OCTOBER 15, 1992

# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

# Family Life Today —Meeting the Challenge

# THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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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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# THE FAMILY UNDER ASSAULT!

"FAMILY is the oldest human institution. In many ways it is the most important. It is society's most basic unit. Entire civilizations have survived or disappeared, depending on whether family life was strong or weak."

So said *The World Book Encyclopedia* back in 1973. Viewed from today's perspective, however, those words take on an ominous, almost foreboding, tone. The last few years have witnessed what amounts to a frontal assault on family life. Popular counselor John Bradshaw writes: "There is a crisis in the family today. . . . The high divorce rate, teenage disorders, massive drug abuse, epidemic incest, eating disorders and physical battering are evidence that something is radically wrong."

Indeed, "evidence that something is radically wrong" with the family can be found all over the world. *The Unesco Courier* said regarding the situation in Europe: "Since 1965, there has been a big increase in the number of divorces throughout the continent. . . . [There] has been an increase in the number of single-parent families." Developing lands are likewise seeing an increase in family distress. Writer Hélène Tremblay observes: "For millions of people living in societies that have known a regular, predictable, unchanging way of life for centuries, today is a time of tumult."

Particularly alarming is the environment existing in many homes today. In the United States alone, millions upon millions of children are being raised by an alcoholic parent. There has also been an appalling increase in family violence. In their book *Intimate Violence,* researchers Richard Gelles and Murray Straus report: "You are more likely to be physically assaulted, beaten, and killed in your own home at the hands of a loved one than anyplace else, or by anyone else in our society."

If civilization's survival really depends upon the strength of the family, there is reason to fear for civilization's future. Still, the fate of civilization may be the very least of your worries. More than likely your concern is what such turmoil may portend for *your* family. What will the outcome be? The answer from an authoritative source may very well surprise you.

# FAMILY DISTRESS
## *A Sign of the Times*

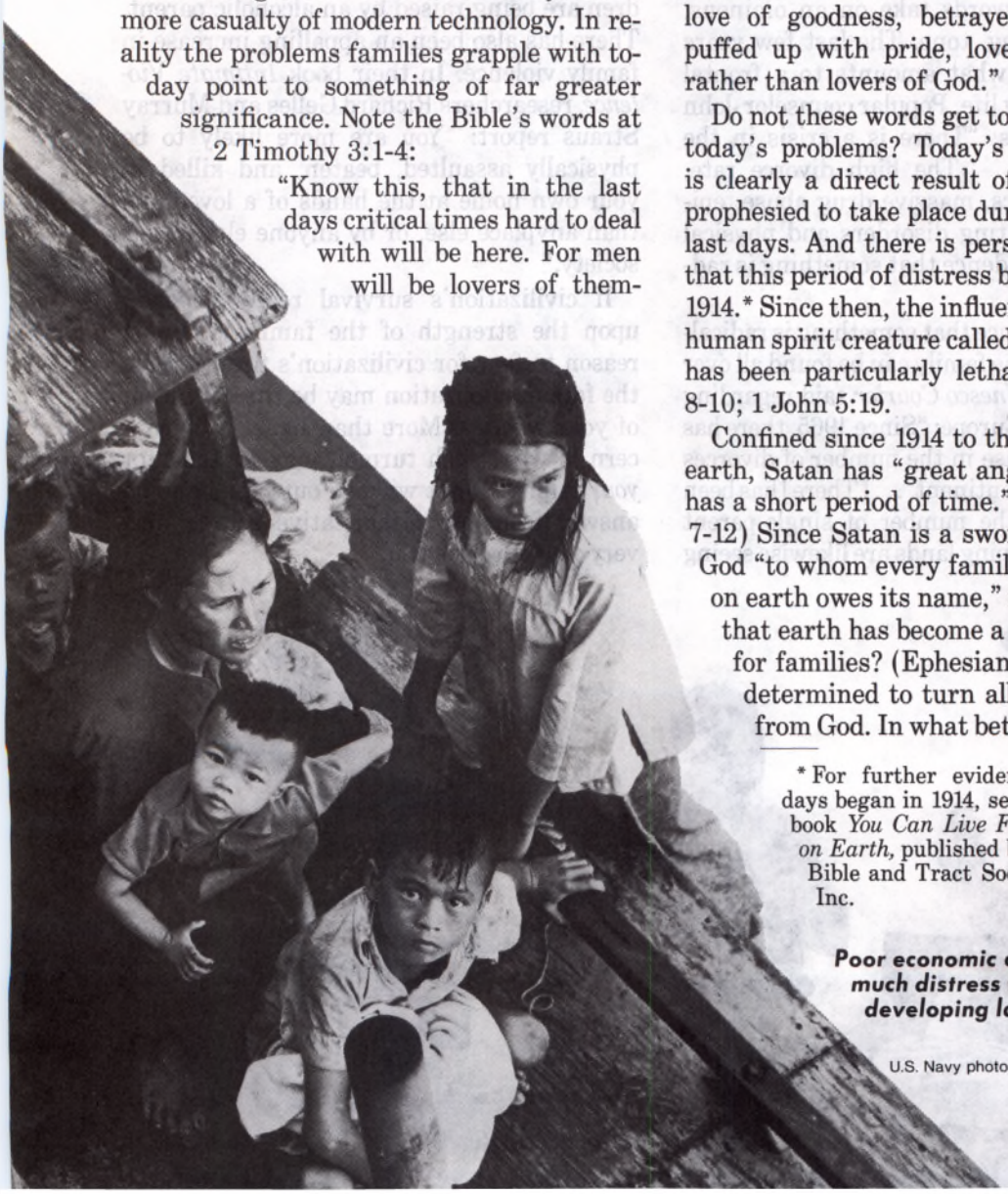
FAMILY distress—many see it as a sign that the traditional rules of marriage and parenting are obsolete. Others see it as the product of political, economic, and social change. Still others see it as just one more casualty of modern technology. In reality the problems families grapple with today point to something of far greater significance. Note the Bible's words at 2 Timothy 3:1-4:

"Know this, that in the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here. For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, self-assuming, haughty, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, disloyal, having no natural affection, not open to any agreement, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, without love of goodness, betrayers, headstrong, puffed up with pride, lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God."

Do not these words get to the very root of today's problems? Today's family distress is clearly a direct result of the conditions prophesied to take place during this world's last days. And there is persuasive evidence that this period of distress began in the year 1914.* Since then, the influence of the superhuman spirit creature called Satan the Devil has been particularly lethal.—Matthew 4:8-10; 1 John 5:19.

Confined since 1914 to the vicinity of the earth, Satan has "great anger, knowing he has a short period of time." (Revelation 12:7-12) Since Satan is a sworn enemy of the God "to whom every family in heaven and on earth owes its name," is it any wonder that earth has become a hazardous place for families? (Ephesians 3:15) Satan is determined to turn all mankind away from God. In what better way could he

* For further evidence that the last days began in 1914, see chapter 18 of the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth,* published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.



***Poor economic conditions cause much distress for families in developing lands***

U.S. Navy photo

accomplish this than by assaulting families with problems?

It will take more than the glib theories of presumed experts to shield families from such a superhuman attack. Nevertheless, the Bible says of Satan: "We are not ignorant of his designs." (2 Corinthians 2:11) There is a measure of protection in knowing some of the specific ways in which he makes his assault.

### Money and Work

Economic pressure is one of Satan's most potent weapons of assault. These are "critical times hard to deal with," or as the *Revised Standard Version* renders 2 Timothy 3:1, "times of stress." In developing lands, problems such as unemployment, low wages, and shortage of basic necessities cause families much hardship. However, even in the relatively affluent United States, economic pressures take their toll. One U.S. survey revealed that money is one of the main causes of family conflict. The book *Secrets of Strong Families* explains that the "time, attention, [and] energy" devoted to meeting the demands of work can also be a "subtle enemy" that erodes marital commitment.

Circumstances have forced record numbers of women into the job market. Writer Vance Packard reports: "Presently, at least a fourth of America's infants and toddlers under age three have mothers who hold down some sort of an outside job." Caring for the almost insatiable needs of small children as well as a job can be a grueling, exhausting endeavor—with negative effects upon both parents and children. Packard adds that because of the shortage of adequate child-care provisions in the United States, "quite a few million children today are being short-changed on good care in their early years."—*Our Endangered Children.*

The workplace itself often undermines family harmony. Many workers are drawn into illicit affairs with workmates. Still others become caught up in a vain quest for success and sacrifice their family life for career advancement. (Compare Ecclesiastes 4:4.) One man became so consumed with his job as a sales representative that his wife described herself as a *"de facto* single parent."

### Weakened Marital Ties

The marriage institution itself has also come under assault. Says the book *The Intimate Environment:* "In the past, the expectation was that a couple would stay married unless one of the spouses committed some gross offense against the marriage—adultery, cruelty, extreme neglect. Now most people see the purpose of marriage as personal fulfillment." Yes, marriage is treated as an antidote for unhappiness, boredom, or loneliness—not as a lifelong commitment to another person. The focus now is on what you get out of marriage, not what you put into it. (Contrast Acts 20:35.) This "major change in the values surrounding marriage" has greatly weakened marital ties. When personal fulfillment eludes their grasp, couples often seize upon divorce as a quick solution.

People in these "last days" are described prophetically in the Bible as "having a form of godly devotion but proving false to its power." (2 Timothy 3:4, 5) Many experts feel that the decline in religion has played a role in undermining marriage. In her book *The Case Against Divorce,* Dr. Diane Medved wrote: "According to most religions, God said marriage was to be permanent. When

you aren't sure about God or don't believe in Him, then you do what you want." As a result, when a marriage has problems, couples do not seek sound solutions. "They hastily junk the entire endeavor."

### Youths Under Attack

Children are reeling from today's pressures. Shocking numbers of children are being violently battered and verbally or sexually abused by their own parents. Through divorce, millions more are deprived of having the loving influence of two parents, and the pain of parental divorce often lasts a lifetime.

Youths are bombarded by powerful influences. By the time an average American youth is 14 years old, he will have witnessed 18,000 killings and countless other forms of violence, illicit sex, sadism, and crime simply by watching television. Music also exerts great power on youths, and much of it is shockingly suggestive, sexually explicit, or even satanic in content. Schools expose youths to theories such as evolution that tend to undermine faith in God and the Bible. Peer pressure prompts many to participate in premarital sex and alcohol or drug abuse.

### The Roots of Family Distress

The assault on families is therefore broad in scope and can be devastating. What can help families survive? Family counselor John Bradshaw suggests: "Our parenting rules have not been seriously updated in 150 years. . . . My belief is that the old rules no longer work." However, more man-made rules are not the solution. Jehovah God is the Originator of the family. He knows better than anyone else how important a role family life plays in our personal happiness and what it takes to make a family happy and strong. Should it surprise us that his Word, the Bible, provides the solution to family distress?

That ancient book explains how family life went awry. The first human couple, Adam and Eve, were placed in a beautiful garden setting and given the rewarding challenge of transforming the earth into a global paradise. God decreed that Adam was to be the head of the family. Eve was to cooperate with his headship as his "helper," or "complement." But Eve rebelled at this arrangement. She usurped her husband's headship and disobeyed the one and only prohibition God had placed upon them. Adam then abdicated his headship and joined her in this revolt.—Genesis 1:26–3:6.

