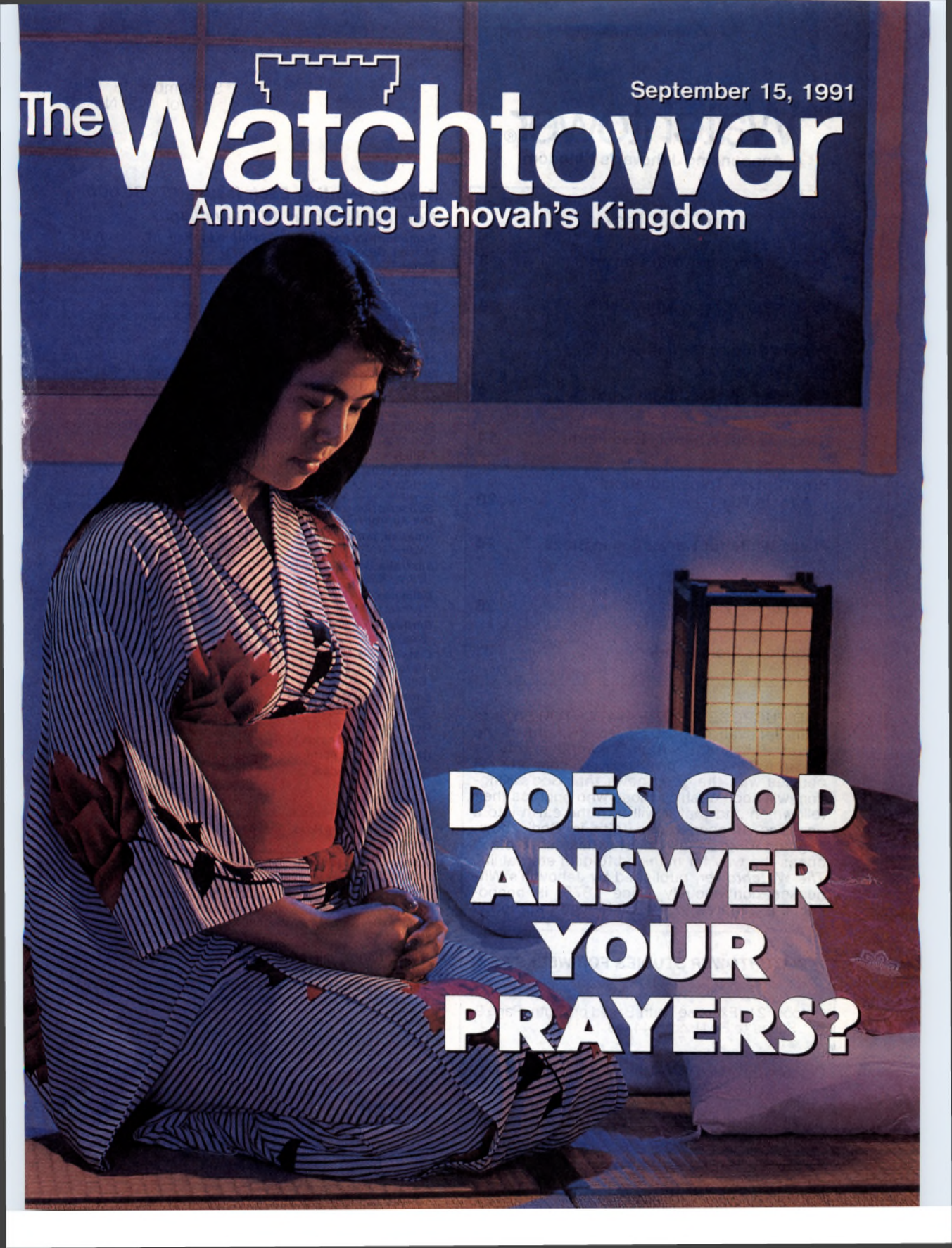


A woman with long dark hair, wearing a blue and white striped kimono, is kneeling on a tatami mat. She is looking down with her hands clasped in prayer. In the background, there is a window with a dark frame and a small lantern with a yellow grid pattern.

The Watchtower

September 15, 1991

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

**DOES GOD
ANSWER
YOUR
PRAYERS?**

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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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Does God Answer Your Prayers?

I HAVE never felt the sensation of having my prayers answered," said a woman living in Hokkaido, Japan. In this regard she is not alone. Many people feel that their prayers are never answered. In fact, you may be wondering if God answers your prayers.

Millions address countless prayers to numberless deities. Why does it seem that so many prayers are not answered? To find out, let us first examine the kinds of prayers being offered.

What Do Some Pray For?

During the New Year's season, two thirds of Japan's population, or some 80 million people, pray in Shinto shrines or Buddhist temples. They give coins as offerings and pray for good fortune and family safety.

In January and February—just before the grueling entrance examinations—students flock to shrines such as one in Tokyo noted for its education god. They write their wishes on wooden prayer plaques and hang them on wooden bars on the grounds of the shrines. At least 100,000 of these plaques decorated the precincts of a well-known shrine in Tokyo during the 1990 examination season.

Many prayers involve health. At a shrine in Kawasaki, Japan, people pray for protection



against AIDS. "The significance of praying against AIDS," explained the shrine's priest, "is that it will make people discreet in their behavior." But is that all there is to prayer?

At another temple, an elderly woman prayed for "sudden death." Why? Because she wanted to avoid suffering a prolonged illness and did not wish to become a burden to her family.

In one so-called Christian country, the captain of a football team prayed for his team's victory and protection from injury. Catholics in Poland pray for their personal well-being and decorate their Madonna with jewelry when they believe that their prayers are heard. Many people flock to churches such as the famous Guadalupe in Mexico City, and Lourdes, France, begging for miraculous cures.

East or West, people offer prayers for many and varied personal reasons. Obviously, they want their prayers to be heard and answered. However, is it realistic to expect that all prayers will be favorably heard? What about your own prayers? Are they answered? In fact, does God answer prayers at all?

Whose Prayers Are Answered?

JEHOVAH is the God who answers prayers. In fact, his Word, the Bible, calls him the "Hearer of prayer." (Psalm 65:2) He is willing to answer prayers. But whose prayers does he actually answer?

God answers the prayers of individuals pleasing to him. They have the reverential attitude of the psalmist who said: "As the hind that longs for the water streams, so my very soul longs for you, O God. My soul indeed thirsts for God, for the living God." (Psalm 42:1, 2) Yet, what evidence is there to prove that Jehovah answers the prayers of his true worshippers?

Proof That God Answers Prayers

The Bible contains an extensive record proving that Jehovah answers the prayers of his faithful servants. For example, when King Jehoshaphat of Judah prayed for deliverance, God answered his prayer and gave him victory by causing his enemies to smite one another. (2 Chronicles 20:1-26) When King Hezekiah similarly faced a formidable military force, he humbly prayed to God for help. Hezekiah saw the salvation of Jehovah when an angel struck down 185,000 Assyrians in one night.—Isaiah 37:14-20, 36-38.

Why did God answer those prayers? In both cases, the kings pleaded that losing the battle would reflect badly on Jehovah's name. (2 Chronicles 20:6-9; Isaiah 37:17-20) They were concerned about his reputation. "The ultimate object of prayer," says *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, "is not merely the good of the petitioner but the honor of God's name." Therefore, faithful servants of Jehovah can be sure that he will help them "for the sake of his name." The record proving that such prayers have been answered gives God's people confidence that

he hears their prayers.—Psalm 91:14, 15; 106:8; Proverbs 18:10.

Even if a situation involves Jehovah's name, however, God decides whether to answer certain prayers or not. He may have valid reasons not to answer some prayers. If we feel that our prayers are not being heard, it is good to consider why this may be the case.

Why Some Prayers Are Not Answered

"Even though you make many prayers, I am not listening," Jehovah once told the Israelites. Pointing out the reason, he continued: "With bloodshed your very hands have become filled." (Isaiah 1:15) How could anyone ignore Jehovah's law and yet have an audience with him? A Bible proverb gives a clear answer, saying: "He that is turning his ear away from hearing the law—even his prayer is something detestable."—Proverbs 28:9.

The Bible gives another reason why some prayers are not heard, when it says: "You do ask, and yet you do not receive, because you are asking for a wrong purpose, that you may expend it upon your cravings for sensual pleasure." (James 4:3) No, Jehovah will not answer prayers for the satisfying of wrong desires. We must also remember that God is not taking orders from humans, so to speak. He is the One who decides how he will answer our prayers.

Sure to be answered are prayers that go to God out of a clean heart, with a proper motive, and in his appointed way—through Jesus Christ. (John 14:6, 14) But even those whose prayers meet such requirements have sometimes felt that they are not being heard. Why would God not immediately answer certain prayers of his servants?

Jehovah knows the best time to answer prayers. Though a boy asks for a bicycle, his father may not obtain one for him until the child is old enough to ride it safely. The same may be true with some prayers of those who love God. Knowing what is best for them, he grants what is needed at the most favorable time.

Yet, Jehovah's servants do not get everything they may pray for. Being imperfect, they may desire some things that would not be good for them. Their loving heavenly Father would not give them anything harmful, for he is the Giver of "every good gift and every perfect present." (James 1:17) Similarly, God may not grant something that is not necessary from his standpoint. (Compare 2 Corinthians 12:7-10.) He answers prayers in harmony with his will and purpose for his people.—1 John 5:14, 15.

Jesus "Was Favorably Heard"

Jesus Christ was a man of prayer. (Matthew 6:9-13; John 17:1-26) He had full confidence that his heavenly Father would hear and answer his prayers. Jesus once said: "Father, . . . I knew that you always hear me." (John 11:41, 42) But was Jesus not disappointed at the very end of his earthly course? Did he not then cry out: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"—Matthew 27:46.

When Jesus said those words, evidently he was fulfilling a prophecy concerning his



death. (Psalm 22:1) In a qualified sense, Jesus could also have meant that Jehovah had removed his protection and let his Son die a painful and shameful death so as to test his integrity to the limit. An examination of the events on that final day of Jesus' earthly life shows that God heard his prayers.

