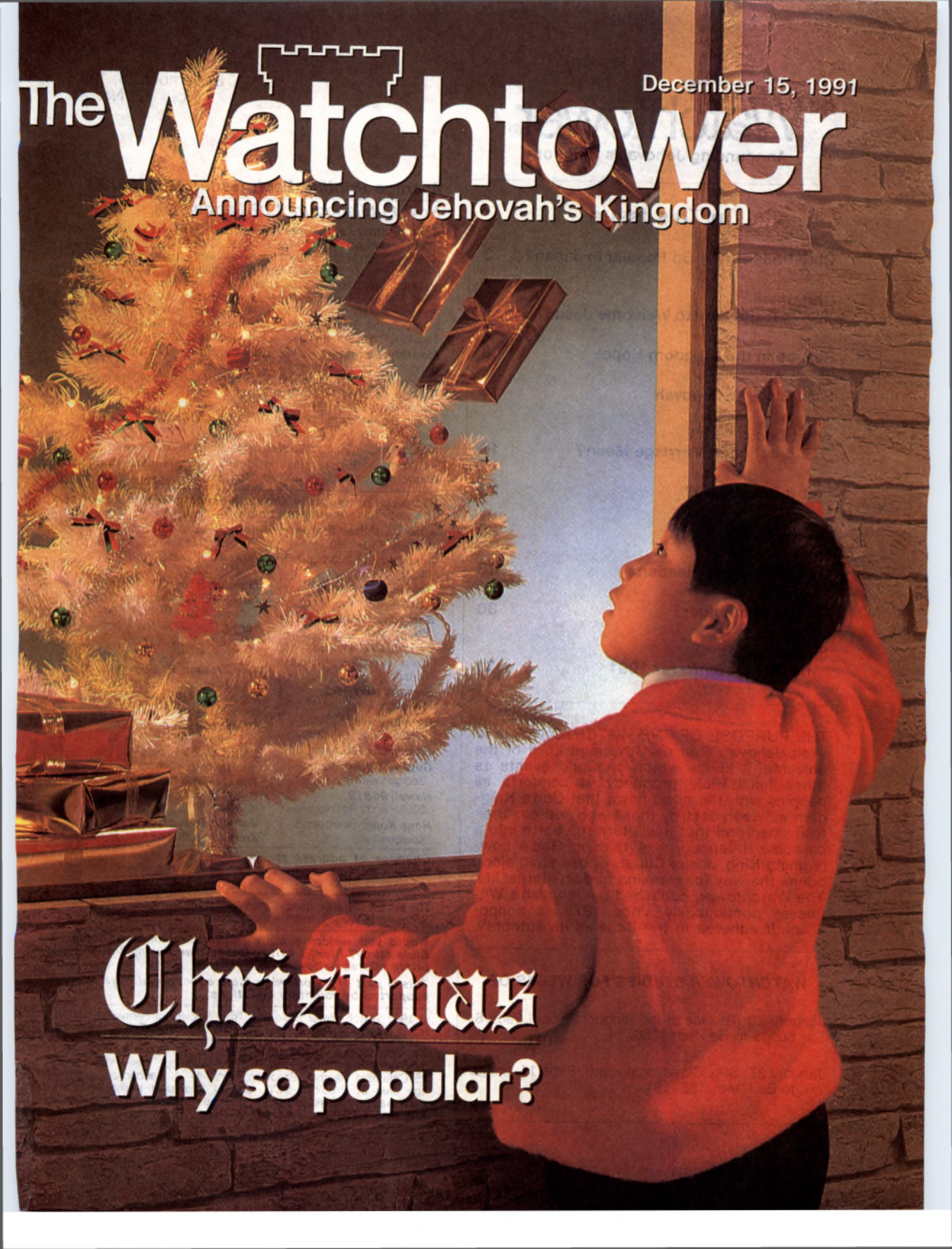


A young boy with dark hair, wearing a red sweater, is seen from the side, looking out of a window. His hands are pressed against the glass. Outside the window, a large, brightly lit Christmas tree is visible, decorated with lights and ornaments. Several wrapped gifts are floating in the air around the tree. The background outside the window is a clear blue sky. The window frame is made of dark wood, and the wall on the right is made of light-colored stone.

The Watchtower

December 15, 1991

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

Christmas
Why so popular?

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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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Christmas

Why so popular in Japan?

RELIEF in Father Christmas runs deep among children in the Buddhist-Shinto country of Japan. In 1989, Japanese children wrote 160,000 letters to Santa World in Sweden. No other country sent more. They wrote the letters in hopes of gratifying their heart's desire, be it an 18,000-yen (\$136, U.S.) toy "Graphic Computer" or a 12,500-yen (\$95, U.S.) portable video game.

To young Japanese girls, a date on Christmas Eve carries a special meaning. "According to a survey of young women," says *Mainichi Daily News*, "38 percent said they had made plans for Christmas Eve a month ahead." Young men have ulterior motives in wanting to be with their girlfriends on Christmas Eve. "A good idea is to pray together quietly with your girlfriend," suggested a magazine for young men. "Do it somewhere fashionable. Your relationship will quickly become more intimate."

Japanese husbands also hope to invoke some magical power by their Christmas tradition of buying a "decoration cake" on the way home from

work. Playing the role of Santa Claus is supposed to compensate for neglecting the family the rest of the year.

Indeed, Christmas has taken root among the non-Christian Japanese. In fact, 78 percent of those surveyed by a supermarket chain said they do something special for Christmas. The ratio is overwhelming in a country where only 1 percent of the population claims to believe in Christianity. While professing to be Buddhists or Shintoists, they feel quite at ease enjoying the "Christian" holiday. In its almanac, together with Japanese festivals, the renowned Shinto Ise Shrine lists December 25th as "Christ's birthday." Scenes of non-Christians steeped in merrymaking during Christmas, however, raise the question:



Whose Celebration Is Christmas?

Webster's *Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* defines Christmas as "a Christian feast on December 25 . . . that commemorates the birth of Christ." It has been viewed as a time for "Christians" to "unite in their feelings of joy on Christ's birthday."

Those who celebrate Christmas as a purely religious festival may find those who secularize that day with merry-making and gift-giving to be annoying and even blasphemous. "In Japan we have the ultimate in crass commercialism: no Christ," wrote an American living in Japan. "To the Western eye," another wrote concerning the Japanese Christmas, "it is not the turkey [which is not commonly found in Japanese markets] that is missing, but the most essential of ingredients, the spirit."

What, then, is the spirit of Christmas? Is it the atmosphere of a church service with its carols, holly, and candles, which for many are used for their sole annual pilgrimage to the church? Or is it the love, the good cheer, and the gift-giving that move many to be generous? Is it the calmness that prevails on the battlefield while soldiers observe a few days of "peace on earth"?

Amazingly, the Christmas spirit often fails to bring peace even to the home front. According to a 1987 survey in England, it was estimated that 'civil war' would break

out in 70 percent of British homes during Christmas that year. Battling over money would be the main cause. Drinking too much and not fulfilling one's role in the family also lead to fighting.

"I wonder if we aren't missing something about the true meaning of Christmas," wrote a Westerner living in Japan who visited his home during the Christmas season recently. "Every Dec. 25, I feel the same longing to go back to that old-fashioned kind of Christmas of long ago—the pagan ceremony that celebrated the winter solstice by worshipping trees and holding orgies. We still have all the pagan trappings—mistletoe, holly, fir trees and so on—but somehow Christmas has never been the same since it was hijacked by the Christians and turned into a religious festival."

Undeniably, Christmas is a pagan holiday. The early Christians did not celebrate it "because they

considered the celebration of anyone's birth to be a pagan custom," says *The World Book Encyclopedia*. The pagan festivals of Saturnalia and New Year are the source of the merrymaking and exchange of presents.

If Christmas is essentially pagan, genuine Christians must ask the question, Is Christmas for Christians? Let us see what the Bible says concerning the celebration of the birthday of Christ.

The Origin of Christmas Celebration

Although the exact details are lost in the mists of antiquity, indications are that by 336 C.E., a form of Christmas was being celebrated by the Roman church. "The date of Christmas was purposely fixed on December 25," explains *The New Encyclopædia Britannica*, "to push into the background the great festival of the sun god." That was when pagans indulged in orgies during the festivals of both the Roman Saturnalia and the Celtic and German feast of winter solstice. *The New Caxton Encyclopedia* says that "the Church seized the opportunity to Christianize these festivals."

Christmas

Is it the way to welcome Jesus?

THE birth of the Savior, the long-awaited Messiah, was indeed a time for rejoicing. "Look!" announced an angel to shepherds in the vicinity of Bethlehem, "I am declaring to you good news of a great joy that all the people will have, because there was born to you today a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." A multitude of angels joined in, praising God: "Glory in the heights above to God, and upon earth peace among men of goodwill." (Luke 2:10-14) Some may conclude that Christians should imitate the angels in expressing joy over the coming of Christ to earth back then.

This was not the first Bible record of angels bursting into songs of praise. When the foundation of the earth was laid, "the morning stars joyfully cried out together, and all the sons of God began shouting in applause." (Job 38:4-7) The exact date of this event is not recorded in the Bible. (Genesis 1:1, 14-18) However joyful the occasion may have been, Christians have not argued that because the angels applauded, they should annually celebrate the creation of the earth and perhaps adopt a pagan festival to commemorate the occasion.

Yet that is just what people who celebrate Christmas are doing to the birth of Jesus Christ. A look into most any reliable encyclopedia under the heading "Christmas" confirms that the date of Jesus' birth is not known. The Bible is silent when it comes to that date.

"If the Trumpet Sounds an Indistinct Call"

"God is a God, not of disorder, but of peace," wrote the apostle Paul, in correcting the disorderliness of the congregation in ancient Corinth. In the same context, he asked: "If the trumpet sounds an indistinct call, who will get ready for battle?" (1 Corinthians 14:8, 33) Now, if a God of order intended to have Christians celebrate the birth of his Son on the earth, would He leave it to imperfect men to choose arbitrarily a date from pagan festivals and to adopt ungodly practices?

