

October 1, 1990

The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



**NOW IS THE TIME
FOR A NEW WORLD**

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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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October 29: Righteousness Not by Oral Traditions. Page 10. Songs to Be Used: 62, 170.

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Do you yearn for the time when...

☐ you can feel safe and secure in your home—no matter what the time of day?

☐ there will be no need for locks, bars, alarms, peepholes, fences, guards, watchdogs, and other security measures?

☐ you can walk the streets alone in perfect safety, even at night?

☐ harmful drugs and all their related problems will be but a distant memory?

☐ all wars will have ceased, and weapons will be neither made nor stockpiled?

☐ you no longer have to worry about polluted food, air, and water?

☐ terrorism, the taking of hostages, and bomb threats will be completely eliminated?

☐ earth's natural resources will be protected, maintained, and used wisely for the common good?

☐ greed and selfishness will no longer be the motivating forces among mankind?

☐ children will maintain their innocence and be respectful of others and their property?

☐ women will not be oppressed and victimized?

☐ laws and regulations will be fair and will be justly administered for the good of all?

☐ government will make decisions based on genuine needs and not on politics?

☐ freedom and equality will be not only preached but also practiced?

☐ poverty will no longer exist, but all will have whatever is needed for their health, welfare, and happiness?

☐ children will be wanted and cared for and never abused or abandoned?

☐ disease and death will have been conquered, and there will be no dreadful plagues?

☐ everyone you meet will be kind, helpful, and trustworthy?

☐ everyone's life will be truly valued, and all can find lasting happiness?

☐ religion will no longer be a divisive force, leading to bigotry, hatred, and wars?

☐ all will have adequate and pleasant places to live, and homelessness will be a thing of the past?

If you can say yes to any of the above, you will be interested in reading the articles that follow.

We need a new world

STEP back and take a look at the conditions that surround you. Do you like what you see?

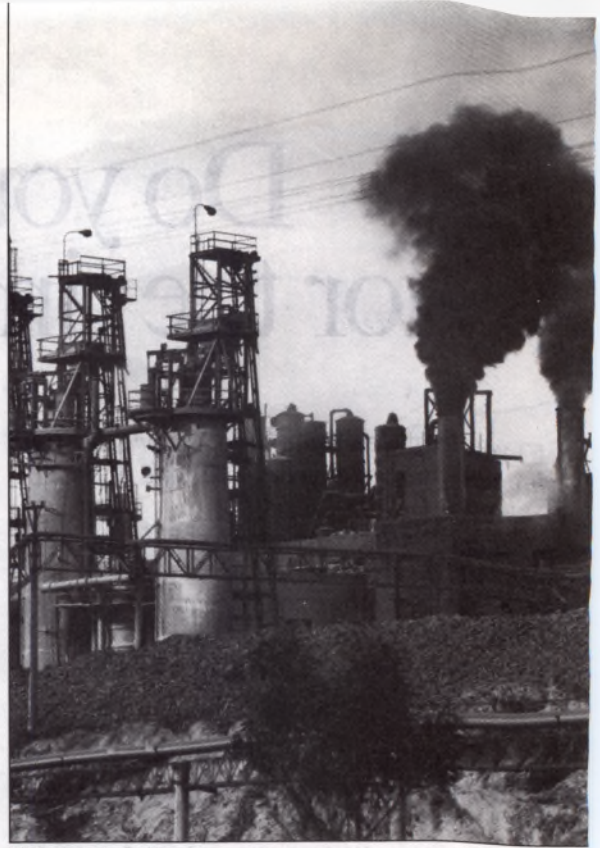
Perhaps you personally have a nice home in a pleasant, well-maintained area. You may also have a well-paying job that you like. Additionally, you and your loved ones may enjoy a measure of good health. All in all, you may feel relatively secure and happy.

But think of other neighborhoods, other parts of the country you live in, other lands. Take a look at the whole world. Is it a pretty picture that you see? Is it truly one of contentment, peace, and prosperity?

According to some predictions earlier in this century, science should by now have eradicated all major illnesses, provided abundant food for all, stabilized and improved the environment, and ushered in an era of peace. But what has really happened?

It does not take much examination to see that peace has eluded our planet. "Since biblical times, people have been admonished to beat swords into plowshares," writes Michael Renner in *State of the World 1990*. "Never has such advice been more appropriate. The relentless pursuit of military might has brought humanity to the brink of annihilation."

Reports abound of the civil strife and wars that decimate so many countries around the globe. According to one source,



WHO photo by P. Almasy

22 wars were still being fought in 1988.* How many had died in those wars? Up to and including that year, "the total number of people killed in all the wars being fought in 1988 was 4,645,000. Seventy-six percent of those killed were civilians," says the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.

Do current world developments indicate a peaceful world ahead? "Word has it that the Cold War is in remission and peace has been given a chance. But look again," says an article in the *San Jose Mercury News* of California, U.S.A. "In the Third World, war storms on with little hope of resolution. These are the world's hidden wars. They are largely conflicts that pit governments against their own people: bloody

* "War" is defined as a conflict that involves at least one government and in which at least 1,000 people are killed in a year.

civil struggles over land, religion, ethnic and tribal differences, political power, even drugs. . . . From the Horn of Africa to Southeast Asia, war has forced millions of people to flee their homes. Crops go unplanted, health clinics get attacked, livestock is destroyed, parents are brutally killed in front of their children, 10-year-old boys are made into porters and then soldiers, young girls are raped. In these mostly forgotten lands, war has left a trail of wreckage and social disorder from which these societies may never fully recover. . . . Research shows the 1980s have seen more wars than any other decade in history."

Many of those who manage to flee to more developed countries find the peace they sought shattered by the threat of violent crime. "The [United States] crime siege has continued through the 1980s despite predictions it would ease," reports *U.S. News & World Report*. "In a typical year: There are 8.1 million serious crimes like murder, assault and burglary. . . . Most harrowing of all is the way the bloodletting has become pervasive and unpredictable. Victimization is a chronic state. The U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics estimates that 83 percent of children now 12 years old will become victims of actual or attempted violence if crime continues at current rates. . . . Punishment of society's wrongdoers is neither sure nor swift. Nationwide, the police are able to solve only 1 in 5 major crimes." Similar situations exist worldwide. The UN General Assembly reports an "increase both in the incidence and seriousness of crime in many parts of the world."

But even if all war, weaponry, and crime were immediately to disappear from the earth, life would still be threatened. "Crushing poverty, rampant disease, and massive illiteracy characterize the lives of hundreds

of millions in developing countries," notes Worldwatch Institute in their *State of the World 1990* report. "All of humanity—rich or poor, militarily strong or weak—confronts the specter of unprecedented environmental devastation."

Yes, the very life-support systems on which all humanity depend are being undermined. "Earth as a whole is in worse shape [than in 1970]," writes editor Paul Hoffman in *Discover* magazine. "Garbage is spilling out of our landfills. Greenhouse gases are heating up the atmosphere. The planet's ozone shield is thinning. Deserts are expanding, and rain forests are shrinking. Plant and animal species are becoming extinct at the rate of 17 per hour."

Add to that the effects of continued contamination of land and water. Figure in the steady rise in the world's population, which results in more and more productive land being built upon or paved over, thereby increasing the extinction of animal and plant species. Consider the rising scarcity of freshwater supplies and the problem of acid rain. Tag on the health-threatening consequences of heavily polluted air and the problems of hazardous waste. Together, they spell disaster for the human race. Whoever or wherever we are, we need air, food, water, and raw materials in order to exist. We need them unpolluted and in adequate measure. Already, "for the poor, the eighties were an unmitigated disaster, a time of meager diets and rising death rates," says *State of the World 1990*.

With the human race being threatened in so many ways, can anyone deny that a new world is sorely needed? But is that a real possibility? From what source would such a world come? What obstacles must be overcome before our planet can really be considered safe and thriving? Let us see.

A new world at hand!

PROPOSALS abound for curing the world's ills. In general, they call for concern and cooperation, as well as for a monumental coordinated effort by all nations worldwide. There is a feeling that as situations worsen, the need for mutual preservation will force the nations to re-evaluate their priorities and work together to form a new and sustainable world. It is envisioned that military budgets will be cut heavily in favor of using resources to address environmental threats and that, as noted in *State of the World 1990*, "rather than maintaining their own large defense establishments, governments may come to rely on a greatly expanded and strengthened U.N. peacekeeping force, one that would have the power and authority to defend any member country against an aggressor."

But such plans fall far short of bringing about the conditions yearned for that were listed in our opening pages. Mere human strategies can in no way cure human sinfulness and greed; they do not eliminate prejudice and ethnic strife; they do not engender unselfish love among all mankind; neither can they guarantee an end to disease and death. Crime is not effectively addressed, nor is there any mention of overcoming religious differences and hatreds. And eliminating natural disasters cannot even be considered. Nationalism, with its potential for causing problems, is allowed to remain. Unhappily, then, we must conclude that humans have failed to come up with a workable solution.

Yet, there is a solution! Indeed, all these things yearned for by mankind have been

promised, and the promise comes from the God "who cannot lie." (Titus 1:2) He knows exactly what must be done, and he has the wisdom, the power, and the ability to accomplish what he has purposed. —Revelation 7:12; 19:1.

God promises: "Just a little while longer, and the wicked one will be no more; and you will certainly give attention to his place, and he will not be. But the meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace." —Psalm 37:10, 11.

