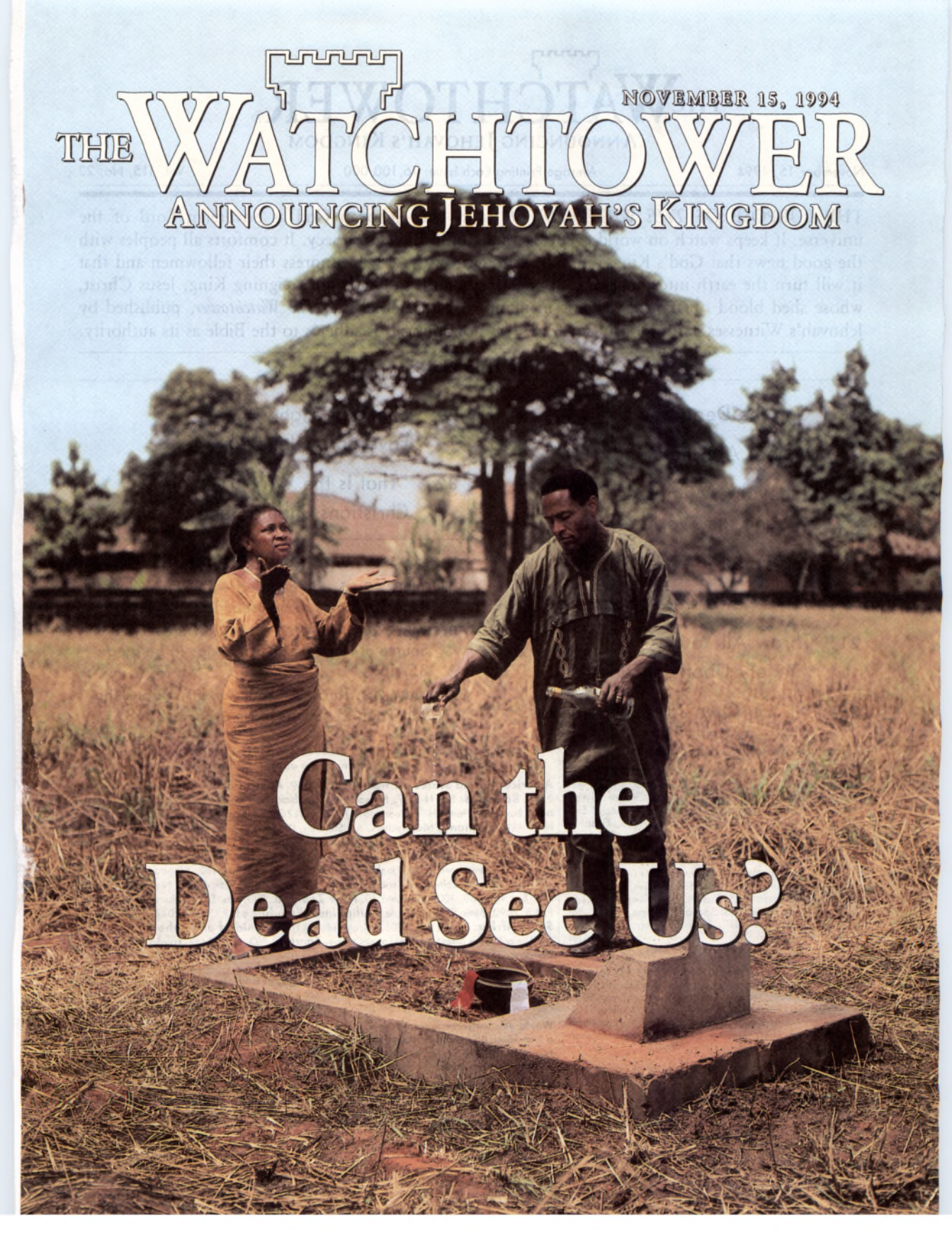




NOVEMBER 15, 1994

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

Can the
Dead See Us?

THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

November 15, 1994

Average Printing Each Issue: 16,100,000

Vol. 115, No. 22

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.

IN THIS ISSUE

- 3 Can the Dead See Us?
- 4 Where Are the Dead?
- 8 Jehovah's Witnesses
Around the World—Poland
- 10 Job Endured—So Can We!
- 15 Job's Reward—A Source of Hope
- 21 Throw All Your
Anxiety Upon Jehovah
- 26 "If You Owe Taxes, Pay Taxes"

- 29 She Was Highly
Favored by Jehovah
- 32 "That Is the Way True
Christians Should Behave"

WATCHTOWER STUDIES

DECEMBER 19-25: Job Endured—So Can We!
Page 10. Songs to be used: 152, 140.

DECEMBER 26-JANUARY 1: Job's Reward—A
Source of Hope. Page 15. Songs to be used:
85, 16.

JANUARY 2-8: Throw All Your Anxiety Upon Jeho-
vah. Page 21. Songs to be used: 103, 182.

Now published in 118 languages.

SEMI-MONTHLY LANGUAGES AVAILABLE BY MAIL:

Afrikaans, Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Bicol, Bislama, Bulgarian, Cebuano, Chichewa, Chinese, Chinese (Simplified), Cibemba, Croatian, Czech, Danish,* Dutch,* Efik, English** (also Braille), Estonian, Ewe, Fijian, Finnish,* French,* Ga, German,* Greek,* Hiligaynon, Hiri Motu, Hungarian,* Igbo, Iloko, Indonesian, Italian,* Japanese* (also Braille), Kannada, Korean,* Macedonian, Malagasy, Malayalam, Marathi, Myanmar, New Guinea Pidgin, Norwegian, Pangasinan, Papiamentu, Polish, Portuguese,* Rarotongan, Romanian,* Russian, Samar-Leyte, Samoan, Sepedi, Serbian, Sesotho, Shona, Sinhalese, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish,* Swahili, Swedish,* Tagalog, Tahitian, Tamil, Telugu, Thai, Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Twi, Ukrainian, Venda, Vietnamese, Wallisian, Xhosa, Yoruba, Zulu

MONTHLY LANGUAGES AVAILABLE BY MAIL:

Armenian, Bengali, Cambodian, Georgian, Greenlandic, Gujarati, Gun, Hausa, Hebrew, Hindi, Icelandic, Kinyarwanda, Kwanzama/Ndonga, Lithuanian, Luganda, Maltese, Marshallese, Moore, Nepali, Niuean, Palauan, Persian, Papiamentu, Sango, Silozi, Solomon Islands Pidgin, Sranantongo, Tongan, Trukese, Tuvaluan, Urdu, Yapepe

* Study articles also available in large-print edition.

** Audiocassettes also available.

© 1994 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. All rights reserved. Milton G. Henschel, President

If you would like to learn about Jehovah's Witnesses or their publications, please write to Watch Tower at the appropriate address below.

America, United States of: Wallkill, N.Y. 12589. **Australia:** Box 280, Ingleburn, N.S.W. 2565. **Bahamas:** Box N-1247, Nassau, N.P. **Barbados:** Fontabelle Rd., Bridgetown. **Canada:** Box 4100, Halton Hills (Georgetown), Ontario L7G 4Y4. **England:** The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RP. **Germany:** Niederselters, Am Steinfels, D-65618 Selters. **Ghana:** Box 760, Accra. **Guyana:** 50 Brickdam, Georgetown 16. **Hawaii 96819:** 2055 Kam IV Rd., Honolulu. **Hong Kong:** 4 Kent Road, Kowloon Tong. **India:** Post Bag 10, Lanavla, Pune Dis., Mah. 410 401. **Ireland:** 29A Jamestown Road, Finglas, Dublin 11. **Jamaica:** Box 180, Kingston 10. **Japan:** 1271 Nakashinden, Ebina City, Kanagawa Pref., 243-04. **Kenya:** Box 47788, Nairobi. **Liberia:** P.O. Box 10-0380, 1000 Monrovia 10. **New Zealand:** P.O. Box 142, Manurewa. **Nigeria:** P.M.B. 1090, Benin City, Edo State. **Philippines, Republic of:** P.O. Box 2044, 1099 Manila. **South Africa:** Private Bag X2067, Krugersdorp, 1740. **Trinidad and Tobago, Republic of:** Lower Rapsey Street & Laxmi Lane, Curepe. **Zambia:** P.O. Box 33459, Lusaka 10101. **Zimbabwe:** 35 Fife Avenue, Harare.

The Bible translation used is the New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References, unless otherwise indicated.

Would you welcome more information or a free home Bible study? Please send your request to Watch Tower, using the appropriate address above.

Publication of "The Watchtower" is part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations.

Changes of address should reach us 30 days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label).

The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) is published semi-monthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201-2483. Second-class postage paid at Brooklyn, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to Watchtower, Wallkill, N.Y. 12589. Printed in U.S.A.



Can the Dead See Us?

A WOMAN murders her husband. Seven years later she is terrified by a dream that she believes is a sign of her dead husband's wrath. To appease his "spirit," she sends her daughter to pour out drink offerings on his grave.

The daughter does not know how to speak to her father's spirit, since the offering comes from her mother who killed him. From a place of concealment, her brother watches. He comes forward, and he and his sister offer a prayer to their father to help them avenge his murder.

This scene is from *The Libation Bearers*, a Greek play written more than 2,400 years ago. In some parts of the world, especially

in Africa, similar graveside sacrifices are offered even today.

Consider, for example, the experience of Ibe, who lives in Nigeria. Having lost three children in death, he approaches the traditional native doctor, who tells Ibe that the deaths are not without reason—Ibe's late father is angry because his burial has not been performed in the proper manner.

Acting on the native doctor's advice, Ibe sacrifices a goat and pours an offering of gin and wine on his father's grave. He calls out to his father's spirit, begging forgiveness, affirming his love, and asking a blessing.

Ibe does not doubt that his father can

see and hear him. He does not believe that his father is lifeless but that at death he "crossed over" from the visible world to the invisible world. Ibe believes that his father has gone from the world of flesh and blood to the world of spirits, the domain of the ancestors.

Ibe reasons like this: 'Though Father is no longer in this world, he still remembers me and is interested in my welfare. And since he is now a spirit with enhanced powers, he is in a far better position to help me than he was as a man on earth. Moreover, he can make direct approach to God in my behalf, since God is also a spirit. Father may be angry right now, but if I show him proper respect, he will forgive and bless me.'

