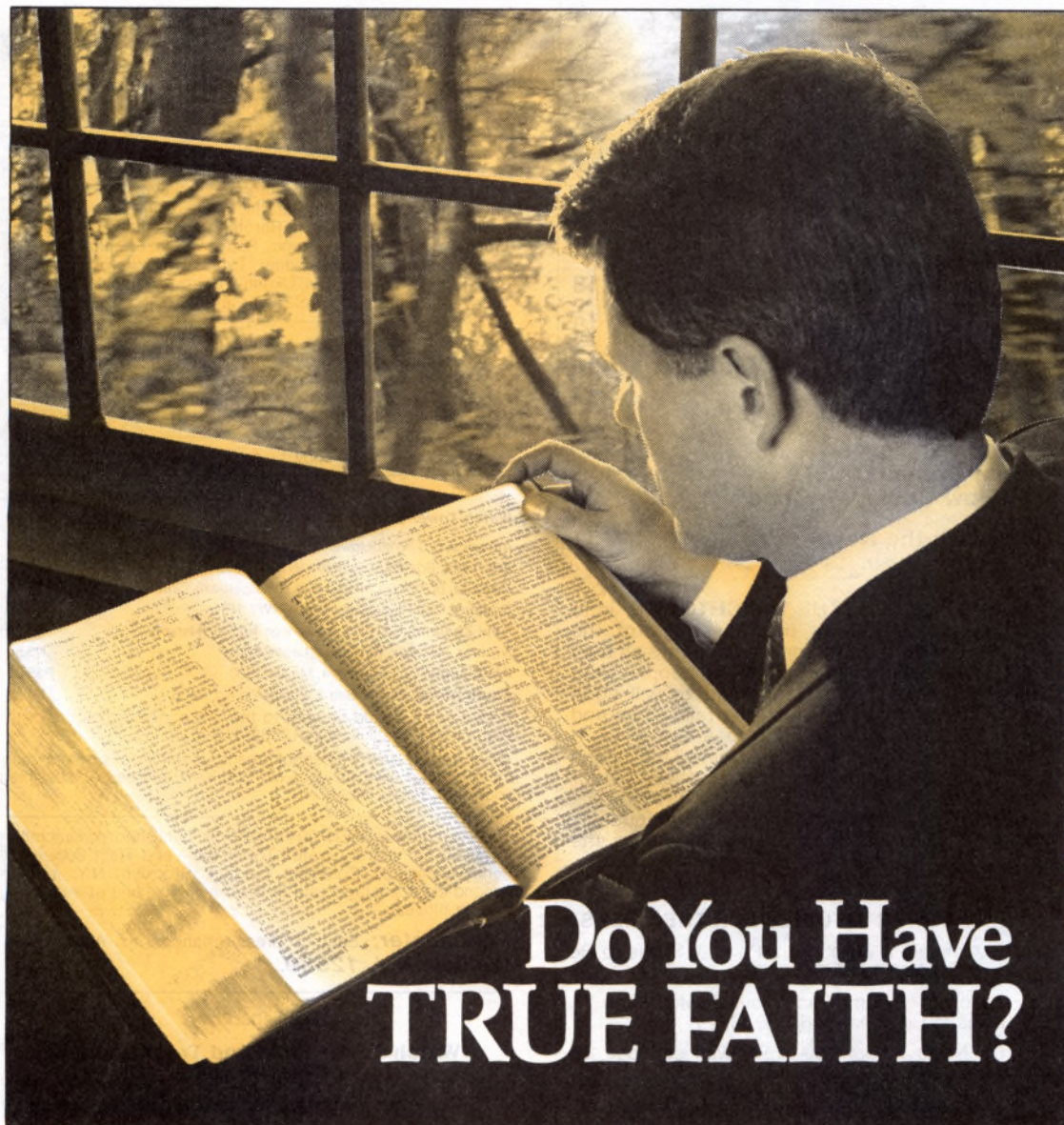


June 1, 1984

The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



Do You Have
TRUE FAITH?

The Watchtower[®]

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

June 1, 1984
Vol. 105, No. 11

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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.

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- July 1: Maintain a Solid Faith. Page 8. Songs to Be Used: 174, 144 (17, 78).
- July 8: Now Is the Time for Zealous Service. Page 13. Songs to Be Used: 126, 162 (3, 89).
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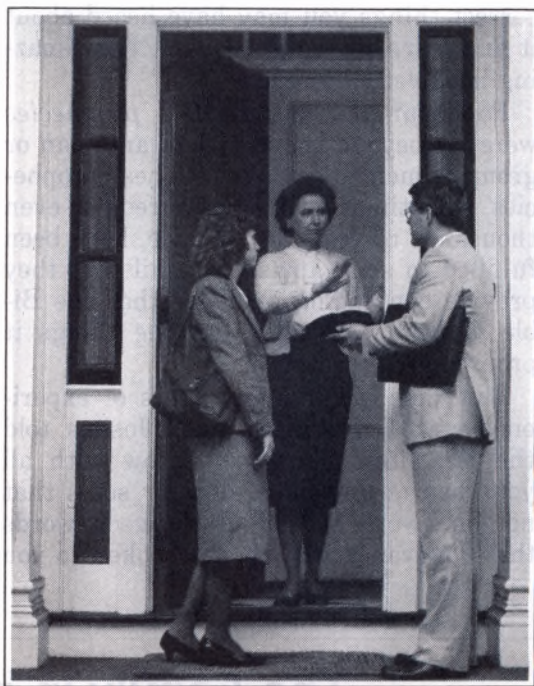
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Who Can Have Faith in This Age of Doubt?

OURS is an age of doubt. Skepticism has become fashionable. We are urged to question everything—customs, ideas, morals, long-standing values, even the existence of God and the truthfulness of his Word, the Bible.

Many people who know very little about the Bible doubt it anyway. Their doubts are based, not on what the Bible really says, but on what some have *said* that it says. But how can anyone form a valid opinion of a book that he has never read and really does not know? Besides that, who can have faith in this age of doubt?

One of Jehovah's Witnesses told a man whose wife was interested in studying the Bible: "I certainly don't expect you to believe something that is this important simply because we have discussed it for the past hour. But once you know what the Bible really says, I believe you will be as convinced of its truthfulness as I am."



The husband agreed to look into the matter, a home Bible study was started and before long he, too, was teaching others. Yes, he acquired true faith in this age of doubt.

A French housewife who had begun studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses said: "I doubt, I doubt, *I have very grave doubts!*" Yet she continued to study. As her knowledge grew, her doubts disappeared and for more than 20 years she has now been teaching others the things that strengthened her faith.

Faith comes through accurate knowledge that gives you the facts on which to base right decisions. For example, when Jesus Christ was on earth, knowledge of his amazing works and teaching enabled many sincere people to "put their faith in his name."—John 2:23; 8:30.

The same is true today. The Bible's truth is clear, provided you put aside in-

correct things you may have heard about it and learn for yourself what this amazing book actually teaches.

For example, the Bible's *prophecies* were far beyond the ability of any man or group of men to devise. Yet these prophecies, sometimes written hundreds or even thousands of years in advance, have been fulfilled in such amazing detail that they provide convincing evidence that the Bible *is* from God and that the things it promises *will* occur.

Long ago, after many years of experience with God's ways, aged Joshua told the Israelites: "You well know with all your hearts and with all your souls that not one word out of all the good words that Jehovah your God has spoken to you

has failed. They have all come true for you. Not one word of them has failed." —Joshua 23:14.

Furthermore, the Bible's value is proved in practice. When the Bible's counsel is applied, it improves people's lives and changes personalities. It helps violent, contentious people to develop mildness and self-control. If any doubt that fact, they should study the Bible. The effect its truth can have on their life may amaze them.—Galatians 5:19-23; Ephesians 4:20-32.

Rather than falling victim to skepticism in this age of doubt, you can acquire true faith. Indeed, the Bible can help you to develop a *solid, life-giving faith*. But how can it do this?

The Family in a Doubting World

The Bible has much to say about families. It says that they should be based on love and that the permanent commitment of two persons to each other and to their children is involved. (Matthew 19:4-6) Even among societies that neither knew the Bible nor followed its principles, 6,000 years of human experience have proved the family's value.

Yet many young people, noting what appears in the press, in books and on television, have grown to doubt the value of marriage today. Some consider marriage to be restrictive and think that being morally faithful to another person limits their "liberty." Doubting the old, they endorse a "new" morality—actually nothing more than the old *immorality* under a new name. They live with

someone without really committing themselves to building a lifetime of love, trust and unity.

Time passes. They grow older. Then, when they really need the loyalty and support that should have been developed, they often find themselves cast aside, alone and heartbroken. Only then do they realize that the other person made no commitment either and had no intention of returning time, love and devotion when these are really needed.

God knows how we are made. He knows what is best for us. His moral principles cannot be ignored or cast aside without serious consequences. This is a fact, no matter what may be said by a doubting world.

Are You Really Seeking True Faith?

ARE you really seeking the truth, searching for it? Probably you would answer: "Of course I am!"

But many people are not really seeking the truth. In fact, they may not even want to believe. Why would anyone not *want* to believe that God exists and that the Bible, with its outstanding promises for the future, is his marvelous Word?

For some, accepting these facts might require changes in life-style. Because they do not want to bring their lives into harmony with God's ways, they must invent doubts and objections, convincing themselves that the Bible is not true.

Even some individuals in the Christian congregation could be like this. The truth sounds good to them, but they may still be holding on to some secret practice that they know God's Word forbids. So they hang back or slowly drift away. The Bible says: "It was through spurning conscience that certain persons made shipwreck of their faith."—1 Timothy 1:19, *The New English Bible*.

When Jesus Christ was on earth, the truth annoyed many people. Wanting to



do things their own way, they refused to accept sound evidence. Quoting earlier prophetic words, Jesus said that their heart was unreceptive. They had shut their eyes and ears "that they might never see with their eyes and hear with their ears and get the sense of it with their hearts and turn back" so as to be healed spiritually.—Matthew 13:14, 15.