The destructive effects of this deviation from God's arrangement became apparent immediately. No longer pure and innocent, Adam and Eve reacted with shame and guilt. Adam, who had earlier described his wife in glowing, poetic terms, now coldly referred to her as 'the woman you gave me.' That negative remark was simply the beginning of marital misery. Adam's vain attempts to regain his headship would result in his 'dominating her.' Eve, in turn, would have a "craving" for her husband, likely in an excessive or unbalanced way.—Genesis 2:23; 3:7-16.

Not surprisingly, Adam and Eve's marital strife had a damaging impact upon their offspring. Their first son, Cain, became a cold-blooded murderer. (Genesis 4:8) Lamech, a descendant of Cain, added to the decline of family life by becoming the first polygamist of record. (Genesis 4:19) Adam and Eve thus passed on not only a legacy of sin and death but a sick family pattern that has been the lot of the human race ever since. During these last days, family discord has reached an all-time peak.

### Families That Thrive

Not all families, however, are buckling under today's pressures. One husband, for example, lives with his wife and two daughters in a small community in the United States. Though many of their neighbors have a generation gap between parents and their offspring, he and his wife do not, nor are they worried that their daughters might experiment with drugs or sex. On Monday evenings, when other youths are glued to the TV, their entire family is gathered around the dining-room table for a Bible discussion. "Monday night is our special night to be together and talk," he explains. "Our daughters feel free to talk out their problems with us."

On the other hand, there is a single parent in New York City who also enjoys an unusual family cohesiveness with her two daughters. Her secret? "We keep the TV turned off until the weekend," she explains. "We have a daily discussion of a Bible text. We also set aside one evening for a family Bible discussion."

Both families are Jehovah's Witnesses. They follow the counsel for families set out in the Bible—and it works. Yet, they are not exceptions. There are hundreds of thousands of families just like them who are obtaining good results by applying the rules for family life found in that book.* Just what are those rules? How can they benefit you and your family? In answer we invite you to consider the articles beginning on the next page.

* By means of a free home Bible study, Jehovah's Witnesses offer personal assistance in applying Bible principles in the family. They can be contacted by writing the publishers of this magazine.

***By applying Bible principles, many families are standing up to today's pressures***

# JEHOVAH'S LOVING FAMILY ARRANGEMENT

*"On account of this I bend my knees to the Father, to whom every family in heaven and on earth owes its name."*—EPHESIANS 3:14, 15.

JEHOVAH created the family unit. By means of it, he did more than satisfy the human need for companionship, support, or intimacy. (Genesis 2:18) The family was the means through which God's glorious purpose to fill the earth was to be fulfilled. He told the first married couple: "Be fruitful and become many and fill the earth and subdue it." (Genesis 1:28) The warm and nurturing environment of the family would prove beneficial for the multitude of children who would be born to Adam and Eve and their descendants.

[2] That first couple, however, chose the course of disobedience—with devastating results for themselves and their offspring. (Romans 5:12) Family life today is thus a distortion of what God wanted it to be. Still, the family continues to have an important place in Jehovah's arrangement, serving as a basic unit of Christian society. This is not said with any lack of appreciation for the fine work being performed by the many unmarried Christians in our midst. Rather, we recognize the large contribution that families also make to the spiritual health of the Christian organization as a whole. Strong families make for strong congregations. How, though, can *your* family thrive in the face of today's pressures? In answer, let us examine what the Bible has to say regarding the family arrangement.

1, 2. (a) For what purpose did Jehovah create the family unit? (b) What part should the family have today in Jehovah's arrangement?

### The Family in Bible Times

[3] Adam and Eve both spurned God's headship arrangement. But men of faith, such as Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Job, rightfully took their places, as family heads. (Hebrews 7:4) The patriarchal family was like a small government, the father acting as religious leader, instructor, and judge. (Genesis 8:20; 18:19) Wives also had an important role, serving not as slaves but as assistant household managers.

[4] When Israel became a nation in 1513 B.C.E., family law became subordinate to the national Law given through Moses. (Exodus 24:3-8) Authority to decide, including on life-and-death matters, was now given to appointed judges. (Exodus 18:13-26) The Levitical priesthood took over the sacrificial aspects of worship. (Leviticus 1:2-5) Nevertheless, the father continued to play an important role. Moses exhorted fathers: "These words that I am commanding you today must prove to be on your heart; and you must inculcate them in

3. What roles did the husband and the wife play in the patriarchal family?

4. How did family life change under the Mosaic Law, but what role did parents continue to play?

your son and speak of them when you sit in your house and when you walk on the road and when you lie down and when you get up." (Deuteronomy 6:6, 7) Mothers had considerable influence. Proverbs 1:8 commanded youths: "Listen, my son, to the discipline of your father, and do not forsake the law of your mother." Yes, within the framework of her husband's authority, the Hebrew wife could make—and enforce—family law. She was to be honored by her children even after she had grown old.—Proverbs 23:22.

[5] The place of children was also clearly defined by God's Law. Said Deuteronomy 5:16: "Honor your father and your mother, just as Jehovah your God has commanded you; in order that your days may prove long and it may go well with you on the ground that Jehovah your God is giving you." Disrespect for one's parents was a most serious offense under the Mosaic Law. (Exodus 21: 15, 17) "In case there should be any man who calls down evil upon his father and his mother," stated the Law, "he should be put to death without fail." (Leviticus 20:9) Rebellion against one's parents was tantamount to rebellion against God himself.

5. How did the Mosaic Law define the place of children in the family arrangement?

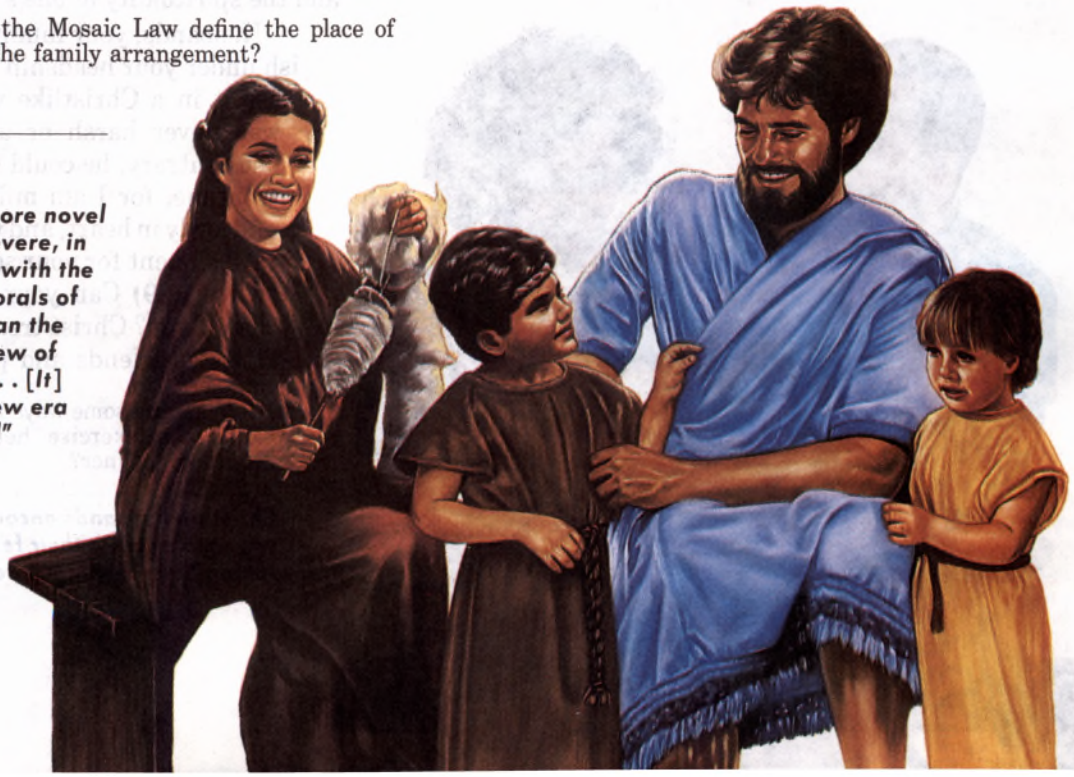
### The Role of Christian Husbands

[6] Christianity shed light upon the family arrangement, in particular upon the role of the husband. Outside of the Christian congregation, it was common for husbands in the first century to treat their wives in a harsh, oppressive manner. Women were denied basic rights and dignity. *The Expositor's Bible* says: "The cultivated Greek took a wife for the production of children. Her rights put no restriction upon his appetite. Love was not in the marriage contract. . . . The slave-woman had no rights. Her body was at her owner's disposal."

[7] In such a climate, Paul penned the words of Ephesians 5:23-29: "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,

6, 7. Why did Paul's words at Ephesians 5:23-29 seem revolutionary to his first-century readers?

***"Nothing in Christianity appeared more novel and more severe, in comparison with the dissolute morals of the time, than the Christian view of marriage. . . . [It] opened a new era for mankind"***



just as the Christ also loved the congregation and delivered up himself for it . . . Husbands ought to be loving their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself, for no man ever hated his own flesh; but he feeds and cherishes it." To first-century readers, these words were nothing short of revolutionary. Says *The Expositor's Bible:* "Nothing in Christianity appeared more novel and more severe, in comparison with the dissolute morals of the time, than the Christian view of marriage. . . . [It] opened a new era for mankind."

[8] The Bible's counsel for husbands is no less revolutionary today. Despite all the talk of women's liberation, women are still viewed by many men as mere objects for sexual gratification. Believing the myth that women actually enjoy being dominated, controlled, or bullied, many men physically and emotionally abuse their wives. How disgraceful it would be for a Christian man to be swayed by worldly thinking and to treat his wife abusively! "My husband was a ministerial servant and gave public talks," says one Christian woman. Yet, she reveals, "I was a victim of wife beating." Clearly, such actions were out of harmony with God's arrangement. That man was a rare exception; he needed to seek help to deal with his rage if he hoped to have God's favor.—Galatians 5:19-21.

8, 9. What unhealthy attitudes toward women are common among men, and why is it important that Christian men reject such viewpoints?

[9] Husbands are commanded by God to be loving their wives as their own bodies. Refusing to do so is rebellion against the very arrangement of God and can undermine one's relationship with God. The apostle Peter's words are clear: "You husbands, continue dwelling in like manner with [your wives] according to knowledge, assigning them honor as to a weaker vessel, . . . in order for your prayers not to be hindered." (1 Peter 3:7) Treating one's wife harshly could also have a devastating effect on her spirituality and the spirituality of one's offspring.

