The Watchtower
Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom
December 1, 1987

FAITH HEALING —IS IT FROM GOD?

The Watchtower®

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

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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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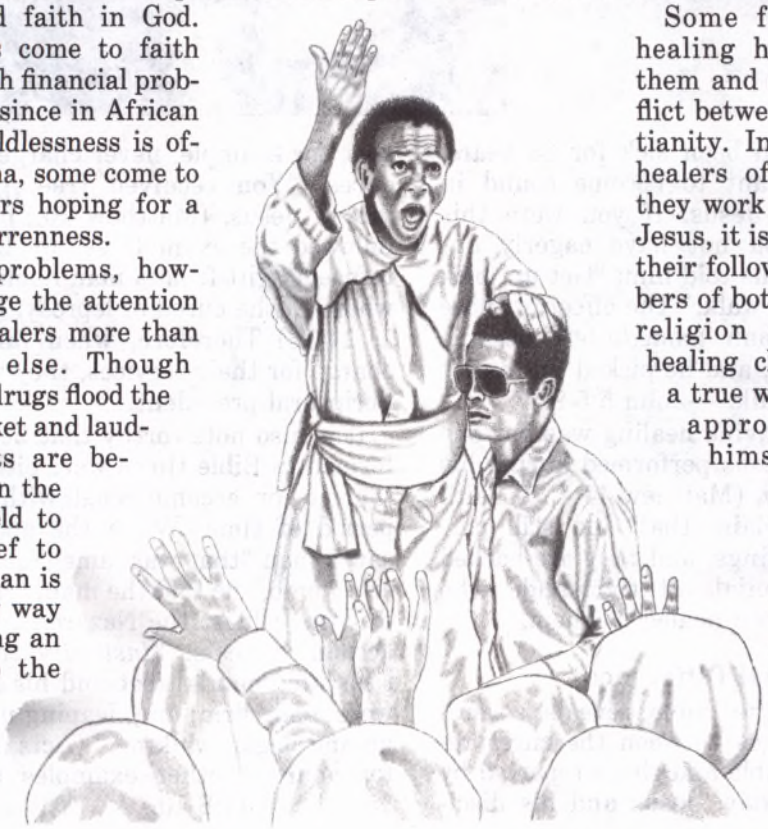
Faith Healing
What Is Its Appeal?

The church reverberates with the sound of the guitar, trumpet, drums, tambourines, and clashing cymbals. Men, women, and children dance and sing in a frenzied state of ecstasy. The mood is right for the healings to begin.

The faith healer, clad in flowing white robes, begins by laying his hands upon a crippled man who goes about on all fours. Next, a blind man, whose dark glasses cover his unseeing eyes. "It's a miracle!" onlookers cry as the lame begin to walk and the blind begin to see . . .

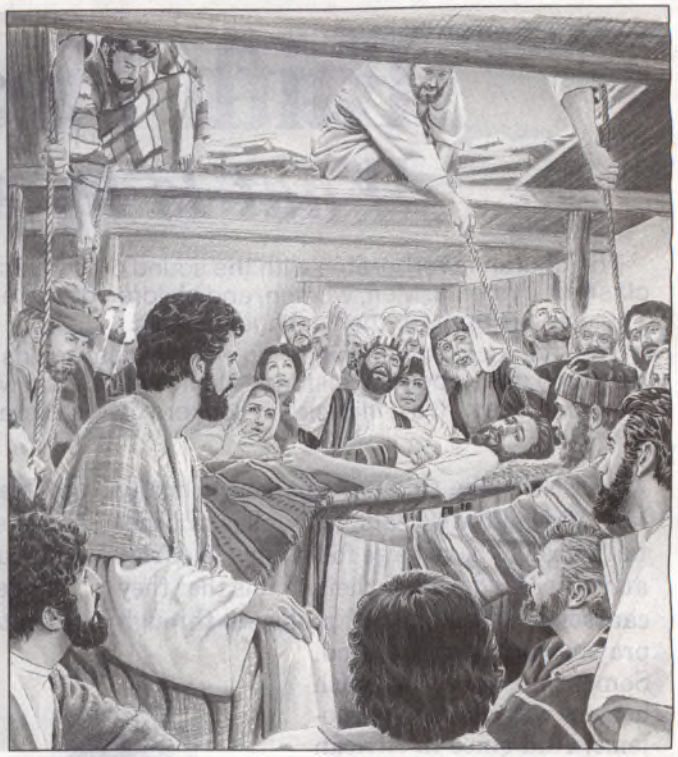
SCENES like this are common in many African faith-healing churches. Indeed, faith healers have large followings in Africa and other lands due to their claims that they can solve all manner of problems through prayer and faith in God. Some thus come to faith healers with financial problems. And since in African society childlessness is often a stigma, some come to faith healers hoping for a cure for barrenness.

Health problems, however, engage the attention of faith healers more than anything else. Though medicinal drugs flood the world market and laudable efforts are being made in the medical field to bring relief to the sick, man is still a long way from finding an answer to the problem of sickness. Some victims of illness have spent large sums of money searching for cures, only to meet with failure. No wonder, then, that in desperation, many turn to faith healers!



Some feel that faith healing has worked for them and can see no conflict between it and Christianity. Indeed, since the healers often claim that they work in the name of Jesus, it is not unusual for their followers to be members of both a mainstream religion and a faith-healing church. But can a true worshiper of God appropriately avail himself of a faith healer? (John 4:23) And can any cures effected by such a one really be attributed to God?

Faith Healing *Is It From God?*



THE man had been sick for 38 years. "Do you want to become sound in health?" asked Jesus. If you were this man, would you not have eagerly answered yes? Jesus told him: "Get up, pick up your cot and walk." The effect of those words? "The man *immediately* became sound in health, and he picked up his cot and began to walk."—John 5:5-9.

This feat of divine healing was but one of many that Jesus performed during his earthly ministry. (Matthew 11:4, 5) Faith healers today claim that God still performs such healings, and they are backed by the testimonials of thousands who claim to have been healed by them.

Crucial Differences

A study of the Bible reveals several crucial differences between the cures reported in the Bible and those reported by faith healers today. Jesus and his disciples, for example, never charged for their cures. "You received free, give free," taught Jesus. (Matthew 10:8) Thus they followed the example set by Elisha, who refused a gift from a man named Naaman whom Elisha cured of leprosy. (2 Kings 5: 1, 14-16) Therefore, when faith healers charge for their services, they violate this Scriptural precedent.

It is also noteworthy that healings performed in Bible times were either instantaneous or accomplished within a short period of time. When the apostle Peter saw a man "that was lame from his mother's womb," he told the man: "In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, walk!" The account reveals: "*Instantly* the soles of [the lame man's] feet and his anklebones were made firm; and, leaping up, he stood up and began walking." (Acts 3:1-8) Read for yourself other examples at Acts 5: 15, 16 and 14:8-10.

Faith healers seldom cure persons with organic problems

Today's faith-healing cures, however, often take days, weeks, or even months to work! Noteworthy, too, is the fact that faith healers tend to focus on functional illnesses, such as blindness, paralysis, or deafness—maladies that at times have a psychological basis. Observes surgeon Paul Brand: "Once an organic fact has become incontrovertible—missing legs, eyes, or hair follicles—miracles rarely occur." Jesus, however, cured "every sort of disease and every sort of infirmity," including defects obviously organic in nature, such as a shriveled hand.—Matthew 9:35; Mark 3:3-5.

'You Lack Faith!'

Tragically, many grievously ill people attend 'healing crusades' only to return home as sick as ever. Faith healers explain away such failures by claiming, 'They lack faith!' This, however, smacks of fraud. As Dr. William Nolen observes: "Unlike the orthodox physician, a psychic healer never has to take the responsibility when his healing fails. I must confess that I would like the option of resorting to such an excuse when I encounter a patient whom I cannot cure."

Neither God's prophets, Jesus, nor Jesus' disciples ever had need to offer the excuse that the infirm one was not cured because he lacked faith. True, a lack of faith may have limited the number of people who came forward to be healed. But for those who did come forward, a complete cure always took place!—Mark 6:5, 6.

Indeed, in some cases people obviously lacking faith were cured. Naaman, the chief of the Syrian army, for example, did not fully believe he could be cured of his leprosy in the way the prophet Elisha directed. It was only after his cure that he admitted: "Here, now, I certainly know that there is no God anywhere in the earth but in Israel." (2 Kings 5:11-13, 15) The flimsy excuses of faith healers thus fall flat.

Healing—A Gift That Passed Away

But is it not true that miraculous gifts of healing were common among early Christians? (1 Corinthians 12:9) Yes, but there was good reason for the miracles that took place back then. For a millennium and a half, the nation of fleshly Israel was God's chosen people; but in the first century of our Common Era, Israel was rejected because of its lack of faith and replaced by the new Christian congregation. Those early Christians needed extraordinary help to strengthen their faith and to give evidence to the outside world that they had Jehovah God's backing.

Thus, miraculous gifts, including healing, were given the infant Christian congregation. These served as "a sign" to unbelievers and as a means of building up the faith of believers. (1 Corinthians 14:

22) However, nearly two thousand years later, Christianity is no longer in its infancy. (Compare 1 Corinthians 13:9-13.) The Bible has long been completed and is in circulation by the millions of copies. So true Christians today can easily direct unbelievers to its pages in support of what they teach. Miraculous manifestations are no longer needed.

Paul further indicated that supernatural gifts would "be done away with." (1 Corinthians 13:8) Such gifts were passed on only directly by or in the presence of Christ Jesus' apostles. (Acts 8:18-20; 10: 44-46; 19:6) After the death of the apostles, miraculous manifestations ceased.

The *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature* by McClintock and Strong (Volume VI, page 320) observes that it is "an uncontested statement that during the first hundred years after the death of the apostles we hear little or nothing of the working of miracles by the early Christians."