Examining a few Biblical examples clarifies that Jehovah God does not deal with his people in that way. When he required the Israelites to keep annual celebrations under the Mosaic Law, God designated specific dates and told them how to observe those festive occasions. (Exodus 23:14-17; Leviticus 23:34-43) Jesus Christ, although never commanding his birth to be commemorated, did command his followers to observe one specific date. "In the night in which he was going to be handed over," Nisan 14, 33 C.E., Jesus initiated the celebration of the Lord's Evening Meal, using unleavened bread and wine. He commanded: "Keep doing this in remembrance of me." (1 Corinthians 11:23, 24) The trumpet sound as to when and how to observe the Lord's Evening Meal is clear and unmistakable. Then what about Christmas? Nowhere in the Bible do we find

any command to celebrate the birth of Christ, nor does it tell us when or how.

'To Win People'

"Oh, of course I know Christmas is of pagan origin," said a clergyman at a Tokyo Zion Church, "but as long as ordinary people are interested in Christianity on December 25 and come to learn the teachings of the Honorable Jesus, Christmas has its place in Christianity." Many agree with his reasoning. Do you believe that making such compromises is proper?

Some argue that even Paul compromised to gain believers. "I make myself everybody's slave," he wrote, "in order to win as many people as possible . . . When working with Gentiles, I live like a Gentile, outside the Jewish Law, in order to win Gentiles. . . . All this I do for the gospel's sake, in order to share in its blessings." (1 Corinthians 9:19-23, *Today's English Version*) Do these words justify adopting a pagan festival to attract Gentiles to Christianity?

Consider carefully the context of Paul's statement. In verse 21, he said: "This does not mean that I don't obey God's law; I am really under Christ's law." (TEV) So he did not compromise in matters that overstepped Christ's law, but he 'lived like a Gentile' by respecting the local customs and habits as long as these were not against Christian commandments.*

With this in mind, think how the adopting of pagan festivals into "Christianity"

* Compare the two ways in which Paul responded on the issue of circumcision. Though he knew that "circumcision does not mean a thing," he circumcised his traveling companion Timothy, who was Jewish on his mother's side. (1 Corinthians 7:19; Acts 16:3) In the case of Titus, the apostle Paul avoided having him circumcised as a matter of principle in the struggle with Judaizers. (Galatians 2:3) Titus was a Greek and so, unlike Timothy, did not have legitimate reason to be circumcised. If he, a Gentile, were to become circumcised, 'Christ would be of no benefit to him.'—Galatians 5:2-4.

under the name of Christmas would appear when viewed in the light of the following Bible command: "Do not become unevenly yoked with unbelievers. For what fellowship do righteousness and lawlessness have? . . . Or what portion does a faithful person have with an unbeliever? . . . 'Therefore get out from among them, and separate yourselves,' says Jehovah, 'and quit touching the unclean thing'; 'and I will take you in.'" (2 Corinthians 6:14-17) No matter what excuses may be offered, adulterating Christianity with pagan festivals is no way to welcome Jesus as a Savior. It would have been inappropriate in the first century when Jesus came in the flesh, and it is just as inappropriate today or in the future, when Christ comes as King to execute God's judgments. (Revelation 19:11-16) In fact, those who prefer to celebrate pagan festivals behind a "Christian" disguise may well be denying Jesus Christ.

"Hidden Christians" Unrestored

Take a lesson from what happened to Catholics in Japan during the shogun era. When suppression of Catholicism began in 1614, some 300,000 Japanese Catholics had three choices: become martyrs, abandon their faith, or go underground. The ones who went underground were called hidden Christians. To camouflage their faith, they conformed to various Buddhist and Shinto customs. In their liturgy, they used Maria Kannon, which was Mary disguised as a Buddhist bodhisattva in the form of a mother holding a child. Their festivals mixed Buddhism, Catholicism, and folk religion. However, when forced to attend Buddhist funerals, they chanted Christian prayers and performed *modoshi*, a ceremony to nullify the Buddhist service. What has become of those "Christians"?

"As far as the majority of the *Kirishitans* [Christians] were concerned," ex-

plains the book *The Hidden Christians*, "a religious attachment grew in them making it difficult to abandon the worship of Shinto and Buddhist gods." When the ban was lifted and Catholic missionaries returned to Japan, the majority of those "hidden Christians" clung to their type of fusion religion.

However, could the Catholic Church reasonably criticize those "hidden Christians" who refused to be restored to Roman Catholicism? The Catholic Church has likewise adopted many pagan teachings and festivals, including Christmas. If Catholics and Protestants, though professing to be Christians, have paganized their "Christianity" with heathen festivals, could they not also be rejecting Jesus Christ?

Restored to the True Christianity

Setsuko, a devout Catholic for 36 years, finally came to that realization. After World War II, she had tried to fill her spiritual vacuum by associating with a Catholic church. 'How satisfying!' she thought as she attended Christmas Mass and saw gorgeous Christmas trees inside and outside her church. "I felt proud of our beautiful decorations, which outdid those of nearby churches," she said. Nevertheless, Setsuko really had no understanding of Catholic teachings, though she even taught Sunday school for a while. So when she wanted to become more involved in church work, she asked her priest a few questions. Rather than answering her questions, the priest belittled her. Disappointed, she decided to



True Christians honor Jesus the year around

study the Bible herself. Two weeks later, Jehovah's Witnesses visited her, and she accepted a home Bible study.

She explains: "It was painful to be faced with Bible truths that refuted my previous beliefs. I even had *alopecia neurotica*, loss of hair due to being upset. Gradually, however, the light of truth shone into my heart. I was stunned to

learn that Jesus could not have been born in a cold, rainy December, when shepherds would not be tending their sheep out in the open at night. (Luke 2:8-12) It shattered my image of the nativity, for we had used cotton wool as snow to decorate scenes of sheep and shepherds."

After convincing herself of what the Bible really teaches, Setsuko decided to stop celebrating Christmas. She no longer has "the Christmas spirit" once a year but manifests the spirit of cheerful Christian giving every day.

If you sincerely believe in Christ, do not be annoyed when you see pagans polluting Christmas. They are only reiterating what it originally was—a pagan festival. Christmas leads no one to welcome Jesus Christ, who has returned invisibly as a heavenly King. (Matthew, chapters 24 and 25; Mark, chapter 13; Luke, chapter 21) Rather, true Christians show a Christlike spirit all year round, and they declare the good news of the Kingdom, of which Jesus has become King. That is how God wants us to welcome Jesus Christ as our Savior and the King of the Kingdom.—Psalm 2:6-12.

REJOICE IN THE KINGDOM HOPE!

"Rejoice in the hope. Endure under tribulation."—ROMANS 12:12.

"THE happy God." (1 Timothy 1:11) How well this describes Jehovah! Why? Because all of his works bring great happiness to him. Since Jehovah is the Source of all good and happifying things, all of his intelligent creatures can find happiness in their association with him. Aptly, the apostle Paul urged Christians to appreciate their joyful privilege of knowing Jehovah God, to be thankful for all His wonderful gifts of creation, and to rejoice in the loving-kindnesses He shows them. Paul wrote: "Always rejoice in the Lord. Once more I will say, Rejoice!"—Philippians 4:4; Psalm 104:31.

² Are Christians heeding this exhortation that Paul offered? Indeed they are! The spiritual brothers of Jesus Christ are rejoicing in the glorious hope that God opened up for them. (Romans 8:19-21; Philippians 3:20, 21) Yes, they know that they will share in fulfilling the great hope for the future of mankind, both the living and the dead, by serving with Christ in his heavenly Kingdom government. Imagine how much they will rejoice in their privileges as joint-heirs, serving as kings and priests! (Revelation 20:6) What happiness will be theirs as they help faithful mankind attain to perfection and help guide the restoration of Paradise

1. Why can we find joy in association with Jehovah, and what did the apostle Paul urge Christians to do?
2. What hope brings great joy, and what are Christians encouraged to do in regard to this hope?

to our earth! Truly, all of God's servants have "the basis of a hope of the everlasting life which God, who cannot lie, promised before times long lasting." (Titus 1:2) In view of this grand hope, the apostle Paul encourages all Christians: "Rejoice in the hope."—Romans 12:12.*

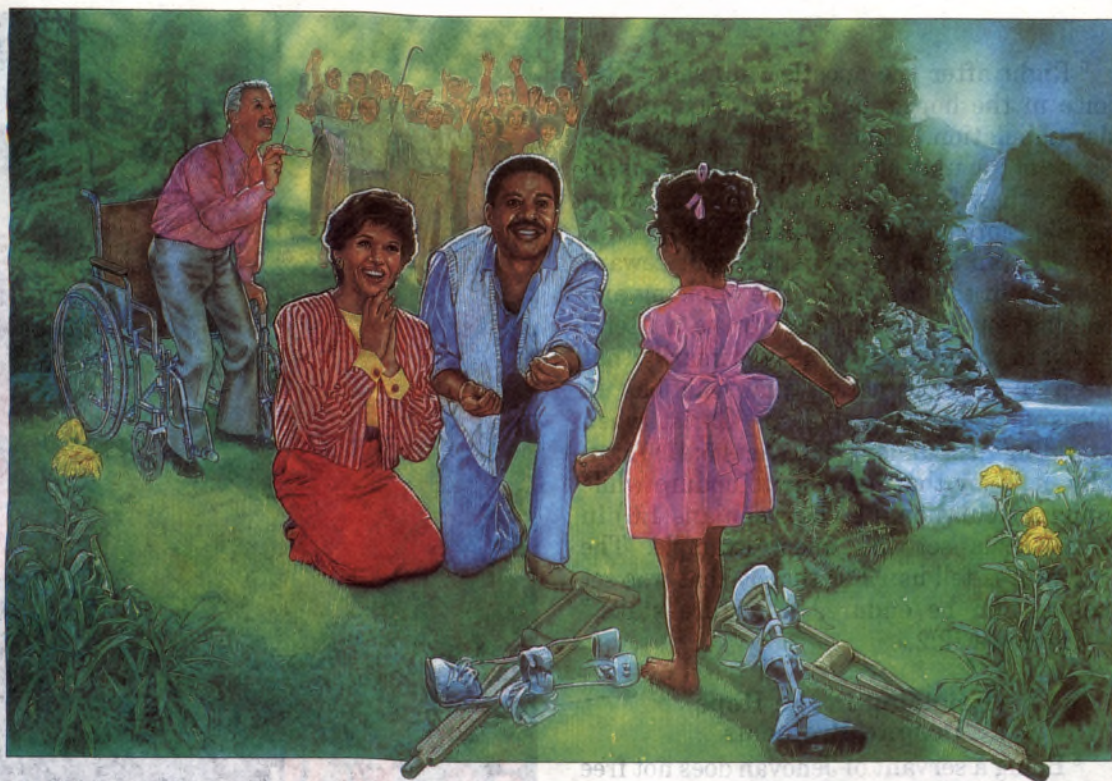
True Joy—A Quality of the Heart

³ "To rejoice" means to feel and to express joy; it does not mean to be in a constant state of euphoria, or exuberance. The verbs corresponding to the Hebrew and Greek words used in the Bible for "joy," "exultation," and "rejoicing" express both the inner feeling and the outward manifestation of joy. Christians are encouraged to "continue to rejoice," "always be rejoicing."—2 Corinthians 13:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:16.