People of that type may simply say that things have not been made clear. Some who opposed Jesus asked him: "How long are you to keep our souls in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us outspokenly." But their failure to understand was not Jesus' fault; it was their own. Jesus answered: "I told you, and yet you do not believe. The works that I am doing in the name of my Father, these bear witness about me. But you do not believe, because you are none of my sheep."—John 10:24-26.

If anyone does not want to hear and get the sense of the truth and turn back and get healing for himself, Satan the Devil will take advantage of that fact. Satan blinds "the minds of the unbelievers, that

the illumination of the glorious good news about the Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine through.”—2 Corinthians 4:4; see also Matthew 13:10-15.

Does this mean that there is no hope of hearing and understanding the good news? Of course it does not mean that! What it means is that much depends on *you*, the hearer.

What the Bible says rings true if you are really seeking true faith. The proud and haughty religious leaders, who did not want to listen, opposed Jesus. But what about the crowds? Why, they “were astounded at his way of teaching”! Even the officers sent to arrest him came back with the report: “Never has another man spoken like this.”—Matthew 7:28; John 7:46.

If you are seeking the truth, are searching for God’s way and are willing to apply his Word in your life, you will find true faith. Jesus said: “Happy are those hungering and thirsting for righteousness, since they will be filled.” “I know my sheep and my sheep know me.” “My sheep listen to my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.” “Everyone that is on the side of the truth listens to my voice.”—Matthew 5:6; John 10:14, 27; 18:37.

Faith is a fruit produced by God’s holy spirit. (Galatians 5:22, 23) If you pray for accurate knowledge and faith, really making an effort to gain them and to live by them, God will help you. As Jesus said:

“Keep on asking, and it will be given you; keep on seeking, and you will find; keep on knocking, and it will be opened to you.”—Matthew 7:7.

Even if you have a problem on which you need to work, God will help you. The inspired Scriptures say: “Trust in Jehovah with all your heart and do not lean upon your own understanding. In all your ways take notice of him, and he himself will make your paths straight.”—Proverbs 3:5, 6.

God “sees what the heart is.” (1 Samuel 16:7) He knows if you are searching for truth and righteousness and if you are willing to do things his right way. If you draw close to God, he will draw close to you.—James 4:8.

Are you such a person? Are you really seeking true faith? Have you heard the Father’s teaching and opened your mind to it? Have you learned it and accepted it? And in order to conform to God’s righteous ways, have you straightened out things that may have been problems in your own life?

If so, you can be encouraged by Jesus’ words: “It is written in the Prophets, ‘And they will all be taught by Jehovah.’ Everyone that has heard from the Father and has learned comes to me.”—John 6:45.

The heavenly Father’s teaching is found in a unique book. Let us now consider its value and how it can affect our faith.

Keep in God’s Love

New and weak Christians are vulnerable. In fact, all of us are. Hence, we should guard our own faith and be vigorous in helping others to strengthen themselves spiritually. How can this be done? Pointing to one way, the disciple Jude wrote: “Beloved ones, by building up yourselves on your most holy faith, and praying with holy spirit, keep yourselves in God’s love, while you are waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ with everlasting life in view.”—Jude 20, 21.

A Book of Positive Faith

THE Bible is not a book of doubt but a book of faith. It does not raise questions such as, Does God exist? Or, Is the Bible his Word? To the contrary, it opens with the statement: "In the beginning God created." And the Bible specifically states: "Prophecy was at no time brought by man's will, but men spoke from God as they were borne along by holy spirit."—Genesis 1:1; 2 Peter 1:21.

Of course, many of the Bible's accounts are brief. So the Bible may not always tell us everything we might wish to know. But it does give the information that God knew we would need in order to understand the world's troubled situation, to bring our lives into harmony with his will and to receive his favor and his gift of everlasting life. What could be more valuable?

Early in the Bible's pages we learn that long ago a rebel angel challenged the rightness of God's universal rulership. But it was also revealed that a "seed" eventually would come to end that rebellion and vindicate Jehovah God as Universal Sovereign. (Genesis 3:1-15; Job 1:6-12) The Bible gives the lineage through which that "seed" would come—through such men of faith as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David.—Genesis 26:4, 5; 2 Samuel 7:12, 13; Matthew 1:1-16; Luke 3:23-38.

This amazing book tells about the birth, life, death and resurrection of the principal member of that "seed," Jesus Christ. It tells how Jesus made known his heavenly Father's name, Jehovah, and provided the ransom for obedient mankind.—Galatians 3:16; John 17:6-8, 26; Matthew 20:28.

The Bible also speaks of everlasting life,

tells about the resurrection of the dead and announces the magnificent "new heavens and a new earth" in which "righteousness is to dwell." (2 Peter 3:13; John 3:36; 5:28, 29) Moreover, it indicates that these marvelous blessings are near at hand, that many now living will survive the present world woes to see them!—Matthew 24:3-14, 32-34.

The Finest of Fruits!

Jesus said that "every good tree produces fine fruit." (Matthew 7:15-20) Yes, you can recognize upright people by their fruits. Well, the Bible's teaching enables teachable people to produce the best of fruit. This book provides knowledge, builds faith and imparts wisdom. (John 17:3; Proverbs 1:1-4) It gives us better standards on which to base the decisions that affect our lives.—Romans 12:2; Colossians 3:9, 10.

Furthermore, the Bible touches hearts. It motivates people to bring their lives into harmony with God's ways and to serve him. Its teachings produce contentment, happier lives, better health, higher morals and finer marriage mates, parents and children. All who have learned Scriptural ways and also follow them have become a loving worldwide brotherhood, in harmony with Jesus' statement: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves."—John 13:35.

The Bible's value is evident in the everyday lives of those who really apply its principles. Why should anyone doubt its promises? As we will see in the following article, it is possible to be solid in the faith, not doubting at all.

Maintain a Solid Faith

“How long will you sit on the fence?”—1 KINGS 18:21, *The New English Bible*.

THE tendency to doubt, so common today, could affect even your own attitude toward God and the Bible. Some people hear the truth, like it and study the Bible for a while. They attend a few Christian meetings but do not really grasp the fact that serving God should be their purpose in life.—Matthew 13:3-9.

² There are others who have accepted the truth, have dedicated their lives to Jehovah God through Jesus Christ and have symbolized that dedication by water baptism. But they fail to progress. Occasionally they spend an hour or two in the field ministry. But they are not really living up to their dedication, for being unreservedly dedicated to God means *being wholly and earnestly devoted to him*.—Matthew 16:24; Hebrews 10:36-39.

³ Vacillating individuals may like the truth, but they also like the world. They may still yearn for some of the old ways. Their loyalties waver. Long ago, Elijah asked the Israelites: “How long will you be limping upon two different opinions? If Jehovah is the true God, go following him; but if Baal is, go following him.” One translation renders it this way: “How long will you sit on the fence?”—1 Kings 18:21; *NE*.

⁴ Jehovah’s people find joy and refresh-

ment in zealous service. (Titus 2:13, 14) It helps them to stay alive spiritually. Many, especially those with long experience in God’s service, demonstrate notable zeal. But reports from many places suggest that some younger or newer ones are still being tempted by the world, rather than throwing themselves wholeheartedly into Jehovah’s service. Think of the joys and blessings that they could have if they took firm hold of the truth and vigorously moved ahead in sacred service, perhaps as full-time pioneers, zealously impressing upon others the urgency of our times.

⁵ It might be good to ask yourself: Am I really solid in the faith, or am I facing both ways? Do I let things that are enjoyable but of little value consume my time? Do I spend more time watching television, pursuing sports or doing other pleasurable but time-consuming things than I devote to God’s service? Or is humbly obeying and serving God my life’s *real* purpose? If doing the divine will is your purpose in life, God will uphold you, and you will be able to rejoice in his blessings forever.

⁶ It is important to take positive steps to keep your faith solid with a view to everlasting life in God’s New Order. Elijah urged others to take a bold stand for

1. How do some react to the truth?
2. (a) How do others react? (b) What fine counsel is found at Hebrews 10:36-39?
3. What did Elijah say about a somewhat similar situation?
4. What is the value of zealous service?

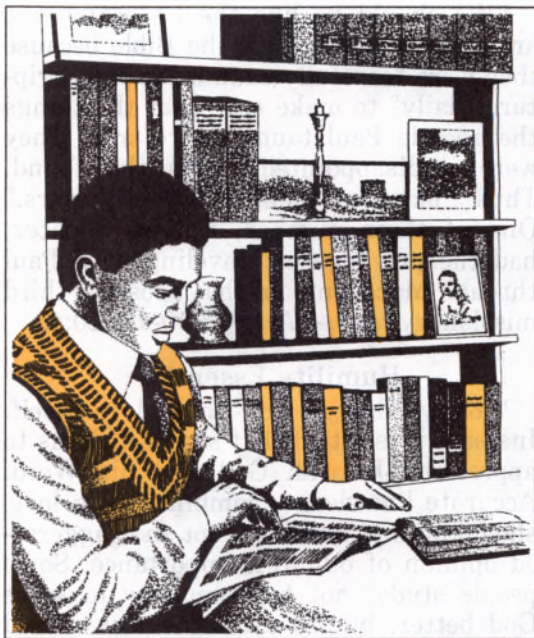
5. What questions might it be good to ask yourself?
6. What counsel in the letter of James can help us to maintain a solid faith?

what was right. James wrote: "Subject yourselves, therefore, to God; but oppose the Devil, and he will flee from you. Draw close to God, and he will draw close to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you indecisive ones." James was writing to those who needed to repent because their indecisive hearts were leading them to engage in activities displeasing to God. His counsel can be helpful if you have been tempted by the world's ways. James wrote: "Give way to misery and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into dejection. Humble yourselves in the eyes of Jehovah, and he will exalt you."—James 4:7-10.

Knowledge Builds Faith

⁷ Faith is an act of trust. It is based on accurate knowledge and experience. The more you know about God and the more experience you have with his Word and his ways, the stronger your faith will be. The Bible says: "Faith is the *assured* expectation of things hoped for." (Hebrews 11:1) How could your faith be assured if you had only a shallow knowledge of what Jehovah has done? God gave you intellect, intelligence and the ability to understand. These are gifts, and he expects you to use them in learning about him. If you write a letter to someone, you expect him to read it, not just put it on a shelf or leave it on a table as an ornament. Have you read and studied God's letters to us—his written Word? By studying and understanding it you will learn things you would not otherwise know. It is important to remember the *value* of the information that the Bible provides. One Christian elder said: "Persons who express doubts usually don't study very much. They don't

7. (a) How does knowledge relate to faith?
(b) Why should you use the Bible in developing faith?



