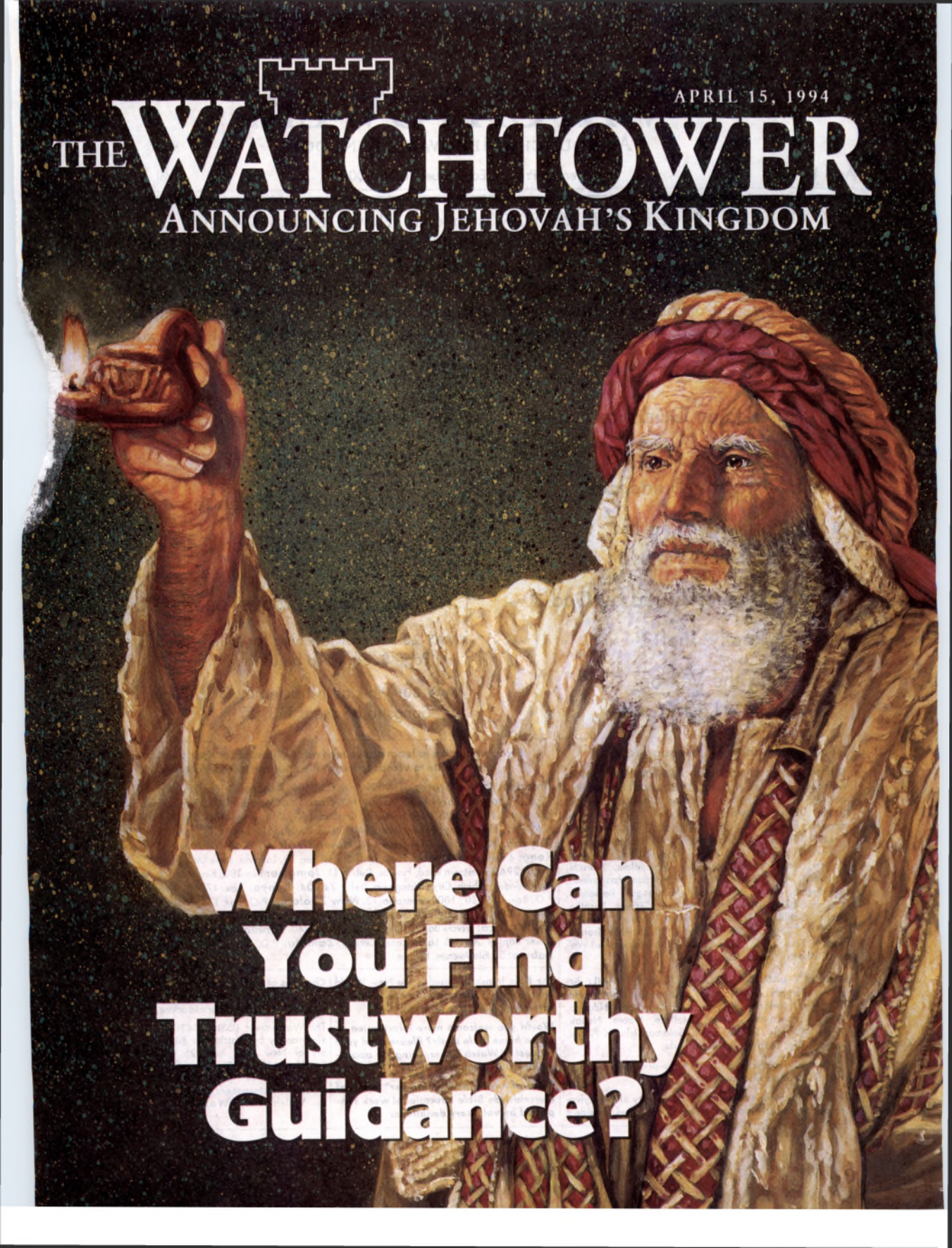


APRIL 15, 1994

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



**Where Can
You Find
Trustworthy
Guidance?**

THE WATCHTOWER[®]

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

April 15, 1994

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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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Has Human Guidance Failed?

WHO created all things? If your answer is "God," then you are in the company of millions who believe in the God of the Bible, the Creator.

Yet, many who believe in God have difficulty accepting that he is actively involved in solving mankind's problems. Is it realistic to think that God has a program under way that will bring relief to humankind? Many find no reasonable evidence that this is so.

For thousands of years, humans have experimented with countless self-help methods in the search for solutions, leaving God out of the picture. But have humans found the solutions? Or are the problems getting more serious and dif-

ficult to resolve? How is man handling the urgent problems in the world today?

One expert puts it this way: "Ever since the Industrial Revolution, the developed countries have over-exploited the world's natural resources through unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, causing damage to the global environment, to the detriment of developing countries."

Man continues to ruin the earth. The Argentinean newspaper *Clarín* commented: "In the second half of this century, economic covetousness, lack of caution, and negligence were responsible for great disasters that not only claimed human victims but also degraded the environment, often to incalculable limits."



Extreme poverty now seems to be a permanent fixture in modern society. Even the so-called rich countries of the world are bending their knees under the overwhelming weight of poverty. According to *The Globe and Mail* of Toronto, Canada, it is estimated that “one-third of all Canadians will experience poverty over the course of their working lives.” The newspaper adds that “family breakdown is one of the main reasons for poverty, and the trend has accelerated in recent years.”

Drug abuse is another sign of a deteriorating society. What can mankind do about it? Evidently very little overall. Millions continue to experience physical, mental, and moral degradation as a direct result of their abuse of narcotics. And the problem is spreading like wildfire.

Scientists seem to be losing the war against disease. True, modern technology has won many battles. Yet, some scientific procedures in themselves have contributed to the emergence of new drug-resistant strains of dangerous microbes.

Human governments cannot stop wide-

spread violations of human rights. For example, despite the many pledges and laws formulated to prevent slavery, it is estimated that around the world more than a hundred million people are forced to work under conditions that amount to abject slavery.

But why has human guidance failed? Consider these factors. Human guidance comes from people—people who have serious limitations. Their experience in life is relatively short and generally limited by certain cultures or environments. Their knowledge is also limited. Whatever guidance they give reflects those limitations. As the apostle Paul said, “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”—Romans 3:23.

In reality most of the problems and difficulties that the greater part of mankind is experiencing are the direct or indirect result of ignoring God’s guidance. Where, though, can such guidance be found? How does God provide us with direction today? The following article will consider the answers.

Where Can You Find Trustworthy Guidance?

“I WELL know, O Jehovah, that to earthling man his way does not belong. It does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step. Correct me, O Jehovah.”—Jeremiah 10:23, 24.

The Bible writer Jeremiah wrote those words some 25 centuries ago. The deplor-

able condition of mankind after thousands of years of applying human guidance proves the irrefutable truthfulness of this statement. But you may ask, ‘Where can trustworthy guidance be found?’

The scripture quoted above points to a source of reliable guidance and direction

that is greatly superior to man—the Creator of man, Jehovah God. Surely no one knows man's makeup and his needs better than our Creator. Nonetheless, is God interested in providing us such guidance and direction? How does he do it? Is it practical for our times?

Designed to Receive Divine Guidance

It is well-known that a principal difference separating man from animals centers on the structure, capacity, and functions of the human brain. In animals nearly all the cerebral functions have been programmed in what has come to be called instinctive wisdom. This is not the case with humans. —Proverbs 30:24-28.

Unlike the brains of animals, a great part of the human brain is free of fixed programs. God endowed humans with the faculty of free will, enabling them to make intelligent decisions and to display superior qualities, such as love, generosity, unselfishness, justice, and wisdom.

Is it logical to think that God would create man with such mental capacity without providing some kind of guidance as to how it can best be used? God gave direct guidance to the first humans. (Genesis 2: 15-17, 19; 3:8, 9) Even after man's fall into sin, Jehovah continued to guide faithful men and women, most notably through his own inspired Word, the Bible. (Psalm 119: 105) This has permitted humans to face with success the daily problems of life as they use their free will wisely.

Divine Authorship of the Bible

What makes the Bible a trustworthy source of guidance? For one thing, it presents information that only the Creator could provide. It outlines the history of events that took place long before the beginning of human life. For example, it provides the history of how the earth was prepared

in successive stages until it became fit to sustain human life. (Genesis, chapters 1, 2) Although this was recorded in the Bible more than 3,000 years ago, it is in harmony with modern scientific concepts.

Long before mankind in general accepted that the earth was round, the Bible declared: “[God] is stretching out the north over the empty place, hanging the earth upon nothing.” (Job 26:7) Furthermore, the Bible reveals that “there is One who is dwelling above the circle of the earth, the dwellers in which are as grasshoppers.” (Isaiah 40:22) Only God, the Creator, could have provided this detail.

The ability to foresee what is to come is not a gift that has been given to man. Rather, the Creator foretells the future through the pages of the Bible. God inspired the prophet Isaiah to write of Him: “I am the Divine One and there is no other God, nor anyone like me; the One telling from the beginning the finale, and from long ago the things that have not been done.”—Isaiah 46:9, 10.

The Bible has demonstrated that it can foretell the finale from the beginning with amazing exactness. For example, it foretold the rise, the fall, and the characteristics of principal world powers during thousands of years of human history. These remarkable prophecies were written centuries before their fulfillment, in some cases thousands of years before. Thus the Bible accurately foretells modern-day events, as well as their final outcome. The Bible is also unique because it points to the way of survival during the destruction of imperfect man-made governments at Armageddon, “the war of the great day of God the Almighty.” God's Kingdom in the hands of his Son, Jesus Christ, will accomplish that great act. —Revelation 16:14, 16; 17:9-18; Daniel, chapters 2, 8.

