septuagint* (36:1, Hebrew)]." —All *Septuagint* references from Bagster's Edition.

This usage of Scripture is an excellent example for everyone who desires to please God. The apostle Peter wrote that Christians should be 'always ready to make a defense before everyone that demands of them a reason for their hope.' (1 Pet. 3:15) What about your knowledge of the written Word of God? If someone asked about your religious beliefs, could you give a Scriptural "reason" for them?

"IF YOU HAD UNDERSTOOD"

While the first five books of the Bible contain the Mosaic law with its hundreds of ordinances, the Hebrew Scriptures are far more than simply a set of "do's" and "don'ts." Careful study of these pre-Christian Scriptures can help persons to mold their thinking patterns to those of the Creator. Consider the following experience of Jesus:

"At that season Jesus went through the grainfields on the sabbath. His disciples got hungry and started to pluck heads of grain and to eat. At seeing this the Pharisees said to him: 'Look! Your disciples are doing what it is not lawful to do on the sabbath.' He said to them: 'Have you not read what David did when he and the men with him got hungry? How he entered into the house of God and they ate the loaves of presentation, something that it was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those with him, but for the priests only? [1 Sam. 21:1-6] Or, have you not read in the Law that on the sabbaths the priests in the temple treat the sabbath as not sacred and continue guiltless? [Num. 28:8-10]"—Matt. 12:1-5.

Here Jesus used to good advantage his knowledge that the Scriptures did not condemn David for eating bread that under normal circumstances would have been lawful only for priests. Jesus' disciples were even less blameworthy, since their

actions violated, not Scriptural, but merely rabbinical regulations.*

Pointing to an important aspect of God's thinking, Jesus concluded his argument with another meaningful quote from the Hebrew Scriptures: "If you had understood what this means, 'I want mercy, and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless ones. [Hos. 6:6]" —Matt. 12:7.

'THAT IT MIGHT BE FULFILLED'

Hebrew Scripture prophecies, even though they were written many centuries before Jesus came to earth, are alive with meaning for Christians. Frequently Christian Bible writers introduce Scriptural quotations by phrases such as, "that there might be fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet." (Matt. 13:35) At times such a phrase indicates direct fulfillment of a prediction. (Matt. 2:5, 6; 11:10-15) But often the indication is otherwise. How so?

Concerning his future betrayal by Judas Iscariot, Jesus stated: "It is in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, 'He that used to feed on my bread has lifted up his heel against me.' " ([Ps. 41:9] John 13:18) In this instance Jesus quoted what David had written about an intimate friend (perhaps David's respected counselor, Ahithophel) who had turned against him. God knew that Jesus would undergo similar treachery from an intimate companion. Therefore God had David's experience recorded under inspiration as prophetically foreshadowing this.

Similar is a quotation that Matthew makes after relating a series of parables that Jesus gave. "All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds by illustrations. Indeed, without an illustration he would not speak to them; that there might be fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet who said: 'I will open my mouth with illustrations, I will publish things hidden since the founding.' " ([Ps. 78:2] Matt. 13:34, 35) Asaph, the writer of Psalm 78, recounted in illustrative language much of the history of God's dealings with the nation of Israel. Similarly, Jesus used parabolic language in giving many illustrations that affected the spiritual "Israel of God."—Gal. 6:16; Matt. 13:1-33, 36-50.

'A GREATER DELIVERANCE'

The Christian Greek Scriptures often record fulfillment in the first century C.E. of prophecies that initially applied to the return of the nation of Israel from Babylonian captivity in 537 B.C.E. Thus, the activity of John the Baptizer is said to fulfill the prophecy at Isaiah 40:3 about "someone . . . calling out in the wilderness." (Matt. 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4; John 1:23) And the apostle Paul, when counseling Christians at Corinth to separate themselves from pagan practices, drew upon Isaiah 52:11 as follows: " 'Therefore get out from among them, and separate yourselves,' says Jehovah, 'and quit touching the unclean thing.' " (2 Cor. 6:17) As to the application of such prophecies, Bible commentator Albert Barnes explains:

> "The last chapters of Isaiah, from the fortieth chapter, foretell the return of the Jews from Babylon; and every circumstance mentioned occurred in their return. But the language is more expanded and sublime than was necessary to express their return. It will also *express appropriately* a much more important and magnificent deliverance—that of the redeemed under the Messiah, and the return of the people of God to him, and the

* The code of Jewish traditional law known as the *Mishnah* specifies 39 major categories of work forbidden on the sabbath, along with numerous sub-categories. Among the forbidden activities were sifting, threshing, grinding and winnowing. (Tractate *Shabbath* 7:2) The Palestinian Talmud gives one rabbinical opinion of such forbidden work: 'In case a woman rolls wheat to remove the husks, it is considered as sifting; if she rubs the heads of wheat, it is regarded as threshing; if she cleans off the side-adherences, it is sifting out fruit; if she bruises the ears, it is grinding; if she throws them up in her hand, it is winnowing.'

universal spread of the gospel; and therefore it may be said *to be fulfilled* in the coming of Jesus, and the spread of the gospel."

Not only do the Christian Scriptures apply such prophecies to the first century C.E., but they extend their application into the then distant future. For instance, according to Isaiah 65:17, God foretold: "Here I am creating new heavens and a new earth; and the former things will not be called to mind, neither will they come up into the heart." This attained an initial fulfillment when the Jews returned from captivity to Babylon in 537 B.C.E. Under the governorship of Zerubbabel, aided by High Priest Joshua, as a symbolic "new heavens," those repatriated Israelites constituted a "new earth," or a new society subject to the new, righteous government. —Hag. 1:1, 14.

But note how Christian Bible writers use this prophecy: "There are new heavens and a new earth *that we are awaiting* according to his promise, and in these righteousness is to dwell." (2 Pet. 3:13) "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the former heaven and the former earth had passed away." (Rev. 21:1) Also, since true Christians have been brought into a glorious paradise of spiritual enlightenment, the Scriptures warrant applying to this "time of the end" of the present system of things the marvelous descriptions of earthly blessings found in prophecies that originally foretold the return of the Jews from Babylonian captivity.—Dan. 12:4.

The "Old Testament" is indeed meaningful for Christians. Its vast storehouse of principles, prophecies and prophetic history are as necessary for true worship today as when they were first written. Truly *"all* Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial."—2 Tim. 3:16.

Benefit from the Bible's 'Play on Words'

The Bible contains plays on words, that is, in the original Hebrew similar-sounding words of different meaning are used to make a point. These are not easily recognized in translations but may be called attention to in footnotes or marginal references. Evidently such plays on words helped to impress the message deeply upon the minds of the hearers or readers. Our taking note of them can make the passages of Scripture where they appear more meaningful to us.

Take, for example, Jeremiah 1:11-13, where we read: "The word of Jehovah continued to occur to me, saying: 'What are you seeing, Jeremiah?' So I said: 'An offshoot of an almond tree is what I am seeing.' And Jehovah went on to say to me: 'You have seen well, for I am keeping awake concerning my word in order to carry it out.'"

One may be inclined to ask, Just what relationship is there between an "almond tree" and "keeping awake"? In the original language a play on words is involved. The Hebrew name for the almond tree literally means "the waker." This is an appropriate designation, since the almond is one of the first trees to bloom after the winter rest.

The foregoing is but one of many Biblical plays on words. So as not to miss them, check the footnotes or marginal references, if the Bible you are using has such. You may make some very interesting and helpful discoveries.

1977 District Assemblies of Jehovah's Witnesses

DURING the past six months, it has been reported that 2,333,115 persons attended 405 "Sacred Service" District Assemblies of Jehovah's Witnesses in 56 countries throughout the world. This year an even greater number of assemblies is being arranged. This will make it convenient for more persons to attend. To help many with their plans, the following information is being provided on assembly cities, dates and areas from which Jehovah's Witnesses will be attending.