Watch Tower publications are
a great aid in researching
Bible subjects and questions

know a lot about the Bible—they never really make the truth their own."

⁸ When someone raises a question that you cannot answer, should this trouble your faith? Of course not. No one knows everything. So, do research. Examine the text. Read the surrounding verses and verify the matter. The *Comprehensive Concordance of the New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, the book *Aid to Bible Understanding* and the *Watch Tower Publications Indexes* can help you to find related texts, background information and a discussion of the subject. More experienced Christians can also help. A Witness with years of experience said: "I have never failed to get a satisfactory answer."

8. What is recommended if someone raises a question you cannot answer?

⁹ We should be like the Bereans who are spoken highly of in the Bible because they were “carefully examining the Scriptures daily” to make sure that the things the apostle Paul taught were true. They were not disappointed in what they found. Thus, “many of them became believers.” One of their number, named Sopater, had the privilege of traveling with Paul through Macedonia on that apostle’s third missionary tour.—Acts 17:10-12; 20:4.

Humility Essential

¹⁰ Knowledge is not an end in itself. Instead, it is a tool that should help us to appreciate Jehovah God and his Word. Accurate knowledge, combined with love, should prompt humility, not an exaggerated opinion of our own importance. Some people study, not to learn how to serve God better, but to exalt themselves and their own opinions. They may get puffed up and criticize others—older brothers and even the Christian congregation and the body of Bible truth that it teaches.—Proverbs 16:5; 1 Corinthians 8:1.

¹¹ However, we have nothing that we did not get from some other source. We inherited our intelligence from our parents, but originally it was given to humankind by our Creator, Jehovah God. Our knowledge came through those who helped us, from things we read and from God who is the source of truth. In fact, everything that we have originally came from God. The apostle wrote: “For who makes you to differ from another? Indeed, what do you have that you did not receive? If, now, you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as

9. What can we learn from the example of the Bereans?

10. (a) How can knowledge be misused? (b) What effect, do you think, should Proverbs 16:5 have on our attitude?

11. From where did our knowledge and intelligence come, and what should this teach us about humility?

though you did not receive it?”—1 Corinthians 4:7.

¹² Jehovah does not judge us by the intelligence we inherited but by our humility and by our willingness to learn his way and to follow it. Humility and faith go together. The Bible says that it is “the meek ones” whom God will teach his way. It also states: “God opposes the haughty ones, but he gives undeserved kindness to the humble ones.”—Psalm 25:9; James 4:6.

¹³ Humility involves a willingness to be corrected. The apostles Peter and Thomas were outstanding examples of this. Peter was foremost in speaking, but this was matched by his being most frequently corrected, reproved or even rebuked. Yet Peter was a zealous, active doer, and his faith, initiative and courage are outstanding examples for all of us. Thomas did not believe that Jesus had been resurrected, but when brought face-to-face with the evidence, he accepted it immediately. Do we show similar humility when our mistakes or misunderstandings are corrected by the Scriptures?—John 20:24-29.

Test Your Faith

¹⁴ One Christian elder, who has been in the truth for a long time, often asks himself why his faith is still strong while some people whom he used to know have drifted away. He says that he has always kept Paul’s counsel in mind: “Keep testing whether you are in the faith, keep proving what you yourselves are.” (2 Corinthians 13:5) Often as this elder drives to work he tests himself, reviewing Bible truths in his mind. He imagines a discussion of these truths, mentally making himself ex-

12. What powerful point is made at Psalm 25:9 and James 4:6?

13. What are some examples of teachableness?

14. What does one Christian elder do that helps him to maintain a solid faith?

plain them and defend them before all kinds of people. This brother points out that public talks at the Kingdom Hall often reestablish in our minds the fact that the Bible truly is the Word of God. But he asks: "How would we know these things if we hadn't been at the meetings where they were discussed?" Regularly he asks himself about God's goodness and His organization. This Christian overseer includes appreciation of these in his prayers and says: "I thank Jehovah for his having allowed me to stay with his people." Could you benefit from applying similar tests to see if you really are "in the faith"?

Prayer Is Vital

¹⁵ This example brings up two points vital in maintaining a solid faith: *prayer* and *Christian meetings*. Often, persons whose faith is weak pray only rarely. One Christian father keeps in mind the fact that Daniel prayed several times a day, even after an antiprayer law had been passed. (Daniel 6:6-10) Several times a day this father looks to Jehovah for wisdom and guidance.

¹⁶ Do you hesitate to pray? The psalm says: "Jehovah is near to all those calling upon him, to all those who call upon him in trueness." Jesus asked: "If you, although being wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more so will your Father who is in the heavens give good things to those asking him?" (Psalm 145:18; Matthew 7:11) Jehovah will, indeed, give "good things" to those humbly asking in faith.

The Role of Meetings

¹⁷ In addition to prayer, meeting regularly with fellow believers also is neces-

15, 16. Why is prayer so vital to our maintaining a solid faith?

17. What Biblical examples show the importance of meeting with fellow believers?

sary for faith. Three times each year every Israelite male was to "appear before the face of the true Lord, Jehovah" in Jerusalem. Realizing the high spiritual value of such occasions, many men took their entire family. (Exodus 23:14-17; Luke 2:41-45) Furthermore, Paul looked forward to faith-building encouragement from the congregation in Rome. He longed to be with fellow believers there so 'that there might be an interchange of encouragement' and spiritual upbuilding through one another's faith.—Romans 1:11, 12.

¹⁸ People whose faith is strong take advantage of all Christian meetings. They do not leave after the first hour, or come only for the second. They *value* these meetings, realizing that these provide an opportunity to learn, to be encouraged, to be blessed, and that at such meetings we can receive help from loving brothers and can incite one another "to love and fine works." (Hebrews 10:24, 25) How could we receive such encouragement without associating with those who can give it?

Witnessing and Our Faith

¹⁹ Christian witnessing is another aid in building faith. James wrote: "Show me your faith apart from the works, and I shall show you my faith by my works. Indeed, as the body without spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead." (James 2:18, 26) A main work of Christians is teaching others, and any one of Jehovah's Witnesses will tell you: 'Witnessing definitely builds faith!' It benefits not only the one who is taught but also the teacher. It is an upbuilding, faith-strengthening activity. Witnessing makes

18. How do those strong in the faith view Christian meetings?

19. How does Christian witnessing strengthen faith?

you defend your faith. It sharpens your thinking. Yes, and Kingdom witnessing brings blessings from God, including the guidance of his spirit.—Mark 13:11; Romans 10:14, 15.

Confidence in the “Slave”

²⁰ It is also important to remember where we first learned the truth. Who helped us to build our faith in the Bible and its promises? How did we come to understand what the Bible means for us today? Jesus said that upon his return he would find a “faithful and discreet slave” providing spiritual food and that the “slave” found so doing would be appointed over all the master’s belongings.—Matthew 24:45-47.

²¹ One Christian husband said: “Jehovah’s visible organization is a tremendously dependable source. Never once has it misled me in any way. Everything it has said has been based on God’s Word and has been the best for me, for my family and for everyone I know. This builds tremendous faith as far as I am concerned.”

²² Have you studied Jehovah’s Word, accepted it and believed it? Have you dedicated your life to God and symbolized that dedication by water baptism? Are you now living in harmony with that dedication? Do you ask God for guidance, knowledge and faith? Do you continue your personal study, regularly and diligently? Are you always at Christian meetings? Are you active and zealous in God’s sacred service? And are you improving the quality of your disciple-making activity, or have you let it become a mere routine?—Matthew 28:19, 20.

20, 21. (a) What is it important to remember about the “faithful and discreet slave”? (b) How did one Christian express this?

22. What questions can help you to analyze how you are caring for your own faith?

²³ Of course, all of us have problems, and we have our own shortcomings. But when facing trials and obstacles we must not vacillate, waver or straddle the fence. Rather, we want to be single-minded and sure of the truth. James wrote: “Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you meet with various trials, knowing as you do that this tested quality of your faith works out endurance.” Paul counseled: “Stay awake, stand firm in the faith, carry on as men, grow mighty.” (James 1:2, 3; 1 Corinthians 16:13) To remain in the true faith as witnesses of Jehovah, we must develop the quality of faith, a fruit of God’s holy spirit.—Galatians 5:22, 23.

²⁴ Why should you do this? Because faith is a shield against Satan, who “walks about like a roaring lion seeking to devour someone.” “Above all things, take up the large shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the wicked one’s burning missiles.” (1 Peter 5:8-10; Ephesians 6:16) If you maintain a solid faith, you will want to do things God’s way. Your heart will be right. Your works will be in harmony with his instructions, and you will move ahead, ever progressing on the narrow road that leads to life.—Matthew 7:14.

23. How should you face problems, trials and obstacles?

24. Why is it so important to have a solid faith?

By Way of Review:

- ☐ Why do some people doubt, and what could they do about it?
- ☐ What did you learn about knowledge and humility?
- ☐ How can you strengthen your faith?
- ☐ Why is it so important to maintain a solid faith?

Now Is the Time for Zealous Service

"He that has endured to the end is the one that will be saved."

—MARK 13:13.

SOME people still doubt that we are living at the end of this present system, although it is hard to imagine why they would be doubtful about that fact. Morals deteriorate. Economic conditions worsen. Violence abounds. The population explosion continues, pollution grows, atomic waste increases, atomic weapons multiply and nonbelievers often wonder if life will survive on earth.

² However, the end of this old system has not yet come. Some dedicated Christians may have wearied of doing Kingdom service. If anyone, in effect, dedicated his life, not to God, but to a date, he may have been sifted out. But those who dedicated their life to Jehovah God, always to do *his* will and to follow *his* ways, are stronger than ever and their numbers continue to grow.

³ People who love righteousness are anxious to see this old system end, for it will be replaced by an earthly Paradise, by the righteous New Order that the Bible promises. (Isaiah 9:6, 7; Matthew 6:9, 10; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1-4) Of course, Jehovah's servants want this change to come as soon as God wills it. But, having made

a genuine dedication to God, they patiently await his time as they push ahead with zeal in the thrilling Kingdom-preaching work he has given them to do.—Matthew 24:14.