Always Beneficial—Never Harmful

Mere human wisdom is imperfect; hence, human counsel is not always beneficial, even though it may be given with good intentions. This is not the case with the Bible's counsel. God himself says: "I, Jehovah, am . . . the One teaching you to benefit yourself, the One causing you to tread in the way in which you should walk. O if only you would actually pay attention to my commandments! Then your peace would become just like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea."—Isaiah 48:17, 18.

Divine guidance helps us to set priorities and adhere to superior values in life. While modern society puts emphasis on material accomplishments and goals, the Bible stresses how valuable it is for us to "keep our eyes, not on the things seen, but on the things unseen. For the things seen are temporary, but the things unseen are everlasting." (2 Corinthians 4:18) In this way we are encouraged to have the finest goals in life, namely, spiritual goals in connection with doing God's will, the ultimate goal being that of everlasting life in a just new system.

As the Christian exerts himself to pursue these elevated goals, Bible counsel helps him to live the best kind of life possible in this wicked system of things. Modern human wisdom tends to encourage the philosophy of work the least and earn the most. On the other hand, the Bible tells us that "the one working with a slack hand will be of little means, but the hand of the diligent one is what will make one rich." The apostle Paul wrote to the Hebrew Christians: "We trust we have an honest conscience, as we wish to conduct ourselves honestly in all things."—Proverbs 10:4; Hebrews 13:18.

The Bible also gives practical advice on the family arrangement. It establishes spe-

cifically the role of both the husband and the wife in the marriage arrangement, as well as the correct way to bring up and educate the children. It says: "Husbands ought to be loving their wives as their own bodies. . . . On the other hand, the wife should have deep respect for her husband. Children, be obedient to your parents . . . You, fathers, do not be irritating your children, but go on bringing them up in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah." Following the Creator's superior advice greatly contributes to the stability and happiness of families.—Ephesians 5:21-6:4.

A Secure Future for Those Who Follow God's Guidance

The written Word of God points out the solution that God has for all of mankind's problems. Very soon Jehovah God will eliminate the present system of things, with all its pain, injustice and sufferings, and will replace it with his righteous new system. The Bible describes this at 2 Peter 3:7-10, adding at verse 13: "There are new heavens and a new earth that we are awaiting according to his promise, and in these righteousness is to dwell." This constitutes by far the best good news that could be given to the human family. It is precisely the message that the Bible presents and that Jehovah's Witnesses preach in more than 200 lands and islands of the sea.

When God's will is practiced in all the earth, the entire human family will benefit by following the excellent guidance of its Creator, Jehovah. No more will there be problems of poverty, crime, and drugs. No more will mankind be afflicted with sickness, old age, and death. The human family will be elevated to the perfection that our first parents had before they rebelled against God's guidance.

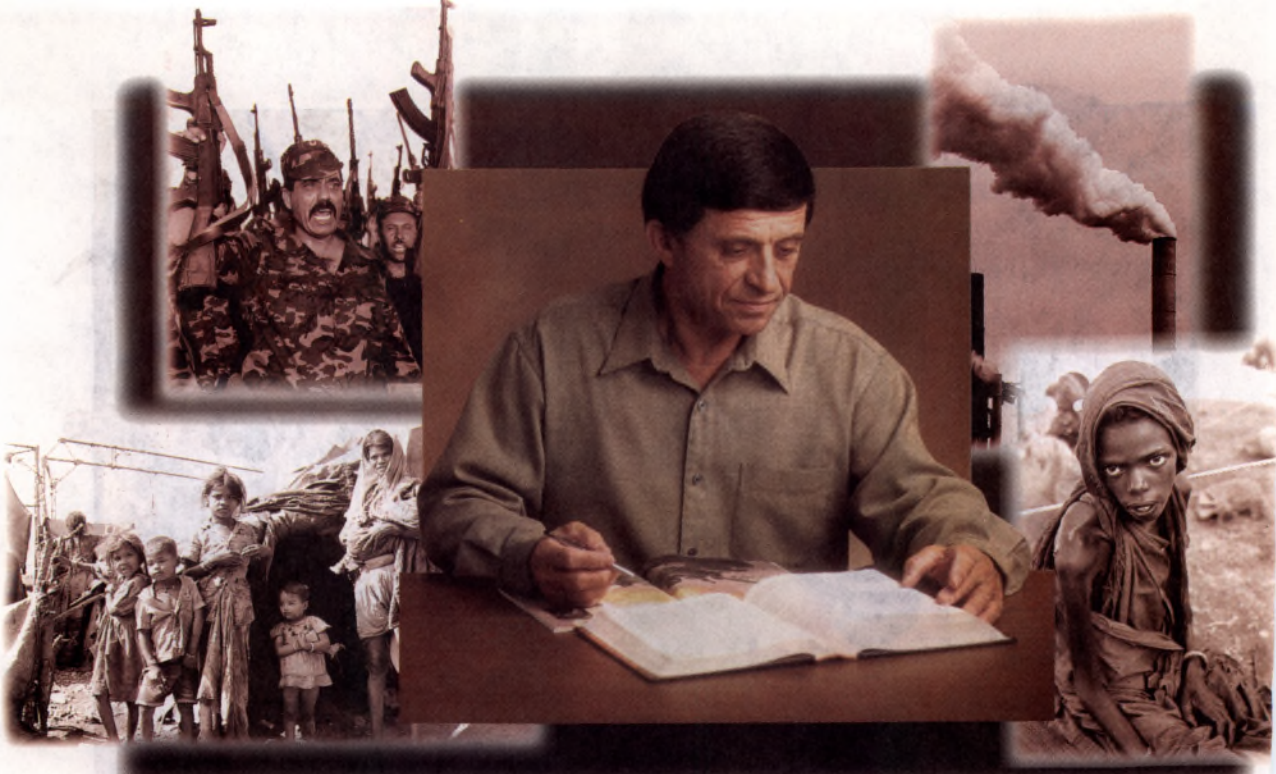


How well the last book of the Bible sums up the happy condition of those who put their trust in divine guidance! Revelation 21:4, 5 says: “[God] will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away.” Our Creator guaranteed that, saying: “Look! I am making all things new.” He adds: “These words are faithful and true.”

If we are to receive these blessings, what does God expect of us? The apostle Paul ex-

plains that God’s will is that “all sorts of men should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth.” (1 Timothy 2:4) Jehovah’s Witnesses cordially invite you to gain that accurate knowledge of the truth through a thorough study of the Bible. By diligently learning about the divine will, you too can find through experience that divine wisdom is the only reliable guidance in these perilous times. The urgency of the times makes it more imperative than ever to follow it!

Swallow us up!



HELPFUL TEACHING FOR OUR CRITICAL TIMES

"Know this, that in the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here. . . . Wicked men and impostors will advance from bad to worse, misleading and being misled."—2 TIMOTHY 3:1, 13.

ARE you being helped, or are you being hurt? Are your problems being solved, or are they being made worse? By what? By teachings. Yes, teachings can greatly affect your life, for better or for worse.

² Three associate professors recently studied this matter and presented their findings in the *Journal for the Scientific*

1, 2. Why should we be interested in what teachings we follow?

Study of Religion. Granted, they may not have studied you or your family. Yet, what they found shows that there is a definite link between teachings and a person's success, or failure, in coping with our critical times. In the next article, we will take note of what they discovered.

³ First, though, consider this question: Do you agree that we live in times hard to

3, 4. What are some evidences that we live in critical times?

Photo top left: Andy Hernandez/Sipa Press; photo bottom right: Jose Nicolas/Sipa Press

deal with? If so, then you would surely see that the evidence proves that these are "critical times hard to deal with." (2 Timothy 3:1-5) The way people are affected varies. For example, you probably know of lands that right now are being torn apart as different factions fight for political dominance. Elsewhere, the killing stems from religious or ethnic differences. Soldiers are not the only ones who get hurt. Think of the countless women and girls who have been brutalized or the elderly who have been deprived of food, heat, and shelter. Uncounted numbers are suffering badly, leading to tidal waves of refugees and many related miseries.

⁴ Our times are also marked by economic problems, resulting in closed factories, unemployment, lost benefits and pensions, erosion of the value of currency, and smaller or fewer meals. Can you add to the list of problems? Probably so. Other millions around the globe suffer from food shortages and diseases. Likely you have seen horrible photos from East Africa showing emaciated men, women, and children. Millions in Asia suffer similarly.

⁵ We have all heard of frightening diseases now increasing. On January 25, 1993, *The New York Times* stated: "Flourishing amid sexual promiscuity, hypocrisy and haphazard prevention, Latin America's AIDS epidemic is on its way to surpassing that of the United States . . . Much of the growth comes from rising infection rates among . . . women." In October 1992, *U.S. News & World Report* said: "It was only two decades ago that the U.S. surgeon general, hailing one of the greatest public-health triumphs ever, announced that it was time to 'close the book on infectious

diseases.'" What about now? "Hospitals are again being inundated with victims of scourges that were supposed to have been defeated. . . . Microbes are evolving ever more clever genetic strategies that are allowing them to outpace the development of new antibiotics. . . . 'We're entering a new era of infectious disease.'"

⁶ As one example, *Newsweek* of January 11, 1993, reported: "Malarial parasites now infect an estimated 270 million people every year, killing up to 2 million . . . and causing at least 100 million cases of acute illness. . . . At the same time, the disease is growing ever more resistant to once curative drugs. . . . Some strains could soon be untreatable." It makes you shudder.

