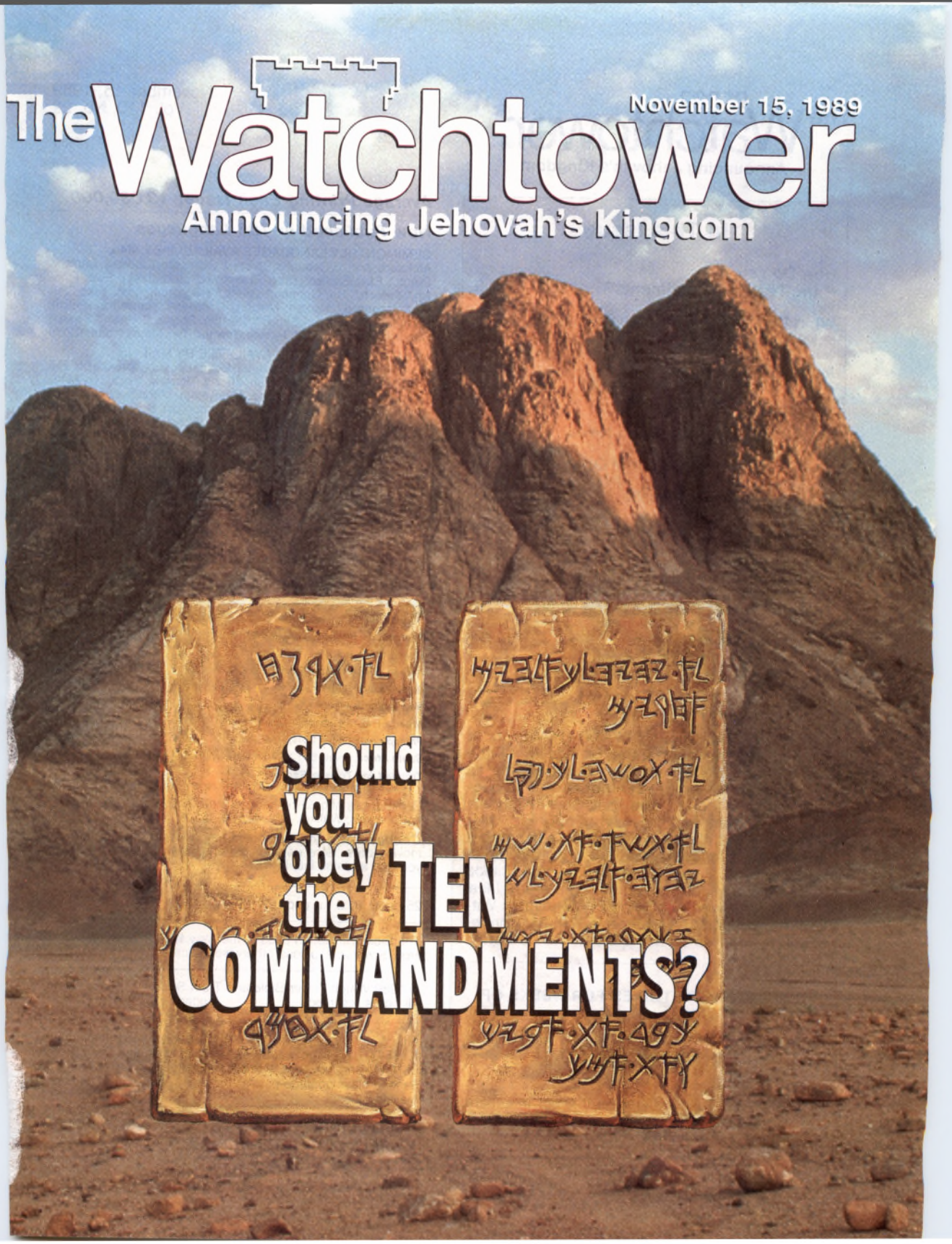
The Watchtower
Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom
November 15, 1989



Should you obey the TEN COMMANDMENTS?

The Watchtower®
Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

November 15, 1989
Vol. 110, No. 22

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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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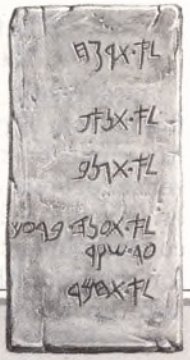
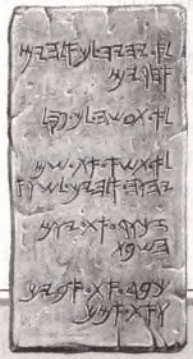
How do you view the TEN COMMANDMENTS?

PEOPLE view the Bible's Ten Commandments in various ways. Seventh-Day Adventists say that the Ten Commandments are binding on all people. Lutherans consider them the "best set of rules ever given upon which an individual can structure his life." "Rightly understood," explains a Catholic spokesman, "the Ten Commandments still provide a basis for Christian living."

Thus, while some religious groups believe that we should obey the Ten Commandments to the letter, others consider them merely a guide for sound moral behavior. Indeed, according to the *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics,* "there is probably no human document which has exercised a greater influence upon religious and moral life than the Decalogue [Ten Commandments]." Why is this the case? Consider first what they say. They are brief, comprehensive, and forceful. But how should you view the Ten Commandments? What do they mean to you?





THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

1. You must not have any other gods against my face.

2. You must not make for yourself a carved image or a form like anything that is in the heavens above or that is on the earth underneath or that is in the waters under the earth. You must not bow down to them nor be induced to serve them . . .

3. You must not take up the name of Jehovah your God in a worthless way . . .

4. Remembering the sabbath day to hold it sacred, you are to render service and you must do all your work six days. . . . You must not do any work, you nor your son nor your daughter, your slave man nor your slave girl nor your domestic animal nor your alien resident who is inside your gates . . .

5. Honor your father and your mother . . .

6. You must not murder.

7. You must not commit adultery.

8. You must not steal.

9. You must not testify falsely as a witness against your fellowman.

10. You must not desire your fellowman's house. You must not desire your fellowman's wife, nor his slave man nor his slave girl nor his bull nor his ass nor anything that belongs to your fellowman.—Exodus 20:3-17.

What do the TEN COMMANDMENTS mean to you?

WITHIN three months of their deliverance from Egypt in 1513 B.C.E., the Israelites encamped in front of Mount Sinai in the wilderness. At Jehovah's beckoning, the prophet Moses ascended the mountain and heard God promise that He would make the nation of Israel His "special property out of all other peoples." Moses then relayed this to the people through the older men of the nation. "After that all the people answered unanimously and said: 'All that Jehovah has spoken we are willing to do.'"—Exodus 19:1-8.

Thereafter, God plainly stated the Ten Commandments to Moses, prefacing these laws with the comment: "I am Jehovah your God, who have brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slaves." (Exodus 20:2) This Decalogue was for the Israelites, who were told in the First Commandment: "You must not have any other gods against my face."—Exodus 20:3.

Subsequently, Jehovah gave Moses instruction in other divine commandments for Israel. (Exodus 20:4–23:19) Altogether, these amounted to some 600 laws. And what a thrill it was to realize that God's angel was going ahead of the nation to prepare the way into the Land of Promise! (Exodus 23:20-22) Jehovah declared: "Before all your people I shall do wonderful things that have never been created in all the earth or among all the nations; and all the people in the midst of whom you are will indeed see the work of Jehovah, because it is a fear-inspiring thing that I am doing with you." In return, what did God require of his people? "For your part keep what I am commanding you today." Yes, obedience to all of Jehovah's laws and precepts was mandatory.—Exodus 34: 10, 11.

What the Ten Words Meant for Israel

As a result of their divinely protected flight from Egyptian bondage, the Israelites came to know God's name in a new sense. Jehovah had become their Deliverer. (Exodus 6:2, 3) Consequently, the third commandment took on special meaning for them, as they were thus forbidden to take up the divine name in a worthless way.—Exodus 20:7.

But what of the fourth commandment, which relates to the Sabbath day? This command featured respect for sacred things, as Jehovah had previously indicated when instituting "a sabbath observance" in connection with the collecting of manna. (Exodus 16:22-26) Because some Israelites did not promptly obey, Jehovah plainly reminded them that he had given them that order. "'Mark the fact that Jehovah has given you the sabbath.'. . . And the people proceeded to observe the sabbath on the seventh day." (Exodus 16: 29, 30) Later, Jehovah showed how exclusive this arrangement was, stating: "Between me and the sons of Israel it is a sign to time indefinite."—Exodus 31:17.

Then, consider the unique tenth commandment, forbidding covetousness. Here

is a law that no human could enforce. Each Israelite was accountable to his God, Jehovah, who searched the individual's heart to find out his motives.—Exodus 20:17; 1 Samuel 16:7; Jeremiah 17:10.

An Adjusted View

Jesus Christ, who was born into the nation of Israel, told his disciples: "Do not think I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I came, not to destroy, but to fulfill." (Matthew 5:17) To Hebrew Christians the apostle Paul wrote: "The Law has a shadow of the good things to come, but not the very substance of the things." (Hebrews 10:1) If you had been a Hebrew convert to Christianity, how would you have understood these comments? Some members of the early Christian congregation believed that all the hundreds of laws that God gave through Moses, including the Ten Commandments, still applied. But was that the right viewpoint?