Inspired Examples

⁴ There is no reason for anyone to draw back, slack off, or relax the hand. Jehovah God and Christ Jesus are workers. (John 5:17) Moreover, the Bible is filled with accounts of hardworking, happy men and women of faith, who serve as inspiring and encouraging examples for us. Yet many of those faithful men and women knew that the promises they awaited would not be fulfilled in their lifetime. Generations, in some cases even thousands of years, would have to pass before the things they awaited would occur. Yet they never slackened their activity. Many served joyfully to a ripe old age, firm in faith, zealous in obedience to God, patiently awaiting the outworking of his purposes. Furthermore, over the centuries, God gave his revelation progressively. Hence, those ancient men of faith had far less knowledge of how God would accomplish the things he had promised than you can have today.

⁵ For example, think of how little information Abel had. He knew only that God

1, 2. (a) What conditions make it obvious that we are living at the end of this system of things? (b) What two reactions could you have?

3. (a) Why are lovers of righteousness anxious to see this old system end? (b) Until it does, what should we be doing?

4. What fine example was set by men and women of faith in ancient times?

5. What example did Abel set?

had promised a "seed" and that at some future time that "seed" would bruise the serpent's head. (Genesis 3:15) Yet Jesus called Abel "righteous," and he is mentioned first in Paul's list of outstanding men of faith. (Matthew 23:35; Hebrews 11:4) Would you have had such faith with the limited information that was available in Abel's time?

⁶ Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob all lived before Jehovah demonstrated his marvelous power at the time of Israel's exodus from Egypt. They knew nothing of the awesome events that would surround the giving of the Law at Sinai. When they lived, not even the first book of the Bible had been written.

⁷ Abraham had no hope that a Paradise would be restored on earth during his lifetime. Instead, he was told that his offspring would be afflicted for 400 years. Only at some distant future time would God's promise be fulfilled that 'by means of Abraham's seed all nations of the earth would certainly bless themselves.' (Genesis 15:13; 22:18; Galatians 3:8) Abraham was "awaiting the city having real foundations, the builder and maker of which city is God." (Hebrews 11:10) The fact that Abraham would see it not in his day but only in the resurrection did not diminish his faith, obedience and zeal in serving God. We might ask ourselves: Do I have the kind of faith, obedience and zeal that Abraham had?

⁸ Moses thought that he could not do the work God assigned him. He said that he was not a fluent speaker and felt that neither his own people nor Pharaoh would listen to him. (Exodus 4:1, 10; 6:12) Yet Moses obeyed. He did what Jehovah told

6, 7. Although certain God-given promises were not fulfilled in Abraham's day, how did he set us a fine example?

8. From Moses, what do we learn about patience and endurance?

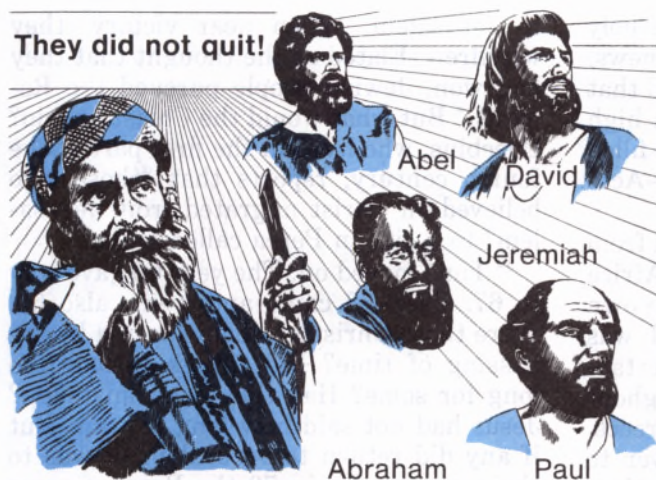
him, and he did this for a very long time. In the wilderness Moses knew that it would be 40 more years before his people would enter the Promised Land, and because of his own later sin he was told that he would not enter the land even then. Yet year after year he continued in Jehovah's way. (Numbers 14:33, 34; 20:9-12; Deuteronomy 3:23-28; 34:1-6) Would your love for God have prompted such patience and diligence in his service? Would you faithfully have led others toward a goal that you knew you personally would not reach?

⁹ When Jehovah asked who would go and speak for him, Isaiah said: "Here I am! Send me." (Isaiah 6:8-11) For more than 40 years he served as Jehovah's prophet. Among other things, Isaiah transmitted God's promise of "new heavens and a new earth," although there was no hope of a righteous new system in his lifetime. (Isaiah 65:17-25) Would you have been that faithful simply because maintaining faithfulness was *right* and in harmony with your deep love for God?

¹⁰ Jeremiah was used to proclaim unpopular warnings to an unbelieving people. No righteous earthly Paradise awaited the end of his preaching. Instead, his beloved Jerusalem was to become "a devastated place, an object of astonishment," destroyed for her inhabitants' lack of faith. Jeremiah knew that there would be a restoration, but it would not occur until after the passing of 70 years—almost another normal lifetime! (Jeremiah 25:8-11; 29:10) The fact that he would not live to see the foretold restoration did not keep Jeremiah from preaching. Even when he tried to stop, Jehovah's word was "like a burning fire" in his bones. He just *had* to speak, and Jehovah was with him "like a terrible mighty one."—Jeremiah 20:7-11.

9, 10. How did Isaiah and Jeremiah demonstrate endurance, without the hope of obtaining a desired reward during their lifetime?

They did not quit!



Aids to Our Endurance

¹¹ The apostle Paul indicated the effect that these examples should have on us. He wrote: "So, then, because we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also put off every weight and the sin [lack of faith] that easily entangles us, and let us run with *endurance* the race that is set before us."—Hebrews 12:1.

¹² Paul also wrote: "All the things that were written aforetime were written for our instruction, that through our endurance and through the comfort from the Scriptures we might have hope. Now may the God who supplies endurance and comfort grant you to have among yourselves the same mental attitude that Christ Jesus had, that with one accord you may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 15:4-6) So these ancient examples of faith should inspire us to *endure*, to stick to our preaching and teaching assignment, and thus zealously glorify Jehovah, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

11, 12. What does the Bible indicate that ancient examples of faith should prompt us to do?

¹³ Just think of the faith-strengthening things we know that the ancient faithful prophets could not have known. When they lived, no one yet knew who the Messiah would be. But not only do we know who he is; we also know about the birth, teaching, death and resurrection of that One, Jesus Christ. Furthermore, we know about the ransom, the Kingdom and the "seed" that those men had faithfully awaited. Moreover, we have all the Christian Greek Scriptures

—from Matthew through Revelation. And we have the opportunity to understand that marvelous book of Revelation, with its faith-strengthening prophecies that are being fulfilled in our time and will yet undergo fulfillment. Indeed, we live in an exciting and crucial time—a time those ancient men eagerly awaited.

Examples of Zealous Service

¹⁴ Jesus' early followers were impatient about seeing the promised Kingdom. They asked Jesus: "Lord, are you restoring the kingdom to Israel at this time?" Those disciples did not then realize that the Kingdom would be a heavenly one. They would come to understand that later under the influence of God's spirit. But Jesus let them know that they had a big work to do. He said that they were to "be witnesses of [him] both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the most distant part of the earth." (Acts 1:6-8) That task did not seem too great to undertake. On the day of Pentecost in 33 C.E., about 120

13. What do we know that ancient men of faith never had the opportunity to learn?

14, 15. Did the fact that the Kingdom was still future discourage first-century Christians? Explain.

disciples, under the guidance of the holy spirit, set about preaching the good news. Some 3,000 people embraced the word that day! And in a short time the Jewish high priest could say: "Look, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching."—Acts 2:41; 5:28.

¹⁵ People then present in Jerusalem from various parts of Europe, Asia and Africa likely took the good news back to their own countries. (Acts 2:5-11) Soon Paul was zealously preaching and helping to establish Christian congregations throughout the Roman province of Asia and in Greece. He went on to Rome and possibly even to Spain. Peter went in the other direction, as far as Babylon. After fewer than 30 years of activity by these first Christians and the multitudes they taught, Paul could say that the good news had been "preached in all creation that is under heaven." (Colossians 1:23) What a work they did, zealously obeying Jesus' command to teach others!—Matthew 28:19, 20; Titus 2:13, 14.

A System Ends

¹⁶ There was, however, a time period of particular importance to first-century Christians. Jesus had said: "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by encamped armies, then know that the desolating of her has drawn near. Then let those in Judea begin fleeing to the mountains, and let those in the midst of her withdraw, and let those in the country places not enter into her; because these are days for meting out justice, that all the things written may be fulfilled."—Luke 21:20-22.

¹⁷ More than 30 years had gone by. Then, in the year 66 C.E., Roman forces laid siege

16. For what event were early Christians watching?

17, 18. (a) When and how did Christians act on Jesus' words recorded at Luke 21:20-22?

(b) What further test might they have faced?

to Jerusalem. When near victory, they withdrew. Elated at the thought that they had won, Jewish people pursued the Romans.* But what would the Christians do? Eusebius, who lived in the first part of the fourth century, reports that "those who believed on Christ migrated from Jerusalem" to a city in Perea called Pella.[#]

¹⁸ Time moved on. The year 66 gave way to 67. Then 68 came and went, also 69. Were those Christians being tested by the passing of time? Did things become too long for some? Had they been mistaken? Jesus had not said how long to wait. But if any did return to Jerusalem, it was to their sorrow, for in 70 the Romans came back, captured the city and killed many of its residents. The historian Josephus says that 1.1 million people died, for Jerusalem was "crowded with inhabitants," throngs having come "from all the country" into Jerusalem for the Passover.[^]

¹⁹ Does that make you think of the situation today? The question is not: When will this old system end? That will occur in God's due time. What we should be thinking about is what *we* are doing. We should ask ourselves: Have I diligently studied God's Word and unreservedly dedicated my life to him? Am I really living up to that dedication? It is not where we are in the stream of time that should move us to engage in sacred service. Like Abel, Abraham, Moses, Isaiah and others, love for Jehovah God should prompt us to do that. We must serve Jehovah willingly, no matter when the end comes. But we have a *special* motivation now. We have reached the final part of "the last days" of this

* Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, II, 19:5-7.

