

The **WATCHTOWER**

THE WISDOM OF SELF-DISCIPLINE

**Also
in This
Issue:**

**Rendering
SACRED SERVICE
Whole-souled**

AUGUST 1, 1977

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

The WATCHTOWER

August 1, 1977
Vol. 98, Number 15

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.

PUBLISHED BY
WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY
OF PENNSYLVANIA
117 Adams Street, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201, U.S.A.
FREDERICK W. FRANZ, Pres. GRANT SUITER, Secy.

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Average Printing Each Issue: 10,400,000

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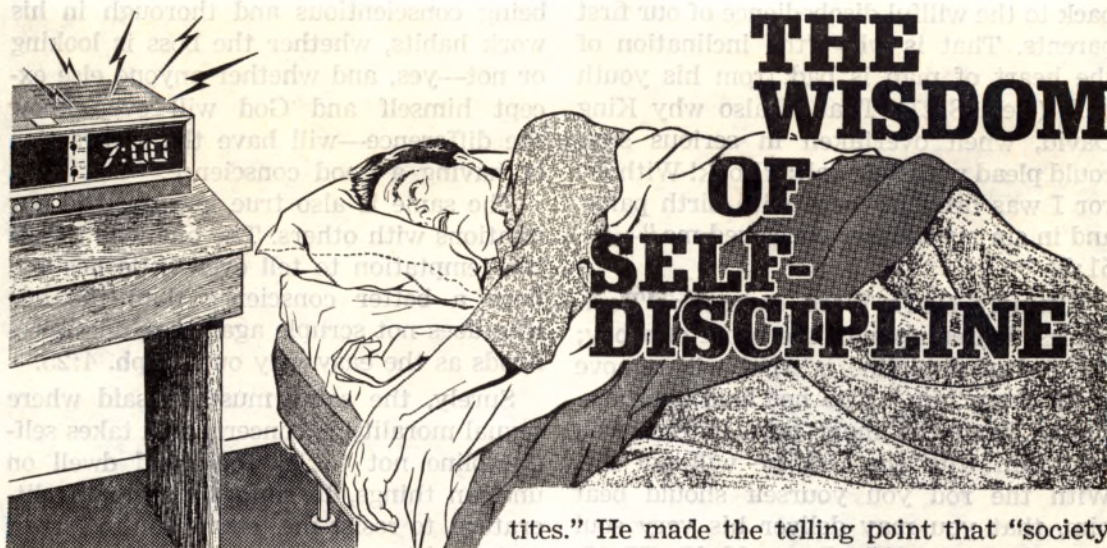
Five cents a copy

Watch Tower Society offices	Yearly subscription rates for semi-monthly editions in local currency
America, U.S., 117 Adams St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201	\$1.50
Australia, 11 Beresford Rd., Strathfield, N.S.W. 2135	\$2.50
Canada, 150 Bridgeland Ave., Toronto, Ontario M6A 1Z5	\$1.50
England, Watch Tower House, The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN	\$1.50
Hawaii, 1228 Pensacola St., Honolulu 96814	\$1.50
New Zealand, 6-A Western Springs Rd., Auckland 3	\$1.50
Nigeria, West Africa, P.O. Box 194, Yaba, Lagos State	N1.10
Philippines, P.O. Box 2044, Manila 2800	P8
South Africa, Private Bag 2, P.O. Elandsfontein, 1406	R1.30
(Monthly editions cost half the above rates.)	

Remittances for subscriptions should be sent to the office in your country. Otherwise send your remittance to 117 Adams Street, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201. Notice of expiration is sent at least two issues before subscription expires. Second-class postage paid at Brooklyn, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS should reach us thirty days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label). Write Watchtower, R.D. 1, Box 300, Wallkill, New York 12589, U.S.A. POSTMASTER: Send Form 3579 to Watchtower, Wallkill, N.Y. 12589.

The Bible translation used in "The Watchtower" is the modern-language "New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures," unless otherwise indicated. Printed in U.S.A.



WHO has not seen a policeman write out a ticket for a car driver who violated some traffic regulation, such as exceeding the speed limit? That might be an instance of a driver's failing to discipline himself. He may have yielded to the temptation or the impulse to ignore traffic regulations, and so had to be disciplined.

The very laws of cause and effect within our bodies discipline us if we do not discipline ourselves. The inspired writer of Proverbs tells us: "Who has woe? Who has uneasiness? . . . Who has wounds for no reason? Those staying a long time with the wine, those coming in to search out mixed wine." Without a doubt, one of the main themes of the book of Proverbs is the wisdom of self-discipline.—Prov. 23:29-35.

What is true of individuals can also be applied to whole nations of people. A noted eighteenth-century British statesman once said: "Men are qualified for civil liberty in exact proportion to their disposition to put moral chains upon their own appe-

tes." He made the telling point that "society cannot exist unless a controlling power upon will and appetite be placed somewhere, and the less of it there is within, the more there must be without." In other words, the less men discipline themselves, the more they need to be disciplined by their governments, in the interest of peace and safety. There have been striking examples of this when people enjoying a democratic form of government became so lawless that they paved the way for a dictatorship to take over. How much wiser for people to exercise self-restraint than to bring on the loss of cherished liberties!

As a modern-day example: In the spring of 1974 certain government agencies threatened to impose rationing and price controls if the people and industry did not exercise restraint. There is no question about the wisdom of the people's disciplining themselves in this regard so as to avoid government controls.

WHY WE ALL NEED DISCIPLINE

What do we mean by discipline? The noun "discipline" is defined as "training, especially of the mind or character; . . . punishment; chastisement." And the verb form of the word means "to train; bring to a condition of order and obedience; bring under control."

Time and again the Bible enlightens us as to why we all need discipline at times. It all goes

back to the willful disobedience of our first parents. That is why "the inclination of the heart of man is bad from his youth up." (Gen. 8:21) That is also why King David, when overtaken in serious sins, could plead with Jehovah: "Look! With error I was brought forth with birth pains, and in sin my mother conceived me."—Ps. 51:5.

Fittingly God's Word counsels: "Foolishness is tied up with the heart of a boy; the rod of discipline is what will remove it far from him." "Do not hold back discipline from the mere boy. In case you beat him with the rod, he will not die. With the rod you yourself should beat him, that you may deliver his very soul from Sheol itself."—Prov. 22:15; 23:13, 14.

Because of their inherited imperfections, their lack of knowledge and experience, Christians are counseled to accept readily the discipline administered to them by their heavenly Father: "'Do not belittle the discipline from Jehovah, neither give out when you are corrected by him; for whom Jehovah loves he disciplines; in fact, he scourges every one whom he receives as a son.' . . . We used to have fathers who . . . used to discipline us according to what seemed good to them, but he [Jehovah] does so for our profit that we may partake of his holiness. True, no discipline seems for the present to be joyous, but grievous; yet afterward to those who have been trained by it it yields peaceable fruit, namely, righteousness."—Heb. 12:5-11.

WHY SELF-DISCIPLINE IS WISDOM

Self-discipline is the course of wisdom for it enables one to have a clear conscience. One who disciplines himself by

being conscientious and thorough in his work habits, whether the boss is looking or not—yes, and whether anyone else except himself and God will ever know the difference—will have the satisfaction of having a good conscience.—Col. 3:23.

The same is also true in regard to our relations with others. The one who resists the temptation to tell even little lies will have a better conscience than the one who does not scruple against telling falsehoods as the easy way out.—Eph. 4:25.

Surely, the same must be said where sexual morality is concerned. It takes self-discipline not to let the mind dwell on unclean things, to shun pornographic literature, to resist the temptation to flirt or to toy with sexual immorality. But surely it is the course of wisdom, for then one will be able to say as did the apostle Paul: "I have behaved before God with a perfectly clear conscience down to this day."—Acts 23:1.

Jesus recommended the course of self-discipline to us when he said: "If ever your hand makes you stumble, cut it off; it is finer for you to enter into life maimed than with two hands to go off into Gehenna." "If your foot makes you stumble," "if your eye makes you stumble," do likewise with these members of your body.—Mark 9:43-48.

Each one of us knows what his individual weaknesses are. Others may not appreciate our firmness in a certain matter, but we individually know where we must exercise self-discipline to be pleasing to God. The apostle Paul set a fine example for us, for 'he pummeled his body and led it as a slave so that after having preached to others he might not become disapproved.'—1 Cor. 9:27.



A PROPHETIC RIDDLE FULFILLED

A RIDDLE stimulates thinking and reflection. It can make a far deeper impression on the mind than a mere stating of facts. Evidently, therefore, with a view to having his prophetic word stand out in the minds of the hearers, the Most High conveyed it through Ezekiel in the form of a riddle.

This riddle is found in Ezekiel chapter 17. We read: "The great eagle, having great wings, with long pinions, full of plumage, which had color variety, came to Lebanon and proceeded to take the treetop of the cedar. He plucked off the very top of its young shoots and came bringing it to the land of Canaan; in a city of traders he placed it. Furthermore, he took some of the seed of the land and put it in a field for seed. As a willow by vast waters, as a willow tree he placed it. And it began to sprout and gradually became a luxuriantly growing vine low in height, inclined to turn its foliage inward; and as for its roots, they gradually came to be under it. And it finally

became a vine and produced shoots and sent forth branches.

"And there came to be another great eagle, having great wings, and having large pinions, and, look! this very vine stretched its roots hungrily toward him. And its foliage it thrust out to him in order for him to irrigate it, away from the garden beds where it was planted. Into a good field, by vast waters, it was already transplanted, in order to produce boughs and to bear fruit, to become a majestic vine."—Ezek. 17:3-8.

Thereafter the following questions are raised about this vine: "Will it have success? Will not someone tear out its very roots and make its very fruit scaly? And must not all its freshly plucked sprouts become dry?" The answer: "It will become dry. Neither by a great arm nor by a multitudinous people will it have to be lifted up from its roots." Then more questions are brought up and thereafter answered: "And, look! although transplanted, will it have success? Will it not dry up completely, even as when the east wind touches it? In the garden beds of its sprout it will dry up."—Ezek. 17:9, 10.

