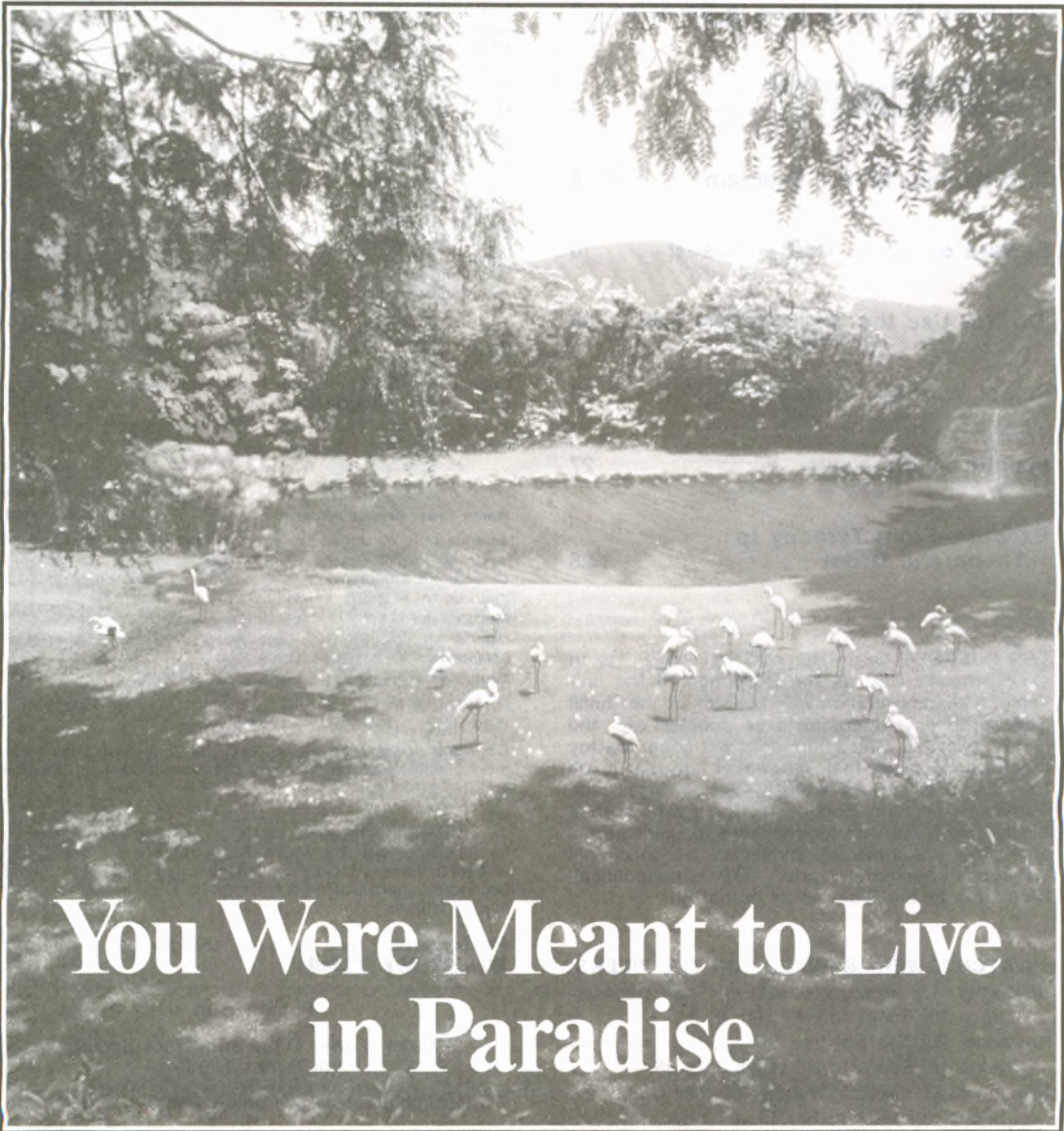


October 15, 1983

The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



**You Were Meant to Live
in Paradise**

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

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

November 13: Beware of Music That Debases!
Page 10. Songs to Be Used: 8, 81.
November 20: 'Do Not Use the World to the Full.'
Page 16. Songs to Be Used: 112, 38.
November 27: Reject Worldly Desires! Page 21.
Songs to Be Used: 88, 49.

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You Were Meant to Live in Paradise



OUR loving Creator wants you to enjoy a Paradise of pleasure. He created such a home for our first parents. The Bible says: "God planted a garden in Eden, toward the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. Thus Jehovah God made to grow out of the ground every tree desirable to one's sight and good for food."—Genesis 2:8, 9, 15.

That original home was truly a Paradise, the word "paradise" meaning "garden." It was a "Paradise of Pleasure," which is another name for "garden of Eden." How do you visualize such a home? Does your mind's eye see multi-colored flowers, shrubs, fruit trees, lovely landscapes, fountains and calm, clear pools? Do you also envision lush green meadows bordered by towering trees, and sweet air filled with the fragrance of deep woods and the songs of birds?

"That and more," you may answer. "Peace and security would exist too." And they did exist in the garden of Eden! Even the animals were at peace with one another and with our original parents. "To everything moving upon the earth in which there is life as a soul I have given *all green vegetation* for food," God said. "And [God] began bringing [the animals] to the man to see what he would call each one . . . So the man was calling the names of all the domestic animals and of the flying creatures of the heavens and of every wild beast of the field."—Genesis 1:30; 2:19, 20.

What a delightful home! And with

man and animals at peace with one another and with their heavenly Creator, it was perfect. Surely you would delight to live in such a Paradise of pleasure!

Where was that original Paradise? The Bible says it was on earth, even naming four of its rivers, including the Euphrates that is still in existence today. But one religious encyclopedia speaks of a recent suggestion "that the original Eden was in heaven." Such a view, however, is in conflict not only with the Bible record but with Jesus Christ's statement that by their union the first man and woman in Eden became "*one flesh*."—Matthew 19:4-6; Genesis 2:21-24; 1 Corinthians 15:50.

Although God created humans to live in an earthly Paradise, most church people today believe that the only paradise that can be enjoyed will be in heaven. Yet, interestingly, a Bible encyclopedia says about this: "Man, indeed, usually conceives the joys of heaven to be the same as, or at least to resemble, the pleasures of this world; and each one hopes to obtain with certainty, and to enjoy in full measure beyond the grave, that which he holds most dear upon earth."

Humans think of Paradise in physical terms because God created man to live upon the earth and to enjoy earthly things. (Psalm 115:16) This raises questions. For example, when Jesus promised the evildoer who died alongside him, "You will be with me in Paradise," where will that Paradise be?—Luke 23:43.

Does the Bible Promise an Earthly Paradise?



“PARADISE is a name for heaven,” says *The World Book Encyclopedia*. “Jesus used the word in this sense when He spoke to the dying thief upon the cross.”

But did Jesus Christ actually promise a heavenly paradise to the dying thief? Or did he promise an earthly Paradise?

Promise of Heavenly Life

There can be no question that Jesus held out the hope of heavenly life to his faithful apostles. The night before his execution, he promised: “In the house of my Father there are many abodes. . . . I am going my way to prepare a place for you. Also, if I go my way and prepare a place for you, I am coming again and *will receive you home to myself, that where I am you also may be.*” What a grand promise of heavenly life!—John 14:2, 3.

Jesus will rule in heaven as King of God’s Kingdom. And God has been selecting from among humankind persons to rule with him. The Bible tells what Christ does with these selected ones: “You made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God, and they are to rule as kings over the earth.”—Revelation 5:10; 2 Timothy 2:11, 12.

The apostle John said that those who are “bought from the earth” to rule in heaven with Christ would number 144,000. They would be a “little flock” compared with all those who receive everlasting life. (Revelation 14:1-3; Luke 12:32; John 10:16) To such ones who had

the hope of being received into heaven, Christ promised: “To him that conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.” (Revelation 2:7; John 16:33; 1 John 5:4) This figurative “paradise of God” is in the invisible heavens.

However, is it correct to assume that heaven is the only paradise set before all of Jesus’ followers? Since the sympathetic evildoer did not conquer the world by pursuing a course of faithfulness to God but was justly being put to death for his wicked deeds, what Paradise did Christ promise him?

What Paradise Promised to the Evildoer?

One of the evildoers hanging next to Jesus said: “You are the Christ, are you not? Save yourself and us.” Yet the sympathetic evildoer rebuked him. Then, turning to Jesus, he said: “Remember me when you get into your kingdom.” At that Jesus made the remarkable promise: “Truly I tell you today, *You will be with me in Paradise.*”—Luke 23:39-43.

Where is this promised Paradise? The way this verse is rendered in numerous Bible translations has influenced the view of many people regarding this. Most Bibles read as does the *Revised Standard Version*: “Truly, I say to you, *today you will be with me in Paradise.*” Thus, according to such translations, on the *very day* that Jesus and the evildoer died they went to Paradise. Yet, how

could that be, since the Bible says that Jesus went to Hades, or Sheol, at death? The apostle Peter, in telling about His resurrection from there three days later, said: "Neither was he forsaken in Hades [Sheol, in Hebrew] . . . This Jesus God resurrected."—Acts 2:31, 32; Psalm 16:10.

Since Jesus clearly was in Sheol, or Hades (the common grave of mankind), prior to his resurrection, the *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures* by J. P. Lange says: "We have, however, by this Paradise to understand not the heavenly Paradise . . . but that part of Sheol which is opposed to Gehenna, and which was also named Paradise."

D. D. Whedon in his *Commentary on the Gospels* provides some background regarding this view of Paradise, explaining: "The name [Paradise] was transferred by the Jewish Church [from the original Paradise in Eden] to the blessed section of Hades, or the intermediate

state between death and the resurrection. Beyond all doubt it was the intention of Jesus to designate *this*, by the term *Paradise*, to the dying thief."