[#] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, III, 5:3.

[^] Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, VI, 9:3, 4.

19. (a) Today, what are the really significant questions for dedicated Christians to answer?

(b) What should motivate us to engage in sacred service?

present system. (2 Timothy 3:1) That fact should move us to *exceptional* service.

²⁰ Christians fled Jerusalem because they had seen the many facets of Jesus' "sign" come true and after they had seen the fulfillment of his statement about armies surrounding the city. Since the eventful year of 1914 we have observed the fulfillment of many prophecies regarding the time of the end. (Matthew, chapters 24, 25; Revelation 6:1-8; 2 Timothy 3:1-5) These prophesied events began to take place some 70 years ago. Yet Jesus said that they would all happen during the lifetime of one generation. (Matthew 24:32-34) Obviously, we are a *long way into that generation!*

Zealous in the Faith

²¹ Lifesaving work often has to be done in haste. Ours is a time for exceptional activity, intensified service and enlarged faith and zeal. We should remember that one day will be our *last* day in this old system. Either we will have lived through to this system's end or our own life will have ended first. Life now is short, fleeting. No one knows that he will be alive tomorrow. We have only a limited time in which to prove our faithfulness and integrity to God. (Psalm 39:5; Ecclesiastes 12:1; Luke 12:18-21) So it would be fitting to ask ourselves: Am I satisfied with what I did *today*?

²² It is important not to forget the reward. Keep your eyes on the prize. Jesus said: "He that has endured to the end is the one that will be saved." Paul wrote that "each person will receive his own reward according to his own labor." He also said:

20. How do the events you have seen compare with those that first-century Christians saw?

21. Why is zealous service to God an urgent matter?

22. What do the Scriptures say about the reward?

"You have need of endurance, in order that, after you have done the will of God, you may receive the fulfillment of the promise."—Mark 13:13; 1 Corinthians 3:8; Hebrews 10:36.

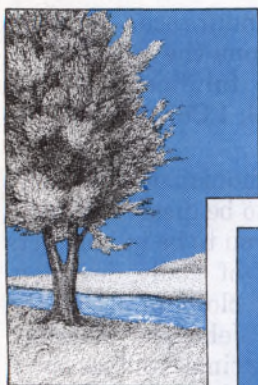
²³ The Scriptures admonish us: "Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of persons ought you to be in holy acts of conduct and deeds of godly devotion, awaiting and keeping close in mind the presence of the day of Jehovah." Further, we are told: "As for the times and seasons, brothers, you need nothing to be written to you. For you yourselves know quite well that Jehovah's day is coming exactly as a thief in the night. . . . So, then, let us not sleep on as the rest do, but let us stay awake and keep our senses."—2 Peter 3:11, 12; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6.

²⁴ May we, therefore, maintain a solid faith and remain zealous in Kingdom service, not doubting at all. If we do so, we can say with the apostle: "We are not the sort that shrink back to destruction, but *the sort that have faith to the preserving alive of the soul.*"—Hebrews 10:39.

23, 24. In view of the counsel in Bible texts here quoted, what are you determined to do as regards your faith and Kingdom service?

Things to Think About

- ☐ How do the examples of Abel, Abraham, Moses and Jeremiah greatly encourage us today?
- ☐ The fact that the Kingdom had not yet come had what effect on first-century Christians?
- ☐ What test might the early Christians have encountered *after* fleeing from Jerusalem?
- ☐ What should be our main concern now?



The Bible's Vivid Figures of Speech

CAN you imagine life without words? Not only do words convey facts but they arrest our attention, stir our emotions and kindle our imagination. Words have changed the course of history.

This is nowhere so true as in the case of the Bible—the most effective example of the written word in history. Why is it so effective? Because it is the written Word of God, and also because it presents God's thoughts in a lively way. And this is partly due to the fact that it uses vivid figures of speech.

“Like a Tree”

The simplest figure of speech is the *simile*. But though simple, it is very effective. What is a simile? When we say a man is as “strong as an ox” or he is “stubborn like a mule,” we are using similes. By means of the words “as” or “like,” we are comparing two things that are really quite different, but which share an outstanding quality, such as strength or stubbornness.

The Bible, for example, tells us that a man who loves the law of God is like a tree. How? “He will certainly become like a tree planted by streams of water, that gives its own fruit in its season and the foliage of

which does not wither, and everything he does will succeed.” (Psalm 1:3) True, a man and a tree are very different. But the luxuriance of a tree planted beside a plentiful water source strongly reminded the psalmist of the spiritual prosperity of the man whose “delight is in the law of Jehovah.”—Psalm 1:2.

“The Salt of the Earth”

Metaphors are not unlike similes. They, too, highlight a similarity between two very different things. The simile uses words such as “like” or “as,” whereas the metaphor speaks as though the one thing *is* the other.

Jesus used a metaphor when he told his disciples: “You are the salt of the earth.” (Matthew 5:13) No, the disciples were not literally salt. But salt is a preservative, and the disciples had a message that would preserve the lives of many people. By saying, “You are the salt” (a metaphor) Jesus was being much more forceful than if he had said, “You are like salt” (a simile).

Metaphors are very, very common in the Bible. We see some more examples in these other words of Jesus: “I am the door”; “You are the light of the world. . . . Let

your light shine.”—John 10:7-9, 11; Matthew 5:14-16.

“Not a Hair of Your Heads”

Another figure of speech is the *hyperbole*. This is an exaggeration that is so obvious that it makes an unforgettable image. When a mother tells her child, “I’ve told you a *million* times not to do that!” she is using hyperbole.

Jesus used a startling hyperbole when he warned: “Why, then, do you look at the straw in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the rafter in your own eye?” (Matthew 7:3) Do you not instinctively blink when you read that? What a forceful way to tell us not to criticize the small faults of others when we have so many big faults of our own! And what about the Pharisees that “strain out the gnat but gulp down the camel?”—Matthew 23:24.

Remember, too, the unforgettable way Jesus described how Jehovah would watch over his servants: “Not a hair of your heads will by any means perish.” (Luke 21:18) No, a Christian’s hair is not somehow sacrosanct. Rather, by this hyperbolic statement, Jesus left no doubt that his followers would be protected in spite of their being “objects of hatred by all people.”—Luke 21:17.

“Death Ruled as King”

Personification is another figure of speech. We use this when we speak of something inanimate as if it were alive. For example, the Bible tells us, “Death ruled as king from Adam down to Moses”; “grief and sighing must flee away”; “true wisdom itself keeps crying aloud in the very street.” (Romans 5:14; Isaiah 35:10; Proverbs 1:20) Death, grief, sighing and wisdom cannot *really* rule, flee or cry out. But speaking as if they did, the Bible paints vivid mental pictures, easily visualized and remembered.

Misunderstood Figures of Speech

These and many other figures of speech make the Bible live. They make its ideas seem to leap out of its pages. But there can be a problem. Failure to recognize when a figure of speech is being used can lead to misunderstandings.

For example, do you perceive a figure of speech in Jesus’ words, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away”? (Matthew 24:35) Many do not. They feel that Jesus was here indicating that one day the earth would be destroyed. But would his listeners have got that impression?

Hardly. They already knew from their reading of the Hebrew Scriptures that the earth would last forever. (Psalm 104:5; Ecclesiastes 1:4; Isaiah 45:18) Thus they would realize that Jesus was vividly emphasizing the permanence of his words. If Jesus’ words are even more permanent than heaven and earth—and heaven and earth are eternal—they are permanent indeed! Even if the impossible happened, and heaven and earth *did* pass away, Jesus’ words would still be there. A striking hyperbole!—Compare Matthew 5:18.

Again, can you see a figure of speech in these words: “The helper, the holy spirit, which the Father will send in my name, that one will teach you all things and bring back to your minds all the things I told you”? (John 14:26) Some take this to mean that the holy spirit is an actual person. But it is so often mentioned together with other impersonal forces or things that that cannot be true. (Matthew 3:11; Ephesians 5:18; Acts 6:3, 5; 13:52; 2 Corinthians 6:4-8) Jesus was clearly using the figure of speech we call personification.

Yes, the Bible’s figures of speech are powerful devices for teaching and motivating. They make God’s Word live. And they give a good example of how effective teaching can be accomplished.

Never Forget You Are a Witness!

“‘You are my witnesses,’ is the utterance of Jehovah, ‘and I am God.’”

—ISAIAH 43:12.

THERE is no greater privilege on earth than that of being a witness for the true God, Jehovah. A witness is “one who testifies in a cause or before a judicial tribunal.” (*Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary*) It was Jesus Christ who testified for the greatest cause in all the universe—that of Jehovah God. “As a witness,” says the Bible, Jesus “made the fine public declaration before Pontius Pilate.” (1 Timothy 6:13) And when on trial, what did he tell this Roman governor?

² In answer to a question then put to him, Jesus declared: “You yourself are saying that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth.” (John 18:37) Yes, Jesus made it clear that he had come into the world to bear witness to God’s truth. In part, that meant bearing witness to his position as Messianic King. Jesus also bore witness to God’s name, Jehovah. Thus, in prayer to his heavenly Father, Jesus could say: “I have made your name manifest to the men you gave me out of the world.” (John 17:6) To the day of his death as a human, Jesus was aware of his obligation to be a witness for Jehovah. Indeed, Jesus never forgot that he was a witness.

1. (a) What is the greatest privilege that any person on earth can have? (b) How is the word “witness” defined?
2. To what did Jesus Christ bear witness?

Example of

“the Faithful and True Witness”

³ Jesus faithfully and zealously carried out his assignment as a witness for Jehovah. And in this regard he sets dedicated Christians a superb example. Noteworthy, too, is Jesus’ counsel to the congregation in Laodicea. Evidently because of being distracted by materialistic desires, this congregation had become “lukewarm” in witnessing for Jehovah and the Messianic Kingdom. So Jesus urged them to “be zealous and repent.” He prefaced his counsel to this congregation with the words: “These are the things that the Amen says, the faithful and true witness.”—Revelation 3:14-19.

