

The Watchtower

July 1, 1988

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

Why Be
THANKFUL?



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

WATCHTOWER STUDIES FOR WEEKS OF

August 1: "Show Yourselves Thankful." Page 7.
Songs to Be Used: 45, 212.

August 8: "Jehovah Is My Shepherd." Page 23.
Songs to Be Used: 77, 42.

Average Printing Each Issue: 13,045,000

Now Published in 103 Languages

SEMICMONTHLY LANGUAGES AVAILABLE BY MAIL

Afrikaans, Arabic, Cebuano, Chichewa, Chinese, Cibemba, Danish,* Dutch,* Efik, English* (also Braille and cassette†), Finnish,* French,* German,* Greek,* Hiligaynon, Igbo, Iloko, Italian,* Japanese,* Korean, Lingala, Malagasy, Maltese, Norwegian, Portuguese,* Russian, Sepedi, Sesotho, Shona, Spanish,* Swahili, Swedish,* Tagalog, Thai, Tsonga, Tswana, Xhosa, Yoruba, Zulu

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* Study articles also available in large-print edition.

† Outside the United States and Canada, write U.S. office concerning rates and certification for the blind and visually impaired.

Watch Tower Society offices	Yearly subscription for the above:	
	Semimonthly Languages	Monthly Languages
America , U.S., Watchtower, Wallkill, N.Y. 12589	\$5.00	\$2.50
Australia , Box 280, Ingleburn, N.S.W. 2565	A\$8.00	A\$4.00
Canada , Box 4100, Halton Hills, Ontario L7G 4Y4	\$7.00	\$3.50
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South Africa , Private Bag 2067, Krugersdorp, 1740	R9.00	R4.50

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25 cents (U.S.) a copy

The Bible translation used is the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, unless otherwise indicated.

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The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) is published semimonthly for \$5.00 (U.S.) per year by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201. Second-class postage paid at Brooklyn, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. Printed in U.S.A.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Watchtower, Wallkill, N.Y. 12589.

Why Be THANKFUL?

LOOK at the front cover of this magazine. Surely, it reminds us that there are many beautiful things to offset the ugliness and squalor seen on every hand.

Do you appreciate things of beauty? Think about a rainbow with its serene, delicate blending of colors after the darkness of a storm. Imagine a cascading waterfall. Or try to visualize animals romping with their young. Picture a delightful flower garden or a bountiful crop of wheat. Yes, these are common sights to many people. But what effect do they have on you?

Easily Taken for Granted

Usually, the more often something is experienced, the more commonplace it becomes—and the easier it is to take it for granted. This failing may seem more pronounced in the fast-moving 20th century. But not taking time to meditate or to count blessings and reasons for thankfulness has always been one of imperfect mankind's shortcomings.

On the other hand, the psalmist David, under inspiration, often expressed thankfulness in song. These words addressed to God in one of David's melodies are a prime example of thankfulness:

"When I see your heavens, the works of your fingers,

*The moon and the stars that you have prepared,
What is mortal man that you keep him in mind,
And the son of earthling man that you take care of him?*

You make him dominate over the works of your hands;

Everything you have put under his feet:

Small cattle and oxen, all of them,

And also the beasts of the open field,

The birds of heaven and the fish of the sea,



*Anything passing through the
paths of the seas.*

*O Jehovah our Lord, how majestic
your name is in all the
earth!"—Psalm 8:3, 4, 6-9.*

Thankfulness Can Suppress Gloom

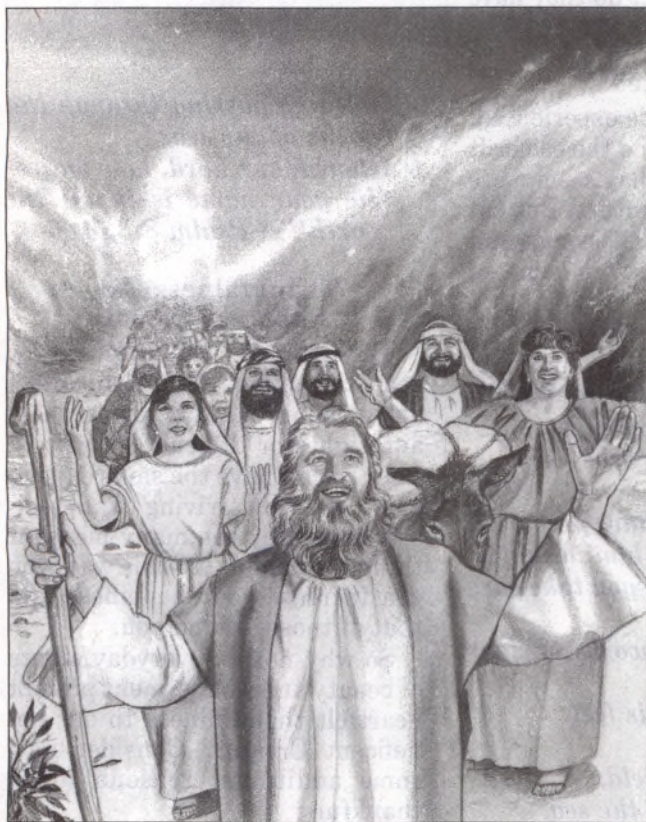
The psalmist's thankfulness for beautiful things helped to offset any gloom brought on by unpleasant sights or difficult situations. You too can have the same experience. How? By striving to appreciate more fully the many pleasant things around us. In this way, you can increase your happiness and that of those around you.

So why not let everyday sights of beauty and wonderment prompt heartfelt thankfulness to our beneficent Creator? Consider now some additional reasons to be thankful.

Additional Reasons to Be **THANKFUL**

THE people of ancient Israel had more reasons than others for expressing thankfulness to the Creator. Why can we say this?

Well, like all other humans, the Israelites had reason to be thankful for all the beautiful and wonderful things created by God. But they had added reason for gratitude because the Almighty had chosen them to be his special people and took particular care of them. (Amos 3:1, 2) Consider some of their outstanding reasons for thankfulness.



Two Escapes From Death

How grateful all Israelite parents must have been on the night of Nisan 14, 1513 B.C.E.! On that momentous night, the angel of God brought death to "every firstborn in the land of Egypt, from man to beast." But he passed over Israelite houses where the blood of Passover animals had been splashed on the doorposts and lintels. The stillness was broken as "there began arising a great outcry among the Egyptians, because there was not a house where there was not one dead." Yet, every Israelite household still had its precious firstborn alive and well.—Exodus 12:12, 21-24, 30.

Not long thereafter, thankfulness must have welled up in the hearts of the Israelites as they witnessed Jehovah's miraculous intervention when they seemed trapped on the shores of the Red Sea, with the army of Egypt's Pharaoh in hot pursuit. First, they saw the pillar of cloud that was leading them move to the rear of them, effectively slowing down the pursuers. Then the Israelites saw Moses stretch his hand out over the sea, and they looked on with amazement as God caused a powerful east wind to blow all night, splitting the waters and converting the sea basin into dry ground. The Israelites needed little urging to hurry through this divinely provided escape corridor.

Now, though, a new cause for alarm! The Egyptians poured into the seabed, confident of

overtaking the Israelites. But look! When all the Egyptians were in the water-walled passage, wheels began coming off their chariots, and soon there was pandemonium. Then, with all the Israelites safely on the other shore, Jehovah again told Moses to stretch out his hand, "and the sea began to come back to its normal condition at the approaching of morning." The result? Not even one of proud Pharaoh's prized military force escaped drowning, nor did the proud ruler himself. (Exodus 14:19-28; Psalm 136:15) Can you imagine how thankful to Jehovah the delivered Israelites were?

God's Spectacular Fighting Methods

Though thankful for their deliverance from Egypt and their unforgettable passage through the Red Sea, the Israelites were to face many grueling experiences before they reached the Promised Land. But each experience during their 40-year trek in the wilderness should have been an additional reason for special thankfulness to Jehovah.

Finally, the Israelites crossed the Jordan River and were in the land God had given them. They soon witnessed an example of Jehovah's spectacular fighting methods on their behalf. How so? Why, by the amazing capture and destruction of the first Canaanite city they encountered—Jeri-cho! (Joshua, chapter 6) How unusual the God-directed strategy of marching around Jeri-cho while carrying the ark of the covenant! For six consecutive days, they marched around the wall once each day. On the seventh day, they marched around the wall seven times. When the priests blew their

horns, the Israelites rent the air with "a great war cry," and "the wall began to fall down flat"! (Verse 20) Only Rahab's house and the portion of the wall beneath it remained standing. The wall of this seemingly impregnable city had fallen without the need for Joshua and his army to shoot one arrow! Surely, that experience at Jeri-cho was an outstanding additional reason for thankfulness to God.

On another occasion, there was a further outstanding display of Jehovah's spectacular fighting methods. When the people of Gibeon made peace with the Israelites, five Amorite kings declared war on the Gibeonites. Joshua came to their aid, and the miraculous hand of Jehovah was shown repeatedly in the ensuing battle. God threw the Amorites into confusion, and "while they were fleeing from before Israel and were on the descent of Beth-horon, Jehovah hurled great stones from the heavens upon them as far as Azekah, so that they died." More met death from those hailstones than were



killed by the Israelites with the sword.—Joshua 10:1-11.