[10] Husbands, your family will flourish under your headship if you exercise it in a Christlike way. Christ was never harsh or abusive. On the contrary, he could say: "Learn from me, for I am mild-tempered and lowly in heart, and you will find refreshment for your souls." (Matthew 11:29) Can your family say that of you? Christ treated his disciples as friends and put trust in

10. What are some ways in which husbands can exercise headship in a Christlike manner?

***Christian husbands encourage their wives to express their feelings, taking those feelings into account***

them. (John 15:15) Do you grant your wife the same dignity? The Bible said of the "capable wife": "In her the heart of her owner has put trust." (Proverbs 31:10, 11) That means allowing her a measure of freedom and latitude, not hemming her in with unreasonable restrictions. Furthermore, Jesus encouraged his disciples to express their feelings and opinions. (Matthew 9:28; 16: 13-15) Do you do likewise with your wife? Or do you view honest disagreement as a challenge to your authority? By taking your wife's feelings into account rather than ignoring them, you actually build her respect for your headship.

[11] If you are a father, you are also required to take the lead in caring for the spiritual, emotional, and physical needs of your children. That includes having a good spiritual routine for your family: working with them in the field service, conducting a home Bible study, discussing the day's text. Interestingly, the Bible shows that an elder or a ministerial servant should be "a man presiding over his own household in a fine manner." Men serving in these capacities should thus be exemplary family heads. While they may carry a heavy load of congregation responsibilities, they must give their own families priority. Paul showed why: "If indeed any man does not know how to preside over his own household, how will he take care of God's congregation?"—1 Timothy 3:4, 5, 12.

### Supportive Christian Wives

[12] Are you a Christian wife? Then you must also play a vital part in the family arrangement. Christian wives are exhorted "to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sound in mind, chaste, workers at home, good, subjecting themselves to their own husbands." (Titus 2:4, 5) You should thus strive to be an exemplary housewife, maintaining a clean and pleasant home for your family. Domestic work may at times be tedious, but it is neither demeaning nor trivial. As wife, you "manage a household" and may enjoy considerable latitude in this regard. (1 Timothy 5:14) The "capable wife," for example, purchased household supplies, made real-estate transactions, and even generated income by managing a small business. No wonder she earned her husband's praise! (Proverbs, chapter 31) Naturally, such initiatives were made within the guidelines her husband gave as her head.

[13] Subjecting yourself to your husband may not always be easy, however. Not all men command respect. And you may well be quite capable when it comes to handling finances, planning, or organizing. You may have a secular job and make a substantial contribution to the family income. Or you may have suffered in some way from male domination in the past and may find it difficult to submit to a man. Nevertheless, showing "deep respect," or "fear," for your husband demonstrates your respect of God's headship. (Ephesians 5:33, *Kingdom Interlinear;* 1 Corinthians 11:3) Submission is also crucial to the success of your family; it helps you to avoid subjecting your marriage to unnecessary stresses and strains.

[14] Does this mean, though, that you must be silent when you feel your husband is making a decision that works against your fam-

11. (a) How can fathers care for the spiritual needs of their children? (b) Why must elders and ministerial servants set a good example in caring for their families?
12. What part does the wife play in the Christian arrangement?

13. (a) Why may submission be difficult for some women? (b) Why is it advantageous for Christian women to submit themselves to their husbands?
14. What might a wife do when she disagrees with a decision made by her husband?

ily's best interests? Not necessarily. Abraham's wife Sarah was not silent when she perceived a threat to the well-being of her son, Isaac. (Genesis 21:8-10) Similarly, you may sense an obligation to express your feelings at times. If this is done in a respectful way at "the right time," a godly Christian man will listen. (Proverbs 25:11) But if your suggestion is not followed and no serious violation of a Bible principle is involved, would not going against your husband's wishes be self-defeating? Remember, "the truly wise woman has built up her house, but the foolish one tears it down with her own hands." (Proverbs 14:1) One way to build up your house is to be supportive of your husband's headship, praising his accomplishments while taking his mistakes in stride.

[15] Another way to build up your house is to share in the discipline and training of your children. For example, you can do your part to keep the family Bible study regular and upbuilding. "Do not let your hand rest" when it comes to sharing God's truths with your children at every opportunity—when traveling or simply shopping with them. (Ecclesiastes 11:6) Help them to prepare their comments for the meetings and parts on the Theocratic Ministry School. Keep an eye on their associations. (1 Corinthians 15:33) When it comes to matters of godly standards and discipline, let your children know that you and your husband are united. Do not allow them to play you against your husband.

[16] If you are a single parent or have an unbelieving mate, you may very well have to take the lead spiritually. This may be difficult and at times even discouraging. But do not give up. Timothy's mother, Eunice, succeeded in teaching him the holy Scriptures "from infancy," despite her being married to an unbeliever. (2 Timothy 1:5; 3:15) And many in our midst are enjoying similar success. If you need some assistance in this regard, you might let your needs be known to the elders. They may be able to arrange for someone to help you get to meetings and out in field service. They may encourage others to include your family in recreational outings or gatherings. Or they may arrange to have an experienced publisher help you get a family study started.

15. In what ways can a wife share in the discipline and training of her children?
16. (a) What Biblical example serves to encourage single parents and those married to unbelievers? (b) How may others in the congregation be of help to such ones?

### Appreciative Children

[17] Christian youths can contribute to the family's welfare by following the counsel of Ephesians 6:1-3: "Children, be obedient to your parents in union with the Lord, for this is righteous: 'Honor your father and your mother'; which is the first command with a promise: 'That it may go well with you and you may endure a long time on the earth.'" By cooperating with your parents, you demonstrate your respect for Jehovah. Jesus Christ was perfect and could easily have reasoned that it was below his dignity to submit to imperfect parents. Yet, "he continued subject to them. . . . And Jesus went on progressing in wisdom and in physical growth and in favor with God and men."—Luke 2:51, 52.

[18] Should you not likewise honor your parents? "Honor" here means to recognize duly constituted authority. (Compare 1 Peter 2:17.) In most situations such honor is due even if one's parents are unbelievers or are failing to set a good example. You should honor your parents all the more if they are

17. (a) How can youths contribute to the family welfare? (b) What example did Jesus set in this regard?
18, 19. (a) What does it mean to honor one's parents? (b) How can the home become a place of refreshment?

exemplary Christians. Remember, too, that the discipline and direction given by your parents are not intended to restrict you unduly. Rather, they are to protect you so that you can "continue living."—Proverbs 7:1, 2.

19 What a loving arrangement, then, the family is! When husbands, wives, and children all follow God's rules for family life, the home becomes a haven, a place of refreshment. Nevertheless, problems involving communication and child training may arise. Our next article discusses how some of these problems can be solved.

**Do You Remember?**

- ☐ What pattern was set by God-fearing husbands, wives, and children in Bible times?
- ☐ What light did Christianity shed upon the role of the husband?
- ☐ What part should the wife play in the Christian family?
- ☐ How can Christian youths contribute to the family's welfare?

# WORK TO PRESERVE YOUR FAMILY INTO GOD'S NEW WORLD

*"You yourself, O Jehovah, will guard them; you will preserve each one from this generation to time indefinite."*—PSALM 12:7.

"TODAY my heart is filled with joy!" exclaimed one Christian elder named John. The cause of this exuberance? "My 14-year-old son and 12-year-old daughter were baptized," he relates. But his joy did not end there. "My 17-year-old son and 16-year-old daughter have both been auxiliary pioneers this past year," he adds.

2 Many families in our midst are having similarly fine results as they apply Bible principles. Some, though, are experiencing problems. "We have five children," writes one Christian couple, "and it has grown progressively harder to deal with them. We have already lost one child to this old system. Our young teenagers seem to be Satan's primary field of attack right now." There are also couples who are experiencing severe marital strife, at times resulting in separation or divorce. Nevertheless, families that cultivate Christian qualities may survive the "great tribulation" and be preserved into God's coming new world. (Matthew 24:21; 2 Peter 3:13) What, then, can you do to ensure the preservation of *your* family?

1, 2. (a) How are some families faring under the pressures of the last days? (b) How may Christian families seek to survive?

### Improving Communication

[3] Good communication is the lifeblood of a healthy family; when it is lacking, tension and stress increase. "There is a frustrating of plans where there is no confidential talk," says Proverbs 15:22. Interestingly, a marriage counselor reports: "The most familiar complaint I hear from wives I counsel is 'He won't talk to me,' and 'He doesn't listen to me.' And when I share this complaint with their husbands, they don't hear me, either."

[4] What causes a lack of communication? For one thing, men and women are different, and they often have noticeably different communication styles. One article noted that a husband "tends to be direct and practical" in his conversations, whereas "what [a wife] wants more than anything else is an empathetic listener." If this presents a problem in your marriage, work at improving matters. A Christian husband may need to work hard at becoming a better listener. "Every man," says James, "must be swift about hearing, slow about speaking." (James 1:19) Learn to refrain from ordering, admonishing, or lecturing when your wife simply wants "fellow feeling." (1 Peter 3:8) "Anyone holding back his sayings is possessed of knowledge," says Proverbs 17:27.

[5] On the other hand, there is "a time to speak," and you may need to learn to be more expressive of your thoughts and feelings. (Ecclesiastes 3:7) For example, are you generous with praise for your wife's accomplishments? (Proverbs 31:28) Do you show yourself thankful for the hard work she does in supporting you and caring for the household? (Compare Colossians 3:15.) Or perhaps you need to improve in making verbal "expressions of endearment." (Song of Solomon 1:2) Doing so may seem awkward to you at first, but it can go a long way toward making your wife feel secure in your love for her.

[6] What about Christian wives? One wife is quoted as saying that her husband knows that she appreciates him, so it is not necessary for her to say it to him. However, men also thrive on appreciation, commendation, and praise. (Proverbs 12:8) Do you need to be more expressive in this regard? On the other hand, perhaps you need to pay more attention to how you listen. If your husband finds it difficult to discuss his problems, fears, or anxieties openly, have you learned how to draw him out, kindly and tactfully?

[7] Of course, even couples who normally get along well may occasionally experience a breakdown in communication. Emotion may overshadow reason, or a calm discussion may quickly turn into a heated argument. (Proverbs 15:1) "We all stumble many times"; a marital spat hardly spells the end of a marriage, however. (James 3:2) But "screaming and abusive speech" are inappropriate and destructive to any relationship. (Ephesians 4:31) Be quick about making peace when hurtful words have been exchanged. (Matthew 5:23, 24) Quarrels can often be prevented in the first place if both of you apply Paul's words at Ephesians 4:26: "Let the sun not set with you in a provoked state." Yes, talk out problems while they are small and manageable; do not wait until your emotions have reached

3, 4. (a) How important is communication in family life, and why do problems with it often arise? (b) Why should husbands strive to be good listeners?

5. What are some ways husbands can improve in expressing their thoughts and feelings?

6. What can wives do to improve family communication?

7. What can cause marital quarrels to erupt, and how can they be prevented?

the flash point. Spending a few minutes each day discussing matters of concern can do much to foster communication and prevent misunderstandings.

### 'The Mental-Regulating of Jehovah'

[8] It appears that some parents are content to allow their children to drift along. The children attend meetings and have some share in field service, but often they have not built up their own relationship with God. In time "the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes" could lead many of such youths away from the truth. (1 John 2:16) How sad it would be for parents to survive Armageddon but because of past neglect leave their children behind as casualties!