Reason to Beware

Jesus Christ warned that a time would come when many would say to him: "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and expel demons in your name, and perform many powerful works in your name?" And yet Jesus would tell them: "I never knew you! Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness." (Matthew 7: 22, 23) What, then, accounts for their seeming success in performing "powerful works" if it is not the spirit of God?

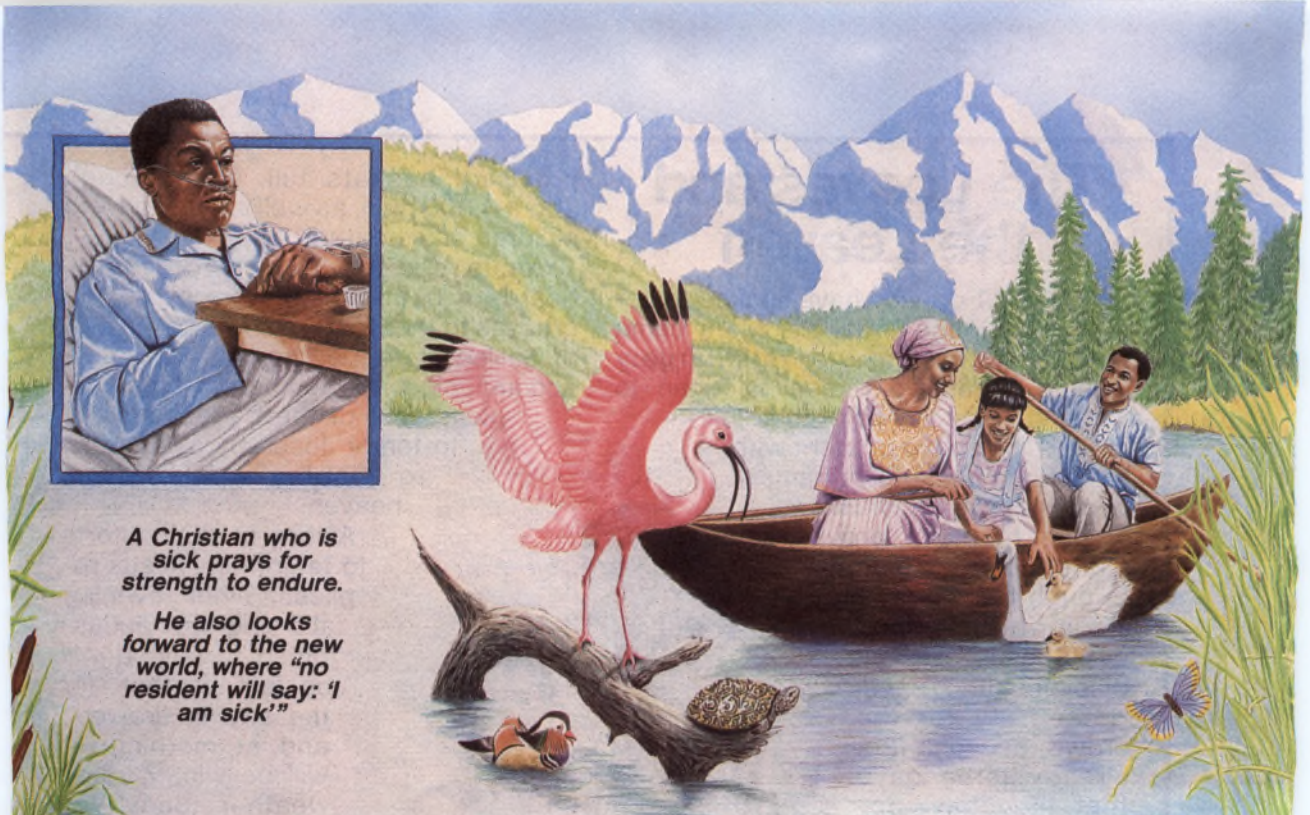
In some cases, outright fraud appears to be involved. For example, *The Herald,* a newspaper of Zimbabwe, reported on three individuals whom a famous faith healer heralded as having been cured. The paper exposed this as a fraud: "One child can still neither hear nor speak; one child was never deaf or dumb; and a woman, who was just deaf, still cannot hear."

At times, faith healing appears to have a placebo effect upon the sufferer. In other cases—especially where a long period of time elapses before the cure manifests itself—it appears that the body's natural healing mechanism is involved. In the book *Science and the Paranormal,* Dr. William Nolen claims that "about 80 percent of the patients who come to [an orthodox physician] have self-limited diseases —that is, diseases from which they will recover spontaneously." With the passage of time, therefore, a faith healer can easily take credit for the cure.

Finally, the Bible warns that "Satan himself keeps transforming himself into an angel of light" in an attempt to deceive. (2 Corinthians 11:14) At 2 Thessalonians 2:9, 10, Paul further explained: "The lawless one's presence is according to the operation of Satan with every powerful work ["all kinds of miracles," *The Jerusalem Bible*] and lying signs and portents and with every unrighteous deception for those who are perishing." So beware! Faith healing often involves demonic powers! "I do not want you to become sharers with the demons," warned Paul. "You cannot be drinking the cup of Jehovah and the cup of demons."—1 Corinthians 10: 20, 21.

When a Christian Is Sick

True, when one is ill, a miraculous cure may seem an attractive possibility. Notice, though, that the apostle Paul's fellow worker Epaphroditus became sick nearly to the point of death. (Philippians 2:25-27) Paul's close companion Timothy likewise suffered "frequent cases of sickness." (1 Timothy 5:23) Yet, Paul did not cure either of these men miraculously. And when Paul needed medical attention himself, he may have used the services of Luke, "the beloved physician," who traveled with him.—Colossians 4:14.



A Christian who is sick prays for strength to endure.

He also looks forward to the new world, where "no resident will say: 'I am sick'"

Likewise today, a Christian who is ill can seek the aid of a qualified physician or therapist, avoiding any dabbling in demon-inspired cures or in the quackery that is so common in many lands today. He can also pray, not for a miraculous cure, but for wisdom to deal with the illness. (James 1:5) He can also implore that Jehovah "sustain him upon a divan of illness."—Psalm 41:3.

Granted, it can be most discouraging when medical science is unable to cure a particular ailment. Nevertheless, even when ill a Christian must strive to "make sure of the more important things," not allowing concern over health to overshadow spiritual concerns completely. (Philippians 1:10) He can sustain himself with the hope of living under God's Kingdom when "no resident will say: 'I am sick.'" —Isaiah 33:24; 65:17-19.

Really, this hope of a righteous new world is of far more value than the empty promises of faith healers. Consider Peter, a blind man living in Akumadan, Ghana. He spent a total of 26 years in different faith-healing churches in hopes that his blindness would be cured. But no faith healer opened his eyes. Then, while still attending a faith-healing church, he was contacted by Jehovah's Witnesses.

The Witnesses explained from the Bible that under God's Kingdom a total healing of all infirmities would take place. This opened Peter's eyes of understanding. Full of appreciation for the Bible's wonderful truths, he became a full-time proclaimer of God's Kingdom and has served as such for over three years! He looks forward to the time when, in a literal way, "the eyes of the blind ones will be opened, and the very ears of the deaf ones will be unstopped."—Isaiah 35:5, 6.

With the help of God's Word, thousands of others have similarly freed themselves from mistaken trust in faith healers.

The Loaves and the Leaven

GREAT crowds have flocked to Jesus in the Decapolis. Many came a long way to this largely Gentile-populated region to listen to him and to be healed of their infirmities. They have brought with them large baskets, or hampers, that they customarily use to carry provisions when traveling through Gentile areas.

Eventually, however, Jesus calls his disciples and says: "I feel pity for the crowd, because it is already three days that they have remained near me and they have nothing to eat; and if I should send them off to their homes fasting, they will give out on the road. Indeed, some of them are from far away."

"From where will anybody here in an isolated place be able to satisfy these people with loaves?" the disciples ask.

Jesus inquires: "How many loaves have you?"

"Seven," they answer, "and a few little fishes."

Instructing the people to recline on the ground, Jesus takes the loaves and the fishes, prays to God, breaks them, and begins giving them to his disciples. They, in turn, serve the people, who all eat to satisfaction. Afterward, when the leftovers are picked up, there are seven provision baskets full, even though about 4,000 men, as well as women and children, have eaten!

Jesus sends the crowds away, boards a boat with his disciples, and crosses to the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. Here the Pharisees, this time accompanied by members of the religious sect of the Sadducees, try to tempt Jesus by asking him to display a sign from heaven.

Aware of their efforts to tempt him, Jesus replies: "When evening falls you are accustomed to say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is fire-red'; and at morning, 'It will be wintry, rainy weather today, for the sky is fire-red, but gloomy-looking.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but the signs of the times you cannot interpret."

With that, Jesus calls them wicked and adulterous and warns them that, as he told the Pharisees earlier, no sign will be given them except the sign of Jonah. Departing, he and his disciples get in a boat and head toward Bethsaida on the northeast shore of the Sea of Galilee. En route the disciples discover that they have forgotten to bring bread, there being but one loaf among them.

Having in mind his encounter with the Pharisees and the Sadducean supporters of Herod, Jesus admonishes: "Keep your eyes open, look out for the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Her-

od." Since the disciples believe that Jesus is referring to their forgetting to *bring* bread, leaven evidently suggesting to their minds the idea of bread, they begin to argue about the matter. Noting their misunderstanding, Jesus says: "Why do you argue over your having no loaves?"

Recently, Jesus had miraculously provided bread for thousands of people, performing this last miracle perhaps only a day or two before. They should know that he is not concerned about a lack of literal loaves. "Do you not remember," he reminds them, "when *I* broke the five loaves for the five thousand men, how many baskets full of fragments you took up?"

"Twelve," they reply.