How will this be accomplished? Isaiah 11:9 answers: "They will not do any harm or cause any ruin in all my holy mountain; because the earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters are covering the very sea." Yes, all mankind will be instructed in "the knowledge of Jehovah," and any individuals refusing to comply therewith will not be allowed to remain and disrupt the peace of others. No longer will our beautiful earth be ruined.

"Behold the activities of Jehovah . . . He is making wars to cease to the extremity of the earth," promises Psalm 46:8, 9. (See also Micah 4:3, 4.) An important factor in making global peace is ending nationalistic differences. Cooperation is guaranteed, for only one government will exist worldwide—that of God. And his government is a Kingdom "that will never be brought to ruin." (Daniel 2:44) Moreover, its King is the resurrected, immortal Jesus Christ, whose rule will be by means of justice and righteousness.—Isaiah 9:6, 7; 32:1.

But would this be spoiled by man's inherent imperfection and be marred by continued pain, sickness, sorrow, and death? No, for these too will be things of the past. Revelation 21:4 assures us: "And he will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away." Inherited sin will be forgiven on the basis of Jesus' ransom sacrifice, and mankind will be brought back to a perfect state. (Romans 6:23; Ephesians 1:7) And who can better control natural forces and keep them from harming mankind than their Creator?—Psalm 148:5-8; Isaiah 30:30.

Things man can only hope for and dream of, God will deliver. But when? Bible prophecy indicates that the changes will come at a time when nations would be "wrathful" and man would be "ruining the earth." (Revelation 11:18) The last days of the old world would be marked by "critical times hard to deal with"—resulting in the worsening conditions that we see around us right now. (2 Timothy 3:1-5, 13) And Jesus foretold that the generation seeing such things would be the generation to see the fulfillment of God's promises.—Matthew 24:3-14, 32-34.

Take time to check into those promises recorded in the Bible. For on this point, both knowledgeable men and God agree: Now is the time for a new world!



Agony in the Garden

WHEN Jesus finishes praying, he and his 11 faithful apostles sing songs of praise to Jehovah. Then they descend from the upper room, emerge into the cool darkness of the night, and head back across the Kidron Valley toward Bethany. But along the way, they stop at a favorite spot, the garden of Gethsemane. This is located on or in the vicinity of the Mount of Olives. Jesus has often met with his apostles here amid the olive trees.

Leaving eight of the apostles—perhaps near the garden's entrance—he instructs them: "Sit down here while I go over there and pray." He then takes the other three—Peter, James, and John—and proceeds farther into the garden. Jesus becomes grieved and sorely troubled. "My soul is deeply grieved, even to death," he tells them. "Stay here and keep on the watch with me."

Going a little way forward, Jesus drops to the ground and with his face to the ground begins earnestly praying: "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass away from me. Yet, not as I will, but as you will." What does he mean? Why is he "deeply grieved, even to death"? Is he backing down from his decision to die and provide the ransom?

Not at all! Jesus is not appealing to be spared from death. Even the thought of avoiding a sacrificial death, once suggested by Peter, is repugnant to him. Rather, he is in agony because he fears that the way he will soon die—as a despicable criminal—will bring reproach upon his Father's name. He now senses

that in a few hours he is going to be impaled upon a stake as the worst kind of person—a blasphemer against God! This is what sorely troubles him.

After praying at length, Jesus returns and finds the three apostles sleeping. Addressing Peter, he says: "Could you men not so much as watch one hour with me? Keep on the watch and pray continually, that you may not enter into temptation." Acknowledging, however, the stress they have been under and the lateness of the hour, he says: "The spirit, of course, is eager, but the flesh is weak."

Jesus then goes off a second time and requests that God remove from him "this cup," that is, Jehovah's assigned portion, or will, for him. When he returns, he again finds the three sleeping when they should have been praying that they not enter into temptation. When Jesus speaks to them, they do not know what to say in reply.

Finally, a third time, Jesus goes about a stone's throw away, and on bended knees and with strong outcries and tears, he prays: "Father, if you wish, remove this cup from me." Jesus keenly feels severe pains because of the reproach that his death as a criminal will bring on his Father's name. Why, to be charged as a blasphemer—one who curses God—is almost too much to bear!

Nevertheless, Jesus continues to pray: "Not what I want, but what you want." Jesus obediently submits his will to God's. At this, an angel from heaven appears and strengthens him with some encouraging words. Likely, the angel tells Jesus that he has his Father's smile of approval.

Yet, what a weight is on Jesus' shoulders! His own eternal life and that of the whole human race hangs in the balance. The emotional stress is enormous. So Jesus continues praying more earnestly, and his sweat becomes as drops of blood as it falls to the ground. "Although this is a very rare phenomenon," observes *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, "bloody sweat . . . may occur in highly emotional states."

Afterward, Jesus returns for a third time to his apostles, and once more finds them sleeping. They are exhausted from sheer grief. "At such a time as this you are sleeping and taking your rest!" he exclaims. "It is enough! The hour has

come! Look! The Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us go. Look! My betrayer has drawn near."

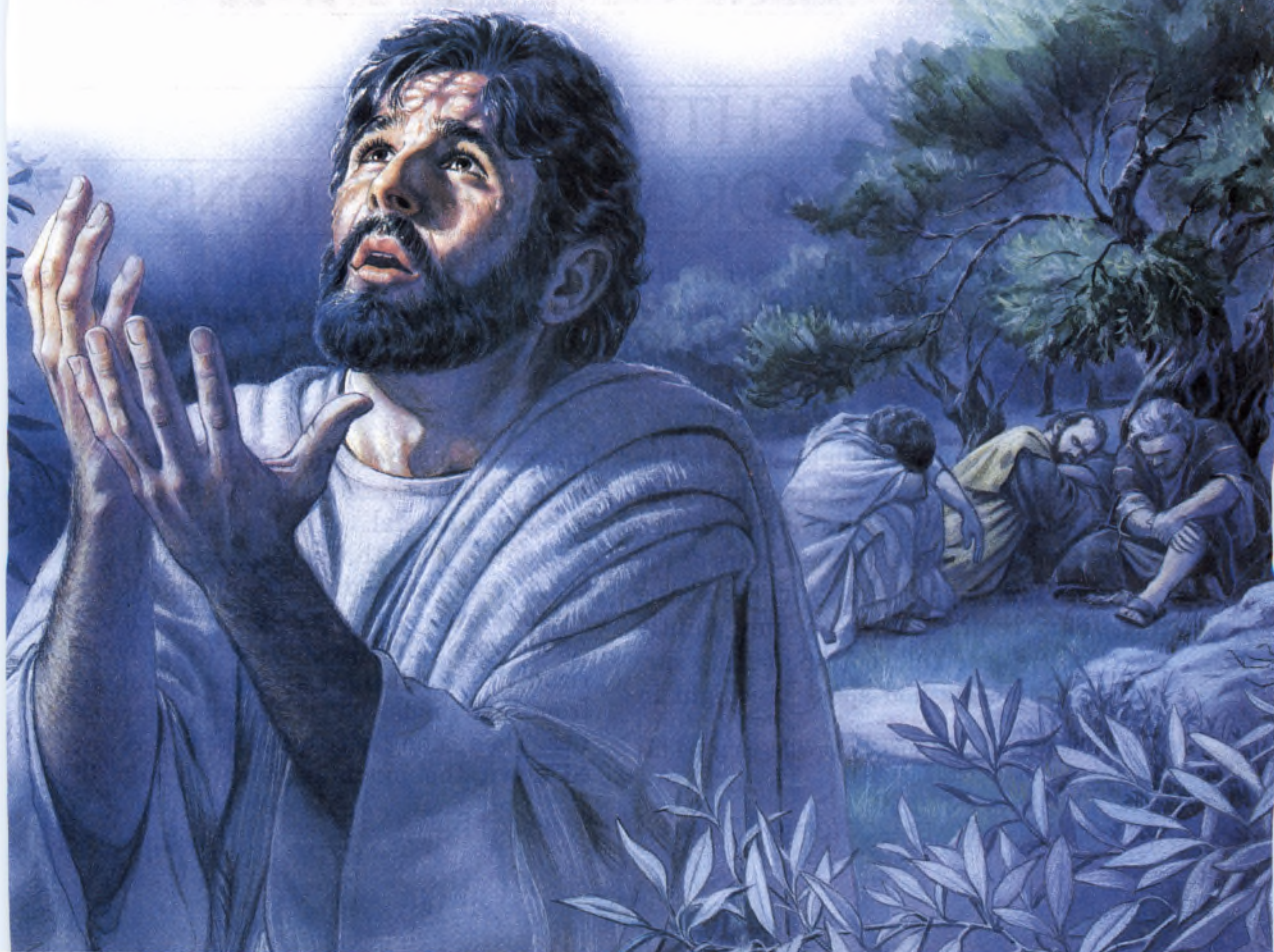
While he is yet speaking, Judas Iscariot approaches, accompanied by a large crowd carrying torches and lamps and weapons. **Matthew 26:30, 36-47; 16: 21-23; Mark 14:26, 32-43; Luke 22: 39-47; John 18:1-3; Hebrews 5:7.**

♦ After leaving the upper room, where does Jesus lead the apostles, and what does he do there?

♦ While Jesus is praying, what are the apostles doing?

♦ Why is Jesus in agony, and what request does he make of God?