8. Why may some youths drift away from the truth?

[9] Paul thus wrote: "You, fathers, do not be irritating your children, but go on bringing them up in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah." (Ephesians 6:4) To do so, you must be thoroughly acquainted with Jehovah's standards yourself. You ought to set a proper example when it comes to such things as your choice of entertainment, personal study, meeting attendance, and field service. Paul's words also imply that a parent must (1) be an astute observer of his children and that he (2) maintain good communication with them. Only then can you know wherein they need "mental-regulating."

[10] It is natural for adolescents to strive for a measure of independence. However, you must be alert to clear-cut signs of worldly influence in their speech, thinking,

9, 10. (a) What does bringing up children "in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah" involve? (b) Why is it important to allow children to express their feelings freely?

***Mealtimes can be enjoyable occasions that promote family unity and communication***

## MUSIC—A POWERFUL INFLUENCE

Says the author of a book on child rearing: "If I were to stand in front of an audience . . . and advocate drunken orgies, getting high on cocaine, pot, or any of the other mind-bending drugs, they would look at me in stunned astonishment. . . . [Yet] parents often provide their children with money to buy records or cassette recordings that openly advocate those things." (*Raising Positive Kids in a Negative World,* by Zig Ziglar) In the United States, for example, sexually explicit rap lyrics are on the lips of many youths. Are you helping your children to be selective in their choice of music so that they avoid such demonic snares?

dress and grooming, and choice of friends. A wise father said as recorded at Proverbs 23:26: "My son, do give your heart to me." Do your children feel free to share their thoughts and feelings with you? When children do not fear immediate censure, they may be more prone to reveal how they really feel about such matters as extracurricular activities, dating, higher education, or Bible truth itself.

[11] In many lands it is customary for families to eat together. Thus the dinner meal can provide a fine opportunity for all family members to share upbuilding conversation. All too often the family meal is crowded out by TV and other distractions. For hours on end, though, your children have been virtually held hostage in school and exposed to worldly thinking. Mealtimes are a good time to communicate with your children. "We use mealtime to talk about things that came up during the day," says a parent. Still, mealtimes need not become embarrassing disciplinary sessions or cross-examinations. Keep the occasion relaxed and enjoyable!

[12] Getting children to open up to you is challenging and may require infinite patience. In time, though, you may see heartwarming results. "Our 14-year-old son had been depressed and withdrawn," recalls a concerned mother. "By means of our prayers and persistence, he is starting to open up and talk!"

11, 12. (a) How may mealtimes be used to promote family communication? (b) What may result from a parent's persistent efforts to promote communication with his children?

### Family Study That Upbuilds

[13] "Mental-regulating" also includes formal instruction in God's Word. As with Timothy, such training should begin "from infancy." (2 Timothy 3:15) Early training strengthens children for tests of faith that may come during the school years—birthday celebrations, patriotic ceremonies, or religious holidays. Without preparation for such tests, a child's faith may be crushed. So take advantage of the tools the Watch Tower Society has prepared for small children, such as the books *Listening to the Great Teacher* and *My Book of Bible Stories.**

[14] Another area for attention is family study, which can easily lapse into irregularity or become a dull, mechanical affair that

* Audiocassettes are also available in some languages.

13. Why is early training of children so important, and how may it be accomplished?
14. How can family study be kept regular, and what have you done to have a regular family study?

is trialsome to both parents and children. How can you improve matters? First, you must 'buy out time' for the study, not allowing it to be crowded out by TV shows or other diversions. (Ephesians 5:15-17) "We had difficulty keeping our family study regular," confesses one family head. "We tried different times until we finally found a time slot a little later in the evening that worked for us. Now our family study is regular."

[15] Next, consider the particular needs of your family. Many families enjoy preparing their weekly *Watchtower* lesson together. From time to time, though, your family may have specific issues that need to be discussed, including problems being faced in school. The book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work* and articles from *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* can fill this need. "If we pick up on any attitudes on the part of our boys that need correcting," says a father, "we zero in on the particular chapter in the *Young People Ask* book that covers it." His wife adds: "We try to be flexible. If we have something planned for our study, and the need arises to discuss something else, then we change according to the need."

[16] How can you make sure that your children really understand what they are learning? The Master Teacher, Jesus, asked viewpoint questions, such as, "What do you think?" (Matthew 17:25) By doing the same, try to find out what your children really think. Encourage each child to answer in his or her own words. Of course, if you overreact to their honest expressions with anger or shock, they may think twice about being open with you again. So remain calm. Avoid turning the family study into a forum for chastisement. It should be enjoyable, upbuilding. "If I discover that one of my children has a problem," says one father, "I'll deal with it at another time." "When the child is dealt with separately," adds a mother, "the child is not as embarrassed and is apt to talk more freely than if counseled during the family study."

[17] Getting children to participate in a family study can be a challenge, especially when you are dealing with children of different ages. Younger children may tend to be fidgety, restless, or manifest a short attention span. What can you do? Try to keep the atmosphere of the study relaxed. If your children have short attention spans, try shorter sessions but more frequent ones. It also helps if you are enthusiastic. "He that presides, let him do it in real earnest." (Romans 12:8) Keep everyone involved. Smaller children may be able to comment on the illustrations or to answer simple questions. Teenagers may be asked to do additional research or to make practical application of the material under consideration.

[18] Do not limit spiritual instruction to one hour a week, however. Inculcate God's Word in your children on every occasion. (Deuteronomy 6:7) Take the time to listen to them. Exhort and console them when necessary. (Compare 1 Thessalonians 2:11.) Be compassionate and merciful. (Psalm 103:13; Malachi 3:17) Doing so, you will 'find pleasure' in your children and support their preservation into God's new world. —Proverbs 29:17.

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15. How can you tailor your family study to the needs of your family?
16. (a) How can you be sure your children understand what they are learning? (b) What should usually be avoided in conducting a family study?
17. What can be done to make family study interesting, and what has worked well for your family?
18. How can parents inculcate God's Word on every occasion, and with what result?

### "A Time to Laugh"

[19] There is "a time to laugh . . . , a time to skip about." (Ecclesiastes 3:4) The Hebrew word for "laugh" may also be translated by such expressions as "celebrate," "play," "make sport," or even "have a good time." (2 Samuel 6:21; Job 41:5; Judges 16:25; Exodus 32:6; Genesis 26:8) Play can serve a beneficial purpose, and it is important to children and youths. In Bible times parents arranged entertainment and recreation for their families. (Compare Luke 15:25.) Do you do the same?

[20] "We take advantage of public parks," says a Christian husband. "We'll invite some of the young brothers and have a ball game and a picnic. They have a good time and enjoy wholesome association." Adds another parent: "We plan things to do with our boys. We go swimming, play ball, take vacations. But we keep entertainment in its proper place. I stress the need to keep a balance." Wholesome recreation, such as appropriate gatherings or trips to zoos and museums, can do much to prevent a child from being attracted to the world's pleasures.

19, 20. (a) What role does recreation play in family life? (b) What are some ways in which parents can arrange for recreation for their family?

**Do You Remember?**

- ☐ How can husbands and wives improve their communication?
- ☐ How can parents raise children in the "mental-regulating of Jehovah"? (Ephesians 6:4)
- ☐ What are some ways to make family study upbuilding and more interesting?
- ☐ What might parents do in arranging recreation and entertainment for their families?

[21] It is also important that your children not feel deprived because they do not celebrate birthdays or unchristian holidays. With some organization on your part, they can look forward to many enjoyable times throughout the year. Why, a good parent does not need some holiday as an excuse for expressing his love in a material way. Like his heavenly Father, he 'knows how to give good gifts to his children'—spontaneously.—Matthew 7:11.

### Securing an Eternal Future for Your Family

[22] The psalmist prayed: "You yourself, O Jehovah, will guard them; you will preserve each one from this generation to time indefinite." (Psalm 12:7) Pressure from Satan is sure to increase—especially against families of Jehovah's Witnesses. Yet, it is possible to withstand this ever-increasing attack. With Jehovah's help and fierce determination and hard work on the part of husbands, wives, and children, families—including your family—can have the hope of being preserved alive during the great tribulation.

[23] Husbands and wives, bring peace and harmony to your marriage by fulfilling your God-assigned roles. Parents, continue setting a proper example for your children, buying out the time to give them the training and discipline they so sorely need. Talk to them. Listen to them. Their lives are at stake! Children, listen to and obey your parents. With Jehovah's help you can succeed and secure yourselves an eternal future in God's coming new world.

21. How can parents prevent their children from feeling deprived because of not celebrating worldly holidays?

22, 23. (a) As the great tribulation approaches, of what can God-fearing families be assured? (b) What can families do in working toward preservation into God's new world?

# Baptism "Into the Name Of"

A STUDY of the thousands of ancient secular papyrus documents found in the sands of Egypt at the beginning of this century often throws interesting light on the Christian Greek Scriptures. How? By considering the way in which certain words were used, we are guided to a more precise understanding of the same words in their Scriptural setting.

One example is Jesus' use of "in the name of" when he commanded his disciples before he ascended to heaven: "Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them *in the name of* the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit." What did Jesus mean?—Matthew 28:19.

Scholars have discovered that in secular writings the expression "in the name of," or "into the name of" (*Kingdom Interlinear*), is used with reference to payments "to the account of any one." Theology professor Dr. G. Adolf Deissmann believed that in view of the evidence from the papyri, "the idea underlying . . . the expressions *to baptise into the name of the Lord,* or *to believe into the name of the Son of God,* is that baptism or faith constitutes the *belonging* to God or to the Son of God."—Deissmann's italics.

Interestingly, a similar expression was used by the Jews of Jesus' day, as explained in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament:* "The circumcision of a proselyte is done . . . 'in the name of the proselyte,' to receive him into Judaism. This circumcision takes place . . . 'in the name of the covenant,' to receive him into the covenant." A relationship is thereby established and the non-Jew becomes a proselyte under the covenant's authority.

So for the Christian, baptism following dedication establishes an intimate relationship with Jehovah God, his Son Jesus Christ, and the holy spirit. The convert recognizes their respective authority in his new way of life. Consider how this is true for each of the three named.

By recognizing God's authority, we draw close to him and enter into a relationship with him. (Hebrews 12:9; James 4:7, 8) We become God's property as his slaves, bought with the price of Jesus Christ's ransom sacrifice. (1 Corinthians 3:23; 6:20) The apostle Paul also told first-century Christians that they belonged to Jesus Christ, not to any men who might have taken the truth to them. (1 Corinthians 1:12, 13; 7:23; compare Matthew 16:24.) Baptism in the name of the Son implies recognizing this fact, accepting Jesus as "the way and the truth and the life."—John 14:6.

