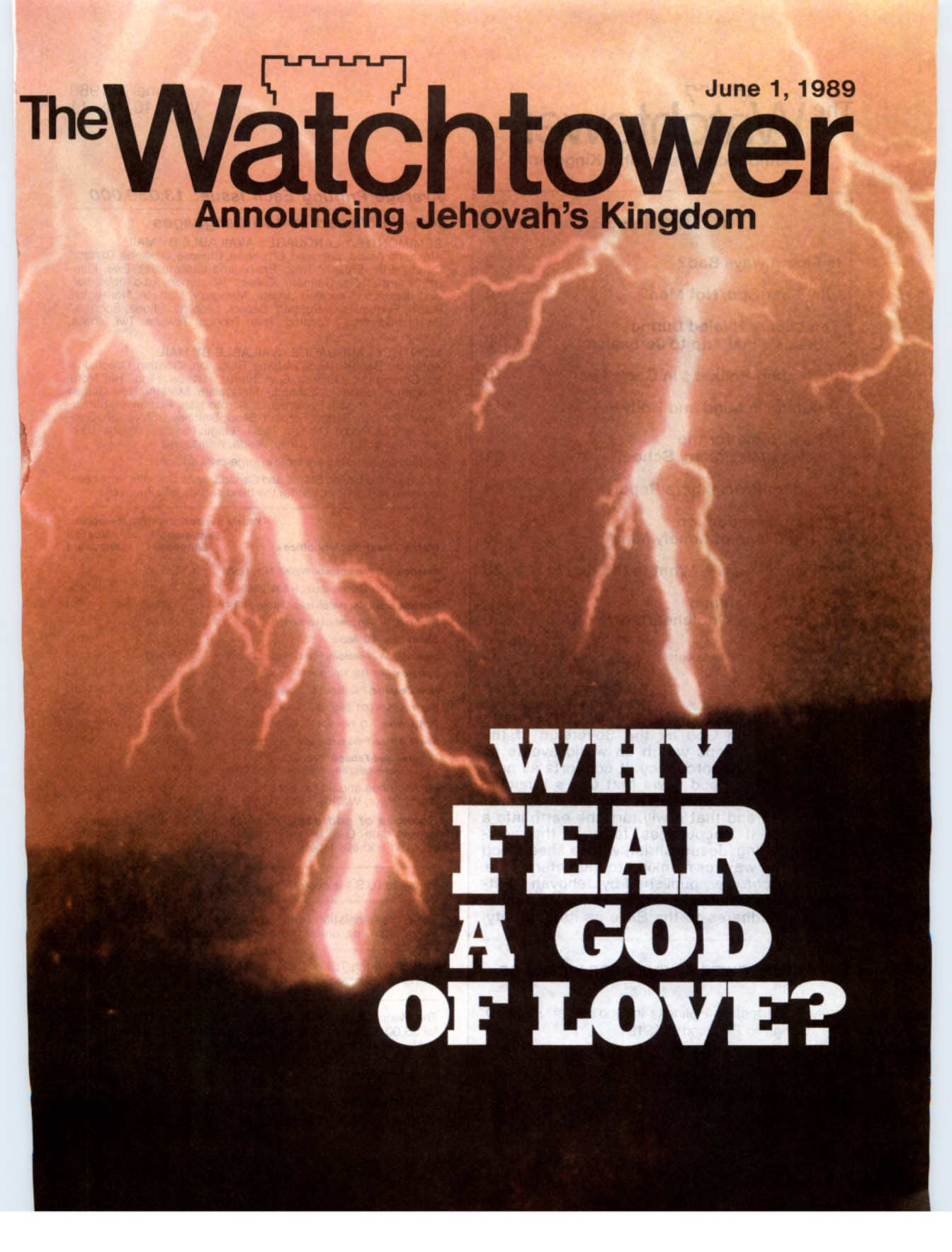
June 1, 1989

The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



WHY FEAR A GOD OF LOVE?

The Watchtower®
Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

June 1, 1989
Vol. 110, No. 11

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

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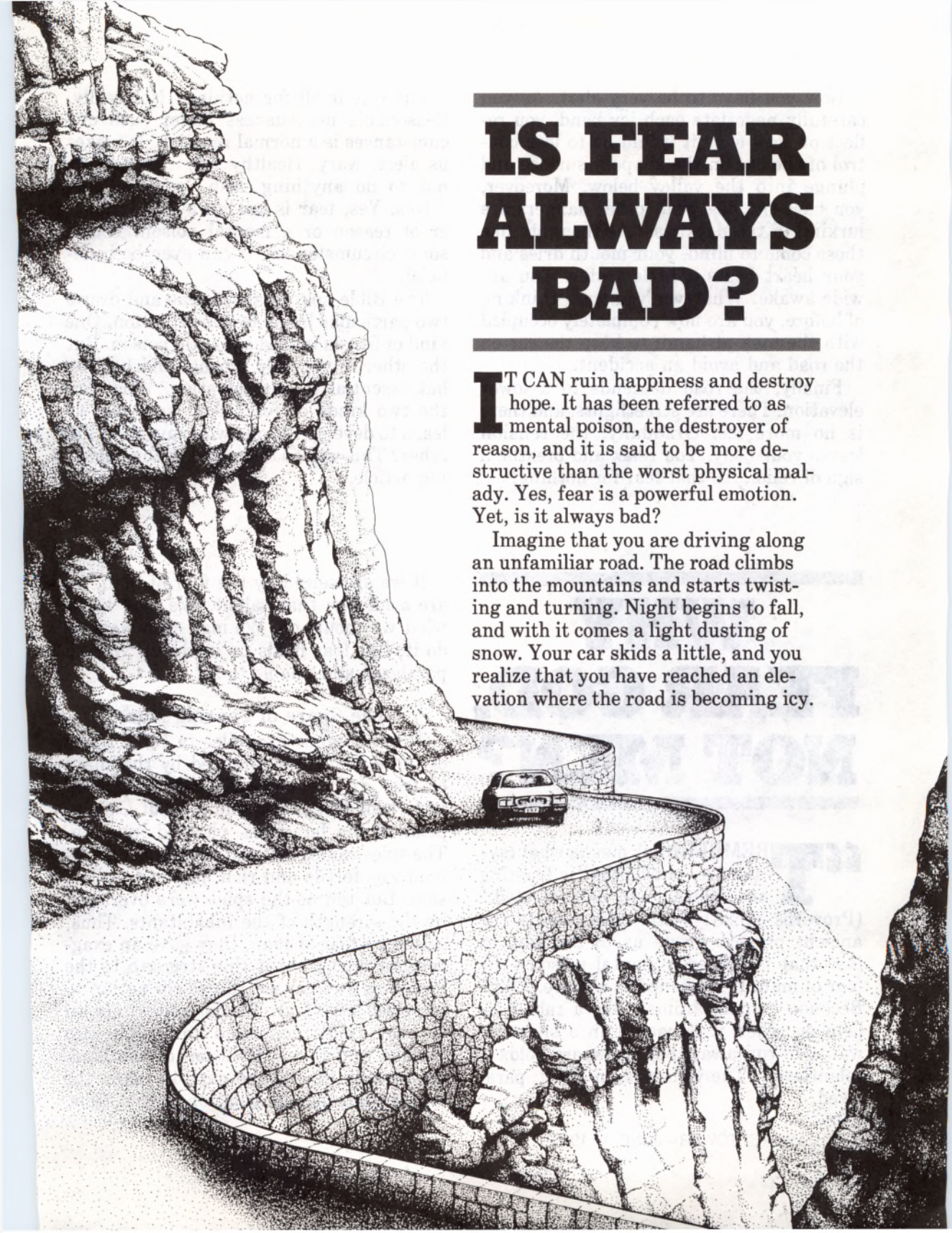


IS FEAR ALWAYS BAD?

IT CAN ruin happiness and destroy hope. It has been referred to as mental poison, the destroyer of reason, and it is said to be more destructive than the worst physical malady. Yes, fear is a powerful emotion. Yet, is it always bad?

Imagine that you are driving along an unfamiliar road. The road climbs into the mountains and starts twisting and turning. Night begins to fall, and with it comes a light dusting of snow. Your car skids a little, and you realize that you have reached an elevation where the road is becoming icy.

Now you have to be very alert. As you carefully negotiate each icy bend, you reflect on how easy it would be to lose control of the car on the slippery surface and plunge into the valley below. Moreover, you have no idea what other dangers are lurking in the darkness. As thoughts like these come to mind, your mouth dries and your heart beats a little faster. You are wide awake. Whatever you were thinking of before, you are now completely occupied with the task at hand: to keep the car on the road and avoid an accident.

Finally, the road descends to a lower elevation. There are streetlights, and there is no more ice. Gradually, the tension leaves your body. You relax and breathe a sigh of relief. All that fear for nothing!

But was it all for nothing? Not really. Reasonable nervousness under such circumstances is a normal reaction. It makes us alert, wary. Healthy fear can help us not to do anything rash, injuring ourselves. Yes, fear is not always a destroyer of reason or a mental poison. Under some circumstances, it can even be beneficial.

The Bible speaks about fear and draws two particular kinds to our attention. One kind of fear is indeed a mental poison. But the other is not only normal and healthy but essential to our salvation. What are the two kinds of fear? And how can we learn to develop the one while avoiding the other? This will be discussed in the following article.

WHY FEAR GOD, NOT MEN?

"TREMBLING at men is what lays a snare, but he that is trusting in Jehovah will be protected." (Proverbs 29:25) With these words the ancient proverb alerts us to the kind of fear that is indeed a mental poison—the fear of man. It is likened to a snare. Why? Because a small animal, like a rabbit, is helpless when it is caught in a snare. It wants to run away, but the snare holds it relentlessly. The victim is, in effect, paralyzed.