♦ What is indicated by Jesus' sweat becoming as drops of blood?





RIGHTEOUSNESS NOT BY ORAL TRADITIONS

"If your righteousness does not abound more than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter into the kingdom of the heavens."

—MATTHEW 5:20.

JESUS had spent the night on a mountain. The starry heavens stretched overhead. Small nocturnal animals rustled in the bushes. To the east the waters of the Sea of Galilee lapped gently at the shore. But Jesus could have been only faintly aware of the peaceful, soothing beauty surrounding him. He had spent the night in

prayer to his heavenly Father, Jehovah. He needed his Father's guidance. The day ahead was crucial.

² In the east the sky lightened. Birds began moving about, chirping softly. The wildflowers swayed gently in the breeze. As the sun's first rays broke over the horizon, Jesus called his disciples to him and from their midst chose 12 to be his apostles. Then, along with all of them, he started down the mountainside. Already the

1, 2. What happened just before Jesus gave his Sermon on the Mount?

crowds could be seen streaming in from Galilee, Tyre and Sidon, Judea and Jerusalem. They came to be healed of their sicknesses. Power from Jehovah was going out of Jesus as many touched him and were cured. They had also come to hear his words that were as a healing balm to his troubled souls.—Matthew 4:25; Luke 6:12-19.

³ In their more formal teaching sessions, the rabbis were accustomed to sit down, and on this particular spring morning of 31 C.E., that is what Jesus did, apparently at a level place higher on the hillside. When his disciples and the crowds saw this, they realized that something special was afoot, so they gathered expectantly around him. When he began to speak, they were in anticipation of his words; when he ended some time later, they were left astounded by what they had heard. Let us see why.—Matthew 7:28.

Two Kinds of Righteousness

⁴ In his Sermon on the Mount, reported both at Matthew 5:1-7:29 and at Luke 6:17-49, Jesus sharply contrasted two classes: the scribes and Pharisees and the common people they oppressed. He spoke of two kinds of righteousness, the hypocritical righteousness of the Pharisees and the true righteousness of God. (Matthew 5:6, 20) Pharisaic self-righteousness was rooted in oral traditions. These had been initiated in the second century B.C.E. as “a fence around the Law” to protect it from the inroads of Hellenism (Greek culture). They had come to be viewed as a part of the Law. In fact, the scribes even rated the oral traditions above the written Law. The Mishnah says: “Greater strin-

gency applies to the observance of the words of the Scribes [their oral traditions] than to the observance of the words of the written Law.” Hence, instead of being “a fence around the Law” to protect it, their traditions weakened the Law and made it void, just as Jesus said: “Adroitly you set aside the commandment of God in order to retain your tradition.”—Mark 7:5-9; Matthew 15:1-9.

⁵ The common people who flocked to hear Jesus were spiritually impoverished, having been “skinned and thrown about like sheep without a shepherd.” (Matthew 9:36) With arrogant haughtiness the scribes and Pharisees scorned them, called them *‘am ha-‘a’rets* (people of the land), and despised them as ignorant, accursed sinners unworthy of a resurrection because they did not keep the oral traditions. By Jesus’ time those traditions had become so voluminous and such an oppressive morass of legalistic nit-picking—so laden with time-consuming ceremonial rituals—that no workingman could possibly keep them. No wonder Jesus denounced the traditions as ‘heavy loads on the shoulders of men.’—Matthew 23:4; John 7:45-49.

⁶ So when Jesus sat down on the hillside, those who drew close to listen were his disciples and the spiritually starved crowds. These must have found his opening pronouncements startling. ‘Happy the poor, happy the hungry, happy those weeping, happy those hated.’ But who can be happy when they are poor, hungry, weeping, and hated? And woes were declared for

5. (a) What was the condition of the common people who came to hear Jesus, and how were they viewed by the scribes and Pharisees?
- (b) What made the oral traditions such a heavy load on the shoulders of workingmen?
6. What was so startling about Jesus’ opening pronouncements, and what change did they indicate for his disciples and for the scribes and Pharisees?

3. Why were the disciples and the crowds in anticipation when Jesus began to speak?

4. (a) What two kinds of righteousness were at issue? (b) What was the purpose of the oral traditions, and was it realized?

those who were rich, well fed, laughing, and admired! (Luke 6:20-26) In just a few words, Jesus reversed all the customary evaluations and the accepted human standards. It was a dramatic reversal of positions, in line with Jesus' later words: "Everyone that exalts himself will be humiliated, but he that humbles himself will be exalted."—Luke 18:9-14.

⁷ In contrast with the self-satisfied scribes and Pharisees, those coming to Jesus on this particular morning were aware of their sad spiritual state. His opening words must have filled them with hope: "Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need, since the kingdom of the heavens belongs to them." And how their spirit must have soared when he added: "Happy are those hungering and thirsting for righteousness, since they will be filled!" (Matthew 5:3, 6; John 6:35; Revelation 7:16, 17) Filled with righteousness, yes, but not with the Pharisaic brand.

Not Enough to Be "Righteous Before Men"

⁸ "If your righteousness does not abound more than that of the scribes and Pharisees," Jesus said, "you will by no means enter into the kingdom of the heavens." (Matthew 5:17-20; see Mark 2:23-28; 3:1-6; 7:1-13.) Some must have thought: 'More righteous than the Pharisees? They fast and pray and tithe and give alms and spend their lives studying the Law. How can our righteousness ever surpass theirs?' But it had to abound more. The Pharisees may have been highly esteemed by men, but not by God. On another occasion Jesus said to these Pharisees: "You

are those who declare yourselves righteous before men, but God knows your hearts; because what is lofty among men is a disgusting thing in God's sight."—Luke 16:15.

⁹ The rabbis had invented their own rules for gaining righteousness. One was merit by descent from Abraham: "The disciples of Abraham our father enjoy this world and inherit the world to come." (Mishnah) Possibly it was to counter this tradition that John the Baptizer warned the Pharisees who came to him: "Produce fruit that befits repentance; and do not presume to say to yourselves, 'As a father we have Abraham [as if that were enough].'"—Matthew 3:7-9; see also John 8:33, 39.

¹⁰ A second way to gain righteousness, they said, was by the giving of alms. Two Apocryphal books written by devout Jews during the second century B.C.E. reflect the traditional view. One statement appears in Tobit: "Almsgiving saves one from death and expiates every sin." (12:9, *The New American Bible*) The Book of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) agrees: "Water quenches a flaming fire, and alms atone for sins."—3:29, *NAB*.

¹¹ The third way they sought righteousness was by works of the Law. Their oral traditions taught that if a man's deeds were mostly good, he would be saved. Judgment "is according to the excess of works that be good or evil." (Mishnah) To stand favorably in judgment, their concern was "to achieve merits which would outweigh sins." If a man's good works exceeded his bad works by one, he would be saved—as though God judged by keeping count of their petty activities! (Matthew 23:23, 24)

7. What effect must Jesus' opening words have had on the spiritually starved crowd listening to Jesus?

8. Why would some wonder how their righteousness could abound more than that of the scribes and Pharisees, yet why must it do so?

9-11. (a) What was one way the scribes and Pharisees thought they would receive a righteous standing before God? (b) By what second way did they expect to gain righteousness? (c) What was the third way they counted on, and what did the apostle Paul say that doomed this to failure?

Presenting a correct view, Paul wrote: "By works of law no flesh will be declared righteous before [God]." (Romans 3:20) Certainly, Christian righteousness must abound more than that of the scribes and Pharisees!

"You Heard That It Was Said"

¹² When Jesus previously quoted from the Hebrew Scriptures, he said: "It is written." (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10) But six times in the Sermon on the Mount, he introduced what sounded like statements from the Hebrew Scriptures with the words: "It was said." (Matthew 5:21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43) Why? Because he was referring to the Scriptures as interpreted in the light of Pharisaic traditions that contradicted God's commandments. (Deuteronomy 4:2; Matthew 15:3) This is made apparent in Jesus' sixth and last reference in this series: "You heard that it was said, 'You must love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'" But no Mosaic law said, "Hate your enemy." The scribes and Pharisees said it. That was their interpretation of the Law to love your neighbor—your Jewish neighbor, no others.

¹³ Consider now the first of this series of six statements. Jesus declared: "You heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You must not murder; but whoever commits a murder will be accountable to the court of justice.' However, I say to you that everyone who continues wrathful with his brother will be accountable to the court of justice." (Matthew 5:21, 22) Anger in the heart can lead to abusive speech and from there to condemnatory judgments, and it may ultimately lead

12. (a) What change from his usual way of introducing references to the Hebrew Scriptures did Jesus make in his Sermon on the Mount, and why? (b) What do we learn from the sixth use of the expression "It was said"?

13. How does Jesus warn against even the beginning of conduct that could lead to actual murder?

to the act of murder itself. Prolonged anger nourished in the heart can be deadly: "Everyone who hates his brother is a man-slayer."—1 John 3:15.

¹⁴ Jesus next said: "You heard that it was said, 'You must not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone that keeps on looking at a woman so as to have a passion for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." (Matthew 5:27, 28) You are not going to commit adultery? Then do not even start down that road by entertaining thoughts about it. Guard your heart, where such things have their source. (Proverbs 4:23; Matthew 15:18, 19) James 1:14, 15 warns: "Each one is tried by being drawn out and enticed by his own desire. Then the desire, when it has become fertile, gives birth to sin; in turn, sin, when it has been accomplished, brings forth death." People sometimes say: 'Don't start what you can't finish.' But in this case we should say: 'Don't start what you can't stop.' Some who have been faithful even when threatened with death before a firing squad have later fallen for the insidious lure of sexual immorality.