On the night of his arrest, Jesus prayed in the garden of Gethsemane. Three times he pleaded: "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass away from me." (Matthew 26:39, 42, 44) Jesus

was not reluctant to give his life as a ransom for believing mankind. No, but he apparently was deeply concerned about the possibility of dishonoring his dearly beloved Father by dying on a torture stake as a cursed blasphemer. Did Jehovah hear Jesus' prayer?

Years later the apostle Paul wrote: "In the days of his flesh Christ offered up supplications and also petitions to the One who was able to save him out of death, with strong outcries and tears, and he was favorably heard for his godly fear." (Hebrews 5:7; Luke 22:42, 44) Yes, on the agonizing night preceding his death, Jesus "was favorably heard." But how?

Jehovah sent an angel who "appeared to [Jesus] and strengthened him." (Luke 22:43) Thus strengthened, Jesus was able to face death on the torture stake. Apparently, Jehovah then gave him assurance that his death on the stake would not bring reproach on the

divine name but would eventually be the very thing used to sanctify it. Indeed, Jesus' death on the torture stake opened a way for Jews, who were otherwise cursed under the Law, to be saved from condemnation to death.—Galatians 3:11-13.

Three days later, Jehovah resurrected Jesus and cleared him of any possible charge of blasphemy by exalting him to a superior heavenly position. (Philippians 2:7-11) What a marvelous way to answer Jesus' prayer concerning "this cup"! That prayer was answered in Jehovah's way. And Jesus experienced wonderful blessings because he had told his heavenly Father: "Let, not my will, but yours take place."—Luke 22:42.

How Jehovah Answers Prayers Today

Like Jesus, those seeking to please Jehovah today should always ask that God's will take place. They need to have faith that Jehovah will answer their prayers in a way that will benefit them the most. In fact, he will 'do more than superabundantly beyond all the things they ask or conceive.'—Ephesians 3:20.

A young Christian woman who lived with her unbelieving parents experienced the truthfulness of that scripture. In a letter from the Watch Tower Society, she was asked to consider prayerfully the possibility of accepting a special missionary assignment. Though her heartfelt desire was to stay at home to help her parents to become Christians, she asked God in prayer: "What is your will? Is it to accept this invitation regardless of my parents' opposition, or is it to help my parents by continuing to live with them?" Every time she prayed, her conscience told her to accept the invitation. She decided that this was the answer from Jehovah.

God strengthened this woman to stick to her decision. When she was asked to move

to Awaji Island, Japan, her parents were shocked and intensified their opposition. However, being unable to convince her to change her mind, her mother decided to study the Bible just to see why her daughter made such a decision. Three months later her parents visited her. Upon seeing how well she was taken care of by other Witnesses of Jehovah, her father was deeply impressed and wept when no one was around. Soon he also began to study the Bible. In time both parents of this young woman got baptized and began to serve Jehovah faithfully. Did Jehovah God not bless this Christian woman superabundantly?

Their Prayers Are Answered

Do you recall the words of the woman mentioned at the outset of the previous article? She had never felt the sensation of having her prayers answered. Yet, she later discerned that God was answering her prayers. The woman had kept a record of the essence of her prayers. One day she looked through the notebook and realized that Jehovah had heard most of her prayers, even the ones that she herself had forgotten! She thus knew that God was caring for her and answering her prayers in a tender way that benefited her the most.

If you feel that your prayers are not being answered, ask yourself: 'Do I have a personal relationship with Jehovah, the "Hearer of prayer"? If not, am I taking steps to learn about him and become one of his dedicated servants?' He answers the prayers of those who love him and do his will. They "persevere in prayer" and are favorably heard, as Jesus was. (Romans 12:12) So, "pour out your heart" to Jehovah and do his will. (Psalm 62:8) Then your prayers will be heard.

Today, millions of people are praying for something special. Yes, and their prayers are being heard. Let us see why we can be sure that such prayers will be answered.

Prayers Sure to Be Answered

THERE are prayers that will definitely be answered. The essence of them is embodied in a model that Jesus Christ gave his disciples when he said: "You must pray, then, this way: 'Our Father in the heavens, let your name be sanctified. Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth.'"—Matthew 6:9-13.

Those words of Jesus' model prayer have been repeated many millions of times. Though Christ did not expect his true followers merely to recite such a prayer, their petitions expressing similar sentiments are sure to be answered. (Matthew 6:7, 8) So, what does it mean to have God's name sanctified? Why pray for his Kingdom to come? And why ask for God's will to be done?

"Let Your Name Be Sanctified"

Jehovah, "the Most High over all the earth," is the One Jesus addressed as "our Father in the heavens." (Psalm 83:18) God had "fathered" the Israelites by freeing them from Egyptian bondage and by entering into a covenant relationship with them. (Deuteronomy 32:6, 18; Exodus 4:22; Isaiah 63:16) Today, anointed Christians have tender regard for Jehovah as their Father. (Romans 8:15) And their associates, who have an earthly hope, likewise pray to Jehovah God as their Father.—John 10:16; Revelation 7:1-9.

But why pray for God's name to be sanctified? Well, since the rebellion of the first human pair in the garden of Eden, reproach



has been heaped on the divine name. In answer to such prayer, Jehovah will clear away all the reproach that has ever been cast upon his memorial name. (Psalm 135:13) He will do this by removing wickedness from the earth. Concerning that time, God said through the prophet Ezekiel: "I shall certainly magnify myself and sanctify myself and make myself known before the eyes of many nations; and they will have to know that I am Jehovah."—Ezekiel 38:23.

Jehovah God is holy and clean. His name should therefore be sanctified, or set apart as holy. He will demonstrate his holiness by acting to sanctify himself before all creation. (Ezekiel 36:23) Those desiring his favor and eternal life must regard Jehovah with awe

and sanctify his name by holding it as separate from and higher than all others. (Leviticus 22:32; Isaiah 8:13; 29:23) Accordingly, Jesus told his followers to pray: "Let your name be sanctified" or, "be held sacred; be treated as holy." We can be sure that God will answer this part of Jesus' model prayer.

"Let Your Kingdom Come"

Jesus also told his followers to pray: "Let your kingdom come." Prayers for the coming of God's Kingdom will definitely be answered. The Kingdom is Jehovah's sovereign rulership as expressed through a heavenly Messianic government in the hands of his Son, Jesus Christ, and associated "holy ones." (Daniel 7:13, 14, 18, 22, 27; Isaiah 9:6, 7) Jehovah's Witnesses have long proved from the Scriptures that Jesus was enthroned as a heavenly King in the year 1914. Why, then, should anyone pray for the Kingdom to "come"?

Praying for the coming of the Kingdom actually means requesting that it come against all opposers of divine rulership on earth. Soon now "the kingdom [of God] . . . will crush and put an end to all these [earthly] kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite." (Daniel 2:44) This development will contribute to the sanctification of Jehovah's holy name.

"Let Your Will Take Place"

Jesus further instructed his disciples to pray: "Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth." This is a request that Jehovah act in harmony with his will for the earth. It is similar to the psalmist's declaration: "Everything that Jehovah delighted to do he has done in the heavens and in the earth, in the seas and all the watery deeps. He is causing vapors to ascend from the extremity of the earth; he has made even sluices for the rain; he is bringing forth the wind from his storehouses, he who struck

down the firstborn ones of Egypt, both man and beast. He sent signs and miracles into the midst of you, O Egypt, upon Pharaoh and upon all his servants; he who struck down many nations and killed potent kings." —Psalm 135:6-10.

Praying that Jehovah's will take place on the earth is a request that he carry out his purposes toward this globe. This includes the permanent removal of his opposers, even as he removed them on a small scale in ancient times. (Psalm 83:9-18; Revelation 19:19-21) Prayers for Jehovah's will to be done throughout the earth and the universe surely will be answered.

When the Kingdom Rules

Instead of the wickedness that now permeates human society, what can be expected when God's Kingdom rules and the divine will is done on earth as it is in heaven? According to the apostle Peter, "there are new heavens and a new earth that we are awaiting according to [God's] promise, and in these righteousness is to dwell." (2 Peter 3:13) The "new heavens" are righteous spiritual ruling powers—Jesus Christ and 144,000 joint-heirs in the heavenly Kingdom. (Romans 8:16, 17; Revelation 14:1-5; 20:4-6) "A new earth" is not another earthly globe. Rather, it is a righteous society of people living on the earth.—Compare Psalm 96:1.

Under Kingdom rule, the earth will be transformed into a global paradise. (Luke 23:43) True peace and prosperity will then be enjoyed by all obedient mankind. (Psalm 72:1-15; Revelation 21:1-5) You can be among those happy throngs if you are a loyal advocate of Messianic rulership over obedient earthly subjects. Advocates of such rule earnestly pray for the sanctification of Jehovah's name, for his Kingdom to come, and for his will to take place. Their heartfelt prayers are sure to be answered.



EXERCISE FAITH BASED ON TRUTH

*"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.

FAITH calls for more than believing that God exists. The first man, Adam, had no doubt about the existence of Jehovah God. God had communicated with Adam, most likely through His Son, the Word. (John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:15-17) Yet, Adam lost the prospect of eternal life because he failed to obey Jehovah and exercise faith in him.

1, 2. How was Adam's faith put to the test, and with what result?

² Adam's future happiness seemed to be jeopardized when his wife, Eve, disobeyed Jehovah. Why, the very thought of losing her put the first man's faith to the test! Could God solve this problem in such a way as to ensure Adam's continued happiness and welfare? By joining Eve in transgression, Adam showed that he apparently did not think so. He attempted to solve the problem *his* way, rather than earnestly seeking divine guidance. Failing to exercise faith in Jehovah, Adam brought death upon

himself and all his offspring.—Romans 5:12.

What Is Faith?