⁷ You may have noticed that in these critical times hard to deal with, many are looking for help to solve their problems. Think of those turning to books about coping with stress or some new disease. Others are desperate for advice about a failing marriage, about child care, about alcohol or drug troubles, or about how to balance the demands of their job and the pressures they feel at home. Yes, they really need help! Are you struggling with a personal problem or experiencing some of the troubles caused by war, famine, or disaster? Even if a pressing problem seems beyond solution, you have reason to ask, 'Why have we reached such a critical state?'

⁸ Before we can cope effectively and find satisfaction in life now and in the future, we need to know why we face such critical times. Frankly, that provides reason for each of us to consider the Bible. Why do we point to the Bible? Because it alone

7. How are many today reacting to the difficult times?

8. Why should we turn to the Bible for insight and guidance?

5, 6. Why can it be said that disease is also an overwhelming aspect of our critical times?

contains accurate prophecy, history written in advance, that shows the reasons for our plight, where we are, and where we are going.

A Lesson From History

⁹ *The Watchtower* of February 15, 1994, provided a noteworthy review of Jesus' vivid prophecy in Matthew chapter 24. If you open your Bible to that chapter, you can see in verse 3 that Jesus' apostles asked for a sign about his future presence and the conclusion of the system of things. Then, in verses 5 to 14, Jesus foretold false Christs, wars, food shortages, persecution of Christians, lawlessness, and extensive preaching about God's Kingdom.

¹⁰ History proves that those very things did occur during the conclusion of the Jewish system of things. If you had lived then, would those not have been difficult times? However, things were moving toward a climax, an unprecedented tribulation on Jerusalem and the Jewish system. In verse 15 we begin reading of what unfolded once the Romans attacked Jerusalem in 66 C.E. Those events climaxed in the tribulation Jesus mentioned in verse 21—the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E., the worst tribulation ever to befall that city. Still, you know that history did not stop then, nor did Jesus say it would. In verses 23 to 28, he showed that following the tribulation of 70 C.E., other things would occur.

¹¹ Some today might be inclined to dismiss such matters from the past with a 'so what?' That would be a mistake. The fulfillment of prophecy back then is vitally important. Why? Well, the wars, famines, earthquakes, plagues, and persecution dur-

ing the conclusion of the Jewish system were to be reflected in a greater fulfillment after "the appointed times of the nations" ended in 1914. (Luke 21:24) Many now living were eyewitnesses to World War I when this modern fulfillment began. But even if you were born after 1914, you have witnessed Jesus' prophecy coming to pass. The events of this 20th century overwhelmingly prove that we are now living in the conclusion of this present wicked system.

¹² This means that "the tribulation" of Matthew 24:29 lies before us. It will involve celestial phenomena that may be unimaginable. Verse 30 shows that people will then see a different sign—one proving that destruction is at hand. According to the parallel account at Luke 21:25-28, at that future time, 'men will become faint out of fear and expectation of the things coming upon the earth.' Luke's account also says that Christians will then lift up their heads because their deliverance will be very near.

¹³ 'All well and good,' you might say, 'but I thought the issue was how can I understand and face our hard times?' Correct. Our first point is to identify key problems and see how we can avoid them. Linked to that is point two, how Scriptural teachings can help us to enjoy a better life now. In this connection, open your Bible to 2 Timothy chapter 3, and see how the words of the apostle Paul can help you to deal with the hard times.

A Prophecy About Our Times

¹⁴ God inspired Paul to write to the loyal Christian Timothy much fine counsel that helped him to lead a more successful and

9, 10. How was Jesus' prophecy in Matthew chapter 24 fulfilled in the first century?

11. In what way is the first-century fulfillment of Matthew chapter 24 related to our day?

12. According to Jesus, what can we yet expect to see?

13. What two key points merit our attention?

14. Why is there reason to believe that consideration of 2 Timothy 3:1-5 can benefit us?

happier life. Part of what Paul wrote was to have prime application in our day. Even if you feel you know them well, follow closely now the prophetic words at 2 Timothy 3: 1-5. Paul wrote: "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, having a form of godly devotion but proving false to its power."

¹⁵ Please note, there were 19 things listed. Before we examine these and come into position to benefit, get the overview. Look at verse 1. Paul foretold: "In the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here." What "last days"? There have been many last days, such as the last days of ancient Pompeii or the last days of a king or a ruling family. Even the Bible mentions a number of last days, such as the last days of the Jewish system. (Acts 2:16, 17) Jesus, though, laid the basis for us to understand that "the last days" Paul mentioned refer to our time.

¹⁶ Jesus did so with a parable about wheat and weeds. These were sown in a field and left to grow. He said that the wheat and the weeds stand for people—true Christians and false ones. We bring up this parable because it establishes that a long period of time would pass before the conclusion of the entire wicked system. When that arrived, something would be in full

15. Why should 2 Timothy 3:1 be of special interest to us now?

16. What situation did the parable of the wheat and the weeds foretell for our time?

bloom. What? Apostasy, or the turning aside from true Christianity, resulting in a bumper crop of wickedness. Other Bible prophecies confirm that this would occur during the last days of the wicked system. That is where we are, in the conclusion of the system of things.—Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43.

¹⁷ Do you see the import? Second Timothy 3:1-5 gives us a parallel indication that during the conclusion of the system, or last days, the fruitage all around Christians would be bad. Paul was not saying that the 19 things listed would be the prime way to prove that the last days had arrived. Rather, he was warning about what we would have to contend with during the last days. Verse 1 speaks of "critical times hard to deal with." That expression is from the Greek, and it literally means "appointed times fierce." (*Kingdom Interlinear*) Do you not agree that "fierce" aptly describes what we are facing today? This inspired passage goes on to give divine insight into our time.

¹⁸ Our interest in this prophecy should allow us to identify tragic examples of how critical, or fierce, our period is. Recall our two key points: (1) to identify problems that make our times hard and to see how to avoid them; (2) to follow teachings that are truly practical and that can help us to enjoy a better life. So rather than stressing negatives, we will focus on teachings that can help us and our families in these times hard to deal with.

Reap Rich Benefits

¹⁹ Paul begins his list by predicting that

17. What parallel information does 2 Timothy 3: 1-5 provide about the conclusion of the system of things?

18. What should we focus on as we study Paul's prophetic words?

19. What evidence have you seen that men are lovers of themselves?

in the last days, “men will be lovers of themselves.” (2 Timothy 3:2) What did he mean? You would be right to say that throughout history there have been conceited, self-serving men and women. Yet, there is no doubt that this defect is unusually common today. It is extreme in many people. It is almost the norm in the political and commercial world. Men and women pursue power and fame at any cost. Usually that is at any cost to *others*, for such lovers of self care little how they harm other people. They are quick to sue or cheat others. You can understand why many call this the “me generation.” Prima donnas and egotists abound.

²⁰ We do not need to be reminded of bitter experiences we have had in dealing with people who are “lovers of themselves.” It is nonetheless true that by candidly identifying this problem, the Bible is helping us, for it is teaching us how to avoid this trap. This is what it says: “Don’t do anything from selfish ambition or from a cheap desire to boast, but be humble toward one another, always considering others better than yourselves. And look out for one another’s interests, not just for your own.” “Do not think of yourself more highly than you should. Instead, be modest in your thinking.” That excellent advice is found at Philippians 2:3, 4 and Romans 12:3, as rendered in *Today’s English Version*.

²¹ Someone might protest, ‘That sounds good, but it is not practical.’ Oh, yes, it is. It can work, and it does, with normal humans today. In 1990 the publisher for Oxford University printed *The Social Dimen-*

20. How is Biblical counsel in contrast with the prevailing spirit of loving self?

21, 22. (a) What broad evidence is there that such counsel can prove helpful today? (b) What effect has God’s counsel had on normal individuals?

sions of Sectarianism. Chapter 8 was entitled “Jehovah’s Witnesses in a Catholic Country,” and it described a study in Belgium. We read: “Turning to the positive attraction of becoming a Witness, apart from the attraction of ‘the Truth’ itself, respondents again sometimes mentioned more than one characteristic. . . . Warmth, friendliness, love, and unity were the most regular mentioned items, but honesty, and personal comportment in ‘acting out biblical principles’ were also qualities that Witnesses cherished.”

²² We might liken that overview to a picture taken with a wide-angle lens; if, instead, you used a zoom, or telephoto, lens, you could see close-ups, many real-life experiences. These would include men who used to be arrogant, bossy, or blatantly selfish but who are now milder, becoming husbands and fathers who show more tender affection and kindness to their mates, children, and others. It would also include women who used to be domineering or callous and who now help others to learn the way of real Christianity. There are hundreds of thousands of such examples. Now, please be forthright. Would you not find it much better to be around people like that

Points to Recall

- ☐ What are some evidences that we live in critical times?
- ☐ Why can we be sure that we live in the last days?
- ☐ What two key points can we draw from a study of 2 Timothy 3:1-5?
- ☐ During this time when so many are lovers of themselves, how have Bible teachings helped Jehovah’s people?

than always to be confronted with men and women who love themselves first and foremost? Would that not make it easier to cope with our critical times? So would not following such Biblical teachings make you happier?

²³ We have, though, considered just the

23. Why will it be worthwhile to give further attention to 2 Timothy 3:2-5?

first item in Paul's list recorded at 2 Timothy 3:2-5. What about the others? Will your carefully examining them also help you to identify key problems of our time so as to avoid them and enable you to understand what course will bring you and your loved ones greater happiness? The following article will help you to answer those questions and to gain a rich blessing.

