THE WATCHTOWER
ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM
MAY 15, 1992

Is the Bible Really a Gift From God?

THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

May 15, 1992 | Average Printing Each Issue: 15,570,000 | Vol. 113, No. 10

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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The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) is published semimonthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201. Second-class postage paid at Brooklyn, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. **Postmaster:** Send address changes to Watchtower, **Wallkill, N.Y. 12589.**

Printed in U.S.A.

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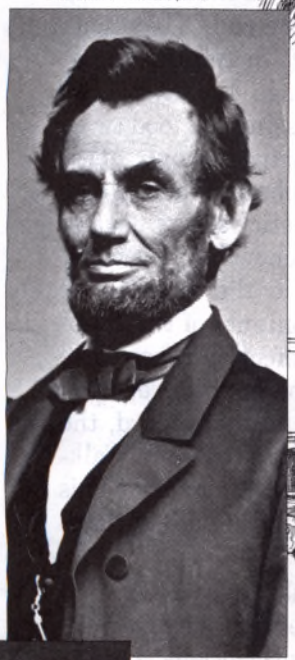

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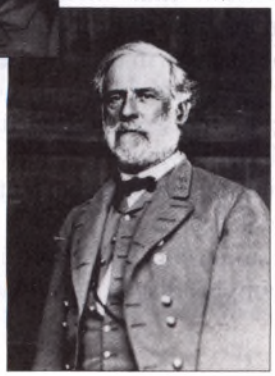


Is the Bible Really a Gift From God?

"I BELIEVE the Bible is the best gift God has ever given to man." That statement was made by Abraham Lincoln, the 16th president of the United States.* He was not alone in his appreciation for this age-old book.

The 19th-century British statesman William E. Gladstone stated: "The Bible is stamped with a Specialty of Origin, and an immeasurable distance separates it from all competitors." Along similar lines, the 18th-century American statesman Patrick Henry said: "The Bible is worth all other books which have ever been printed." Obviously impressed by the Scriptures, French emperor Napoléon Bonaparte commented: "The Bible is no mere book, but a Living Creature, with a power that conquers all that oppose it."

For some, the Bible has been a source of help and comfort. The American Confederate general Robert E. Lee stated: "In all my perplexities and distresses, the Bible has never failed to give me light and strength." And because of his appreciation for this book, U.S. president John Quincy Adams said: "I have for many years made it a practice to read through the Bible once every year."

If the Most High has given the Bible to mankind, there should be evidence that it is divinely inspired. It should be greater than any other book. And for the Bible to be a true source of strength and instruction, it would have to be completely reliable. So, then, there remains the question, Is the Bible really a gift from God? Let us next seek the answer to that question.

* Of course, there is a greater gift—Jesus Christ.—John 3:16.

Why the Bible Is God's Inspired Gift

THE Bible says that "God is love" and ascribes wisdom and power to him. (1 John 4:8; Job 12:13; Isaiah 40:26) It tells us that "all his ways are justice." (Deuteronomy 32:4) According to the Bible, God also displays such qualities as mercy and compassion.—Exodus 34:6; Romans 9:15.

Because the Bible ascribes such qualities to Jehovah God, it draws groping humans to him. This book speaks of creation, the origin of sin and death, and the means of reconciliation with God. It presents an enthralling hope of Paradise restored to the earth. But all of this is of value only if it can be proved that the Bible is an inspired gift from God.

The Bible and Science

The Bible has consistently triumphed over criticism. For instance, when it is read with an open mind, it is found to be in harmony with true science. Of course, the Bible was prepared as a spiritual guide, not as a science textbook. But let us see if the Bible agrees with scientific facts.

Anatomy: The Bible accurately says that 'all the parts' of a human embryo are "in writing." (Psalm 139:13-16) The brain, the heart, the lungs, the eyes—these and all the other body parts are 'written down' in the genetic code of the fertilized egg in the mother's womb. Contained in this code are internal timetables for the appearance of each of these parts in proper order. And just think! This fact about the development of the human body was recorded in the Bible almost 3,000 years before scientists discovered the genetic code.

Animal life: According to the Bible, "the hare . . . is a chewer of the cud." (Leviticus 11:6) François Bourlière (*The Natural History of Mammals,* 1964, page 41) says: "The habit of 'refection,' or passing the food twice through the intestine instead of only once, seems to be a common phenomenon in the rabbits and hares. Domestic rabbits usually eat and swallow without chewing their night droppings, which form in the morning as much as half the total contents of the stomach. In the wild rabbit refection takes place twice daily, and the same habit is reported for the European hare." In this regard, the work *Mammals of the World* (by E. P. Walker, 1964, Volume II, page 647) states: "This may be similar to 'chewing the cud' in ruminant mammals."

Archaeology: Biblical kings, cities, and nations have come to life with the discovery of clay tablets, pottery, inscriptions, and the like. For instance, such people as the Hittites mentioned in the Scriptures actually did exist. (Exodus 3:8) In his book *The Bible Comes Alive,* Sir Charles Marston said: "Those who have shaken popular faith in the Bible, and undermined its authority, are in turn undermined themselves by the evidence that has been brought to light, and their authority destroyed. The spade is driving destructive criticism out of the field of questionable facts into that of recognized fiction."

Archaeology has supported the Bible in many ways. For example, discoveries have

confirmed the places and names found in Genesis chapter 10. Excavators have uncovered the Chaldean city of Ur, the commercial and religious center where Abraham was born. (Genesis 11:27-31) Above the spring of Gihon in the southeastern part of Jerusalem, archaeologists found the Jebusite city taken by King David. (2 Samuel 5:4-10) The Siloam Inscription carved at one end of King Hezekiah's conduit, or aqueduct, was discovered in 1880. (2 Kings 20:20) Babylon's fall to Cyrus the Great in 539 B.C.E. is related in the Nabonidus Chronicle, unearthed in the 19th century C.E. Details in the book of Esther have been confirmed by inscriptions from Persepolis and the discovery of the palace of King Xerxes (Ahasuerus) at Shushan, or Susa, between 1880 and 1890 C.E. An inscription found in 1961 in the ruins of a Roman theater at Caesarea proved the existence of Roman governor Pontius Pilate, who handed Jesus over for impalement.—Matthew 27:11-26.

Astronomy: Some 2,700 years ago—long before people in general knew that the earth is round—the prophet Isaiah wrote: "There is One who is dwelling above the circle of the earth." (Isaiah 40:22) The Hebrew word *chugh* here translated "circle," may also be rendered "sphere." (*A Concordance of the Hebrew and Chaldee Scriptures,* by B. Davidson) Then, too, "the circle" of the earth's horizon is clearly seen from outer space and sometimes during high-altitude airplane travel. Incidentally, Job 26:7 says that God is "hanging the earth upon nothing." This is true, for astronomers know that the earth has no visible means of support.

Botany: Some wrongly conclude that the Bible is inaccurate because Jesus Christ spoke of "a mustard grain" as "the tiniest of all the seeds." (Mark 4:30-32) Likely, Jesus meant the seed of the black mustard plant (*Brassica nigra* or *Sinapis nigra*), which is only about 0.039 to 0.063 inch in diameter. Though there are smaller seeds, such as fine-as-powder seeds of the orchid, Jesus was not talking to people who grew orchids. Those Galilean Jews knew that of the various types of seeds sown by local farmers, the mustard seed was the tiniest. Jesus was talking about the Kingdom, not teaching a lesson in botany.

Geology: Regarding the Bible account of creation, the noted geologist Wallace Pratt said: "If I as a geologist were called upon to explain briefly our modern ideas of the origin of the earth and the development of life on it to a simple, pastoral people, such as the tribes to whom the Book of Genesis was addressed, I could hardly do better than follow rather closely much of the language of the first chapter of Genesis." Pratt noted that the order of events in Genesis—the origin of oceans, the emergence of land, and then the appearance of marine life, birds, and mammals—is essentially the sequence of the principal divisions of geologic time.

Medicine: In his book *The Physician Examines the Bible,* C. Raimer Smith wrote: "It is very surprising to me that the Bible is so accurate from the medical standpoint. . . . Where treatment is mentioned, as for boils, wounds, etc., it is correct even by modern standards. . . . Many superstitions are still believed by large numbers of people such as, that a buckeye in the pocket will prevent rheumatism; that handling toads will cause warts; that wearing red flannel around the neck will cure a sore throat; that an asafetida bag will prevent diseases; that every time a child is sick it has worms; etc., but no such statements are found in the Bible. This in itself is remarkable and to me is another proof of its divine origin."

Reliable in Historical Details

In his book *A Lawyer Examines the Bible,* attorney Irwin H. Linton observed: "While

romances, legends and false testimony are careful to place the events related in some distant place and some indefinite time, thereby violating the first rules we lawyers learn of good pleading, that 'the declaration must give time and place,' the Bible narratives give us the date and place of the things related with the utmost precision."

To prove this point, Linton cited Luke 3: 1, 2. There the Gospel writer mentioned seven officials so as to establish the time when Jesus Christ began His ministry. Notice the details Luke provided in these words: "In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was district ruler of Galilee, but Philip his brother was district ruler of the country of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was district ruler of Abilene, in the days of chief priest Annas and of Caiaphas, God's declaration came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness."

