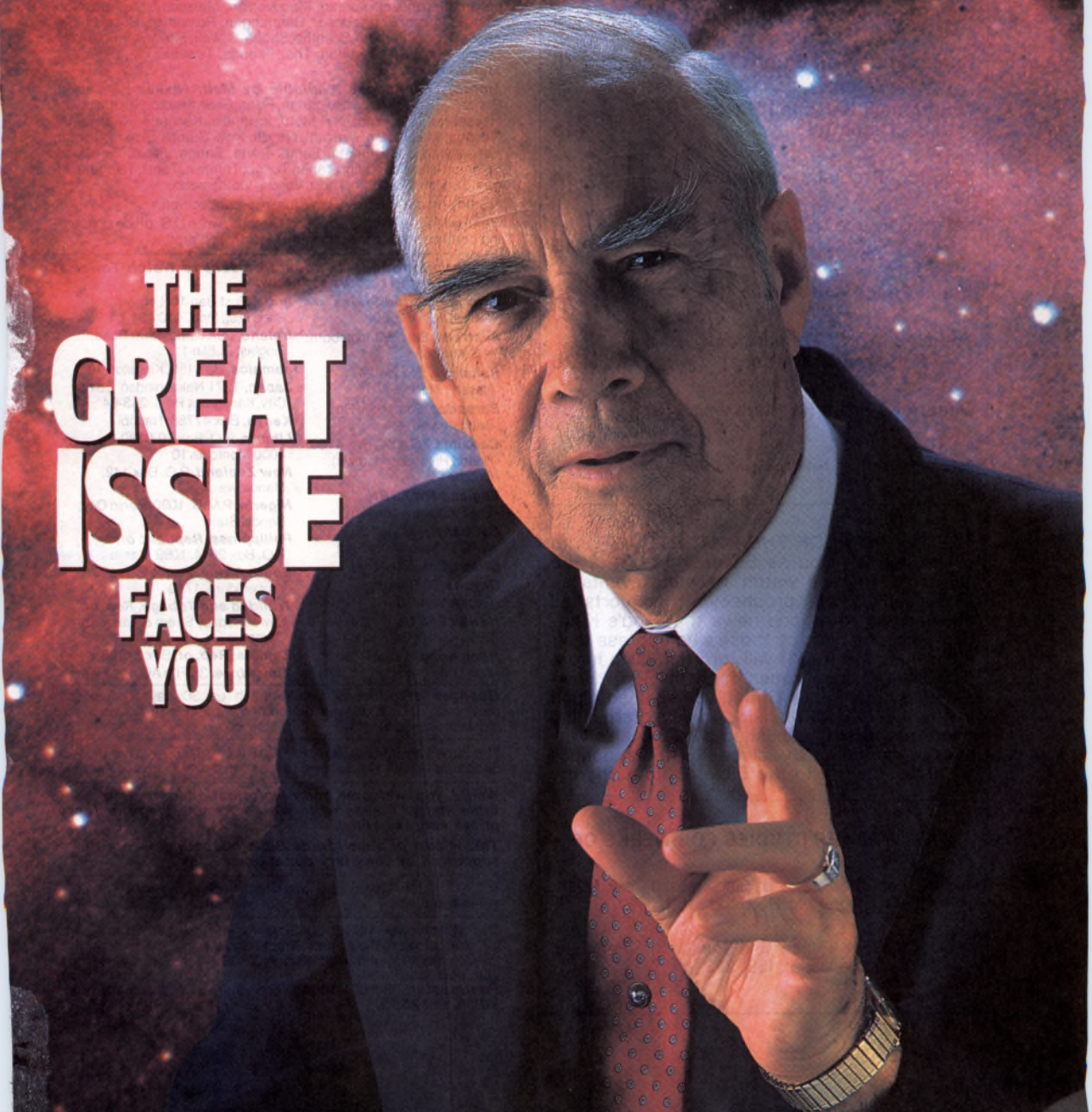


The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

March 1, 1991

THE
GREAT
ISSUE
FACES
YOU



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THE PURPOSE OF *THE WATCHTOWER* is to exalt Jehovah God as Sovereign Lord of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as these 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 God's 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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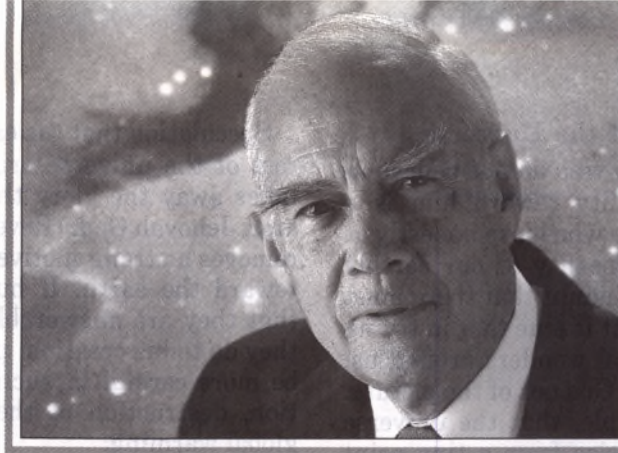
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THE GREAT ISSUE

WHAT IS IT?

WHAT is the great issue facing each one of us? Is it rising sea levels and freak weather caused by global warming? Is it depletion of the ozone layer, leading to dangerous exposure to the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays? Is it a population explosion, which compounds other global problems, such as poverty and crime? Or is it the prospect of the annihilation of untold millions in a nuclear war, with any holocaust survivors eventually dying in agony from cold, starvation, or radiation?

After discussing these and other issues, in 1989 the journal *Scientific American* concluded: "The possibility of nuclear war undoubtedly represents the gravest potential danger to . . . survival." Is nuclear war, then, the great issue facing us?

The Great Issue

With the change in the political climate since 1989, nuclear war may seem less likely. Even so, as long as nuclear weapons exist, they will pose a serious threat to

mankind. However, information in the *1990 Britannica Book of the Year* points to another critical matter. According to this reference work, over 230 million of earth's inhabitants are atheists. Other sources show that additional millions are influenced by Eastern philosophies that allow for the view that there is no Creator. Moreover, while hundreds of millions do believe in a Creator, their ideas about him differ radically. And in many cases, their actions bring great reproach upon the One they claim to worship.—2 Peter 2:1, 2.

If God exists—and he most certainly does—then surely the major issue today must involve him. Why did he create mankind? What is our responsibility toward him? How will he react to the way man is ruining the earth? And how will he respond to the challenge implied by the refusal of so many to believe in him or submit to his will? In fact, the great issue facing each one of us is whether we accept or reject the sovereignty of God, "whose name alone is JEHOVAH."—Psalm 83:18, *King James Version*.

The Origin of the Universe

Of course, to those who do not believe in God, our responsibility toward him is a nonissue. But anyone who looks honestly at the design and the beauty of our earthly home is compelled to admit that there must be a great Designer. It is true that in trying to explain the natural wonders around us, most scientists leave God out of the picture. Many say, for example, that the universe grew to its present size from a tiny point much smaller than the head of a pin, that it all happened "naturally," by chance, without the need of a Creator. However, after explaining a popular new theory on how the universe got started, physicist Hanbury Brown, in his book *The Wisdom of Science*, admits: "To most people, I guess, that would seem to be more like a conjuring trick than an explanation." Professor Brown concludes that "the origin and purpose of the world" are "great mysteries" that science seems unable to solve.

Scientists have demonstrated that matter and energy are closely related and that matter can be converted into energy and energy into matter. As seen in nuclear explosions, a small amount of matter represents a huge amount of energy. Where, then, is the source of all the energy represented by the 100,000 million stars in our galaxy, as well as the more than 1,000 million galaxies that make up the visible universe?

The Bible says: "Raise your eyes high up and see. Who has created these things? It is the One who is bringing forth the army of them even by number, all of whom he calls even by name. Due to the abundance of dynamic energy, he also being vigorous in power, not one of them is missing." Who is that One? The Bible records the answer: "I am Jehovah. That is my name; and to no one else shall I give my own glory."—Isaiah 40:26; 42:5, 8.

Speculation that the earth along with the rest of the universe originated by chance takes away the glory that is due the Creator, Jehovah God. (Revelation 4:11) It also removes a strong motive to act responsibly toward the earth. If humans were aware that they are answerable to God for what they do to his creation, possibly they would be more careful in such matters as pollution, destruction of the ozone layer, and global warming.

The Origin of Life

Consider also the question: How did life get started? People have been taught that life came about without any intervention by God. But this contradicts a well-established scientific principle. At one time it was believed that beetles came from cow dung, worms from rotten flesh, and mice from mud. Even during the last century, scientists taught that microorganisms come from lifeless matter. But ideas like these were disproved by Redi, Pasteur, and other scientists. *The World Book Encyclopedia* (1990 edition) states: "After Pasteur's experiments, most biologists accepted the idea that all life comes from existing life."

Nevertheless, scientists theorize that things were different in the distant past. They say that the first one-celled organisms arose by chance from a lifeless mixture that they call a primeval soup, which contained the chemicals needed for life. "Chance, and chance alone, did it all, from the primeval soup to man," declares Christian de Duve in *A Guided Tour of the Living Cell*.

Speaking of God, the Bible says: "With you is the source of life." (Psalm 36:9) This statement is truly in harmony with what has been observed—that life can only come from preexisting life. Since, however, mainstream science prefers to view one of God's most precious gifts, life, as something that just happened, many people feel no responsibility toward God for how they use their

lives. Thus, they break God's laws, oppressing one another, stealing from one another, murdering one another, and spending considerable money, time, and ingenuity in designing murderous weapons that kill and devastate with terrifying efficiency.

Settling the Issue

Besides atheists and modernists, countless others deny God's sovereignty. A vast number today claim to believe in God, and more than 1,700 million call themselves Christians. For centuries the churches of Christendom have publicly praised God in their services. But where do most of those 1,700 million people really stand on the matter of God's sovereignty?

Both individuals and nations have demonstrated their disregard for it by going

against God's specific commands. Nations claiming to be Christian have perpetrated godless acts of violence, including the two worst wars of human history—and "Christian" clergymen on both sides blessed those wars! By such hypocrisy, they have greatly misrepresented God. As the Bible states: "They publicly declare they know God, but they disown him by their works."—Titus 1:16.