"When I broke the seven for the four thousand men, how many provision baskets full of fragments did you take up?"

"Seven," they answer.

"Do you not yet get the meaning?" Jesus asks. "How is it you do not discern that I did not talk to you about loaves? But watch out for the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

The disciples finally get the point. Leaven, a substance to cause fermentation and make bread rise, was a word often used to denote corruption. So now the disciples understand that Jesus is using a symbolism, that he is warning them to be on guard against "the *teaching* of the Pharisees and Sadducees," which teaching has a corrupting effect. **Mark 8:1-21; Matthew 15:32–16:12.**

- Why do people have large provision baskets with them?
- After leaving the Decapolis, what boat trips does Jesus take?
- What misunderstanding did the disciples have regarding Jesus' comment about leaven?
- What did Jesus mean by "the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees"?

Fear of God
Can It Benefit You?

"Fear the true God and keep his commandments. For this is the whole obligation of man."
—ECCLESIASTES 12:13.

DOES the expression "fear of God" sound strange to you? Many may feel that if they really love God, they should not have to fear him too. Do we really have to do both? If so, how does the fear of God benefit us?

[2] The Scriptures show that our worship and service of God must be based on love. Jesus made this clear when he told us to love Jehovah with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength. (Mark 12:30) But the importance of fearing God is also stressed in his Word. Very pointedly, we are told at Ecclesiastes 12:13: "Fear the true God and keep his commandments. For this is the whole obligation of man." Is Jehovah inconsistent in asking us to fear him and to love him at the same time?

[3] Not really—if we keep in mind that there are different kinds of fear. When people think of fear, they usually have in mind a morbid feeling that destroys hope and makes us discouraged. Obviously, Jehovah would not want us to feel that way about him! Our heavenly Father wants us to come to him just as a child would come to his father, confident of his father's love and yet at the same time fearing to displease him. Such fear will help us remain obedient to our heavenly Father when tempted to do wrong. This is a proper "godly fear" that Christians must have.—Hebrews 5:7; 11:7.

[4] Jehovah is not like an unfeeling judge who simply punishes his servants each time they slip. Rather, he loves them and wants them to succeed. So if we make a mistake or commit a sin, fear of Jehovah should not restrain us from speaking to him about it. (1 John 1:9; 2:1) Our respectful fear of Jehovah is not a fear of being rebuffed or rejected. As we read at 1 John

1, 2. (a) On what should our worship of God be based? (b) What else, however, does God require? (Deuteronomy 10:12)
3. Concerning fear, what must be kept in mind?
4. What type of fear would love eliminate?

4:18: "There is no fear in love, but perfect love throws fear outside, because fear exercises a restraint." "Perfect love," however, would not eliminate the deep respect and proper fear that we should have for Jehovah as our Creator and Life-giver. —Psalm 25:14.

Consider the Benefits

5 Let us consider some of the benefits that flow from "the fear of Jehovah." For example, it leads to our gaining true wisdom. Men have tried in many ways, they have spared no effort, to gain such wisdom, but they have failed because they ignore a basic principle: "The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom." (Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 9:10) Consider how such fear helped a former drug addict to act wisely. He explains: "As I took in knowledge of God, I also developed a fear of hurting or displeasing him. I knew he was watching, and I had a longing to be approved in his sight. It moved me to destroy the drugs that were in my possession by flushing them down the toilet." This man overcame his bad practices, dedicated his life to Jehovah, and is now a minister in Johannesburg, South Africa.

6 Would you like to avoid what is bad? "The fear of Jehovah means the hating of bad." (Proverbs 8:13) Yes, this proper fear can keep you from many bad habits that God condemns, such as smoking, drug abuse, drunkenness, and sexual immorality. Besides pleasing Jehovah, you are protecting yourself against the horrible things that happen to people, including the fearsome diseases to which they expose themselves. (Romans 1:26, 27; 12: 1, 2; 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8) Fear of God not only will help you to guard against what is bad and perverse but will lead you to what is pure and wholesome, for we are told that "the fear of Jehovah is pure."—Psalm 19:9.

7 Happiness is another goal sought by most people. How can you gain it? Says God's Word: "Happy is the man in fear of Jehovah." (Psalm 112:1; 128:1) The experience of a teenage girl verifies this. She had become involved in all types of illicit sex, as well as spiritism and stealing. She then began to study the Bible and saw the need to listen to and fear Jehovah. She says: "Knowing Jehovah is the best thing that has happened to me. Jehovah helped me so much in finding the truth and happiness. I feel I owe so much to him because he opened my eyes and gave me the chance really to think and find him. I now want to help other people find this happiness."

8 Jehovah also promises that he will reward 'those fearing his name.' (Revelation 11:18) Furthermore, "the fear of Jehovah tends toward life, and one will spend the night satisfied; one will not be visited with what is bad." (Proverbs 19:23) Really, it is "the fear of Jehovah" that will bring to us all that we would ever need. When linked with humility, the result is "riches and glory and life."—Proverbs 22:4; 10:27.

9 Does this not give us every encouragement to fear the true God? Indeed, "the fear of Jehovah" is most appealing. It leads to all the things that will bring us true satisfaction—a rare experience today. How encouraging these inspired words are: "Although a sinner may be doing bad a hundred times and continuing

5. (a) How only can wisdom be gained? (b) What prompted a former drug addict to change his unwise course in life?
6. How will "the fear of Jehovah" protect us against bad things, and to what will it lead us?
7, 8. (a) How did one young girl experience that "the fear of Jehovah" leads to happiness? (b) Mention further benefits that come to those who fear Jehovah.
9. Why does "the fear of Jehovah" lead to the only course in life that shows wisdom? (Job 28:28; Micah 6:9)

Fear of Jehovah will help youths reject temptations to do what is bad

a long time as he pleases, yet I am also aware that it will turn out well with those fearing the true God, because they were in fear of him. But it will not turn out well at all with the wicked one, neither will he prolong his days that are like a shadow, because he is not in fear of God"! (Ecclesiastes 8:12, 13) Who is the man that does not desire matters to "turn out well" for him? This happy experience will be enjoyed only by those who fear God.—Psalm 145:19.

[10] Should this not make us determined to have a profound reverence for our heavenly Father Jehovah, yes, an awe of him? Really, we should have a wholesome dread of displeasing him. We deeply appreciate all the loving-kindness and goodness that he has shown to us. Everything we have has come from him. (Revelation 4:11) Moreover, he is the Supreme Judge, the Almighty, with power to put to death those who disobey him. "Keep working out your own salvation with fear and trembling," urges the apostle Paul. —Philippians 2:12; Hosea 3:5; Luke 12:4, 5.

[11] There is no indication here that we can gain salvation by adopting a lackadaisical attitude, doing as little as possible and hoping that somehow things will turn out well. This is not the attitude to be displayed by Christians who in these last days are striving to maintain a relationship with the One who can see right into their hearts and who knows their innermost thoughts and intentions. (Jeremiah 17:10) Only those who have a proper recognition of Jehovah will be acknowledged by him. He says: "To this one, then, I shall look, to the one afflicted and contrite in spirit and trembling at my word." —Isaiah 66:2.

We Must Learn to Fear Jehovah

[12] Considering Jehovah's dealings with Israel can further impress on our minds the need to fear him. No other nation

10. What are some vital reasons that should move us to fear God?

11. (a) What attitude should be avoided by Christians in these last days? (b) What spirit should be developed?

12. (a) In what ways was the nation of Israel favored above other nations? (b) What did Jehovah expect in return?

experienced such care and attention from the Sovereign of the universe. (Deuteronomy 4:7, 8, 32-36; 1 Samuel 12:24) With their own eyes the Israelites saw what Jehovah did to the Egyptians, who, having no fear of him, enslaved and oppressed his people. What did he expect in return? "Congregate the people, the men and the women and the little ones and your alien resident who is within your gates, in order that they may listen and in order that they may learn, as they must fear Jehovah your God and take care to carry out all the words of this law. And their sons who have not known should listen, and they must learn to fear Jehovah your God all the days that you are living upon the soil to which you are crossing the Jordan to take possession of it."—Deuteronomy 31: 12, 13; 14:23.

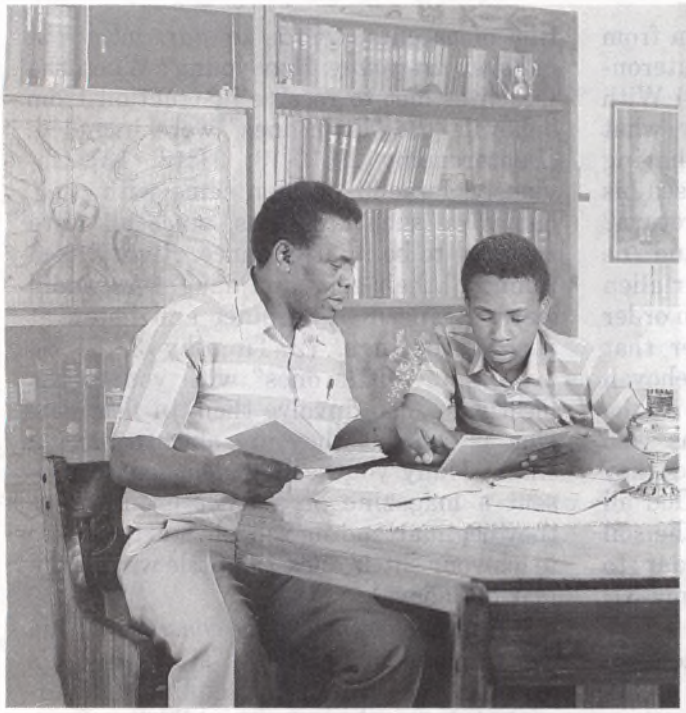
[13] As with the Israelites, God's modern-day servants "must learn to fear Jehovah." What a responsibility this places on all of us—parents especially! Parents, ask yourselves: 'How can I assist my children to gain a heart that fears Jehovah?' One day when they grow up and leave home, what will provide better protection for your children, spiritually, mentally, or materially, than that? Jehovah himself stresses the importance of this when he pleads: "If only they would develop this heart of theirs to fear me and to keep all my commandments always, in order that it might go well with them and their sons to time indefinite!"—Deuteronomy 5:29; 4:10.