The Bible is filled with similar details. Moreover, such portions of it as the Gospels were penned during a period of highly developed Jewish, Greek, and Roman culture. It was a time of lawyers, writers, administrators, and the like. Surely, then, if the details found in the Gospels and other parts of the Bible had not been factual, they would have been exposed as being fraudulent. But secular historians confirmed such points as the existence of Jesus Christ. For example, concerning Jesus and His followers the Roman historian Tacitus wrote: "Christus, from whom the name [Christians] had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus." (*Annals,* Book XV, 44) The Bible's historical accuracy helps to prove that it is God's gift to mankind.

The Greatest Evidence

Though archaeology, astronomy, history, and other fields of knowledge support the Bible, faith in it does not rest on such confirmation. Among the many proofs that the Bible is God's inspired gift to us, no greater evidence can be presented than the fulfillment of its prophecies.

Jehovah God is the Source of true prophecy. Through his prophet Isaiah, he said: "The first things—here they have come, but new things I am telling out. Before they begin to spring up, I cause you people to hear them." (Isaiah 42:9) Moreover, the Bible says that its writers were inspired of God by means of his holy spirit, or active force. For example, the Christian apostle Paul wrote: "All Scripture is inspired of God." (2 Timothy 3:16) The apostle Peter wrote: "No prophecy of Scripture springs from any private interpretation. For prophecy was at no time brought by man's will, but men spoke from God as they were borne along by holy spirit." (2 Peter 1:20, 21) So let us look at Bible prophecy.

Among the hundreds of prophecies in the Bible are those concerning the Assyrian capital, Nineveh, "the city of bloodshed" that instilled terror throughout the ancient Middle East for more than 15 centuries. (Nahum 3:1) Yet, at the height of Nineveh's power, the Bible foretold: "[God] will make Nineveh a desolate waste, a waterless region like the wilderness. And in the midst of her, droves will certainly lie stretched out, all the wild animals of a nation. Both pelican and porcupine will spend the night right among her pillar capitals. A voice will keep singing in the window. There will be devastation at the threshold; for he will certainly lay bare the very wainscoting." (Zephaniah 2:13, 14) Today, visitors see that only a mound marks

BIBLE PROPHECIES FULFILLED

PROPHECY	FULFILLMENT
Genesis 49:10	Judah made the royal tribe of Israel (1 Chronicles 5:2; Hebrews 7:14)
Zephaniah 2:13, 14	Nineveh desolated in about 632 B.C.E.
Jeremiah 25:1-11; Isaiah 39:6	Jerusalem's conquest begins 70-year desolation (2 Chronicles 36:17-21; Jeremiah 39:1-9)
Isaiah 13:1, 17-22; 44:24-28; 45:1, 2	Cyrus conquers Babylon; Jews return to homeland (2 Chronicles 36:20-23; Ezra 1:1-4; 2:1)
Daniel 8:3-8, 20-22	Medo-Persia overthrown by Alexander the Great and Grecian Empire divided
Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5:2	Jesus born of a virgin in Bethlehem (Matthew 1:18-23; 2:1-6)
Daniel 9:24-26	Anointing of Jesus as Messiah (29 C.E.) (Luke 3:1-3, 21-23)
Isaiah 9:1, 2	Jesus' enlightening ministry starts in Galilee (Matthew 4:12-23)
Isaiah 53:4, 5, 12	Death of Christ as ransom sacrifice (Matthew 20:28; 27:50)
Psalm 22:18	Casting of lots for Jesus' garments (John 19:23, 24)
Psalm 16:10; Matthew 12:40	Resurrection of Christ on the third day (Mark 16:1-6; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8)
Luke 19:41-44; 21:20-24	Jerusalem's destruction by Romans (70 C.E.)
Luke 21:10, 11; Matthew 24: 3-13; 2 Timothy 3:1-5	Unparalleled warfare, famine, earthquakes, pestilences, lawlessness, and so forth, signifying "the last days"
Matthew 24:14; Isaiah 43:10; Psalm 2:1-9	Worldwide proclamation by Jehovah's Witnesses that God's Kingdom is established and will soon conquer all opposers
Matthew 24:21-34; Revelation 7:9-17	International family of Jehovah's Witnesses worshiping God and preparing for survival of "the great tribulation"

the desolate site of ancient Nineveh. Furthermore, flocks of sheep graze there, as foretold.

In vision, God's prophet Daniel beheld a two-horned ram and a male goat with a great horn between its eyes. The goat struck down the ram, breaking its two horns. Thereafter, the goat's great horn was broken, and four horns came up in its place. (Daniel 8:1-8) The angel Gabriel explained: "The ram that you saw possessing the two horns stands for the kings of Media and Persia. And the hairy he-goat stands for the king of Greece; and as for the great horn that was between its eyes, it stands for the first king. And that one having been broken, so that there were four that finally stood up instead of it, there are four kingdoms from his nation that will stand up, but not with his power." (Daniel 8:20-22) As history has proved, the two-horned ram—the Medo-Persian Empire—was overthrown by "the king of Greece." That figurative he-goat had a "great horn" in the person of Alexander

War, famine, pestilences, and earthquakes take their toll today, but a new world of peace and happiness is on the horizon

the Great. After his death, his four generals replaced that "great horn" by establishing themselves in power in "four kingdoms."

Scores of prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures ("Old Testament") have been fulfilled in connection with Jesus Christ. Some of these were applied to him by divinely inspired writers of the Christian Greek Scriptures ("New Testament"). For instance, the Gospel writer Matthew pointed out the fulfillment of Scriptural prophecies in Jesus' birth by means of a virgin, in His having a forerunner, and in His entry into Jerusalem on the colt of an ass. (Compare Matthew 1: 18-23; 3:1-3; 21:1-9 with Isaiah 7:14; 40:3; Zechariah 9:9.) Such fulfilled prophecies help to prove that the Bible is indeed God's inspired gift.

The present fulfillment of Bible prophecy proves that we are living in "the last days." (2 Timothy 3:1-5) Wars, food shortages, pestilences, and earthquakes of unparalleled proportions are part of "the sign" of Jesus' "presence" in Kingdom power. That sign also includes the worldwide activity of over four million Witnesses of Jehovah, who are preaching the good news of the established Kingdom. (Matthew 24:3-14; Luke 21:10, 11) Bible prophecy now undergoing fulfillment also assures us that God's heavenly government under Jesus Christ will soon bring about a new world of eternal happiness for obedient mankind. —2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1-5.

The accompanying chart headed "Bible Prophecies Fulfilled" presents just a few of the hundreds of Bible prophecies that could be listed. Fulfillment of some of these was noted in the Scriptures themselves, but especially noteworthy are prophecies that are being fulfilled today.

Likely, you can see certain worldwide developments foretold in the Bible. But why not investigate further? Jehovah's Witnesses will gladly provide additional details at your request. And may your sincere quest for knowledge of the Most High and his purposes convince you that the Bible truly is God's inspired gift.

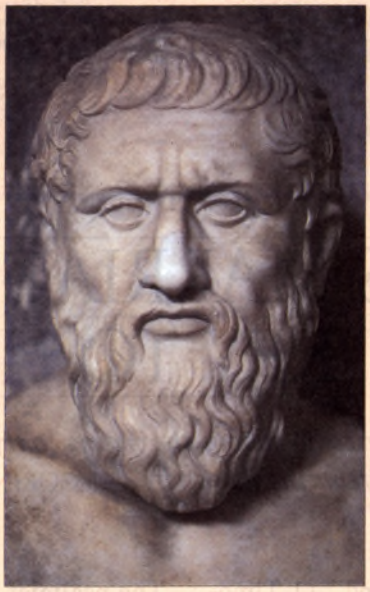
Paul Versus Plato on the Resurrection

THE apostle Paul wrote about the resurrection at 1 Corinthians 15:35-58 and 2 Corinthians 5:1-10. In doing so, did he follow the immortal-soul ideas of Plato and the Greek philosophers, or was he in harmony with the teaching of Jesus and the rest of the Scriptures?

The booklet *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Individual: St. Paul's View with Special Reference to Plato,* written in 1974 and endorsed by the archbishop of the Greek Orthodox Church of North and South America, gives a revealing answer. After discussing the nature of the resurrection in the above-mentioned scriptures and the Hellenistic influences of the time, the author reaches the following conclusion:

"Plato teaches that the soul continues in unending and eternal existence, apart from the body. The soul for Plato is inherently and intrinsically immortal . . . St. Paul neither teaches such a view nor makes any claim to do so . . .

Vatican Museum photograph



Greek philosopher Plato

"The Apostle Paul is not concerned with the immortality of the psyche or spirit as separate and distinct parts but with the resurrection of the whole complex soul-spirit body of man as the consequence of Christ's resurrection. Paul's conception of the resurrection body has nothing to do with the resuscitation of dead bodies from the grave.

"His conception of resurrection body may be better expressed as the transformation, recreation, and reconstitution, by the power of God, of the whole man's unity, of the same person, of the personality, of the psycho-somatic organism, of the true psycho-physical individual. Our future resurrection will take place not as our own natural possession, but as the royal gift of God."

Yes, immortality is not an inherent possession of any human. Rather, it is a prized and gracious gift from Jehovah through our Lord Jesus Christ to those who make up the anointed Christian congregation.—1 Corinthians 15:20, 57; Philippians 3:14.