To assist you in making plans to attend one of the 110 district assemblies scheduled for the Continental United States, the following chart sets out the assembly cities and nearby circuits. To the extent possible, we recommend that you attend the convention shown for your circuit unless vacation plans or other circumstances make it necessary for you to attend elsewhere. In some cases the size of the crowd needs to be balanced with the seating facilities available and so some congregations in those circuits marked with an asterisk (*) may be slightly closer to another convention city, but it would be best, if possible, to attend the assembly indicated so that there will be plenty of room. Where the chart indicates that a portion of a circuit attend a particular assembly, such as ½ or ¼, and so forth, it simply means that those living in the part of the circuit closest to that assembly would attend where indicated, but the rest of the circuit would attend another assembly closest to them, as shown elsewhere on the list. In a number of cities where two or three assemblies are being held in succession, we are recommending that the brothers in the circuits listed in the chart attend during the particular week indicated, to the extent possible, to assure adequate seating for everyone. Additional details will be provided later.

ASSEMBLIES IN CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES

JUNE 16-19:
Des Moines, Iowa: Ill. ¼4; Iowa 1, 2, 3, 4-B; Neb. ¼1, ¾2, ⅓3.
Fresno, Calif. (Spanish only): S-5*, S-15-B.
Greensboro, N.C.: N.C. 1-B, 2, 6-A, 7; S.C. ½2; Va. ½4-A.
Jacksonville, Fla.: Fla. 3, 11-B; Ga. ½1-A, 7.
Knoxville, Tenn.: Ky. ¼4; Tenn. 1, 5.
Lakeland, Fla.: Fla. ½9, 10*.
Mobile, Ala.: Ala. 3, ⅕5; La. 3-B; Miss. 1-B, ½3-B.
Montgomery, Ala.: Ala. 4, ⅘5; Fla. 11-A*.
Phoenix, Ariz.: Ariz. 1, ⅔2, 3, 5-B; N.M. ¼2.
Portland, Me.: Me. 1; N.H. 1; Vt. ½1.
Salt Lake City, Utah: Ariz. 5-A*; Ida. 1-B; Nev. ¼1; Utah 1, 2.

JUNE 23-26:
Denver, Colo.: Colo. 2, 4, 5, 6; Neb. ⅓3.
Fresno, Calif. (Spanish only): S-11*, S-15-A.
Greensboro, N.C.: N.C. ⅔3, 5; S.C. ⅔1; Va. 2, 5.
Hallandale, Fla.: Fla. 1, ¼4, 6, 8.
Jackson, Mich.: Ind. 7-B; Mich. 1-B, 1-C, 8.
Knoxville, Tenn.: Ga. 4-B; N.C. ⅓3, 4; Tenn. ¼4.
Lakeland, Fla.: Fla. ½4, 5; (Spanish also: S-16-A).
Landover, Md. (Nr. Wash. D.C.): Md. 2, 3, 4; N.J. 7-C; Pa. 5-B, 5-C. ½9.
Lubbock, Tex.: N.M. ¼2, 3; Tex. ⅔9, 10-A, ⅓14.
Montgomery, Ala.: Ala. ⅓1, 2, ¾6.
Providence, R.I.: Mass. 1, 4; R.I. 1-B, 1-C.
Puyallup, Wash.: Wash. 3, 8.
Richfield, Ohio (Nr. Cleveland): Ohio 3, ⅛8-A, 8-B, 12; Pa. 7, 8.
Santa Rosa, Calif.: Calif. 12*, 27, ⅓43.
Savannah, Ga.: Ga. 3; S.C. ⅓1, ⅔2.
South Bend, Ind.: Ill. ½6, 12; Ind. 1, 7-A; Mich. 4*.
Tucson, Ariz.: Ariz. ½2, 4; N.M. 1*; (Spanish also: ½-S-24, ½S-28).