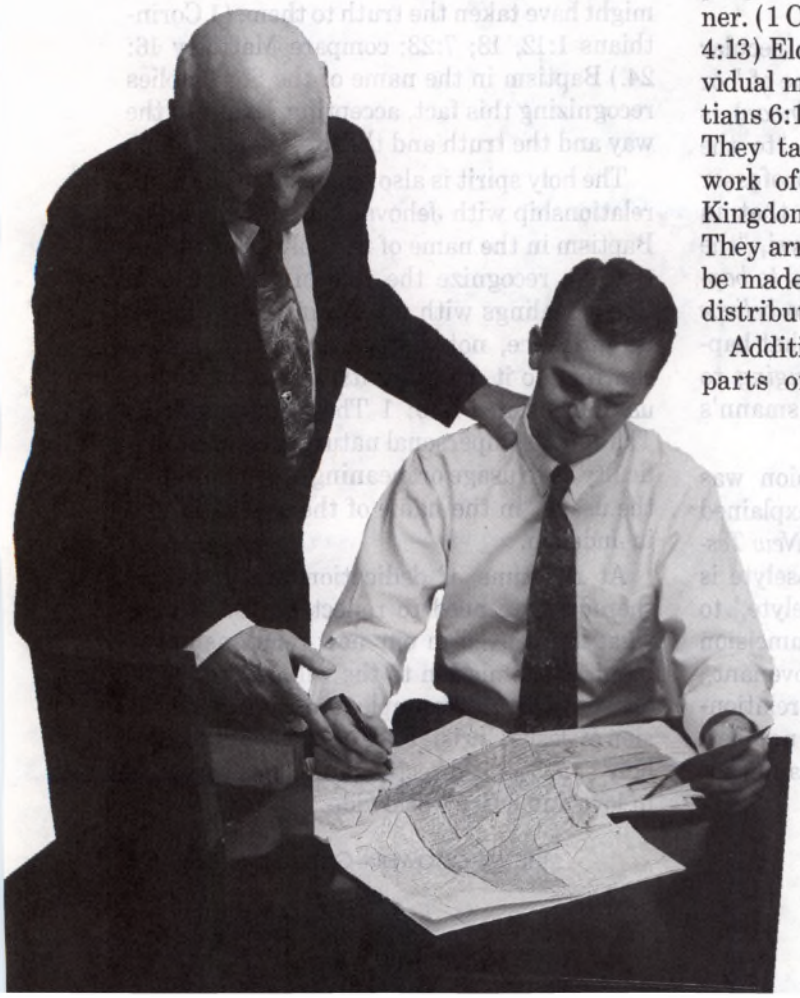
The holy spirit is also essential to our right relationship with Jehovah and Jesus Christ. Baptism in the name of the holy spirit shows that we recognize the role of the spirit in God's dealings with us. We intend to follow its guidance, not disregarding it or acting contrary to it, blocking its working through us. (Ephesians 4:30; 1 Thessalonians 5:19) The spirit's impersonal nature creates no difficulty as to usage or meaning, any more than the usage "in the name of the covenant" did in Judaism.

At the time of dedication and baptism, therefore, we need to reflect prayerfully on what is involved in our new relationship. It requires submission to the will of God, demonstrated in the example and ransom provision of Jesus Christ, to be carried out through holy spirit as it directs all of God's servants in love and unity worldwide.

# Elders—Delegate!

HE WAS a patient, humble man, with a keen sense of justice tempered by his experiences in life. Thus, over three million men, women, and children confidently looked to him for advice. He tried not to disappoint them. From morning till evening, he listened to their problems and patiently helped them to see how God's laws applied to their situation. Yes, for a brief period, some 3,500 years ago, the 12 tribes of Israel were judged singlehandedly by one man—Moses.

However, Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, was concerned. How could Moses ever hope to keep up such a pace? So Jethro declared: "It is not good the way you are doing. You will surely wear out, both you and this people who are with you, because this business is too big a load for you. You are unable to do it by yourself." (Exodus 18:17, 18) The solution? Jethro advised Moses to delegate some of his responsibilities to others. (Exodus 18:19-23) Good advice!



Within the Christian congregation today, there are many elders who, like Moses, are trying to care for more than they can possibly accomplish alone. They organize meetings as well as prepare and then present program parts in an orderly, effective manner. (1 Corinthians 14:26, 33, 40; 1 Timothy 4:13) Elders also care for the needs of individual members of the congregation. (Galatians 6:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; James 5:14) They take the lead in the all-important work of preaching the good news of the Kingdom. (Matthew 24:14; Hebrews 13:7) They arrange, too, for literature supplies to be made available to the congregation for distribution to the public.

Additionally, some elders are assigned parts on circuit assembly and district convention programs. They staff assembly organizations and serve on hospital liaison committees. Some assist with Kingdom Hall construction. And all of this is in addition to their family responsibilities and their need to feed themselves spiritually. (Compare Joshua 1:8; Psalm 110:3; 1 Timothy 3:4, 5; 4:15, 16.) How do such Christian men get all of it done? Like Moses they

must have help. They must learn to delegate. Indeed, a person who does not delegate is a poor organizer.

### The Value of Training Others

There are further reasons for delegating responsibility. In Jesus' illustration of the talents, the master, before departing on a long trip, summoned his slaves and delegated to them varying degrees of responsibility. (Matthew 25:14, 15) By so doing, the master was able to achieve several goals. First, while he was away, his slaves acted in his place and necessary work did not grind to a halt while he was gone. Second, since actions speak louder than words, the master could observe the abilities and loyalties of his slaves. Third, the master gave his slaves an opportunity to gain much-needed experience.

This illustration has meaning for us today. When Jesus left the earth, he committed responsibility to his anointed disciples. The remaining ones of these are still responsible for the worldwide interests of the Kingdom. (Luke 12:42) During the modern-day stewardship of the anointed, Jehovah's blessing has been evident upon his organization. As a result, it has increased wonderfully. Why, in just the last five years, well over a million new ones have symbolized their dedication by water baptism! This has resulted in thousands of new congregations and hundreds of new circuits.

Just as Jesus Christ delegated responsibilities to "the faithful and discreet slave," they in turn have assigned congregational responsibilities to elders and ministerial servants of the "other sheep." (Matthew 24:45-47; John 10:16) Nevertheless, more dedicated men are needed to care for the tremendous growth. Where will they come from? Elders must train them. But how can elders train such men if they do not delegate appropriate responsibilities to individuals who show promise? How else do the elders have opportunity to observe the capabilities and loyalties of younger men?

### What Does It Mean to Delegate?

To some, "delegating" means unloading, avoiding, neglecting, or abdicating their responsibilities. However, when properly used, "delegating" is really a way to fulfill responsibilities. The English verb "to delegate" is defined as, "to entrust to another; to appoint as one's representative; to assign responsibility or authority." Nevertheless, the delegator remains ultimately responsible for what is done.

Some may hold back from delegating because they are afraid they will lose control. Yet, delegating does not mean loss of control. Though invisible and ruling from the heavens, Christ Jesus is very much in control of the Christian congregation. He, in turn, entrusts the congregation to the care of experienced men.—Ephesians 5:23-27; Colossians 1:13.

Others may be disinclined to delegate because they feel they can do the job quicker themselves. However, Jesus saw the value of training others. No one on earth taught more effectively than Jesus. (John 7:46) Yet, after giving instructions to 70 of his disciples, he dispatched them into the preaching work. Although unable to equal Jesus in teaching ability, they returned overjoyed at their successes. Jesus rejoiced with them and commended them, for he knew they would carry on with the work long after he was gone and would eventually accomplish more than he ever could working alone.—Luke 10:1-24; John 14:12.

Delegating also means getting help with necessary details. The day before Jesus was

to die, he assigned Peter and John to make the necessary arrangements for his last Passover meal. (Luke 22:7-13) Jesus did not have to worry about purchasing a lamb, wine, unleavened bread, and bitter greens; nor did he have to gather up utensils, firewood, and the like. Peter and John took care of those details.

Elders today can enjoy similar benefits if they imitate Jesus' example. For instance, the one caring for literature may be asked to order needed supplies for an upcoming campaign. He may be instructed to analyze his records to determine how similar items were used in past campaigns. He may also take into consideration the characteristics of the congregation territory before preparing the appropriate order form. He would then submit the form to the congregation secretary for checking. Once the literature servant has learned his job, it should not be necessary for the secretary to double-check past records as long as the totals on the order form are within reason. Clearly, this simple act of delegating would make placing a literature order easier and simpler for all concerned.

In view of such potential benefits, how can one delegate effectively?

### How to Delegate

*Define the task.* First of all, make clear what results are expected. "Do business till I come" is what the "man of noble birth" in Jesus' illustration of the minas told his ten slaves. (Luke 19:12, 13) The master expected the slaves to trade profitably with his mina and then report their gains upon his return. They knew what they had to do. How would this principle apply on a modern-day Kingdom Hall project? As an example, the brother assigned to repair the roof would normally be told what materials to use, where to find them, and when to start the work, weather permitting. Such specific guidelines make for good organization.

It is important to define not only the scope of a task but also what decisions a person is allowed to make and what matters should be referred to someone else. Moses told his appointees that they were to judge small cases, but difficult cases were to come to him.—Exodus 18:22.

When assigning responsibilities, take care to avoid overlap. When more than one person is assigned the same duties, confusion results. Imagine what could happen if at a large convention of Jehovah's Witnesses, both the Cleaning Department and the Food Service Department were given the responsibility to clean the food stands, or if both the Attendant Department and the Immersion Department were assigned to direct the observers during the baptism.

*Select capable men.* Jethro advised Moses: "You must yourself search for capable, God-fearing men among all the people, honest and incorruptible men, and appoint them over the people." (Exodus 18:21, *The New English Bible*) Obviously, a man must first meet the spiritual qualifications. To determine if one is "capable" of doing the job at hand, consideration must be given to such factors as personality traits, experience, training, and talents. Thus, a Christian with an especially amiable, pleasant, helpful disposition would likely work well at either the magazine counter or as an attendant. In a similar vein, when selecting someone to assist the congregation secretary, consideration would logically be given to how orderly he is. Does he give attention to detail, is he reliable, and can he keep a confidence? (Luke 16:10) Giving consideration to such

factors in addition to the necessary spiritual qualifications would aid in fitting the right man to the job.

*Assign adequate resources.* The one serving will need to have at his disposal certain resources in order to complete an assigned task. Perhaps he will need equipment, funds, or assistance. Assign enough resources. For instance, a brother may be asked to make some necessary repairs on the Kingdom Hall. Obviously, he would be told what needs to be done, but he may also need some petty cash to purchase incidental materials. Perhaps he will need help. So elders may ask others to assist him or make an announcement to the congregation to the effect that 'Brother So-and-so will be doing such-and-such work on the hall, and he may be approaching some of you to ask for help.' Such forethought will prevent one from assigning a task without providing adequate resources. "Don't half-delegate" is the way one management consultant expresses it.

When assigning responsibilities, inform others that the person is acting in your stead. The authority to act in your place is also a resource. Joshua was commissioned as the new leader of Israel before "all the assembly." Moses was instructed to "put some of [his] dignity upon him." (Numbers 27:18-23) In the congregation setting, the same may be accomplished by simply posting on the information board a list of those with assigned duties.