¹⁵ We come now to Jesus' third statement. He said: "Moreover it was said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' However, I say to you that everyone divorcing his wife, except on account of fornication, makes her a subject for adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman [that is, one divorced on grounds other than sexual immorality] commits adultery." (Matthew 5:31, 32) Some Jews dealt treacherously with their wives and divorced them on the flimsiest of grounds. (Malachi 2:13-16; Matthew 19:3-9) Oral traditions allowed a man to divorce his wife

14. How does Jesus counsel us not even to start down the road that leads to adultery?

15. How did Jesus' position on divorce differ completely from that related in the oral traditions of the Jews?

“even if she spoiled a dish for him” or “if he found another fairer than she.”—Mishnah.

¹⁶ In a similar vein, Jesus continued: “Again you heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘You must not swear without performing’ . . . However, I say to you: Do not swear at all.” By this time the Jews were abusing oath-taking and were swearing many oaths about trivial things without performing. But Jesus said: “Do not swear at all . . . Just let your word Yes mean Yes, your No, No.” His rule was simple: Be truthful at all times, not having to guarantee your word by an oath. Reserve oaths for vital matters.—Matthew 5:33-37; compare 23:16-22.

¹⁷ Jesus next said: “You heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye and tooth for tooth.’ However, I say to you: Do not resist him that is wicked; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other also to him.” (Matthew 5:38-42) Jesus is not here

16. What Jewish practice made the swearing of oaths meaningless, and what position did Jesus take?

17. What better way than “eye for eye and tooth for tooth” did Jesus teach?

Review Questions

- ☐ Why did the Jews create their oral traditions?
- ☐ What dramatic reversal did Jesus make relative to the scribes and Pharisees and the common people?
- ☐ How did the scribes and Pharisees expect to gain a righteous standing with God?
- ☐ What did Jesus show to be the way to avoid fornication and adultery?
- ☐ By showing the spirit behind the Mosaic Law, what higher standards did Jesus establish?

referring to a blow intended to do injury but to an insulting slap with the back of the hand. Do not degrade yourself by swapping insults. Refuse to return evil for evil. Rather, return good and thereby “keep conquering the evil with the good.”—Romans 12:17-21.

¹⁸ In the sixth and final example, Jesus clearly showed how the Mosaic Law was weakened by rabbinic tradition: “You heard that it was said, ‘You must love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ However, I say to you: Continue to love your enemies and to pray for those persecuting you.” (Matthew 5:43, 44) The written Mosaic Law put no limits on love: “You must love your fellow as yourself.” (Leviticus 19:18) It was the Pharisees who balked at this commandment, and to escape it they limited the term “neighbor” to those who kept the traditions. So it was that when Jesus later reminded a certain lawyer of the command to ‘love your neighbor as yourself,’ the man quibbled: “Who really is my neighbor?” Jesus answered with the illustration of the good Samaritan—make yourself a neighbor to the one that needs you.—Luke 10:25-37.

¹⁹ Continuing his sermon, Jesus proclaimed that ‘God showed love to the wicked. He caused the sun to shine and the rain to fall on them. There is nothing extraordinary in loving those who love you. The wicked do that. There is no reason for reward in that. Prove yourselves sons of God. Copy him. Make yourself a neighbor to all and love your neighbor. And thus “be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”’ (Matthew 5:

18. (a) How did the Jews alter the law about loving your neighbor, but how did Jesus counteract this? (b) What was Jesus’ answer to a certain lawyer who wanted to limit the application of “neighbor”?

19. What action by Jehovah toward the wicked did Jesus recommend that we follow?

45-48) What a challenging standard to live up to! And how far short it shows the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees to be!

²⁰ So when Jesus referred to parts of the Law and added, "However, I say to you," he was not setting aside the Mosaic Law and substituting something else in its place. No, but he was deepening and widening its force by showing the spirit behind it. A higher law of brotherhood judges continued ill will as murder. A higher law of purity condemns continued lustful thinking as adultery. A higher law of marriage rejects frivolous divorcing as a course leading to adulterous remarriages.

20. Rather than setting aside the Mosaic Law, how did Jesus widen and deepen its impact and set it on an even higher plane?

A higher law of truth shows repetitious oaths to be unnecessary. A higher law of mildness sets aside retaliation. A higher law of love calls for a godly love that knows no bounds.

²¹ What a profound impact such unheard-of admonitions must have had as they fell upon the ears of those hearing them for the first time! How utterly worthless they rendered the hypocritical self-righteousness that came from slaving for rabbinic traditions! But as Jesus continued his Sermon on the Mount, the crowds hungering and thirsting for the righteousness of God were to learn specifically how to attain it, as the following article shows.

21. What did Jesus' admonitions reveal as to rabbinic self-righteousness, and what else would the crowds learn?

KEEP SEEKING THE KINGDOM AND GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS

"Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you."—MATTHEW 6:33.

THE scribes and Pharisees sought righteousness in their own way, which was not God's way. Not only that, but when they did perform acts that were good in themselves, they turned them into hypocritical performances to be seen of men. They were serving, not God, but their

1, 2. Into what did the scribes and Pharisees turn acts that were good in themselves, and what warning did Jesus give to his followers?

own vanity. Jesus warned his disciples against such playacting: "Take good care not to practice your righteousness in front of men in order to be observed by them; otherwise you will have no reward with your Father who is in the heavens."—Matthew 6:1.

² Jehovah appreciates those who give to the poor—but not those who give as the Pharisees did. Jesus warned his disciples

**The Pharisees
liked to pray
standing on
street corners,
where they
could be seen
by men**



against copying them: "Hence when you go making gifts of mercy, do not blow a trumpet ahead of you, just as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be glorified by men. Truly I say to you, They are having their reward in full." —Matthew 6:2.

³ The Greek word for 'they are having in full' (*a-pe'kho*) was a term that often appeared in business receipts. Its use in the Sermon on the Mount indicates that "they have received their reward," that is, "they have signed the receipt of their reward: their right to receive their reward is realised, precisely as if they had already given a receipt for it." (*An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, by W. E. Vine)

3. (a) In what way were the scribes and Pharisees paid in full for their giving? (b) How was Jesus' position on giving different?

Gifts for the poor were publicly pledged in the streets. In the synagogues the names of donors were announced. Those who gave large amounts were specially honored by having seats next to the rabbis during worship. They gave to be seen by men; they were seen and glorified by men; hence, they could stamp the receipt for the reward that came from their giving "Paid in Full." How different was Jesus' position! Give "in secret; then your Father who is looking on in secret will repay you." —Matthew 6:3, 4; Proverbs 19:17.

Prayers That Please God

⁴ Jehovah appreciates prayers directed to him—but not as the Pharisees prayed. Jesus said to his followers: "When you pray,

4. Why did the Pharisees' prayers cause Jesus to call those men hypocrites?

you must not be as the hypocrites; because they like to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the broad ways to be visible to men. Truly I say to you, They are having their reward in full.” (Matthew 6:5) The Pharisees had many prayers to be recited daily, at specific times, regardless of where they were. Theoretically, they were to give them in private. By design, though, they managed to be “on the corners of the broad ways,” visible to people passing by in four directions, when the hour of prayer arrived.

⁵ In a display of false holiness, they would “for a pretext make long prayers.” (Luke 20:47) One oral tradition said: “The pious men of old used to wait an hour before they said the *Tefillah* [prayer].” (Mishnah) By then everyone would be sure to see their piety and marvel at it! Such prayers reached no higher than their own heads. Jesus said to pray in privacy, without vain repetition, and he gave them a simple model. (Matthew 6:6-8; John 14:6, 14; 1 Peter 3:12) Jesus’ model prayer put first things first: “Our Father in the heavens, let your name be sanctified. Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place.” (Matthew 6:9-13) Few people today know God’s name, much less want it sanctified. They thereby make him a nameless god. Let God’s Kingdom come? Many think it is already here, within them. They may pray for his will to be done, but most do their own will.—Proverbs 14:12.

⁶ A fast is acceptable to Jehovah—but not as the Pharisees performed it. As with the almsgiving and the praying by the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus also dismissed

their fasting as meaningless: “When you are fasting, stop becoming sad-faced like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Truly I say to you, They are having their reward in full.” (Matthew 6:16) Their oral traditions indicated that during fasts the Pharisees were neither to wash nor to anoint themselves but to smear ashes on their heads. When not fasting, the Jews regularly washed themselves and rubbed their body with oil.

⁷ Regarding fasting, Jesus told his followers: “Grease your head and wash your face, that you may appear to be fasting, not to men, but to your Father.” (Matthew 6:17, 18) In Isaiah’s day backsliding Jews found delight in their fasting, afflicting their souls, bowing down their heads, and sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But Jehovah wanted them to free the oppressed, feed the hungry, house the homeless, and clothe the naked.—Isaiah 58:3-7.

