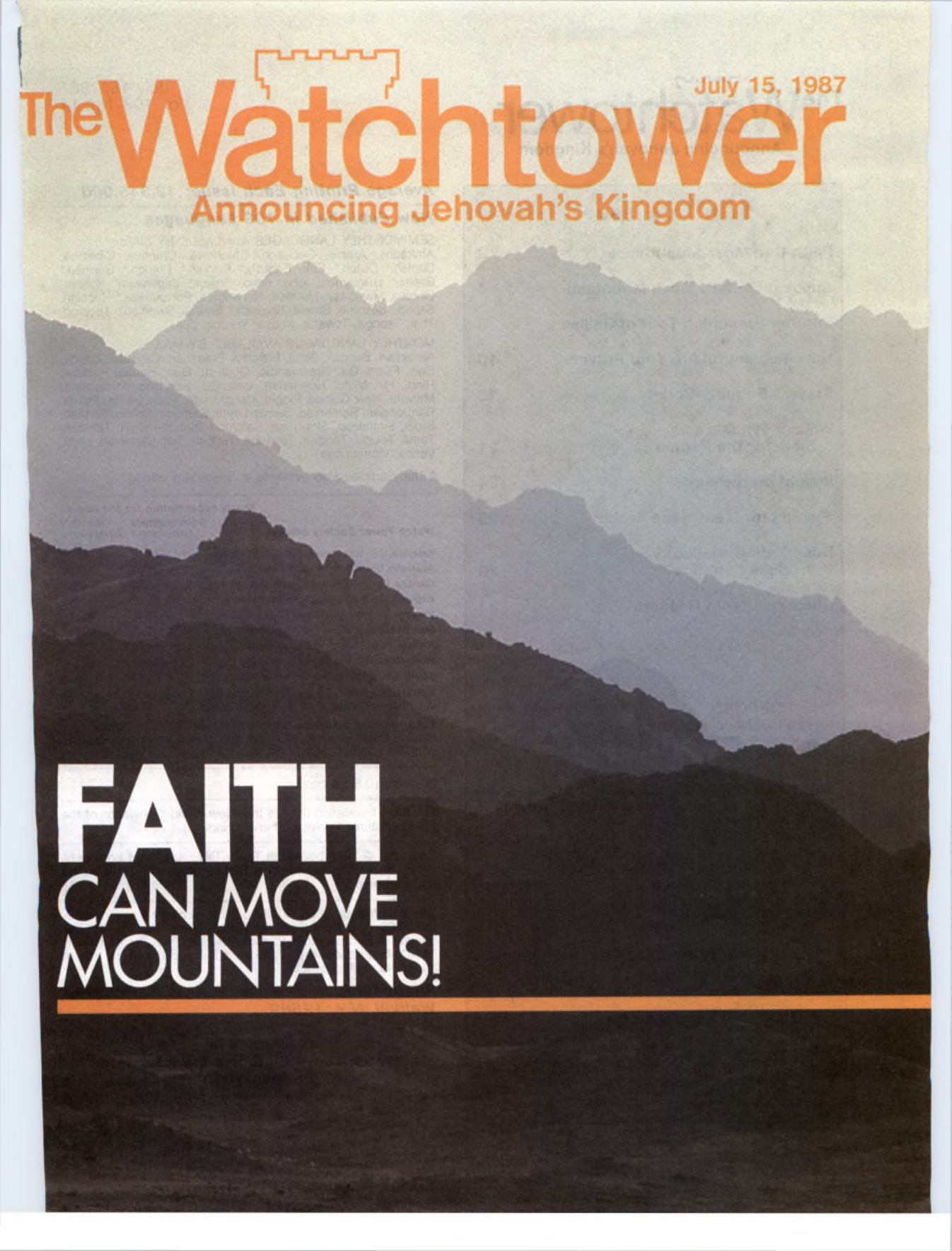


The **Watchtower**
Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

July 15, 1987



**FAITH
CAN MOVE
MOUNTAINS!**

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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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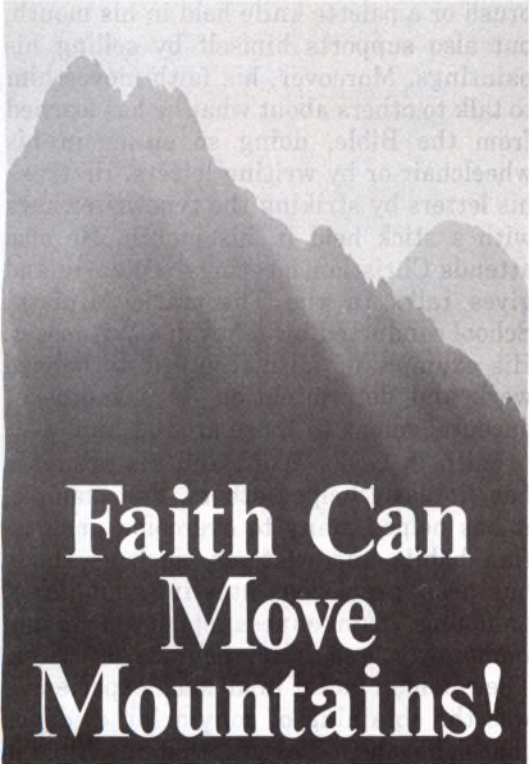
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Faith Can Move Mountains!

THE crowd was in suspense. A father had just brought his epileptic son to men considered capable of curing him. Eagerly, a cure was awaited. But nothing happened! Disappointed, the father turned away.

At that moment four other men appeared and among them their leader, Jesus of Nazareth. Running toward him, the father pleaded: "Have mercy on my son, because he is an epileptic and is ill, for he falls often into the fire and often into the water; and I brought him to your disciples, but they could not cure him."

"Bring him here to me," said Jesus. The result? "Then Jesus rebuked it, and the demon came out of him; and the boy was cured from that hour." Yes, another miracle! But why had Jesus' disciples failed?

Jesus explained why, saying: "Because of your little faith." Then he continued: "If you have faith the size of a mustard grain, you will say to this mountain, 'Transfer from here to there,' and it will transfer, and nothing will be impossible for you." —Matthew 17:14-20.

From this true-life experience, it is evident that faith is powerful. But just what is faith? Can it be built up and strengthened? Can it really move mountains?

What Is Faith?

The apostle Paul described faith as "the assured expectation of things hoped for, the evident demonstration [or, convincing evidence] of realities though not beheld." (Hebrews 11:1) In other words, faith is convincing evidence of something unseen. It is not based on mere hearsay but has a solid foundation. Hence, faith differs from credulity. One dictionary defines credulity as "belief or readiness of belief, esp[ecially] on slight or uncertain evidence." Contrariwise, the person with true faith has solid evidence for what he believes. Therefore, he can tell you why he is convinced that a certain thing will come to pass. The father mentioned at the outset had some evidence convincing him that Jesus could cure his son. What evidence? Well, Jesus had been performing miracles for more than two years, and his fame had spread throughout most of Palestine.—Luke 7:17; John 10:25.

Faith has also been described as "the *title-deed* of things hoped for." A man who purchases a distant property and has the title deed in his hand has convincing evidence that the property exists and that it really belongs to him, even though he may never have seen it. So, too, the person with faith can bring forth tangible evidence for what he believes. For example, suppose he has faith that Jehovah God will bring true peace to this earth through His

Kingdom. Then the individual must have at hand evidence that God exists and has the power, the will, and the wisdom needed to bring peace and that He has established the Kingdom for that purpose. Such evidence must be strong enough to convince not only the person having faith but also others who might 'demand of him the reason for his hope' for peace.—1 Peter 3:15.

Faith Can Move Mountains!

Someone may ask, however, 'Did Jesus mean that such faith could literally transfer mountains?' Jesus may have included that, but he often used illustrations. (Matthew 13:34) So he probably had in mind obstacles that could be like mountains to the believer. In fact, the word "mountain" is frequently used to mean a huge quantity, such as "a mountain of debts." That true faith can transfer or remove mountainlike obstacles is confirmed by many modern-day experiences.

For example, would you not agree that being paralyzed from the neck down would be such a mountain? Yet, a quadriplegic living in Vancouver, B.C., Canada, not only has learned to paint, with either a

brush or a palette knife held in his mouth, but also supports himself by selling his paintings. Moreover, his faith moves him to talk to others about what he has learned from the Bible, doing so either in his wheelchair or by writing letters. He types his letters by striking the typewriter keys with a stick held in his mouth. He also attends Christian meetings regularly and gives talks in the Theocratic Ministry School conducted by Jehovah's Witnesses. His example of faith, coupled with hard work and determination, is a source of encouragement to those around him.

Faith in God's Word and his promises has similarly helped others. For example, it has helped many to overcome unchristian habits and customs, such as shady business practices, stealing, smoking, gambling, drunkenness, spiritism, sexual immorality, and false religious practices. The common factor in all such experiences was the obtaining of convincing evidence that Jehovah God exists, that the Bible is his written Word, and that his promises set forth in the Scriptures are trustworthy and will be fulfilled. Such faith *can* move mountains.

Building Faith to Move Mountains

"I DO have faith; oh, help me to have more!" These were the words of the distraught father of the epileptic boy mentioned in the preceding article. (Mark 9:24, *The Living Bible*) It may be that this statement also reflects your feelings. If so, be assured that you are not alone. World conditions today tend to weaken faith in

God and his Word. Atheistic philosophy, materialism, crises in the churches, and the frightful increase in violence all tend to undermine true faith. Very appropriate, then, was Jesus Christ's question, "When the Son of man arrives, will he really find the faith on the earth?"—Luke 18:8.

On one occasion, even Jesus' apostles pleaded, "Give us more faith." Instead of miraculously giving them more faith, however, he said: "If you had faith the size of a mustard grain, you would say to this black mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea!' and it would obey you." (Luke 17:5, 6) So, just how can we get more faith?

Building Faith

The apostle Paul wrote: "How . . . will they put faith in him of whom they have not heard? How, in turn, will they hear without someone to preach? . . . So faith follows the thing heard. In turn the thing heard is through the word about Christ." (Romans 10:14-17) It follows, then, that if we want more faith, we must hear and take in knowledge of the Scriptures. That is what the previously mentioned quadriplegic did. Jehovah's Witnesses studied the Bible with him, he gained faith, and then applied what he learned in his daily life. Thus he found faith so as to remove the mountainlike obstacle in his life.