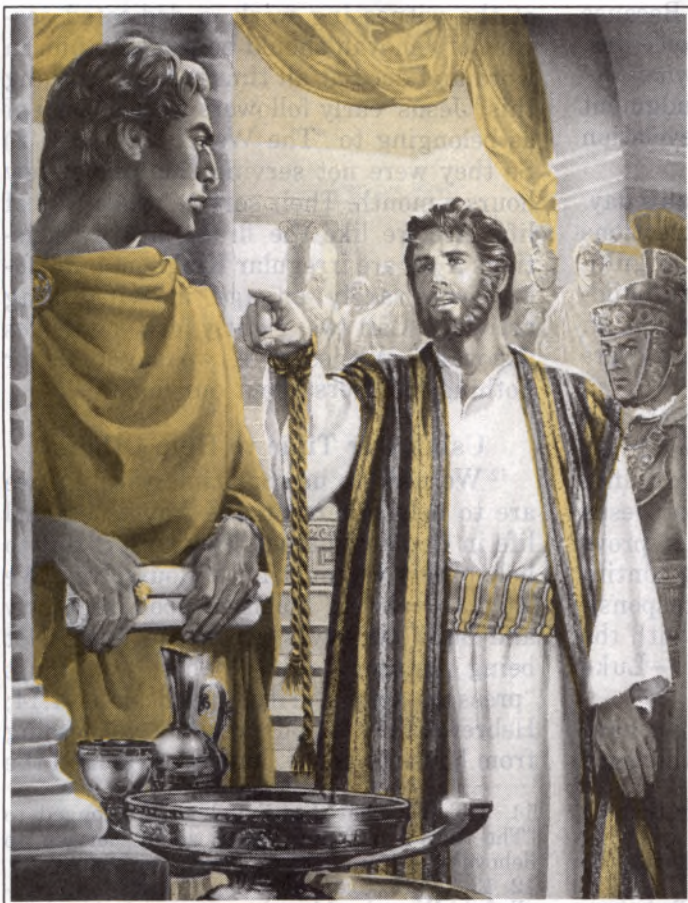
⁴ First, Jesus calls himself the “Amen.” Why? Because Jehovah sent him as the “Amen” (meaning, “so be it”) to all the divine promises. Jesus is the one who effectuates the promises of God. (2 Corinthians 1:20) Next, Jesus identifies himself as “the faithful and true witness.” Why? So that the congregation would look to him as their Exemplar and thus receive an incentive to repent of their shortcomings and “be zealous” again in witnessing for

3. (a) Who is “the faithful and true witness”?
- (b) What had happened to the congregation at Laodicea, and what counsel did Jesus give to it?
4. (a) Why did Jesus call himself the “Amen”?
- (b) Jesus wanted the Laodicean Christians never to forget what?

Jehovah. The Son of God wanted those Christians in Laodicea never to forget that they should be witnesses of God and of the Messianic Kingdom.

⁵ Jesus wants all his disciples to be faithful, zealous witnesses right down to the very end of this wicked system of things. "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations," said Jesus, "and then the end will come." (Mat-

5. How was Jesus an example for Jehovah's Witnesses today?



Jesus never forgot he was a witness for Jehovah

thew 24:14; Acts 1:6-8) In both what he did and what he said, "the faithful and true witness" was an encouraging example for true Christian witnesses of Jehovah today. They recognize their grand privilege as upholders of the divine name and loyal servants of Jehovah who take to heart his words: "You are my witnesses . . . and I am God."—Isaiah 43:10-12.

Why the Need Never to Forget

⁶ If you are a dedicated, baptized witness of Jehovah, be ever alert to your great privilege of serving the highest Personage in the universe. Remember that "the Faithful Witness" was "the light of the world." (Revelation 1:5; John 8:12) Hence, all of Jehovah's Witnesses must beam out the light concerning God's purposes. Just as it would be inappropriate to put a lamp under a basket rather than on a lampstand, so it is unreasonable for a true Christian to hide his light. He must shine so that all who come in contact with him get the benefit of the spiritual light that he himself enjoys. Accordingly, Jesus urged his disciples: "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your fine works and give glory to your Father who is in the heavens." (Matthew 5:14-16) As an organization, Jehovah's Witnesses today are prominent around the globe—they are just like a mountaintop city that beams

6. (a) Regarding spiritual light, what privilege do witnesses of Jehovah have? (b) What questions might we ask ourselves?

out light far and wide. But are you personally beaming out your light at all times? Are you always aware of your privilege as a witness of Jehovah?

⁷ Why must we never forget that we are witnesses of Jehovah? One main reason is that we live in a world in which the pressures of daily living, the anxieties of life and the abundance of diversions could easily distract us from speaking about the true God and his purposes. For our benefit and warning, Jesus urged: "Keep on the watch, . . . prove yourselves ready, because at an hour that you do not think to be it, the Son of man is coming." (Matthew 24: 42-44) Why this sound warning? Because distraction can lead to destruction—yes, destruction for those distracted when Jesus comes for the execution of judgment upon this system of things.—Revelation 19:11-21.

⁸ Think of what happened in Noah's day. Why, there were so many distractions then that the people attached no significance to Noah's preaching and ark building! They "took no note," were caught off guard because of distractions and were destroyed.—Matthew 24:36-39.

⁹ Are we, then, going to be distracted by today's world and its many diversions? Since being totally distracted from fulfilling our obligation as followers of Jesus can result in destruction, let us prove ourselves ever alert. By our being continually ready, never asleep to our responsibilities, we will not be destroyed with the distracted ones of this world.—Luke 17:26-30; 21:34-36.

¹⁰ So we must never forget that we have the vital assignment to preach the good

7. What is a main reason not to forget that we are witnesses of Jehovah?

8, 9. How can we benefit from considering the distracted people of Noah's day?

10. What vital assignment do all true Christians have?

news of God's Kingdom. (Mark 13:10) No matter who we are or what duties we perform in Jehovah's organization, we have the responsibility to declare our hope to others. (Romans 10:10; 1 Corinthians 9:16) In many lands we can freely go from house to house with the Kingdom message. But in countries where there is this freedom to preach, people may be indifferent to religion, and you may have few conversations at the doors. If so, you need to be especially alert to avail yourself of other opportunities to let your light shine.

¹¹ Even though you may have specific times set aside to share in certain features of the witnessing work, a dedicated servant of Jehovah should be praising him in word and deed at all times. Are you doing this? Jesus' early followers were spoken of as belonging to "The Way." (Acts 9:1, 2) So they were not serving God only a few hours a month. Their service was a way of life! Are we like the first-century Christians if we are irregular Kingdom publishers who rarely engage in witnessing activity? Can we rightly call ourselves Jehovah's Witnesses if we say little or nothing to others about our hope?

Using Our Time to Help Others

¹² We need to use our time wisely if we are to help others on the way to eternal life in God's righteous New Order. But to help others we must fortify ourselves. We have to take in spiritual food regularly and build ourselves up in the faith. Not being content to be "babes," we must "press on to maturity." (Ephesians 4:14; Hebrews 6:1) In our regular witnessing from house to house, have we taken on the

11. The fact that Jesus' followers belonged to "The Way" indicates what about service to Jehovah?

12, 13. (a) How can we fortify ourselves spiritually? (b) Why should we keep a record of interest found in the field ministry?

added responsibility of keeping track of sheeplike persons? When people listen to our Bible message or show interest in God's Word and his Kingdom, what do we do? Are we concerned enough to keep a record of the name and address and the subject we discussed, and then follow up the interest?

¹³ If we are spiritually alert, we can make opportunities to preach God's Word anytime, anywhere. May we do so with joy, our hearts overflowing with what we have learned from our Grand Instructor, Jehovah.—Isaiah 30:20, 21.

Be Alert to Informal Witnessing

¹⁴ Some are becoming acquainted with God's truth because of contacts with relatives, friends, workmates, neighbors, and so forth. For instance, in one group of 238 baptized Witnesses, 40 percent had learned the Bible's truth through informal witnessing. Of course, this should not replace the field ministry, your regular activity in witnessing from house to house or on return visits, and the like.—Acts 5:42; 20:20.

¹⁵ Yet Jesus, "the faithful and true witness," set us a fine example in informal witnessing. For example, "while passing along," Jesus saw "a man named Matthew seated at the tax office" and spoke to him with good results. (Matthew 9:9) Moreover, on another occasion, though Jesus was tired he seized the opportunity to speak the truth to a woman who came to draw water at a well in Sychar. That conversation resulted in many Samaritans' putting faith in Jesus as the Messiah.—John 4:5-30, 39-42.

14. (a) Through what kind of witnessing have some learned God's truth? (b) Should informal witnessing replace your regular field ministry?

15. What kind of example did Jesus set as regards informal witnessing?



Zealously witness in regular field ministry and informally

¹⁶ The apostle Paul also took advantage of every opportunity to speak about Jehovah's Word. When in Athens, Paul did so "every day in the marketplace with those who happened to be on hand." (Acts 17:17) And when he was under house arrest in Rome, the apostle "would kindly receive all those who came in to him, preaching the kingdom of God to them and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with the greatest freeness of speech." (Acts 28:30, 31) How all of this should move us never to overlook any witnessing opportunities!

¹⁷ Besides our regular field ministry, there are many other opportunities to bear

16. What fine example did the apostle Paul set in witnessing?

17. Besides regular field ministry, what opportunities are there to witness to others?

witness. Our workmates, schoolmates, relatives and acquaintances all need to hear about Jehovah and his purposes. When traveling by bus, plane or train, we may be able to strike up a conversation that leads to a Kingdom witness. We may also be able to share the "good news" with hotel and motel managers, service station attendants, restaurant workers or taxi drivers. While at home we may witness to salesmen or deliverymen. Why, even if we are hospitalized, we may be able to witness to nurses, doctors and patients! While recuperating in a hospital, many witnesses of Jehovah have helped other patients to learn about God's New Order in which people will enjoy radiant health.