IS MARRIAGE THE ONLY KEY TO HAPPINESS?

"She is free to be married to whom she wants, only in the Lord. But she is happier if she remains as she is."—1 CORINTHIANS 7:39, 40.

JEHOVAH is "the happy God." (1 Timothy 1:11) As the Bountiful Provider of "every good gift and every perfect present," he makes available to all his intelligent creatures—human and spirit—exactly what they need to be happy in his service. (James 1:17) For that matter, a bird in full song, a rollicking pup, or a playful dolphin all testify that Jehovah created the animals to enjoy life in their respective habitats. The psalmist even goes so far as to say poetically that "the trees of Jehovah are satisfied, the cedars of Lebanon that he planted." —Psalm 104:16.

1. How do the Scriptures describe Jehovah, and what has he done for his creatures?

2 Jesus Christ is 'the exact representation of God's very being.' (Hebrews 1:3) It is not surprising, then, that Jesus should be called "the happy and only Potentate." (1 Timothy 6:15) He provides us with a wonderful ex-

2. (a) What shows that Jesus finds happiness in doing his Father's will? (b) What reasons for happiness did Jesus' disciples have?

ample of how doing Jehovah's will can be more satisfying than food, producing sheer delight. Jesus also shows us that there can be enjoyment when acting in the fear of God, that is, with profound reverence and a wholesome dread of displeasing Him. (Psalm 40:8; Isaiah 11:3; John 4:34) When 70 disciples returned "with joy" after a Kingdom-preaching tour, Jesus himself "became overjoyed in the holy spirit." After expressing his joy to his Father in prayer, he turned to the disciples and said: "Happy are the eyes that behold the things you are beholding. For I say to you, Many prophets and kings desired to see the things you are beholding but did not see them, and to hear the things you are hearing but did not hear them."—Luke 10:17-24.

Reasons to Be Happy

[3] Should not *our* eyes be happy to behold the things we see in fulfillment of Jehovah's Word and purposes in this time of the end? Should we not be overjoyed to understand prophecies that such faithful prophets and kings as Isaiah, Daniel, and David could not comprehend? Are we not delighted to serve the happy God, Jehovah, under the leadership of the happy Potentate, our King Jesus Christ? Of course we are!

[4] If we want to remain happy in God's service, however, we must not base our prerequisites for happiness on worldly ideas. These could easily becloud our thinking because they include material wealth, a showy life-style, and the like. Any "happiness" founded on such things will be short-lived, for this world is passing away.—1 John 2:15-17.

3. What are some reasons for happiness?
4, 5. (a) To remain happy in Jehovah's service, what must we avoid? (b) What are some things that contribute to happiness, and what question does this raise?

[5] Most of Jehovah's dedicated servants realize that achieving worldly goals will not bring true happiness. Only our heavenly Father provides spiritual and material things that contribute to the genuine happiness of his servants. How thankful we are for the spiritual food he gives us through "the faithful and discreet slave"! (Matthew 24:45-47) We are also grateful for physical food and other material things we receive from God's loving hand. Then, too, there is the wonderful gift of marriage and the related joys of family life. No wonder Naomi's heartfelt wish for her widowed daughters-in-law was expressed in these words: "May Jehovah make a *gift* to you, and do you find a resting-place each one in the house of her husband." (Ruth 1:9) So marriage is a key that can unlock a door to great happiness. But is marriage the only key unlocking the gateway to a happy life? Younger ones especially need to examine seriously whether this is so.

[6] Recounting the origin of marriage, the Bible states: "God proceeded to create the man in his image, in God's image he created him; male and female he created them. Further, God blessed them and God said to them: 'Be fruitful and become many and fill the earth and subdue it.'" (Genesis 1:27, 28) By Jehovah's instituting of marriage, Adam was used to bring more human creatures into existence, thus expanding the human race. But there is much more than this to marriage.

"Only in the Lord"

[7] Since Jehovah God is the Originator of marriage, we would expect him to set standards for wedlock that would result in the

6. According to Genesis, what was the primary purpose of the marriage arrangement?
7. What marriage requirement did one faithful patriarch go to great lengths to fulfill?

happiness of his servants. In patriarchal times, marriage to those who were not worshipers of Jehovah was strongly discouraged. Abraham had his servant Eliezer swear by Jehovah that he would not take a wife for the patriarch's son Isaac from the Canaanites. Eliezer made a long journey and scrupulously followed Abraham's instructions in order to find 'the woman whom Jehovah assigned for the son of his master.' (Genesis 24:3, 44) So Isaac married Rebekah. When their son Esau chose wives from among the pagan Hittites, these women "were a source of bitterness of spirit to Isaac and Rebekah."—Genesis 26:34, 35; 27:46; 28:1, 8.

[8] Under the Law covenant, marrying men or women belonging to specified Canaanite nations was prohibited. Jehovah instructed his people: "You must form no marriage alliance with them. Your daughter you must not give to his son, and his daughter you must not take for your son. For he will turn your son from following me, and they will certainly serve other gods; and Jehovah's anger will indeed blaze against you, and he will certainly annihilate you in a hurry." —Deuteronomy 7:3, 4.

[9] It is not surprising that similar restrictions on marrying those not worshiping Jehovah should apply within the Christian congregation. The apostle Paul admonished his fellow believers: "Do not become unevenly yoked with unbelievers. For what fellowship do righteousness and lawlessness have? Or what sharing does light have with darkness? Further, what harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what portion does a faithful person have with an unbeliever?" (2 Corinthians 6:14, 15) That counsel applies in various ways and certainly is applicable to marriage. Paul's explicit instruction to all dedicated servants of Jehovah is that they should consider marrying someone "only if he is in union with the Lord."—1 Corinthians 7:39, footnote.

8. What restriction was imposed on marriage by the Law covenant, and why?
9. What counsel on marriage does the Bible give to Christians?

Unable to Marry "in the Lord"

[10] Many single Christians have chosen to follow the example of Jesus Christ by cultivating the gift of singleness. Then again, because of being unable at present to find a godly mate and thus marry "in the Lord," many loyal Christians have placed their trust in Jehovah and have remained single instead of marrying an unbeliever. God's spirit brings forth within them such fruits as joy, peace, faith, and self-control, enabling them to maintain chaste singleness. (Galatians 5:22, 23) Among those successfully meeting this test of devotion to God are quite a number of our Christian sisters, for whom we have the deepest regard. In various lands, they outnumber the brothers and therefore have a major share in the preaching work. Indeed, "Jehovah himself gives the saying; the women telling the good news are a large army." (Psalm 68:11) Actually, many of God's unmarried servants of both sexes are maintaining integrity because they 'trust in Jehovah with all their heart, and he is making their paths straight.' (Proverbs 3:5, 6) But are those who cannot presently marry "in the Lord" certain to be unhappy?

[11] Let us remember that we are Witnesses of the happy God, Jehovah, serving under the happy Potentate, Jesus Christ. So if our

10. What are many unmarried Christians doing, and what question arises?
11. Of what can Christians who remain single out of respect for Bible principles be assured?

respect for restrictions clearly laid down in the Bible should move us to remain single because of being unable to find a marriage mate "in the Lord," is it logical to think that God and Christ would leave us unhappy? Certainly not. Hence, we must conclude that it is possible to be happy as Christians while in the unmarried state. Jehovah can make us truly happy whether we are married or single.

The Key to True Happiness

[12] Marriage is not the only key to happiness for all of God's servants. Take, as an example, the angels. Before the Flood, some angels cultivated desires unnatural for spirit creatures, became dissatisfied that they could not marry, and materialized fleshly bodies in order to take women as wives. Because these angels thus "forsook their own proper dwelling place," God "has reserved [them] with eternal bonds under dense darkness for the judgment of the great day." (Jude 6; Genesis 6:1, 2) Clearly, God never arranged for the angels to marry. So marriage simply could not be the key to their happiness.

[13] Yet, the faithful angels are happy. Jehovah laid the earth's foundations "to the joyful concert of the morning stars and unanimous acclaim of the [angelic] sons of God." (Job 38:7, *The New Jerusalem Bible*) Why are the holy angels happy? Because they are in constant attendance on Jehovah God, "listening to the voice of his word" in order to carry it out. They delight in "doing his pleasure." (Psalm 103:20, 21, footnote) Yes, the happiness of the holy angels comes from serving Jehovah faithfully. That is the key to true happiness for humans too. For that matter, married anointed Christians happily serving God now will not marry when resurrected to heavenly life, but they will be happy as spirit creatures doing the divine will. Whether married or single, then, all of Jehovah's loyal servants can be happy because the true basis for happiness is faithful service to the Creator.

12. What does the case of the disobedient angels indicate as to marriage?
13. Why are the holy angels happy, and what does this indicate for all of God's servants?

"Something Better Than Sons and Daughters"

[14] Even if a loyal Christian never marries, God can ensure that one's happiness. Encouragement can be drawn from these words prophetically addressed to eunuchs in ancient Israel: "This is what Jehovah has said to the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths and that have chosen what I have delighted in and that are laying hold of my covenant: 'I will even give to them in my house and within my walls a monument and a name, something better than sons and daughters. A name to time indefinite I shall give them, one that will not be cut off.'" (Isaiah 56:4, 5) One might have expected that these individuals would be promised a wife and children to perpetuate their name. But they were promised "something better than sons and daughters"—a lasting name within Jehovah's house.