⁴ But how can one always be rejoicing? This is possible because true joy is a quality of the heart, a deep inner quality, a spiritual one. (Deuteronomy 28:47; Proverbs 15:13; 17:22) It is a fruit of God's spirit, listed by Paul just after love. (Galatians 5:22) As an inward quality, it is not dependent on external things, not even on our brothers. But it does depend on God's holy spirit. And it

* During 1992, Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide will have as a yeartext: "Rejoice in the hope. . . . Persevere in prayer."—Romans 12:12.

- 3, 4. (a) What does the term "to rejoice" mean, and how often should Christians be rejoicing?
- (b) What is true joy, and what is it dependent on?



Would it not fill your heart with joy to witness the kind of healings that Jesus performed?

comes from that deep inner satisfaction of knowing that you have the truth, the Kingdom hope, and that you are doing what pleases Jehovah. Hence, joy is not a mere personality trait that we are born with; it is part of "the new personality," the assemblage of qualities that distinguished Jesus Christ.—Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10.

⁵ Though joy is a heart quality, it may nevertheless be shown outwardly on occasion. What are these occasional, outward manifestations of joy? They could be anything from facial serenity to an actual leaping for joy. (1 Kings 1:40; Luke 1:44; Acts 3:8; 6:15) Does this mean, then, that people who are not talkative or who are not

5. When and how may there be outward manifestations of joy?

always smiling have no joy? No! True joy does not express itself in constant chatter, laughter, smiling, or grinning. Circumstances cause joy to manifest itself in various ways. It is not joy alone that makes us congenial at the Kingdom Hall but, rather, our brotherly affection and love.

⁶ The constant aspect of joy is its inward permanence as a heartfelt feature of the Christian's new personality. This is what makes it possible to be always rejoicing. Of course, at times we may be disturbed about something, or we may face unpleasant conditions. But we can still have joy in our heart. Some early Christians were slaves, having masters who were difficult to please. Could such Christians always be rejoicing? Yes, because of their Kingdom hope and the joy in their hearts.—John 15:11; 16:24; 17:13.

6. Why can Christians always rejoice even when they face unpleasant conditions?

⁷ Right after the apostle Paul said: “Rejoice in the hope,” he added: “Endure under tribulation.” (Romans 12:12) Jesus also spoke of joy under tribulation when he said at Matthew 5:11, 12: “Happy are you when people reproach you and persecute you . . . Rejoice and leap for joy, since your reward is great in the heavens.” The rejoicing and leaping for joy here need not be a literal outward manifestation; it is primarily that deep inner satisfaction that one has in pleasing Jehovah and Jesus Christ when standing firm under trial. (Acts 5:41) Actually, it is joy that helps us to endure while under tribulation. (1 Thessalonians 1:6) In this, Jesus set the finest example. The Scriptures tell us: “For the joy that was set before him he endured a torture stake.” —Hebrews 12:2.

Rejoicing in the Hope Despite Problems

⁸ Being a servant of Jehovah does not free one from problems. There may be family problems, economic difficulties, impaired health, or death of loved ones. While such things might induce sorrow, they do not take away our basis for rejoicing in the Kingdom hope, the inner joy that we have in our heart. —1 Thessalonians 4:13.

⁹ Consider Abraham, for example. Life was not always pleasant for him. He had family problems. His concubine, Hagar, and his wife, Sarah, did not get along. There was bickering. (Genesis 16:4, 5) Ishmael poked fun at Isaac, persecuting him. (Genesis 21:8, 9; Galatians 4:29) Finally, Abraham’s beloved wife, Sarah, died. (Genesis

7. (a) What did Jesus say about joy under tribulation? (b) What helps us to endure under tribulation, and who set the finest example in this regard?

8. What problems may Christians face, but why do problems not take away a Christian’s joy?

9. What problems did Abraham have, and how do we know that he had joy in his heart?



Those rejoicing in the Kingdom encourage others by sharing their hope

23:2) Despite these problems, he rejoiced over the hope of the Kingdom Seed, the Seed of Abraham, through whom all families of the earth would bless themselves. (Genesis 22:15-18) With joy in his heart, he endured in Jehovah’s service for a hundred years after leaving his home city of Ur. Therefore it is written of him: “He was awaiting the city having real foundations, the builder and maker of which city is God.” Because of Abraham’s faith in the coming Messianic Kingdom, the Lord Jesus, when already appointed by God to be King, could say: “Abraham . . . rejoiced greatly in the prospect of seeing my day, and he saw it and rejoiced.” —Hebrews 11:10; John 8:56.

¹⁰ As imperfect humans, we also have our sinful flesh to contend with, and this struggle to do what is right can be very distressing. Our fight against our weaknesses does not mean, though, that we do not have hope. Paul felt miserable over this conflict, and he said: "Who will rescue me from the body undergoing this death? Thanks to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Romans 7: 24, 25) By means of Jesus Christ and the ransom he provided, we are rescued.—Romans 5:19-21.

¹¹ Christ's ransom sacrifice makes up for our inability to wage the fight perfectly. We can rejoice in this ransom because it makes possible a cleansed conscience and forgiveness of our sins. At Hebrews 9:14, Paul speaks of "the blood of the Christ" that has the power to "cleanse our consciences from dead works." Thus, the consciences of Christians need not be burdened down with condemnation and guilt feelings. This, along with the hope we have, constitutes a strong force for joyous happiness. (Psalm 103:8-14; Romans 8:1, 2, 32) Contemplating our hope, all of us will be encouraged to wage the fight successfully.

Keeping Our Hope Close in Mind

¹² It is important for both the spirit-anointed remnant and the other sheep to keep their "hope of salvation" in mind, wearing it as a protective helmet. (1 Thessalonians 5:8) Anointed Christians can contemplate the wonderful privilege of gaining immortality in heaven, having access to Jehovah God, and enjoying personal association with the glorified Jesus Christ and

10, 11. (a) What struggle do we as Christians have, and how are we rescued? (b) What makes up for our inability to wage perfectly the fight against our sinful flesh?

12. What hope can anointed Christians contemplate?

the apostles and all others of the 144,000, who maintained their integrity down through the centuries. What an indescribable wealth of association!

¹³ How do the few anointed still on earth feel about their Kingdom hope? This can be summed up in the words of F. W. Franz, president of the Watch Tower Society, who was baptized in 1913: "Our hope is a sure thing, and it will be fulfilled fully to every last one of the 144,000 members of the little flock to a degree beyond what we have even imagined. We of the remnant who were on hand in the year 1914, when we expected all of us to go to heaven, have not lost our sense of value of that hope. But we are as strong for it as we ever were, and we are appreciating it all the more the longer we have to wait for it. It is something *worth* waiting for, even if it required a million years. I evaluate our hope more highly than ever before, and I *never* want to lose my appreciation for it. The hope of the little flock also gives assurance that the expectation of the great crowd of other sheep will, without any possibility of failure, be fulfilled beyond our brightest imagination. That is why we are holding fast down to this very hour, and we are going to hold fast until God has actually proved that he is true to his 'precious and very grand promises.'"—2 Peter 1:4; Numbers 23:19; Romans 5:5.

Rejoicing Now in the Paradise Hope

¹⁴ Such an expression of exultant faith infuses in those who are of the great crowd of other sheep grand reasons for rejoicing. (Revelation 7:15, 16) Such ones need to keep in mind the hope of surviving Armageddon. Yes, look forward to seeing God's Kingdom

13. How do the anointed still on earth feel about their hope?

14. What hope do the great crowd need to keep in mind?

vindicate the universal sovereignty of Jehovah God and sanctify his glorious name by bringing the great tribulation, which will cleanse the earth of the wicked ones of whom the Devil has been god. What a joy it will be to survive that great tribulation! —Daniel 2:44; Revelation 7:14.

¹⁵ Concerning the great crowd, Revelation 7:17 says: "The Lamb . . . will shepherd them, and will guide them to fountains of waters of life. And God will wipe out every tear from their eyes." Though this prophecy has a spiritual fulfillment now, the Armageddon survivors will see it literally fulfilled. How so? Well, what did Jesus do when he was on earth? He healed the maimed, made the lame walk, opened the ears of the deaf and the eyes of those blind, and he cured leprosy, paralysis, and "every sort of disease and every sort of infirmity." (Matthew 9:35; 15:30, 31) Is that not what Christians today need? The great crowd will carry old-world disabilities and infirmities over into the new world. What do we expect the Lamb to do about that? The needs of the Armageddon survivors will be very different from the needs of those who will be resurrected. The resurrected ones will likely be recreated with whole, sound, healthy bodies, though not yet having human perfection. Because of the miracle of resurrection, they will evidently not thereafter need repair of any former disabilities by the miracle of healing. On the other hand, because of their unique experience of surviving Armageddon, miraculous repair is what many of the great crowd will need and will receive. Apparently, a major intent of Jesus' healings was to portray for the encouragement of the great crowd the joyous prospect

15. (a) What work of healing did Jesus do when he was on earth, and why? (b) What will be the health needs of the Armageddon survivors, and why are they different from those who are resurrected?

that they will not only survive but be healed thereafter.