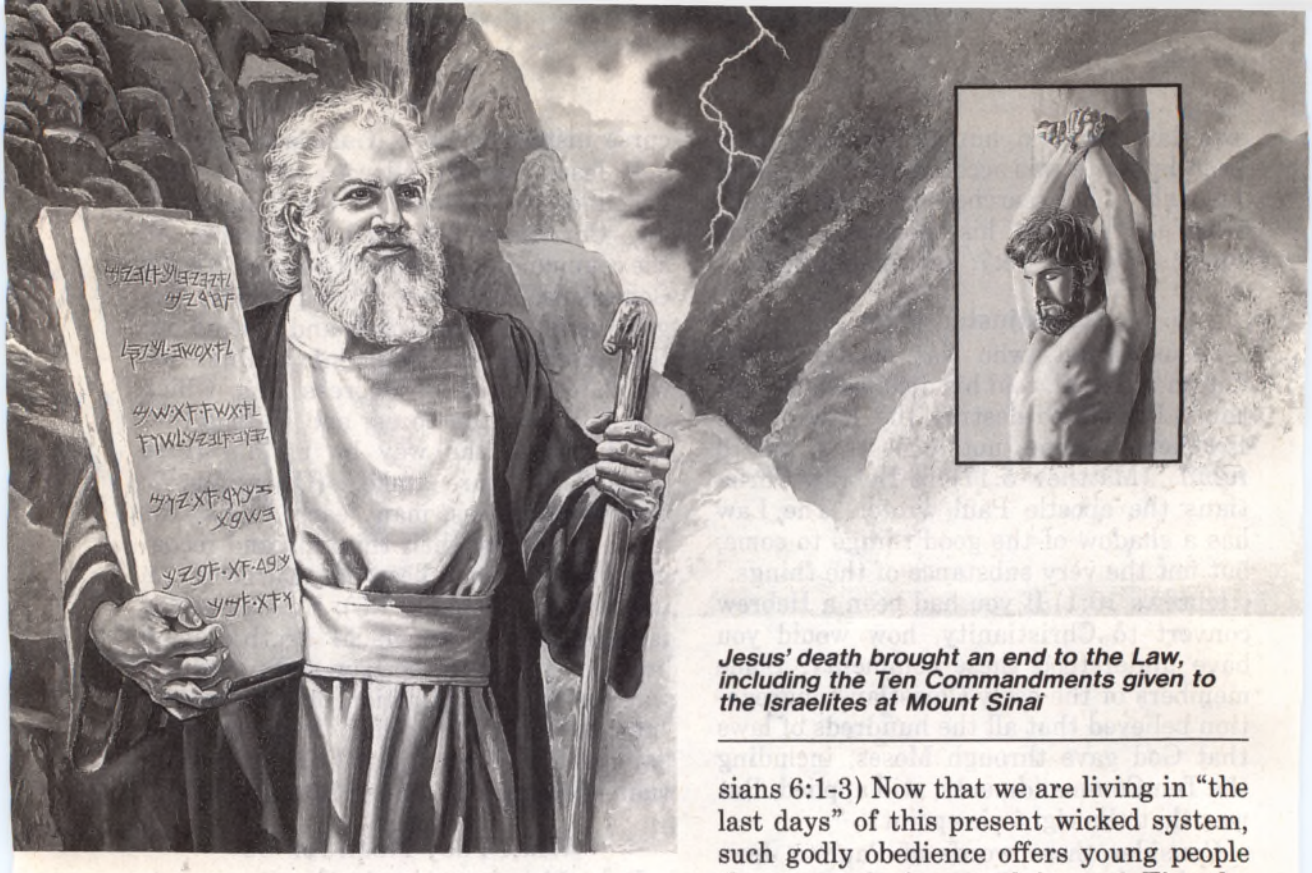
Consider these words of Paul to Jews who had become Christians in the province of Galatia: "We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners from the nations, knowing as we do that a man is declared righteous, not due to works of law, but only through faith toward Christ Jesus, even we have put our faith in Christ Jesus, that we may be declared righteous due to faith toward Christ, and not due to works of law, because due to works of law no flesh will be declared righteous." (Galatians 2:15, 16) Indeed, a righteous standing with God did not depend on perfect obedience to the Mosaic Law, for in the imperfect human state, that was impossible. Paul added: "All those who depend upon works of law are under a curse; for it is written: 'Cursed is every one that does not continue in all the things written in the scroll of the Law in order to do them.' . . . Christ by purchase released us from the curse of the Law by becoming a curse instead of us."—Galatians 3:10-13.

If Jesus' Jewish followers were no longer under the curse of the Law, were any Christians obligated to observe all the commandments given to Israel? To the Colossians, Paul wrote: "[God] kindly forgave us all our trespasses and blotted out the handwritten document against us, which consisted of decrees and which was in opposition to us; and He has taken it out of the way by nailing it to [Christ's] torture stake." (Colossians 2: 13, 14) Doubtless, many early Christians needed to adjust their thinking and recognize that they had been "discharged from the Law." (Romans 7:6) By exercising faith in Jesus' sacrificial death, which brought an end to the Law and paved the way for the inauguration of the foretold "new covenant," they had the prospect of gaining a righteous standing with Jehovah.—Jeremiah 31:31-34; Romans 10:4.

What They Mean for Us

Does this mean that the Ten Commandments, a basic part of the Law, have lost all meaning for Christians? Certainly not! Although the Ten Words are not legally binding on Christians, these laws continue to offer sound guidelines, as do other commands of the Mosaic Law. For instance, Jesus said that the two greatest commandments are those requiring love of God and neighbor. (Leviticus 19:18; Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 22:37-40) In counseling Roman Christians, Paul cited the sixth, seventh, eighth, and tenth commandments, adding: "And whatever other commandment there is, is summed up in this word, namely, 'You must love your neighbor as yourself.'"—Romans 13:8, 9.

So, then, as part of God's inspired Word, what purpose do the Ten Commandments serve today? They reveal Jehovah's viewpoint on matters. (2 Timothy 3:16, 17) Consider how they do this.



Jesus' death brought an end to the Law, including the Ten Commandments given to the Israelites at Mount Sinai

The first four commandments highlight our responsibilities toward Jehovah. **(First)** He is a God who still exacts exclusive devotion. (Matthew 4:10) **(Second)** None of his worshipers should use images. (1 John 5:21) **(Third)** Our use of God's name should be proper and dignified, never disrespectful. (John 17:26; Romans 10:13) **(Fourth)** Our whole life should revolve around sacred matters. This enables us to rest, or 'take a sabbath,' from a course of self-righteousness.—Hebrews 4:9, 10.

(Fifth) The obedience of children to their parents continues to serve as the cornerstone of family unity, bringing with it Jehovah's blessings. And what a marvelous hope this "first command with a promise" offers! It is not only "that it may go well with you" but also that "you may endure a long time on the earth." (Ephesians 6:1-3) Now that we are living in "the last days" of this present wicked system, such godly obedience offers young people the prospect of never dying.—2 Timothy 3:1; John 11:26.

Love for our neighbor will prevent us from causing him harm through such wicked deeds as **(Sixth)** murder, **(Seventh)** adultery, **(Eighth)** stealing, and **(Ninth)** making false statements. (1 John 3:10-12; Hebrews 13:4; Ephesians 4:28; Matthew 5:37; Proverbs 6:16-19) But what of our motives? The **(Tenth)** commandment, against covetousness, reminds us that Jehovah requires that our intentions always be upright in his eyes. —Proverbs 21:2.

What a wealth of meaning we find in the Ten Commandments! Based as they are on divine principles that will never be out-of-date, we should prize them as precious reminders of our obligation to love God and our neighbor.—Matthew 22:37-39.

Insight on the News

Owning a Bible Not Enough

A recent study found that of people who own Bibles, half said they never read them. This included many who identify themselves as born-again Christians. Nearly 30 percent of the professed Christians polled did not know that Jesus was born in Bethlehem. According to *The Detroit News,* "eighteen percent answered Jerusalem, while 8 percent said Nazareth." George Barna, head of the survey group, said: "If they are uninformed about elementary things such as these, how can they be expected to intelligently discuss the content of the Scriptures with an unbeliever or to live in a manner consistent with biblical principles?"

The apostle Paul observed a similar situation among some who had "a zeal for God; but not according to accurate knowledge." He also referred to some who had "a self-imposed form of worship and mock humility" and foretold that "the last days" would be marked by the presence of those "having a form of godly devotion but proving false to its power." (Romans 10:2; Colossians 2:23; 2 Timothy 3:1-5) True Christians, however, hold the Word of God in high esteem. They recognize that owning a Bible is not enough. Rather, they wholeheartedly comply with its admonition to "form a longing for the unadulterated milk belonging to the word."—1 Peter 2:2.

Addicted to Lawlessness

One of the features listed by Jesus Christ as part of "the sign" of the last days of this system of things is "the increasing of lawlessness." (Matthew 24:3, 12) Drug abuse has had a dramatic influence on the escalation of lawlessness today. For example, the Australian newspaper *The Sydney Morning Herald* reports that seven out of ten crimes committed in New South Wales are drug related, and about 85 percent of the armed robberies in the state are committed by heroin users. And the problem of drug abuse is growing.

U.S.News & World Report says that "no place in Europe is immune from the plague." In the Soviet Union, the number of drug abusers is estimated to be in the millions. In a desperate attempt to stem the tide of drug abuse, the Soviet government has opened negotiations with drug-enforcement agencies in 25 countries. However, hopes that governments will achieve such goals seem unrealistic in the face of reports that drug profits are being used to corrupt policemen, prosecutors, and even judges. Said one frustrated government official: "There is no police force in the world which has made more than a dent in stopping the supply [of drugs] hitting the streets." He added: "It's depressing because there are never any solutions put forward."

Such words bring to mind Jesus' prophecy regarding the last days. He foretold that at this time 'men would become faint out of fear, not knowing the way out.' —Luke 21:25, 26.

Jesus and Politics

A headline in *The Star* of Johannesburg, a South African newspaper, read: "Catholic Church Unveils Pastoral Plan for SA." The plan is to "bring about the kingdom of God" in South Africa through "a determined bid by the church to eliminate racial discrimination." To achieve this objective, Jude Pieterse, secretary-general of the South African Catholic Bishops Conference, says that the church is seeking the support of other churches as well as "all facets of South African society." However, some Catholics feel that the plan is a "plot by the Bishops to turn Catholics into political activists," explains Johannesburg's bishop, Reginald Orsmond. While Pieterse admitted that the plan had political implications, Orsmond said that it was "nothing new" but was "as old as Jesus himself."

Actually, Jesus Christ would never have directed his disciples to become political activists. When questioned by Pontius Pilate, Jesus firmly replied: "My kingdom is no part of this world." (John 18:36) Also, more than three million of Jehovah's Witnesses enjoy racial harmony within their ranks because they live in accord with Jesus' 'new commandment, that they love one another; just as Jesus loved them'—not just in South Africa, but worldwide!—John 13:34.

Visiting the Temple Again

JESUS and his disciples have just spent their third night in Bethany since arriving from Jericho. Now the early morning light of Monday, Nisan 10, finds them already on the road to Jerusalem. Jesus is hungry. So when he catches sight of a fig tree with leaves, he goes over to it to see whether it might have some figs.

The tree's leaves are unseasonally early, since the season for figs is not until June, and it is now only late March. However, Jesus evidently feels that since the leaves are early, the figs might also be early. But he is disappointed. The leaves have given the tree a deceptive appearance. Jesus then curses the tree, saying: "Let no one eat fruit from you anymore forever." In a following issue of this magazine, we will be interested to learn the consequences of Jesus' cursing of the fig tree and what was the figurative significance of this.

Continuing on, Jesus and his disciples soon reach Jerusalem. He goes to the temple, which he had inspected the previous afternoon. Today, however, he takes action, just as he did three years earlier when he came to the Passover in 30 C.E. Jesus throws out those selling and buying in the temple and overturns the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. He does not even allow anyone to carry a utensil through the temple.

Condemning those who are changing money and selling animals in the temple, he says: "Is it not written, 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? But you have made it a cave of robbers." They are robbers because they demand exorbitant prices from those who have little alternative but to buy from them the animals needed for sacrifice. So Jesus views these business dealings as a form of extortion or robbery.

When the chief priests, scribes, and principal ones of the people hear what Jesus has done, they again seek how they can have him killed. They thereby prove that they are irreformable. Yet, they do not know how to destroy Jesus, since all the people keep hanging onto him to hear him.

Besides natural Jews, Gentiles have also come to the Passover. These are proselytes, meaning that they have converted to the religion of the Jews. Certain Greeks, evidently proselytes, now approach Philip and ask to see Jesus. Philip goes to Andrew, perhaps to ask whether such a meeting would be appropriate. Jesus is apparently still at the temple, where the Greeks are able to see him.

Jesus knows he has only a few days of life left, so he nicely illustrates his situation: "The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified. Most truly I say to you, Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains just one grain; but if it dies, it then bears much fruit."

One grain of wheat has *little value. Yet,* what if it is put into the soil and "dies," ending its life as a seed? It then germinates and in time grows into a stalk that produces many, many grains of wheat. Similarly, Jesus is just one perfect man. But if he dies faithful to God, he becomes the means of imparting everlasting life to faithful ones who have the same spirit of

self-sacrifice that he has. Thus, Jesus says: "He that is fond of his soul destroys it, but he that hates his soul in this world will safeguard it for everlasting life."