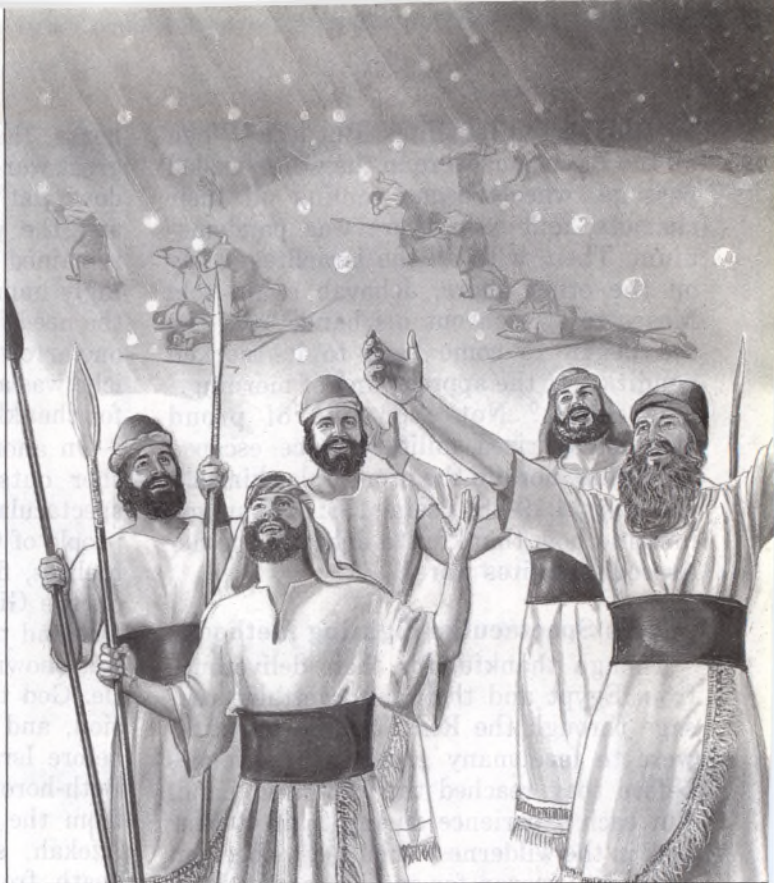
“Before the eyes of Israel,” Joshua then spoke to Jehovah and said: “Sun, be motionless over Gibeon, and, moon, over the low plain of Aijalon.” The result? “Accordingly,” says the account, “the sun kept motionless, and the moon did stand still, until the nation could take vengeance on its enemies.”—Joshua 10:12, 13.

What astonishing events! And what further outstanding reasons for thankfulness on the part of Jehovah’s people!

Thankfulness Short-Lived

After each manifestation of Jehovah’s intervention, the Israelites were filled with thankfulness. Likely, each Israelite said in his heart that he would never forget the things he had seen. Yet, such thankfulness was unbelievably short-lived. Time and again, the Israelites displayed a thankless attitude. Thus, God “repeatedly gave them into the hand of the nations, that those hating them might rule over them.”—Psalm 106:41.

Yet, Jehovah showed his magnanimous spirit of forgiveness when the Israelites came into dire straits, repented of their wrong and thankless course, and called to him for help. “He would see the distress of theirs when he heard their entreating cry. And he would remember concerning them his covenant, and he would feel regret according to the abundance of his grand loving-kindness.” (Psalm 106:44, 45) Time after time, their forgiving God released them from oppressors and took them back into his favor.



Despite God’s long-suffering and his repeated sending of prophets to adjust their thinking, the Israelites proved incorrigible. At last, Jehovah’s patience ran out, and he allowed the nation of Judah to be conquered by the Babylonians in 607 B.C.E. Those not killed by the forces of King Nebuchadnezzar were taken captive to Babylon.

What a disastrous end for recurring unthankfulness and disloyalty to God! And this happened in spite of the abundance of reasons to be thankful.

How may Christians today avoid making the same mistake of failing to show thankfulness for all that Jehovah God has done for them, over and above his acts of goodness toward mankind in general? This we leave for consideration in the following article.

"Show Yourselfes **THANKFUL**"

"Let the peace of the Christ
control in your hearts . . . And
show yourselves thankful."

—COLOSSIANS 3:15.

THIS troubled 20th century has reached the stage where many people have forgotten how to be thankful. The appreciative words "please" and "thank you" are heard less frequently with each passing year.

1. Against what must Christians be on guard in this thankless world?

Unthankfulness has become part of "the air," the selfish spirit that dominates people of this world. (Ephesians 2:1, 2) Though Christians are "no part of the world," they must live in it as long as the present system of things exists. (John 17:11, 16) Therefore, they must take care that this thankless spirit does not rub off on them, causing their thankfulness to diminish.

² Appreciation for God's goodness may be expressed often in conversation with fellow believers. Most dedicated Christians probably thank their heavenly Father, Jehovah, for his goodness several times a day, doing so in personal prayer. Thankfulness is also expressed in congregation prayers and while singing Kingdom songs at Christian meetings. Of course, it is relatively easy to express thankfulness in words. The apostle Paul, however, encouraged his brothers at

2. (a) What are some ways in which Jehovah's servants may express thankfulness to him?
(b) What is required beyond verbal expressions of thanks?

The Israelites showed thankfulness by offering tithes and firstfruits and by making provision for the poor to glean their fields



Colossae not just to *say* that they were thankful but also to *show* or *demonstrate* thankfulness in their daily lives. He wrote: "Let the peace of the Christ control in your hearts, for you were, in fact, called to it in one body. *And show yourselves thankful.*"—Colossians 3:15.

Abundant Cause for Thankfulness

³ Everyone living has abundant cause for thankfulness. The foremost reason is the enjoyment of life itself, for everything we have or might plan will suddenly become valueless if we lose our life. The psalmist David urged all humans to remember that "with you [Jehovah God] is the source of life." (Psalm 36:9) And the apostle Paul reminded the men of Athens of the same eternal truth when speaking on the Areopagus. (Acts 17:28) Yes, just being alive is abundant cause for thankfulness. And our appreciation deepens when we remember the faculties God has given us—the senses of taste, of touch, of smell, of sight, and of hearing—so that we

3. Why should all of us be thankful to God?

The psalmist thanked Jehovah for His wonderful works and thoughts toward His people



can enjoy life and the beauties of creation around us.

⁴ Yet, many take these good things for granted. Only when deprived of a faculty, such as eyesight or hearing, do many humans realize the blessings they failed to appreciate when in good health. Dedicated Christians constantly need to be careful not to drift into a similar lack of appreciation. They must work hard to maintain the same thankful attitude as that displayed by the psalmist who said: "Many things you yourself have done, O Jehovah my God, even your wonderful works and your thoughts toward us; there is none to be compared to you. Were I inclined to tell and speak of them, they have become more numerous than I can recount."—Psalm 40:5.

⁵ The 106th Psalm gives a poetic summary of the mighty acts Jehovah performed in behalf of his people, Israel. God's dealings with them were in addition to the goodness and normal blessings of life that he bestows upon mankind in general. Despite these advantages, however, the psalmist points out that the Israelites did not continue to show appreciation for their unique blessings. Verse 13 states: "Quickly they forgot his works; they did not wait for his counsel." No, it was not the passing of time that gradually diminished their thankfulness, so that decades later they no longer remembered what God had done for them. Instead, they forgot *quickly*—within weeks of Jehovah's outstanding miracles in their behalf at the Red Sea. (Exodus 16:1-3) Sadly, future events showed that unthankfulness became a regular pattern in their life.

4. What will safeguard us from taking the blessings of life for granted?

5. Despite Israel's additional blessings from Jehovah, what shameful course did they pursue?

How to Show Thankfulness

⁶ In detail, Jehovah spelled out three specific ways in which the Israelites were to show genuine appreciation for his goodness. One was to observe the tithing requirement by giving Jehovah a tenth of all produce and livestock. (Leviticus 27:30-32) This would be no hardship, for God was responsible for the sun, the fertile soil, the rain, and the miracle of growth. So, giving a tenth to the priests at Jehovah's sanctuary was a practical expression of thankfulness to Jehovah himself.

⁷ Another requirement was the making of contributions to God in which the amount was determined by the heart attitude of the individual Israelite. While no set amount was specified, the contributions were to be of the *firstfruits*—the first of the grain, the wine, and the wool of the flocks. (Numbers 15:17-21; Deuteronomy 18:4) Moreover, Jehovah stipulated that his people 'were not to give hesitantly' and were to give "the best of the first ripe fruits." (Exodus 22:29; 23:19) This gave the Israelites opportunities to show their gratitude to Jehovah in a tangible way. They could reveal their depth of thankfulness by the amount of the contributions. Would they contribute just one bunch of grapes? Or would a generous heart move them to give a whole basketful? Thus, each person or family could demonstrate thankfulness without coercion.

⁸ A third specific way to show thankfulness was in connection with God's provision for gleaning. At harvesttime, por-

tions were to be left unreaped for the needy. Not only did this teach compassion and consideration for the poor but it also ensured that they did not subsist on demoralizing handouts that required no effort on their part. (Leviticus 19:9, 10) Just how much should be left for the needy was not specified. But if the Israelite farmers showed a generous spirit by leaving plenty around the edge of their fields and thus showing favor to the poor, they would be glorifying God. (Proverbs 14:31) It was left for them to determine whether to leave a narrow or a wide area unreaped. But God gave strong directives toward generosity by instructing that any sheaves overlooked in the field and any fruit left on the tree or vine should be for the gleaners. (Deuteronomy 24:19-22) In turn, gleaners could demonstrate their own thankfulness to Jehovah for this provision by contributing a tenth of their gleanings at his place of worship.

Generosity of Heart

⁹ If the Israelites made liberal contributions, Jehovah's blessing would rest upon their houses. (Compare Ezekiel 44:30; Malachi 3:10.) In spite of plentiful harvests, however, they often failed to make contributions. Then God used reminders through kings or prophets to reawaken their thankfulness. Actually, selfish Israelites were the ones missing out, for Jehovah could not bless those who withheld contributions associated with his worship or for the poor.

¹⁰ On one occasion, King Hezekiah's reminders resulted in a joyful 14-day celebration in Jerusalem. The people were spiritually revived. First, they destroyed

6. Why was the tithing requirement no hardship?

7. (a) What major difference was there between tithing and making contributions to Jehovah? (b) What did this allow the Israelites to reveal about themselves?

8. (a) What two benefits did the gleaning arrangement provide? (b) How could generosity and thankfulness be demonstrated by all those involved in the gleaning arrangement?

9. Why were those exhibiting a selfish attitude actually hurting themselves?

10. (a) What were the happy results of King Hezekiah's reminders about thankfulness? (b) Did these conditions last?

all appendages of idol worship and then “gave heaps upon heaps. . . . When Hezekiah and the princes came and saw the heaps, they proceeded to bless Jehovah and his people Israel.” (2 Chronicles 30:1, 21-23; 31:1, 6-8) Sadly, though, after such periodic revivals, the people lapsed into unthankfulness. Finally, God’s patience ran out, and he allowed his people to be taken captive to Babylon. Their city and beautiful temple were destroyed. (2 Chronicles 36:17-21) Later, after the restoration, conditions again became so serious that Jehovah likened the Jews’ tightfistedness to stealing from him, robbing him!—Malachi 3:8.