In Africa the belief that the dead see people on earth and influence their lives is common among those who practice traditional religion. It is evident among professed Christians also. For example, after a woman has been married in church, it is not unusual for her to go to the home of

her parents to receive a traditional blessing. There the ancestors are invoked, and a drink offering is poured out to them. Many people believe that failure to do this brings disaster upon the marriage.

It is thought that the ancestors, or ancestral spirits, ensure the survival and prosperity of their families on earth. According to this view, they are powerful allies, able to bring good harvests, promote well-being, and protect people from harm. They intercede in man's behalf. If ignored or offended, however, they bring disaster—sickness, poverty, even death. Consequently, through sacrifice and ritual, people strive to maintain good relations with the dead.

Do you believe that the dead play an active role in the lives of the living? Have you ever stood at the grave of a loved one and found yourself speaking a few words, just in case he or she could hear you? Well, whether the dead see and hear us or not depends on what happens at death. Let us examine what the Bible says about this important subject.

Where Are the Dead?

"THE earth is a marketplace; heaven is our home," say the Yoruba of West Africa. This idea is echoed in many religions. It conveys the notion that the earth is like a marketplace that we visit for a short time and then depart. According to this belief, at death we go to heaven, our true abode.

The Bible does teach that some go to heaven. Jesus Christ told his faithful apostles: "In the house of my Father there are

many abodes. . . . I am going my way to prepare a place for you. Also, if I go my way and prepare a place for you, I am coming again and will receive you home to myself, that where I am you also may be."—John 14:2, 3.

Jesus' words do not mean that all good people go to heaven or that heaven is mankind's home. Some are taken to heaven in connection with rulership over the earth. Jehovah God knew that human govern-

ments would never successfully manage affairs on earth. Therefore, he arranged for a heavenly government, or Kingdom, that would eventually take control of the earth and transform it into the Paradise he originally purposed it to be. (Matthew 6:9, 10) Jesus would be King of God's Kingdom. (Daniel 7:13, 14) Others would be selected from among humankind to rule with him. The Bible foretold that those taken to heaven would be "a kingdom and priests to our God" and would "rule as kings over the earth."—Revelation 5:10.

Who Go to Heaven?

Considering the great responsibility these heavenly rulers would have, it is not surprising that they would have to meet strict requirements. Those who go to heaven must have accurate knowledge of Jehovah and must obey him. (John 17:3; Romans 6:17, 18) They are required to exercise faith in Jesus Christ's ransom sacrifice. (John 3:16) Yet, more is involved. They must be called and chosen by God through his Son. (2 Timothy 1:9, 10; 1 Peter 2:9) Furthermore, they must be baptized Christians who are "born again," begotten by God's holy spirit. (John 1:12, 13; 3:3-6) They also need to maintain integrity to God until death.—2 Timothy 2:11-13; Revelation 2:10.

Countless millions of people who have lived and died did not meet these requirements. Many have had little opportunity to learn about the true God. Others have never read the Bible and know little or nothing about Jesus Christ. Even among true Christians on earth today, few have been chosen by God for heavenly life.

Consequently, the number of those who go to heaven would be relatively small. Jesus referred to such ones as a "little flock." (Luke 12:32) Later, it was revealed to the

apostle John that those "bought from the earth" to rule with Christ in heaven would number only 144,000. (Revelation 14:1, 3; 20:6) When compared with the billions of people who have lived on earth, that is a small number indeed.

Those Who Do Not Go to Heaven

What happens to those who do not go to heaven? Are they suffering in a place of eternal torment, as some religions teach? Of course not, for Jehovah is a God of love. Loving parents do not throw their children into the fire, and Jehovah does not torture people in such a way.—1 John 4:8.

The prospect for the vast majority of those who have died is a resurrection to an earthly paradise. The Bible says that Jehovah created the earth "to be inhabited." (Isaiah 45:18) The psalmist declared: "As regards the heavens, to Jehovah the heavens belong, but the earth he has given to the sons of men." (Psalm 115:16) It is the earth, not heaven, that will be mankind's permanent home.

Jesus foretold: "The hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice [that of Jesus, the "Son of man"] and come out." (John 5:27-29) The Christian apostle Paul affirmed: "I have hope toward God . . . that there is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous." (Acts 24:15) On the torture stake, Jesus promised a repentant evildoer life by means of a resurrection into an earthly paradise.—Luke 23:43.

What, though, is the present state of the dead who will be resurrected to life on earth? An event in the ministry of Jesus helps to answer this question. His friend Lazarus had died. Before Jesus went to resurrect him, He told His disciples: "Lazarus our friend has gone to rest, but I

am journeying there to awaken him from sleep." (John 11:11) Thus Jesus compared death to sleep, a deep sleep without dreams.

Sleeping in Death

Other scriptures harmonize with this thought of being asleep in death. They do not teach that humans have an immortal soul that passes on to the spirit realm at death. Rather, the Bible says: "The dead . . . are conscious of nothing at all . . . Their love and their hate and their jealousy have already perished . . . There is no work nor devising nor knowledge nor wisdom in Sheol [the grave], the place to which you are going." (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6, 10) Moreover, the psalmist declared that man "goes back to his ground; in that day his thoughts do perish."—Psalm 146:4.

There will be great joy when the dead are resurrected on a paradise earth

These scriptures make it clear that those sleeping in death cannot see or hear us. They are unable to bring either blessing or calamity. They are not in heaven, nor do they dwell in a community of ancestors. They are lifeless, nonexistent.

In God's due time, those now asleep in death and who are in his memory will be awakened to life in a paradise earth. It will be an earth cleansed of the pollution, troubles, and problems mankind now experiences. What a joyous time that will be! In that Paradise they will have the prospect of living forever, for Psalm 37:29 assures us: "The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it."

I QUIT WORSHIPING THE DEAD

"When I was a boy, I assisted my father during his regular sacrifices to his dead father. On one occasion when my father recovered from a terrible illness, the oracle man told him that in appreciation for his recovery he should offer a sacrifice of a goat, yams, kola nuts, and liquor to his dead father. My father was also advised to appeal to his dead ancestors to ward off further sickness and calamity.

"My mother purchased what was required for the sacrifice, which was to be performed at the grave of my grandfather. The grave was right beside our house, in harmony with local custom.

"Friends, relatives, and neighbors were invited to observe the sacrifice. My father, elegantly clad to fit the occasion, sat on a chair facing the shrine where several skulls of goats that had been used for previous sacrifices were lined up. My job was to pour wine from a bottle into a small tumbler, which I

handed to my father. In turn, he poured it out on the ground in sacrifice. My father called on the name of his father three times and prayed to him for deliverance from future calamity.

"Kola nuts were offered, and a ram was slaughtered, boiled, and eaten by all those present. I shared in the eating and danced to singing and the beating of drums. My father danced beautifully and rigorously, even though age was telling on him. At intervals he prayed for his ancestors to bless all those present, while the people, including me, answered /se, meaning 'May it be so.' I watched my father with keen interest and admiration and yearned for the day when I would be old enough to make sacrifices to dead ancestors.

"Despite the many sacrifices offered, peace still eluded the family. While there were three surviving sons of my mother, none



of the three daughters born to her lived very long; all died in childhood. When my mother became pregnant again, my father made elaborate sacrifices for the child to be born safely.

"Mother gave birth to another girl. Two years later the child became sick and died. My father consulted the oracle, who said that an enemy was responsible for the death. The oracle said that for the 'soul' of the child to fight back, a burning piece of wood, a bottle of liquor, and a young dog were required for the sacrifice. The burning wood was to be placed on the grave, the liquor was to be sprinkled on the grave, and the young dog was to be buried alive near the grave. This was supposed to awaken the soul of the dead girl to avenge her death.

"I carried the bottle of liquor and the burning wood to the grave, and my father carried the puppy, which he buried according to the oracle's instructions. All of us believed that within seven days the soul of the dead girl

would destroy the person who caused her untimely death. Two months passed, and no death was reported in the neighborhood. I became disillusioned.

"I was 18 years old at the time. Shortly thereafter I met Jehovah's Witnesses, who showed me from the Scriptures that the dead can work neither good nor evil to the living. As knowledge of God's Word took root in my heart, I told my father I could no longer accompany him to make sacrifices to the dead. At first he was angry with me for deserting him, as he put it. But when he observed that I was not willing to renounce my newfound faith, he did not oppose my worship of Jehovah.

"On April 18, 1948, I symbolized my dedication by water baptism. Since then, I have continued to serve Jehovah with much rejoicing and satisfaction, helping others to get free from the worship of dead ancestors, who can neither help us nor harm us." —Contributed by J. B. Omiegbe, Benin City, Nigeria.

Jehovah's Witnesses Around the World

IN THE fall of 1989, the Communist governments from the Baltic to the Black Sea began to crumble. As the Iron Curtain was being torn apart, nations in Eastern Europe began seeking their own directions. Among them was Poland, a country covered with rolling hills, flat plains, and rugged mountains.*

The Polish people are hard workers, and Poland has produced some of the world's noted artists and scientists. More than that, though, there now is a growing army of proclaimers of the good news of God's Kingdom.

Bold in Exposing Falsehood

In Poland there are many who would like to learn the truth from the Bible. But some are deterred by their relatives or neighbors. For example, in the vicinity of Wrocław, an interested woman stopped studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses when family and friends put pressure on her. Nevertheless, her teenage daughter read a series of *Watchtower* articles exposing false religion. These sparked her interest in the truth.

After six months of Bible

study, this young person decided to break all her ties with false religion. She visited the clergyman of her church to inform him of her decision. He told her to write the following: "I, K——P——, renounce the Catholic faith."

On the following Sunday, this statement was read in church. The girl's grandfather fainted, and her grandmother burst into tears. However, other parishioners were impressed and remarked: "At last, someone is brave enough to say that there is a lot of falsehood in our church." This courageous teenager is now a baptized spiritual sister and has started seven Bible studies in her village.

'By Their Fruits'

The weekly *Kujawy i Pomorze* published the report "You Will Recognize Them by Their Fruit." In part, the article said that worshipers in Christendom "in reality do not treat very seriously the religious principles they have accepted. They stand in sharp contrast with Jehovah's Witnesses who act as they say, and they say what the Bible commands."

After contrasting the appearance of the Witnesses with that of nominal Christians,

the report continued: "The latter most likely do not know, and far too often do not apply, the essential truths and principles of their faith. . . . By their attitude, Jehovah's Witnesses manifest the harmony of their words and actions, thus proving they are not the 'false prophets,' rather, they can be recognized by their fruits. 'Never do people gather grapes from thorns or figs from thistles, do they?' (Matthew 7:15-20)."