Jesus obviously is not thinking only of himself, for he next explains: "If anyone would minister to me, let him follow me, and where I am there my minister will be also. If anyone would minister to me, the Father will honor him." What a marvelous reward for following Jesus and ministering to him! It is the reward of being honored by the Father to associate with Christ in the Kingdom.

Thinking about the great suffering and agonizing death that awaits him, Jesus continues: "Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me out of this hour." If what awaits him could only be avoided! But, no, as he says: "This is why I have come to this hour." Jesus is in agreement with the entire arrangement of God, including his own sacrificial death. **Matthew 21:12, 13, 18, 19; Mark 11: 12-18; Luke 19:45-48; John 12:20-27.**

- Why does Jesus expect to find figs even though it is not the season for them?
- Why does Jesus call those selling in the temple "robbers"?
- In what way is Jesus like a grain of wheat that dies?
- How does Jesus feel about the suffering and death that await him?

DO ALL THINGS FOR THE GOOD NEWS

"I do all things for the sake of the good news, that I may become a sharer of it with others."—1 CORINTHIANS 9:23.

THOUGH we differ from one another in various ways, all of us share a common trait. Through inheritance from Adam, we were born as sinners alienated from the Most High God, Jehovah. (Romans 5:12; Colossians 1:21) As the Christian apostle Paul wrote: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23) For salvation, therefore, people of every racial group and nation need to be reconciled to God. And how grateful we can be that, with matchless love and mercy, Jehovah has provided the basis for reconciliation to him!

1. What trait is common to all of us, but for what has God provided the basis?

[2] Nineteen centuries ago, anointed wit-

2. (a) What ministry was entrusted to anointed Christians? (b) From whose example can we learn, and why? (1 Corinthians 11:1)

nesses of Jehovah were entrusted with "the ministry of the reconciliation." Said Paul: "As substitutes for Christ we beg: 'Become reconciled to God.'" (2 Corinthians 5:18-20) With what attitude did the apostle carry out this ministry? "Though I am free from all persons," he said, "I have made myself the slave to all, that I may gain the most persons." (1 Corinthians 9:19) Unquestionably, Paul made conscientious effort to present his message in an effective way, for he also said: "I do all things for the sake of the good news, that I may become a sharer of it with others." (1 Corinthians 9:23) So, what can we learn from Paul's example?

Helping Humble Jews

[3] Paul's Jewish background and his willingness to do all things for the sake of the good news equipped him to help humble Jews to accept Jesus as the Messiah. For example, consider what the apostle did when he chose Timothy as his traveling companion. Timothy, whose father was Greek, had not been circumcised as Jewish male children were. (Leviticus 12:2, 3) Paul knew that Jews might be stumbled if an uncircumcised young man tried to help them to become reconciled to God. Therefore, so that honesthearted Jews might not be hindered from accepting Jesus, what did Paul do? He "took [Timothy] and circumcised him because of the Jews." This was done even though circumcision was not a Christian requirement.—Acts 16:1-3.

[4] So it was that Paul was doing things for the sake of the good news when he expressed loving concern for fellow Jews. He wrote: "To the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain Jews; to those under law I became as under law, though I myself am not under law, that I might gain those under law." (1 Corinthians 9:20) Yes, as illustrated in the case of Timothy, Paul did what he could to gain Jews, helping them to become Christians. But did he deal similarly with Gentiles?

3. How was Paul's willingness to do all things for the sake of the good news shown in connection with Timothy and the Jews?
4. According to 1 Corinthians 9:20, what was Paul's objective?

Seeking to Gain Gentiles

[5] After Paul's arrival in the city of Corinth about the fall of 50 C.E., he delivered weekly talks in the synagogue to an audience of Jews and Greek proselytes to the Jewish faith. But his zealous preaching sparked such opposition that he told his adversaries: "Let your blood be upon your own heads. I am clean. From now on I will go to people of the nations." Jehovah blessed this move, for "many of the Corinthians that heard began to believe and be baptized" as Christians. Indeed, in a vision, the Lord exhorted Paul to stick to that assignment, telling him: "I have many people in this city."—Acts 18:1-10.

[6] Paul's genuine desire to gain *Gentile* converts to Christianity prompted him to take an interest also in people whose background was very different from his own. "To those [the Gentiles] without law I became as without law, although I am not without law toward God but under law toward Christ, that I might gain those without law." (1 Corinthians 9:21) How did the apostle seek to gain Gentiles?

[7] When Paul went to Jerusalem about 49 C.E. to attend the important meeting of the Christian congregation's governing

5. To whom did Paul preach in Corinth, and with what result?
6. What prompted Paul's interest in those whose background differed from his?
7. With regard to circumcision, why was Titus' situation different from that of Timothy?

body, he was accompanied by the Greek disciple Titus. To the assembled brothers, Paul delivered a report on his preaching work among the people of the nations, and he later wrote: "Not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, although he was a Greek." (Galatians 2: 1-3) Unlike Timothy, Titus performed his ministry primarily among uncircumcised people of the nations. Hence, the issue of circumcision did not arise in his case. —2 Corinthians 8:6, 16-18, 23; 12:18; Titus 1:4, 5.

[8] Giving a witness in Athens, Paul again demonstrated that he did all things for the sake of the good news. Taking into account the thinking of inhabitants of that Grecian capital, he told them about the God unknown to them and quoted their poets Aratus and Cleanthes, who said: "For we are also his progeny." The apostle thus sought to help his listeners to understand that they "ought not to imagine that the Divine Being is . . . like something sculptured by the art and contrivance of man." Moreover, Paul reasoned: "God has overlooked the times of such ignorance, yet now he is telling mankind that they should all everywhere repent." He effectively directed attention to the "Lord of heaven and earth," Jehovah. And the result? "Some men joined themselves to him and became believers." (Acts 17: 22-34) Yes, Paul's methods were successful!

[9] "To the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak," said Paul. (1 Corinthians 9:22a) Though his speech was forceful, the apostle considered the weak consciences of certain Jews and Gentiles in the congregation. He urged Roman Christians: "Welcome the man having weaknesses in his faith, but not to make decisions on inward questionings." Instead of being judgmental, Paul said: "Pursue the things making for peace and the things that are upbuilding to one another." (Romans 14:1, 13, 19) He counseled: "We, though, who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those not strong, and not to be pleasing ourselves." (Romans 15:1) Aware of his obligation to adjust his way of speaking and acting so as to help others, he wrote: "I have become all things to people of all sorts."—1 Corinthians 9:22b; Galatians 3:28.

8. How did Paul give a witness in Athens?
9. How did Paul become 'weak to the weak,' and why?

Improve Your Preaching Skills

[10] Jehovah's Witnesses today need to imitate Paul as he imitated Christ. (1 Corinthians 11:1) The apostle was a skillful preacher who had the missionary spirit. The same can be true in our case, though our circumstances may not allow us to serve in a foreign field. Like Paul, we must 'do all things for the sake of the good news so that we may share it with others.' (1 Corinthians 9:23) But what can improve our skills as Kingdom preachers and disciple makers?—Matthew 28:19, 20.

[11] Work to develop your powers of observation. By being observant, you can learn much that will help you to adapt your presentation of the good news to individual householders. For instance, if you witness to city dwellers, observe the locks on the door, the religious decorations, and the slogans on window stickers. These things can help you to give a witness that may touch the hearts of the people living in such homes. Paul surely was observant. In Athens he used an altar "To an Unknown God" as one feature of his fine witness regarding "the God that made the

10. How can we today imitate *Paul?*
11. As a minister, why develop your powers of observation?

world and all the things in it." (Acts 17: 22-25) You can do similar things in your ministry.

[12] Use discernment in the ministry. Do not be discouraged by a person's initial reluctance to open the door and speak to you. Instead of letting yourself be turned away by a stern countenance, manifest kindness and use discernment. Endeavor to adapt your witness to the circumstances. With even brief prayerful thought, you may be able to say something that will strike a responsive chord in the person's heart.—Compare Nehemiah 2:4-6.

[13] Be considerate. In this regard, various things can be done for the sake of the good news. For instance, consideration will prevent you from keeping elderly or sick persons standing at the door very long. You might suggest that you speak with them inside the house, where they may be more at ease. Or you may decide that under the circumstances it would be good to make your visit brief. In any case, be considerate. Show that you care!—Matthew 9:35, 36.

[14] Speak in a way that puts your listeners at ease. Start your witness with a friendly greeting that is acceptable in your area. (Matthew 10:12) Take possible fears and prejudices into account. Make your remarks courteously and with genuine friendliness. This will help to assure householders that you are there to help and do not have ulterior motives.

[15] Householders need to know who is calling and why. Therefore, provide adequate information about yourself. In some areas, especially in Africa and Asia, people are so interested in visitors that they are eager to get answers to such questions as: Who are you? Where do you live? Are you married? Do you have a family? To contribute to the pleasantness of the occasion, custom demands that you answer these questions before explaining the purpose of your visit. Do not view such greetings as unnecessary, but use the time to observe the person and build respectful eye contact with him.

[16] Use good questions to maintain communication with the householder. Though a person's countenance may reveal something, his thoughts and feelings need to be understood. To that end, you might skillfully use questions to prompt the householder to express his views and sentiments. To illustrate: One childless lady who had given much attention to animals said this about the visit of a Witness: "What I remember about her smiling face was the peace. I was intrigued. This lady asked me what concerned me most about the conditions on the earth. I said I was worried about the way man treated animals, and she showed me Isaiah 11:6-9 about animals living in true peace. I wanted to know more."

[17] Be alert to comments the householder may make about his or her circumstances, especially in frequently covered territory. In this way, even during a short conversation, you will probably learn something noteworthy about the person. After leaving the door, briefly note such information on the house-to-house record. But what if the householder raises a question that you cannot answer? Then do some research in

12. What role does discernment play in our ministry?
13. How might we show consideration for those to whom we witness?
14. When witnessing, how can we put listeners at ease?
15. Why provide adequate information about yourself and the reason you are calling at a home?
16. How may good questions be helpful in maintaining communication with a householder?
17. Why be alert to comments the householder may make about his or her circumstances?

the Watch Tower Society's publications to determine the best way to share the good news with the individual the next time you call.

An Example for Missionaries

[18] Among those doing all things for the sake of the good news are missionaries trained at the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead. They can learn from Paul, who had a fine missionary spirit. For instance, he did not want to be responsible for obstacles that might prevent Jews and Gentiles from accepting the truth. Therefore, the apostle was careful about what he ate and admonished Corinthian Christians to watch that exercising their right to eat certain foods did not stumble others. (1 Corinthians 8:8, 9) In the *New Century Bible,* Professor F. F. Bruce stated: "In all indifferent things (such as the food which was at issue in [1 Corinthians] chapter 8), [Paul] conforms to the customs of those with whom he is at the time, so as to put no obstacle in the way of 'winning' them for the gospel." (Romans 14:21) Similarly, missionaries among Jehovah's Witnesses do not try to change the customs of people in their assignments, though new ones are given spiritual help to make adjustments needed to please God.—Romans 12:1, 2.