Just what did the riddle mean? How was it fulfilled? And of what benefit is this to us today? These are questions that merit an answer.

We are not left to guess about the meaning of the riddle. The inspired explanation is also recorded in the Scriptures. Identifying the "great eagle" that came to "Lebanon," Ezekiel 17:12 says: "The king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and proceeded to take its king and its princes and bring them to himself at Babylon."

The "king of Babylon," Nebuchadnezzar, was like a "great eagle" under whose large wings came many subject peoples. This "great eagle" came to

"Lebanon," that is, Jerusalem. On account of its lofty location and buildings of extensive cedarwood construction, Jerusalem could appropriately be referred to as "Lebanon." Furthermore, the government in the hands of a ruler of the royal line of David at Jerusalem was like a tall cedar. The topmost part of this cedar—representing King Jehoiachin and his princes—Nebuchadnezzar plucked off, taking it into Babylonian exile. In the riddle the taking of it into Babylonian exile is spoken of as a 'bringing of it to the land of Canaan, a placing of it in a city of traders.' This is so because centuries earlier the expression "Canaanite" had come to mean "tradesman" or "merchant." (Compare Job 41: 6, where "Canaanites" is rendered "tradesmen.") As a great commercial center, Babylon was indeed "a city of traders."

Regarding what Nebuchadnezzar did with "some of the seed," the explanation continues: "He took one of the royal seed [Zedekiah, the uncle of King Jehoiachin] and concluded a covenant with him and brought him into an oath; and the foremost men of the land he took away, in order that the kingdom might become low, unable to lift itself up, that by keeping his covenant it might stand."—Ezek. 17: 13.

Thus Nebuchadnezzar planted Zedekiah as a "willow," making him a vassal king. As such Zedekiah was to be just a local sovereign dependent on Babylon. In the former territory of the kingdom of Judah willows grow as shrubs or small trees. The position of Zedekiah was like such a willow, as compared to the lofty position once occupied by kings of the royal line of David.

Zedekiah was not satisfied with this position. He began looking to another "great eagle" to help him to break free from the Babylonian yoke. Who was this "great eagle"? We are told: "He [Zedekiah] finally rebelled against him [Nebuchadnezzar]

in sending his messengers to Egypt, for it to give him horses and a multitudinous people."—Ezek. 17:15.

As long as Zedekiah remained submissive to Nebuchadnezzar, his kingship was secure. His position was like that of a low-growing luxuriant vine, abundantly supplied with water. But the situation was to change. In turning to another "great eagle," Egyptian Pharaoh Hophra, Zedekiah was courting disaster. He would incur the rage of the more powerful eagle, King Nebuchadnezzar. Like a searing east wind, the Babylonian forces would come against him, and he would dry up as a vine under the intense heat.

Explaining what was to happen to Zedekiah for his rebellion, the prophetic word says: "In the midst of Babylon he will die. And by a great military force and by a multitudinous congregation Pharaoh will not make him effective in the war."—Ezek. 17:16, 17.

All that the prophetic riddle indicated befell Zedekiah. In the eleventh year of Zedekiah's reign, the Babylonian armies broke through the walls of Jerusalem. By night Zedekiah and the men of war fled. A Chaldean military force caught up with them in the desert plains of Jericho. Zedekiah was captured and brought before Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah. There Zedekiah's sons were slain before his eyes, after which he was blinded, bound with copper fetters and taken to Babylon, where he died in the house of custody.—2 Ki. 25: 2-7; Jer. 52:6-11.

We should not make the mistake of viewing the fulfillment of the prophetic riddle merely as dead history. It was in connection with this riddle that another feature was introduced, one that can be a great blessing for us. We read: "This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah has said: 'I myself will also take and put some of the lofty treetop of the cedar; from the top of its twigs I shall pluck off a tender

one and I will myself transplant it upon a high and lofty mountain . . . and it will certainly bear boughs and produce fruit and become a majestic cedar.'—Ezek. 17:22, 23.

This pointed to the time when an heir of the royal house of David, the Messiah or Christ, Jesus, would rule as king. This one would become like a lofty cedar, exercising worldwide rulership. With prophetic reference to his rule, Psalm 72:7, 8 states: "In his days the righteous one will sprout, and the abundance of peace

until the moon is no more. And he will have subjects from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth."

We can choose Christ's rulership even now by heeding his invitation to become his disciples: "Come to me, all you who are toiling and loaded down, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you and become my disciples, for I am mild-tempered and lowly in heart." (Matt. 11: 28, 29) Have you acted on that invitation? Doing so is the only way to avoid courting disaster as did King Zedekiah of old.

A Modest Judge who wanted to be Sure

IT HAPPENED

during the thirteenth century B.C.E., about 200 years after the death of Moses' successor, Joshua. The location was the valley of Jezreel in the northern portion of the land that God had promised to the Israelites.

What occurred back there that is of interest to us today? One of Israel's judges with an army of only 300 men routed an enemy force that amounted to about 135,000.

How could such a thing take place?

An important factor was the determination of this judge to be sure that God was backing him up.

The Biblical record of this amazing event is found in the book of Judges, chapters 6 through 8, which begins: "Then the sons of Israel began to do what was bad in the eyes of Jehovah. So Jehovah gave them into the hand of Midian for seven years. And the hand of Midian came to prevail over Israel." (Judg. 6:1, 2) If Israel

would sow seed, the Midianites and other marauders "would camp against them and would ruin the yield of the earth all the way to Gaza, and they would not let any sustenance or sheep or bull or ass remain in Israel."—Judg. 6:4.

GOD CHOOSES "THE SMALLEST"

In desperation, Israel "called to Jehovah for aid on account of Midian." (Judg. 6:7) Therefore, God raised up as judge and deliverer a man of the family of Abiezer (a subdivision of the tribe of Manasseh), namely, Gideon the son of Joash. While Gideon was secretly threshing out grain in a winepress, so as not to be seen by the enemy, an angel appeared to him, saying: "Jehovah is with you, you valiant, mighty one." Surprised, he asked how it could be that God was with Israel, seeing that they were in such dire straits. "Upon that Jehovah [by his angel] faced him and said: 'Go in this power of yours, and you will certainly save Israel out of Midian's palm. Do I not send you?'" —Judg. 6:11-14.

Gideon's response to this commission from God reveals a modest disposition. He replied: "Excuse me, Jehovah. With what shall I save Israel? Look! My thousand is the least in Manasseh, and I am the smallest in my father's house." However, God assured him: "Because I shall prove to be with you, and you will certainly strike down Midian as if one man." —Judg. 6:15, 16.

Gideon, nevertheless, was aware of the difficulties involved in doing battle with Midian and any nations that might join them. He therefore requested a "sign" so as to be sure that this commission was really from God. He brought a gift of meat, unfermented cakes and broth, placed the items on a big rock and poured out the broth. The angelic messenger touched the meat and the unfermented cakes with his staff. Fire began to ascend out of the

rock and to consume the offering, whereupon the messenger vanished. "Consequently Gideon realized that it was Jehovah's angel."—Judg. 6:17-22.

That night Jehovah put his chosen judge to the test. God commanded him to tear down his father's altar to the god Baal, to cut down the sacred pole alongside it, to build in its place an altar to Jehovah and to offer upon it his father Joash's young bull of seven years (evidently a bull considered sacred to Baal). The sacred pole was to serve as firewood. Courageously, Gideon accepted this assignment. But, showing caution, he carried it out by night.—Judg. 6:25-27.

When the men of the city got up the next day and saw what had happened, they demanded Gideon's life. However, his father, Joash, intervened, arguing that if Baal were truly a god, he should make his own defense.—Judg. 6:28-32.

UNUSUAL BATTLE PREPARATIONS

The Bible account next relates that "all Midian and Amalek and the Easterners gathered together as one and proceeded to cross over and camp in the low plain of Jezreel." Then Jehovah's spirit enveloped Gideon. He assembled the Abiezrites for battle, and also sent messengers throughout Manasseh and to Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali, urging men to join him. (Judg. 6:33-35) Those who rallied to his side numbered 32,000. Those in the enemy camp, however, amounted to about 135,000, outnumbering Israel 4 to 1.

At this point Gideon requested that God perform two miracles, once again for him to be sure that God would back up the move against Midian. He asked that a fleece left overnight on a threshing floor be soaked with dew while the floor surrounding it was dry, and on the following night that the fleece be dry, though the floor was wet. God granted both of these requests.—Judg. 6:36-40.



When Gideon and his forces set up camp in preparation for meeting the enemy, Jehovah gave an unexpected command: "The people who are with you are too many for me to give Midian into their hand. Perhaps Israel would brag about itself against me, saying, 'My hand it was that saved me.' And now call out, please, in the hearing of the people, saying, 'Who is there afraid and trembling? Let him retire.'" Obediently, Gideon put them to the test. And the result? "With that, twenty-two thousand of the people retired, and there were ten thousand that remained." (Judg. 7:2, 3) The odds against Israel suddenly rose to 13 to 1.

Next, Jehovah instructed Gideon to lead the remaining ten thousand men down to the water for further testing. The majority let down their guard, and greedily got down on their knees to drink. How-

ever, 300 of the men remained alert, bending down only enough to scoop water to their mouths by hand. God then said: "By the three hundred . . . I shall save you people, and I will give Midian into your hand." (Judg. 7:4-7) This made the odds against Israel 450 to 1.

God told Gideon that, if afraid, he along with an attendant should scout out the enemy camp by night. He did this, and he overheard a man relating a dream to his companion. The man had dreamed of a round cake of barley bread tumbling into the camp of Midian and flattening one of their tents. The companion exclaimed: "This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel. The true God has given Midian and all the camp into his hand."—Judg. 7:9-14.

Strengthened, Gideon returned to the camp of Israel and organized his move

against the enemy. But how could a group of 300 succeed against about 135,000?

"JEHOVAH'S SWORD AND GIDEON'S!"