One woman wrote a letter to the *Przyjaciółka* weekly, lamenting that her son left the Catholic Church and became one of Jehovah's Witnesses. What was the editor's advice? "If your son came to associate with Jehovah's Witnesses, learned and accepted their faith, it is all his own decision, which is to be recognized and respected. . . . This religious group is characterized by many beautiful and socially desirable features, such as their unusual solidarity and profound group ties, great honesty and close following of the accepted rules of community life, and finally, ability to live in harmony with their truth, accomplishing in practice the professed values. These are precious virtues."

* For additional information, see the 1994 *Calendar of Jehovah's Witnesses*.



POLAND



Poland branch office in Lodz in 1948



*Placard work, June 1948,
in former East Prussia*



*Seventy-two members of the Poland
Bethel staff, January 1993*

COUNTRY PROFILE	
1993 Service Year	
PEAK NUMBER WITNESSING:	113,551
RATIO:	1 Witness to 339
MEMORIAL ATTENDANCE:	235,642
AVERAGE PIONEER PUBLISHERS:	7,961
AVERAGE BIBLE STUDIES:	79,131
NUMBER BAPTIZED:	8,164
NUMBER OF CONGREGATIONS:	1,397
BRANCH OFFICE:	Nadarzyn

The new branch in Nadarzyn



JOB ENDURED—SO CAN WE!

“Look! We pronounce happy those who have endured.”—JAMES 5:11.

THE Devil is after me! I feel just like Job! With such words A. H. Macmillan expressed his feelings to a close friend at the headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses. Brother Macmillan finished his earthly course at the age of 89 on August 26, 1966. He knew that credit for the faithful service of anointed Christians like him would “go right with them.” (Revelation 14:13) Indeed, they would continue right on in Jehovah's service by a resurrection to immortal life in heaven. His friends rejoiced that Brother Macmillan obtained that reward. In his declining years on earth, however, he was beset by various trials, including health problems that made him keenly aware of Satan's attempts to break his integrity to God.

² When Brother Macmillan said he felt just like Job, he was referring to a man who had endured great tests of faith. Job lived in “the land of Uz,” likely in northern Arabia. A descendant of Noah's son Shem, he was a worshiper of Jehovah.

1. What did one elderly Christian say about his trials?

2, 3. Who was Job?

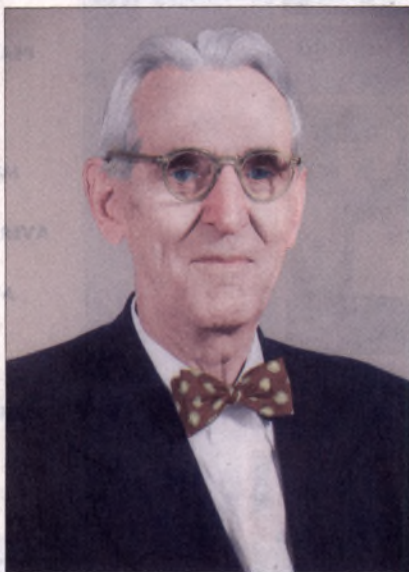
Job's tests apparently occurred sometime between the death of Joseph and the time when Moses proved himself upright. During that period nobody on earth was equal to Job in godly devotion. Jehovah viewed

Job as a blameless, upright, God-fearing man. —Job 1:1, 8.

³ As “the greatest of all the Orientals,” Job had many servants, and his livestock numbered 11,500. But spiritual riches were of utmost importance to him. Like godly fathers today, Job most likely taught his seven sons and three daughters about Jehovah. Even after they no longer lived in his home, he acted as family priest by offering sacrifices for them, just in case they had sinned. —Job 1:2-5.

⁴ Job is someone for persecuted Christians to consider in order to strengthen themselves for patient endurance. “Look!” wrote the disciple James. “We pronounce happy those who have endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome Jehovah gave, that Jehovah is very tender in affection and merci-

4. (a) Why should persecuted Christians consider the man Job? (b) Regarding Job, what questions will we consider?



A. H. Macmillan

ful.” (James 5:11) Like Job, Jesus’ anointed followers and the present-day “great crowd” need endurance to cope with tests of faith. (Revelation 7:1-9) So, what trials did Job endure? Why did they occur? And how can we benefit from his experiences?

A Burning Issue

⁵ Unknown to Job, a great issue was about to be raised in heaven. One day “the sons of the true God entered to take their station before Jehovah.” (Job 1:6) God’s only-begotten Son, the Word, was present. (John 1:1-3) So were the righteous angels and the disobedient angelic ‘sons of God.’ (Genesis 6:1-3) Satan was there, for his ouster from heaven would not come until after the Kingdom’s establishment in 1914. (Revelation 12:1-12) In Job’s day, Satan would raise a burning issue. He was about to call into question the rightfulness of Jehovah’s sovereignty over all His creatures.

⁶ “Where do you come from?” asked Jehovah. Satan replied: “From roving about in the earth and from walking about in it.” (Job 1:7) He had been seeking someone to devour. (1 Peter 5:8, 9) By breaking the integrity of individuals serving Jehovah, Satan would try to prove that nobody would fully obey God out of love. Taking up the issue, Jehovah asked Satan: “Have you set your heart upon my servant Job, that there is no one like him in the earth, a man blameless and upright, fearing God and turning aside from bad?” (Job 1:8) Job met divine standards that took his imperfections into account. (Psalm 103:10-14) But Satan retorted: “Is it for nothing that Job has feared God? Have not you yourself

put up a hedge about him and about his house and about everything that he has all around? The work of his hands you have blessed, and his livestock itself has spread abroad in the earth.” (Job 1:9, 10) The Devil thus slandered Jehovah by implying that nobody loves and worships Him for what He is but that He bribes creatures to serve Him. Satan alleged that Job served God for selfish advantage, not out of love.

Satan on the Attack!

⁷ “But,” said Satan, “for a change, thrust out your hand, please, and touch everything he has and see whether he will not curse you to your very face.” How would God respond to such an insulting challenge? “Look!” said Jehovah. “Everything that he has is in your hand. Only against him himself do not thrust out your hand!” The Devil had said that all Job possessed was blessed, increased, and hedged about. God would allow Job to suffer, though his body was not to be touched. Bent on evil, Satan left the assembly.—Job 1:11, 12.

⁸ Soon, the satanic attack began. One of Job’s servants gave him this bad news: “The cattle themselves happened to be plowing and the she-asses were grazing at the side of them when the Sabeans came making a raid and taking them, and the attendants they struck down with the edge of the sword.” (Job 1:13-15) The hedge had been removed from around Job’s property. Almost immediately, direct demon power was applied, for another servant reported: “The very fire of God fell from the heavens and went blazing among the sheep and the attendants and eating them up.” (Job

5. Unknown to Job, what was taking place in heaven?

6. What was Satan trying to do, and how did he slander Jehovah?

7. In what way did the Devil challenge God, and how did Jehovah respond?

8. (a) What material losses did Job experience?
(b) What was the truth about “the very fire of God”?

1:16) How diabolic it was to make it appear that God was responsible for such calamity even upon his own servant! Since lightning is from heaven, Jehovah could easily have been blamed, but actually the fire was of demonic source.

⁹ As Satan pressed the attack, another servant reported that the Chaldeans had taken Job's camels and had killed all the other attendants. (Job 1:17) Though Job thus experienced economic ruin, this did not destroy his relationship with God. Could you endure great material loss without breaking your integrity to Jehovah?

Greater Tragedy Strikes

¹⁰ The Devil was not finished with Job. Still another servant reported: "Your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in the house of their brother the firstborn. And, look! there came a great wind from the region of the wilderness, and it went striking the four corners of the house, so that it fell upon the young people and they died. And I got to escape, only I by myself, to tell you." (Job 1:18, 19) The misinformed might say that the devastation caused by that wind was 'an act of God.' However, demon power had touched Job at an especially tender spot.

¹¹ Grief-stricken, Job 'ripped his sleeveless coat apart, cut the hair off his head, fell to the earth, and bowed down.' Yet, listen to his words. "Jehovah himself has given, and Jehovah himself has taken away. Let the name of Jehovah continue to be blessed." The account adds: "In all this Job did not sin or ascribe anything improper to God." (Job 1:20-22) Satan was defeated

9. How did economic ruin affect Job's relationship with God?

10, 11. (a) What happened to Job's ten children? (b) After the tragic death of Job's children, how did he view Jehovah?

once again. What if we should experience bereavement and grief as God's servants? Unselfish devotion to Jehovah and trust in him can enable us to endure as integrity keepers, just as Job did. Anointed ones and their companions who have an earthly hope can surely draw comfort and strength from this account of Job's endurance.

The Issue Gets Hotter

¹² Jehovah soon called another assembly in the heavenly courts. Job had become a childless, impoverished man, seemingly smitten by God, but his integrity was intact. Of course, Satan would not admit that his charges against God and Job were false. Now the 'sons of God' were about to hear the argument and counterargument as Jehovah maneuvered the Devil so as to bring the issue to a showdown.

¹³ Calling Satan to account, Jehovah asked: "Just where do you come from?" The reply? "From roving about in the earth and from walking about in it." Jehovah again drew attention to his blameless, upright, God-fearing servant Job, who was still holding fast his integrity. The Devil replied: "Skin in behalf of skin, and everything that a man has he will give in behalf of his soul. For a change, thrust out your hand, please, and touch as far as his bone and his flesh and see whether he will not curse you to your very face." So God said: "There he is in your hand! Only watch out for his soul itself!" (Job 2:2-6) Hinting that Jehovah had not yet removed all protective barriers, Satan called for the touching of Job's bone and flesh. The Devil would not be permitted to kill Job; but Satan knew that physical disease would pain him and make it appear that he was suffering punishment from God for secret sins.

12, 13. At another assembly in heaven, what did Satan call for, and how did God respond?

¹⁴ Dismissed from that assembly, Satan proceeded with fiendish delight. He struck Job with "a malignant boil from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head." What misery Job endured as he sat in the ashes and scraped himself with a piece of pottery! (Job 2:7, 8) No human physician could bring him relief from this terribly painful, loathsome, and humiliating affliction, for it was caused by satanic power. Only Jehovah could heal Job. If you are an ailing servant of God, never forget that God can help you to endure and can give you life in a disease-free new world.—Psalm 41:1-3; Isaiah 33:24.