[19] Those starting out in a missionary assignment need to learn about people's ways and customs. This is an enriching experience and can help missionaries to be more effective in their preaching work. In fact, to avoid stumbling others, they may need to make adjustments in such matters as dress and grooming. For example, when one missionary sister first arrived in West Africa, she found that the way she used cosmetics could easily identify her with women of loose morals in that region. Therefore, so that others would not question her motives, she quickly changed her way of applying makeup. Of course, all Witnesses of Jehovah should exercise good judgment in dress and grooming so as to help others spiritually. Christians, who are admonished 'not to put a stumbling block before a brother' and to pursue things upbuilding to one another, surely do not want to stumble anyone else.—Romans 14:13, 19.

[20] Success as Kingdom proclaimers depends primarily on Jehovah's blessing. (1 Corinthians 3:6, 7) Yet, we also need to put forth effort. So be observant, as Paul was in his ministry. Use discernment, be considerate, put householders at ease, and use good questions to maintain communication with them. Adapt to customs that may seem strange but are not unscriptural. Yes, let us 'do all things for the sake of the good news, that we may become sharers of it with others.' (1 Corinthians 9:23) But what happens when some are already part of our Christian brotherhood? How do we treat them?

18. What can missionaries and others learn from Paul?

19. In making disciples, what adjustments may be necessary for (a) those in missionary work? (b) all Kingdom publishers?

20. (a) In summary, what will help us to "do all things for the sake of the good news"? (b) What questions remain to be answered?

How Would You Answer?

- ☐ What did Paul do to help Jews become Christians?
- ☐ How did Paul seek to gain Gentiles?
- ☐ What are some ways to improve our preaching skills?
- ☐ Paul set what example for missionaries and other Kingdom proclaimers?

TAKE A PERSONAL INTEREST IN OTHERS

"Keeping an eye, not in personal interest upon just your own matters, but also in personal interest upon those of the others."—PHILIPPIANS 2:4.

WE HAVE good reasons for taking a personal interest in others. For instance, fellow humans should interest us because we differ from one another. The genetic material of our body cells carries a blueprint of our hereditary makeup. So distinctive is it that crime-detection agencies have added genetic "fingerprinting" to their range of identification techniques.

[2] There are other reasons why we differ and are interesting as individuals. From conception, we are subject to the influence of our environment. There is much evidence that unborn babies react to what goes on outside the womb. Then, after we enter the world as independent breathers, or souls, our parents' attitudes and ways affect us. As we grow up, we may be an only child or be joined by brothers and sisters and have some share in caring for them. Such association or lack of it has a bearing on how we develop. What we read, are taught in school, and watch on television also influence our thinking and actions.

[3] So, then, the way we differ promotes some interest in one another. But the apostle Paul had in mind a higher reason for interest in others. Thus, he urged fellow Christians to be 'keeping an eye, not in personal interest upon just their own matters, but also in personal interest upon those of the others.' (Philippians 2:4) Instead of seeking our own advantage, we should especially be interested in others spiritually. What, then, are some ways in which we take such a personal interest in others?

1, 2. What are some reasons for taking a personal interest in others?
3. In harmony with Philippians 2:4, what interest should we especially have in others?

Spiritual Interest and Personality Differences

[4] Our spiritual interest in others is enhanced when we personally apply knowledge of Scriptural truth and learn to pattern ourselves according to Jesus Christ's example. (1 Peter 2:21) As true Christians, we 'put away the old personality which conforms to our former course of conduct' and work at replacing this with "the new personality which was created according to God's will in true righteousness and loyalty." (Ephesians 4:22-24) Thus, selfish attitudes are progressively replaced by kind, considerate concern for others.—Isaiah 65:25.

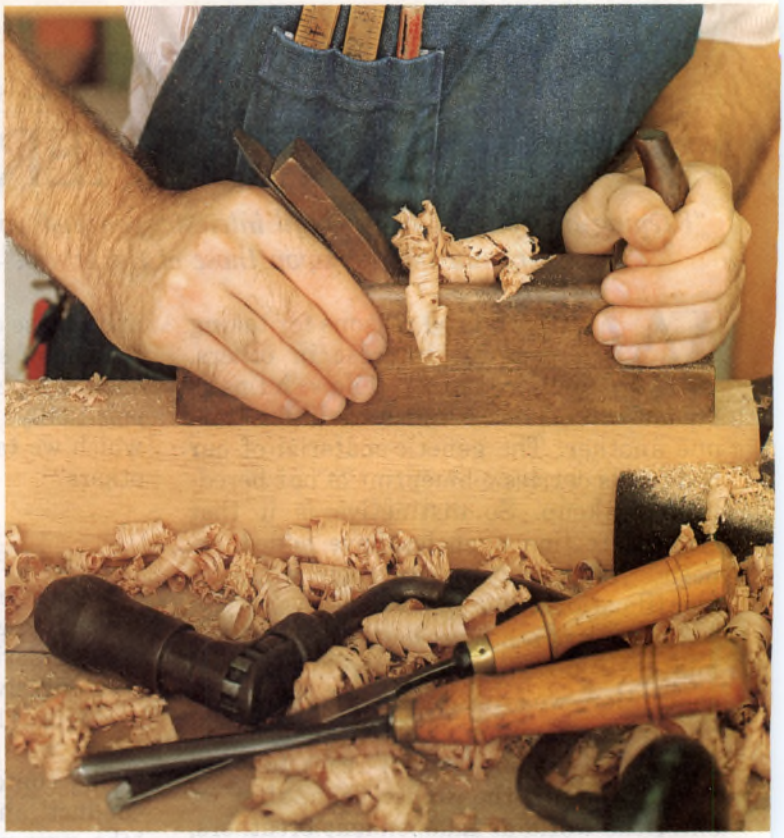
[5] Remarkable though changes in personality have been among Jehovah's people, sinful tendencies still remain. Even Paul acknowledged: "When I wish to do what is right, what is bad is present with me." (Romans 7:21) Of course, other inherited and acquired characteristics exist, and these identify us. Some have an artistic flair, others an analytical approach. Whereas some are quiet and reserved,

4. According to Ephesians 4:22-24, what changes enhance our spiritual interest in others?
5. Why are there different personalities in the Christian congregation, prompting what question?

others are gregarious and outgoing. How, then, is the unity of the Christian congregation to be maintained amid such personality differences?

[6] If we are to show spiritual interest in others and preserve Christian unity, we must be realistic and understanding. Since God does not require perfection of us, we should not demand it of our Christian associates. Moreover, Jehovah does not expect all of his servants to be exactly the same. In the Christian congregation, all of us have a place and can use our inherited, God-given abilities to further his work. (1 Corinthians 12:12-26) If we keep busy laboring under the direction of the Head of the congregation, Jesus Christ, we will not have time to look at one another in a critical way. (1 Corinthians 4:1-4) As a craftsman knows, each tool is designed to do certain work. Can a hammer make the fine hole that a drill does? Will a plane used to shape wood effectively drive a screw into it? No, for each tool has its proper use.

[7] How true the words of the Kingdom song "Joyful Service"! It urges: "Let us serve with joyfulness our God and King, as our gifts and talents to his work we bring." True, we may not have outstanding ability. Yet, we keep uppermost in mind the work assigned to us as Jehovah's Witnesses and devote ourselves to it wholeheartedly. As the song adds: "Tho' but small our service, yet thereby we prove our heart's full devotion and express our love."—*Sing Praises to Jehovah,* song 130.



6. How should we view personality differences, and how would you illustrate this?
7. As we share together in Kingdom service, what should we keep uppermost in mind?

Consider Others Superior

[8] Unity is also promoted by considering others superior to oneself. Paul wrote: "If, then, there is any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any sharing of spirit, if any tender affections and compassions, make my joy full in that you are of the same mind and have the same love, being joined together in soul, holding the one thought in mind." Notice

8. How is unity promoted by applying what Paul said at Philippians 2:1-3?

As each tool is designed to do a certain work, all in the Christian congregation can use God-given abilities to further God's work

To promote Christian unity, take a personal interest in others

that the apostle adds: "Doing nothing out of contentiousness or out of egotism, but with lowliness of mind considering that the others are superior to you."—Philippians 2:1-3.

9 Not considering others superior, a contentious person exhibits "an often perverse and wearisome tendency to quarrels and disputes." (*Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*) This trait may manifest itself in "debates about words." (1 Timothy 6:4) Surely, the spirit behind the words and the thoughts they convey should be of prime concern. So avoid being a stickler for certain expressions used orally or in written material. And what if a different view about some belief is presented to you? Loyally adhere to the Scriptural information provided by God through "the faithful and discreet slave." (Matthew 24: 45-47) After all, that is how we learned the truth in the first place. Recognizing this helps us to avoid being egotistical, that is, having an exaggerated sense of self-importance.

Develop Personal Interest in Others

10 Remember that Paul urged us to 'keep an eye, not in personal interest upon just our own matters, but also in personal interest upon those of the others.' (Philippians 2:4) What does this mean? Just as being observant of our surroundings may help us in the field ministry, so taking an interest in the welfare of others

9. What does it mean to be contentious and egotistical, and how can we avoid these traits?
10. What application of Philippians 2:4 should be made in the congregation?

Paul left elders a fine example of how to show loving concern for fellow believers

in the congregation will furnish us opportunities to cement the bond of love that unites us. Particularly do elders have a responsibility to show concern for fellow believers, for a proverb states: "You ought to know positively the appearance of your flock." (Proverbs 27:23) Of course, all of us can and should be attentive to the needs of our fellow believers.—1 Peter 2:17.

[11] Another way to promote unity and develop interest in others is to take time to communicate well with your spiritual brothers and sisters. Find out what they are thinking. This can be done when you visit their homes, before and after meetings at the Kingdom Hall, and between sessions of our assemblies. And listen carefully when they speak. This may mean that we will hear about the difficulties they face, but then we may be able to help carry their burdens and thus fulfill the law of the Christ. (Galatians 6:2) Yet, something more than talking with our brothers will safeguard the unity of the congregation. What is that?

Manifest Fellow Feeling

[12] Fellow feeling also promotes Christian unity. With life's mounting pressures, all of us need to manifest this quality. May we never become so intent on what we have in mind that we fail to consider the feelings of others. As an example: Just as one program participant arrived for the Service Meeting, an elder spoke to him quickly about a matter to be announced. To the elder's surprise and shame, the participant looked at him, smiled, and said: "First, Brother, good evening!" The matter to be announced was discussed after they exchanged friendly greetings and the brother was put at ease. What a lesson that elder learned! Do not be too quick, thus ignoring the courtesies that make your relationship with others pleasant.

[13] Fellow feeling moves elders to display compassion and other fine traits. At times, these men must be gentle, "as when a nursing mother cherishes her own children." (1 Thessalonians 2:7) Helping some individuals calls for much patience and loving support. Those who have 'left the love they had at first' may need to be

11. Why do we need to be attentive when talking to our spiritual brothers and sisters?
12. Why should we manifest fellow feeling?
13. Fellow feeling moves elders to do what in dealing with their Christian associates?

incited to greater activity and may need help to appreciate the urgency of our times. (Revelation 2:4; 2 Timothy 4:2; Hebrews 6:11, 12) Like Paul, elders have "tender affection" for Christian associates, exhorting and consoling them 'to the end that they should go on walking worthily of God.'—1 Thessalonians 2: 8, 11, 12.