*Support their decisions.* Now the one assigned can get on with the work at hand. Remember, though, you can be a real source of encouragement to him if you support the good decisions he makes. For instance, you as an elder may have your own preference about how to position microphones and furniture on the Kingdom Hall platform, perhaps somewhat differently from how the assigned brother does it. However, if the brother taking care of the platform is allowed some latitude in his work, he will likely gain confidence and experience. Besides, he may even improve matters. One business consultant stated: "Delegate the task, not how it is done. . . . Often, creative talent is unleashed."

Furthermore, the brother on the job with his hand on the plow, so to speak, is often closer to a particular situation and thus may better understand the problems associated with it. He will likely respond to problems with solutions that really work. He may also be dealing with factors that are not obvious to onlookers. Therefore, one Christian overseer said of an experienced assistant: "If he says that he has some rocks in that soil, I have to trust him."

Yes, a most valuable resource available to Christian elders is dedicated men and women who are willing and able to assist in whatever way they are directed. Elders, avail yourselves of this excellent commodity! Delegating is a sign of modesty and can minimize stress and frustration. Not only will you thus be enabled to do more but you will give others the opportunity to gain needed experience.

## In Our Next Issue

A World Without Sin—How?

Education With a Purpose

See What Jehovah Has Done for Us!

# Truth Saturates the Village of Many Waters

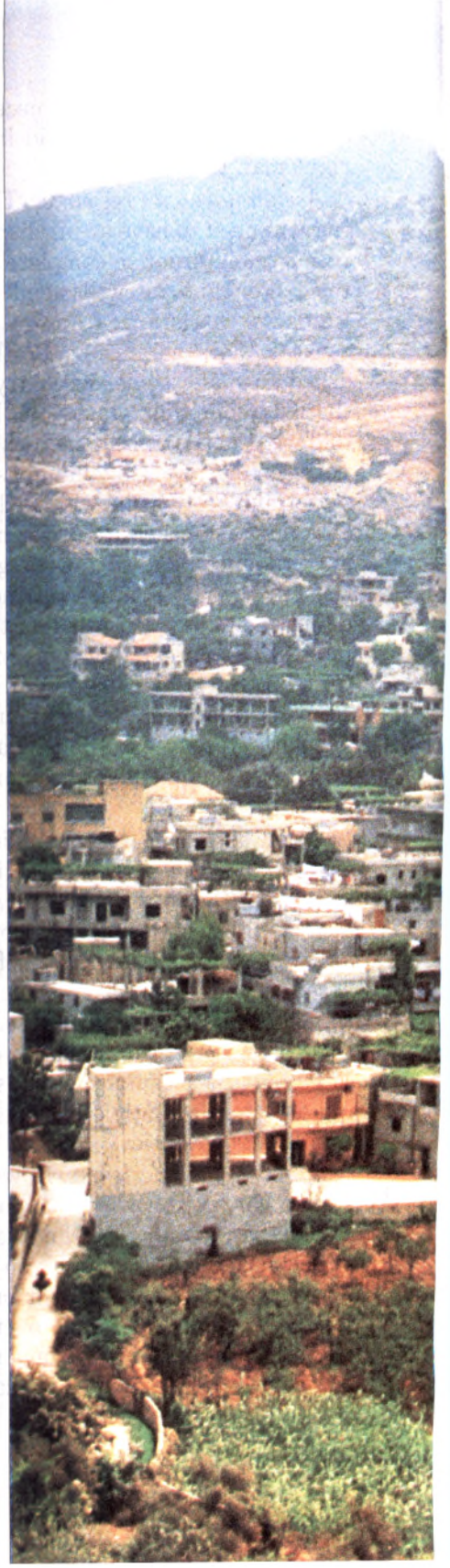
HOW strange! A land famous for its many waters is found to be thirsty! A well-watered region is found to be dry and exhausted! It is a thirst that can only be quenched with the waters of truth from God's Word, the Bible. It is the story of Rahbeh, a small village of 2,200 inhabitants, nestled in the mountains in northern Lebanon, about 80 miles from Beirut.

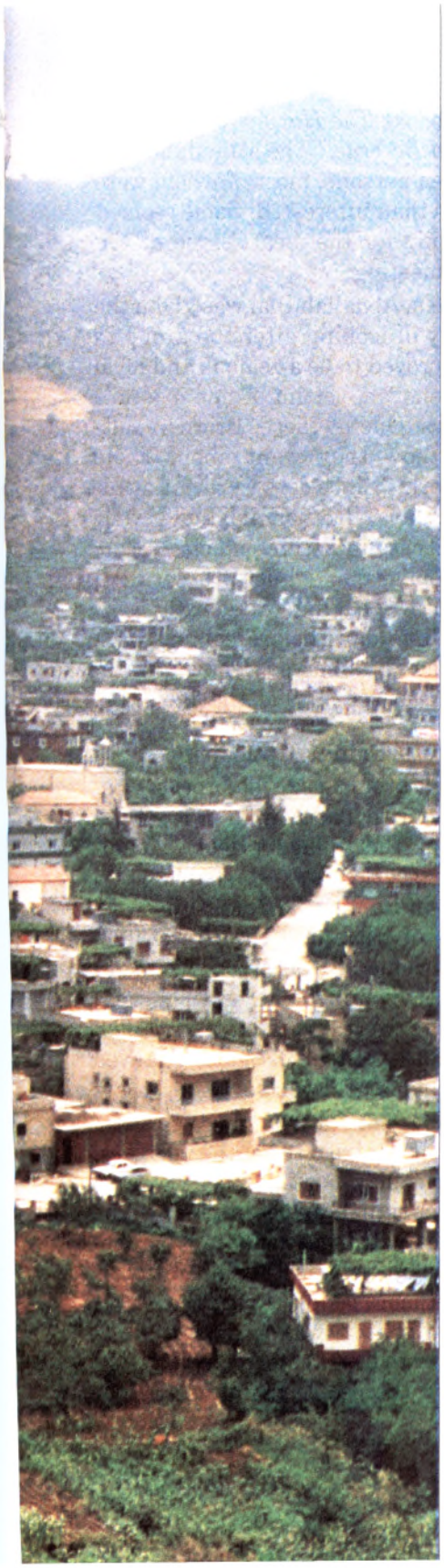
The name Rahbeh means "a roomy place" in Arabic, and it comes from a Semitic root meaning "extensive, spread out." Appropriately, the village is spread out over two large hills some 2,000 feet above sea level. During winter and spring, snow can be seen high on the mountains to the east, adding a touch of splendor. But, above all, Rahbeh is a village of many waters. There are 360 springs, large and small, in the area, providing precious water for the fertile fields of wheat, apricots, pears, peaches, and grapes in the surrounding valleys.

### Past and Present Meet in Rahbeh

In many respects things in Rahbeh have remained much the same since Bible times. Houses in the village are packed tightly together. The streets are narrow, winding, and teeming with traffic—asses and cows. Though there are some motor vehicles, the animals have the right-of-way here. Very often their owners load them with goods in the field and send them home by themselves. They follow the narrow streets, working their way in and out of tight spots, and get back to their home. Could this be similar to what Isaiah had in mind when he said: "A bull well knows its buyer, and the ass the manger of its owner"?—Isaiah 1:3.

Rahbeh is also a place of contrasts. Here you will find university graduates as well as simple peasants who have never been to a city. There are villas surrounded





with gardens, and there are small huts with livestock running about. Electric appliances are found in almost every home, but electricity is not always available. Because of this, many homes have generators. The main streets of the village are paved, although most paths leading to the fields are unpaved and rugged. Thus, the only way to transport the produce from the fields is by domestic animals. You may even see an ass carrying an electric generator to the field to power the farm machines, which are used right alongside draft animals in the fields.

Similarly, life in the village has not changed very much. If you stay in the village overnight, you may be awakened by cocks crowing at two or three in the morning. The daily routine begins early, so do not be surprised if you hear the noise of people shouting to one another in the dark while getting the animals ready. At the crack of dawn, you can see many villagers, with their animals loaded, heading for the fields or to the markets to sell their wares.

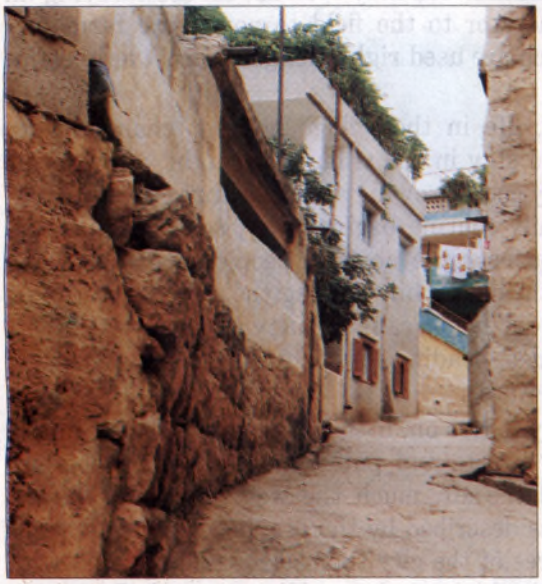
As the day moves on, little boys and girls come out to play in the streets and public places. Their cries and laughter fill the air, much the way it was in ancient Jerusalem as described by the prophet Zechariah: "The public squares of the city themselves will be filled with boys and girls playing in her public squares." (Zechariah 8:5) You will also find the villagers most friendly and inquisitive. You are expected to greet every villager you meet, as they want to know who you are, where you are from, why you are there, and where you are going. People get to know one another very well.

### Waters of Truth Reach Rahbeh

In such a close-knit community, news gets around quickly. This was what happened when Asaad Younis returned to Rahbeh from the United States in 1923. Wondering if Asaad had become rich in America, his friend Abdallah Blal went to see him. Instead of talking about money, Asaad gave him a copy of the book *The Harp of God* and told him: "Here is true riches." Abdallah, a former Protestant, read this Bible-based publication and was deeply impressed. Although Asaad did not do much about the information, Abdallah was excited

about what he had learned and openly confessed that he had found the truth.

Some time later, Abdallah moved to Tripoli, the major city in northern Lebanon. There, he was able to get in touch with several Bible Students, as Jehovah's Witnesses were known at that time, and he made



***A street scene in Rahbeh***

further progress in his Bible studies. He later moved back to Rahbeh to spread the good news he had learned. He would engage fellow villagers in discussions on such subjects as the Trinity, whether man has an immortal soul, hellfire, the priesthood, Mass, and the use of images, sharing with them what the Bible actually teaches.

Some of the villagers showed interest. Three or four of them joined Abdallah in the preaching work. Then they started to hold Sunday meetings. These consisted of listening to a recorded sermon from a phonograph or a reading from the Bible, followed by a discussion of what they had just heard. Later, some Bible study aids were used, including the books *The Harp of God, Riches,* and *"Let God Be True."* The attendance did not exceed ten persons, most of whom were more curious than interested. Some seemed to come mainly for the meal served at the end of each meeting.

In the 1940's, Abdallah Blal was given the responsibility of looking after the group in Rahbeh. He proved to be a zealous and loyal servant of Jehovah, setting a fine example for the others. One of these, Brother Mattar, recalls how they went about their preaching work: "Since cars were not available in those days, Brother Blal and I went on foot to witness in nearby villages. I carried the phonograph, while Brother Blal took the lead in speaking. We usually went for two or three days before coming back home." Brother Blal served Jehovah faithfully till his death in 1979 at the age of 98.