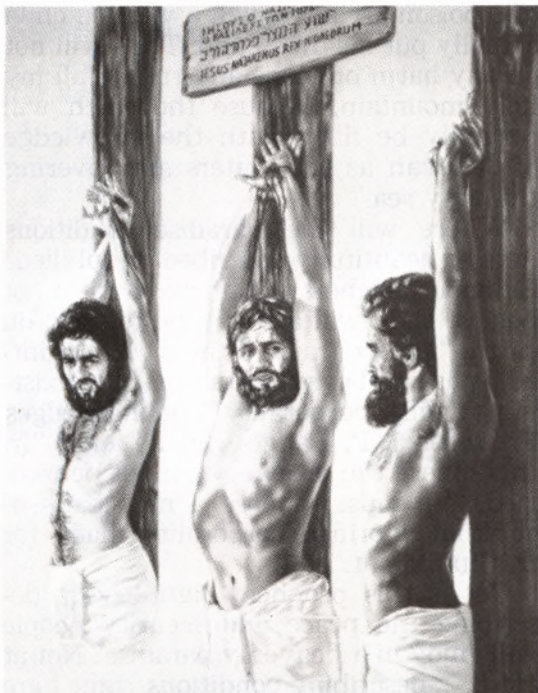
Paradise a "blessed section of Hades"? This was apparently a view that originated with Jewish teachers; it certainly is *not* something taught in the sacred Hebrew Scriptures. Most churchmen today do not accept the view that Paradise is a section of Hades. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* notes: "According to the prevailing interpretation of Catholic theologians and commentators, paradise in this instance is used as a synonym for the heaven of the blessed to which the thief would accompany the Saviour."

Many Protestant writers agree with this view held by Catholics. J. G. Butler, in his commentary *The Bible-Work*, exclaims: "What a day to that dying man! Its morning saw him a culprit condemned before the bar of earthly judgment; before evening shadowed the hill of Zion he stood accepted at the bar of heaven."

But wait! We have seen that, according to the Bible, Jesus went to Sheol, or Hades, when he died, not to heaven. He was dead for three days, unconscious in the common grave of humankind. (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10) *So he could not have gone to heaven.* The Bible says that Jesus returned to heaven 40 days after his resurrection.—Acts 1:3, 6-11.

Clearly, Jesus was promising the evil-doer simply that he would be resurrected into Paradise; Jesus was not saying he would live in Paradise that very day. Therefore the correct translation of Jesus' words is: "Truly I tell you today, *You will be with me in Paradise.*" A number of Bible translations read this way, one of which (*Lamsa*) says in its footnote: "Ancient texts were not punctuated. The comma could come before or after *today.*"

So where will the Paradise be that



Jesus promised the evildoer? And when will it be enjoyed?

An Earthly Paradise

Remember, we spoke earlier about God's creation of the original Paradise in Eden right here on earth. Obviously it was God's purpose to have an earthly Paradise in which humankind would enjoy everlasting life in peace and security. Do you think that God will permit this purpose of his to go unfulfilled? Never! "Everything that is my delight I shall do," he says. "I have even spoken it; I shall also bring it in." (Isaiah 46:10, 11) Yes, God will do what he purposes! And his promise is: "The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it."—Psalm 37:29.

So when we read Jesus' promise of Paradise to the evildoer, we should picture in our minds this entire earth made into a beautiful place in which to live, like a fruitful garden, for that is what the word "paradise" means. Will Jesus be right here on earth with the former evildoer in Paradise? No, Jesus will be in heaven ruling as King over the earthly Paradise. He will be with that man in the sense that He will raise him from the dead and care for his needs, both physical and spiritual.

The evildoer obviously was not a faithful Christian conqueror who qualified for life as a coruler in heaven with Christ. He did wicked things, even as did millions of other people whom Jesus will resurrect. (Acts 24:15) But they did these wicked things because they were ignorant of God's will. So in Paradise they will be taught what God's will is, and they will have the opportunity to prove that they really do love God by doing his will.

A Picture of Paradise

Though it draws the conclusion that Paradise is "a place distinct from the earth," the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* says: "The peace and ideal justice to be procured by the messianic king will be like those of Paradise in Is[ai]ah 11.6-11." Consider the beautiful Paradise described there. After telling about the rulership of the Messianic King, Jesus Christ, this heart-stirring prophecy in Isaiah chapter 11 goes on to say in verses 6 to 9:

"The wolf will actually reside for a while with the male lamb, and with the kid the leopard itself will lie down, and the calf and the maned young lion and the well-fed animal all together; and a mere little boy will be leader over them. And the cow and the bear themselves will feed; together their young ones will lie down. And even the lion will eat straw just like the bull. And the sucking child will certainly play upon the hole of the cobra; and upon the light aperture of a poisonous snake will a weaned child actually put his own hand. They will not do any harm or cause any ruin in all my holy mountain; because the earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters are covering the very sea."

Where will the Paradise conditions here so beautifully described be fulfilled? Religious teachers of Christendom do not believe they will actually be fulfilled on earth. "All the traits of the picture painted by Isaiah bear the stamp of the existing earthly corporality," acknowledges Professor J. P. Lange. But he adds: "In this sphere the prophecy cannot be realized. We must suppose a new basis of spiritual, glorified corporality made for this fulfilment."

Yet is this prophecy figuratively describing the peace and security people will enjoy in a heavenly paradise? Not at all! It is describing conditions right here



Will these conditions really prevail on earth?

on earth. Already today within the organization of Jehovah's Witnesses earth wide a condition of spiritual prosperity, peace and security exists, as depicted in such a beautiful way by God's prophet Isaiah. However, will such paradise conditions in due course be extended so as to be fulfilled in a literal way?

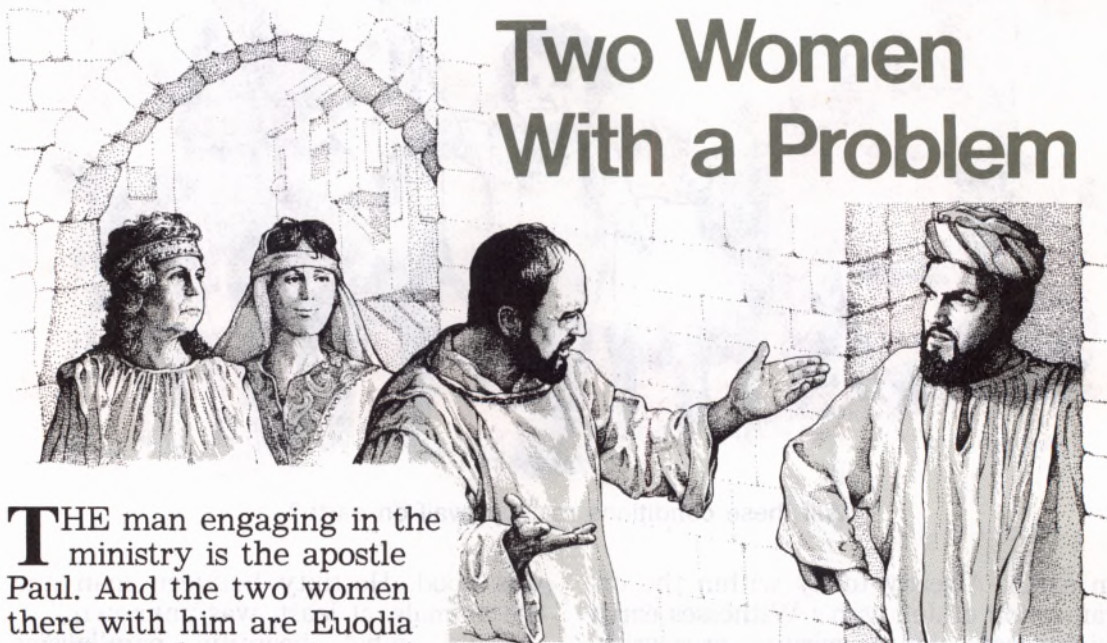
True, most teachers of religion in Christendom may scoff at the idea that God will cause animals to be at peace with one another and with humans. But we can have confidence that Almighty God will bring about such marvelous changes in the animal realm. As one Bible commentator noted regarding this Bible prophecy: "If all is merely figurative, what is the point of such detailed statements concerning the change in animals? It would appear also that we have here a parallelism or comparison with the condition before the fall of man into sin. Before the entrance of sin into the world the animals were the helps of man and were named by him. All that God had made

was good. Hostility between man and the animals, at least, was unknown."

Truly, what beautiful parallelisms there are between this prophetic description in Isaiah of the Messiah's rule and the conditions that existed in the garden of Eden! There, "the knowledge of Jehovah" abounded, as God no doubt communed with his perfect earthly son, Adam. The Bible specifically says that then animals were given "*all green vegetation* for food." They did not eat other animals. (Genesis 1:30) And the animals were in subjection to man, obeying the command to appear before him to be named.—Genesis 2:19, 20.

How grand it will be to see such a situation of harmony and security restored earth wide! What a privilege it will be to enjoy a glorious earthly Paradise in which all people love one another and where this grand peace among humans is even reflected in the cessation of hostilities in the animal realm! Indeed, the Bible does promise an earthly Paradise!

Two Women With a Problem



THE man engaging in the ministry is the apostle Paul. And the two women there with him are Euodia and Syntyche, members of the first-century Christian congregation in the city of Philippi.

Some years after this, when Paul was in Rome, he wrote to the Philippian congregation: "Keep assisting these women who have striven side by side with me in the good news." (Philippians 4:3) Why did Paul write this about Euodia and Syntyche?

Paul had heard that some problem had developed between the two women, and they were not getting along. So he wrote: "Euodia I exhort

and Syntyche I exhort to be of the same mind in the Lord." (Philippians 4:2) The Bible does not tell what their difficulty was, but it was serious enough for Paul to have heard about it hundreds of miles away in Rome. Perhaps the two were in some way jealous of each other. Or maybe they had got into a serious dispute, as seen here, and were no longer speaking to each other. Whatever



God's Word Is Alive

the problem, Paul gave them counsel in a letter addressed to the whole congregation.—Philippians 1:1.

Well, did Euodia and Syntyche respond to the counsel and settle their differences? The Bible does not say. But since these were good women who earlier had worked along in the ministry with Paul, we can just imagine their going to each other after the meeting and straightening out their problem in a spirit of love. On the other hand, they could have been hardened by the counsel given. They could have taken the attitude: 'What right does Paul have to air our problem before the whole congregation?' And so their differences could have been unresolved, and even grown worse. What if this occurred?

Well, this letter to the Philippians was written about 60 C.E. A few years later great persecution broke out against Christians in Rome. What if this persecution spread to Philippi, and Euodia and Syntyche were thrown into prison, even as Paul and Silas years before had been imprisoned there? (Acts 16:19-34) What if they were put in the same prison and in the very same cell together?