Store Up Heavenly Treasure

⁸ In their pursuit of righteousness, the scribes and Pharisees lost sight of how to gain God’s approval and focused on the admiration of men. They became so wrapped up in the traditions of men that they set aside the written Word of God. They set their hearts on earthly position rather than heavenly treasure. They ignored a simple truth that a Pharisee-turned-Christian wrote down years later: “Whatever you are doing, work at it whole-souled as to Jehovah, and not to men, for you know that it is from Jehovah you will receive the due reward of the inheritance.”—Colossians 3:23, 24.

5. (a) What further practices caused the Pharisees’ prayers to go unheard by God? (b) What things did Jesus put first in his model prayer, and are people today in agreement with that?
6. Why did Jesus condemn the Jewish fasts as meaningless?

7. (a) How were Jesus’ followers to conduct themselves when fasting? (b) With regards to fasting, what did Jehovah want in Isaiah’s day?
8. What caused the scribes and Pharisees to lose sight of how to gain God’s approval, and what principle, later expressed by Paul, did they overlook?

⁹ Jehovah is interested in your devotion to him, not in your bank account. He knows that your heart is where your treasure is. Can rust and moths consume your treasure? Can thieves dig through mud walls and steal it? Or in these modern times of economic instability, can inflation shrink its buying power or can stock-market crashes wipe it out? Will the soaring crime rate cause your treasure to be stolen? Not if it is stored in heaven. Not if your eye—a lamp that lights up your whole body—is simple, focused on God’s Kingdom and his righteousness. Riches have a way of disappearing. “Do not toil to gain riches. Cease from your own understanding. Have you caused your eyes to glance at it, when it is nothing? For without fail it makes wings for itself like those of an eagle and flies away toward the heavens.” (Proverbs 23: 4, 5) So why lose sleep over wealth? “The plenty belonging to the rich one is not permitting him to sleep.” (Ecclesiastes 5:12) Remember Jesus’ warning: “You cannot slave for God and for Riches.”—Matthew 6:19-24.

Faith That Disperses Anxiety

¹⁰ Jehovah wants your faith to be in him, not in material possessions. “Without faith it is impossible to please him well, for he that approaches God must believe that he is and that he becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him.” (Hebrews 11:6) Jesus said: “Even when a person has an abundance his life does not result from the things he possesses.” (Luke 12:15) Millions in the bank will not keep diseased lungs working or a tired heart pumping. So it is “on this

9. What dangers can threaten earthly treasure, but what will keep true treasure safe?

10. Why is it so important to have your faith in God rather than in material possessions, and what counsel did Jesus give?

account I say to you,” Jesus continued in his Sermon on the Mount: “Stop being anxious about your souls as to what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your bodies as to what you will wear. Does not the soul mean more than food and the body than clothing?”—Matthew 6:25.

¹¹ Jesus was a master of verbal illustrations. He thought of them wherever he looked. He saw a woman putting a lighted lamp upon a lampstand and turned it into an illustration. He saw a shepherd separating sheep from goats; it became an illustration. He saw children playing in the marketplace; it became an illustration. And so it was in the Sermon on the Mount. As he talked about anxiety over physical needs, he saw illustrations in the birds flitting about and the lilies carpeting the hillsides. Do the birds sow and reap? No. Do the lilies spin and weave? No. God made them; he takes care of them. You, however, are worth more than birds and lilies. (Matthew 6:26, 28-30) He gave his Son for you, not for them.—John 3:16.

¹² Jesus was not here telling his followers that they did not have to work to feed and clothe themselves. (See Ecclesiastes 2:24; Ephesians 4:28; 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12.) On that spring morning, the birds were busy scratching for food, courting, building nests, sitting on eggs, feeding their young. They were working but without worrying. The flowers were also busy pushing their roots into the soil in search of water and minerals and sending their leaves reaching up for sunlight. They had to mature and blossom and cast their seed before they

11. Where did Jesus find many of his illustrations, and how is this demonstrated in the Sermon on the Mount?

12. (a) Did the illustrations about the birds and the flowers mean that Jesus’ disciples would not have to work? (b) What point was Jesus making concerning work and faith?

died. They were working but without worrying. God provides for birds and lilies. 'Will he not much rather provide for you, you with little faith?'—Matthew 6:30.

¹³ So have faith. Do not be anxious. Anxiety will change nothing. "Who of you by being anxious," Jesus asked, "can add one cubit to his life span?" (Matthew 6:27) But why does Jesus relate a physical measure of distance, a cubit, to a measure of time in a life span? Perhaps because the Bible frequently likens the life span of humans to a journey, using such expressions as "the way of sinners," "the path of the righteous," a 'broad road to destruction,' and a 'cramped road to life.' (Psalm 1:1; Proverbs 4:18; Matthew 7:13, 14) Anxiety about daily needs cannot extend one's life by even a fraction, "one cubit," so to speak. But there is a way to lengthen your life by endless millions of miles, as it were. Not by being anxious and saying: "What are we to eat?" or "What are we to drink?" or "What are we to put on?" but by having faith and doing what Jesus tells us to do: "Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you."—Matthew 6:31-33.

Attaining God's Kingdom and His Righteousness

¹⁴ In the opening sentence of his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus spoke of the Kingdom of the heavens as belonging to those conscious of their spiritual need. In the fourth sentence, he said that those hungering and thirsting for righteousness would be filled. Here Jesus puts both the Kingdom

13. (a) Why was it appropriate for Jesus to use a cubit measure when talking about increasing one's life span? (b) How can you lengthen your life endless millions of miles, as it were?

14. (a) What is the theme of the Sermon on the Mount? (b) In what wrong way did the scribes and Pharisees seek the Kingdom and righteousness?

and Jehovah's righteousness in first place. They are the theme of the Sermon on the Mount. They are the answer to the needs of all mankind. But by what means do God's Kingdom and God's righteousness become attainable? How do we continue seeking them? Not the way the scribes and Pharisees did. They sought the Kingdom and righteousness by means of the Mosaic Law, which they claimed included the oral traditions, since they believed that both the written Law and the oral traditions were given by God to Moses at Mount Sinai.

¹⁵ Their tradition concerning this said: "Moses received the Law [footnote, "The 'Oral Law'"] from Sinai and committed it to Joshua, and Joshua to the elders, and the elders to the Prophets; and the Prophets committed it to the men of the Great Synagogue." In time their oral law was exalted above even the written Law: "[If] he transgresses the words of the [written] Law, he is not culpable," but if "he adds to the words of the Scribes [oral traditions], he is culpable." (Mishnah) Their oral traditions did not start at Sinai. In fact, they began

15. (a) According to the Jews, when did their oral traditions originate, and how did they elevate them above the written Mosaic Law? (b) When did these traditions really begin, and with what effect on the Mosaic Law?

In Our Next Issue

- Masada—Proof That Messiah Had Come?
- Be Thankful—Jehovah's Messianic Kingdom Rules
- Why Pursue Righteousness?

accumulating rapidly some two centuries before Christ. They added to, subtracted from, and made void the written Mosaic Law.—Compare Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32.

¹⁶ God's righteousness comes about not through the Law but apart from it: "By works of law no flesh will be declared righteous before him, for by law is the accurate knowledge of sin. But now apart from law God's righteousness has been made manifest, as it is borne witness to by the Law and the Prophets; yes, God's righteousness through the faith in Jesus Christ." (Romans 3:20-22) So God's righteousness comes by faith in Christ Jesus—this was amply "borne witness to by the Law and the Prophets." The Messianic prophecies were fulfilled in Jesus. He also fulfilled the Law; it was taken out of the way by being nailed to his torture stake.—Luke 24:25-27, 44-46; Colossians 2:13, 14; Hebrews 10:1.

¹⁷ Hence, the apostle Paul wrote of the Jews' failure in seeking righteousness: "For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God; but not according to accurate knowledge; for, because of not knowing the righteousness of God but seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the Law, so that everyone exercising faith may have righteousness." (Romans 10:2-4) Paul also wrote of Christ Jesus: "The one who did not know sin he made to be sin for us, that we might become God's righteousness by means of him."—2 Corinthians 5:21.

¹⁸ The Jews viewed a dying Messiah as a weak nothing. The Greek philosophers

scoffed at such a Messiah as foolishness. Nevertheless, it is as Paul proclaimed: "Both the Jews ask for signs and the Greeks look for wisdom; but we preach Christ impaled, to the Jews a cause for stumbling but to the nations foolishness; however, to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because a foolish thing of God is wiser than men, and a weak thing of God is stronger than men." (1 Corinthians 1:22-25) Christ Jesus is a manifestation of God's power and wisdom and is God's means of righteousness and everlasting life for obedient mankind. "There is no salvation in anyone else, for there is not another name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must get saved."—Acts 4:12.

¹⁹ The following article will show that if we would escape destruction and attain to everlasting life, we must keep on seeking God's Kingdom and his righteousness. That must be done not only by listening to the sayings of Jesus but also by doing them.

19. What will the following article show?

Review Questions

- ☐ Into what did the Jewish religionists turn their gifts of mercy, prayers, and fastings?
- ☐ Where is the safe place for storing your treasure?
- ☐ Why should we avoid anxiety over our material needs?
- ☐ What false claim did the Jews make about the origin of their oral traditions?
- ☐ By what means do God's Kingdom and his righteousness come?

16. How does God's righteousness come about for mankind?

17. According to the apostle Paul, how did the Jews miss knowing the righteousness of God?

18. How was "Christ impaled" viewed by the Jewish traditionalists, the Greek philosophers, and "those who are the called"?