[14] Any Christian who has raised a family will readily agree that this is not an easy task. Nevertheless, God's inspired Word brings several vital factors to the attention of parents. One is to *start when the children are young.* How young? When the Israelites met to receive instruction from Jehovah, the "little ones" were included. (Deuteronomy 29:10-13; 31:12, 13) Obviously, Israelite women came with their babies on such occasions, since all were required to be in attendance. Right "from infancy," their sons and daughters would learn the need to be quiet and listen at such gatherings. (2 Timothy 3:15) So bring your "little ones" with you to the meetings. Also, involve them in field service as soon as they are able to have a share. Many youths have learned to present a magazine or a tract even before they begin attending school. Start early to teach your "little ones," in little ways, "the fear of Jehovah."

[15] Another factor is to *be consistent.* This can be done if we always stick to God's Word in the training, discipline, and instruction we give to our children. Even when it comes to relaxation or recreation, be consistent in allowing Bible principles to dictate what will be allowed on such occasions. (Ephesians 6:4) This will require effort, as God's Word so clearly indicates when it says: "And these words that I am commanding you today must prove to be on your heart; and you must inculcate them in your son and speak of them when you sit in your house and when you walk on the road and when you lie down and when you get up." (Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 4:9; 11:18-21) Such consistency over the years will do much to help your children to develop a heart that fears Jehovah.

[16] Parents must also strive to impress on the minds and hearts of their children

13. What should be of primary concern to parents regarding their children?
14. Name one factor that parents should keep in mind in training their children to be fearers of Jehovah, and explain how this should be applied.
15. What is a second factor, and how can parents accomplish it?
16. (a) What is the third factor, and why is this so important? (b) What questions could parents ask themselves?



Parents should help their children to develop a wholesome fear of Jehovah

that they themselves, as parents, are "fearers of Jehovah." (Psalm 22:23) One way in which they can do this is by *applying theocratic counsel* when training and disciplining their children. This is the third factor to be considered. Ask yourself: 'Am I regularly having a Bible study with my children?' 'Do I put to full use for my younger children such aids as *My Book of Bible Stories* and *Listening to the Great Teacher?*' 'As they grow older, am I using the book *Your Youth—Getting the Best out of It* and the "Young People Ask" articles in *Awake!?*' 'Do I arrange for wholesome recreation and entertainment that will not have a detrimental effect on my children?' 'Have I accepted what has been said by Jehovah's organization about higher education?' 'Am I instructing my children accordingly?' 'Are the goals that I have set for my children ones that will help them to have "godly fear"?'—Hebrews 5:7.

[17] The benefits and joys will come not only to your children but also to you for doing all you can to instruct them in "the fear of Jehovah." For example, a Witness who at the end of a day feels, as she says, "battle-scarred" considers everything worth while when she hears her seven-year-old daughter pray to Jehovah. Tears come to her eyes and a lump to her throat as she listens to her daughter's prayer: "Loving Jehovah, thank you for all the good things you've done for me today. And thank you for my food. Help all the brothers in prison and the concentration camps to get food, Jehovah, and all the thin brothers and sisters in other lands. Help them also to get enough food, Jehovah. And those who are sick, help them get better so they can go to the meetings. Let the angels

17. Who benefit when children learn to fear Jehovah? Illustrate.

Points to Ponder

- How can we both love and fear Jehovah?
- What are some of the benefits of fearing Jehovah?
- What three factors can help parents to assist their children to develop a heart that fears Jehovah?
- How do we affect one another in the matter of fearing Jehovah?

"It will turn out well with those fearing the true God."
—Ecclesiastes 8:12

By courtesy of Hartebeespoort Snake and Animal Park

please look after me while I sleep in the night, Jehovah, and my mommy and daddy, and my brother, and my granny and grandpa, and all the brothers and sisters in the truth. Through your Son Jesus, Amen."

18 In this matter of fearing Jehovah, we must remember that we affect one another by the example we set. Parents affect their children. Elders and ministerial servants affect their congregations. Traveling overseers affect those whom they serve. Obviously, this is why the kings in Israel were instructed to read God's Law all the days of their life so that they "may learn to fear Jehovah." (Deuteronomy 17:18-20) The example that the king would set in fearing Jehovah could affect the entire nation.

19 History testifies to the fact that Israel, as a nation, lost their fear of Jehovah. They thought that having the temple in Jerusalem would serve as a protection for them, like some sort of "lucky" charm, regardless of whether they obeyed his laws or not. (Jeremiah 7:1-4; Micah 3:11, 12) But they were wrong. Jerusalem and its temple were destroyed. Later, when they were reestablished as a nation, they again failed to show proper fear of Jehovah. (Malachi 1:6) There is much we can learn from this experience, which will be covered in the next article.

20 Remember, then, that fear of Jehovah does not weaken our love for him; rather, it strengthens and reinforces it. Obedience to all his commands will prove not only that we fear Jehovah but that we love him. Both are vital. It is impossible to have the one without the other. How important it is for parents to inculcate this godly fear of Jehovah and love for him into their children! And what great joy this brings to both old and young! May we, therefore, feel the same way as the psalmist did when he said: "Unify my heart to fear your name." —Psalm 86:11.

18. How do we affect one another in this matter of fearing Jehovah?
19. To what does history testify regarding the Israelites?
20. How could we sum up why we should fear Jehovah?

Maintain Your Fear of Jehovah

"'I am a great King,' Jehovah of armies has said, 'and my name will be fear-inspiring among the nations.'"
—MALACHI 1:14.

"A PRONOUNCEMENT: The word of Jehovah concerning Israel by means of Malachi." (Malachi 1:1) This brief, stirring statement begins the Bible book of Malachi. In the Bible a pronouncement is usually a denunciation of wickedness. This is certainly true in the case of the book of Malachi with its direct and forceful message to the nation of Israel. Our considering it will highlight the need to maintain our fear of Jehovah and our love for him.

[2] The first two verses of the book provide a lesson in giving counsel. Jehovah assures his listeners of his desire to help them: "'I have loved you people,' Jehovah has said." What a reassuring, heartwarming introduction for honesthearted ones of delinquent Israel. The message continues: "And you have said: 'In what way have you loved us?' 'Was not Esau the brother of Jacob?' is the utterance of Jehovah. 'But I loved Jacob, and Esau I have hated; and I finally made his mountains a desolated waste and his inheritance for the jackals of the wilderness.'"—Malachi 1: 2, 3.

[3] Why did Jehovah love Jacob and, later, the descendants of Jacob, the Israelites? It was because Jacob was God-fearing and he respected his God-fearing parents. Esau, on the other hand, was a selfish person, lacking fear of God. Also, he lacked respect for his parents, who had the God-given, natural right to expect his obedience. Rightly, Jehovah loved Jacob but hated Esau. This is a warning to us. We must avoid ever losing the fear of God and becoming a materialist like Esau, who sought only to satisfy his fleshly desires. —Genesis 26:34, 35; 27:41; Hebrews 12:16.

[4] Just as Jacob's course proved to be a blessing for his descendants, the Israelites, so Esau's course proved to be the exact opposite for his descendants, the Edomites. The Edomites did not enjoy Jehovah's blessing. Instead, by their vicious opposition to his covenant people, they incurred Jehovah's hatred. They were overrun by Nebuchadnezzar's armies and later by the Arabians. Eventually, as prophesied by Jehovah, the Edomites vanished as a nation.—Obadiah 18.

[5] God's judgments upon Edom started before Malachi's day. How should this have affected the Israelites? Jehovah tells them: "Your own eyes will see it, and you yourselves will say: 'May Jehovah be magnified over the territory of

1, 2. (a) What powerful message is contained in the book of Malachi? (b) What lesson is provided by the opening words of Jehovah's message?
3. What were the reasons for Jehovah's feelings toward Jacob and Esau?
4, 5. (a) The course in life of Jacob and Esau had what effect upon their descendants? (b) How should this have affected the Israelites?

Israelites despised Jehovah by offering blind, lame, or sick animals as sacrifices

Israel.'" (Malachi 1:5) Down through the centuries, Israel had seen with its "own eyes" the love Jehovah had for it as a nation.

Our Actions Will Show Whether We Fear God

6 The pronouncement continues: "'A son, for his part, honors a father; and a servant, his grand master. So if I am a father, where is the honor to me? And if I am a grand master, where is the fear of me?' Jehovah of armies has said to you, O priests who are despising my name." (Malachi 1:6; Exodus 4:22, 23; Deuteronomy 32:6) Jehovah had corrected the Israelites, provided for them, and protected them, just as a father would his son. What did he rightly expect in return? To be honored and feared. The nation, including the priests, failed to do this but, rather, showed a disrespect for Jehovah's name, and a despising of it. They became "renegade sons."—Jeremiah 3:14, 22; Deuteronomy 32:18-20; Isaiah 1:2, 3.

6. What accusation did Jehovah make against the Israelites?

7 The Israelites asked: "In what way have we despised your name?" Jehovah forcefully replied: "'By presenting upon my altar polluted bread.' And you have said: 'In what way have we polluted you?' By your saying: 'The table of Jehovah is something to be despised.' And when you present a blind animal for sacrificing: 'It is nothing bad.' And when you present a lame animal or a sick one: 'It is nothing bad.' 'Bring it near, please, to your governor. Will he find pleasure in you, or will he receive you kindly?' Jehovah of armies has said."—Malachi 1:6-8.