Nevertheless, God "cannot deny himself." (2 Timothy 2:13) The time must come when he will resolve all aspects of this issue of sovereignty in harmony with his own stated purpose: "They will have to know that I am Jehovah." (Ezekiel 38:23) But why has he taken so long? How will the issue finally be resolved? And how can you make right decisions in this most important matter?

WHY SO LONG TO SETTLE THE ISSUE?

SOME 6,000 years ago, God's sovereignty was not at issue. On completion of his wonderful works of creation, "God saw everything he had made and, look! it was very good." (Genesis 1:31) He then entered a long period of "rest"; not, of course, that he was physically tired. Rather, he rested in that he ceased his creative works on earth, confident that his good purpose respecting these would be a complete success.—Genesis 2:1-3; Isaiah 55:11.

What was that purpose? Jehovah placed the first human couple in a place called the garden of Eden. Their initial responsibility was to care for their paradisaic home, including its great variety of animal life. Also,

they were to bring forth and raise children. In time, as their family grew, they were to extend Paradise to the ends of the earth in obedience to God's command to 'subdue the earth.' Thus, the earth would eventually be a magnificent home, filled with a happy, united family serving their heavenly Father. That was God's original purpose.—Genesis 1:27, 28; 2:8, 15, 20-22.

Would Adam and Eve share in fulfilling this grand purpose to its end? That depended on their continuing to cooperate with it by obeying their Creator. Their obedience was not to be blind, unthinking. They were granted free will, for God wanted them to serve him out of an appreciative heart. As a

visible reminder of his rightful sovereignty, he provided a simple test. They could partake of any provision in the garden except one. There was a fruit tree concerning which God said: "In the day you eat from it you will positively die."—Genesis 2:16, 17.

These words tell us that Adam and Eve were not created to grow old and die. Death would come only if they disobeyed this simple command. If Adam and Eve had remained obedient to God, they would still be alive on earth today as parents of a worldwide family of perfect offspring.—See the principle stated at Psalm 37:29.

However, one of God's angelic creatures, now called Satan, became critical of God's way of ruling. He urged Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit, deceptively suggesting that by being independent of God's sovereignty, she would be better off. Satan's real motive, though, was a desire to be the god of the prospective family of mankind.—Genesis 3:1-5; Matthew 4:8, 9; John 8:44.

Since Jehovah had given the first human couple everything they needed, Eve should have upheld his sovereignty and rejected Satan's lying suggestion. Tragically, though, she went ahead and broke God's law. Afterward, Adam chose to join his wife in her unwise course. Thus the self-willed couple, as well as Satan, rebelled against God, and the issue of divine sovereignty was raised.—Genesis 3:6.

Time Needed to Settle Vital Issues

Jehovah could have destroyed the three rebels then and there. But that would not have conclusively settled the questions raised by their rebellion. Could man rule himself successfully apart from God? Was it justice on God's part to demand submission to his sovereignty? Moreover, in view of the conduct of the first couple, would any humans unselfishly choose to serve God of their own free will—even when tested by

Satan? (Job 1:7-11; 2:4) It would take time to answer these questions. It would take time, also, to overcome the effects of that original rebellion and fulfill God's purpose to make the earth a paradise populated by a sinless human race. We are still awaiting the final resolution of these issues.

In harmony with his law, God withdrew from Adam and Eve the privilege of living forever. They were no longer worthy to share in the fulfillment of his great purpose. However, before they died, they were allowed to produce and raise offspring. True, Adam and Eve could no longer pass on to their offspring vibrant, sinless life. (Romans 5:12) But even though the generations that followed were born imperfect and doomed to die, many individuals had the opportunity to show where they stood with regard to the great issue of sovereignty.

Resolving the Issue

How will God resolve these matters relating to his sovereignty? In one sense the questions raised back in Eden have now been answered. Thousands of years of human history have made it painfully evident that Satan's allegation that Eve would be better off independent of God was a lie. Human rule that ignores God has been a continuing failure. As the Bible says: "Man has dominated man to his injury."—Ecclesiastes 8:9.

On the other hand, many good things have been documented during the long years since Adam and Eve sinned. Many of humankind have demonstrated an unbreakable attachment to Jehovah's sovereignty, the most outstanding example being "the Son of man," Jesus Christ himself. (Matthew 20:18; Hebrews 11:1-12:3) Those who have followed God's laws and acknowledged his sovereignty have found that this really is the best way. They have experienced the truth of the proverb: "The blessing of Jehovah—that is what makes rich, and he adds



no pain with it.” (Proverbs 10:22) Moreover, thanks to the resurrection provision, they will eventually get to share in the fulfillment of God’s grand purpose.—John 5:28, 29.

Jehovah has not forgotten his original purpose. Those who reject his sovereignty will not be allowed to dominate on earth for all time, and the Bible warns that soon God will act against them. We read: “God’s wrath is being revealed from heaven against all ungodliness.” (Romans 1:18) This coming expression of God’s anger, which the Bible calls Armageddon, will unquestionably demonstrate that he does indeed exist. Only those who accept his sovereignty will survive that event. “The upright are the ones that will reside in the earth, and the blameless are the ones that will be left over in it. As regards the wicked, they will be cut off from the very earth.”—Proverbs 2:21, 22.

The Great Issue and You

In view of these facts, each of us—like Adam and Eve—must make a choice. Will

we try to live independently of God? Or will we submit to his sovereignty? Remember, this is the most vital issue facing you today. Other issues, important as they may seem, have to do with your present life. This one has to do with everlasting life. The decision you make will affect your eternal future.

How can you show that you accept God’s sovereignty? By diligently studying his Word, the Bible, and seeking to obey his will in association with other true Christians. (Zephaniah 2:2, 3) If you do so, you will have the happy hope of seeing the fulfillment of God’s grand purpose. You will get to see the realization of this marvelous promise: “Just a little while longer, and the wicked one will be no more . . . 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) What a wonderful outcome for all who submit to God’s sovereignty! What a powerful reason for deciding wisely in this most important matter!

Buried Friday, an Empty Tomb Sunday

BY NOW it is late Friday afternoon, and the Sabbath of Nisan 15 will begin at sundown. Jesus' dead body hangs limp on the stake, but the two robbers alongside him are still alive. Friday afternoon is called Preparation because this is when people prepare meals and complete any other pressing work that cannot wait until after the Sabbath.

The Sabbath soon to begin is not only a regular Sabbath (the seventh day of the week) but also a double, or "great," Sabbath. It is called this because Nisan 15, which is the first day of the seven-day Festival of Unfermented

Cakes (and is always a Sabbath, no matter on what day of the week it comes), falls on the same day as the regular Sabbath.

According to God's law, bodies are not to be left hanging on a stake overnight. So the Jews ask Pilate that the death of those being executed be hastened by breaking their legs. The soldiers, therefore, break the legs of the two robbers. But since Jesus appears to be dead, his legs are not broken. This fulfills the scripture: "Not a bone of his will be crushed."

However, to remove any doubt that Jesus is really dead, one of the soldiers



jabs a spear into his side. The spear pierces the region of his heart, and immediately blood and water come out. The apostle John, who is an eyewitness, reports that this fulfills another scripture: "They will look to the One whom they pierced."

Also present at the execution is Joseph from the city of Arimathea, a reputable member of the Sanhedrin. He refused to vote in favor of the high court's unjust action against Jesus. Joseph is actually a disciple of Jesus, although he has been afraid to identify himself as one. Now, however, he exercises courage and goes to Pilate to ask for Jesus' body. Pilate summons the army officer in charge, and after the officer confirms that Jesus is dead, Pilate has the corpse handed over.

Joseph takes the body and wraps it in clean fine linen in preparation for burial. He is assisted by Nicodemus, another member of the Sanhedrin. Nicodemus also has failed to confess his faith in Jesus because of fear of losing his position. But now he brings a roll containing about a hundred Roman pounds of myrrh and expensive aloes. Jesus' body is wrapped in bandages containing these spices, just the way the Jews have the custom of preparing bodies for burial.

The body is then laid in Joseph's new memorial tomb that is carved in the rock in the garden nearby. Finally, a large stone is rolled in front of the tomb. To accomplish the burial before the Sabbath, preparation of the body is hasty. Therefore, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James the Less, who have perhaps been helping with the preparation, hurry home to prepare more spices and perfumed oils. After the Sabbath, they plan to treat Jesus' body further in

order to preserve it for a longer period of time.

The next day, which is Saturday (the Sabbath), the chief priests and the Pharisees go to Pilate and say: "Sir, we have called to mind that that impostor said while yet alive, 'After three days I am to be raised up.' Therefore command the grave to be made secure until the third day, that his disciples may never come and steal him and say to the people, 'He was raised up from the dead!' and this last imposture will be worse than the first."

"You have a guard," Pilate answers. "Go make it as secure as you know how." So they go and make the grave secure by sealing the stone and posting Roman soldiers as guards.

Early Sunday morning Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, along with Salome, Joanna, and other women, bring spices to the tomb to treat Jesus' body. En route they say to one another: "Who will roll the stone away from the door of the memorial tomb for us?" But on arriving, they find that an earthquake has occurred and Jehovah's angel has rolled the stone away. The guards are gone, and the tomb is empty! **Matthew 27:57-28:2; Mark 15:42-16:4; Luke 23:50-24:3, 10; John 19:31-20:1, 19:14; 12:42; Leviticus 23:5-7; Deuteronomy 21:22, 23; Psalm 34:20; Zechariah 12:10.**

- ♦ Why is Friday called Preparation, and what is a "great" Sabbath?
- ♦ What scriptures are fulfilled in connection with Jesus' body?
- ♦ What do Joseph and Nicodemus have to do with Jesus' burial, and what is their relationship to Jesus?
- ♦ What request do the priests make of Pilate, and how does he respond?
- ♦ What occurs early Sunday morning?



What Many Reasons I Have to Be Thankful!

AS TOLD BY LOTTIE HALL

IT HAPPENED on our way from Calcutta, India, to Rangoon, Burma, in 1963. Shortly after leaving Calcutta by plane, one of the brothers noticed oil leaking onto the wing. On being told about it, the crew declared an emergency landing. The plane first had to jettison a lot of fuel to make it possible to land. The steward called out, "If you want to pray, do it now!" We did indeed pray that if it was Jehovah's will, we might have a safe landing, and we did. Truly we had something to be thankful for!

YES, and I have much else to be thankful for. At the age of 79, I still have a measure of health and strength, which I use in the full-time ministry. Moreover, in addition to those blessings common to all of Jehovah's people, I have had many outstanding experiences. All in all, it has been my precious lot to serve Jehovah for upwards of 60 years, and more than half of that time I have been a full-time minister, or pioneer.

