

THE WATCHTOWER
ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

DECEMBER 15, 1992

**What Really
Is the Gospel?**

THE WATCHTOWERTM

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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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What Really Is the Gospel?

DURING the Christmas season, people in many lands hear about, and even personally speak about, the Gospel. The term is very common, but does it have more meaning than most imagine? Could the Gospel mean something outstandingly good for you and your loved ones?

"Gospel" means "good news," and surely, good news is welcome not just at Christmas-time but anytime. However, *the* Gospel is not just any good news. It is a specific good news from a definite source about a particular subject. It is, in fact, a message that God has appointed to be announced to all mankind.

Eugênio Salles, archbishop of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, spoke about that good news when he urged: "We should act in harmony with the Gospel and not in the light of ideologies." The archbishop was correct. To act in harmony with the Gospel, however, requires that we know what the Gospel is. How can we learn that? And how will acting in harmony with the Gospel help us?

What Is the Gospel?

The nature of the Gospel is often misunderstood. In 1918 the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America hailed the now defunct League of Nations as the political expression of the Kingdom of God on earth and declared that it was "rooted in the Gospel." That body failed dismally in its goal to preserve peace. Clearly, the council was wrong. The League of Nations had nothing to do with the Gospel.

In recent years promoters of liberation theology have freely brought up the Gospel when talking about their

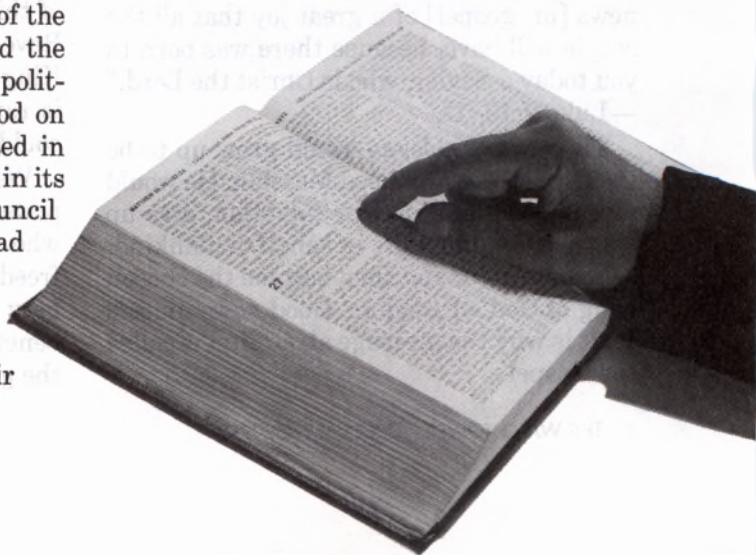
ideas for political or social reformation. In doing so they have disregarded the real Gospel. The Brazilian magazine *Veja* commented: "The Catholic Church began to favor the social kingdom, ignoring the spiritual needs of its faithful. Those who sought the word *God* in a sermon often found only rhetorical arguments against social injustices."

An improvement in living conditions or a change in political systems may be good news to some. Yet, such is not *the* good news, *the* Gospel. Admitting his church's failure to preach the real Gospel, one bishop said: "We neglected the spiritual teaching of our faithful since the 60's because of a materialistic interference in our doctrine."

A report in the U.S. news magazine *Time* suggests that Protestants too have lost sight of the Gospel. The magazine observes: "Not only are the traditional denominations failing to get their message across; they are increasingly unsure just what that message is." What should their message be? What is the Gospel?

Identifying the Gospel

Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary defines "Gospel" as "the message



concerning Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation." The word "gospel" is also defined as "an interpretation of the Christian message (the social gospel)"; "the message or teachings of a religious teacher." Do all these definitions apply? No, not if we are speaking of *the* Gospel. The real Gospel is based on the Bible; hence, only the first of those three definitions is accurate. The last two merely reflect the way that the word "gospel" has come to be used today.

In harmony with this thought, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* says that in the Christian Greek Scriptures (the "New Testament"), the Gospel "denotes the good tidings of the Kingdom of God and of salvation through Christ, to be received by faith, on the basis of His expiatory death." It is important to understand this because a correct understanding of the true good news has much to do with our present well-being and future happiness.

A Distinct Message

As the foregoing reference work shows, the Gospel is closely linked with Jesus Christ—so much so that the four Bible accounts of his life on earth are called the four Gospels. Right from the beginning of his human life, news about Jesus was good news. When announcing his birth, an angel said: "Look! I am declaring to you good news [or, gospel] of a great joy that all the people will have, because there was born to you today a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." —Luke 2:10, 11.

The newborn Jesus would grow up to be the Christ, the promised Messiah. He would reveal God's purpose for salvation, give up his perfect human life in behalf of mankind, be resurrected, and then become the chosen King of God's Kingdom. Good news indeed! That is why the message about him is called the Gospel.

During his short earthly ministry, Jesus was very zealous in preaching the good news. We read in the Gospel of Matthew: "Jesus set out on a tour of all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching *the good news of the kingdom*." (Matthew 9:35) His preaching was not just to make people feel better. Mark records Jesus as saying: "The appointed time has been fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has drawn near. Be repentant, you people, and have faith in the good news." (Mark 1:15) Yes, those who responded and obeyed the good news found that it changed their lives.

After Jesus' death, his followers continued to preach the Gospel. Not only did they speak about the Kingdom but they added the happy news that Jesus had been resurrected to God's right hand in the heavens and had offered the value of his perfect human life in behalf of mankind. As the one chosen by God to rule over all the earth as King of God's Kingdom, he would be God's Agent in destroying God's enemies and in restoring the earth to a paradise.—Acts 2:32-36; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10; Hebrews 9:24-28; Revelation 22:1-5.

Today, the good news includes a further element. According to all the evidence of the fulfillment of prophecy, Jesus has now been enthroned, and we are living in the last days of this system of things. (2 Timothy 3:1-5; Revelation 12:7-12) The time when the Kingdom will act against God's enemies is rapidly approaching. What better news could there be?

We will see in the following article how powerful the Gospel is. It helped one woman who was ensnared by black magic to find freedom. It helped a man in prison for robbery to find happiness. And it will greatly benefit you also—if you listen to and obey the good news.

How Can the Gospel Benefit You?

THE Bible is highly regarded for its literary value—even by some atheists.

Really, though, few read it in order to apply what it says. Moreover, since the good news it contains dates from nearly two thousand years ago, many people seem to believe that it should be modernized, brought up-to-date. Is the Gospel archaic or obsolete? Not at all.

There are men and women, young and old, numbering into the millions, who know that the Bible is an invaluable source of help. It is as the preface of *Today's English Version* reads: "The Bible is not simply great literature to be admired and revered; it is Good News for all people everywhere—a message both to be understood and to be applied in daily life."

What does the Gospel mean to you? Do you use it as a guide in your daily life? Consider how the good news benefited some who listened to it in the first century and how some have benefited in our time.

People Helped by the Gospel

In Jesus' day individuals such as hard-working fishermen and housewives were attracted by the good news and learned the truth about God's purpose for man. The good news radically changed their lives and often brought them profound relief. For example, Mary Magdalene was cured of demon possession. Zacchaeus, formerly a chief tax collector, abandoned his greedy way of life. (Luke 8:2; 19:1-10) The blind and the lepers were helped when they came to Jesus, the one preaching the good news. (Luke 17: 11-19; John 9:1-7) Jesus could rightly say: "The blind are seeing again, and the lame

are walking about, the lepers are being cleansed and the deaf are hearing, and the dead are being raised up, and the poor are having the good news declared to them." —Matthew 11:5.

More important than their healing, though, was the way the good news changed many of those disadvantaged individuals as persons. Honesthearted ones were filled with hope for the future. They put their trust in God's Kingdom—something better than any social gospel. (Matthew 4:23) Their hope was not frustrated by Jesus' death. Describing matters even after that event, Acts 5:42 says of his disciples: "Every day in the temple and from house to house they continued without letup teaching and declaring the good news about the Christ, Jesus." In the first century, people in many lands received spiritual help because they responded to such preaching.

The Kingdom was the best of news back then. Is the Kingdom message still good news?

What Does the Good News Mean Today?

If you long for a peaceful, secure world, then the news of the Kingdom surely is good. In fact, in a world with hundreds of millions of undernourished and starving people, with frightful diseases threatening everyone, with an alarming increase in crime, and with spreading political instability, it is the only real and lasting good news. It represents the only hope of true improvement.

That is why Jesus prophesied concerning our day: "This good news of the kingdom

will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come.” (Matthew 24:14) These words are being fulfilled in a remarkable way as Jehovah’s Witnesses preach the good news in more than 200 lands. A Catholic publication, *Nova Evangelização 2000*, commends the Witnesses for this, saying: “Where do we find Jehovah’s Witnesses? On the doorsteps of the homes. And to be a Witness of Jehovah, besides belonging to Jehovah, one has to be a witness. Therefore, we find them working, announcing, presenting, what they have experienced.”

However, no one benefits automatically from the good news. It will help only those who listen and obey. In order to demonstrate this point, Jesus gave the parable about a man going out to sow seed. The different kinds of soil that the seed fell on illustrated the different kinds of heart condition that hearers of the good news demonstrate. Jesus said: “Where anyone hears the word of the kingdom but does not get the sense of it, the wicked one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart . . . As for the one sown upon the fine soil, this is the one hearing the word and getting the sense of it, who really does bear fruit and produces, this one a hundredfold, that one sixty, the other thirty.”—Matthew 13:18-23.

As in the first century, most people today make little effort to understand the good news. They do not get the sense of it, and thus they lose out. Others show appreciation for the good news and learn how to bring their lives into harmony with God’s will. In this way they are blessed. To which group do you belong?