[15] If these eunuchs are taken to be a prophetic picture involving "the Israel of God," they represent anointed ones who receive a lasting place within Jehovah's spiritual house, or temple. (Galatians 6:16) Doubtless, this prophecy will have a literal application to godly eunuchs of ancient

14. What prophetic promise was given to godly eunuchs in ancient Israel, and why might this seem strange?
15. What may be said about the fulfillment of Isaiah 56:4, 5?

Israel who are resurrected. If they accept Christ's ransom sacrifice and continue to choose what Jehovah delights in, they will receive "a name to time indefinite" in God's new world. This could also apply to those of the "other sheep" in this time of the end who forgo marriage and parenthood in order to devote themselves more fully to Jehovah's service. (John 10:16) Some of them may die unmarried and childless. But if they are faithful, in the resurrection they will receive "something better than sons and daughters"—a name "that will not be cut off" in the new system of things.

Marriage Not the Only Key to Happiness

[16] Some people feel that happiness is inseparably related to marriage. It must be admitted, however, that even among Jehovah's servants today, marriage does not always bring happiness. It solves some problems but often causes others that can be harder to deal with than those experienced by single people. Paul said that marriage brings 'tribulation in the flesh.' (1 Corinthians 7:28) There are times when a married person is "anxious" and "divided." He or she often finds it difficult to be in "constant attendance upon the Lord without distraction."—1 Corinthians 7:33-35.

16. Why can it be said that marriage does not always bring happiness?

How Would You Respond?

- ☐ Why are Jehovah's servants happy?
- ☐ Why is marriage not the key to the greatest happiness?
- ☐ In the choice of a marriage mate, what is required of Jehovah's people?
- ☐ Why is it logical to believe that Christians who remain single can be happy?
- ☐ What must be admitted about marriage and happiness?

[17] Both marriage and singleness are gifts from God. (Ruth 1:9; Matthew 19:10-12) To succeed in either state, however, prayerful thought is vital. Traveling overseers report that many Witnesses are marrying too young, often becoming parents before they are ready to shoulder the resulting responsibilities. Some of these marriages break up. Other couples cope with their problems, but their marriage has not brought them happiness. As English dramatist William Congreve wrote, those who marry in haste "may repent at leisure."

[18] Circuit overseers also report that some young brothers refrain from applying for Bethel service or from volunteering for the Ministerial Training School because of the requirement to remain single for a time. But Paul gives the advice not to marry before one "is past the bloom of youth," that is, to wait until the initial surge of sexual drive has lessened. (1 Corinthians 7:36-38) The years spent living as a single adult provide a person with precious experience and insight, putting him or her in a better position to choose a marriage partner or to make the carefully considered decision to remain single.

[19] Some of us are past the bloom of youth, with its strong urge for sexual intimacy. We

17, 18. (a) What have some traveling overseers reported? (b) What advice did Paul give, and why is it beneficial to apply it?

19. How might we view matters if we do not have a real need for matrimony?

may occasionally reflect on the blessings of marriage but actually have the gift of singleness. Jehovah may see that we serve him effectively in the single state and do not have a real need for matrimony, which might require that we relinquish certain privileges in his service. If marriage is not a personal need and we are not blessed with a mate, God may have something else in store for us. Let us therefore exercise faith that he will provide what we need. The greatest happiness results from humbly accepting what appears to be God's will for us, even as Jewish brothers 'acquiesced and glorified God' upon realizing that he had granted Gentiles repentance so that they could have life.—Acts 11:1-18.

[20] So, then, marriage can be a key to happiness, though it can also open the door to problems. One thing is sure: Marriage is not the *only* way to find happiness. All things considered, it would therefore be wise, especially for young Christians, to try to make room for several years of singleness. Such years can be used well to serve Jehovah and to progress in spirituality. Regardless of age or spiritual progress, however, this fundamental point remains true for all those unreservedly dedicated to God: True happiness is found in faithful service to Jehovah.

20. (a) What counsel on singleness is here given to young Christians? (b) What fundamental point regarding happiness remains true?

TRUE HAPPINESS IN SERVING JEHOVAH

"Happy is the one who has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in Jehovah his God."—PSALM 146:5.

WHAT is happiness? Lexicographers, philosophers, and theologians have been trying to define it for centuries. But they have not provided a definition that meets with unanimous approval. The *Encyclopædia Britannica* admits: " 'Happiness' is one of the most elusive of words." Happiness apparently means different things to different people, depending upon their outlook on life.

[2] For many people happiness revolves around good health, material possessions, and pleasant companionship. Yet, there are people who have all of that but who are unhappy. For men and women dedicated to Jehovah God, the Bible provides a concept of happiness that is quite different from the general view.

1, 2. What has been said about the definition of happiness, and what does happiness mean for many people today?

A Different View of Happiness

[3] In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus Christ did not say that happiness depends on good health, material possessions, and the like. He pronounced truly happy those

3, 4. (a) Whom did Jesus pronounce happy? (b) What can be noted with regard to the happiness factors that Jesus mentioned?

Many single sisters are happily serving Jehovah as full-time ministers

"conscious of their spiritual need" and those "hungering and thirsting for righteousness." Related to these two factors needed for true happiness is Jesus' seemingly paradoxical statement: "Happy are those who mourn, since they will be comforted." (Matthew 5:3-6) Obviously, Jesus was not saying that people would automatically be happy when they lost a loved one. Rather, he was speaking of those who bemoan their sinful state and its consequences.

[4] The apostle Paul spoke of human creation groaning under sin on the basis of hope that it would be "set free from enslavement to corruption." (Romans 8:21, 22) Humans who accept Jehovah's sin-atoning provision through Christ's ransom sacrifice and who do God's will are truly comforted and made happy. (Romans 4:6-8) In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus also pronounced happy "the mild-tempered ones," "the merciful," "the pure in heart," and "the peaceable." He gave the assurance that even though persecuted, such meek ones would not lose their happiness. (Matthew 5:5-11) It is interesting to note that these elevated happiness factors place the rich and the poor on an equal footing.

The Basis for Real Happiness

[5] The source of true happiness is not found in material wealth. Wise King Solomon said: "The blessing of Jehovah—that is what makes rich, and he adds no pain with it." (Proverbs 10:22) For creatures who acknowledge Jehovah's universal sovereignty, happiness is inseparably related to God's blessing. The dedicated person who *has* and *feels* Jehovah's blessing upon him or her is truly happy. Viewed Biblically, happiness involves a sense of contentment, satisfaction, and fulfillment in Jehovah's service.

[6] True happiness is contingent upon a right relationship with Jehovah. It is based on love of God and faithfulness to him. Jehovah's dedicated servants subscribe wholeheartedly to Paul's words: "None of us, in fact, lives with regard to himself only . . . We live to Jehovah . . . We belong to Jehovah." (Romans 14:7, 8) Therefore, true happiness cannot be achieved apart from obedience to Jehovah and joyful submission to his will. Jesus said: "Happy are those hearing the word of God and keeping it!" —Luke 11:28.

Variable Happiness Factors

[7] The foregoing happiness factors might

5. What is the basis for the happiness of God's dedicated servants?
6. What is required of Jehovah's people for them to be truly happy?
7, 8. (a) How may happiness factors be classified? (b) What can be said of marriage and childbearing?

be termed "basics," or "constants," because they are valid for Jehovah's dedicated servants at all times. Additionally, there are what might be called variables, factors that may result in happiness at one time but little or none of it at another. In the patriarchal and pre-Christian periods, marriage and childbearing were considered indispensable for happiness. This is reflected in Rachel's poignant appeal to Jacob: "Give me children or otherwise I shall be a dead woman." (Genesis 30:1) This attitude toward childbearing suited Jehovah's purpose for that period.—Genesis 13:14-16; 22:17.

[8] Marriage and childbearing were considered to be God-given blessings among Jehovah's people of early times. However, distress was associated with these and other circumstances during calamitous periods in their history. (Compare Psalms 127, 128 with Jeremiah 6:12; 11:22; Lamentations 2: 19; 4:4, 5.) It is, therefore, evident that marriage and childbearing are not permanent happiness-factors.

Happiness Without Marriage in the Past

[9] Many of God's servants have found true happiness without marriage. Out of respect for her father's vow, Jephthah's daughter remained single. For a time she and her girl companions wept over her virginity. But what joy she had serving full-time at Jehovah's house, perhaps among "the women servants who did organized service at the entrance of the tent of meeting"! (Exodus 38:8) For this, she received yearly commendation.—Judges 11:37-40.

[10] Because of the dramatic times in which the prophet Jeremiah lived, God required that he refrain from marrying and raising children. (Jeremiah 16:1-4) But Jeremiah experienced the truthfulness of God's words: "Blessed is the able-bodied man who puts his trust in Jehovah, and whose confidence Jehovah has become." (Jeremiah 17:7) Throughout more than 40 years of prophetic service, Jeremiah served God faithfully as a single man. As far as we know, he never did get married and have children. Yet, who can doubt that Jeremiah was happy, like the faithful Jewish remnant that 'became radiant over the goodness of Jehovah'?—Jeremiah 31:12.