If they were not of the same mind, and if their differences had grown into hate for each other, what could have happened? They could have torn down each other spiritually, perhaps ruining each other's relationship with Jehovah God. How sad that would have been! And how sad it will be today if

we do not have intense

love for one

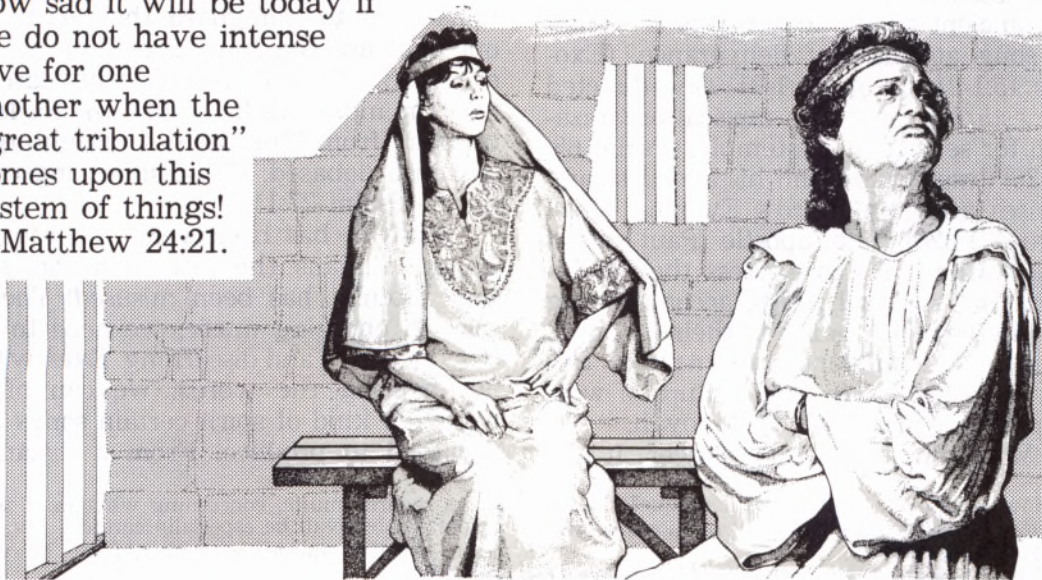
another when the

"great tribulation"

comes upon this

system of things!

—Matthew 24:21.



Beware of Music That Debases!

“Instruct me, O Jehovah, in your way, and lead me in the path of uprightness.”—PSALM 27:11.

JEHOVAH GOD graciously gave mankind the gift of music. This was a unique expression of his undeserved kindness, for although music is not needed to sustain life, it enables humans to express emotions—their sorrows, their joys. (Genesis 4:21) It can bring comfort when there is sadness or greater happiness in times of joy. Appropriately, then, James wrote fellow Christians: “Is there anyone in good spirits? Let him sing psalms.”—James 5:13.

² Singing and music have long been associated with the worship of Jehovah. His ancient people joyously praised him in song at times of deliverance. (Exodus 15:1-21; Judges 5:1-31) God directed the establishment of a musical organization for service at his temple. (Psalm 68:24-26) Jesus Christ and his apostles sang praises after the Lord’s Evening Meal. (Mark 14:26) The apostle Paul urged fellow Christians to express their sentiments in ‘spiritual songs, accompanying themselves with music in their hearts to Jehovah.’ (Ephesians 5:19) And to this day, singing is a regular feature of worship among witnesses of Jehovah.

³ Music undeniably has power. It can

reach hearts and stir emotions. So, worldly anthems and marches are used to arouse patriotic fervor. Worldly schools have “fight” songs to inspire athletes. Advertisers use catchy tunes to sell products. Such evidence of music’s power should put Christians on guard.

Why a Need for Caution?

⁴ Satan the Devil is also aware of music’s great power, and he sometimes uses it to affect the heart and lead people away from the pure worship of Jehovah. In this respect, therefore, loyal Christians need to ‘safeguard the heart, for out of it are the sources of life.’ (Proverbs 4:23) We must be especially careful that the music we listen to does not lead us away from “the path of uprightness” and into debased, God-dishonoring conduct.—Psalm 27:11.

⁵ Jehovah has been very generous in giving humans the gift of music. But how often it has been misused! Therefore, in choosing music, we need to be very selective and discerning. Even without hearing the words, we can often tell what kind of spirit certain songs are designed to produce. From a distance,

1. How is Jehovah’s gift of music unique?
2. Music and song have had what relationship with Jehovah’s worship?
3. What evidence is there that music has power?

4. As regards music, concerning what must worshipers of Jehovah be especially careful?
5. In choosing music, why should we be very selective?

Moses could discern that music emanating from the Israelite camp was not 'the singing over mighty performance or the singing of defeat.' When he finally came to the camp and saw how the people *were acting*, he knew that the music had been of the kind that led to unrestrained idolatrous conduct. (Exodus 32:15-19, 25) So we today need to examine the kind of mood, or spirit, that the music we listen to is producing. Does it uplift us, or is it music that debases?

⁶ The apostle Paul realized that Satan desires to debase or corrupt Jehovah's people. Hence, Paul urged fellow believers to separate themselves from the unrighteous, and asked: "What fellowship do righteousness and lawlessness have? Or what sharing does light have with darkness? Further, what harmony is there between Christ and Belial?" (2 Corinthians 6:14-17) Today, the Devil has cunningly been using various forms of unrighteousness in music, thereby endeavoring to seduce people into degraded conduct and thus turn them away from God. Dedicated witnesses of Jehovah need to be alert to these dangers.

Have No Share With the Demons!

⁷ In the field of music spiritual perils do exist. For instance, many popular musicians are involved in the occult. Some openly admit that they worship Satan, and satanic influence often shows up in their music and songs. But how can a Christian tell if demonic influence exists in certain music? It is sufficient in some cases to look at the cover of a record album. Depicted on it you may see characters dressed to look like witches, demons or devils. Or the cover may have pictures tending toward the mystical or the oc-

cult. The name of the musical group or of an album may indicate a connection with the demons, as may the titles and words of the songs. For example, what would you conclude from song titles such as "Sympathy for the Devil" and "Children of the Grave"? The *New York Post* reported that one such song was "a brazen admission" that the musicians were "working hand-in-glove with Satan."

⁸ There have also been recordings of unscriptural and even demonistic messages by means of a technique called backward masking, used by a number of musical groups. When the recording of one very popular song is played backward, it repeatedly says, "Decide to smoke marijuana." If played backward, another popular recording carries this message: "I will sing because I live with Satan. . . . There's no escaping it, my sweet Satan."

⁹ Normally, of course, people do not play recordings in reverse. Yet, when listening to certain musical records, either unscriptural or demonic ideas may be absorbed by a mind left open to improper suggestion. *High Fidelity Magazine* quoted a divisional head of one record company as saying: "The kind of receptivity needed for the new rock and the new classical are exactly the same. . . . You have to give yourself up to it and let them take your mind." But is this wise? A spiritually unguarded mind can leave you open to intrusion by the demons!—Compare Matthew 12:43-45.

¹⁰ To his beloved fellow believers the apostle Paul wrote: "The things which the nations sacrifice they sacrifice to demons, and not to God; and I do not want

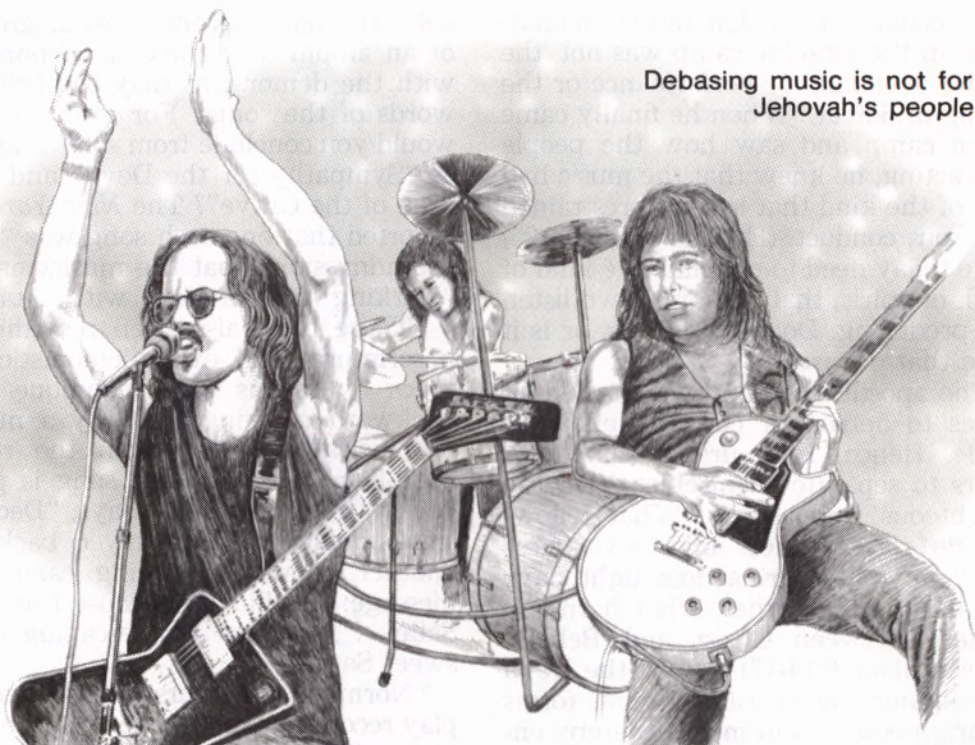
6. How has the Devil been using some music, and so what words of Paul are particularly noteworthy?

7. How can a Christian tell if there is demonic influence in certain music?

8. By means of backward masking, what kind of messages have been put in some musical recordings?
9. Ideas of what kind can be absorbed when one listens to certain kinds of music, and how can this be dangerous?

10. How should faithful Christians view anything demonistic?

Debasing music is not for
Jehovah's people



you to become sharers with the demons. You cannot be drinking the cup of Jehovah and the cup of demons; you cannot be partaking of 'the table of Jehovah' and the table of demons." (1 Corinthians 10:20, 21) Immorality and involvement with spiritism, the occult or anything demonistic have no proper place in the life of a faithful Christian.—Deuteronomy 18:10-12; Galatians 5:19-21.