¹¹ What principle can be learned from the Israelites’ erratic history? This: As long as thankfulness remained strong in their hearts, they joyfully demonstrated this by giving “heaps upon heaps” to Jehovah. But when thankfulness was forgotten or came to a low ebb, joyful material giving virtually stopped. Could such a bad

11. What principle learned from Israel’s history can benefit Christians living at this time?

attitude be displayed by dedicated Christians today? Yes, because human imperfection is still with us. How glad we are that God recorded his dealings with Israel so that we, who live at the end of this system of things, can learn and benefit from them! —Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11.

¹² Like the Israelites, Jehovah’s people today have many reasons for thankfulness. We too are recipients of more blessings than those enjoyed by our fellow humans. In fact, we know much more about Jehovah’s purposes than did the people of Israel. We have learned how God willingly sacrificed his Son, and we are aware of the blessings this will bring to those having divine approval. And today we are privileged to be in a spiritual paradise, for since 1919, Jehovah has created a grand spiritual estate for his peo-

12. (a) How are Jehovah’s people today in a position similar to that of the Israelites? (b) What questions do we need to ask?

Jehovah’s Witnesses today show thankfulness by sharing in field service and theocratic building projects, as well as by making material gifts



ple. Yes, Jehovah's Witnesses have many added reasons for thankfulness. So we need to ask: How deep is our thankfulness to God? And how can we *show* ourselves thankful in this 20th century?

Modern-Day Parallels

¹³ Christians are not under the Mosaic Law that outlined how to demonstrate thankfulness to God. (Galatians 3:24, 25) Our "sacrifice" of praise to Jehovah is "the fruit of lips which make public declaration to his name." (Hebrews 13:15) This, then, is the principal way that dedicated Christians can show thankfulness to God. But interesting parallels may be drawn from the laws on tithing, contributions, and gleanings.

¹⁴ Tithing meant giving the specific amount of one tenth—and there was no option about this. Similarly, today there are specific commands resting upon all of Jehovah's servants, also without options. We are to meet together regularly, and we must publicly preach the good news of Jehovah's Kingdom and help others to become Christ's disciples.—Hebrews 10:24, 25; Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20.

¹⁵ Remember, too, the contributions and gleanings arrangements. Specific amounts were not stipulated. Likewise, the Scriptures lay down no specific amount of time for each of Jehovah's Witnesses to spend in sacred service. The amount of time devoted to studying God's Word and preaching to others is left to the motivation of generous, unselfish hearts. Similarly, the extent of material contributions for the advancement of Kingdom interests is left for each individual's heart to dic-

13, 14. Though Christians are not under the Mosaic Law, can any parallel be drawn for them from the tithing law?

15. What indicators of generous hearts in modern times parallel those revealed by the contributions and gleanings arrangements in ancient Israel?

tate. Depth of thankfulness will determine whether one of God's servants today will bring in "heaps upon heaps" or just enough to get by. (2 Chronicles 31:6) As in Israel's case, however, the greater one's demonstration of thankfulness, the more bountiful the blessings received from God.

Ways to Show Thankfulness

¹⁶ One of the most direct ways to demonstrate thankfulness to Jehovah is to engage in the full-time ministry. Is your thankfulness great enough for your heart to have that longing? It has well been observed that a successful pioneer needs first the *desire* to serve and then the right circumstances. When thankfulness is strong, an impelling desire to serve God more fully wells up in an appreciative heart. Is that how you feel? Even if your present circumstances preclude your sharing in the full-time ministry, this need not quench the pioneer spirit. You can give wholehearted support and encouragement to the pioneers.

¹⁷ If you are unable to pioneer now, could you be an auxiliary pioneer from time to time? There are special periods each year when the Christian congregation encourages more-than-usual effort in the preaching work. The summer months, for example, are ideal for many, and in October there is additional activity in connection with the magazine subscription campaign. With regard to increased time for sacred service, the principle holds true that thankfulness produces generous giving.

¹⁸ Another specific way to show thankfulness is by supporting the theocratic building program taking place around the earth. In many lands, new Kingdom Halls are being built, and existing halls are being enlarged because of overcrowding.

16-18. In what specific ways can dedicated Christians show themselves thankful?

New Assembly Halls are being constructed, and extensions are being added to Bethel Homes and factories. What a practical way to demonstrate thankfulness to Jehovah—our contributing labor or finances to care for these building projects!

Fine Example of Needy Widow

¹⁹ A well-known Biblical example of showing thankfulness by generous material giving is that of the widow described by Jesus. (Luke 21:1-4) She must have realized that her two coins of such small value would make little difference as to the material well-being of the temple and those serving there. But she did not look at the temple and the priests who served there and think to herself: 'They live far better than I do and have a better building than my humble home.' True, the temple was much more luxurious and beautiful. "It was adorned with fine stones and dedicated things." (Luke 21:5) But that did not deter the widow from making a contribution. She wanted to show herself thankful to Jehovah, not to the men who served at the temple.

²⁰ Jehovah's people today learn from this example. Like the needy widow, they know that their contributions, large or small, are given to God. And they are reassured by knowing that Jehovah's earthly organization is so structured that no individual can ever profit financially. The Society's facilities are constructed and operated so as to equip hard workers to get the maximum result in quality production of Bibles and Bible helps and in serving Kingdom interests. This is a striking contrast to the scandalous misuse of donated money recently reported in

19. What impresses you most about the needy widow at the temple?

20. How may we display the same admirable attitude as that shown by the poor widow?

connection with some television evangelists.

Reminders to Thankfulness Beneficial

²¹ The Israelites needed constant reminders of their duty toward Jehovah, especially of the need to demonstrate a thankful spirit. Generally, when these matters were brought to their attention, thankfulness was rekindled in their hearts, and this resulted in more than words to express their grateful appreciation. They were willing to give "heaps upon heaps" of produce to Jehovah to be used at his house of worship.

²² So may those of the present-day "Israel of God" and the "great crowd" of their companions always feel the same way. (Galatians 6:16; Revelation 7:9) May their grateful hearts move them to give "heaps upon heaps" of praise to Jehovah. Then they can truly say: "We are *showing ourselves thankful* to our generous and loving God, Jehovah."

21, 22. What effect should kindly reminders to show ourselves thankful evoke in appreciative hearts?

Do You Recall?

- ☐ Why do Christians constantly need to check the extent of their thankfulness?
- ☐ Why have Jehovah's people always had extra cause for thankfulness?
- ☐ In what specific ways could the Israelites show their thankfulness to Jehovah?
- ☐ Like the Israelites, what specific things can we do to express thankfulness?
- ☐ What can we learn from the needy widow at the temple?

Kingdom Proclaimers Report

Integrity Under Ban

FOR 11 years the preaching work in one Southeast Asian country has been under official government ban. In recent years, however, the brothers have had reason to believe that some responsible persons in the government would like to relieve the situation. The ban appears to have been prompted by strong influence of Christendom's religions in governmental circles.

At times the brothers have been subjected to surveillance, arrest, and intense interrogation. Those working for government institutions have been threatened with demotion or forced retirement if they do not join the State political party. A group of publishers was severely beaten.

Witnesses have also been stripped of legal rights, such as the services of civil courts and the right to conduct funerals. (The authorities appoint a clergyman to do this.) In some places, even registration of marriage is denied Witnesses!

Yet, those overseeing the work there report: "Invariably, where brothers face the issue boldly, respectfully giving a witness from the Bible, the interrogations eventually stop and surveillance lessens, enabling the brothers effectively to carry on the preaching and disciplinarian work."—Matthew 28:19, 20.

For example, a sister under interrogation was asked where we get the name Jehovah. Courageously she opened her Bible

to Exodus 15:3, where the name appears. The interrogator, a military commander, followed along in the Bible, saying: "Yes, indeed. It is in the Bible." Then, turning to a clergyman who was also participating in the interrogation, he inquired: "Why don't you inform the people about the name?" The clergyman lamely replied: "Oh, yes, the name is in the Old Testament. But because this country does not have diplomatic relations with Israel, we do not use the name." The sister was immediately released!

Acting on a tip from an "interested" person, the police canceled the first of three district conventions the night before it was to begin! However, several favorably minded persons on the police force helped stop the ensuing interrogations. Fearlessly, the brothers held the other two conventions.

In spite of strong religious opposition in this country, there are still those who love righteousness. One employer, for example, having seen the brothers' loyalty to their principles and belief, has even developed more trust in the brothers. They are given more responsibility on the job.

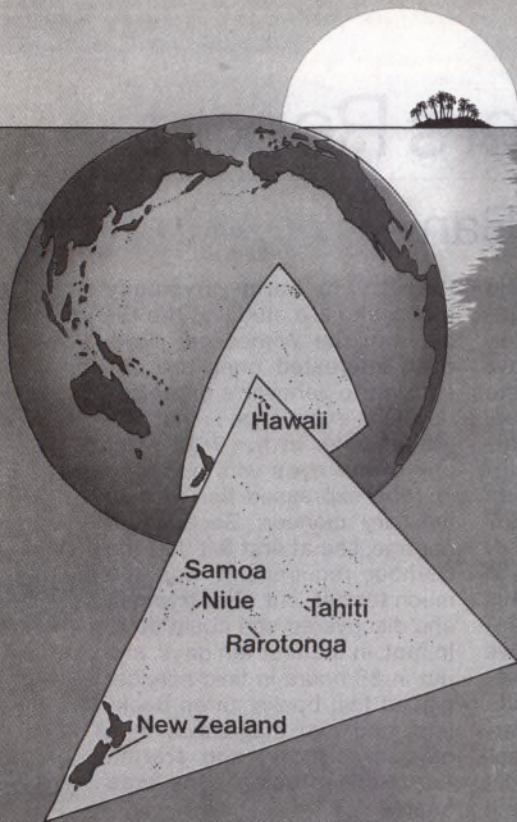
Similar things happen to the schoolchildren. Honesthearted teachers admire them for their firm stand taken for their belief.