¹⁸ How vital it is, then, that as one of Jehovah's Witnesses you declare the Kingdom message at every opportunity! In other words, never forget you are a witness! But what if you are hesitant when you see an opportunity to witness? Then pray for courage to speak the truth. You will reap rich blessings that otherwise would have been missed. (Compare Acts 4:29-31.) Of course, witnessing to relatives and ac-

18. (a) What is recommended if you are hesitant about taking advantage of opportunities to give a witness? (b) In witnessing to relatives and acquaintances, what qualities should we manifest?

In Our Next Issue

- **Justice for All**
—How Will It Happen?
- **Do You Dramatize Vexations?**
- **Happiness Despite a**
Lawless, Loveless World

quaintances may be somewhat easier. But be tactful, kind and patient with them, not taking liberties because of knowing them so well. Have a long-range view and gradually build up in them an appreciation for Bible truth.

Fine Conduct—Part of the Way We Witness

¹⁹ Not all our witnessing is verbal. The apostle Paul linked fine conduct with light-bearing. He urged Philippian Christians to 'keep doing all things free from murmurings and arguments, that they might come to be blameless and innocent, children of God without a blemish in among a crooked and twisted generation, among whom they were shining as illuminators in the world.' (Philippians 2:14, 15) In a world that is morally corrupt and dark, the witness of Jehovah must stand out brilliantly as an illuminator. Indeed, the faithful Christian reflects the word of truth by witnessing verbally and shines by reason of his fine moral conduct. May all of Jehovah's Witnesses show themselves to be loyal light-bearers by the way they live and by the words of Scriptural truth they speak!

²⁰ Stressing the same point, the apostle Peter wrote: "Maintain your conduct fine among the nations, that . . . they may as a result of your fine works of which they are eyewitnesses glorify God in the day for his inspection." (1 Peter 2:12) Of course, not all will glorify God and become Jehovah's Witnesses in the day of his inspection. Most will not come onto the side of God's Messianic Kingdom and maintain its high standards of conduct. But there will be some sheeplike eyewitnesses who will see that we represent true Christianity. Our fine conduct will impress them,

19. What relationship is there between our witnessing and our conduct?

20. How may our fine conduct affect others?

and they will join us in preaching "this good news of the kingdom." (Matthew 24:14) What joy we have when these people glorify Jehovah along with us as his witnesses!

²¹ So, then, be wholehearted in doing Jehovah's work and will. (Matthew 22:37) Realize that one of Jehovah's Witnesses should be praising God all the time. "Praise Jah, you people! Praise Jehovah, O my soul. I will praise Jehovah during my lifetime." (Psalm 146:1, 2) Yes, 'praise Jehovah during your lifetime.' And that lifetime can be eternal, if you never forget you are a witness.

21. With what attitude should Jehovah's Witnesses do God's will?

How Would You Answer?

- ☐ What is the greatest privilege that any person on earth can enjoy?
- ☐ How was Jesus Christ an example for witnesses of Jehovah today?
- ☐ What vital assignment do all of Jehovah's Witnesses have?
- ☐ Should your regular field ministry be replaced by informal witnessing?
- ☐ What relationship is there between our conduct and our witnessing?

Special Convention Feature for 1985

IN VARIOUS parts of the earth there will be a unique feature connected with and in addition to the regular 1985 district conventions. Particular attention will be given to having special conventions in certain regions throughout the world where it is desirable to give a greater witness.

Chosen delegations will be invited to a number of cities in Europe, the Caribbean and Mediterranean areas, Africa, South America, the Far East and the South Pacific. In some of these regions, there will be two or three convention locations to which these delegations will be directed. Suitable cities, where a limited number of visitors can be accommodated, will be selected. Certain branches will be asked to recommend those who may be invited to attend in specific convention locations, so it will not be practical to give an open invitation to everyone. Nevertheless, it will be most advantageous to have in attendance a limited delegation representing different countries. Announcement concerning this arrangement is being made now to let Jehovah's people know that there will be opportunity for some to visit other lands.

The delegates that are eventually selected will be limited to dedicated and baptized Witnesses

who will be a fine example to the local brothers and a source of encouragement by their deportment and attendance at the conventions to which they are invited. So it is expected that such ones will view their visit primarily as an opportunity to advance the Kingdom interests and not as a mere sightseeing holiday.

Various aspects of this arrangement have yet to be worked out. Hence, the Society would like to request that you do not write or make inquiries about this matter at this time. At a later date, further details concerning this arrangement will be supplied by the Society's branches that are invited to send delegates to a particular country or countries.

District conventions for the year 1985 will be arranged in most countries as usual. This will afford everyone an opportunity to enjoy the blessings of assembling together theocratically. The conventions will emphasize our responsibilities in regard to Kingdom service in this time of the end. Meanwhile, as we look forward to sharing in the "Kingdom Increase" Conventions during this current year, may Jehovah's rich blessings be upon the great ingathering work that is now in progress.

Eleven Orphans —How Could We Cope?

As told by Maria Lucia Vinhal

“IF GOD were really loving, he wouldn’t have taken both Dad and Mom in such a short time!” “If God is almighty, why didn’t he keep Mom from dying, knowing she would leave behind 11 orphans?”

Repeatedly, I argued in this vein with my Catholic friends and relatives who insisted it was God’s will that Dad had committed suicide and that, four months later, Mother had succumbed to a heart attack. Frightened and confused, I kept asking myself, “How will I, a girl of 17, care for ten younger brothers and sisters, the youngest being just one month old?”

Family Background

We had been a devout Catholic family. Dad, a schoolteacher, also served as treasurer and catechist in a nearby chapel, and I sang in the choir. Both he and I belonged to the religious order of Saint Vincent de Paul. Our whole family shared in our daily devotions and other church activities, for there was not much more to do in the quiet little city where we lived in the interior of the state of Goiás, Brazil.

Dad had a deep desire to learn and understand the Bible and he read it fre-

quently, often into the wee hours of the morning. I remember once when I heard him crying because he could not understand the words of Job, “Who will grant me this, that thou mayst protect me in hell?” (Job 14:13, *Douay*) “If Job was a loyal servant,” Dad asked aloud, “why did he ask to be sent to *hell* for protection?” Dad had other questions for which he could not find answers: Why do we suffer so much? Does not God remember us? He even went to some Protestant churches looking for the answers—but in vain.

Our quiet, simple life was shattered on



Seven members of the Vinhal family

June 24, 1974, when two of my cousins brought me the heartbreaking news: "Maria Lucia, your father killed himself!" A bad business deal had brought financial ruin and debts, and this left Dad desperate. The shock and anguish proved too much for Mother's weak heart, and four months later she also died, leaving us 11 orphans destitute and overwhelmed with grief.

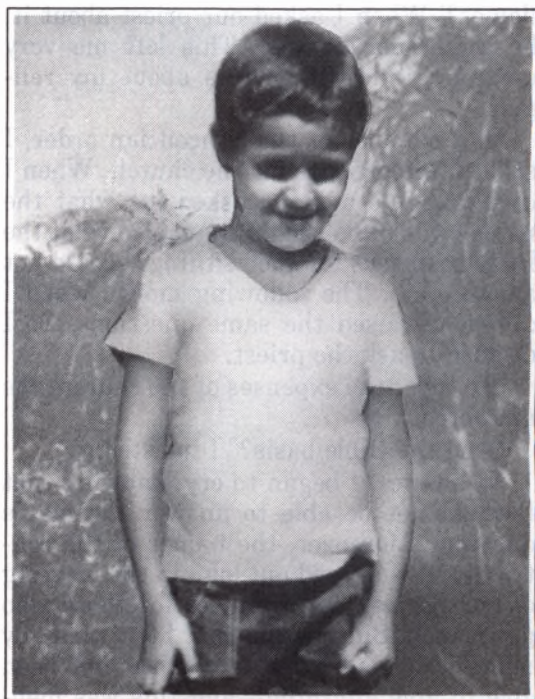
How to Cope?

At the time I was working in a supermarket, earning very little. So with the debts that were left, we began to suffer privation, at times not even having enough food for the table. Seeing our plight, a fellow worker collected food for us from door to door. Although embarrassed, I did feel grateful for her loving gesture and for the help we received from the local people.

Our house had belonged to Mother, so at least we had a place to live. After a time, too, we began to receive a small pension. To supplement this, 12-year-old Paulo went to work in a butcher shop and Silvio, just 11, started to deliver milk. The housework was cared for by Lucia Maria, 15, and Maria Aparecida, 9. There was just no way for all 11 of us to stay together, so it was decided that the 6 youngest children would, for the time being, go to live with relatives. The rest of us soon became engrossed in our attempt to cope with the problems of everyday life.

There were so many decisions to be made that affected all of us and, since I was the oldest, the final word was generally left to me. At times it was hard for the others to accept my decision, since I was still so young. For instance, there was the time when I tried to make Paulo be quiet because he was making so much noise that the rest of us could not study.

"Who are you to correct me?" he responded. Then, after quite a discussion he left the house and did not return that night. Next



Alexandre, born shortly before his mother died

morning, red-eyed from crying, I went looking for him, even thinking of going to the police station. But how relieved we were when Paulo came home later that morning, smiling and carefree, having spent the night with some friends! Such misunderstandings, however, were few.

Disturbing Questions

There were still religious questions that disturbed us. Since our friends had said that God had taken our parents, we kept thinking that, if it were true, then he would probably take the rest of us one by one. So when any one of us became ill, we were afraid that God was going to take another one! This left us terrified! Moreover, we had been taught that if a person committed suicide his soul would go to hell, and I kept wondering, 'Is Dad really suffering in

flames?' When I asked our priest about it, he would not answer. This left me very unhappy and with doubts about my religion.

As a member of the Vincentian order, I still collected tithes for the church. When I called on one man he asked me what the money was to be used for and also what the Bible basis was for such tithing. I could not answer him. The following month when I called he raised the same questions. So I decided to ask the priest.

"To cover the expenses of the church," he answered.

"And the Bible basis?" I insisted.

No answer. I began to cry, knowing that I would not be able to answer the man's question. Moreover, the names of the contributors were read out loud in the meeting of our Society, with praises for those who gave much. But imagine how I felt when my name was read aloud and I had not been able to give anything—and this was mentioned before everyone!

All of this only added to my disillusionment. Looking back, too, although we did appreciate very much the material aid we received during the weeks following Mother's death, I realize that all the rituals we went through in church did little to help me cope with my responsibility to give moral training to our family.