BE DOERS OF THE WORD, NOT HEARERS ONLY

"Not everyone saying to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but the one doing the will of my Father who is in the heavens will."

—MATTHEW 7:21.

KEEP on asking. Keep on seeking. Keep on knocking. Persevere in praying, studying, and doing the sayings of Jesus recorded in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus tells his followers they are the salt of the earth, with a preserving message seasoned with salt that they must not allow to become insipid, losing its tastiness or its preserving power. They are the light of the world, reflecting the light

from Christ Jesus and Jehovah God not only by what they say but also by what they do. Their good works shine as much as their enlightening words—and may speak even louder in a world used to the Pharisaic hypocrisy of both religious and political leaders, who say much and do little.—Matthew 5:13-16.

² James admonishes: "Become doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving

1. What are the followers of Jesus to continue doing?

2. What admonition does James give, but what comfortable position do some mistakenly adopt?

yourselves with false reasoning.” (James 1:22) Many deceive themselves with the doctrine of ‘once saved always saved,’ as though they may now retire and wait for a supposed heavenly reward. It is a false doctrine and an empty hope. “He that has endured to the end,” Jesus said, “is the one that will be saved.” (Matthew 24:13) To gain everlasting life, you must “prove yourself faithful even to death.”—Revelation 2:10; Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:26, 27.

³ As Jesus continued his Sermon on the Mount, more sayings mounted up that Christians must strive to follow. Here is one that seems simple, but it condemns one of the most difficult tendencies to get rid of: “Stop judging that you may not be judged; for with what judgment you are judging, you will be judged; and with the measure that you are measuring out, they will measure out to you. Why, then, do you look at the straw in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the rafter in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Allow me to extract the straw from your eye’; when, look! a rafter is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First extract the rafter from your own eye, and then you will see clearly how to extract the straw from your brother’s eye.”—Matthew 7:1-5.

⁴ In Luke’s account of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus told his hearers not to find fault with others. Rather, let them “keep on releasing,” that is, forgiving the shortcomings of their fellowman. This would cause others to respond in kind, as Jesus said: “Practice giving, and people will give to you. They will pour into your laps a fine measure, pressed down, shaken together and overflowing. For with the measure

that you are measuring out, they will measure out to you in return.”—Luke 6:37, 38.

⁵ During the first century C.E., because of oral traditions, the Pharisees in general tended to judge others harshly. Any of Jesus’ listeners who were in the habit of doing that were to stop it. It is so much easier to see the straws in the eyes of others than the rafters in our own—and much more reassuring to our ego! As one man said, “I love to criticize others because it makes me feel so good!” Habitually censuring others may give us feelings of virtue that seem to compensate for faults of our own that we want to hide. But if correction is necessary, it should be given in a spirit of mildness. The one giving correction should be ever conscious of his own shortcomings.—Galatians 6:1.

Before Judging, Try Understanding

⁶ Jesus did not come to judge the world but to save it. Any judgments he made were not his but were based on the words God gave him to speak. (John 12:47-50) Any judgments we make should also be in harmony with Jehovah’s Word. We must squelch the human tendency to be judgmental. In doing this, we should persistently pray for Jehovah’s help: “Keep on asking, and it will be given you; keep on seeking, and you will find; keep on knocking, and it will be opened to you. For everyone asking receives, and everyone seeking finds, and to everyone knocking it will be opened.” (Matthew 7:7, 8) Even Jesus said: “I cannot do a single thing of my own initiative; just as I hear, I judge; and the judgment that I render is righteous, because I seek, not my own will, but the will of him that sent me.”—John 5:30.

3. What instruction about judging does Jesus next give in the Sermon on the Mount?

4. What additional instruction does Luke’s account give, and what does its application result in?

5. Why is it so much easier to see the flaws in others than those in ourselves?

6. On what basis should our judgments, when necessary, be made, and what help should we seek so as not to be overly critical?

⁷ We should cultivate the habit, not of judging people, but of trying to understand them by putting ourselves in their place—not an easy thing to do but a necessary thing if we are to abide by the Golden Rule, which Jesus next proclaimed: “All things, therefore, that you want men to do to you, you also must likewise do to them; this, in fact, is what the Law and the Prophets mean.” (Matthew 7:12) So Jesus’ followers must be sensitive and discern the mental, emotional, and spiritual state of others. They must perceive and understand the needs of others and take a personal interest in assisting them. (Philippians 2:2-4) Years later Paul wrote: “For the entire Law stands fulfilled in one saying, namely: ‘You must love your neighbor as yourself.’”—Galatians 5:14.

⁸ “Go in through the narrow gate,” Jesus next said, “because broad and spacious is the road leading off into destruction, and many are the ones going in through it; whereas narrow is the gate and cramped the road leading off into life, and few are the ones finding it.” (Matthew 7:13, 14) Many in those days chose the road to destruction and many still do. The broad way permits people to think as they please and live as they please: no rules, no commitments, just a relaxed life-style, everything easy. None of this “exert yourselves vigorously to get in through the narrow door” for them!—Luke 13:24.

⁹ But it is the narrow door that opens onto the road to everlasting life. It is a course that calls for self-control. It may entail discipline that will probe your motives and test the mettle of your dedication. When persecutions come, the road gets rough and

requires endurance. Jesus warns those who walk this road: “Be on the watch for the false prophets that come to you in sheep’s covering, but inside they are ravenous wolves.” (Matthew 7:15) This description fitted the Pharisees perfectly. (Matthew 23: 27, 28) They “seated themselves in the seat of Moses,” claiming to speak for God while following the traditions of men.—Matthew 23:2.

How Pharisees “Shut Up the Kingdom”

¹⁰ Moreover, the Jewish clergy sought to block those seeking to enter through the narrow gate. “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you shut up the kingdom of the heavens before men; for you yourselves do not go in, neither do you permit those on their way in to go in.” (Matthew 23:13) The Pharisees’ method was just as Jesus warned. They would “cast out [his disciples’] name as wicked for the sake of the Son of man.” (Luke 6:22) Because the man born blind and healed by Christ believed that Jesus was the Messiah, they expelled him from the synagogue. His parents would answer no questions because they feared expulsion from the synagogue. For the same reason, others who believed Jesus to be the Messiah hesitated to admit it publicly.—John 9: 22, 34; 12:42; 16:2.

¹¹ “By their fruits you will recognize them,” Jesus said. “Every good tree produces fine fruit, but every rotten tree produces worthless fruit.” (Matthew 7:16-20) The same rule applies today. Many of the clergy of Christendom say one thing and do another. Though claiming to teach the Bible, they subscribe to such blasphemies

10. In what specific way did the scribes and Pharisees seek to ‘shut up the kingdom before men’?

11. What identifying fruits do the clergy of Christendom produce?

7. What habit should we cultivate that will help us in applying the Golden Rule?

8. What two roads did Jesus discuss, and why is one of them chosen by the majority of people?

9. What does it take to walk the narrow road, and what warning does Jesus give to those walking it?

as the Trinity and hellfire. Others deny the ransom, teach evolution instead of creation, and preach pop psychology to tickle ears. Like the Pharisees, many of today's clergy are money lovers, fleecing their flocks of millions of dollars. (Luke 16:14) All of them shout, "Lord, Lord," but Jesus' response to them is: "I never knew you! Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness."—Matthew 7:21-23.

¹² Today, some who once walked the narrow way have ceased doing so. They say they love Jehovah, but they are not obeying his command to preach. They say they love Jesus, but they are not feeding his sheep. (Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20; John 21:15-17; 1 John 5:3) They do not wish to be yoked with those who walk in Jesus' steps. They found the cramped road too cramped. They wearied of well-doing, so they "went out from us, but they were not of our sort; for if they had been of our sort, they would have remained with us." (1 John 2:19) They went back into darkness, and "how great that darkness is!" (Matthew 6:23) They ignored John's plea: "Little children, let us love, neither in word nor with the tongue, but in deed and truth."—1 John 3:18.

¹³ Jesus concluded his Sermon on the Mount with a dramatic illustration: "Everyone that hears these sayings of mine and does them will be likened to a discreet man, who built his house upon the rock-mass. And the rain poured down and the floods came and the winds blew and lashed against that house, but it did not cave in, for it had been founded upon the rock-mass."—Matthew 7:24, 25.

¹⁴ In Palestine heavy rains could send waters racing down the dry torrent valleys in destructive flash floods. If houses were

12. Why have some who once walked the narrow way ceased doing so, and with what result?

13, 14. What illustration did Jesus give about applying his sayings in our lives, and why was it so fitting for those in Palestine?

to stand, they required foundations on solid rock. Luke's account shows that the man "dug and went down deep and laid a foundation upon the rock-mass." (Luke 6:48) It was hard work, but it paid off when the storm came. So building Christian qualities upon the sayings of Jesus will be rewarding when the flash flood of adversity strikes.

¹⁵ The other house was built on sand: "Everyone hearing these sayings of mine and not doing them will be likened to a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand. And the rain poured down and the floods came and the winds blew and struck against that house and it caved in, and its collapse was great." So it will be for those who say "Lord, Lord" but fail to do the sayings of Jesus.—Matthew 7:26, 27.

"Not as Their Scribes"

¹⁶ What was the effect of the Sermon on the Mount? "Now when Jesus finished these sayings, the effect was that the crowds were astounded at his way of teaching; for he was teaching them as a person having authority, and not as their scribes." (Matthew 7:28, 29) They were stirred to their depths by one who spoke with an authority they had never sensed before.