Although the situation in the field has been easing up for the brothers, the churches still continue their harassment and try every possible means to stop the witness work. Sometimes

they try to harm physically those who are studying the Bible with the Witnesses. However, interested ones are still flocking to Jehovah's organization. One experience is that of a grandmother in her 70's. After one of her eyes was operated on, she expressed her wish to auxiliary pioneer. Because of her age, she at first felt that the 60-hour requirement was too much for her, but after trying it, she discovered she could do it. In fact, in the first ten days, she put in 38 hours in field service; placed two books, three booklets, and two magazines in a difficult territory; and started two Bible studies. She was happy!

Overall, the field-service situation in the country is very good. Especially after the general election, the brothers have been able to pursue various features of witnessing. This has truly accelerated the work. A regular publisher is able to have seven to ten Bible studies. Previously, householders were very inquisitive about who we were, where we came from, and so on. Now the brothers hardly have to introduce themselves. The people are hungry for satisfying spiritual food. The field is really ready for harvesting.—Matthew 9:37, 38.

Truly, the brothers in this land have kept integrity under trial, recently enjoying a 7-percent increase in publishers! They take the same stand that the psalmist David took when he said: "As for me, in my integrity I shall walk."—Psalm 26:11.



Glorifying Jehovah's Name in the *Isles of the Sea*

Tahiti and had spoken to the inhabitants about the wonders she had seen in her native land. She told of the existence of white men called Cookees (after Captain Cook). She described metal tools that they used instead of bones to cut down trees and to make canoes with great ease and speed. But she also told them that the white men worshiped the God Jehovah and Jesus Christ. Thus inspired, the uncle of the king of the island decided to build an altar and a marae dedicated to them.* In this way, God's personal name preceded Christendom's missionaries to the Polynesian Islands.

Jehovah—A Name Well Known in the Beginning

When they started to teach their religion to the peoples of Polynesia, the missionaries of Christendom discovered that many gods were worshiped in those islands. To avoid any confusion with these gods, they started referring to the Supreme God by his name rather than by a title such as Lord, the Eternal, or even Atua, the word for "God" in most of the Polynesian languages. Thus the inhabitants of these islands learned to pray to Jehovah, using his personal name.

Later, the first translations of the Bible appeared in the local languages. Logically enough, they used the personal name of God: Iehova in Hawaiian, Rarotongan, Tahitian, and Niuean; Ieova in Samoan; and Ihowa in Maori. More noteworthy still, in many translations the name even appeared in the Christian Greek Scriptures (New Testament).

The older generation of Maori in New Zealand can still remember when Jehovah's name was in common use—especially on the marae. On official occa-

IMAGINE the surprise of an explorer who when he sets foot on an "unknown" island finds his country's flag there right out in the open. Early in the 19th century, John Williams, a member of the London Missionary Society, experienced a similar surprise upon his arrival in Rarotonga, a small island in the Cook Islands, in the south of the Pacific. On this island where he thought himself to be Christendom's first representative, he discovered an altar in honor of Jehovah and Jesus Christ. The account of his missionary voyages gives the following explanation:

Some years before Williams' arrival, a woman had come from

* The *marae* was originally a sacred enclosure used for religious and social purposes. Today it generally refers to a tribal meeting place.

sions, quotations such as “the fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom” were part of the opening speech welcoming visiting dignitaries. Throughout Polynesia, the name was freely used at church services. To this day, older ones are familiar with God’s name in their local language. However, this is not true of many of the younger generation, who have drifted away from the traditional way of life.

Attempts to Suppress the Name

In time, a number of the Polynesian translations were revised. Just as has taken place with different revisions made in Europe and North America, one of the principal changes was the elimination of the name Jehovah (or some of its very close equivalents). Thus, it was replaced by Alii (Lord) in the revised edition of the Samoan Bible that appeared in 1969, and a similar revision was planned in Niuean.

True, the inhabitants of Polynesia no longer worship their gods or idols as in the past, not even Io of the Hidden Face, the former supreme god of the Maori. But does that in any way authorize Bible translators to relegate the God of the Bible to anonymity by replacing his name with a mere title? Does this name have less importance today? Certainly not, since Jesus himself, in the model prayer, taught his disciples to pray first of all for the sanctification of that name.*

Defender of the Name

Despite these recent developments, the name Jehovah is not about to disappear in Polynesia. Why not? Because, just as in all other lands, Jehovah’s Witnesses regularly visit the inhabitants of these islands in order to make that name known to them. Right now more than 16,000 Witnesses in this part of the world are participating in this important work, and they are demonstrating to their fellowman the importance of having an accurate knowledge of God’s Word and putting that knowledge into practice. That is what it means to worship God and sanctify his name.—John 4:21-24.

* The model prayer taught by Jesus to his disciples (often called the Our Father) begins with these words: “Our Father in the heavens, let your name be sanctified.”—Matthew 6:9.

Tutuila,
American
Samoa

Lake Gunn,
New Zealand



Savaii,
Western
Samoa

Avatele
Beach on
Niue



Jesus Sends Out 70 Others to Preach

IT IS the fall of 32 C.E., a full three years since Jesus' baptism. He and his disciples have recently attended the Festival of Tabernacles in Jerusalem, and apparently they are still nearby. In fact, Jesus spends most of the remaining six months of his ministry either in Judea or just across the Jordan River in the district of Perea. This territory needs to be covered too.

True, after the Passover of 30 C.E., Jesus spent about eight months preaching in Judea. But after the Jews tried to kill him there on the Passover of 31 C.E., he spent the next year and a half teaching almost exclusively in Galilee. During that time, he developed a large, well-trained organization of preachers, something he did not have earlier. So he now launches a final intensive witnessing campaign in Judea.

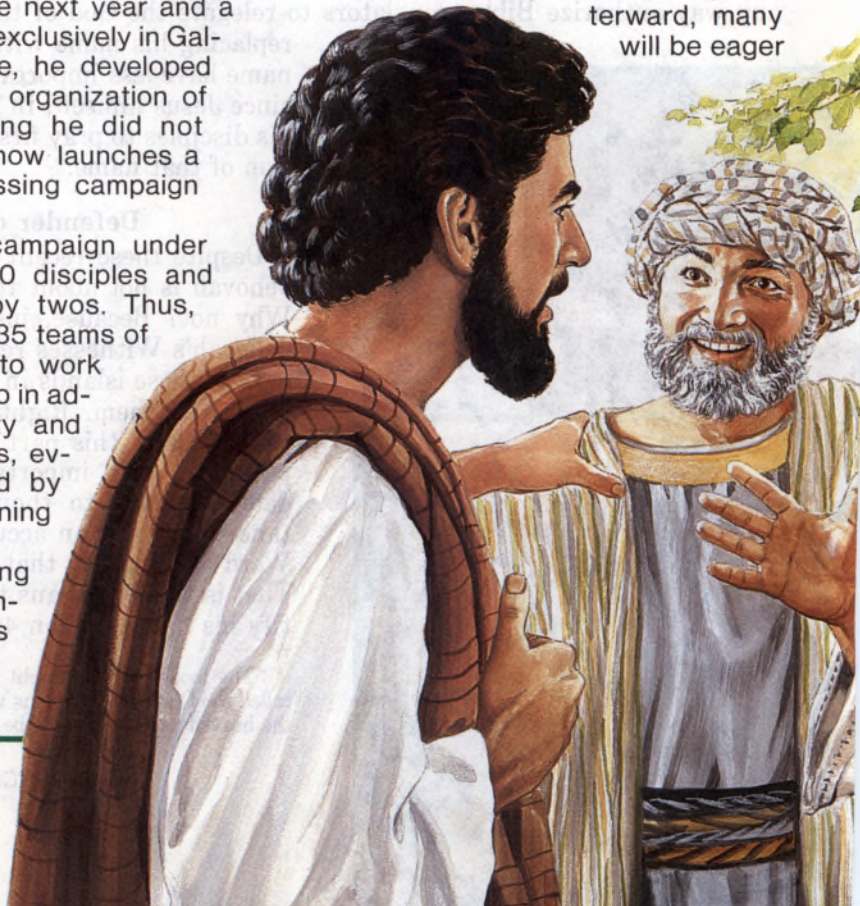
Jesus gets this campaign under way by choosing 70 disciples and sending them out by twos. Thus, there are altogether 35 teams of Kingdom preachers to work the territory. These go in advance into every city and place to which Jesus, evidently accompanied by his apostles, is planning to come.

Instead of directing the 70 to go to synagogues, Jesus tells them to enter private homes, explaining:

"Wherever you enter into a house say first, 'May this house have peace.' And if a friend of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him." What is to be their message? "Go on telling them," Jesus says, "the kingdom of God has come near to you." Regarding the activity of the 70, *Matthew Henry's Commentary* reports: "Like their Master, wherever they visited, they preached from house to house."

Jesus' instructions to the 70 are similar to those given to the 12 when he sent these out on a preaching campaign in Galilee about a year earlier. Not only does he warn the 70 of the opposition they will face, preparing them to present the message to householders, but he empowers them to cure the sick.

Thus, when Jesus arrives shortly afterward, many will be eager



Jesus' Life and Ministry

to meet the Master whose disciples are able to do such marvelous things.

The preaching by the 70 and Jesus' follow-up work last a relatively short time. Soon the 35 teams of Kingdom preachers begin returning to Jesus. "Lord," they say joyfully, "even the demons are made subject to us by the use of your name." Such a fine service report surely thrills Jesus, for he responds: "I began to behold Satan already fallen like lightning from heaven. Look! I have given you the authority to trample underfoot serpents and scorpions."

Jesus knows that after the birth of God's Kingdom at the time of the end, Satan and his demons are to be cast out of heaven. But now this casting out of unseen demons by mere humans serves as added assurance of that coming event. Therefore, Jesus speaks

of the future fall of Satan from heaven as a certainty. Hence, it is in a symbolic sense that the 70 are given authority to trample serpents and scorpions. Yet, Jesus says: "Do not rejoice over this, that the spirits are made subject to you, but rejoice because your names have been inscribed in the heavens."

Jesus is overjoyed and publicly praises his Father for using these humble servants of his in such a powerful way. Turning to his disciples, he says: "Happy are the eyes that behold the things you are beholding. For I say to you, Many prophets and kings desired to see the things you are beholding but did not see them, and to hear the things you are hearing but did not hear them."