It takes time to gather the convincing evidence as the basis for faith. (Hebrews 11:1) And it takes effort. Are you willing to spend time and put forth effort on a regular basis so as to gather the evidence needed to build faith?

"Blocks" for Building Faith

The process of building faith can be likened to the erecting of a structure. Even the largest buildings are made up of individual building blocks. Each block is put into place with hundreds of other blocks to give the building the stability needed to withstand violent storms as well as the ravages of time. Faith, too, is based on individual "blocks" of evidence carefully lined up in relation to others. Each "block" will add to the evidence that God exists, that he is the Creator of all things,

and that he has a purpose involving his human creation. Just what are these building "blocks"?

In the first place, take a look at your own body. Do you not see convincing evidence of a Creator, for instance, in your fantastic brain—an organ that science cannot even dream of imitating? Can you say as did the psalmist, "In a fear-inspiring way I am wonderfully made"? (Psalm 139:14) If you can, then you have one "block" with which to build your faith.

Do you find further evidence of a loving Creator in the infinite variety and beauty of trees, plants, and flowers? Can you see such evidence in animal, bird, and marine creatures and in their interdependence as well as their importance to mankind? If we are willing to listen, we can "hear" all of them declare, 'God exists!'—Romans 1:20.

Nevertheless, belief in the existence of the Creator is not enough. To answer questions about him and his purposes, we need a revelation from this invisible, all-wise God. And we have it! Where? In the Bible. But many do not consider this source of information to be as reliable as the visible creation around us.

However, there is abundant proof, convincing evidence, that the Bible is a book inspired of God. For example, the harmony that exists among its writers—about 40 in all, writing during 16 centuries—is evidence of *one* Author, Jehovah God. Time and again the findings of true science and archaeology have also proved the Bible to be authentic and reliable. For instance, astronomer Robert Jastrow wrote: "The details differ, but the essential elements in the astronomical and biblical accounts of Genesis are the same: the chain of events leading to man commenced suddenly and sharply at a definite moment in time, in a flash of light and energy."

Consider just one example of how archaeology has confirmed the Bible record. At 2 Kings 18:13-15, we read: "In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib the king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and proceeded to seize them." At that time "the king of Assyria laid upon Hezekiah the king of Judah three hundred silver talents and thirty gold talents." In confirmation, during the 19th century archaeologist A. H. Layard discovered what is called King Sennacherib's Prism. Its cuneiform text reads: "As for Hezekiah the Jew, who did not submit to my yoke, 46 of his strong, walled cities, . . . I besieged and took. . . . I added to the former tribute, and laid upon him as their yearly payment, a tax . . . 30 talents of gold and 800 talents of silver." A remarkable corroboration of the Bible record, differing only in the amount of the silver tax!

Other "Blocks" for Building Faith

Outstanding among building "blocks" are those furnished by the fulfillment of Bible prophecies. A prophecy is a prediction of some future event. When that event occurs, it stamps the prediction as true. Such prophecies are beyond the ability of man, and the Bible correctly states: "Prophecy was at no time brought by man's will, but men spoke from God as they were borne along by holy spirit." (2 Peter 1:21) A look at a few of such Bible prophecies certainly is faith strengthening.

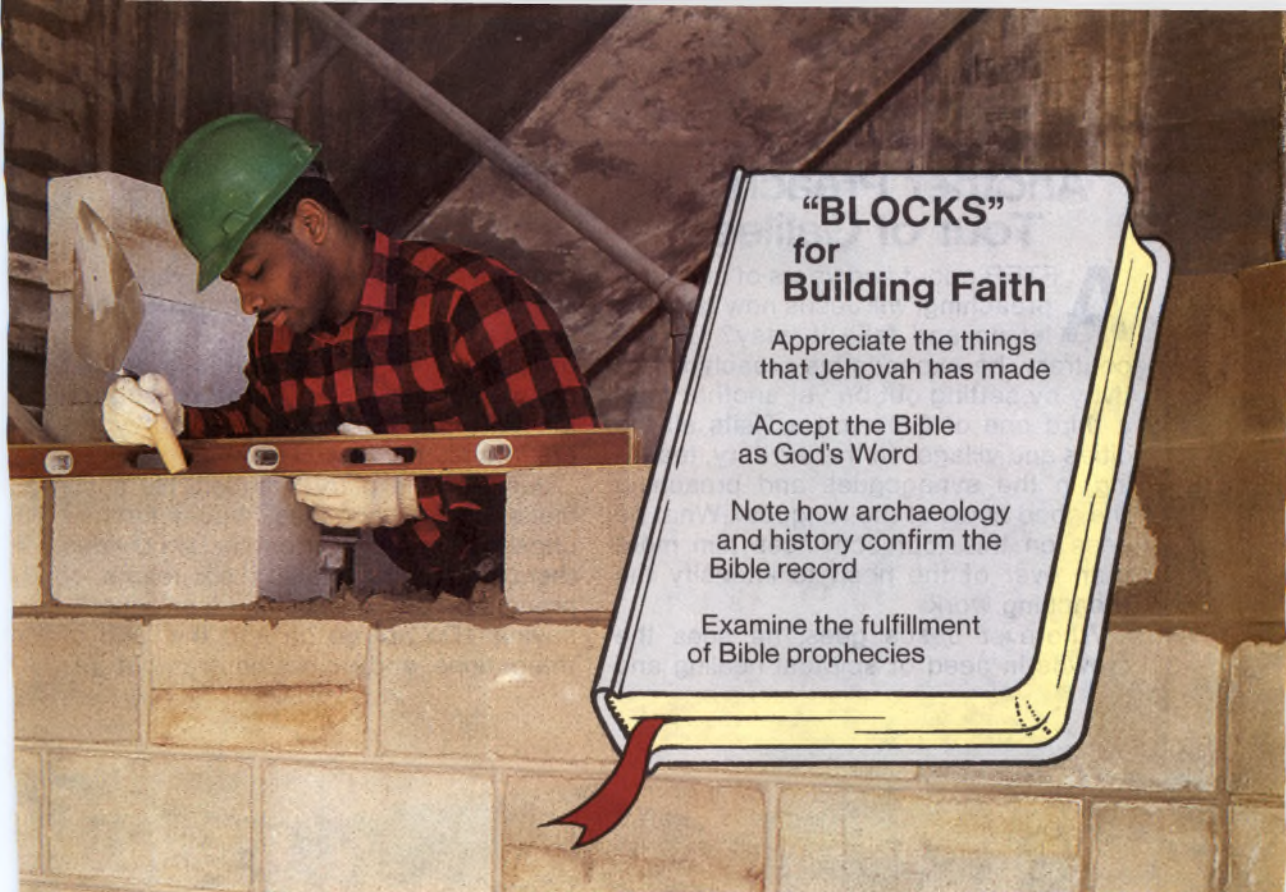
About 732 B.C.E., Isaiah foretold the downfall of Babylon at the hands of the Medes and the Persians, even giving the name of the conqueror, Cyrus. Remarkably, this prophecy was given some 200 years before Cyrus took Babylon! In part, the prophecy speaks of Jehovah as "the One saying to the watery deep, 'Be evaporated; and all your rivers I shall dry up.'" It was foretold that God would 'open be-

fore Cyrus the two-leaved doors, so that even the gates would not be shut.' "The copper doors I shall break in pieces, and the iron bars I shall cut down," said Jehovah, "and I will give you the treasures in the darkness." (Isaiah 44:24-45:3) How was this prophecy fulfilled?

It happened on a night of drunken revelry for Babylon and her princes. Unnoticed and under the cover of night, the army of Cyrus worked diligently to divert the waters of the Euphrates River, which passed through the center of the city. This allowed the soldiers to enter Babylon by the riverbed. The river gates had carelessly been left open during the feasting. Hence, the Medes and the Persians had no difficulty in taking Babylon and all its treasures. Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled in all its details.

Jehovah God also saw fit to make Jesus Christ the focal point of many prophecies foretelling details of his birth, life, ministry, and death, some of them written centuries in advance. For example, it was foretold that he would be born in the tribe of Judah of David's family (Genesis 49:10; Isaiah 11:1, 2) and in the town of Bethlehem. (Micah 5:2) One close associate would be unfaithful and would betray him for 30 pieces of silver. (Psalm 41:9; Zechariah 11:12) Lots would be cast for his garments. (Psalm 22:18) He would be pierced, but none of his bones would be broken. (Zechariah 12:10; Psalm 34:20) Daniel 9:24-27 foretold the coming of Jesus as the Messiah, or Christ, after 69 weeks of years, a period of 483 years running from 455 B.C.E. until Jesus' baptism in 29 C.E. Half a "week" (3 1/2 years) later, in 33 C.E., Jesus was "cut off" in death as foretold. Other details of the prophecy were also fulfilled.

These are but a few "blocks" that can be used to build the faith that can move mountains. To gather all of them together



“BLOCKS” for Building Faith

Appreciate the things
that Jehovah has made

Accept the Bible
as God's Word

Note how archaeology
and history confirm the
Bible record

Examine the fulfillment
of Bible prophecies

and put them in their place takes time, effort, and perseverance. But it has been done. John, living in Santos, Brazil, can testify that it can be done. Some years ago, he was indifferent toward religion, having no faith in the Bible, although he did believe that God exists. John agreed to visits by one of Jehovah's Witnesses. Weekly discussions finally convinced John that the Bible was not an ordinary book, and he finally "accepted it, not as the word of men, but, just as it truthfully is, as the word of God." (1 Thessalonians 2:13) It took time, but further Bible studies helped John to understand God's purpose toward mankind. Finally, in 1970 he was baptized as one of Jehovah's Witnesses. Now, as an appointed congregation elder, he helps others to build up and maintain their faith.

Do you want help in building up *your* faith? If so, remember that "faith follows the thing heard. In turn the thing heard is through the word about Christ." (Romans 10:17) More than 3,000,000 of Jehovah's Witnesses are diligently spreading "the word about Christ" and God's Kingdom in more than 200 lands. They will be glad to help you learn more about God's Word through free Bible discussions.