¹⁷ No scribe ever spoke on his own authority, as this historical record shows: "The scribes borrowed credit to their doctrine from traditions, and the fathers of them: and no sermon of any scribe had any authority or value, without [citing] . . . *The Rabbins have a tradition*, or . . . *The wise men say*; or some traditional oracle of that

15. What will be the result for those who follow traditions of men rather than obey the sayings of Jesus?

16. What was the effect on those who heard the Sermon on the Mount?

17. What did the scribes have to do to give validity to their teaching, and what did they claim about dead sages who were quoted?

nature. Hillel the Great taught truly, and as the tradition was concerning a certain thing; 'But, although he discoursed of that matter all day long, . . . they received not his doctrine, until he said at last, So I heard from Shemaia and Abtalion [authorities previous to Hillel].'" (*A Commentary on the New Testament From the Talmud and Hebraica*, by John Lightfoot) The Pharisees even claimed of sages long dead: "The lips of the righteous, when someone cites a teaching of law in their names—their lips murmur with them in the grave."—*Torah—From Scroll to Symbol in Formative Judaism*.

¹⁸ The scribes quoted dead men as authorities; Jesus spoke with authority from the living God. (John 12:49, 50; 14:10) Rabbis drew stale water from closed cisterns; Jesus brought up springs of fresh water that slaked an inner thirst. He prayed and pondered through the night, and when he spoke, he touched depths in people they had never been aware of before. He spoke with a power they could feel, an authority that even scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees eventually feared to challenge. (Matthew 22:46; Mark 12:34; Luke 20:40) Never had another man spoken like this! At the sermon's conclusion, the crowds were left astounded!

¹⁹ What about today? As house-to-house ministers, Jehovah's Witnesses use similar methods. A householder tells you: "My church says the earth is to be burned up." You respond: "Your own King James Bible reads at Ecclesiastes 1:4: 'The earth abideth for ever.'" The person is surprised. "Why, I never knew that was in my Bible!" Another says: "I've always heard that sinners

will burn in hellfire." "But your own Bible says at Romans 6:23: 'The wages of sin is death.'" Or on the Trinity: "My preacher says that Jesus and his Father are equal." "But at John 14:28 your Bible quotes Jesus as saying: 'My Father is greater than I.'" Another person says to you: "I've heard it said that the Kingdom of God is within you." Your response: "At Daniel 2:44 your Bible says: 'In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed . . . It shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.'" How could that be within you?"

²⁰ Jesus spoke with authority from God. Jehovah's Witnesses speak with the authority of God's Word. The clergy of Christendom speak religious traditions polluted by doctrines handed down from Babylon and Egypt. When sincere people hear their beliefs refuted by the Bible, they are astounded and exclaim: 'I never knew that was in my Bible!' But it is. Now is the time for all those conscious of their spiritual need to give heed to the sayings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount and thereby build on a durable rock foundation.

20. (a) What contrast is there between the way of teaching of the Witnesses and that of the clergy of Christendom? (b) For what is it now the time?

Review Questions

- ☐ Rather than pass judgment, what should we try to do, and why?
- ☐ Why do so many today choose the broad way?
- ☐ Why was Jesus' way of teaching so different from that of the scribes?
- ☐ What was the effect of the Sermon on the Mount on its hearers?

18. (a) What difference was there between the teaching of the scribes and that of Jesus? (b) In what ways was Jesus' teaching so outstanding?
 19. How are some teaching methods used by Jehovah's Witnesses today similar to those used by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount?



JEHOVAH BLESSED MY DETERMINATION

AS TOLD BY RICHARD WUTTKE

"You're going to die within three months!"

"What do you mean?"

"That's what the doctor you consulted in Assis told me,"
my brother William replied.

BUT I wanted to live, not to die. For the first time, I prayed to God for help. Happily, 46 years later, I can say that although the doctor did not say what my problem was, his diagnosis was wrong. The scare, however, made me think about my purpose in life and the need to serve our Creator.

Family on the Move

When I was born on November 11, 1921, my parents were living in Grosen, a small town in eastern Germany. They were born in Russia to German immigrants. But,

when the Bolshevik revolution in 1917 ushered in Communism, they along with others of German origin were deported and lost all their possessions. After a long trip by freight train, my parents and their small children arrived at the German border. However, they were refused entry and had to make the trip back to Russia. There they were refused reentry, so they had to go back to Germany. After months of hardship, they were finally allowed into the country.

When I was ten years old, my father died. Two years later, in 1933, Hitler came

to power, and I was compelled to join the Nazi Youth movement. During Hitler's regime, there were problems for Germans born in other countries, and there was evidence that Germany was preparing for another war. So we decided to immigrate to Brazil, being encouraged by others who had already moved there. We arrived in Santos, Brazil, in May 1936.

After working a few months on a coffee plantation, we bought a small farm in a fertile region near Maracá in the state of São Paulo. While we built our house, we were able to stay in the home of the Lutheran minister. He encouraged us to attend his church but when he, and later his successor, began to talk politics in his sermons, we left the church.

First Contact With Bible Truth

It was about this time that my brother told me of the doctor's dire diagnosis. So I went to São Paulo to get a second opinion. While I was there, the family I was living with had a visit from a friend of theirs, Otto Erbert. He was one of Jehovah's Witnesses, and he began to witness to us. However, the family did not appreciate what he was saying, and one by one they all left the room, leaving me with their visitor.

Otto talked to me for about two hours on the subjects of hellfire; immortality of the soul; the true God, Jehovah; his Kingdom; and the hope of living forever on a paradise earth. What a brilliant future he painted! How different from what I had learned in the Lutheran Church! Finally, Otto asked: "Do you believe in Christendom's false teachings or in the Bible?"

"In the Bible," I answered.

"Then study it!" he urged, adding: "If you want to hear more about it, come see me." Since I liked what I had heard, especially about living forever on earth, I went

to see him the next day. That second discussion convinced me that I had found the 'truth that sets mankind free.' (John 8:32) I left with a booklet, *Health and Life*, and an invitation to a Bible study in German.

Fulfilling My Deepest Desire

In the meantime, I obtained proper medical treatment and was able to return home. I took Otto Erbert with me for a vacation. Mother was very happy that I was studying the Bible, the book that was always on our table but never read. After Otto returned to São Paulo, I had a Bible study with my family almost every night, as best I could. I was overjoyed when my mother, my brother Robert, and my sister Olga all accepted the message of truth. Our home had always been a center of social activity, but after about two months of our witnessing, it was almost empty. One of those who used to come to our home said: "If you keep on with this, you'll end up in an asylum!"

However, my desire to serve Jehovah continued to grow. I obtained more publications, and I would read well into the night. But all the literature was in German, and I realized that if I was going to teach others, I would have to learn Portuguese. So, in 1945, I moved to São Paulo to study Portuguese. I lived with Otto Erbert, who later married my sister Olga.

Along with about 50 others, I began to attend the meetings in the only Kingdom Hall in São Paulo. That one congregation has now grown to more than 510 congregations in greater São Paulo, with over 50,000 Kingdom publishers. On January 6, 1946, I was baptized in symbol of my dedication to do God's will. That same year I attended the "Glad Nations" Theocratic Assembly in São Paulo, my first large assembly. What a thrill it was to see 1,700 persons present on Sunday! At this

convention I met Otto Estelmann, who encouraged me, saying: "Richard, you are young; you are healthy; so be a pioneer."

I had considered the full-time ministry before, but now I did so more seriously. Along with two others, I set a time six months in the future to begin. When the time arrived, I asked: "Are you ready to go?" Neither of them was. So I told them I was going to begin anyway. "You'll have problems," they warned. But I stuck to my decision. On May 24, 1947, I received my assignment as a regular pioneer.

New Doors of Service Open

My territory was enormous, including residential and business sections of São Paulo. I placed hundreds of books and booklets each month. One morning I entered a large room where several men were working. I went up to the first man and offered him the book *"The Truth Shall Make You Free."*

"How many books do you have in your case?" he asked.

"About 20," I replied. He took them all and gave one to each man there. It turned out to be city hall!

However, my greatest joy was in conducting home Bible studies. Within four years, thanks to Jehovah, 38 of those I studied with were baptized. Several took up the full-time ministry. Among them was Afonso Grigalhunas, who served for more than ten years as an auxiliary pioneer, until his death in 1988—and that with an artificial leg. Then there was the Ciuffa family. Francisco, a son, served for years as a traveling overseer, and his sister, Ângela, is still a pioneer.

In 1951 I was invited to be a traveling overseer. My assignment included large areas of the states of Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina. Thousands of persons of European descent lived there in the south of Brazil. Most of the visits were on isolated

persons and groups, since there were few congregations at that time. There were plenty of rivers but few bridges, which meant fording the smaller ones with my suitcase on my back and my typewriter and briefcase in my hands. Roads were unpaved and filled with holes. To protect my clothes from the dust, I wore a light smock. This led some to think I was their new priest, and they tried to kiss my hand.

Defending Kingdom Interests

As I tried to keep problems in perspective, I followed this principle: If others can live so far from the cities, walk on these trails and cross these rivers, why can I not do the same, especially since I have such an important message to bring?

