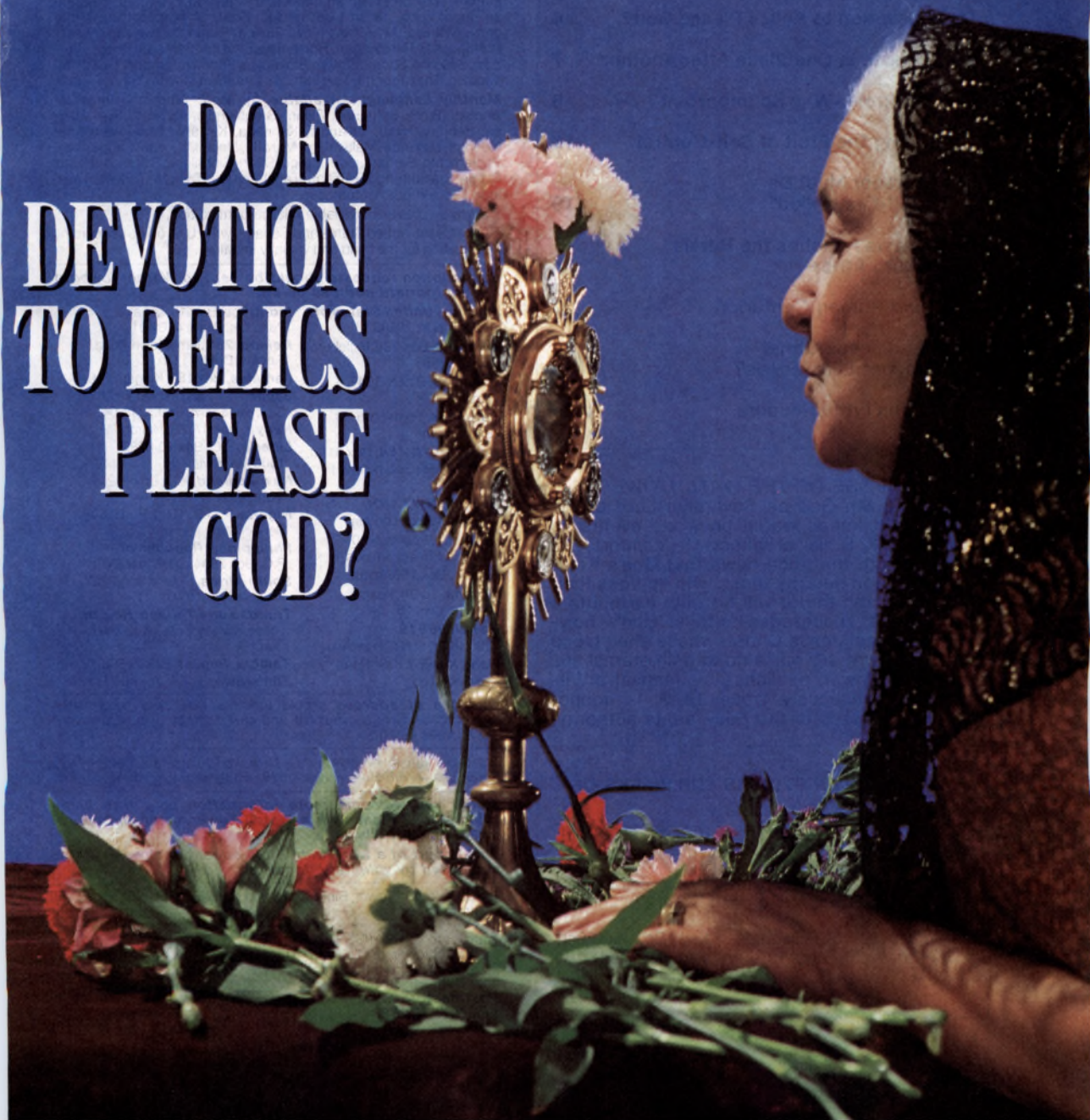


The **Watchtower**
Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

November 15, 1991

**DOES
DEVOTION
TO RELICS
PLEASE
GOD?**



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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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- December 16: Self-Control—Why So Important?
Page 8. Songs to Be Used: 124, 132.
- December 23: Cultivating the Fruit of Self-Control.
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WHY THEY USE RELICS IN WORSHIP

NAPLES, Italy. Imagine that you are there in the early years of the 18th century of our Common Era. In its cathedral, Irish philosopher George Berkeley stands before a famous religious relic. He views with skepticism the apparent liquefying of the blood of "*San Gennaro*," the Catholic "saint" Januarius.

Naples has changed little in this respect. For instance, despite bad weather on one occasion in recent years, the church was again teeming with people, and an apparent miracle had taken place. The relic and a procession led by the cardinal archbishop were greeted with warm applause. Yes, this was another of the many times that the blood of "*San Gennaro*" appeared to liquefy. Miracles involving this religious relic had reportedly been taking place since the 14th century.

According to Catholic tradition, a relic (from the Latin *relinquere*, meaning "to leave behind") is an object left by a person considered to be a saint. As the *Dizionario Ecclesiastico* points out, relics are "in the strict sense of the word, the body or part of the body and the ashes of the Saint, in a broader sense

the object that came into contact with the body of the saint and which is therefore worthy of devotion."

Papal Endorsement

Doubtless, many give reverential treatment to religious relics because of apparent miracles associated with them. Papal endorsement is evidently another factor in their popularity.

At least four popes in the last 70 years have given special attention to relics. A Catholic periodical reveals that like his predecessor Pius XI, Pope Pius XII "kept relics of the saint of Lisieux on his person." Paul VI "kept a finger of the apostle [Thomas] on the desk in his study," and John Paul II "keeps, in his own apartment, fragments of the . . . mortal remains" of "Saint Benedict" and "Saint Andrew."—*30 giorni*, March 1990, page 50.

In view of such papal endorsement, it is not surprising that the demand for relics for both private and public devotion is increasing. But does devotion to religious relics please God?



Courtesy of The British Museum

**A reliquary, a
container in which
religious relics
are preserved**

DOES DEVOTION TO RELICS PLEASE GOD?

THE blood of “*San Gennaro*,” said to liquefy usually three times a year, is one of many religious relics. So is the Shroud of Turin, in which the body of Jesus Christ was allegedly wrapped. Among relics linked with Jesus are his supposed crib (in a large basilica in Rome), his spelling book, and more than a thousand nails said to have been used at his execution! Religious relics also include a number of heads of John the Baptist and, in various places in Europe, four bodies said to be “*Santa Lucia*.”

Among cities particularly famous for relics is Trier, Germany, where one of the many “holy tunics”—the seamless inner garment worn by Jesus Christ—is preserved. In Vatican City itself there are over a thousand relics in a special archive. Literally thousands of religious relics are kept in the church of “Saint Ursula” in Cologne, Germany. The list could go on and on. Why, in Italy alone, there are 2,468 so-called holy places with religious relics!

Reverence for relics is believed to date from the fourth century of our Common Era, as does veneration of “saints.” For religious, economic, and even political reasons, the number of relics has gradually grown through the centuries, with thousands in existence today. The Second Vatican Council reaffirmed that “according to its tradition, the Church venerates the saints and honors their authentic relics and their images.” (*Constitution “Sacrosanctum Concilium” sulla sacra Liturgia*, in *I Documenti del Concilio Vaticano II*, 1980, Edizioni Paoline) “The illustrious relics, as well as those honored by great popular piety,” are mentioned in *Codex Iuris Canonici* (Code of Canon Law) promul-

gated by John Paul II in 1983. (Canon 1190) Anglicans and members of the Orthodox churches also honor relics.

With so many alleged nails of Christ’s impalement and heads of John the Baptizer in existence, it is obvious that religious relics are often fraudulent. For instance, radiocarbon dating proved the Shroud of Turin to be a fraud. Interestingly, during the heated debate over it in 1988, the well-known Vatican observer Marco Tosatti asked: “If the scientific analysis used on the Shroud was applied to other objects of popular devotion, what would the verdict be?”

Obviously, no wise person would want to venerate a false relic. But is that the only factor to consider?

What Does the Bible Say?

The Bible does not say that God’s favored people, the ancient Israelites, venerated religious relics while in Egyptian bondage. True, the patriarch Jacob died in Egypt and his remains were carried into the land of Canaan for burial ‘in the cave that was in the field of Machpelah.’ His son Joseph also died in Egypt, and his bones were eventually carried to Canaan for burial. (Genesis 49: 29-33; 50:1-14, 22-26; Exodus 13:19) However, the Scriptures give no indication that the Israelites ever venerated the remains of Jacob and Joseph as religious relics.

Consider, too, what happened in the case of the prophet Moses. Under God’s direction, he led the Israelites for 40 years. Then, at the age of 120, he ascended Mount Nebo, viewed the Promised Land, and died. Michael the archangel disputed with the Devil about Moses’ body, and Satan was foiled in



Elisha's bones were not venerated although they were involved in a resurrection

Some in Christendom advocate devotion to relics because of what is said at Acts 19:11, 12, where we read: "God kept performing extraordinary works of power through the hands of [the apostle] Paul, so that even cloths and aprons were borne from his body to the ailing people, and the diseases left

any possible attempt to use it to ensnare the Israelites in relic worship. (Jude 9) Although they understandably mourned Moses' death, they never venerated his remains. In fact, God made such a thing impossible by burying Moses in an unmarked grave at a location unknown to humans.—Deuteronomy 34:1-8.

Certain advocates of the veneration of relics cite 2 Kings 13:21, which says: "It came about that as they were burying a man, why, here they saw the marauding band. At once they threw the man into [the prophet] Elisha's burial place and went off. When the man touched the bones of Elisha, he immediately came to life and stood upon his feet." This was a miracle involving the lifeless bones of one of God's prophets. But Elisha was dead and "conscious of nothing at all" at the time of the miracle. (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10) Hence, this resurrection must be attributed to the miracle-working power of Jehovah God, who effected it by means of his holy spirit, or active force. It is also noteworthy that the Scriptures do not say that Elisha's bones were ever venerated.

them, and the wicked spirits came out." Please note that it was God who performed those extraordinary works through Paul. The apostle himself did not perform such works independently, and he never accepted veneration from any human.—Acts 14:8-18.

Contrary to Bible Teachings

Actually, devotion to religious relics is contrary to a number of Bible teachings. For instance, an indispensable factor in such devotion is belief in the immortality of the human soul. Millions of devout church members believe that the souls of all those canonized and venerated as "saints" are alive in heaven. These sincere people pray to such "saints," seeking their protection and asking that they intercede with God on the petitioners' behalf. In fact, according to one ecclesiastical work, Catholics attribute to relics "the power of intercession of the Saint with God."

According to the Bible, however, the human soul is not immortal. Humans do not have souls within them that are undying and capable of existence apart from the body

after death. Rather, the Scriptures say: "Jehovah God proceeded to form the man out of dust from the ground and to blow into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man came to be a living soul." (Genesis 2:7) Instead of teaching that humans have immortal souls, the Bible says: "The soul that is sinning—it itself will die." (Ezekiel 18:4) This applies to all humans—including those later canonized as "saints"—for all of us have inherited sin and death from the first man, Adam.—Romans 5:12.