Luke 10:1-24; Matthew 10:1-42; Revelation 12:7-12.

♦ Where did Jesus preach during the first three years of his ministry, and what territory does he cover in his final six months?

♦ Where does Jesus direct the 70 to find people?

♦ Why did Jesus say he beheld Satan already fallen from heaven?

♦ In what sense did the 70 trample serpents and scorpions?



I Found Justice **Not in Politics** **but in True Christianity**

As told by Xavier Noll

INJUSTICE! This was something I met up with early in life, and I suffered because of it. As a youth, I asked myself: 'Is injustice something that just has to be put up with? Is there no government on earth that is capable of putting an end to it? Where can justice be found?' I eventually found it, but not where I expected.

A Search From Childhood

I was brought up in Wittelsheim, a small town in Alsace, a region in northeastern France. My father, like many other men in that area, worked in a potash mine. Back in the 1930's, workers in the industrial world were astir with revolt. I remember that as a child, I joined in workers' demonstrations. We would parade in the streets with raised fists, chanting revolutionary songs, such as the socialist "Internationale." The workers demanded justice and better living conditions.

When the miners went on strike and occupied the mine, I would take my father his meals. I still remember how scared I was when I had to go through the cordon of armed national guards in order to pass



my father's *gamelle* (meal can) to him through the mine railings. I was impressed by the banners displaying fiery slogans and the red flags flying in the wind, some bearing the hammer and sickle.

Women would assemble in front of the mine gates, shouting slogans to encourage their husbands to keep up the fight against the "exploiters." Other women lived in constant fear for their husbands' safety. In spite of their anticapitalist feelings, some men would sneak out to the mine under

cover of darkness in order to earn enough to feed their family. At times my father did this also. He would then carry a gun in his bag in case he met up with pickets looking for strikebreakers.

Hitler Invades France

I was 17 when war broke out. A few months later, the Nazis invaded France. Since they claimed that Alsace was not merely occupied territory but a part of the German Reich, all young men like me were to be enrolled in Hitler's army. Hence, with a suitcase tied on my back, I fled on my bicycle before the oncoming invaders.

I sometimes managed to get a tow by holding on to the back of trucks heading south. Streams of refugees were a ready target for German planes, so I would plunge into a ditch when I heard them coming.

I reached south-central France, which was still unoccupied by the Germans. But even there I met up with injustice. I worked hard sweeping the streets, carrying coffins in cemeteries, or humping high 100-pound loads in a cement factory. Sometimes I would work 12 hours a day for a mere pittance. Most of the relief we refugees should have received was stolen by the officials appointed to distribute it.

Toward the end of 1940, I decided to join in the fight to liberate my country. I went to Algeria, in North Africa, and joined what was left of the French army there. Army life did not satisfy my thirst for justice any more than civilian life had done, but I still wanted to share in freeing Europe. The Americans landed in North Africa near the end of 1942. One day in 1943, however, I lost three of my fingers when a grenade detonator I was handling exploded. So I was unable to join the troops that were to reconquer Europe.

Disgusted With Commerce, Politics, and Religion

Once back to civilian life in Algeria, the flagrant exploitation of man by man that was going on in the working world made me feel indignant. One of my companions died after inhaling a deadly gas under dangerous working conditions. Shortly afterward I nearly died under the same circumstances. This commercial firm had absolutely no consideration for the health, or even the lives, of its workers. I had to fight to obtain compensation. I was thoroughly disgusted.

Although only 24, I ended up in an old people's home, where I stayed until the end

of the war. While there, I met some French communist militants who had been exiled to Algeria at the beginning of the war. We got on well, and they had no trouble persuading me to join them in their fight against injustice.

Once the war was over, I returned to my hometown in Alsace, full of my new ideals. But things did not turn out as I had hoped. I was most disturbed to discover that some members of the Communist Party had not been good patriots during the war. One day a party official said to me: "You know, Xavier, we'd never get anywhere if we only accepted hard-liners." I expressed my disagreement and my disappointment.

I also noticed that those who shouted the loudest about ideals and justice spent most of their salary on drinks down at the mine canteen, reducing their family to poverty. In spite of this, I still voted for the Communist Party because I felt the communists were doing the most to obtain justice for the working class.

I had been a server at Mass in my younger days, so the Catholic priest came around to try to persuade me to become a militant for the church. But I had lost faith in the clergy. I was convinced that they were on the side of the dominant class. Besides, I knew that many Catholic priests had collaborated with the Germans in France during the occupation. I remembered that when I was in the army, the Catholic chaplains preached patriotism. But I also knew that Catholic chaplains in the German army did the same thing. In my opinion, that was the job of politicians and military leaders, not church ministers.

Additionally, bitter experiences had seriously shaken my faith in God. My sister was killed by a shell the day she turned 20. At the time, I said to myself: 'If God exists, why does he allow all this injustice?' Nevertheless, when I enjoyed the

peaceful calm of our beautiful countryside, I felt deeply moved. I would say to myself: 'All of this could not have "just happened."' At times like that I would pray.

A Message of Hope

One Sunday morning in 1947, a man and a woman in their 30's came to our door. They talked to my father, who told them: "You'd better see my son. He reads everything he can get his hands on." It was true. I would read anything, from the communist newspaper *L'Humanité* to the Catholic daily *La Croix*. These visitors told me about a war-free world of justice for all, where our earth would become a paradise. Everyone would occupy his own house, and sickness and death would be things of the past. They proved everything they said from the Bible, and I could see they were really convinced.

I was 25, and this was the first time I had ever even touched a Bible. The passages they read aroused my curiosity. It seemed too good to be true, and I wanted to be clear on the matter in my own mind. My visitors promised to bring me a Bible and left a book called *Deliverance*, together with a booklet entitled "*Be Glad, Ye Nations*."

As soon as they left, I started reading the booklet. The testimony of General de Gaulle's niece concerning the integrity of Jehovah's Witnesses in the Ravensbrück concentration camp for women was a real eye-opener. 'If true Christians exist,' I said to myself, 'these must be the ones.' I finished the *Deliverance* book before going to bed that night. At last I had found the answer to one of the questions that had been haunting me for so long: "Why does a God of justice permit injustice?"

I Take My Stand for True Justice

The following day, true to their promise, the Witnesses came back with a Bible.

Because of a bicycle accident, my shoulder was in a cast, and I could not go to work, so I had time on my hands. I read through the whole Bible in just seven days, discovering its fine principles of justice and righteousness. As I read on, I became more and more convinced that this book was from God. I began to understand that the fight to establish true justice had to be spiritual, not political.—Ephesians 6:12.

I was convinced that all my political friends would be overjoyed to hear about the message of hope I had just discovered. What a disappointment when they showed anything but enthusiasm! As for me, I just could not hold back from telling out the good news to one and all. I particularly enjoyed quoting certain texts, such as James 5:1-4, where the rich are condemned for exploiting the workers.

I was a mailman at the time. In order to avoid irritating my father, who stuck to his own opinions, I would leave the house wearing my mailman's cap and would be sure to have it on when I came home. One day my father said to a friend: "My son is doing a lot of overtime lately." The truth was that I left my cap at a friend's place when I went out in the preaching work and put it back on afterward.

Less than three months after my first

In Our Next Issue

- Jesus Christ—God, Man, or Myth?
- Meeting the Needs of Our Older Ones
—A Christian Challenge
- Our Unforgettable Journey to Vanuatu

contact with Jehovah's Witnesses, I set off alone to attend a convention in Basel, Switzerland. In the middle of the baptism talk, I mentioned to the Witness lady sitting next to me (who had kindly put me up for the assembly) that I would like to get baptized but that I had no bathing gear. She immediately left her seat and was back with trunks and towel long before the end of the talk.

Widening Out in the Ministry

I was already spending about 60 hours a month visiting people in their homes. However, when a letter encouraging pioneer service (full-time preaching work) was read at the Kingdom Hall, I said to myself: 'That's for me!'

Toward the end of 1949, I was sent to the famous Mediterranean seaport of Marseilles to pioneer. Life was pleasant in Marseilles in those days after the war. It was the kind of city where tram drivers would stop so as not to interrupt a game of *pétanque* (bowls) being played in the street. The other pioneer brothers and I found nowhere to stay but a boarding house that was also used by prostitutes. It was not an ideal place for Christian ministers, but I must say that as far as we were concerned, these *filles de joie* never said or did anything out of place and listened attentively to our message.

We had very little money and leaned heavily on Jehovah to provide our material needs. In the evenings, when we got back home, we would share our experiences. One day, to my great surprise, a Yugoslav lady I met while going from door to door took a huge crucifix from her bedside table and kissed it with fervor to prove how much she loved God. She accepted a Bible study, and soon her eyes were opened to the vanity of worshipping idols.

In November 1952 Sister Sara Rodri-

guez, a pioneer from Paris, arrived in Marseilles to help in the preaching work. All of us pioneer brothers were glad to have her accompany us when visiting women who showed interest in Bible truth. Finally I "kidnapped" her, so to speak, for she became my wife.

In 1954, three months after our marriage, the Society invited us to go to Martinique in the French West Indies. We would be the first overseas Witnesses to preach on this island since the expulsion of missionaries in the early 1950's. After 17 days on the ocean, we finally arrived with many questions on our minds. How would we be accepted? Where would we live? What kind of food would we eat? How long would it take to find a suitable Kingdom Hall for our meetings?

A New Territory and a New Life

The inhabitants of Martinique proved to be very hospitable. As we went from door to door, the people would often give us refreshments. In fact, it was not



uncommon to be invited in for a meal. We placed much Bible literature, and although most of the islanders did not own a Bible, they held it in high esteem.

Our first home was a hut with a tin roof. During the rainy season, the sudden downpours at night would wake us up with a start as the rain pounded on the roof. Tap water was available only two or three times a day. We had no bathroom. We would take a shower by standing in an empty oil barrel in our small backyard, taking turns pouring water over each other. Rather primitive but very welcome after a long day out in the sun!