It all started with my father when we lived in Carbondale, Illinois. He was associated with the Disciples of Christ denom-

ination and was interested in becoming a minister. However, his experience with two Bible colleges left him disillusioned, for he had his own ideas about the Trinity, the immortality of the soul, and eternal torment.

Eventually, he was satisfied by the Bible truth brought to him by a Bible Student colporteur in 1924, when I was just 12 years old. My father was glad to learn that there were others who felt as he did, that the Trinity, hellfire, and the immortality of the human soul are false teachings. Soon our family was meeting regularly

with the Bible Students, as Jehovah's Witnesses were then called. Learning the truth about Jehovah and his Word was something for which I was truly thankful.

Before long, however, calamity struck. The man who had brought my father these truths turned out to be both dishonest and immoral. He stumbled my father but not mother and me. Now 15, I was the oldest of six children, and with my mother I stuck to the truth.

In the summer of 1927, it was announced that a big convention of Bible Students would be held in Toronto, Canada. Father said he could not afford to go, but Mother was a determined woman. She started to peddle various household items, and by convention time she had accumulated eight dollars. With that sum she and I started to hitchhike to Toronto, a thousand miles away. It took five days and 37 rides before we finally made it, getting there the day before the convention began. Because our funds were low, we asked for and received free sleeping accommodations. When Brother A. H. Macmillan heard about our trip, he wrote it up for the convention newspaper under the title: "Any Increase in Rail Fares Doesn't Worry These Bible Students."

Mother kept Father informed by means of postcards. So, at the last minute, he decided to come after all and arrived by car just in time for the public talk on the last day of the convention. Now we did not need to hitchhike our way back home. What a convention it was! How thankful I was that we had been able to attend it, and how grateful I was that it helped my father to regain his spiritual balance!

For years when I was asked what my religion was, I answered, "IBSA," which letters stood for International Bible Students Association. But I always felt unhappy with that designation. I was grateful, therefore, when at the 1931

convention in Columbus, Ohio, we adopted the new name Jehovah's Witnesses.

My School Career

Among the many blessings that have made my life rich were those connected with music. I was very fond of music and early learned to play the piano. For many years I had the privilege of playing the accompaniment for congregation singing. Before the Watch Tower Society began making recordings of Kingdom songs, a missionary brother serving in Papua New Guinea once asked that I make recordings of a number of our songs so that the Papuans could learn to sing them. That was something I really enjoyed doing.

My favorite instrument, however, was the clarinet. I loved playing it in the college orchestra. The college professor was so pleased with my playing that he asked that I also play in the men's band. In those days no female ever played in a men's band, so when the band members heard of what the professor had proposed, they planned to strike. They thought better of it when they were served notice that if they struck, they would be expelled. Another tradition was broken when I was required to march with the band in an all-day parade. The newspaper rated it a sensation and reported it with bold headlines: "Girl Musician in a Sea of Men."

Eventually, I was interviewed for a professorship in music. However, thinking of all the issues that could arise if I was to teach music, such as being asked to teach or play religious and nationalistic music, I decided to pursue something else and was assigned to teach world history. But that change did not keep me, years later, from playing my clarinet in convention orchestras in many lands as I traveled to international conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses.

In time I became an instructor in world history at a large high school in a suburb

of Detroit, and as such, I was once asked by the principal to recommend one of several new textbooks. In reviewing these, I was struck by the fact that while the current textbook mentioned Jehovah's name eight times, the new ones left the God of the Hebrews unnamed, although they named many of the gods of pagan nations, such as Ra, Molech, Zeus, and Jupiter. When a salesman called, I asked him why Jehovah was not mentioned in his textbook, and he said: "No, we will not put that name in our text because of Jehovah's Witnesses." So I told him: "Very well! Then I will not recommend your text." He slammed the book in his bag and bolted out the door.

Later, I reported to the principal that we really did not need a new textbook and gave a number of good reasons. He agreed with me. All were happy with this decision when, just a few months later, it was decided to drop the world history course from the high school's curriculum. A new course, called social studies, replaced it throughout the 14-school system. Had the school bought new history books, what a loss that would have entailed!

I had many enjoyable experiences teaching school and was a strict disciplinarian. This paid off in a number of lifelong friendships. I also had many opportunities to do informal witnessing. But eventually time and circumstance led me into the full-time service.

International Conventions

After teaching school for 20 years, my eyes began to fail. Further, my parents felt that they needed me, so my father asked me to come home, saying that there was a more important teaching work to be done, and Jehovah would see to it that I did not starve. I quit teaching in 1955, and among my first blessings thereafter was attending the series of "Triumphant

Kingdom" conventions in Europe. How thankful I was to be with our brothers in Europe, many of whom had undergone so much suffering during the second world war! Especially was it a blessing to be among the 107,000 who packed the *Zeppelinwiese*, or Zeppelin Meadow, in Nuremberg, where Hitler had planned to have his victory march after World War II.

That was just the first of many world tours I have been privileged to make. In 1963 my mother and I were among the 583 conventioners to travel right around the world with the "Everlasting Good News" Assemblies. That trip took us from New York to Europe, then on to Asia and islands in the Pacific before concluding in Pasadena, California. It was during that trip that we had the frightening experience described in the introduction. Later tours took us to conventions in South America, the South Pacific, and Africa. Truly, these trips enriched my life, and being able to play in the convention orchestras in many of these places was an added plus for a music lover.

Entering the Pioneer Ranks

In 1955, after getting back from Europe, I joined my mother in the pioneer work for a year, and then the Society asked me to work with a small congregation at Apalachicola in western Florida. For seven years another sister and I helped in the work there, and soon the congregation was able to build a Kingdom Hall to accommodate the increase. Progress continued, and before long another congregation was formed in Port Saint Joe. I spent 11 years working with three congregations in western Florida.

Once I was asked by the circuit overseer to find a place for a circuit assembly. I was able to obtain the use of the prestigious Centennial Building in Port Saint Joe for only \$10. But we also needed a cafeteria,

and we thought of using a school facility. However, I found that the superintendent of schools was opposed, and he said I would have to meet with the school board. The mayor also came to that meeting, as he wanted us to have the use of the cafeteria. When he asked what were the objections to our having it, the head of the school board said that there was no precedent for a religious group's using school facilities. The mayor turned to me for a reply. Well, I had a number of handbills showing that we had used school facilities for our meetings in other towns, and then I pointed to Acts 19:9, which said that the apostle Paul preached in a school auditorium. That settled it. The board agreed with the mayor to let us have the cafeteria—for \$36.

When I was but 13 years old, at which age I was baptized, I prayed: "O God, just let me bring *one* person into the truth." That prayer was now being answered many, many times over as I was blessed in helping a good number to take their stand for Jehovah and his Kingdom. Repeatedly, however, just before a Bible student reached the point of dedication and baptism, I was assigned to another congregation. Still, I had the privilege of planting and watering, and many of these students have proved to be lifelong friends. Sharing in such fruitful activities truly brought many reasons for me to be thankful.

The Media Help

While the media in many places time and again have reported unfavorably on the activity of Jehovah's Witnesses, I am happy to say that the media in the De Land, Florida, area—where I now serve—have helped me to witness. For example, while on one of those world convention tours, my mother and I sent lengthy dispatches to the local newspaper, and these were readily published, together with pic-

tures. The reports were in the nature of travelogues, but we always managed to use them to witness about Jehovah's name and Kingdom.

The same has been true of my street witnessing. I have a street corner where I have two lawn chairs, one on which I sit and the other on which I display our literature. Once, a half-page article with a picture appeared in a local paper under the caption: "Deland's Lottie Carries On Parents' Work as Witnesses." More recently, in 1987, another paper had a half-page article with a large picture in color under the heading: "Lottie Hall Has Her Own Corner Staked Out for Christ." The following year another paper had a front-page picture of me, along with such remarks as, "She's always there" and, "Seated in a lawn chair, the retired school teacher uses her street corner post to do Jehovah's Witness missionary work." Also, four times the local TV station has presented pictures about my witnessing. I keep sharing to a limited degree in all features of the Kingdom ministry: house-to-house preaching, return visits, and home Bible studies. However, because of advancing years and physical infirmities, I now spend quite a lot of time in the street work.

In retrospect I must say that I truly have many reasons to be thankful. In addition to those blessings common to all of Jehovah's people, I have as a schoolteacher had the privilege of influencing many young people; I have had the joy of attending a number of conventions worldwide; I have had a most fruitful pioneer ministry; and I have also been blessed in connection with music. Moreover, there was the witnessing I was able to do by means of the media. Truly, I can say with the psalmist David: "I will praise the name of God with song, and I will magnify him with thanksgiving."—Psalm 69:30.

Kingdom Proclaimers Report

“The Sheep Listen to His Voice”

□ JESUS said: “The sheep listen to [the shepherd’s] voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.” (John 10:3) He further added: “I know my sheep and my sheep know me.” (John 10:14) Sheep-like ones listen to Jesus’ voice as he speaks to them through the Bible. Notice how two honesthearted persons in Italy followed this course.

He Finally Listened

□ Alberto writes: “I was 16 when I started smoking marijuana and taking LSD, and at 18 I went on to using heroin. In order to procure the drugs, I did everything imaginable. I stole, I pushed drugs, I swindled, I sold all my belongings. I just could not stop. Vacations abroad, long periods in the countryside, or political involvement with extremist groups bent on combating injustice—none of these things helped. I tried marriage, but after a while I was back where I started. Not even the arrival of a baby girl stopped me from taking drugs. In fact,

things got worse, since I now needed more money. Then my wife left me, and in two years of living alone, I saw my daughter only twice. I was on the run from drug pushers to whom I owed money, and many times I suffered from withdrawal symptoms.

“Then I remembered a book that Jehovah’s Witnesses had given me some years earlier. I still had it and started reading it together with the Bible. In this way I came to know the true God, Jehovah, and I prayed to him for help. As I gradually put into practice the things I was learning, my withdrawal symptoms became less harrowing. I found a job, and with Jehovah’s help I got my family back together. I went to the Kingdom Hall, and there I realized that Jehovah’s Witnesses have the truth. Reunited, my wife and I studied the Bible with the Witnesses and eventually were baptized. Now, what a joy it is to share our hope with others as regular pioneers!”