The Power of the Gospel Today

Experiences testify that understanding the good news helps those who “had no hope

and were without God.” (Ephesians 2:12; 4:22-24) Roberto from Rio de Janeiro needed help. Since his youth, he had led a debauched way of life, being involved in drugs, immorality, and thievery. Eventually he ended up in prison. While there Roberto studied the Bible with a visiting Witness. He progressed so well spiritually that his prison term was greatly reduced.

After being released, Roberto met a young girl he had once mugged and threatened with a gun. She too was studying the Bible with Jehovah’s Witnesses. What happened? The following is part of a letter relating the incident: “They met each other in the Kingdom Hall for the first time after the assault. The encounter was touching. Both shed tears of emotion and embraced as brother and sister. Now both the ex-thief and his victim praise Jehovah.”

Another individual, Isabel, also needed help, for she was known for her bad temper. She was deeply involved in spiritism and witchcraft and was tormented by demons. As she studied the Bible with Jehovah’s Witnesses, she found that the good news really helped. After some time, she shook off the control of the demons and changed her personality—finally learning to control her temper. Now she is a faithful Christian, known as a person who is kind in dealing with others.

Yes, the good news is not merely theory. It has real power to transform lives. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11) It does even more than that. It also points to future blessings.

Blessings Yet Ahead

According to God’s Word, the future holds marvelous prospects. We will see the fulfillment of Jesus’ prayer for God’s Kingdom to come and for His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. (Matthew 6:10) Shortly, the present system of things with its depressing

corruption and violence will be removed, and God's heavenly government, his Kingdom, will rule over righteous individuals who were willing to listen to and obey the good news.—Daniel 2:44.

Radical improvements will follow as faithful humans are directed to transform the earth into a paradise where meek ones will live forever. (Psalm 37:11, 29) Surely, it is good news that crime, disease, famine, pollution, and wars will disappear forever! Can you envision yourself and your family living in that new world in peace and perfect health without fear of sickness or death?—Revelation 21:4.

True, many consider such good news to be simplistic or imaginary. But they are wrong. The good news is based on the most solid evidence, and it has already changed millions of lives. Therefore, never be intimidated if others do not believe.

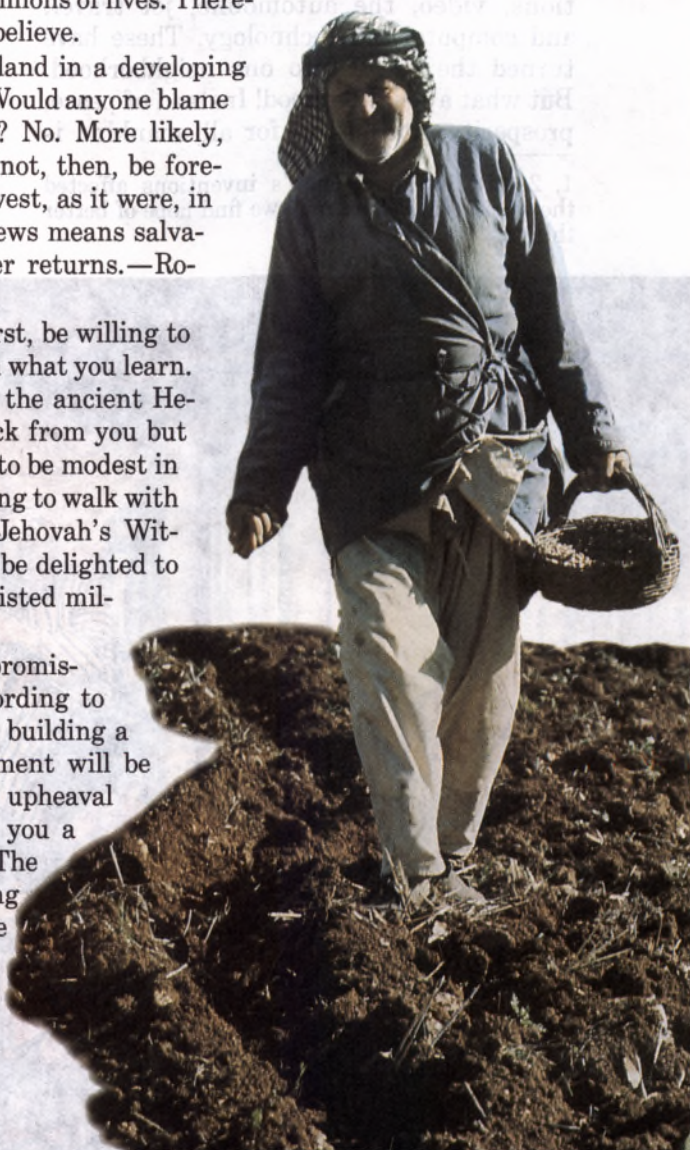
Imagine a prudent individual who buys land in a developing area, hoping to profit from his investment. Would anyone blame him for investing his money in this way? No. More likely, people would say he is acting wisely. Why not, then, be foresighted with regard to the Kingdom and invest, as it were, in the good news? Since accepting the good news means salvation, no other investment will bring better returns.—Romans 1:16.

How can you invest in the good news? First, be willing to be taught by God. Then act in harmony with what you learn. Follow the basic requirements, as listed by the ancient Hebrew prophet: "What is Jehovah asking back from you but to exercise justice and to love kindness and to be modest in walking with your God?" (Micah 6:8) Learning to walk with God takes time and effort. Nevertheless, Jehovah's Witnesses, who helped Roberto and Isabel, will be delighted to assist you in this regard—as they have assisted millions of others over the years.

While awaiting the fulfillment of God's promises, nurture your investment by living according to the good news, enjoying peace of mind and building a closer relationship with God. Your investment will be safe—no economic depression or political upheaval will threaten it. And finally, it will bring you a wonderful return. What is that return? The apostle John wrote: "The world is passing away and so is its desire, but he that does the will of God remains forever."—1 John 2:17.

Garo Nalbandian

Seeds of the good news fall on different kinds of soil



JEHOVAH, THE DOER OF WONDROUS THINGS

"You are great and are doing wondrous things; you are God, you alone."

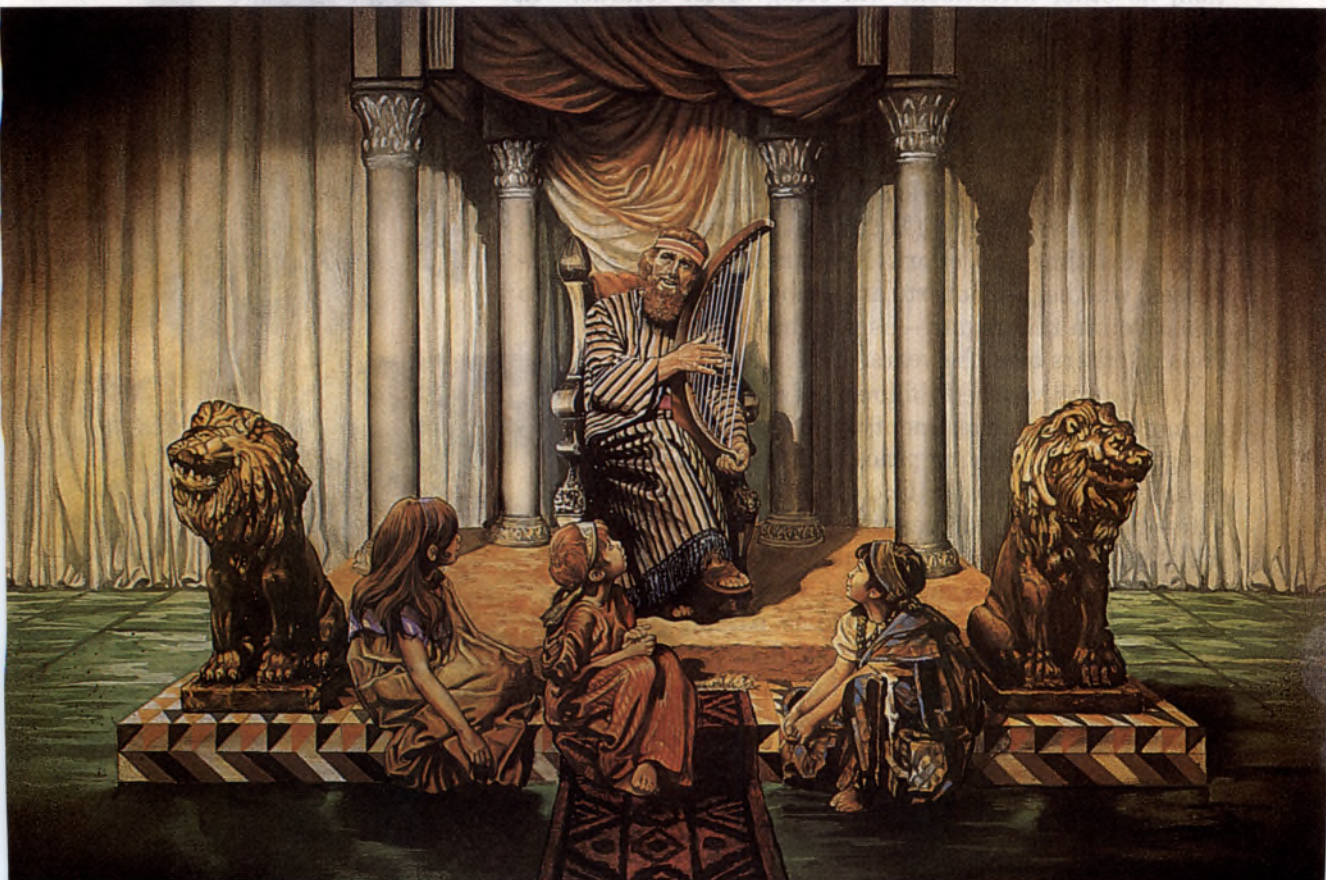
—PSALM 86:10.