### Progress Brings Opposition

As the work progressed, the brothers began to experience opposition. In 1950, at the instigation of the village priest, a campaign of persecution was started against the brothers in Rahbeh. The priest accused the brothers of profaning the church and of sacrilege. Some villagers became so incensed that they stoned the brothers, and some brothers were arrested and jailed. However, subsequent investigation proved the accusations false. Even so, the brothers were kept in prison for several days.

Another opposer tried to get the villagers, some of whom may not have been able to read well, to sign a paper accusing the brothers of many things, including disturbing the people by insistently calling at their homes. To get more people to sign the paper, he told them that it was a request for a certain worker to be transferred back to the village. When the people found out that it

actually was a charge against the Witnesses, they blotted out their signatures. Incidents such as this helped in giving a good witness to many officials in the area.

Aside from dealing with such outright opposition, the brothers faced another obstacle. In a small village where everyone knows everyone else, "trembling at men is what lays a snare," as the Bible points out at Proverbs 29:25. It takes courage for the brothers to preach to neighbors, friends, and relatives, who constantly criticize and mock them. Real meaning is thus given to Jesus' words at Matthew 10:36: "A man's enemies will be persons of his own household." Yet, as the proverb goes on to say, "he that is trusting in Jehovah will be protected." The faith and endurance of the brothers have produced outstanding results.

### Truth Saturates Rahbeh

Over the years the villagers have come to appreciate the fine conduct of Jehovah's Witnesses, and many have accepted the truth. The brothers were overjoyed in 1969 when a second congregation was formed in Rahbeh. They continued to work very hard. Many took up the full-time ministry, some even moving to serve in other territories, including the city of Beirut. Jehovah blessed their hard work, and a third congregation was established in Rahbeh in 1983. Meanwhile, more brothers emigrated or moved to live in the cities. Still, the growth continued, and a fourth congregation was formed in Rahbeh in 1989, followed by a fifth in 1990.

By this time almost every family in the village had a relative or a friend who was a Witness. The hostility that once existed had died down. People became better acquainted with the Witnesses. In fact, the expressions "elder," "pioneer," "circuit overseer," "assembly," and "Armageddon" became a part of the villagers' vocabulary. On special occasions, such as the visit of the circuit overseer or the Memorial, the streets would be empty and the Kingdom Halls packed. Some congregations even put loudspeakers on the balcony for the convenience of the neighbors.

There are now over 250 Kingdom publishers in Rahbeh. That means that there is 1 Witness for about 8 persons in the village! One congregation of 51 publishers has a territory of 76 houses, and they cover it every week. Imagine what happened during the months of March and April last year when 98 of the 250 publishers took up the auxiliary pioneer work, along with the 13 regular pioneers in Rahbeh. The territory was covered many times each week. It was not unusual for one house to be called on by two or three pairs of publishers on the same day or even at the same time. Most of the villagers have become accustomed to the visits. But when a man complained, a publisher replied: "When you accept our offer to have a Bible study, then you will be called on only once a week." They also talk to everyone they meet in the fields—people plowing, sowing, watering, or riding on an ass.

For a fact, Bible truth has saturated Rahbeh, the village of many waters. That is not all. Just as Rahbeh has been the source of fresh water for many surrounding villages, it has also supplied them with life-giving waters of Bible truth. Publishers from Rahbeh visit people in nearby villages on foot and organize car groups and make day trips to preach in villages farther away. Some publishers move to serve in other cities. With Jehovah's blessing, there will be further increase that will render still more praise to the heavenly Father, Jehovah God.

# A Model Hebrew Bible Manuscript

BEFORE the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947, the earliest known Hebrew Bible manuscripts —apart from a few fragments—were from the late 9th to the 11th century C.E. That is barely a thousand years ago. Does this mean that before 1947 the Hebrew text of the Bible was uncertain? And why were there so few ancient Hebrew manuscripts?

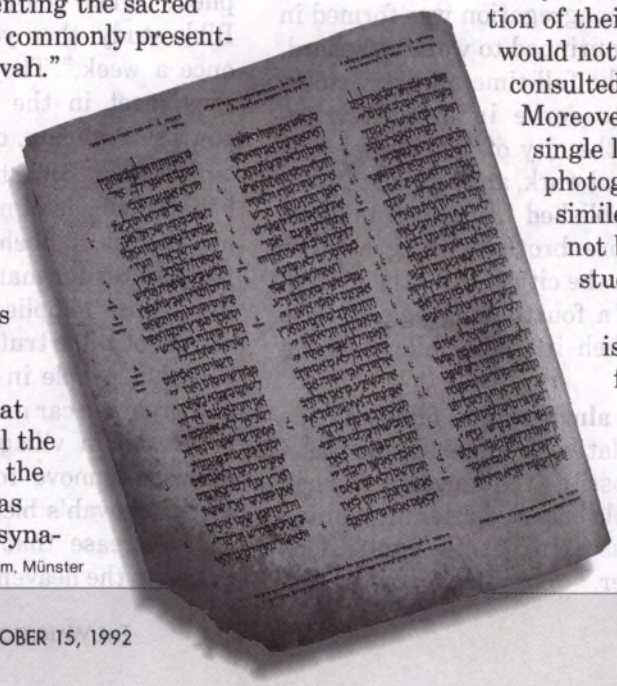
To consider that last question first, under the orthodox Jewish system, any Hebrew Bible manuscript considered too worn for further use was locked away in a genizah, a storeroom in the synagogue. Later, the accumulated worn manuscripts were taken out and buried. The Jews did this to prevent their Scriptures from being profaned or misused. Why? Because they contained the Tetragrammaton, the Hebrew letters representing the sacred name of God, which is commonly presented in English as "Jehovah."

## The "Crown"

For the most part, the ancient Hebrew text has been faithfully transmitted from earliest times. For example, there was an important Hebrew manuscript, called the *Keter,* the "Crown," that originally contained all the Hebrew Scriptures, or the "Old Testament." It was guarded in the oldest synagogue of an ancient, small community of Jews living in Aleppo, Syria, a predominantly Muslim town. Earlier, this manuscript had been left to the Karaite Jews in Jerusalem, but it was captured by the Crusaders in 1099. Later, the manuscript was regained and taken to Old Cairo, Egypt. It reached Aleppo by at least the 15th century and subsequently became known as the Aleppo Codex. This manuscript, dated back to at least 930 C.E., was considered the crown of Masoretic scholarship, as its name implies. It is a fine example to illustrate the care taken in the transmission of the Bible text and was, indeed, a model Hebrew manuscript.

In more modern times, the guardians of this outstanding manuscript, superstitiously fearing the desecration of their sacred object, would not allow it to be consulted by scholars. Moreover, since only a single leaf was ever photographed, a facsimile edition could not be published for study.

When the British withdrew from Palestine in 1948, riots broke out in Aleppo against the Jews.

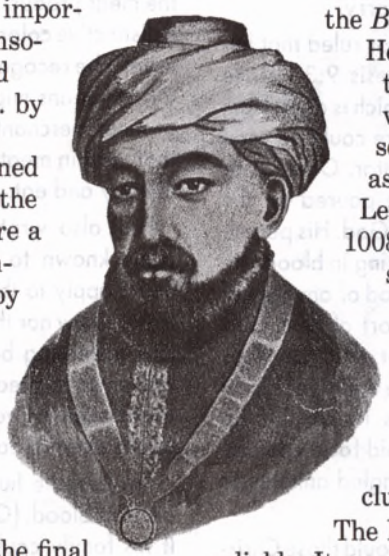


Bibelmuseum, Münster

Their synagogue was burned; the precious codex disappeared and was presumed destroyed. What a surprise, then, some ten years later, to learn that about three quarters of it had survived and been smuggled out of Syria to Jerusalem! In 1976 a fine facsimile edition of 500 copies in full color was finally issued.

### The Work of a Master

Why is this manuscript so important? Because its original consonantal text was corrected and punctuated by about 930 C.E. by Aaron ben Asher, one of the most celebrated scholars trained in copying and transmitting the Hebrew Bible. It was therefore a model codex, setting the standard for future copies made by less skilled scribes.



Originally it contained 380 folios (760 pages) and was written generally in three columns on parchment sheets. It now consists of 294 folios and lacks most of the Pentateuch and the final section, comprising Lamentations, Song of Solomon, Daniel, Esther, Ezra, and Nehemiah. It is cited as "Al" in the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—Reference Bible* (Joshua 21:37, footnote). Moses Maimonides (depicted here), a renowned medieval Jewish scholar of the 12th century C.E., pronounced the Aleppo Codex the best he had ever seen.*

The Hebrew text copied by hand from the 13th through the 15th century was a mixed one drawn from two major Masoretic text families, the Ben Asher and the Ben Naphtali. In the 16th century, Jacob ben Hayyim produced the text for a printed Hebrew Bible derived from this mixed tradition, and this became the basis for nearly all Hebrew Bibles printed for the next 400 years.

With the third edition in 1937 of the *Biblia Hebraica* (the printed Hebrew text), the Ben Asher tradition was consulted as it was preserved in a manuscript kept in Russia, known as the Leningrad B $19^A$. The Leningrad B $19^A$ dates from 1008 C.E. The Hebrew University in Jerusalem plans to publish the Aleppo Hebrew text in full over a period of time, along with readings from all other important manuscripts and versions, including the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The Bible text we use today is reliable. It was divinely inspired and was transmitted over the centuries by scribal copyists who worked with meticulous skill. The extreme care of these copyists is seen in that comparisons between the Isaiah scroll found beside the Dead Sea in 1947 and the Masoretic text show surprisingly few differences, even though the Dead Sea Scroll is more than a thousand years older than the oldest extant Masoretic Bible. Moreover, now that the Aleppo Codex is available to scholars, it will provide even more reason for confidence in the authenticity of the text of the Hebrew Scriptures. Truly, "as for the word of our God, it will last to time indefinite."—Isaiah 40:8.

Jewish Division / The New York Public Library / Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations

* For some years certain scholars doubted that the Aleppo Codex was the manuscript punctuated by Ben Asher. However, since the codex has been available for study, evidence has been forthcoming that it is the actual Ben Asher manuscript mentioned by Maimonides.

# QUESTIONS FROM READERS

***How concerned should Christians be that blood components, such as dried plasma, might have been added to food products?***

If there is valid basis to believe that animal blood (or a component of it) is definitely being used locally in food products, Christians should exercise due caution. Still, it would be unwise to be upset by mere suspicion or live with unfounded worry.

Early in man's history, our Creator ruled that humans should not eat blood. (Genesis 9:3, 4) He stated that blood represents life, which is a gift from him. Blood removed from a creature could be used only in sacrifice, such as on the altar. Otherwise, blood from a creature was to be poured on the ground, in a sense giving it back to God. His people were to avoid sustaining life by taking in blood. He decreed: "You must not eat the blood of any sort of flesh, because the soul of every sort of flesh is its blood. Anyone eating it will be cut off." (Leviticus 17:11-14) God's prohibition on the eating of blood was repeated for Christians. (Acts 15:28, 29) So the early Christians needed to avoid food containing blood, such as meat from strangled animals or blood sausage.