WALK AS INSTRUCTED BY GOD

"Let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah . . . , and he will instruct us about his ways, and we will walk in his paths."—MICAH 4:2.

GOD'S prophet Micah foretold that in "the final part of the days," our time, many people would actively seek God, to worship him. These would encourage one another, saying: "Let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah . . . , and he will instruct us about his ways, and we will walk in his paths."—Micah 4:1, 2.

² Our studying 2 Timothy 3:1-5 can help us to see the results of being instructed by God in "the last days." In the preceding article, we began by noting benefits coming to those who take to heart Paul's warning not to be "lovers of themselves." Paul added that in our time men would also be "lovers of money."

³ No one needs a college degree in modern history to see how well those words fit our times. Have you not read of financiers and corporate leaders who are not satisfied with

earning millions each year? These lovers of money keep wanting more, even by illegal means. Paul's words also fit many today who, while not wealthy, are just as covetous, never satisfied. You may know many of such in your area.

⁴ Is what Paul mentioned just an unavoidable aspect of human nature? Not according to the Author of the Bible, who long ago set out this truth: "The love of money is a root of all sorts of injurious things, and by reaching out for this love some have been led astray from the faith and have stabbed themselves all over with many pains." Notice, God did not say, 'Money is the root of all injurious things.' He said that it is "the love of money."—1 Timothy 6:10.

⁵ Interestingly, the context of Paul's words acknowledged that some fine Christians in the first century were rich in the

1. According to Micah, what would God do for his people in the last days?

2, 3. How is Paul's prediction about men being lovers of money being fulfilled today?

4-6. How does the Bible help Christians to avoid becoming lovers of money?

present system of things, whether they inherited wealth or earned it. (1 Timothy 6:17) It should be evident, then, that whatever our financial status, the Bible warns us of the danger of becoming a *lover* of money. Does the Bible offer any further instruction about avoiding this grievous and common defect? Indeed it does, such as in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Its wisdom is world famous. Note, for example, what Jesus said at Matthew 6:26-33.

⁶ As recorded at Luke 12:15-21, Jesus spoke of a rich man who kept trying to accumulate more wealth but who suddenly lost his life. What was Jesus' point? He said: "Guard against every sort of covetousness, because even when a person has an abundance his life does not result from the things he possesses." Along with giving such counsel, the Bible condemns laziness and stresses the value of honest labor. (1 Thessalonians 4:11, 12) Oh, some may object that these teachings do not fit our times—but they do, and they are *working*.

Instructed and Benefited

⁷ In nation after nation, you can find real-life examples of men and women from all social and economic levels who have applied divine principles about money. They have benefited themselves and their families, as even outsiders can see. For instance, in the book *Religious Movements in Contemporary America*, from the publisher for Princeton University, an anthropologist wrote: "In [Witness] publications and in congregation talks they are reminded that they do not depend upon new cars, expensive clothes, or lavish living for their status. At the same time a Witness is to give

7. What reason do we have for confidence that we can successfully apply the Bible's counsel about riches?

a just day's work to his employer [and is to] be scrupulously honest . . . Such traits make even a man without many skills a useful employee, and some Witnesses in North Philadelphia [U.S.A.] have moved up to positions of considerable job responsibility." Clearly, people who have accepted instruction from God through his Word have been alerted to attitudes that make it harder to deal with present conditions. Their experience proves that Bible instruction leads to a better, happier life.

⁸ We can link the next three things Paul lists. In the last days, men would be "self-assuming, haughty, blasphemers." These three are not identical, but all are related to pride. The first is "self-assuming." A dictionary says that the basic Greek word here means: "'One who makes more of himself than reality justifies,' or 'promises more than he can perform.'" You can understand why some Bibles use the term "boastful." Next comes "haughty," or literally "superior-appearing." Last, "blasphemers." Some may think of blasphemers as those who speak irreverently of God, but the underlying term includes injurious, defamatory, or abusive speech against humans. So Paul is referring to blasphemy directed against both God and man.

⁹ How do you feel when you are around people who fit Paul's description, whether they be workmates, schoolmates, or relatives? Does it make your life easier? Or do such people complicate your life, making it harder for you to deal with our times? God's Word, though, teaches us to shun these attitudes, offering instruction such as found

8. Why can "self-assuming," "haughty," and "blasphemers" be linked, and what is the meaning of these three terms?

9. In contrast with prevailing harmful attitudes, what attitudes does the Bible encourage people to develop?

WHAT A PRICE TO PAY!

"Teenagers face an enormous risk of AIDS because they like to experiment with sex and drugs, take risks and live for the moment, and because they feel immortal and defy authority," says a report presented at a conference on AIDS and teenagers.—*New York Daily News*, Sunday, March 7, 1993.

"Sexually active teen-age girls are emerging as the next 'leading edge' of the AIDS epidemic, a United Nations study in Europe, Africa and Southeast Asia has found."—*The New York Times*, Friday, July 30, 1993.

at 1 Corinthians 4:7; Colossians 3:12, 13; and Ephesians 4:29.

¹⁰ Though Christians are imperfect, their applying this fine instruction greatly helps them in these critical times. The Italian journal *La Civiltà Cattolica* said that one reason why Jehovah's Witnesses keep growing "is that the movement gives its members a precise and strong identity." But, by "strong identity," did the writer mean "self-assuming, haughty, blasphemers"? On the contrary, the Jesuit magazine notes that the movement "gives its members a precise and strong identity, and it is a place for them where they are welcomed with warmth and a sense of brotherhood and solidarity." Is it not evident that the things the Witnesses have been taught are helping them?

Instruction Benefits Family Members

¹¹ We might group the next four things, which are somewhat related. Paul foretold that during the last days, many would be "disobedient to parents, unthankful, disloyal, having no natural affection." You know that two of these defects—being unthankful and being disloyal—are all around us. Still, we can easily see why Paul set

them between being "disobedient to parents" and "having no natural affection." The four are intertwined.

¹² Virtually any observant person, young or old, would have to admit that disobedience to parents is rampant, and it is growing worse. Many parents complain that young people seem unthankful for all that is done for them. Many youths protest that their parents are not really loyal to them (or to the family in general) but are wrapped up in their jobs, pleasures, or themselves. Rather than try to figure out who is at fault, look at the results. Estrangement between adults and youths often leads teenagers to form their own code of morality, or immorality. The consequence? A soaring rate of teenage pregnancies, abortions, and sexually transmitted diseases. All too often, lack of natural affection at home leads to violence. You can probably relate examples from your area, proof that natural affection is evaporating.

¹³ This may explain why more and more are turning against those who once seemed to be part of their extended family, of the same clan, tribe, or group. Keep in mind, however, that we are not bringing these

10. What indicates that Jehovah's people are benefited from accepting Biblical instruction?

11, 12. How did Paul accurately indicate what the situation in many families would be like?

13, 14. (a) In the face of the deterioration of many families, why should we give attention to the Bible? (b) What sort of wise advice does God offer about family life?

things up to stress the negatives of life today. Our two key interests are: Can Bible teachings help us to avoid suffering from the faults that Paul listed, and will we benefit from applying Bible teachings in our lives? The answers can be yes, as is evident regarding those four points in Paul's list.

¹⁴ A sweeping statement is well justified: No teaching excels that from the Bible in producing family life that warms the heart and has good success. That is borne out by a mere sample of its counsel that can help family members not just to avoid pitfalls but to succeed. Colossians 3:18-21 well illustrates that, though there are many other beautiful and practical passages directed to husbands, wives, and children. This instruction works in our day. Granted, even in families of true Christians, there are complications and challenges. Yet, the overall results prove that the Bible is providing very helpful teaching for families.

¹⁵ For a year and a half, a researcher from the University of Lethbridge, Canada, studied social life in Zambia. She concluded: "Jehovah's Witnesses experience greater success than members of other denominations in maintaining stable marital unions. . . . Their success represents a modified exchange relationship between husband and wife, who, in their newly discovered, nonthreatening, cooperative endeavors, have become accountable in their treatment of one another to a new figurehead, God. . . . The Jehovah's Witness husband is taught to mature into practicing responsibility for the well-being of his wife and children. . . . Husband and wife are encouraged to be individuals with integrity . . . This overriding demand for integrity cements marriage."

15, 16. What situation did a researcher find when studying Jehovah's Witnesses in Zambia?



¹⁶ That study was based on numerous real experiences. For instance, this researcher said that contrary to the norm, "Jehovah's Witness men more frequently are found helping their wives in gardens, not only during the preparation phase, but also with planting and digging."

It is thus evident that countless experiences earth wide show that Bible instruction touches lives.

¹⁷ The preceding article mentioned findings in the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*. In 1991 it contained an article entitled "Religious Heritage and Premarital Sex: Evidence From a National Sample

17, 18. What surprising results surfaced in a study about religious heritage and premarital sex?





Bible instruction benefits Jehovah's Witnesses in the congregation and at home

of Young Adults.” You probably know how prevalent premarital sex is. At a young age many give in to passion, and many teenagers have multiple sex partners. Can Bible teachings alter this common pattern?

¹⁸ Three associate professors who studied the issue expected to find ‘that adolescents and young adults raised in the more conservative Christian tradition would be less likely to have premarital sex.’ But what did the facts show? Overall, between 70 percent

and 82 percent had engaged in premarital sex. For some “a fundamentalist heritage [reduced] the likelihood of premarital sex, but not in the case of ‘teenage premarital sex.’” The researchers commented on some youths from seemingly religious families who “exhibited a *significantly higher probability* of premarital sex when compared to Mainline Protestants.”—Italics ours.