8 One can imagine an Israelite looking over his flock and slyly selecting a blind or

7. How did the Israelites feel about this accusation, and what was Jehovah's reply to them?
8. What were the Israelites indicating by their actions?

a lame animal to offer to Jehovah. In this way he could go through the motions of making a sacrifice and yet selfishly keep the best of the flock for himself. He would not dare to do such a thing to the governor! But the Israelites did it to Jehovah —as if he could not see their scheming and cheating. Rightly, Jehovah asked them, "Where is the fear of me?" By their words, they may have claimed to fear Jehovah, but their actions clearly indicated otherwise.—Deuteronomy 15:21.

9 What was the reaction of the priests to these contemptible sacrifices? They said: "It is nothing bad." They justified the wicked course of the Israelites. So even though the exiles who returned from Babylon made a zealous start in restoring true worship, they later became careless, proud, and self-righteous. They lost their fear of Jehovah. Hence, their temple service became a mockery, and they kept the festivals in a formalistic way.—Malachi 2: 1-3; 3:8-10.

10 Some may object: 'This does not apply to us; we no longer offer animal sacrifices.' But we have another type of sacrifice to offer. Note Paul's urgent appeal: "I entreat you by the compassions of God, brothers, to present your bodies a sacrifice living, holy, acceptable to God, a sacred service with your power of reason." (Romans 12:1) The sacrifice Jehovah wants today is you! That is, your energies, assets, and abilities. Our sacrifice will meet with his approval only if it is our best. Offering Jehovah the leftovers, like a lame, sick sacrifice, is sure to affect our relationship with him.

11 Even though some may say, in effect, "It is nothing bad," we know how Jehovah feels about it. Let us, therefore, carefully scrutinize the "sacrifice" of "sacred service" we are offering, which includes the share we have in preaching, personal study, prayer, and attending the meetings. Are you satisfied that you are offering Jehovah your best, or is it just leftovers? There is a danger of getting so involved in entertainment or recreation on the weekend that one does not have time or energy to preach the Kingdom good news and attend meetings. Our whole way of life, our day-to-day living, including attitudes and motives, should be tied in with the sacrifice that we make to Jehovah. Let it be nothing but the best!

Identifying True Fearers of God

12 "And now," says the prophecy, "please, soften the face of God, that he may show us favor." (Malachi 1:9) Jehovah urges the Israelites to do what is right, show proper fear of God, and offer him what he deserves. We must do the same today. Only by living up to Jehovah's requirements can we gain and maintain his favor.

9. How did the priests react to what the people were doing?
10. (a) What sacrifice does Jehovah want today? (b) How only can our sacrifice meet with Jehovah's approval?
11. What scrutinizing should each dedicated servant of Jehovah do?
12. What counsel is now given?

[13] Without proper fear of God, our service to him may be done merely out of formalism and for selfish gain. Note how Jehovah questions the Israelite priests regarding their temple service: "'Who also is there among you that will shut the doors? And you men will not light my altar—for nothing. No delight do I have in you,' Jehovah of armies has said, 'and in the gift offering from your hand I take no pleasure.'" (Malachi 1:10) Oh, yes, the priests were there performing temple duty, locking the doors of the sanctuary, lighting the altars. But they did not do this for nothing. They were looking for handouts and bribes from the Israelites who came to make sacrifices at the temple. Jehovah found no pleasure then, and he finds no pleasure now, in service that is done merely for selfish gain. It is disgusting to him.

[14] The need to be on guard against selfishness and greed has not diminished in our day. Repeatedly the Scriptures warn us against greed, stating that greedy people are not favored by Jehovah. (1 Corinthians 6:10; Ephesians 5:5) In fulfilling our ministry, may our love and fear of Jehovah keep us free from ever performing it for selfish gain. We should be quick to root out any such tendencies that may arise in our heart. Elders and ministerial servants are particularly cautioned not to be "greedy of dishonest gain." (Titus 1:7; 1 Timothy 3:8; 1 Peter 5:2) Some may purposely cultivate relationships only with brothers who can help them materially, resulting in favoritism and a reluctance to counsel such ones. Never do we want to become like the greedy priests of Israel who were looking for handouts and bribes from their fellow Israelites.

13. (a) Without fear of God, into what trap could we fall? (b) How did greed affect the Israelite priests?
14. Why is there an ever-present need for guarding against greed?

[15] Today, if Jehovah asked the question, "Where is the fear of me?" could any people reply, 'Here we are, the ones who fear you'? Most definitely! Who? Jehovah's faithful witnesses, who are found in all parts of the earth. This international group of people and the work they would do was foretold at Malachi 1:11: "'For from the sun's rising even to its setting my name will be great among the nations, and . . . a presentation will be made to my name, even a clean gift; because my name will be great among the nations,' Jehovah of armies has said."—See also Psalm 67:7; Isaiah 33:5, 6; 41:5; 59:19; Jeremiah 32:39, 40.

[16] How aptly Malachi here tells of the great work being done in our day with the preaching of the good news in all the earth. (Matthew 24:14; Revelation 14:6, 7) From sunrise to sunset, in a geographical sense, means from east to west. No matter where we look in the earth today, we find fearers of Jehovah doing his will. From sunrise to sunset also means all day long. Yes, praise is constantly being offered up by God-fearing servants. As Jehovah promised, his name is being declared in all the earth by those who truly fear him. —Exodus 9:16; 1 Chronicles 16:23, 24; Psalm 113:3.

Maintain Proper Fear of God

[17] For those who fail to respect and fear Jehovah, worship and service become a burden. Jehovah said to the Israelites: "You men are profaning me by your saying, 'The table of Jehovah is something

15. (a) How did Malachi indicate that there would be fearers of Jehovah in all parts of the earth? (b) What other scriptures support this?
16. From sunrise to sunset could have what different meanings, and how is this being fulfilled?
17. What may be the result of losing our respect for Jehovah and our fear of him?

polluted, and its fruit is something to be despised, its food.' And you have said, 'Look! What a weariness!'" (Malachi 1: 12, 13) The same can be true in modern times. For those who lose the fear of Jehovah, meetings, field service, and other Christian activities could become a burden.

[18] Notice how such ones were described in *The Watchtower* of January 1, 1937: "To those unfaithful ones the privilege of serving God by bringing the fruits of the kingdom before others, as the Lord has commanded, has become only a tiresome ceremony and formality, which offers them no opportunity to shine in the eyes of men. The carrying of the kingdom message from house to house in printed form, and presenting this to the people, is too humiliating for such self-important ones. They find no joy in it . . . Therefore they have said, and continue to say: 'This carrying books about is merely a book-selling scheme. What a wearisome task that is!'" Even today there are those who, from time to time, find the field service a drudgery and attending meetings tedious. This is what can happen when we lose our fear of Jehovah and, along with it, our love for him.

[19] Maintaining fear of Jehovah will keep us humble before him and ever appreciative of all that he is doing for us. Whether we are at a small gathering in a home or at a large gathering of tens of thousands in a stadium, we are thankful to Jehovah for the privilege of being with our Christian brothers. We will show our thankfulness by being present there and by inciting others present to "love and fine works" by our upbuilding conversation and by the comments we make during meetings. (Hebrews 10:24, 25) If it should be our privilege to care for parts at meetings, we will avoid putting off preparation to the last minute, hastily gathering some ideas together. Never treat such assignments as something commonplace. They are sacred privileges, and the way we care for them is another indication of how we respect and fear Jehovah.

[20] How sad the outcome is for those who lose the fear of God! They lack appreciation for the undeserved privilege of having a relationship with the Sovereign of the universe. "'I am a great King,' Jehovah of armies has said, 'and my name will be fear-inspiring among the nations.'" (Malachi 1:14; Revelation 15:4) May we never forget that. May each of us be like the psalmist who said: "A partner I am of all those who do fear you." (Psalm 119:63) After considering this matter, we come to the same conclusion that Solomon did when he said: "Fear the true God and keep his commandments. For this is the whole obligation of man. For the true God himself will bring every sort of work into the judgment in relation to every hidden thing, as to whether it is good or bad." —Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14.

18. From time to time, what has happened to some of God's modern-day servants?

19. How may we continue to demonstrate our appreciation for Jehovah's provisions?

20. (a) What must we never forget? (b) To what conclusion do we come?

Lessons From the Book of Malachi—

- ☐ Why did the Israelites owe Jehovah their fear?
- ☐ How do our actions show whether we truly fear Jehovah?
- ☐ What proves that there are fearers of Jehovah earth wide today?
- ☐ Why must we maintain proper fear of God?

Kingdom Proclaimers Report

Young Ones in Italy Make Opportunities to Witness

THOSE who appreciate God's wonderful purposes are delighted to help others learn of the marvelous Kingdom hope. This often involves taking advantage of opportunities that arise, as the following report from Sardinia shows.

□ "A 12-year-old publisher was traveling back from field service by bus. Also on the bus were two young boys and a girl, all about 18 years of age. The young publisher sat near the girl and began reading the *Awake!* magazine, hoping to arouse her curiosity. She noticed the magazine and asked what he was reading. He explained he was reading an article dealing with the solution to problems young people have to face. He said that he had greatly benefited from this material and that it could help her also. She gladly accepted the magazines.

"Having listened in on the conversation, the other two youths asked for magazines. While they were getting the contribution, the driver told them not to waste their money on such useless things. The youths answered that they were intelligent, and the magazines were interesting. At this the bus driver pulled over to the side of the road, stopped the bus, and wanted to see what was so interesting in these magazines. He also accepted copies.

"The young Witness who related this experience said: 'I am really glad I began witnessing on the bus.'"

□ Another young Witness took advantage of a situation in school. This youth relates: "Our schoolteacher taught us a study method that was quite different from the traditional one. After considering the material, we were to work up an outline including main points and secondary points and then give an extemporaneous talk on the subject.