A Devout Woman’s Prayer Answered

□ A woman reports: “In 1958, I was actively engaged in parish activities, particularly in pilgrimages to the Sanctuary of the Madonna of the Divine Love in Rome. In time I became a close friend of a cardinal who was the vicar of Rome, and I had many private conversations with Popes Paul VI and John Paul II. After 25 years of organizing pilgrimages, I received a diploma of merit. However, in time my faith as a fervent Catholic began to waver. I noticed thefts, swindles, nepotism, and strange trafficking. I began to see the church through different eyes as I realized that God’s law was very often trampled underfoot. Such things disturbed me, and I asked God to help me because I was losing my faith. I cried often.

“Then, four years ago, my son brought me some copies of *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* that he had obtained from Jehovah’s Witnesses. The magazines were so interesting that I asked him to get me some more. Soon after that I found a Kingdom Hall of Jehovah’s Witnesses and left a note on the door asking for someone to visit me. The Witnesses came four days later. I began a Bible study and made progress to the point of baptism. Now I am sure I have finally found what I have always been seeking—the truth!”

These individuals listened to the voice of the Fine Shepherd, Jesus Christ, and ‘the truth set them free.’—John 8:32.

Garò Nalbandian





LET "THE PEACE OF GOD" GUARD YOUR HEART

"May Jehovah lift up his face toward you and assign peace to you."

—NUMBERS 6:26.

IN THE year 65 C.E., the apostle Paul was a prisoner in Rome. Although he was soon to die violently at the hands of a Roman executioner, Paul was at peace. This is evident from the words he wrote to his younger friend Timothy, when he said: "I have fought the fine fight, I have run the course to the finish, I have observed the faith. From this time on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me as a reward in that day."—2 Timothy 4:7, 8.

1. Shortly before his death, what did Paul write to Timothy, revealing what?

² How could Paul be so calm in the face of death? It was because "the peace of God that excels all thought" was guarding his heart. (Philippians 4:7) This same peace had protected him through all the action-packed years since his earlier conversion to Christianity. It had supported him through mobbings, imprisonments, scourgings, and stoning. It had strengthened him as he warred against apostasy and Judaizing influences. And it had helped him to wrestle with unseen demonic forces. Evidently, it strengthened him right to the end.

2. What had guarded Paul's heart throughout his eventful life, right up to his death?

—2 Corinthians 10:4, 5; 11:21-27; Ephesians 6:11, 12.

³ What a powerful force Paul found this peace to be! Can we today learn what it is? Will it help guard our hearts and strengthen us as we “fight the fine fight of the faith” during these difficult, “critical times hard to deal with”?—1 Timothy 6:12; 2 Timothy 3:1.

Peace With God—How It Was Lost

⁴ In the Bible the word “peace” has many meanings. Following are some, as listed in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*: “Throughout the O[ld] T[estament], [*sha-lohm*] (peace) covers well-being in the widest sense of the word (Jdg. 19:20); prosperity (Ps. 73:3), even in reference to the godless; bodily health (Isa. 57:18[, 19]; Ps. 38:3); contentedness . . . (Gen. 15:15 etc.); good relations between nations and men (. . . Jdg. 4:17; 1 Chr. 12:17, 18); salvation (. . . Jer. 29:11; cf. Jer. 14:13).” Most important are peaceful relations with Jehovah, without which any other peace is, at best, only temporary and limited.—2 Corinthians 13:11.

⁵ Originally, the whole of creation was at complete peace with Jehovah. With good reason, God declared that all his creative works were very good. Indeed, the heavenly angels shouted in applause at the sight of them. (Genesis 1:31; Job 38:4-7) Unhappily, though, that universal peace did not last. It was shattered when the spirit creature now known as Satan seduced the newest of God’s intelligent creatures, Eve, away from obedience to God. Eve’s husband, Adam, followed her, and

with three rebels at large, there was discord in the universe.—Genesis 3:1-6.

⁶ Loss of peace with God was disastrous for Adam and Eve, who now began a slow physical deterioration that ended with their death. Instead of enjoying peace in Paradise, Adam had to struggle with the unprepared soil outside Eden to feed his growing family. Rather than contentedly mothering a perfect human race, Eve produced imperfect offspring in pain and suffering. Loss of peace with God led to jealousy and violence among humans. Cain killed his brother Abel, and by the time of the Flood, the whole earth was filled with violence. (Genesis 3:7-4:16; 5:5; 6:11, 12) When our first parents died, they surely did not go to their graves satisfied, “in peace,” as did Abraham many hundreds of years later.—Genesis 15:15.

⁷ After Adam and Eve’s loss of peace, we find the first mention of enmity in the Bible. God spoke to Satan and said: “I shall put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed. He will bruise you in the head and you will bruise him in the heel.” (Genesis 3:15) As time went by, Satan’s influence grew to the point that the apostle John could say: “The whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one.” (1 John 5:19) A world under Satan is certainly not at peace with God. Appropriately, then, the disciple James warned Christians: “Do you not know that the friendship with the world is enmity with God?”—James 4:4.

At Peace in a Hostile World

⁸ Back in Eden, when God first mentioned the word “enmity,” he also foretold

3. What questions are raised about the peace of God?

4. What are some meanings of the word “peace” in the Bible?

5. How was the peace of God’s creation originally disturbed?

6. What did loss of peace with God result in for mankind?

7. (a) What prophecy did God utter that pointed to a restoration of complete peace? (b) How influential did God’s enemy Satan become?

8, 9. After Adam sinned, how could humans be at peace with God?

how complete peace would be restored to creation. The promised seed of God's woman would bruise the head of the original peacebreaker. From Eden on, those who exercised faith in that promise enjoyed peaceful relations with God. For Abraham, this developed into friendship.—2 Chronicles 20:7; James 2:23.

⁹ In the time of Moses, Jehovah formed the children of Israel, Abraham's grandson, into a nation. He offered his peace to this nation, as is seen in a blessing that Aaron, the high priest, pronounced over them: "May Jehovah bless you and keep you. May Jehovah make his face shine toward you, and may he favor you. May Jehovah lift up his face toward you and assign peace to you." (Numbers 6:24-26) Jehovah's peace would bring rich rewards, but it was offered conditionally.

¹⁰ Jehovah told the nation: "If you continue walking in my statutes and keeping my commandments and you do carry them out, I shall also certainly give your showers of rain at their proper time, and the land will indeed give its yield, and the tree of the field will give its fruit. And I will put peace in the land, and you will indeed lie down, with no one making you tremble; and I will make the injurious wild beast cease out of the land, and a sword will not pass through your land. And I shall indeed walk in the midst of you and prove myself your God, and you, on your part, will prove yourselves my people." (Leviticus 26:3, 4, 6, 12) Israel could enjoy peace in that they had security from their enemies, material abundance, and a close relationship with Jehovah. But this would depend on their adhering to Jehovah's Law.—Psalm 119:165.

¹¹ Throughout the nation's history, Israelites who faithfully tried to keep Jehovah's statutes did enjoy peace with him,

10, 11. For Israel, on what was peace with God conditional, and what would it result in?

and that often brought many other blessings. During the early years of King Solomon's reign, peace with God brought material prosperity as well as rest from wars with Israel's neighbors. Describing that time, the Bible says: "Judah and Israel continued to dwell in security, everyone under his own vine and under his own fig tree, from Dan to Beer-sheba, all the days of Solomon." (1 Kings 4:25) Even when hostilities broke out with neighboring lands, faithful Israelites still had the peace that really matters, peace with God. Thus, King David, a noted warrior, wrote: "In peace I will both lie down and sleep, for you yourself alone, O Jehovah, make me dwell in security."—Psalm 4:8.

A Better Basis for Peace

¹² Eventually, the Seed that was to restore complete peace arrived in the person of Jesus, and at his birth angels sang: "Glory in the heights above to God, and upon earth peace among men of goodwill." (Luke 2:14) Jesus appeared in Israel, but despite being under God's covenant, that nation as a whole rejected him and turned him over to the Romans to be killed. Shortly before his death, Jesus wept over Jerusalem, saying: "If you, even you, had discerned in this day the things having to do with peace—but now they have been hid from your eyes." (Luke 19:42; John 1:11) Because of rejecting Jesus, Israel completely lost its peace with God.

¹³ Nevertheless, God's purposes were not thwarted. Jesus was resurrected from the dead, and he offered to Jehovah the value of his perfect life as a ransom for righthearted humans. (Hebrews 9:11-14) Jesus' sacrifice became a new and better way for humans—both natural Israelites and Gentiles—to find peace with God.

12. How did Israel finally reject peace with God?

13. What new way did Jehovah establish for man to find peace with Him?

Paul said in his letter to the Christians in Rome: "When we were enemies, we became reconciled to God through the death of his Son." (Romans 5:10) In the first century, those who made peace in this way were anointed with holy spirit to be adopted sons of God and members of a new spiritual nation called "the Israel of God."—Galatians 6:16; John 1:12, 13; 2 Corinthians 1:21, 22; 1 Peter 2:9.

¹⁴ These new spiritual Israelites would be the target of hostility from Satan and his world. (John 17:14) However, they would have "peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord." (2 Timothy 1:2) Jesus told them: "I have said these things to you that by means of me you may have peace. In the world you are having tribulation, but take courage! I have conquered the world."—John 16:33.

¹⁵ This is the peace that helped Paul and his fellow Christians to endure despite all the hardships they faced. It reflects a tranquil, harmonious relationship with God made possible by Jesus' sacrifice. It gives its possessor a serene peace of mind as he becomes aware of Jehovah's concern. A child nestled in a loving father's arms has a similar feeling of peace, an unquestioning certainty that he is watched over by someone who cares for him. Paul encouraged the Philippians: "Do not be anxious over anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God; and the peace of God that excels all thought will guard your hearts and your mental powers by means of Christ Jesus."—Philippians 4:6, 7.

¹⁶ One result of man's loss of peace with God was hatred and discord. For first-

century Christians, finding peace with God resulted in the very opposite: peace and unity among themselves, what Paul called "the uniting bond of peace." (Ephesians 4:3) They 'thought in agreement and lived peaceably, and the God of love and peace was with them.' Moreover, they preached "the good news of peace," which was, essentially, the good news of salvation for 'friends of peace,' those who respond to the good news.—2 Corinthians 13:11; Acts 10:36; Luke 10:5, 6.