JUNE 30–JULY 3:
Denver, Colo.: Colo. 1, 3, 7; N.M. ½2; Wyo. 1-B.
El Paso, Tex. (Spanish only): S-6, ⅓-S-18, ⅔-S-24.
Fresno, Calif.: Calif. 10, 29-A; Nev. ¼1.
Inglewood, Calif. (Spanish only): S-4, S-9, S-20, S-23, ½S-28.
Jackson, Mich.: Mich. 5, 10, ½13.
Kansas City, Mo.: Kans. 1, ¼4; Mo. 3, 5, 7; Neb. ¼3.
Providence, R.I.: Mass. 2, 5; R.I. 1-A.
Puyallup, Wash.: Wash. 2, ¼4, 6.
Richfield, Ohio (Nr. Cleveland): Ohio 2-B, 10, 13, 14, 15-B; Pa. 10*.
St. Paul, Minn.: Minn. ⅔2, 3, 4, 5, ½6-B; Neb. ¼2; N.D. ¼1; S.D. ½1; Wis. 5.
St. Petersburg, Fla.: Fla. 2.
San Antonio, Tex.: Tex. ⅔3, 8.
San Francisco, Calif.: Calif. 19, 22-A, 22-B, 26, 41.
South Bend, Ind.: Ill. 2, ⅓3, ¼4, 5-B, 5-C; Ind. 5.
Utica, N.Y.: N.Y. 6, ¾22.

JULY 7-10:
Allentown, Pa.: N.J. 8*; N.Y. ¼22; Pa. 5-A, 6.
Anchorage, Alaska.
Baton Rouge, La.: La. 2, 3-A, 5; Miss. 1-A.
Billings, Mont.: Mont. 1-B*, 2; N.D. ½1; S.D. ½1; Wyo. 1-A.
Duluth, Minn.: Mich. ½7; Minn. 1, ½2, 6-A, ½6-B; N.D. ¼1.
Fresno, Calif.: Calif. 8*, 9.
Grand Rapids, Mich.: Mich. ½6-A, 9, ¼13.
Jackson, Mich.: Mich. 11-A, 12; Ohio ⅖5.
Kansas City, Mo.: Kans. ½3; Mo. 1-A, 2, 4-B, 6; Neb. ¾1.
Louisville, Ky.: Ill. ½6, ⅔7; Ind. 2*, 6*; Ky. ½1, ½4; Ohio 9.
Miami, Fla. (Spanish only): S-12, S-16-B, S-26.
Pullman, Wash.: Ida. 1-A, 2; Mont. 1-A; Ore. 5-A; Wash. ⅔4.
Puyallup, Wash.: Wash. 1, 5.
Richfield, Ohio (Nr. Cleveland): Ohio 1, 4, ⅕5, 11; Pa. ½12, 14.
Rochester, N.Y.: N.Y. 7, 9, ¼21.
St. Petersburg, Fla.: Fla. 7, ½9.
San Antonio, Tex.: Tex. 1, ⅔7, ½11.
San Francisco, Calif.: Calif. 13, 18-C, 22-C, 34, 40.
Utica, N.Y.: N.Y. ¾21; Vt. ½1.
Woodburn, Ore. (Spanish only): S-19.

JULY 14-17:
Allentown, Pa.: Pa. 2, 3, ½9, ½11.
Baton Rouge, La.: La. 1, 4; Miss. 3-A, ½3-B; Tex. ½4.
Cherry Hill, N.J.: N.J. 3, 7-B; Pa. 1, 13.
Corvallis, Ore.: Calif. ½43; Ore. 1, 3, 5-B.
Fresno, Calif.: Calif. 11*, 39.
Galveston, Tex. (Spanish only): S-14-A.
Holt, Mich. (Spanish only): S-13-B, S-13-C.
Houston, Tex.: Tex. 2, ⅔4, ⅕5-A, 16.
Landover, Md. (Nr. Wash. D.C.): D.C. 1; Md. 1, 5; Va. ¼4-A, 4-B; W. Va. 2-B.
Louisville, Ky.: Ind. 3, 4; Ky. 2, ¾3; Ohio 2-A, 2-C, 6.
Macon, Ga.: Ala. ⅙6; Ga. 2, 4-A, 6.
Oklahoma City, Okla.: Kans. ⅔4; Okla. 1, 2; Tex. ⅕5-A, 5-B, 10-B, 15.
San Angelo, Tex.: Tex. 6*, ½7, ½9, ½14.
Springfield, Mass.: Conn. 1-A*, 1-C*; Mass. 3; Vt. ½1.
Yonkers, N.Y. (Tentative): N.J. ⅘5*; N.Y. 10, 14.