The cautious judge arranged his forces into three bands of a hundred each. This made it possible to approach the enemy from three sides. He gave each individual a horn, a large earthenware jar and a torch inside the jar, explaining: "When I have blown the horn, I and all who are with me, you also must blow the horns, you too, round about all the camp, and you must say, 'Jehovah's and Gideon's!'" (Judg. 7:16-18) How did this strategy work out? The Scriptural account goes on to relate:

"In time Gideon came with the hundred men who were with him to the edge of the camp at the start of the middle night watch. They had just got through posting the sentries. And they proceeded to blow the horns, and there was a dashing to pieces of the large water jars that were in their hands. At that the three bands blew the horns and shattered the large jars and took fresh hold on the torches with their left hand and with their right hand on the horns to blow them, and they began calling out: 'Jehovah's sword and Gideon's!' All the while they kept standing each one in his place all around the camp, and the whole camp got on the run and broke out into shouting and went fleeing. And the three hundred continued to blow the horns, and Jehovah proceeded to set the sword of each one against the other in all the camp; and the camp kept up their flight as far as Beth-shittah, on to Zererah, as far as the outskirts of Abel-meholah by Tabbath." —Judg. 7:19-22.

Devastating indeed was the effect of this strategy! The horn blowing, jar smashing, hoisting of torches and shouting evidently made the Midianites believe that they were surrounded by a huge military force. Likely they viewed each torch as representing, not a single individual, but a whole band of soldiers. Panic stricken, they took to flight, even turning "the

sword of each one against the other" among their own people.

Determined to achieve a total rout of the enemy, Gideon now called for help from the tribes of Manasseh, Asher, Naphtali and Ephraim. These swooped down upon the fleeing Midianites, cutting off their escape routes. Men of Ephraim captured and executed Oreb and Zeeb, Midian's two princes.—Judg. 7:23-25.

Then something happened that once again displays Gideon's fine disposition. We read: "The men of Ephraim said to him: 'What sort of thing is this that you have done to us in not calling us when you went to fight against Midian?' And they vehemently tried to pick a quarrel with him." The valiant judge, however, responded with commendable modesty: "What now have I done in comparison with you? . . . It was into your hand that God gave Midian's princes Oreb and Zeeb, and what have I been able to do in comparison with you?" This mild response averted further quarreling.—Judg. 8:1-3; Prov. 15:1.

Though tired, this courageous judge, along with his three hundred men, crossed the Jordan in pursuit of Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian. En route Gideon requested food from the men of Succoth, but the princes of Succoth refused, saying: "Are the palms of Zebah and Zalmunna already in your hand so that bread has to be given to your army?" The same thing happened at the city of Penuel.—Judg. 8:4-9.

In spite of their hardships, Gideon and his men kept up the chase. They finally located Zebah and Zalmunna, along with the remaining 15,000 of their men. Once again this divinely appointed judge demonstrated caution, for he "began to strike the camp while the camp happened to be off guard." (Judg. 8:10, 11) Zebah and Zalmunna fled, but were captured and put to death by Gideon.—Judg. 8:12, 18-21.

So appreciative were the men of Israel for Gideon's complete victory that they asked him to establish a ruling dynasty over them. But he desired none of the pomp and creature worship that go with man-made royalty. "I myself shall not rule over you, nor will my son rule over you. Jehovah is the one who will rule over you." —Judg. 8:22, 23.

Gideon then asked for contributions of gold jewelry that had been taken as spoils. From this he made a costly ephod, or priestly garment, perhaps adorned with precious stones. Likely he had a good motive in doing this, perhaps viewing the ephod as a memorial of the conquest of Midian. However, it proved to be a stumbling block, for "all Israel began to have immoral intercourse with it [the ephod] there, so that it served as a snare to Gideon and to his household." (Judg. 8:27) Apparently the Israelites used the costly garment in some type of false worship.

VALUABLE LESSONS FOR TODAY

The Bible account concerning Gideon contains valuable lessons for persons living today. Consider, for example, his caution. Did you note how this judge repeatedly sought miraculous evidence that God was backing him up? This was no indication of lack of faith. It took great faith to show willingness to do battle at odds of 4 to 1, not to mention their increasing to 13 to 1 and, finally, 450 to 1. But though full of faith, Gideon wanted to be sure of divine backing for a humanly impossible task. Even after receiving this assurance, Gideon proceeded cautiously, moving against the enemy when they were off guard.

Similarly today, Christians find themselves greatly outnumbered by a world hostile to true worshipers of Jehovah. (John 15:18, 19) Those who would please God in this period of time must continually examine the Bible to be sure that their

IN COMING ISSUES

- **Peace Can Be Your Possession.**
- **What Are Young Persons Thinking?**
- **Working Together for the Unity of the Family.**

sacred service conforms thereto and has God's backing. (2 Cor. 13:5) As Gideon cautiously pulled down the Baal altar by night, Christians must be "cautious as serpents" and be tactful in performing their witnessing and disciple-making work, which overturns religious falsehoods. (Matt. 10:16; 24:14; 28:19, 20) They seek out opportune times and methods that will allow the Christian message to have its beneficial effect on right-hearted ones.

Another fine lesson is provided in Gideon's humility. The Scriptures counsel Christians to develop a like attitude, "doing nothing out of contentiousness or out of egotism, but with lowliness of mind." —Phil. 2:3.

Additionally, this Bible account is prophetic. Judge Gideon foreshadows Christ Jesus, to whom God "has committed all the judging." (John 5:22) The Scriptures foretell that soon Jesus, along with angelic armies, will do battle with "the kings of the earth and their armies." (Rev. 19:11, 14, 19) The outcome will be according to the prayer of the psalmist with reference to the deliverance wrought by Gideon: "Do to them as to Midian. . . . As for their nobles, make these like Oreb and like Zeeb, and like Zebah and like Zalmunna . . . that people may know that you, whose name is Jehovah, you alone are the Most High over all the earth." —Ps. 83:9-18.



VENEZUELAN'S TAKE ADVANTAGE OF JEHOVAH'S UNFAILING TREASURE

THE millions of dollars that are pouring into Venezuela at present—over nineteen million dollars a day—are accustoming many there to the highest per capita income in South America. But the wealthiest of all the Latin-American countries is running out of its fabulous black treasure—oil. Informed persons are worried by the reports showing that the proven reserves are down to 17.7 billion barrels, which, at the present rate of production, may last for only another twenty years.

One troubled person, Monsignor Ovidio Pérez Morales, secretary of the Roman Catholic Episcopate, in a recent admonitory message, stated: "We are living in an inundation of waste, of luxury and of collective foolishness. . . . The philosophy of the easy life, of exaggerated profit and of triumph at any cost is being spread and in such a way a country cannot be built."

However, many Venezuelans are being helped to get a positive outlook for the

future. Jehovah's Christian witnesses in that land are telling them about a treasure far more valuable than oil, a spiritual treasure that will never be exhausted. (Isa. 33:6) Thirty years ago, in 1946, there were just thirteen persons carrying on this Bible educational work. By 1976, however, there were more than *thirteen thousand* (13,749) visiting their thirteen million neighbors with the message of a future free from fear, under Christ's rule. Half this number were baptized just during the last four years.

There are several factors that have aided Jehovah's Witnesses to teach the truth of God's Word to so many. In these days most Venezuelans know how to read, because the government has made a conscientious effort to provide enough schools. In the last few years the people have come to look at the Bible in a better light. The Roman Catholic Church has sponsored the "Week of the Bible," during which one may buy the Catholic Bible at a reduced

rate, and Bible reading is encouraged. This has helped to erase the ideas that the Bible is an 'immoral book' and that 'one could go insane' reading it.

One especially useful benefit of the oil bonanza is the network of good roads over much of Venezuela. This has made it much easier to contact people with the "good news" of the Kingdom. But there are still places that must be reached by plane, riverboat, *curiara* (dugout canoe), burro or other transportation.

BLIND MAN AIDED TO HELP OTHERS

Persons in all walks of life and in a variety of circumstances are finding delight in gaining an accurate knowledge of God's Word. On the island of Margarita, five hours off the Caribbean coast by ferry, a twenty-one-year-old blind man accepted the Bible's message. At the age of twelve he had lost his sight when playing with *tumbarancho* firecrackers, the "jumbo" type. He had been making a living as a singer with a local group of musicians. Upon becoming one of Jehovah's Witnesses, however, he gave up this work to avoid the atmosphere of overdrinking and rowdiness associated with it. For almost a year now he has been devoting about ninety hours monthly to sharing Bible truth with others. How does he do it?

Witnesses have opened their homes to him, and different ones help him to get to the territory where he shares in the public proclamation of the "good news." He makes his living by repairing reed furniture—a skill he acquired at the School for the Blind in Caracas, the capital. There he also learned Braille. This has been especially useful to him. For example, from tape recordings of the Bible handbook *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*, he has made a translation into Braille for his own use, and this has en-

abled him to teach the Bible to others. Three of his students are now Witnesses.

MARVELOUS PERSONALITY CHANGES

The precious message of the Bible has assisted many Venezuelans to change their personalities for the better. A Portuguese immigrant relates:

"A few years ago I had friends who, just like me, robbed and took all kinds of drugs, including LSD. One night I was walking with the gang when, suddenly, someone shouted, 'The four J's!' (The initial of each of our names was "J"; Joao, Jesús, Jorge and José.) Just a short time later Jorge and José died in a gun battle.

"When I found myself at the police station for the tenth time, guilty of robbery, within myself I prayed to God with all my heart. I promised him that I would never rob again. That morning I was freed.

"I tried to leave all this violent world behind and went to work with my brother Manuel in his bakery. An old man came there and left me a copy of *Awake!* I liked the magazine so much that I asked him for more literature. When he came to take me to a meeting in the Kingdom Hall, I had already read all the book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*.

"As the book showed that one should get baptized, I wanted to be ready. I said to myself, 'I'm too shy to speak to the Witnesses about baptism, but in case they mention it to me, why, I'll have my swimming trunks on!' So, the first time that I went to the Kingdom Hall I wore my swimming trunks under my trousers.

"My brother Manuel was very angry with me for associating with the Witnesses and called me names. But my conduct was very different now. I was no longer taking drugs, robbing, getting drunk and committing sexual immorality.

"My family observed the great change in me and, one by one, they started to

study the Bible. My brother Alfonso said, "That religion may be very bad, but the people are *good*!" Now Alfonso and his wife and my youngest brother Carlos are all baptized, and even Manuel is studying.