Rest assured that the time you devote to listening to "the thing heard" will be time well spent. It could help you to build faith that moves mountains. This, in turn, could lead to eternal life, "for God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life."—John 3:16.

Another Preaching Tour of Galilee

AFTER about two years of intensive preaching, will Jesus now begin to let up and take it easy? On the contrary, he expands his preaching activity by setting out on yet another tour, a third one of Galilee. He visits all the cities and villages in the territory, teaching in the synagogues and preaching the good news of the Kingdom. What he sees on this tour convinces him more than ever of the need to intensify the preaching work.

Wherever Jesus goes, he sees the crowds in need of spiritual healing and

comfort. They are like sheep without a shepherd, skinned and thrown about, and he feels pity for them. He tells his disciples: "Yes, the harvest is great, but the workers are few. Therefore, beg the Master of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest."

Jesus has a plan of action. He summons the 12 apostles, whom he had chosen nearly a year earlier. He divides them into pairs, making six teams of preachers, and gives them instructions, saying: "Do not go off into the road of the nations, and do not enter into a Sa-





maritan city; but, instead, go continually to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of the heavens has drawn near.'"

This Kingdom that they are to preach about is the one Jesus taught them to pray for in the model prayer. The Kingdom had drawn near in the sense that God's designated King, Jesus Christ, was present. To establish his disciples' credentials as representatives of that superhuman government, Jesus empowers them to cure the sick and even raise the dead. He instructs them to perform these services free.

Next he tells his disciples not to make material preparations for their preaching tour. "Do not procure gold or silver or copper for your girdle purses, or a food

pouch for the trip, or two undergarments, or sandals or a staff; for the worker deserves his food." Those who appreciate the message will respond and contribute food and housing. As Jesus says: "Into whatever city or village you enter, search out who in it is deserving, and stay there until you leave."

Jesus then gives instructions on how to approach householders with the Kingdom message. "When you are entering into the house," he instructs, "greet the household; and if the house is deserving, let the peace you wish it come upon it; but if it is not deserving, let the peace from you return upon you. Wherever anyone does not take you in or listen to your words, on going out of that house or that city shake the dust off your feet."

Of a city that rejects their message, Jesus says: "It will be more endurable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on Judgment Day than for that city." This shows that at least some unrighteous ones to whom his disciples would preach will be present during Judgment Day. When these former citizens are resurrected during Judgment Day, however, it will be even harder for them to humble themselves and accept Christ as King than it will be for resurrected persons from the ancient immoral cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Matthew 9: 35-10:15; Mark 6:6-12; Luke 9:1-5.

♦ When does Jesus begin a third preaching tour of Galilee, and of what does it convince him?

♦ When sending his 12 apostles out to preach, what instructions does he give them?

♦ Why was it correct for the disciples to teach that the Kingdom had drawn near?

♦ How will it be more endurable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for those who rejected Jesus' disciples?

How Meaningful Are Your Prayers?

"I have called with my whole heart. Answer me, O Jehovah."
—PSALM 119:145.

WHAT kind of prayers does the Creator, Jehovah God, hear? A parable Jesus Christ told indicates one of the basic conditions for God to answer prayers. Jesus said that two men were praying at the temple in Jerusalem. One was a highly respected Pharisee, the other a despised tax collector. The Pharisee prayed: "O God, I thank you I am not as the rest of men, . . . or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week, I give the tenth of all things I acquire." But the lowly tax collector "kept beating his breast, saying, 'O God, be gracious to me a sinner.'"—Luke 18:9-13.

² In commenting on these two prayers, Jesus said: "I tell you, This man [the tax collector] went down to his home proved more righteous than that man [the Pharisee]; because everyone that exalts himself will be humiliated, but he that humbles himself will be exalted." (Luke 18:14) Clearly, Jesus showed that merely praying to our heav-

enly Father is not enough. How we pray—our mental attitude—is also important.

³ Prayer is indeed a precious, weighty, serious privilege, and all well-informed Christians are familiar with the basic rules that govern it. Prayers must be addressed to the one true God, Jehovah. They must be said in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ. To be acceptable, they must be

3. (a) Cite some basic rules governing prayer.
(b) What forms may prayer take?



- 1, 2. (a) What parable of Jesus dealt with prayer?
(b) What conclusion did Jesus draw from the two prayers, and what should this show us?

offered in faith. Yes, "he that approaches God must believe that he is." Moreover, one's prayers must be in line with God's will. (Hebrews 11:6; Psalm 65:2; Matthew 17:20; John 14:6, 14; 1 John 5:14) And from Scriptural examples, we learn that prayers can take the form of praise, thanksgiving, petition, and supplication.—Luke 10:21; Ephesians 5:20; Philippians 4:6; Hebrews 5:7.

Examples of Meaningful Prayers

⁴ When weighty problems are to be faced, serious decisions are required, gross mistakes have been made, or our lives are threatened, our prayers especially take on earnestness and become meaningful. Because the Israelites rebelled after hearing the negative report of the ten unfaithful spies, Jehovah told Moses that the people deserved to be wiped out. In an earnest and meaningful prayer, Moses begged Jehovah not to take this action because His name was involved. (Numbers 14:11-19) When Israel was defeated at Ai because of Achan's greed, Joshua uttered a most impassioned plea also on the basis of Jehovah's name. (Joshua 7:6-9) Many of David's psalms are in the form of earnest prayers, a particularly striking example being Psalm 51. King Hezekiah's prayer at the time of Assyrian King Sennacherib's invasion of Judah is another fine example of a meaningful prayer, and again Jehovah's name was involved.—Isaiah 37:14-20.

⁵ The book of Lamentations might be said to be a long, earnest prayer by Jeremiah on behalf of his people, for Jehovah is repeatedly addressed therein. (Lamenta-

tions 1:20; 2:20; 3:40-45, 55-66; 5:1-22) Ezra and Daniel also offered meaningful and earnest prayers on behalf of their people, confessing their nation's wrongs and pleading for forgiveness. (Ezra 9:5-15; Daniel 9:4-19) And we can be certain that the prayer Jonah said while he was in the belly of the huge fish was earnest and meaningful.—Jonah 2:1-9.

⁶ Before choosing the 12 apostles, Jesus spent all night in prayer so that his Father's will might be done in making the choices. (Luke 6:12-16) There is also Jesus' meaningful prayer on the night of his betrayal, as recorded at John chapter 17. All these prayers give eloquent testimony to the fine relationship with Jehovah God that was enjoyed by those who uttered them. Without a doubt, this must be a basic factor in our prayers if they are to be meaningful. And earnest and meaningful they need to be if they are to be 'powerful' with Jehovah God.—James 5:16, *The Jerusalem Bible*.

Flaws Due to Human Imperfection

⁷ As has been noted, under stressful conditions our prayers are likely to be especially earnest and meaningful. But what about our everyday prayers? Do they give evidence of the warm, close relationship we feel we have with our heavenly Father, Jehovah God? It has well been said: "Prayer must mean something to us if it is to mean anything to God." Do we give our prayers the thought they deserve and make sure that they really come from our figurative heart?

⁸ It is easy to let our prayers deteriorate in these respects. Because of our inherited

4. (a) What examples of meaningful prayer did Moses and Joshua provide? (b) What examples did David and King Hezekiah give? (c) What common characteristic did several of these prayers have?

5. We have what other examples of meaningful prayers said by certain servants of Jehovah?

6. (a) Jesus gave us what examples of meaningful prayers? (b) What basic factor is needed to make our prayers meaningful?

7. What questions might we ask ourselves regarding our prayers?

8. Our prayers might have what flaws due to human imperfection?

imperfect inclinations, our hearts can easily deceive us, robbing our prayers of the qualities they should have. (Jeremiah 17:9) Unless, in most cases, we pause and think before we pray, we may find that the tendency is for our prayers to become mechanical, stereotyped, routine. Or they may become repetitious, which calls to mind what Jesus said about the improper way 'the people of the nations pray.' (Matthew 6:7, 8) Or our prayers may deal only with generalities rather than with specific matters or persons.

⁹ At times we may be inclined to hurry through our prayers. But noteworthy is the observation: "If you are too busy to pray, you *are* too busy." We should not want to memorize certain words and just repeat them each time we pray; neither should it be necessary for a witness of Jehovah to read his prayer, as at a public assembly. No doubt all these pitfalls arise, at least in part, from the fact that we cannot physically see Jehovah God, the One to whom we pray. However, we cannot expect him to be pleased with such prayers, nor do we benefit from saying them.

Overcoming the Flaws

¹⁰ We will be able to guard against the aforementioned pitfalls to the extent that we appreciate the importance of our daily prayers and have a good relationship with our heavenly Father. For one thing, such appreciation will help us to guard against hurrying through our prayers as if we needed to get to more important things. Nothing can be more important than talking to the Universal Sovereign, Jehovah God. True, there may be occasions when

9. What other pitfalls may arise as regards our prayers, and what doubtless is one reason for these pitfalls?

10. (a) What attitude would betray a lack of appreciation for the importance of prayer?
(b) What Scriptural instance is noted?

time is limited. For example, when King Artaxerxes asked his cupbearer Nehemiah, "What is this that you are seeking to secure?" Nehemiah 'at once prayed to the God of the heavens.' (Nehemiah 2:4) Since the king was expecting an immediate reply, Nehemiah could not linger long in that prayer. But we may be sure that it was meaningful and came from his heart because Jehovah immediately answered it. (Nehemiah 2:5, 6) Except for such rare occasions, however, we should take time for our prayers and let other things wait. If our prayers tend to be hurried, we do not fully appreciate the importance of prayer.

¹¹ Another pitfall we may need to avoid is that of repeating generalities. Such prayers also fail to do justice to the precious privilege of prayer. In his model prayer, Jesus set a fine example for us in this regard. He mentioned seven distinct petitions: three dealing with the triumph of righteousness, one with our daily physical needs, and three with our spiritual welfare.—Matthew 6:9-13.

¹² The apostle Paul also set us a fine example along these lines. He asked that others pray for him 'that ability to speak with boldness might be given him.' (Ephesians 6:18-20) He was just as specific in his own prayers in behalf of others. "This is what I continue praying," said Paul, "that your love may abound yet more and more with accurate knowledge and full discernment; that you may make sure of the more important things, so that you may be flawless and not be stumbling others up to the day of Christ, and may be filled with righteous fruit, which is through Jesus Christ, to God's glory and praise."—Philippians 1:9-11.