¹⁹ The professors found just the opposite among youths of Jehovah’s Witnesses, who were among “the group most distinct from others.” Why? “The level of commitment and social integration engendered by experiences, expectations, and involvement . . . may generally create higher levels of adherence to principles of faith.” They added: “Witnesses are expected to fulfill missionary responsibilities as adolescents and young adults.”

²⁰ So Bible instruction affected Jehovah’s Witnesses for the good by helping them to avoid immorality. That means protection from sexually transmitted diseases, some of which are incurable and others fatal. It means no pressure toward abortions, which the Bible teaches are the equivalent of taking life. It also means young adults who are able to enter marriage with clean consciences. That means marriages built on a more solid foundation. It is such teachings that can help us to cope, to be healthier, happier.

Positive Instruction

²¹ Now go back to 2 Timothy 3:3, 4, and note what else Paul said would make our times hard to deal with for many—but not for all: “[Men would be] not open to ————
19, 20. How has God’s instruction helped and protected many youths among Jehovah’s Witnesses?
21. What things did Paul accurately foretell for our time?

any agreement, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, without love of goodness, betrayers, headstrong, puffed up with pride, [and] lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God.” How accurate! Nevertheless, instruction from the Bible can protect us and equip us to cope, to succeed.

²² The apostle Paul ends his list on a positive note. He turns the last item into a godly command that can also bring us immeasurable benefit. Paul mentions those “having a form of godly devotion but proving false to its power; *and from these turn away.*” Recall that youths in some churches actually have a higher rate of premarital sex than the average. Why, even if the immorality of those churchgoers were only at the average level, would that not be proof that their form of worship was powerless? Furthermore, do religious teachings change how people act in business, how they deal with subordinates, or how they treat relatives?

²³ Paul’s words show that we ought to put into practice what we learn from God’s Word, having a way of worship that manifests the real power of Christianity. Concerning those whose form of worship is powerless, Paul tells us: “From these turn away.” That is a clear command, one that will bring us definite benefits.

²⁴ In what way? Well, the last book of the Bible depicts a figurative woman, a harlot, called Babylon the Great. Evidence shows that Babylon the Great represents the worldwide empire of false religion, which Jehovah God has examined and rejected. Yet, we do not have to be included. Revelation 18:4 exhorts us: “Get out of her, my —”
^{22, 23.} Paul concluded his list with what positive exhortation, and what is its import?
^{24.} How does the exhortation in Revelation chapter 18 parallel Paul’s counsel?

people, if you do not want to share with her in her sins, and if you do not want to receive part of her plagues.” Is that not the same message that Paul conveyed, “from these turn away”? Our complying is another way in which we can benefit from God’s instruction.

²⁵ Soon God will directly intervene in human affairs. He will wipe away all false religion and the rest of the present wicked system. That will be a cause for rejoicing, as Revelation 19:1, 2 indicates. On earth those who accept and follow God’s instruction will be allowed to keep following his teachings when the obstacles of these critical times are past.—Revelation 21:3, 4.

²⁶ Living in that restored earthly Paradise will certainly be delightful beyond our imagination. God promises that it is possible for us, and we can trust him implicitly. He thus gives us abundant reason to accept and follow his helpful teaching. When? Let us follow his instructions now in our critical times and on into the Paradise that he promises.—Micah 4:3, 4.

^{25, 26.} What future is in store for those who now accept and apply instruction from Jehovah God?

Points to Ponder

- ☐ How are Jehovah’s people benefited from his counsel about riches?
- ☐ A Jesuit magazine testified to what good results coming to God’s servants through applying his Word?
- ☐ A study in Zambia revealed what benefits that came to families applying divine instruction?
- ☐ What protection does divine instruction provide for young people?

Is It Really Theft?

ABIODUN was a senior waiter in a big hotel in Nigeria. While locking up the banquet hall one evening, he found a bag of cash containing the equivalent of \$1,827, U.S. Without delay he turned in the money, which was later claimed by its owner, a guest at the hotel. The hotel management rewarded Abiodun with a double promotion and gave him their “best worker of the year” award. The owner of the money also rewarded him.

Quality, a local newsmagazine, featured the story, calling Abiodun a “Good Samaritan.” When asked by *Quality* if he was tempted to keep the money for himself, Abiodun said: ‘I am one of Jehovah’s Witnesses. So if I find anything that does not belong to me, I give it back to the owner.’

Many in the community were surprised by Abiodun’s display of honesty. Abiodun’s fellow Witnesses were pleased by what happened, but they were not surprised. Throughout the earth Jehovah’s Witnesses are known for their high principles. Among them honesty is not the exception; it is the rule, an essential part of true Christianity.

Occasionally, however, circumstances may seem to blur the line between what is honest and what is not. Consider this situation. Festus, who cared for the contributions and accounts in a congregation of Jehovah’s Witnesses in West Africa, was in desperate need of money.* His wife needed a serious operation that her doctors said should not be delayed. The hospital demanded half the money in advance.

Festus lacked the money. When he approached several people for a loan, he was

turned down. Then he thought of the money in his care and reasoned, ‘Is it right for me to let my wife risk death when I can do something to prevent it? Why not “borrow” from the congregation cash? I can return it when some people pay me what they owe me.’

Festus used that money that was not his to pay the hospital. Was his reasoning correct? Was his action justifiable in view of the emergency situation he faced?

Whose Money Is It?

In analyzing these questions, let us briefly review a few points concerning the source and purpose of money such as Festus took. The funds come through voluntary contributions made by members of the congregation who want to further Jehovah’s pure worship. (2 Corinthians 9:7) It is not used to pay salaries, since no one is paid for what they do in the congregation. On the contrary, the contributed money is used mainly to obtain and care for a meeting place, usually a Kingdom Hall. This provides a convenient and comfortable location where people—young and old, rich and poor—can meet for Bible instruction.

Whose money is it? It belongs to the congregation collectively. No individual member determines how the money is to be spent. While the body of elders directs payment of routine congregational expenses, when an unusual payment is called for, the elders present the matter to the entire congregation for approval.

Borrowing or Theft?

Because of his plan to replace the money as quickly as possible, Festus viewed his

* The name has been changed.

action as borrowing. However, *Webster's New Dictionary of Synonyms* uses other words regarding "the taking and removing of another's property usually by stealth or without his knowledge and always without his consent." The words are "theft" and "thief." Without permission or authorization, Festus took money that belonged to the congregation. So, yes, he was guilty of theft. He was a thief.

Of course, there are degrees of reprehensibility in the motivation behind theft. We can see that from the example of Judas Iscariot, who was entrusted with caring for the money held by Jesus and the faithful apostles. The Bible says: "[Judas] was a thief and had the money box and used to carry off the monies put in it." (John 12:6) Motivated by a bad heart and outright greed, Judas went from bad to worse. Eventually he sank to betraying the Son of God—for 30 pieces of silver.—Matthew 26:14-16.

Festus, however, was motivated by concern for his ailing wife. Does this mean that he was without blame? By no means. Consider what the Bible says about theft in another seeming emergency situation: "People do not despise a thief just because he commits thievery to fill his soul when he is hungry. But, when found, he will make it good with seven times as much; all the valuables of his house he will give." (Proverbs 6:30, 31) In other words, when caught, the thief must face the full penalty of the law. According to the Mosaic Law, a thief was to pay for his crime. So rather than encourage or excuse theft, the Bible warns that even in emergency situations, stealing can result in economic loss, disgrace, and most seriously, a loss of God's approval.

As Witnesses of Jehovah, all true Chris-

tians, especially those entrusted with responsibilities within the congregation, must be exemplary, "free from accusation." (1 Timothy 3:10) Festus did not receive the money he was expecting, and thus he was not able to replace the money he had taken. What he had done became known. What happened to him? Had he been an unrepentant thief, he would have been expelled from the clean Christian congregation. (1 Peter 4:15) But he was cut to the heart and did repent. Hence, he could remain in the congregation, although he lost his privileges of service.

Trusting in God

The apostle Paul warned that stealing by a person who claims to serve Jehovah can bring reproach on God's name and His name people. Paul wrote: "Do you, . . . the one teaching someone else, not teach yourself? You, the one preaching 'Do not steal,' do you steal? For 'the name of God is being blasphemed on account of you people.'" —Romans 2:21, 24.

Agur, a wise man of ancient times, made the same point. In his prayer he asked that he might "not come to poverty and . . . actually steal and assail the name of [his] God." (Proverbs 30:9) Notice that the wise man acknowledged that poverty can bring about circumstances that might tempt even a righteous person to steal. Yes, hard times can test a Christian's faith in Jehovah's ability to care for the needs of his people.

Yet, loyal Witnesses of Jehovah, including those who are poor, have faith that God "becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him." (Hebrews 11:6) They know that Jehovah rewards his faithful ones by helping them to care for their needs. Jesus made that clear in his Sermon on the

Mount, saying: "Never be anxious and say, 'What are we to eat?' or, 'What are we to drink?' or, 'What are we to put on?' . . . For your heavenly Father knows you need all these things. Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you." —Matthew 6:31-33.

How does God provide for needy ones in the Christian congregation? In many ways. One is through fellow believers. God's people display genuine love for one another. They take seriously the Biblical admonition: "Whoever has this world's means for supporting life and beholds his brother having need and yet shuts the door of his tender compassions upon him, in what way does the love of God remain in him? Little children, let us love, neither in word nor

with the tongue, but in deed and truth." —1 John 3:17, 18.