[14] Paul left elders a fine example of how to show loving concern for the welfare of spiritual brothers and sisters. He wrote: "Besides those things of an external kind, there is what rushes in on me from day to day, the anxiety for all the congregations." Because Paul had such concern, he could ask: "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is stumbled, and I am not incensed?" If you are an elder, do you have such fellow feeling?—2 Corinthians 11: 28, 29.

Gaining Your Brother

[15] Showing fellow feeling promotes unity among Jehovah's servants. On rare occasions, however, personal differences may arise. When matters of a serious nature are involved, Christians are to follow Jesus' counsel recorded at Matthew 18:15-17. Note the first step. It is to talk with your brother privately in order to "lay bare his fault." What should be your aim? Why, 'gaining your brother'! Said Jesus: "If he listens to you, you have gained your brother." Happily, speaking together privately is usually all that is needed to restore peaceful relations between you and your fellow worshiper of Jehovah.

14. What evidence did Paul give that he had fellow feeling?
15. When serious difficulties arise between brothers, what counsel of Jesus at Matthew 18: 15 should be followed, and what should be the aim?

[16] If you observe that your brother has something against you, follow Jesus' counsel to "make your peace with your brother." (Matthew 5:24) Talk the problem over in a calm, kind manner, trying to understand each other's viewpoint. In this way, the matter can usually be resolved and the peace of the congregation can be maintained.

Gaining Unbelievers

[17] One of the most difficult situations in which to apply Scriptural principles is within a religiously divided household. Many Christians labor faithfully while coping with frustrations and difficulties caused by a lack of spiritual unity in their marriage. How can they be helped?

[18] Because of taking a personal interest in others, elders gladly provide spiritual help for those living in religiously divided households. For instance, attention may be directed to Peter's counsel about the conduct of Christian wives in this situation. He tells them to be in subjection to their husbands, even if these are unbelievers and "not obedient to the word." Why

16. What should be done if you observe that your brother has something against you?
17, 18. What counsel did Peter give to Christian wives living in religiously divided households?

In Our Next Issue

- **The Amazing Scope of God's Goodness**
- **Do You Seek Hidden Treasures?**
- **I Climbed the Finest Mountain of All**

be in subjection? "In order that . . . they may be won [or, gained] without a word through the conduct of their wives." (1 Peter 3:1; *Kingdom Interlinear*) But how effective is it to apply this counsel?

[19] A woman named Vera admits that when she first became a Christian, she constantly talked to her husband about Bible truth, and he became fed up with it. "Following Scriptural advice received from an elder," she adds, "I decided that it was better to be tactful and wait for favorable opportunities to present themselves." Basically, Vera applied 1 Peter 3:1, although she took some initiative to prompt her husband, Barry, to discuss Bible principles. He later explained: "Over the years, I noticed that *Awake!* [companion journal of *The Watchtower*] appeared in unusual places about the house. It contained items that were practical and sometimes ahead of the news." As a result, after 20 years of disunity, Barry and Vera are happy to be united in Jehovah's service.

[20] A believing husband faces great difficulties if his wife is opposed to true Christianity and influences their children against him. Taking a personal interest in such a man, elders can draw attention to helpful Bible principles. For instance, it can be pointed out that despite his wife's opposition, he is the family head and should give his children Scriptural instruction. (Ephesians 6:4) He can be urged to dwell with his wife "according to knowledge," showing interest in what she does and helping her with household duties and the care of the children. (1 Peter 3:7) Above all, the believing husband and father should be encouraged to keep the lines of communication open so that he learns what is in the heart of each member of his family. The elders may also encourage him to keep on trying to help his wife with words "seasoned with salt," tactfully presenting Scriptural truth to her on appropriate occasions.—Colossians 4:6.

[21] Showing interest in relatives of Christians in religiously divided households sometimes sparks a response to the Kingdom message. To illustrate: One Christian man was discouraged because his wife had bitterly opposed him for several years. An elder offered to call and help with a Bible discussion. Arriving at the home, the elder greeted the wife pleasantly and asked: "Would you care to sit in with us?" That friendly invitation so impressed the woman that she gladly joined in the discussion. Soon she accepted the truth and began to preach to others.

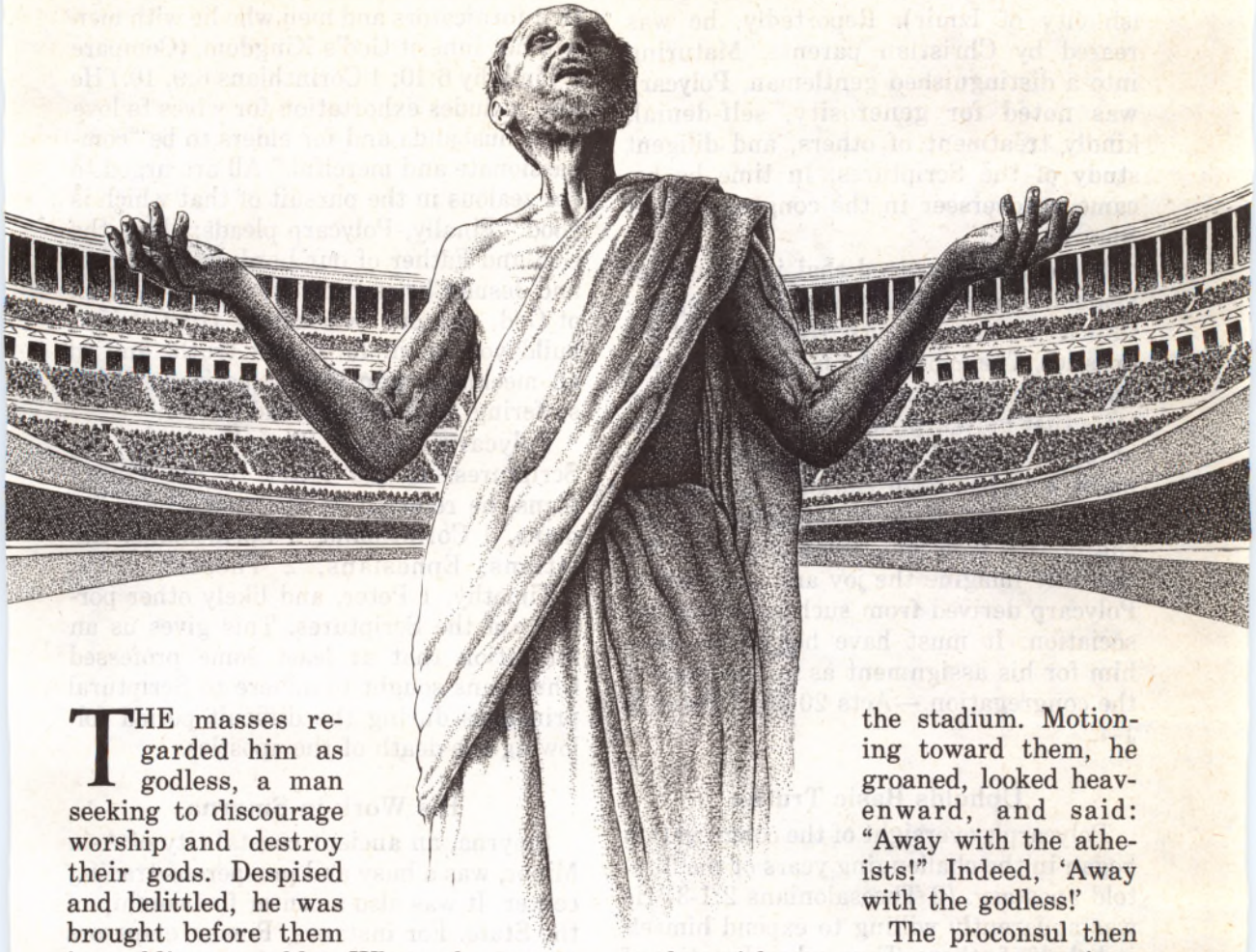
[22] As Jehovah's Witnesses, then, let us "do all things for the sake of the good news." (1 Corinthians 9:23) Indeed, "as long as we have time favorable for it, let us work what is good toward all, but especially toward those related to us in the faith." (Galatians 6:10) May we take personal interest in one another so that love will flourish in our worldwide brotherhood.

19. Give an example to illustrate the benefit of applying 1 Peter 3:1.
20. What help can elders give Christian husbands in religiously divided households?
21. How might an unbelieving wife be helped to take an interest in the truth?
22. Why take personal interest in one another?

How Would You Answer?

- ☐ Why, especially, should we be interested in others?
- ☐ How can we develop personal interest in fellow believers?
- ☐ How may elders express fellow feeling?
- ☐ What may result from our taking personal interest in unbelievers?

'AWAY WITH THE GODLESS!'



THE masses regarded him as godless, a man seeking to discourage worship and destroy their gods. Despised and belittled, he was brought before them in public assembly. When the governor made inquiry, a stately man of 86 years of age stepped forth and acknowledged his identity. His name was Polycarp.

The Roman provincial governor Statius Quadratus proceeded with the words: "Swear by the genius of Caesar; change your mind and say, 'Away with the atheists!'" Polycarp then gazed at the vast crowd of lawless pagans filling the stadium. Motioning toward them, he groaned, looked heavenward, and said: "Away with the atheists!" Indeed, 'Away with the godless!'

The proconsul then spoke with greater urgency, saying: "Take the oath and I release you; revile Christ." But Polycarp responded: "Eighty-six years have I served Him, and He has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who has saved me?"

Preparations were then made for the aged man's execution. His flesh was to be consumed by fire. Why? Just who was Polycarp? And what events led up to his death?

Polycarp's Early Life

Polycarp was born about 69 C.E. in Asia Minor, at Smyrna (the modern-day Turkish city of Izmir). Reportedly, he was reared by Christian parents. Maturing into a distinguished gentleman, Polycarp was noted for generosity, self-denial, kindly treatment of others, and diligent study of the Scriptures. In time he became an overseer in the congregation at Smyrna.

It has been reported that in his earlier years, Polycarp took advantage of opportunities to learn directly from some of the apostles. The apostle John apparently was one of his teachers. In fact, Irenaeus relates that Polycarp "was not only instructed by apostles, and had intercourse with many who had seen Christ, but was also appointed for Asia by apostles, in the church that is in Smyrna an overseer." We can only imagine the joy and satisfaction Polycarp derived from such enriching association. It must have helped to equip him for his assignment as an overseer in the congregation.—Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5: 1-4.

Upholds Basic Truths

Polycarp's oversight of the congregation began in the challenging years of the foretold apostasy. (2 Thessalonians 2:1-3) He was apparently willing to expend himself in behalf of others. Thus, when Ignatius of Antioch, Syria, en route to his martyrdom in Rome, asked the Philippians to send a letter to his home congregation, Polycarp of Smyrna saw to its delivery. At that time he sent the Philippians his own letter.