11. What is another pitfall we need to guard against, and what fine example did Jesus set in this regard?

12. Paul provides what fine examples as to being specific in our prayers?

¹³ Yes, our prayers should deal with specific things, and this requires that we give thought to our prayers. (Compare Proverbs 15:28.) While in the field ministry, we might ask God not only for his blessing on our efforts but also for wisdom, tact, largeheartedness, freeness of speech, or help for whatever weakness may tend to interfere with our effectiveness in witnessing. Moreover, could we not ask God to lead us to the ones hungering and thirsting for righteousness? Just before giving a public talk or having some part on a Service Meeting or in the Theocratic Ministry School, we can beg Jehovah to have his holy spirit dwell richly in us. Why? So that we may have confidence and poise, may speak with earnestness and conviction, so as to bring honor to God's name and build up our brothers. All such prayers are also conducive to our having the right frame of mind when speaking.

¹⁴ Do we have a fleshly weakness that wars against our spirituality and seems difficult to overcome? We should want to deal with it specifically in our prayers. And far from getting discouraged, we should never tire of humbly and earnestly asking God to help us and grant forgiveness. Yes, under such circumstances, we should want to go to Jehovah as a child goes to his father when in trouble, no matter how often we pray to God about the same weakness. If we are sincere, Jehovah will give us help and the realization that he has forgiven us. Under such circumstances, we can also draw comfort from the apostle Paul's confession that he had a problem.—Romans 7: 21-25.

13. How may we say meaningful prayers as regards our various kinds of service to Jehovah?

14. What should be our attitude regarding fleshly weaknesses difficult to overcome?

Aids in Offering Meaningful Prayers

¹⁵ For our prayers to be truly meaningful, we must make an effort to dismiss all outside considerations and to concentrate on the fact that we are coming into the presence of the Great God, Jehovah. We need to approach him with deep respect, appreciating his awesomeness. As Jehovah told Moses, no man can see God and yet live. (Exodus 33:20) So we need to approach Jehovah with due humility and modesty, which is a point Jesus stressed in his parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector. (Micah 6:8; Luke 18:9-14) Jehovah must be very real to us. We must have the same mental attitude as Moses had. "He continued steadfast as seeing the One who is invisible." (Hebrews 11:27) Such traits bear testimony that we have a good relationship with our heavenly Father.

¹⁶ Our prayers will also be meaningful if we come to Jehovah with hearts full of love and affection for him. For instance, what appreciation of Jehovah God and love for him the psalmist David expressed in Psalms 23 and 103! There is no question about David's having had a fine relationship with his Great Shepherd, Jehovah God. In the Theocratic Ministry School, we are counseled to speak with warmth and feeling. This should especially be the case when we are reading scriptures and even more so when we are praying to our heavenly Father. Yes, we want to feel as did David when he prayed: "*Make* me know your own ways, O Jehovah; teach me your own paths. *Make* me walk in your truth and teach me, for you are my God of salvation." Also indicative of how we should feel are these words of another psalmist: "I have called with my whole

15. With what mental attitude should we approach Jehovah God in prayer?

16. What part do our hearts play in saying meaningful prayers?

heart. Answer me, O Jehovah.”—Psalm 25:4, 5; 119:145.

¹⁷ To keep our prayers meaningful and to avoid making them repetitious, we do well to vary their thought content. The Bible text for the day or some Christian publication we have been reading might furnish a thought. The theme of the *Watchtower* lesson, of the public talk, or of the assembly or the convention we are attending might serve such a purpose.

¹⁸ To help us to get more into the mood of prayer and make our prayers more meaningful, it is good to change our physical position. For public prayers, we naturally bow our heads. But for more personal prayers, some have found it good to kneel before Jehovah when praying individually or as a family because they find that position conducive to their having a humble mental attitude. At Psalm 95:6 we are urged: “O come in, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before Jehovah our Maker.” Solomon knelt when offering his prayer at the dedication of Jehovah’s temple, and Daniel made it a habit to kneel when praying.—2 Chronicles 6:13; Daniel 6:10.

17. How can we keep our prayers from becoming repetitious?

18. To make our prayers more meaningful, what might we do in keeping with Biblical words and examples?

How Do You Respond?

- ☐ What are some meaningful prayers recorded in the Scriptures?
- ☐ Because of human imperfection, how might our prayers be flawed?
- ☐ How can we overcome certain flaws in our prayers?
- ☐ What are some aids in our offering meaningful prayers?

¹⁹ In view of the importance of prayer, appointed elders should use good judgment about whom they call upon to offer a public prayer on behalf of the congregation. The baptized man representing the congregation should be a mature Christian minister. His prayer should reveal that he has a fine relationship with God. And those privileged to offer such prayers should give thought to being heard, for they are praying not only in behalf of themselves but also in behalf of the entire congregation. Otherwise, how can the rest of the congregation join in saying “Amen” at the close of the prayer? (1 Corinthians 14:16) Of course, for the rest to be able to say a meaningful “Amen,” they must listen attentively, not letting their minds wander but truly making the prayer their own. Another word of caution that might be added is that since such prayers are offered to Jehovah God, they should not be used as an excuse for preaching to the listeners or for presenting some purely personal ideas.

²⁰ When our prayers that are spoken aloud are truly meaningful, they impart a blessing to the hearers. Because this is so, married couples and families would do well each day to have at least one common prayer. In it, one person, such as the family head, would speak for the other or for the rest.

²¹ For our prayers to be truly meaningful, there is yet another matter that merits our attention. This is the fact that we must be consistent as regards our prayers, this meaning what? That we live in harmony with our prayers and work at what we pray for. This aspect of our prayers will be considered in the succeeding article.

19. Those having the responsibility for public prayers would do well to have what facts in mind?

20. Because meaningful prayers spoken aloud impart a blessing to the hearers, what suggestion is made?

21. For our prayers to be meaningful, what is another matter that merits consideration?

Prayers Require Works

"Jehovah is far away from the wicked ones, but the prayer of the righteous ones he hears."—PROVERBS 15:29.

ALL of Jehovah's requirements are wise, just, and loving. By no means are they burdensome. (1 John 5:3) That includes his requirements regarding prayer, one of which is that we must lead lives in harmony with our prayers. Our course of action must please Jehovah God. Otherwise, how can we expect him to consider our petitions and supplications with favor?

² This is an aspect of prayer that is overlooked by most of those in Christendom, even as it was overlooked by the apostate Israelites in Isaiah's day. That is why Jehovah had his prophet represent him as saying: "Even though you make many prayers, I am not listening . . . Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the badness of your dealings from in front of my eyes; cease to do bad. Learn to do good." (Isaiah 1:15-17) Yes, if those Israelites wanted God's favor, they had to act in a way that pleased him. As has well been said: "If you would have God hear you when you pray, you must hear Him when He speaks."

³ In fact, Jehovah God repeatedly found it necessary to remind his people Israel of these truths. Thus we read: "He that is turning his ear away from hearing the law—even his prayer is something detestable" to God. "Jehovah is far away from the wicked ones, but the prayer of the

righteous ones he hears." (Proverbs 28:9; 15:29) Because of this situation, Jeremiah mourned: "You [Jehovah] have blocked approach to yourself with a cloud mass, that prayer may not pass through." (Lamentations 3:44) Truly, the warning that Micah was inspired to give was fulfilled: "They will call to Jehovah for aid, but he will not answer them. And he will conceal his face from them in that time, according as they committed badness in their dealings."—Micah 3:4; Proverbs 1:28-32.

⁴ So it is necessary to live in harmony with our prayers. Is it essential to stress this fact today? Indeed it is, not only because of the situation in Christendom but also because of the situation of some of Jehovah's dedicated people. Of the more than 3,000,000 publishers of the good news last year, upwards of 37,000 were disfellowshipped for conduct unbecoming a Christian. That amounts to a ratio of about one in 80. Quite likely, most of these individuals were praying at least now and then. But were they acting in harmony with their prayers? By no means! Even some elders who had been in the full-time service for decades were among those disciplined in one way or another. How sad! Truly, "Let him that thinks he is standing beware that he does not fall," that he does not act in a way that makes his prayers unacceptable to his Maker.—1 Corinthians 10:12.

1. What is one condition to be met if God is to answer our prayers?

2, 3. Why did Jehovah not answer the prayers of the Israelites, as seen by the words of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Micah?

4. What indicates that even among Jehovah's people some do not appreciate the need for works harmonizing with their prayers?

Why Prayers Require Works

⁵ For our prayers to be heard by Jehovah God, not only must we be morally and spiritually clean but we must also prove the sincerity of our prayers by working at what we pray for. Prayer alone is not a substitute for honest, intelligent effort. Jehovah will not do for us what we can do for ourselves by earnestly applying the counsel of his Word and following the guidance of his holy spirit. We should be willing to do all we can in this regard so that he will have a basis for answering our prayers. Thus, we 'should not be asking for more than we are willing to work for,' as someone has well put it.

⁶ However, the question may be asked: 'Why pray if we have to work at what we pray for?' We should pray for at least two good reasons. First, by our prayers we acknowledge that all good things come from God. He is the Giver of every good and perfect present—the sunshine, the rain, the fruitful seasons, and so much more! (Matthew 5:45; Acts 14:16, 17; James 1:17) Second, whether our efforts are successful or not depends upon Jehovah's blessing. As we read at Psalm 127:1: "Unless Jehovah himself builds the house, it is to no avail that its builders have worked hard on it. Unless Jehovah himself guards the city, it is to no avail that the guard has kept awake." Making the same point are these words of the apostle Paul at 1 Corinthians 3:6, 7: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God kept making it grow; so that neither is he that plants anything nor is he that waters, but God who makes it grow."

5. For Jehovah to answer our prayers, how must we prove our sincerity?

6. For what two reasons should we pray?

Some Ancient Examples

⁷ The Scriptures report many cases showing that Jehovah's faithful servants worked at what they prayed for. Let us consider a few representative examples. Because Abraham's grandson Jacob gained the birthright blessing, his older brother Esau bore him murderous hatred. (Genesis 27:41) Some 20 years later, when Jacob was returning from Paddan-aram to the land of his birth with a large household and much livestock, he heard that Esau was coming to meet him. Remembering Esau's animosity, Jacob prayed fervently to Jehovah for protection from his brother's wrath. But did he let it go at that? No, indeed. He sent generous gifts ahead of him, reasoning: "I may appease him by the gift going ahead of me." And so it turned out to be, for when the two brothers met, Esau embraced Jacob and kissed him.—Genesis, chapters 32, 33.