[11] Many other people have served Jehovah joyfully without a marriage mate. They were either single, widows, or widowers. Among them were the prophetess Anna; probably Dorcas, or Tabitha; the apostle Paul; and the greatest example of all—Jesus Christ.

Single but Happy Today

[12] Today, thousands of Jehovah's Witnesses are faithfully serving God without a marriage partner. Some have been able to accept Jesus' invitation: "Let him that can make room for [the gift of singleness] make room for it." They have done this "on account of the kingdom of the heavens." (Matthew 19:11, 12) That is, they have put their God-given freedom to good use by devoting more time and energy to promoting Kingdom interests. Many of them are serving as pioneers, missionaries, or members of the Bethel family at the Watch Tower Society's world headquarters or at one of its branches.

9. Why did Jephthah's daughter receive yearly commendation?
10. What did Jehovah require of Jeremiah, and does it appear that he led an unhappy life as a result?
11. What are some Scriptural examples of Jehovah's faithful servants who were happy although they did not have a marriage mate?
12. For what have some of Jehovah's happy, dedicated servants made room today, and why?

Serving Jehovah's interests is the primary source of happiness

[13] One dear elderly sister gave her life story the telltale title "Single and Happy as a Pioneer." (*The Watchtower,* May 1, 1985, pages 23-6) Another single sister who spent over 50 years serving at Bethel stated: "I am fully satisfied with my life and my work. I am busier now than ever before in a work that I dearly love. I have no regrets. I would make the same decision again."—*The Watchtower,* June 15, 1982, page 15.

[14] Notice that word "decision." Paul wrote: "If anyone stands settled in his heart, having no necessity, but has authority over his own will *and has made this decision in his own heart,* to keep his own virginity, he will do well. Consequently he also that gives his virginity in marriage does well, but he that does not give it in marriage will do better." (1 Corinthians 7: 37, 38) Why "better"? Paul explained: "I want you to be free from anxiety. The unmarried man is anxious for the things of the Lord, how he may gain the Lord's approval. . . . Further, the unmarried woman, and the virgin, is anxious for the things of the Lord . . . But this I am saying for your personal advantage, . . . to move you to that which is becoming and that which means constant attendance upon the Lord without distraction."—1 Corinthians 7:32-35.

[15] Is "constant attendance upon the Lord without distraction" with a view to 'gaining the Lord's approval' happiness related? Apparently Paul thought so. Speaking of a Christian widow, he said: "She is free to be married to whom she wants, only in the Lord. But *she is happier* if she remains as she is, according to my opinion. I certainly think I also have God's spirit."—1 Corinthians 7:39, 40.

13. What examples show that a Christian can be single and happy?

14, 15. (a) According to the apostle Paul, what is necessary in order to remain single? (b) Why does Paul say that the single person does "better" and "is happier"?

Advantages of the Unmarried State

[16] Whether a Christian is single by personal decision or by force of circumstances, the unmarried state brings with it many personal advantages. Single persons generally have more time to study God's Word and meditate on it. If they take advantage of this circumstance, their spirituality is deepened. Having no marriage mate with whom to share their problems, many learn to lean more heavily on Jehovah and to seek his direction in all things. (Psalm 37:5) This helps to bring about a closer relationship with Jehovah.

16. What are some advantages enjoyed by unmarried Witnesses of Jehovah?

[17] Unmarried Christians have opportunities for an enlarged field of service to Jehovah's praise. The special training now being given at the Ministerial Training School is limited to single brothers or widowers. Single sisters too are freer to reach out for privileges in God's service. The elderly sister mentioned earlier volunteered to serve in an African country when, to quote her, she was "a somewhat fragile woman over 50 years of age." And she stayed there, even during a ban, when all the missionaries were expelled. She is still serving there as a pioneer, although she is now over 80 years of age. Is she happy? In her life story she wrote: "I was able to use the extra freedom and mobility that singleness affords to keep busy in the ministry, and this has brought me great happiness. . . . Over the years my relationship with Jehovah has deepened. As a single woman in an African country, I have seen him as a Protector."

[18] Noteworthy, too, are the words of a brother who served at the Watch Tower Society's headquarters for decades. He was happy, though he never got married and though he had a heavenly hope with no prospect of marriage. At the age of 79, he wrote: "Every day I ask our dear heavenly Father in prayer for help and wisdom to keep myself spiritually as well as physically healthy and strong so that I can keep on doing his holy will. During these past forty-nine years in Jehovah's service I have indeed enjoyed a happy, rewarding and blessed way of life. And with Jehovah's undeserved kindness I am looking forward to continued service to his honor and glory and to the blessing of his people. . . . [The] joy of Jehovah helps me to keep up the good fight of faith, looking forward to the time when Jehovah's enemies are no more and all the earth is filled with his glory."—Numbers 14:21; Nehemiah 8:10; *The Watchtower,* November 15, 1968, pages 699-702.

17, 18. (a) What opportunities for an enlarged field of service are available for Jehovah's servants who are unmarried? (b) How have certain unmarried servants of Jehovah described their happiness?

On What Does True Happiness Depend?

[19] Our precious relationship with Jehovah, his approval, and his blessing—these are the factors that will bring us true happiness throughout eternity. With this proper outlook on what produces genuine happiness, even married servants of Jehovah realize that their marriage is not the most important thing in their lives. They heed the apostle Paul's counsel: "This I say, brothers, the time left is reduced. Henceforth let those who have wives be as though they had none." (1 Corinthians 7:29) This does not mean neglecting their wives. Mature Christian husbands put Jehovah's service first, and so do their godly, loving, and supportive wives, some even serving full-time as companions of their husbands.—Proverbs 31:10-12, 28; Matthew 6:33.

[20] Married brothers who are traveling overseers, Bethel volunteers, congregation elders—indeed, all married Christians who put Kingdom interests first—do not 'use the world to the full'; they work to fit their marriage privileges into their dedicated life of service to Jehovah. (1 Corinthians 7:31) Yet, they are happy. Why? Because the overriding reason for their happiness is not their marriage but their service to Jehovah. And many faithful husbands and wives

19. Upon what will our happiness always depend?
20. What proper attitude do many Christians have toward their marriage privileges?

—yes, and also their children—are happy to have it so.

[21] The prophet Jeremiah wrote: "This is what Jehovah has said: 'Let not the wise man brag about himself because of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man brag about himself because of his mightiness. Let not the rich man brag about himself because of his riches. But let the one bragging about himself brag about himself because of this very thing, the having of insight and the having of knowledge of me, that I am Jehovah, the One exercising loving-kindness, justice and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I do take delight,' is the utterance of Jehovah."—Jeremiah 9: 23, 24.

[22] Whether we are single or married, our greatest source of happiness should be our knowledge of Jehovah and the conviction that we have his blessing because we are doing his will. We are also happy to have insight into what constitutes the true scale of values, the things in which Jehovah takes delight. Much-married King Solomon did not consider marriage the only key to happiness. He said: "Happy is the man that has found wisdom, and the man that gets discernment, for having it as gain is better than having silver as gain and having it as produce than gold itself. It is more precious than corals, and all other delights of yours cannot be made equal to it. Length of days is in its right hand; in its left hand there are riches and glory. Its ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its roadways are peace. It is a tree of life to those taking hold of it, and those keeping fast hold of it are to be called happy."—Proverbs 3:13-18.

21, 22. (a) On the basis of Jeremiah 9:23, 24, what should fill us with happiness? (b) What happiness factors are mentioned at Proverbs 3: 13-18?

[23] May those of us who are married find eternal joy in doing the divine will. And may our dear brothers and sisters who are single by choice or by force of circumstances endure all their trials and find happiness and contentment in serving Jehovah now and forever. (Luke 18:29, 30; 2 Peter 3: 11-13) In God's coming system of things, "scrolls" will be opened. (Revelation 20:12) These will contain exciting new commandments and regulations contributing to the happiness of obedient humankind.

[24] Surely, we can feel confident that our "happy God" has in store for us wonderfully good things that will result in our complete happiness. (1 Timothy 1:11) God will continue to 'open his hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.' (Psalm 145:16) No wonder there is and always will be true happiness in serving Jehovah.

23, 24. Why can we be sure that all of Jehovah's faithful servants will be happy in the new system of things?

How Would You Respond?

- ☐ What is the basis for the happiness of Jehovah's dedicated servants?
- ☐ In Bible times, who were some of Jehovah's happy unmarried servants?
- ☐ Why did Paul recommend singleness, and how have some Christians found this to be a happy life?
- ☐ Upon what will our happiness always depend?
- ☐ Why should we be confident that all faithful ones in the new system of things will be happy?

"Put On the Complete Suit of Armor From God"

CHRISTIANS wearing armor? Why should they take up such warlike equipment? Are they not lovers of peace? (2 Timothy 2:24) Yes, they are. Nevertheless, all true Christians are engaged in a fight—one in which they strive, not to kill, but to conquer.

Had Satan not rebelled, such a fight would never have been necessary. But he did rebel, and he misled Adam and Eve into joining his rebellion. Since then the world system that has developed lies in the power of "the wicked one," Satan the Devil. (1 John 5:19) Those who submit to the rightful Sovereign, Jehovah, must resist the influence of the world and its ruler. They must fight for their spiritual lives. To this end, Christians are exhorted: "Put on the complete suit of armor from God that you may be able to stand firm against the machinations of the Devil."—Ephesians 6:11.