Devotion to "saints" should be avoided because they were never authorized to intercede with God for anyone. Jehovah God has decreed that only his Son, Jesus Christ, can do this. The apostle Paul said that Jesus "not only died for us—he rose from the dead, and there at God's right hand he stands and pleads for us."—Romans 8:34, *The Jerusalem Bible*; compare John 14:6, 14.

Another reason to avoid devotion to "saints" and religious relics associated with them rests in what the Bible says about idolatry. One of the Ten Commandments given to the Israelites stated: "You must not make for yourself a carved image or a form like anything that is in the heavens above or that is on the earth underneath or that is in the waters under the earth. You must not bow down to them nor be induced to serve them, because I Jehovah your God am a God exacting exclusive devotion." (Exodus 20:4, 5) Centuries later, the apostle Paul told fellow Christians: "My beloved ones, flee from idolatry." (1 Corinthians 10:14) Similarly, the apostle John wrote: "Little children, guard yourselves from idols."—1 John 5:21.

Reverence for canonized "saints" and religious relics, therefore, finds no support in the Bible. However, some people desire the presence of something considered holy that can be seen and touched and supposedly has saving power. Indeed, many consider religious relics to be a visible link in a chain

between heaven and earth. Please reflect on this point for a moment.

It is not by seeing and touching religious relics that a person acts in harmony with Jesus' words about the worship that God desires. Jesus said: "The hour is coming, and it is now, when the true worshipers will worship the Father with spirit and truth, for, indeed, the Father is looking for suchlike ones to worship him. God is a Spirit, and those worshiping him must worship with spirit and truth." (John 4:23, 24) Jehovah God is "a Spirit," invisible to human eyes. To worship him "with spirit" means that our sacred service to God is motivated by a heart full of love and faith. (Matthew 22:37-40; Galatians 2:16) We cannot worship God 'with truth' by venerating relics but only by rejecting religious falsehoods, learning his will as revealed in the Bible, and doing it.

It is not surprising, therefore, that scholar James Bentley acknowledges that 'the ancient Hebrews did not practice the veneration of relics.' He also says that during the four centuries between Stephen's death and the exhuming of his body by Lucian, the attitude of Christians toward relics changed completely. By the fifth century C.E., however, apostate Christendom had already ceased adhering to clear Biblical teachings about idolatry, the condition of the dead, and the role of Jesus Christ as the one who "pleads for us."—Romans 8:34; Ecclesiastes 9:5; John 11:11-14.

If we want our worship to please God, we must make sure that it is not associated with any form of idolatry. To be acceptable, our worship must go to the Creator, Jehovah God, not to any relic or creature. (Romans 1:24, 25; Revelation 19:10) We must also acquire accurate knowledge of the Bible and build up a strong faith. (Romans 10:17; Hebrews 11:6) And if we walk in the way of true worship, we will act in harmony with the overwhelming Scriptural evidence that devotion to relics does not please God.

‘Pestilences in One Place After Another’

PESTILENCES of unparalleled proportions were a foretold feature of “the sign of [Jesus Christ’s] presence and of the conclusion of the system of things.” (Matthew 24:3) The Gospel writer Luke adds this detail not mentioned in the accounts of Matthew and Mark. (Matthew, chapters 24 and 25; Mark, chapter 13) Outbreaks of epidemics and devastating diseases would occur “in one place after another” in the last days. (Luke 1:3; 21:11) From where might such diseases come?

“Scientists know of several viruses lurking in the tropics that—with a little help from nature—could wreak far more loss of life than will likely result from the AIDS epidemic,” states the journal *Science News*. “Even if the world’s viral inventory remains stable, researchers say, the tropics already harbor enough viral ‘fire power’ to wipe out large segments of Earth’s population.”

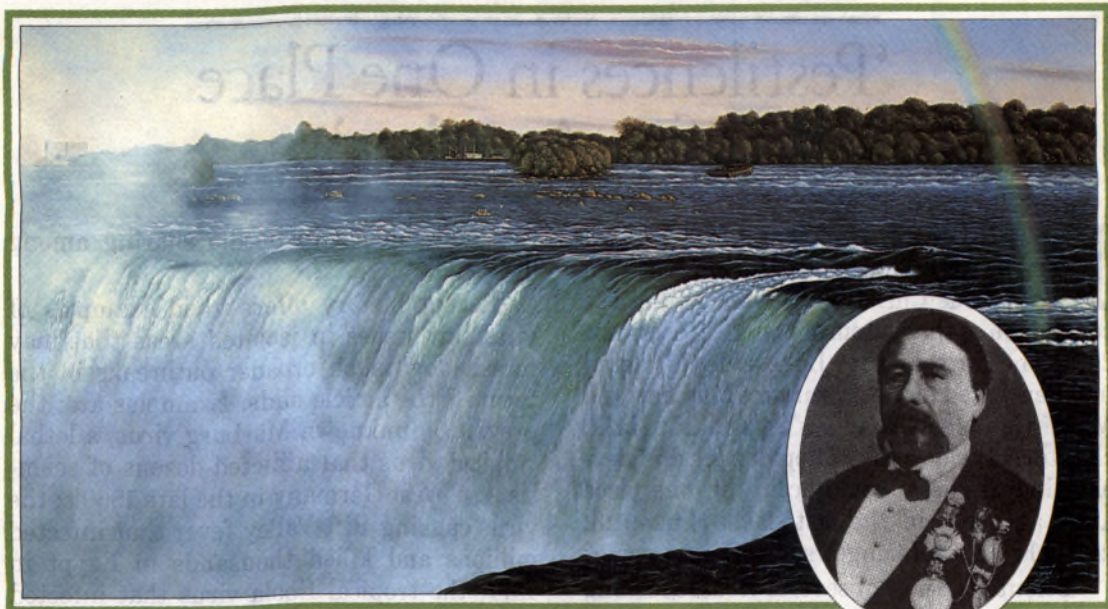
What makes ours an era of increased vulnerability is the earth’s burgeoning population and the greater needs of a crowded world. “History shows that life-threatening viral outbreaks have often followed when humans moved into unexplored terrain or when urban living conditions deteriorated in ways that invited new viral hosts,” says *Science News*. As humans infiltrate virus-infected areas that were previously inaccessible, new viral epidemics often follow. The same thing happens as insects extend their range when global climate patterns change. “Additionally,” says the magazine, “modern medical technologies such as transfusion and transplantation have provided viruses new means of transport between human hosts. So have a variety of social and behavioral changes, ranging from globe-trotting among the

rich and famous to needle sharing among drug addicts.”

“Recent history offers vivid examples of viral skirmishes in isolated areas that may foreshadow much broader outbreaks in the future,” the article adds. Examples are: the previously unknown Marburg virus, a lethal tropical virus that afflicted dozens of scientists in West Germany in the late 1960’s; the virus causing Rift Valley fever that infected millions and killed thousands in Egypt in 1977; the tropical Ebola virus that infected more than a thousand people in Zaire and Sudan in 1976 and killed about 500, many of them doctors and nurses treating its victims.

Devastating viral attacks are rarely predicted in advance. “In 1918, for example, a particularly virulent mutant strain of human influenza spread around the globe, killing an estimated 20 million people,” says *Science News*. “More recently, the emergence in humans of a virus that probably once resided only in African monkeys caught the world off guard again. The AIDS virus has now infected 5 million to 10 million people in 149 countries, according to World Health Organization estimates. But despite all the attention drawn by this most recent plague, much more frightening things await us, many virologists fear.”

As distressing as pestilences are, they are part of the composite sign of Jesus’ presence in Kingdom glory, along with such features as wars, famines, and great earthquakes. (Mark 13:8; Luke 21:10, 11) The features are also a reason for rejoicing, for Luke adds Jesus’ words: “But as these things start to occur, raise yourselves erect and lift your heads up, because your deliverance is getting near.”—Luke 21:28.



Historical Pictures Service

SELF-CONTROL —WHY SO IMPORTANT?

"By your contributing in response all earnest effort, supply to your faith virtue, to your virtue knowledge, to your knowledge self-control."—2 PETER 1:5, 6.

WITHOUT a doubt, one of the most amazing displays of physical control was furnished by Charles Blondin in the latter half of the 19th century. According to one report, he crossed Niagara Falls a number of times, first in 1859, on a tightrope 1,100 feet long and 160 feet above the water. After that, he did so each time with a different display of his ability: blindfolded, in a sack, trundling a wheelbarrow, on stilts, and carrying a man on his back. In another setting, he turned somersaults on stilts on a rope stretched 170 feet

above the ground. To maintain such balance required extremely great physical self-control. For his pains, Blondin was rewarded with both fame and fortune.

² While few could even come near to duplicating those displays, the importance of physical self-control in the exercise of professional skills or in sports is apparent to all of us. For example, in describing the virtuosity of the late famed pianist Vladimir Horowitz, one musician said: "For me the fascinating thing was a sense of complete control . . . , the sense of an unbelievable

1. What remarkable display of physical self-control occurred in the 19th century?

2. What other forms of activity are there that demand physical control?

energy being harnessed." Another report on Horowitz spoke of "eight decades of flying fingers in perfect control."

³ It takes great effort to develop such skills. However, even more important and challenging is *self-control*. It has been defined as "restraint exercised over one's own impulses, emotions, or desires." In the Christian Greek Scriptures, the word translated "self-control" at 2 Peter 1:6 and elsewhere, has been defined as "the virtue of one who masters his desires and passions, especially his sensual appetites." Individual self-control has even been called "the acme of human achievement."

Why Self-Control Is So Important

⁴ What a harvest the lack of self-control has been reaping! Many troubles in the world today are primarily due to a lack of self-control. Truly, we are in "the last days," when 'critical times hard to deal with are here.' Men are "without self-control" often because of greed, one form of which is being "lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God." (2 Timothy 3:1-5) This sobering truth has forcefully been brought home to us by the exclusion of over 40,000 erring individuals from fellowship with the Christian congregation during the past service year, largely because of grossly wrong conduct. To these must be added the many who were given reproof, mostly for sexual immorality but all because of failure to exercise self-control. Also sobering is the fact that some longtime elders lost all their privileges as overseers for the same reason.

⁵ The importance of self-control might be

3. (a) What is the most demanding form of control, and how is it defined? (b) What is the meaning of the Greek word rendered "self-control" in the Bible?

4. The lack of self-control has reaped what bad fruitage?

5. How might the importance of self-control be illustrated?

illustrated by an automobile. It has four wheels that enable it to move, a powerful engine that can turn those wheels very rapidly, and brakes that can stop them. However, disaster can result unless there is someone in the driver's seat to decide where those wheels go, how fast they turn, and when they stop, by making controlled use of the steering wheel, the accelerator, and the brakes.