⁸ David furnished another example of working in behalf of what we pray for. When his son Absalom usurped his throne, David's counselor Ahithophel cast his lot with Absalom. So David made earnest supplication that Ahithophel's counsel might be frustrated. Did David merely pray to that effect? No, he instructed his loyal counselor Hushai to join Absalom so that he might frustrate Ahithophel's counsel. And that is the way things worked out. Absalom acted on the bad counsel given him by Hushai, rejecting the counsel of Ahithophel.—2 Samuel 15:31-37; 17:1-14; 18:6-8.

⁹ Yet another example that might be cited for our admonition is that of Nehe-

7, 8. (a) What incident in Jacob's life shows that he appreciated that works must accompany prayers? (b) What example did King David provide in this regard?

9. How did Nehemiah show that he appreciated the principle that prayers require works?



Jesus urged his disciples to pray for more harvest workers. But he also sent them out into the preaching, or 'harvesting,' work

miah. He had a large project to carry out—rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. However, many enemies were conspiring against him. Nehemiah both prayed and worked, even as we read: “We prayed to our God and kept a guard posted against them day and night.” From then on, half of Nehemiah’s young men stood ready to protect the other half, those building the wall.—Nehemiah 4:9, 16.

The Example of Jesus

¹⁰ Jesus Christ set us a fine example of working at what we pray for. He taught us to pray: “Let your name be sanctified.” (Matthew 6:9) But Jesus also did all he could so that his listeners might sanctify

10, 11. What examples provided by Jesus show that he acted in harmony with his prayers?

his Father’s name. Likewise, Jesus did not limit himself to praying: “Father, glorify your name.” (John 12:28) No, he did what he could to glorify his Father’s name and to get others to do so.—Luke 5:23-26; 17:12-15; John 17:4.

¹¹ Seeing the great spiritual need that the people had, Jesus said to his disciples: “The harvest is great, but the workers are few. Therefore, beg the Master of the harvest [Jehovah God] to send out workers into his harvest.” (Matthew 9:37, 38) Did Jesus let matters go at that? Not at all! Right after that, he sent out his 12 apostles in pairs on a preaching, or ‘harvesting,’ tour. Later, Jesus sent out the 70 evangelizers to do the same work.—Matthew 10:1-10; Luke 10:1-9.

Do you pray for help to control your television viewing? Then apply the principle that prayers require works by turning off your TV set

Applying the Principle

¹² Clearly, Jehovah God expects us to be consistent, to act in harmony with our prayers, thereby proving our sincerity. Jesus told us to pray: "Give us today our bread for this day." (Matthew 6:11) Rightly, therefore, all his followers petition God to that effect. But do we expect our heavenly Father to answer that prayer without our doing anything about it? Of course not. That is why we read: "The lazy one is showing himself desirous"—perhaps even by praying—"but his soul has nothing." (Proverbs 13:4) The apostle Paul made the same point at 2 Thessalonians 3:10, saying: "If anyone does not want to work, neither let him eat." Praying for our daily bread must be accompanied by a willingness to work. Interestingly, Paul wisely said that those who did not "want to work" should not eat. Some who want to work may be unemployed, sick, or too old to work. They do want to work, but this is beyond their circumstances. Hence, they may rightly

12. What bearing does work have on our prayers that God give us our daily bread?



pray for their daily bread and hope to receive it.

¹³ Jesus also counseled us to ask his heavenly Father for His holy spirit. As Jesus assures us, God is more willing to give us the holy spirit than earthly parents are to give good things to their children. (Luke 11:13) But can we expect Jehovah God to impart his holy spirit to us miraculously, without any effort on our part? By no means! We must do everything we can to receive holy spirit. In addition to praying for it, we need to feed

13. For Jehovah to answer our prayers for his holy spirit, what must we do?

diligently on God's Word. Why? Because Jehovah God does not give his holy spirit apart from his Word, and we cannot hope to receive holy spirit if we ignore the earthly channel Jehovah is using today, "the faithful and discreet slave," represented by the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses. Without help from this "slave," we would neither be able to understand the full import of what we read nor know how to apply what we learn.—Matthew 24:45-47.

¹⁴ The principle that prayers require works also applies to these words of the disciple James, the half brother of Jesus: "If any one of you is lacking in wisdom, let him keep on asking God, for he gives generously to all and without reproaching; and it will be given him." (James 1:5; Matthew 13:55) But does God impart this wisdom to us by some miracle? No. First of all, we must have the right attitude, as we read: "He will teach the meek ones his way." (Psalm 25:9) And how does God teach "the meek ones"? By means of his Word. Again, we must put forth an effort to understand it and apply it, as indicated at Proverbs 2:1-6: "My son, if you will receive my sayings and treasure up my own commandments with yourself, so as to pay attention to wisdom with your ear, that you may incline your heart to discernment; if, moreover, you call out for understanding itself and you give forth your voice for discernment itself, if you keep seeking for it as for silver, . . . in that case you will understand the fear of Jehovah, and you will find the very knowledge of God. For Jehovah himself gives wisdom."

¹⁵ When King Solomon prayed for wisdom and God miraculously answered his

14, 15. (a) For Jehovah to answer our prayers for wisdom, how must we cooperate? (b) How is this borne out by King Solomon's example?

prayer, did the principle that prayers require works also apply? Yes, it did, for as king of Israel, Solomon was required to write his own copy of the Law, read in it daily, and apply it to his life. But when Solomon went contrary to its instructions, as by multiplying wives and horses, his works were no longer in harmony with his prayers. As a result, Solomon became an apostate and died as such a "senseless one."—Psalm 14:1; Deuteronomy 17:16-20; 1 Kings 10:26; 11:3, 4, 11.

¹⁶ The principle that works must accompany prayers also applies when we are requesting God's help to overcome some ingrained, selfish habit. Thus a pioneer sister admitted to being addicted to soap operas, watching them from 11:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. every day. Learning from a district convention talk how harmful these immoral programs are, she took the matter to God in prayer. But it took quite a while for her to overcome the habit. Why? Because, as she said: 'I would pray to overcome the habit and then would watch the programs anyway. So I decided to stay in the field service the whole day so that I would not have the temptation. At last I got to the point that I could turn off the

16. What illustration shows that our prayers to overcome fleshly weaknesses must be accompanied by works?

In Our Next Issue

- Alcohol—What Is the Christian View of It?
- Christ Actively Leads His Congregation
- The Spirit That Jehovah Blesses

TV in the morning and keep it off all day.' Yes, in addition to praying to overcome her weakness, she had to work at overcoming it.

Prayer and Our Witnessing

¹⁷ Nowhere is the principle that prayers require works more true than in the Kingdom-preaching work. Thus, all of Jehovah's Witnesses not only pray for an increase in harvest workers but also apply themselves to that work. As a result, they have seen phenomenal increases in one land after another. To note just one example: In 1930 there was only one witness of Jehovah preaching in Chile. Today, that one Witness has become not only a thousand but some 30,000. (Isaiah 60:22) Was this merely the result of prayers? No, work was also involved. Why, in 1986 alone, Jehovah's Witnesses in Chile devoted over 6,492,000 hours to the preaching work!

¹⁸ The same is true when the preaching work is banned. Witnesses not only pray for increase but also go underground and keep on preaching. Despite official opposition, therefore, increases take place in these lands. Thus, in 33 lands where Jehovah's Witnesses meet with such official opposition, during the 1986 service year they devoted more than 32,600,000 hours to their preaching work and rejoiced in a 4.6-percent increase!

¹⁹ Of course, the principle that prayers require works also applies individually. We may pray to Jehovah to get a home Bible study but may not be doing all we can to obtain one. That was the experience of one pioneer. Having only one Bible study, she prayed to have more. Did she

17-19. (a) What facts show that Jehovah's Witnesses have been acting in harmony with their prayers? (b) What example of an individual makes the same point?

let matters go at that? No, but she carefully took note of her ministry and found that on her return visits she was not bringing up the subject of having a home Bible study. Proceeding along this line, she soon had two more Bible studies.

²⁰ Many more examples could be given to prove that prayers require works. For instance, there are those relating to personal relationships in the family or the congregation. But the foregoing examples should suffice to make it fully clear that prayers do require works. This is most logical, for we cannot expect Jehovah God to give favorable consideration to our petitions if we offend him by our very conduct. It also follows that we must do all we can in harmony with our prayers if we are to expect Jehovah to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. Truly, Jehovah's principles are wise and just. They make sense, and it is to our own benefit that we act in harmony with them.

20. How may the principle that prayers require works be summed up?

Do You Recall?

- ☐ What requirement regarding prayer was overlooked by many in ancient Israel?
- ☐ Why is God not unreasonable in requiring that we work as well as pray for what we desire?
- ☐ What ancient examples show that Jehovah's servants worked at what they prayed for?
- ☐ For God to answer our prayers for his holy spirit and for wisdom, what must we be doing?
- ☐ How does the principle that prayers require works apply to our field ministry?

William Tyndale's Bible for the People



From an old engraving in the Bibliothèque Nationale

IT WAS a day in May in the year 1530.* St. Paul's churchyard in London was crowded with people. Instead of milling around the booksellers' stalls and exchanging the latest news and gossip as usual, the crowd was visibly agitated. A fire was roaring at the center of the square. But it was no ordinary bonfire. Into the fire, some men were emptying basketfuls of books. It was a book burning!

Those were not ordinary books either. They were Bibles—William Tyndale's "New Testament" and Pentateuch—the first ever to be printed in English. Strangely, those Bibles were being burned at the order of the Bishop of London, Cuthbert Tunstall. In fact, he had spent a considerable sum buying all the copies he could find. What could possibly have been wrong with the Bibles? Why did Tyndale produce them? And why did the authorities go to such lengths to get rid of them?

The Bible—A Closed Book

In most parts of the world today, it is a relatively simple thing to purchase a Bible.

* Events similar to those described here had taken place in 1526 and at other times.