In Polycarp's letter to the Philippians, we find reaffirmation of certain Scriptural truths. He separates God and Christ, the Father and Son, and says that it is "by the will of God *through* Jesus Christ" that we gain salvation. Polycarp warns against the love of money and reminds his readers that fornicators and men who lie with men will not inherit God's Kingdom. (Compare 1 Timothy 6:10; 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10.) He also includes exhortation for wives to love their husbands and for elders to be "compassionate and merciful." All are urged to "be zealous in the pursuit of that which is good." Finally, Polycarp pleads: "May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ Himself, who is the Son of God, and our everlasting High Priest, build you up in faith and truth, and in all meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, forbearance, and purity."

Polycarp quoted liberally from the Scriptures. In his letter to the Philippians, he referred to Matthew, Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 1 Peter, and likely other portions of the Scriptures. This gives us an indication that at least some professed Christians sought to adhere to Scriptural principles during the difficult period following the death of the apostles.

His Work in Smyrna

Smyrna, an ancient coastal city of Asia Minor, was a busy and prosperous trading center. It was also a center for worship of the State. For instance, Roman emperors were featured prominently as deities on coins and in inscriptions. Pagan religious philosophies were promoted by imperial authority.

Evidently, a number of those associated with the Smyrna congregation were poor materially. But at one time, they were commended for being spiritually rich. How encouraging it must have been to Christians in Smyrna to hear Jesus' words recorded by the apostle John! Said Christ

to the "angel," or anointed overseers, at Smyrna: "I know your tribulation and poverty—but you are rich—and the blasphemy by those who say they themselves are Jews, and yet they are not but are a synagogue of Satan. Do not be afraid of the things you are about to suffer. Look! The Devil will keep on throwing some of you into prison that you may be fully put to the test, and that you may have tribulation ten days. Prove yourself faithful even to death, and I will give you the crown of life."—Revelation 2:8-10.

Any spiritual richness that may have continued among professing Christians at Smyrna was no doubt directly related to the fine oversight of congregation elders. That era was one of tumultuous religious struggling, and members of the congregation served amid conflicting creeds and cults. Their witnessing territory was rife with demonic practices, including sorcery and astrology, and thus the climate was one of godlessness.

Adding to the hostility of the pagan populace was the bitter hatred expressed by the Jews. When the martyrdom of Polycarp took place on February 23, 155 C.E., fanatical Jews reportedly assisted with the gathering of firewood. This they did even though the execution took place on a great Sabbath day!

Who Are the Godless?

Polycarp had intended to remain in Smyrna and face the danger when his foes came for him. But at the urging of others, he withdrew to a nearby farm. When his whereabouts became known, he refused to move again to elude those searching for him but merely said: "The will of God be done."

Entering the stadium, Polycarp stood before the governor and the vast, seething crowd. As the governor persisted in urging him to express worshipful honor to Caesar, Polycarp plainly said: "I am a Christian . . . If you want to know the meaning of Christianity, you have only to name a day and give me a hearing." The governor replied: "Try your arguments on the crowd." But Polycarp said: "It is you whom I thought it might be worth discussing it with, because we have been taught to pay all proper respect to powers and authorities . . . so long as it does not compromise us." Shortly thereafter Polycarp was burned to death because he would not renounce Jesus Christ.

Polycarp's status as a Christian is something God alone can determine. What of today? A vast throng of true Christians also will not renounce Christ. Rather, they declare that he is God's Messianic King enthroned in heaven. These Witnesses of Jehovah also point out that we are about to see the fulfillment of Jesus' prophetic words concerning the "great tribulation," the most cataclysmic event the world will ever know. However, this betokens not the end of humankind but of wickedness. Survival is possible into a righteous new world of peace and pleasantness.—Matthew 24:13, 21, 34; 2 Peter 3:13.

Who would choose to fight against the messengers of such glad tidings? Only those who really are godless, even if they have a "form of godly devotion." (2 Timothy 3:5) False religious teachings have blinded the minds of some, and many are "paying attention to misleading inspired utterances and teachings of demons." (1 Timothy 4:1) Present-day Christians have suffered at the hands of the godless, some to the point of death. But faithful servants of Jehovah will never lose out, for theirs will be God's eventual gift of eternal life. Meanwhile, these faithful proclaimers of God's Kingdom remain staunch advocates of Scriptural truth.

GEMS
From Luke's Gospel

JEHOVAH'S Son, Jesus Christ, is well-known for being compassionate. How fitting, then, that the Gospel writer Luke should stress compassion, mercy, and fellow feeling! For Jews and Gentiles alike, he wrote a truly heartwarming account of Jesus' earthly life.

Certain aspects of this Gospel indicate that a scholarly person wrote it. For example, it has a classical introduction and an extensive vocabulary. Such points fit the fact that Luke was a well-educated physician. (Colossians 4:14) Though he did not become a believer until after Jesus' death, he accompanied Paul to Jerusalem after the apostle's third missionary trip. Therefore, following Paul's arrest there and imprisonment at Caesarea, this careful researcher was able to gather material by interviewing eyewitnesses and by consulting public records. (1:1-4; 3:1, 2) His Gospel may have been written at Caesarea sometime during the apostle's two-year confinement there, about 56-58 C.E.

Some Unique Features

At least six of Jesus' miracles are unique to Luke's Gospel. These are: a miraculous catch of fish (5:1-6); raising a widow's son at Nain (7:11-15); healing a woman bent double (13:11-13); curing a man of dropsy (14:1-4); cleansing ten lepers (17:12-14); and restoring the ear of the high priest's slave. —22:50, 51.

Also unique to Luke's account are some of Jesus' parables. These include: the two debtors (7:41-47); the neighborly Samaritan (10:30-35); the barren fig tree (13:6-9); the grand evening meal (14:16-24); the prodigal son (15:11-32); the rich man and Lazarus (16:19-31); and the widow and the unrighteous judge.—18:1-8.

Touching Incidents

The physician Luke showed concern for women, children, and the elderly. He alone mentioned Elizabeth's barrenness, her conception, and the birth of John. Only his Gospel reported the angel Gabriel's appearance to Mary. Luke was moved to say that Elizabeth's baby leaped in her womb as Mary spoke to her. He alone told of Jesus' circumcision and his presentation at the temple, where He was seen by aged Simeon and Anna. And we owe to Luke's Gospel our knowledge of the childhood of Jesus and of John the Baptizer.—1:1–2:52.

When Luke wrote about the grief-stricken widow of Nain who lost her only son in death, he said that Jesus "was moved with pity for her" and then restored the young man to life. (7:11-15) Reported only in Luke's Gospel, and heartwarming too, is the incident involving Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector. Being of short stature, he climbed a tree to see Jesus. What a surprise when Jesus said that he would stay at the house of Zacchaeus! Luke shows that the visit was a great blessing to the happy host.—19:1-10.

From a Physician's Pen

This Gospel contains many terms or words with medical meanings or significance. These words were not used at all or not in a medical sense by other writers of the Christian Greek Scriptures. But we might expect medical language from a physician's pen.

For example, only Luke said that Peter's mother-in-law had "a *high* fever." (4:38) He also wrote: "Look! a man *full of leprosy!*" (5:12) To other Gospel writers, it was enough to mention leprosy. But not so with the physician Luke, who indicated that the man's disease was in an advanced stage.

Insight Into Customs

Luke said that after Jesus' birth, Mary "bound him with cloth bands." (2:7) Customarily, a newborn infant was washed and rubbed with salt, perhaps to dry the skin and make it firm. Then the baby was wrapped in swaddling bands, nearly like a mummy. The bands kept the body straight and warm, and running them under the chin and over the

head may have trained the child to breathe through the nose. A 19th-century report on similar swaddling customs quoted a visitor to Bethlehem as saying: "I took the little creature in my arms. His body was stiff and unyielding, so tightly was it swathed with white and purple linen. His hands and feet were quite confined, and his head was bound with a small, soft red shawl, which passed under his chin and across his forehead in small folds."

Luke's Gospel also gives us insight into first-century funeral customs. Jesus was near the gate of Nain when he saw "a dead man being carried out, the only-begotten son of his [widowed] mother," and "a considerable crowd from the city was also with her." (7:11, 12) Burial generally took place outside a city, and friends of the deceased accompanied the body to the tomb. The bier was a litter possibly made of wickerwork and having poles projecting from its corners that allowed four men to bear it on their shoulders as the procession walked to the burial site.

In another illustration recorded by Luke, Jesus spoke of a man beaten by robbers. A neighborly Samaritan "bound up his wounds, pouring oil and wine upon them." (10:34) This was a customary way to care for injuries. Olive oil would soften and soothe the wounds. (Isaiah 1:6) But what about wine? *The Journal of the American Medical Association* said: "Wine was a principal medicine in Greece. . . . Hippocrates of Cos (460-370 BC) . . . made extensive use of wine, prescribing it as a wound dressing, a cooling

agent for fevers, a purgative, and a diuretic." Jesus' illustration alluded to the antiseptic and disinfectant properties of wine, as well as the effectiveness of olive oil in helping to heal wounds. Of course, the point of the parable is that a true neighbor acts mercifully. That is how we should deal with others.—10:36, 37.