¹¹ In view of divinely inspired counsel, then, what should a Christian do if he discovers that he has musical recordings betraying demonic influence? Surely, he should destroy them, for Jehovah's people must not be "sharers with the demons." Under similar circumstances, early Christians at Ephesus acted without hesitation, for we read: "Indeed, quite

11. What should a Christian do if he discovers that he has demonistic musical recordings?

a number of those who practiced magical arts brought their books together and burned them up before everybody. And they calculated together the prices of them and found them worth fifty thousand pieces of silver." (Acts 19:19) Those "lovers of Jehovah" hated what was wicked and were not deterred by thoughts of material loss. Rather, to their great spiritual benefit, they destroyed possessions of demonistic nature.—Psalm 97:10.

Avoid the World's Spirit

¹² Neither should we overlook the worldly spirit of wild abandonment often associated with today's music and musicians. (Compare Ephesians 2:1-7.) For

12, 13. (a) What worldly spirit often is associated with present-day music and musicians, and how has this been displayed? (b) How should Jehovah's Witnesses apply Galatians 6:7?

instance, when one concert was canceled, thousands of fans rioted, *The Toronto Star* reporting: "They bombarded 268 policemen with bottles, chains and other missiles during a 30-minute rampage . . . They tore out 200 seats welded to steel posts and bolted to concrete. They heaved scores of metal chairs on stage. . . . They ripped out steel turnstiles, smashed windows in ticket booths and the Grandstand restaurant, and damaged several cars outside the stadium." Should a Christian ever be in such company?

¹³ At such performances alcohol and drugs are usually taken in freely. Additionally, the music and actions of the performers engender a spirit of wild abandonment. Clearly, the type of music played on such occasions, along with elements including demonism, drugs and violence, can only be debasing. Could a Christian, then, listen to the same music in his own home without being affected detrimentally? Hardly! And no faithful witness of Jehovah will ignore the Bible principle: "God is not one to be mocked. For whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap."—Galatians 6:7.

¹⁴ Yet, some have felt: 'I don't listen to the music for the words; I just like the beat. It's good to dance to.' But there can be danger in this, too. According to *The Times-Herald* of Newport News, Virginia, "an avid disco dancer might dance all night to a hit song without noticing any more about the music than the pulsating beat and the hook line, a musician's term for a catchy phrase that's repeated frequently." True, the music may have a catchy beat for dancing, but what are the words encouraging us to do? What is entering the listener's mind? For example, how can a loyal witness of Jehovah dance to the music of a song that urges

him, over and over again, to go and commit fornication?—1 Corinthians 6:9, 10.

¹⁵ Of course, morally debased lyrics are not limited to rock and disco music. In many lands or localities there are forms of music that may be quite popular locally despite having a beat or using lyrics that true Christians may find quite objectionable. Concerning country music, an article in *The News & Observer* of Raleigh, North Carolina, states: "Honky tonk angels and cheatin' men have always played their part in country songs, but never in the history of the music have their illicit affairs been so graphically depicted as they are today." Alluding to another trend in popular but immoral music, *The Spokesman-Review* says: "Women are singing about sex in the night and sex on the dance floor and sex on the street corner." Can such songs be anything but debasing?

¹⁶ Never forget that the imperfect human heart is treacherous, desperate. (Jeremiah 17:9) Is your heart persuading you to listen to or dance to what you know to be wrong in Jehovah's eyes? If so, beware! Prayerfully seek God's help so that you can 'keep on making sure of what is acceptable to the Lord and quit sharing in the works belonging to the darkness.' (Ephesians 5:10-12; Psalm 5:1, 2) Your firm refusal to listen to or dance to sexually debased music may even serve to reprove others whose heart may be misleading them.

¹⁷ Those immersed in the spirit of this wicked system of things may take delight in sexually debased music. But how could this possibly be true of faithful

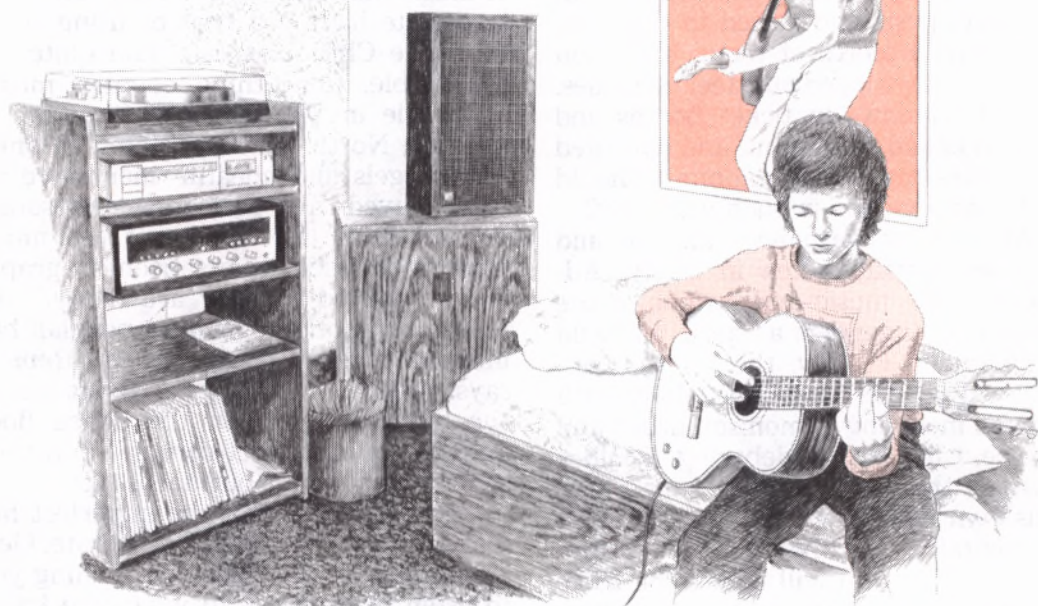
15. What debasing trends are there in modern music?

16. What help is there for a person whose heart is moving him to listen to or dance to sexually debased music?

17. As regards music, how do you think we can apply the counsel at (a) Ephesians 5:3? (b) Titus 2:11-14?

14. Why is it not fitting to listen to and dance to a song suggesting immoral conduct?

Should true Christians imitate worldly musicians in dress, grooming and life-style?



Christians? They are counseled: "Let fornication and uncleanness of every sort or greediness not even be mentioned among you, just as it befits holy people." (Ephesians 5:3) Have we fittingly 'repudiated ungodliness and worldly desires'? Then let us watch not only what we say but also what we listen to, so that it does not include songs about immorality. Let us "live with soundness of mind and righteousness and godly devotion amid this present system of things."—Titus 2: 11-14.

¹⁸ But how do you personally feel about worldly musicians? Ask yourself: Do I imitate some of them in my dress, grooming and speech? How much of my conversa-

18. Regarding our attitude toward certain musicians, what questions might be asked?

tion is about them and their music? Am I idolizing them by wearing T-shirts or jackets that advertise such performers, or even by hanging their pictures or posters in my room? Does this please Jehovah, to whom my reverence should go? Am I following the Bible's plain counsel to "flee from idolatry"?—1 Corinthians 10:14; Romans 1:24, 25.

Distinguish Between Right and Wrong

¹⁹ The apostle Paul wrote: "Solid food belongs to mature people, to those who through use have their perceptive powers trained to distinguish both right and wrong." (Hebrews 5:14) Christian parents and youths need to use properly

19. With respect to music, how should properly trained perceptive powers be used?

trained perceptive powers to distinguish between right and wrong. They need to recognize and thoroughly reject the deceptive enticements of debasing music. As the "anything goes" moral code becomes more entrenched in this Devil-dominated world and its music, witnesses of Jehovah, young and old, must become ever more decisive in aligning their lives with the high standards of their heavenly Father.—Psalm 119:9-16; 1 John 5:19.

²⁰ Never forget that music has power. It can affect the heart. Do you see yourself getting caught up in the spirit of questionable worldly songs? Then act promptly to safeguard your heart. If you are a youth, discuss the situation with your Christian parents. Also, pray fervently to Jehovah for help by means of his holy spirit.—Proverbs 4:23; Luke 11:13; Galatians 5:22-24.

²¹ Parents, what are you doing to help your children to distinguish between acceptable music and the debasing kind? As Christians, can you properly allow them to listen to songs featuring demonism, sexual immorality, drug abuse and violence? Well, then, before buying a record or allowing your children to listen to certain music, take the time to examine the album cover to see if it gives evidence of corrupt influences. Consider the titles and the lyrics of the songs. If the songs are debasing, discuss this kindly with your youngsters. You might point out that all Christians should be 'babes as to badness but full-grown in powers of understanding,' not seeking knowledge of vile things or filling their minds with debasing ideas. (1 Corinthians 14:20) After such a discussion, doubtless you and your children will get rid

20. What is recommended in the case of a young person who is getting caught up in the spirit of questionable songs?

21. How can Christian parents help their children to avoid debasing music?

of any Scripturally objectionable records in your possession and together resolve that never again will you listen to debasing music.

²² There is a wide variety of Scripturally acceptable and upbuilding music, including delightful Kingdom songs enjoyed by Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide. So we are not missing anything worthwhile by rejecting music that debases. By a regular study of the Bible and related Christian publications, may we train our perceptive powers to distinguish between right and wrong. Then let us cling to what is right. If any music conflicts with God's righteous standards, reject it. Yield to his instruction and be firm in staying on "the path of uprightness." (Psalm 27:11) By all means, beware of music that debases! At the same time, may your personal choice of music be a praise to God, who "furnishes us all things richly for our enjoyment." —1 Timothy 6:17.

22. (a) Why are we not missing anything worthwhile by rejecting music that debases? (b) What should be our attitude and viewpoint in choosing music?

How Would You Answer?

- ☐ What evidence do we have that music has power?
- ☐ How can you tell if there is demonic influence in certain music?
- ☐ What should be done if you have musical recordings betraying demonic influence?
- ☐ If a person's heart is moving him to listen to or dance to debasing music, what help is there?
- ☐ How can Christian parents help their children to avoid music that debases?

'Do Not Use the World to the Full'

"Those who have to deal with the world should not become engrossed in it. I say this because the world as we know it is passing away."

—1 CORINTHIANS 7:31, *The Jerusalem Bible*.

ONE cannot foretell the surprises or disappointments the future has in store. . . . Yet, clumsily or smoothly, the world, it seems, progresses and will progress." So stated noted historian H. G. Wells a few decades ago. Despite numerous crises and calamities, many feel that mankind will somehow solve its problems, and the world, much as we know it, will survive.