³ One dictionary defines faith as “firm belief in something for which there is no proof.” Far from supporting that idea, however, the Bible stresses just the opposite. Faith is based on facts, on realities, on truth. The Scriptures say: “Faith is the assured expectation of things hoped for, the evident demonstration of realities though not beheld.” (Hebrews 11:1) A person having faith has a guarantee that everything promised by God is as good as fulfilled. So strong is the convincing proof of unseen realities that faith is said to be equivalent to that evidence.

⁴ In the *New World Translation*, the causative form of the Hebrew verb ‘a-man’ is sometimes rendered “exercise faith.” According to the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, “at the heart of the meaning of the root is the idea of certainty . . . in contrast with modern concepts of faith as something possible, hopefully true, but not certain.” The same work says: “The derivative ‘āmēn ‘verily’ is carried over into the New Testament in the word *amēn* which is [the] English word ‘amen.’ Jesus used the word frequently (Mt 5:18, 26, etc.) to stress the certainty of a matter.” The word rendered “faith” in the Christian Greek Scriptures also means belief in something firmly based on fact or truth.

⁵ The Greek word (*hy-po'sta-sis*) rendered “assured expectation” at Hebrews 11:1 was commonly used in ancient papyrus business

3. How does the Bible's definition of faith differ from that given by one dictionary?

4. How does one reference work support the Biblical definition of faith?

5. How was the Greek word rendered “assured expectation” at Hebrews 11:1 used in ancient business documents, and what significance does this have for Christians?

documents to convey the idea of something that guarantees future possession. Scholars Moulton and Milligan suggest the rendering: “Faith is the *title deed* of things hoped for.” (*Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*) Obviously, if a person possesses the title deed to property, he can have the “assured expectation” that someday his hope to obtain it will be realized.

⁶ At Hebrews 11:1, the Greek word translated “evident demonstration” (*e'leg-khos*) conveys the idea of presenting evidence to demonstrate something, particularly something contrary to what appears to be the case. Positive or concrete evidence makes clear what previously went undiscerned, thereby refuting what only appeared to be the case. So in both the Hebrew and the Greek Scriptures, faith is by no means “firm belief in something for which there is no proof.” On the contrary, faith is based on truth.

Based on Basic Truths

⁷ The apostle Paul stated a basic truth when he wrote that the Creator's “invisible qualities are clearly seen from the world's creation onward, because they are perceived by the things made, even his eternal power and Godship, so that [opposers of truth] are inexcusable.” (Romans 1:20) Yes, “the heavens are declaring the glory of God,” and “the earth is full of [his] productions.” (Psalm 19:1; 104:24) But what if a person is unwilling to consider the evidence? The psalmist David said: “The wicked one according to his superciliousness [“arrogant as he is,” *The New English Bible*] makes no search; all his ideas are: “There is no God.”” (Psalm 10:4; 14:1) In part, faith

6. What is the significance of the Greek word rendered “evident demonstration” at Hebrews 11:1?

7. How do Paul and David describe those denying God's existence?

is based on the fundamental truth that God exists.

⁸ Jehovah does not simply exist; he is also trustworthy, and we can rely on his promises. He has said: "Surely just as I have figured, so it must occur; and just as I have counseled, that is what will come true." (Isaiah 14:24; 46:9, 10) These are not meaningless words. There is clear proof that hundreds of prophecies recorded in God's Word have been fulfilled. With this enlightenment, those exercising faith are also able to discern the ongoing fulfillment of many other Bible prophecies. (Ephesians 1:18) For example, they are seeing the fulfillment of "the sign" of Jesus' presence, including the accelerated preaching of the established Kingdom, as well as the foretold expansion of true worship. (Matthew 24:3-14; Isaiah 2:2-4; 60:8, 22) They know that soon the nations will cry "Peace and security!" and that shortly thereafter God will "bring to ruin those ruining the earth." (1 Thessalonians 5:3; Revelation 11:18) What a blessing to have faith based on prophetic truths!

A Fruit of Holy Spirit

⁹ The truth upon which faith is based is found in the Bible, a product of God's holy spirit. (2 Samuel 23:2; Zechariah 7:12; Mark 12:36) Logically, then, faith cannot exist apart from the operation of holy spirit. That is why Paul could write: "The fruitage of the spirit [includes] . . . faith." (Galatians 5:22) But many reject divine truth, contaminating their lives with fleshly desires and viewpoints that grieve God's spirit. Thus, "faith is not a possession of all people," for they have no basis upon which to develop it. —2 Thessalonians 3:2; Galatians 5:16-21; Ephesians 4:30.

8. Those exercising faith are able to have what assurance and discernment?

9. What is the relationship between faith and holy spirit?

¹⁰ From among Adam's descendants, however, some individuals have exercised faith. Hebrews chapter 11 mentions Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, and Samuel, along with many unnamed servants of Jehovah, who "had witness borne to them through their faith." Notice what was done "by faith." It was by faith that Abel "offered God a sacrifice" and Noah "constructed an ark." By faith Abraham "obeyed in going out into a place he was destined to receive as an inheritance." And by faith, Moses "left Egypt." —Hebrews 11:4, 7, 8, 27, 29, 39.

¹¹ Obviously, all those servants of Jehovah did more than just believe in God's existence. Exercising faith, they trusted in him as the One who is "the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him." (Hebrews 11:6) They did what God's spirit directed them to do, acting upon the accurate knowledge of truth then available, though it was limited. How different from Adam! He did not act in faith based on truth or in accordance with the direction of holy spirit. God gives his spirit to those only who obey him. —Acts 5:32.

¹² Unlike his father, Adam, godly Abel had faith. Apparently from his parents, he learned of the first prophecy ever uttered: "I [Jehovah God] 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) God thus promised to destroy wickedness and restore righteousness. How this promise would be fulfilled, Abel did not know. But his faith that God is the

10. How did some early servants of Jehovah show that they exercised faith?

11. What does Acts 5:32 indicate as regards persons obeying God?

12. (a) In what did Abel have faith, and how did he show this? (b) Despite their faith, what did pre-Christian witnesses of Jehovah not receive?

Rewarder of those earnestly seeking Him was strong enough to move him to offer a sacrifice. He had likely given much thought to the prophecy and believed that the shedding of blood would be necessary to fulfill the promise and lift mankind to perfection. Hence, Abel's animal sacrifice was appropriate. Despite their faith, however, Abel and Jehovah's other pre-Christian witnesses "did not get the fulfillment of the promise."—Hebrews 11:39.

Perfecting Faith

¹³ Periodically through the centuries, God revealed additional truth about how the promise regarding 'the seed of the woman' would be fulfilled. Abraham was told: "By means of your seed all nations of the earth will certainly bless themselves." (Genesis 22:18) Later, King David was told that the promised Seed would come through his royal line. In 29 C.E., that Seed appeared in the person of Jesus Christ. (Psalm 89:3, 4; Matthew 1:1; 3:16, 17) In contrast with faithless Adam, "the last Adam," Jesus Christ, was exemplary in displaying faith. (1 Corinthians 15:45) He lived a life of devoted service to Jehovah and fulfilled the many prophecies foretelling the Messiah. Jesus thus made the truth about the promised Seed clearer and put the things foreshadowed by the Mosaic Law into the realm of reality. (Colossians 2:16, 17) It could therefore be said that "the truth came to be through Jesus Christ."—John 1:17.

¹⁴ Now that the truth had come to be through Jesus Christ, there was an enlarged foundation upon which to base faith in "the promise." Faith had been made firm—

13. (a) What did Abraham and David learn about the fulfillment of the promise? (b) Why can it be said that "the truth came to be through Jesus Christ"?

14. How did Paul show the Galatians that faith had taken on new dimensions?

er, had taken on new dimensions, as it were. In this regard Paul told fellow anointed Christians: "The Scripture delivered up all things together to the custody of sin, that the promise resulting from faith toward Jesus Christ might be given to those exercising faith. However, before the faith arrived, we were being guarded under law, being delivered up together into custody, looking to the faith that was destined to be revealed. Consequently the Law has become our tutor leading to Christ, that we might be declared righteous due to faith. But now that the faith has arrived, we are no longer under a tutor. You are all, in fact, sons of God through your faith in Christ Jesus."—Galatians 3:22-26.

¹⁵ The Israelites had exercised faith in God's dealings with them by means of the Law covenant. But now this faith needed to be augmented. How? By exercising faith in the spirit-anointed Jesus to whom the Law had been designed to lead them. Only in that way could pre-Christian faith be perfected. How essential it was for those early Christians to 'look intently at Jesus, the Chief Agent and *Perfecter* of their faith'! (Hebrews 12:2) Indeed, all Christians need to do so.

¹⁶ In view of increased knowledge of divine truth and the resulting perfected faith, was holy spirit also due to come in an intensified way? Yes. At Pentecost 33 C.E., God's spirit, the promised helper of which Jesus had spoken, was poured out upon his disciples. (John 14:26; Acts 2:1-4) Holy spirit was then operative upon them in a completely new way as anointed brothers of Christ. Their faith, a fruit of holy spirit, was strengthened. This equipped them for the huge disciple-making work that lay ahead.—Matthew 28:19, 20.

15. How only could faith be perfected?

16. How did holy spirit come in an intensified way, and why?

THOSE WHO HAVE FAITH...

- ☐ Speak about Jehovah.
—2 Corinthians 4:13.
- ☐ Do works like those of Jesus.
—John 14:12.
- ☐ Are sources of encouragement to others.—Romans 1:8, 11, 12.
- ☐ Conquer the world.—1 John 5:5.
- ☐ Have no reason to fear.—Isaiah 28:16.
- ☐ Are in line for everlasting life.
—John 3:16.

¹⁷ Faith arrived when Jesus presented himself as King-Designate over 1,900 years ago. But now that he is a reigning heavenly King, our basis for faith—revealed truth—has grown tremendously, thus perfecting our faith. Likewise, the operation of the holy spirit has been intensified. There was clear evidence of this in 1919, when holy spirit revitalized God's dedicated servants from a condition of near inactivity. (Ezekiel 37:1-14; Revelation 11:7-12) The foundation was then laid for a spiritual paradise, which has in the ensuing decades become more obvious and more glorious year by year. Could there be any greater proof of God's holy spirit in operation?