If we are seized by the fear of man, we are a lot like that rabbit. We may know what we should do. We may even want to do it. But fear holds us in thrall. We are paralyzed and unable to act.

The Snare of Fearing Man

Think of some examples in Bible times of those who were captured by the snare of fear. In the days of Joshua, 12 men were sent to spy out the land of Canaan prior to the Israelites' planned invasion. The spies came back and reported that the land was fertile and rich, just as God had said. But ten of the spies were overawed by the strength of the inhabitants. Thus, seized by fear of man, they gave an exaggerated report about this strength to the Israelites and caused the whole nation to be seized with fear. The Israelites refused to obey God's command to march into Canaan and take possession of the land. As a result, during the next 40 years, the entire adult male population of that time,

with a few exceptions, died in the wilderness.—Numbers 13:21-14:38.

Jonah was another victim of fear of man. When assigned to preach to the great city of Nineveh, he "proceeded to get up and run away to Tarshish from before Jehovah." (Jonah 1:3) Why? The Ninevites had the reputation of being a ruthless and violent people, and Jonah certainly knew that. Fear of man caused him to run in a direction away from Nineveh. True, he eventually accepted his assignment but only after receiving unusual discipline from Jehovah.—Jonah 1:4, 17.

Even kings may fear men. On one occasion, King Saul directly disobeyed an express command from God. His excuse? "I have overstepped the order of Jehovah and your words, because I feared the people and so obeyed their voice." (1 Samuel 15:24) Some centuries later, when Jerusalem was under attack by the Babylonians, Jeremiah, a faithful prophet, counseled King Zedekiah to surrender and thus save Jerusalem from much bloodshed. But Zedekiah refused. Why? He confessed to Jeremiah: "I am in fright of the Jews that have fallen away to the Chaldeans, for fear that they might give me into their hand and they might actually deal abusively with me."—Jeremiah 38:19.

Finally, even an apostle could be afraid. On the day Jesus was to die, he warned his followers that they would all abandon him. Peter, however, boldly declared: "Lord, I am ready to go with you both into prison and into death." (Luke 22:33; Matthew 26: 31, 33) How wrong those words proved to be! Just a few hours later, Peter fearfully denied having been with Jesus or even knowing him. Fear of man overpowered him! Yes, fear of man is indeed a mental poison.

Whom Should We Fear?

How can we overcome fear of man? By replacing it with a much more wholesome fear. This type of fear was encouraged by the same apostle, Peter, when he said: "Be in fear of God." (1 Peter 2:17) The angel seen by John in Revelation called out to mankind: "Fear God and give him glory." (Revelation 14:7) The wise king Solomon also encouraged such fear, when he said: "The conclusion of the matter, everything having been heard, is: Fear the true God and keep his commandments. For this is the whole obligation of man." (Ecclesiastes 12:13) Yes, fear of God is an *obligation.*

Fear of God brings benefits. The ancient psalmist sang: "Surely [Jehovah's] salvation is near to those fearing him." (Psalm 85:9) A Bible proverb also stresses: "The very fear of Jehovah will add days." (Proverbs 10:27) Yes, fear of Jehovah is a healthy, beneficial thing. 'But surely,' you may say, 'Jehovah is a loving God. Why should we fear a God of love?'

Fear a God of Love?

Because fear of God is not the abject, paralyzing fear that grips people in some situations. It is the kind of fear that a child may feel for his father, even though he loves his father and knows that his father loves him.

Fear of God is really a profound reverence for the Creator that stems from the realization that he is the complete embodiment of righteousness, justice, wisdom, and love. It involves a healthy dread of displeasing God because he is the Supreme Judge with the power to reward and to punish. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God," wrote the apostle Paul. (Hebrews 10:31) God's love is not something to be taken for granted, nor is his judgment something to be downplayed. That is why the Bible reminds us: "The fear of Jehovah is the start of wisdom."—Proverbs 9:10.

We should remember, however, that

while Jehovah has the power to punish those not obeying him—and has often done so—he is by no means bloodthirsty or cruel. He is really a God of love, even though he, like a loving parent, sometimes gets righteously angry. (1 John 4:8) That is why fearing him is wholesome. It leads us to obey his laws, which are designed for our good. Obeying God's laws brings happiness, while disobeying them *always* brings bad results. (Galatians 6:7, 8) The psalmist was inspired to declare: "Fear Jehovah, you holy ones of his, for there is no lack to those fearing him."—Psalm 34:9.

Whom Do You Fear?

How does the fear of God help us to overcome fear of man? Well, humans may mock us or even persecute us for doing what is right, which puts pressure on us. But a respectful fear of God will put pressure on us to stick to a right course, since we do not want to displease him. Moreover, a love of God will urge us to do what brings pleasure to his heart. Additionally, we remember that God rewards us richly for doing what is right, which makes us love him all the more and makes us want to do his will. Hence, a balanced view of God helps us to overcome any fear we may have of men.

For example, many are pressured into doing what is wrong because of fear of what their peers think. Young people at school may smoke, use bad language, boast of sexual experience (real or imagined), and even experiment with alcohol or drugs. Why? Not always because they want to, but because they are afraid of what their peers would say if they acted differently. To a teenager, mockery and ridicule may be as hard to endure as physical persecution.

An adult may also feel pressure to do wrong. Perhaps the boss at work will tell an employee to inflate a bill to a client or to fill out a company tax form dishonestly so as to reduce the tax liability. The Christian may feel that if he does not obey, he will lose his job. Thus, fear of man may pressure him to do what is wrong.

In both cases, a healthy fear of God and respect for his commands would prevent the Christian from being paralyzed by fear of man. And a love of God would restrain him from engaging in acts that God has forbidden. (Proverbs 8:13) Moreover, his faith in God would assure him that if he acted according to his Bible-trained conscience, God would support him no matter what the outcome. The apostle Paul expressed his faith with these words: "For all things I have the strength by virtue of him who imparts power to me."—Philippians 4:13.

The Bible provides numerous examples of men and women who were faithful to Jehovah under even the most severe tests. They "received their trial by mockings and scourgings, . . . by bonds and prisons. They were stoned, they were tried, they were sawn asunder, they died by slaughter with the sword." (Hebrews 11:36, 37) But they did not allow fear of man to control their minds. Rather, they pursued the same wise course that Jesus later gave his disciples: "Do not become fearful of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; but rather be in fear of him [God] that can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna."—Matthew 10:28.

Following this counsel of Jesus to fear God rather than man also enabled early Christians to endure all manner of hardships, trials, and persecutions "for the sake of the good news." (Philemon 13) The apostle Paul is a noteworthy example of this. In his second letter to the Corinthians, he shows how fear of God emboldened him to endure prison terms, beatings, stoning, shipwrecks, various

Fear of God emboldened Paul to endure all things, including beatings, imprisonment, and even shipwreck.—2 Corinthians 11:23-27

dangers on the roads, sleepless nights, hunger, thirst, cold, and nakedness. —2 Corinthians 11:23-27.

Fear of God also strengthened those early Christians to stand up to severe persecution under the Roman Empire, when some were even thrown to wild beasts in the arena. In the Middle Ages, courageous believers were publicly burned to death because they would not compromise their faith. During the last world war, Christians preferred to suffer and die in concentration camps rather than do things that displeased God. What a powerful force godly fear is! Surely, if it strengthened Christians to overcome fear of man under such trying circumstances, it can strengthen us in whatever situation we may find ourselves.

Today, Satan the Devil is doing all he can to pressure us into displeasing God. True Christians should therefore have the same determination as that expressed by the apostle Paul when he wrote: "We are not the sort that shrink back to destruction, but the sort that have faith to the preserving alive of the soul." (Hebrews 10:39) The fear of Jehovah is a real source of strength. With its help, may we "be of good courage and say: 'Jehovah is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?'"—Hebrews 13:6.

Ten Lepers Healed During Jesus' Final Trip to Jerusalem

JESUS frustrates the efforts of the Sanhedrin to kill him by leaving Jerusalem and traveling to the city of Ephraim, perhaps only 15 miles or so northeast of Jerusalem. There he remains with his disciples, away from his enemies.

However, the time for the Passover of 33 C.E. is drawing near, and soon Jesus is on the move again. He travels through Samaria and up into Galilee. This is his last visit to this area prior to his death. While in Galilee, likely he and his disciples join others who are on their way to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration. They take the route through the district of Perea, east of the Jordan River.

Early in the trip, while Jesus is entering a village either in Samaria or in Galilee, he is met by ten men who have leprosy. This terrible disease gradually eats away a person's body parts—his fingers, his toes, his ears, his nose, and his lips. To safeguard others from being infected, God's Law says regarding a leper: "He should cover over the mustache and call out, 'Unclean, unclean!' All the days that the plague is in him he will be unclean. . . . He should dwell isolated."

The ten lepers observe the Law's restrictions for lepers and remain a long way off from Jesus. Yet, they cry out with loud voices: "Jesus, Instructor, have mercy on us!"

Seeing them in the distance, Jesus commands: "Go and show yourselves to the priests." Jesus says this because God's Law authorizes the priests to pronounce as cured lepers who have recovered from their illness. In this way such ones receive approval to live again with healthy people.

The ten lepers have confidence in Jesus' miraculous powers. So they hurry off to see the priests, even though they have not yet been healed. While on the way, their faith in Jesus is rewarded. They begin to see and to feel their restored health!

Nine of the cleansed lepers continue on their way, but the other leper, a Samaritan, returns to look for Jesus. Why? Because he is so grateful for what has happened to him. He praises God with a loud voice, and when he finds Jesus, he falls at his feet, thanking him.

In reply Jesus says: "The ten were cleansed, were they not? Where, then, are the other nine? Were none found that turned back to give glory to God but this man of another nation?"