² However, writing under divine inspiration, the Christian apostle Paul presented a different picture when he urged fellow believers: "Let . . . those making use of the world [be] as those not using it to the full; for the scene of this world is changing." Another rendition is: "Those who have to deal with the world should not become engrossed in it. I say this because the world as we know it is passing away." (1 Corinthians 7:29-31, *New World Translation; JB*) What does this counsel mean to servants of Jehovah God today?

"The World . . . Is Passing Away"

³ At 1 Corinthians chapter 7 Paul was discussing marriage among Christians.

1, 2. (a) What view of the world's future do many have today? (b) Paul said what about the world and the use of it?

3. Paul discussed what at 1 Corinthians chapter 7, and what are some of the points he made there?

While recommending singleness as the better course, he acknowledged that those who enter wedlock "commit no sin." Yet he added that they would have "tribulation in their flesh," for marriage is attended by certain anxieties. For instance, the illness of a loved one can bring about stress. Although Paul did not here mention persecution, added tribulation can result to married people during such a time if mates are separated or if parents are separated from their children.—1 Corinthians 7:25-28.

⁴ Paul went on to say: "Moreover, this I say, brothers, the time left is reduced. Henceforth let those who have wives be as though they had none." (1 Corinthians 7:29) Since "the time left is reduced," married Christians should not devote themselves so completely to marriage privileges and duties that these are their whole life. Rather, they should keep Kingdom interests first in life, although not failing to fulfill marital responsibilities. (1 Corinthians 7:3-5, 29-40) Living as we do in "the last days," we have all the more reason to follow this inspired counsel.—2 Timothy 3:1-5.

⁵ Since "the time left is reduced," Paul

4. What is the meaning of 1 Corinthians 7:29?

5. What is the "world" that we should not use to the full?

said, "let . . . those making use of the world [be] as those not using it to the full." (1 Corinthians 7:29-31) In this passage the Greek word rendered "world" (*kósmos*) applies not directly to mankind, as it does in John 3:16, but to the human sphere of life and its framework. Mankind has its language groups, nations, tribes, families, rich and poor, and the general framework that surrounds and affects humans. (1 Corinthians 14:10; James 2:5, 6; Revelation 7:9; 14:6) Yes, it was to the human sphere of life and what it holds out that Paul referred when he said: "While you use the world, don't try to get out of it all you can."—1 Corinthians 7:31, *The New Testament in the Language of Today*, William F. Beck.

⁶ Paul also indicated that Christians

6, 7. (a) How is 'the scene of this world changing'? (b) What point did the apostle John make regarding the world's future?

should 'not use the world to the full' because "the scene of this world is changing." This world is like the changing scenes on a stage. Though it may appear attractive, its actors and settings change. Humans come 'on stage,' and some act haughtily. But soon they depart along with their generation and are forgotten. (Ecclesiastes 1:4) In our time, the 'curtain is about to go down' on this old world! Indeed, "the world as we know it is passing away."—1 Corinthians 7:31, *JB*.

⁷ The apostle John made a similar point, saying: "The world is passing away and so is its desire, but he that does the will of God remains forever." (1 John 2:15-17) John evidently meant that unrighteous human society was due to pass away by divine destruction, even as the ungodly pre-Flood world perished. (Hebrews 11:7; 2 Peter 2:5; 3:6) Of course, with unrighteous people will go the present human



The merchant sold everything
to buy "one pearl of
high value"

framework of things and everything it offers.

⁸ Even as righteously disposed humans survived the Deluge, however, so Jesus showed that some will survive the rapidly approaching "great tribulation." (Matthew 24:21, 22, 36-39; compare Revelation 7:9-17.) Already forming is a "new earth," a society of people who will live on this earth under Kingdom rule. (2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1; compare Psalm 96:1.) So if we personally have the hope of survival and of eternal life in the New Order, why should we devote most of our time and energy to the passing old world?

"As Light As Possible"

⁹ As witnesses of Jehovah living in this system of things, we cannot actually "get out of the world." (1 Corinthians 5:9, 10) So we can appropriately use the world in balanced, proper, limited ways. For instance, since we pay our taxes, we are entitled to certain services furnished by the governmental "superior authorities." (Romans 13:1-7) We properly use postal, police and other lawful services, such as transportation systems. For what purpose? For proper living and to carry on the God-given work of Kingdom witnessing. But since we are not to use the world "to the full," all such things are used only to the extent that they serve Christian interests.

8. Although this world is passing away, what hope do Christians have, and how should this affect our use of the world?

9. In what balanced ways can witnesses of Jehovah properly use the world?



¹⁰ We cannot afford to let worldly interests dominate us. Rather, we need to center our life on our relationship with Jehovah, on our worship of him and our service to him. Do our actions reveal that "intimacy with God" is really important to us? (Job 29:4) And do we recognize the superlative value of spiritual things? Jesus Christ illustrated the preciousness of the Kingdom by "one pearl" so valuable that a merchant "promptly sold all the things he had and bought it." (Matthew 13:45, 46) Thus Jesus showed that a person appreciating the true value of gaining the Kingdom would be willing to part with any earthly treasure to do so. If the Kingdom and its interests, and particularly intimacy with Jehovah, mean that much to us, we will keep "every contact with the world . . . as light as possible."—1 Corinthians 7:31, *Phillips*.

10. (a) Around what should we center our lives? (b) How did Jesus illustrate the great value of the Kingdom? (c) If Kingdom interests and intimacy with Jehovah mean much to us, how will this affect our use of the world?

'We Did Not Receive the Spirit of the World'

¹¹ Another reason not to use the world to the full is that it is impossible to enjoy intimacy with Jehovah while having "the spirit of the world." (1 Corinthians 2:12) The spirit or energizing force that controls the world of unrighteous human society is demonic and alienated from God. Under the Devil's control, the world caters to selfishness and the desires of the fallen flesh, resulting in enmity toward Jehovah God.—John 14:30; Ephesians 2:1-3; 1 John 5:19.

¹² The apostle Paul contrasted the world's spirit with the spirit of God and said concerning Christians: "Now we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God." (1 Corinthians 2:12) Since the world's pattern of thought and conduct runs counter to the influence of God's holy spirit and the instruction found in his Word, godly persons must shun its spirit. Instead, lovers of Jehovah properly cultivate and manifest the holy spirit's fruitage of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness and self-control.—Galatians 5:22, 23.

¹³ Interestingly, the aged apostle John showed that God's true "inspired expressions" came through the genuine Christian congregation, not through unchristian worldly sources. Then he said: "He that gains the knowledge of God listens to us; he that does not originate with God does not listen to us." True, John's subject was "inspired expressions." But he made the point that Christians do not "speak what proceeds from the world." (1 John 4:1-6) So why should we use the world to the full?

Remain "Without Spot From the World"

¹⁴ Employment and other activities make it necessary for witnesses of Jehovah to "deal with the world" in certain ways. But we "should not become engrossed in it" for yet another reason. (JB) Jesus said that his followers are "no part of the world." (John 17:14) Jehovah has, through Christ, provided salvation from this world under Satan's control. (Colossians 1:13, 14) By obedience to the revealed truth of Jehovah's Word, anointed Christians have been sanctified, or made holy, set apart for God's use in his service. Thus they, as well as their dedicated associates of the "great crowd," stand out as being "no part of the world" that does not adhere to Jehovah's truth. (Revelation 7:9; John 17:16, 17; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:22) How inappropriate it would be for such persons to use the world to the full!

¹⁵ Being "no part of the world" calls for neutrality toward the controversies and politics of the world. (Matthew 22:21; John 18:36, 37) Anointed followers of Christ and their dedicated associates must also avoid spiritual fornication through friendship with the world. Moral and spiritual cleanness are required of them. (Ephesians 4:25-32; James 4:4) To render clean and undefiled worship to Jehovah, then, we must 'keep ourselves unspotted from the world' by not adopting attitudes, speech and conduct common to sinful humankind alienated from God. (James 1:27) We must remain free of the world's corruption, violence, unjust schemes, and so forth. Yes, the need to 'keep unspotted from the world' is an

11, 12. (a) What is "the spirit of the world"? (b) Christians have received what spirit, and how does it contrast with this world's spirit?

13. What did John write at 1 John 4:1-6, and does this have any bearing on our use of the world?

14. How do anointed Christians and their dedicated associates stand out as being "no part of the world"?

15. According to James 1:27, clean and undefiled worship calls for what?

other vital reason not to 'use the world so as to get out of it all we can.'—Beck.

Remain 'Holy to Our God'

¹⁶ Jehovah's people differ from the world as regards hopes, aspirations and compliance with the will of their holy God. (Exodus 39:30) They should prove holy to God. Accordingly, the people of ancient Israel were to make "fringed edges upon the skirts of their [robelike] garments," with a blue string above the fringe. They were to do this so as not to be 'in style' with Moabites, Egyptians or others and to be reminded that they were to be different as Jehovah's people and that they should obey him, 'proving holy to their God.' (Numbers 15:37-41) The desire to be 'holy to our God' should prompt us to be cautious in using the world.

¹⁷ Worldly objectives involve wealth, fame and spiritually unwholesome activities that can undermine Christian faith. For instance, the pursuit of material things and wealth, if allowed to take the dominant place in our life, may even entice us to do wrong for selfish advantage, thus endangering our relationship with Jehovah. (Proverbs 28:20; compare Jeremiah 5:26-28; 17:9-11.) Indeed, those using the world to such an extent that they make material pursuits their prime concern are in danger of becoming involved in dishonest practices and of losing their faith because of neglecting spiritual matters. Someone who becomes successful in business or becomes wealthy may also become "high-minded," proudly esteeming his own views above counsel from God's congregation. (1 Timothy 6: 9, 10, 17) This surely is not the way to remain 'holy to our God.'

16. Why were the Israelites to make "fringed edges" on their robelike garments?

17. How might the worldly objective of acquiring wealth endanger our relationship with Jehovah?

Fringed edges on their garments reminded the Israelites that they should prove holy to Jehovah. A desire to be 'holy to our God' should make us cautious in using the world



¹⁸ Jesus appropriately said: "Make friends for yourselves by means of the unrighteous riches, so that, when such fail, they [your heavenly Friends, Jehovah God and Jesus Christ] may receive you into the everlasting dwelling places." (Luke 16:9) So, while we need some material things and we can use such resources to advance Kingdom interests and make heavenly Friends, the worldly goal of acquiring these things in abundance should not be allowed to corrupt our heart.—Luke 12:34.