Sara had to adapt to local cooking and learn to prepare breadfruit. As a child, I had always imagined the breadfruit tree with loaves hanging from its branches. Actually, the fruit of this tree is more like a vegetable. It can be prepared like potatoes. Back in those days, we would eat it with turtle eggs. This was delicious, but today such eggs are a luxury. Breadfruit is also good with meat or fish.

Material problems were overcome, and abundant spiritual blessings amply compensated for any difficulties. Upon coming home one day, I announced to Sara that I had found a Kingdom Hall to seat a hundred. "How much?" she asked. "The owner told me to fix my price," I replied. At that time all we could offer was the derisory sum of 10 francs a month. Providentially, the man accepted.

We were in high hopes of having excellent meeting attendance, for people were always saying: "If you had a hall, we would come to your meetings." However, for many long months we had an average attendance of only ten. But perseverance bore fruit, and today there are 24 congregations on the Flowered Island, as Martinique is called, totaling some 2,000 Witnesses.

Abundant Blessings

Toward the end of 1958, I went to French Guiana to answer a call from a young student. After a ten-day sea trip on a small vessel called the *Nina*, I started preaching at Saint Laurent, a port on the Maroni River. There I met several ex-convicts who stayed on after the penal colony system was abolished by France in 1945. Then I went to Cayenne, where I visited the young man I had come to see. He and several other persons who subscribed for our magazines during my stay in French Guiana are now active servants of Jehovah.

My wife and I were invited several times to the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses, in Brooklyn, for different training courses, totaling over a year. There I have really seen how the Bible principles of justice and equality are put into practice among God's people. Those holding responsible positions eat at the same tables as youths who work in the factory, and they receive the same small reimbursement. Yes, justice and equality—my childhood dream—are a living reality there.

I am now 65, with 40 years in full-time service behind me. My wife and I spent many of those years combing Martinique on motorcycles, preaching the good news of Jehovah's new system of things founded upon justice. We now work at the branch in an office building overlooking the magnificent bay of Fort-de-France. All these years in God's organization have taught us an important lesson. It is only among God's people that true justice may be found, with no racial, tribal, or religious barriers. Together with those we have seen come along into the truth over the years, we cherish the hope of living soon in a new earth in which righteousness is to dwell.—2 Peter 3:13.

“Jehovah Is My Shepherd”

“Jehovah is my Shepherd. I shall lack nothing.”

—PSALM 23:1.

IMAGINE this scene: Philistine troops face the army of Israel. Goliath, a Philistine giant, is defiant. A young man, armed only with sling and stones, runs to meet him. A well-aimed stone pierces the giant’s skull and kills him. Who was the young man? David, a shepherd who won this stunning victory with the aid of Jehovah God.—1 Samuel, chapter 17.

² In time, this young man became Israel’s king, ruling for 40 years. He was an expert harpist and composed much poetry under divine inspiration. David also wrote over 70 beautiful psalms that are a source of much encouragement and guidance for Jehovah’s people today. The best known of these is Psalm 23. Why not open your Bible and follow along as we undertake a verse-by-verse study of this psalm?

Jehovah, a Loving Shepherd

³ “*Jehovah is my Shepherd.*” (Psalm 23:1) As an experienced shepherd, David knew how to lead, feed, and protect the sheep. For instance, he courageously protected his sheep from a lion on one occasion and a bear on another. (1 Samuel 17:34-36) David’s sheep trusted their shepherd implicitly. But in relation to Jehovah, he himself was a sheep. Since David felt secure in God’s loving care, he could say: “Jehovah is my Shepherd.” Do you enjoy this feeling of security under the Great Shepherd, Jehovah God? He surely leads, feeds, and protects his sheeplike worshippers today. Moreover, as appointed elders in the congregations of Jehovah’s Witnesses, faithful, loving undershepherds zealously care for the sheep.—1 Peter 5:1-4.

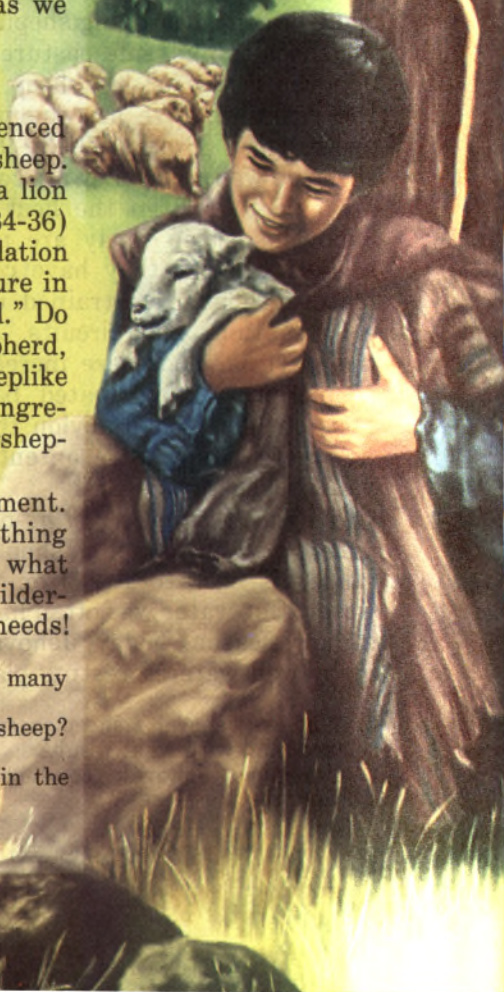
⁴ “*I shall lack nothing.*” Think carefully about this statement. Because of Jehovah’s loving care, do you not have a soothing feeling of calmness and confidence? Do you remember what happened to the Israelites when they wandered in the wilderness for 40 years? Why, God provided for all their basic needs!

1, 2. What were some of David’s accomplishments, and how many psalms did he compose?

3. (a) On what occasions did David risk his life to protect his sheep?

(b) In what sense is Jehovah our Shepherd?

4. How is our situation today similar to that of the Israelites in the wilderness?



It is the same today. Jehovah's faithful servants lack nothing. Many can echo these inspired words of David: "A young man I used to be, I have also grown old, and yet I have not seen anyone righteous left entirely, nor his offspring looking for bread." (Psalm 37:25) Today, an abundance of spiritual food is being provided through "the faithful and discreet slave." (Matthew 4:4; 24:45-47) In addition to several meetings a week, we have the Bible, the magazines *The Watchtower* and *Awake!*, and many other publications. Even in countries where the preaching work of Jehovah's Witnesses is banned, supplies of spiritual food are received regularly. Jehovah's sheep lack nothing!

⁵ "In grassy pastures he makes me lie down." (Psalm 23:2) There were large grassy pastures around many cities in ancient Israel. As a loving shepherd then led his sheep to fine, safe pasture grounds, so Jehovah cares for his sheep today. Says the psalmist: "We are the people of his pasturage." (Psalm 79:13; 95:7) Literal sheep do well when they are contented and are able to rest in the heat of the day. Jehovah's sheep today are peaceful and relaxed because they have confidence in mature shepherds—trained overseers in congregations and circuits. As a result, the spiritual flocks are increasing. Many people previously treated badly by the false shepherds of Babylon the Great are now very happy and contented as Jehovah's sheep.

⁶ "By well-watered resting-places he conducts me." In Israel a shepherd had to guide his flock to a pool or a stream for water. But water was often hard to find in the dry season. Today, Jehovah 'conducts us by well-watered resting-places' by pro-

viding the waters of truth in great abundance. (Compare Ezekiel 34:13, 14.) And the prophet Isaiah gives this rousing invitation: "Hey there, all you thirsty ones! Come to the water." (Isaiah 55:1) By taking in these spiritual waters, the sheep gain protection from the fiery judgments to come upon those "who do not know God and those who do not obey the good news."—2 Thessalonians 1:8; Revelation 7:16, 17.

⁷ "My soul he refreshes." (Psalm 23:3) When we are weary, in trouble, discouraged, or facing serious opposition, Jehovah refreshes us by means of his Word. Hence, it is good for Christians to make it a practice to read a portion of the Bible every day. Do you do this? Some find it helpful to memorize certain texts, such as Exodus 34:6, 7 or Proverbs 3:5, 6. Why is this beneficial? Well, if a crisis should occur and you do not have a Bible handy, comforting Scriptural thoughts can immediately strengthen you. Many brothers condemned to jails or prison camps because of standing firm for righteous principles have been greatly refreshed and strengthened by recalling memorized scriptures. Yes, God's Word can cause "the heart to rejoice" and make "the eyes shine"!—Psalm 19:7-10.

⁸ "He leads me in the tracks of righteousness." Tracks of righteousness are difficult to follow, but they lead to life. As Jesus said: "Narrow is the gate and cramped the road leading off into life." (Matthew 7:14) The apostle Paul expressed a related thought by telling disciples in Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch: "We must enter into the kingdom of God through many tribu-

7. When is spiritual refreshment from Jehovah especially helpful, and under what circumstances can memorized Bible texts prove to be highly beneficial?

8. Is it easy to follow "the tracks of righteousness," but doing so leads to what?

5. Why are Jehovah's sheep today peaceful and relaxed, and with what result?

6. How does Jehovah 'conduct us by well-watered resting-places'?

lations.” And Paul certainly knew what he was talking about. Shortly before that, he had been stoned at Lystra and left for dead!—Acts 14:19-22.

⁹ Jehovah ‘leads us in the tracks of righteousness’ by guiding and instructing us through his Word and organization. But most people follow the broad and spacious road “leading off into destruction.” (Matthew 7:13) Rampant sexual uncleanness and the rapidly spreading plague of AIDS underscore the need for Christians to avoid bad associations. (1 Corinthians 15:33) We must also take care to prevent our very thoughts from wandering into unclean channels. (Psalm 19:14) To that end, let us always apply the fine counsel God’s Word gives concerning sex and how to avoid the many pitfalls of immorality.—1 Corinthians 7:2-5; Ephesians 5:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8.

¹⁰ “For his name’s sake.” Jehovah’s Witnesses have the heavy responsibility of glorifying God’s name and bringing no reproach upon it. (Matthew 6:9; Exodus 6:3; Ezekiel 38:23) Many worldly people are quick to point an accusing finger at Jehovah’s people. If this is done because of our stand for such Bible principles as neutrality or the sacredness of blood, our conscience is clear. But if this was to happen because of our wrongdoing, we would be dishonoring Jehovah. (Isaiah 2:4; Acts 15:28, 29; 1 Peter 4:15, 16) So may we hate what is bad. (Psalm 97:10) If we have to undergo persecution, Jehovah will always help us and protect us for his name’s sake.