Why Analyze Our Faith?

¹⁸ Shortly after the Israelites were delivered from slavery in Egypt, 12 men were dispatched to spy out the land of Canaan. However, ten of them lacked faith, doubting Jehovah's ability to fulfill his promise to give Israel the land. They were motivated by sight, by physical things. Of the 12, only Joshua and Caleb showed that they walked

17. (a) How has truth come and faith been perfected since 1914? (b) What evidence do we have of the holy spirit in action since 1919?

18. How did the Israelite spies differ from one another as to faith?

by faith, not by sight. (Compare 2 Corinthians 5:7.) For exercising faith, they alone among those men survived to enter the Promised Land.—Numbers 13:1-33; 14:35-38.

¹⁹ Today, we are standing at the borders of God's new world of righteousness. If we are to enter it, faith is essential. Happily, the foundation of truth upon which to base that faith has never been deeper. We have the entire Word of God, the example of Jesus Christ and his anointed followers, the support of millions of spiritual brothers and sisters, and the backing of God's holy spirit in unprecedented measure. Yet, we do well to analyze our faith and take steps to strengthen it while we yet can.

²⁰ 'Oh, I believe this is the truth,' you may say. But how strong is your faith? Ask yourself: 'Is Jehovah's heavenly Kingdom as real to me as a human government is? Do I recognize and fully support Jehovah's visible organization and its Governing Body? With eyes of faith, can I see that the nations are now being maneuvered into final position for Armageddon? Does my faith compare favorably with that of the "great cloud of witnesses" mentioned in Hebrews

19. How is the foundation upon which to build faith deeper today than ever before, and yet what should we do?

20. What questions would it be appropriate to ask ourselves?

What Are Your Answers?

- ☐ What is faith?
- ☐ Why can faith not exist apart from truth and holy spirit?
- ☐ How did Jesus Christ become the Perfecter of our faith?
- ☐ Why should we analyze how strong our faith is?

chapter 11?'—Hebrews 12:1; Revelation 16:14-16.

²¹ Those possessing faith based on truth are moved to action. Like the acceptable sacrifice offered by Abel, their sacrifices of praise are pleasing to God. (Hebrews 13:15, 16) Like Noah, a preacher of righteousness who obeyed God, they pursue a righteous course as Kingdom preachers. (Hebrews 11:7; 2 Peter 2:5) Like Abraham, those with faith based on truth obey Jehovah despite inconveniences and even under the most trialsome circumstances. (Hebrews 11:17-19) Like Jehovah's faithful servants of ancient times, those with faith

21. How does faith motivate those who have it, and how are they blessed? (Include comments from box on page 13.)

today are richly blessed and cared for by their loving heavenly Father.—Matthew 6:25-34; 1 Timothy 6:6-10.

²² If you are a servant of Jehovah but find that your faith is weak in some way, what can you do? Strengthen your faith by diligently studying God's Word and letting your mouth bubble forth the waters of truth that fill your heart. (Proverbs 18:4) If your faith is not regularly strengthened, it may become weak, inactive, even dead. (1 Timothy 1:19; James 2:20, 26) Be determined that this will never happen to your faith. Beg for Jehovah's assistance, praying: "Help me out where I need faith!"—Mark 9:24.

22. How can faith be strengthened?

"HELP ME OUT WHERE I NEED FAITH!"

"The father of the young child was saying: 'I have faith! Help me out where I need faith!'"—MARK 9:24.

THE father of a demon-possessed boy stood before Jesus Christ. How that man yearned to have his young child healed! Jesus' disciples had lacked sufficient faith to expel the demon, but the father cried out: "I have faith! Help me out where I need faith!" By means of God-given power, Jesus then expelled the demon, doubtless strengthening the faith of the boy's father.—Mark 9:14-29.

1. What caused one father to exclaim, "Help me out where I need faith"?

² Like that boy's hopeful father, a loyal servant of Jehovah is not ashamed to say: "I have faith!" Scoffers may deny the power of God, the truthfulness of his Word, and even his very existence. But true Christians readily admit that they have faith in Jehovah God. Yet, when speaking privately to their heavenly Father in prayer, these same individuals may plead: "Help me out where I need faith!" This they also do

2. As to faith, in what two ways are Christians unashamed?

Like the father whose son Jesus healed, do you sense a personal need for more faith?

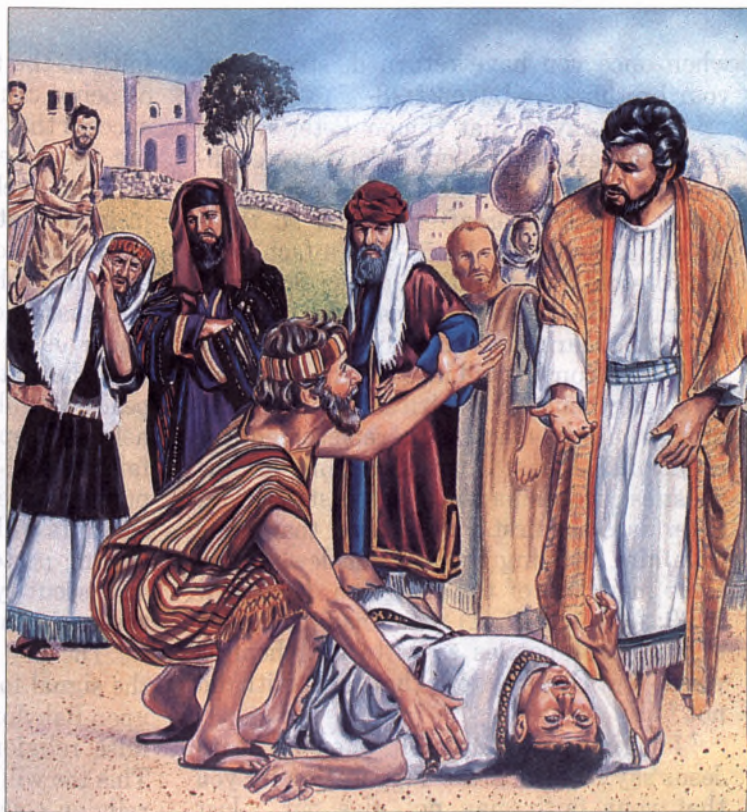
without shame, knowing that even the apostles of Jesus Christ begged: "Give us more faith."—Luke 17:5.

³ Especially do the Christian Greek Scriptures have much to say about faith. In fact, John's Gospel uses various Greek words related to "faith" over 40 percent more frequently than do the other three Gospels combined. John stressed that *having* faith is not sufficient; *exercising* it is vital. Writing in about 98 C.E., he saw the poisonous tentacles of apostasy reaching out to ensnare Christians weak in faith. (Acts 20:28-30; 2 Peter 2:1-3; 1 John 2:18, 19) So it was vital to exercise faith, to give evidence of it by acts of godly devotion. Difficult times lay ahead.

⁴ Faith enables Christians to cope with any difficulties. Jesus told his disciples that if they had "faith the size of a mustard grain," nothing would be impossible for them. (Matthew 17:20) In that way, he stressed the power of faith, a fruit of holy spirit. Jesus thus emphasized, not what humans, but what God's spirit, or active force, can do. Those guided by it do not make molehill-size obstacles and problems into mountains. Applying the wisdom that God's spirit imparts helps them to keep things in proper perspective. Even serious problems

3. What is significant about how John used the word "faith" in his Gospel, and why was this appropriate?

4. Why is nothing impossible for those having faith?



shrivel when subjected to the sustaining power of faith.—Matthew 21:21, 22; Mark 11:22-24; Luke 17:5, 6.

Praying That Faith May Not Fail

⁵ In 33 C.E., Jesus celebrated the Passover with his disciples for the last time. Then, after dismissing Judas Iscariot, he instituted the Memorial celebration, saying: "I make a covenant with you [men], just as my Father has made a covenant with me, for a kingdom . . . Simon, Simon, look! Satan has demanded to have you men to sift you as wheat. But I have made supplication for you that your faith may not give out; and you,

5-7. (a) What warning words about faith did Jesus speak when he instituted the Memorial? (b) How did Peter's faith enable him to strengthen his brothers?

when once you have returned, strengthen your brothers.”—Luke 22:28-32.

⁶ Jesus prayed that Simon Peter’s faith might not give out. Though Peter overconfidently boasted that he would never deny Jesus, shortly thereafter he did so three times. (Luke 22:33, 34, 54-62) In fact, with the foretold striking down of the Shepherd in death, the sheep were scattered. (Zechariah 13:7; Mark 14:27) However, when Peter recovered from his fall into the snare of fear, he strengthened his spiritual brothers. He brought up the matter of a replacement for unfaithful Judas Iscariot. Acting as the apostles’ spokesman at Pentecost 33 C.E., Peter used the first of “the keys” that Jesus gave him, opening the way for Jews to become members of the Kingdom. (Matthew 16:19; Acts 1:15-2:41) Satan had demanded to have the apostles so as to sift them as wheat, but God saw to it that their faith did not fail.

⁷ Imagine how Peter felt when he heard Jesus say: “I have made supplication for you that your faith may not give out.” Just think! His Lord and Master had prayed that Peter’s faith might not fail. And it did not fail, or give out. In fact, on the day of Pentecost, Peter and others became the first persons anointed by holy spirit to become God’s spiritual children, prospective joint-heirs with Christ in heavenly glory. With holy spirit then active upon them in a measure previously unknown, they could demonstrate its fruitage, including faith, as never before. What a marvelous answer to their plea: “Give us more faith!”—Luke 17:5; Galatians 3:2, 22-26; 5:22, 23.