¹⁹ Another worldly goal is that of achieving position, fame and glory. Often this requires years of advanced education,

18. Why should we not have the worldly goal of acquiring material things in abundance?

19. How should we view the worldly goal of achieving glory?

social climbing and the like. But people seeking their own glory are likened in the Scriptures to those who eat too much honey, which can cause nausea. Thus we read: "To eat honey in abundance is not good, nor is searching out their own honour [glory] an honourable thing." (Proverbs 25:16, 27, *Rotherham; NW*) Similarly, revering worldly heroes and stars is unscriptural, something that Christian parents may at times find it necessary to point out kindly to their youngsters. (Compare Acts 12:21-23.) Surely, a proper view of such matters also is essential if we wish to remain 'holy to our God' and to avoid using the world to the full.

Do 'Not Use the World Fully'

²⁰ So, then, as faithful witnesses of Jehovah, we should not use the world to the full. We "should not become engrossed in it" because (1) "the time left is reduced"; (2) "the world as we know it is passing away"; (3) our life should be centered on our precious relationship with Jehovah; (4) we should manifest

20, 21. Why should we not use the world to the full?

Do you recall?

- What "world" is meant at 1 Corinthians 7:31?
- Since "the scene of this world is changing," how should Christians view the use of the world?
- To what extent may Christians appropriately use the world?
- What is "the spirit of the world," but what spirit do lovers of Jehovah manifest?
- How do Jehovah's people differ from the world as regards objectives?

God's spirit, not the world's; (5) we need to be "without spot from the world"; and (6) we must remain 'holy to our God.'

²¹ We can do all of this only with Jehovah's aid. (Compare Zechariah 4:6.) Since we have the marvelous Kingdom hope, we should not want to use the world to the full, as though what it offers is all we have. But what can really help us to reject worldly ways and desires?

Reject Worldly Desires!

JEHOVAH GOD deserves to be worshiped in a clean, upright way by all those dedicated to him. At all times and in every way, they should honor him in word and deed. They certainly must not have "this world's spirit"—its sinful and

1, 2. (a) How should Jehovah be worshiped?
(b) What does this require of his Witnesses?

selfish, often corrupt, dominant feeling or activating force. (1 Corinthians 2:12, *Today's English Version*) As a people organized to praise God, Jehovah's Witnesses must stand out as being different from this world. They must wholeheartedly apply divine instruction to "repudiate ungodliness and worldly desires

and to live with soundness of mind and righteousness and godly devotion amid this present system of things.”—Titus 2: 11-14.

² Sadly, however, not all those claiming to love Jehovah have always honored him and given clear evidence that they have rejected worldly desires or ways. It is reported that certain dedicated Christian men attended a masquerade party dressed as women. Could such behavior be considered unworldly or an honor to Jehovah? Surely, actions of that kind are not what we would expect of those who are “no part of the world.” (John 15:19) Why, under most circumstances a man wearing a woman’s wig and clothing would not only appear effeminate but also open the way to propositions for unnatural sex use by other men!—Deuteronomy 22:5.

³ As witnesses of Jehovah, we may acknowledge that we should ‘not be overly absorbed in worldly affairs,’ as shown in the previous article. (1 Corinthians 7:31, *The New Testament: A New Translation*, by Olaf M. Norlie) We may realize that God’s undeserved kindness “teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions.” (Titus 2:11, 12, *New*

3. As to worldly ways and desires, what questions merit consideration?

International Version; NW) But what if our heart does not really react that way? Or suppose we desire to strengthen our determination to reject worldly desires. What can help us?

Appeal to the “Hearer of Prayer”

⁴ One way to succeed in rejecting worldly desires is to make earnest and regular petitions for help from the “Hearer of prayer.” (Psalm 65:2) But how might we pray if our heart yearns somewhat for worldly things?

⁵ As witnesses of Jehovah, we should ‘let our petitions be made known to God in everything.’ If we do so in faith, the unequalled “peace of God” will guard our mind and heart. Of course, Jehovah himself said that “the inclination of the heart of man is bad from his youth up.” (Philippians 4:6, 7; Genesis 8:21) So at times we need to pray for a different attitude, a change of heart. For instance, if the world’s allurements tug at our heart, we need to ask our heavenly Father to help us replace that yearning with spiritually wholesome desires.

⁶ Centuries ago, the psalmist David petitioned God: “*Make me know your own ways, O Jehovah . . . Make me walk in your truth and teach me.*” (Psalm 25: 4, 5) Jehovah did this for David, and surely He can answer such a prayer for His present-day servants. Since Jehovah’s “ways” and “truth” are not worldly, prayerful sentiments like David’s may be helpful if this world’s ways seem particularly appealing to us.

⁷ The world holds immoral views and is rife with wickedness. Often this is apparent in worldly songs, dances,

4, 5. (a) Of what can our prayers properly consist? (b) As regards our heart, how may we need to pray at times?

6. If the world’s ways and allurements seem especially appealing to us, how might we pray?

7. What is the wise course to follow if we are drawn to unwholesome worldly entertainment?

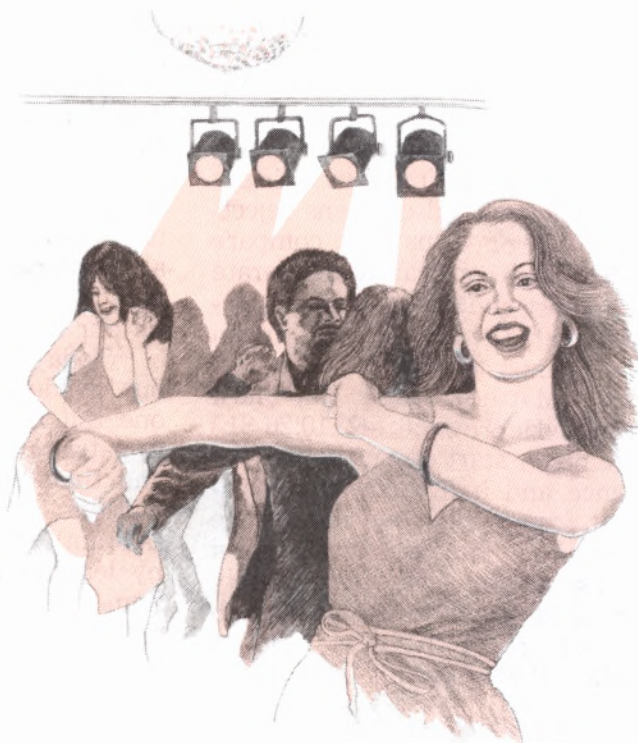
In Our Next Issue

■ **Armageddon—Prelude to Paradise!**

■ **How Can We Keep Our ‘First Love’?**

■ **Duties or Pleasures—Which Do You Put First?**

Do not let
curiosity draw
you into
worldly
corruption



books, plays, motion pictures, television programs, and the like. If we, as dedicated Christians, are drawn to unwholesome, worldly entertainment, then what? First, we will do well to appraise entertainment possibilities in the light of God's Word. It shows that we should "abhor what is wicked, cling to what is good." (Romans 12:9) Then we should pray for Jehovah's help so that our heart, imperfect though it is, will cease to desire vile things. Surely, our God can 'create in us a pure heart' if we sincerely ask him to do so.—Psalm 51:10.

Help by Holy Spirit

⁸ After the gravity of his sin with Bathsheba had been dramatically impressed upon Israel's King David, he pleaded with Jehovah: "Do not throw me away from before your face; and *your holy spirit O do not take away from me.*" (Psalm 51:11) God answered that prayer. But note that the holy spirit can be lost or withdrawn.

⁹ If we, as dedicated Christians, per-

8. According to Psalm 51:11, what can happen even though we now have the holy spirit?

9. What could draw us into worldly corruption, and with what possible consequences?

mit the world to draw us back into its "low sink of debauchery," we may drown there spiritually. (1 Peter 4:4) This may start with curiosity, perhaps by our beginning to feed the mind and heart on immoral, worldly thoughts implanted therein by Scripturally objectionable literature and forms of entertainment. God's Word urges that we be "babes as to badness," not seeking knowledge of things immoral or wicked. (1 Corinthians 14:20) But curiosity could draw us into a vortex of corruption, and we may unwisely conclude that we are mature or strong enough spiritually to withstand defilement. Then arrogance may develop so that we want no one—ultimately not even God—to 'tell us what to do.' The consequences can be disastrous, since no one can defy God by stubbornly rejecting his counsel and "come off uninjured." —Job 9:1-4.

¹⁰ If left unchecked, worldly desires can cause us to grieve God's holy spirit by disregarding it, taking a course contrary to its leading and setting our heart on objectives other than those toward which the spirit would impel us. "Grieving God's holy spirit" also means rejecting his Word. (Ephesians 4:30; compare Acts 7:51-53.) This can lead to deliberate rebellion against the evident manifestation of Jehovah's spirit and can mean blasphemy against that spirit, an unforgivable sin. (Matthew 12:31, 32; Mark 3:29; compare Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:26-31.) So may we never start down the path of independence and indulgence in worldly practices from which we once were rescued through Jehovah's undeserved kindness. Instead, let us pray for the holy spirit and yield to its influence, which will help us to resist the world and its enticements.—Psalm 143:10; Luke 11:13.

God's Word an Aid

¹¹ A marvelous product of God's holy spirit is his inspired Word. (2 Samuel 23:2; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20, 21) Within its pages are 'things written aforetime for our instruction' and 'warning examples for us upon whom the ends of the systems of things have arrived.' (Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11) How, then, did some people of Bible record view the world?

¹² Even an unfavorable example is beneficial, for it shows us what to avoid. To illustrate: The apostle Paul was forsaken by his fellow worker Demas 'because of his love for the present system of things.' The exact nature and extent of

his forsaking Paul is not disclosed, but a love for worldly pleasures and material things may have become stronger than that for spiritual things. In any event, Demas failed to use his excellent opportunity to strengthen his brother Paul. (2 Timothy 4:10) How this should move us to stick with fellow believers, not abandoning them because of permitting love for the present system of things to fill our heart!

¹³ Today we have the entire Bible as our guide. But without having even one full Bible book—Genesis—the godly patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and their loyal wives, 'did not use the world to the full.' For example, Abraham (Abram) did as Jehovah God directed by leaving Ur, a Chaldean city of fine homes and many advantages. Yes, excavations there reveal that he and his beloved wife Sarah (Sarai) must have made notable material sacrifices to go where God directed, dwelling in tents as alien residents in the land of promise. Isaac and Jacob also acted in faith as "heirs with [Abraham] of the very same promise." Worldly interests were of relatively little consequence to Abraham, "for he was awaiting the city having real foundations, the builder and maker of which city is God."—Hebrews 11:8-10.