MODERN man may boast that his inventions are wondrous—electrical devices, telecommunications, video, the automobile, jet travel, and computerized technology. These have turned the world into one neighborhood. But what a neighborhood! Instead of peace, prosperity, and plenty for all, mankind is

1, 2. (a) How have man's inventions affected the world? (b) Where may we find hope of better things?

plagued by murderous wars, crime, terrorism, pollution, diseases, and poverty. And the nuclear weapons scattered around the world, though reduced in number, could still annihilate the human race. Merchants of death, the armaments manufacturers, continue to operate the biggest business on earth. The rich grow richer, and the poor poorer. Can anyone find a way out?

² Yes! For there is Someone who guarantees deliverance, "one that is higher than



the high one," Jehovah God. (Ecclesiastes 5:8) He inspired the writing of the psalms, which provide much comfort and wise counsel for times of distress. Among them is Psalm 86, which carries the simple superscription: "A prayer of David." It is a prayer that you can make your own.

Afflicted but Loyal

³ David wrote this psalm when under affliction. We today, who are living through "the last days" of Satan's system, these "critical times hard to deal with," face similar trials. (2 Timothy 3:1; see also Matthew 24:9-13.) Like us, David suffered anxieties and depression because of the problems bearing in upon him. But he never permitted those trials to weaken his loyal trust in his Creator. He cried out: "Incline, O Jehovah, your ear. Answer me, for I am afflicted and poor. O do guard my soul, for I am loyal. Save your servant—you are my God—that is trusting in you."—Psalm 86:1, 2.

⁴ We can be confident, as David was, that "the God of all comfort," Jehovah, will turn his ear to this earth and listen to our humble prayers. (2 Corinthians 1:3, 4) Trusting implicitly in our God, we can follow David's advice: "Throw your burden upon Jehovah himself, and he himself will sustain you. Never will he allow the righteous one to totter."—Psalm 55:22.

Intimacy With Jehovah

⁵ In the 86th Psalm, David uses the expression "O Jehovah" 11 times. How fervent is David's prayer and how close his intimacy with Jehovah! Later, such intimate use of

3. In these times, what encouraging example does David provide for us?

4. How should we show our confidence?

5. (a) How have some careful translations reversed the errors of Jewish scribes? (b) In what way do the 85th and 86th psalms magnify Jehovah? (See footnote.)

God's name became distasteful to Jewish scribes, notably the Sopherim. They nurtured a superstitious fear of misusing the name. Ignoring the fact that man had been created in God's image, they declined to ascribe to God attributes that humans also display. So in 7 of the 11 occurrences of the divine name in the Hebrew text of this one psalm, they substituted the title 'Adho-nai' (Lord) for the name YHWH (Jehovah). We can be grateful that the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, as well as a number of other careful translations, have restored the divine name to its rightful place in God's Word. As a result, our relationship to Jehovah is emphasized as it should be.*

⁶ The prayer of David continues: "Show me favor, O Jehovah, for to you I keep calling all day long. Make the soul of your servant rejoice, for to you, O Jehovah, I lift up my very soul." (Psalm 86:3, 4) Note that David kept calling on Jehovah "all day long." Indeed, he often prayed through the night, as when he was a fugitive in the wilderness. (Psalm 63:6, 7) Similarly today, some Witnesses when threatened with rape or other criminal assault have cried aloud to Jehovah. At times they have been surprised at the happy result.[#] Jehovah's name is precious to us, even as it was to "Jesus Christ, son of David," when he was on earth. Jesus taught

* A Bible commentary of 1874 quotes Andrew A. Bonar as saying: "There was much, very much, of God's peculiar character, his glorious name, brought to view in the close of the last [85th] Psalm. This may account for its being followed by another, 'A Prayer of David,' almost equally full of the character of Jehovah. The key-note of this [86th] Psalm is Jehovah's name."

[#] See page 28 of the June 22, 1984, issue of *Awake!* published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

6. In what ways can we show that Jehovah's name is precious to us?

his disciples to pray for the sanctification of Jehovah's name and made known to them what the name stands for.—Matthew 1:1; 6:9; John 17:6, 25, 26.

⁷ David lifted up his soul, his entire self, to Jehovah. He encourages us to do likewise, saying at Psalm 37:5: "Roll upon Jehovah your way, and rely upon him, and he himself will act." Thus our plea to Jehovah for him to make our soul rejoice will not go unanswered. Many integrity-keeping servants of Jehovah continue to find great joy in his service—despite hardships, persecutions, and illnesses. Our brothers in war-torn areas in Africa, such as Angola, Liberia, Mozambique, and Zaire, have continued to place Jehovah's service first in their lives.*

* For details, see the chart "1992 Service Year Report of Jehovah's Witnesses Worldwide," to appear in the January 1, 1993, issue of *The Watchtower*.

7. What examples do we have of Jehovah's lifting up the very soul of his servants, and how should we respond?

He has truly caused them to rejoice in a bounteous spiritual harvest. As they have endured, so must we. (Romans 5:3-5) And as we endure, we are assured: "The vision is yet for the appointed time, and it keeps panting on to the end . . . It will not be late." (Habakkuk 2:3) With complete confidence and trust in Jehovah, may we also keep "panting on to the end."

Jehovah's Goodness

⁸ David makes the further impassioned plea: "*You, O Jehovah, are good and ready to forgive; and the loving-kindness to all those calling upon you is abundant. Do give ear, O Jehovah, to my prayer; and do pay attention to the voice of my entreaties. In the day of my distress I will call upon you, for you*

8. What intimacy may we have with Jehovah, and how has he manifested his goodness?

In the coming "new earth," the wondrous works of Jehovah will continue to testify to his glory and goodness



will answer me.” (Psalm 86:5-7) “O Jehovah”—again and again we thrill to the intimacy of this expression! It is an intimacy that may constantly be cultivated through prayer. David prayed on another occasion: “The sins of my youth and my revolts O do not remember. According to your loving-kindness do you yourself remember me, for the sake of your goodness, O Jehovah.” (Psalm 25:7) Jehovah is the very epitome of goodness—in providing Jesus’ ransom, in showing mercy to repentant sinners, and in showering loving-kindness on his loyal and appreciative Witnesses.—Psalm 100:3-5; Malachi 3:10.

⁹ Should we fret over past mistakes? If we are now making straight paths for our feet, we are buoyed up when we recall the apostle Peter’s assurance to repentant ones that “seasons of refreshing” will come from Jehovah. (Acts 3:19) Let us keep close to Jehovah in prayer through our Ransomer, Jesus, who lovingly said: “Come to me, all you who are toiling and loaded down, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am mild-tempered and lowly in heart, and you will find refreshment for your souls.” As loyal Witnesses pray to Jehovah today in Jesus’ precious name, they do indeed find refreshment.—Matthew 11:28, 29; John 15:16.

¹⁰ The book of Psalms refers to Jehovah’s “loving-kindness” over a hundred times. Such loving-kindness is surely abundant! In its first four verses, the 118th Psalm appeals to God’s servants to thank Jehovah, repeating four times “for his loving-kindness is to time indefinite.” The 136th Psalm emphasizes the endearing quality of “his loving-kindness” 26 times. In whatever ways we

err—and as James 3:2 says, “we all stumble many times”—may we be ready to seek Jehovah’s forgiveness, confident of his mercy and loving-kindness. His loving-kindness is an expression of his loyal love toward us. If we loyally continue to do God’s will, he will show his loyal love in strengthening us to cope with every trial.—1 Corinthians 10:13.

¹¹ There may be occasions when we are stumbled by others. Emotional or physical abuse during childhood has left some with feelings of guilt or of utter unworthiness. Such a victim may call to Jehovah, confident that he will answer. (Psalm 55:16, 17) A kindly elder may take an interest in helping such a one to accept the fact that it was not the victim’s fault. Thereafter, a periodic friendly phone call by the elder can help that one until he (or she) is able at last to ‘carry the burden.’—Galatians 6:2, 5.

¹² There are many other distressing circumstances that Jehovah’s people have to contend with today. Starting with World War I in 1914, major calamities began to afflict this earth. As foretold by Jesus, they were “a beginning of pangs of distress.” Distresses have multiplied as we have progressed deeper into “the conclusion of the system of things.” (Matthew 24:3, 8) The Devil’s “short period of time” is winding down toward its climactic end. (Revelation 12:12) “Like a roaring lion” in search of prey, that great Adversary is using every available subterfuge to separate us from the flock of God and destroy us. (1 Peter 5:8) But he will not succeed! For, like David, we anchor our trust completely in our one God, Jehovah.

9. What assurance should repentant sinners take to heart?

10. What prominence does the book of Psalms give to Jehovah’s loving-kindness?

11. How may action by elders help to remove guilt feelings?

12. How have distresses multiplied, but how may we successfully cope with them?

¹³ Doubtless, David instilled in his son Solomon's heart the need to rely on Jehovah's goodness. Thus, Solomon could instruct his own son: "Trust in Jehovah with all your heart and do not lean upon your own understanding. In all your ways take notice of him, and he himself will make your paths straight. Do not become wise in your own eyes. Fear Jehovah and turn away from bad." (Proverbs 3:5-7) Parents today should likewise teach their little ones how to pray trustingly to Jehovah and how to cope with the assaults of a heartless world—such as peer pressure at school and temptations to commit immorality. Living the truth with your children each day can impress on their young hearts real love for Jehovah and prayerful reliance on him.—Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 11:18, 19.

Jehovah's Incomparable Works

¹⁴ With deep conviction David says: *"There is none like you among the gods, O Jehovah, neither are there any works like yours."* (Psalm 86:8) Jehovah's works are greater, grander, more majestic, than any human could even imagine. As glimpsed by

13. How may parents and their children avail themselves of Jehovah's goodness?

14, 15. What are some of Jehovah's incomparable works?