⁶ It would be difficult to overemphasize the importance of self-control. What the apostle Paul said at 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 about the importance of love might well be said of self-control. No matter how eloquent we may be as public speakers, no matter how much knowledge and faith we may have gained through good study habits, no matter what works we might be doing to benefit others, unless we exercise self-control, all of that is in vain. We should bear in mind Paul's words: "Do you not know that the runners in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may attain it. Moreover, every man taking part in a contest exercises self-control in all things." (1 Corinthians 9:24, 25) Helping us to exercise self-control in all things is Paul's warning at 1 Corinthians 10:12: "Let him that thinks he is standing beware that he does not fall."

Warning Examples

⁷ By allowing emotion rather than reason to govern his actions, Adam failed to exercise self-control. As a result, "sin entered into the world and death through sin." (Romans 5:12) The first murder was also due to a lack of self-control, for Jehovah God had

6. (a) What criterion regarding love might well be applied to self-control? (b) What further counsel must we keep in mind?

7. (a) How did lack of self-control start the human race on its downward course? (b) What other early examples of lack of self-control do the Scriptures give us?

**Christians need
to exercise self-control
regarding food and drink**

warned Cain: 'Why are you hot with anger and why has your countenance fallen? Sin is crouching at the entrance, and will you get the mastery over it?' Because Cain did not gain the mastery over sin, he murdered his brother Abel. (Genesis 4:6-12) The wife of Lot also failed to exercise self-control. She just could not resist the temptation to look back. What did her lack of self-control cost her? Why, her very life!—Genesis 19:17, 26.

⁸ Jacob's firstborn son, Reuben, lost the birthright because of his lack of self-control. He violated his father's lounge by having sexual relations with one of Jacob's concubines. (Genesis 35:22; 49:3, 4; 1 Chronicles 5:1) Because Moses lost his temper over the way the Israelites tried him with their murmuring, complaining, and rebellion, he was denied the greatly desired privilege of entering the Promised Land. (Numbers 20:1-13; Deuteronomy 32:50-52) Even faithful King David, 'a man agreeable to God's own heart,' got into deep trouble because of his lack of self-control on one occasion. (1 Samuel 13:14; 2 Samuel 12:7-14) All such examples provide us with wholesome warnings that we need to exercise self-control.

What We Need to Control

⁹ First of all, self-control involves our *thoughts and emotions*. These are often referred to in the Scriptures by the figurative use of such words as "heart" and "kidneys." What we let our minds dwell on either helps us or hinders us in our effort to please

8. The experiences of what three men of old provide warnings for us as to the need for self-control?

9. What are some scriptures that highlight the importance of self-control?



Jehovah. Self-control is needed if we are to heed the Scriptural counsel found at Philipians 4:8, to keep considering things that are true, chaste, and virtuous. The psalmist David expressed similar sentiments in prayer, saying: "Let the . . . meditation of my heart become pleasurable before you, O Jehovah my Rock and my Redeemer." (Psalm 19:14) The tenth commandment—not to desire anything belonging to a fellowman—required control of one's thoughts. (Exodus 20:17) Jesus highlighted the seriousness of controlling our thoughts and emotions when he said: "Everyone that keeps on looking at a woman so as to have a passion for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart."—Matthew 5:28.

¹⁰ Self-control also involves our *words*, our *speech*. Many indeed are the scriptures that counsel us to exercise control of our tongues. For example: "The true God is in the heavens but you are on the earth. That is why your words should prove to be few." (Ecclesiastes 5:2) "In the abundance of words there does not fail to be transgression, but the one keeping his lips in check is acting discreetly." (Proverbs 10:19) "Let

10. What Bible texts stress the importance of controlling our speech?



a rotten saying not proceed out of your mouth, but whatever saying is good for building up as the need may be . . . Let all . . . screaming and abusive speech be taken away from you along with all badness." And Paul goes on to give counsel to put away from us foolish talking and obscene jesting.—Ephesians 4:29, 31; 5:3, 4.

¹¹ James, a half brother of Jesus, condemns unbridled speech and shows how hard it is to control the tongue. He says: "The tongue is a little member and yet makes great brags. Look! How little a fire it takes to set so great a woodland on fire! Well, the tongue is a fire. The tongue is constituted a world of unrighteousness among our members, for it spots up all the body and sets the wheel of natural life aflame and it is set aflame by Gehenna. For every species of wild beast as well as bird and creeping thing and sea creature is to be tamed and has been tamed by humankind. But the tongue, not one of mankind can get it tamed. An unruly injurious thing, it is full of death-dealing poison. With it we bless Jehovah, even the Father, and yet with

11. How does James deal with the problem of controlling the tongue?

Self-control will help us refrain from harmful gossip

it we curse men who have come into existence 'in the likeness of God.' Out of the same mouth come forth blessing and cursing. It is not proper, my brothers, for these things to go on occurring this way."—James 3:5-10.

¹² Of course, self-control involves our *actions*. One area in which great self-control is needed has to do with our relations with those of the opposite sex. Christians are commanded: "Flee from sexual immorality." (1 Corinthians 6:18, *New International Version*) Husbands are exhorted to limit their sex interest to their own wives, being told in part: "Drink water out of your own cistern, and tricklings out of the midst of your own well." (Proverbs 5:15-20) We are plainly told that "God will judge fornicators and adulterers." (Hebrews 13:4) Self-control is especially needed by those who would cultivate the gift of singleness.—Matthew 19:11, 12; 1 Corinthians 7:37.

¹³ Jesus summed up the whole matter regarding our actions toward fellow humans when he gave what is generally termed the "Golden Rule," saying: "All things, therefore, that you want men to do to you, you also must likewise do to them; this, in fact, is what the Law and the Prophets mean." (Matthew 7:12) Truly, it takes self-control not to let our selfish inclinations or outside pressures or temptations cause us to treat others differently from the way we would want them to treat us.

¹⁴ Then there is the matter of self-control regarding *food and drink*. God's Word wisely counsels: "Do not come to be among heavy drinkers of wine, among those who are gluttonous eaters of flesh." (Proverbs

12, 13. What are some scriptures that show the importance of controlling our actions and conduct?

14. What counsel does God's Word give regarding food and drink?

23:20) Particularly regarding our day, Jesus warned: "Pay attention to yourselves that your hearts never become weighed down with overeating and heavy drinking and anxieties of life, and suddenly that day be instantly upon you as a snare." (Luke 21:34, 35) Yes, self-control involves our thoughts and our feelings, as well as our words and our actions.

Why Self-Control Is Such a Challenge

¹⁵ Self-control does not come easily because, as all Christians know, we have three powerful forces arrayed against our exercise of self-control. To begin with, there are Satan and his demons. The Scriptures leave no doubt as to their reality. Thus, we read that "Satan entered into" Judas just before he went out to betray Jesus. (John 13:27) The apostle Peter asked Ananias: "Why has Satan emboldened you to play false to the holy spirit?" (Acts 5:3) Most fittingly, Peter also warned: "Keep your senses, be watchful. Your adversary, the Devil, walks about like a roaring lion, seeking to devour someone."—1 Peter 5:8.

¹⁶ In their efforts to display self-control, Christians must also contend with this world that lies "in the power of the wicked one," Satan the Devil. Concerning it, the apostle John wrote: "Do not be loving either the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him; because everything in the world—the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the showy display of one's means of life—does not originate with the Father, but originates with the world. Furthermore, the world is passing away and so is its desire, but he that does the will of God remains forever." Unless we exercise

15. How do the Scriptures show the reality of Satan's opposition to the exercising of self-control by Christians?

16. Why must Christians exercise self-control with regard to this world?

self-control and strongly resist any tendency to love the world, we will succumb to its influence, as did Paul's one-time fellow worker Demas.—1 John 2:15-17; 5:19; 2 Timothy 4:10.

¹⁷ As Christians, we also need self-control if we are to contend successfully with our own inherited fleshly weaknesses and shortcomings. We cannot escape the fact that "the inclination of the heart of man is bad from his youth up." (Genesis 8:21) Like King David, 'with error we were brought forth with birth pains, and in sin our mothers conceived us.' (Psalm 51:5) A newborn child knows nothing about self-control. When it wants something, it just keeps on crying until it gets it. One report on child training states: 'Children reason in a way entirely different from adults. Children are self-centered and often unresponsive to the most logical persuasion because they are unable to "put themselves in another person's place."' Truly, "foolishness is tied up with the heart of a boy." However, with the application of "the rod of discipline," he gradually learns that there are rules he must obey and that selfishness must be curbed.—Proverbs 22:15.

17. With what problem as regards self-control are we born?

Do You Recall?

- ☐ Why is self-control important?
- ☐ What are some examples of those who suffered loss because of lack of self-control?
- ☐ In what areas must we exercise self-control?
- ☐ What three enemies make it difficult for us to exercise self-control?

¹⁸ Yes, our inborn selfish tendencies furnish a challenge for us when it comes to exercising self-control. Those tendencies reside in the figurative heart, concerning which Jesus said: "Out of the heart come wicked reasonings, murders, adulteries, fornications, thieveries, false testimonies, blasphemies." (Matthew 15:19) That is why Paul wrote: "The good that I wish I do not do, but the bad that I do not wish is what I practice. If, now, what I do not wish is what I do, the one working it out is no longer I, but the sin dwelling in me." (Romans 7:

18. (a) According to Jesus, what tendencies reside in the figurative heart? (b) What words of Paul show his awareness of the problem of exercising self-control?

19, 20) However, this was not a losing battle, for Paul also wrote: "I pummel my body and lead it as a slave, that, after I have preached to others, I myself should not become disapproved somehow." Pummeling his body required exercising self-control. —1 Corinthians 9:27.

¹⁹ Well could Paul say that he pummeled his body, for exercising self-control is complicated by many physical factors, such as high blood pressure, bad nerves, lack of sleep, headaches, indigestion, and so forth. In the next article, we will consider qualities and aids that will help us to exercise self-control.

19. Why could Paul well say that he pummeled his body?

CULTIVATING THE FRUIT OF SELF-CONTROL

*"The fruitage of the spirit is love, joy, peace,
long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control.
Against such things there is no law."*—GALATIANS 5:22, 23.

JEHOVAH GOD and Jesus Christ have given us the finest examples of self-control. Ever since man's disobedience in the garden of Eden, Jehovah has kept exercising this quality. (Compare Isaiah 42:14.) Nine times in the Hebrew Scriptures we read that he is "slow to anger." (Exodus 34:6) That takes self-control. And certainly God's Son exercised great self-control, for

1. Who have given us the finest examples of self-control, as seen by what scriptures?

"when he was being reviled, he did not go reviling in return." (1 Peter 2:23) Yet, Jesus could have asked his heavenly Father for the support of "more than twelve legions of angels." —Matthew 26:53.