Facing Tests Ahead With Faith

⁸ In fulfillment of Bible prophecy, we will soon hear the cry “Peace and security!” (1 Thessalonians 5:3) Could this put our

8. What timely warning has the organization given us regarding the fulfillment of 1 Thessalonians 5:3?

faith to the test? Yes, for we are in danger of being caught off guard by the apparent success that the nations may have in bringing about peace. But we will not share the spirit of such peace proclaimers if we keep in mind that Jehovah God is not using any of the agencies of this world toward that end. He has his own way to bring true peace, and that is only by means of his Kingdom under Jesus Christ. Hence, whatever success the nations may have in establishing peace, it will be brief and only a veneer. To help us keep on guard in this respect, “the faithful and discreet slave” will continue to publish timely warnings so that Jehovah’s servants will not be caught off guard by the coming pretentious proclamation of “Peace and security” by the nations of this old system of things.—Matthew 24:45-47.

⁹ The cry “Peace and security!” will be the signal for “sudden destruction” to come upon Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion. (Revelation 17:1-6; 18:4, 5) This too will test Christian faith. With false religion collapsing in ruins, will Jehovah’s Witnesses remain firm in faith? Of course they will. This event—unexpected and incomprehensible for most people—will not be of man’s doing. People must know that in reality it is Jehovah’s judgment, in sanctification of the name that false religion has long reviled. But how could people know unless someone had told them? And who besides Jehovah’s Witnesses could be expected to tell them so?—Compare Ezekiel 35:14, 15; Romans 10:13-15.

¹⁰ Anointed Witnesses of Jehovah and their associates with an earthly hope have had the courage needed to tell others about the imminent execution of Jehovah’s judgment against Babylon the Great and the rest of Satan’s system of things. (2 Corin-

9. Why will the destruction of Babylon the Great call for courage and faith on our part?

10. How will Gog’s attack on Jehovah’s people also be a test of faith?



Faith like that of Noah and his family will be needed to survive the “great tribulation”

thians 4:4) In his role as Gog of Magog, denoting his present degraded position, Satan will marshal his earthly forces for an all-out attack on God’s people. Faith in divine protective powers in behalf of Jehovah’s Witnesses will be put to the test. But we can have faith that as God’s Word foretold, Jehovah will rescue his people.—Ezekiel 38:16; 39:18-23.

¹¹ Today, we do not know exactly how Jehovah will protect his people during the “great tribulation,” but this is no reason to doubt that he will do so. (Matthew 24:21, 22) The situation of God’s present-day servants will be like that in which Noah and his family found themselves during the Flood.

11, 12. (a) What ensured the salvation of Noah and his family during the Flood? (b) About what will we not need to worry during the great tribulation?

Shut up inside the ark with the swirling waters of destruction around them, likely they were awestruck by this demonstration of divine power and must have prayed earnestly. There is no Scriptural indication that they were worried and asked themselves: ‘Is the ark really sturdy enough to survive the destructive forces? Do we have enough food to last until the Flood is over? Will we be able to cope with the changed circumstances on earth afterward?’ Subsequent events proved that such worries would have been unfounded.

¹² To ensure their salvation, Noah and his family needed to exercise faith. This meant following instructions and the leadings of God’s holy spirit. During the great tribulation, it will be just as imperative that we follow the leadings of the holy spirit and obey Jehovah’s instructions through his organization. Then we will have no reason to worry and ask: ‘How will our spiritual and material needs be satisfied? What provision will be made for older persons or for those

requiring special medical care or treatment? How will Jehovah make it possible for us to survive into the new world?' With strong faith, all of Jehovah's loyal servants will leave everything in his capable hands.—Compare Matthew 6:25-33.

¹³ Once the great tribulation has started, doubtless our faith in God will be greatly strengthened. After all, we will see that Jehovah is carrying out what he said he would do. We will be seeing his execution of judgment with our own eyes! But will we personally have enough faith to believe that while destroying the wicked, God will preserve his people? Will we be like Abraham, who had faith that 'the Judge of all the earth will do what is right,' not destroying the righteous along with the wicked?—Genesis 18:23, 25.

¹⁴ How important it is that we now build up our faith! With the end of this wicked system of things so close at hand, let us allow God's spirit to motivate us to "holy acts of conduct and deeds of godly devotion." (2 Peter 3:11-14) Then we will not be plagued during the great tribulation with such disquieting thoughts as these: 'Do I warrant receiving Jehovah's protection? Could I have done more in his service? Did I really work hard enough to put on "the new personality"? Am I the kind of person Jehovah wants in the new world?' Such sobering questions should cause us to analyze our faith and to work hard to strengthen it right now!—Colossians 3:8-10.

Faith to Make Us Well

¹⁵ Jesus did not confine his works of physical healing to people with faith. (John 5:

13. Once the great tribulation begins, why will we need a faith like Abraham's?

14. What questions should cause us to analyze our faith and work hard to strengthen it?

15. What did Jesus sometimes tell those whom he healed, but why does this not support present-day faith healing?

5-9, 13) So his activity gives no support to the unscriptural doctrine of faith healing. True, Jesus sometimes told those he healed: "Your faith has made you well." (Matthew 9:22; Mark 5:34; 10:52; Luke 8:48; 17:19; 18:42) But by saying this, he was simply pointing out an obvious truth: If those afflicted ones had lacked faith in Jesus' healing ability, they would not have come to him for healing in the first place.

¹⁶ Today, Jesus Christ is directing a program of spiritual healing, and more than 4,000,000 individuals have put themselves in line to benefit from it. As Jehovah's Witnesses, they are enjoying spiritual health despite any physical infirmities they may have. Anointed Christians among them have a heavenly hope, and they 'keep their eyes on everlasting things unseen.' (2 Corinthians 4:16-18; 5:6, 7) And Christians with an earthly hope look forward to the marvelous acts of physical healing that will take place in God's new world.

¹⁷ The apostle John referred to God's provisions for eternal life in these words at Revelation 22:1, 2: "He showed me a river of water of life, clear as crystal, flowing out from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of its broad way. And on this side of the river and on that side there were trees of life producing twelve crops of fruit, yielding their fruits each month. And the leaves of the trees were for the curing of the nations." The "water of life" includes God's Word of truth and every other provision of Jehovah for recovering obedient humans from sin and death and granting them eternal life on the basis of Jesus' ransom sacrifice. (Ephesians 5:26; 1 John 2:1, 2) While on the earth, Jesus' 144,000 anointed

16. What healing program is Jesus directing today?

17, 18. What provision of Jehovah is described at Revelation 22:1, 2, and how is faith required for us to benefit from it?

followers drink of God's provision for life through Christ and are called "big trees of righteousness." (Isaiah 61:1-3; Revelation 14:1-5) They have produced much spiritual fruitage on earth. As resurrected ones in heaven, during Christ's Thousand Year Reign, they will share in dispensing the ransom provisions that will serve for "the curing of the nations" from sin and death.

¹⁸ The stronger our faith in these provisions of God is, the greater will be our willingness to follow the leadings of his spirit to partake of them. Physical perfection will evidently come as a person exercises faith in Christ and makes spiritual progress. Though an individual will have been miraculously healed of major disabilities, he will be brought closer to perfection as he practices what is right. He will regularly be partaking of God's provision for healing by means of Christ's sacrifice. So faith will influence our being healed and perfected in a physical way.

"Saved Through Faith"

¹⁹ Until the dawn of God's new world forever dispels the darkness of the present wicked world, how vital it is that Jehovah's servants remain firm in faith! People "without faith" will be cast into "the lake that burns with fire and sulphur," the second death. At the latest, this will occur after the final test at the end of Christ's Thousand Year Reign. (Revelation 20:6-10; 21:8) How blessed the lot of those who continue to exercise faith and survive to enjoy an endless future!

²⁰ Then these words of Paul at 1 Corinthians 13:13 will take on special meaning: "There remain faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love." No longer

19. Why is it vital to remain firm in faith?

20. How will 1 Corinthians 13:13 take on special meaning at the end of Christ's Thousand Year Reign?

will we need to exercise faith that the prophetic promise at Genesis 3:15 will become reality or to hope that it will be fulfilled. That will have happened. As integrity keepers, we will continue to hope in Jehovah, have faith in him and his Son, and love them as the ones who brought about the fulfillment of this prophecy. Moreover, deep love and heartfelt gratitude for our salvation will bind us to God in unbreakable devotion for all eternity.—1 Peter 1:8, 9.

²¹ Through his visible organization, Jehovah has made wonderful provisions to strengthen faith. Take full advantage of all of them. Regularly attend and participate in the meetings of God's people. (Hebrews 10:24, 25) Study his Word and Christian publications diligently. Petition Jehovah for his holy spirit. (Luke 11:13) Imitate the faith of those humbly taking the lead in the congregation. (Hebrews 13:7) Resist worldly temptations. (Matthew 6:9, 13) Yes, and deepen your personal relationship with Jehovah in every way possible. Above all, continue to exercise faith. Then you can be among those who please Jehovah and attain to salvation, for Paul stated: "By . . . undeserved kindness, indeed, you have been saved through faith; and this not owing to you, it is God's gift."—Ephesians 2:8.

21. What should we today do so as to be "saved through faith"?

What Are Your Answers?

- ☐ What tests of faith lie directly ahead of us?
- ☐ In what two ways can our faith make us well?
- ☐ According to 1 Peter 1:9, how long must we maintain faith?
- ☐ What provisions do we have to strengthen our faith?

How Christ's Transfiguration Affects You

Four men had just ascended a lofty mountain. In those heights something amazing took place. As three startled disciples of Jesus Christ looked on, he underwent a change before their eyes.

Listen as the Gospel writer Mark reports this thrilling event:

“JESUS took Peter and James and John along, and brought them up into a lofty mountain to themselves alone. And he was transfigured before them, and his outer garments became glistening, far whiter than any clothes cleaner on earth could whiten them. Also, Elijah with Moses appeared to them, and they were conversing with Jesus. And responsively Peter said to Jesus: ‘Rabbi, it is fine for us to be here, so let us erect three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.’ In fact, he did not know what response he should make, for they became quite fearful. And a cloud formed, overshadowing them, and a voice came out of the cloud: ‘This is my Son, the beloved; listen to him.’ Suddenly, however, they looked around and saw no one with them any longer, except Jesus alone.” —Mark 9:2-8.