A Covenant of Peace

¹⁷ Can such peace be found today? Yes, it can. Since the establishment of God's Kingdom under the glorified Jesus Christ in 1914, Jehovah has gathered the remaining ones of the Israel of God out of this world and made a covenant of peace with them. He thus fulfilled his promise made through the prophet Ezekiel: "I will conclude with them a covenant of peace; an indefinitely lasting covenant is what there will come to be with them. And I will place them and multiply them and place my sanctuary in the midst of them to time indefinite." (Ezekiel 37:26) Jehovah made this covenant with anointed Christians who, like their brothers in the first century, exercise faith in Jesus' sacrifice. Cleansed of spiritual pollution, they have dedicated themselves to their heavenly Father and strive to follow his commandments, most notably by spearheading the worldwide preaching of the good news of God's established Kingdom.—Matthew 24:14.

¹⁸ The prophecy continues: "And my tabernacle will actually prove to be over them, and I shall certainly become their

14, 15. Describe the peace of God, and explain how it protects Christians even when they are the target of Satan's hostility.

16. How did peace with God affect the relationship of first-century Christians with one another?

17. What has God made with his people in our day?

18. How have some among the nations responded when they discerned that God's name is upon the Israel of God?

God, and they themselves will become my people. And the nations will have to know that I, Jehovah, am sanctifying Israel.” (Ezekiel 37:27, 28) In harmony with this, hundreds of thousands, yes, millions, from “the nations” have recognized that Jehovah’s name is on the Israel of God. (Zechariah 8:23) Out of all nations, they have flocked to serve Jehovah with that spiritual nation, forming the “great crowd” foreseen in Revelation. Having “washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb,” they will survive the great tribulation into a peaceful new world. —Revelation 7:9, 14.

¹⁹ Together, the Israel of God and the great crowd enjoy spiritual peace comparable to the peace enjoyed by Israel under King Solomon. Regarding them, Micah prophesied: “They will have to beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning shears. They will not lift up sword, nation against nation, neither will they learn war anymore. And they will actually sit, each one under his vine and under his fig tree, and there will be no one making them tremble.” (Micah 4:3, 4; Isaiah 2:2-4) In harmony with this, they have turned their back on war and

strife, symbolically beating their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning shears. Thus, they enjoy a peaceful brotherhood throughout their international community, no matter what their nationality, language, race, or social background. And they delight in the certainty of Jehovah’s protective watchcare over them. ‘No one makes them tremble.’ Truly, ‘Jehovah himself has given strength indeed to his people. Jehovah himself has blessed his people with peace.’—Psalm 29:11.

²⁰ As in the first century C.E., however, the peace of God’s servants has incited the hostility of Satan. Cast out of heaven after the establishment of God’s Kingdom in 1914, Satan has since then waged war “with the remaining ones of [the woman’s] seed.” (Revelation 12:17) Even in his day, Paul warned: “We have a wrestling, not against blood and flesh, but against . . . the wicked spirit forces in the heavenly places.” (Ephesians 6:12) With Satan now confined to the vicinity of the earth, that warning is urgent.

²¹ Satan has used every tactic at his disposal in his effort to destroy the peace of God’s people, but he has failed. Back in 1919, there were not even 10,000 who strove to serve God faithfully. Today, there are over four million conquering the world through their faith. (1 John 5:4) For these, peace with God and peace with one another is a reality, even as they endure the hostility of Satan and his seed. But in view of this hostility, and considering our own imperfection and the “critical times hard to deal with” in which we live, we have to work diligently to preserve our peace. (2 Timothy 3:1) In the next article, we will see what this involves.

20, 21. (a) Why must we work at preserving our peace with God? (b) What can we say about Satan’s efforts to shatter the peace of God’s people?

19. What peace do God’s people enjoy today?

Can You Explain?

- ☐ Why did man originally lose his peace with God?
- ☐ For Israel, on what was peace with God conditional?
- ☐ What is peace with God based on today?
- ☐ What is “the peace of God” that guards our hearts?
- ☐ What further blessings do we enjoy if we have peace with God?



“SEEK PEACE AND PURSUE IT”

“Let Jehovah be magnified, who takes delight in the peace of his servant.”

—PSALM 35:27.

WHAT a joy it is in this divided world to be at peace! What a delight to worship Jehovah, “the very God of peace,” and to share in the blessings of his “covenant of peace”! How refreshing, in the midst of life’s pressures, to know “the peace of God that excels all thought” and to experience ‘the bond of peace’ that unites God’s people no matter what their nationality, language, race, or

1. What peace do we enjoy today?

social background!—1 Thessalonians 5:23; Ezekiel 37:26; Philippians 4:7; Ephesians 4:3.

² As Jehovah’s Witnesses, we treasure this peace. However, we cannot take it for granted. Peace is not maintained automatically just because we are associated with a Christian congregation or happen

2, 3. (a) While God’s people as a whole will endure, what may happen to individual Christians? (b) What does the Bible urge us to do?

to be part of a Christian family. While the anointed remnant and their companions of the "other sheep" will endure as one flock to the end, individuals may lose their peace and fall away.—John 10:16; Matthew 24:13; Romans 11:22; 1 Corinthians 10:12.

³ The apostle Paul warned anointed Christians of his day: "Beware, brothers, for fear there should ever develop in any one of you a wicked heart lacking faith by drawing away from the living God." (Hebrews 3:12) This warning applies also to the great crowd. So the Bible urges Christians: "Seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of Jehovah are upon the righteous ones, and his ears are toward their supplication; but the face of Jehovah is against those doing bad things."—1 Peter 3:10-12; Psalm 34:14, 15.

"The Minding of the Flesh"

⁴ What can interrupt our pursuit of peace? Paul mentions one thing when he says: "The minding of the flesh means death, but the minding of the spirit means life and peace; because the minding of the flesh means enmity with God." (Romans 8:6, 7) By "flesh," Paul refers to our fallen condition as imperfect humans with inherited sinful tendencies. Giving in to the inclinations of the fallen flesh will destroy our peace. If a Christian unrepentantly commits immorality, lies, steals, takes drugs, or in some other way breaks the divine law, he disrupts the peace with Jehovah that he once enjoyed. (Proverbs 15:8, 29; 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10; Revelation 21:8) Moreover, if he allows material things to become more important to him than spiritual things, his peace with God is gravely threatened.—Matthew 6:24; 1 John 2:15-17.

4. What could disturb our peace with God?

⁵ On the other hand, Paul said: "The minding of the spirit means life and peace." Peace is part of the fruitage of the spirit, and if we train our heart to appreciate spiritual things, praying for God's spirit to help us in this, then we will avoid "the minding of the flesh." (Galatians 5:22-24) At 1 Peter 3:10-12, peace is linked with righteousness. (Romans 5:1) Peter says that the pursuing of peace includes 'turning away from what is bad and doing what is good.' God's spirit can help us to "pursue righteousness" and thus preserve our peace with God.—1 Timothy 6:11, 12.

⁶ The pursuit of peace is of major concern to the elders in the congregation. For example, if someone tries to introduce polluting practices, the elders are responsible to protect the congregation by trying to reprove the sinner. If he accepts the reproof, he will regain his peace. (Hebrews 12:11) If not, he may have to be cast out so that the peaceful relationship of the congregation with Jehovah may be preserved.—1 Corinthians 5:1-5.

Peace With Our Brothers

⁷ 'Minding the flesh' can destroy not only our peace with God but also our good relationship with other Christians. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "You are yet fleshly. For whereas there are jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly and are you not walking as men do?" (1 Corinthians 3:3) Jealousy and strife are the very opposite of peace.

⁸ Disturbing the peace of the congregation by causing jealousy and strife is very

5. What is involved in the pursuit of peace?

6. What is one of the responsibilities of the elders with regard to the peace of the congregation?

7. What manifestation of 'minding the flesh' does Paul warn the Corinthians about?

8. (a) What may happen to one who causes jealousy and strife in the congregation? (b) On what does our peace with God depend?

***Peace abounds among those
taught by Jehovah***

serious. Speaking of a quality related to peace as a fruit of the spirit, the apostle John warned: "If anyone makes the statement: 'I love God,' and yet is hating his brother, he is a liar. For he who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot be loving God, whom he has not seen." (1 John 4:20) In a similar way, if an individual causes jealousy or strife among brothers, can he really be at peace with God? Surely not! We are urged: "Continue to rejoice, to be readjusted, to be comforted, to think in agreement, to live peaceably; and the God of love and of peace will be with you." (2 Corinthians 13:11) Yes, *if we continue to live peaceably with one another, then the God of love and peace will be with us.*

⁹ This does not mean that there will never be misunderstandings between Christians. In the weeks following Pentecost, there was a disagreement in the young Christian congregation about the daily food distribution. (Acts 6:1) On one occasion a disagreement between Paul and Barnabas led to "a sharp burst of anger." (Acts 15:39) Paul had to counsel Euodia and Syntyche, doubtless fine, zealous sisters, "to be of the same mind in the Lord." (Philippians 4:2) No wonder Jesus gave detailed advice on how to solve disturbances of the peace between Christians and highlighted the urgency of handling such problems promptly! (Matthew 5:

9. How do we know that Christians will sometimes have misunderstandings and disagreements?



23-25; 18:15-17) He would not have given this counsel if he did not anticipate difficulties among his followers.

¹⁰ Today, then, it is quite possible that someone may be offended by a tactless word or a perceived slight from a fellow Christian. A characteristic in one person may intensely irritate another. Personalities may clash. Someone may strongly disagree with a decision of the elders. On the body of elders itself, one elder may be very strong-minded and try to override the other elders. Despite the fact that such things happen, we still have to seek peace and pursue it. The challenge is to handle these problems in a Christian way so as to preserve "the uniting bond of peace."—Ephesians 4:3.

10. What situations sometimes arise in a congregation, and what responsibility does this put upon all involved?

¹¹ The Bible says: "Let Jehovah be magnified, who takes delight in the peace of his servant." (Psalm 35:27) Yes, Jehovah wants us to be at peace. Hence, he has made two outstanding provisions to help us preserve peace among ourselves and with him. One is holy spirit, of which peace is a fruit, along with related peaceable qualities, such as long-suffering, kindness, mildness, and self-control. (Galatians 5:22, 23) The other is divine wisdom, of which we read: "The wisdom from above is first of all chaste, then peaceable, reasonable, ready to obey, full of mercy and good fruits."—James 3:17, 18.