Problems of a different nature often arose in the smaller towns. For example, one time we made arrangements to hold a meeting in a local school next to a park. On the other side of the park was a small bar and a Catholic church. When the teacher did not show up to open the school, I decided to give the talk in the park. Soon after the talk began, a half dozen men came out of the bar and began to shout and gesticulate. We learned later that they had been paid to do this by the priest.

I began to talk louder, speaking directly at them. They stopped, and one said: "He's talking about God. How could the priest say that he is of the Devil?" When the priest saw that the men were not going to break up the meeting, he got into his jeep and drove around the park, shouting: "Anyone who is a Catholic should not attend this meeting!" No one moved, and the meeting continued peacefully.

In Mirante do Paranapanema, São Paulo, I visited the chief of police to explain the nature of our work and to request the use of a hall for a public talk. He arranged for us to use a club hall. We told him we would also be preparing handbills to ad-

vertise the talk. "In what part of town will you be distributing them?" he asked. After we told him, he requested some to distribute in another part of town. On Sunday he came to the talk, bringing along two policemen, as he said, "to maintain order."

"Do you want me to introduce your talk?" he asked.

"I would like that," I answered, "but let me explain how we introduce our speakers." After introducing me, he sat down on the platform to listen. Believe me, it was a well-behaved audience. We had no trouble there, what with two policemen by the door and the chief sitting on the platform!

In March 1956 I was appointed as a district overseer and served assemblies all over Brazil. Travel distances were great. Once it took three days to get from one assembly to the next. In the northern part of the country, travel was at times by station wagon. These were windowless, hence well ventilated, which was a good idea, for the passengers included chickens and pigs!

Gilead Strengthens My Determination

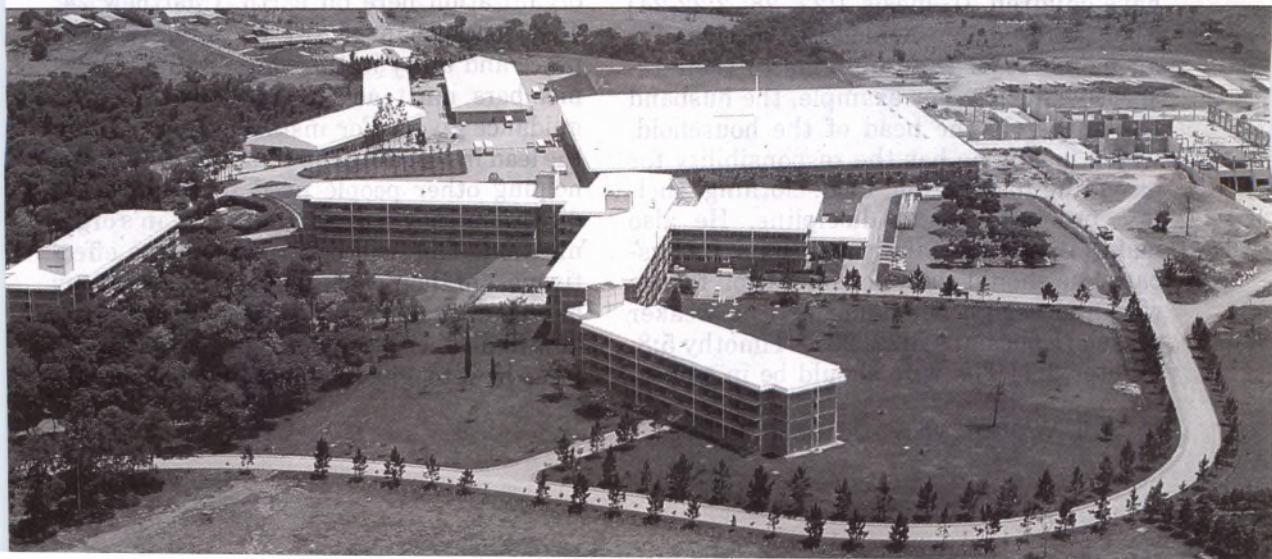
What a thrill it was in 1958 to attend the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead! Our class graduated that summer during

the convention at Yankee Stadium and the Polo Grounds, where 253,922 from 123 different countries attended the public talk. What a sight! Then I returned to Brazil, more determined than ever to keep on announcing Jehovah's Kingdom.

In 1962 I married Ruth Honemann, who had already served for more than six years as a missionary in Brazil. Since our marriage I have continued to enjoy additional privileges of service, conducting courses in the Kingdom Ministry School and the Pioneer Service School, as well as taking the lead in arranging for national and international conventions and in building São Paulo's first Assembly Hall.

Presently we are enjoying the greatest privilege of our theocratic careers as members of the Brazil Bethel family. Looking back on more than 40 years of full-time service, 35 of them as a traveling overseer, I can say that they have been full of happy, rewarding activities. (Proverbs 10:22) I have learned much from Jehovah's organization, including the need to show empathy, to be a friend not a boss, and not to be too busy to attend to the needs of others. In conclusion, I would like to say, especially to the younger ones, what Brother Estelmann said to me years ago: "You are young; you are healthy; so be a pioneer!"

Our present home, the Brazil Bethel



DO YOU FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS?

A LOVING father will instruct his children so that they may be successful in life and happy when they become adults. And children who love and respect their parents will accept such instruction because they know it is for their own good. Likewise, our loving heavenly Father, Jehovah, supplies his servants with guidance that brings them success and joy in their lives. Therefore, it is important that we follow the instructions God gives us through his Word, the Bible, and his earthly organization.

Within the Family

There are various areas for which we are given instructions. One is within the family circle. Marriage and family are of divine origin. The Bible says that God married the first human couple and told them to have children. (Genesis 1:27, 28; 2:22-24) The Creator has provided instructions for all members of the family as to their respective duties. For example, the husband and father is the head of the household, which means he has the responsibility for providing instruction, food, clothing, shelter, protection, and discipline. He also makes important family decisions. As husband, he should show consideration for his wife and assign her honor as to a weaker vessel. (Ephesians 5:22, 23; 1 Timothy 5:8; 1 Peter 3:7) The wife should be in subjec-

tion to her husband, show him deep respect, and be his helper and complement. And the Scriptures point out that children must be obedient to their parents.—Genesis 2:18; Ephesians 6:1-3; 1 Peter 3:1, 2.

What happens if these instructions are overlooked? Disagreements and disputes occur when husbands lack consideration for their wives, and wives show little respect for the husband's headship. In fact, such things have caused the breakup of many marriages. The disobedience and the rebelliousness of children have brought great sorrow to many parents. Often, parents are much to blame for not bringing up their children according to the proper discipline, thus irritating them.—Ephesians 6:4.

Although social workers, psychologists, and others have offered a wide variety of suggestions on how to deal with family problems, no counsel is more effective than the instructions provided in the Bible by the Creator of the family. Following these brings true happiness and satisfaction.—Psalm 19:7-9.

In the Congregation

We should follow the instructions that the Head of the Christian congregation, Jesus Christ, gives through "the faithful and discreet slave," the appointed channel of God's organization here on earth. (Matthew 24:45-47; Ephesians 5:23) In order to have peace and unity in the congregation, all its members must act in harmony with the guidance given. For instance, those taking the lead in teaching the congregation and in helping other people need to stick to the directions they receive from Jehovah's organization. This will contribute to the effectiveness of their work. The instructions may be on how to share in the preaching activity, how to deal with problems in the congregation, how to give counsel and encourage-



tate to apply any directions they receive from God's theocratic organization. This will serve as a fine example for all in each congregation and will help them to be united among themselves and with the rest of the Christian brotherhood around the earth.—Acts 15:1-31; Hebrews 13:7; Revelation 5:6.

Joyful Results

When a builder erects a large building, he carefully follows the plans of the architects so that what he builds will last. In the violent days before the Flood, Noah was commissioned to build an ark. He was told how to construct it and which humans and animals to bring into it for survival through the com-

ment, how to comfort afflicted ones, and so forth. There are also directives on how to prepare instructive and upbuilding meetings for all who associate with the Christian congregation.—Acts 20:20; Romans 12:6-8; Galatians 6:1; 1 Thessalonians 3:1-3.

Congregation elders, or overseers, especially should set a good example in this regard. The Governing Body sends out instructions that the elders should follow carefully and faithfully. They should adapt and apply the instructions to local circumstances. We must keep in mind that the one who directs the Christian congregation is Jesus Christ. He discerns perfectly the needs of all the congregations around the world, and he provides the needed encouragement and assistance. Therefore, elders should not hesi-

ing Flood. How did Noah respond? The Bible says: "Noah proceeded to do according to all that God had commanded him. He did just so." Only Noah and those who were with him in the ark survived the Flood. (Genesis 6:5, 13-22; 7:23) Today, we are living in times that are very similar to Noah's day, and for this reason God will wipe out all the wicked people. The Bible tells us what steps we must take if we want to be among the survivors.—Matthew 24:37-39; 2 Peter 3:5-7, 11.

Therefore, let us receive with appreciation and put into practice the instructions Jehovah gives through his written Word and his earthly organization. Doing this will bring us success and joy and will also save our lives.



Should You Believe in the Trinity?

Is Jesus Christ
the Almighty God?

A person from Hayward, California, writes: "I am amazed, thrilled, and delighted with the above-named brochure. It is a masterly work of accumulating data from various religious sources and quoting admissions that the doctrine of the Trinity is false, misleading, and not supported by God's Word, the Bible."

**Should
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