¹⁶ Such miraculous healing will logically take place among Armageddon survivors relatively soon after Armageddon and well before the resurrection begins. (Isaiah 33:24; 35:5, 6; Revelation 21:4; compare Mark 5:25-29.) Then people will throw away eye glasses, canes, crutches, wheelchairs, dentures, hearing aids, and the like. What a cause for rejoicing! How well such early restorative action by Jesus comports with the role of the Armageddon survivors as the foundation of the new earth! Disabling maladies will be moved out of the way so that these survivors can move forward with zest, looking eagerly to the marvelous activity of the Millennium stretching ahead of them, not dragged down by the afflictions that the old world may have brought upon them. And all during the Millennium, they will be rejoicing in the hope of reaching the very fullness of perfect human life by the end of those thousand years.

¹⁷ If that is your hope, contemplate also the joy of sharing in restoring Paradise on the earth. (Luke 23:42, 43) No doubt the Armageddon survivors will help to clean up the earth and thus provide pleasant locations where dead ones will be resurrected. Funerals may be replaced by welcoming sessions for those brought up in the resurrection, including our own loved ones who have gone down into death. And think of the enriching fellowship with faithful men and women from past centuries. Whom do you especially want to talk to? Is it Abel, Enoch, Noah, Job, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Rahab, Deborah, Samson, David, Elijah, Elisha, Jere-

16. (a) When may miraculous healing of the Armageddon survivors take place, and with what result? (b) In what hope will we continue to rejoice during the Millennium?

17. What joys will there be as the work of restoring Paradise goes on?

miah, Ezekiel, Daniel, or John the Baptizer? Well, then, this delightful prospect is also part of your hope. You will be able to converse with them, learn from them, and work together with them in making the entire earth a paradise.

¹⁸ Imagine, too, the wholesome food, pure water, and clean air, with our earth restored to its perfect ecological balance the way Jehovah created it to be. Life then will be, not mere passive enjoyment of perfection, but an active and meaningful participation in joyful activities. Contemplate a worldwide society of people free from crime, egotism, jealousy, quarreling—a brotherhood where the fruitage of the spirit is cultivated and produced by all. How thrilling!—Galatians 5:22, 23.

Hope That Makes Life Worth Living

¹⁹ Expectation realized is no longer hope, so the rejoicing encouraged by Paul at Romans 12:12 is to be experienced now. (Romans 8:24) Just thinking of the future blessings that God's Kingdom will bring is a cause for us to rejoice in that hope now. So be determined not to allow the burdens of life in a corrupt world to push your glorious hope aside. Do not become worn down and give out, losing sight of the hope ahead. (Hebrews 12:3) Abandoning the Christian course will not solve your problems. Remember, if someone quits serving God because of all the burdens of life now, he is still stuck with those burdens, but he loses out on hope and so loses out on the possibility of rejoicing in the marvelous prospects ahead.

²⁰ Jehovah's people have every reason to have happy lives. Their bright, inspiring

hope makes life worth living. And they do not keep this joyous hope to themselves. No, they are eager to share it with others. (2 Corinthians 3:12) Thus it is that those who embrace the Kingdom hope are a confident people, and they seek to encourage others by telling them the good news from God. This fills the lives of those who accept the message with the most wonderful hope that has ever been given to humankind in general—the hope of the Kingdom that will restore Paradise to earth. If people do not accept it, we still continue to rejoice because we have the hope. The ones who turn a deaf ear are the losers; we are not.—2 Corinthians 4:3, 4.

²¹ God's promise is: "Look! I am making all things new." (Revelation 21:5) The new world with all its entrancing and endless blessings is at hand. Our hope—for life in heaven or on a paradise earth—is precious; hang on to it. In these critical last days, more than ever, view it "as an anchor for the soul, both sure and firm." With our hope anchored in Jehovah, "an everlasting rock—the Rock of ages," we surely have strong and exhilarating reason right now to "rejoice in the hope" set before us.—Hebrews 6:19; Isaiah 26:4, *The Amplified Bible*.

21. What is near at hand, and how should we evaluate our hope?

Questions for Review

- ☐ What is mankind's great hope?
- ☐ What is true joy?
- ☐ When will miraculous healing of Armageddon survivors likely take place?
- ☐ Why should we not let the burdens of life push our hope aside?
- ☐ What joys do you look forward to in the new world?

18. What further joys can we contemplate?
19. (a) When is the rejoicing mentioned at Romans 12:12 to be experienced? (b) Why should we be determined not to let the burdens of life push our hope aside?
20. What effect does the Kingdom hope have on those who embrace it, and why?

STAY CLOSE TO JEHOVAH

"Persevere in prayer."—ROMANS 12:12.

JEHOVAH is "the God who gives hope" to all of his faithful people. As the "Hearer of prayer," he listens to their pleas for help to attain the joyous hope that he sets before them. (Romans 15:13; Psalm 65:2) And through his Word, the Bible, he encourages all of his servants to come to him anytime they wish. He is always there, desiring to receive their inmost concerns. In fact, he encourages them to "persevere in prayer" and to "pray incessantly."* (Romans 12:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:17) It is Jehovah's will that all Christians constantly call on him in prayer, pouring out their hearts to him and doing so in the name of his beloved Son, Jesus Christ.—John 14:6, 13, 14.

² Why does God give us this exhortation? Because life's pressures and responsibilities can weigh us down so much that we could forget to pray. Or problems may overwhelm us and cause us to stop rejoicing in the hope and cease praying. In view of these things, we need reminders that encourage us to pray and to draw very close to the source of help and comfort, Jehovah our God.

³ The disciple James wrote: "Draw close to God, and he will draw close to you."

* According to Webster's New Dictionary of Synonyms, "**Persevere** nearly always implies an admirable quality; it suggests both refusal to be discouraged by failure, doubts, or difficulties, and a steadfast or dogged pursuit of an end or an undertaking."

1. What is Jehovah's will regarding prayer, and what encouragement did the apostle Paul give about praying?
- 2, 3. (a) Why did God exhort us to "persevere in prayer"? (b) What assurance do we have that God wants us to pray?

(James 4:8) Yes, God is neither too lofty nor too far removed to hear our expressions to him, despite our imperfect human condition. (Acts 17:27) Furthermore, he is not indifferent and unconcerned. Says the psalmist: "The eyes of Jehovah are toward the righteous ones, and his ears are toward their cry for help."—Psalm 34:15; 1 Peter 3:12.

⁴ Jehovah invites prayer. We might compare this to a gathering where a number of people are together talking. You are there, listening to the others talk. Your role is that of an observer. But then someone turns to you, says your name, and directs his words to you. This arrests your attention in a special way. Similarly, God is always attentive to his people, wherever they may be. (2 Chronicles 16:9; Proverbs 15:3) So he hears our words, protectively and interestedly observing, as it were. When we call upon God's name in prayer, however, his attention is arrested, and he is now focused on us in an explicit way. By his powers, Jehovah can even detect and comprehend man's unvoiced petition offered within the hidden recesses of his heart and mind. God assures us that he will draw close to all those sincerely calling upon his name and seeking to stay close to him.—Psalm 145:18.

Response According to God's Purpose

⁵ The counsel to persevere in prayer indicates that Jehovah at times may allow us to

4. How might Jehovah's attentiveness to prayer be illustrated?
5. (a) What does the counsel "persevere in prayer" indicate regarding *our prayers*? (b) How does God answer prayers?

keep on praying about a matter for a while before his response becomes apparent. We might even tend to get weary of petitioning God for favor or loving-kindness that may seem sorely needed but long deferred. Hence, Jehovah God entreats us not to yield to any such leaning but to keep on praying. We should continue petitioning him about our concerns, confident that he respects our prayer and will meet our real need, not simply what we may have reasoned out. Jehovah God no doubt balances our petitions according to his purpose. For example, others may be affected by our request. We might liken the matter to that of a father whose son asks him for a bicycle. The father knows that if he buys a bicycle for that son, his other son would want one too. Since one son may be too young for a bicycle, the father may decide not to buy any at that particular time. In a similar manner, in the light of his purpose and timing of matters, our heavenly Father decides what is truly best for us and for others.—Psalm 84:8, 11; compare Habakkuk 2:3.

⁶ Noteworthy is the illustration Jesus gave concerning the need for his disciples “always to pray and not to give up.” A widow, unable to get justice, persevered in her request to a human judge until she finally received justice. Jesus added: “Certainly, then, shall not God cause justice to be done for his chosen ones?” (Luke 18:1-7) Perseverance in prayer shows our faith, our reliance on Jehovah, our willingness to stay close to him and make our petition, leaving the outcome in his hands.—Hebrews 11:6.

Examples of Staying Close to Jehovah

⁷ The Bible abounds with accounts of

6. What illustration did Jesus give with regard to prayer, and what does perseverance in prayer show?

7. How can we imitate Abel's faith in staying close to Jehovah?

prayers uttered by God's servants. These “were written for our instruction, that through our endurance and through the comfort from the Scriptures we might have hope.” (Romans 15:4) Our hope is strengthened by our considering some examples of those who stayed close to Jehovah. Abel offered an acceptable sacrifice to God, and though no prayer is reported, he doubtless appealed in prayer to Jehovah that his offering might be accepted. Hebrews 11:4 says: “By faith Abel offered God a sacrifice of greater worth than Cain, through which faith he had witness borne to him that he was righteous.” Abel knew of God's promise at Genesis 3:15, but compared to what we now know, he knew very little. Yet, Abel acted on what knowledge he did have. So today, some of those newly interested in God's truth do not yet have much knowledge, but they pray and make the most of the knowledge they do have, as did Abel. Yes, they act in faith.