² We also have some fine Scriptural examples of self-control exercised by imperfect humans. For instance, this quality was displayed during a notable incident in the

2. What fine Scriptural examples do we have of the exercise of self-control by imperfect humans?

life of Joseph, a son of the patriarch Jacob. What self-control Joseph exercised when Potiphar's wife tried to seduce him! (Genesis 39:7-9) There was also the fine example of the four Hebrew youths who exercised self-control by refusing to eat the Babylonian king's dainties because of Mosaic Law restrictions.—Daniel 1:8-17.

³ For modern examples of self-control, we can point to Jehovah's Witnesses as a whole. They deserve the commendation given them by the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*—that they are “one of the best-behaved groups in the world.” A Philippine university instructor stated that “the Witnesses practice religiously what they learn from the Scriptures.” Regarding the Witnesses' convention in Warsaw in 1989, a Polish reporter wrote: “55,000 people did not smoke one cigarette for three days! . . . This demonstration of superhuman discipline impressed me with admiration mixed with awe.”

Fearing God and Hating What Is Bad

⁴ One of the greatest aids in cultivating self-control is the fear of God, the wholesome dread of displeasing our loving heavenly Father. How important the reverent fear of God should be to us can be seen by the fact that the Scriptures mention it many times. When Abraham was about to offer up his son Isaac, God said: “Do not put out your hand against the boy and do not do anything at all to him, for now I do know that you are God-fearing in that you have not withheld your son, your only one, from me.” (Genesis 22:12) Emotional stress no doubt ran high, so it must have taken a great deal of self-control on the part of Abraham to proceed with God's command

to the point of lifting up his knife to slay his beloved son Isaac. Yes, the fear of God will help us to exercise self-control.

⁵ Closely related to the fear of Jehovah is the hating of bad. We read at Proverbs 8:13: “The fear of Jehovah means the hating of bad.” In turn, the hating of what is bad also helps us to exercise self-control. Time and again, the Scriptures tell us to hate—yes, abhor—what is bad. (Psalm 97:10; Amos 5:14, 15; Romans 12:9) That which is bad is often so pleasurable, so tempting, so enticing that we simply must hate it in order to fortify ourselves against it. All such hating of what is bad has the effect of strengthening our determination to exercise self-control and thus serves as a protection to us.

Self-Control, the Course of Wisdom

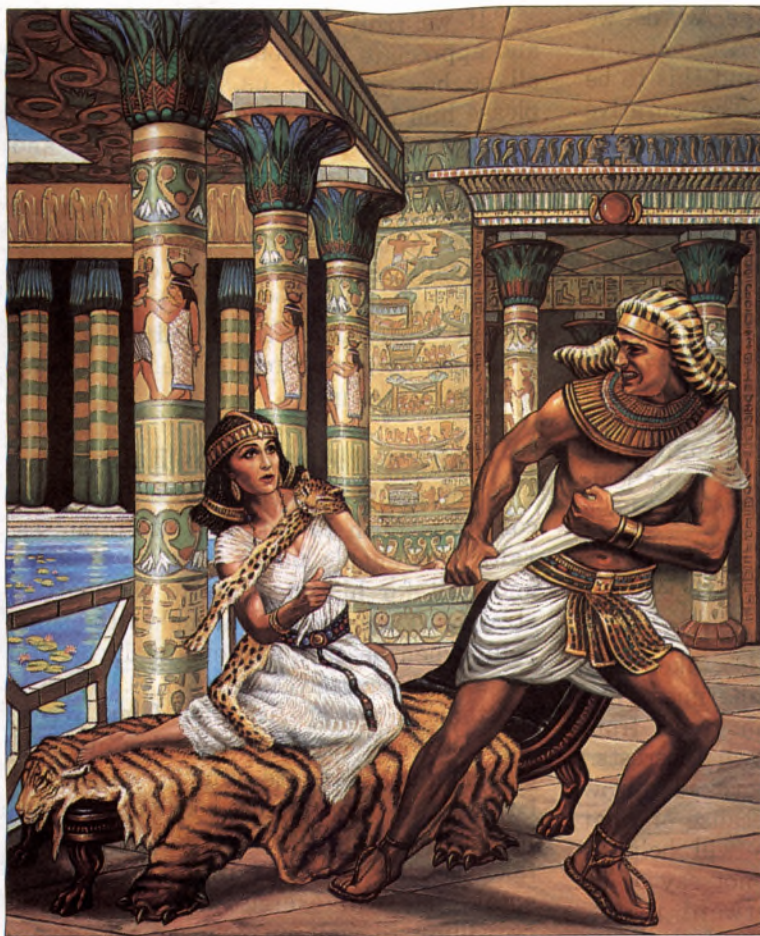
⁶ Another great aid in our practicing self-control is to appreciate the wisdom of displaying this quality. Jehovah asks us to exercise self-control for our own benefit. (Compare Isaiah 48:17, 18.) His Word contains much counsel showing how wise it is to curb our selfish inclinations by practicing self-control. We simply cannot escape God's unchangeable laws. His Word tells us: “Whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap; because he who is sowing with a view to his flesh will reap corruption from his flesh, but he who is sowing with a view to the spirit will reap everlasting life from the spirit.” (Galatians 6:7, 8) An obvious example is that of eating and drinking. Many ills result because people eat or drink too much. All such yielding to selfishness robs a person of self-respect. More than that, an individual cannot yield to selfishness without also damaging his relationships with others. Most serious of all, lack

3. Who are noted for their fine behavior, as seen by what testimony?

4. What is one of the greatest aids in exercising self-control?

5. What role does the hating of bad play in our exercise of self-control?

6. Why is it the course of wisdom to curb our selfish inclinations by practicing self-control?



Joseph exercised self-control when tempted

right, which may be difficult because this goes against our sinful inclinations.

⁸ Illustrating the wisdom of exercising self-control is the case of one of Jehovah's Witnesses standing in line at a bank when a man pushed ahead of him. Though the Witness was a little annoyed, he exercised self-control. That very day he had to see a certain engineer to get a signature for some Kingdom Hall plans. And who did this engineer prove to be? Why, the very man who had pushed ahead of him at the bank! Not only did the engineer prove to be very friendly but he charged the Witness less than one tenth of the regular fee. How happy

of self-control damages our relationship with our heavenly Father.

⁷ Therefore, we must keep telling ourselves that selfishness is self-defeating. An outstanding theme of the book of Proverbs, which stresses self-discipline, is that selfishness simply does not pay and there is wisdom in exercising self-control. (Proverbs 14:29; 16:32) And let it be noted that self-discipline involves much more than simply avoiding what is bad. Self-discipline, or self-control, is also needed to do what is

happy the Witness was that he had exercised self-control earlier that day, not letting himself get provoked!

⁹ Time and again when we go from door to door preaching the good news of God's Kingdom or stand on a street corner trying to interest passersby in our message, we encounter abusive speech. What is the course of wisdom? This wise statement is made at Proverbs 15:1: "An answer, when

8. What experience highlights the wisdom of exercising self-control?

9. What is the course of wisdom when we meet with abusive reactions in the ministry?

7. What is a major theme of the book of Proverbs, as shown by what Bible texts?

mild, turns away rage." In other words, we need to exercise self-control. And not only have Jehovah's Witnesses found this to be true but others have also. The curative value of self-control is being appreciated more and more by the medical profession.

Unselfish Love Helps

¹⁰ Paul's description of love at 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 shows that its power can help us to exercise self-control. "Love is long-suffering." To be long-suffering takes self-control. "Love is not jealous, it does not brag, does not get puffed up." The quality of love helps us to control our thoughts and emotions, to curb any tendency to be jealous, to brag, or to get puffed up. Love moves us to be just the opposite, making us humble, lowly in mind, as Jesus was. —Matthew 11:28-30.

¹¹ Paul goes on to say that love "does not behave indecently." It also takes self-control to act decently at all times. The quality of love keeps us from greed, from solely 'looking out for our own interests.' Love "does not become provoked." How easy it is to get provoked because of what others say or do! But love will help us to exercise self-control and not say or do things that we would afterward regret. Love "does not keep account of the injury." Human nature is inclined to harbor a grudge or to cherish resentment. But love will help us to dismiss such thoughts from our minds. Love "does not rejoice over unrighteousness." It takes self-control not to take pleasure in what is unrighteous, such as pornography or degrading TV soap operas. Love also "bears all things" and "endures all things." It takes self-control to put up with things, to endure trialsome or burdensome things and not let them discourage us, cause us to retaliate in kind, or incline us to quit serving Jehovah.

10, 11. Why is love a real help in exercising self-control?

¹² If we truly love our heavenly Father and appreciate his wonderful qualities and all he has done for us, we will want to please him by exercising self-control at all times. Also, if we truly love our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, and appreciate all he has done for us, we will heed his command 'to pick up our torture stake and follow him continually.' (Mark 8:34) That certainly requires that we exercise self-control. Love for our Christian brothers and sisters will also keep us from hurting them by taking some selfish course.

Faith and Humility as Helpers

¹³ Another great help in exercising self-control is faith in God and his promises. Faith will enable us to trust in Jehovah and wait for his due time to set matters straight. The apostle Paul makes the same point when he says at Romans 12:19: "Do not avenge yourselves, beloved, . . . for it is written: 'Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says Jehovah.'" In this regard, humility can also help us. If we are humble, we will not be quick to take offense because of imagined or real injuries. We will not rashly take the law into our own hands, so to speak, but will exercise self-control and be willing to wait on Jehovah.—Compare Psalm 37:1, 8.

¹⁴ That we can learn to exercise self-control was powerfully brought home in an experience involving a man with a violent temper. Why, he had such a temper that when the police were called because of the rumpus he and his father were causing, he knocked out three policemen before others subdued him! In time, however, he came in

12. What is one way to show our appreciation for all that Jehovah God and Jesus Christ have done for us?

13. Why can faith help us to exercise self-control?

14. What experience shows that self-control can be acquired even by those greatly lacking in it?

*Child discipline
administered with
calmness and in love
takes real self-control*

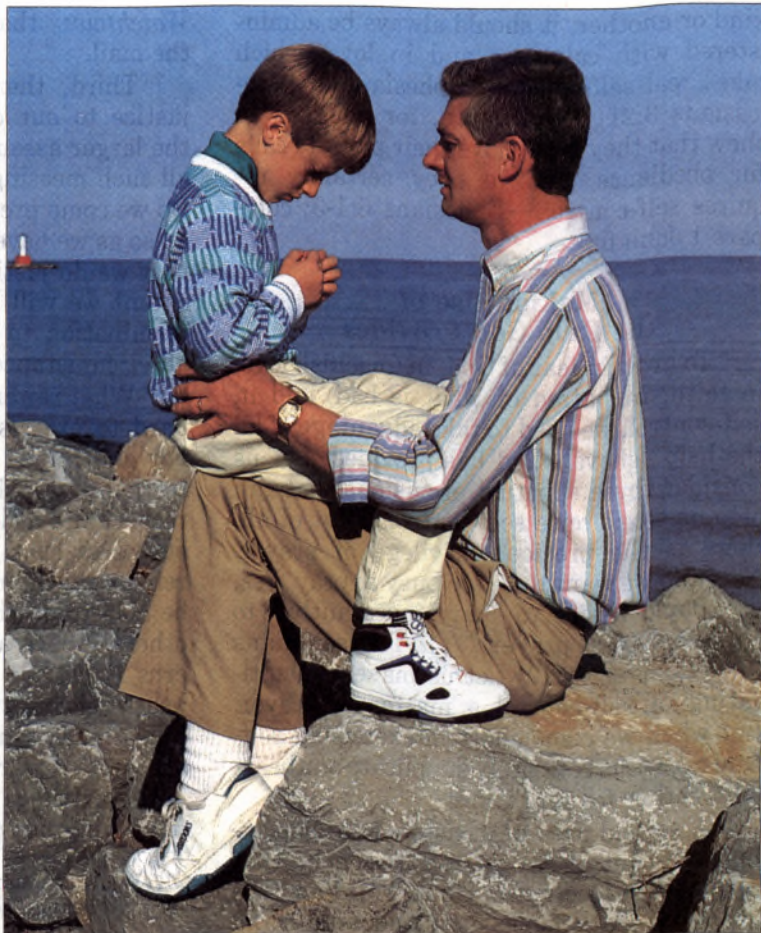
touch with Jehovah's Witnesses and learned to exercise self-control, one of the fruits of God's spirit. (Galatians 5:22, 23) Today, 30 years later, this man is still faithfully serving Jehovah.