In Our Next Issue

Rejoicing in Our Grand Creator

Gerizim—'On This Mountain
We Worshiped'

God Does Not Forget "the Love
You Showed for His Name"

modern science, the created universe—its vastness, its harmony, its magnificence—has proved to be far more stupendous than anything David perceived. Yet, even he was moved to say: "The heavens are declaring the glory of God; and of the work of his hands the expanse is telling."—Psalm 19:1.

¹⁵ Jehovah's works are wonderfully portrayed, too, in the way that he positioned and prepared the earth, providing for day and night, the seasons, seedtime and harvest, and a multitude of delights for future human enjoyment. And how wonderfully we ourselves are made and equipped, so that we are able to enjoy Jehovah's works that surround us!—Genesis 2:7-9; 8:22; Psalm 139:14.

¹⁶ After our first parents had disobeyed God, triggering the distresses that plague the earth to this day, Jehovah out of his love performed a wondrous work in sending his Son to earth to proclaim God's Kingdom and to die as a ransom for mankind. And wonder of wonders! Jehovah then resurrected Christ to become his associate King-elect. (Matthew 20:28; Acts 2:32, 34) From loyal humans God has also chosen "a new creation" that will rule with Christ as a benevolent "new heaven" over "a new earth" society that will include billions of resurrected humans. (2 Corinthians 5:17; Revelation 21:1, 5-7; 1 Corinthians 15:22-26) Jehovah's works will thus move on to a glorious climax! Truly, we can exclaim: "O Jehovah, . . . how abundant your goodness is, which you have treasured up for those fearing you!"—Psalm 31:17-19.

¹⁷ Jehovah's present-day works include what David describes at Psalm 86:9: "All

16. What is the greatest expression of Jehovah's goodness, leading to what further incomparable works?

17. With regard to Jehovah's works, how is Psalm 86:9 now being fulfilled?

the nations whom you have made will themselves come, and they will bow down before you, O Jehovah, and will give glory to your name." After calling out from among mankind the remaining ones of his new creation, the "little flock" of Kingdom heirs, Jehovah has proceeded to gather from among "all nations" "a great crowd" of "other sheep," millions who also exercise faith in Jesus' shed blood. These he has built into a dynamic organization, the only global society of peace lovers on earth today. Observing this, the heavenly hosts prostrate themselves before Jehovah, declaring: "The blessing and the glory and the wisdom and the thanksgiving and the honor and the power and the strength be to our God forever and ever." The great crowd also glorifies Jehovah's name, serving him "day and night," with the hope of surviving this world's end and living forever on a paradise earth.—Luke 12:32; Revelation 7:9-17; John 10:16.

Jehovah's Greatness

¹⁸ David next calls attention to Jehovah's Godship, saying: "*You are great and are doing wondrous things; you are God, you alone.*" (Psalm 86:10) From of old, Jehovah has been demonstrating that he is, indeed, 'God alone.' It was a tyrannical Pharaoh of Egypt who defiantly challenged Moses: "Who is Jehovah, so that I should obey his voice to send Israel away? I do not know Jehovah at all." But he soon got to learn how great Jehovah is! Almighty God humiliated Egypt's gods and magic-practicing priests by sending catastrophic plagues, slaying Egypt's firstborn sons, and annihilating Pharaoh and his elite army in the Red Sea. Truly, there is no one like Jehovah among the gods!—Exodus 5:2; 15:11, 12.

18. How has Jehovah demonstrated that he is 'God alone'?

¹⁹ As God alone, Jehovah has proceeded to do wondrous things in preparation for delivering his obedient worshipers from modern Egypt—Satan's world. He has had his divine judgments proclaimed in all the earth as a witness by means of the most extensive preaching campaign in all history, thus fulfilling Jesus' prophecy at Matthew 24:14. Shortly, "the end" must come, when Jehovah will demonstrate his greatness on an unprecedented scale by wiping out all wickedness on earth. (Psalm 145:20) Then the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb will reach a crescendo: "Great and wonderful are your works, Jehovah God, the Almighty. Righteous and true are your ways, King of eternity. Who will not really fear you, Jehovah, and glorify your name, because you alone are loyal?"—Revelation 15:3, 4.

²⁰ May we for our part be zealous in talking to others about these magnificent purposes of God. (Compare Acts 2:11.) Jehovah will continue to do great and wondrous things in our day and on into the future, as our next article will describe.

19, 20. (a) When will the song of Revelation 15:3, 4 have its grandest expression? (b) How may we even now share in Jehovah's work?

Do You Recall?

- ☐ Why should we make the prayer of Psalm 86 our own?
- ☐ How may we find intimacy with Jehovah?
- ☐ How does Jehovah express his goodness toward us?
- ☐ What are some of Jehovah's incomparable works?
- ☐ How is Jehovah 'God alone' as to greatness?

WALKING WITH A UNIFIED HEART

"Instruct me, O Jehovah . . . Unify my heart to fear your name."—PSALM 86:11.

O JEHOVAH, you are God, you alone.' (Psalm 86:8, 10) David praised God from a heart brimming with appreciation. Even before David became king over all Israel, Jehovah had delivered him from Saul and from the Philistines. Hence, he could sing: "Jehovah is my crag and my stronghold and the Provider of escape for me. With someone loyal you will act in loyalty." (2 Samuel 22:2, 26) Jehovah had preserved his loyal servant through many trials. David could place his trust and confidence in his loyal God, but he needed continued guidance. David now petitioned God: *"Instruct me, O Jehovah, about your way."*—Psalm 86:11.

² David wanted nothing to do with worldly ideas or philosophies. He wanted to be "taught by Jehovah," as God's prophet later expressed it. (Isaiah 54:13) David could likely meditate on only nine books of the Bible available in his day. Yet, that instruction from Jehovah was precious to him! In being taught, we today can feast upon all 66 books of the Bible, as well as upon an abundance of Kingdom literature provided through "the faithful and discreet slave." (Matthew 24:45) Like David, let us call on Jehovah, that his spirit may help us to search into "the things that God has prepared for those

who love him, . . . even the deep things of God."—1 Corinthians 2:9, 10.

³ The Bible has the answer to every question and problem that may arise in our lives. "For all the things that were written aforetime were written for our instruction, that through our endurance and through the comfort from the Scriptures we might have hope." (Romans 15:4) Absorbing the instruction from Jehovah will strengthen us to endure hardships, comfort us in times of depression, and keep the Kingdom hope burning brightly in our hearts. May we find delight in reading God's Word and in meditating on it "day and night," for Bible-based wisdom becomes "a tree of life to those taking hold of it, and those keeping fast hold of it are to be called happy."—Psalm 1:1-3; Proverbs 3:13-18; see also John 17:3.

⁴ God's Son, Jesus, also called the "Son of David," always looked to Jehovah for instruction. (Matthew 9:27)* He said: "The Son cannot do a single thing of his own initiative, but only what he beholds the Father doing. For whatever things that One does, these things the Son also does in like

* As the foretold "seed," Jesus was heir to the Davidic kingdom and hence was the "Son of David" both in a literal and in a spiritual sense.—Genesis 3:15; Psalm 89:29, 34-37.

1. How does Jehovah reward his loyal ones?
2. How has Jehovah made provision for our being taught by him?

3. In what ways can Bible instruction benefit us?
4. As to our actions, what example did Jesus set for us?

manner." "I do nothing of my own initiative; but just as the Father taught me I speak these things." (John 5:19; 8:28) Jesus left a model for us "to follow his steps closely." (1 Peter 2:21) Just think! If we study as Jesus must have done, in any situation we will be able to act as Jehovah would have us act. Jehovah's way is always the right way.

⁵ David next declares: "*I shall walk in your truth.*" (Psalm 86:11) A thousand years later, Pilate, addressing the Son of David, Jesus, asked: "What is truth?" But Jesus had just answered that question, telling Pilate: "My kingdom is no part of this world," adding: "You yourself are saying that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth." (John 18:33-38) Jesus thus made known that the truth focuses on the Messianic Kingdom. Indeed, the entire theme of the Bible is the sanctification of Jehovah's name through that Kingdom.—Ezekiel 38:23; Matthew 6:9, 10; Revelation 11:15.

⁶ What does it mean to walk in the truth? It means to make the Kingdom hope the main concern of our lives. We must live Kingdom truth. We must be undivided in putting Kingdom interests first, zealous according to our opportunities in bearing witness to Kingdom truth, after Jesus' example. (Matthew 6:33; John 18:37) We cannot walk part of the time in the truth, giving merely token service but then pleasing ourselves by taking detours to indulge in excessive recreation or to enter on a time-consuming career or "slave . . . for Riches." (Matthew 6:24) We could get lost on one of

those byways, never to find the way back onto 'the cramped road leading off into life.' Let us not stray from that road! (Matthew 7:13, 14) Our Grand Instructor, Jehovah, through his Word and organization, illuminates the road, saying: "'This is the way. Walk in it, you people,' in case you people should go to the right or in case you should go to the left."—Isaiah 30:21.