In practical terms, though, how would those Christians act on their determination to 'keep themselves from blood'? (Acts 21:25) Should they simply apply the apostle Paul's words: "Everything that is sold in a meat market keep eating, making no inquiry on account of your conscience"?

No. Those words at 1 Corinthians 10:25 refer to meat that might have been from an animal sacrificed at an idol temple. Back then, excess meat from temples was disposed of by being sold to merchants, who might include it among their supply of meat for sale in their stores. Paul's point was that meat from a temple was not intrinsically bad or contaminated. Evidently it was customary to drain and use on the pagan altars the blood of animals sacrificed there. So if some of the excess meat was sold in a market, with no obvious link to a temple or the misconceptions of pagans, Christians could simply buy it as commercial meat that was clean and that had been suitably drained of blood.

It would have to be different, however, if those Christians knew that meat from strangled animals (or blood sausage) was one of the choices at local shops. They would need to exercise care in choosing what meat to buy. They might be able to recognize the meat products that contained blood if such had a distinctive color (even as today blood sausage can usually be recognized in lands where it is common). Or Christians might inquire of a reputable butcher or meat merchant. If they had no reason to believe that certain meat contained blood, they could simply buy and eat.

Paul also wrote: "Let your reasonableness become known to all men." (Philippians 4:5) That could apply to the matter of buying meat. Neither Israel's Law nor the decree of the first-century Christian governing body indicated that God's people had to go to great lengths in inquiring about meat, even becoming vegetarians if there was the slightest doubt about blood being in available meat.

An Israelite hunter who killed an animal would drain its blood. (Compare Deuteronomy 12:15, 16.) If his family could not eat all the meat, he might sell some. Even in a properly bled carcass, a small amount of blood would remain in the meat, but nothing in the Bible suggests that a Jew buying meat needed to go to extremes in getting such facts as the number of minutes between killing and draining, which artery or vein was cut to let the blood flow, and how the animal was hung up and for how long. Furthermore, the governing body did not write that Christians had to take extraordinary precautions in this regard, as if they needed ultimate answers before eating any meat.

In many lands today, the law, custom, or religious practice is such that meat products (except for unusual items, such as blood sausage) are from animals that must be drained of blood when slaughtered. Thus, Christians in those areas normally need not be preoccupied with slaughtering or processing

methods. In an extended sense, they may simply 'keep eating commercial meat, making no inquiry,' and they can have a clear conscience that they are abstaining from blood.

There have occasionally been technical reports, though, about commercial blood use that have disturbed certain Christians. Some in the meat-processing industry reason that large amounts of blood from slaughtered animals can be collected for practical applications and profit, such as in fertilizers or animal feed. Researchers have studied whether such blood (or components) might be used in processed meats. A few commercial plants have even turned out limited amounts of liquid, frozen, or powdered plasma (or decolorized red-cell material) that might be substituted for a small percentage of meat in sausagelike products or pâté. Other studies have centered on using powdered blood derivatives as a filler or to bind water and fat in ground meat, in baking products, or in other foods and drinks to add protein or iron.

It is worth noting, however, that such research has been going on for decades. Yet, it seems that use of such products has been very limited, or even nonexistent, in most lands. Some typical reports help to show why:

"Blood is a source of nutritional and functional proteins. However, beef blood has been used only in limited quantities for direct human consumption because of the intense color and characteristic taste."—*Journal of Food Science*, Volume 55, Number 2, 1990.

"Blood plasma proteins have useful properties such as high solubility, emulsifying activity and hydrophobicity . . . and their use in food processing offers great advantages. However, no effective system to sanitize plasma, especially after dehydration, has been established in Japan."—*Journal of Food Science*, Volume 56, Number 1, 1991.

Some Christians have occasionally checked the labels on packaged foods, since many governments require that ingredients be listed. And they may choose to do so regularly with any product that they have reason to believe might contain blood. It would be right, of course, to avoid products that listed things such as blood, blood plasma, plasma, globin (or globulin) protein, or hemoglobin (or globin) iron. Marketing information from one European company in this field acknowledged: "Information concerning the use of globin as an ingredient must be marked on the package of the food in such a way that the consumer is not misled as to the composition or value of the food."

However, even as to checking labels or making inquiry of butchers, reasonableness is needed. It is not as if every Christian worldwide must study the labels and ingredients on all packaged food or should interrogate employees at restaurants or food stores. A Christian might first ask himself, 'Is there any verified evidence that blood and its derivatives are used in normal food products in this area or country?' In most places the answer is no. Hence, many Christians have concluded that they personally will not divert a great deal of time and attention to checking on remote possibilities. A person who does not feel this way should act in accord with his conscience, without judging others who might resolve the matter otherwise but in good conscience before God.—Romans 14:2-4, 12.

Even if food products containing blood can be produced, it may well be that this is not widely done because of cost, legislation, or other factors. For example, *Food Processing* (September 1991) noted: "For those processors that have any problems with the less than 1% (in the finished meat patty) of hydrolyzed beef plasma in the blend, an alternate mix replaces it with whey protein concentrate and could be certified as Kosher."

It bears emphasizing that law, custom, or taste in many lands is such that blood is normally drained from slaughtered animals and that such blood is not used in other food products. If there is no substantial basis for thinking that the situation is different locally or that a major change has occurred recently, Christians should guard against becoming disturbed by mere possibility or rumor. When, though, it is certain or highly likely that blood is widely used —whether in food or in medical treatment—we should be determined to obey God's command to abstain from blood.

# Prophecy Fulfilled

WHEN Christ Jesus was asked by his disciples for the sign of his invisible presence in Kingdom power, Jesus foretold an "increasing of lawlessness." (Matthew 24:3, 12) Is this prophecy being fulfilled in our day?

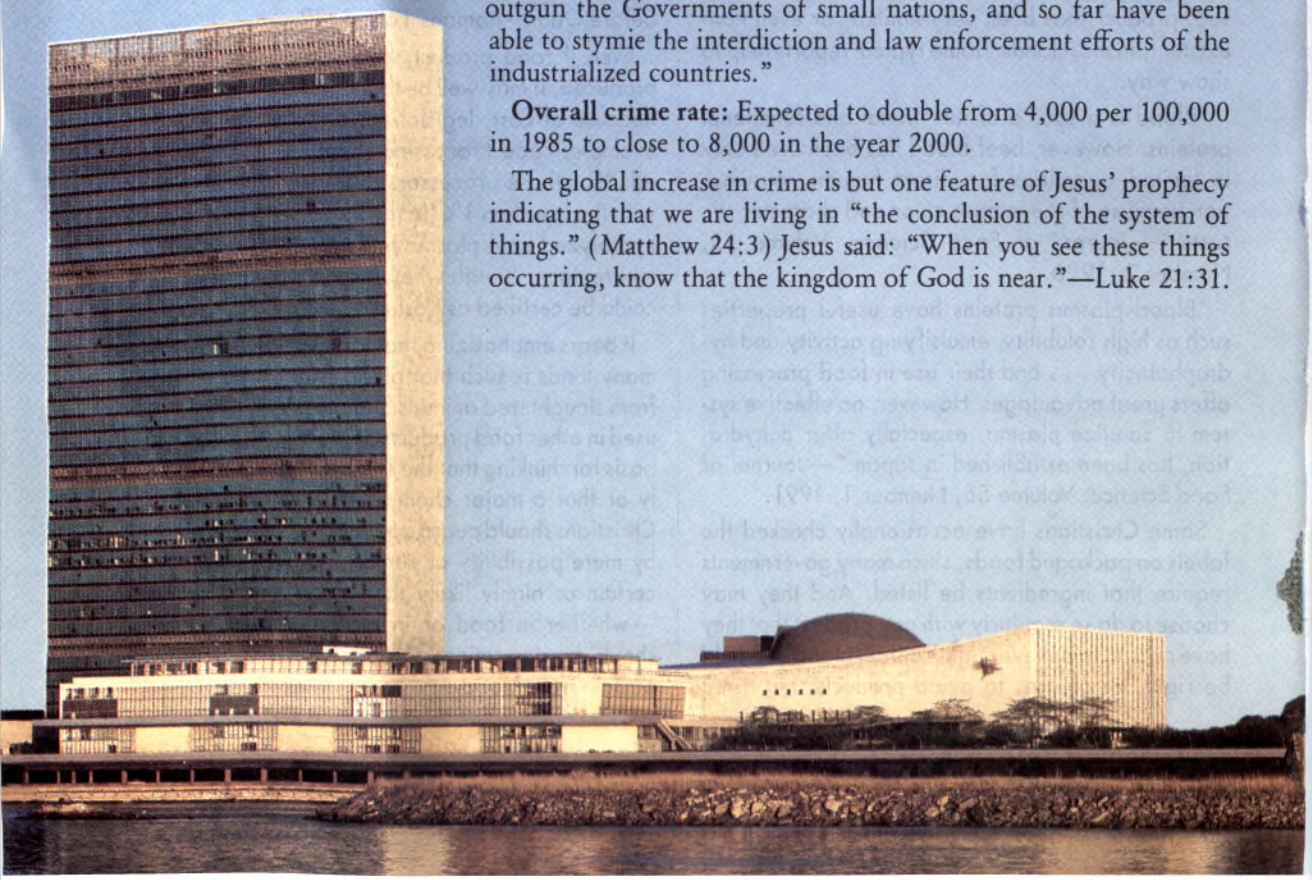
Indeed it is! The book *The United Nations and Crime Prevention,* published by the UN in October 1991, states: "Serious crime is an exceptionally severe problem for the majority of the nations of the world. Domestic crime has outstripped the control of most individual nations and transnational crime has accelerated far beyond the current reach of the international community. . . . Crime by organized criminal groups has expanded to alarming proportions, with particularly serious consequences in terms of physical violence, intimidation and corruption of public officials. Terrorism has claimed tens of thousands of innocent victims. Predatory trafficking in addictive narcotics has become a worldwide tragedy. Criminally reckless environmental destruction has taken such alarming forms and dimensions that it has become recognized as a crime against the world itself."

**Assaults:** An increase from 150 assaults per 100,000 people in 1970 to nearly 400 per 100,000 in 1990.

**Thefts:** An increase from just over 1,000 per 100,000 in 1970 to 3,500 per 100,000 in 1990.

**Intentional homicides:** In developing countries, an increase from 1 to 2.5 per 100,000 between 1975 and 1985. In developed countries the increase for the same period was from less than 3 to over 3.5.

**Drug-related crime:** The book observes: "Major trafficking combines can literally outspend and outgun the Governments of small nations, and so far have been able to stymie the interdiction and law enforcement efforts of the industrialized countries."

**Overall crime rate:** Expected to double from 4,000 per 100,000 in 1985 to close to 8,000 in the year 2000.

The global increase in crime is but one feature of Jesus' prophecy indicating that we are living in "the conclusion of the system of things." (Matthew 24:3) Jesus said: "When you see these things occurring, know that the kingdom of God is near."—Luke 21:31.