¹⁵ Finally, Job's wife said: "Are you yet holding fast your integrity? Curse God and die!" "Integrity" denotes blameless devotion, and she may have spoken sarcastically to get Job to curse God. But he replied: "As one of the senseless women speaks, you speak also. Shall we accept merely what is good from the true God and not accept also what is bad?" Even this ploy of Satan did not work, for we are told: "In all this Job did not sin with his lips." (Job 2:9, 10) Suppose opposing family members were to say that we were foolishly wearing ourselves out in Christian pursuits and urged us to renounce Jehovah God. Like Job, we can endure such a test because we love Jehovah and desire to praise his holy name.—Psalm 145:1, 2; Hebrews 13:15.

Three Arrogant Frauds

¹⁶ In what turned out to be another satanic scheme, three "companions" came, supposedly to comfort Job. One was Eli-

14. With what did Satan strike Job, and why could no human give the sufferer relief?

15. What did Job's wife urge him to do, and what was his reaction?

16. Who came, supposedly to comfort Job, but how did Satan manipulate them?

phaz, likely a descendant of Abraham through Esau. Since Eliphaz had priority in speaking, doubtless he was the oldest. Present, too, was Bildad, a descendant of Shuah, one of Abraham's sons by Keturah. The third man was Zophar, called a Naamathite to identify his family or place of residence, perhaps in northwest Arabia. (Job 2:11; Genesis 25:1, 2; 36:4, 11) Like those who try to make Jehovah's Witnesses renounce God today, this trio was manipulated by Satan in an effort to make Job plead guilty to false charges and break his integrity.

¹⁷ The trio made a big show of sympathy by weeping, ripping their garments, and tossing dust upon their heads. But then they sat with Job seven days and seven nights without uttering one word of comfort! (Job 2:12, 13; Luke 18:10-14) These three arrogant frauds were so bereft of spirituality that they had nothing comforting to say about Jehovah and his promises. Yet, they were drawing wrong conclusions and getting ready to use them against Job as soon as they had complied with the formalism of public grief. Interestingly, before the seven-day silence ended, the young man Elihu took a seat within hearing distance.

¹⁸ Job finally broke the silence. Having drawn no comfort from the visiting trio, he cursed the day of his birth and wondered why his miserable life was being prolonged. He sought peace in death, not even imagining that he could ever have real joy again before he died, now that he was destitute, bereaved, and gravely ill. But God would not let Job be touched to the point of death.—Job 3:1-26.

17. What did the visiting trio do, and what did they not do for seven days and seven nights?

18. Why did Job seek peace in death?

Job's Accusers Attack

¹⁹ Eliphaz spoke first in the three rounds of debate that further tested Job's integrity. In his first speech, Eliphaz asked: "Where have the upright ever been effaced?" He concluded that Job must have done something evil to receive God's punishment. (Job, chapters 4, 5) In his second speech, Eliphaz ridiculed Job's wisdom and asked: "What do you actually know that we do not know?" Eliphaz implied that Job was trying to show himself superior to the Almighty. Ending his second assault, he painted Job as guilty of apostasy, bribery, and deceit. (Job, chapter 15) In his final speech, Eliphaz falsely accused Job of many crimes—extortion, withholding bread and water from the needy, and oppressing widows and orphans.—Job, chapter 22.

²⁰ Taking the second turn in each of the three rounds of debate, Bildad usually followed the general theme set by Eliphaz. Bildad's speeches were shorter but more biting. He even accused Job's children of doing wrong and thus of meriting death. With faulty reasoning, he used this illus-

19. In what respects did Eliphaz accuse Job falsely?

20. What was the nature of Bildad's attacks upon Job?

How Would You Respond?

- ☐ What great issue did Satan raise in Job's day?
- ☐ By what means was Job tested to the limit?
- ☐ Of what did Job's three "companions" accuse him?
- ☐ As in Job's case, how may Satan try to break our integrity to Jehovah?

tration: As papyrus and reeds dry up and die without water, so it is with "all those forgetting God." That statement is true, but it did not apply to Job. (Job, chapter 8) Bildad classified Job's afflictions as those coming upon the wicked. (Job, chapter 18) In his short third speech, Bildad argued that man is "a maggot" and "a worm" and is therefore unclean before God.—Job, chapter 25.

²¹ Zophar was the third to speak in the debate. In general, his line of thought followed that of Eliphaz and Bildad. Zophar accused Job of wickedness and urged him to put away his sinful practices. (Job, chapters 11, 20) After two rounds Zophar stopped talking. He had nothing to add in the third round. All along, however, Job courageously answered his accusers. For instance, at one point he said: "All of you are troublesome comforters! Is there an end to windy words?"—Job 16:2, 3.

We Can Endure

²² Like Job, we may face more than one trial at a time, and Satan may use discouragement or other factors in his efforts to break our integrity. He may try to turn us against Jehovah if we are having economic troubles. If a loved one dies or we experience ill health, Satan may seek to induce us to blame God. Like Job's companions, someone might even accuse us falsely. As Brother Macmillan indicated, Satan may be 'after us,' but we can endure.

²³ As we have observed so far, Job was enduring his various trials. However, was he just barely enduring? Did he actually have a broken spirit? Let us see if Job had really lost all hope.

21. Of what did Zophar accuse Job?

22, 23. (a) As in Job's case, how may the Devil go about trying to break our integrity to Jehovah God? (b) Though Job was enduring various tests, what might we ask about his attitude?

JOB'S REWARD —A SOURCE OF HOPE

"Jehovah . . . blessed the end of Job afterward more than his beginning."

—JOB 42:12.

JEHOVAH "becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him." (Hebrews 11:6) He also motivates his devoted people to witness courageously, even if trials have made them as weak as dead ones. (Job 26:5; Revelation 11:3, 7, 11) That proved true in the case of suffering Job. Though maligned by three false comforters, he was not si-

1. What does Jehovah do for his people, even when trials weaken them greatly?

lenced by fear of men. Rather, he gave a bold witness.

² Many present-day Witnesses of Jehovah have suffered such great persecution and hardship that they have been near death. (2 Corinthians 11:23) Like Job, however, they have shown love for God and have

2. Though they have suffered persecution and hardship, how have Jehovah's Witnesses come out of their trials?



practiced righteousness. (Ezekiel 14:14, 20) They have also come out of their trials determined to please Jehovah, strengthened to give a bold witness, and filled with genuine hope.

Job Gives a Bold Witness

³ In his final speech, Job gave an even greater witness than he had previously given. He fully silenced his false comforters. With biting sarcasm, he said: "O how much help you have been to one without power!" (Job 26:2) Job extolled Jehovah, whose power hangs our earthly globe on nothing in space and suspends water-laden clouds above the earth. (Job 26:7-9) Yet, Job said that such wonders 'are but the fringes of Jehovah's ways.'—Job 26:14.

⁴ Certain of his innocence, Job declared: "Until I expire I shall not take away my integrity from myself!" (Job 27:5) Contrary to the false charges hurled against him, he had done nothing to merit what had befallen him. Job knew that Jehovah does not hear the prayers of apostates but will reward integrity keepers. This may well remind us that soon Armageddon's storm will hurl the wicked out of their place of power, and they will not escape God's unsparing hand. Until then, Jehovah's people will walk in their integrity.—Job 27:11-23.

⁵ Imagine the worldly-wise trio listening as Job showed that man has used his skills to find gold, silver, and other treasures in the earth and in the sea. "But," said he, "a bagful of wisdom is worth more than one full of pearls." (Job 28:18) Job's false comforters could not buy true wisdom. Its source is the Creator of the wind, the rain,

the lightning, and the thunder. Indeed, the reverential "fear of Jehovah—that is wisdom, and to turn away from bad is understanding."—Job 28:28.

⁶ Despite his sufferings, Job did not stop serving Jehovah. Instead of turning away from the Most High, this man of integrity yearned for his former "intimacy with God." (Job 29:4) Job was not bragging when he recounted how he 'rescued the afflicted, clothed himself with righteousness, and was a real father to the poor.' (Job 29:12-16) Rather, he was citing the facts of his life as a faithful servant of Jehovah. Have you built up such a fine record? Of course, Job was also exposing the falsity of the charges made by the three pious frauds.

⁷ Job was laughed at by younger men 'whose fathers he would not even have placed with the dogs of his flock.' He was detested and spit upon. Gravely afflicted as he was, Job was shown no consideration. (Job 30:1, 10, 30) Because he was wholly devoted to Jehovah, however, he had a clean conscience and could say: "He will weigh me in accurate scales and God will get to know my integrity." (Job 31:6) Job was not an adulterer or a schemer, and he had not failed to help the needy. Though he had been rich, he never trusted in material wealth. Moreover, Job did not engage in idolatry by giving devotion to inanimate things, such as the moon. (Job 31:26-28) Trusting in God, he set a fine example as an integrity keeper. Despite all his sufferings and the presence of false comforters, Job made a masterful defense and gave a splendid witness. His words having come to an end, he looked to God as his Judge and Rewarder.—Job 31:35-40.

3. What kind of witness did Job give in his final speech?

4. What did Job say about integrity, and why could he express himself in that way?

5. How did Job define true wisdom?

6. Why did Job speak about his earlier life?

7. What kind of person had Job been?

Elihu Speaks

⁸ Nearby was the young man Elihu, a descendant of Nahor's son Buz and thus a distant relative of Jehovah's friend Abraham. (Isaiah 41:8) Elihu showed respect for older men by listening to both sides of the debate. Yet, he spoke courageously concerning matters about which they were wrong. For instance, his anger blazed at Job's "declaring his own soul righteous rather than God." Especially was Elihu's wrath directed against the false comforters. Their statements seemed to exalt God but really reproached him by taking Satan's side of the controversy. "Full of words" and moved by holy spirit, Elihu was an impartial witness of Jehovah.—Job 32:2, 18, 21.

⁹ Job had become more concerned with his own vindication than with God's. In fact, he had contended with God. As Job's soul drew close to death, however, there was a hint of restoration. How so? Well, Elihu was moved to say that Jehovah favored Job with this message: "Let him off from going down into the pit! I have found a ransom! Let his flesh become fresher than in youth; let him return to the days of his youthful vigor."—Job 33:24, 25.

¹⁰ Elihu corrected Job for saying that there is no profit in taking pleasure in God by maintaining integrity. Said Elihu: "Far be it from the true God to act wickedly, and the Almighty to act unjustly! For according to the way earthling man acts he will reward him." Job acted rashly in emphasizing his own righteousness, but he did so without adequate knowledge and insight. Elihu added: "Let Job be tested out to the

limit over his replies among men of hurtfulness." (Job 34:10, 11, 35, 36) Similarly, our faith and integrity can be fully proved only if we are 'tested to the limit' in some way. Nevertheless, our loving heavenly Father will not let us be tempted beyond what we can bear.—1 Corinthians 10:13.