Throughout the world, in more than 73,000 congregations, over four and a half million Witnesses of Jehovah diligently strive to serve God according to his righteous principles. They know that God will never abandon his loyal ones. Those who have served Jehovah for many years raise their voices in agreement with King David, who wrote: "A young man I used to be, I have also grown old, and yet I have not seen anyone righteous left entirely, nor his offspring looking for bread." —Psalm 37:25.

How much better to put faith in the God who inspired those words, rather than ever let oneself be tempted to steal and possibly lose God's favor forever! —1 Corinthians 6: 9, 10.

Lifting the Veil on Alaska's Last Frontier

FOR two days now, the four of us have huddled in a small room in the famous gold-rush town of Nome, Alaska. In 1898 more than 40,000 prospectors converged here to seek but one thing—gold! We, on the other hand, seek a different treasure.

Our interest, for the moment, is in "the desirable things" who may reside in the isolated villages of Gambell and Savoonga on St. Lawrence Island, 200 miles to the west in the Bering Strait. (Haggai 2:7) There the Inuit brave the icy Arctic waters and hunt whales only a few miles from what was once

the Soviet Union. But blowing snow and a dense gray blanket of fog hold us captive. Our airplane is grounded.

As we wait, I reflect on events of the past few years and thank Jehovah God for his blessing on the bush witnessing. In Alaska—which is called by some the world's last frontier—there are more than 60,000 native people living in over 150 remote communities, spread over almost 600,000 square miles of wilderness, not connected by roads of any kind. By means of the Watch Tower Society's airplane, we have already reached over one third of these isolated villages,

bringing the good news of God's Kingdom to them.—Matthew 24:14.

To reach these remote settlements, the plane often has to let down through clouds and fog that may cover the land for days. Once on the ground, there is yet another fog that must be penetrated. Like a veil, it envelops the minds and hearts of these kind and peaceful people.—Compare 2 Corinthians 3:15, 16.

A Painful Transition

The Alaskan bush is inhabited by Inuit, Aleuts, and Indians. Each of these has its own customs and traits peculiar to its individual heritage. To survive the Arctic winter, they have learned to live with and off the resources of the land by hunting, fishing, and whaling.

Foreign influence came upon them in the mid-1700's. Russian fur traders found a people dressed in animal skin and smelling of seal oil, who lived, not in igloos made of ice, but in semiunderground sod houses with grass roofs and below-ground entrances. The traders brought these soft-spoken, mild, and yet hardy people many serious problems, including new cultures and new diseases, which reduced the population of some tribes by half. Alcohol soon became a curse upon the people. The new economy forced a change from a subsistence form of life to a monetary one. To this day, some feel, it has been a painful transition.

When Christendom's missionaries arrived, change of another kind was forced upon the native Alaskans. While some reluctantly gave up their traditional religious practices—worship of the spirits of wind, ice, bear, eagle, and so on—others developed a mingling of concepts, resulting in a fusion, or confusion, of religions. All of this often resulted in suspicion and mistrust of

strangers. A visitor is not always welcomed in some villages.

The challenge before us, therefore, is, How will we reach all the natives spread throughout this vast frontier? How can their suspicions be put to rest? What can we do to lift the veil?

Early Efforts to Witness

In the early 1960's, a number of hearty Alaskan Witnesses braved the elements—fierce winds, subzero temperatures, whiteout conditions—and flew their private, single-engined airplanes on preaching tours among the villages scattered to the north. In retrospect, these courageous brothers were really exposing themselves to a large measure of risk. An engine failure would almost certainly have led to disaster. Even if a safe landing was possible, they would be miles away from help in subzero temperatures and with no means of travel. Survival would depend on getting food and shelter, which would be scarce. Thankfully, no serious incidents occurred, but such dangers could not be ignored. So the Alaska branch office of the Watch Tower Society discouraged this approach.

To press on with the work, faithful brothers in the Fairbanks and North Pole Congregations concentrated their efforts on the larger villages, such as Nome, Barrow, and Kotzebue, which are served by commercial airlines. They used their own funds to travel to these areas, over 450 miles to the north and west. Some remained in Nome for several months to conduct Bible studies with interested ones. In Barrow an apartment was rented to provide a haven from the frigid minus 50 degrees Fahrenheit temperature. Over several years, more than \$15,000 was spent by those taking to heart Jesus' command to preach the good news to the ends of the earth.—Mark 13:10.

Unexpected Help Arrives

The search for a way to reach the more secluded communities continued, and Jehovah opened the way. A twin-engined aircraft became available—just the thing to cross the rugged Alaska Range safely. There are numerous mountains that tower over 14,000 feet in Alaska, and the peak of famous Mount McKinley (Denali) is 20,320 feet above sea level.

Finally, the plane arrived. Imagine our disappointment when a worn, faded, multi-

1. Gambell
2. Savoonga
3. Nome
4. Kotzebue
5. Barrow
6. Tuktoyaktuk
7. Fairbanks

8. Anchorage
9. Unalaska
10. Dutch Harbor

colored piece of flying machine touched down on the runway. Could it possibly be airworthy? Could we entrust the lives of our brothers to it? Again, Jehovah's hand was not short. Guided by licensed mechanics, over 200 brothers volunteered their services, spending several thousand hours to refurbish the entire plane.

What a delight to behold! Lifting into the Alaskan skies, a shiny, like-new aircraft with the registration number 710WT emblazoned on the tail! Since both seven and ten are used in the Bible to symbolize completeness, 710 might be taken to emphasize

the support Jehovah's organization has given to lift the veil from hearts enshrouded in darkness.

Down the Aleutian Chain

Since receiving the airplane, we have covered 50,000 miles of wilderness, bringing the Kingdom good news and Bible literature to over 54 villages. This is the equivalent of crossing the continental United States 19 times!

Three times we have reached down through the thousand-mile-long Aleutian Islands, which separate the Pacific Ocean from the Bering Sea. The more than 200 almost treeless islands that make up the chain are home not only to the Aleut natives but also to thousands of sea birds, bald eagles, and emperor geese, with snow-white heads and distinctive black-and-white ribbed feathers.

The alluring beauty of the region, however, is not without its dangers. Flying over the sea, we could see 10-to-15-foot whitecaps on the foaming icy water, so cold that even in the summer one can survive in it for only 10 to 15 minutes. If forced to land, a pilot's only options are a rugged, rockbound island or the frigid, deadly sea. How grateful we are for our skillful brothers, certified A & E (Aircraft and Engines) mechanics, who volunteer to maintain the aircraft in tip-top shape!

On one of the trips, we were headed for Dutch Harbor and the fishing village of Unalaska. The region is known for its 70-to-100-knot winds. Happily, it was much calmer that day but still turbulent enough to make us queasy several times. What a surprise when the landing strip came into sight—just a notch cut into a rocky mountain-side! On one side of the runway was a sheer

cliff of stone, on the other, the icy water of the Bering Sea! When we touched down, it was on a wet runway. It rains more than 200 days a year there.

What a joy it was to discuss God's Word and purpose with the inhabitants of the area! Several old-timers expressed appreciation for the hope of a world without war. They still had vivid memories of the bombing of Dutch Harbor by the Japanese during World War II. Our memories of such witnessing trips are equally unforgettable.

A Slow Warming Trend

Checking the weather again, we notice a slow rise in the temperature. That makes me think of our bush work. Slowly but steadily we have seen a warming trend in the hearts of the people.

It has taken time to remove the shroud of suspicion and distrust that the people have toward outsiders. In our early attempts, it was not uncommon for village church lead-

ers to meet the airplane, inquire of the purpose of our visit, and then abruptly ask us to leave. Such receptions, of course, were disappointing. But we recalled Jesus' counsel found at Matthew 10:16: "Prove yourselves cautious as serpents and yet innocent as doves." So we returned with the plane loaded with fresh lettuce, tomatoes, cantaloupes, and other items not easily available locally. The formerly hostile residents were now delighted to see our cargo.

While one brother attended the "store," accepting donations for the fresh goods, several others went from door to door, informing the householders of the arrival of the fresh cargo. At the doors they also inquired: "Oh, by the way, are you a reader of the Bible? I know you will enjoy this Bible study aid that shows that God has promised us a paradise." Who could refuse such a tempting offer? Everyone appreciated the physical as well as the spiritual food. The welcome was pleasant, much literature was placed, and a few hearts were warmed.

Stepping Over the Border

Over in Yukon Territory, the Whitehorse Congregation extended to us a "Macedonian" invitation to "step over" into Canada to visit some of the areas in the remote Northwest Territories. (Acts 16:9) Five of us were on board as we headed for Tuktoyaktuk, a village near Mackenzie Bay on the Beaufort Sea, north of the Arctic Circle.

To reach isolated communities, it is often necessary to cross one of Alaska's many mountain ranges



"How do you pronounce this strange name?" we were wondering as we arrived.

"Tuk," a young man answered with a big smile.

"Why didn't we think of that?" we marveled.

We were surprised to find that the people of Tuktoyaktuk were well versed in the Scriptures. As a result, we had many friendly discussions, and much literature was placed. One of our young pioneers had an enlightening conversation with a householder.

"I am an Anglican!" said the householder.

"Are you aware that the Anglican Church approves of homosexuality?" our pioneer inquired.

"It does?" the man hesitated. "Well, then, I am not an Anglican anymore." Hopefully, another person was having his heart opened to the good news of the Bible.—Ephesians 1:18.