**Self-Control Within
the Family Circle**

¹⁵ Self-control is certainly needed within the family circle. For a husband to love his wife as he loves himself requires that he exercise much control of his thoughts, words, and actions. (Ephesians 5: 28, 29) Yes, it takes self-control for husbands to heed the words of the apostle Peter at 1 Peter 3:7: "You husbands, continue dwelling in like manner with them according to knowledge." Especially when his wife is not a believer will the believing husband need to exercise self-control.

¹⁶ To illustrate: There was an elder who had a very ill-tempered unbelieving wife. Yet, he exercised self-control, and this benefited him so much that his doctor told him: "John, either you are by nature a very, very patient man or else you have a powerful religion." We do indeed have a powerful

15. 16. (a) What will help a husband to exercise self-control? (b) Self-control is especially needed in what situation, as seen from what experience? (c) Why is self-control needed by a wife?



religion, for "God gave us not a spirit of cowardice, but that of power and of love and of soundness of mind," enabling us to exercise self-control. (2 Timothy 1:7) Additionally, it takes self-control on the part of a wife to be submissive, especially when her husband is not a believer.—1 Peter 3:1-4.

¹⁷ Self-control is also needed in the parent-child relationship. To have children that are self-controlled, parents themselves must first of all set a good example. And when children require discipline of one

17. Why is self-control important in the parent-child relationship?

kind or another, it should always be administered with calmness and in love, which takes real self-control. (Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21) Then again, for children to show that they really love their parents calls for obedience, and to obey certainly requires self-control.—Ephesians 6:1-3; compare 1 John 5:3.

Making Use of the Help God Provides

¹⁸ To grow in fear of God, in unselfish love, in faith, in hatred of what is bad, and in self-control, we need to take advantage of all the help Jehovah God has provided. Let us consider three spiritual provisions that can help us to exercise self-control. First of all, there is the precious privilege of prayer. Never do we want to be too busy to pray. Yes, we should desire to “pray incessantly,” to “persevere in prayer.” (1 Thessalonians 5:17; Romans 12:12) Let us make the cultivating of self-control a matter of prayer. But when we come short in exercising self-control, let us contritely supplicate our heavenly Father for forgiveness.

¹⁹ A second area of assistance in displaying self-control is getting the help that comes from feeding on God’s Word and the literature that enables us to understand and apply the Scriptures. It is so easy to neglect this part of our sacred service! We must exercise self-control and keep telling ourselves that there is no more important reading material than the Bible and that provided by “the faithful and discreet slave,” and thus we must give it priority. (Matthew 24:45-47) It has been well said that life is never this *and* that but this *or* that. Are we truly spiritual men and women? If we are conscious of our spiritual need, we will exercise the self-control required to turn off the TV and prepare for our meetings or read *The*

18-20. What three spiritual provisions must we take advantage of in order to cultivate the qualities that will help us to exercise self-control?

Watchtower that may just have arrived in the mail.

²⁰ Third, there is the matter of doing justice to our congregation meetings and the larger assemblies and conventions. Are all such meetings an absolute must for us? Do we come prepared to take part and then do so as we have opportunity? To the extent that we do justice to our meetings, to that extent we will be strengthened in our determination to exercise self-control under all circumstances.

²¹ What rewards can we expect for trying hard to exercise self-control at all times? For one thing, we will never reap the bitter fruits of selfishness. We will have self-respect and a clear conscience. We will save ourselves ever so many troubles and will remain on the road to life. Further, we will be able to do the greatest possible good to others. Above all, we will be heeding Proverbs 27:11: “Be wise, my son, and make my heart rejoice, that I may make a reply to him that is taunting me.” And that is the greatest reward we could possibly have—the privilege of gladdening the heart of our loving heavenly Father, Jehovah!

21. What are some of the rewards we can enjoy for cultivating the spirit’s fruit of self-control?

Do You Recall?

- ☐ How does fear of God help us to exercise self-control?
- ☐ Why does love help us to exercise self-control?
- ☐ How does self-control help in family relationships?
- ☐ What provisions must we make good use of if we are to cultivate self-control?

“AN OVERSEER MUST BE . . . SELF-CONTROLLED”

“An overseer must be . . . self-controlled.”—TITUS 1:7, 8.

HISTORY provides a most noteworthy example involving restraint of the emotions. In the mid-16th century, the young Dutch prince William of Orange was on a hunting trip with King Henry II of France. The king revealed to William the plan he and the king of Spain had to wipe out all the Protestants in France and in the Netherlands—in fact, in all Christendom. King Henry was under the impression that young William was a devout Catholic like himself and therefore divulged all the details of the plot. What William heard horrified him in the extreme because many of his closest friends were Protestants, but he did not betray what he felt; instead, he showed great interest in all the details the king gave him.

² As soon as William could do so, however, he set in motion plans to foil the plot, and this ultimately led to freeing the Netherlands of Spanish Catholic domination. Because William was able to exercise self-control when he first heard of the plot, he became known as “William the Silent.” So successful was William of Orange that we are told: “He was the real founder of the independence and greatness of the Dutch republic.”

³ By reason of his restraint, William the Silent greatly benefited both himself and his people. In a comparable way, the holy

spirit’s fruit of self-control should be manifested today by Christian elders, or overseers. (Galatians 5:22, 23) By exercising this quality, they benefit both themselves and the congregations. On the other hand, failure on their part to exercise self-control can do incalculable harm.

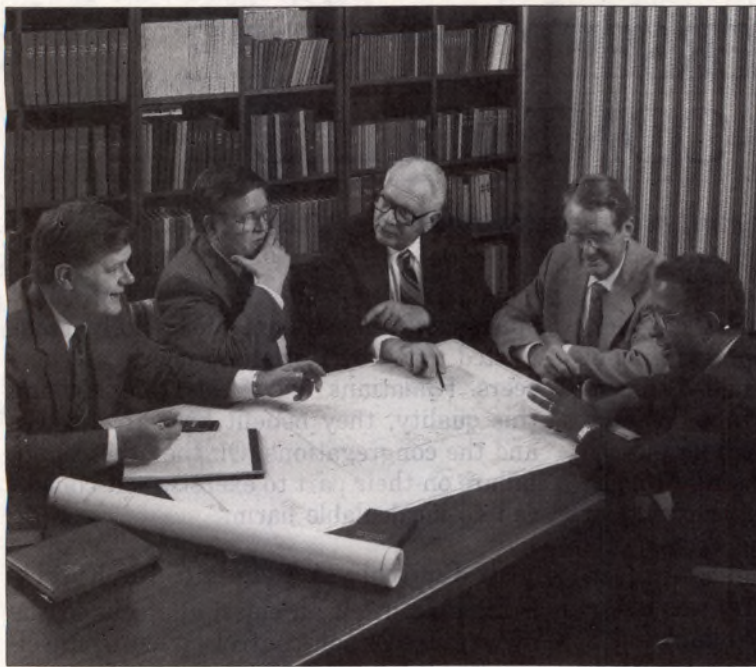
Self-Control—A Requisite for Elders

⁴ Paul, himself an elder, appreciated the importance of self-control. When counseling the elders who had come to him from Ephesus, he told them: “Pay attention to *yourselves* and to all the flock.” Among other things, paying attention to themselves included the need to exercise self-control, to watch their conduct. In writing to Timothy, Paul made the same point, saying: “Pay constant attention to *yourself* and to your teaching.” Such counsel showed Paul’s awareness of the human tendency on the part of some to be more concerned with preaching than with practicing what they preach. Therefore, he first emphasized the need to watch themselves. —Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 4:16.

⁵ Throughout the years, the Scriptural role of elders has gradually become clearer. Today, we see that eldership is an appointive position. Elders are appointed by the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses or

- 1, 2. What example of restraint did William of Orange provide, and with what beneficial results?
3. Who benefit when Christian elders exercise self-control?

4. What counsel of the apostle Paul stresses the need for elders to exercise self-control?
5. How are Christian elders appointed, and where are their qualifications recorded in the Scriptures?



***Displaying self-control
is essential at meetings
of elders***

involve self-control. For example, the overseer must be free from accusation, yes, irreprehensible. Certainly, an elder could not meet those requirements unless he exercised self-control.

***When Dealing
With Others***

⁸ Then again, an overseer must be patient and long-suffering in dealing with fellow believers, and this requires self-control. For example, at Galatians 6:1, we read: "Brothers, even

though a man takes some false step before he is aware of it, you who have spiritual qualifications [primarily the elders] try to readjust such a man in a spirit of mildness, as you each keep an eye on yourself, for fear you also may be tempted." To manifest a spirit of mildness takes self-control. For that matter, self-control is also involved in keeping an eye on oneself. Likewise, when an elder is being called on for help by a person in distress, self-control is very important. Regardless of what the elder may think of the individual, he must be kind, patient, and understanding. Rather than be quick to give advice, the elder must be willing to listen and draw out from the individual what really seems to be troubling him.

⁹ Especially when dealing with distraught

its direct representatives. That body, in turn, represents "the faithful and discreet slave." (Matthew 24:45-47) The qualifications for becoming a Christian overseer, or elder, are given primarily by the apostle Paul at 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.

⁶ Paul states at 1 Timothy 3:2, 3 that an overseer must be moderate in habits. This and the need for an elder to be orderly require the exercising of self-control. A man qualifying to be an overseer is not a smiter and is not belligerent. These qualifications also require that an elder be self-controlled. Moreover, for an elder not to be a drunken brawler, given to wine, he must exercise self-control.—See also footnotes to 1 Timothy 3:2, 3.