¹¹ As Elihu continued, he again showed that Job was laying too much stress on his own righteousness. Attention should be focused on our Grand Maker. (Job 35:2, 6, 10) God "will not preserve anyone wicked alive, but the judgment of the afflicted ones he will give," said Elihu. (Job 36:6) No one can call God's way to account and say that he has been unrighteous. He is more exalted than we can know, and his years are unsearchably endless. (Job 36:22-26) When sorely tested, remember that our ever-living God is righteous and will reward us for our faithful activities to his praise.

¹² While Elihu spoke, a storm was brewing. As it drew near, his heart began to leap and tremble. He spoke of great things done by Jehovah and said: "Do give ear to this, O Job; stand still and show yourself attentive to the wonderful works of God." Like Job, we need to consider God's wonderful works and fear-inspiring dignity. "As for the Almighty, we have not found him out," said Elihu. "He is exalted in power, and justice and abundance of righteousness he will not belittle. Therefore let men fear him." (Job 37:1, 14, 23, 24) Elihu's concluding expressions remind us that when God soon executes judgment on the wicked, he will not belittle justice and righteousness and will preserve those fearing him as his

8. Who was Elihu, and how did he display both respect and courage?

9. How did Elihu hint at restoration for Job?

10. To what extent was Job to be tested, but of what can we be sure in view of 1 Corinthians 10:13?

11. When sorely tested, what should we remember?

12. What do Elihu's concluding expressions indicate about God's execution of judgment on the wicked?

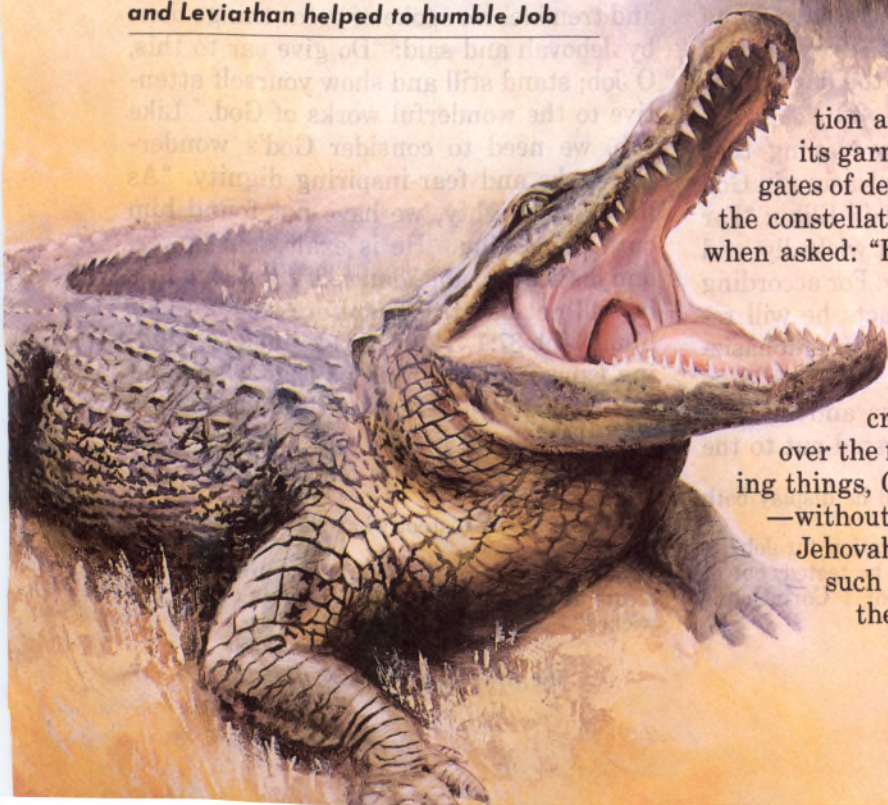
reverential worshipers. What a privilege to be among such integrity keepers who acknowledge Jehovah as the Universal Sovereign! Endure as Job did, and never let the Devil draw you away from your blessed place among these happy throngs.

Jehovah Answers Job

¹³ How amazed Job must have been when Jehovah spoke to him out of the windstorm! That storm was an act of God, unlike the great wind Satan used to collapse the house and kill Job's children. Job was speechless as God asked: "Where did you happen to be when I founded the earth? . . . Who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars joyfully cried out together, and all the sons of God began shouting in applause?" (Job 38: 4, 6, 7) Jehovah plied Job with one ques-

13, 14. (a) Concerning what did Jehovah begin to question Job? (b) What points can be drawn from other questions that God asked Job?

Jehovah's statements about Behemoth and Leviathan helped to humble Job



tion after another about the sea, its garment of cloud, the dawn, the gates of death, light and darkness, and the constellations. Job could say nothing when asked: "Have you come to know the statutes of the heavens?"

—Job 38:33.

¹⁴ Other questions indicated that before man was created and given dominion over the fish, fowl, beasts, and creeping things, God was providing for them —without any human help or advice. Jehovah's further questions cited such creatures as the wild bull, the ostrich, and the horse. Job

was asked: "Is it at your order that an eagle flies upward and that it builds its nest high up?" (Job 39:27) Of course not! Imagine Job's reaction when God asked him: "Should there be any contending of a faultfinder with the Almighty?" No wonder Job said: "Look! I have become of little account. What shall I reply to you? My hand I have put over my mouth." (Job 40:2, 4) Since Jehovah is always right, if we should ever be tempted to complain against him, we should 'put our hand over our mouth.' God's questions also magnified his superiority, dignity, and strength, as displayed in creation.

Behemoth and Leviathan

¹⁵ Jehovah next mentioned Behemoth, generally considered to be the hippopotamus. (Job 40:15-24) Remarkable for its huge size, great weight, and tough hide, this herbivorous animal 'eats green grass.' Sources of its power and energy are in its hips and the tendons of its belly. The bones of its legs are as strong as "tubes of copper." Behemoth does not panic in torrential waters but easily swims against the tide.

¹⁶ God also asked Job: "Can you draw out Leviathan with a fishhook, or with a rope can you hold down its tongue?" The description of Leviathan fits the crocodile. (Job 41:1-34) It will not conclude a covenant of peace with anyone, and no wise human is so audacious that he would arouse this reptile. Arrows do not chase it away, and "it laughs at the rattling of a javelin." Raging Leviathan makes the depths boil

15. Behemoth is generally considered to be what animal, and what are some of its characteristics?

16. (a) The description of Leviathan fits what creature, and what are some facts about it? (b) The power of Behemoth and Leviathan may suggest what about fulfilling assignments in Jehovah's service?

like a brewing pot of ointment. The fact that Leviathan and Behemoth were much more powerful than Job helped to humble him. We too must humbly acknowledge that we are not mighty in ourselves. We need God-given wisdom and strength to elude the fangs of Satan, the Serpent, and to fulfill our assignments in Jehovah's service. —Philippians 4:13; Revelation 12:9.

¹⁷ Completely humbled, Job acknowledged his wrong viewpoint and admitted that he had spoken without knowledge. Yet, he had expressed faith that he would "behold God." (Job 19:25-27) How could that happen, since no human can see Jehovah and live on? (Exodus 33:20) Actually, Job saw the manifestation of divine power, heard God's word, and had his eyes of understanding opened to see the truth about Jehovah. Job therefore 'made a retraction and repented in dust and ashes.' (Job 42:1-6) The many questions that he had been unable to answer had proved God's supremacy and had shown the smallness of man, even one as devoted to Jehovah as Job was. This helps us to see that our interests are not to be put above the sanctification of Jehovah's name and the vindication of his sovereignty. (Matthew 6:9, 10) Our prime concern should be maintaining integrity to Jehovah and honoring his name.

¹⁸ What, though, about the self-righteous false comforters? Jehovah could rightly have killed Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar for not speaking the truth about him, as Job had. "Take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job," said God, "and you men must offer up a burnt sacrifice in your own behalf; and Job

17. (a) How did Job "behold God"? (b) What was proved by the questions Job was unable to answer, and how can this help us?

18. What did Job's false comforters need to do?

my servant will himself pray for you.” The trio had to humble themselves to comply. Integrity-keeping Job was to pray for them, and Jehovah found his prayer acceptable. (Job 42:7-9) But what about Job’s wife, who had urged him to curse God and die? It appears that she was reconciled to him by God’s mercy.

Promised Rewards Give Us Hope

¹⁹ As soon as Job quit worrying about his sufferings and was revived in God’s service, Jehovah changed matters for him. After Job prayed for the trio, God ‘turned back his captive condition’ and gave him ‘all that had been his in double amount.’ Jehovah showed His superiority over the Devil by turning back Satan’s disease-infecting hand and miraculously healing Job. God also pushed back the demon hordes and held them at bay by again putting a hedge about Job with His angelic encampment.—Job 42:10; Psalm 34:7.

²⁰ Job’s brothers, sisters, and former acquaintances kept coming to eat with him,

19. In connection with Job, how did Jehovah show His superiority over the Devil?

20. In what ways did Jehovah reward and bless Job?

How Would You Respond?

- ☐ What were some points made by Job in his final reply to his false comforters?
- ☐ How did Elihu prove to be an impartial witness of Jehovah?
- ☐ What were some of God’s questions to Job, and what effect did they have?
- ☐ How have you benefited from the Scriptural account regarding Job?

sympathize with him, and comfort him over the calamity Jehovah had allowed to come upon him. Each of them gave Job money and a gold ring. Jehovah blessed the end of Job more than his beginning, so that he came to have 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 1,000 spans of cattle, and 1,000 she-asses. Job also came to have seven sons and three daughters, the same number he previously had. His daughters—Jemimah, Keziah, and Keren-happuch—were the prettiest women in the land, and Job gave them an inheritance among their brothers. (Job 42:11-15) Moreover, Job lived another 140 years and saw four generations of his offspring. The account concludes: “Gradually Job died, old and satisfied with days.” (Job 42:16, 17) The extension of his life was the miraculous work of Jehovah God.