JULY 21-24:
Charleston, W. Va.: Ohio 15-A*; W. Va. 1, 2-A.
Cherry Hill, N.J.: N.J. 4*, 6; Pa. 4, ½11.
Chicago, Ill. (Spanish only): S-21; Missouri Spanish Circuit.
Corpus Christi, Tex. (Spanish only): S-7, S-10-A.
Corvallis, Ore.: Ore. 2, 4, 6.

Hampton, Va.: N.C. 1-A, 6-B; Va. 6.
Houston, Tex.: Tex. ⅓3, ⅔11, 12, 17.
Lansing, Mich.: Mich. 1-A, 3*, ⅓6-A, 6-B*.
Macon, Ga.: Ga. ½1-A, 1-B, 5, 8.
Memphis, Tenn.: Ark. 4; Miss. 2; Mo. 4-A; Tenn. 3.
Milwaukee, Wis.: Ill. 1, ⅓3, ⅓4, 5-A, 8, 9, 10, 11; Iowa 4-A; Mich. ⅓7; Wis. 1, 2, 3, 4.
Nashville, Tenn.: Ala. ⅔1; Ill. ⅓7; Ky. ⅔1, ¼4; Tenn. 2, ¾4.
New Haven, Conn.: Conn. 1-B, ½2, 3; N.Y. ⅓3.
Oklahoma City, Okla.: Ark. ½1-A; Kans. 2, ⅓3; Okla. 3, 4; Tex. 13, ⅓14.
Sacramento, Calif.: Calif. 15, 23, 29-B; Nev. ½1.
Springfield, Mass.: Conn. ½2; N.Y. 16*.
Yonkers, N.Y. (Tentative): N.J. 2; N.Y. 2-A, ¾3, 5.

JULY 28-31:
Charleston, W. Va.: Ky. ⅓3; Ohio 7, ½8-A; W. Va. 3.
Chicago, Ill. (Spanish only): S-13-A.
Corpus Christi, Tex. (Spanish only): S-3-A, S-8, S-10-B.
Hampton, Va.: Va. 1, 3.
Inglewood, Calif.: Calif. 1, 3, 17, 24, 28, 38, 44, 46.
Lansing, Mich.: Mich. 2, 11-B, ¼13.
Memphis, Tenn.: Ark. ½1-A, 1-B, 2, 3; Mo. 1-B.
Monroe, N.Y. (French only): N.Y. 20; Florida French Circuit.
Niagara Falls, N.Y.: N.Y. 8, 13; Pa. ⅔12.
Sacramento, Calif.: Calif. 14, 18-A, 18-B, 42, ⅓43.
San Angelo, Tex. (Spanish only): S-3-B, S-3-C, S-14-B, ⅔-S-18.
Yonkers, N.Y. (Tentative): N.J. 1, 7-A; N.Y. 2-B, 17.

AUGUST 4-7:
Elmont, N.Y. (Nr. New York City) (Spanish and Portuguese only): S-1, S-2, S-17, S-22, S-25, S-27, S-29, S-30.
Inglewood, Calif. (Japanese also): Calif. 4, 6, 7, 16, 21, 25, 31, 35.

AUGUST 11-14:
Elmont, N.Y. (Nr. New York City): N.J. ⅓5 (Staten Island; N.Y. 1, 2-C, 2-D, 4, 11, 12, 15, 18, 19. (Greek also; N.Y. Greek Circuit); (Italian also: N.Y. Italian Circuit).
Inglewood, Calif. (Korean also): Calif. 2, 5, 20, 30, 32, 33, 36, 37, 45.

Note to the Body of Elders in Each Congregation: Please determine immediately from the above chart which assembly it is suggested that your congregation attend and announce to the congregation several times the city and dates so that all will know what the Society has recommended.

ASSEMBLIES IN HAWAII

JUNE 30–JULY 3: Wailuku, Maui.
JULY 7-10: Hilo.
JULY 14-17: Kona.
JULY 21-24: Lihue, Kauai.
JULY 28-31: Honolulu, Oahu.
AUGUST 4-7: Honolulu, Oahu.
AUGUST 11-14: Honolulu, Oahu.

ASSEMBLIES IN BRITISH ISLES

JULY 7-10: Sheffield, South Yorks; Plymouth, Devon; Dublin, Irish Republic.
JULY 14-17: Sheffield, South Yorks.
JULY 21-24: Cardiff, Wales; Edinburgh, Scotland.
JULY 28-31: London.
AUG. 4-7: London.