9. (a) How does God ‘lead us in the tracks of righteousness’? (b) In what way can Psalm 19:14 be helpful? (c) What scriptures can help us to avoid the pitfalls of illicit sex?

10. (a) What responsibility do Jehovah’s Witnesses have regarding the divine name? (b) Why do worldly people often criticize us? (c) Under what circumstances will Jehovah help us?

Jehovah Protects His Sheep

¹¹ “*Even though I walk in the valley of deep shadow, I fear nothing bad.*” (Psalm 23:4) Isaac Leeser’s translation reads: “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will not fear evil.” This may call to mind the deep gorges, or valleys, that run down from the mountains of Judea on the western side of the Dead Sea. A valley, or ravine, where beasts of prey lurk in the shadows is a dangerous place for sheep. David passed through many perilous valleys in his life, with death staring him in the face. But since God was leading him, he was confident and did not give way to unrestrained fear. We should have similar confidence in Jehovah. This reference to “deep shadow” may also remind us of Isaiah’s prophecy: “Those dwelling in the land of deep shadow, light itself has shone upon them.” Matthew referred to this prophecy and applied it to Jesus Christ, saying: “The people sitting in darkness saw a great light, and as for those sitting in a region of deathly shadow, light rose upon them.” How? By the great preaching campaign that Jesus conducted.—Isaiah 9:2; Matthew 4:13-16.

¹² David ‘feared nothing bad.’ The same thing is true of Jehovah’s servants today, even though they are not popular in this evil world ruled by Satan. (1 John 5:19) Many people actually hate them, and they are severely persecuted in some countries. But in these lands they continue to preach the good news of the Kingdom, although not as openly as they would normally do. They know that Jehovah is with them and

11. What is meant by “the valley of deep shadow,” and of what may this remind us concerning Jesus?

12. (a) How have Jehovah’s servants adapted to persecution in many countries, and with what result? (b) How did Peter encourage the persecuted early Christians?

will protect them. (Psalm 27:1) Fine progress is being made in many countries where the Kingdom work must be done underground. In such countries, Jehovah's Witnesses echo the words of the psalm: "Jehovah is on my side; I shall not fear. What can earthling man do to me?" (Psalm 118:6) These Witnesses are in a position similar to that of the early Christians to whom the apostle Peter wrote these encouraging words: "Even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are happy. However, the object of their fear do not you fear, neither become agitated."—1 Peter 3:14.

¹³ "For you are with me." Please note a very interesting factor in this phrase. The inspired psalmist has changed from the third person to the second. Instead of speaking of Jehovah as "he," David now uses the pronoun "you." Why? Because it is more intimate. Danger brings us closer to our loving Father, Jehovah. We then enjoy a more intimate relationship with him. By means of prayer and supplication, we can call upon him for protection, and thus overcome our fears.—Compare Zephaniah 3:12.

¹⁴ "Your rod and your staff are the things that comfort me." The Hebrew word *she'vet*, rendered "rod," can signify a shepherd's crook. Both the rod and the staff can be used for defense and to represent or indicate authority. Certainly, these implements would be very useful in beating off such predators as wolves and snakes. A shepherd's crook could also be used to nudge sheep in the right direction or even

13. (a) What interesting change occurs at Psalm 23:4, and why? (b) How can Christians overcome their fears?

14. (a) What implements did shepherds have in David's time, and how did they use them? (b) How do Christian shepherds protect the flock today?

to draw back a sheep straying too close to a spot where it might fall and get hurt. Today, Jehovah provides faithful shepherds, elders in congregations, who defend the flock from such spiritual predators as apostates. Or the elders may have to counsel those who become lax in meeting attendance or deviate from Christian conduct.

A Rich Banquet Amid Enemies

¹⁵ "You arrange before me a table in front of those showing hostility to me." (Psalm 23:5) Here we have a meaningful change of illustration, from a shepherd to a host. As a very generous host, Jehovah provides an abundance of spiritual food through the anointed "slave" class. (Matthew 24:45) Although we live in a hostile world, we are well fed. *The Watchtower* is published in over a hundred languages so that people living in such diverse places as South Africa, Greenland, the Solomon Islands, and India can be fed spiritually. Besides, the approximately 55,000 congregations worldwide have well-trained public speakers and teachers and fine meeting places, including hundreds of new Kingdom Halls. Over 3,000,000 home Bible studies are being conducted to help sheep-like ones. In contrast, those in Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion, go hungry.—Isaiah 65:13.

¹⁶ "With oil you have greased my head." In ancient Israel a hospitable host provided oil to grease the heads of his guests. Interestingly, on a certain occasion Jesus was the guest of a Pharisee who did not

15. (a) What meaningful change of illustration occurs at Psalm 23:5? (b) What facts show that Jehovah's people are well fed spiritually, in contrast with whom?

16. (a) In contrast with a sinful woman, what did a certain Pharisee fail to do for Jesus? (b) What kind of oil does Jehovah provide for his loyal servants today?

grease Jesus' head with oil or provide water to wash his feet. At that time, a sinful woman washed his feet with her tears and greased them with special perfumed oil. (Luke 7:36-38, 44-46) But Jehovah is a very hospitable host! For his loyal servants, he provides the spiritual "oil of exultation." (Isaiah 61:1-3) Yes, Jehovah's people certainly are exulting today.

¹⁷ "My cup is well filled." Another rendition is: "My cup is brimming over." (Moffatt) This denotes spiritual abundance. Though overdrinking is not meant, these words suggest a cup of fine wine. This beverage has curative properties, as is shown by Paul's advice to Timothy: "Do not drink water any longer, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent cases of sickness." (1 Timothy 5:23) In a spiritual sense, wine also makes our hearts rejoice. (Psalm 104:15) Our loving Father, Jehovah, generously provides a spiritual banquet of good things for his loyal servants, including a 'well-filled cup' of joy.

¹⁸ "Surely goodness and loving-kindness themselves will pursue me all the days of my life." (Psalm 23:6) Goodness is part of the fruitage of Jehovah's holy spirit. (Galatians 5:22, 23) God's goodness and loving-kindness are enjoyed by those who walk in his way. (Psalm 103:17, 18) With strong faith in Jehovah, his people can face any trial they encounter. They are always the objects of his blessing and loving care. And faithfulness to the end will mean everlasting life in the new world. What a wonderful prospect!

17. (a) A 'well-filled cup' denotes what? (b) How does Jehovah provide a 'well-filled cup' for his servants today?

18. (a) Jehovah's goodness and loving-kindness are enjoyed by whom, and how does Psalm 103:17, 18 show this? (b) What glorious prospect lies ahead for those faithful to Jehovah?

¹⁹ "And I will dwell in the house of Jehovah to the length of days." In David's day God's sanctuary was the tabernacle, for the temple had not yet been built. Since the psalmist had a gracious host in mind, 'dwelling in Jehovah's house' meant having a good relationship with God as His guest. (Psalm 15:1-5) Today, that house can be identified with Jehovah's holy temple, his arrangement for pure worship. King Solomon was privileged to construct the first material temple, richly ornamented with gold and built to honor Jehovah. What a great privilege it was to serve there! Although such a temple no longer exists, God has a holy organization to honor him and promote pure worship. As one means of doing this, Jehovah's organization has established Bethel Homes in scores of countries. "Bethel" means "House of God," and thousands of dedicated people serve in these theocratic centers. Some of these men and women have served in this way "to the length of days," having spent most of their lives in Bethel service. Millions of others, not members of

19. (a) What does it mean to "dwell in the house of Jehovah"? (b) What has Jehovah's organization established to promote true worship today, and why do thousands of dedicated people deem it a privilege to serve there? (c) Who else are determined to serve God forever?

How Would You Answer?

- ☐ How does Jehovah prove to be our loving Shepherd?
- ☐ By what means does God lead us in the tracks of righteousness?
- ☐ How does Jehovah protect his sheep?
- ☐ In what respect has God spread a table for us amid our enemies?

a Bethel family, are similarly determined to serve Jehovah forever.

²⁰ The 23rd Psalm is like a gem with many facets that sparkle with light. It exalts the glorious name of our loving heavenly Father, Jehovah, and reveals how he guides, protects, and provides for his sheep. As a result, his people are happy, well fed spiritually, and rapidly increasing in number, even in countries

20. (a) Why is Psalm 23 an outstanding part of the Scriptures, and what does it help us to cultivate? (b) What privileges await Jehovah's faithful servants?

Exploiters of 'Poverty and Ignorance'?

"JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES . . . take advantage of the poverty, the neglect, and the ignorance of a good portion of our people," alleged Mexican writer Jorge García, "in order progressively to take control of their conscience."—*Excelsior* of March 9, 1983.

Similar accusations against Jehovah's Witnesses are often heard in Latin America. 'No one of any importance ever becomes one of Jehovah's Witnesses,' say some professional people, politicians, and religious leaders. 'Jehovah's Witnesses get their followers from the poor, ignorant people.' It is true that many of Jehovah's Witnesses are of humble means, but does this mean that Jehovah's Witnesses are 'taking advantage of poverty, neglect, and ignorance?' Does the fact that many hum-

where there is bitter opposition. Psalm 23 also helps us to cultivate a warm, intimate bond with our Creator. And when we look at the starry heavens, as David often did while watching his flock, we are grateful that the Creator of this awesome universe cares for us as a loving Shepherd. Lovingly, he also offers us eternal life in the new world if we maintain our integrity to him. How grand it will then be to meet such faithful resurrected servants of God as David! And what a privilege to serve Jehovah, the Great Shepherd, to all eternity!

ble and poor people respond to their teachings mean that such teachings are wrong?

To answer these questions, let us think back to the first century of our Common Era. What kind of people were attracted to Christianity back then?