²¹ The Scriptural account regarding Job makes us more aware of Satan’s devices and helps us to see how universal sovereignty is related to human integrity. Like Job, all who love God will be tested. But we can endure as Job did. He emerged from his trials with faith and hope, and his rewards were many. As Jehovah’s servants today, we have true faith and hope. And what a grand hope the Great Rewarder has set before each of us! Keeping in mind the heavenly reward will help anointed ones to serve God loyally for the rest of their life on earth. Many with earthly prospects will never die at all, but those who do will be rewarded with a resurrection in Paradise on earth, along with Job himself. With such genuine hope in heart and mind, let all who love God prove Satan a liar by standing firmly on Jehovah’s side as integrity keepers and staunch supporters of his universal sovereignty.

21. How are we helped by the Scriptural account regarding Job, and what should we be determined to do?

THROW ALL YOUR ANXIETY UPON JEHOVAH

"Humble yourselves . . . under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time; while you throw all your anxiety upon him, because he cares for you."—1 PETER 5:6, 7.

ANXIETY can affect our life dramatically. It can be likened to the static that sometimes disrupts a beautiful melody heard on the radio. If there is no interference with the radio waves, sweet strains can be enjoyed and can produce a state of calmness. However, the raspy noise of static can distort even the loveliest tune, causing us irritation and frustration. Anxiety can have a similar effect on our serenity. It can weigh us down so much that we cannot attend to vital matters. Indeed, "anxious care in the heart of a man is what will cause it to bow down."—Proverbs 12:25.

² Jesus Christ spoke about the danger of being distracted by excessive anxiety. In his prophecy regarding the last days, he urged: "Pay attention to yourselves that your hearts never become weighed down with overeating and heavy drinking and anxieties of life, and suddenly that day be instantly upon you as a snare. For it will come in upon all those dwelling upon the face of all the earth. Keep awake, then, all the time making supplication that you may succeed in escaping all these things that are destined to occur, and in standing before the Son of man." (Luke 21:34-36) Just

as overeating and heavy drinking can produce a sluggish mental state, so becoming weighed down with the "anxieties of life" can cause us to lose mental perspective, with tragic results.

What Anxiety Is

³ "Anxiety" is defined as "painful or apprehensive uneasiness of mind usu[ally] over an impending or anticipated ill." It is "fearful concern or interest" as well as "an abnormal and overwhelming sense of apprehension and fear often marked by physiological signs (as sweating, tension, and increased pulse), by doubt concerning the reality and nature of the threat, and by self-doubt about one's capacity to cope with it." (*Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*) So anxiety can be a complex problem. Among its many causes are sickness, aging, fear of crime, loss of employment, and concern for the welfare of one's family.

⁴ Clearly, there are degrees of anxiety, just as there are various conditions or circumstances that can give rise to it. Not all people react to a situation in the same way. Hence, we need to realize that even if something does not trouble us, it may be the cause of severe anxiety to some of our

1. How can anxiety affect us, and how might this be illustrated?

2. What did Jesus Christ say about the "anxieties of life"?

3. How has "anxiety" been defined, and what are some of its causes?

4. (a) What is it good to remember about people and their anxieties? (b) If we are experiencing anxiety, what can be done?

fellow worshipers of Jehovah. What can be done if anxiety reaches such a point that we cannot concentrate on the harmonious and delightful truths of God's Word? What if we become so smitten with anxiety that we are unable to keep in focus the issues of Jehovah's sovereignty and Christian integrity? We may not be able to change our circumstances. Instead, we need to look for Scriptural points that will help us to cope with undue anxiety caused by life's thorny problems.

Help Is Available

⁵ When Christians need spiritual assistance and are burdened with anxieties, they can draw comfort from God's Word. It provides reliable guidance and gives us many assurances that we are not alone as Jehovah's loyal servants. For instance, the psalmist David sang: "Throw your burden upon Jehovah himself, and he himself will sustain you. Never will he allow the righteous one to totter." (Psalm 55:22) How can we act in harmony with these words? By throwing all our anxieties, worries, fears, and disappointments upon our loving heavenly Father. This will help to give us a feeling of security and a calmness of heart.

⁶ Regular heartfelt prayer is essential if we are to throw our burden, including all our anxiety, upon Jehovah. This will bring us inner peace, for the apostle Paul wrote: "Do not be anxious over anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God; and the peace of God that excels all thought will guard your hearts and your mental powers by means of Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:

6, 7) The incomparable "peace of God" is an unusual tranquillity enjoyed by Jehovah's dedicated servants even in the most trying situations. It results from our close personal relationship with God. As we pray for holy spirit and let it motivate us, we are not relieved of all life's problems, but we do enjoy the spirit's fruitage of peace. (Luke 11:13; Galatians 5:22, 23) We are not overwhelmed by anxiety, for we know that Jehovah makes all of his faithful people "dwell in security" and will let nothing happen that will cause us permanent harm. —Psalm 4:8.

⁷ Yet, what if our anxiety persists, even though we are meditating on the Scriptures and persevering in prayer? (Romans 12:12) The appointed elders in the congregation are also Jehovah's provision to help us spiritually. They can comfort and assist us by using God's Word and by praying with us and for us. (James 5:13-16) The apostle Peter urged his fellow elders to shepherd the flock of God willingly, eagerly, and in an exemplary way. (1 Peter 5:1-4) These men have our best interests at heart and want to be helpful. Of course, to benefit fully from the help of the elders and to fare well spiritually in the congregation, all of us need to apply Peter's counsel: "You younger men, be in subjection to the older men. But all of you gird yourselves with lowliness of mind toward one another, because God opposes the haughty ones, but he gives undeserved kindness to the humble ones." —1 Peter 5:5.

⁸ Peter added: "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time; while you throw all your anxiety upon him, because he

5. How may we act in harmony with Psalm 55:22?

6. According to Philippians 4:6, 7, what can prayer do for us?

7. What role can Christian elders play in helping us to cope with anxiety?

8, 9. What comfort may be drawn from 1 Peter 5:6-11?

cares for you. Keep your senses, be watchful. Your adversary, the Devil, walks about like a roaring lion, seeking to devour someone. But take your stand against him, solid in the faith, knowing that the same things in the way of sufferings are being accomplished in the entire association of your brothers in the world. But, after you have suffered a little while, the God of all undeserved kindness, who called you to his everlasting glory in union with Christ, will himself finish your training, he will make you firm, he will make you strong. To him be the might forever. Amen.”—1 Peter 5:6-11.

⁹ How comforting to realize that we can ‘throw all our anxiety upon God because he cares for us’! And if some of our anxiety results from the Devil’s attempts to destroy our relationship with Jehovah by bringing persecution and other sufferings upon us, is it not wonderful to know that everything will turn out well for integrity keepers? Yes, after we have suffered a little while, the God of all undeserved kindness will finish our training and will make us firm and strong.

¹⁰ First Peter 5:6, 7 alludes to three qualities that can help us to cope with anxiety. One is humility, or “lowliness of mind.” Verse 6 ends with the expression “in due time,” suggesting a need for patience. Verse 7 shows that we can confidently throw all our anxiety upon God ‘because he cares for us,’ and those words encourage implicit trust in Jehovah. So let us see how humility, patience, and implicit trust in God can help to allay anxiety.

How Humility Can Help

¹¹ If we are humble, we will admit that God’s thoughts are vastly superior to our

10. First Peter 5:6, 7 alludes to what three qualities that can help to allay anxiety?

11. How may humility help us to cope with anxiety?

own. (Isaiah 55:8, 9) Humility helps us to recognize our limited mental range in comparison with Jehovah’s all-encompassing perspective. He sees things we do not discern, as shown in the case of the righteous man Job. (Job 1:7-12; 2:1-6) By humbling ourselves “under the mighty hand of God,” we are acknowledging our lowly position in relation to the Supreme Sovereign. In turn, this helps us to cope with circumstances he permits. Our hearts may yearn for immediate relief, but since Jehovah’s qualities are in perfect balance, he knows precisely when and how to act in our behalf. Like young children, then, let us humbly hold on to Jehovah’s mighty hand, confident that he will help us to cope with our anxieties.—Isaiah 41:8-13.

¹² Humility includes willingness to apply counsel from God’s Word, which can often lessen anxiety. For example, if our anxiety has resulted from deep involvement in material pursuits, we might well reflect on Paul’s counsel: “Let your manner of life be free of the love of money, while you are content with the present things. For [God] has said: ‘I will by no means leave you nor by any means forsake you.’” (Hebrews 13:5) By humbly applying such counsel, many have freed themselves of great anxiety about material security. While their financial condition may not have improved, it does not dominate their thoughts to their spiritual detriment.

The Role of Patience

¹³ The expression “in due time” at 1 Peter 5:6 suggests the need for patient

12. How might anxiety about material security be affected if we humbly apply the words of Hebrews 13:5?

13, 14. (a) As to patient endurance, what example did the man Job provide? (b) Patiently waiting on Jehovah can do what for us?

endurance. Sometimes a problem persists for a long time, and that can heighten anxiety. Especially then do we need to leave matters in Jehovah's hands. The disciple James wrote: "We pronounce happy those who have endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome Jehovah gave, that Jehovah is very tender in affection and merciful." (James 5:11) Job experienced economic ruin, lost ten children in death, suffered from a loathsome disease, and was wrongly condemned by false comforters. At least some anxiety would be normal under such circumstances.

¹⁴ At any rate, Job was exemplary in patient endurance. If we are undergoing a severe test of faith, we may have to wait for relief, even as he did. But God did act in his behalf, eventually relieving Job of his suffering and rewarding him abundantly. (Job 42:10-17) Patiently waiting on Jehovah develops our endurance and reveals the depth of our devotion to him.—James 1:2-4.

Trust in Jehovah

¹⁵ Peter urged fellow believers to 'throw all their anxiety upon God because he cares for them.' (1 Peter 5:7) So we can and should have implicit trust in Jehovah. Proverbs 3:5, 6 says: "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." Because of past experiences, some who are filled with anxiety find it

15. Why should we trust implicitly in Jehovah?

difficult to trust other humans. But we have every reason to trust our Creator, the very Source and Sustainer of life. Even if we do not trust our own reaction in a certain matter, we can always rely on Jehovah to deliver us out of our calamities.—Psalm 34:18, 19; 36:9; 56:3, 4.