ASSEMBLIES IN CANADA

JULY 7-10: Regina, Sask. (Tentative); Vancouver, B.C.
JULY 14-17: London, Ont.; Moncton, N.B. (Tentative); Prince George, B.C.; Quebec City, Que. (French only) (Tentative); Winnipeg, Man.
JULY 21-24: Brampton, Ont. (Italian only); Kitchener, Ont. (Tentative); Montreal, Que. (English only); Sudbury, Ont. (Tentative); Victoria, B.C.
JULY 28-31: Brampton, Ont. (Spanish only); Montreal, Que. (French only); Montreal, Que. (Italian only).
AUG. 4-7: Brampton, Ont. (Portuguese only); Edmonton, Alta. (Tentative).
AUG. 11-14: Toronto, Ont. (Tentative).
AUG. 18-21: Brampton, Ont. (Greek only).
AUG. 25-28: Vancouver, B.C. (Chinese only).

We look forward with you to the many blessings that Jehovah has in store for us at the assemblies this summer. Surely it will prove to be a spiritually rewarding experience for you to attend all four days of the district assembly and we encourage you to plan now to do so. —Heb. 10:24, 25.

● Who is the "Lord" mentioned in Romans 10:12, the Lord Jesus Christ or the Lord Jehovah?

Romans 10:12 reads: "For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for there is the same Lord over all, who is rich to all those calling upon him." The identity of the one referred to as "Lord" cannot be established with certainty from the context.

Throughout the centuries Bible scholars have not been in agreement as to whether Paul meant the Lord Jesus Christ or the Lord Jehovah. Romans 10:9 definitely refers to Jesus Christ as Lord, and the quotation from Isaiah 28:16 found in Romans 10:11, "None that rests his faith on him will be disappointed," also applies to Jesus. So if Romans 10:11 is to be directly linked with the Lord of Romans 10:12, the Lord referred to is Jesus Christ.

On the other hand, in Romans 10:9 Paul speaks of 'exercising faith in your heart that God raised him up from the dead.' This shows that faith in Jehovah God is also essential for salvation. Furthermore, Romans 10:13, a quotation from Joel 2:32, reads: "For 'everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah will be saved.'" Hence, if the calling on the Lord referred to in Romans 10:12 is the same as in Romans 10:13, Jehovah God is the Lord being referred to by Paul. The thought would then be the same as that expressed at Romans 3:29: "Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of people of the nations? Yes, of people of the nations also."

New Method of Conducting "Watchtower" Study

Elders who preside at the weekly *Watchtower* study, as well as those who conduct the congregation book studies, are anxious to teach in the most effective and helpful way. (Rom. 12:8; 2 Tim. 4:2) Moreover, all in the congregation desire to make the most of opportunities for taking in spiritual nourishment so that they may attain to "accurate knowledge and full discernment" of the truth.—Phil. 1:9.

With this in mind, we recommend to all congregations the following order of study: (1) Read the paragraph in *The Watchtower* (or other publication); (2) Read the question thereon; (3) Call on those raising their hands for answers, discussing fully the paragraph and supporting scriptures.

There should be a number of advantages in reading the paragraphs before they are discussed. This will quickly refresh the minds of all who have studied over the lesson in advance, and in the event some have not been able to do this previous to the meeting, the reading will at least familiarize them with the material before it is discussed. Everyone will be encouraged to concentrate on the reading, rather than look ahead for the answer in the next paragraph. Those who are shy, or who are slow in organizing their thoughts, will be able to prepare better to put their words together and so gain confidence to raise their hands. There should be freer participation and fuller discussion of the finer details of the study, with emphasis on the application of key scriptures before passing on to the reading of the next paragraph.

This new arrangement should be a blessing to all of God's people, as they seek to "be filled with the accurate knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual comprehension, in order to walk worthily of Jehovah."—Col. 1:9, 10.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

March 6: Do You Appreciate God's Patience Toward You? Page 80. Songs to Be Used: 39, 43.

March 13: Continue to Be Patient. Page 85. Songs to Be Used: 115, 56.