Just think! Jesus’ face was shining as the very sun. (Matthew 17:2) His garments were glistening, “far whiter than any clothes cleaner on earth could whiten them.” There was the sound of God’s own powerful voice making a declaration about his Son. What a marvelous event!

The Greek word here rendered “transfigured” means “to change into another form.” It also appears at Romans 12:2, where Christians are counseled to “be transformed” by making their minds over.—*An*

Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, by W. E. Vine, Volume IV, page 148.

Yes, a dramatic event took place when Jesus was transfigured some time after the Passover celebration of 32 C.E. What led up to this miracle? Does it have a special purpose? Why were Moses and Elijah involved? And how does Christ’s transfiguration affect you?

Preceding Events

Before ascending the mountain, Jesus and his disciples were in the vicinity of Caesarea Philippi. Since this city was about 15 miles southwest of Mount Hermon, the transfiguration may have occurred on one of its lofty spurs.

While walking to the “lofty mountain,” Jesus asked his disciples: “Who are men saying that I am?” They responded: “John the Baptist, and others, Elijah, still others, One of the prophets.” Then Christ asked: “You, though, who do you say I am?” Peter replied: “You are the Christ.” At that, Jesus “strictly charged them not to tell anyone about him. Also, he started teaching them that the Son of man must undergo many sufferings and be rejected by the older men and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and rise three days later.” —Mark 8: 27-31.

Jesus went on to make this promise: “There are some of those standing here that

will not taste death at all until first they see the kingdom of God already come in power.” (Mark 9:1; Matthew 16:28) This promise was fulfilled “six days later,” when Jesus was praying and was transfigured before Peter, James, and John. Luke says this occurred “eight days” thereafter, apparently because he included the day of the promise and that of the fulfillment.—Matthew 17:1, 2; Mark 9:2; Luke 9:28.

No Dream or Unreality

Jesus’ transfiguration was not a dream. The three apostles would not have had the same dream, and Jesus called it a “vision.” That does not imply unreality, for the Greek word used at Matthew 17:9 is elsewhere rendered “sight.” (Acts 7:31) So the observers were completely awake, and with their eyes and ears, they actually saw and heard what was taking place.—Luke 9:32.

Wide awake but not knowing what to say, Peter suggested the erecting of three tents—one each for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah. (Luke 9:33) The cloud that formed as Peter spoke evidently indicated God’s presence on the mountain, as at Israel’s tent of meeting in the wilderness. (Exodus 40:34-38; Luke 9:34) And surely the apostles would not be asleep when “God the Father” declared: “This is my Son, the one that has been chosen. Listen to him.”—2 Peter 1:17, 18; Luke 9:35.

Why Moses Was Seen

When the transfiguration occurred, Moses was “conscious of nothing at all,” for he had died centuries earlier. (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10) Like David, he had not been resurrected and therefore was not personally present. (Acts 2:29-31) But why was Moses seen with Christ in this vision?

God had told Moses: “A prophet I shall raise up for them from the midst of their brothers, like you; and I shall indeed put my

words in his mouth, and he will certainly speak to them all that I shall command him.” (Deuteronomy 18:18) Peter specifically applied this prophecy to Jesus Christ. (Acts 3:20-23) Aside from Jesus, Moses was the greatest prophet God sent to the nation of Israel.

Similarities exist between Moses and the Greater Moses, Jesus Christ. For instance, while they were infants, the lives of both of them were jeopardized by tyrannical rulers, but God saw to it that the babies were spared. (Exodus 1:20-2:10; Matthew 2:7-23) Both men spent 40 days fasting at the start of their careers as Jehovah’s special servants. (Exodus 24:18; 34:28; Deuteronomy 9:18, 25; Matthew 4:1, 2) And Moses and Jesus both performed miracles by God’s power.—Exodus 14:21-31; 16:11-36; Psalm 78:12-54; Mark 4:41; Luke 7:18-23; John 14:11.

God used Moses to deliver Israel from Egyptian bondage, even as Jesus brings about spiritual liberation. (Exodus 12:37-14:31; John 8:31, 32) Moses was privileged to mediate the Law covenant between God and the Israelites, while Jesus is the Mediator of the new covenant. (Exodus 19:3-9; 34:3-7; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Luke 22:20; Hebrews 8:3-6; 9:15) Jehovah also used Moses to make a name for Himself before the Israelites, the Egyptians, and others, just as Jesus Christ has magnified Jehovah’s holy name. (Exodus 9:13-17; 1 Samuel 6:6; John 12:28-30; 17:5, 6, 25, 26) By having Moses appear with the transfigured Jesus, God showed that Christ would serve in these capacities on a far grander scale.

Why Elijah Appeared

Although the dead prophet Elijah had not been resurrected, it was fitting that he should appear in the transfiguration vision. Elijah did a great work in restoring pure worship and sanctifying Jehovah’s name among the Israelites. Jesus Christ did the

same while on the earth and will do even more to restore pure religion and vindicate his heavenly Father by means of the Messianic Kingdom.

The prophet Malachi showed that Elijah's work foreshadowed future activity. Through Malachi, God said: "Look! I am sending to you people Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and fear-inspiring day of Jehovah. And he must turn the heart of fathers back toward sons, and the heart of sons back toward fathers; in order that I may not come and actually strike the earth with a devoting of it to destruction."—Malachi 4:5, 6.

This prophecy had its miniature fulfillment in the work of John the Baptizer. Jesus pointed this out after the transfiguration, when his disciples asked why the scribes said that Elijah must come first—before the Messiah's appearance. Jesus said: "Elijah, indeed, is coming and will restore all things. However, I say to you that Elijah has already come and they did not recognize him but did with him the things they wanted. In this way also the Son of man is destined to suffer at their hands." The account adds: "Then the disciples perceived that he spoke to them about John the Baptist."—Matthew 17:10-13.

John did an Elijahlike work when he baptized Jews who repented of their sins against the Law covenant. More important, John was the Messiah's forerunner and introduced Jesus Christ. (Matthew 11:11-15; Luke 1:11-17; John 1:29) But why was John's work only a miniature fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy?

In this vision, Elijah was seen speaking with Jesus. This was after the death of John the Baptizer, thus implying that an Elijah work would be done in the future. Moreover, the prophecy showed that this work would be done before "the great and fear-inspiring

day of Jehovah." That rapidly approaching event includes "the war of the great day of God the Almighty" at Har-Magedon, or Armageddon. (Revelation 16:14-16) This meant that the then future establishment of God's heavenly Kingdom would be preceded by a work corresponding to the activities of Elijah and his successor, Elisha. And for over a century, Jehovah's modern-day Witnesses have been carrying on a work involving the restoration of pure worship and the exalting of God's name.—Psalm 145:9-13; Matthew 24:14.

Its Purpose

The transfiguration must have fortified Jesus for the sufferings and death he was about to undergo. Hearing his heavenly Father speak of him as His approved Son must have strengthened Jesus' faith. But what did the transfiguration do for others?

Jesus' transfiguration also strengthened the faith of the observers. It impressed on their minds that Jesus Christ is God's Son. Indeed, since Jehovah's Chief Spokesman, the Word, was then in their midst, they heard God's own voice declare: "This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved." Though Jehovah had borne like testimony when Jesus was baptized, during the transfiguration God added that the disciples should listen to His Son.—Matthew 3:13-17; 17:5; John 1:1-3, 14.

The transfiguration strengthened faith in another way. During the vision, Jesus, "Moses," and "Elijah" spoke about the "departure" that [Christ] was destined to fulfill at Jerusalem." (Luke 9:31) "Departure" is translated from a form of the Greek word *e'xo-dos*. This exodus, or departure, evidently involved both Jesus' death and his resurrection by God to spirit life. (1 Peter 3:18) So the transfiguration strengthened faith in Christ's resurrection. Especially did it build faith by providing convincing evidence that Jesus would

be the King of God's Messianic Kingdom. Moreover, the vision showed that the Kingdom would be glorious.

The transfiguration also strengthened faith in Scriptural prophecy. Some 32 years later (about 64 C.E.), Peter still recalled this experience and wrote: "No, it was not by following artfully contrived false stories that we acquainted you with the power and presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, but it was by having become eyewitnesses of his magnificence. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when words such as these were borne to him by the magnificent glory: 'This is my son, my beloved, whom I myself have approved.' Yes, these words we heard borne from heaven while we were with him in the holy mountain. Consequently we have the prophetic word made more sure; and you are doing well in paying attention to it as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until day dawns and a daystar rises, in your hearts."—2 Peter 1:16-19.

Its Meaning for You

Yes, Peter viewed Jesus' transfiguration as a powerful confirmation of God's prophetic word. The apostle John may also have alluded to this vision when he said: "The Word became flesh and resided among us, and we had a view of his glory, a glory such as belongs to an only-begotten son from a father; and he was full of undeserved kindness and truth." (John 1:14) Similarly, the transfiguration can build your faith in Jehovah's prophetic word.

The transfiguration and associated events can strengthen your faith that Jesus Christ



is God's Son and the promised Messiah. It can fortify your belief in Jesus' resurrection to spirit life in heaven. This amazing vision should also increase your faith in God's government, for the transfiguration was a foreview of Christ's glory and Kingdom power.

It is particularly faith-strengthening to know that Christ's transfiguration pointed to our day, when Jesus' presence is a reality. (Matthew 24:3-14) Since 1914 he has been ruling as God's appointed King in the heavens. His God-given authority and power will soon be exercised against all enemies of divine rule, opening the way for a new world. (2 Peter 3:13) You can enjoy its endless blessings if you exercise faith in the wonderful things portrayed in the transfiguration of Jesus Christ.

Fields white for harvesting in

B · R · A · Z · I · L

“LIFT up your eyes and view the fields, that they are white for harvesting. Already the reaper is receiving wages and gathering fruit for everlasting life.” (John 4:35, 36) Those prophetic words of Jesus Christ are true today in the far reaches of the vast South American country of Brazil.