Then he tells the Samaritan: "Rise and be on your way; your faith has made you well."

When we read about Jesus' healing of the ten lepers, we should take to heart the lesson implied by his question: "Where, then, are the other nine?" The ingratitude that was manifested by the nine is a serious shortcoming. Will we, like the Samaritan, show ourselves grateful for the things we receive from God, including the certain promise of everlasting life in God's righteous new world? **John 11:54, 55; Luke 17:11-19; Leviticus 13:16, 17, 45, 46; Revelation 21:3, 4.**

- How does Jesus frustrate efforts to kill him?
- Where does Jesus next travel, and what is his destination?
- Why do the lepers stand at a distance, and why does Jesus tell them to go to the priests?
- What lesson should we learn from this experience?

Jesus' Life and Ministry

PERFECTING HOLINESS IN GOD'S FEAR

"Let us cleanse ourselves of every defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in God's fear."—2 CORINTHIANS 7:1.

JEHOVAH is the holy God. High-ranking angels in heaven proclaim his holiness in no uncertain terms. "Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah of armies. The fullness of all the earth is his glory." Such was the stirring call of the seraphs seen in a vision by the prophet Isaiah in the eighth century B.C.E. At the end of the first century C.E., the apostle John saw visions of what was to occur in "the Lord's day," where we now are. He saw four living creatures around Jehovah's throne and heard them proclaim unceasingly: "Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is coming." These threefold proclamations by Jehovah's heavenly spirit creatures emphasize the Creator's superlative holiness.—Isaiah 6:2, 3; Revelation 1:10; 4:6-8.

1. How do we know that high-ranking angels recognize Jehovah's holiness?

Holiness and Separateness

[2] Holiness means not only religious cleanness and purity but also separateness, or sanctification. Jehovah is supremely clean, or pure; he is completely set apart from all the filthy gods of the nations. This aspect of his holiness, or sanctification, was underscored by Moses when he sang out: "Who among the gods is like you, O Jehovah? Who is like you, proving yourself mighty in holiness?" —Exodus 15:11.

[3] The holy God Jehovah required that the ancient Israelites, his people on earth, should also be holy. This was demanded not only of the priests and the Levites but also of the entire nation. Jehovah said to Moses: "Speak to the *entire assembly of the sons of Israel,* and you must say to them, 'You should prove yourselves holy, because I Jehovah your God am holy.'" (Leviticus 19:2) To that end, Jehovah gave them laws to help them remain clean spiritually, morally, mentally, physically, and ceremonially, the latter being in connection with their worship at the tabernacle and, later, at the temple.

A People Set Apart

[4] To the extent that the Israelites followed God's laws, they stood out from the depraved nations around them. They were distinguished as a people set apart, or sanctified, for the service of the holy God Jehovah. Moses told them: "You are a holy people to Jehovah your God. It is you Jehovah your God has chosen to become his people, a special property, out of all the peoples that are on the surface of the ground."—Deuteronomy 7:6.

[5] Such cleanness and separateness are also required of spiritual Israel. The apostle Peter wrote to the ones chosen to be spiritual Israelites: "As obedient children, quit being fashioned according to the desires you formerly had in your ignorance, but, in accord with the Holy One who called you, do you also become holy yourselves in all your conduct, because it is written: 'You must be holy, because I am holy.'"—1 Peter 1:1, 14-16.

[6] In Revelation chapter 7, the members of the "great crowd" are described as "standing before the throne [of Jehovah] and before the Lamb, dressed in white robes," having "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (Revelation 7:9, 14) Their white robes symbolize their clean, righteous standing before Jehovah, which he grants them because of their faith in Christ's redeeming blood. Clearly, then, not only anointed Christians but "other sheep" too must remain spiritually and morally clean in order to worship Jehovah acceptably. —John 10:16.

[7] Let us now consider how Jehovah's people in the past were required to prove themselves clean and holy and why the same principles apply to God's people today.

Spiritual Cleanness

[8] Fleshly Israelites had to keep themselves scrupulously separate from the unclean religious practices of other nations.

2. (a) What two aspects are there to holiness, and how is Jehovah holy in both these respects? (b) How did Moses emphasize Jehovah's holiness?
3. In what ways were all the Israelites required to be holy, and how did Jehovah help them in this regard?
4, 5. (a) How was fleshly Israel a sanctified nation? (b) What is required of spiritual Israelites, and how does the apostle Peter confirm this?
6, 7. (a) How are the members of the "great crowd" described in Revelation chapter 7, and what is logically required of them? (b) What will be considered in the following paragraphs?
8. For what reasons did the Israelites have to keep themselves separate from the religions of Canaan?

Speaking through Moses, Jehovah told Israel: "Watch yourself that you do not conclude a covenant with the inhabitants of the land to which you are going, for fear it may prove itself a snare in your midst. But their altars you people are to pull down, and their sacred pillars [used in connection with disgusting sex worship] you are to shatter, and their sacred poles you are to cut down. For you must not prostrate yourself to another god, because Jehovah, whose name is Jealous, he is a jealous God [or, "a God exacting exclusive devotion," *New World Translation Reference Bible,* footnote]; for fear that you may conclude a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, as they will certainly have immoral intercourse with their gods and sacrifice to their gods."—Exodus 34: 12-15.

[9] Centuries later, Jehovah inspired Isaiah to address these prophetic words to the faithful remnant who would return to Judah from Babylon: "Turn away, turn away, get out of there, touch nothing unclean; get out from the midst of her, keep yourselves clean, you who are carrying the utensils of Jehovah [to be used in restoring pure worship at the temple in Jerusalem]."—Isaiah 52:11.

[10] Similarly, spiritual Israelites and their companions must keep themselves undefiled by the idolatrous religions of this world. Writing to anointed Christians in the Corinth congregation, the apostle Paul stated: "What agreement does God's temple have with idols? For we are a temple of a living God; just as God said: 'I shall reside among them and walk among them, and I shall be their God, and they will be my people.' '"Therefore get out from among them, and separate yourselves," says Jehovah, "and quit touching the unclean thing"'; '"and I will take you in."'"—2 Corinthians 6:16, 17.

[11] Since 1919 the cleansed and refined members of the anointed remnant have been freed from the unclean, idolatrous religions of Babylon the Great. (Malachi 3: 1-3) They have heeded the heavenly call: "Get out of her, my people, if you do not want to share with her in her sins, and if you do not want to receive part of her plagues." (Revelation 18:4) Since 1935 an increasing great crowd of "other sheep" have likewise heeded this call and have abandoned unclean Babylonish religion. The anointed ones and their companions also keep spiritually clean by avoiding all contact with the pernicious ideas of apostates.—John 10:16; 2 John 9-11.

Moral Cleanness

[12] By means of the Law covenant, Jehovah raised the moral status of the Israelites far above the degraded condition of the surrounding nations. Marriage and family life were protected institutions in Israel. The seventh of the Ten Commandments forbade adultery. Both adultery and fornication were severely punished. (Deuteronomy 22:22-24) Virgins were protected under the Law. (Deuteronomy 22: 28, 29) The rules for marriage were particularly strict for the priesthood. As for the high priest, he was required to choose a chaste virgin for a wife.—Leviticus 21: 6, 7, 10, 13.

[13] Similarly, the great High Priest, Je-

9. What precise instructions were given to the faithful remnant who left Babylon in 537 B.C.E.? 10, 11. (a) What similar instructions were given to spiritual Israelites in the first century C.E.? (b) How have these instructions been followed particularly since 1919 and 1935, and in what other way do the anointed and their companions keep spiritually clean?

12. (a) By means of what laws did Jehovah raise the moral status of the Israelites far above that of the surrounding nations? (b) What rules were particularly strict for the priesthood?
13. To whom are the members of Christ's "bride" likened, and why?

God's Word says: "Let marriage be honorable"

sus Christ, has a "bride" made up of 144,000 anointed Christians, who are likened to "virgins." (Revelation 14:1-5; 21:9) They keep themselves undefiled by Satan's world and remain doctrinally and morally pure. The apostle Paul wrote to anointed Christians in Corinth: "I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy, for I personally promised you in marriage to one husband that I might present you as a chaste virgin to the Christ." (2 Corinthians 11:2) Paul also wrote: "Christ also loved the congregation and delivered up himself for it, that he might sanctify it, cleansing it with the bath of water by means of the word, that he might present the congregation to himself in its splendor, not having a spot or a wrinkle or any of such things, but that it should be holy and without blemish." —Ephesians 5:25-27.

[14] This spiritual purity of Christ's bride must be accompanied by moral cleanness on the part of its members. The apostle Paul stated: "Do not be misled. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers . . . will inherit God's kingdom. And yet that is what some of you were. But you have been washed clean, but you have been sanctified."—1 Corinthians 6:9-11.

[15] That such requirements of moral purity apply also to the other sheep becomes apparent when considering those whom Jehovah will exclude from his promised new heaven and new earth. We read: "But as for . . . those who are disgusting in their filth and murderers and fornicators . . . , their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulphur. This means the second death."—Revelation 21:1, 8.

Honorable Marriage

[16] To remain morally clean, anointed members of the bride class and the other sheep are not required to remain single. Compulsory celibacy is unscriptural. (1 Timothy 4:1-3) Sexual relations within the marriage bond are not unclean. God's Word states: "Let marriage be honorable among all, and the marriage bed be without defilement, for God will judge fornicators and adulterers."—Hebrews 13:4.

[17] However, a Christian who desires to 'perfect holiness in God's fear' should not feel free to marry whomever he or she pleases. Just before counseling his fellow Christians to 'cleanse themselves of every defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in God's fear,' the apostle Paul wrote: "Do not become unevenly yoked with unbelievers. For what fellowship do righteousness and lawlessness have? . . . Or what portion does a faithful person have with an unbeliever?" (2 Corinthians 6:14, 15; 7:1) As a member of Jehovah's

14, 15. (a) What must accompany the spiritual purity of the bride class, and what scripture shows this? (b) Why is it evident that similar requirements of moral purity apply also to the other sheep?