⁸ Another faithful servant of God was Abraham, “the father of all those having faith.” (Romans 4:11) Today, more than ever, we need strong faith, and we need to pray in faith, as did Abraham. Genesis 12:8 says that he built an altar “to Jehovah and began to call on the name of Jehovah.” Abraham knew God's name and used it in prayer. Time and again he sincerely persevered in prayer, calling “upon the name of Jehovah the indefinitely lasting God.” (Genesis 13:4; 21:33) Abraham was calling upon God in the faith for which he became celebrated. (Hebrews 11:17-19) Prayer helped Abraham to keep on rejoicing greatly in the Kingdom hope. Are we following Abraham's example of persevering in prayer?

8. Why can we be certain Abraham stayed close to Jehovah, and what question should we ask ourselves?

⁹ David was outstanding as to persevering in prayer, and his psalms illustrate what prayers should be. For example, God's servants can properly pray for such things as salvation or deliverance (3:7, 8; 60:5), guidance (25:4, 5), protection (17:8), forgiveness of sins (25:7, 11, 18), and a pure heart (51:10). When David felt afflicted, he prayed: "Make the soul of your servant rejoice." (86:4) We can pray similarly for joy of heart, knowing that Jehovah desires that we rejoice in our hope. David stayed close to Jehovah and prayed: "My soul has closely followed you; on me your right hand keeps fast hold." (63:8) Will we stay close to Jehovah, as did David? If we do, he will uphold us as well.

¹⁰ If we are to stay close to Jehovah, we need to avoid envying the wicked because of their carefree and materialistic lives. The psalmist Asaph at one point felt that it was of no value to serve Jehovah, for the wicked "are at ease indefinitely." Still, he discerned that his reasoning was wrong and that the wicked are "on slippery ground." He realized that nothing was better than staying close to Jehovah, and he expressed himself to God this way: "I am constantly with you; you have taken hold of my right hand. For, look! the very ones keeping away from you will perish. . . . But as for me, the drawing near to God is good for me. In the Sovereign Lord Jehovah I have placed my refuge, to declare all your works." (Psalm 73:12, 13, 18, 23, 27, 28) Instead of envying the carefree lives of the wicked, the people without hope, let us imitate Asaph in staying close to Jehovah.

9. (a) Why are David's prayers of much benefit to God's people today? (b) What might result from our praying as David did to stay close to Jehovah?

10. What wrong thoughts did the psalmist Asaph have at one point, but what did he come to realize?

¹¹ Daniel persevered resolutely in prayer, even in the face of the danger of being in the lions' pit because of disregarding official restrictions on prayer. But Jehovah "sent his angel and shut the mouth of the lions," rescuing Daniel. (Daniel 6:7-10, 22, 27) Daniel was greatly blessed by his persevering in prayer. Do we also persevere in prayer, especially when faced with opposition to our Kingdom preaching?

Jesus, Our Exemplar

¹² Right from the beginning of his earthly ministry, Jesus is observed at prayer. His prayerful attitude while being baptized set a fine example for those undergoing water baptism in modern times. (Luke 3: 21, 22) One could pray for God's help to carry out what is symbolized by water baptism. Jesus also helped others to approach Jehovah in prayer. On an occasion when Jesus was in a certain place praying, one of his disciples said to him afterward: "Lord, teach us how to pray." Jesus then related what is commonly known as the model prayer, in which the sequence of subjects shows that God's name and purpose should be given priority. (Luke 11:1-4) Thus, in our prayers we need to keep perspective and balance, not neglecting "the more important things." (Philippians 1:9, 10) Of course, there are times of special need or when a specific problem needs to be addressed. Like Jesus, Christians may go to God in prayer to seek strength to carry out certain assignments or to face up to particular trials or dangers. (Matthew 26:36-44) In fact, personal prayers may embrace virtually every facet of life.

11. Why is Daniel a fine example of staying close to Jehovah, and how can we imitate him?

12. (a) At the beginning of his ministry, what example did Jesus set with regard to prayer, and how can this benefit Christians? (b) What does Jesus' model prayer reveal about prayer?



Daniel persevered in prayer despite the threat of being thrown into the lions' pit

it to the Lord Jesus Christ: "David says respecting him, 'I had Jehovah constantly before my eyes; because he is at my right hand that I may never be shaken.'" We can do likewise. We can pray for God to be close to us, and we can show our confidence in Jehovah by constantly keeping him mentally before our eyes. (Compare Psalm 110:5; Isaiah 41:10, 13.) Then we will avoid all kinds of troubles, for Jehovah will support us, and we will never totter.

¹³ By his fine example, Jesus showed the importance of praying in behalf of others. He knew that his disciples would be hated and persecuted, even as he was. (John 15:18-20; 1 Peter 5:9) He, therefore, petitioned God "to watch over them because of the wicked one." (John 17:9, 11, 15, 20) And knowing the special trial that lay ahead for Peter, he told him: "I have made supplication for you that your faith may not give out." (Luke 22:32) How beneficial it is if we too persist in praying for our brothers, thinking of others and not just our own problems and interests!—Philippians 2:4; Colossians 1:9, 10.

¹⁴ Throughout his ministry, Jesus persevered in prayer, staying very close to Jehovah. (Hebrews 5:7-10) The apostle Peter, at Acts 2:25-28, quotes Psalm 16:8 and applies

13. How did Jesus show the importance of praying for others?

14. How do we know that Jesus stayed very close to Jehovah throughout his earthly ministry, and how can we imitate him?

¹⁵ May we never fail to express thanks to Jehovah for all his goodness to us, yes, "the surpassing undeserved kindness of God," which includes the gift of his Son as a ransom sacrifice for our sins. (2 Corinthians 9:14, 15; Mark 10:45; John 3:16; Romans 8:32; 1 John 4:9, 10) Indeed, in Jesus' name, be "giving thanks always for all things to our God and Father." (Ephesians 5:19, 20; Colossians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:18) We must be careful not to let our thankfulness for what we have be soured because we are so preoccupied with what we do not have or with our personal problems.

Throwing Our Burdens Upon Jehovah

¹⁶ Persistence in prayer shows our depth of devotion. When we call on God, the effect on us is good even before an answer comes

15. (a) With regard to what should we never fail to persevere in prayer? (b) What caution is given regarding our thankfulness?

16. When some burden troubles us, what should we do?

from him. If some burden is troubling our minds, we can stay close to Jehovah by following the counsel: "Throw your burden upon Jehovah himself, and he himself will sustain you." (Psalm 55:22) By throwing all our burdens—anxieties, worries, disappointments, fears, and so forth—upon God, with full faith in him, we receive a calmness of heart, "the peace of God that excels all thought."—Philippians 4:4, 7; Psalm 68:19; Mark 11:24; 1 Peter 5:7.

¹⁷ Does this peace of God come instantly? Though we may get some relief immediately, what Jesus said about praying for holy spirit holds true here also: "Keep on asking, and it will be given you; keep on seeking, and you will find; keep on knocking, and it will be opened to you." (Luke 11:9-13) Since holy spirit is the means by which we cast off anxiety, we need to persevere in asking for the peace of God and his help with regard to our burdens. We can be sure that by persistence in prayer, we will get the desired relief and calmness of heart.

¹⁸ But what if we do not know exactly what to pray for? Our inward groans often remain unexpressed because we do not fully understand our situation, or we are at a loss as to what to present to Jehovah. It is here that the holy spirit can intercede for us. Paul wrote: "The problem of what we should pray for as we need to we do not know, but the spirit itself pleads for us with groanings unuttered." (Romans 8:26) How so? In God's Word are inspired prophecies and prayers that bear on our situation. He lets these intercede for us, as it were. He accepts these as being what we would pray for if only we knew their meaning in our case, and accordingly he fulfills them.

17. How may we obtain the peace of God?

18. What does Jehovah do for us if we do not know exactly what to pray for in a certain situation?

Prayer and Hope to Continue

¹⁹ Prayer to our heavenly Father will continue forever, especially with regard to thankfulness for the new world and all its blessings. (Isaiah 65:24; Revelation 21:5) We will also continue to rejoice in hope, for hope in some form will remain forever. (Compare 1 Corinthians 13:13.) What new things Jehovah will bring forth when he is no longer under his self-imposed Sabbath day of rest toward the earth, we cannot even imagine. (Genesis 2:2, 3) For all eternity, he will have loving surprises ahead for his people, and the future holds grand things for them in the way of doing his will.

²⁰ With such a thrilling hope ahead of us, may all of us stay close to Jehovah by persevering in prayer. May we never cease thanking our heavenly Father for all our blessings. In due time our expectations will be joyfully realized, even beyond what we could have imagined or anticipated, for Jehovah can "do more than superabundantly beyond all the things we ask or conceive." (Ephesians 3:20) In view of this, then, let us give all praise and glory and thanks for all eternity to Jehovah our God, the "Hearer of prayer"!

19. Why will prayer and hope continue forever?
20. What should be our determination, and why?

How Would You Answer?

- ☐ Why do we need to persevere in prayer?
- ☐ What do we learn from pre-Christian examples of prayer?
- ☐ What does Jesus' example teach us about prayer?
- ☐ How can we throw our burdens on Jehovah and with what result?

What Does Subjection in Marriage Mean?

WHEN a Christian woman marries, she has to make many adjustments. Perhaps the greatest of these affects her liberty. As a single adult, she may have been free to make many of her own decisions without consulting anyone. But now that she has a husband, she is obligated to consult him and ask his permission to do many of the things that she used to decide for herself. Why is this so?

Because when the Creator of mankind gave the first woman in marriage to the first man, He appointed the man to be the head of his wife and their future children. This was only reasonable. In any organized group of people, someone needs to take the lead and make final decisions. In the case of marriage, the Creator decreed that "a husband is head of his wife."—Ephesians 5:23.

In support of this, the divine instruction states: "Let wives be in subjection to their husbands." (Ephesians 5:22) How a wife is affected by this arrangement depends on two things: First, how willing is she to submit to the arrangement? and second, how will her husband exercise his authority? In truth, when both marriage partners view the arrangement properly, they find that it is a blessing for the wife, the husband, and their children.