Questions Answered

Six months after Mother's death the way was opened to have my questions answered. A lady, Yolanda by name, visited my place of work offering a free home Bible study to a fellow worker. She identified herself as one of Jehovah's Witnesses. Listening in, I was captivated by the title of the blue, pocket-size book she offered, *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*. Since I did not have money to buy one, a fellow worker later gave me a copy as a present.

At home I devoured its contents and a

few days later when I met *dona* Yolanda again, I pleaded, "Give me your address so I can go to your house for that Bible course you promised." And how many questions I had! What most impressed me in the Bible study was the way she answered my questions from *our* Bible—just what had been lacking when I had previously questioned the priest.

One scripture that deeply touched my heart was John 5:28, 29, which reads: "Do not marvel at this, because the hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out." Lucia Maria and I cried for joy at the prospect of seeing Mother again!

"But what about Dad? Is he suffering in hell?" were questions begging for answers. What a relief to learn that hell is the common grave of mankind and that no one is suffering there! This also answered my father's original question about Job asking to be protected in hell. We learned, too, that Dad's future life prospects rest in the hands of the great Judge, Jehovah God. But at least he is not in torment!—Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10.

One by one the rest of the family also began to study the Bible with other Witnesses. How grateful we are for their kindness and patience in teaching us Bible truths! We learned why God permits evil and that he has not forgotten us. We found, too, that the Bible has fine counsel for us on morals, honesty, respect for authority and how we should treat one another.—1 Corinthians 6:9, 10; Hebrews 13:17, 18; Romans 13:1, 2; Matthew 7:12.

We were determined to apply the things we learned and we made a "pact" among us that if one erred, another would correct him. For example, Paulo began to show a liking for parties where there was too much drinking. Over a period of time and with the right counsel, this problem was overcome and he began to show a more serious

attitude. Silvio, a year younger than Paulo, did not take the Bible study seriously at first, and he would go with us to meetings at the Kingdom Hall only because we made him go with us. Later, as our Bible study progressed, he began to manifest a deep desire to serve God and to accept responsibility. He says that what helped him was the encouragement that he received from others in the congregation.

No Longer "Orphans"

As a family, we felt that Jesus' words at Mark 10:29, 30 had particular meaning for us: "No one has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father . . . 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*." Yes, we now have many "brothers and sisters and mothers" in a spiritual sense.

Dona Yolanda, for example, not only studied the Bible with us but also spent hours teaching us how to care for the home better, to cook and to wash and iron clothes. If it had not been for her "motherly" counsel, I do not know what would have become of all of us. The Christian brothers in the small congregation (about 20 persons in all) also were attentive to our needs. They even made arrangements to repair our house!

Some of our relatives, who up till then had shown little interest in our situation, became disturbed by all the attention we were receiving, and on the day set to begin work on the house, they also showed up. "You Witnesses can leave this to us," they said. "We'll fix up the house." We were very surprised, and grateful, to receive their help. Later the brothers came and finished the electrical repairs, making our home much more comfortable.

Of course, all this activity with the Witnesses did not go unnoticed by our neighbors, who did not want us to become Jeho-



My sister Lucia Maria,
now serving as a full-time minister
in Goiás, Brazil

vah's Witnesses. One day as we left home to go to the Kingdom Hall for a meeting, the man across the street stopped us.

"You're not going to that meeting!" he insisted.

"Why not?" I asked.

"Because that is a new religion, invented just a short time ago. Your father died a Catholic and you all must stay in the Catholic Church until you die. Go on back home!"

Although we realized that he was well-meaning, we did not let this incident discourage us.

One of the greatest joys that Bible knowledge brought us was to experience unity as a family. We studied the Bible together,

prayed together and, later on, began to preach from house to house together. All of this gave us a unity of effort we had never felt before. As time went on we began to explore ways whereby at least one of us could share more fully in preaching to others.

Up till that time Lucia Maria did the sewing for the family (and also some for outsiders), as well as much of the housework. We arranged for Maria Aparecida to learn how to sew and also to take on more of the housework, thus freeing Lucia Maria to a great extent. With this arrangement it was possible for Lucia Maria, in April 1978, to begin to devote most of her time to the preaching work as a pioneer. Two years later she was assigned as a special pioneer, spending 140 hours each month teaching others the Bible in a distant city where a congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses was being formed.

Ten years have passed since that tragic year 1974, when it seemed that our whole world collapsed. But how things have changed! In view of our improved situation, materially and especially spiritually, we have been able to unite most of our family again. In 1979 Dorinato came back to be with us, and a few months later I got grandmother's approval to bring back Dalva and Lourdes. All three have made fine progress, the latter two being baptized in 1980. How happy we were to see Bible truth take root in their hearts!

It was Beatriz' turn next. The family with whom she had gone to live were Catholic, and she accompanied them in their religion. We thought we would have difficulty in getting her to return home. However, much to our surprise and happiness, she came home in November 1981. She began to study the Bible seriously with us and in July 1982 she was baptized. Now she conducts her own Bible studies. Jehovah's hand was indeed not short!

Then came Clodoaldo's turn. In May 1983 we were finally able to bring him home and he now shares regularly in our family Bible study and also in the preaching activity. We pray that both he and Dorinato will continue to make progress toward dedication and baptism. The youngest, Alexandre, is still living with relatives. Even though we do not yet have permission to bring him home, we have been able to make arrangements to give him regular spiritual help. At present he is enjoying reading the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*.

After Paulo and Silvio were baptized, they took the lead in our family Bible studies and prayer. In fact, Silvio's secular work has allowed him enough free time so that he could serve for the past nine months as an auxiliary pioneer. Currently, Paulo has the privilege of serving at the branch office of the Watchtower Society here in Brazil. I still carry on with my secular work and devote as much time as possible to Jehovah's service. Needless to say, all of this has been a source of real joy and satisfaction to me after the struggles of the previous years.

We often think of what the psalmist wrote in Psalm 127:1: "Unless Jehovah himself guards the city, it is to no avail that the guard has kept awake." If Jehovah had not been 'on guard' for us, all my vigilance over the family would likely have been in vain.

It has been a real thrill and pleasure for us to study, learn and talk to others about Jehovah's wonderful purposes. He has indeed been a real *Father* to us and we are happy to express ourselves as did David, who said: "Sing you to God, make melody to his name; raise up a song to the One riding through the desert plains as Jah, which is his name; . . . a father of fatherless boys . . . is God in his holy dwelling."—Psalm 68:4, 5.

Insight on the News

Work Values Undermined

"Television is the biggest mass programmer of modern society," claims Edward Cornish, president of the World Future Society, and it is "far more important than schools, parents or the churches." He contends that television viewers "are being programmed with the following beliefs: Everyone is entitled to a high standard of living regardless of how little work they do. Work is, in fact, largely unnecessary because all serious problems can be solved by some sponsor's product. Real effort must not go into one's job because that would interfere with a person having fun, and . . . play—having fun—is the purpose of life."

Speaking at a special conference in Washington, D.C., Mr. Cornish stated that while television personalities are shown in work situations, they are actually only playing, doing "pretend work—loafing at their jobs." The result, he says, is that "TV programs are creating a generation of people who expect a standard of living, without having to do much to achieve it," being programmed "to believe that real effort and self-discipline are unnecessary."

This, of course, is not what God intended for man. He made man to work. (Genesis 2:15) Yet, although man would do hard work, it would be a pleasure and not a drudgery. God's "gift," says Ecclesiastes 3:13, is that "every man should eat and indeed drink and see good for all his hard

work." In addition, a God-fearing person is admonished to "do hard work, doing with his hands what is good work, that he may have something to distribute to someone in need."—Ephesians 4:28.

'World Falling Apart'

"The dominant impression," writes international news analyst Gwynne Dyer concerning recent news events, "is that the world is falling apart." Could it be that the headlines are distorting the reality? Not in this respect, says Dyer. "Things really are getting worse." Writing in the newspaper, *New Nigerian*, Dyer states: "Throughout the year rumours of war in the developed countries, and actual war and civil violence elsewhere, overshadowed the acute global problems that would normally have commanded attention"—such as economic recession and world debt problems. And yet "the biggest and deadliest wars," Dyer says, "got comparatively little attention, because they have been going on so long."

This does not surprise serious Bible students, who were told to expect "wars and reports of wars" as a sign of 'the conclusion of this system of things.' (Matthew 24:3, 6, 7) But Jesus instructed his disciples not to be terrified at these worsening world conditions, saying: "Stand upright and hold your heads high, because your liberation is near." —Luke 21:28, *The New English Bible*.

Self-Tailored Christianity

There is "compelling evidence," states *Newsweek* magazine, "that churches are no longer secure sanctuaries—if they ever were—against moral confusion, theological ambiguity, social conflict and family disintegration." What led to this conclusion? A recently published three-year study that, according to the article, "is of such depth and breadth that it raises serious questions about how all U.S. Christians interpret and practice their faith." The report, says one church historian, shows a "pick-and-choose' Christianity" where individual members select or reject beliefs according to their own spiritual goals. In fact, two thirds of those surveyed "saw no harm in rejecting some of their church's doctrines." Said one woman: "I feel that in religious training, as in any other thing, you are taught the basics. From those basics, you sort out what you want or pick it apart as you see fit."

However, the apostle Paul, under inspiration, wrote that this was *not* to be the case with true Christians when he said: "Now I exhort you, brothers, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that you should all speak in agreement, and that there should not be divisions among you, but that you may be fitly united in the same mind and in the same line of thought."—1 Corinthians 1:10.

Come and hear the public talk:

A GOVERNMENT THAT ACCOMPLISHES WHAT MAN CANNOT

What government is this?

Over what will it govern?

Who will be its rulers?

How will it be set up?

**Why can it accomplish what
governments of men have not
been able to accomplish?**

These and other questions will be answered in the important public talk that will be featured at the four-day "Kingdom Increase" District Convention of Jehovah's Witnesses. You can hear this talk at any one of more than a hundred such conventions being held this summer in scores of cities in the United States, the British Isles and Canada. The convention program also features helpful Bible discussions on practical matters of life, and two instructive Bible dramas.

Contact the local Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses for the time and place of the convention nearest to you, or write the publishers of this magazine.