Christianity

—Why It Appealed to Lowly Ones

Modern-day critics of Jehovah's Witnesses are merely echoing the words of first-century opposers of Christianity. Consider, for example, the Greek intellectuals who dwelt in the ancient city of Corinth. As the apostle Paul put it, "the Greeks look[ed] for wisdom." (1 Corinthians 1:22) They wanted, of course, not Biblical wisdom, but abstruse philosophical arguments. And when the apostle Paul "did not come with an extravagance of speech or of wisdom" but delivered instead the simple message of "Christ, and him impaled," Christianity was mocked by many as "foolishness."—1 Corinthians 1:23; 2:1, 2.

Was Paul 'taking advantage of ignorance,' then, in appealing to the humble and lowly ones along with the other residents of Corinth? Not at all. Paul ex-

plained to Christians there: "For you behold his calling of you, brothers, that not many wise in a fleshly way were called, . . . but God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put the wise men to shame . . . in order that no flesh might boast in the sight of God."—1 Corinthians 1:26-29.

From the very beginning, Christianity had been a religion that primarily attracted lowly, humble people. Jesus' 12 apostles—the foundation of his church—were not taken from among the educated scribes and Pharisees. (Ephesians 2:20) Rather, they were from the working class, four being fishermen by trade. (Matthew 4:18-22; 10:2, 3) They were men who were viewed by the religious leaders as "unlettered and ordinary," meaning that their education was elementary and not from the schools of higher learning. (Acts 4:13) The "lettered" scribes and Pharisees downgraded the long-awaited Messiah, mocking his teachings and his followers. They took the attitude that 'no one of importance follows Jesus.'

Recall what happened on one occasion when they dispatched officers to "get hold of" Jesus. The officers came back empty-handed. Why? Says the Bible record: "The officers replied: 'Never has another man spoken like this.'" Yes, they were astonished at Christ's teachings! Yet, how did the educated religious leaders respond? "In turn the Pharisees answered: 'You have not been misled also, have you? Not one of the rulers or of the Pharisees has put faith in him, has he?'" (John 7:32, 44-48) Pride thus prevented them from accepting Jesus. True, the Bible says that "many even of the rulers actually put faith in him, but because of the Pharisees they would not confess him, in order not to be expelled from the synagogue; for they loved the glory of men more than even the glory of God."—John 12:42, 43.

Imagine that! These men were actually convinced that Jesus had the truth, but they refused to become his disciples out of fear of men. It was simply not convenient for those rulers to sacrifice their standing in the social, political, and religious circles to become followers of Jesus. No wonder that Jesus said: "Truly I say to you that it will be a difficult thing for a rich man to get into the kingdom of the heavens"! (Matthew 19:23) So, in general, such ones were too proud to follow a religion that required them humbly to 'pick up their torture stake and follow Jesus.' (Matthew 16:24) Christ thus once said in prayer: "I publicly praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have carefully hidden these things from wise and intellectual ones, and have revealed them to babes." (Luke 10:21) Unlike the worldly intellectuals, such ones were receptive to the truth.—Compare Matthew 18:3.

God Is Not Partial

Wrote the disciple James: "God chose the ones who are poor respecting the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he promised to those who love him, did he not?" (James 2:5) Did this mean, then, that those of means and secular education were barred from serving God? Not at all! After the first Gentile convert, Cornelius, received holy spirit, Peter observed: "For a certainty I perceive that God is not partial, but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him." (Acts 10:34, 35) Perhaps Peter recalled Jehovah's words to Samuel, spoken centuries previously: "For not the way man sees is the way God sees, because mere man sees what appears to the eyes; but as for Jehovah, he sees what the heart is."—1 Samuel 16:7.

Interestingly, then, the Bible states that "a great crowd of priests began to be

obedient to the faith.” (Acts 6:7) Christians were found, too, in the prestigious “household of Caesar.” (Philippians 4:22) And even though the majority of Christians were of humble means, there were some in the congregation who were rich.—1 Timothy 6:17.

Modern Times

It should not surprise us, then, that the truth today has borne fruit primarily among the common people. Jehovah is still looking, not at a person’s bank account or secular education, but at the heart. (Proverbs 21:2) Remember, too, that Jesus said: “No man can come to me unless the Father, who sent me, draws him.” (John 6:44) Certainly, the Father would draw to himself only those who were humble and teachable, would he not?

However, this is not to say that educated and so-called professional people are not becoming Jehovah’s Witnesses. When Paul gave a simple, yet forceful, exposition of the truth before King Agrippa, the king admitted: “In a short time you would persuade me to become a Christian.” (Acts 26:27, 28) Likewise, many educated ones have been attracted to the truth by the clear and logical explanation of Bible truth that Jehovah’s Witnesses give. Remember, a humble person is not necessarily uneducated. Moses was called “the meekest of all the men who were upon the surface of the ground.” (Numbers 12:3) Yet, he had been “instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.”—Acts 7:22.

It is worthy of note, though, that when individuals of little secular education begin associating with Jehovah’s Witnesses, they often take steps to improve their educational skills. They try to improve their reading and study habits so as to learn the basic teachings of the Bible and keep up with the steady stream of Bible literature published by Jehovah’s Wit-

nesses. If a sincere person wants to learn the Bible but is hindered by illiteracy, free instruction can often be arranged through the local congregation.

The Watchtower Society even publishes a booklet entitled *Learn to Read and Write*. This booklet has helped many thousands of people to learn to read in Asia, Africa, and Central and South America. In one Latin-American country, 51,249 have learned to read and write in the past 26 years with the help of this booklet! In one small Latin-American village, the inspector of the Department of Education met together with representatives of several different organizations—including Jehovah’s Witnesses. The Witness there told them about the *Learn to Read* booklet and invited the group to one of the Witnesses’ meetings.

The group attended the Theocratic Ministry School—a meeting designed to help men and women become effective teachers. To their surprise, they saw a man whom they had known to be illiterate—on the platform and giving a Bible talk! Said one of the visitors, a school principal: “It is not possible that this man that we have always known as an illiterate is able to converse in Spanish [rather than his native dialect], much less to talk to an audience, but he is.”

So rather than exploiting lowly people, true Christians today are helping them improve themselves by assisting them to come to a knowledge of the truth. Such Christians are carrying out the educational work Jesus commissioned when he said: “Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations, . . . teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you.” (Matthew 28:19, 20) And as a result, each year tens of thousands from every level of society are joining the ranks of Jehovah’s Witnesses.

Questions From Readers

■ Did the Jews have legal authority to execute Jesus, as suggested by Pilate's words at John 19:6?

We cannot be sure whether at that time the Romans granted the Jews authority to carry out executions.

After the Jewish leaders instigated Jesus' arrest, they held a form of trial. During the trial they "were looking for false witness against Jesus in order to put him to death." Finally, they pronounced Jesus guilty of blasphemy and said that he thus was "liable to death." (Matthew 26:59, 60, 65, 66) But after "consultation against Jesus so as to put him to death," they took him to the Roman governor, Pilate.—Matthew 27:1, 2.

These circumstances have led many to conclude that the Jews did not then have Roman permission to execute Jesus Christ on that religious charge. Apparently confirming this view is the Jews' reply when Pilate told them to judge the accused under Jewish law. They responded: "It is not lawful for us to kill anyone." (John 18:31) In fact, a tradition related in the Jerusalem Talmud says that about 40 years before Jerusalem's destruction in 70 C.E., the Jews lost their authority to execute wrongdoers.

* How strange it is, then, to read Pilate's words at John 19:6. Responding to shouts from the religious leaders for Jesus' impalement, Pilate told them: "Take him yourselves and impale him, for I do not find any fault in him." This statement seems to conflict with what the Jews had said at John 18:31.

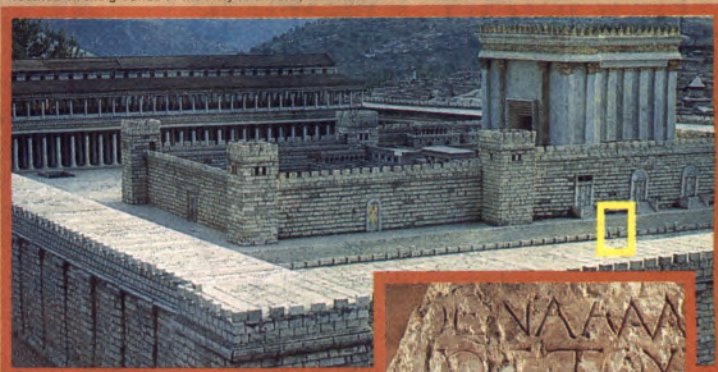
Jewish historian Flavius Josephus provides an eyewitness account that may shed light on this conflict. He reports that during the Roman assault on Jerusalem in

70 C.E., the rebels retreated into the temple precinct. Some of these bloodied fighters were in areas that had been off limits because of their sacredness. Repelled by this desecration of what even Romans tended to view as sacred ground, General Titus called out:

"You disgusting people! Didn't you put up that balustrade [or low barrier dividing off part of the courtyard] to guard your Holy House? Didn't you at intervals along it place slabs inscribed in Greek characters and our own, forbidding anyone to go beyond the parapet? And didn't we give you leave to execute anyone who

not let the Jews employ capital punishment for civil offenses, it seems that they did grant authority to execute for certain grave religious offenses. The Jews who handed Jesus over to Pilate may have thought it desirable to let the Romans do the executing, perhaps to make his death more repugnant, and so any public outcry would be directed against the foreigners. (Galatians 3:13; Deuteronomy 21:23) Pilate, though, possibly wanting to avoid that problem, told them: "Take him yourselves and impale him." He might have been indicating, too, that he felt that if the issue was a religious one of sufficient gravity, the Jewish leaders must bear responsibility for executing Jesus.

Reproduction of the city of Jerusalem at the time of the second temple
—located on the grounds of the Holyland Hotel, Jerusalem



This inscription from the temple courtyard (see inset) warned Gentiles against passing beyond the low wall of the temple

did go beyond it, even if he was a Roman? Why then, you guilty men, are you now trampling dead bodies inside it?"—*The Jewish War*, translated by G. A. Williamson, page 312. Italics ours.

Hence, even if the Romans did



Pictorial Archive (Near Eastern History) Est.



Help in Choosing Friends

Could you use some? Youths face many weighty decisions while growing up in these troubled times. A young girl from Britain writes regarding the help provided by *Your Youth—Getting the Best out of It*:

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YOUR YOUTH

*Getting
the Best out of It*