A Proper Fear

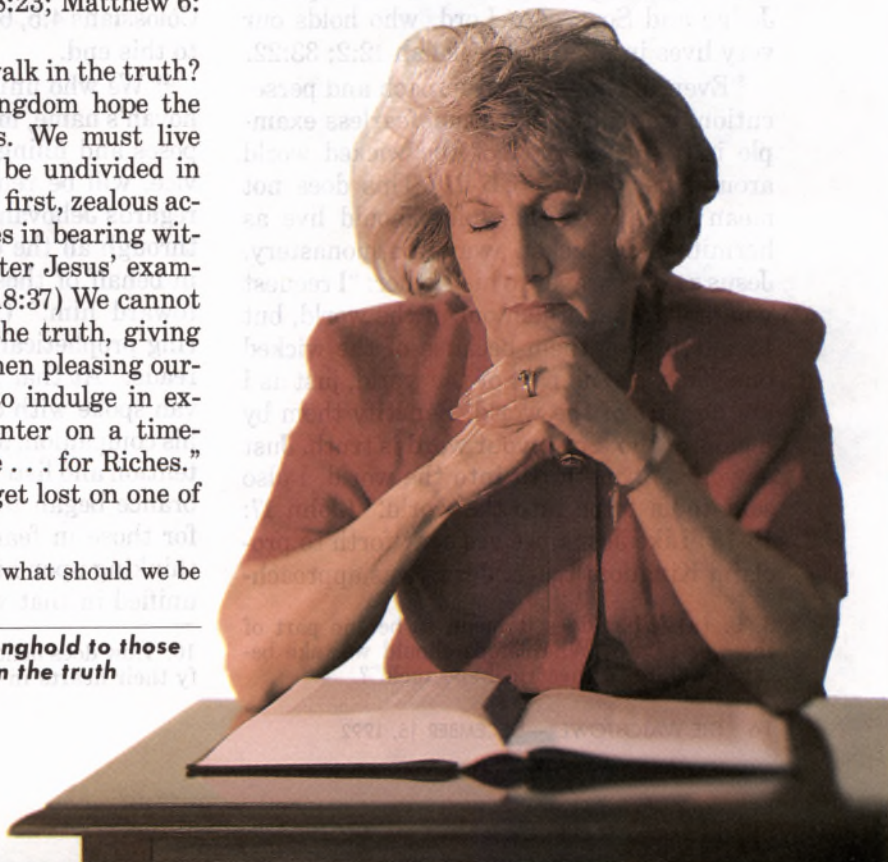
⁷ David's prayer continues in verse 11: "*Unify my heart to fear your name.*" Like David, we should want our hearts to be undivided, complete, in doing God's will. This is in line with Moses' counsel: "And now, O Israel, what is Jehovah your God asking of you but to fear Jehovah your God, so as to walk in all his ways and to love him and

7. How may we "unify" our hearts?

5. What is "truth"?

6. In walking in the truth, of what should we be cautious?

Jehovah is a crag and a stronghold to those who walk straightforward in the truth



The yeartext for 1993:

“Instruct me, O Jehovah . . . Unify my heart to fear your name.”

—Psalm 86:11.

to serve Jehovah your God with all your heart and all your soul; to keep the commandments of Jehovah and his statutes that I am commanding you today, for your good?” (Deuteronomy 10:12, 13) It is, indeed, for our good that we pour heart and soul into serving Jehovah. Thus we show proper fear of his illustrious name. Jehovah’s name literally means “He Causes to Become,” particularly with reference to bringing his grand purposes to completion. It stands also for his supreme authority over all the universe. Serving in awe of God’s majesty, we will not be sidetracked by fear of mortal man. Our hearts will not be divided. Rather, we will fear to do anything that would displease Jehovah, the Supreme Judge and Sovereign Lord, who holds our very lives in his hand.—Isaiah 12:2; 33:22.

⁸ Even in the face of reproach and persecution, we will follow Jesus’ fearless example in being no part of the wicked world around us. (John 15:17-21) This does not mean that Jesus’ disciples should live as hermits or be tucked away in a monastery. Jesus said in prayer to his Father: “I request you, not to take them out of the world, but to watch over them because of the wicked one. They are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world. Sanctify them by means of the truth; your word is truth. Just as you sent me forth into the world, I also sent them forth into the world.” (John 17:15-18) Like Jesus, we are sent forth to proclaim Kingdom truth. Jesus was approach-

able. People were refreshed by his way of teaching. (Compare Matthew 7:28, 29; 11:28, 29; John 7:46.) It should be the same with us.

⁹ Our outgoing friendliness, tasteful grooming and appearance, kindly and clean conversation, should make us and our message acceptable to righthearted persons. We must shun sloppiness, immodest dress, associations that can lead to worldly involvements, and the loose, unprincipled way of life that we see in the world around us. Having “become a theatrical spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men,” we are on duty 24 hours each day to serve and to live as exemplary Christians. (1 Corinthians 4:9; Ephesians 5:1-4; Philippians 4:8, 9; Colossians 4:5, 6) Our heart must be unified to this end.

¹⁰ We who unify our hearts in fear of Jehovah’s name, meditating on his grand purposes and filling our lives with sacred service, will be remembered by Jehovah. “As regards Jehovah, his eyes are roving about through all the earth to show his strength in behalf of those whose heart is complete toward him.” (2 Chronicles 16:9) Referring prophetically to our day, Malachi 3:16 reads: “At that time those in fear of Jehovah spoke with one another, each one with his companion, and Jehovah kept paying attention and listening. And a book of remembrance began to be written up before him for those in fear of Jehovah and for those thinking upon his name.” May our hearts be unified in that wholesome fear of Jehovah!

8, 9. (a) What does it mean to be “no part of the world”? (b) What steps should we take because we are “a theatrical spectacle”?

10. How does Jehovah remember those who unify their hearts in sacred service?

Jehovah's Loving-Kindness

¹¹ How fervent is David's prayer! He continues: "*I laud you, O Jehovah my God, with all my heart, and I will glorify your name to time indefinite, for your loving-kindness is great toward me, and you have delivered my soul out of Sheol, its lowest place.*" (Psalm 86:12, 13) For the second time in this psalm, David praises Jehovah for His loving-kindness—His loyal love. So great is this love that it can save in seemingly impossible situations. When Saul was hounding him in the wilderness, David may have felt like crawling into a corner to die. It was like coming face-to-face with the lowest Sheol—the depths of the grave. But Jehovah delivered him! In like manner, Jehovah has often brought relief to his modern-day servants in marvelous ways, and he has also sustained integrity keepers who have endured faithfully even to death. All loyal ones will have their reward, even by a resurrection if necessary.—Compare Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6, 9, 10; 27:5; 42:10; Proverbs 27:11; Matthew 24:9, 13; Revelation 2:10.*

¹² Concerning persecutors David cries out: "*O God, the presumptuous ones themselves have risen up against me; and the very assembly of tyrannical ones have looked for my soul, and they have not set you in front of themselves.*" (Psalm 86:14) Today, the persecutors have included clergymen of Christendom. These ones presume to worship God but replace his holy name by the title "Lord" and present him as a mysterious Trinity that is actually mentioned no-

* For modern-day examples, see *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses*, editions of 1974, pages 113-212; 1985, pages 194-7; 1986, pages 237-8; 1988, pages 182-5; 1990, pages 171-2; 1992, pages 174-81.

11. How will Jehovah's loving-kindness be expressed toward loyal ones?

12. How have the clergy been presumptuous and tyrannical, and what will be their reward?

where in the Bible. How presumptuous! Added to this, they try to persuade the political powers to outlaw and imprison Jehovah's Witnesses, as is still being done in a surprisingly large number of countries around the earth. These berobed blasphemers of God's name will reap their reward, along with all harlotlike sectors of Babylon the Great.—Revelation 17:1, 2, 15-18; 19:1-3.

¹³ In happy contrast David's prayer continues: "*But you, O Jehovah, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness and truth.*" (Psalm 86:15) Superlative, indeed, are such qualities of our God. These words take us back to Mount Sinai when Moses asked to see Jehovah's glory. Jehovah replied: "I myself shall cause all my goodness to pass before your face, and I will declare the name of Jehovah before you." But he warned Moses: "You are not able to see my face, because no man may see me and yet live." Thereafter, Jehovah came down in the cloud, proclaiming: "Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness and truth." (Exodus 33:18-20; 34:5, 6) David quoted these words in his prayer. Such qualities of Jehovah mean far more to us than any physical appearance! From our own experience, do we not appreciate Jehovah's goodness as exemplified in these fine attributes?

"A Sign Meaning Goodness"

¹⁴ David again implores Jehovah's blessing, saying: "*Turn to me and show me favor. Do give your strength to your servant, and do save the son of your slave girl. Work out with me a sign meaning goodness, that those*

13. What qualities does Jehovah show in making known his goodness?

14, 15. How does Jehovah work out for his servants "a sign meaning goodness"?

hating me may see it and be ashamed. For you yourself, O Jehovah, have helped me and comforted me.” (Psalm 86:16, 17) David recognizes that as ‘the son of Jehovah’s slave girl,’ he too must belong to Jehovah. It is the same with all of us today who have dedicated our lives to Jehovah and who slave in his service. We need Jehovah’s saving strength through his holy spirit. Hence, we ask our God to work out with us “a sign meaning goodness.” Jehovah’s goodness embraces the fine qualities we have just discussed. On this basis, what sign, or token, can we expect Jehovah to give us?

¹⁵ Jehovah is the Giver of “every good gift and every perfect present” and is generous, as Jesus assures us, in giving “holy spirit to those asking him.” (James 1:17; Luke 11:13) Holy spirit—what a priceless gift from Jehovah! Through holy spirit, Jehovah provides joy of heart, even in time of persecution. Thus, Jesus’ apostles, when on trial for their lives, could joyfully declare that God gives holy spirit to those obeying him as ruler. (Acts 5:27-32) Joy of holy spirit continually worked out with them “a sign meaning goodness.”—Romans 14:17, 18.

¹⁶ During the course of their missionary

16, 17. (a) What sign of his goodness did Jehovah give to Paul and Barnabas? (b) What sign was given the persecuted Thessalonians?

journey through Asia Minor, Paul and Barnabas met up with hardships, even severe persecution. When they preached in Antioch of Pisidia, the Jews rejected their message. Hence, they turned to people of the nations. What resulted? “When those of the nations heard this, they began to rejoice and to glorify the word of Jehovah, and all those who were rightly disposed for everlasting life became believers.” But the Jews caused an uproar, so that those missionaries were thrown out of the country. Were they and the new believers despondent about this? By no means! Rather, “the disciples continued to be filled with joy and holy spirit.” (Acts 13:48, 52) Jehovah gave them that sign of his goodness.