¹² Therefore, when our peace with others is disturbed, we should pray for wisdom from above to show us how to act, and we should ask for holy spirit to strengthen us to do what is right. (Luke 11:13; James 1:5; 1 John 3:22) In harmony with our prayer, we can then look into the source of divine wisdom, the Bible, for guidance, as well as check available Bible literature for counsel on how to apply the Scriptures. (2 Timothy 3:16) We may also wish to seek advice from elders in the congregation. A final step would be to follow the guidance received. Isaiah 54:13 says: "All your sons will be persons taught by Jehovah, and the peace of your sons will be abundant." This implies that our peace depends on our putting into practice the things Jehovah teaches us.

"Happy Are the Peaceable"

¹³ Jesus, in his Sermon on the Mount, said: "Happy are the peaceable, since they will be called 'sons of God.'" (Matthew 5:9) "Peaceable" here does not refer to

someone who is simply placid by nature. The original Greek word means "peacemakers." A peacemaker is skilled at restoring peace when it is disturbed. More important, though, a peacemaker strives to avoid disturbing the peace in the first place. 'Peace controls in his heart.' (Colossians 3:15) If God's servants strive to be peacemakers, then problems among them will be kept to a minimum.

¹⁴ Becoming a peacemaker involves recognizing our own weaknesses. For example, a Christian may have a hot temper or be sensitive and easily offended. When under pressure, his emotions may make him forget Bible principles. This is not unexpected in imperfect humans. (Romans 7:21-23) Nevertheless, enmities, strife, and fits of anger are listed as works of the flesh. (Galatians 5:19-21) If we find such tendencies in ourselves—or if they are brought to our attention by others—we should pray earnestly and continually for Jehovah's spirit to develop in us self-control and mildness. Indeed, everyone should strive to cultivate such qualities as part of his new personality.—Ephesians 4:23, 24; Colossians 3:10, 15.

¹⁵ On occasion, a congregation or a body of elders is disturbed by someone who is stubborn, always insisting on his own way. True, when it comes to divine law, a Christian should be strong-minded, even inflexible. And if we feel we have a good idea that could benefit others, there is nothing wrong with expressing ourselves forthrightly, as long as we explain our reasons. But we do not want to be like those in the world who are "not open to any agreement." (2 Timothy 3:1-4) The wisdom from above is peaceable, reasonable. Those whose actions form a pattern of stubborn inflexibility should heed

15. How is the wisdom from above opposed to unreasonable stubbornness?

11. What provisions has Jehovah made to help us to pursue peace with one another?

12. What should we do if our peace with our brothers has been disturbed?

13, 14. (a) What is implied by Jesus' expression "peaceable"? (b) How can we become peacemakers?



*How pleasant the peace of
brothers who serve in unity!*

yet makes great brags. Look! How little a fire it takes to set so great a woodland on fire!" (James 3:5) Mischievous gossip, criticism of others behind their back, unkind and harsh words, murmuring and complaining, as well as dishonest flattery for the sake of personal advantage—all of these are works of the flesh that disturb the peace of God's people.—1 Corinthians 10:10; 2 Corinthians 12:20; 1 Timothy 5:13; Jude 16.

¹⁸ True, James said: "The tongue, not one of mankind can get it tamed." (James 3:8) Even mature Christians

Paul's counsel to the Philippians to 'do nothing out of egotism.'—Philippians 2:3.

¹⁶ In that same letter, Paul urges that we should, 'with lowliness of mind,' sincerely 'consider that the others are superior to us.' This is the very opposite of egotism. A mature Christian does not think first of forcing his own ideas, saving face, or protecting his own position and authority. This would be contrary to Paul's exhortation to 'keep an eye, not in personal interest upon just his own matters, but also in personal interest upon those of the others.'—Philippians 2:4; 1 Peter 5:2, 3, 6.

Peaceable Words

¹⁷ The one pursuing peace is especially careful in his use of the tongue. James warns: "The tongue is a little member and

sometimes say things they sincerely regret afterward. All of us hope that others will forgive us such mistakes just as we forgive them. (Matthew 6:12) Sometimes a sharp burst of anger may produce hurtful words. Then, a peacemaker will remember that "an answer, when mild, turns away rage, but a word causing pain makes anger to come up." (Proverbs 15:1) Often, he will just have to take a deep breath and refuse to respond to angry words with more angry words. Afterward, when tempers have cooled, a largehearted peacemaker knows how to overlook things said in the heat of the moment. And a humble Christian will know how to apologize and try to heal any wounds he has caused. It is a sign of moral strength to be able honestly to say, "I am sorry."

16. How does Paul's counsel in the book of Philippians help us to overcome egotism?

17. What wrong use of the tongue can disturb the peace of the congregation?

18. (a) In the case of an inadvertent wrong use of the tongue, what is the correct course for everyone involved? (b) When anger causes someone to utter hurtful words, how do mature Christians react?

¹⁹ The tongue may have to be used to counsel others. Paul publicly reprimanded Peter when the latter acted incorrectly in Antioch. And Jesus gave strong counsel in his messages to the seven congregations. (Galatians 2:11-14; Revelation, chapters 2, 3) If we study these examples, we learn that counsel should not be so mild that its point is lost. Nevertheless, Jesus and Paul were not harsh or cruel. Their counsel was not an outlet for their own frustrations. They were genuinely trying to help their brothers. If the one giving counsel senses that he is not in full control of his tongue, he may choose to pause and cool down a little before saying anything. Otherwise, he may speak harsh words and cause a worse problem than the one he is trying to handle.—Proverbs 12:18.

²⁰ As mentioned already, peace and love are closely related as fruits of the spirit. If what we say to our brothers—or about them—is always a reflection of our love for them, then it will contribute to the peace of the congregation. (John 15:12, 13) Our utterances must be “with graciousness, seasoned with salt.” (Colossians 4:6) They should be tasty, as it were, appealing to the heart. Jesus counseled: “Have salt in yourselves, and keep peace between one another.”—Mark 9:50.

“Do Your Utmost”

²¹ The psalmist wrote: “Look! How good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!” (Psalm 133:1) Truly, we delight to be with our brothers, especially at our weekly meetings and during assemblies and the larger conventions. At such times our peace is evident even to outsiders.

19. What do we learn from Paul and Jesus about how to give counsel?

20. What should govern everything we say to or about our brothers and sisters?

21. What is evident about God’s people at their weekly meetings and during assemblies and conventions?

²² Soon the nations will think they are achieving peace without Jehovah. But while they are saying, “Peace and security!” sudden destruction will come on all who are not at peace with God. (1 Thessalonians 5:3) After that, the great Prince of Peace will proceed with the healing of mankind from the calamitous results of man’s original loss of peace with God. (Isaiah 9:6, 7; Revelation 22:1, 2) Then, God’s covenant of peace will result in a worldwide tranquillity. Even the beasts of the field will experience a rest from hostility.—Psalm 37:10, 11; 72:3-7; Isaiah 11:1-9; Revelation 21:3, 4.

²³ What a glorious time that will be! Do you eagerly look forward to it? If so, “pursue peace with all people.” Seek peace now with your brothers, and especially with Jehovah. Yes, “since you are awaiting these things, do your utmost to be found finally by him spotless and unblemished and in peace.”—Hebrews 12:14; 2 Peter 3:14.

22. (a) What false peace will the nations soon think they are achieving, leading to what? (b) What real peace will God’s covenant of peace lead to?

23. If we cherish the hope of a peaceful new world, what should we now do?

Do You Remember?

- ☐ What can shatter our peace with Jehovah?
- ☐ What kind of misunderstandings may need to be resolved in the congregation?
- ☐ What provision has Jehovah made to help us seek peace and pursue it?
- ☐ What fleshly attitudes can disturb the peace of the congregation, and how can we counteract them?



The “New World Translation” *Scholarly and Honest*

“FULL of falsifications!” Back in the 16th century, that is what opposers said about Martin Luther’s translation of the Bible. They believed they could prove that Luther’s Bible contained “1,400 heretical errors and lies.” Today, Luther’s Bible is viewed as a landmark translation. The book *Translating the Bible* even calls it “a work of genius”!

In this 20th century, the *New World Translation* has also been charged with falsification. Why? Because it departs from the traditional rendering of many verses and stresses the use of God’s name, Jehovah. Hence, it is unconventional. But does this make it false? No. It was produced with much care and attention to detail, and what may appear unfamiliar represents a sincere effort to represent carefully the nuances of the original languages. Theologian C. Houtman explains the reason for the unorthodoxy of the *New*

World Translation: “Various traditional translations of important terms from the original text have been discarded, apparently in order to arrive at the best possible understanding.” Let us consider some examples of this.

Different—But Not Wrong

For one thing, closely related words in the original Bible languages are translated, where possible, by different English words, thus alerting the Bible student to possible different shades of meaning. Thus, *syn-te’lei-a* is rendered “conclusion” and *te’los* “end,” although both words are translated “end” in many other versions. (Matthew 24:3, 13) The word *ko’smos* is rendered “world,” *ai-on’* “system of things,” and *oi-kou-me’ne* “inhabited earth.” Again, many Bible translations use merely “world” to represent either two or all three of these Greek words, although, in fact, there are

The complete *New World Translation* now exists in:
Danish, Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, and Spanish

differences between them.—Matthew 13:38, 39; 24:14.

Similarly, the *New World Translation* carefully notes the difference between *gnō-sis* (“knowledge”) and *e-pi’gnō-sis* (translated “accurate knowledge”)—a difference ignored by many others. (Philippians 1:9; 3:8) It also distinguishes between *ta’phos* (“grave,” an individual burial place), *mne’ma* (“tomb”), *mne-meí’on* (“memorial tomb”), and *hai’des* (“hades,” referring in the Bible to the common grave of dead mankind). (Matthew 27:60, 61; John 5:28; Acts 2:29, 31) Several Bible translations distinguish between *ta’phos* and *mne-meí’on* at Matthew 23:29 but not consistently elsewhere.—See Matthew 27:60, 61, *New International Version*.

Verb tenses are carefully and precisely rendered. For example, in the *Revised Standard Version*, 1 John 2:1 reads: “If any one does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” Shortly after, the same translation renders 1 John 3:6: “No one who abides in [Jesus] sins.” If no follower of Jesus sins, how does 1 John 2:1 apply?