An old-timer was impressed with our determination to reach every home in the area. Normally we would have to do all our work on foot. Usually there would be a walk of a mile or more from the airstrip to the village. Then, to reach each home, we had to hike over gravel or mud paths. The man lent us his pickup truck, and what a blessing it was! Stepping over the border and helping out in Canadian territory was a fine privilege.

Is It Worth It?

When the weather is bad and we get stranded or indefinitely delayed, as we are now, or when a long day of witnessing seems to have brought nothing but disinterest or even hostility, then we begin to wonder if it is worth all the time, energy, and expense. We may think of people who seem to show interest and promise to correspond but fail to do so. Then we remember that it is not the custom of many native people to write letters, and friendliness can easily be mistaken for interest in the Bible message. At times it seems so difficult to measure success.

These negative thoughts quickly vanish when we recall the good experiences of other Kingdom publishers. For example, a



Betty Haws, Sophie Mezak, and Carrie Teeples have a combined total of more than 30 years in full-time service



Witness from Fairbanks preached in the village of Barrow in the far north. There she met a teenager who was home from college in California. The sister kept up the interest by correspondence and continued to encourage the girl even after she returned to college. Today, the young lady is a happy, baptized servant of Jehovah.

A knock on the door jars me out of my reverie and gives yet another proof that it is all worth it. There in the doorway stands Elmer, so far the only dedicated, baptized Inuit Witness in Nome.

"If you get out, may I go with you?" he

asked. Living isolated and over 500 miles from the nearest congregation, he wants to share in the ministry with his brothers while he has the opportunity.

The sun's rays begin to break through the clouds, and we know we will soon receive clearance to depart. As Elmer climbs into the airplane, we are warmed by his happy, beaming face. This is a special day for Elmer. He is coming with us to our village destination to preach to his own Inuit people, joining us in our attempt to remove the veil from the hearts of those living on the world's last frontier.—*Contributed.*

Determined to Serve Jehovah!

“YOU are not to go out preaching!” “Don’t have your people call here!” Many Christian women hear these and similar expressions from their opposed husbands. But when these men are serving in the armed forces, their wives face special challenges to their faith. (Isaiah 2:4; John 17:16) How, then, do such Christian wives manage to keep spiritually strong and active in Kingdom service?

Loyalty to Jehovah God coupled with personal determination helps them persevere. “I think it was my own sheer determination,” explains Yvonne, a soldier’s wife. “I knew there must be ways around my husband’s opposition.” Indeed, there were.

Another Christian woman, married to an army officer, relates how her determined stand even makes life easier for her husband. “He knows my schedule as well as his, and military people appreciate that,” she

explains. Nevertheless, her continued service to Jehovah is no easy course.

Overcoming Loneliness

Wives of servicemen frequently face the challenge of moving on a few days’ notice if they are to accompany their husbands to a posting far from home. Then, installed in unfamiliar surroundings, it is easy to feel isolated. But this need not be. Those who serve Jehovah have an advantage. What is that? According to the Christian apostle Peter, it is “the whole association of brothers.” Now numbering into the millions, Jehovah’s Witnesses in 231 countries act as a large Christian family, a “brotherhood.” You find them virtually everywhere.—1 Peter 2:17, footnote.

Susan, suddenly uprooted from her home area, arrived to live at the air force base where her husband was assigned. New in the faith and under pressure from her un-

believing husband to cease sharing in the Christian ministry, she relates: "I went immediately to the local meetings, and there I was able to sit and talk to other sisters. I can truthfully say it was this association that kept me going."

Sometimes loneliness causes depression. Even then, good news provides a welcome uplift. Glenys, an English sister who accompanied her husband when he was posted overseas, relates: "When I was really down, out of the blue, somebody whom I'd known years ago when I was in the army myself wrote and said that she had recently been baptized as one of Jehovah's Witnesses. That gave me a boost just at the right time."

Jane, who traveled with her husband to Kenya, found that Christian meetings proved to be a lifeline, even though conducted in languages she did not understand. "I knew this was where Jehovah wanted me to be," she explains. "I was with my brothers, and they were like a tonic. They welcomed me, and I felt we were a family."

Jane is just one of many in these circumstances who discovered spiritual relatives that she did not even know she had!—Mark 10:29, 30.

Steadfast in the Face of Opposition

"Do not think I came to put peace upon the earth," Jesus warned. "I came to put, not peace, but a sword." (Matthew 10:34) What did he mean? Even within a family, where peace would be expected, there might be "a sudden hurling of the sword," comments A. T. Robertson in *Word Pictures in the New Testament*. "Indeed," Jesus noted, "a man's enemies will be persons of his own household." (Matthew 10:36) How true these words prove to be when a marriage mate is hostile to the truth!

When Diane began to study the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses, her husband, an air force officer, was very displeased. What effect did this have on their marriage? "It was like a block of ice coming between us," Diane explains. "We had been happily married. Suddenly we were just existing in the same household." How, then, did she cope? "Personal conviction and determination are what counted, together with help from Jehovah and his spirit." Diane took to heart the Bible example of the prophet Daniel.

When exiled to Babylon and offered food unacceptable to a servant of God, Daniel "*determined in his heart* that he would not pollute himself with the delicacies of the king." Yes, Daniel made a conscious decision. He resolved in his heart never to pollute himself by eating that food. What fortitude he then demonstrated as "*he kept requesting* of the principal court official that he might not pollute himself"! The result? Jehovah blessed his determined stand.—Daniel 1:8, 9, 17.

Likewise today an opposed husband may demand that his wife stop attending congregation meetings. How should she react? Jane found herself in this situation. She explains: "I would never back off under pressure. I knew there could be no compromise. I had to demonstrate how much the meetings meant to me." Jehovah blessed her resolve as she kept attending.

"My husband tried to keep me from going to the meetings, but that didn't last too long," relates Glenys. "I still went. When I returned home, he sometimes beat me, and at other times I was greeted by silence." Yet, she coped, praying repeatedly. Also, two of the congregation elders regularly prayed with her, which greatly encouraged her to keep attending.—James 5:13-15; 1 Peter 2:23.



At times a husband's superiors may pressure him to discourage his wife from preaching the good news. Diane found that she had to make it clear to her husband what her priorities were. "I was prepared," she said, "to take the consequences of my continued preaching." How like the apostles' stand this is! (Acts 4:29, 31) Nevertheless, she was circumspect in her preaching. She relates: "I used to have gatherings for coffee and offer everybody present a *Truth* book."—Matthew 10:16; 24:14.

Subjection Without Compromise

Though distressed by marital tension, Christian wives look to the future and rely on Jehovah. This helps them to maintain a balanced view. They give their husbands whatever support they can without compromising their faith. So doing, they follow Peter's inspired advice: "You wives, be in subjection to your own husbands." (1 Peter 3:1) In *The Amplified New Testament*, this apostolic instruction reads: "Subordinate yourselves as being secondary to and dependent on them, and adapt yourselves to

Prayerful study strengthens Christian determination

them." Notice how Jane followed this advice. "My husband told me that what I wanted to do must not interfere with his career," she explains. "So I tried to find ways I could help him."

Some Christian wives have thus agreed to attend social functions to which their husbands have been invited. But they still resolve never to compromise their faith. Jane took time to talk to her husband about this. She kindly explained that she was willing to attend but did not want her presence to embarrass him. "I knew that occasionally all present are expected to stand and take part in a toast. I had learned that allegiance is due only to Jehovah, and toasting was much more than simply showing respect. My husband realized how awkward the situation could be, so he simply said: 'Don't come! I obeyed.'"

Glenys, on the other hand, accompanied her husband to such a function, but she watched the officers at the head of the table. When she saw them preparing to toast, she discreetly left for the rest room! Yes, these women adapted themselves but never compromised.

"Won Without a Word"

"If I improve my own ability as a wife, my husband will see that the truth is changing me," reasoned Yvonne. So she read and re-read the chapter in the *Family Life* book entitled "A Wife Who Is Dearly Loved."* "I paid particular attention to material under the subheading 'The Weepers, the Naggers'! But I found the more I tried to speak to my husband, the worse matters became."

* *Making Your Family Life Happy*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc. (1978).

Finally, though, she succeeded in helping her husband to serve Jehovah. How? By applying the principle outlined at 1 Peter 3:1, that husbands may be “won without a word.”

The way Christian women care for their families does much to commend Christianity to others. “I tried to make the truth as attractive as possible,” relates Diane. “When I went to meetings, my husband would feel very left out, so I made it a point to instruct the children to be especially well-behaved when we arrived home. I also tried to pay extra attention to him when we returned.” Gradually her husband’s attitude changed as he responded to his family’s kind attention.

Fellow servants of Jehovah can help too. Jane relates that her husband enjoyed the company of Witness missionaries he met in Kenya. “They made friends with him and talked about football, and they were very hospitable. On a number of occasions, we were invited to different missionary homes for meals.” Her husband later explained: “I began to see Jane’s faith from a totally different viewpoint. Her friends were very intelligent people who could speak on a variety of subjects.” Similarly, Diane’s husband changed his view of the truth. When the car he was driving broke down, a young Witness came to his rescue. “That really impressed me,” he says.

Of course, not all marriage mates are won over to the truth. What then? Jehovah supplies help to enable the faithful ones to endure. (1 Corinthians 10:13) Consider Glenys’ encouragement for those in circumstances similar to hers: “Never, never doubt that Jehovah is the One who originated marriage and that he wants couples to stay together. So no matter what the husband might do or what opposition you

might get from those around you, Jehovah will never allow you to totter.” Although her husband does not yet worship Jehovah, his attitude toward her and the truth has mellowed.