¹⁷ Later, the new congregation in Thessalonica was subjected to persecution. This led the apostle Paul to write a letter of comfort, commending their endurance under tribulation. They had “accepted the word under much tribulation with joy of holy spirit.” (1 Thessalonians 1:6) “Joy of holy spirit” continued to strengthen them as an

At the “Light Bearers” International Convention of Jehovah’s Witnesses in St. Petersburg, Russia, in June, 46, 214 attended and 3,256 were baptized. How wonderfully these are availing themselves of Jehovah’s goodness, with “joy of holy spirit”!



evident sign from the God who is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in loving-kindness and trueness.

¹⁸ In recent times, Jehovah has expressed his goodness toward our faithful brothers in Eastern Europe, shaming those who have hated them—their former persecutors. Though recently relieved from decades of oppression, these dear brothers still have to endure, for many are faced with severe economic hardships. However, their “joy of holy spirit” comforts them. What greater joy could they have than in using their new-found freedoms in expanding the witness? Many people are listening to them, as reports on conventions and baptisms reveal.—Compare Acts 9:31.

¹⁹ All that has been discussed in this and

18. How have our brothers in Eastern Europe shown appreciation for Jehovah’s goodness?

19. How may we make the words of Psalm 86:11 our very own?

in the preceding article echoes David’s fervent prayer to Jehovah: “Instruct me, O Jehovah . . . Unify my heart to fear your name.” (Psalm 86:11) Let us make those words of our 1993 yeartext our very own as we work wholeheartedly in support of the Kingdom interests and in appreciation of the inexhaustible goodness of our one God, the Sovereign Lord Jehovah.

How Would You Answer?

- ☐ What do we indicate by praying, “Instruct me, O Jehovah”?
- ☐ What is meant by our hearts’ being unified to fear Jehovah’s name?
- ☐ How will Jehovah show his loving-kindness toward all loyal ones?
- ☐ How does Jehovah work out with us “a sign meaning goodness?”

Nigerian Supreme Court Upholds Religious Freedom

VILLAGERS loot a farmer’s harvest. Others storm a bricklayer’s home and seize his tools. Still others prevent a woman from buying and selling. Why such abuse? It is because the victims, all of whom are Jehovah’s Witnesses, will not take part in age grade associations. “In what?” you may wonder.

An age grade association is made up of people, usually males, who were born at about the same time and in the same village. Age grade groups are common to eastern Nigeria. They may sponsor a communi-

ty project, but they also engage in idolatrous worship and perform spiritistic rites to show that the members have come of age. Because the Bible condemns such practices for true Christians, Jehovah’s Witnesses have no share in such groups.—1 Corinthians 10:20, 21; 1 John 5:21.

Samuel Okogbue worked as a tailor in Aba, Nigeria. Early in 1978, members of the Umunkalu Age Grade Association of Alayi demanded that he pay a “tax” to help build a health center. As a true Christian, Samuel goes out of his way to help other people, but

he conscientiously refused to be involved with the age grade group. On April 22 of that year, six members of the group broke into his shop and seized his sewing machine, which they said they would hold until he paid the money. Samuel protested that he was not obliged to pay anything since he was not a member of their association. When he could not recover his sewing machine, Samuel took the matter to court.

From Court to Court

In the Chief Magistrate Court, the age grade group argued that because of his age, Samuel was automatically one of their members, responsible to pay any taxes they imposed on themselves. Furthermore, native custom held that if a member did not pay a tax, his property would be seized until he did.

The court disagreed. On February 28, 1980, it ruled that Samuel could not be forced to become a member of an age grade group. The Chief Magistrate stated: "A custom which deprives a citizen a free choice of association runs contrary to S[ection] 37 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and therefore cannot acquire the force of Law."

The age grade group appealed this verdict to the High Court and won. There the judge ordered Samuel to pay the tax, stating that it was simply a way of contributing to the development of his native community.

Then Samuel appealed what he saw to be an injustice. The Court of Appeal reversed the High Court's judgment, deciding in Samuel's favor. Unwilling to admit defeat, the age grade group took the case to the Supreme Court of Nigeria.

Meanwhile, group members had been busy in Samuel's village. Arguing that the Witnesses were against all community projects, they convinced the village head to ban the activities of Jehovah's Witnesses in the

area. The town crier announced that anyone who had dealings with Jehovah's Witnesses would be fined. Witnesses from neighboring towns intervened and clarified the matter for the older men in the village. They explained that God's people were in no way opposed to community development. In fact, Samuel had produced receipts in court proving that he had contributed to community projects that were not sponsored by age grade groups. The village elders then reversed their decision to ostracize the Witnesses.

Religious Freedom Triumphs

On October 21, 1991, five justices of the Nigerian Supreme Court unanimously ruled in favor of Samuel. Elaborating on the lead judgment by Justice Paul Nwokedi, Justice Abubakar Wali stated: "It is not the levy [imposed tax] that the respondent [Samuel] is opposed to paying but being a member of any society, club or age grade, as this is against his religious belief, he being a member of Jehovah's witness[es]."

The justice continued: "The 1963 Constitution, *section 24(1)* guaranteed to all Nigerian citizens freedom of conscience, thought, and religion. The respondent is entitled to hold to the tenet of his religion, thought and conscience which prohibit him from joining the Age grade. Any custom that holds otherwise is contrary to the Constitution and therefore null and void to that extent."

In short, the court ruled that no person can be legally compelled to join an age grade group even though membership may be a community custom. It also ruled that no person can be legally compelled to pay dues through an association that he is not a member of, even when the dues are for community development. So in this seemingly small detail, religious freedom for all Nigerians was upheld.

Why Is It So Easy to Lie?

NO ONE likes to be lied to. Yet, people the world over lie to one another for various reasons. A survey that appeared in the book *The Day America Told the Truth*, by James Patterson and Peter Kim, revealed that 91 percent of Americans lie regularly. The authors state: "The majority of us find it hard to get through a week without lying. One in five can't make it through a single day—and we're talking about conscious, premeditated lies."

Lying is a common practice in nearly all aspects of modern-day life. Political leaders lie to their people and to one another. Time and again, they have appeared on television denying any connection with the scandalous schemes in which they actually were deeply involved. Sissela Bok, in her book *Lying—Moral Choice in Public and Private Life*, observes: "In law and in journalism, in government and in the social sciences, deception is taken for granted when it is felt to be excusable by those who tell the lies and who tend also to make the rules."

Referring to political lying in the United States, *Common Cause Magazine* of May/June 1989 observed: "Watergate and Vietnam certainly rivaled Iran-contra in terms of government deception and public mistrust. So what made the Reagan years such a watershed? Many lied, but few were remorseful." It is with good reason, therefore, that the common people do not trust their political leaders.

In international relations such leaders find it difficult to trust one another. The Greek philosopher Plato observed: "The rulers of the State . . . may be allowed to lie for the good of the State." In international re-

lations it is as the Bible prophecy at Daniel 11:27 says: "At one table a lie is what they will keep speaking."

In the business world, lying about products and services is a general practice. Buyers have to enter contractual agreements with caution, being certain to read the fine print. Some countries have regulatory agencies in the government to protect the people from false advertising, from injurious merchandise that is represented as



being beneficial or harmless, and from fraud. Despite these efforts, people continue to suffer financially from lying merchants.

For some people, lying is so easy it becomes habitual. Others are generally truthful, but when cornered they will lie. Few refuse to lie under any circumstances.

A lie is defined as "1. a false statement or action, especially one made with intent to deceive . . . 2. anything that gives or is meant to give a false impression." The intention is to cause others to believe something that the liar knows is not the truth. By lies or half-truths, he strives to deceive those who are entitled to know the truth.

Reasons for Lying

People lie for many reasons. Some think they are obligated to lie about their abilities in order to get ahead in this competitive world. Others try to cover up errors or guilt with lies. Still others falsify reports to give the impression that they have done work they have not done. Then there are those who lie to damage another's reputation, to avoid embarrassment, to justify previous lies, or to defraud people of their money.

A common justification for a lie is that it protects another person. Some consider this to be a white lie because they think it does not injure anyone. But do these so-called white lies really leave no bad effects?

Consider the Effects

White lies can set a pattern that can lead to a practice of lying that may involve more serious matters. Sissela Bok comments: "All lies defended as 'white' cannot be so easily dismissed. In the first place, the harmlessness of lies is notoriously disputable. What the liar perceives as harmless or even beneficial may not be so in the eyes of the deceived."

Lies, no matter how innocent they may seem to be, are destructive to good human relationships. The credibility of the liar is shattered, and there may well be a permanent breakdown of trust. Famous essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote: "Every violation of truth is not only a sort of suicide in the liar, but is a stab at the health of human society."

It is easy for a liar to make a false statement about another person. Although he presents no proof, his lie creates doubt, and many believe him without investigating his claim. Thus the reputation of the innocent person is damaged, and he carries the burden of proving his innocence. It is, therefore, frustrating when people believe the liar rather than the innocent person, and it destroys the innocent one's relationship with the liar.

A liar can easily develop the practice of lying. One lie usually leads to another. Thomas Jefferson, an early American statesman, observed: "There is no vice so mean, so pitiful, so contemptible; and he who permits himself to tell a lie once, finds it much easier to do it a second and third time, till at length it becomes habitual." It is the road to moral collapse.

The Reason It Is Easy to Lie

Lying began when a rebellious angel lied to the first woman, telling her that she would not die if she disobeyed her Creator. It resulted in incalculable harm to the entire human race, bringing imperfection, sickness, and death to all.—Genesis 3:1-4; Romans 5:12.