The *New World Translation* resolves this seeming contradiction. At 1 John 2:1, it says: “I am writing you these things that you may not *commit a sin*. And yet, if any one does *commit a sin*, we have a helper with the Father, Jesus Christ, a righteous one.” John used the aorist tense in this verse, indicating the committing of an isolated sin, the kind of thing all of us do from time to time because we are imperfect. However, 1 John 3:6 reads: “Everyone remaining in union with him does not *practice sin*; no one that *practices sin* has either seen him or come to know him.” John here used the

present tense, indicating an ongoing, habitual course of sin that would invalidate anyone’s claim to be a Christian.

Other Scholars Agree

Certain unfamiliar terms supposedly invented by Jehovah’s Witnesses are supported by other Bible translations or reference works. At Luke 23:43, the *New World Translation* records Jesus’ words to the criminal executed with him: “Truly I tell you today, You will be with me in Paradise.” In the original Greek, there were no punctuation marks such as commas; but usually some kind of punctuation is inserted by translators to help with the reading. Most, however, make Luke 23:43 read as though Jesus and the criminal were bound for Paradise that very day. *The New English Bible* reads: “I tell you this: today you shall be with me in Paradise.” Not all convey this thought, however. Professor Wilhelm Michaelis renders the verse: “Truly, already today I give you the assurance: (one day) you will be together with me in paradise.” This rendering is much more logical than that of *The New English Bible*. The dying criminal could not have gone with Jesus to Paradise that same day. Jesus was not resurrected until the third day after his death. In the meantime he was in Hades, mankind’s common grave.—Acts 2:27, 31; 10:39, 40.

According to Matthew 26:26 in the *New World Translation*, Jesus, when instituting the celebration of the Lord’s Evening Meal, says of the bread that he passes to his disciples: “This *means* my body.” Most other translations render this verse: “This *is* my body,” and this is used to support the doctrine that during the celebration of the

The *New World Translation* is in the process of being
translated into a further 20 tongues

Lord's Evening Meal, the bread literally becomes Christ's flesh. The word translated in the *New World Translation* as "means" (*es-tin'*, a form of *ei-mi'*) comes from the Greek word meaning "to be," but it can also signify "to mean." Thus, Thayer's *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* says that this verb "is often i.q. [equivalent to] to denote, signify, import." Indeed, "means" is a logical translation here. When Jesus instituted the Last Supper, his flesh was still on his bones, so how could the bread have been his literal flesh?*

At John 1:1 the *New World Translation* reads: "The Word was a god." In many translations this expression simply reads: "The Word was God" and is used to support the Trinity doctrine. Not surprisingly, Trinitarians dislike the rendering in the *New World Translation*. But John 1:1 was not falsified in order to prove that Jesus is not Almighty God. Jehovah's Witnesses, among many others, had challenged the capitalizing of "god" long before the appearance of the *New World Translation*, which endeavors accurately to render the original language. Five German Bible translators likewise use the term "a god" in that verse.[#] At least 13 others have used expressions such as "of divine kind" or "godlike kind." These renderings agree with other parts of the Bible to show that, yes, Jesus in heaven

is a god in the sense of being divine. But Jehovah and Jesus are not the same being, the same God.—John 14:28; 20:17.

God's Personal Name

At Luke 4:18, according to the *New World Translation*, Jesus applied to himself a prophecy in Isaiah, saying: "Jehovah's spirit is upon me." (Isaiah 61:1) Many object to the use of the name Jehovah here. It is, however, just one of the more than 200 places where that name appears in the *New World Translation* of the Christian Greek Scriptures, the so-called New Testament. True, no early surviving Greek manuscript of the "New Testament" contains the personal name of God. But the name was included in the *New World Translation* for sound reasons, not merely on a whim. And others have followed a similar course. In the German language alone, at least 11 versions use "Jehovah" (or the transliteration of the Hebrew, "Yahweh") in the text of the "New Testament," while four translators add the name in parentheses after "Lord."* More than 70 German translations use it in footnotes or commentaries.

In Israel, God's name was pronounced without inhibition for more than a thousand years. It is the name that appears most frequently in the Hebrew Scriptures ("Old Testament"), and there is no convincing proof that it was unknown to the general public or that its pronunciation had been forgotten in the first century of our Com-

* At Revelation 1:20, German translator Curt Stage rendered the same verb as follows: "The seven lampstands mean [*ei-sin'*] the seven congregations." Fritz Tillmann and Ludwig Thimme similarly render it "mean" [*es-tin'*] at Matthew 12:7.

[#] Jürgen Becker, Jeremias Felbinger, Oskar Holtzmann, Friedrich Rittelmeyer, and Siegfried Schulz. Emil Bock says, "a divine being." See also the English translations *Today's English Version*, *The New English Bible*, *Moffatt*, *Goodspeed*.

* Johann Babor, Karl F. Bahrddt, Petrus Dausch, Wilhelm M. L. De Wette, Georg F. Griesinger, Heinrich A. W. Meyer, Friedrich Muenther, Sebastian Mutschelle, Johann C. F. Schulz, Johann J. Stolz, and Dominikus von Brentano. August Dächsel, Friedrich Hauck, Johann P. Lange, and Ludwig Reinhardt have the name in parentheses.

A TRANSLATION RECOMMENDS ITSELF

One of Jehovah's Witnesses in Germany conversed with an elderly lady, to whom she read Habakkuk 1:12: "Are you not from long ago, O Jehovah? O my God, my Holy One, *you do not die.*" The lady protested because her Bible said, "Let us not die." The Witness pointed out that the *New World Translation* adheres closely to the original manuscripts. Since the elderly woman spoke Hebrew, she fetched her Hebrew Bible and discovered to her surprise that the *New World Translation* is accurate. The Sopherim (Jewish scribes) changed this text long ago because they felt the original passage showed irreverence toward God. With few exceptions, German Bible translations make no adjustments to correct this scribal emendation. The *New World Translation* has restored the original text.

mon Era, when Jewish Christians were inspired to write the books of the "New Testament."—Ruth 2:4.

Wolfgang Feneberg comments in the Jesuit magazine *Entschluss/Offen* (April 1985): "He [Jesus] did not withhold his father's name YHWH from us, but he entrusted us with it. It is otherwise inexplicable why the first petition of the Lord's Prayer should read: 'May your name be sanctified!'" Feneberg further notes that "in pre-Christian manuscripts for Greek-speaking Jews, God's name was not paraphrased with *kýrios* [Lord], but was written in the tetragram form [YHWH] in Hebrew or archaic Hebrew characters. . . . We find recollections of the name in the writings of the Church Fathers; but they are not interested in it. By translating this name *kýrios* (Lord), the Church Fathers were more interested in attributing the grandeur of the *kýrios* to Jesus Christ." The *New World Translation* restores the name to the text of the Bible wherever there is sound, scholarly reason to do so.—See Appendix 1D in the *Reference Bible*.

Some criticize the form "Jehovah" by which the *New World Translation* renders God's name. In Hebrew manuscripts, the name appears just as four consonants, YHWH, and many insist that the proper pronunciation is "Yahweh," not "Jehovah." Hence, they feel that using "Jehovah" is a

mistake. But, in truth, scholars are by no means in agreement that the form "Yahweh" represents the original pronunciation. The fact is that while God preserved the spelling of his name "YHWH" over 6,000 times in the Bible, he did not preserve the pronunciation of it that Moses heard on Mount Sinai. (Exodus 20:2) Therefore, the pronunciation is not of the utmost importance at this time.

In Europe the form "Jehovah" has been widely recognized for centuries and is used in many Bibles, including Jewish translations. It appears countless times on buildings, on coins and other objects, and in printed works, as well as in many church hymns. So rather than trying to represent the original Hebrew pronunciation, the

In Our Next Issue

- Should Sins Be Confessed?
- Jehovah's Celestial Chariot on the Move
- Who Really Have a Heavenly Calling?

New World Translation in all its different languages uses the form of God's name that is popularly accepted. This is exactly what other Bible versions do with all the other names in the Bible.

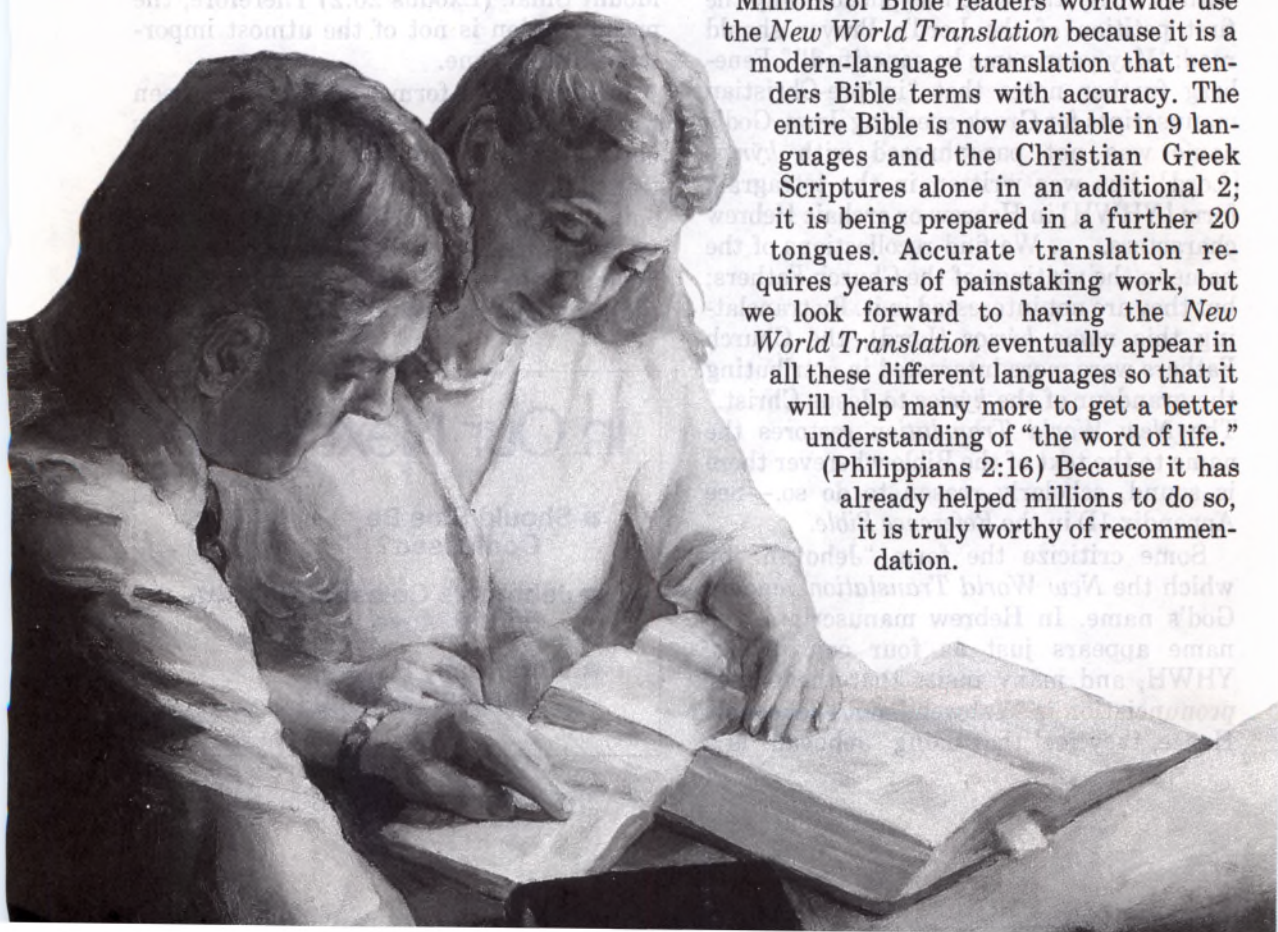
Why the Harsh Criticism?