16, 17. (a) What scriptures show that singleness is not a requirement for moral cleanness? (b) How can a Christian show proper fear of God in the choice of a marriage mate, and why would it be unwise to ignore the apostolic restriction?

separate and clean people, a Christian man or woman who wishes to marry will accept the apostolic restriction to do so "only in the Lord," that is, by choosing someone who is a dedicated, baptized, and faithful servant of Jehovah. (1 Corinthians 7:39) As in the past, so today, it would certainly be unwise for dedicated ones among God's people to ignore this Scriptural counsel. (Compare Deuteronomy 7:3, 4; Nehemiah 13:23-27.) It would not be showing wholesome fear of our Grand Master, Jehovah.—Malachi 1:6.

[18] Furthermore, in Israel, laws imposed limits on sexual activities even within the marriage bond. A husband was to refrain from having relations with his wife during her menstrual period. (Leviticus 15:24; 18:19; 20:18) This required loving consideration and self-control on the part of the Israelite menfolk. Should Christians be any less considerate of their wives? The apostle Peter says that Christian husbands should dwell with their wives "according to knowledge," that is, knowledge of their make-up as "a weaker vessel, the feminine one."—1 Peter 3:7.

18. In what other way can Christians keep their marriage honorable?

Points for Review

- What two aspects are there to holiness, and why can it be said that Jehovah is superlatively holy?
- In what two ways were the Israelites to prove themselves to be a holy nation?
- What is required of spiritual Israelites and of their companions, the other sheep?
- How should our fear of God affect our choice of a marriage mate?
- What two roads can be followed today, and why must a clear choice be made?

Walking on "the Way of Holiness"

[19] The foregoing underscores the ever-widening gulf that separates Jehovah's people from Satan's world. The present worldly system of things is increasingly permissive and self-indulgent. Jesus stated: "Go in through the narrow gate; because broad and spacious is the road leading off into destruction, and many are the ones going in through it." (Matthew 7:13) That wide road is being followed by the majority of mankind. To quote the apostle Peter, it is the way of "loose conduct, lusts, excesses with wine, revelries, drinking matches, and illegal idolatries," a way that leads to a "low sink of debauchery." (1 Peter 4:3, 4) Its end is destruction.

[20] God's people, on the other hand, are walking on a different road, a clean road being followed by clean people. The opening up of this road in the time of the end was foretold by the prophet Isaiah, who wrote: "And there will certainly come to be a highway there, even a way; and the Way of Holiness it will be called. The unclean one will not pass over it." (Isaiah 35:8) Commenting on this prophecy, the book *Worldwide Security Under the "Prince of Peace"* states: "In 1919 a figurative highway was opened up to the joyful servants of God. Those who wanted to be holy in Jehovah's sight were the ones who walked upon that 'highway,' 'the Way of Holiness.' . . . Today, so deep into 'the conclusion of the system of things,' that divinely provided 'highway' remains open. Throngs of appreciative people are . . .

19, 20. (a) Describe the broad road being followed by the majority of mankind. (b) How must Jehovah's people be different from Satan's world? (c) What highway are God's people following, when was it opened, and who only are allowed on it?

entering in upon the spiritual paradise route, 'the Way of Holiness.'"*

[21] Yes, the anointed remnant of spiritual Israelites and their companions, the other sheep, distinguish themselves today as a people set apart from Satan's world, for whom the notion of holiness has lost all meaning. Nothing is sacred to the Devil's crowd walking along the "broad and spacious . . . road leading off into destruction." Not only are they spiritually and morally unclean but in many cases they are physically unclean and their appearance is slovenly, to say the least. Yet, the apostle Paul says: "Let us cleanse ourselves of every defilement of *flesh* and *spirit*, perfecting holiness in God's fear." (2 Corinthians 7:1) In what ways God's people should be careful to be clean in mind and body will be considered in the next article.

* Chapter 16, pages 134-5.

21. How and why must Jehovah's servants distinguish themselves from the Devil's crowd, and what will be considered in the next article?

BE CLEAN IN MIND AND BODY

"Present your bodies a sacrifice living, holy, acceptable to God."—ROMANS 12:1.

A PERSON who desires to serve the holy God Jehovah must be spiritually and morally pure. Logically, this also implies being clean in mind and body. The present system of things being what it is, people who come out of it in order to serve Jehovah have to make changes not only in their thinking habits but often in their personal habits too. The apostle Paul wrote to Christians in Rome: "Consequently 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. And quit being fashioned after this system of things, but be transformed by making your mind over, that you may prove to yourselves the good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Romans 12: 1, 2) What does cleanness of mind and body involve?

1. According to the apostle Paul, why is cleanness in mind and body necessary?

Mental Cleanness

[2] Even before the Law was given, faithful Job showed that our eyes and heart can cause us to commit loose conduct if we do not control them. He stated: "A covenant I have concluded with my eyes. So how could I show myself attentive to a virgin? If my heart has been enticed toward a woman, . . . that would be loose conduct, and that would be an error for attention by the justices." (Job 31:1, 9-11) If we have roving eyes and a fickle heart, we need mental discipline, "the discipline that gives insight."—Proverbs 1:3.

[3] King David's eyes led him into committing adultery with Bath-sheba.

2. How could our eyes and heart cause us to engage in loose conduct, and what is necessary to avoid this?

3, 4. (a) What does the example of David and Bath-sheba show, and what is necessary in order to change bad thinking habits? (b) Why should Christian elders be particularly careful?

(2 Samuel 11:2, 4) This example shows that even men who are used prominently by Jehovah can fall into sin if they do not discipline their minds. It may take strenuous effort to change our thinking habits. Such an effort should be accompanied by fervent prayer for Jehovah's help. After having repented of his sin with Bathsheba, David prayed: "Create in me even a pure heart, O God, and put within me a new spirit, a steadfast one."—Psalm 51:10.

[4] Christian elders should be particularly careful not to harbor wrong desires that could lead them into serious sin. (James 1: 14, 15) To the Christian elder Timothy, Paul wrote: "The objective of this mandate is love out of a clean heart and out of a good conscience and out of faith without hypocrisy." (1 Timothy 1:5) It would certainly be hypocritical for an elder to carry out his spiritual duties while allowing a roving eye to incite in his heart thoughts of committing uncleanness.

[5] All of us as Christians should do our utmost to be clean in mind. This means avoiding any movies, TV programs, or reading matter that could have a corrupting influence on our thinking. Mental hygiene involves conscious effort to dwell on things that are "true, . . . righteous, . . . chaste." The apostle Paul adds: "Whatever virtue there is and whatever praiseworthy thing there is, continue considering these things."—Philippians 4:8.

Personal Hygiene

[6] It has been said that "cleanliness is next to godliness." True, a person who is morally and physically clean may not be godly. But a godly person must, of necessity, be morally and physically clean. The Mosaic Law gave precise instructions on the cleansing of infected houses and on personal bathing in various cases of uncleanness. (See Leviticus, chapters 14 and 15.) All Israelites were required to prove themselves holy. (Leviticus 19:2) The publication *Insight on the Scriptures* states: "The dietary, sanitary, and moral laws that God gave [the Israelites] were constant reminders to them of their separateness and holiness to God."—Volume 1, page 1128.

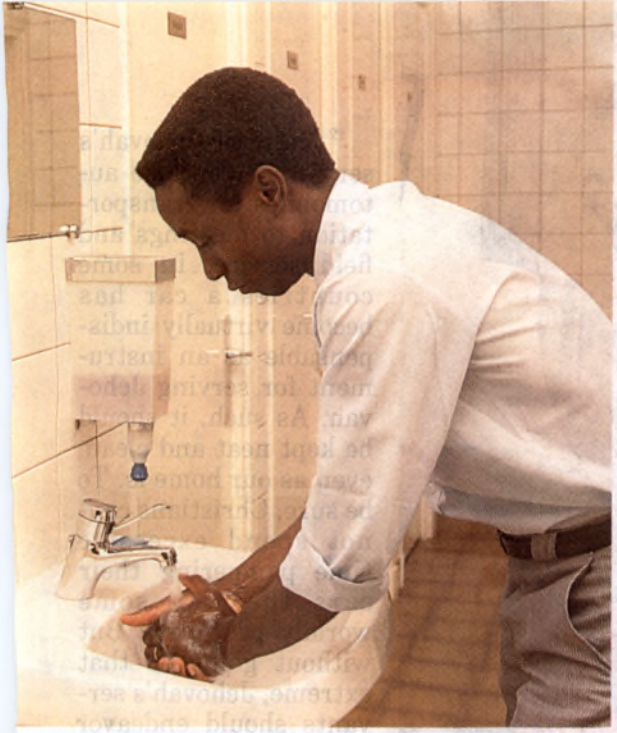
[7] While Jehovah's Witnesses as a people are clean of any defilement by Babylonish false religion and do not condone moral uncleanness in their midst, reports from traveling overseers indicate that some individuals neglect personal hygiene and tidiness. How can we be sure that we are clean in this respect too? A good model for all Christian homes is Bethel, which name means "House of God."

[8] When a person becomes a member of a Bethel family at the Watch Tower Soci-

5. What should be avoided in order to maintain cleanness of mind?
6. (a) Give examples from the book of Leviticus showing that personal as well as collective hygiene was required in Israel. (b) What was the purpose of such laws?
7. What is true of Jehovah's Witnesses as a people, but what have some traveling overseers reported?
8, 9. (a) What counsel is given to all new members of the Bethel family? (b) What principles followed in Bethel Homes should govern every Christian household?