¹⁶ Trusting in God includes obeying his Son, Jesus Christ, who taught what he learned from his Father. (John 7:16) Jesus urged his disciples to 'store up treasures in heaven' by serving Jehovah. But what about material needs involving food, clothing, and shelter? "Stop being anxious," counseled Jesus. He pointed out that God feeds the birds. He clothes the flowers beautifully. Are not God's human servants worth more than these? Of course they are. Hence, Jesus urged: "Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and [God's] righteousness, and all these other things will be added to

you." Jesus continued: "So, never be anxious about the next day, for the next day will have its own anxieties." (Matthew 6:20, 25-34) Yes, we need food, drink, clothing, and shelter, but if we trust in Jehovah, we will not be unduly anxious about these things.

¹⁷ To seek first the Kingdom, we must trust in God and keep our priorities in proper order. A diver with no breathing apparatus may plunge beneath the water's

16. What did Jesus Christ say about anxiety over material things?

17. How might we illustrate the need to seek first the Kingdom?



Do you know why Jesus said, "Stop being anxious"?

surface in search of an oyster with a pearl inside it. This is his means of providing for his family. A high priority, indeed! But what is more important? *Air!* He must surface regularly to refill his lungs. Air is a higher priority. Likewise, we may have to be somewhat involved in this system of things in order to obtain the necessities of life. However, spiritual matters must come first because the very life of our household depends on these things. To avoid undue anxiety over material needs, we must have implicit trust in God. Moreover, 'having plenty to do in the Lord's work' may help to allay anxiety as "the joy of Jehovah" proves to be our stronghold.—1 Corinthians 15:58; Nehemiah 8:10.

Keep On Throwing Your Anxiety Upon Jehovah

¹⁸ To remain clearly focused spiritually, we must keep on throwing all our anxiety upon Jehovah. Always remember that he really does care for his servants. To illustrate: Because of her husband's unfaithfulness to her, one Christian woman's anxiety

18. What evidence is there that throwing all our anxiety upon Jehovah can really help us?

How Would You Respond?

- ☐ How may anxiety be defined?
- ☐ What are some ways we can cope with anxiety?
- ☐ How can humility and patience help to allay anxiety?
- ☐ In coping with anxiety, why is it vital to have implicit trust in Jehovah?
- ☐ Why should we keep on throwing all our anxiety upon Jehovah?

increased to the point that it was impossible for her to sleep. (Compare Psalm 119:28.) In bed, however, she would throw all her anxiety upon Jehovah. She would pour out her heart to God, telling him of the pain that she and her two small daughters were suffering. After she cried out for relief in fervent prayer, she would always be able to fall asleep, for she trusted that Jehovah would take care of her and her children. This Scripturally divorced woman is now happily married to an elder.

¹⁹ As Jehovah's people, we have various ways of coping with anxiety. Applying God's Word is especially helpful. We have the rich spiritual food provided by God through "the faithful and discreet slave," including helpful and refreshing articles published in *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* (Matthew 24:45-47) We have the assistance of God's holy spirit. Regular and fervent prayer benefits us greatly. Appointed Christian elders are ready and willing to provide spiritual help and comfort.

²⁰ Our own humility and patience are highly beneficial in dealing with anxiety that may beset us. Especially important is implicit trust in Jehovah, for our faith is built up as we experience his help and direction. In turn, faith in God can keep us from becoming unduly troubled. (John 14:1) Faith prompts us to seek first the Kingdom and to keep busy in the Lord's joyful work, which can help us to cope with anxiety. Such activity makes us feel secure among those who will sing God's praises to all eternity. (Psalm 104:33) Let us therefore keep on throwing all our anxiety upon Jehovah.

19, 20. (a) What are some ways we may cope with anxiety? (b) What should we keep on doing with all our anxiety?

“IF YOU OWE TAXES, PAY TAXES”

IN THIS world nothing is certain but death and taxes.” So said 18th-century American statesman and inventor Benjamin Franklin. His words, so often quoted, reflect not only the inevitability of taxes but also the dread that they invoke. For many, paying taxes has little more appeal than dying.

Unpleasant though the paying of taxes may be, this is an obligation that genuine Christians take very seriously. The apostle Paul wrote to the Christian congregation at Rome: “Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.” (Romans 13:7, *New International Version*) And Jesus Christ was referring specifically to taxes when he said: “Pay back Caesar’s things to Caesar, but God’s things to God.”—Mark 12:14, 17.

Jehovah has permitted governmental “superior authorities” to exist and requires that his servants be in relative subjection to them. Why, then, does God insist on his worshipers’ paying taxes? Paul mentions three basic reasons: (1) the “wrath” of the “superior authorities” in punishing lawbreakers; (2) a Christian’s conscience, which will not be clean if he cheats on his taxes; (3) the need to pay these “public servants” for providing services and maintaining a degree of order. (Romans 13:1-7) Many may not like to pay taxes. Yet, they would undoubtedly like even less living in a land with no police or fire protection, no road maintenance, no public schools, and no mail system. American jurist Oliver Wendell Holmes once put it this way: “Taxes are what we pay for civilized society.”

Payment of taxes is nothing new for servants of God. Residents of ancient Israel paid a form of taxes to support their kings, and some of those rulers burdened the people heavily through unreasonable taxation. The Jews also paid tributes and taxes to the foreign powers that dominated them, such as Egypt, Persia, and Rome. So Christians in Paul’s day knew well what he was talking about when he mentioned the paying of taxes. They knew that whether the taxes were reasonable or not, and regardless of how the government might spend this money, they had to pay whatever tax they owed. The same applies to Christians today. However, what principles might offer us guidance while paying our taxes in these complex times?

Five Guiding Principles

Be orderly. We serve and imitate Jehovah, who is “a God, not of disorder, but of peace.” (1 Corinthians 14:33; Ephesians 5:1) Being orderly is crucial when it comes to paying taxes. Are your records complete, accurate, and organized? Usually, an expensive filing system is not needed. You might have one folder labeled for each type of record (such as receipts itemizing your various expenses). It might suffice to group these in larger folders for each year. In many lands it is necessary to keep such files for a number of years in the event that the government decides to examine past records. So do not throw anything away until you are certain that it is no longer needed.

Be honest. Paul wrote: “Carry on prayer for us, for we trust we have an honest con-

science, as we wish to conduct ourselves honestly in all things.” (Hebrews 13:18) A heartfelt desire to be honest should guide every decision we make when paying our taxes. First, consider taxes to be paid on reportable income. In many lands, additional income—from tips, odd jobs, sales—is subject to taxation as soon as it exceeds a specified amount. A Christian with an “honest conscience” will find out what constitutes taxable income where he lives and will pay the applicable tax.

Second, there is the matter of deductions. Governments commonly allow taxpayers to deduct certain expenses from their taxable income. In this dishonest world, many see no harm in being “creative” or “imaginative” when claiming such deductions. One man in the United States reportedly bought his wife an expensive fur coat, then hung it in his place of business for a day so that he could deduct it as a form of “decoration” for the workplace! Another man claimed his daughter’s wedding expenses as business deductions. Still another tried to deduct the expenses of having his wife travel with him for months in the Far East, although she was really there mainly for social and recreational purposes. There seems to be no end of such cases. Put simply, calling something a business deduction when it really is nothing of the kind is a form of lying—something that our God, Jehovah, utterly despises.—Proverbs 6:16-19.

Be cautious. Jesus urged his followers to be “cautious as serpents and yet innocent as doves.” (Matthew 10:16) That advice could well apply to our taxpaying practices. Particularly in developed countries, more and more people these days pay an accounting firm or some professional to prepare their taxes. Then they simply sign the forms and send in the check. This would be

a good occasion to observe the caution recorded at Proverbs 14:15: “Anyone inexperienced puts faith in every word, but the shrewd one considers his steps.”

More than a few taxpayers have encountered trouble with the government because they ‘put faith in every word’ of some unscrupulous accountant or inexperienced tax preparer. How much better to be shrewd! Consider your steps by carefully reading *any* document before you sign it. If some entry, omission, or deduction strikes you as odd, have it explained—repeatedly if necessary—until you are satisfied that the matter is honest and legal. Granted, in many lands tax laws have grown exceedingly complex, but to the extent possible, it is the course of wisdom to understand anything you sign. In some cases, you may find that a fellow Christian who is familiar with tax law can offer some insight. One Christian elder who deals with tax matters as a lawyer said succinctly: “If your accountant proposes something that sounds too good to be true, then it probably is!”

Be responsible. “Each one will carry his own load,” wrote the apostle Paul. (Galatians 6:5) When it comes to paying taxes, each Christian must shoulder the responsibility of being honest and law-abiding. This is not a matter in which the congregation elders supervise the flock under their care. (Compare 2 Corinthians 1:24.) They do not involve themselves in tax matters unless some case of serious wrongdoing, perhaps involving scandal in the community, comes to their attention. In general, this is an area wherein the individual Christian is responsible for using his properly trained conscience in applying Scriptural principles. (Hebrews 5:14) This includes being aware that signing a tax document—regardless of who prepared it—may well

constitute a legal statement that you have read the document and believe that what it contains is true.*

Be irreprehensible. Christian overseers must be “irreprehensible” in order to qualify for their office. Similarly, the whole congregation should be irreprehensible in God’s sight. (1 Timothy 3:2; compare Ephesians 5:27.) They therefore strive to maintain a good reputation in the community, even when it comes to paying taxes. Jesus Christ himself set the example in this regard. His disciple Peter was asked if Jesus paid the temple tax, a small matter of two drachmas. Really, Jesus was exempt from this tax, since the temple was his Father’s house and no king imposes a tax on his own son. Jesus said as much; yet he paid that tax. In fact, he even used a miracle to produce the needed money! Why pay a tax from which he was properly exempt? As Jesus himself said, it was “that we do not cause them to stumble.”—Matthew 17:24-27.†

Maintain a God-Honoring Reputation

Jehovah’s Witnesses today are likewise concerned that they do not stumble others. Not surprisingly, then, as a whole, they enjoy a good reputation worldwide as being honest, taxpaying citizens. For instance, the Spanish newspaper *El Diario Vasco* commented on widespread tax evasion in Spain, but noted: “The only exception [is] Jehovah’s Witnesses. When they

buy or sell, the [property] value they declare is the absolute truth.” Similarly, the U.S. newspaper *San Francisco Examiner* remarked some years ago: “You might regard [Jehovah’s Witnesses] as model citizens. They pay taxes diligently, tend the sick, battle illiteracy.”

No true Christian would want to do anything that might taint this hard-won reputation. If faced with a choice, would you risk being known as a tax cheat for the sake of saving some money? No. Surely you would rather lose money than sully your good name and cast your values and even your worship of Jehovah in a bad light.