⁷ At Titus 1:7, 8, Paul specifically stated that an overseer must be self-controlled. Note, however, how many of the other requirements that are listed in these verses

6, 7. What specific qualifications of elders require self-control?

8. What qualities needed by elders in giving counsel underscore the need for self-control?

9. Elders should have what counsel in mind when dealing with distraught brothers?

persons is this counsel at James 1:19 apropos: "Know this, my beloved brothers. Every man must be swift about hearing, slow about speaking, slow about wrath." Yes, particularly when encountering angry or emotional reactions must an elder be careful not to respond in kind. It takes self-control not to meet emotionally charged words with emotionally charged words, not to "return evil for evil." (Romans 12:17) To respond in like manner just makes bad matters worse. So here again God's Word gives elders fine advice, reminding them that "an answer, when mild, turns away rage."—Proverbs 15:1.

Self-Control at Meetings of Elders and Judicial Hearings

¹⁰ Another area wherein Christian overseers need to be careful to exercise self-control is during meetings of elders. To speak up calmly in the interest of truth and justice sometimes takes great self-control. It also takes self-control to avoid trying to dominate a discussion. Where an elder has such a propensity, it would be a kindness for another elder to offer him counsel.—Compare 3 John 9.

¹¹ Then again, at meetings of elders, an overearnest elder may be tempted to get emotional, even to raise his voice. How greatly such actions betray a lack of self-control! They are really doubly self-defeating. On the one hand, to the extent that a person loses self-control, to that extent he weakens his own case by allowing emotion to overshadow logic. On the other hand, to the extent that an individual gets emotional, he tends to upset or even antagonize his fellow elders. Besides, unless elders are careful, sharp differences of opinion may cause division in their ranks. This

10, 11. What has happened at meetings of elders, showing the need for self-control on such occasions?

works to their own harm and to that of the congregation.—Compare Acts 15:36-40.

¹² Self-control is also greatly needed by elders to avoid being partial or abusing their power. It is so easy to yield to temptation, to let imperfect human considerations influence what one says or does! Time and again, elders have failed to act decisively when one of their children or some other relative was found guilty of wrong conduct. In such situations it takes self-control not to let blood ties impede just action.—Deuteronomy 10:17.

¹³ Another situation in which self-control is very important is when there is a judicial hearing. Elders must exercise great self-control so that they are not unduly influenced by emotion. They should not be too easily swayed by tears. At the same time, an elder must be careful not to lose his composure when charges fly and aspersions may be cast upon him, as may be the case when dealing with apostates. Here Paul's words are very fitting: "A slave of the Lord does not need to fight, but needs to be gentle toward all." It takes self-control to exercise gentleness under pressure. Paul goes on to show that "a slave of the Lord" must be "keeping himself restrained under evil, instructing with mildness those not favorably disposed." To manifest mildness and to keep oneself restrained when dealing with opposition takes great self-control.—2 Timothy 2:24, 25.

Self-Control With the Opposite Sex

¹⁴ Elders must be keenly alert to exercise self-control when it comes to their dealings with those of the opposite sex. It is inadvisable for an elder to make a shepherding call on a sister alone. The elder should be

12. In dealing with what situations must elders be careful to exercise self-control?

13. Why is self-control especially needed by elders at judicial hearings?

14. What fine counsel should elders heed in their dealings with those of the opposite sex?

accompanied by another elder or a ministerial servant. Likely appreciating this problem, Paul counseled the elder Timothy: "Entreat . . . older women as mothers, younger women as sisters with all chasteness." (1 Timothy 5:1, 2) Some elders have been seen putting their hands on a sister as if with a fatherly gesture. But they could be deceiving themselves, for a romantic impulse instead of pure Christian brotherly affection could well be motivating such a gesture.—Compare 1 Corinthians 7:1.

¹⁵ How much harm to the truth has resulted because some elders did not exercise self-control in their dealings with sisters in the congregation! A few years ago, an elder was disfellowshipped because he had committed adultery with a Christian sister whose husband was not a Witness. On the very night that the disfellowshipping of the former elder was announced, the aggrieved husband strode into the Kingdom Hall with a rifle and fired at the two guilty individuals. Neither of them was killed, and he was at once disarmed, but the next day a major newspaper featured on its front page the news of 'a shooting at a church.' What reproach that elder's lack of self-control brought upon the congregation and upon Jehovah's name!

Self-Control in Other Areas

¹⁶ Self-control is also very much needed when an elder gives a public talk. A public speaker should be a model of confidence and poise. Some try to amuse their hearers with many witty remarks made just for the purpose of getting laughs. This may betray a yielding to the temptation to please their

15. How does a certain incident highlight the reproach on Jehovah's name that can result when an elder does not exercise self-control?

16. Why must elders be careful to exercise self-control when giving public talks?

audience. Of course, all yielding to temptation is a lack of self-control. It might even be said that running overtime when giving a talk betrays a lack of self-control, as well as insufficient preparation.

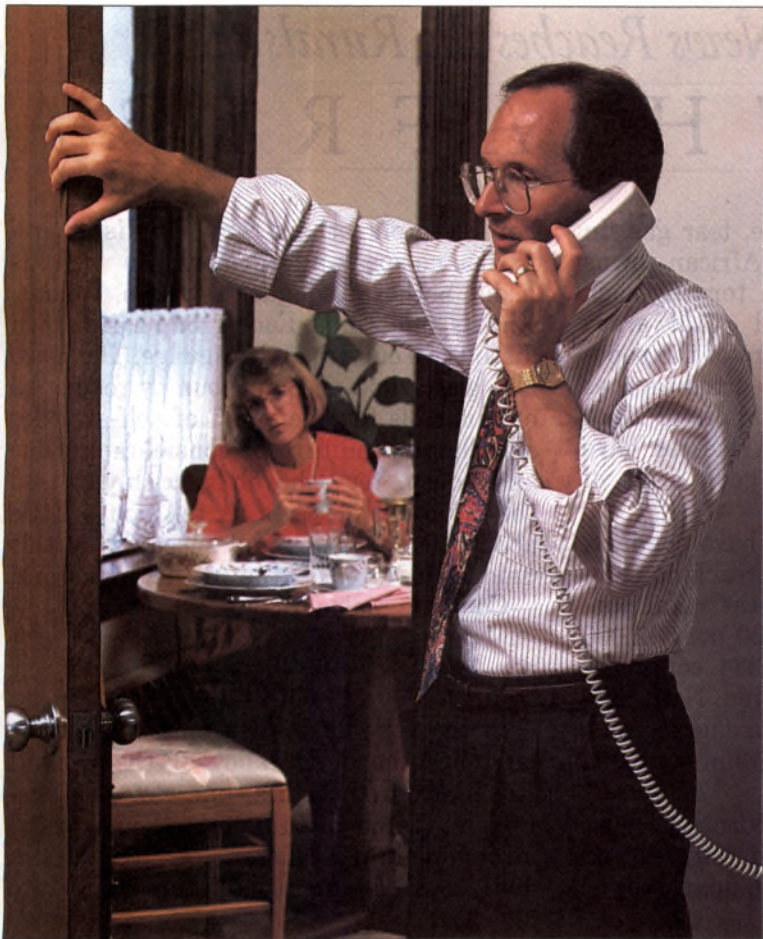
¹⁷ Every hardworking elder must meet the challenge to balance the various demands made upon his time and energy. It takes self-control not to go to one extreme or another. Some elders have been so concerned with the demands of the congregation that they have neglected their families. Thus, when one sister told the wife of an elder about the fine shepherding call he had made on her, the elder's wife exclaimed: "I wish he would make a shepherding call on me sometime!"—1 Timothy 3:2, 4, 5.

¹⁸ An elder also needs self-control to balance the time he spends on personal study with that spent in the field ministry or on shepherding calls. In view of the deceitfulness of the human heart, it is very easy for an elder to spend more time than he should at what he finds most pleasurable. If he likes books, he could well be spending more time on personal study than he should. If

17, 18. What role does self-control play in an elder's balancing his various responsibilities?

Do You Recall?

- ☐ What Scriptural requirements of elders show that they must exercise self-control?
- ☐ Why is self-control needed by elders when dealing with fellow believers?
- ☐ How should self-control be exercised at meetings of elders?
- ☐ What challenge is presented by the need for elders to maintain confidentiality?



Christian elders must exercise self-control and maintain confidentiality

whom he has good communication, there may be a tendency on his part to discuss or just to mention matters of a confidential nature. But this is improper and most unwise. To begin with, it betrays a trust. Spiritual brothers and sisters come to elders and confide in them because they have confidence that the matter will be held strictly confidential. Imparting confidential matters to one's wife is wrong, unwise, and unloving also because this places a needless burden upon her.—Proverbs 10:19; 11:13.

²⁰ Without question, self-control is, oh, so important, and especially so for elders! By virtue of their having been entrusted with the privilege

he finds the house-to-house ministry rather difficult, he may find excuses for neglecting it in the interests of making shepherding calls.

¹⁹ The obligation to maintain confidentiality also requires that an elder be alert to practice firm self-control. Pertinent here is the counsel: "Do not reveal the confidential talk of another." (Proverbs 25:9) Experience suggests that this may be one of the most widely violated requirements among elders. If an elder has a wise and loving wife with

of taking the lead among Jehovah's people, they have greater accountability. Since much has been given to them, much will be required of them. (Luke 12:48; 16:10; compare James 3:1.) It is the privilege and duty of elders to set a fine example for others. More than that, appointed elders are in a position to do more good or more harm than others, often depending on whether they practice self-control or not. No wonder Paul said: "An overseer must be . . . self-controlled."

19. What obligation do elders have that underscores the need for self-control?

20. Why is it so important for elders to exercise self-control?

Good News Reaches the Rural of S O U T H A F R I C A

ANGRY mobs, riot police, tear gas. In recent years, South African towns and cities have been torn by such strife. Even the beautiful rural areas—where more than 40 percent of the population lives—have not escaped the ravages of political violence. In the midst of all of this, however, Jehovah's Witnesses have continued to declare "the good news of peace."—Ephesians 6:15.

For years the Witnesses have conducted an annual three-month preaching campaign specifically aimed at the rural population. For example, in 1990 over 12,000 Kingdom publishers from 334 congregations took part in the campaign. Naturally, many obstacles must be overcome to reach these scattered rural dwellers of southern Africa.

Among other things, the Witnesses must deal with a great variety of cultures and languages. And what a varied mixture it is!

For example, there are English- and Afrikaans-speaking farmers, as well as Pedis, Sothos, Tsongas, Tswanas, Vendas, Xhosas, and Zulus. Each group has its own distinctive culture and language. There are also great distances and bumpy roads. All of this calls for the spirit of self-sacrifice and the expenditure of considerable time and money. Yet, Jehovah has richly blessed the efforts made. Let us tell you a little about the hardships and successes of this unique feature of the preaching work.—Compare Malachi 3:10.