"My family friend José, my brother's partner in the bakery, also appreciated my good conduct and made some changes of his own. As he was a wrestler, he had previously settled any difference of opinion with brute force. But now as a Witness he strives to be peaceable with everyone. José's brother Ernesto was especially drawn by the Bible's hope of a paradise here on earth. He married the mother of his four children whom he had previously abandoned, and now both are baptized Witnesses. Finally the brother of José and Ernesto, Fernando, married the mother of his children, and both of them are preparing themselves for baptism.

"I had a great desire to serve Jehovah as a pioneer, but a large debt did not permit me to do so. I prayed to Jehovah. The owner of the business offered me a raise in my daily wage. But I told him that he could give me the raise *or* one hour a day, and that I preferred getting off an hour earlier, leaving work at 5 p.m., instead of at 6 p.m., in order to spend two or three hours in God's service each day as a 'pioneer.' At the same time I was speaking to Jehovah in prayer. The owner accepted my proposal, and immediately I took up the auxiliary pioneer work.

"I owe everything to the undeserved kindness of Jehovah, because I do not deserve it."

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE RESPONDING

Among others making great changes in their lives are young people. Venezuela is really a land of young people, with 70 percent of the population being under thirty years of age. Instead of basing their future hopes on the liquid black treasure

of Venezuela, some of them are coming to appreciate the spiritual treasure that Jehovah God offers to his people.

In a cool mountain town near Caracas, a young long-haired, bearded hippie, with a guitar slung over his shoulder, and his friend, a fanatical atheist and Communist, had been seeking the means to a better world and had been reading up on Oriental religions. Finally, they came to the branch office of the Watch Tower Society asking for a free Bible study. Both cleaned up from their former ways and are now baptized Witnesses, basing their hope for the future on the wisdom and knowledge contained in the Scriptures.

FAITHFUL DESPITE OPPOSITION

At times acceptance of Bible truth is attended by bitter family opposition. This was the experience of a young Syrian woman. She knew nothing of Venezuela until a Syrian businessman, visiting from Venezuela in his home area, picked her out for his wife. She made a new life for herself, far from her family, and had four children. She was such a devout Roman Catholic that her husband, a materialist, objected to so much praying and going to church. When called on by a "pioneer" Witness, the Syrian woman could speak no Spanish but, by gestures, conveyed her love for her Arabic Bible.

Arrangements were made for her to study in Arabic with a Lebanese Witness, generally in someone else's home, or over the telephone. The husband became furious that his wife had stopped being a Roman Catholic (which was better for his business) and was studying with Jehovah's Witnesses. He forbade the Witnesses to come to the house. He forbade his wife to go to the Kingdom Hall. He dismissed the maid, who was one of Jehovah's Witnesses. He removed the telephone. He brought over from Syria her

mother and others of her family, for them to put pressure on her. He threatened her by shouting, gave her the silent treatment, feigned illness, and left home with a revolver. He even went to the extreme of taking her to a medical clinic under false pretenses and then had her drugged, hoping thus to wipe out the name of Jehovah from her mind. But all was useless. With spiritual help from several Witness women, she continued to make progress, arranging to go to meetings, sharing in proclaiming Bible truth to others, becoming fluent in Spanish and getting baptized.

Finally, while she was pregnant with their fifth child, the husband asked for a legal separation. Nevertheless, he provided well for her, and she was now able to serve Jehovah without violent opposition at home. A year later he realized that he had lost everything—the companionship of his beautiful wife, the joy of watching his five children grow up, home-

cooked meals and laundry service. So, he returned home, and the family is now united.

Besides witnessing to the native population, Jehovah's Witnesses have reached out to share the Bible's message with the more than half a million immigrants who have entered Venezuela since World War II. Some of the Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, East European and Middle Eastern immigrants have had good success in teaching their relatives about God's promises for a better system of things.

Jehovah's servants in Venezuela are continuing to help honest-hearted persons to make spiritual treasures their own. Happily, some Venezuelans are responding favorably. Instead of putting their trust in the prosperity that oil can provide, they are learning to look ahead to an eternal future under God's kingdom by Christ. May many more come to appreciate the lasting value of spiritual riches.

New Watch Tower President Elected

JEHOVAH'S work on earth continues to move on grandly under the leadership of the enthroned King, Jesus Christ. With the passing of our beloved Brother Nathan H. Knorr on June 8, 1977, it became necessary to elect a new president for the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, the corporation that handles the activities of Jehovah's Witnesses world wide, and also for the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., the legal agency for administering the affairs of Jehovah's Witnesses in the United States. Acting on a united recommendation by all fifteen members of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses, the directors of the two corporations held a joint meeting on June 22, 1977, at which Frederick W. Franz was elected president of both corporations by unanimous vote. It is of interest that Brother Franz gave the talk on the occasion of Brother Knorr's immersion on July 4, 1923, and that, from the following year, Brother Franz served in close association with Brother Knorr at the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses, in Brooklyn, New York. Brother Franz has served as vice-president of the Pennsylvania corporation since 1945. On September 12, 1977, he will be eighty-four years of age. He continues very active in Jehovah's service, having just returned from a seven-week lecture tour that included eleven countries extending from Ireland to Israel. His outstanding reputation as an eminent Bible scholar and his tireless work in behalf of Kingdom interests has won him the confidence and loyal support of Jehovah's Witnesses everywhere. He expresses the fervent desire that Jehovah's people continue to work, to serve and to pray together until the end of this system of things.



Rendering SACRED SERVICE Whole-souled

“Whatever you are doing, work at it whole-souled as to Jehovah, and not to men, for you know that from Jehovah you will receive the due reward of the inheritance.”—Col. 3:23, 24.

THE rendering of sacred service to the Creator of all mankind is the greatest privilege anyone could possibly have. It not only brings happiness now, but opens up wonderful future prospects as well.

² The Bible speaks of a future heavenly scene, where “the throne of God and of the Lamb” can be seen. Here also 144,000 in number from among mankind are rendering sacred service even while ruling as heavenly kings. These are the ones of whom it is said: “They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. . . . And they will rule as kings forever and ever.”—Rev. 14:1-4; 22:3-5.

³ But what about others of mankind, those not called to the “heavenly calling” but who also render Jehovah God sacred service? Are they also to be seen in this prophetic picture? Yes, they are, for the angel showed John “a



river of water of life . . . flowing out from the throne of God and of the Lamb. . . . On this side of the river and on that side there were trees of life producing twelve crops of fruit, yielding their fruits each month. And the leaves of the trees were for the curing of the nations.” So persons showing faith now, people of the “nations” who pass through “the great tribulation,” will have this prospect of enjoying the benefits of this river of water of life and the fruits of the trees of life that will bring healing and eternal happiness to them.—Rev. 22:1, 2.

1, 2. (a) According to Deuteronomy 30:20, why is serving God so important? (b) What privilege of heavenly service will some enjoy?
3. What prospects do the majority of faithful people have for which to look forward?

⁴Do you want to understand who these Armageddon survivors are, and how you can be among them? We read: "In response one of the elders said to me: 'These who are dressed in the white robes, who are they and where did they come from?' So right away I said to him: 'My Lord, you are the one that knows.' And he said to me: 'These are the ones that come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. That is why they are before the throne of God; and they are rendering him sacred service day and night in his temple; and the One seated on the throne will spread his tent over them. . . . The Lamb . . . will shepherd them, and will guide them to fountains of waters of life.'" (Rev. 7: 13-17) Do you see yourself there? Do you want to be among these survivors of "the great tribulation"? You can be.



⁵If you desire to be with the "great crowd" who will be standing before God's throne serving him day and night in the post-Armageddon era, now is the time to prove to Jehovah that your service will be, not half-hearted, not lukewarm, not on and off, but without letup, as illustrated by the continuous lay-and-night activity of these praisers of Je-

hovah. This means being whole-souled in your service to God. The original-language words for "soul" in Hebrew and Greek refer to the person—you and me. So when we talk about whole-souled service, it really means giving of ourselves completely, in every way possible. When Jesus spoke of loving Jehovah with our "whole soul," he meant with all our existence as a person, with our mind, our heart, our strength. (Luke 10: 27) We need to use each part of our soul (or, life as a person) in this service to God. Our whole life should be intertwined with our sacred service.

⁶Sacred service means more than talking about God's Word to others. True, that is a part of the example that Jesus set for his followers, but sacred service also includes doing good to others, sharing things—how we live our lives each day. Our conduct at work, for example, reflects on our worship of God. As Colossians 3:23, 24 says: "Whatever you are doing, work at it whole-souled as to Jehovah, and not to men, for you know that it is from Jehovah you will receive the due reward of the inheritance. Slave for the Master, Christ." This would include every facet of our lives—in our witnessing to others, at home, at work—it all reflects on how we respond to Jehovah's direction.

⁷For example, both men and women have certain God-given responsibilities and assignments to perform within the family circle. Those who recognize Jehovah's direction in their lives see the applying and the carrying out of such heavenly instruction

6. How does Colossians 3:23, 24 show that more than speaking the good news is involved in sacred service?

7, 8. What are some things we should do in a whole-souled way, and why?

What does God require for one to survive Armageddon?
What did Jesus mean when he spoke of loving Jehovah with one's "whole soul"?

as a part of their sacred service in the sight of God. Thus Colossians 3:18-22 (*Good News for Modern Man*) reminds us: "Wives, be obedient to your husbands, for that is what you should do as Christians. Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. Children, it is your Christian duty to obey your parents always, for that is what pleases God. Parents, do not irritate your children, or they might become discouraged. Slaves [today, employees], obey your human masters in all things, and do it not only when they are watching you, just to gain their approval, but do it with a sincere heart, because of your reverence for the Lord."

⁸ Thus a woman's devoted care for her family is a part of her sacred service, since Jehovah has given her that assignment. And she should be whole-souled in carrying it out as befits an assignment from God. (Prov. 31:15, 27) The same is true of the husband, for he must carry out his assigned role to provide things needful and to give loving oversight to the family. So wives' obedience to husbands, husbands' love for wives, children's obeying parents—all should be whole-souled to be pleasing to Jehovah. We do well to ask ourselves, Are we dealing with these positions that we have in Jehovah's arrangement in a sacred way—or in a profane and worldly way?