¹⁴ The prophet Moses furnishes another fine example of one who trusted in Jehovah and rejected worldly desires. By faith, Moses chose ill-treatment with God's people and "esteemed the reproach of the Christ [that is, of being God's anointed servant] as riches greater than the treasures of Egypt." Therefore, he had marvelous privileges while serving steadfastly 'as though seeing the invi-

10. (a) As to the holy spirit, what can happen to us if worldly desires are left unchecked? (b) So what will help us to resist the world and its enticements?

11. What will we now consider that should help us to resist the temptation to 'use the world to the full'?

12. Who was Demas, and how can we benefit from considering his course?

13. What proof is there that Abraham and Sarah were not 'overly absorbed in worldly affairs'?

14. (a) How can it be shown that Moses 'did not use the world to the full'? (b) As to our view of spiritual interests, how can we benefit from Moses' example?

Joseph fled
to keep from
sinning.
We, too,
should act
quickly to
avoid ungodly
conduct

ble One,' Jehovah. (Hebrews 11:24-27) Clearly, Moses could have made no finer decision than that of putting spiritual interests first in life despite any worldly enticements. Neither can we.—Matthew 6:33.

¹⁵ The things of the world that will soon pass away with it include "the desire of the flesh," which manifests itself in various ways, some of them wicked. (1 John 2:15-17) Worldly enticements to immorality are numerous and have at times had devastating effects even on people dedicated to Jehovah. For instance, although the Israelites had been delivered from Egyptian bondage, thousands of them later were put to death because of having "immoral relations with the daughters of Moab." (Numbers, chapter 25; 1 Corinthians 10:8) How this should move us to shun worldly enticements to immorality!

¹⁶ Consider the fine example of Joseph, the son of Jacob. Repeatedly, his Egyp-

15. Our considering what experience of the Israelites should move us to shun worldly enticements to immorality?

16. (a) When tempted to act immorally, what did Joseph do? (b) How might we benefit from Joseph's example?



tian master's wife urged him to have sexual relations with her. However, he staunchly refused. It is not said that the woman was so ugly that she would repel a man. Rather, Joseph fled from her presence because he did not want to sin against his righteous God, Jehovah. (Genesis 39:7-20) Do we need to make adjustments in our reading, recreation or certain circumstances so as to avoid sinning against God? If so, let us act without delay, as did godly Joseph.—1 Peter 2:11, 12.

¹⁷ Worldly thinking often fosters independence and pride. The world's emphasis on the material aspects of life extends to adornment, particularly significant to

17. (a) Worldly thinking often fosters what attitude? (b) How did certain haughty women of Judah adorn themselves, and what happened to them and their ornaments?

women who desire to have a fine appearance. In ancient Judah of Isaiah's day, haughty women decked themselves with many ornaments. Apparently to be in fashion, such proud females wore "step chains," or chainlets, fastened to their anklets. These chains made a "tinkling sound" as a woman walked, and they restricted her stride so that she went along "with tripping steps," having what might be considered a genteel feminine gait. Of course, the Babylonian conquest of Judah in 607 B.C.E. brought an end to those ornaments and to freedom.—Isaiah 3:16-24.

¹⁸ As regards feminine adornment, what a difference in attitude there was between immodest, worldly Jezebel and modest, godly, though well-attired, Esther! (2 Kings 9:30; Esther 2:7; 5:1) Obviously, Christian women wish to be like Esther. Hence, they attire themselves "in well-arranged dress, with modesty and soundness of mind." They make their principal adornment "the secret person of the heart in the incorruptible apparel of the quiet and mild spirit, which is of great value in the eyes of God."—1 Timothy 2:9; 1 Peter 3:3-5.

¹⁹ Jesus Christ provides the chief example of *unworldliness*. Although he was a perfect man with far more potential for worldly success than any other human, his prime concern was spiritual—so much so that he had "nowhere to lay down his head." (Matthew 8:20) Far from having been corrupted morally by this world, Jesus is described as "loyal, guileless, undefiled, separated from the sinners." (Hebrews 7:26) We who are imperfect cannot now follow Jesus' steps perfectly. But we ought to do our best, with Jehovah's help.—1 Peter 2:21, 22.

18. What is the Scriptural standard as regards feminine adornment?

19. How did Jesus Christ provide the finest example of unworldliness?

Continue Rejecting Worldly Desires

²⁰ If you find yourself in the happy throng of Jehovah's worshipers, you are blessed indeed. You have found something far better than all that this corrupt and dying world can offer. Cling to true worship, then, and remain free of this world's spirit. To that end, appeal often to the "Hearer of prayer," seek the aid of his holy spirit, always yield to the counsel of God's Word and never abandon the ranks of the long—now centuries-old—line of Jehovah's faithful witnesses.—Compare Hebrews 12:1-3.

²¹ May it be your determination not to use this world to the full. Rather, may you keep your mind and heart fixed on the doing of God's will. If you do so, you will have the unfailing support of Jehovah's "everlasting arms." (Deuteronomy 33:27, *An American Translation*) Confident in such divine aid, may you continue living with soundness of mind, righteousness and godly devotion while rejecting ungodliness and worldly desires.

20. If you are a worshiper of Jehovah, how can you remain free of this world's spirit?

21. As to this world, what should be our determination?

How would you answer?

- ☐ If our heart yearns somewhat for worldly things, how can prayer be helpful?
- ☐ How can the holy spirit help us to resist the world and its enticements?
- ☐ What Biblical examples can help us to reject worldly ways and desires?
- ☐ How can we remain free of this world's spirit?

Insight on the News

Generation of "Wicked Characters"

Writing in Nigeria's *National Concord*, newspaper columnist Derek Ingram speaks of World War II as the European civil war and says: "It was just the worst civil war of many over the centuries; in a sense the second part of a 31-year civil war that began in 1914 . . . What is so extraordinary about the period 1933-1945 is that Europe produced such an array of truly wicked characters all at the same time. How on earth did it come about that there was not just the rav- ing, bizarre figure of Adolf Hitler but a whole galaxy of larger than life horror figures?" Then listing Göring, Goebbels, Himmler, Heydrich, Mussolini and Stalin as opprobrious examples, he says of them: "All men of the same generation, in power, and with hundreds of millions of people terrorised into following them."

The Bible answers Mr. Ingram's question. It speaks of "the last days" and "the conclusion of the system of things" as marked by men "having no natural affection," "without self-control, fierce," and of a divided world, with 'nation rising against nation' and 'the love of many people growing cold.' (Matthew 24: 3, 7, 12; 2 Timothy 3:1-3) Since 1914 these prophecies and others have been seeing their fulfillment. They point to the root cause behind a generation of "wicked characters"—Satan the Devil. He

is identified as being responsible for bringing "woe for the earth" and influencing people to reflect his own wicked personality. Yet he knows that he has but "a short period of time" left. So we can take courage because, Jesus said, "Your deliverance is getting near."—Revelation 12:7-12; Luke 21:28.

How Strong Is Peer Pressure?

"Train up a boy according to the way for him; even when he grows old he will not turn aside from it," advises Proverbs 22:6. Is this Biblical advice sound today? Yes, especially with regard to religious values. In a recent article published in the quarterly *Adolescence*, David A. de Vaus, Ph.D., of LaTrobe University, Victoria, Australia, reported that "in the realm of the sacred (in this case, religious beliefs), parents are more important than peers" in shaping the religious direction their children will take.

Dr. de Vaus' study of 375 Australian adolescents, 16 to 18 years old, provides evidence that parents are the strongest force for the religious orientation of their children. Although parents win over peer pressure in molding their children's religious belief, his study does not indicate that this would be true for the adolescent's religious behavior. Therefore, Christian parents do well not only to raise their children "with Christian discipline and instruction" but also to seek out wholesome associates

for their children while heeding the Biblical warning: "Bad companions ruin good character."—Ephesians 6:4; 1 Corinthians 15:33, *Today's English Version*.

World Economy Struggles

While the economies of industrial countries struggle to recover after being hit by the economic slump afflicting the world since 1980, "the economic conditions of many developing countries have worsened," states *The World Development Report 1983*, published for the World Bank. "The recession has lasted longer than expected and has set back global development more decisively than at any time since the Great Depression" of the 1930's, notes A. W. Clausen, president of the World Bank. The report does not paint a rosy picture for the future either. It concludes: "Population continues to grow inexorably, production and trade have lagged, unemployment has risen . . . and large debts overhang many countries" with the "danger that continued recession in developing countries will undermine the pace of economic recovery in the industrial countries."

Man's efforts to improve the world may be sincere, but the psalmist wisely advises: "Do not put your trust in nobles, nor in the son of earthling man, to whom no salvation belongs." Rather, "Happy is the one . . . whose hope is in Jehovah his God."—Psalm 146:3, 5.

EXODUS

-From Tyranny to Theocratic Order

JEHOVAH heard their cries as "slaves under tyranny." It was time to act, and he did so as their Almighty Deliverer. Soon thereafter, God established his chosen people as a well-organized theocracy.

This, in essence, is the thrilling account you will find in the Bible book of Exodus. Written by the Hebrew prophet Moses, it relates the experiences of the Israelites from 1657 to 1512 B.C.E. Astounding miracles and superb legislation are among the book's absorbing features.

But does Exodus have real meaning in the 20th century? Indeed it does, as our brief consideration will show.

Epitome of Exodus

As residents in Egypt, Jacob's descendants increase so rapidly that by royal mandate they are made to suffer as "slaves under tyranny." Pharaoh even decrees death for all Israelite male infants. Escaping such an end is a baby whose mother sets him adrift on the Nile in a pa-



At Mount Sinai Jehovah organized the Israelites as a theocracy

pyrus ark. Pharaoh's daughter finds and adopts the child, giving it the name Moses, meaning "saved out of water." Although he is reared in the royal household, at the age of 40 Moses sides with his own oppressed people, killing an Egyptian. Forced to flee, he goes to Midian, where he gets married and lives as a shepherd. In the meantime Pharaoh dies, but another

Pharaoh tyrannizes over the Israelites. In time God hears their cry for help. —Exodus 1:1-2:25.