In truth, maintaining a reputation as a just, honest person may well cost you money at times. As the ancient Greek philosopher Plato noted some 24 centuries ago: “When there is an income tax, the just man will pay more and the unjust less on the same amount of income.” He might have added that the just man never regrets paying the price for being just. Even having such a reputation is worth the cost. This is certainly true of Christians. Their good reputation is precious to them because it honors their heavenly Father and can help to draw others to their way of life and to their God, Jehovah.—Proverbs 11:30; 1 Peter 3:1.

Most of all, though, true Christians value their own relationship with Jehovah. God sees everything that they do, and they desire to please him. (Hebrews 4:13) Therefore, they reject the temptation to try to cheat the government. They recognize that God takes delight in honest, upright conduct. (Psalm 15:1-3) And since they want to make Jehovah’s heart rejoice, they pay all the taxes they owe.—Proverbs 27:11; Romans 13:7.

* This may present a challenge to Christians who file a joint tax return with an unbelieving mate. The Christian wife would make a conscientious effort to balance the headship principle with the need to obey Caesar’s tax laws. She should be aware, though, of the possible legal consequences of knowingly signing a falsified document.—Compare Romans 13:1; 1 Corinthians 11:3.

† Interestingly, Matthew’s is the only Gospel to record this event in Jesus’ earthly life. As a former tax collector himself, Matthew was no doubt impressed with Jesus’ spirit in this matter.

She Was Highly Favored by Jehovah

“GOOD DAY, highly favored one, Jehovah is with you.” What a salutation! The speaker is none other than the angel Gabriel. He is addressing a young woman of humble heart—Mary, the daughter of a man named Heli. The year is 3 B.C.E., and the place is the city of Nazareth.—Luke 1:26-28.

Mary is promised in marriage to Joseph the carpenter. According to Jewish law and custom, she is viewed as his espoused wife. (Matthew 1:18) Like her, he is of humble station in life. Why, then, does the angel greet her as one who is highly favored?

Her Wonderful Privilege

Gabriel adds: “Have no fear, Mary, for you have found favor with God; and, look! you will conceive in your womb and give birth to a son, and you are to call his name Jesus. This one will be great and will be called Son of the Most High; and Jehovah God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule as king over the house of Jacob forever, and there will be no end of his kingdom.”—Luke 1:29-33.

Amazed and perplexed, Mary asks: “How is this to be, since I am having no intercourse with a man?” Gabriel answers: “Holy spirit will come upon you, and power of the Most High will overshadow you. For that reason also what is born will be called holy, God’s Son.” To remove any doubts, the angel adds: “Look! Elizabeth your relative has also herself conceived a son, in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her, the so-called barren woman; because with

God no declaration will be an impossibility.”—Luke 1:34-37.

Mary immediately accepts this marvelous privilege of service. Willingly, but in humility, she responds: “Look! Jehovah’s slave girl! May it take place with me according to your declaration.” At that, Gabriel departs. Mary hastens to a city in the mountainous region of Judah. Arriving at the home of the priest Zechariah and his wife, Elizabeth, she finds conditions exactly as the angel described them. What joy fills Mary’s heart! Her lips bubble forth in words of praise to Jehovah.—Luke 1:38-55.

She Becomes Joseph’s Wife

A virgin is to supply Jesus’ human body, for such a birth was foretold. (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:22, 23) But why is a betrothed virgin required? In order to provide an adoptive father who can convey to the child the legal right to King David’s throne. Both Joseph and Mary belong to the tribe of Judah and are descendants of King David. So the heirship rights of Jesus will be doubly established. (Matthew 1:2-16; Luke 3:23-33) This is why the angel later assures Joseph that he should not hesitate to take Mary as his legal wife, although she is pregnant.—Matthew 1:19-25.*

A taxation decree issued by Augustus Caesar obligates Joseph and Mary to register in Bethlehem. While there, she gives

* If Mary had not been a virgin, who would have wanted to marry her? The Jews insisted on a girl’s being a virgin.—Deuteronomy 22:13-19; compare Genesis 38:24-26.

birth to her firstborn son. Shepherds come to see the infant, and they give praise to his Father, Jehovah. After 40 days of purification according to the Mosaic Law, Mary goes to the temple in Jerusalem to make atonement for her sins. (Leviticus 12:1-8; Luke 2:22-24) Yes, since she was not immaculately conceived, and so not free from the stain of sin, her natural imperfections must be covered by atoning sacrifices.—Psalm 51:5.

While Mary and Joseph are at the temple, elderly Simeon and the aged prophetess Anna are privileged to behold the Son of God. Mary is not the center of attention. (Luke 2:25-38) Later, Magi do obeisance not to her but to Jesus.—Matthew 2:1-12.

After fleeing to Egypt and remaining there until wicked Herod dies, Jesus' parents return and settle in the little village of Nazareth. (Matthew 2:13-23; Luke 2:39) It is there that Joseph and Mary rear Jesus under godly family conditions.

Mary Had Other Children

In time, Mary and Joseph provide Jesus with natural brothers and sisters. When Jesus' ministry brings him to his hometown of Nazareth, his childhood acquaintances recognize him. "Is this not the carpenter's son?" they ask. "Is not his mother

called Mary, and his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us?" (Matthew 13:55, 56) The Nazarenes are referring to the physical family of Joseph and Mary, including her sons and daughters whom they know as Jesus' natural brothers and sisters.

These brothers and sisters are not Jesus' cousins. Neither are they his disciples, or spiritual brothers and sisters, for John 2:12 makes a clear distinction between the two groups by stating: "He [Jesus] and his mother and brothers and his disciples went down to Capernaum." Years later in Jerusalem, the apostle Paul saw Cephas, or Peter, and added: "I did not see any of the other apostles; I only saw James, the brother of the Lord." (Galatians 1:19, *The Jerusalem Bible*) Moreover, the statement that Joseph "had no intercourse with [Mary] until she gave birth to a son" indicates that Jesus' adoptive father did have relations with her afterward and fathered her other children. (Matthew 1:25) Accordingly, Luke 2:7 calls Jesus her "firstborn" son.

A God-Fearing Mother

As a God-fearing mother, Mary cooperates with Joseph in instructing her children in righteousness. (Proverbs 22:6) That she is an ardent student of the Scriptures is seen from her spiritually rich expression when greeted by Elizabeth. At that time Jesus' mother repeats sentiments from Hannah's song and displays knowledge of the psalms, historic and prophetic writings, and books of Moses. (Genesis 30:13; 1 Samuel 2:1-10; Proverbs 31:28; Malachi 3:12; Luke 1:46-55) Mary has committed prophetic events and sayings to memory, treasured them up in her heart, and pondered over them in her mind. She is therefore well equipped to share in giv-

In Our Next Issue

The Roots of Atheism

**The Rightful Place of Jehovah's
Worship in Our Lives**

**Fulfilling a Basic Human Need
Through Recognition**

ing parental instruction to the lad Jesus. —Luke 2:19, 33.

Well-taught 12-year-old Jesus manifests Scriptural knowledge that astonishes learned men at the temple. Because he has become separated from his parents during that Passover season, his mother says: "Child, why did you treat us this way? Here your father and I in mental distress have been looking for you." Jesus responds: "Why did you have to go looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in the house of my Father?" Unable to grasp the significance of this reply, Mary stores it in her heart. Returning to Nazareth, Jesus goes on "progressing in wisdom and in physical growth and in favor with God and men." —Luke 2:42-52.

Mary as Jesus' Disciple

How fitting it is that Mary should eventually become Jesus' devoted disciple! She is meek and has no ambition to shine in spite of her unique God-given assignment. Mary knows the Scriptures. If you search them yourself, you will not find her described with a halo, seated on a throne as "mother-queen" and bathed in the reflected glory of Christ. Rather, you will find her far in the background, out of the spotlight. —Matthew 13:53-56; John 2:12.

Jesus nipped in the bud any such thing as Mariolatry among his followers. While he was speaking on one occasion, "a woman from the crowd called out, 'Blest is

the womb that bore you and the breasts that nursed you!' 'Rather,' he replied, 'blest are they who hear the word of God and keep it.'" (Luke 11:27, 28, *The New American Bible*, translated by members of the Catholic Biblical Association of America) At a wedding feast, Jesus told Mary: "What have I to do with you, woman? My hour has not yet come." (John 2:4) Other translations read: "Leave the matter in my hands." (*Weymouth*) "Do not try to direct me." (*An American Translation*) Yes, Jesus respected his mother, but he did not place her on a pedestal.



**Mary was highly favored
as the mother of Jesus**

Eternal Privileges

What privileges Mary enjoyed! She gave birth to Jesus. Then she mothered and trained the young child. Finally, she exercised faith, becoming Christ's disciple and spiritual sister. In our last Scriptural glimpse of Mary, we see her in an upper chamber in Jerusalem. She is there together with Jesus' apostles,

her other sons, and some faithful women—all worshipers of Jehovah. —Acts 1:13, 14.

In time, Mary died and her body returned to the dust. Like other early anointed followers of her dear son, she slept in death until God's due time to resurrect her as a spirit creature with immortal life in heaven. (1 Corinthians 15:44, 50; 2 Timothy 4:8) How delighted this "highly favored one" must now be in the presence of Jehovah God and Jesus Christ!



"That Is the Way True Christians Should Behave"

IN HIS 1990 book *Arbeit macht tot—Eine Jugend in Auschwitz* (Work Kills You—Young Manhood in Auschwitz), Auschwitz survivor Tibor Wohl documents a conversation he overheard between two fellow prisoners. One, an Austrian, claimed to be a "nonbeliever." Yet, he praised the prisoners who wore the purple-triangle insignia—the Bible Students, as Jehovah's Witnesses were called in the camp.

"They do not go to war," said the Austrian to his companion. "They would rather be killed than kill anyone else. In my view that is the way true Christians should behave. I must tell you about a very pleasant episode I had with them. We were together with both Jews and Bible Students in one block in the camp of Stutthof. In those days the Bible Students had to do hard labor, outdoors in the bitter cold. We could not understand how they survived. They said Jehovah gave them strength. They needed their bread desperately, since they were famished. But what did they do? They collected all the bread they had, took half of it and gave the other half to their brothers, their spiritual brothers, who came in ravenous from other camps. And they welcomed them and kissed them. Before they ate, they prayed, and afterward their faces beamed with happiness. They said that nobody was hungry anymore. So, you see, then I thought to myself, 'These are true Christians.' That was how I always imagined they should be. How nice it would have been to give starving comrades such a welcome here in Auschwitz!"