Luther's Bible was criticized because it was produced by a man who exposed the shortcomings of the traditional religion of his day. His translation opened the way for ordinary people to see the truth of much of what he said. Similarly, the *New World Translation* is criticized because it is published by Jehovah's Witnesses, who outspokenly declare that many of Christendom's doctrines are not found in the Bible. The *New World Translation*—indeed, any Bible—makes this evident.

In fact, the *New World Translation* is a scholarly work. In 1989, Professor Benja-

min Kedar of Israel said: "In my linguistic research in connection with the Hebrew Bible and translations, I often refer to the English edition of what is known as the *New World Translation*. In so doing, I find my feeling repeatedly confirmed that this work reflects an honest endeavor to achieve an understanding of the text that is as accurate as possible. Giving evidence of a broad command of the original language, it renders the original words into a second language understandably without deviating unnecessarily from the specific structure of the Hebrew. . . . Every statement of language allows for a certain latitude in interpreting or translating. So the linguistic solution in any given case may be open to debate. But I have never discovered in the *New World Translation* any biased intent to read something into the text that it does not contain."

Millions of Bible readers worldwide use the *New World Translation* because it is a modern-language translation that renders Bible terms with accuracy. The entire Bible is now available in 9 languages and the Christian Greek Scriptures alone in an additional 2; it is being prepared in a further 20 tongues. Accurate translation requires years of painstaking work, but we look forward to having the *New World Translation* eventually appear in all these different languages so that it will help many more to get a better understanding of "the word of life." (Philippians 2:16) Because it has already helped millions to do so, it is truly worthy of recommendation.



Questions From Readers

■ Angels are spirits, without material bodies, so why do you show them in illustrations as having wings? Is this just religious tradition?

We usually depict angels with wings because of the symbolic descriptions found in the Bible.

You are correct in saying that spirit creatures do not have material bodies with literal wings—nor faces, hands, feet, or other body parts. Yet, on occasion, when angels appeared to God's servants, they must have looked like normal men, for they were mistaken for such.—Genesis 18:2, 22; 19:1; Judges 6:11-22.

Sometimes, however, humans received visions of angels and described them. The prophet Ezekiel saw "four living creatures," and in a later vision, he identified these as angels of the rank known as cherubs. (Ezekiel 1:5; 9:3; 10:3) Each of these angels had four wings, which showed their ability to respond swiftly in any direction to God's commands. "They would not turn when they went; they would go

each one straight forward . . . To wherever the spirit would incline to go, they would go. They would not turn as they went."—Ezekiel 1:6, 9, 12.

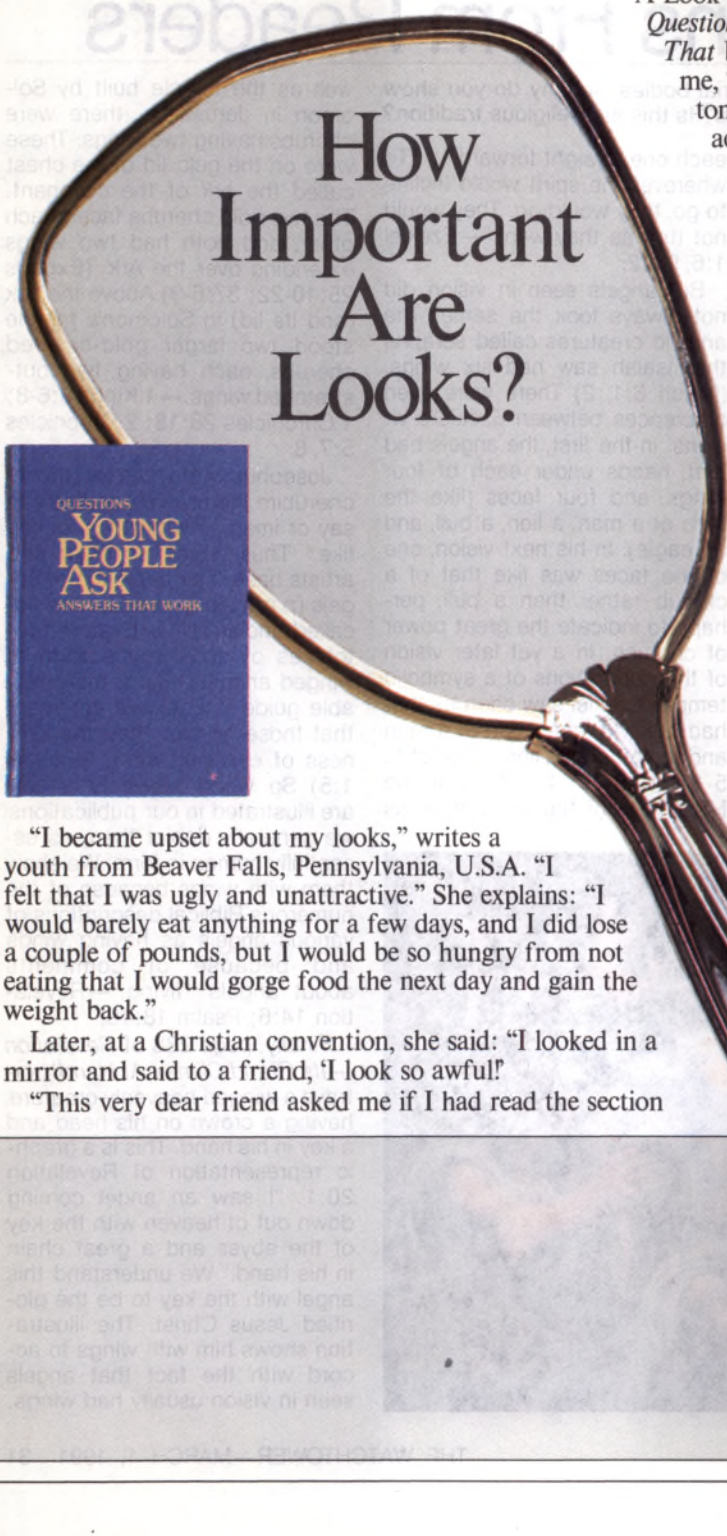
But angels seen in vision did not always look the same. The angelic creatures called seraphs that Isaiah saw had six wings. (Isaiah 6:1, 2) There were even differences between Ezekiel's visions. In the first, the angels had feet, hands under each of four wings, and four faces (like the face of a man, a lion, a bull, and an eagle). In his next vision, one of the faces was like that of a cherub rather than a bull, perhaps to indicate the great power of cherubs. In a yet later vision of the decorations of a symbolic temple, Ezekiel saw cherubs that had but two faces, one of a man and the other of a lion. (Ezekiel 1:5-11; 10:7-17; 41:18, 19) In the Most Holy of the tabernacle, as

well as the temple built by Solomon in Jerusalem, there were cherubs having two wings. These were on the gold lid of the chest called the ark of the covenant. The two gold cherubs faced each other, and both had two wings extending over the Ark. (Exodus 25:10-22; 37:6-9) Above the Ark (and its lid) in Solomon's temple stood two larger gold-covered cherubs, each having two outstretched wings.—1 Kings 8:6-8; 1 Chronicles 28:18; 2 Chronicles 5:7, 8.

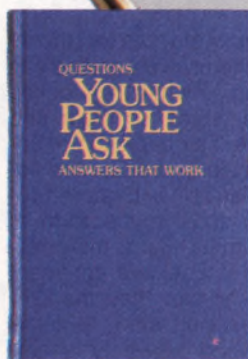
Josephus wrote: "As for [those] cherubim themselves, no one can say or imagine what they looked like." Thus, some scholars and artists base their depiction of angels (particularly cherubs) on so-called ancient Near Eastern prototypes of gods in the form of winged animals. But a more reliable guide is Ezekiel's comment that those he saw "had the likeness of earthling man." (Ezekiel 1:5) So when heavenly angels are illustrated in our publications, we generally depict them as essentially human in form. We show them with wings because of the numerous Biblical descriptions of various angels as having wings and because of comments about angels' "flying."—Revelation 14:6; Psalm 18:10.

Finally, page 288 of *Revelation—Its Grand Climax At Hand!* portrays a winged heavenly creature, having a crown on his head and a key in his hand. This is a graphic representation of Revelation 20:1: "I saw an angel coming down out of heaven with the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand." We understand this angel with the key to be the glorified Jesus Christ. The illustration shows him with wings to accord with the fact that angels seen in vision usually had wings.





How Important Are Looks?



'A Look at How You Look' in the book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*. I told her no. She said to me, 'My dear, you need to go home tonight and read it.' And that's exactly what I did.

"I felt as if I were reading my life story. Then I came to a question that made me think, 'Who is it that promotes the idea that you need a certain look if you are to be popular, successful, or happy?'"

The answer to the question, this youth said, made a dramatic change in her life. She concluded: "Through the helpful suggestions in the *Young People Ask* book, I saw the need to set my priorities straight."

"I became upset about my looks," writes a youth from Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. "I felt that I was ugly and unattractive." She explains: "I would barely eat anything for a few days, and I did lose a couple of pounds, but I would be so hungry from not eating that I would gorge food the next day and gain the weight back."

Later, at a Christian convention, she said: "I looked in a mirror and said to a friend, 'I look so awful!'"

"This very dear friend asked me if I had read the section