In Our Next Issue

- **Will We Ever See Them Again?**
- **Cultivating Christian Manners in an Unmannerly World**
- **"Before Glory There Is Humility"**



"Bethel life calls for maintaining high physical, moral and spiritual standards"

ety's headquarters or any of its branches throughout the world, he is given a brochure prepared by the Governing Body. This publication explains what is expected of him in the way of work habits and personal habits. Under the heading "Room Care and Cleanliness," it states: "Bethel life calls for maintaining high physical, moral and spiritual standards. Everyone at Bethel should be concerned with keeping himself and his room clean. This contributes to good health. There is no reason for anyone to be dirty. It is a good practice to bathe daily. . . . Washing before mealtime is essential and is expected of all. In consideration of your roommate and housekeeper, the washbasin or tub should be rinsed out after each use."

[9] In Bethel Homes, the toilets are kept scrupulously clean, and provision is made to enable those using them to wash their hands immediately. Members of the family are expected to leave the toilet clean after use, which means checking to see that the toilet is properly flushed. This shows consideration for the next user or for the housekeeper. Should not such fine, loving principles govern each and every Christian household?

[10] Naturally, conditions vary from country to country. In some places, homes do not have a bathtub or even a shower. Generally speaking, though, Christian men and women can find enough soap and water to keep their own bodies clean and see that their children are clean.* Many homes throughout the world are not connected to a sewage system. But sewage can be safely disposed of by burying, as was required among the Israelites even in military camps. (Deuteronomy 23:12, 13) Besides this, Jehovah's laws governing camp life called for frequent washing of clothes and bathing, the rapid diagnosis and treatment of disease, the proper handling of dead bodies, and the maintaining of clean water and food supplies. All these laws contributed to the health of the nation. Should Jehovah's people today be any less hygienic in their personal habits? —Romans 15:4.

Tidy Homes and Cars

[11] Our homes, be they ever so humble, can be orderly and clean, but this requires good organization at the family level. A Christian mother will want to spend as much time as possible on spiritual matters, including the preaching work, so she

* For practical suggestions on hygiene under difficult circumstances, see the article "Meeting the Challenge of Cleanliness," published in *Awake!* of September 22, 1988, pages 8-11.

10. (a) Why is an elaborate bathroom not necessary in order to keep oneself and one's children clean? (b) What laws in Israel were conducive to good health, and what lesson can Jehovah's people today learn from this?
11. (a) What should be true of even the most humble Christian home? (b) What cooperation is required of all members of the Bethel family?

Should a mother have to spend extra time each day cleaning up after unthoughtful family members?

should not have to spend time every day tidying up after family members who leave clothing, books, papers, magazines, and so forth, lying around. In Bethel, although there are housekeepers who do the cleaning, each member of the family is expected to make his bed and leave his room tidy in the morning. All of us appreciate our neat and clean Kingdom Halls and Assembly Halls. May our homes also testify that we are a part of Jehovah's clean and holy people!

[12] Many of Jehovah's servants today use automobiles for transportation to meetings and field service. In some countries a car has become virtually indispensable as an instrument for serving Jehovah. As such, it should be kept neat and clean, even as our home is. To be sure, Christians cannot spend excessive time pampering their cars the way some worldly people do. But without going to that extreme, Jehovah's servants should endeavor to keep their automobiles reasonably clean and in good order. In some countries a car wash at a gas station is neither costly nor time-consuming. As to the inside of a car, ten minutes of cleaning and tidying up can work wonders. Elders and ministerial servants, in particular, should endeavor to be examples in this respect, since they often use their cars to transport groups of publishers in the field service. When a publisher picks up an interested person to take him to a meeting, it is certainly not a good witness if the car is dirty and untidy.

[13] Thus, by our efforts to be physically clean and to have clean and tidy homes

12, 13. (a) What counsel is given concerning automobiles used in Jehovah's service, and why need this not be very time-consuming? (b) What spiritual reason is there for keeping physically clean and for having tidy homes and cars?

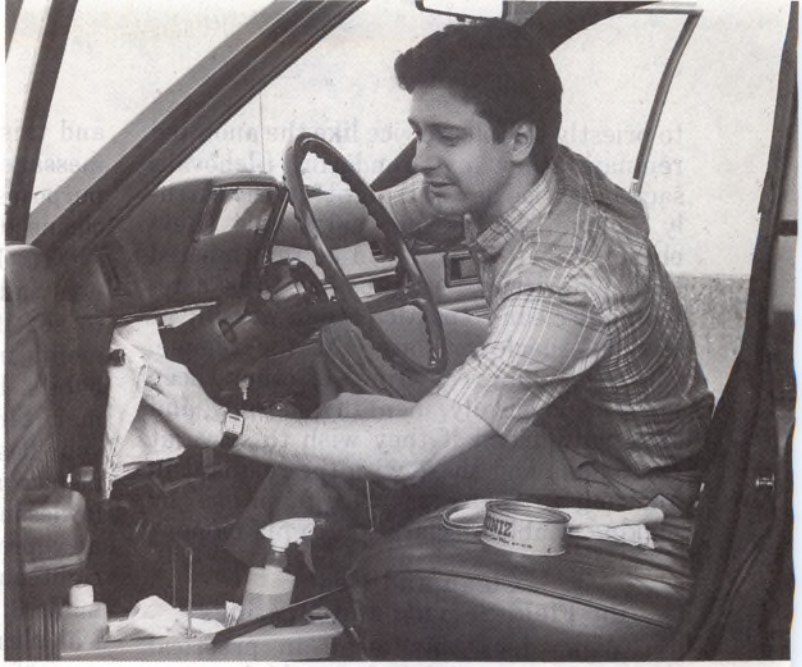
and automobiles, we honor Jehovah as members of his clean organization.

Cleanness When Offering Spiritual Sacrifices

[14] Ceremonial cleanness in connection with worship was required in Israel, under the penalty of death. Jehovah told Moses and Aaron: "You must keep the sons of Israel separate from their uncleanness, that they may not die in their uncleanness for their defiling of my tabernacle, which is in their midst." (Leviticus 15:31) On Atonement Day, the high priest had to bathe his flesh in water twice. (Leviticus 16: 4, 23, 24) The copper basin at the tabernacle, and later the huge copper sea at the temple, provided water for the priests to wash in before offering sacrifices to Jehovah. (Exodus 30:17-21; 2 Chronicles 4:6) What about the Israelites in general? If they became ceremonially impure for any reason, they were barred from taking part in worship until they had fulfilled the requirements for purification. (Numbers 19:11-22) All of this emphasized that physical cleanness is required of those who worship the holy God Jehovah.

[15] True, Jehovah's people today are not required to offer up animal sacrifices at an earthly temple. The sacrifices under the Law have been replaced by "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all time." (Hebrews 10:8-10) We "worship the Father with spirit and truth." (John 4: 23, 24) But does this mean that we have no sacrifices to offer to our holy God Jehovah? And is cleanness less of a requirement for us than it was for the Israelites?

14. What laws governed ceremonial cleanness in Israel, and what do these laws indicate?
15. Why are animal sacrifices no longer necessary, but what questions are raised?



In ten minutes, wonders can be done cleaning up the inside of a car

[16] The prophecy of Malachi shows that anointed Christians on earth in the time of the end would be refined, or purified, for temple service. History shows that this refining began in 1918. Since 1919 the anointed remnant have "certainly become to Jehovah people presenting a gift offering in righteousness," and their gift offering is "gratifying to Jehovah." (Malachi 3: 3, 4) Thus, they are able to "offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 2:5) The apostle Paul wrote: "Through him let us always offer to God a sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of lips which make public declaration to his name."—Hebrews 13:15.

[17] While the "great crowd" are not called

16. How has the prophecy of Malachi 3:3, 4 been fulfilled upon anointed Christians since 1918, and what acceptable sacrifices can they offer to Jehovah?
17. Although the "great crowd" are not a part of the royal priesthood, why must they be physically, mentally, morally, and spiritually clean?

to priestly temple service like the anointed remnant, they are "rendering [Jehovah] sacred service day and night" in the earthly courtyard of his spiritual temple. (Revelation 7:9, 10, 15) It will be remembered that nonpriestly Israelites had to be ceremonially clean to participate in worship at the tabernacle or, later, at the temple. Likewise, the great crowd of other sheep must be physically, mentally, morally, and spiritually clean if they wish to serve at the temple and share with the remnant in 'offering to God a sacrifice of praise' by making "public declaration to his name."

Clean and Neat for Field Service and Meetings

[18] What does this mean in practical terms? It means that it would be most unfitting and disrespectful to Jehovah to represent him in the house-to-house ministry, in the streets, or in someone's home if we were not physically clean and properly dressed. Hence, we should not be casual about such matters. We must give them careful attention, so that we act in a manner that is fitting for ministers bearing Jehovah's name. Our clothing need not be expensive, but it should be clean, tasteful, and modest. Our footwear should also be in good repair and of good appearance. Similarly, at *all* meetings, including the Congregation Book Study, our bodies should be clean, and we should be neatly and appropriately dressed.

[19] Our clean and neat appearance while engaged in the witnessing work and at our meetings is one way to "adorn the teaching of our Savior, God." (Titus 2:10) It is a witness in itself. Many people have been impressed by our cleanness and tidiness, and this has moved them to listen to our message concerning Jehovah's wonderful purposes for righteous new heavens and a cleansed new earth.—2 Peter 3:13.

[20] As Jehovah's clean new system draws near, all of us need to examine ourselves to see if we need to make some adjustments in our thinking or in our personal habits. Paul wrote: "I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh: for even as you presented your members as slaves to uncleanness and lawlessness with lawlessness in view, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness with holiness in view." (Romans 6:19) Spiritual cleanness and physical cleanness bring good fruitage even now, "fruit in the way of holiness, and the end [will be] everlasting life." (Romans 6:22) Let us, therefore, be clean in mind and body as we 'present our bodies a sacrifice living, holy, acceptable to God.' —Romans 12:1.