Not a Tyrant

How should a husband exercise his authority? By following the fine example of God's Son. The Bible says: "A husband is head of his wife as the Christ also is head of the congregation, he being a savior of this body. Husbands, continue loving your wives, just as the Christ also loved the congregation and delivered up himself for it." (Ephesians 5:23, 25) Jesus Christ's exercise of headship was a blessing to the congregation. He was not a tyrant. He did not make his disciples feel restricted or oppressed. Instead, he gained the respect of all by his loving and compassionate treatment of them. What a fine example for husbands to follow in their treatment of their wives!

There are husbands, though, who do not follow this fine example. They use their

God-given headship selfishly, rather than for the good of their wives. They dominate their wives in a tyrannical manner, demanding total subjection and often not permitting them to make any decisions for themselves. Understandably, the wives of such husbands often live an unhappy life. And such a husband also suffers in that he fails to gain the loving respect of his wife.

True, God requires a wife to respect the position that her husband holds as head of the family. But if the husband desires to enjoy her heartfelt respect for him as a person, he has to earn it, and the best way to do that is by acting responsibly and cultivating fine, godly qualities as head of the household.

Subjection Is Relative

A husband's authority over his wife is not total. In some ways wifely subjection can be compared to a Christian's subjection to a worldly ruler. God decrees that a Christian must "be in subjection to the superior authorities." (Romans 13:1) Yet this subjection must always be balanced by what we owe to God. Jesus said: "Pay back Caesar's things to Caesar, but God's things to God." (Mark 12:17) If Caesar (the secular government) demands that we give him what belongs to God, we remember what the apostle Peter said: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men."—Acts 5:29.

In a somewhat similar way, if a Christian woman is married to a man who does not understand or fails to respect Christian principles, she is, nevertheless, obliged to be subject to him. Rather than rebel against this God-ordained arrangement, she would do well to act toward him with love and consideration and thus try to gain his confidence. Perhaps such fine conduct will make her husband change; it may even win him to the truth. (1 Peter 3:1, 2) If her husband orders her to do something forbidden by God, she has to remember that God

is her primary Ruler. For example, if he demands that she engage in immoral sex practices, such as wife swapping, she is obliged not to submit. (1 Corinthians 6: 9, 10) Subjection to her husband is governed by her conscience and by her primary subjection to God.

In the time of King David, Abigail was married to Nabal, a man who did not respect godly principles and who acted harshly and unlovingly toward David and David's men. These had protected the thousands of sheep and goats belonging to Nabal, but when David requested a food contribution, Nabal refused to give anything.

Upon learning that her husband's niggardly attitude was going to bring disaster on the household, Abigail decided for herself to take food to David. "Abigail hastened and took two hundred loaves of bread and two large jars of wine and five sheep dressed and five seah measures of roasted grain and a hundred cakes of raisins and two hundred cakes of pressed figs and put them upon the asses. Then she said to her young men: 'Pass on ahead of me. Look! I am coming after you.' But to her husband Nabal she told nothing."—1 Samuel 25:18, 19.

Was Abigail wrong in acting contrary to the will of her husband? Not in this case. Abigail's subjection did not require her to be as unloving as her husband, especially since Nabal's unwise course put his whole household in danger. Hence, David said to her: "Blessed be Jehovah the God of Israel, who has sent you this day to meet me! And blessed be your sensibleness." (1 Samuel 25: 32, 33) Similarly, Christian wives today should not agitate and rebel against the headship of their husbands, but if these take an unchristian course, the wives do not have to follow them in this.

True, Paul in his letter to the Ephesians says: "As the congregation is in subjection to the Christ, so let wives also be to their

husbands in everything.” (Ephesians 5:24) The apostle’s use of the word “everything” here does not mean that there are no limits to the wife’s subjection. Paul’s expression, “as the congregation is in subjection to the Christ,” indicates what he had in mind. Everything that Christ requires of his congregation is righteous, in accord with God’s will. Therefore, the congregation can easily and joyfully be in subjection to him in everything. Similarly, a wife of a Christian husband who earnestly tries to follow Jesus’ example will be happy to be subject to him in everything. She knows that he is very concerned for her best interests, and he will never knowingly ask her to do something out of harmony with God’s will.

A husband will keep the love and respect of his wife when he reflects the godly qualities of his head, Jesus Christ, who commanded his followers to love one another. (John 13:34) Even though a husband is fallible and imperfect, if he manages his authority in harmony with the superior headship of the Christ, he makes it easier for his wife to be happy to have him as her head. (1 Corinthians 11:3) If a wife cultivates the Christian qualities of modesty and loving-kindness, it is not difficult for her to subject herself to her husband.

Humble and Reasonable

Husbands and wives in the congregation are spiritual brothers and sisters with an equal standing before Jehovah. (Compare Galatians 3:28.) Men, however, have been assigned by God to exercise congregation oversight. This is gladly recognized by righthearted women in all submissiveness. And the weighty obligation it puts upon men not to be lording it over the flock is humbly recognized by mature men in the congregation.—1 Peter 5:2, 3.

If such is the relationship between men and women in the congregation, how can a Christian husband justify his acting as a

tyrant over his wife, his spiritual sister? And how can the wife justify competing with her husband for headship? Rather, they should treat each other as Peter admonishes all members of the congregation: “All of you be like-minded, showing fellow feeling, having brotherly affection, tenderly compassionate, humble in mind.” (1 Peter 3:8) Paul too counseled: “Clothe yourselves with the tender affections of compassion, kindness, lowliness of mind, mildness, and long-suffering. Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely if anyone has a cause for complaint against another. Even as Jehovah freely forgave you, so do you also.”—Colossians 3:12, 13.

Such attitudes should be cultivated in the congregation. And they especially should be cultivated between husband and wife in the Christian home. A husband can show his tender affection and mildness by listening to suggestions from his wife. He should consider his wife’s point of view before making a decision affecting the family. Christian wives are not empty-headed. They can often give their husbands valuable suggestions, as Sarah did to her husband, Abraham. (Genesis 21:12) On the other hand, a Christian wife will not be unreasonably demanding of her husband. She will show her kindness and lowliness of mind by following his lead and supporting his decisions, even though they may sometimes differ from her own preferences.

A reasonable husband, like a reasonable elder, is approachable and kind. A loving wife responds by being compassionate and long-suffering, recognizing the efforts he makes to fulfill his responsibilities in spite of imperfection and the pressures of life. When such attitudes are cultivated by both husband and wife, subjection in a marriage is not going to be a problem. Rather, it is a source of joy, security, and lasting contentment.

"Yet It Does Move!"

"THE Bible teaches how to go to heaven, not how the heavens go," said the 16th-century Italian scientist and inventor Galileo Galilei. Beliefs like that one threw him into conflict with the Roman Catholic Church, which threatened him with torture and imprisonment. Some 350 years later, the church reviewed its treatment of Galileo. What took place in Galileo's day has been called a "confrontation between empirical science and blind dogmatism."

Today, searchers for truth can learn from Galileo's experience. But why did such a confrontation ever occur? A look at the accepted scientific views of his time will provide the answer.

In the mid-16th century, the earth was thought to be the center of the universe. Planets were assumed to orbit in perfect circles. Although not proved by scientific methods, these ideas were accepted in faith as established fact. Indeed, science with its "mystic ideas" was inseparable from religion.

Into such a world Galileo was born to a respected family in Pisa in 1564. His father wanted him to study medicine, but the inquisitive boy became fascinated by mathematics. In time, as a professor of science, he discovered certain principles of inertia. When descriptions of early Dutch telescopes reached him, he greatly improved on the design and built his own superior instrument. He turned it toward the heavens and published what he learned in his first book, *Sidereus Nuncius* (The Starry Messenger), introducing four moons of Jupiter to his generation. In 1611 he was called to Rome, where he presented his findings to the Jesuit *Collegio Romano* (Roman College). They honored him by a conference in which they acknowledged his findings.

Teachings Opposed by the Church

Ominously, before Galileo left Rome, a powerful Jesuit, Cardinal Bellarmine, instigated an inquiry into Galileo's teachings. Galileo believed that creation is governed by laws that men can learn through study. The Catholic Church opposed this view.

Even some astronomers objected to Galileo's opinion. They believed that it was impossible for the telescope to enhance reality and that the invention was a hoax. One priest even suggested that the stars seen had been built into the lens! When Galileo discovered lunar mountains, confirming that the heavenly bodies were not perfect spheres, the priest Clavius countered that the moon was encased in crystal, so that, although one might see through to the mountains, it was still a perfect ball! "This," said Galileo in response, "is a beautiful flight of the imagination."

Galileo's drive to read from the "Book of Nature," as he called the study of creation, led him to the work of the Polish astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus. In 1543, Copernicus had published a book arguing that the earth revolved around the sun. Galileo verified this. However, this pitted Galileo against the scientific, political, and religious establishment of his day.

While the Catholic Church used Copernican astronomy for setting dates, such as Easter, Copernicus' views had not been officially adopted. The church hierarchy backed Aristotle's theory that the earth was the center of the universe. Galileo's new ideas, however, challenged their reputation and power.

Although independent scientists across Europe worked to confirm the Copernican system, they were content to discuss it within the academic world. On that basis the Catholic Church let them alone. Galileo wrote not in Latin but in the Italian of the common man and thus popularized his discoveries. The clergy felt that he was challenging not only them but God's Word.

Not a Science Manual

Of course, discovering the facts about the universe is not truly a challenge to God's Word. Students of that Word realize that the Bible is not a science manual, though it is accurate when it touches on scientific matters. It was written for the spiritual development of believers, not to teach them physics or some other natural science. (2 Timothy 3: 16, 17) Galileo agreed. He suggested that there are two types of language: the precise terms of science and the everyday words of the inspired writers. He wrote: "It is needful in the Scriptures . . . to accommodate these to the understanding of ordinary people, to say many things which appear different (as to the meaning of the words) from absolute truth."