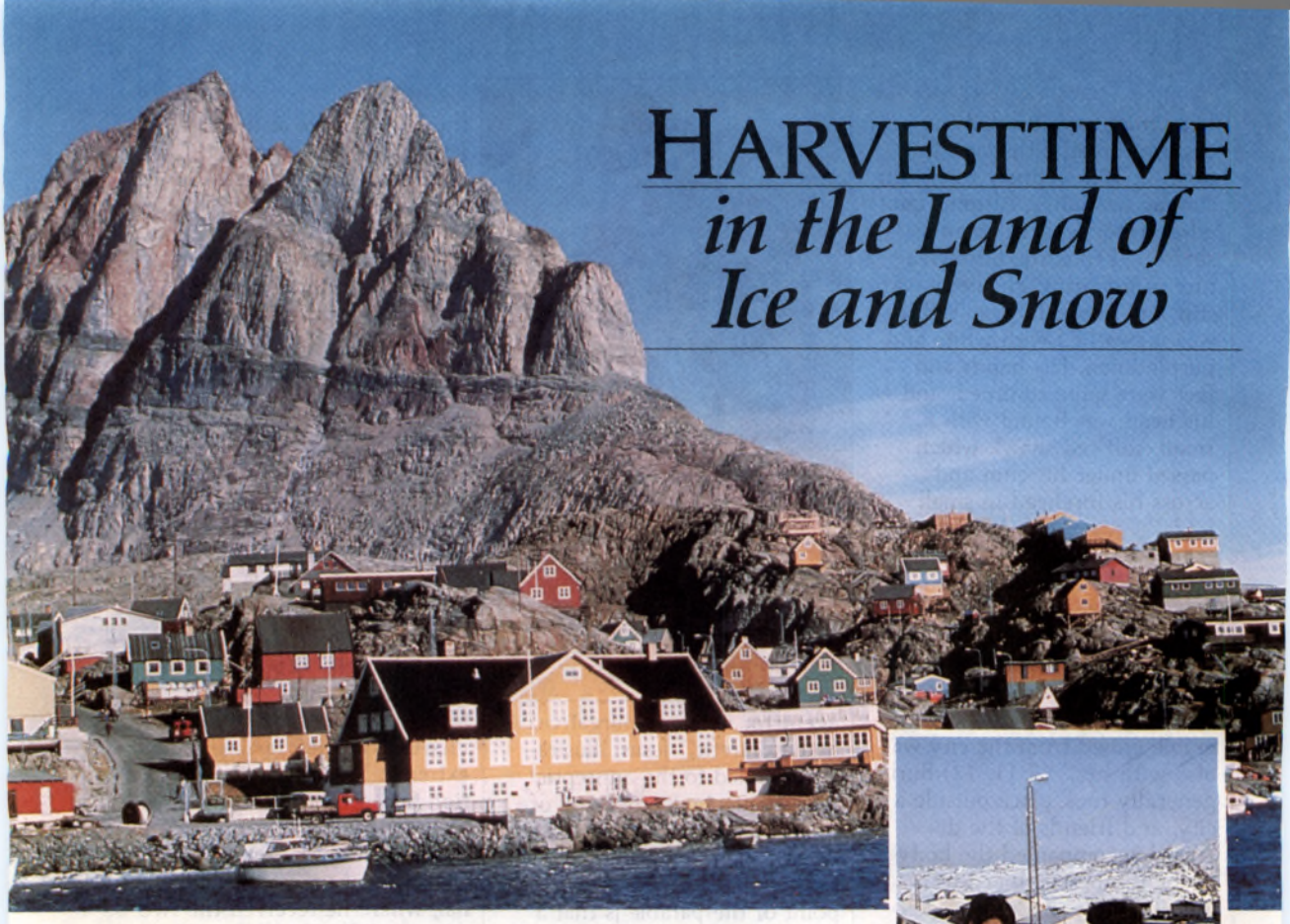
Lessons in Humility

Luke alone related an illustration that Jesus gave upon seeing guests choose the most prominent places at a meal. During feasts, guests reclined on couches placed along three sides of a table. Servers had access to it on the fourth side. Customarily, a couch was occupied by three people, each facing the table while resting on the left elbow and taking food with the right hand. The three positions indicated that a person had the high, middle, or low place on the couch. One having the low position on the third couch had the lowest place at the meal. Jesus said: 'When invited to a feast, choose the lowest place and the host will tell you, "Go up higher." Then you will have honor before your fellow guests.' (14:7-10) Yes, let us humbly put others ahead of ourselves. In fact, in applying the illustration, Jesus said: "Everyone that exalts himself will be humbled and he that humbles himself will be exalted."—14:11.

Also stressing humility, and unique with Luke's Gospel, was Jesus' illustration about a tax collector and a Pharisee praying in the temple. Among other things, the Pharisee said, "I fast twice a week." (18:9-14) The Law required only one annual fast. (Leviticus 16:29) But the Pharisees carried fasting to an extreme. The one in the illustration fasted on the second day of the week because that was thought to be the time when Moses went up into Mount Sinai, where he received the two tablets of the Testimony. He is said to have descended from the mountain on the fifth day of the week. (Exodus 31:18; 32:15-20) The Pharisee cited his semiweekly fasting as a proof of his piety. But this illustration should move us to be humble, not self-righteous.

These gems from Luke's Gospel prove that it is unique and instructive. Incidents related in the account help us to relive touching events in Jesus' earthly life. We also benefit from background information on certain customs. But especially will we be blessed if we apply such lessons as those on mercy and humility so well taught in this Gospel by Luke, the beloved physician.

HARVESTTIME *in the Land of Ice and Snow*



GREENLAND, the largest island in the world, is truly a land of ice and snow. Most of this nearly 1,700-mile-long island lies north of the Arctic Circle and is under a permanent ice cap averaging about one mile in thickness. The rest of Greenland is covered by snow from five to eight or more months out of the year. It is said that the early Viking explorers named it Greenland to attract settlers. During the short summer, however, certain coastal areas do fit the name.

In the spring, the frozen sea off northeastern Greenland breaks up, and pack ice appears. This ice makes its way down the east coast, around Cape Farewell, and partway up the west coast, making travel by sea extremely difficult for

months on end. In the wintertime, the sea around most of the island freezes, isolating the populated places. Literally, ice dominates the land, the sea, and the people's way of life. It is hard to imagine what could be harvested in this country.

Making a Start

Eskimo of Inuit cultures have lived as hunters in Greenland for centuries. In 1721 Lutheran minister Hans Egede came to Greenland as a missionary. Later, the Moravian Mission was active in various settlements. Some of their missionaries translated certain books of the Bible into the Greenlandic language, preserving God's personal name, Jehovah, in their translation. But since 1900, only the Danish Lutheran Church has operated in Greenland.

In 1953, while Greenland was still a colony of Denmark, an important turn of events occurred. According to the new Danish Constitution that took effect that year, religious groups other than the Lutheran Church were once again allowed in Greenland. Thus, in January 1955, two of Jehovah's Witnesses from Denmark arrived as missionaries. Their assignment was a 1,200-mile stretch along the southwest coast, where almost all Greenlanders lived—a population of 27,000, consisting mostly of hunters and fishermen.

Kristen Lauritsen, one of the two Witnesses, recalls: "Our knowledge of Greenlandic was next to nothing, but we did have a very strong desire to teach Greenlanders the truth of God's Word. We had a few tracts in Greenlandic, and the booklet *'This Good News of the Kingdom'* arrived later that first year." How did they go about their preaching work?

"In the beginning we used printed cards to explain the purpose of our visit. But later we learned some sentences by heart. Travel between towns was always by boat and very irregular, as timetables were virtually unknown. Seasickness was a common experience. We also had problems finding places to stay. Often, we had to make do with the tent we always carried along with our luggage."

But there were compensations. The Greenlanders are a friendly and hospitable people. It is natural for them to believe in God and respect the Bible. Nearly every home has the complete Bible in the vernacular. Kristen remembers that a little girl once came up to them with a note that said: "If you haven't got a place to stay yet, you can come and stay with us." This family also helped them to find a place where they arranged to show one of the Society's films.

Reinforcements Arrive

By 1961 families from Denmark began moving to Greenland to serve where the need for Witnesses was greater. They put forth admirable effort to learn the extremely difficult Greenlandic language and to endure isolation from fellow believers. They held meetings regularly and kept strong in their faith and Christian activity. Their labors were surely not in vain. That year the first two congregations were established in Greenland, one in the capital Nûk (Godthåb) and the other in Qaqortoq (Julianehåb), to the south. It brought the Witnesses great joy when some Greenlanders who had moved to Scandinavia were baptized.

In the 1970's several young and zealous special pioneer couples arrived, spearheading the witnessing work. By 1973 *The Watchtower* and the book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life* were available in Greenlandic. Thus equipped, the pioneers plied the coast, visiting towns and villages, bountifully sowing the seed of truth. For the first time, the preaching

work had reached the isolated east coast around Ammassalik (Angmagssalik). What a joy it was when a Greenlander finally embraced the truth in Greenland that year!

Harvest at Last!

As other Bible study aids were published in the local language, much literature was placed. For example, it was not uncommon for a couple of Witnesses working in unassigned territory for a few weeks to place from 300 to 400 books, just as many booklets, and 1,000 magazines, also obtaining 60 or 70 subscriptions.

As a result of all the sowing and watering, 'God has made things grow' among both the native Greenlanders and the Danes living in Greenland. (1 Corinthians 3:5-7) Today, 117 Kingdom proclaimers serve in seven congregations and one isolated group, scattered throughout this land of ice and snow. Let's meet some of these hard workers.

Visiting the Greenlandic Field

A good place to start is the southernmost congregation, in Qaqortoq (Julianehåb). Five families have come up from Denmark to serve there. Some of them have worked hard at learning Greenlandic so that they can witness to the Greenlanders who do not understand Danish. Flemming, a family man and a pioneer (a full-time Kingdom proclaimer) in this congregation, says: "Our territory is extensive. It includes many fishing villages and sheep-farming stations snuggled in the complex of fjords along the southern coast." Using their own motorboats, the Witnesses make trips as long as 400 miles to call on the people living in these out-of-the-way places.

After traveling three hours by boat through the picturesque fjords, we come to the next congregation, at Narsaq. Living here is a lone family of four Kingdom publishers. Though isolated, they are able to encourage and build one another up spiritually through healthy study habits and by regularly sharing in meetings and field ministry.

Now we board the coastal passenger ship that comes here weekly during the summer months. This 24-hour trip takes us to Paamiut (Frederikshåb), where there are ten Witnesses. But at the halfway point, we pass a village where there are two isolated publishers. One of them, Ane Marie, has a son in Nûk who learned the truth a few years ago and began witnessing to her by telephone and letter. She appreciated what he told her. By reading everything available in Greenlandic and listening to tapes of Greenlandic Witnesses relating their experiences, Ane Marie has taken her stand for the truth. At over 60 years of age and without the support of a local congregation, she succeeded in breaking her 50-year-long smoking habit, stopped celebrating Christmas and birthdays, and started witnessing to the whole village. As a result of her patient effort and good example, about ten interested ones gather regularly to study the Bible and to listen to the recorded meetings.

Leaving Paamiut, a 14-hour boat trip on the rough open sea takes us to Nûk. In this capital city of 13,000, there are 43 publishers in the congregation, and over a third of them are Greenlanders. The weekly meetings are a mixture of Danish and Greenlandic, certainly a challenge for both language groups.

Back on the coastal passenger ship again, an eight-hour journey takes us to Maniitsoq (Sukkertoppen). Here, four families from Denmark work along with a few local Kingdom publishers. They have covered the territory in town so thoroughly and have placed so much Bible literature that every other household has a copy of *My Book of Bible Stories* in Greenlandic. By

means of their motorboats, they also arrange regular witnessing trips to the outlying villages.

Continuing northward, our next stop is ten hours away, at Sisimiut (Holsteinsborg). Five Danish families and a few local publishers make up the congregation here. A special-pioneer couple from here make periodic visits to the east coast. This involves a half-hour helicopter ride to the airport, a two-hour plane trip across the central ice cap, and another short hop by helicopter across the bay to Ammassalik on the east coast. The scenery there is truly impressive—rugged mountains towering above and glaciers filling the hollows below. The people are quite receptive to the Kingdom message, but few have yet taken a stand for the truth.

After flying back across the ice cap, we make our last stop in Ilulissat (Jakobshavn), the northernmost congregation. *Ilulissat* is Greenlandic for "icebergs," and it is an appropriate name. Nearby is the most productive glacier in the Northern Hemisphere, and icebergs float all over the bay and fjords, making the scenery quite enthralling. Six families from Denmark and a couple of Greenlanders make up this very active congregation. In addition to the town of Ilulissat and the entire Disko Bay area, they have what is probably the world's northernmost witnessing territory, reaching right up to the village of Kullorsuaq (Devil's Thumb) near 75 degrees north latitude.

The special pioneers in Ilulissat regularly visit this distant area, witnessing to the people in Upernavik and Uummannaq. Bo and Helen report: "These wide-open northern areas are still an untouched Arctic paradise. The area is sparsely populated, and people live on hunting more than on fishing. Their life is simple, and they don't worry too much about the future. Many of them are interested in spiritual things. They willingly listen to the message we bring." Time alone will tell if such sheeplike ones will be gathered into the one true "flock" under the "one shepherd," Jesus Christ.—John 10:16.

Only Danish pioneers have ever worked in this area, but about eight Greenlanders in Nûk made a video tape recording of a general witness about our beliefs and way of life. When the pioneers used this tape in their house-to-house ministry, it really got people talking and asking a great many questions, especially about our not celebrating Christmas and not baptizing babies. It may be added that about 200 books were placed during the entire four-week trip just described.