The Suit of Armor

Notice that we need "the *complete* suit of armor from God" if we are to be properly protected. Let us, then, look at each part of this armor as described by the apostle Paul and make an honest appraisal of ourselves to determine whether we are fully equipped for spiritual warfare.—Ephesians 6:14-17.

"Stand firm, therefore, with your loins girded about with truth." (Ephesians 6:14a) In Bible times soldiers wore a leather belt up to six inches wide. This girdle helped to protect the loins. When a soldier tightened his girdle, this signified his readiness for battle.

How fitting, then, that divine truth is likened to a soldier's girdle! This well illustrates that we should keep God's Word of truth very close to us, as if girded by it. We should reflect deeply on the thought content of God's Word. This will protect us from being misled by lies and deceptions. Moreover, the sayings of Jehovah's mouth will support and strengthen us spiritually and bolster our integrity.

"Having on the breastplate of righteousness." (Ephesians 6:14b) A soldier's breastplate protected a vital physical organ—the heart. In our God-given spiritual armor, then, righteousness protects our heart. Scripturally, the heart is a fitting symbol of what we are inside—our feelings, thoughts, and desires. Since the Bible also says that the heart is inclined to badness, it is vital to cultivate a determination to hold on to Jehovah's standard of righteousness. (Jeremiah 17:9) Obedience to God must not be a hypocritical outward show; it must come from within. This requires that we develop a strong love of righteousness and an equally strong hatred of lawlessness. (Psalm 45:7) Thus our heart will be protected.

"With your feet shod with the equipment of the good news of peace." (Ephesians 6:15) Are your feet shod in this way? Do they regularly take you into the field ministry to declare the good news? Are you striving to improve the quality of your preaching and teaching activities? True, certain territories are relatively unresponsive. Individuals may be indifferent, apathetic, or antagonistic. Our preaching may even bring

persecution upon us. But by persevering, Christians develop endurance, a quality that provides protection against Satan's attacks. Though persecuted, Paul was a zealous preacher, and we are encouraged to 'become imitators of him, even as he was of Christ.'—1 Corinthians 11:1.

Keeping busy in Kingdom-preaching activity strengthens our confidence in the good news. Further, it allows Jehovah's spirit to work through us in the accomplishment of his will. In fact, such activity makes us fellow workers with the angels—even with Jehovah God himself. (1 Corinthians 3:9; Revelation 14:6) And having 'plenty to do in the Lord's work' makes us "steadfast, unmovable." (1 Corinthians 15:58) What wonderful protection this provides!

"Take up the large shield of faith." (Ephesians 6:16) With a large shield, a soldier of ancient times protected himself from spears and arrows. If he failed to use a shield, he could be seriously wounded or even killed. Christians face even more deadly weapons—"the wicked one's burning missiles." These include all the resources Satan brings to bear in order to weaken our faith and kill us spiritually. They include persecution, lies, deceptive worldly philosophies, materialistic attractions, and the temptation to engage in immorality. To protect us against all of these, we need a *large* shield. No part of us can safely be left vulnerable.

Abraham and his wife, Sarah, had strong faith. When beyond the age of childbearing, they put faith in God's promise that a seed would be born to them. Later, Abraham showed remarkable faith when he obeyed the call to sacrifice Isaac, his only son by beloved Sarah. Jehovah stayed Abraham's hand and provided a substitute sacrifice. But Abraham was ready to obey. Why? Because he had absolute faith that Jehovah could resurrect his son and fulfill the promises made about him.—Romans 4:16-21; Hebrews 11:11, 12, 17-19.

Moses also had the kind of faith we need. He rejected the wealth of Egypt, choosing rather to suffer oppression with God's people. Why? Because he had faith that Jehovah exists and would bring salvation to the Israelites. So strong was Moses' faith that "he continued steadfast as seeing the One who is invisible."—Hebrews 11:6, 24-27.

Do we have comparable faith in Jehovah? Is our relationship with Jehovah so close that it is almost as if we can see him? Are we willing to make any sacrifice or endure any hardship to maintain our relationship with God? Do we have full faith in Jehovah? (Hebrews 11:1) If so, Satan's burning missiles will not force their way through our shield of faith.

"Accept the helmet of salvation." (Ephesians 6:17a) A soldier's helmet protected his head and thus the brain—the organ of neural coordination and of thought. The Christian hope of salvation is likened to a helmet because it protects the mind. A Christian's mind has been made new through accurate knowledge, but it still belongs to a weak and imperfect individual. (Romans 7:18; 12:2) If we allow the mind to feed on faith-destroying unclean thinking produced by the spirit of this world, our confidence in salvation will fade and may finally die. On the other hand, if we constantly feed our mind on the strengthening words of God, our hope will remain bright and clear. Do you keep your helmet of salvation tightly fitted?

"The sword of the spirit, that is, God's word." (Ephesians 6:17b) The saying that the best defense is a good offense is true in

Christian warfare. As our feet, shod with the good news of peace, carry us among the unbelievers, we are not left weaponless. God's Word, the Bible, acts as a powerful sword to slash away at spiritual lies and misconceptions and to help righthearted individuals to find spiritual freedom.—John 8:31, 32.

Jesus showed the power of this weapon when, in effect, he engaged Satan the Devil in combat. When tempted in the wilderness, Jesus defended himself against three satanic assaults by effectively using God's Word and saying: "It is written." (Matthew 4:1-11) If we learn to use this sword skillfully, we can help meek ones to come out from under Satan's power. Then, too, congregation elders use God's Word to protect the flock from individuals who try to subvert the faith of weaker ones.—Acts 20:28-30.

A soldier's skill with the sword does not come easily. Training and long, dedicated practice are required to use it deftly. Similarly, in spiritual warfare it takes much study and regular practice in the ministry to become a skillful user of God's Word. By all means, let us put forth the effort needed to be skilled spiritual swordsmen, capable of "handling the word of the truth aright." —2 Timothy 2:15.

Carry On Prayer, Stand Firm

All the pieces of our spiritual armor are vital for maintaining integrity to God. But how can we keep this armor on? Regularly studying the Bible, preparing in advance for Christian meetings, and then listening carefully and actively participating in them will help us to keep on our armor. (2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 10:24, 25) Regular and zealous field ministry together with fine Christian association will also help to keep our offensive and defensive spiritual armor in good condition.—Proverbs 13:20; Romans 15:15, 16; 1 Corinthians 15:33.

Developing a right mental attitude is also important. We must refuse to allow the attractions of this world to distract us. Rather, let us cultivate a 'simple eye.' (Matthew 6:19-24) In imitation of Jesus Christ, we must also learn to love righteousness and hate lawlessness. (Hebrews 1:9) All these things help us to keep on our God-given spiritual armor.

After discussing each piece of spiritual armor, Paul concludes by saying: "With every form of prayer and supplication . . . carry on prayer on every occasion in spirit. And to that end keep awake with all constancy and with supplication in behalf of all the holy ones." (Ephesians 6:18) Loyal soldiers keep in touch with army headquarters and obey orders. As Christian soldiers, we need to keep in constant touch with our Sovereign, Jehovah God, through his great "commander to the national groups," Jesus Christ. (Isaiah 55:4) This can be done, not by means of superficial prayer, but through heartfelt supplication that reflects a closeness and deep devotion to Jehovah. By regularly communicating with Jehovah, we receive strength each day to sustain us in the fight.

Jesus said: "I have conquered the world." (John 16:33) Jehovah also wants us to be victorious. As the apostle Paul's death drew near, he could say: "I have fought the fine fight, I have run the course to the finish, I have observed the faith." (2 Timothy 4:7) May we be able to make a similar expression about our part in the conflict. If we really desire this, let us "stand firm against the machinations of the Devil" by keeping on the complete suit of armor from God. —Ephesians 6:11.

The Goajiro Indians Respond Favorably

SITTING in the shade of a huge tree and dressed in a floor-length black robe, the elderly lady seemed to be from another world. She also spoke in a language strange to our ears. "Come back again," she said enthusiastically. Pointing to another 50 people of her race sitting around her, she added: "All of us want you to come back again. Come every week!"

Who were these people? Why were they so anxious to have us return, although they had never met us before? Allow us to tell you about a day we spent among the Goajiro Indians inhabiting La Guajira Peninsula in northeastern Colombia and adjacent northwestern Venezuela.

First Impressions

Starting off from Venezuela's capital city, Caracas, our first stop was Maracaibo. As we drove into town, we noticed three young women walking along the road in long, colorful robes. Their features were different from the average Venezuelan—high cheekbones, brown skin, straight black hair. Noting their easy, graceful walk, we were intrigued by our first glimpse of Goajiro Indians.

The day of our trip to La Guajira Peninsula dawned clear and still. Before the morning sun got too hot, 50 of us boarded a bus, excited at having a share in the special nationwide campaign to take the Bible's message to remote areas here in Venezuela. We were headed for the town of Paraguachón, on the border with Colombia.

Leaving the city of Maracaibo behind, we passed through many small towns and villages, each with a market and some stalls selling woven sandals and the long, colorful robes called mantas. Every village had a neat, central plaza and a church in pastel colors, giving the whole scene a pleasant look. All the people had Indian features. Although they looked so different to us, we had to remind ourselves that these were some of the original Venezuelans.