From the time of disobedient Adam and Eve, the insidious influence of this father of lies has created a climate in the world of mankind that stimulates lying. (John 8:44) It is a decadent world in which truth is only

relative. *The Saturday Evening Post* of September 1986 observed that the problem of lying “touches business, government, education, entertainment, and simple day-to-day relationships between fellow citizens and neighbors. . . . We’ve bought the theory of relativism, the single big lie that says there are no absolute truths.”

Such is the viewpoint of habitual liars, who lack any empathy for those they deceive. Lying comes easy for them. It is their way of life. But others who are not habitual liars may lie unhesitatingly out of fear—fear of exposure, fear of punishment, and so forth. It is a weakness of the imperfect flesh. How can this tendency be replaced by a determination to speak the truth?

Why Be Truthful?

Truth is the standard our great Creator has set for all. His written Word, the Bible, states at Hebrews 6:18 that “it is impossible for God to lie.” This same standard was upheld by his Son, Jesus Christ, who was God’s personal representative on the earth. To the Jewish religious leaders who sought to kill him, Jesus said: “Now you are seeking to kill me, a man that has told you the truth that I heard from God. . . . And if I said I do not know him I should be like you, a liar.” (John 8:40, 55) He set a model for us in that “he committed no sin, nor was deception found in his mouth.”—1 Peter 2:21, 22.

Our Creator, whose name is Jehovah, hates lying, as Proverbs 6:16-19 clearly states: “There are six things that Jehovah does hate; yes, seven are things detestable to his soul: lofty eyes, a false tongue, and hands that are shedding innocent blood, a heart fabricating hurtful schemes, feet that are in a hurry to run to badness, a false witness that launches forth lies, and anyone sending forth contentions among brothers.”

This truthful God requires us to live by his standards in order to receive his approval. His inspired Word commands us: “Do not be lying to one another. Strip off the old personality with its practices.” (Colossians 3:9) People who refuse to quit the practice of lying are not acceptable to him; they will not receive his gift of life. In fact, Psalm 5:6 says frankly that God “will destroy those speaking a lie.” Revelation 21:8 further says that the portion of “all the liars” is “the second death,” which is eternal destruction. So our accepting God’s view of lying gives us strong reason to speak the truth.

But what should be done in a situation where the truth might create an embarrassing situation or bad feelings? Lying never is the solution, but saying nothing sometimes is. Why speak lies that can only ruin your credibility and make you subject to divine disapproval?

Out of fear and human weakness, a person may be tempted to seek refuge in a lie. That is the course of least resistance or mistaken kindness. The apostle Peter succumbed to such a temptation when he three times denied that he knew Jesus Christ. Afterward, he was cut to the heart for having lied. (Luke 22:54-62) His genuine repentance moved God to forgive him, as is evident in his later being blessed with many privileges of service. Repentance with a determined decision to stop lying is the course that brings divine forgiveness for doing what God hates.

But rather than seeking forgiveness after a lie, preserve a good relationship with your Creator and maintain your credibility with others by speaking the truth. Remember what Psalm 15:1, 2 says: “O Jehovah, who will be a guest in your tent? Who will reside in your holy mountain? He who is walking faultlessly and practicing righteousness and speaking the truth in his heart.”

Reaching “All Sorts of Men” in B · E · L · G · I · U · M

THE apostle Paul reminded his fellow anointed Christians of God’s will that “all sorts of men should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth.” For this they were to pray that they be granted “a calm and quiet life” so that they might



proclaim the Kingdom good news to all who had a hearing ear.—1 Timothy 2:1-4.

Today, reaching “all sorts of men” with the good news takes on special meaning for Jehovah’s Witnesses in Belgium. Since the end of World War II, this small country, which would easily fit into Lake Tanganyika or half

of Lake Michigan, has undergone drastic changes in its ethnic and cultural makeup. In addition to its three traditional communities—Flemish (Dutch), French, and German—there is now in Belgium a diversity of linguistic and cultural groups. There are Arabic, Turkish, Indian, Chinese, Filipino, African, and American populations, to name just a few. It is estimated that 1 out



of every 10 people in Belgium is of foreign extraction.

Thus, the Witnesses in Belgium, like their fellow Christians worldwide, are faced with the challenge of reaching “all

sorts of men" with the good news. What is it like preaching among such a variety of nationalities? How does one approach individuals who have a totally different cultural and religious background? And what is their response to the Bible message?

Initiative Brings Results

Talking to "all sorts of men" about the Kingdom good news is a happy and exciting experience. On the busy streets, in



the market places, on public transportation, from house to house, people from all continents are to be found. With a little initiative, the Kingdom publisher can easily strike up

a conversation, and often this leads to rewarding results.

At a bus stop, a Witness initiated a conversation with an African lady simply with a warm smile. The lady soon



expressed her joy at hearing about God's Kingdom, and she wanted to know more about the Bible. She accepted the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines and gave her address to the Witness. When she said that she would visit her soon, the lady objected. "No! No! Let's make a definite appointment so that I will be at home when you come."

Three days later, when the Witness was to make the call, she discovered that she had lost the lady's address. But remembering the street name, she went and checked at every house to see if she could find an African name. She came to the end of the street without finding



what she was looking for. What a great disappointment! As she was getting ready to leave, suddenly, as if appearing from nowhere, standing in front of her was the very lady she was looking for, and it was exactly the time they had agreed upon for the call! A home Bible study was started.

What about the different customs, beliefs, and traditions? For example, what about Hindu beliefs? Well, one pioneer recalled what she had read in the book *Reasoning From the Scriptures*. It says: "Instead of trying to deal with the complexities of Hindu philosophy, present the satisfying truths found in the Holy Bible. . . . The clear truths in his Word will reach the hearts of those who hunger and thirst for righteousness."

That was exactly what the pioneer did when she met



Kashi, a woman from India who accepted a Bible study. Kashi made steady progress, and soon she was talking to all her friends about what she was learning. One day the pioneer

met an ambassador's wife, who asked: "Are you the one who teaches Kashi the Bible?" How surprised the pioneer was when the lady said: "What a teacher she is! She has been able to convince me on many points. Imagine, her, a Hindu, teaching me, a Catholic, the Bible!"

When you meet the Filipinos, you immediately realize that most of them love the Bible. They are warmhearted and hospitable, and it is very easy to start a conversation with them. One Filipino lady readily accepted two magazines, but being a Catholic, she threw them away. Some weeks later she again accepted two magazines, which she left in her handbag. One night she felt like reading. After searching around for something interesting, she came upon the magazines. Hesitantly, she started reading, and her interest grew. Shortly thereafter, a Witness called at her home, and the lady asked many questions. This was the first time she had ever compared her Catholic beliefs with what the Bible says. The logical, Scriptural presentation convinced her that she had finally found the truth.

"Send Out Your Bread"

Many of the foreign residents are in Belgium for business reasons or to work at one of the 150 accredited embassies or the European Commu-

nity Commission. Most of them stay only a few years. Witnessing to and studying the Bible with them may seem fruitless at first. But the Bible reminds us: "Send out your bread upon the surface of the waters, for in the course of many days you will find it again." (Ecclesiastes 11:1) Often the results are surprisingly rewarding.

This was the case with an American woman who regularly received the magazines from a Witness. In time the Witness pointed out the benefit of studying the Bible regularly, and she offered to study with her. The woman accepted the offer and made rapid progress. Soon she saw the difference between true religion and false. She therefore rid her house of all religious images. Then the time came for her to return to the United States. Did that mean the end of her spiritual progress? Imagine the joy and surprise of the Witness when she received a phone call from a Witness in the United States telling her that the lady had continued her study, had dedicated her life to Jehovah God, and had been baptized! In fact, she was already serving as an auxiliary pioneer minister.

The same was true of Kashi, the Indian woman, and of the Filipino lady mentioned earlier. When Kashi returned to India, she and her husband resumed their Bible study. Eventually both of them dedicated themselves to Jehovah and shared in the preaching work. Since they lived in an area where there were no other Witnesses, they offered their home for a Congregation Book Study. Kashi served as an auxiliary pioneer to the extent her health permitted, and she has been conducting six home Bible studies, involving a total of 31 people. Similarly, in time the Filipino woman moved to the United States, progressed to dedication and baptism, and became a regular pioneer. Such happy results are among many that the Kingdom publishers in Belgium enjoy as they continue to preach to the people in their territory.

The Challenge of Languages

In order to accomplish the task of preaching to "all sorts of men," the branch office has to have on hand Bible literature in over a hundred languages. There are now Belgian congregations in ten languages. Of the 341 congregations, 61 are in foreign languages, and of

the 26,000 Kingdom publishers, 5,000 are of foreign nationality. One congregation includes men and women from 25 different countries. Imagine the color and variety at their meetings! Yet the love and unity among the brothers is a powerful testimony to true Christian discipleship.—John 13:34, 35.

Since there are so many residents in Belgium needing to hear the good news in foreign tongues, some publishers have accepted the challenge of learning difficult languages, such as Turkish, Arabic, and Chinese. Their efforts have been richly rewarded.

Those who work among the Arabic population find that they can often kindle interest in the Bible by highlighting its practical value. One Kingdom publisher had an interesting discussion with an Arabic professor, then for three years thereafter was not able to find the professor again. Not being easily discouraged, the publisher decided to leave a note with some Bible questions for the professor. This so intrigued him that he was willing to make an objective examination of the Bible. He was so amazed by what he found that he and his wife, both Muslims, set aside certain evenings to read the Bible together.

Those trying to help the large Chinese population in the major cities have another obstacle to overcome in addition to the language barrier. Most of the Chinese do not believe in God as the Creator or in the Bible as God's Word. Yet, they are curious and want to know what it is all about. They are also avid readers. It is not unusual for them to finish reading whatever Bible literature is left with them, or even much of the Bible, in just a few days. If their heart is right, they are moved by the power of God's Word.