"'I am very familiar with this method,' stated the Witness. 'It is the one suggested by the *Theocratic Ministry School Guidebook*.' The teacher soon noticed I was the only one who was successful in applying this method. He asked why there was such a difference between my work and that of the others. I explained that I had learned this method in the Theocratic Ministry School. He was very pleased and invited me to illustrate it to the class, using the *Theocratic Ministry School Guidebook*. This I did.

"When I went home, I told my family what had happened. My father, who is not a Witness, had always said that being one of Jehovah's Witnesses was a handicap at school, but after listening to my experience, he was forced to change his mind."

What a grand privilege you young ones, as well as you older ones, have to uphold and make known Jehovah's name! —Psalm 148:12, 13.

Graduation of the 83rd Gilead Class
Truly a Festive Occasion

"GIVE thanks to Jehovah, O you people, for he is good: for his loving-kindness is to time indefinite." (Psalm 136:1) That was the heartfelt sentiment of all 4,391 who attended the graduation exercises of the 83rd class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead this fall. The talks, the experiences, and the Bible drama presented during the exercises caused all to leave in high spirits. The graduation took place September 6, 1987, at the beautiful Jersey City Assembly Hall, formerly known as the Stanley Theater.

After the opening song, and prayer by John Booth of the Governing Body, the chairman, Albert Schroeder, another member of the Governing Body, welcomed one and all to this festive occasion. The 24 students had come from five countries, and they were now being sent to eight different lands. Brother Schroeder highlighted the confidence Jehovah's people have because their faith is based on absolutes. They know, for example, that Jehovah is the Universal Sovereign and that his Word, the Holy Bible, is absolute truth. This is in striking contrast with human philosophies based on uncertainties and speculations.

The first speaker was Martin Poetzinger, also a member of the Governing Body, who spent nine years in Nazi concentration camps. His theme was "In Whom Do You Trust?" based on Proverbs 3:5, 6. He stressed to the students the need of trusting fully in Jehovah and his visible organization, as well as individually proving trustworthy. The students' Gilead training was only a foundation; now they had to build on it by following Paul's advice at Ephesians 5:15, 16. 'Do not stand still,' urged the speaker. 'You will have your problems in your missionary assignment as to language, climate, food, and so forth; but by trusting in Jehovah, you can solve all those problems. Love for people is your key to success. Every encouragement is from God; every discouragement is from Satan.'

The next speaker was Eldor Timm, a member of the Factory Committee, who based his remarks on 2 Corinthians 13:5: "Keep testing whether you are in the faith." The students were finished with written tests, he said, but they will keep facing many other tests in their missionary assignments. How they meet those tests will determine their success as missionaries. They need to guard against overconfidence by heeding the counsel: "Let him that thinks he is standing beware that he does not fall." (1 Corinthians 10:12) They will keep making improvements if they keep a good mental attitude.

A member of the Service Department Committee, Joel Adams, followed. He spoke on the subject: "Think Like Jesus, Show a Personal Interest in Others." What a fine example Jesus set in this regard! His example of unselfishness and humility is highlighted for us at Philippians 2:3-5. If some are a trial to us by reason of their shortcomings or lack of tact, let us go out of our way to show kindness to them. During the Gilead School course, many showed an interest in the students; now it was up to them to do the same toward others. The most successful missionaries are those who show an interest in others' customs, language, needs, and so forth.

Next, the students were encouraged by one who had been a missionary for many years, Lloyd Barry, also a member of the Governing Body. He spoke on the theme "Sing to Jehovah," based on Psalm 96:1. Jehovah's people enjoy singing. Singing goes with joy, and so he encouraged the students never to lose the joy of bringing the truth to others. 'If you have to learn a new language,' he urged, 'put your heart into it from the start. The Devil will try to discourage you, make you homesick, cause disunity in your ranks. Never allow him one inch!' Brother Barry referred to the "dean of missionaries," Edwin Skinner, who has been in his foreign assignment in India for 60 years, and who now at the age of 93 still does a full day's work. According

83rd Graduating Class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead

In the list below, rows are numbered from front to back and names are listed from left to right in each row. (1) Melin, D.; Goode, M.; Ramos, M.; Chow, N.; Hermanson, A.; Dagostini, D. (2) David, E.; DiPaolo, A.; Neiman, D.; Shephard, J.; Foster, M.; Ramos, R. (3) Foster, W.; Melin, D.; Fristad, D.; Fristad, R.; White, L.; Dagostini, F. (4) Neiman, D.; Ness, S.; Shephard, D.; Goode, J.; White, K.; Hermanson, L.

to Brother Skinner, the key to success as a missionary consists of four words: "Humility is the keynote!"

Following these remarks, the chairman read a number of telegrams congratulating the students and extending a welcome to them. Messages were received from Bolivia, Canada, Ecuador, Honduras, Spain, Sweden, and Trinidad.

Jack Redford, one of the instructors of the Gilead School, spoke on the subject "Continue to Be Jehovah's Friend." He began by noting that there are many commercial institutions that offer training on achieving success in business by winning friends and influencing people. The students, as future missionaries, have also been taught how to win friends and influence people, not for selfish gain, however, but so that such people can become friends of God. 'Yours is a life of self-sacrifice,' said the speaker. 'You received free, give free. There is no satisfaction or joy greater than succeeding in helping people to become friends of God. Friendship with God is the greatest honor any creature can have. James 2:23 tells that Abraham became Jehovah's friend because of exercising faith in God. He went to a foreign land and did not look back; neither should you missionaries look back, but, instead, look forward to the blessings in God's new world.'

Ulysses Glass, a Gilead instructor and registrar of the school, now spoke on the subject "The Final Lesson." He noted that the students had learned how far-reaching and exacting Jehovah's laws really are. By way of example, he pointed to the many details associated with sacrifices offered on the Day of Atonement and the many animals that were involved. (Leviticus, chapter 16) He commended the students for their manifest deephearted appreciation and said that Psalm 145:7 well describes their mental attitude: "With the mention of the abundance of your goodness they will bubble over, and because of your righteousness they will cry out joyfully." In his conclusion, he also quoted Proverbs 3:5-7, stressing their need to 'trust in Jehovah with all their heart.'

Brother F. W. Franz, the 94-year-old president of Gilead School as well as president of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, gave the concluding talk of the morning. In it he recounted the history of the Society from the time of the first president, C. T. Russell, until the establishing of the Gilead School. His vigorous and enthusiastic presentation was greatly appreciated by all. After his talk, the 24 students received their diplomas together with some gifts, and then one of the students read a fine letter expressing the students' appreciation for all the help they had received from the Governing Body and also from the Bethel family.

After an intermission of approximately two hours, Phil Wilcox, a member of the Watchtower Farms Committee, conducted an abbreviated study of the current *Watchtower* lesson in which the study questions were answered by the students. That was followed by the students' program in which they reenacted experiences they had enjoyed while witnessing during Wednesday afternoons in New York City. This was part of their Gilead training. They also vividly demonstrated the various problems they could expect to meet up with when they reached their foreign assignments.

As a fitting conclusion to the whole program, the students presented a costumed Bible drama in two parts, highlighting the seriousness of the times we are living in. The drama did this by comparing our days with past judgment periods. At 4:15 p.m., with the singing of the song "Theocracy's Increase" and a prayer by Governing Body member Milton Henschel, the most delightful program came to an end.

The Value of Singing in True Worship

CAN you picture a world without song? Never again to hear the happy singing of children or the sweet voice of the nightingale or the bellbird? No more to hear the magpie's infectious chuckle or the throaty laughter of a kookaburra? Happily, this will never be. But such contemplation highlights one of God's many gifts to man: the gift of song.

Jehovah a God of Song

Why does singing bring pleasure and joy to us? For one thing, Jehovah himself enjoys and is pleased with songs of praise by his creatures. Can you picture the occasion when all the angels shouted for joy at the magnificence of Jehovah's earthly creation? Or can you imagine standing spellbound among the shepherds on the autumn night of Jesus' human birth, thrilling to the sound of a vast host of angels singing: "Glory in the heights above to God"?—Luke 2:13, 14; Job 38:7.

One way that Jehovah indicated he is a God of song was by making singing part of true worship in Israel. Later, God again revealed the close tie between singing and true worship in the Revelation vision given to the apostle John. In one prophetic scene a tremendous choir—144,000 strong—sings a magnificent new song before the throne of God.—Revelation 14:3.

Singing in Pre-Christian Times

God's majesty and awesome acts also inspired his earthly servants to break out in song. Feel the stirring effects that singing had on the Israelites soon after their miraculous deliverance from Egyptian slavery. The hearts of Moses and his fellow Israelites were moved emotionally as they sang the victory song recounting what Jehovah had done to Pharaoh and his hosts.—Exodus 15:1-21.

Later in Israel's history, the momentous day came when, under King David's direction, the ark of the covenant was to be placed inside its specially erected tent. What a historic event! Not only outstanding singing but soul-stirring orchestral accompaniment added to the grandeur of the day.—1 Chronicles 16:4-36.

David's love for music and his skillfulness on the harp accentuated his keenness to promote music and singing in true

worship. At Psalm 33:1, 3, we hear his passionate plea for worshipers of Jehovah to sing aloud to God with all their heart: "Cry out joyfully, O you righteous ones, because of Jehovah. . . . Do your best at playing on the strings along with joyful shouting."

Singing in Christian Times

In early Christian times, singing also played a prominent role in true worship. Jesus and his apostles sang together after the evening meal just before Jesus' death. (Mark 14:26) In prison Paul and Silas sang aloud so that all could hear. (Acts 16:25) Like David the apostle Paul was enthusiastic about the use of song. More than once, he encouraged fellow believers to sing songs of praise to Jehovah. —Ephesians 5:18, 19; Colossians 3:16.