But this has not always been the case. Even in 15th- and early 16th-century England, the Bible was viewed as the property of the church, a book to be read only at public services and explained solely by the priests. What was read, however, was usually from the Latin Bible, which the common people could neither understand nor afford. Thus, what they knew of the Bible was no more than the stories and moral lessons drawn by the clergy.

But the common people were not the only ones ignorant of the Bible. Reportedly, during the reign of King Edward VI (1547-53), a bishop of Gloucester found that among 311 clergymen, 168 could not repeat the Ten Commandments and 31 did not know where to find them in the Bible. Forty could not recite the Lord's Prayer and about 40 did not know its originator. True, John Wycliffe had produced a Bible in English in 1384, and paraphrases of various parts of the Scriptures, such as the Gospels and the Psalms, existed in that tongue. Nevertheless, the Bible was in fact a closed book.

Conditions like these made Tyndale determine to make the Bible available to the English-speaking people. "I perceived how that it was impossible to establish the lay people in any truth," he wrote, "except the Scripture were plainly laid before their eyes in their mother tongue."

But by translating the Bible into English, Tyndale incurred the wrath of the authorities. Why? Because as early as 1408 a council of clergymen met at Oxford, England, to decide whether the common people should be allowed to have copies of

the Bible in their own tongue for personal use. The decision read, in part: "We therefore decree and ordain, that from henceforward no unauthorised person shall translate any part of the holy Scripture into English or any other language . . . under the penalty of the greater excommunication, till the said translation shall be approved either by the bishop of the diocese, or a provincial council as occasion shall require."

More than a century later, Bishop Tunstall applied this decree in burning Tyndale's Bible, even though Tyndale had earlier sought the approval of Tunstall.* In the opinion of Tunstall, Tyndale's translation contained some 2,000 errors and was therefore "pestilent, scandalous, and seductive of simple minds." But was this an excuse on the part of the bishop to justify his burning of it? Was Tyndale really a poor translator, lacking the necessary scholarship in Hebrew, Greek, and English? How good a translator was Tyndale?

Tyndale—A Poor Translator?

Although the understanding of Hebrew and Greek then was not what it is today, Tyndale's grasp of these languages compared well with that of most scholars of his time. What makes Tyndale's work stand out is that he did not merely consult the Latin *Vulgate* and Luther's German translation. He went back to the original Greek text published for the first time in 1516 by Erasmus. Tyndale also did not forget his purpose: to make the Scriptures easy enough for the ordinary layman to read, right down to the "boy who plows the field." So his style and idiom are simple and clear, yet powerful. And his lively rhythm no doubt reflects the joy that he experienced in undertaking the task.

So it is true to say that "Tyndale was a

* For more details on Tyndale's life and work, see *The Watchtower* of January 1, 1982, pages 10-14.

translator whose judgment was unusually good. Working in extraordinarily adverse conditions, at his day's frontiers of knowledge of biblical languages, he produced translations which set the pattern for all the English translators who followed." —*The Making of the English Bible*, by Gerald Hammond, pages 42, 43.

An Accurate Translation

In matters of accuracy Tyndale also set a high standard. For example, in translating from Hebrew, he tried to be as literal as possible while maintaining an easy, flowing English style. He was careful even to reproduce the Hebrew fullness of description with its frequent repetition of the word "and" joining clause after clause in a sentence. (See Genesis chapter 33 in the *King James Version*, which retains Tyndale's wording almost entirely.) He paid close attention to the context and avoided additions to or omissions from the original text, even though paraphrasing was resorted to by most translators of the time.

Tyndale's word choice was also careful and accurate. For example, he used "love" instead of "charity," "congregation" for "church," and "elder" rather than "priest" where appropriate. This infuriated critics like Sir Thomas More because it changed words that had come to be venerated through tradition. Where the original demanded the repetition of a word, Tyndale was careful to reproduce it. To illustrate: At Genesis 3:15, his translation twice speaks of 'treading' done by the seed of the woman and by the serpent.*

Tyndale was also responsible for intro-

* Many modern translators fail to note the repeated Hebrew verb here with its reciprocal meaning. So instead of "bruise . . . bruise" (*New World Translation*; *Revised Standard Version*), they use "crush . . . strike" (*The Jerusalem Bible*; *New International Version*), "crush . . . bite" (*Today's English Version*), "tread . . . strike" (*Lamsa*), or "crush . . . lie in ambush" (*Knox*).

ducing God's personal name, *Jehovah*, into the English Bible. As writer J. F. Mozley observes, Tyndale used it "more than twenty times in his Old Testament" translations.

Looking back on the effect of Tyndale's efforts and their enduring qualities, this modern assessment well sums up his work: "Tindale's honesty, sincerity, and scrupulous integrity, his simple directness, his magical simplicity of phrase, his modest music, have given an authority to his wording that has imposed itself on all later versions. . . . Nine-tenths of the Authorized New Testament [*King James Version*] is still Tindale, and the best is still his."—*The Bible in Its Ancient and English Versions*, page 160.

Tyndale's Work Not in Vain

To escape the persecution of the authorities, Tyndale fled to mainland Europe to continue his work. But he was at last caught. Convicted of heresy, he was strangled and burned at the stake in October 1536. His final prayer was: "Lord, open the King of England's eyes." Little did he know how soon the situation would change. In August 1537, less than a year after Tyndale's death, King Henry VIII gave authorization to the Bible generally known as Matthew's Bible. He decreed that it should be freely sold and read within his realm.

What was Matthew's Bible? Professor F. F. Bruce explains: "On examination it is seen to be substantially Tyndale's Pentateuch, Tyndale's version of the historical books of the Old Testament as far as 2 Chronicles . . . Coverdale's version of the other Old Testament books and Apocrypha, and Tyndale's New Testament of 1535." Thus, the writer continues, "it was a signal act of justice . . . that the first English Bible to be published under royal

licence should be Tyndale's Bible (so far as Tyndale's translation had reached), even if it was not yet advisable to associate Tyndale's name with it publicly."

In a few more years, the wheel was to turn full circle. When an edition of the translation known as the *Great Bible*—a revision of Matthew's Bible—was issued in 1541 and commanded to be placed in every church in England, the title page included this statement: "Oversene and perused at the comaundemet of the kynges hyghnes, by the ryghte reverende fathers in God Cuthbert bysshop of Duresme, and Nicholas bishop of Rochester." Yes, this 'Bishop of Durham' was none other than Cuthbert Tunstall, formerly Bishop of London. He who had so bitterly opposed the work of Tyndale was now giving approval to the issuing of the *Great Bible*, a work still essentially that of Tyndale.

Final Recognition

It may be surprising today to read of such controversy over the Bible and hatred for its translators. But perhaps more remarkable is the fact that, in spite of their efforts, opposers have been unable to prevent God's Word from reaching the common people. "The green grass has dried up, the blossom has withered," said the prophet Isaiah, "but as for the word of our God, it will last to time indefinite."—Isaiah 40:8.

Tyndale and others worked with the shadow of death looming over their heads. But by making the Bible available to many people in their native tongue, they opened before them the prospect, not of death, but of life eternal. As Jesus Christ said: "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ." (John 17:3) May we, therefore, cherish and diligently study God's Word.

Insight on the News

Tolerance of Sin No Virtue

In a recent address to church leaders, religion columnist Michael J. McManus stated that the churches have contributed to a disintegration of the American family. So reports *The Fresno Bee*, a California newspaper. McManus noted that there were 1.2 million divorces and 750,000 illegitimate births in the United States during 1985 and that 2.2 million unmarried couples were living together.

McManus indicated that, instead of staunchly upholding Biblical standards on morality, which urge fidelity in marriage, the church has taken a more passive role on such issues in an effort to bolster attendance. As an example, he cited a recent proposal "that the Episcopal Church drop its opposition to couples who live together without being married."

Such modernistic views on sex and marriage stand in sharp conflict with the Bible. The Christian apostle Paul stated: "Let marriage be honorable among all, and the marriage bed be without defilement." (Hebrews 13:4) When the Pharisees confronted Jesus Christ on the matter of divorce, he said that "a man will leave his father and his mother and will stick to his wife, and the two will be one flesh." He added: "Whoever divorces his wife, except on the ground of fornication, and marries another commits adultery." —Matthew 19:4, 5, 9.

Responding to proposed leniency by the church on such moral issues, McManus said: "The Episcopal Church has gotten to the point where it says its highest virtue is tolerance. Nowhere does Jesus say to tolerate

sin. He condemned sin." Well-informed Bible students agree.

Undeniable Evidence

"After years of proudly skeptical agnosticism, scientists are grudgingly beginning to give God a second look," observes columnist Pete McMartin of *The Vancouver Sun*, a British Columbia, Canada, newspaper. Although religion and science have been in conflict for centuries, "that's simply no longer true," says Wasley Krogdahl, a former University of Kentucky professor of astronomy and physics. He adds: "Cosmology has made it clear that the universe had a beginning, and that implies a creator." —*The State Journal-Register*, Springfield, Illinois.

At least some scientists are rethinking the origin of the universe. The reason? "The universe makes

a lot more sense than it did 50 years ago," explains astronomer Krogdahl. During the last 25 years, the development of more sensitive equipment has resulted in the discovery of quasars, neutron stars, and pulsars. Krogdahl concedes that as the knowledge of the universe increases, so does the evidence that there is a God. Such evidence, he notes, "has simply knocked the props out from under the atheists."

Yet, what has taken scientific minds years to accept after exhaustive research and study, students of the Bible have known for centuries. "[The Creator's] invisible attributes, that is to say his everlasting power and deity, have been visible, ever since the world began, to the eye of reason, in the things he has made." (Romans 1:20, *The New English Bible*) Simply put, the undeniable evidence has always been there.



U.S. Naval Observatory photo

Orion Nebula

'Fishing for Men' in the Arctic



Every summer many of Jehovah's Witnesses preach in "unassigned territories"—outlying areas with no established congregations. Many of them are working people and students who spend their vacation doing so. Others are full-time pioneers branching out in their ministry. They experience the joy of bringing the good news to isolated people and of being brought closer to their family and spiritual brothers. This is an account of such an expedition in the far north.