⁹ Apart from these family responsibilities, a very important part of our sacred service involves our bearing witness to the truth in harmony with the example of Jesus and the apostles. (Matt. 24:14; John 18:37; Heb. 13:15; Rev. 1:5; 12:17) Of course, the amount of time persons can spend in such public service will vary, depending on age, health, family responsibilities, and so forth. But the question is, What about our desire? Are we whole-

souled in our worship of Jehovah, so that we take advantage of our opportunities and the strength that we have to bear witness to the truth?

¹⁰ At Matthew 13:23 Jesus gave the illustration of the seed sown upon fine soil. He applied it to people, speaking of those who not only hear the word but get the sense of it and really do bear fruit and produce, this one a hundredfold, that one sixty, and the other thirty. If we do what we can in a whole-souled way, whether little or much, then we fit Jesus' illustration, for all three types described were part of the "fine soil," each producing according to individual circumstances.

¹¹ Some, like the full-time servant Paul, have the privilege of devoting their entire lives to Jehovah's service. Not that they are any more whole-souled than others, but, like Paul, they not only have the desire to do as much as possible in Kingdom service, but also have the mental and physical stamina, and can adjust their circumstances to take hold of this opportunity. Paul felt that the opportunity he enjoyed to share extensively in the work of announcing the Kingdom was an undeserved kindness from God. He said: "By God's undeserved kindness I am what I am. And his undeserved kindness that was toward me did not prove to be in vain, but I labored in excess of them all, yet not I but the undeserved kindness of God that is with me . . . so we are preaching and so you have believed." (1 Cor. 15:10, 11) Is that the way you feel about your service to God?

¹² Peter expressed similar thoughts. He said: "His divine power has given us freely all the things that concern life and godly devotion, through the accurate knowledge of the one who called us through glory and virtue. Through these things he has

9. (a) How do the scriptures show another service in which true Christians share? (b) What questions should we ask ourselves?

10. Explain Matthew 13:23.

11. What attitude did Paul have toward serving God and how did he show it?

12. What benefits come from godly devotion?

freely given us the precious and very grand promises, that through these you may become sharers in divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world through lust." (2 Pet. 1:3, 4) While Peter is here addressing those with heavenly hopes as "sharers in divine nature," his words apply similarly to all persons exercising godly devotion. By applying the accurate knowledge of God's Word in a whole-souled way, we can escape the corruption and troubles that come to those following lustful ways. And we have the grand promise that we may enjoy everlasting benefits from the river of water of life and from the trees of life.

A FRUITFUL SERVICE

¹³ All of those demonstrating this godly devotion by making an effort to share the truth of God's Word with others want to be sure that they have Jehovah's favor and that what they do will be successful. This is what Peter discusses at 2 Peter 1:5-8. Again we note that whole-souled effort is needed, by "contributing in response all earnest effort." Peter then mentions a number of other qualities that are essential in preventing us from becoming "either inactive or unfruitful regarding the accurate knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." In fact, if someone is having spiritual problems he can generally go through this list and find what is lacking that causes the spiritual sickness or the inactivity. On the other hand, if we apply these things, we will be both active and fruitful in our service to Jehovah.

¹⁴ Among the qualities Peter mentions are *earnest effort*, then *faith*, then *virtue*. It is clear that it takes effort to accomplish anything—effort to study to get understanding and to establish our faith, ef-

fort to apply what we learn or to share it with others. But we also know that we will reap as we sow, so if we want results, the effort comes first.—Gal. 6:7.

¹⁵ And what about faith? We cannot instill it in others unless we have it ourselves. We can be glad that faith is one of the fruits of the spirit, so that it will increase with cultivation and care. (Rom. 10:17) And why is faith so important? Because 'without faith it is impossible to please God well.'—Heb. 11:6.

¹⁶ However, besides effort and faith, Peter talks also about virtue. This is important for the reason that, when it comes to our witnessing to others, all our effort and all our talking go for nothing unless Jehovah blesses our efforts and makes the seed of truth grow. It does not help in seeking to offer a sacrifice of praise if we are not living according to the truth. Virtue is moral excellence, and is needed if we are to qualify to be among those dressed in white robes. (Rev. 7:9) We can understand that a man who is very busy and yet is alert to speak in favor of the Bible and who lives according to it will do much more to advance the truth than one who can spend more time witnessing in a certain area but who is not living up to God's Word. Time and effort spent witnessing are not the only factors that produce fruitage. Rather, it is Jehovah who gives the increase, and he knows us; he knows what we do and what we are like.

¹⁷ Peter continues: "Supply . . . to your virtue *knowledge*, to your knowledge *self-control*, to your self-control *endurance*." It is easy to see how a fine, accurate knowledge of the Bible will help us to be effective and fruitful in convincing people of its importance. This knowledge will help us to be ready always to make, not just

13. (a) In what should every servant of Jehovah be interested? (b) What will help to make our service successful?

14, 15. (a) What three qualities did Peter first mention, and why is the first one of importance? (b) Why do we need faith?

16. (a) What is virtue? (b) How does it affect our Christian service?

17. How can knowledge of the Bible be helpful?

a defense, but an effective defense of the good news. Not only that, but it helps us to know what Jehovah requires of us so that we will have his favor. As we get this knowledge we can see more clearly the value of doing all things his way, with completeness of heart and mind.

¹⁸ This leads us to the matter of self-control. How can our life be one of whole-souled devotion if we do not follow Jehovah's Word in controlling our body and its passions—or what we do with our hands, where our feet lead us, what our mouth says? How can we progress spiritually if we do not have enough self-control to turn off the television when it is time to study? Which do we devote the most time to—watching television or some other recreation, or to spiritual matters? This is something to think about. How do we want to spend our time? Do we value the time that we have as a provision of Jehovah that can be used by us in matters related to “sacred service,” not just once or twice a week, but “day and night”? Whole-souled devotion to Jehovah requires control of self. It means that our energies and thoughts must be toward Jehovah, not toward self or devoted largely to self-indulgence.—Gal. 5:16, 17, 22-24.

¹⁹ But even knowledge and self-control are of little value if we do not show *endurance* and *godly devotion*, sticking to the truth once that we have found it. As Luke wrote (21:19): “By endurance on your part you will acquire your souls.” Yes, our life prospects depend on endurance. Some have to endure physical abuse, as Jehovah's Witnesses in Malawi have done. Others may be troubled by indifference to their efforts to share the good news, or by pressures and ridicule from friends and family, some even by violent

opposition. But as Paul told Timothy: “Godly devotion is beneficial for all things, as it holds promise of the life now and that which is to come.” (1 Tim. 4:8) So we need both endurance and godly devotion to continue on faithfully, not becoming inactive or unfruitful in our sacred service to God.

²⁰ Finally, Peter tells us to add to our godly devotion *brotherly affection*, and to our brotherly affection *love*. (2 Pet. 1:7) This reaches out, not just to our natural family, but to all persons. (Gal. 6:10) Those who show genuine interest in others, and *agape* or principled love, often see a fine response to their efforts to share the truth. Just as Jehovah shows love to us, so we want to show love and brotherly affection toward all people. We should show concern for them as individuals, including a sincere desire to help them spiritually. By doing all these things we will avoid becoming “inactive or unfruitful regarding the accurate knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”—2 Pet. 1:8.

A SERVICE THAT BRINGS BLESSINGS

²¹ Peter continues his words of encouragement: “For this reason, brothers, all the more do your utmost to make the calling and choosing of you sure for yourselves; for if you keep on doing these things you will by no means ever fail. In fact, thus there will be richly supplied to you the entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (2 Pet. 1:10, 11) Whether we are of the anointed remnant of Christ's heirs or of the “great crowd,” Peter's encouragement here to “do your utmost” applies to each one who wants to enjoy Kingdom blessings.

²² This is no time to diminish our sa-

18. (a) What are some ways in which we can show self-control? (b) According to what he wrote to the Galatians, what shows that Paul as a single man thought self-control was important?

19. Why do Christians need endurance and godly devotion?

20. How do brotherly affection and love help us to avoid becoming unfruitful in our service?

21, 22. (a) What counsel by Peter applies to each one serving God in spirit and in truth? (b) How can we apply Jesus' words at Luke 13:24, 25?

cred service. Rather, Peter appeals to us: "What sort of persons ought you to be in holy acts of conduct and deeds of godly devotion, awaiting and keeping close in mind the presence of the day of Jehovah." (2 Pet. 3:11, 12) Jesus did not give the assignment of making disciples to the angels, expecting them to materialize to do the work of separating the "sheep" and the "goats." Instead, he gave it to those who show themselves to be his true followers both by their service and by their whole-souled devotion. (Rev. 12:17) Now is the time to be pleasing our heavenly King by regular Kingdom activity, and not by offering a crippled or half-hearted sacrifice of praise by occasional or irregu-

lar service.—Mal. 1:6-8; Luke 13:24, 25.

²³ As we fill our lives with sacred service rendered whole-souled, we can have the assurance of being among the happy crowd of Armageddon survivors who will rejoice to continue such service day and night before God's throne after the great tribulation is finished. And as Revelation 7:17 tells us: "The Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, will shepherd them, and will guide them to fountains of waters of life." What a wonderful prospect is before us if we continue to render sacred service to Jehovah in a whole-souled way!

23. What wonderful prospects are before those now rendering God sacred service in a whole-souled way?

WHAT DID the WISE MAN MEAN?

The Wisdom of Avoiding Extremes

It is very easy for imperfect humans to get off balance, taking an extreme view of matters. King Solomon, therefore, gave this admonition: "Do not become righteous overmuch, nor show yourself excessively wise. Why should you cause desolation to yourself? Do not be wicked overmuch, nor become foolish. Why should you die when it is not your time? It is better that you should take hold of the one, but from the other also do not withdraw your hand; for he that fears God will go forth with them all."—Eccl. 7:16-18.