18. While engaged in the public witnessing work and attending meetings, what should be our concern regarding personal cleanness, clothing, and footwear?

19. What spiritual benefits result from our clean and neat appearance as Christian ministers?

20. What further good fruitage comes from our being clean in mind and body?

Points to Recall

- ☐ How could our eyes and heart cause us to engage in loose conduct?
- ☐ What benefits did the Israelites receive when they obeyed Jehovah's laws on collective and individual hygiene?
- ☐ What principles followed in Bethel Homes should govern every Christian household?
- ☐ When, especially, should we be careful about our appearance?
- ☐ What spiritual reasons do Jehovah's servants have for keeping their homes and cars clean and tidy?

A NEW HOME FOR THE GILEAD MISSIONARY SCHOOL

ON FEBRUARY 1, 1943, Nathan H. Knorr, former president of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, delivered the opening address to the first class of a new school. He explained to those one hundred students that "it is not the purpose of this [school] to equip you to be ordained ministers. You are ministers already and have been active in the ministry for years. . . . The course of study . . . is for the exclusive purpose of preparing you to be more able ministers." To this day the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead continues to train ministers for the foreign missionary work.

Back in 1943, Gilead School was located in the Finger Lakes region of New York State. Gilead remained there for 17 years. Then, in 1961, it was relocated in Brooklyn. For what purpose? The Gilead curriculum has always been designed to meet the needs of the organization. The need for developing and better organizing branch facilities throughout the earth called for more extensive instruction of the students by members of the headquarters staff of Jehovah's Witnesses, located in Brooklyn. So for a number of years, the emphasis was on training branch personnel. After that, the focus was again on the missionary work.

For the next 27 years, 1961 through 1988, the students of Gilead School enjoyed the privilege of living and learning right among the headquarters staff in Brooklyn. There the students benefited from close association with members of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses and with other experienced ministers. What better way to learn how a branch of the Watch Tower Society operates? The students benefited not only from training in class but also from observing the headquarters staff at work each day.

What effect has Gilead School had on the international preaching work? Of the 93 branch committee coordinators serving to keep the work organized worldwide, 74 are graduates of Gilead School. This speaks well for the excellent training these men received for handling the heavy responsibility of shepherding God's people today. Countless traveling overseers now serving the needs of the organization are also Gilead School graduates. Yes, the training program at Gilead School has kept pace with the needs of the organization.

Gilead Moves out of Brooklyn

Once again, however, the decision was made to move Gilead School. So in the autumn of 1988, four truckloads of furniture and office equipment arrived at Gilead's third home—Watchtower Farms, located in Wallkill, New York. Within just two months, the maintenance staff at Watchtower Farms prepared fine classrooms, a library, and offices for the school. Some worked day and night to prepare the facilities of the school in time for the next class to begin their training.

On October 17, 1988, the 86th class of Gilead commenced. Without missing a beat, the school continued its purpose of 'training men and women to be more able ministers.'

STUDENT PROFILE

Number of married couples: 12
Number of students: 24
Number of countries students are from: 6
Number of countries assigned to: 12
Average age: 32.3
Average years in truth: 14.1
Average years in full-time ministry: 9.1

In its beautiful new surroundings at Watchtower Farms, some of the flavor of the original school in the Finger Lakes region was restored.

The 86th Class Graduates

On March 5, 1989, the entire Watchtower headquarters staff in Brooklyn and Watchtower Farms met together at the Jersey City Assembly Hall to share in the graduation of the 86th class. Daniel Sydlik, a member of the Governing Body, opened the program with prayer. Karl Klein of the Governing Body served as chairman. In his introduction, he drew a contrast between the foreign missionaries of Christendom and those of Jehovah's Witnesses. How successful Gilead-trained missionaries have been in teaching the truth of God's Word in countries such as Japan, where there are now over 131,000 Witnesses actively sharing in the field ministry!

With the theme "Let Good Works Be Your Hallmark," Donald Krebs described the pivotal role Gilead missionaries have played in the worldwide increase of Jehovah's organization. "Your good works in the missionary field as teachers of God's Word will be your . . . distinguishing trait. We encourage you to work hard. Jehovah will richly bless your efforts."

George Gangas, a member of the Governing Body, gave a spirited talk on the theme "The Bible Is the Best Book Under the Sun." He counseled the graduates: "Do not forget to study the Bible. The Bible is full of spiritual gems . . . that shine and sparkle. One who appreciates them wants to look at them over and over and enjoy their sparkling qualities."

Richard Eldred's theme was "You Can Make a Difference." As the new missionaries touch the lives of other people, they can make a positive difference. Men and women of ancient times such as David, Nehemiah, Deborah, and Abigail had a positive influence on others by caring deeply for them, maintaining courageous faith, and displaying a mild, spiritual attitude.

"Count Your Blessings" were the words of Lyman Swingle, a Governing Body member, to the graduating class. After recounting a few of the blessings the class has had, such as being able to spend five months in concentrated study of the Bible, he encouraged them: "As the end draws near, you may find the pace may quicken, the road may get rougher, the path steeper. But make sure you never tire out, that you never quit, that you never become a dropout."

One of the instructors, Jack Redford, developed the theme "Do Not Let Your Strength Become a Weakness." Based on Solomon's counsel, "Do not become righteous overmuch," he warned of depending too much on personal assets rather than leaning on Jehovah. (Ecclesiastes 7:16, 17) "Good traits that are carried to an excess can become a pitfall." For example, one whose strength is law and order might take such a trait to the extreme by being too rigid. Thus, he gave this counsel to the class: "All of us should be aware of our weaknesses, but we should also be aware of our strengths. Be righteous but not self-righteous. Lean on Jehovah. Make Jehovah your strength."

Ulysses Glass, instructor and school registrar, explained Jesus' words, "Take my yoke upon you." (Matthew 11:29, 30) Here Jesus is inviting his disciples to 'get under his yoke' with him. He did not want to burden them. He had the needs of others foremost in his mind. He showed humility. He did not chastise his disciples. Jesus said, "Learn from me." A missionary must have the mind of Christ. This speaker commended the class for their giving spirit and encouraged them to continue showing that same spirit in their foreign assignments.

As the morning session drew to a close, Governing Body member Carey Barber gave a spirited talk on the subject "The Harvest

86th 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) Parrott, R.; Imig, E.; Benig, G.; Bengtsson, E.; Baart, W.; Ihander, K. (2) Lewis, J.; Hilario, L.; Lindmark, A.; Antoncich, C.; Agurs, C. (3) Bengtsson, R.; Parrott, J.; Benig, J.; Imig, J.; Baart, A.; Rissell, S. (4) Rissell, M.; Lewis, L.; Antoncich, M.; Hilario, R.; Agurs, H.; Lindmark, L.; Ihander, J.

Is the Conclusion of the System of Things." He drew attention to the modern-day fulfillment of Jesus' illustration of the wheat and the weeds. (Matthew, chapter 13) First, Christ's anointed ones are gathered in. Then, especially since the year 1935, the other sheep have joined in being 'harvested.' Gilead School has accomplished a marvelous work in helping to harvest disciples of Christ.

After the graduates had been given their diplomas, one of their number read a warm letter expressing their sentiments about the training and attention they received from the instructors and the Bethel family. In part, the letter said: "Your interest in us not only as a class of Gilead but as individuals has impressed us and is a course worthy of imitating. It is with mixed feelings that we part company—sad to leave because we will miss your presence but happy and excited about our new assignment."

For the afternoon program, the graduates participated in a *Watchtower* Study conducted by Ralph Walls. Then the class acted out some highlights of the experiences they had in the field ministry during their stay at Watchtower Farms. The Teaching Committee of the Governing Body presented a program of skits entitled "Respect for Authority Promotes Unity" and a slide presentation depicting the joy missionaries in many lands have shared in over the years. The program ended with a heartfelt prayer by Frederick Franz, 95-year-old president of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead.

By their enthusiastic response to the program, those in attendance indicated their support for the prospective missionaries and appreciation for the program. There is no doubt that the 24 graduates of the 86th class of Gilead are determined to make Jehovah their strength as they go to their privileged assignments in the missionary field.

Kingdom Proclaimers Report

Search for Bible Truth Rewarded in Israel

MORE and more people in Israel as elsewhere are seeing the futility of man's efforts to bring lasting peace and provide a hope for the future. The 370 Jehovah's Witnesses in that beautiful, historic land are bringing life-giving hope to those seeking God. (Isaiah 55: 2, 3) The following reports from the Watch Tower Society's branch office in Tel Aviv show that God rewards those who seek Bible truth.

"The disturbances by rowdy religious fanatics have died down, and their previous efforts to interfere with our meetings continue to boomerang. For example, an elderly Russian couple were associating with an Adventist group but were dissatisfied with what they were learning. They saw no evidence of the persecutions that were prophesied to mark true Christianity. Then one day they found an old, discarded Romanian-language news magazine that carried a report about violent mob attacks back in 1985 on the Society's branch office building and the Kingdom Hall in Tel Aviv. With their interest stirred, they traveled to Tel Aviv and walked around for four hours until they located the building described in the newspaper article. They enjoyed receiving answers to some of their questions and stayed for the evening meeting, where they were happy to meet some Russian-speaking Witnesses. Since then, a regular Bible study has been held with them. The more they learn, the more they are convinced that they have found just what they were searching for—the truth!

"In another instance, a brother witnessed to a young family man who did not agree with some of the points he tried to explain and so did not continue to look into the Kingdom message. Some years later, this same man's daughter fell sick, and he was told by superstitious friends that the problem was likely connected with the mezuzah attached to his doorpost. They recommended that he have it checked by the rabbi. This he decided to do. At the same time, he prayed earnestly to God for guidance in finding the truth.