SLOWLY the fishing cutter *Skagstein* slid from the quay. It was an early summer's eve. A gentle easterly breeze rippled the sea and brought refreshing relief from the smell of fish and herring oil. Standing on deck, we waved good-bye to Båtsfjord, the largest fishing village in East Finnmark, Norway.

On board was a crew of eight. Øivind and Åshild had come to Båtsfjord 11 years earlier to help with the preaching work in this unassigned territory. Now, as they were moving to another area, a congregation of nearly 40 Kingdom publishers was flourishing here. The rest of the crew consisted of the skipper, Jarle (a professional fisherman and "seasonal" pioneer), two pioneer sisters, one excavator operator, one industrial worker, and one office clerk from the Norwegian Bethel Home. What had brought this group together? And on what kind of voyage were they embarking?

Going Island to Island

This time Jarle was not after codfish. The plan was for us to call from island to island and outpost to outpost on board *Skagstein* from Båtsfjord in the far north to Brønnøysund in the county of Nordland. We would be covering more than half the Norwegian coastline. Why? Well, many of these places can only



be reached by private boat, and it is just once every several years that Jehovah's Witnesses call at these places with the Kingdom message. We had decided to go 'fishing for men' in these outposts.—Matthew 4:18, 19.

The boat headed out of Båtsfjorden and went westward along the coast all night. It was the first of July. The midnight sun, hidden by a smooth blanket of clouds, shone with a grayish, soft light. Thousands of sea gulls and kittiwakes were visible on the cliffs. The roll and swell of the open sea was just fine, according to the skipper. But for some of us landlubbers, it was a bit rough.

The next morning we drew up alongside the quay at Honningsvåg. This is where our "fishing"—preaching work—was to begin. The people in northern Norway have a reputation for being hospitable. When we had given a short account of our mission, we were generally offered a seat on a kitchen stool and were served coffee. Then we had to give a full account of who we were, where we had come from, our occupation, the name and size of our boat, whether we had caught any fish thus far, and the remainder of our itinerary. Only after that was out of the way could we get to the real point of the visit—the good news of God's Kingdom.

Warm Response in the Frozen Arctic

Would the message appeal to these people on an island 300 miles (480 km) north of the Arctic Circle? What were they really concerned about? Exactly what people everywhere else are concerned about: social injustice, unemployment, money, family and personal problems. They were also worried about the tense world situation—north-south relations and the east-west conflict.

It was easy for us to point to the Bible's solution—God's Kingdom. And how rewarding to see pessimism and skepticism melt away and be replaced by joy and hope!

Many people in these faraway places have prayed for the Kingdom since childhood, but they have never really understood the meaning of such a prayer. (Matthew 6:9-13) We left Bible literature with many of the islanders and arranged to correspond with them in order to keep up their interest.

Though it was summertime, the temperature was only in the mid-30's (2° C) in Rolvsøy, and a strong wind was blowing. Shivering and tightly bundled up in his coat, one of the brothers approached a man standing along the shore.

"Are you cold?" the man inquired.

"Eh . . ." the brother hesitated.

"Come along and have something hot to eat and drink!"

Inside the house, the brother was led to the kitchen, where the man's wife was busy.

"Have you got some coffee for this chap?" the man asked.

Hot coffee was served along with chunks of bread, homemade cloudberry jam, and salmon. After a pleasant conversation, the brother left some Bible literature and went on to the next call, warm and encouraged. Such were the experiences of witnessing to the friendly and hospitable people in these remote, isolated areas.

An Enriching Experience

As *Skagstein* plowed its way through the waves from island to island, the crew was thrown together in more ways than one. Eight people living closely together for days and weeks on a 38-foot (12 m) boat soon get to know one another's distinctive traits. We learned to get along with one another and to be considerate. The rough edges were smoothed out, and our Christian personality was polished. (Colossians 3:9, 10) So the experience proved to be most rewarding.

Together, we discussed the daily Bible

text and talked about the experiences of the day. We would review what had been said and done and what might have been said and done. This stimulated us to put forth greater effort to be effective in talking to the people. The younger and newer ones received sound advice and encouragement to widen out in their ministry.

"I have been thinking about the full-time ministry ever since I was baptized," said 27-year-old Bjørn. "During our trip, the desire and courage to 'test Jehovah out' grew in me little by little. I experienced what great confidence we can have in Jehovah. The trip made it easier for me to get into the pioneer work."—Malachi 3:10.

The trip also helped us to see more clearly the urgency of the times. Many of the communities we visited were slowly dying. Fishing mills were shutting down. Post offices and shops were closing. People were worried as they saw young people moving on for opportunities in faraway towns and cities, leaving behind fine new houses and the traditional way of life. Around the world, millions are homeless and starving. Here you find empty homes and plenty of food from the sea. Yet, comparatively few want them. All of this is silent proof of a world out of balance.

On With the Journey

The expedition went on along the north side of Sørøya to Kvænangen. At some of the stops, we had to get ashore by rowboat. But at other places, *Skagstein* could pull up right alongside the quay. Many of the local people crowded around to see who these strangers were because we surely did not look like fishermen to them. When they found out that we were Jehovah's Witnesses coming with good news from the Bible, lively conversations usually followed.

After covering this area, we headed for Tromsø, where some of us would attend the

"Divine Peace" District Convention. This part of the journey was truly an outstanding experience. It was night, but the midnight sun shone brilliantly just over the horizon. To the right, darkened islands and islets stood in sharp silhouette. To the left, snow-covered mountains glistened in the sunlight. The weather was mild, and the sea was broken only by a slight ripple. All was calm and quiet, except for the rhythmic hum of the engine and a little soothing music from our radio. What a pleasant atmosphere!

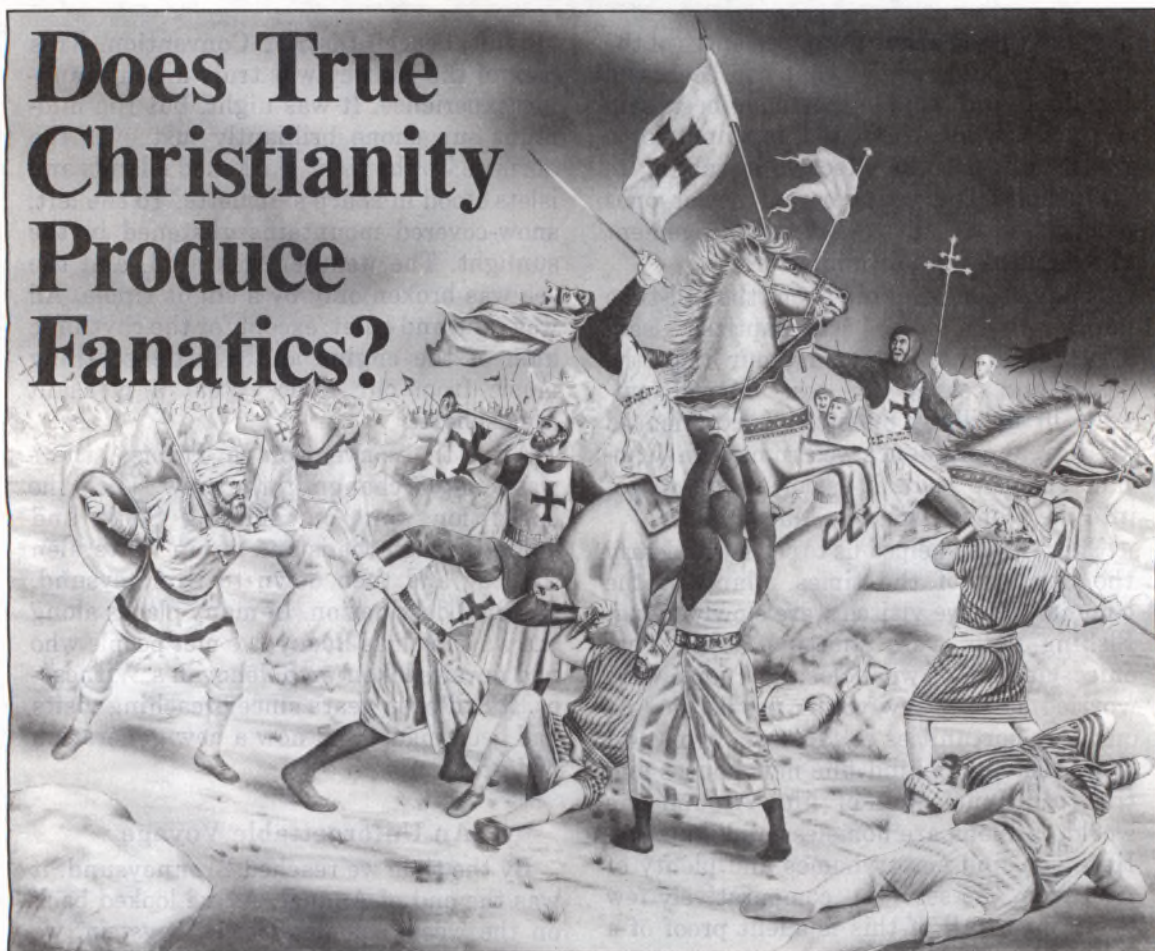
After the convention in Tromsø, there was a slight change in the crew. Then the expedition went on, skirting Senja and going through the island group Vesterålen to Bodø and then down to Brønnøysund, our final destination. In many places along the way, such as Rødøy, we met people who had never spoken with Jehovah's Witnesses. It had been years since preaching visits had been made, and now a new generation had grown up.

An Unforgettable Voyage

By the time we reached Brønnøysund, it was the end of August. As we looked back on the weeks spent aboard *Skagstein*, we felt that it was truly an unforgettable voyage. On this trip we had spent a total of 880 hours preaching the good news and had placed 126 books and 1,026 magazines, also obtaining 12 subscriptions for *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* An abundance of Kingdom seed had been sown in these sparsely populated areas.

"It was the finest vacation I've ever had!" exclaimed one of the young publishers who went on the trip. Those of us who were privileged to share in this journey heartily agreed. We felt that it was not only a fine vacation but one of the most spiritually beneficial and rewarding things we had ever done.

Does True Christianity Produce Fanatics?