The person who is righteous overmuch gets overly concerned about minor mat-

ters. For example, he makes big issues over things that are strictly human procedures or methods, matters that are not set forth in the Scriptures. When he sees someone doing a kindness, or perhaps acting in a merciful way, he may object on the basis that certain "protocol" has been ignored. He is much like the Pharisees who did not rejoice about the marvelous relief Jesus Christ brought to afflicted ones on the Sabbath but who became enraged, concluding that the Son of God had violated the law by performing cures on that day. (Mark 3:1-6; Luke 14:1-6) Persons who are righteous overmuch often give no thought to what would be the merciful, loving or helpful thing to do.

They take rules to the ultimate limit. When, in their estimation, some rule has been violated, they do not take anything else into consideration.—Compare Matthew 12:2-7; 23:23; Romans 14:1-4, 10.

In their own case, those who are righteous overmuch may practice self-denial to the point of harming their health. They act contrary to the sound advice of Colossians 2:20-23: "Why do you, as if living in the world, further subject yourselves to the decrees: 'Do not handle, nor taste, nor touch,' respecting things that are all destined to destruction by being used up, in accordance with the commands and teachings of men? Those very things are, indeed, possessed of an appearance of wisdom in a self-imposed form of worship and mock humility, a severe treatment of the body; but they are of no value in combating the satisfying of the flesh."

As Solomon said, the person who is righteous overmuch is definitely in danger of causing 'desolation to himself.' He may bring physical, mental or emotional ruin to himself by rash zeal or extreme self-denial. Worse, his unloving attitude can cost him God's favor and blessing.

Then, as Solomon shows, there is the person who 'shows himself excessively wise,' trying to impress others with his wisdom. He sets himself up as a critic and gives the impression that he has better insight than anybody else. His exalted opinion of his abilities often causes him to get involved in other people's affairs, offering them unrequested solutions to their problems. In time he alienates others, and they may do everything possible to avoid him. Also, time may reveal that his advice was not so good, and he may be blamed for causing needless trouble.

Lest a person get off balance and take the wrong view of proper righteousness and wisdom, Solomon went on to warn against 'becoming wicked overmuch.' Imperfection, of course, should be accepted

by all of us as a reality. The apostle John wrote: "If we make the statement: 'We have no sin,' we are misleading ourselves and the truth is not in us." (1 John 1:8) We therefore must resign ourselves to falling short in many respects. However, a person must be careful that he does not pass over wrongdoing lightly, excusing himself with the words, 'Well, after all, I'm a sinner.' While a person can enjoy life, he should be careful not to cast off all restraints. Calamity is in store for the one who acts the part of a fool, thinking that he is above law and correction. The person who pursues an unbridled course may experience serious problems and even die prematurely.

How can damaging extremes be avoided? The fear of Jehovah, a wholesome regard for the Creator, is essential. This fear serves to restrain wrongdoing and also moves the individual to follow a balanced course of life, avoiding extremes. One who fears God endeavors to be righteous and wise but shuns being overly scrupulous and making a show of wisdom. Because he enjoys life in a wholesome way, extremists may even judge him as a wrongdoer, just as Jesus Christ was wrongly labeled as being a drunkard and a glutton.—Matt. 11:19.

In reality, however, such a conscientious, balanced person is keeping a tight reign on his conduct and does not become a practitioner of wickedness. The God-fearing person goes forth unharmed by the problems and difficulties of those who ignore the precepts (1) 'do not be righteous overmuch nor show yourself excessively wise' and (2) 'do not be wicked overmuch.' As Solomon recommended, he thus 'takes hold of the one, but from the other also does not withdraw his hand.' He takes on righteousness without being so exacting as to set impossible standards for himself and others, or withdrawing from the healthful pleasure to be enjoyed in life.

Insight on the News

- Recently the people of Enewetak atoll, site of U.S. nuclear bomb testing from 1948 to 1958, began to return to their home islands. U.S. government agencies are clearing away radioactive soil and debris to help to restore the environment for the islanders. **Atomic Site Restored**

Already, however, scientists are marveling at the amazing resilience of the land after twenty years without bombs. "Today fish and corals thrive in the [atomic] craters, which attests to the capacity of nature to recover from nearly any kind of disturbance," writes one marine biologist.

A government official marvels: "We see no mutations of marine life or vegetation. We just don't see any of the two-headed monsters that science fiction suggests would be the case after prolonged radiation."

Certainly, then, whatever humans do to ruin our environment before God brings about his promised "new earth," the damage will not be permanent. In time, his creation's amazing capacity for recovery, with his blessing, will restore earth to the gardenlike condition he originally purposed for it.—Rev. 11:18; 21:1-4.

- "National Geographic" magazine recently reported on the unusual Huichol Indians of the Sierra Madre Occidental mountains in western Mexico. Speaking of the missionaries who worked among these fire-and-sun-worshiping Indians, the writer remarks:

Indian Insight
"I felt [they] had to soft-pedal their evangelistic role." To illustrate, he observes that "in the tiny chapel I noticed that the [Catholic] altar faced the Huichols' sacred east; on each side of the altar there was a shaman's [witch doctor's] ceremonial chair, also facing east." He notes that "the Christian saints and the ancient native deities are honored in the church as well as in Huichol temples."

"National Geographic" also quotes an Indian's remark to an explorer some years earlier: "If Christians pray to saints that are made by the carpenters, why should not the

Huichols pray to the sun, which is so much better made?"—June 1977, p. 850.

Many centuries before, a similar observation was made about wood in the hands of an ancient carver, as recorded by the Catholic "Jerusalem Bible": "Half of it he burns in the fire, on the live embers he roasts meat, eats it and is replete. He warms himself too. . . . With the rest he makes his god, his idol; he bows down before it and worships it and prays to it. 'Save me,' he says 'because you are my god.'" Such a person, it continues, will never admit that "What I have in my hand is nothing but a lie!"—Isa. 44:16, 17, 20.

- Most Americans probably believe that religious mob actions are a thing of the past in their country. However, the New York "Times" reports that "Jehovah's Witnesses, seeking to preach their gospel mission" in Brooklyn, were confronted by "as many as 40 young [Hasidic (ultra-orthodox)] Jews" who demanded that the Witnesses "leave the largely Jewish area centered on 47th Street and 14th Avenue."

The mob backed up their demands with metal rods, bricks and stones. "Seven Witnesses reported that they had been assaulted," says the "Times." One, treated for a shoulder injury at Maimonides Medical Center, was later found also to have suffered a concussion. —May 30, 1977, p. 19.

Eyewitnesses report that Hasidim ("the pious ones") of all ages assaulted even elderly people, including a woman in her 60's. Automobiles were vandalized, Bibles and Bible literature destroyed. A list of people in the local Witness congregation was stolen and those listed on it began to receive threatening telephone calls.

No doubt the majority of ethnic Jews, though they may disagree with Witness religious views, do not approve of this violence against peaceful people motivated only by a desire to help. Yet it is tragic to see such intolerance displayed by some of those who themselves formerly suffered terrible persecution at the hands of the Nazis. Surely these former victims of intolerance should hate intolerance most of all.

**“Serve Jehovah with rejoicing. Come in before him
with a joyful cry.”—Ps. 100:2.**

Rejoice in Your Service to Jehovah

DO YOU want to be happy? ‘Of course,’ you may answer, ‘doesn’t everyone?’ Yes, most people pursue happiness throughout their lives, but the majority of earth’s inhabitants never really find that deep inner peace, contentment and joy characteristic of true, lasting happiness. Many people, believing that material things will make them happy, earnestly seek to acquire more possessions. But is the pursuit of material things the way to find lasting happiness? If not, how can it be found?

² These questions are not difficult to answer when we realize that abiding happiness is not primarily dependent upon physical circumstances. In Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, his “beatitudes” or “happinesses” did not even mention material possessions. Rather, he said: “Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need . . . Happy are those hungering and thirsting for righteousness . . . Happy are the merciful . . . Happy are the peaceable.”—Matt. 5:3-9.

³ Elusive as some believe happiness and true contentment to be, it is not far away,

because it is to be found closely associated with the pure worship of the Creator, Jehovah God. He is called the “happy God” and, since he created man in his image, it follows that he wants us to be happy as well. (1 Tim. 1:11; Gen. 1:27) He makes it easily possible to find out what his purpose is for us, and what we should do. The apostle Paul told a group of Athenian philosophers that God created man and that he desires that men “grope for him and really find him, although, in fact, he is not far off from each one of us.”—Acts 17:26, 27.

JESUS’ VIEW OF WHAT BRINGS JOY

⁴ In this world many persons find that it is a struggle to obtain the necessities of life. But need it be so? Indeed, it takes work to earn a living. But Jesus Christ showed that worrying and engaging in an anxious pursuit of what we need is unnecessary. (Matt. 6:25) Jesus knew what he was talking about, for he had served as an agent of his Father in creating mankind at the beginning. (Col. 1:15, 16) He

1, 2. How is happiness often sought, and what was Jesus’ view as to what brings happiness?

3. Is it really hard to find the way of true contentment and happiness?

4. Why can we rely on Jesus’ counsel that a person should not be full of anxiety and worry about material things?

had observed God's care and provisions for those who served Him and he could agree with David's declaration: "A young man I used to be, I have also grown old, and yet I have not seen anyone righteous left entirely, nor his offspring looking for bread."—Ps. 37:25.

⁵ Jesus came to the Jewish nation at a turbulent time. He knew that much harder times were coming before many years passed. As God's highest representative to the people he gave serious, truthful advice, we can be sure, when he said: "Never be anxious and say, 'What are we to eat?' or, 'What are we to drink?' or, 'What are we to put on?' For all these are the things the nations are eagerly pursuing. For your heavenly Father knows you need all these things. Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other things *will be added* to you."—Matt. 6:31-33.

⁶ Jesus knew that his Father was the Living God, able and willing to use his superior power to provide for the one serving him, following his Word of truth. This does not mean that he will feed and clothe his servant without effort on the individual's part. The servant of God must have a balanced view, working for the necessary things, but not making this his exclusive pursuit. He must seek what God wants him to do by looking into His Word. He must actually come to make the spiritual part of his life the primary thing. Then God will do his part, empowering the person to obtain the things he needs.—Phil. 4:19.