In present-day Christian worship, singing also features prominently. In 1905 the book *Hymns of the Millennial Dawn* was published. The title page describes its 333 songs as "A Choice Collection of Psalms and Hymns and Spiritual Songs to Aid God's People in Singing and Making Melody in their Hearts unto the Lord."

Then in 1928 a revised songbook with 337 songs was provided. It was called *Songs of Praise to Jehovah,* and its preface said: "These Songs will be found to be in harmony with the divine truths now due to be understood." However, as years passed and the light of truth increased, it became clear that some of these songs were influenced by thinking carried over from false religion. Additionally, Kingdom songs to encourage preaching the good news were needed, as public declaration came more to the fore.—Matthew 24:14; Hebrews 13:15.

In 1944 *Kingdom Service Songbook* was provided, with 62 songs. Two decades later, in 1966, the book *Singing and Accompanying Yourselves With Music in Your Hearts* was released. This contained 119 Kingdom songs that covered every aspect of Christian living and worship, including witnessing to others and praising Jehovah God and Christ Jesus.

Almost another two decades passed, during which the light of truth kept on increasing. (Proverbs 4:18) The need was seen for yet another songbook. So in 1984 came the release of the songbook entitled *Sing Praises to Jehovah.* It has 225 Kingdom songs, with words and melodies composed entirely by dedicated servants of Jehovah from all parts of the earth.

Use Theocratic Singing to the Full

The illustration shown on the double-spread endsheet at the back of this latest songbook stimulates us to use theocratic singing to the full at Christian meetings. Trained temple singers there depicted are clearly raising their hearts and their voices in song to God.—1 Chronicles 25:7.

We can likewise sing at our Christian meetings, opening our mouths and singing from our hearts. However, not all of us do that. Perhaps pride causes us to miss out on the joy of singing to Jehovah without embarrassment, no matter what sort of voice we have. We may be overly concerned with the impression being

In Our Next Issue

- **Angels—Do They Affect Your Life?**
- **Honoring the God of Hope**
- **Who Really Is Jesus?**

made on those standing nearby. Moses had a similar problem—not with singing but with speaking. The answer Jehovah gave him might assist us if we tend to hold back from singing because of lack of ability. Jehovah asked Moses: "Who appointed a mouth for man? . . . Is it not I, Jehovah?" (Exodus 4:11) Surely, Jehovah will gladly listen as we use whatever ability he has given us to sing his praises out loud!

Think, too, how Paul and Silas sang aloud while in prison. No embarrassment there, and they had no musical accompaniment, not even a songbook to follow. Picture the occasion: "But about the middle of the night Paul and Silas were praying and praising God with song; yes, the prisoners were hearing them." (Acts 16:25) Was this because either Paul or Silas had trained singing voices? Not necessarily. Their chief concern was to sing aloud and from the heart! What is *our* chief concern when singing songs of praise?

All of Us Can Improve

Musician David's advice is appropriate here: "Do your best at playing on the strings along with joyful shouting." (Psalm 33:3) That is what Jehovah expects of all his servants—nothing more, nothing less than that we 'do our best.' If we do just that, we can expect Jehovah to bless our efforts, and to our delight—and sometimes to our surprise—we will likely make improvement.*

Here are some practical suggestions that may help to improve the quality of your singing: Try listening frequently to the newer Kingdom melodies, using recorded musical tapes or records where possible. For some, singing the songs at home or at small gatherings with fellow believers has proved beneficial as well as pleasant. At congregation meetings it is important that musical accompaniment be played loud enough to be heard by all those singing. This makes it easier to follow the tune and increases confidence on the part of those singing. The one announcing a song should state its theme, perhaps even noting its appropriateness, not just the number.

Parents, do you encourage your children to sing Kingdom songs with enthusiasm and from their hearts? Families that have encouraged their young ones to sing from the heart, and with understanding, have many times found such singing to be a fine aid to spiritual growth.

Benefits Are Many

There are many benefits from singing aloud and from the heart. Our personal involvement in public worship becomes stronger. Those standing nearby are encouraged to sing louder when they hear our unembarrassed singing. The entire congregation also benefits, for increased volume is contagious!

Additionally, strong singing gives a good witness to those attending meetings for the first time. Those passing by our Kingdom Halls, as well as neighbors living nearby, are impressed by our fine singing, just as doubtless were those other prisoners who heard Paul and Silas. This has even resulted in some hearers' wanting to know more about the truth.

Most importantly, our improved singing will bring greater praise to Jehovah, the Originator of music and singing, the one deserving to be praised in song above all others.

* Some of the latest songs may be a little difficult for us to sing at first, but after we become familiar with them, they may well prove to be our favorites. For example, when the previous songbook came out, song 88, "Walking in Integrity," was not liked in one country, but later on it became the favorite.

Is Your Giving a Sacrifice?

A Balanced View of Contributions

AFTER teaching the people many things in the temple, Jesus "sat down with the treasury chests in view and began observing how the crowd was dropping money into the treasury chests." (Mark 12:41) What followed was the well-known account of the widow's mite. But why did Jesus sit there and watch the people make their offering? Did he not tell his disciples that they should not even let their left hand know what their right hand was doing when they made their gifts of mercy? —Matthew 6:3.

Earlier, Jesus had strongly denounced the religious leaders for using unscrupulous methods to devour "the houses of the widows." He said that these religionists "will receive a heavier judgment." (Mark 12:40) In order to teach a lesson, he then turned his attention to what the people were doing there at the treasury chests. Today, when we hear so much about the big money involved in church organizations, the misuse of such funds, and the lavish life-styles of those in charge, we would do well to listen closely to what Jesus had to say.—Please read Mark 12:41-44.

The Treasury Chests

The account relates that Jesus "sat down with the treasury chests in view." This was evidently in the Court of Women, where a number of chests, or boxes, were placed along the walls for the people to drop in their offerings. Jewish tradition tells us that there were 13 boxes in all. In Hebrew they were called trumpets, because they had a small opening at the top in the shape of the bell of a trumpet. It is said that 'no one entered the temple without putting something in.'

The French professor Edmond Stapfer, in his book *Palestine in the Time of Christ* (1885), gave a rather detailed description of these treasury chests. His account gives us some insight into the religious life of the people of the time, especially with respect to their contributions toward the services at the temple.

"Each chest was for a different object, indicated by an inscription in the Hebrew tongue. The first was inscribed: *New shekels;* that is, shekels set apart for the expenses of the current year. The second: *Old shekels;* that is, shekels dedicated to the expenses of the previous year. Third: *Turtle doves and young pigeons;* the money placed in this chest was the price to be paid by those who had to offer two turtle doves or two young pigeons, the one as a burnt offering, the other as a sacrifice for sin. Above the fourth chest was written: *Burnt offerings;* this money covered the expense of the other burnt offerings. The fifth had the inscription: *Wood,* and held the gifts of the faithful for the purchase of wood for the altar. The sixth: *Incense* (money for buying incense). The seventh: *For the sanctuary* (money for the mercy-seat). The six remaining chests bore the inscription: *Freewill offerings.*"

The designation on the first two chests had reference to the half-shekel (two drachmas in Grecian money) head tax each adult male was required by law to pay for the maintenance of the temple, the services performed there, and the daily sacrifices offered on behalf of the entire nation. This

tax was often collected in local communities and then brought to the temple.—Matthew 17:24.

The people were also required by the Law to make various offerings on their own behalf. Some were for sins committed, others for ceremonial reasons, and still others out of their devotion and thanksgiving. The boxes marked "Turtle doves and young pigeons" and "Burnt offerings" would be for such purposes. "Into Trumpet III," says the book *The Temple, Its Ministry and Services,* "those women who had to bring turtledoves for a burnt- and a sin-offering dropped their equivalent in money, which was daily taken out and a corresponding number of turtledoves offered." Likely this was what the parents of the infant Jesus did.—See Luke 2:22-24; Leviticus 12:6-8.

Then there were offerings for the wood and incense used at the altar and for the voluntary offerings. Again, according to Professor Stapfer, "if any one gave money for *wood* or *incense,* there was a minimum fixed, and less than this might not be offered. It was necessary to give at least the price of a handful of incense, or two logs of wood a cubit long and large in proportion."

What do we learn from all of this? It is quite evident that the Israelites had numerous responsibilities toward the maintenance of the tabernacle and later the temple in Jerusalem, the center of true worship. Sacrifices and offerings were an integral part of their worship. In fact, the Law commanded that "none should appear before Jehovah empty-handed." (Deuteronomy 16:16) But what was their view of these obligations?

Differing Views

The Bible record shows that the people were most liberal and generous in the time of Moses and David and later during the reign of Jehoash and Josiah. (Exodus 36: 3-7; 1 Chronicles 29:1-9; 2 Chronicles 24: 4-14; 34:9, 10) They were happy to have a share in building the house of Jehovah and maintaining it as well as in advancing true worship. Their sentiment was well expressed by the words of David when he said: "I rejoiced when they were saying to me: 'To the house of Jehovah let us go.'" —Psalm 122:1.

This generous spirit, however, was not shared by all. For instance, we read that in the days of Malachi, the priests were offering to Jehovah "something torn away, and the lame one, and the sick one." Rather than rejoicing at their privilege of service, they said: "Look! What a weariness!" —Malachi 1:13.

Similarly, in Jesus' time some took advantage of the situation to advance their own interests. The notorious money changers at the temple, for example, were not there just to make change. Rather, they capitalized on the fact that only Hebrew shekels were acceptable as offerings, and all those with Roman or Greek money would have to exchange it. According to Alfred Edersheim, an authority on Jewish history, "the bankers were allowed to charge a silver *meah,* or about one-fourth of a denar [or denarius, a laborer's wage for a day's work] on every half-shekel." If this is correct, it is not hard to see what a lucrative business this must have become and why the religious leaders were so incensed when Jesus drove out the money changers.