A "Sunday School" in Zululand

In the very heart of semitropical Zululand lies the deep valley of the Umvoti River. From the cliffs, one can see clusters of thatched Zulu huts (homesteads) stretching into the distance. One Sunday in 1984, two Kingdom publishers came into



the valley on the winding, dusty road. It is so hot and humid there that the area has the nickname *Kwa-Sathane* (Place of Satan)—an obvious allusion to the false doctrine of a hellfire stoked by the Devil!

Drenched in perspiration, the brothers approached a woman named Doris, who was conducting a Sunday school class. After hearing the Kingdom message, Doris immediately invited the Witnesses to address her group of about 40 youths. The result? The brothers returned the following week with 70 copies of the publication *My Book of Bible Stories* for use at the local school. Within a few weeks, the Sunday school atmosphere was changed to that of a Bible study group. Instead of church hymns, Kingdom songs were sung in the African way, with delightful natural harmony. Soon the group grew to over 60. One brother exclaimed: "What a heartwarming experience it was to share in transforming this Sunday school into a place of true worship!"

In the Dusty Bushveld

Because of the churches' involvement in the political unrest, many white farmers are cautious or even suspicious about anyone approaching them with a Bible message. Note this report by a group from Johannesburg that traveled about 400 miles to preach the good news in a portion of the Transvaal.

"We have been traveling north across the rolling bushveld for close to four hours now. A mirage dances on the straight road shimmering under the African sun. Suddenly, the tar gives way to dirt, rutted and full of potholes. At last, a sandy track leads us to a farm.

"'Good morning, *Meneer* [Sir],' we say in greeting a burly farmer.

"'Morning,' comes his gruff reply. 'Can I help you?'

"After introducing ourselves, we explain the reason for our call. The words are hardly out of our mouths when he screams: 'My *dominee* [minister] warned me about you people! You are all Communists and Antichrists. Get off my property at once before I . . . !'

"The farmer's posture indicates that he could become violent at any moment. Having little option, we decide to take our leave and 'shake the dust off our feet.' (Matthew 10:14) There is enough dust to do this quite literally.

"At the next farm, the response is the same. Then it occurs to us that the local telephone line has been busily engaged by the resident Dutch Reformed minister, who has been warning 'his flock' about the impending 'danger' in the neighborhood. At last we meet a farmer who, although not interested himself, says: 'Yes, you can speak to my laborers.'

"We have been waiting for just that. Clumped together next to some wattle trees are about ten humble small terra-cotta huts. We sense curious eyes peeping out of the huts as we stack neat piles of literature on the bonnet [hood] of our car. One pile of Bibles, another pile of the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*, a stack of *My Book of Bible Stories*, and various brochures complete the display. One of the local boys runs to inform the villagers of our arrival. Soon a crowd of about 30 is assembled around the car to hear the message.

"A prerecorded sermon is played to them in Tswana. How happy these people are to hear in their own language the good news of God's Kingdom and the Paradise hope! There is much excited chatter when the publications are offered. Before long, we can hardly keep up with the placements. One old man even puts in an offer for the tape recorder. We feel deeply moved as

appreciation for the good news is reflected in many small ways—a shy smile, a touch, a soft ‘thank you.’

“Spontaneously, the children form a ragged line and sing a traditional farewell song. Suddenly, the dusty, rutted roads and the sometimes negative responses pale into insignificance. It has been worth every bit of the effort!”

A Chief Issues a Decree!

One congregation from Soweto had an assignment to preach in a tribal area near the eastern town of Piet Retief. Custom there dictates that a visitor first state his business to the *induna* (chief) of the area. The brothers complied with that arrangement. What a surprise when the chief welcomed them warmly and even offered them accommodations in his own home! Additionally, using his official stamp, he wrote a note of introduction for the publishers to carry from door to door. It said: “These are the preachers of God’s Kingdom. Take them into your home, and listen to them.”

The response was so overwhelming that the Witnesses arranged to have a public talk given in the yard of the chief’s house that Sunday afternoon. The open-air “hall” was packed to capacity, and the meeting was opened and closed with song and prayer. Similar experiences with favorably disposed ones have been enjoyed in other rural areas.

One such person was Nathaniel, in the little village of Pitsedisulejang in a drought-stricken corner of Bophuthatswana. He was a community developer engaged in a program to teach the local people to grow produce effectively. He dreamed of turning this barren place into a paradise. But when he learned that a global paradise would soon come about, his eyes sparkled. He eagerly wrote down every scripture the publishers showed him. Nathaniel was quickly put in

touch with the nearest congregation, some 20 miles away.

Joyfully Helping Many Truth Seekers

“Jehovah showed us that poverty does not prevent a spiritually hungry person from learning the truth,” says Monika, a pioneer, or full-time Kingdom proclaimer. She was part of a pioneer group that preached from farm to farm across the open plains of the Orange Free State in the central part of the country. How did the pioneers feel about expending themselves in taking the good news to these people? “Who can put a price on the things we have experienced?” they responded. Indeed, the pioneers were well rewarded spiritually for their efforts.

Even inability to read does not prevent a spiritually hungry person from learning Scriptural truth. The well-illustrated brochure *Enjoy Life on Earth Forever!* is particularly well received by those who are illiterate or who can read very little. Young and old alike are fascinated with the colorful pictures of Paradise. One full-time worker who assists in printing such material observed: “This brochure helps people to see Paradise as a reality and enhances their natural reverence and awe for the Bible.”

For this same reason, the publication *My Book of Bible Stories* has been immensely popular. In a remote tribal area of Lebowa, two of our spiritual sisters were surprised to find that an old, partially blind man and his wife had a copy of this book in the Sepedi language. This couple used it as their textbook for teaching the local children. In fact, the book had been so well studied and marked that it was falling apart. How delighted they were to obtain a new copy!

So it is that true Christian publications are filling a great need in helping those *hungering for the truth*. Interestingly, a large portion of all printed material in

many of the local languages of southern Africa is produced by the Watch Tower Society. In 1990 alone, 113,529 books, brochures, and magazines published by the Society were distributed in the rurals of South Africa.

Fruitage of the Labor

Have these fine experiences and literature placements produced lasting fruitage in the rurals of South Africa? They certainly have. Since 1989 four congregations and nine isolated groups have been formed as a direct result of proclaiming the good news in the rurals of South Africa. Temporary special pioneers and regular pioneers spearheaded much of this work.

Do you remember Doris and her Sunday school in that faraway valley in Zululand?

Today, she is a dedicated, baptized Witness of Jehovah. Moreover, a thriving group of nine Kingdom publishers continues to make spiritual progress there. Many new ones are attending the meetings held in the home of Doris, and seven persons with whom she conducted Bible studies were baptized at the district convention held in Durban in December 1990.

Such fruitage is a heartwarming stimulus to the Kingdom publishers in South Africa. They take to heart the apostle Paul's words: "As long as we have time favorable for it, let us work what is good toward all." (Galatians 6:10) Yes, Jehovah's servants are determined to reach all honesthearted people, including those who live in the rurals of this "distant part of the earth."—Acts 1:8.

The Kind Roman Centurion

ROMAN centurions did not have a reputation for kindness. Assigned to lead a band of a hundred battle-hardened soldiers, a centurion had to be a tough drill-sergeant, a disciplinarian, and, at times, even an executioner. Nevertheless, the Bible tells us of a Roman centurion of the band of Augustus who showed real generosity and compassion to the apostle Paul. His name? Julius.

The Bible introduces us to this man in Acts chapter 27. The apostle Paul had requested that Caesar hear his appeal in Rome. Thus, Paul, along with several other prisoners, was handed over to the care of "an army officer named Julius of the band of Augustus." They set sail from Caesarea, a seaport city northwest of Jerusalem that served as a headquarters for Roman troops. Says the

historian Luke: "The next day we landed at Sidon, and Julius treated Paul with human kindness and permitted him to go to his friends and enjoy their care."—Acts 27:1-3.

Just why Julius was moved to show such kindness is not stated in the Bible. He could have been under orders from Governor Festus to give Paul special treatment. Or perhaps having become familiar with the circumstances of Paul's arrest, Julius may simply have admired Paul's courage and integrity. In any event, Julius seemed to appreciate that Paul was no ordinary prisoner.

Nevertheless, Julius chose not to listen to Paul's warning against setting sail from Fair Havens. Soon the ship was caught in a tempestuous wind that threatened to run it aground on the sandbanks off the shore of northern Africa. (Acts 27:8-17) In the midst

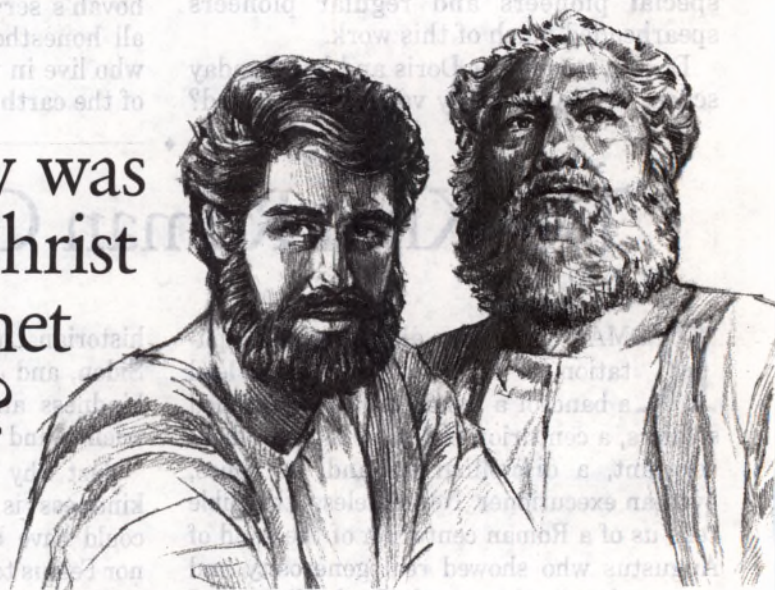
of this tempest, Paul stood up and assured the frightened passengers that 'not a soul of them would be lost, only the boat.' Still, some of the sailors later tried to escape. Paul then told Julius: "Unless these men remain in the boat, you cannot be saved."—Acts 27:21, 22, 30, 31.

This time, Julius chose to listen to Paul, and the sailors' escape was foiled. True to Paul's prediction, the ship ran aground on a shoal and was wrecked. Fearful that the prisoners would escape, the soldiers on board determined to kill all of them. Once again, though, Julius intervened and restrained his

men, thus saving Paul's life.—Acts 27:32, 41-44.

The Bible does not tell us what became of this kindly centurion or whether he ever embraced the Christian faith. Whatever kindness he showed was a demonstration of the workings of a God-given conscience. (Romans 2:14, 15) Christians, however, go beyond mere human kindness and show godly kindness that results from having the spirit of God. (Galatians 5:22) Certainly, if a pagan soldier who did not know God could show kindness, how much more God's people should be moved to do so!

How was Jesus Christ a prophet like Moses?



JEHOVAH GOD does not lie. (Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18) Therefore, the prophecies of his Word, the Bible, are reliable and true. They are sure to be fulfilled.