THE PRIMARY CAUSES FOR REAL JOY

⁷ This assurance and the evidence from God that this promise is true will be a

source of happiness. The greater happinesses or joys are: First, the understanding of God's purpose for the earth and mankind on it, and the place the individual occupies in that purpose. This gives aim, purpose to life, which is more important to happiness than mere possessions.

⁸ Then, living as God requires frees one from many fears and dangers. Those who are properly taking care of their families, both materially and spiritually, have joy, because they generally have happier family relations. Their children grow up with a purpose in life. It is much easier for the members of such a family to see the futility of seeking pleasure through drugs, immoral associations and the pursuit of goals that have no lasting reward. They thereby escape the many diseases, mental and physical, that come from the loose, wasteful, unreal way of life that is pursued by a great number of people today. Regarding this, the apostle Paul said: "Godly devotion is beneficial for all things, as it holds promise of the *life now* and that which is to come."—1 Tim. 4:8.

⁹ Additionally, there is a real brotherhood among those serving God. They may not always find favor from relatives. They may lose friends. But, as Jesus promised: "No one has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for my sake and for the sake of the good news who will not get a hundredfold now in this period of time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and fields, with persecutions, and in the coming system of things everlasting life."—Mark 10:29, 30.

¹⁰ A crowning happiness to a life being lived according to the Bible is the *joy of helping others*. In contrast to the general

5. Were the economic conditions easier during and after Jesus' earthly ministry than they are in our time, so that his words might apply with less force to us today?

6. Can the one trusting in God for his needs sit back and wait for God to supply them?

7. What is probably the foremost happiness for a person who learns the truth?

8. How do the apostle Paul's words at 1 Timothy 4:8 apply to us in this time?

9. Besides the joys already mentioned, what further joy does one have upon coming to a knowledge of the truth and following through on it?

10. What is a great happiness that only those proclaiming the good news can have?

idea that there is joy in getting, God's Son said: "There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving." (Acts 20:35) Those who have dedicated their lives to helping their fellowman in the field of medicine, in education and like endeavors, have found a measure of satisfaction and joy. But these joys do not equal that of helping your fellowman to come to a knowledge of God. This is because a knowledge of God's ways and his instructions help in more than a temporary way—throughout this life and with a hope of future life. Learning the truth, people come to know how, with God's help, to live their lives, solve or cope with their problems. They can, in turn, help others in learning the way to life that the Bible

provides. All of this adds more to the joy of the teacher of the good news, for he sees the fruitage of his work in the expansion of the good news over an area vaster than he could cover himself. The early Thessalonian congregation is an example of this.—1 Thess. 1:8, 9.

11 If we can bring joy to others it results also in satisfying joy to us. No doubt Paul and Silas were amazed and glad when Jehovah miraculously broke open the doors of the jail in which they were held, in the Macedonian city of Philippi. But imagine the joy they had when the jailer, realizing that these men represented the Most High God, brought them outside

11. Describe the joy that Paul and Silas had while they endured persecution in Philippi.



Great joy can come from helping a workmate to learn Bible truth

their cell and asked: "Sirs, what must I do to get saved?" Paul and Silas were then able to explain God's purposes through Christ, and the result was, "one and all, he and his were baptized without delay . . . and he rejoiced greatly with all his household now that he had believed God."—Acts 16:25-34.

CHRISTIANS DO NOT LET OPPOSITION SPOIL THEIR JOY

¹² Some people, however, are not glad to receive the truth, and these may tend to mar the joy of the one proclaiming the good news. They may even fight the spread of the good news and try to make it hard on the proclaimer by misrepresenting him and his motives. This happened to the apostle Paul. Nevertheless, when in prison in Rome Paul wrote back to the Philippian congregation, saying: "True, some are preaching the Christ through envy and rivalry, but others also through goodwill. The latter are publicizing the Christ out of love, for they know I am set here for the defense of the good news; but the former do it out of contentiousness, not with a pure motive, for they are supposing to stir up tribulation for me in my prison bonds. What then? Nothing, except that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is being publicized, and in this I rejoice. In fact, I will also keep on rejoicing." He added, "in no respect [be] frightened by your opponents. This very thing is a proof of destruction for them, but of salvation for you; and this indication is from God."—Phil. 1:15-18, 28.

¹³ On an earlier occasion, shortly after Pentecost day, 33 C.E., the high priest and the Sadducees "became filled with jealousy" at the public witnessing of the apostles, particularly at the fact that many people were hearing them and becoming

believers. They had them taken into custody. They were released by an angel and rearrested later. Upon hearing their defense the religious leaders "felt deeply cut and were wanting to do away with them." But when a highly respected Pharisee named Gamaliel warned: "Let them alone . . . otherwise, you may perhaps be found fighters actually against God," they merely flogged the apostles and ordered them to stop their proclamation. Did this close brush with death discourage them, causing them to lose their joy? Quite the contrary, they "went their way . . . rejoicing because they had been counted worthy to be dishonored in behalf of his name. And every day in the temple and from house to house they continued without letup teaching and declaring the good news about the Christ, Jesus."—Acts 5:12-42.

¹⁴ On this occasion and on others, God miraculously intervened to make it evident that he was backing up the work of declaring the good news. (Acts 12:1-11) He backs it up no less today, as Christ and his angels oversee the work. In modern times Jehovah's servants have experienced marvelous deliverances. They have seen the work of proclaiming the good news open up in areas hitherto impossible to reach. God, by his spirit, has drawn to the truth persons who were formerly bitter opposers, reminding us of the conversion of Saul, who became the apostle Paul. (Acts 9:1-16) The modern-day examples are not so *obviously* miraculous as those in the early congregation. Nevertheless, God's servants can see the almighty power behind these instances—"powerful works" of Jehovah.—Gal. 3:5.

¹⁵ With this mighty power behind them, those truly serving Jehovah are not paralyzed by fear, or discouraged to the point of quitting because of indifference on the

12. Why should we not be dismayed because some oppose the truth and reproach us?

13. How did the apostles in Jerusalem react to bitter persecution there?

14. Can we count on as much help from God as did the Christian congregation in the first century?

15. Do Christians seek persecution, or why do they face it?

part of the people to whom they speak. In fact, they are aware of Jesus' words to his followers: "You will be objects of hatred by all people on account of my name." Also, they recall the apostle Paul's warning that "all those desiring to live with godly devotion in association with Christ Jesus will also be persecuted." (Matt. 10:22; 2 Tim. 3:12) Christians do not seek or desire persecution, nor do they like it, but they face it when it is brought upon them, knowing that endurance through trials will turn out for their good. They take the position of the early Christians: "Let us exult while in tribulations, since we know that tribulation produces endurance; endurance, in turn, an approved condition; the approved condition, in turn, hope [that is, hope of attaining the reward], and the hope does not lead to disappointment."—Rom. 5:3, 4.

¹⁶ The ancient psalmist encouraged the people of Israel: "Serve Jehovah with rejoicing. Come in before him with a joyful cry." (Ps. 100:2) He desired all Israel to gather to the temple at Jerusalem to engage in pure worship. We can gain strength and encouragement by considering the situation and faith of those who served Jehovah back there. They had to maintain obedience to the Law, which held the highest standard of morality and which, by its sanitary and dietary laws, tended to keep faithful Jews from association with those not worshipers of the true God. They were surrounded by these pagan nations, which practiced every form of immorality, often in connection with their unclean idol worship. At times they were called on to fight these people who, generally, desired to destroy Israel and take their land.

¹⁷ Imagine the faith and courage it took to go out in battle against these nations, their soldiers being hardened warriors,

while the Israelites, for the most part, spent their time in peaceful farming pursuits. Picture yourself having to go out and fight hand to hand against these mighty enemy warriors. And it was not personal strength, but faith in God that enabled Israel to win, for, when they lost faith in God, these nations were too much for them. It is very encouraging to read accounts such as 2 Samuel 23:8-22, and, while reading, to realize that, although the men named there were doubtless strong, active men, it was their faith in God that gave them their miraculous energy and enduring power. We have the same powerful backing today. (Matt. 28:20; Rev. 14:6) Therefore we should not become weary in well-doing or shrink back through fear, for Jehovah "is giving to the tired one power; and to the one without dynamic energy he makes full might abound. Boys will both tire out and grow weary, and young men themselves will without fail stumble, but those who are hoping in Jehovah will regain power. They will mount up with wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not tire out."—Isa. 40:29-31.

¹⁸ As we declare the good news we do not have to face instant death every hour as often those fighters back there did. And we have a peaceful message that appeals to the hearts of those who really listen. So our joy can be even greater. Instead of fighting with destructive weapons of the flesh, we have weapons of righteousness that eliminate, not people, but wrong doctrines and thoughts, and bring healing. The joy that it brings to the hearts of those who hear and believe increases our joy and strengthens our hope of gaining the fine reward ahead.—2 Cor. 6:4, 7; Col. 3:23, 24.

16, 17. (a) What was required on the part of the soldiers of Israel in their fight against the pagan nations? (b) Can we count on the same backing as we engage in bearing witness to the people?

18. How can our joy really be greater, as a result of our faith, than the joy those ancient faithful men experienced?

TRANSLATING THE TITLE "GOD"



THE books of the Bible were written at a time when the majority of earth's inhabitants did not know the true God. Instead, they worshiped many gods and goddesses. The apostle Paul well described the situation to fellow Christians in ancient Corinth: "Even though there are those who are called 'gods,' whether in heaven or on earth, just as there are many 'gods' and many 'lords,' there is actually to us one God the Father."—1 Cor. 8:5.

In the original Greek used by Paul, the word for "God" is *The-os*, a term that applied to any of the numerous gods worshiped by the ancient Greeks and other peoples. However, neither the apostle Paul nor other writers of the Christian Greek Scriptures nor the Jewish translators of the *Septuagint*, the first version of the Hebrew Scriptures in Greek, had any objection to using this term with reference to the true God.