There are examples of this in various Bible texts. One is Job 38:6, where the Bible speaks of the earth as having "pedestals" and a "cornerstone." Some



misused this as evidence that the earth is fixed. Such expressions are not meant as a scientific description of the earth but, rather, poetically compare the creation of the earth to the erection of a building, with Jehovah as the Master Builder.

As biographer L. Geymonat points out in his book *Galileo Galilei*: "Narrow-minded theologians who wanted to limit science on the basis of biblical reasoning would do nothing but cast discredit upon the Bible itself." For selfish reasons stubborn men did exactly that. A letter was sent to the Holy Office calling for an investigation of Galileo.

On February 19, 1616, Catholic theologians were presented with two propositions: (1) "the sun is the center of the universe" and (2) "the earth is not the center of the universe." On February 24 they ruled these ideas foolish and heretical. Galileo was ordered not to hold to or teach such theories.

Galileo was silenced. Not only was the Catholic Church against him but his friends had been powerless to help. He simply devoted himself to research. Had it not been for a change of pope in 1623, we may not have heard of him again. However, the new pontiff, Urban VIII, was an intellectual and a supporter of Galileo. Word reached Galileo that the pope would not object to a new book. He even had an audience with the pope.

After this apparent indication of open-mindedness by the pope, Galileo went to work.

Although Galileo's *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems* was first published under Catholic license in 1632, papal enthusiasm soon vanished. At 70 years of age, Galileo was summoned to appear before the Inquisition a second time. The charge of suspicion of heresy required that the church authorization to publish the book be explained first, and it was asserted that Galileo fraudulently concealed the earlier ban on teaching Copernicanism. Since *Dialogue* compared astronomical systems, including that of Copernicus, it was asserted that it violated the ban.

Galileo responded that his book was critical of Copernicus. It was a weak defense, for in the book a most convincing case had been made for Copernicus. Furthermore, the pope's words were put in the mouth of the most dull-witted character in the book, Simplicio, thus offending Pope Urban VIII.

Galileo Convicted of Heresy

Galileo was found guilty. Already ill and having been threatened with torture unless he recanted, he did. On his knees he swore: "I do abjure . . . the said errors and heresies . . . I shall never again speak . . . such things as might bring me under similar suspicion." Interestingly, legend has it that upon rising, he struck the earth and mumbled, "*Eppur si muove!* [And yet it does move!]"

The sentence was imprisonment and penances until his death, which occurred nine years later. A letter he wrote in 1634 said: "It is not any opinion of mine that started the war, but my being in the bad graces of the Jesuits."

In 1822 the ban on his works was lifted. But not until 1979 did Pope John Paul II reopen the question and admit that Galileo had been "made to suffer much . . . by the

men and the organisations of the Church." In the Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, Mario D'Addio, a noted member of the special commission set up by Pope John Paul II to review Galileo's 1633 conviction, said: "The so-called heresy of Galileo does not seem to have any foundation, neither theologically nor under canon law." According to D'Addio, the Inquisition court overstepped its authority—Galileo's theories did not violate any article of faith. The Vatican newspaper admitted that the conviction of Galileo for heresy was baseless.

What do we learn from Galileo's experience? A Christian should realize that the Bible is not a science textbook. When a conflict appears to exist between the Bible and science, he need not try to reconcile every "discrepancy." After all, Christian faith is based on "the word about Christ," not on scientific authority. (Romans 10:17) Besides, science is continually changing. A theory that appears to contradict the Bible and that is popular today may tomorrow be discovered to be in error and be rejected.

Yet, when pointing to the case of Galileo to demonstrate religious suppression of science, scientists would do well to remember that Galileo's discovery was not accepted by the research establishment of his day. Contrary to contemporary thought, the Bible was not out of harmony with that truth. God's Word needed no revision. It was the Catholic Church's misinterpretation of the Bible that caused the problem.

Everyone should be moved by the exquisite harmony and natural law in the universe to a greater appreciation of the Creator, Jehovah God. Galileo asked: "Is the Work less noble than the Word?" The apostle answers: "[God's] invisible qualities are clearly seen from the world's creation onward, because they are perceived by the things made."—Romans 1:20.

A Ministry for You?

JEHOVAH has shown his generosity in perfectly provisioning the earth for our enjoyment of life. He generously let these provisions remain even after Adam and Eve rebelled. What is more, he has expressed his surpassing love in sending his Son to save believing humans from the calamity of sin.—Matthew 5:45; John 3:16.

How can we respond to such love? Jesus said that we must love Jehovah our God with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength. This suggests that we owe him our worship and loyalty and that we should live our lives in harmony with his will.—Mark 12:30; 1 Peter 4:2.

A nurse with a family to care for says: "I travel over one hour every day to the hospital where I work, so I thought I could not auxiliary pioneer. But I carefully organized my activities to share in the field service early each morning before going to work, during break periods, and on days off. You can imagine my joy when, by the end of one month, I had spent 117 hours in preaching! I placed 263 magazines, 22 subscriptions for the magazines and was able to start 3 Bible studies."

But what is involved in doing God's will? Is there a service that we can render to him—a ministry that we should share in?

A Need for Ministers

The churches have confused people as to how to worship and serve God. Yet, the Bible shows that there is only one true religion, "one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all persons." Jesus said: "True worshipers will worship the Father with spirit and truth." Hence they are counseled: "You

should all speak in agreement, and . . . there should not be divisions among you."
—Ephesians 4:3-6; John 4:23; 1 Corinthians 1:10.



Confusion as to what is the true religion began in Eden when Satan challenged the rightfulness of Jehovah's sovereignty by questioning God's way of ruling. (Genesis 3:1-6, 13) Satan now sustains this opposition to God with counterfeit teachings spread by deceitful religious ministers who "keep transforming themselves into ministers of righteousness." So the Bible says: "Beloved ones, do not believe every inspired expression . . . because many false prophets have gone forth into the world." —2 Corinthians 11:14, 15; 1 John 4:1.

Happily, God has taken steps to settle this issue of rulership. Having sent his Son to redeem mankind, he has now made Jesus the King of God's heavenly Kingdom, with authority to destroy Satan and his prophets, or ministers. This will ensure that God's will is done on earth, to the everlasting blessing of obedient people. —Daniel 7:13, 14; Hebrews 2:9.

Satan has obscured these truths. (2 Corinthians 4:4) Thus, there is a need for us to serve as ministers of God, exposing Satan's falsehoods and bearing witness to the truth. Jehovah does not force us into this service. He wants us, like Jesus, to offer ourselves willingly out of appreciation for him and for what he has done for us. —Psalm 110:3; Hebrews 12:1-3.

The Christian Ministry

Jesus "went journeying from city to city and from village to village, preaching and declaring the good news of the kingdom of God." (Luke 8:1) He also trained his disciples to be ministers like him and sent them out to preach. (Matthew 10:1-14, 27) Later, he commissioned them to continue the ministry to the ends of the earth. —Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 1:8.

This commission rests on true Christians, and God's spirit motivates them to preach. As happened at Pentecost 33 C.E., all who accept the good news take up the responsibility to make public declaration of their faith. —Acts 2:1-4, 16-21; Romans 10:9, 13-15.

Most people, though, cannot see themselves as ministers. Peter, one of Jehovah's Witnesses, says: "Men in Germany often consider it below their dignity to talk about religion. 'That is for clergymen to do,' they say." According to Tony, a missionary for decades, people in England have said: "What you are saying is good, and I think Jehovah's Witnesses are fine people. But to go from door to door preaching—I just could not do that." Ben studied the Bible for a



while with a Nigerian man who told him: "I cannot show myself preaching publicly from house to house; but I could give money to your congregation to help those who are willing to do that." Yes, most people lack the faith and conviction needed for the Christian ministry.

Nonetheless, public preaching is the responsibility of all in the Christian congregation, regardless of age or sex. It is not only for the elders and the ministerial servants, who 'take the lead,' but also for Christians in general. All are exhorted: "Offer to God a sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of lips which make public declaration to his name. . . . Be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you."—Hebrews 13:15, 17.

Addressing a mixed crowd in his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said: "Not everyone saying to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but the one doing the will of my Father who is in the heavens will." On another occasion he showed that doing God's will includes preaching to unbelievers. His disciples were urging him to leave off preaching to some Samaritans in order to eat, but he said: "My food is for me to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work."—Matthew 7:21; John 4:27-38.

Should It Be Your Career?

People usually prefer to pursue material food and wealth. But earlier in the Ser-

Michael has seven young children, and he holds a responsible job in a Nigerian college. He is also an elder in the Christian congregation. He shares the view of thousands of Witnesses:

"I view the ministry as my career and always recall that Paul said: 'I planted, Apollos watered, but God kept making it grow.' My wife and I 'plant' during brief house-to-house discussions of the good news. We 'water' by returning to those who show interest to teach them from the Bible, as Jesus said we should. Weekly home Bible studies have helped a great number—in some cases whole families—to come to a knowledge of the truth."

mon on the Mount, Jesus advised his listeners against anxiously pursuing such things. "Rather," he said, "store up for yourselves treasures in heaven . . . Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and [God's] righteousness."—Matthew 6:20, 33.

Seeking first the Kingdom means not letting other interests overshadow our ministry. However, doing this does not mean excluding everything else. For example, the Bible encourages us not to neglect genuine family obligations. We hold such obligations in common with all humans. To neglect them is

to act in a way that is contrary to the Christian faith. (1 Timothy 5:8) Nevertheless, we should do all we reasonably can in the ministry while handling other responsibilities in a balanced way.

Jesus said: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached . . . for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will

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- **Worship Which God?**
- **Fear Jehovah and Glorify His Holy Name**
- **Maintaining Christian Integrity in War-Torn Liberia**

come.” (Matthew 24:14) The context of that prophecy places its fulfillment in our day. Since 1914 the good news is that the Kingdom has been empowered to act in favor of Jehovah’s sovereignty and against Satan and his world. (Revelation 11:15-18) We should think seriously about the implications of this. The end will come, and we must get the preaching work done before then. Lives are at stake; we can help to save many of them.