"Out of Her Want"

All of this only emphasizes Jesus' illustration about the poor widow's small contribution, which she no doubt dropped into one of the boxes marked "Freewill offerings." As a widow, she was not required to give the head tax, and with limited means, she was probably not able to meet the minimum requirements for the burnt

offerings or the wood or incense offerings. Yet, she wanted to do something to show her love for Jehovah. She did not want to be counted out or just leave it to those who could 'afford it.' Jesus said: "She, out of her want, dropped in all of what she had, her whole living."—Mark 12:44.

There are many valuable lessons we can learn from this account. The most outstanding one, perhaps, is that while all of us have the privilege of lending support to true worship by means of our material possessions, what is truly precious in God's sight is, not our giving what we can do without anyway, but our giving what is valuable to us. In other words, are we giving something we will not really miss? Or is our giving a real sacrifice?

Advancing True Worship Today

Today, Jehovah's Witnesses advance true worship by zealously preaching "this good news of the kingdom . . . in all the inhabited earth." (Matthew 24:14) To accomplish this global task involves not only dedicated effort, time, and energy but also considerable expense. The *1987 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses* reports that "during 1986, a total of $23,545,801.70 was spent in financial support of . . . the 2,762 missionaries, 13,351 special pioneers, and overseers and their wives for the world's 3,353 circuits and districts." This was in addition to "much expense in purchasing, constructing, and renovating properties; in equipping factories and offices at headquarters and in the Society's 93 branches; and in providing for the material needs of the 8,920 volunteers who serve in the Bethel families."

'Where do such funds come from?' is an often-asked question. Unlike the churches of Christendom, Jehovah's Witnesses do not take up collections or send out envelopes to solicit donations. Rather, contribution boxes—like the treasury chests of Biblical times—are set up at their Kingdom Halls. At times, other boxes may be set up for designated purposes, such as construction of Kingdom Halls or Assembly Halls or to assist missionaries to attend conventions in their homeland. Contributions may

HOW SOME CONTRIBUTE TO THE KINGDOM WORK

□ GIFTS: Voluntary donations of money may be sent directly to the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, New York 11201, or to the Society's local branch office. Property such as real estate, as well as jewelry or other valuables, can also be donated. A brief letter stating that such is an outright donation should accompany these contributions.

□ CONDITIONAL-DONATION ARRANGEMENT: Money may be given to the Watch Tower Society to be held in trust, with the provision that in case of personal need, it will be returned to the donor.

□ INSURANCE: The Watch Tower Society may be named as the beneficiary of a life-insurance policy or in a retirement/pension plan. The Society should be informed of any such arrangements.

□ TRUSTS: Bank savings accounts can be placed *in trust for* the Society. If this is done, please inform the Society. Stocks, bonds, and property can also be donated under an arrangement to benefit the donor during his or her lifetime. This method eliminates the expense and uncertainties of probate of will, while ensuring that the Society receives the property in the event of death.

□ WILLS: Property or money may be bequeathed to the Watch Tower Society by means of a legally executed will. A copy should be sent to the Society.

For more information and advice regarding such matters, write to the Treasurer's Office, Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, New York 11201, or to the Society's local branch office.

also be sent directly to the Watch Tower Society at 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, New York 11201, or to the Society's branch office in your country, for advancing the preaching work worldwide.

How do you view these many and varied ways contributions are made? Do you, like some in Malachi's day, view them as a tiresome burden, perhaps saying in your heart: "Look! What a weariness!"? Or do you, like the "poor widow," view them as opportunities to demonstrate your zeal and concern for true worship and your desire to honor Jehovah with your valuable things? Do not forget the pertinent question: Is your giving a sacrifice?

"'Test me out, please, in this respect,' Jehovah of armies has said, 'whether I shall not open to you people the floodgates of the heavens and actually empty out upon you a blessing until there is no more want.'" (Malachi 3:10) The spiritual prosperity and the worldwide expansion among Jehovah's people prove that Jehovah is already doing that. May we continue to give to Jehovah an offering that is truly a sacrifice.

Questions From Readers

■ Some scholars contend that "rope" should replace "camel" at Matthew 19:24, which reads: "It is easier for a camel to get through a needle's eye." Which word is correct?

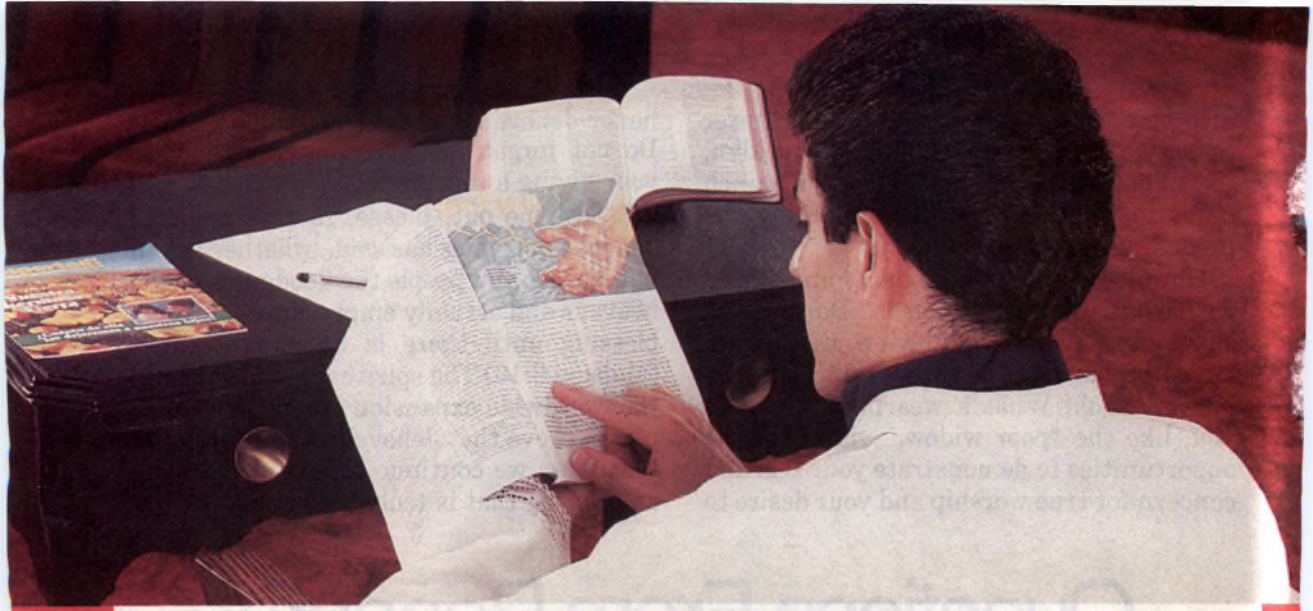
Certain Bible scholars mistakenly conclude that Jesus' words here were originally recorded in Aramaic. The Aramaic word used in such versions (*gam·la'*) can mean "camel." Depending on the context, however, it can also be rendered "a large rope and a beam." But according to Papias of Hierapolis, perhaps a contemporary of the apostle John, Matthew wrote his Gospel account originally in Hebrew, not Aramaic, thereafter translating it into Greek. The Hebrew word for camel (*ga·mal'*) is quite different from the words translated rope (*che'vel*) or cord (*'avoth'*), and it is certain that Matthew would have selected the correct Greek term.

The oldest and most reliable Greek manuscripts (Sinaiticus and Vatican No. 1209) have the word *ka'me·los,* which means camel. This same word is used at Matthew 23:24, where there is little doubt that "camel" is intended.

Through the centuries some have tried to soften Jesus' biting hyperbole. Some even took liberties with the sacred text. From about the fifth century, a similar word *ka'mi·los* is found at this text in some Greek manuscripts. This rare word means "rope, ship's cable." According to *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* by Arndt and Gingrich, it "has no place in the NT [New Testament]." Greek scholars Westcott and Hort blame this substitution on fifth-century professed Christian Cyril of Alexandria, who asserted that the word used by Matthew (*ka'me·los*) could mean a cable, saying: "It is the custom of those well versed in navigation to call the thicker cables 'camels.'" Yet, of this idea Westcott and Hort state: "It is certainly wrong."

The idea of a huge camel trying to fit through the eye of a tiny sewing needle "savours of Eastern exaggeration," according to one reference work. In fact, in discussing some individuals renowned for such shrewdness that they seemed to do the impossible, *The Babylonian Talmud* states: "They draw an elephant through the eye of a needle." So Jesus was using a typical Oriental image to emphasize the impossibility of something by way of a vivid contrast. Indeed, it would be impossible to thread any large object through a needle's eye—whether rope, camel, or elephant.

Jesus was not saying that it was impossible for a rich person to gain life, for some wealthy individuals became his followers. (Matthew 27:57; Luke 19:2, 9; John 19:38, 39) But just before Jesus gave this 'hard saying,' a rich young man had turned down great spiritual opportunities because of a greater love for his "many possessions." (Matthew 19:16-22) It would be impossible for any rich man with this attitude to inherit everlasting life. Only with God's extreme help could such a person change and receive the salvation that must come through God's power. —Matthew 19:25, 26.



'Like Bread and Water to the Heart'

That is what a Protestant minister from Málaga, Spain, said the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines were like to him. He explained:

"I have been a Protestant pastor for several years, and I can assure you that in all my theological studies, I have not found the simplicity and clarity that your publications have. To me, Jehovah's Witnesses are admirable people; in a hypocritical world, they live according to what they believe. . . .

"At the moment, due to personal problems, I can't study with you as I would like to, but thanks to God, I do receive your magazines, and they are 'bread' and 'water' to my heart, which hungers and thirsts for the living God."