Still, when speaking to those who did not know the Creator, first-century Christians used the term *The-os* in such a way that no one could equate the true God with one of the many false gods. Address-

ing Athenians, the apostle Paul, for example, said: "While passing along and carefully observing your objects of veneration I also found an altar on which had been inscribed 'To an Unknown God.' Therefore what you are unknowingly giving godly devotion to, this I am publishing to you. The God that made the world and all the things in it, being, as this One is, Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in handmade temples, neither is he attended to by human hands as if he needed anything, because he himself gives to all persons life and

breath and all things."—Acts 17:23-25.

With this explanation regarding the identity of the true God, the listeners would have had no problem in differentiating between the Creator and the many false gods worshiped in Athens. The fact that the title *the-os* was also applied to false deities in no way obscured the identity of the Creator.

Translators today reasonably should allow themselves to be guided by the way first-century Christians used the term *the-os*. The fact that a certain term for "God" is applied by native speakers to false gods need not make the word objectionable. Nevertheless, the term used to translate the word *The-os* should be one that the reader or hearer can readily understand to mean the Almighty. It should not bring to his mind ideas that are contrary to the personality of the true God.

By way of illustration, the supreme deity of the ancient Greeks was Zeus. But that name would not have been appropriate in rendering the Hebrew word for God. The name "Zeus," the supreme deity of the Greek pantheon, would have brought to mind the picture of a god in human form, and an immoral one at that.

A term of broader meaning is, therefore, usually better than one of narrower meaning. The context can then serve to restrict the word's application to the true God.

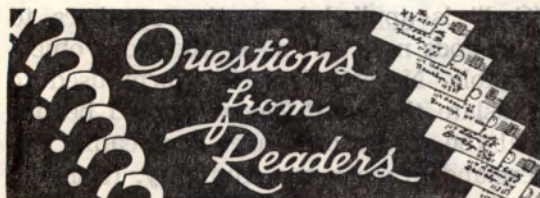
There is, then, no reason for undue concern about the origin of a particular term for "God." Even in the Bible the same word is applied to the true God as well as to false gods. In itself, the term is not sacred. So there is no objection to the use of a designation that referred exclusively to false gods before those speaking that language came to know the God of the Bible.

This is, in fact, what has happened in connection with many modern languages. The Japanese word for "God" can mean, literally, "a lot of little gods." In Amharic and Tigrinya, two prominent languages of Ethiopia, a common designation for God is *Egziabher*. Literally, that expression means "Lord of the lands," that is, "Lord of the Ethiopian lands." As to the English word "God," *The Century Dictionary and Encyclopedic Lexicon of the English Language* (Vol. 3, p. 2561, 1899 edition) states that it was originally neuter, and "gener-

ally in the plural, being applied to the heathen deities, and elevated to the Christian sense upon the conversion of the Teutonic peoples." The book *Word Origins*, by Wilfred Funk, says: "The central word of all faiths is God, and the history of the title *God* is a tangle of guesses. The word *God* itself is related to similar words in Danish, Saxon, Old High German, Scandinavian, and other languages, and may even be related to an ancient Lithuanian word that referred to someone who practiced magic." —P. 279.

Today none of the terms for God in any of the aforementioned languages, despite their not having been originally applied to the Creator, put wrong ideas into the minds of the hearers or readers. So no objection can be raised about their being used in Bible translations.

As with everything else, a reasonable view must be taken when it comes to the use of a word designating the God of the Bible. In the final analysis, any term for "God" is but a title and not a proper name. What really distinguishes the true God from all others is his personal name, Jehovah.—Ps. 83:18.



● Abortion, I realize, is wrong from the Biblical standpoint, for it is deliberately taking life. I understood that Exodus 21:22, 23 supported this fact. But recently I read a Bible version that gives these verses a different meaning. What do the verses really say and mean?

The *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* renders Exodus 21:22, 23: "And in case men should struggle with each other and they really hurt a pregnant woman and her

children do come out but no fatal accident occurs, he is to have damages imposed upon him without fail according to what the owner of the woman may lay upon him; and he must give it through the justices. But if a fatal accident should occur, then you must give soul for soul."

Some other translations, though, render this passage in such a way that someone might conclude that abortion is not so serious. For example, the *Revised Standard Version* reads: "When men strive together, and hurt a woman with child, so that there is a miscarriage, and yet no harm follows, the one who hurt her shall be fined. . . . If any harm follows, then you shall give life for life." The impression that one could get is that the only serious concern is for the woman, not the fetus. Someone might conclude from such a translation that if the

hurt caused an abortion but no other damage to the woman, the guilty man was simply to be fined. So, abortion might not seem serious.

Perhaps such renderings have been influenced by how the first-century Jewish historian Flavius Josephus paraphrased these verses: "He that kicks a woman with child, so that the woman miscarry, let him pay a fine in money, as the judges shall determine, as having diminished the multitude [of the nation] by the destruction of what was in her womb; and let money also be given the woman's husband by him that kicked her; but if she die of the stroke, let him also be put to death, the law judging it equitable that life should go for life." Professor William Whiston, who translated Josephus' writings, states that this understanding of Exodus 21:22, 23 reflected "the exposition of the Pharisees in the days of Josephus."—*Antiquities of the Jews*, Book IV, Chapter viii, paragraph 33, and footnote.

On the other hand, the translators who produced the Greek *Septuagint Version* took a different view of the matter. In their translation, Exodus 21:22, 23 says that, "if two men strive and smite a woman with child, and her child be born imperfectly formed [or, "she miscarry of an embryo"], he shall be forced to pay a penalty." So they thought that if what was aborted was too young to have developed recognizable human features, a monetary fine would suffice. But if the fetus was "perfectly formed" or "completely organised," the man who gave cause to the abortion must pay life for life.—English translations of the *Septuagint* by Sir L. L. Brenton and Charles Thomson.

With so many and varied views, it clearly would be wise to go back to the original Hebrew to see what it does and does not say.

Exodus 21:22, 23 is in a part of the Mosaic law dealing with compensation for injuries. As the next verses show, the basic principle was "eye for eye, tooth for tooth." But what was to be done if a pregnant woman was injured?

Actually, there could be a number of outcomes of the injury. Consider the woman first. She might be hurt, even crippled, but not fatally. Or the damage might have caused her death. Consider next the developing child or

children in her womb. If her pregnancy was quite advanced, the blow or shock might bring on early labor so that she prematurely delivered a live baby. Or, the hurt to the mother might cause an abortion, a destruction of the life developing in her womb. Plainly, what the Law said about damage to a pregnant woman had to cover a range of possibilities.

What exactly did the Law say? We here present the literal rendering in the Hebrew-English interlinear by Dr. G. R. Berry (read from right to left):

וְכִי־יִנָּצוּ אָנָשִׁים וְנָפוּ אִשָּׁה הָרָה 22
 ,pregnant woman a strike they and ,men contend when And
 וַיִּצְאוּ יָלְדָהּ וְלֹא יְהִי אִסּוֹן עָנָשׁ יַעֲנֹשׁ
 ,fined be shall he surely ;injury is not and ,child her forth goes and
 כִּאֲשֶׁר יִשִּׁית עָלָיו בְּעַל הָאִשָּׁה וְנָתַן 23
 gives shall he and ,woman the of husband the him upon put may as
 בְּפִלְאִים : וְאִם־אִסּוֹן יְהִי וְנָתַתָּה נַפְשׁ
 ,soul give shalt thou (and) ,is injury if And ,judges the with
 תַּחַת נַפְשׁ :
 ,soul for

The Hebrew word here rendered "injury" ("harm," *Revised Standard Version*; "mischief," *Authorized Version*) is *asón*. According to the lexicon by William L. Holladay, *asón* means "mortal accident." This is borne out by the usage of *asón* in its three other occurrences in the Bible. (Gen. 42:4, 38; 44:29) Thus, the rendering "fatal accident" in the *New World Translation* enables one more accurately to understand what the Law here said.

But then the question arises, To whom does the expression "fatal accident" apply? Is it the child, the mother or either of them? Some translations present an interpretation of the matter. For instance, *The Jerusalem Bible* reads: "If, when men come to blows, they hurt a woman who is pregnant and she suffers a miscarriage, though she does not die of it, the man responsible must pay the compensation demanded of him, . . . But should she die, you shall give life for life." (Ex. 21:22, 23, italics added) This translation clearly shows that a fatal accident is at issue, but the inserted interpretive "she" leaves the impression that if the blow caused the woman to abort but she lived, then merely a fine was imposed. However, is that what the Hebrew text really says?

The aforementioned interlinear reading reveals that the Hebrew does not limit the application of "injury" (fatal accident) to just the mother. Thus, the respected commentary by C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch says that a fine was sufficient only when "no injury [fatal accident] was done either to the woman or the child that was born." This commentary shows that if the Law meant that, just as long as the mother lived, a simple fine would cover any damage the Hebrew text would have added *lah*, "to her." The verse would thus have said, 'When men contend and they strike a pregnant woman and her child goes forth and no injury [fatal accident] is done to her, a fine must be paid.' Yet, these commentators conclude: "The omission of *lah*, also, apparently renders it impracticable to refer the words to [an] injury done to the woman alone."

Consequently, a fine was imposed when the damage caused the child to be born alive prematurely, with no fatal results to either mother or child. If, though, the blow took the life of either the mother or her child in the womb, the Law required "soul for soul."

This harmonizes with other Bible passages that show that Jehovah God does not view a

living human embryo or fetus as a mere piece of tissue in a woman's womb. (Ps. 139:13-16) Bearing that out, Jehovah said to the prophet Jeremiah: "Before I was forming you in the belly I knew you, and before you proceeded to come forth from the womb I sanctified you." (Jer. 1:5) Also, the stipulated "soul for soul" in the case of a man who caused the death of a woman or caused her to abort, would be consistent with the Bible's overall teaching of respect for life and its opposition to manslaughter.—Gen. 9:6; Num. 35:30, 31; Rev. 21:8.

Therefore Exodus 21:22, 23 in no way minimizes the serious wrongness of abortion. Rather, it shows that the heavy penalty of "soul for soul" was set out in the Mosaic law for anyone who caused a "fatal accident" to a woman or a child developing in her womb.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

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September 11: Rejoice in Your Service to Jehovah. Page 472. Songs to Be Used: 58, 101.