"On his way to the rabbi's home, the man suddenly decided to go and pick up a medical prescription at the health clinic. When he arrived, who should he find sitting there but the Witness who had preached to him some years before! The brother states that he had had no plans to go to the clinic that evening until suddenly he remembered something he needed. The brother and the man sat and talked for a couple of hours that evening, and a Bible study was arranged with the young man. He started to attend meetings, his progress was steady, and he joined the Theocratic Ministry School. Soon he was going in the field ministry, and he is now a baptized brother. He never did get as far as the rabbi's house!"

These persons' search for Bible truth was richly rewarded, as they have found a treasure more precious than fine gold. —Proverbs 3:13-18.

FINDING FREEDOM ON "THE ISLAND OF LONELY MEN"

THE launch plowing through the light swells of the Gulf of Nicoya was not full. This was not due to a shortage of tourists though. Here on the Pacific shore of Costa Rica, the cloudless sky, emerald-green water, white sandy beaches, and swaying coconut palms never failed to attract those in pursuit of a tropical paradise. But I was not here on vacation—and neither were the other passengers.

"The Island of Lonely Men"

We were heading for San Lucas Island, a penal colony run by the Costa Rican Ministry of Justice. At one time, San Lucas Island was one of the most infamous prisons in Latin America. Hardened criminals made up most of its population, and those sent here soon learned the hard facts of survival. The authorities provided the bare necessities, while the inmates established their own pecking order and struggled to improve their personal lot. Often, those who tried to escape were swept out to sea by the strong currents, or they were killed by sharks.

In the early 1950's, a former inmate of San Lucas Island, José León Sánchez, wrote a book based on his personal life in the penal colony. His blunt, brutal, but factual, story, *La Isla de los Hombres Solos* (The Island of Lonely Men), soon became a best-seller in Mexico and Central America. In Costa Rica it touched off a strong public outcry.

At the time, the government was in the process of modernizing its penal institutions. Emphasis was put on reform rather than punishment, and the death penalty was abolished. With the attention generated by Sánchez' book, changes also came to

San Lucas Island. Prisoners were taught cattle and swine raising, fishing, and other skills. They also raised cash crops for sale and were allowed to participate in the profit. Improvements were also made in the housing facilities. By the beginning of the 1960's, San Lucas became a model reform center for minimum-security inmates.

As I stepped off the launch onto the small dock, I was well aware of the infamous history of the island. But I was here as a prison guard, not as a prisoner. I had joined the National Police Force when I was 18, and because I was big for my age, my first assignment was guard duty on San Lucas Island.

A Prisoner, yet Free

Raised by Catholic nuns and priests, I was always horrified by the thought of a burning hell. To me, the most important thing in life was to avoid ending up in hell. But I was perplexed to see that most people seemed to care very little about it. The priest might speak about it in class, but outside the classroom, no one wanted to talk about religion or the Bible. They claimed to believe in hellfire, but that did little to restrain their conduct.

The situation on San Lucas was not much different. Though many of the guards and inmates professed the same belief, it seemed to have little effect on them. Obscene speech and unclean practices were common. Once a fellow guard was caught smuggling marijuana onto the island and ended up an inmate himself! My immediate supervisor had a terrible temper and twice challenged rebellious inmates to a fistfight. Since I had time on my hands, I often thought deeply about the things I was observing on the island. As an inexperienced young man, I was confused and disillusioned.

One evening, Franklin, a trusted inmate, invited me to listen to a Bible discussion. Even though I was not too interested, a conversation soon developed.

"It must be difficult to be a prisoner and study the Bible," I remarked. I never forgot Franklin's reply.

"Physically I'm a prisoner," he said, "but spiritually I'm free."

How I wanted to understand that kind of freedom!

Witnesses on San Lucas

It turned out that Franklin was studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses. On Sundays, relatives and friends were allowed on the island. Often, two or three boats would bring as many as 30 Witnesses across the bay from the Puntarenas Congregation. Being new there, I was surprised to see the officials simply wave the Witnesses past the checkpoints while everyone else was thoroughly searched. Even more surprising to me was the fact that the Witnesses treated with respect inmates and guards alike and talked to everyone about their Bible-based message.

A few inmates had regular, personal Bible studies with the Witnesses on these Sundays. Franklin was one of them, and there was something about him that impressed me. I learned that Franklin had been sentenced to a 12-year prison term for killing a business competitor. In prison he had studied accounting by correspondence. Because he did not drink, smoke, or use drugs, he was put in charge of the prison library. Later, he was given his own cabin and even more responsibility.

While still in school, Franklin had had some friends who were Jehovah's Witnesses. He noted that they never got in-

volved in squabbles or fights, even when others picked on them. Though he did not take religion seriously, he knew the Witnesses to be a peaceful and morally clean people. So when he heard that there was an *Atalaya* ("Watchtower," as some called Jehovah's Witnesses) among the inmates, he became curious.

One day before lunch, Franklin saw a prisoner sitting alone outside the dining hall. His neat appearance made Franklin inquire if he was the *Atalaya.* When being told that he was, Franklin's first reaction was: "Why are you here?" The man explained that he had first been sentenced to the Central Penitentiary in San José, the capital, and had begun to study the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses while there. After being transferred to San Lucas, he continued his studies with a Witness from Puntarenas. In time he was baptized right there at Coco Beach on San Lucas Island.

That meeting was a turning point in Franklin's life. From then on, whenever the Witnesses came to visit, he would engage them in lively discussions. He also began to talk to other inmates and guards about the things he was learning. His conduct, dress, and grooming began to improve. Both he and his baptized companion gained the respect of everyone.

Eventually, Franklin's 12-year sentence was reduced to 3 years and 4 months. He and his companion kept studying the Bible. In spite of the bad prison atmosphere, they were happy, and their faces showed it. Evidently they noticed that I was different from the other guards, since I did not share in dirty jokes and obscene jesting. So they invited me to their cabins for Bible discussions. What I heard from them and from the Witness visitors was very interesting to me, especially about the condition of the dead and that there really is no burning hell. I was given a copy of the book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life* and started to read it. Although I did not realize it then, seeds of truth that would later produce fruit were being sown in my heart.

True Freedom at Last

After leaving the National Police Force, I lived briefly in Miami, Florida. One day a workmate began to speak to me about the Bible. His speech, dress, and grooming told me that I had met up with Jehovah's Witnesses once again. This brought back memories of San Lucas Island, and I asked him why no one seemed interested in discussing spiritual things. He gave me a brief answer and suggested a discussion in my home. This led to a regular Bible study and later to dedication and baptism.

I returned to Costa Rica in 1975 and attended a district convention in San José. I am still not sure who was more surprised when Franklin and I met by chance at the convention. He was now physically free and also baptized. When I left San Lucas, Franklin had been unsure about how strong my interest in the Bible was. But here we were, former prisoner and ex-guard, truly united in the freedom that comes from worship of the true God Jehovah!

For some the penal "Island of Lonely Men" meant only unsavory memories. For me it meant the beginning of spiritual freedom. Now, as a Christian elder, I share in bringing liberty to those who think that they are free but who are really imprisoned as were those men I once used to guard.—*As told by David Robinson.*

ENJOYING MUSIC
WHAT IS THE KEY?

GRASS immorality and idolatry were practiced in the ancient world. Hence, the apostle Paul found it necessary to give very strong counsel on Christian conduct. To the congregation in Ephesus he wrote: "This, therefore, I say and bear witness to in the Lord, that you no longer go on walking just as the nations also walk in the unprofitableness of their minds, while they are in darkness mentally, and alienated from the life that belongs to God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the insensibility of their hearts."—Ephesians 4:17, 18.

Is that not also a good description of the way things are today? This includes the field of music. Much of modern music reflects a style that is 'alien to the godly life.' Often the lyrics betray an 'insensible heart,' without kindness or compassion.

But Paul took his counsel a step further by saying: "Their sense of right and wrong once dulled, they have abandoned themselves to sexuality and eagerly pursue a career of indecency of every kind." —Ephesians 4:19, *The Jerusalem Bible.*

This 'eager pursuit of a career of indecency' is reflected in much of today's music. The lyrics and the musical intent pander to a generation steeped in sex, violence, drugs, and pleasure. How should Christians view such vices? Note Paul's words: "Now that is hardly the way you have learnt from Christ, unless you failed to hear him properly when you were taught what the truth is in Jesus." —Ephesians 4:20, 21, *JB.*

"A Spiritual Revolution" Necessary

How can we apply this admonition in the case of music that reflects the spirit of the world? In that, if we have "the mind of Christ," that is, if we have his mental attitude, we will not want to listen to music that is "earthly, animal, demonic." —1 Corinthians 2:16; James 3:15.

But you might ask, 'How can I change my taste in music?' Again Paul helps, for he says: "You must give up your old way of life; you must put aside your old self, which gets corrupted by following illusory desires. Your mind must be renewed by a spiritual revolution."—Ephesians 4: 22, 23, *JB.*

There is the answer, *a renewal of the mind by a spiritual revolution.* This involves much more than our taste in music. It calls for a reeducation, a raising of standards and values. It means a change in our way of thinking, a different set of criteria. And it involves seeing things from the viewpoint of God and Christ. As Paul so clearly expressed it: "Whether you are eating or drinking *or doing anything*

> "Rock music has one appeal only, a barbaric appeal, to sexual desire—not love, not *eros,* but sexual desire undeveloped and untutored. . . . Young people know that rock has the beat of sexual intercourse."—*The Closing of the American Mind,* by Allan Bloom.

else, do all things for God's glory."—1 Corinthians 10:31.