The Harvest Goes On

In spite of the harsh elements and the language barrier, the Kingdom harvest goes on. Many Greenlanders have learned the Danish language in order to benefit from congregation meetings. However, an increasing number of meetings are being held in Greenlandic, making it possible for more to share in the spiritual feeding.

For example, although the 1988 "Divine Justice" District Convention program was presented in Danish at Nûk, about a third of the talks were translated into Greenlandic. A total of 163 attended. Delegates from the northernmost congregation at Ilulissat and the southernmost congregation at Qaqortoq had to travel as much as two days each way. Four were baptized at the convention.

What are the prospects for future harvest? Very good indeed! In 1989 it was a joy to see 205 attend the Memorial of Christ's death. Presently, over a hundred home Bible studies are being conducted. Yes, Jehovah is richly blessing the hard work of his servants in this land of ice and snow.

ONE day last February, Venezuela's long anticipated new economic package was announced. Prices were being raised more than 100 percent on basic food items like milk, flour, and bread. Gasoline prices would increase 90 percent. Transportation fares were authorized to go up 30 percent. The country was stunned. Suddenly, on Monday, February 27, people reacted by rioting nationwide.

Rioting cannot stop the good news

The next morning, things had reached a crescendo of destruction and looting. Gunshots echoed in a number of places. Young and old raged through city streets, leaving behind a trail of destruction that resembled a war-scarred battlefield.

That afternoon the country's president declared a state of emergency and suspended constitutional guarantees for ten days. A curfew was instituted for the hours between 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. The next day, the minister of defense announced that the curfew would continue in effect until further notice. The military used its authority to take control of the streets, enter homes without authorization, and stop and search people. "Two hundred dead and one thousand wounded in three days of disturbances," reported one newspaper.

How were the congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses faring during the crisis? The brothers were counseled: Be prudent and avoid trouble areas. Adjust meeting times to comply with the curfew, and avoid preaching in large groups. Yet, the preaching of the good news of God's Kingdom went forward.—Matthew 24:14; 28: 19, 20.

Because the unbelieving husband of a certain Christian woman was worried about her welfare if she stepped out of the house to preach, he forbade her to leave. "You don't understand that I have an obligation to fulfill," she told him. "So come now! I am going to study the Bible with you!"

This was the first time in this woman's 22 years as a Witness that her husband expressed a willingness to study the Bible. Still he cautioned: "All right, as long as you promise not to go out. But don't ask me questions, just read to me." Nevertheless, the sister studied with him for an hour and a half. "It was a model study, the best study I have ever had in my 22 years in the truth," she said, as tears welled up in her eyes.

In another case, a regular pioneer was sweeping the sidewalk outside her home when she was approached by a lady who would not generally listen to the Witnesses when they visited her home. "I haven't seen you Witnesses preach lately," said the woman. "Don't tell me you're not going to preach anymore!"

The sister explained that they had stopped preaching from house to house only during the rioting. "But the day will come when we will not preach to people anymore, and that will mean the end of the world," said the sister. "You should take advantage of the opportunity now and accept a Bible study in your home."

"When can we make arrangements?" the lady quickly asked. Right then and there arrangements were made to start a home Bible study.

Unrest did not stop Kingdom proclaimers

Photograph by *Publicaciones Capriles, Caracas, Venezuela.*

Thankfully, the unrest ceased, allowing the country's affairs to return to normal. Yet, in such tense situations, it is a comfort to know that soon a new world of tranquillity and security will be here. God's Word promises: "There are new heavens and a new earth that we are awaiting according to his promise, and in these righteousness is to dwell." (2 Peter 3:13) And as long as God permits, Jehovah's Witnesses will continue to preach the good news of the Kingdom.

Questions From Readers

■ **Why did God's Law say that an Israelite man who had sex relations with an unengaged virgin had to marry her and could never divorce her?**

At Exodus 22:16, 17 and Deuteronomy 22:28, 29, we find this law, which some have claimed seems unsympathetic toward women. Actually, it encouraged a high moral standard for both men and women.

Deuteronomy chapter 22 presented various domestic laws. For instance, it dealt with the situation of a man who no longer loved his wife and claimed that she had not been a virgin. It also presented God's laws about adultery and rape. Then we read:

"In case a man finds a girl, a virgin who has not been engaged, and he actually seizes her and lies down with her, and they have been found out, the man who lay down with her must also give the girl's father fifty silver shekels, and she will become his wife due to the fact that he humiliated her. He will not be allowed to divorce her all his days." —Deuteronomy 22:28, 29.

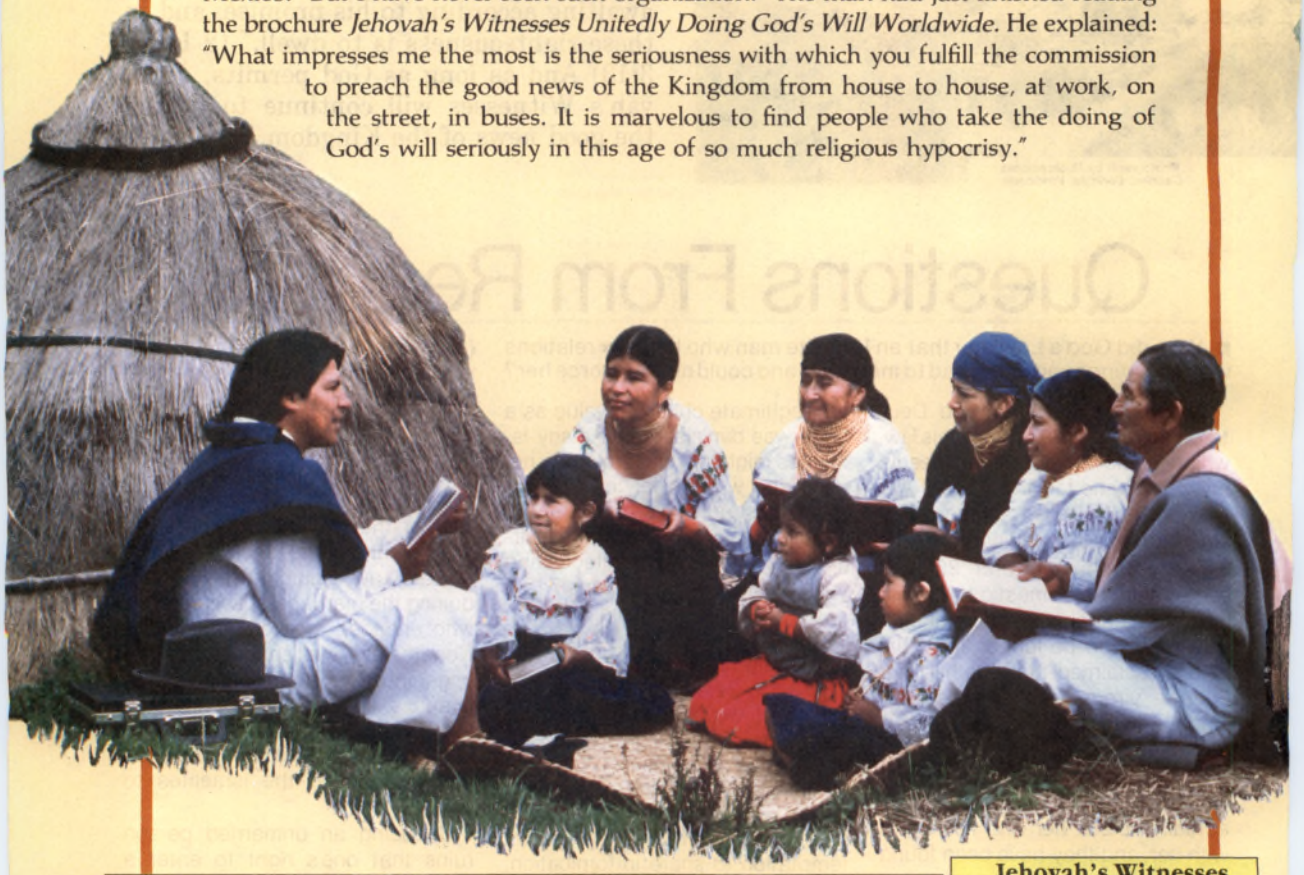
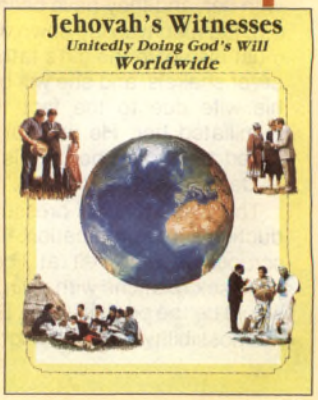
This was a case of pressured seduction and/or fornication. If an unscrupulous man felt at liberty to have sex relations with a virgin, she would be the primary loser. Besides the possibility that she might have an illegitimate child, her value as a bride was diminished, for many Israelites might not want to marry her once she was no longer a virgin. What, though, would discourage a man from taking liberties with a virgin? God's "holy and righteous and good" Law would. —Romans 7:12.

The Mosaic code had a provision allowing a man to divorce his wife for certain reasons. (Deuteronomy 22:13-19; 24:1; Matthew 19:7, 8) But what we read at Exodus 22:16, 17 and Deuteronomy 22:28, 29 shows that the option of divorce disappeared after premarital fornication. This, then, might cause a man (or a virgin woman) to resist a temptation to share in fornication. A man could not feel, 'She is pretty and exciting, so I'll have a good time with her even though she is not the sort I'd like to marry.' Rather, this law would deter immorality by causing any would-be offender to weigh the long-term consequences of fornication—having to stay with the other party throughout his life.

The Law also lessened the problem of illegitimacy. God decreed: "No illegitimate son may come into the congregation of Jehovah." (Deuteronomy 23:2) So if a man who seduced a virgin had to marry her, their fornication would not result in an illegitimate offspring among the Israelites.

Granted, Christians live in a social setting that is different from that of the ancient Israelites. We are not under the decrees of the Mosaic Law, including this law requiring the marriage of two persons who engaged in such fornication. Nonetheless, we cannot feel that engaging in premarital fornication is an insignificant thing. Christians should give serious thought to long-term consequences, even as this law moved the Israelites to do so.

Seducing an unmarried person ruins that one's right to enter a Christian marriage as a clean virgin (male or female). Premarital fornication also affects the rights of any person who might become the individual's mate, namely, that individual's right to marry a chaste Christian. Most of all, fornication must be avoided because God says that it is wrong; it is a sin. The apostle aptly wrote: "This is what God wills, the sanctifying of you, that you abstain from fornication."—1 Thessalonians 4:3-6; Hebrews 13:4.

ORGANIZED TO SERVE GOD

"I have gone through different religions and religious sects," writes a man from Mexico. "But I have never seen such organization." The man had just finished reading the brochure *Jehovah's Witnesses Unitedly Doing God's Will Worldwide*. He explained: "What impresses me the most is the seriousness with which you fulfill the commission to preach the good news of the Kingdom from house to house, at work, on the street, in buses. It is marvelous to find people who take the doing of God's will seriously in this age of so much religious hypocrisy."