CHRISTENDOM has had its fanatics—from people who set themselves on fire in political protest to individuals acting intolerantly toward those holding different religious views. For example, the first Crusade was inspired by the Catholic Church to free Jerusalem from the hands of people she considered to be infidels. It began with three undisciplined mobs whose violent excesses included a pogrom of Jews in the Rhineland. When the military forces of this Crusade succeeded in taking Jerusalem, these so-called Christian soldiers turned the streets into rivers of blood.

In his book *The Outline of History*, H. G. Wells said of the first Crusade: "The slaughter was terrible; the blood of the conquered ran down the streets, until men splashed in blood as they rode. At nightfall, 'sobbing for excess of joy,' the crusaders came to the Sepulchre from their treading of the winepress, and put their blood-stained hands together in prayer."

In a later Crusade called by Pope Innocent III, the peaceful Albigenses and Waldenses, who objected to the doctrines of Rome and the excesses of the clergy, were massacred. Regarding the fanaticism expressed against them, Wells wrote: "This

was enough for the Lateran, and so we have the spectacle of Innocent III preaching a crusade against these unfortunate sectaries, and permitting the enlistment of every wandering scoundrel . . . and every conceivable outrage among the most peaceful subjects of the King of France. The accounts of the cruelties and abominations of this crusade are far more terrible to read than any account of Christian martyrdoms by the pagans."

Christendom's history is full of accounts of fanatics, and they have usually produced fruits of violence. So we can conclude that fanaticism does not produce good fruitage. Funk and Wagnalls *New Standard Dictionary of the English Language* (1929 edition) defines fanaticism in the following way: "Extravagant or frenzied zeal." And it goes on to illustrate it with these words: "No period of history exhibits a larger amount of cruelty, licentiousness, and fanaticism than the Crusades."

It is also of interest to note the definition given to the word "fanatic" by Webster's *Third New International Dictionary*, 1961 edition. It says: 'Fanatic—Latin, inspired by a deity. 1. possessed by or as if by a demon; broadly: crazed, frantic, mad. 2. governed, produced, or characterized by too great zeal: extravagant, unreasonable; excessively enthusiastic, especially on religious subjects.' With these thoughts in mind, can it be said that true Christians are fanatics?

Identified by Fruits

As the fruit of a tree identifies it, so the results of human actions identify what kind of people are producing them. Jesus Christ, the Founder of Christianity, pointed this out. He said: "A good tree cannot bear worthless fruit, neither can a rotten tree produce fine fruit. Really, then, by their fruits you will recognize those men."—Matthew 7:18, 20.

Jesus founded true Christianity as a good tree. It could not, therefore, produce the bad fruits of fanaticism. At no time did Jesus urge his followers to do physical harm to themselves or to others. Instead, in quoting one of the two great commandments, he said: "You must love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:39) His followers were to be kind even to their enemies. Said Jesus: "Continue to love your enemies, to do good to those hating you, to bless those cursing you, to pray for those who are insulting you."—Luke 6:27, 28.

Jesus' true followers went out among people of many different nations, not with fire and sword, but with God's written Word and peaceful persuasion. No military armies accompanied them to other lands in order to slaughter, torture, and rape those who rejected Christian baptism. Instead, Jesus' disciples followed his peaceful example of preaching the good news of God's Kingdom to all, encouraging them to reason on information presented from the Scriptures. The fruits of their work included the fruitage of God's spirit—"love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control."—Galatians 5:22, 23.

It is not different today. True Christianity still produces good fruit. The tree, the Christian organization, that Jesus planted over 1,900 years ago was good, and it is still good. So it is incapable of producing the bad, intolerant, violent fruits of fanaticism. Why, then, has fanaticism been so common in Christendom?

The apostle Paul indicated that the time would come when imitation Christians would appear. They would bear the name Christian but not live up to it or produce its good fruits. He told elders from Ephesus: "I know that after my going away oppressive wolves will enter in among you and will not treat the flock with

There is no reason to view Jehovah's Witnesses as fanatics because of their zeal in the Christian ministry

tenderness, and from among you yourselves men will rise and speak twisted things to draw away the disciples after themselves." (Acts 20:29, 30) From these apostates arose Christendom with its hundreds of conflicting religious organizations teaching things that are merely represented as being Christian. Actually, they are "twisted things," ideas of men and not the truth of God's Word. It has been among these false Christians that the bad fruitage of fanaticism has manifested itself.

Is Christian Zeal Fanaticism?

It is true that fanaticism is a form of zeal. But fanaticism is an "extravagant or frenzied zeal," an "unreasonable" zeal. This cannot be said of true Christianity.

Repeatedly, the Bible admonishes Christians to be reasonable. For example, Philippians 4:5 says: "Let your reasonableness become known to all men." And Christians are counseled "to speak injuriously of no one, not to be belligerent, to be reasonable, exhibiting all mildness toward all men."—Titus 3:2.

Because Jehovah's Witnesses visit people in their homes to talk about the good news of God's Kingdom, they are different from the majority who claim to be Christians. This zeal in the Christian ministry is no basis for viewing them as fanatics. It is a reasonable zeal for a work that Jesus did and commanded his followers to do. (Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20) A person who sets aside many time-consuming personal activities in order to devote as much time as possible to the Kingdom-preaching work is not a fanatic. Instead, he shows his appreciation for the urgency

of helping others to learn about the life-giving truths of God's Word in the short time remaining for this work to be done. This is reasonable and beneficial.

Instead of being a fanatical work that injures others, this activity builds faith in God and his Word. It gives hope to those without hope, brings freedom from religious superstitions and ignorance, and transforms countless immoral and violent people into morally clean and peaceful Christians. These good fruits indicate a good organization.

In more than 200 lands, Jehovah's Witnesses maintain their loyalty to God's Kingdom, even though they are under official proscription in many places. Their loyalty to God, the Supreme Sovereign, can hardly be classed as fanaticism. He is the highest Authority, and when there is a conflict between his laws and those of a human government, a true Christian is obligated to obey him. Under human governments, local laws are sometimes nullified because they conflict with federal laws. Similarly, for true Christians human laws are nullified when in conflict with those of the Universal Sovereign, Jehovah God. Since a true Christian cannot obey two conflicting laws, he does what the apostles did. They said: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men." (Acts 5:29) This is reasonable.

The same reasonableness is shown by Jehovah's Witnesses with respect to national and religious celebrations that are in conflict with God's Word. It is not fanaticism to decline to participate in what the majority in a country are observing. Being different because of their religious conscience puts the Witnesses in the same

category as the early Christians, who did not participate in the popular celebrations of their day. And Jehovah's Witnesses are glad to give a Scriptural reason for their nonparticipation.—1 Peter 3:15.

Some persons may class the Witnesses as fanatics because of their refusal to accept blood transfusions, a procedure that is popular with the majority of doctors. Here again it is a matter of obedience to the law of God. True followers of Jesus Christ are commanded to "keep abstaining . . . from blood."—Acts 15:28, 29.

Is a person fanatical because, for conscience' sake, he rejects a medical procedure that is currently popular? Some people who are not Jehovah's Witnesses reject blood transfusions out of fear of contracting AIDS or other diseases. So is it unreasonable for the Witnesses to re-

quest medical treatment that does not violate their conscience?

What, then, should be concluded from this? That Jehovah's Witnesses are not fanatics because they are different from the majority and insist on being obedient to God. Although they have a zeal for God, they do not have an "extravagant or frenzied zeal" as if possessed by a demon; nor do they appear to be "crazed, frantic," or "mad." At no time do they out of religious zeal do violent harm to others or to themselves. Rather, in harmony with what the Bible says about true Christians, they are "peaceable with all men."—Romans 12:18.

So the Christian organization that Jesus Christ began in the first century as a good tree continues today producing only good fruit. It is, therefore, impossible for true Christianity to produce fanatics.

Questions From Readers

■ Are Jehovah and Jesus the ones meant at Proverbs 30:4, which asks: "What is his name and what the name of his son?"

This verse makes it evident how limited man is compared to the Most High. Its rhetorical questions could be asked about any man, but these questions should lead a reasoning person to the Creator.

The writer Agur asked: "Who has ascended to heaven that he may descend? Who has gathered the wind in the hollow of both hands? Who has wrapped up the waters in a mantle? Who has made all the ends of the earth to rise? What is his name and what the name of his son, in case you know?"—Proverbs 30:1, 4.

No imperfect human has gone up to heaven and come back omniscient; nor has any human the ability to control the wind, the seas, or the geological forces

shaping the earth. In effect, then, Agur asked: 'Do you know the name or family line of any man who has done these things?' We must answer no.—Compare Job 38:1-42:3; Isaiah 40:12-14; Jeremiah 23:18; 1 Corinthians 2:16.

Thus, we have to look outside the human sphere to find one who has the superhuman power to control natural forces. We are not, though, limited to learning about him by observing his accomplishments. (Romans 1:20) This is because he has, as it were, descended with information about himself and his dealings. He has provided specific information. He did this, for example, when he 'descended' to give the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai. (Exodus 19:20; Hebrews 2:2) He

has also helped his servants to appreciate his meaningful name, Jehovah. (Exodus 3:13, 14; 6:3) Later, he identified his Son, who was named Jesus and who literally descended from heaven with additional information about the Creator.—John 1:1-3, 14, 18.

This should help all of us to reach certain conclusions: Like Agur, we cannot from our own resources gain true wisdom. (Proverbs 30:2, 3) And we cannot name any human who has superlative powers or knowledge. Hence, we should humbly look to the One who is able to provide the wisdom we need. This is the Most Holy One, whose name we can know and whose Son has died so that we might be ransomed and gain everlasting life.—Matthew 20:28.

"This book should receive an Oscar"

The following letter was received from East Orange, New Jersey, U.S.A.

"Dear Sir:

"I recently had the pleasure of reading the book *Life—How Did It Get Here? By Evolution or by Creation?* I picked it up by accident while working in the mail room on my job. And I thought the book was just fascinating. The people who composed this wonderful piece of work deserve to be complimented. I don't give out free compliments, but they certainly have my sincere compliments.

"I have two lovely daughters, eleven and seven

years of age. I'm certain this book would prove to be a valuable instrument in the primary education they are now receiving. The book was very well written with large print—great for Dear Old Dad's eyes. This book should receive an Oscar [an award] because it is colorful, superbly illustrated and masterfully laid out. . . . Please tell me where and how to order. I want three copies, so please send some order forms and the price as soon as possible."