Much of modern music brings no glory to God. On the contrary, it spurns those values for which Christians stand and for which many have been willing to die in prisons and concentration camps. Therefore, why should we consider it to be a sacrifice if we have to make a change in our musical taste so as not to be 'loving the world or the things in the world'? —1 John 2:15-17.

Good Music—What Is the Key?

If, because of our regard for Scriptural principles, we reject degrading music, with what can we replace it? Well, why not explore new avenues of music? They might be far more enjoyable and upbuilding than those we have preferred in the past. For example, a former rock musician said this about the changes he made:

"I had to make an effort to move from the easy rock sound to an acceptable popular type of music and deeper classical music. But when I realized that there was more substance to them and that I could no longer identify with the spirit of most modern music, it became easier and more satisfying. It was suddenly wholesome. I realized what I had missed because of my former prejudice against alternative types of music."

There is a wide range of classical music, as well as folk and some modern music, that has a good melodic line, clean lyrics, and does not express a philosophy contrary to Bible principles. The key is to find and enjoy music that will not wrongly influence our thinking, music that is 'righteous, chaste, well spoken of, virtuous, and praiseworthy.'—Philippians 4:8.

Music's Role in a Christian's Life

For some, one way of enjoying good music is by singing or by learning to play an instrument. Great pleasure can be derived from solo and group performances with family and friends. As in all things, however, balance is needed. A recreation or a pastime should never become an obsession in a Christian's life. If that should happen, even wholesome music, by reason of excess, would have unwholesome effects. Then the Christian would be in danger of becoming 'a lover of pleasures rather than a lover of God.'—2 Timothy 3:4.

Music is also an integral part of our worship of Jehovah. In ancient Israel, Asaph and his brothers sang: "Give thanks to Jehovah, you people; call upon his name, make his deeds known among the peoples! *Sing to him, make melody to him,* concern yourselves with all his wonderful acts." Yes, music can praise God and please him.—1 Chronicles 16:8, 9.

The Kingdom songs used by Jehovah's Witnesses at their Kingdom Halls are based on Bible texts, psalms, prayers, and teachings. Can we not also deeply enjoy this sacred music? And should we not show our joy by singing these songs with feeling and enthusiasm? Even on occasions other than Christian meetings, can we not lighten our lives with the beautiful arrangements of these songs called *Kingdom Melodies?*

In these orchestral renderings, all the musicians are Jehovah's Witnesses. Some are professionals who play in symphony orchestras. Others, including the former rock musician quoted above, are talented young people who enjoy many types of decent music. They do not feel that they lose out because of renouncing music that reflects earthly, demonic attitudes. Their fine example shows that we too, if we allow Bible principles to govern our choice, can find much wholesome joy in music, both secular and sacred.—Ephesians 5:18-20.

Seek Jehovah and Serve Him Wholeheartedly

Lessons From the Scriptures: Zephaniah 1:1–3:20

SOME 50 years before the Babylonians devastated apostate Judah, Jehovah declared through his prophet Zephaniah: "I shall without fail finish everything off the surface of the ground." (1:1, 2) But God also showed his people the way to safety. (2:3; 3:9) In this regard, the book of Zephaniah contains valuable lessons for all who now face "the war of the great day of God the Almighty."—Revelation 16:14.

Jehovah's Day Is Near

With Jehovah's day so near, any who have drawn away from God should quickly return to him. Among the ones God will "finish off" are "those who are drawing back from following Jehovah." They have turned away and no longer concern themselves with God's will. What a dangerous situation! It should be corrected immediately.—Zephaniah 1:3-11.

Material wealth cannot provide security in Jehovah's day. Some who claim to serve Jehovah busy themselves in material pursuits, snuggling into a comfortable position. But what self-delusion! Their material things will offer no security in "that day." —Zephaniah 1:12-18.

Salvation Possible

To be concealed in Jehovah's day, more than superficial knowledge of the Scriptures is needed. "Meek ones" who have "practiced His own judicial decision" are admonished to 'seek Jehovah, seek righteousness, seek meekness.' Only those who have "endured to the end" will be saved.—Zephaniah 2:1-3; Matthew 24:13.

BIBLE TEXTS EXAMINED

o Zephaniah 1:5—Malcam, possibly the same as Milcom, Molech, or Moloch, was the principal false god of the Ammonites. (1 Kings 11:5, 7) The worship of Molech included disgusting child sacrifice and was condemned by the Law.—Leviticus 20:2-5; Acts 7:42, 43.

o Zephaniah 2:14—As foretold, desolated Nineveh's toppled pillars and their capitals became places for birds and beasts. Birds and likely the wind 'sang' in deserted windows. Doorways and even palace interiors were devastated.

o Zephaniah 3:9—A common human language does not guarantee unity, as is shown by the wars fought between people of the same tongue. The "pure language" is Scriptural truth, "the pattern of healthful words." (2 Timothy 1:13) It transcends pride, glorifies God, and unifies all who speak it.

o Haggai 1:6—Since the Jews were neglecting Jehovah's temple, they did not have his blessing. Hence, they sowed much but brought in few crops and lacked enough food and drink to satisfy their needs. Their clothing was of insufficient quantity or quality to keep them warm, and wage earners seemed to be putting funds into a money bag full of holes. Unlike those Jews, let us never neglect divine interests.—Proverbs 10:22; Nehemiah 10:39.

o Haggai 2:9—Whereas "the former" temple, built by Solomon, stood for 420 years, the "later house" was used for 584 years (515 B.C.E.-70 C.E.). So the second temple lasted longer. More worshipers flocked to it, as at Pentecost 33 C.E., when Jews and proselytes gathered to it from beyond Judea. Moreover, the Messiah, Jesus Christ, taught in the "later house." These factors gave it greater religious glory.

Nations that oppress Jehovah's people today will suffer destruction. They will have the same experience as Moab, Ammon, Assyria, and other nations around Judah. Destruction also awaits Babylon the Great. (Revelation 18:4-8) How this encourages us to press on in declaring God's judgment!—Zephaniah 2:4-15.

A Restored People

Jehovah is now preparing his people for survival. Have you abandoned Babylonish ideas and begun to speak the "pure language" of precious Bible truth? Have you 'called on Jehovah's name' by dedicating yourself to him? Are you 'bringing a gift,' that is, "the fruit of lips which make public declaration to his name"? For survival, you must serve "shoulder to shoulder" with Jehovah's dedicated people.—Zephaniah 3:1-10; Romans 10:13-15; Hebrews 13:15.

For salvation, we must seek Jehovah and hold high his holy name. Haughtiness, unrighteousness, and lies have no place among his people. (Ephesians 4:25-32) Only "humble and lowly" ones will be saved when he sanctifies his name.—Zephaniah 3:11-20.

Lessons From the Scriptures: Haggai 1:1–2:23

THE book of Haggai takes us to 520 B.C.E., 17 years after a Jewish remnant returned to Jerusalem to rebuild Jehovah's temple. (Haggai 1:1) That was a time for everyone to set his heart on God's work. Yet, Jehovah found it necessary to send the prophet Haggai to remind His people of their obligation. Are there lessons in this for us?

Put Jehovah's Work First

Never put material interests ahead of spiritual duties. Jews who returned to their homeland had reason for concern over economic uncertainties, hostile neighbors, and so forth. But these were not the causes of their negligence, in view of their luxurious living conditions. Only after being roused by Haggai did they begin to work on the temple. Likewise today, we need to 'set our hearts upon our ways' and be sure that we support God's work to the fullest extent possible.—Haggai 1:2-15.

Jehovah blesses the efforts of those who do his work wholeheartedly. God would bless the work of Zerubbabel and other Jews in completing the temple, and its glory would surpass that of the former house. With "a great crowd" responding to the Kingdom message today, "the desirable things of all the nations" are coming to Jehovah's spiritual temple, and he is 'filling his house with glory.'—Haggai 2:1-9; Revelation 7:9.

Wholehearted Service Required

Our worship is of value only if we are clean, our motives are pure, and we are serving Jehovah with a complete heart. Neglecting God's house made the Jews unclean, but he would bless them as soon as temple work began. So, if we are to enjoy Jehovah's blessing, we must correct anything needing attention and set our heart on his work. (Compare Numbers 19:11-13.) As we wait for God to rock the heavens and the earth, overthrowing kingdoms, let us follow the antitypical Zerubbabel, Jesus Christ, and share wholeheartedly in Jehovah's work.—Haggai 2:10-23.

District convention in Verona, Italy

Why You Should Attend the "GODLY DEVOTION" District Convention

A rewarding three days of Bible instruction await you at the "Godly Devotion" District Convention of Jehovah's Witnesses beginning this month. By means of instructive discourses and interviews and a drama, vital Bible guidance will be provided. Be present at 10:20 Friday morning when the convention begins with a musical presentation.

Friday morning's program will feature the talk "Avoiding Lips of Hurtfulness" and an important discourse on the origin of the Trinity doctrine. In the afternoon, parents will be admonished to accept their moral responsibility to provide their children a spiritual heritage. Next, youths will be encouraged to make Christ their model and to make the truth their own. The day's program will conclude with the discussion of a grand provision that is being made particularly to assist youths.

Saturday will be another full day of instruction that will feature the baptism in the morning and in the afternoon noteworthy talks about the Christian Governing Body and how we can cooperate with it today. The afternoon sessions will conclude with the important talk "The Bible—God's Word or Man's?"

Sunday morning, timely instruction will warn against "the man of lawlessness" and against going astray in matters of food and drink, grooming, and recreation. (2 Thessalonians 2:3) This will be followed by a modern-day drama stressing the importance of subjecting ourselves to God. Then, you will not want to miss the public talk, "Deliverance Near for People of Godly Devotion!"

During June, July, and August, more than 130 conventions are scheduled throughout the United States alone, so there will be one not far from your home. Check with Jehovah's Witnesses locally for the time and place of the one nearest you.