‘Sow With Tears; Reap With Joy’

Truly, these Christian women are determined to serve Jehovah. If you are in similar circumstances, make this your resolve too. Remember the exhortation: “Jehovah your God you should fear. Him you should serve, and to him you should cling.”—Deuteronomy 10:20.

“The one that without fail goes forth, even weeping, carrying along a bagful of seed, will without fail come in with a joyful cry, carrying along his sheaves,” declares the psalmist. (Psalm 126:6) “You do shed so many tears as you try to show your partner the truth, either silently or verbally,” acknowledges one Witness. “But in the end you cry out joyfully because even if he does not accept the truth, Jehovah blesses you for the effort you make.”

All who faithfully serve Jehovah despite opposition at home earn real commendation. They deserve support and love. May they maintain their uncompromising stand, determined to serve Jehovah!

In Our Next Issue

Is Religion Filling Your Needs?

Sing Praises to Jehovah

**Why Jehovah’s Witnesses
Keep on the Watch**

DO YOU REMEMBER?

Have you enjoyed reading the recent issues of *The Watchtower*? If so, you will find it interesting to recall the following:

□ **Why did the Israelite spies choose to lodge at the house of Rahab the harlot?**

The Israelite spies lived by God's Law, so they did not lodge at Rahab's house for immoral reasons. They probably reasoned that their presence in a harlot's house would be less likely to arouse suspicion in the city. That her house was built on the city wall might make escape easier. But above all, Jehovah guided them to a sinner whose heart had been so favorably affected by reports of divine dealings with the Israelites that she repented and changed her ways.—12/15, pages 24-5.

□ **How does anger affect our health?**

Studies indicate that anger produces stress hormones. Frequent outbursts of anger can cause an imbalance between the protective and the harmful forms of cholesterol, putting us at risk of cardiovascular disease.—12/15, page 32.

□ **What suggestions will help us to increase our distribution of the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines?**

Be *Watchtower* and *Awake!* conscious; keep the presentation simple; be flexible by preparing a few brief presentations; set a personal goal.—1/1, pages 24-5.

□ **Why is Moses such a fine theocratic example for us to follow?**

Moses sought Jehovah's guidance on matters. He had no personal ambitions but was concerned about Jehovah's glory. He had strong faith, and he never forgot that Jehovah was the real Ruler of the nation of Israel.—1/15, page 11.

□ **What are some ways in which divine teaching triumphs?**

Divine teaching triumphs by imparting to Jehovah's people a progressive understanding of the truth. It brings people into spiritual light, and it shows meek ones how to worship God "with spirit and truth." (John 4:24) Divine teaching also triumphs over trials and the wicked world.—2/1, pages 10-12.

□ **What is the key to successful counseling?**

The key is proper respect for the other person and his right to be treated in a dignified manner. Hence, a Christian counselor should be kind and firm but should clothe the recipient with dignity.—2/1, page 28.

□ **How did the Roman Catholic Church come to accept Mary's Assumption as a doctrine?**

In the first centuries after Jesus' death, the idea of Mary's Assumption into heaven was completely foreign to the thinking of Christians. However, after the Trinity teaching became official church doctrine, Mary was given an increasingly important role. The Assumption theory was not accepted as dogma until November 1, 1950, when Pope Pius XII announced: "We define it to be a dogma revealed by God."—*Munificentissimus Deus*.—2/15, pages 26-7.

□ **In Jeremiah chapter 24, what did the two baskets of figs, the good figs and those that were bad, represent?**

The good figs represented the Jews initially taken captive to Babylon, from which a remnant would return to Judah. The bad figs stood for King Zedekiah and those with him who rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar despite having taken an oath in God's name. Comparably, we find in modern times the remnant of spiritual Israel, who have produced good fruitage in their lives, in contrast with the clergy of Christendom, who have produced rotten fruitage.—3/1, pages 14-16.

□ **Who were the Quartodecimans, and why are they of interest to Christians today?**

After the time of the apostles, there were some who observed the Lord's Evening Meal on Nisan 14 each year, following the apostolic pattern. They came to be known as "Fourteenthers," or Quartodecimans. This is of interest today, for it shows that even after the apostles died, there were some who held to the proper course of commemorating Jesus' death once a year on Nisan 14.—3/15, pages 4-5.

□ **Who was William Whiston?**

He was a brilliant 18th-century scholar in England, a close associate of Sir Isaac Newton. Whiston translated the Christian Greek Scriptures, openly opposed the teaching of the Trinity doctrine, and was a lecturer on astronomy and mathematics. But Whiston is likely most remembered for his translation into English of the writings of Jewish historian Flavius Josephus.—3/15, pages 26-8.

□ **How was man made in God's image? (Genesis 1:27)**

Man was made with the ability to exercise God's outstanding qualities of love, justice, wisdom, and power—as well as other qualities.—4/1, page 25.

QUESTIONS FROM READERS

When Saul's soldiers ate meat along with the blood, why were they not executed, since that was the punishment set out in God's Law?

These men did violate God's law on blood, but they may have been shown mercy because they had respect for blood, even though they should have been more diligent about showing such respect.

Consider the situation. The Israelites under King Saul and his son Jonathan were at war with the Philistines. At a point when "the men of Israel themselves were hard pressed" in battle, Saul rashly took an oath that his men should not eat until the enemy was defeated. (1 Samuel 14:24) Soon his oath created a problem.

His men were winning a hard-fought battle, but the strenuous effort was taking its toll. They were famished and exhausted. What did they do in that extreme situation? "The people began darting greedily at the spoil and taking sheep and cattle and calves and slaughtering them on the earth, and the people fell to eating along with the blood."—1 Samuel 14:32.

That was in violation of God's law concerning blood, as some of Saul's people told him, saying: "Look! The people are sinning against Jehovah by eating along with the blood." (1 Samuel 14:33) Yes, the Law said that when animals were slaughtered, the blood had to be drained before the meat was eaten. God did not demand taking fanatical measures to drain the blood. By taking reasonable steps of drainage, his servants could manifest respect for the significance of blood. (Deuteronomy 12:15, 16, 21-25) Animal blood could be used in a sacrificial way on the altar, but it was not to be eaten. Deliberate violation was punishable by death, for God's people were told: "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 17:10-14.

Were the soldiers of King Saul deliberately breaking the Law? Were they showing absolute

disregard for the divine law on blood?—Compare Numbers 15:30.

We need not conclude so. The record says that they were 'slaughtering the animals *on the earth* and eating along with the blood.' So they may have been making some attempt to drain the blood. (Deuteronomy 15:23) Yet, in their exhausted, famished state, they did not hang up the slaughtered carcasses and allow adequate time for normal blood drainage. They slaughtered the sheep and cattle "on the earth," which could retard drainage. And they quickly cut meat from carcasses that might have been lying in blood. Hence, even if they had in mind obeying God's law, they did not follow through in proper ways nor to an adequate extent.

The result was that "the people fell to eating along with the blood," which was sinful. Saul recognized this and ordered that a large stone be rolled to him. He commanded the soldiers: "Bring near to me, each one of you, his bull and, each one, his sheep, and you must do the slaughtering in this place and the eating, and you must not sin against Jehovah by eating along with the blood." (1 Samuel 14:33, 34) The guilty soldiers obeyed, and "Saul proceeded to build an altar to Jehovah."—1 Samuel 14:35.

Slaughtering animals on the stone probably effected adequate blood drainage. Meat from the animals would be eaten away from where the slaughtering occurred. Saul may have used some of the drained blood on the altar in seeking God's mercy toward those who had sinned. Jehovah extended mercy, apparently because he knew what attempts the soldiers had made even though they were very tired and hungry. God may also have taken into account that Saul's rash oath had pressed his men into that desperate situation.

This account does show that an emergency situation is no excuse for disregarding divine law. It should also help us see the need for careful thought before taking an oath, for a rash vow can cause problems for us personally and for others. —Ecclesiastes 5:4-6.

More Precious Than Corals

Increasing numbers of visitors have thrilled over displays such as this in the waters of the Red Sea.

The countless fish in a rainbow of colors and hues are fascinating to those snorkeling in the clear waters. But observe that around the colorful fish seen here, there is an eye-catching display of other undersea wonders, including brilliantly colored corals.

The beautiful corals are to be found in many shapes and colors. As you can imagine, even in ancient times gorgeous pieces of coral were highly prized. From them artisans fashioned lovely ornaments, and Bible writers mentioned corals along with gold, silver, and rubies. (Proverbs 3: 14, 15; Ezekiel 27:16) But those writers help us to see beyond the beauty and value of corals themselves.

They highlighted that some things are even more valuable and that we should treasure them more highly. A good, capable wife is one, for we read: "A capable wife who can find? Her value is far more than that of corals." (Proverbs 31:10) Are you a married man? Look again at the exquisite corals here, and reflect on whether you are esteeming your wife as she merits.

Whether we are men or women, married or single, a view of splendid corals ought to help us appreciate the even greater worth of godly wisdom, discernment, and knowledge. God's Word says: "Happy is the man that has found wisdom, and the man that gets discernment, for having it as gain is better than having silver as gain and having it as produce than gold itself. It is more precious than corals, and all other delights of yours cannot be made equal to it." —Proverbs 3: 13-15; 8: 11.

So whether seeing them by snorkeling ourselves or via photography, the corals of the Red Sea should convey to us both beauty and material for profitable reflection.