In Search of Houses

Finally we arrived at our destination. Our bus pulled over to the side of the road and parked by a low wall in the shade of a tree with an enormous spread. On the other side of the wall was the local village school—closed because it was Sunday.

Splitting into two groups, we went in opposite directions looking for houses. We were to invite everyone to a Bible talk to be given in the Goajiro language at three o'clock that afternoon in the school yard. Evelinda, a native Goajiro Indian, was our companion. Hopefully, this would make us more acceptable, for although we could speak Spanish, we knew nothing of the Goajiro language.

Once out of the village, we had a lot of walking to do be-

tween houses. As we walked down a long, straight road with heavy undergrowth on both sides, a small boy of about ten fell in step beside us and stared at us with open curiosity. Evelinda smiled at him and explained in Goajiro the purpose of our visit to the area. His name was Omar, and he scampered off after we invited him to the talk.

Branching off the road, we followed a dirt track still damp from the recent rains. We learned that these were smuggler tracks between Colombia and Venezuela. The air was heavy with the aroma of lush vegetation. Though the humid heat was a little oppressive, it did not dampen our enthusiasm. In any case, all discomfort was forgotten as the path through dense, tropical greenery suddenly opened onto a large clearing—a typical Goajiro homestead.

Face-to-Face With the Goajiro

About a dozen goats, with beautiful white, black, and tan markings, lay in the shade, chewing contentedly. Lying in a hammock stretched between two trees, a woman was feeding her baby. A couple of tots played nearby. She was just outside a stick-and-wire fence surrounding a mud-and-cane house with a thatched roof. There were a few open sheds in the area. One was obviously the kitchen, where a wood fire was burning on the ground among some large cauldronlike pots. Goatskins were hanging nearby to dry.

When he saw us approach, a man standing by the gate ran forward and placed two stools for us near the woman in the hammock. Evelinda greeted the man and the woman in their language and explained the Scriptural hope for the future using the illustrated brochure *Enjoy Life on Earth Forever!* The peaceful conditions in the area told us that international crises or the increase in inner-city muggings would not be appropriate themes here. One Witness in the group had explained that since the Goajiro Indians are somewhat reserved by nature, it is important to show warmth and genuine personal interest at the outset. "We often ask about the health of the family, about the harvest, if there has been rain recently, and so on," she said. "This opens up the way for us to tell them about God's Kingdom and to show them that Jehovah will soon remove all suffering and Satan the Devil, of whom they are especially afraid."

As Evelinda spoke, her listeners expressed agreement, and soon we were joined by another woman

Lives Enriched by Bible Truth

Iris and Margarita, two Goajiro teenagers, were delighted to see the brochure *Enjoy Life on Earth Forever!* But they had a problem. They did not know how to read. The Witness who called offered to help them by means of the booklet *Learn to Read and Write*. Soon, the girls were thrilled to be able to write and correctly pronounce the name Jehovah.

As they progressed, they marveled at the wonderful hope held out in the Bible. They were particularly touched by the promise that all mankind will enjoy freedom. "Life here is very sad for us teenagers," they explained. "We are usually married off at a very early age, and rape is a constant danger."

A highlight for Iris and Margarita was their attending a circuit assembly in Maracaibo. Their faces reflected the joy they felt in their hearts, especially during the singing of the songs. They were always eagerly waiting at the door when the Witness came for their Bible study, and they never missed a public talk held in their village. These young girls feel that their lives truly have been enriched by a knowledge of Jehovah God and his purpose.

and several children. We had learned earlier that Goajiro law permits a man to have more than one wife. Could that be the case here? This made us think of Yenny, an attractive 21-year-old Goajiro living in Maracaibo. A wealthy Goajiro man offered a good bride-price for her. But her parents, who are not Jehovah's Witnesses, were divided. Though her mother agreed to the match, Yenny's father said no. The suitor was already married to Yenny's sister!

When Evelinda finished her presentation, the man obtained a brochure. The woman standing behind him also asked for one, and we were happy to oblige. By then the rest of our friends had passed us by. So we invited the family to the afternoon talk and left, not wanting to get lost in this unfamiliar countryside.

One Witness in the group related what had happened to him. A man in a hammock listened attentively as his wife fetched some refreshments—two glasses of chicha, made of ground corn. Politely, our brother accepted and drank it. Later, his Goajiro companion, Magaly, explained how the drink was made. Usually, the corn was ground with the teeth! She could not help bursting out in laughter as she watched him turn pale.

Another Indian gentleman, visibly impressed by our brother's effort to reach his home with the Bible's message, swung down out of his hammock. Donning a shirt, he personally led them to a hidden settlement that had been overlooked.

Passing through another clearing where some of our friends were conversing with the adults of the family, we saw a group of small, naked children with distended bellies standing quietly under a tree. We learned that this condition was due to a combination of malnutrition and parasites. Many of these people have no running water and no electricity. This, of course, means no refrigerators, fans, or lights.

An Unexpected Turnout

The morning had gone by very quickly. As we made our way back to the bus to eat our lunch, we wondered how many of those invited would come to the afternoon Bible talk.

At 2:45 p.m., we wondered if our busload would be the only audience for our Goajiro

brother, who had prepared a 45-minute talk in the local language. But no! The first little family came shyly into the school yard. They must have been astonished as everyone made them feel welcome. In the next few minutes, many more arrived, some obviously having walked a long way. The family that lived in the clearing with the dozen goats was there too! How different the lady in the hammock looked in her smart, black manta! Even little Omar, to whom we spoke on the road, had come, apparently all by himself. As others arrived, the one long, concrete step in the school yard that served as a bench filled up. At that our friendly bus driver started to pull seats out of the bus for people to sit on during the talk.

A total of 55 Goajiro Indians sat and listened as Eduardo gave the Bible talk. They did not sit in complete silence, though. If they agreed with a point the speaker made, they hummed or grunted their approval. When he spoke about the coming end of wickedness, the elderly lady mentioned at the outset joined in. "Yes, there is a lot of wickedness," she said, loud enough for all to hear. "In fact, there are some wicked people sitting here right now. So I hope they are listening!" Brother Eduardo tactfully acknowledged the comment and continued with his talk.

After the talk was over, one of our group took a photograph. The Goajiro liked that and asked if they should hold up their *Enjoy Life* brochures for the next picture. Some then gradually departed, but about half stayed and watched us climb aboard the bus. They made us promise to return, then stood and waved until the bus was out of sight.

As we drove away, we could not help but feel that it had been a privilege to take the good news of God's Kingdom to these people. In many cases they had heard it for the very first time. Witnesses in Maracaibo were already talking about their next visit. Would there be a sequel to this story?

A Successful Sequel

The brothers returned two weeks later. Quantities of Bible literature were placed, return visits were made on interested ones, and home Bible studies were started. Moreover, 79 Indians attended the second open-air public meeting. On that occasion the brothers explained that they would be returning in three weeks instead of two because of a circuit assembly. The Indians were alarmed. "We might die before then!" said one of them. They asked what a circuit assembly was. It sounded so good that they decided they wanted to be there too! Arrangements were made, and 34 of them were able to attend the assembly in Maracaibo, where Goajiro-speaking brothers helped them to understand the Spanish program.

The will of Jehovah is that "all sorts of men should . . . come to an accurate knowledge of truth." (1 Timothy 2:3, 4) What a joy to see such a favorable response among these truth-seeking Indians on La Guajira Peninsula!

In Our Next Issue

How Faith Can Help the Sick

Make Wise Use of Your Christian Freedom

Jehovah—Your Acquaintance or Your Friend?

Jehovah Cared for Us Under Ban

Part 3

IT WAS March 14, 1990. On that momentous day, I was among those present when a high government official at the Ministry for Religious Affairs in East Berlin handed over the document bestowing legal status on Jehovah's Witnesses in what was then called the German Democratic Republic, or East Germany. During the proceedings that day, I thought back to when I became a Witness and reflected on the difficult times we had experienced.

In the mid-1950's, when Margarete, a workmate who was a Witness, first spoke to me about her Bible-based beliefs, the persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses in East Germany was intense. Soon thereafter she left to work elsewhere, and I began to study the Bible with another Witness. I was baptized in 1956, and Margarete and I were married that same year. We were associated with the Lichtenberg Congregation in Berlin. It had about 60 Kingdom publishers sharing in the preaching work.

Two years after my baptism, government officials called at the home of the one taking the lead in our congregation. They intended to arrest him, but he was at work in West Berlin. His family was able to notify him to remain there, and some months later they joined him in the West. Even though I was only 24 years old, I was then given heavy responsibilities in the congregation. I am thankful that Jehovah provides the wisdom and strength needed to care for such duties. —2 Corinthians 4:7.

Providing Spiritual Food

When the Berlin Wall was erected in August 1961, Jehovah's Witnesses in the East suddenly became isolated from their brothers in the West. Thus began a period when we made copies of our literature, first by typewriter, then by a series of duplicating machines. Starting in 1963, I spent two years building a hideaway in our home to do this printing. After working all day as a toolmaker, I spent nights producing copies of *The Watchtower* with the help of a couple of other brothers. The authorities were bent on penetrating our printing organization, but Jehovah helped us so that our food, as we called it, appeared on time.