Among these divinely inspired prophecies is one the Hebrew prophet Moses recorded concerning the Messiah. Quoting Jehovah, Moses stated: "A prophet I shall raise up for them [the Israelites] from the midst of their brothers, like you [Moses];

and I shall indeed put my words in his mouth, and he will certainly speak to them all that I shall command him."—Deuteronomy 18:17, 18.

The apostle Peter applied this prophecy to Jesus Christ when he stated: "Moses said, 'Jehovah God will raise up for you from among your brothers a prophet like me. You must listen to him according to all the things he speaks to you.'" (Acts 3:22)

In fact, Jesus himself had stated: "If you believed Moses you would believe me, for that one wrote about me." (John 5:46) In what ways were Jesus and Moses alike?

Alike Early in Their Careers

Both Moses and Jesus escaped the slaughter of very young male children. The infant Moses was concealed among the reeds on the banks of the Nile River and thus escaped the slaughter of Israelite male babies as ordered by Pharaoh of Egypt. As a young child, Jesus also escaped the slaughter of males up to two years old in Bethlehem and its districts. This massacre was ordered by King Herod the Great, who, like Pharaoh, was an enemy of God and His people.—Exodus 1:22-2:10; Matthew 2:13-18.

A mild-tempered, or meek, spirit was displayed by both Moses and Jesus. Though he was reared as a son in the household of a powerful king of Egypt, Moses came to be "by far the meekest of all the men who were upon the surface of the ground." (Numbers 12:3) Comparably, Jesus had served as the mighty prince Michael in heaven but humbly came to the earth. (Daniel 10:13; Philippians 2:5-8) Moreover, Jesus had compassion for people and could say: "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am mild-tempered and lowly in heart, and you will find refreshment for your souls."—Matthew 11:29; 14:14.

For the sake of Jehovah's service, both Moses and Jesus left behind prominent positions and great riches. To serve Jehovah and His people, Moses gave up wealth and a prestigious place in Egypt. (Hebrews 11:24-26) Similarly, Jesus left behind a greatly favored position and riches in heaven so as to serve God and His people on the earth.—2 Corinthians 8:9.

Moses and Jesus both became God's anointed ones. The prophet Moses served as

Jehovah's anointed one to the nation of Israel. As the apostle Paul said, Moses "esteemed the reproach of [being] the Christ [anointed one] as riches greater than the treasures of Egypt." (Hebrews 11:26; Exodus 3:1-4:17) When did Jesus become the Christ, or anointed One? This occurred when he was anointed with God's holy spirit, or active force, upon being baptized. To the Samaritan woman at Jacob's fountain at Sychar and before Israel's high priest when on trial, Jesus testified that he was the Messiah, or Christ.—Mark 14:61, 62; John 4:25, 26.

Both Moses and Jesus fasted for 40 days. Early in his career as God's spokesman, Moses fasted for 40 days while in the mountain of Sinai. (Exodus 34:28) Jesus fasted for 40 days in the wilderness and then resisted satanic temptation early in his career as the promised Messiah.—Matthew 4:1-11.

Both Men Glorified Jehovah

Jehovah used both Moses and Jesus to magnify His holy name. God told Moses to go to the Israelites in the name of 'Jehovah the God of their forefathers.' (Exodus 3:13-16) Moses represented God before Pharaoh, who was kept in existence so that Jehovah's power could be shown and His name declared in all the earth. (Exodus 9:16) Jesus likewise came in Jehovah's name. For instance, Christ said: "I have come in the name of my Father, but you do not receive me." (John 5:43) Jesus glorified his Father, made Jehovah's name manifest to the men God gave him, and made it well-known on the earth.—John 17:4, 6, 26.

By divine power, Moses and Jesus both performed miracles that glorified God. Moses performed miracles to prove that he was commissioned by Jehovah God. (Exodus 4:1-31) Throughout his career, Moses, who

was used by God to part the Red Sea, continued to perform miracles that glorified Jehovah. (Exodus 5:1-12:36; 14:21-31; 16:11-18; 17:5-7; Psalm 78:12-54) Similarly, Jesus brought glory to God by performing many miracles. So much was that the case that Jesus could say: "Believe me that I am in union with the Father and the Father is in union with me; otherwise, believe on account of the works themselves." (John 14:11) Among his miracles was that of causing a violent windstorm to abate, so that the Sea of Galilee became calm.—Mark 4:35-41; Luke 7:18-23.

Other Important Similarities

Moses and Jesus were both associated with a miraculous provision of food. Moses was Jehovah's prophet when food was miraculously provided for the Israelites. (Exodus 16:11-36) Similarly, on two occasions of Bible record, Jesus miraculously fed multitudes with material food.—Matthew 14:14-21; 15:32-38.

Manna from heaven was linked with the service of both Moses and Jesus. Moses was leading the Israelites when they were provided with manna from heaven, as it were. (Exodus 16:11-27; Numbers 11:4-9; Psalm 78:25) In a comparable but highly important way, Jesus provided his own flesh as manna from heaven for the life of obedient mankind.—John 6:48-51.

Both Moses and Jesus led people out of bondage into freedom. Moses was used by God to lead the Israelites out of bondage to the Egyptians and into freedom as His people. (Exodus 12:37-42) Similarly, Jesus Christ has been leading his followers into freedom. Christ will yet lead obedient mankind into freedom from bondage to the organization of Satan the Devil, as well as from sin and death.—1 Corinthians 15:24-26; Colossians 1:13; 1 John 5:19.

Moses and Jesus both mediated covenants. Moses was the mediator of the Law covenant, between Jehovah God and the Israelites. (Exodus 19:3-9) Jesus is the Mediator of the new covenant, between God and spiritual Israel.—Jeremiah 31:31-34; Luke 22:20; Hebrews 8:6-13.

Judging was committed to both Moses and Jesus Christ. Moses served as judge and lawgiver to fleshly Israel. (Exodus 18:13; Malachi 4:4) Jesus serves as Judge and has given the spiritual "Israel of God" its laws and commandments. (Galatians 6:16; John 15:10) Christ himself said: "The Father judges no one at all, but he has committed all the judging to the Son, in order that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He that does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him."—John 5:22, 23.

Both Moses and Jesus were entrusted with headship over God's house. Moses was faithful as the head over the house of God in ancient Israel. (Numbers 12:7) Comparably, Jesus was made the Head of Jehovah's spiritual house of sons and has proved faithful over it. Indeed, Jesus "was faithful to the One that made him such, as Moses was also in all the house of that One. For the latter is counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who constructs it has more honor than the house. . . . Moses as an attendant was faithful in all the house of that One as a testimony of the

In Our Next Issue

■ Is Religion Really Necessary?

■ Breaking Free
From False Religion

■ How Can We Repay Jehovah?

things that were to be spoken afterwards, but Christ was faithful as a Son over the house of that One. We are the house of that One, if we make fast our hold on our freedom of speech and our boasting over the hope firm to the end."—Hebrews 3:2-6.

Even as to death, Moses and Jesus were alike. How so? Well, Jehovah removed Moses' body, thus preventing men from either profaning it or idolizing it. (Deuteronomy 34:5, 6; Jude 9) Similarly, God disposed of Jesus' body, not allowing it to see corruption and thus preventing its becoming a stumbling block to faith.—Psalm 16:10; Acts 2:29-31; 1 Corinthians 15:50.

Pay Attention to Prophecy

These are among the ways in which Jesus Christ proved to be a prophet like Moses. How wonderfully God's words to Moses regarding the coming of that prophet were fulfilled!

There is no question that Jehovah carried out his prophetic promise to raise up a prophet like Moses. The words of Deuteronomy 18:18 were fulfilled in the life and experiences of Jesus Christ. And such fulfillment gives us reason to have confidence in other prophetic features of God's Word. Therefore, let us always pay attention to Bible prophecy.

Questions From Readers

■ Why is 29 C.E. considered to be a pivotal date in Bible history rather than 14 C.E., the start of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, who is mentioned at Luke 3:1?

The start of Tiberius' reign is not mentioned in the Bible, but an event occurring in the latter part of his 15th year is. This enables Bible students to fix the event as occurring in 29 C.E., which can be viewed as a pivotal date from the Biblical standpoint.

The reign of the second emperor of Rome, Tiberius Caesar, is well accepted in history. *The New Encyclopædia Britannica* says: "In AD 14, on August 19, Augustus [the first emperor] died. Tiberius, now supreme, played politics with the Senate and did not allow it to name him emperor for almost a month, but on September 17 he succeeded to the principate."*

This fixed point for the start of Tiberius' reign is Biblically relevant because Luke 3:1-3 says

* September 17 on the Julian calendar is equivalent to September 15 on the Gregorian calendar, the calendar widely used today.

about the ministry of John the Baptizer: "In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, . . . God's declaration came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness. So he came into all the country around the Jordan, preaching baptism in symbol of repentance for forgiveness of sins."

John did not commence preaching and baptizing when Tiberius became emperor but did so "in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar." That 15th year ran from autumn 28 C.E. to the autumn of 29 C.E. Knowing this, however, does not enable one to determine with any precision when John's ministry began during that year or how to calculate related events.

But the Bible gives us vital supplemental information. For example, Daniel's prophecy of the "seventy weeks" pointed to 29 C.E. for

the Messiah's appearance. It also indicated that Jesus' ministry would be three and a half years long. (Daniel 9:24-27) Add to this these Biblical details: Jesus was born six months after John; when Jesus was baptized, he "was about thirty years old"; and Jesus died in the spring of 33 C.E. (Passover time), when he was 33 1/2 years old.—Luke 1:24-38; 3:23; 22:14-16, 54.*

With such precise Biblical information, combined with the secular dating of Tiberius' reign, Bible students can calculate that John's ministry began in the spring of 29 C.E. and that six months later, in the autumn of 29 C.E., John baptized Jesus. Hence, it is not 14 C.E. but 29 C.E. that is viewed as the pivotal date from the standpoint of the Bible.

* Compare *Insight on the Scriptures*, Volume 1, pages 458, 463, 467; Volume 2, pages 87, 899-902, 1099, 1100, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

'The book keeps disappearing'

That is what a high-school teacher in southern California, U.S.A., says about the book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*. The school instituted a daily reading period during which students could read anything they liked. She put out literature, including the *Young People Ask* book, for students who brought nothing to read.

"The book has become the most popular one in the class," she explains. "It disappears for several hours at a time, or even for a day or two, then comes back. Students will ask their friends, 'Have you read this?' or comment, 'That's a good book.' After pointing out things to their friends, they go back and read more.

"Pages are turned down, and the book is showing signs of wear. The most worn chapter is number 23, 'What About Sex Before Marriage?' The students like the pictures, and they identify with the captions. I saw one student reading the chapter 'Why Did Dad and Mom Split Up?'

"After a while the first book disappeared, so I put out another one. Then the first one came back, so now there are two. Three or four months have passed since I put the first book out, and these are still being read."



QUESTIONS
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