One day Moses notes a bush that is burning but, miraculously, is not consumed. Through an angel Jehovah there commissions him to return to Egypt and lead the Israelites out of despotic slavery. God appoints his brother Aaron to be his spokesman.—Exodus 3:1-4:31.

Moses and Aaron appear before Pharaoh, asking that the Israelites be permitted to celebrate a festival to Jehovah in the wilderness. The Egyptian ruler defiantly refuses, but then Jehovah acts to

make a name for himself. Haughty Pharaoh and his magicians certainly are no match for Moses, whom Jehovah uses to bring about telling blows. Even after nine plagues, however, the Egyptian tyrant is obstinate!—Exodus 5:1-10:29.

In anticipation of the tenth blow, Jehovah commands that the Israelites celebrate a “passover.” On Nisan 10, they take a lamb or a kid for each household. The animal is killed on Nisan 14 and its blood is sprinkled on the doorposts and lintels of their houses. They roast and eat it after sundown, along with bitter herbs and unleavened bread. While all these families are indoors, about midnight Jehovah’s angel goes through the land but passes over every Israelite home. The tenth blow is struck. Death befalls all the firstborn of Egypt, including Pharaoh’s first son. At this he lets the Israelites go.—Exodus 11:1-12:36.

Soon, however, the Egyptian oppressor and his military forces are in hot pursuit. But Jehovah provides deliverance by opening an escape corridor through the Red Sea. Then, with the Israelites safely on the other side, God causes the sea to close in on pursuing Pharaoh and his army, drowning all of them. What a way to get to know Jehovah and his awesome power!—Exodus 12:37-15:21.

From there to Mount Sinai in Arabia the Israelites repeatedly learn more about Jehovah, as he makes bitter water sweet, furnishes an abundance of quails and provides a tasty food they call manna. In their third month after deliverance from Egyptian tyranny, they encamp at the foot of Mount Sinai. There they receive God’s laws, including the “Ten Words” (the Ten Commandments), and enter into a covenant with Jehovah, their Almighty Deliverer.—Exodus 15:22-24:18; Deuteronomy 4:13.

Moses spends 40 days in the mountain receiving instructions regarding true wor-

ship and the construction of Jehovah’s tabernacle, a portable temple. Meanwhile, the Israelites make and worship a golden calf. Descending from the mountain, Moses sees this and becomes so incensed that he smashes the two tablets on which the Ten Words have miraculously been inscribed. After due punishment is meted out to the idolatrous wrongdoers, he again ascends the mountain and there receives another set of the tablets. Moses is given a view of God’s glory and hears Jehovah declaring that He is merciful but does not give exemption from merited punishment.—Exodus 25:1-34:7.

Upon Moses’ return from the mountain this second time, tabernacle construction begins, following the pattern provided by Jehovah. By the end of Israel’s first year of freedom, this marvelous tent and all its furnishings have been completed. The tabernacle is set up and fully equipped, whereupon Jehovah fills it with his glory.—Exodus 34:8-40:38.

Likely, you have been deeply moved by this review of these thrilling events. But a personal reading of Exodus may give rise to certain questions, some of which may be answered as we now consider the three main features of the book in question-and-answer form.

“Slaves Under Tyranny”

•3:1—What kind of priest was Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses?

Jethro evidently was the patriarchal head of a tribe of Midianites and was responsible for teaching and leading them in matters secular and religious. Since the Midianites were Abraham’s descendants by Keturah, they had memories of Jehovah’s worship that Abraham always enjoined upon his household. We cannot be sure about how pure the tribe’s religion was in Moses’ day. But Jethro showed considerable appreciation for Jehovah although he was not specially appointed by God.—Exodus 18:1-24.

•4:11—Is Jehovah responsible for such defects as blindness?

No, Jehovah is not responsible for every case of such physical defects as blindness and deafness. These have come about mainly because God has allowed a sinful human race to come into existence, the sinners Adam and Eve having lost their own perfection and, hence, their ability to produce perfect children. (Job 14:4; Romans 5:12) As their descendants had offspring, more and more imperfections, including physical defects, have become manifest. By allowing this situation to develop, God could speak of himself as 'appointing' the speechless, deaf and blind. For specific purposes, but only on occasion, has Jehovah caused physical blindness and speechlessness. (Genesis 19:11; Luke 1:20-22, 62-64; Acts 13:8-11) If people choose to be deaf and blind spiritually, he permits them to persist in their unbelief and rejection of his message, thus 'appointing' the deaf and blind in a spiritual sense. (Isaiah 6:9, 10) But Jehovah has granted spiritual hearing and sight to those seeking to please him. Moreover, through his Kingdom by Jesus Christ, the loving God, Jehovah, will free humankind from physical blindness and all other handicaps.—Isaiah 61:1, 2; 1 John 4:8; Revelation 21:1-4.

•4:24-26—Whose life was in danger, and what happened?

Because this passage is obscure, we suggest: Moses' son was threatened with death for not being in harmony with the earlier covenant of circumcision. (Genesis 17:9-14) After removing the child's foreskin, Zipporah caused this evidence of compliance with the covenant to touch the materialized angel's feet, thus showing that there no longer was a reason for her son to die. If she was addressing Jehovah through the angel as "a bridegroom of blood," it was as though she had accepted a wifely position in the covenant of circumcision, with God as the husband.

•6:3—Since Abraham, Isaac and Jacob used the name Jehovah, in what sense had God not made it known to them?

The name Jehovah literally means "He Causes to Become," that is, according to God's purpose. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob used the divine name and received promises from Jehovah. Yet they did not know or experience Jehovah as the One who caused these promises to be completely fulfilled. (Genesis 12:

1, 2; 15:7, 13-16; 26:24; 28:10-15) However, Jehovah's name soon would take on greater meaning for their descendants, the Israelites. They would come to know its real meaning when Jehovah carried out his purpose toward Israel by delivering them from tyranny and then giving them the Promised Land in fulfillment of his covenant with their forefathers.

•7:22—Where did the Egyptian priests get water that had not yet been turned into blood?

They could have used some water that had been taken from the Nile River before this blow, or plague. However, unaffected water apparently could be collected by digging wells in the moist soil round about the Nile. (Exodus 7:24) Perhaps the priests used such water in order to perform their trickery.

•12:29—Were both males and females reckoned as the firstborn?

The firstborn included only males. This is evident from the fact that later, when an exchange was made by giving the Levites over to Jehovah, only the males were enumerated. (Numbers 3:40-51) Pharaoh himself was a firstborn, but he was not killed because he had his own household and it was not the head but the firstborn son of the household that died on that Passover night.—Exodus 12:12.

Delivered by Jehovah

•15:8—Since the Red Sea waters were "congealed," were they frozen?

The Hebrew word here translated "congealed" means to shrink or thicken. At Job 10:10 the expression is used with regard to curdling cheese. So it does not necessarily mean that the walls of water were frozen solid. Since nothing visible was holding back the waters, they would have the appearance of being congealed, stiffened or thickened so as to remain standing. If the wind mentioned earlier had been cold enough to freeze the waters, doubtless some reference would have been made to the extreme cold.—Exodus 14:21.

Organized as a Theocracy

•20:5—Does this mean that faithful ones would be punished?

No, because each individual, after reaching an age of responsibility, is judged on the basis of his own conduct and attitude. (Compare Ezekiel 18:20.) However, when the nation of Israel later turned to idolatry, it suffered the evil consequences of this for generations thereafter. Faithful ones were not personally punished for the nation's sin, although they did feel some effects of it. It was difficult for these integrity-keepers to swim against the tide of national religious delinquency, but in doing so they enjoyed Jehovah's loving-kindness.

•23:20-23—Who was the angel mentioned here, and how was it that Jehovah's name was "within him"?

Angels other than the prehuman Jesus Christ were used to transmit God's law to Moses. (John 1:1-3, 14; Hebrews 2:2, 3) But it is reasonable to conclude that the angel of whom Jehovah said "my name is within him" was Jesus in his prehuman form. He was used to guide the Israelites on their way to the Promised Land. (1 Corinthians 10:1-4) Jesus, whose name means "Salvation of Jehovah," is the principal one that upholds and vindicates his Father's name.

•32:25—Why was Aaron not punished for making the golden calf?

Aaron did this at the behest of the people, not because he was in heartfelt sympathy with the idolatry. Later, he apparently joined fellow Levites in taking a stand for Jehovah and against those who withstood Moses on this occasion. About 3,000 persons (likely ringleaders) were slain, but more were guilty because after the 3,000 were gone Moses reminded the people that they had sinned greatly. So more persons than just Aaron received Jehovah's mercy at that time.—Exodus 32:1-6, 26-35.

•34:26—What was the significance of this command not to boil a kid in its mother's milk?

The seething or boiling of a kid, or young goat, in its mother's milk reportedly was a pagan ritual for producing rain. So the Israelites may have been given this law to keep them clear of such practices. However, this command, along with others, seems to em-

phasize the fact that there is a proper and fitting order in all matters. Jehovah provided the mother's milk to nourish her young. But boiling her offspring in it would result in harm and death, the very opposite of the milk's intended purpose. This law also seems to have provided a lesson showing God's covenant people that they should not act in a heartless way but should be compassionate.

Real Meaning for the Faithful

Exodus is a moving account of tyrannical bondage, divine deliverance and the organizing of a theocratic society. But what can 20th-century witnesses of Jehovah learn from this book?

Jehovah sustains his people. He did this by supporting and blessing the Israelites when they were "slaves under tyranny." (Exodus 1:7, 14) Similarly, Jehovah sustains his modern-day witnesses, even in the face of intense persecution.

Jehovah is the incomparable Deliverer. How evident that was at the Red Sea! Accordingly, his present-day witnesses can be confident that they, as a group, will survive the coming "great tribulation" under the almighty hand of this Grand Deliverer.—Matthew 24:20-22; Revelation 7:9, 14.

Jehovah is the God of theocratic organization. His laws, when obeyed, enabled the Israelites to worship him in an orderly, secure, joyful manner that honored his name. Comparably, Jehovah has organized his witnesses of today as an orderly, secure and happy brotherhood. For our own security and happiness, then, we must faithfully serve God as part of this theocratic society that glorifies his holy name.—Psalm 100:1-5; 1 Peter 2:17.

These are among the many benefits to be drawn from the book of Exodus. May our faith be strengthened as we reflect on this thrilling account of divine deliverance from tyranny to theocratic order.