Reach Out for a Fuller Ministry

Many of Jehovah’s Witnesses devote ten or more hours each month to sharing the good news with others. Thousands spend two or more hours a day in preaching as auxiliary pioneers, and others serve continually as regular and special pioneers. They appreciate the urgency of this work and want to have the fullest share possible to get it done before the end of this unhappy world comes.

Are you already an active Witness of Jehovah? Then reach out for a fuller share in the service. Improve your proficiency in preaching and teaching, trying to accomplish more in the ministry. If you are in a position to become a pioneer, do so. If your circumstances genuinely do not permit you

to, then encourage those who can to reach out for this service.

If you are not a dedicated Witness of Jehovah, do not say that the ministry is not for you. Another man named Peter, a mechanical engineer, strongly objected to his wife’s sharing the good news with others. “How can I have my wife preaching from house to house?” he would ask. After years of observing her firm conviction regarding the truth of God’s Word, he decided to study the Bible too. Now, like his wife, he is a dedicated, baptized minister of the good news.

So do not bar yourself from the privilege of serving Jehovah. We encourage you to study the Bible and to associate with true Christians at their meetings. This will help you to mold your life in harmony with God’s righteousness and to build up firm faith in his purposes. If you make progress in this, you too will qualify to be a minister of God. You will then be privileged to share in carrying out this command of Jesus: “Go therefore and make disciples . . . teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you.”—Matthew 28:19, 20.

Yes, there is a ministry you may share in, and it is more urgent than ever for you to do so.

Questions From Readers

■ What should a Christian family do if their child has to attend a school where religious instruction is compulsory?

Christian parents are not interested in having their children indoctrinated with false religion. But there may be situations where children cannot decline to be in a class where religion is taught, though they would not share in false religious acts or ceremonies.

God’s friend Abraham set a fine pattern as to religious instruction for children. He raised his offspring in Canaan, where they were surrounded by religious error and abominable “sacred” practices. (Compare Exodus 34:11-15; Leviticus 18:21-30; Deuteronomy 7:

1-5, 25, 26; 18:9-14.) Nonetheless, he was the source of religious instruction for his family. God was confident that Abraham would “command his sons and his household after him so that they shall keep Jehovah’s way to do righteousness.”—Genesis 18:19.

As a youth, Jesus too benefited from family and congregational instruction in true worship. Thus, he

"went on progressing in wisdom and in physical growth and in favor with God and men."—Luke 2:52.

In most parts of the earth, Christian youths receive secular education in public schools. Not everything taught is in full accord with Biblical truth and established fact. For example, many generations of Christian youths have attended science or biology classes as part of their normal curriculum. Most of them have thus been exposed to prevailing theories of evolution and associated views about "natural" origins of life on earth.

This exposure did not, however, turn these Christian youths into adherents of godless evolution. Why? Because at home and at Christian meetings, they had previously received accurate information based on God's inspired Word, which helped to train their 'perceptive powers to distinguish both right and wrong.' (Hebrews 5:14) Many parents had studied with their children the balanced coverage of evolution in the faith-strengthening volume *Life—How Did It Get Here? By Evolution or by Creation?** Thus equipped, these schoolchildren did not accept as believable the classroom instruction about evolution. Yet they were able to show in their classroom responses and in tests that they were paying attention and could learn the details presented. Some even had opportunity to provide alternative explanations in accord with the facts presented in the Bible by man's Creator.—1 Peter 3:15.

What, though, about class periods devoted to instruction about the predominant local religion or even religion in general?

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It is unlikely that such instruction will be presented neutrally, as mere information. The teacher may even practice that religion and thus try to influence the minds and hearts of the students. So Jehovah's Witnesses prefer that their children be excused from religious instruction classes. This may enable their children to use school time more profitably to complete assignments for other classes or to study in the school library.

In some places, however, such requests have been denied; the school or public authorities may even require that all children attend and complete a religion course in order to be graduated. Each family must decide personally what to do in that case.

Some of God's servants in the past have involuntarily been in situations where they had to endure exposure to religious teachings or acts while remaining loyal to the true God. That was likely so of Moses. He was brought up as the grandson of Egypt's Pharaoh, and he "was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." (Acts 7:20-22) That probably included to some degree the beliefs and religious practices common in Egypt. But Moses was safeguarded by the superior instruction he evidently received from his family and perhaps other Hebrews.—Exodus 2:6-15; Hebrews 11:23-26.

Consider also the example of the three young Hebrews, associates of Daniel, who were given special instruction in Babylon and made government workers. (Daniel 1:6, 7) They were not at liberty to do or refuse to do whatever they wanted. On one occasion King Nebuchadnezzar decreed that they assemble with other officials at the gold image he set up on the plain of Dura, where acts of

nationalistic devotion would be performed. How did the three Hebrews respond? We can be certain that they would have preferred not to be there, but that was not possible.* Yet they remained faithful to their beliefs and to Almighty God. Their godly consciences permitted them to be present while resolutely refusing to participate in, or personally engage in, any act of false religion.—Daniel 3:1-18.

When it is compulsory for all students to be present at a religion class and possibly to learn to the extent of being able to pass standard tests, children from families of true Christians might be present, as those three were at Nebuchadnezzar's command. But the Christian youths would put God first. There would be no need for them to challenge each incorrect statement made or each unscriptural practice shared in by the others, just as the three Hebrews did not try to interfere when others bowed down to the image of gold. However, Christian youths would not themselves share in acts of worship, joint prayers, religious songs, and such things.

These youths ought to exert themselves at other times to take in upbuilding knowledge 'from the holy writings that are able to make them wise for salvation through faith in connection with Christ Jesus.' (2 Timothy 3:15) Through communication with their children, the parents should constantly monitor the content of the class instruction. This will help the adult Christians to see what needs to be corrected or clarified from the Bible so that their children do not become confused or misled.

* The Bible makes no mention of Daniel's being on the plain of Dura. Perhaps his higher rank in the government enabled him to be excused from going there.

Do You Remember?

Have you given careful thought to recent issues of *The Watchtower*? If so, you will probably find it interesting to recall the following:

□ **How does the Bible's record of Jehovah's battles give us confidence in facing the "great tribulation"?** (Matthew 24:21)

Always in control, Jehovah has demonstrated that he can out-think his enemies and maneuver circumstances for the salvation of his people.—8/15, page 27.

□ **What must parents be willing to do to maintain communication between themselves and their children?**

Parents must spend time with their children. Also, they must be willing to make sacrifices in behalf of their children for the sake of their mental, physical, and spiritual growth.—9/1, page 22.

□ **What meaning does Jesus' transfiguration have for us today?** (Mark 9:2-4)

The transfiguration can build faith in Jehovah's prophetic word and strengthen our belief in Jesus Christ as God's Son and promised Messiah. It can also fortify our belief in Jesus' resurrection to spirit life and increase our faith in God's government.—9/15, page 23.

□ **What is the meaning of "for a while" at Isaiah 11:6?**

A careful rendering of this verse shows that the wolf and the lamb will not constantly be around each other in the new world. It is probable that such animals will still have distinct habitats and so come under the categories of 'domestic animals and wild beasts' as existed in the original Paradise. (Genesis 1:24) However,

animals will be at peace with one another, able to be around one another without risk.—9/15, page 31.

□ **What is the key to real Christianity?**

Love is the key to real Christianity. Faith, works, and right association are indispensable, but without love their value is not realized. This is so because Jehovah is preeminently a God of love. (1 Corinthians 13:1-3; 1 John 4:8)—10/1, page 20.

□ **Does the expression "a time for birth and a time to die" at Ecclesiastes 3:2 support the idea that God has predetermined our time of death?**

No. Solomon was simply discussing the continuing cycle of life and death that afflicts imperfect humanity. Ecclesiastes 7:17 states: "Do not be wicked overmuch, nor become foolish. Why should you die when it is not your time?" What sense would this counsel make if one's time of death were predetermined?—10/15, pages 5-6.

□ **What argues against the apostle Peter's being the first bishop of Rome?**

There is no proof that Peter ever visited the city of Rome; nor did Peter ever refer to himself as anything more than one of Christ's apostles. (2 Peter 1:1)—10/15, page 8.

□ **Is it right for Christians to send flowers for a funeral?**

If it is well-known that a custom (or a design, such as a cross) presently has a religious meaning in one's area, it should be avoided. So Christians would not send

flowers in the form of a cross or use them in some formal way that definitely has a false religious meaning. However, at this time in many lands, the custom of providing flowers without religious links is widespread. Some Christians have sent flowers to add a note of cheer to a sad occasion and to show sympathy and concern.—10/15, page 31.

□ **What do official definitions make clear about the Trinity?**

They make it clear that the Trinity doctrine is not a simple idea. Instead, it is a complex set of ideas that have been brought together over several centuries and locked into one another. Many scholars, including Trinitarians, admit that the Bible actually does not contain the doctrine of the Trinity.—11/1, pages 21-2.

□ **Why is 29 C.E. a pivotal date in Bible history?**

Because by combining precise Biblical information 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.—11/15, page 31.

□ **What did "worship" mean to Hebrew-speaking people, and how does this apply to Jehovah's Witnesses today?**

The Hebrew equivalent of the word "worship" can be translated "service." In the Hebrew mind, therefore, worship meant service. This is what it means to Jehovah's people today, so a very important mark of true religion is the godly service of preaching.—12/1, page 19.

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'A True Mosaic'

That is how a reader from Argentina defined the recently published book *Mankind's Search for God*. "It contains a variety of forms and elements, just like mosaic," he wrote. "Just as a mosaic is an inlaid work of diverse elements, this book contains such a variety of subjects and explanations about religion that it surprises the reader."

"Generally, Western observers are totally ignorant of Eastern beliefs and their origins." Yet, as this appreciative reader notes, this book goes "from Hinduism to Zionism, to Buddhism and the sects of Christendom, and to innumerable other religious ideas. It is a mosaic of help," he explains, "for anyone who is investigating religions."



Below: GPO, Jerusalem



Below: Camerapix



QUESTIONS FROM READERS

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