For several years Jehovah’s Witnesses in Brazil have been enjoying fine increases. In April 1991, a peak of 308,973 Kingdom harvesters conducted 401,574 home Bible studies. On March 30, 1991, a total of 897,739 persons assembled to commemorate the death of Jesus, the one who began the harvesting work.

Despite such fine results, part of the field still waits to be harvested. More than five million people live in areas of Brazil where little or no preaching work is carried on by Jehovah’s Witnesses. What is being done to extend the harvest to these areas?

Pioneers Share in the Harvest

During a recent six-month period, the Watch Tower Society’s branch office in Brazil sent full-time Kingdom proclaimers—100 temporary special pioneers and 97 regular pioneers—to 97 towns, mostly in the more densely populated eastern part of the country. Kingdom publishers from various congregations also volunteered to work in these areas for shorter periods. Despite the obstacles that had to be overcome, the results have been gratifying.

For example, in São João da Ponte, in the state of Minas Gerais, the pioneers called on the religion teacher of the local school. After hearing the message, he ordered 50 copies of the book *Your Youth—Getting the Best Out Of It* for his catechism class. Another teacher told the departing pioneers: “You should not be leaving, since you are doing such a fine work here. You are the only ones who can give a clear explanation of the Bible.”





Happy Witnesses from Rio de Janeiro share in the harvest

Not everyone was pleased with this fine work. For instance, consider a letter published in a local newspaper (*Diário de Montes Claros*) under the front-page headline "Priest Accused of Inciting to Violence and of Discrimination." The letter said: "In church, [the priest] has the custom of denouncing persons who follow other sects and religions, even though the local clergy do not provide adequate Catholic and Christian guidance on the Gospel for the faithful. In the Mass, he has attacked ministers of Jehovah's Witnesses who are in town, although they do not treat Catholics badly." Not showing such hostility, the article's writer (a theologian)

attended the Bible talk presented by the pioneers and brought along other interested ones. All of them enjoyed the meeting.

Four brothers from Fortaleza traveled by air to Fernando de Noronha Island, 250 miles from the mainland. The island's 1,500 inhabitants had not received a good witness in over 15 years. In ten days the brothers placed 50 books and 245 magazines and brochures, and they started 15 home Bible studies. Twelve people attended the Memorial of Christ's death, which fell during their visit. The pioneers hope that with Jehovah's help the work will soon get firmly established there. Some brothers have considered moving to the island.

Clergy Influence Affects Harvest

A group of Kingdom publishers of the Arpoador Congregation in Rio de Janeiro volunteered to spend two weeks preaching in several towns in the state of Minas Gerais, about 125 miles away. To their delight they found the local people most hospitable and kind. The men had the custom of lifting their hats every time God or his name, Jehovah, was mentioned. Because of their reverence for God, however, they were easily influenced by the clergy.

In one town the priest advised the people not to listen to Jehovah's Witnesses or attend the meeting they were planning to hold. He also scheduled a special Mass at the



Rural witnessing in Minas Gerais

the true God, Jehovah. "In my heart this is what I have always been waiting for," she added.

Later, two pioneers were assigned to care for the interest in that area. As in the first century C.E., "those who were rightly disposed for everlasting life became believers." (Acts 13: 48) And like the Samaritan woman to whom Jesus gave a witness at Jacob's fountain, they began to talk to others about what they learned. (John 4:5-30) Today the 2 pioneers have 6 others serving with them, and an average of 20 people attend the weekly meetings.

Enthusiastic about the success of this special work, 29 publishers of the Arpoador Congregation went to preach in the town of Mutum, about 300 miles away. "The reception was really outstanding," said the elder directing the group. "Most people listened with such attentiveness and interest that 170 Bible studies were started, and we feel that many of them will continue." In two weeks the publishers preached an average of 90 hours each and placed nearly 1,100 pieces of literature with the people. A peak of 181 attended the public talks given by the brothers.

A few months later, the congregation rented a fine house in the center of Mutum for use as a Kingdom Hall and a pioneer home. The first report sent to the Society by the two pioneer sisters assigned there read in

same time as the meeting, and the Mass was broadcast full blast over the loudspeaker outside his church. In spite of his efforts, however, 29 local residents attended the meeting, in addition to the visitors.

A neighboring town was totally different. There the priest told the people to listen when the Witnesses called. The result was that 168 attended the first meeting. Later, he told them to pay attention to how Jehovah's Witnesses observe the Memorial because, as he said, "they do it the proper way." During the two weeks of Kingdom-preaching work in that area, 1,014 books and 1,052 magazines and brochures were placed.

Continued Efforts Brought Blessings

A month later 34 Kingdom publishers returned to care for the Bible studies started during the first visit. The Christian elder taking the lead wrote: "It was thrilling to see the interested people welcome us with thanks and tears of joy in their eyes." One sister recalls that a woman approached her and other Witnesses in a luncheonette "pleading, with tears in her eyes, for us to come and study with her." Another lady studied three times during the week the Witnesses were there. Each time, she had her lesson prepared and was waiting for the study. The lady said that she had begun to pray to

part: "With so many studies already started, we need more pioneers. Even with the help of the brothers from Rio de Janeiro once a month, the work is enormous. Nine out of ten householders spoken to ask us to return. We also need help to conduct the meetings." Another pioneer has now joined them.

Lives Transformed

It has been very encouraging to see the truth take root and produce fine fruitage. One interested person wrote: "Getting this knowledge of the Bible is the best thing that ever happened to me. My life has changed for the better, and I do not need to take sedatives anymore. . . . May Jehovah reward you for everything you have done for me."

Another individual stated: "I really marvel at how Jehovah has opened my eyes. Although I lost my grandmother this week, I now have a hope of seeing her again. I hope to get baptized, but I want to be well prepared first. May Jehovah bless you for coming here to show us the narrow way that leads to eternal life." Still another person said: "I want you to know that I stopped smoking a month ago. I'm very happy with the magazine you sent me. It had many good things in it that helped me to do so." Surely, the harvest gives good reason to rejoice.

However, such blessings have not come without a struggle. For example, when one lady and her daughter began to study, the local priest warned them that if they went to the meetings of the Witnesses, he would put them out of the church. Ignoring the threat, they went to the meetings. They were then ostracized by former friends, some of whom accused them of going mad because "that Jehovah" does not appear in the Catholic Bible. Since the lady was unable to find Jehovah's name in her Catholic Bible, she invited the neighbors to visit her on the day of her study with the pioneers. One woman came with her Catholic Paulinas

version of the Bible. When she read God's name in the footnote to Exodus 6:3, she accepted a Bible study in her home.

Share Fully in the Harvest

What effect did serving in seldom-worked territory have on the workers themselves? One Kingdom publisher said: "This activity served to fortify our faith and our relationship with Jehovah and helped us to revise our priorities." Another publisher stated: "That 14-day period increased my love for my brothers, who serve as one family with one objective: to search for more meek ones. It made me love more those who accept our message, often with tears in their eyes, showing a real thirst for the truth. And most of all, I felt Jehovah's love in giving us the privilege of serving him."

An elder who shared in preaching in seldom-worked territory pointed to the contrast between life there and in large cities. He said: "I cannot help thinking how the life of many brothers could be enriched by moving into the interior. Violence is practically nonexistent here. Life in small and medium-sized towns is such that it allows us not only to live on much less but also to have more association with our brothers and to devote more time to spiritual activities. Can more retired brothers, young people with little family responsibility, or brothers whose work permits them to move embrace this unique privilege and bring joy to themselves, to Jehovah, and to their neighbors?"

This report on seldom-worked territory in Brazil proves that the fields are white for harvesting. In just two years, work in this field has resulted in 191 new congregations and isolated groups. Much remains to be done, but surely Jehovah will continue to bestow his blessing as more Kingdom publishers take part in the fruitful harvest. Can you have a greater share in it?

ILLUSTRATIONS

A key to reaching hearts

DAVID has been running for his life. His enemy is Saul, anointed king of Israel. However, Saul is a man full of hatred for David, consumed by jealousy. In his murderous quest, the king has now brought along 3,000 soldiers. Greatly outnumbered, David and his men have hidden deep inside a cave in the wilderness.

As David and his men huddle together in the darkness, the situation takes a surprising turn. King Saul steps into this very cave to ease nature. David quietly comes upon his helpless foe, weapon in hand. But to the astonishment of David's men, he does not kill the king. He merely cuts off the skirt of Saul's garment. Regretting even this, David says: "It is unthinkable, on my part, from Jehovah's standpoint, that I should do this thing to my lord, the anointed of Jehovah, by thrusting out my hand against him, for he is the anointed of Jehovah."—1 Samuel 24:1-6.

This Bible account teaches a profound lesson about respect for God-given authority. It also reaches the heart, perhaps even more effectively than straightforward counsel. Such is the power of accounts recorded in God's Word for our instruction.—Romans 15:4.

Accordingly, Jehovah's Witnesses endeavor to do more than state facts when they preach the good news, conduct home Bible studies, give Scriptural talks, or witness informally. They try to reach hearts by relating experiences and using illustrations. Their *Theocratic Ministry School Guidebook* explains: "Illustrations stim-

ulate interest and highlight important ideas. They stir up one's thinking processes and make it easier to grasp new thoughts. Well-chosen illustrations couple intellectual appeal with emotional impact. . . . On occasion, an illustration can be used to sidestep prejudice or bias."*—Page 168.

In his book *Essentials of Public Speaking*, Warren DuBois notes: "Let the writer or speaker express his ideas through the actions or words of human beings, and the dullest subject takes on life and color." Thus, adding life and color to a message already vibrant and life-giving is sure to help Christian ministers to reach the heart.