One Chinese lady found it very difficult to accept the idea of a Creator. But during the second study, tears came to her eyes when she said: "Now I do believe in Jehovah God, for if the Bible was written over a period of 1,600 years by 40 different men and yet is in complete harmony with one theme, then it must be that Jehovah God was directing the writing. That's so logical!"

Another Chinese lady was approached by a Witness on the tram. "Are you a Christian?" she asked the Wit-

ness. She then said that she was very disappointed to see so much contradiction among those who claim to be Christians. The Witness agreed with what she said but explained that the Bible does not contradict itself. Just then the lady had to get off. She gave the Witness her address, and when she visited her, the lady exclaimed: "If only I had known, I would have taken the tram one year earlier!" When asked what she meant, the lady explained: "That was the first time I went to the university by tram. Can you imagine? I wasted one year!" She was so happy to be able to study the Bible even for just a few months before returning to China.

Experiences such as these have taught the Belgian Witnesses a lesson. "In the morning sow your seed and until the evening do not let your hand rest," the Bible says, "for you are not knowing where this will have success, either here or there, or whether both of them will alike be good." (Ecclesiastes 11:6) The efforts put forth to overcome the barriers of language, custom, and tradition are well worth the results. The heartwarming responses prove, above all, that God is truly "not partial, but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him." —Acts 10:34, 35.

The Value of the Nash Papyrus

HOW do you accurately date an old Hebrew Bible manuscript? That was the problem facing Dr. John C. Trever in 1948 when he first saw the Dead Sea Scroll of Isaiah. The form of the Hebrew letters intrigued him. He knew the letters held the key to its age, but with what could he compare them? Correctly, he concluded: Only with the script of the Nash Papyrus. Why? What is this manuscript, and where did it come from?

The Nash Papyrus consists of merely four fragments of 24 lines of Hebrew text, measuring some three by five inches. It was named after W. L. Nash, the secretary of the Society of Biblical Archaeology, who acquired it from an Egyptian dealer in 1902. It was published by S. A. Cooke in the following year in that society's *Proceedings* and was presented to Cambridge University Library, England, where it has remained. The value of this papyrus fragment rests with its age. Scholars dated it to the second or first century B.C.E., so it was the earliest Hebrew manuscript leaf ever found.

When Dr. Trever compared a color slide of the Nash Papyrus with the scroll before him, he looked meticulously at the form and shapes of individual letters. Without a doubt, they were very similar. Even so, it seemed incredible to him that the large, newly discovered manuscript could possibly be as early in date as the Nash Papyrus. In time, however, his line of reasoning proved to be correct. The Dead Sea Scroll of Isaiah belonged to the second century B.C.E.!

The Contents of the Nash Papyrus

An analysis of the Nash Papyrus text reveals that all of its 24 lines are incomplete,

with a word or letters missing at both ends. It contains parts of the Ten Commandments from Exodus chapter 20, along with some verses from Deuteronomy chapters 5 and 6. So this was not a regular Bible manuscript but a mixed text with a special purpose. It was evidently part of an instructional collection to remind a Jew of his duty to God. A section of scripture commencing with Deuteronomy 6:4, called the Shema, was frequently repeated. That verse reads: "Listen, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah."

The Tetragrammaton, YHWH, "Jehovah," in this verse is visible twice on the last line of the papyrus, and it occurs in five other places. It also appears once with its first letter missing.

The Shema in particular was meant to emphasize "the *single personality* of God." According to the Jewish Talmud (Berakoth 19a), the concluding word, '*E-chadh*' ("One"), "should be specially emphasized while it was being enunciated by holding out each syllable." (W. O. E. Oesterley and G. H. Box) In reference to God, this lengthened '*E-chadh*' also proclaimed his uniqueness.

Today, the Nash Papyrus has many peers, especially among scrolls found in caves along the shores of the Dead Sea close to Qumran. Detailed analysis has confirmed that many of these manuscripts date to the first and second centuries B.C.E.* Although it is no longer the earliest-known Hebrew manuscript, the Nash Papyrus is still of great interest. It remains the only Hebrew Bible manuscript of such early date discovered in Egypt.

* See *The Watchtower* of April 15, 1991, pages 10-13.

DO YOU REMEMBER?

Have you enjoyed reading the recent issues of *The Watchtower*? If so, you will no doubt find it interesting to recall the following:

□ **What convincing proof was given by the various operations of the holy spirit in the first century?** These operations provided visible evidence that God was no longer using the 1,500-year-old congregation of Israel as his special people, but his approval now rested with the new Christian congregation, established by his only-begotten Son. (Compare Hebrews 2: 2-4.)—8/15, page 5.

□ **What accounts for the phenomenal growth experienced by Jehovah's Witnesses?** Primarily, this is due to God's blessing. It is God's work. What Jehovah's Witnesses teach in their evangelizing work is based on the Bible. Another key to their success is their full recognition of Christ Jesus as the appointed Head of the Christian congregation.—9/1, page 19.

□ **Why did Jehovah show David mercy in regard to his great sin with Bath-sheba?** This was principally because of the Kingdom covenant that God had made with David, but it was also due to David's own mercifulness and his genuine repentance. (1 Samuel 24: 4-7; 2 Samuel 7:12; 12:13; Psalm 51:1, 2, 17)—9/15, pages 10, 11.

□ **What three types of evidence do the Christian Greek Scriptures give in support of Jesus' Messiahship?** Jesus' lineage is the first line of evidence. (Matthew 1:1-16; Luke 3:23-38) Another evidence is fulfilled prophecy. There are literally scores of prophecies, such as that found at Daniel 9:25, identifying Jesus as the Messiah. The third line of evidence is God's own testimony; he provided this on three occasions with his own voice. (Matthew 17:5; Luke 3:21, 22; John 12:28)—10/1, pages 10, 12.

□ **What did Jesus mean when he said, as recorded at Matthew 24:37: "Just as the days of Noah were, so the presence of the Son of man will be"?** Noah was building the ark and was warning the wicked for a period of decades before the Flood arrived and wiped out the corrupt world system. Likewise, Christ's invisible presence lasts over a period of some decades, during which a global witness is given, before it too culminates in a great destruction.—10/1, page 16.

□ **What are some of the essentials for a good family Bible study?** Time has to be bought out for the study. We should not allow it to be crowded out by TV or other diversions. The particular needs of the family must be considered. Use viewpoint questions to make sure the children understand what they are learning. (Matthew 17:25) Keep the atmosphere relaxed. Be enthusiastic, and get everyone involved in the study.—10/15, page 17.

□ **How concerned should Christians be that blood components may have been added to food products?** Christians should guard against becoming disturbed by mere possibility or rumor, and reasonableness is needed even as to checking labels or making inquiry of butchers. However, if it is known that blood is widely used locally—whether in food or in medical treatment—Christians should be careful to obey God's command to abstain from blood. (Acts 15:28, 29)—10/15, pages 30-1.

□ **How does the book of Proverbs highlight the spiritual depth of the teaching methods used in Israel?** The book of Proverbs shows that its purpose was to teach "inexperienced ones" such elevated things as wisdom, discipline, understanding, insight, judgment, shrewdness, knowledge, and thinking ability—all in "the fear of Jehovah." (Proverbs 1:1-7; 2:1-14)—11/1, page 12.

□ **What balanced view of education should young people take today?** Christians should regard education as a means to an end. Their purpose in these last days is to serve Jehovah as much and as effectively as possible in the full-time ministry if they can.—11/1, page 18.

□ **Why did Jehovah require the nation of Israel to pay tithes?** First, so that they could show in a tangible way their appreciation for Jehovah's goodness. Second, so that they could contribute to the support of the Levites, who could then concentrate on their obligations, including the teaching of the Law. (See 2 Chronicles 17:7-9.)—12/1, page 9.

□ **What is the tithe that Christians are invited to bring? (Malachi 3:10)** The tithe represents the portion of what is ours that we bring to Jehovah or use in his service. This is a token of our love for him and of our realization that we belong to him.—12/1, page 15.

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Predicting the Future of the World Economy

THE instability of economic markets and a lack of confidence in analysts who failed to predict the 1987 stock market crash have made some businessmen turn to astrology to predict their financial future, claims the London magazine *Accountancy Age*. The magazine notes that "financial astrologers are gaining an impressive list of prestigious clientele for their detailed market predictions."

One consultant compares the cycles he detects in 30 years of daily financial data with the movement of the planets. On this basis he offers his predictions. Although many clients were reluctant to heed his advice before 1987, he now finds even hardheaded financiers prepared to listen.

Another financial astrologer draws charts based on dates of birth to assess a person's character and also to seek out "cues for the timing of likely business developments." Yet another believes that fluctuations of the silver market follow a lunar cycle. But when compared with regular financial analysts, this astrologer finds that his clients give him "very little scope for getting it wrong."

There is, however, one financial forecast that is sure to come true, and it has nothing to do with astrology. This forecast is registered in the Bible and inspired by Jehovah, the God who gives himself absolutely no "scope for getting it wrong." He is the God "who cannot lie." (Titus 1:2) He had his prophet Ezekiel declare: "Into the streets they will throw their very silver, and an abhorrent thing their own gold will become. Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to deliver them."—Ezekiel 7:19.

When will this be? During the coming "great tribulation" foretold by Jesus Christ, which Ezekiel termed "the day of Jehovah's fury." (Matthew 24:21; Ezekiel 7:19) Financial prosperity will not secure survival, despite what astrologers may predict. It is only trust in Jehovah God, the Great Deliverer, that can guarantee security during this worldwide upheaval in which all corruption will be removed—political, religious, and commercial.—Proverbs 3:5, 6; Zephaniah 2:3; 2 Peter 2:9.