Producing sufficient copies of our magazines required paper in large quantities, and obtaining these amounts was not easy. If we had regularly bought paper in bulk, this would have attracted the attention of the authorities. We therefore had individual Witnesses purchase paper in small amounts and bring it to our group Bible study. From there it was taken to where we produced the magazines. Other Witnesses then distributed the finished magazines.

Since the officials suspected that I was involved in printing literature, they kept a close watch on me. Late in 1965, I noticed them following me more than usual and sensed that they were planning something. Suddenly, they struck early one morning.

A Close Call

I was on my way to work that winter morning. It was before dawn, and I braced myself against the biting cold. While walking along, I spotted four heads above the hedges. The men turned the corner and headed along the path in my direction. To my horror I recognized them as government officials. What was I to do?

Deep snow had been shoveled aside to leave a narrow pathway. I kept walking. Putting my head down, I pressed on with my eyes fixed on the ground. I whispered a quick prayer. The men came nearer and nearer. Had they recognized me? As we shuffled past one another on the cramped pathway, I could hardly believe what was happening. I kept walking faster and faster. "Hey," one of them yelled, "that's him. Stop!"

I ran for all I was worth. Speeding around the corner, I bounded over a neighbor's fence and into my own backyard. Hurtling inside the house, I locked and bolted the door. "Everyone out of bed!" I bellowed. "They're here to get me."

Margarete was downstairs in a flash and took up a position at the door. In no time I was in the cellar stoking up the stove. I snatched all the congregation records in my possession and fed them to the flames.

"Open up!" the men thundered. "Open the door! This is the public prosecutor."

Margarete stood her ground as I burned everything beyond recognition. Then I joined Margarete and nodded for her to open the door. The men burst in.

"Why did you run away?" they asked.

Soon reinforcements arrived, and the whole house was searched. My main concern was the hideaway where our printing machine and 40,000 sheets of paper were located. But the hidden entrance remained undetected. Though the interrogations went on for hours, Jehovah helped me to keep calm. That experience drew us closer to our loving heavenly Father and strengthened us to endure.

In Prison but Free

In the late 1960's, I was notified to report for military duty. Since I could not conscientiously serve, I was forced to spend seven months in custody and in a labor camp. There were 15 Witnesses in the camp at Cottbus, southeast of Berlin. All of us were there because of our Christian neutrality. (Isaiah 2:2-4; John 17:16) Our workdays were long and the labor hard. We got up at 4:15 a.m. and were taken outside the camp to work on the railroad tracks. While imprisoned, however, we had opportunities to tell others about Jehovah's Kingdom.

For example, two fortune-tellers were with us in Cottbus. One day I heard that the younger one desperately wanted to speak with me. What could he want? He poured out his heart. His grandmother had been a fortune-teller, and he had developed similar powers after reading her books. Although this man so much wanted to get free from the powers that dominated him, he was afraid of reprisals. He cried and cried. But what did all of this have to do with me?

In the course of our conversation, he explained that his ability to tell the future was impaired when he was in the company of Jehovah's Witnesses. I explained that there are both bad spirits, or demons, and good ones, or righteous angels. Using the example of those who became Christians in

ancient Ephesus, I emphasized the need to dispose of all items related to fortune-telling or any other spiritistic practice. (Acts 19: 17-20) "Then contact the Witnesses," I told him. "There are Witnesses living everywhere."

The young man left the camp a few days later, and I heard nothing more of him. But the experience with that terrified and inconsolable man who yearned for freedom deepened my love for Jehovah. We 15 Witnesses were in the camp for our faith, but we were free in a spiritual way. That young man had been set free from prison, but he was still enslaved to a "god" who terrified him. (2 Corinthians 4:4) How we Witnesses should cherish our spiritual freedom!

Our Children Tested

Not only did adults have to stand firm for their Bible-based convictions but so did young people. They were pressured to compromise both in school and at work. All of our four children had to take a stand for their beliefs.

A flag-salute ceremony was held in school every Monday. The children filed into the yard, sang a song, and gave the so-called Thälmann salute as the flag was hoisted. Ernst Thälmann was a German Communist murdered by the Nazi SS in 1944. After the second world war, Thälmann became a hero in East Germany. Because of our Bible-based conviction that sacred service should be directed only to Jehovah God, my wife and I instructed our children to stand respectfully during such ceremonies without participating.

Schoolchildren were also taught Communistic songs. Margarete and I went to our children's school and explained why they would not sing such political songs. We said, though, that they would be willing to learn songs of another nature. Thus, at an early age, our children learned to stand firm and be different from their peers.

Toward the end of the 1970's, our eldest daughter wanted to serve an apprenticeship in an office. However, each apprentice was first required to undergo 14 days of premilitary training. Since Renate's conscience would not allow her to participate in this, she took a bold stand and was finally absolved of responsibility to receive such training.

During her apprenticeship, Renate went to a class in which she was called upon to attend shooting practice. "Renate, you are also coming to shooting practice," said the teacher. He was indifferent to her objections. "You need not shoot," he promised. "You can take care of refreshments."

That evening, we talked things over as a family. We felt that Renate's presence at shooting practice was wrong, even if she did not directly participate. Strengthened by the discussion with us and by prayer, she did not let herself be intimidated. What an encouragement for us to see our young daughter take a stand for righteous principles!

Increasing Our Public Preaching Activities

When opposition to our work eased in the late 1970's, large supplies of our Christian publications began to be brought from the West. Though this was dangerous work, courageous brothers volunteered to do it. We greatly appreciated these increased literature supplies and the efforts of those who made them possible. When persecution was severe during the early years of the ban, house-to-house preaching activity was a real challenge. In fact, fear of reprisal led some to refrain from it. But in time our public preaching work increased dramatically. In the 1960's, only about 25 percent of the Kingdom publishers were participating in

the house-to-house service regularly. However, the number regularly sharing in that feature of the ministry had risen to 66 percent by the late 1980's! By then the authorities paid less attention to our public preaching activity.

On one occasion a brother I was working with in the ministry brought his young daughter along. Warmed by the girl's presence, an elderly lady we spoke with invited us into her home. She appreciated our Scriptural presentation and agreed that we should call again. I later turned the call over to my wife, who promptly started a home Bible study with the woman. Despite advanced age and failing health, this lady became our sister and continues active in Jehovah's service.

Adjustments as Freedom Neared

Jehovah prepared us for the time when we would enjoy greater freedom. To illustrate: Shortly before the ban was lifted, we were advised to change the way we addressed one another at meetings. For security reasons, we had called one another only by our first names. Many who had known one another for years did not know a fellow believer's last name. In preparation for welcoming many more interested ones to our meetings, however, we were encouraged to refer to one another by family names. To some this seemed impersonal, but those who followed the advice later adjusted more easily when we obtained our freedom.

Horst and Margarete Schleussner at the Society's premises in East Berlin

We were also encouraged to start our meetings with a song. In this way we grew accustomed to the procedure followed by congregations elsewhere. Another adjustment was in the size of our study groups. They gradually increased from four persons in the 1950's to eight. Later they were increased to 10 and finally to 12. Additionally, a study was made to ensure that the meeting place for each congregation was centrally located for the majority of Witnesses.

At times we were able to see the wisdom of a suggested adjustment only after it had been made. How often Jehovah showed himself to be a wise and considerate Father! Gradually, he brought us into line with the rest of his earthly organization, and we felt more and more a part of the worldwide brotherhood of his people. Surely, Jehovah God had lovingly protected his people throughout the nearly 40 years that they worked under ban in East Germany. How we now rejoice to have legal status!

Today, there are 22,000 or more Witnesses of Jehovah in what was formerly East Germany. They stand as a testimony to the wise guidance and loving care of Jehovah God. His support during the years we were under ban shows that he can master any situation. No matter what weapon is formed against his people, it will not succeed. Jehovah always cares well for those who trust in him. (Isaiah 54:17; Jeremiah 17:7, 8)—*As told by Horst Schleussner.*

Fire Stirs Up a Building Program

"FIRE! Fire! The Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses is on fire!" That startling cry rang out one Friday afternoon in October 1989 in Heerenveen, a town in the northern region of the Netherlands.

Jehovah's Witnesses had used this fine Assembly Hall for 11 years. Almost every weekend, hundreds had gathered there for either a two-day circuit assembly or a one-day special assembly day. It had been a comfortable place for Bible instruction.

An accident occurred while work was under way on the roof of the hall. Practically in minutes, this mishap turned the hall into smoldering ruins. Thankfully, however, no one was hurt.

Sad about the loss but not disheartened, the Witnesses made plans for a new hall at another location. They found a suitable site at Swifterbant, in the province of Flevoland. This is a vast polder in the former inland Zuider Zee, 16 feet below sea level.

By January 1991 the signal was sounded to start building a new Assembly Hall. It would be built between May and September 1991. Hundreds of Witnesses volunteered to work at the site, and some young men saw the project as a stepping-stone to serving Jehovah God full-time. Dozens of workers came from Belgium and England.

A nicely designed building was constructed. Its auditorium and cafeteria are separated by a glass-roofed corridor. The main hall seats 1,008 people, and another 230 can watch the program on television screens in an adjacent hall.

Today, thousands are saying: 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, and he will instruct us about his ways.' (Isaiah 2:2, 3) This new Assembly Hall is just one of many places where such spiritual instruction is being imparted. The local Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses is another. There you will find a warm welcome.