Illustrations That Teach

What kind of illustration works best? Usually, one based on something listeners can relate to easily. Jesus Christ set a fine example in this regard. In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus spoke about such common things as salt, lamps, and birds. (Matthew 5:1-7:29) For instance, everyone was acquainted with lamps that burned olive oil and that were sometimes set on a lampstand. Therefore, Jesus' disciples must have realized that they should be bearers of spiritual light when he told them: "People light a lamp and set it, not under the measuring basket, but upon the lampstand, and it shines upon all those in the house. Likewise let your light shine before men, that they may see your fine works and give glory to your Father who is in the heavens." (Matthew 5:15, 16) Uncomplicated illustrations

* Published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.



Like Jesus, present-day Christian ministers can use vivid illustrations to convey their message and reach hearts

“My father asked me the direct question: ‘Son, will I be lonesome in the grave while I am waiting for the kingdom to begin its work of filling the earth with perfection?’

“That was a question a young man could not readily answer to the satisfaction of an older person who had never thought along that line.

that fit a subject will help Christian ministers to clarify ideas and Bible teachings.

Perhaps Jesus’ most powerful illustrations focused on people. Consider those recorded in Luke chapters 15 and 16. The scribes and the Pharisees had criticized Jesus for receiving sinners and tax collectors. In response, he told moving stories about people. He spoke about a shepherd who found his lost sheep, a woman who retrieved a lost coin, a prodigal son who returned home, and an unrighteous steward.

Realistic illustrations and true-life experiences can be very useful to a Christian minister. For example, note how Alexander H. Macmillan, who traveled extensively as a public speaker for 60 years, explained Bible truth about the dead. Shortly before the death of his father, who believed that the soul never dies, Macmillan had this conversation with him:

“In reply I asked him: ‘Father, did you sleep well last night?’

“He answered, ‘Yes, my son, I did after the doctor gave me some sleeping pills.’

“‘Were you lonesome while you were asleep?’

“‘No, I was not. I wish I could sleep all the time, for then I feel no pain.’”

A. H. Macmillan then read Job 14:13-15 and 3:17-19 to his father and said: “So you see, father, the dead are in a death sleep and know nothing while in that condition, so how could they be lonesome?”

What effective teaching! If you are one of Jehovah’s Witnesses, you too can use scriptures and illustrations to appeal to the mind and the heart.

Finding Illustrations

But where can you find effective illustrations or true-life experiences? Many can be brought out of your treasure trove of

personal experience. For instance, do you need to demonstrate the blessings of faith, the power of prayer, or the joy of the ministry? If you are a dedicated Christian, likely you could relate various incidents in your own life. You may hear fine experiences at a congregation meeting or when talking with fellow Christians. Or you may read an encouraging experience in the *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses*. In fact, the *Watch Tower Publications Index* provides access to printed experiences from around the world.

How can you tell an experience effectively? For one thing, creating a measure of anticipation helps you to hold the attention of your listeners. You might preface an experience by saying: "One pioneer learned firsthand just how Jehovah blesses those who trust in him." Immediately, your listeners wonder what blessings the full-time Kingdom preacher enjoyed. Be sure to tell them.

Try to relate an experience in your own words. Provide details, for doing so adds impact to a story. By painting a clear picture of the circumstances involved, you can more easily motivate your listeners. But make sure that you do not get so involved in storytelling that they fail to understand why you are relating the experience. Also, avoid exaggerating, for although this may make a story more interesting, it can undermine your credibility. For the same reason, refrain from passing on hearsay or relating experiences you cannot verify.

Bringing the Bible to Life

The most instructive experiences are found in the Bible itself. For example, suppose you wish to show a Bible student or an audience that children can take a stand for Jehovah God. You may decide to use the account of the unnamed girl who spoke to

Naaman's wife about Jehovah's prophet Elisha. First, read the account at 2 Kings 5: 1-5. You might then ask: "How difficult do you think it was for this girl to maintain integrity to God in a land of false worship? Did it not take courage for her to talk convincingly about Jehovah and his prophet?"

Prior research may have helped you to make the account live. You may have found helpful information under the headings NAAMAN, SYRIA, and ELISHA in the *Watch Tower Publications Index*. Cross-references in the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* may have led you from the account in 2 Kings to Psalm 148:12, 13, where we read: "You young men and also you virgins, you old men together with boys. Let them praise the name of Jehovah, for his name alone is unreachably high. His dignity is above earth and heaven." What encouragement for young people to speak God's word with boldness!—Acts 4:29-31.

If you are a Christian minister, 'pay constant attention to your teaching' in this regard. (1 Timothy 4:16) Do not simply tell the truth—illustrate it. Make Bible accounts vivid and meaningful. Use fitting experiences and illustrations. These are ways to reach the heart.

In Our Next Issue

- **How Long Will God's Patience Last?**
- **Trust in Jehovah's Saving Arm**
- **"Do Not Be Irritating Your Children"**

Questions From Readers

■ Why does Isaiah 11:6 say that "the wolf will actually reside for a while with the male lamb"? Will such peace not be permanent?



Zoological Research Center, Tel-Aviv Hebrew University

The refreshing peace in the animal creation prophesied at Isaiah 11:6-9 will be permanent. But a careful rendering of Isaiah 11:6 makes it clear that such animals will not be together constantly.

In the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, Isaiah 11:6 reads: "The wolf will actually reside for a while with the male lamb, and with the kid the leopard itself will lie down, and the calf and the maned young lion and the well-fed animal all together; and a mere little boy will be leader over them."

The reading in many Bible versions is something like: "The wolf also shall dwell [or, "live"] with the lamb." Such renderings might convey an image of a wolf and a lamb being continual companions, as if in a new family or living arrangement.

However, the Hebrew word translated "dwell" or "live" is *gur*. According to lexicographer William Gesenius, it means "to sojourn, to dwell for a time, to live as not at home, i.e. as a stranger,

foreigner, guest." (*A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, translated by Edward Robinson) The lexicon by F. Brown, S. Driver, and C. Briggs gives the meaning "sojourn, dwell for a (definite or indef[inite]) time, dwell as a new-comer . . . without original rights."

God used *gur* in telling Abraham to "reside as an alien" in Canaan. The patriarch would not own the land, but he could be a protected resident there. (Genesis 26:3; Exodus 6:2-4; Hebrews 11:9, 13) Likewise, Jacob said that he was 'residing as an alien' in the area of

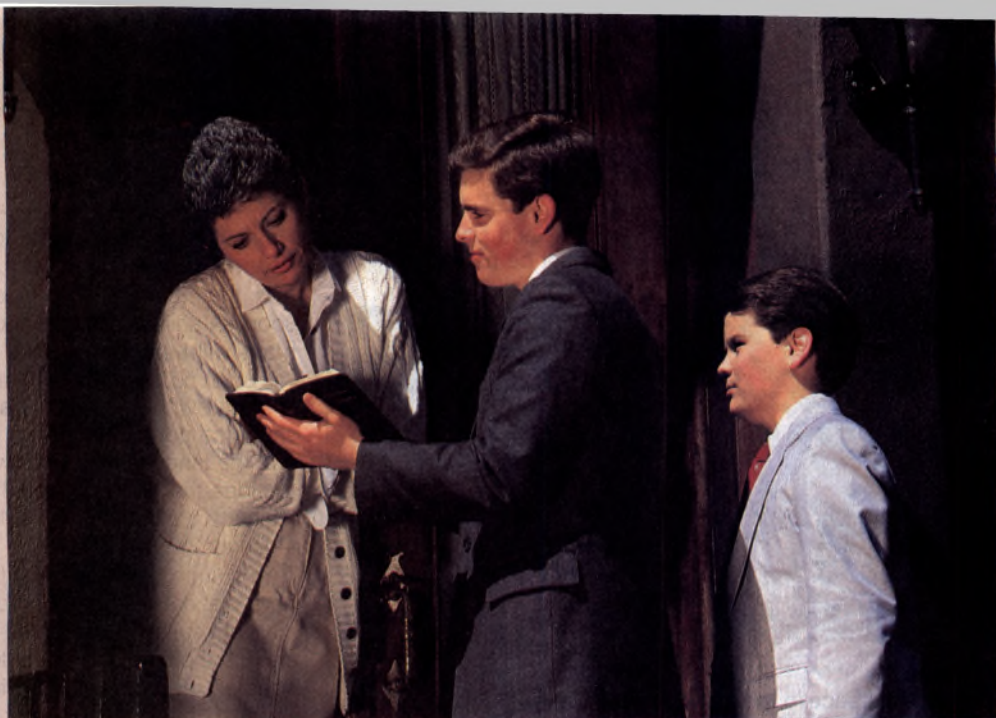
Haran, for he would return to Canaan. —Genesis 29:4; 32:4.

In the Paradise that God will soon establish, animals and humans will be at peace. The lamb will be at no risk to be with a wolf or a calf with a leopard. As if to show the contrast with the present, the language even allows for the idea that the wolf would be a resident protected by the lamb. —Isaiah 35:9; 65:25.*

Yet, such animals might still have distinct habitats. Some animals are suited to the forests, others to the plains, still others to the coastal regions or mountains. Even at the time of the original Paradise, God spoke of 'domestic animals and wild beasts.' (Genesis 1:24) Domestic animals evidently were those that might commonly be near humans and their dwellings. The wild beast, though not ferocious, apparently preferred to live away from mankind. So, as Isaiah's prophecy foretells, the wolf will "reside for a while with the male lamb," but it will not continuously be around such domestic animals.

* *The Bible in Living English* words Isaiah 11:6 this way: "And wolf will be sheep's tenant."





Would You Welcome a Visit?

Last year a woman from Corpus Christi, Texas, U.S.A., wrote the Watchtower Society in Brooklyn, New York, saying: "My name is Emily, and I have been studying the literature that some of Jehovah's Witnesses gave me a few weeks ago. After reading the magazines and comparing them with my family Bible, I saw that the Roman Catholic Church didn't seem to teach what was in the Holy Bible. They never spoke of the name of God or of the coming Kingdom of God, which I found to be key subjects in my Bible. I have stopped going to my family church and have started to study the Bible, thanks to your truthful literature."

"I would like to begin fellowship with a local congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses. Please send a message to them to come to my home so that we may talk."

