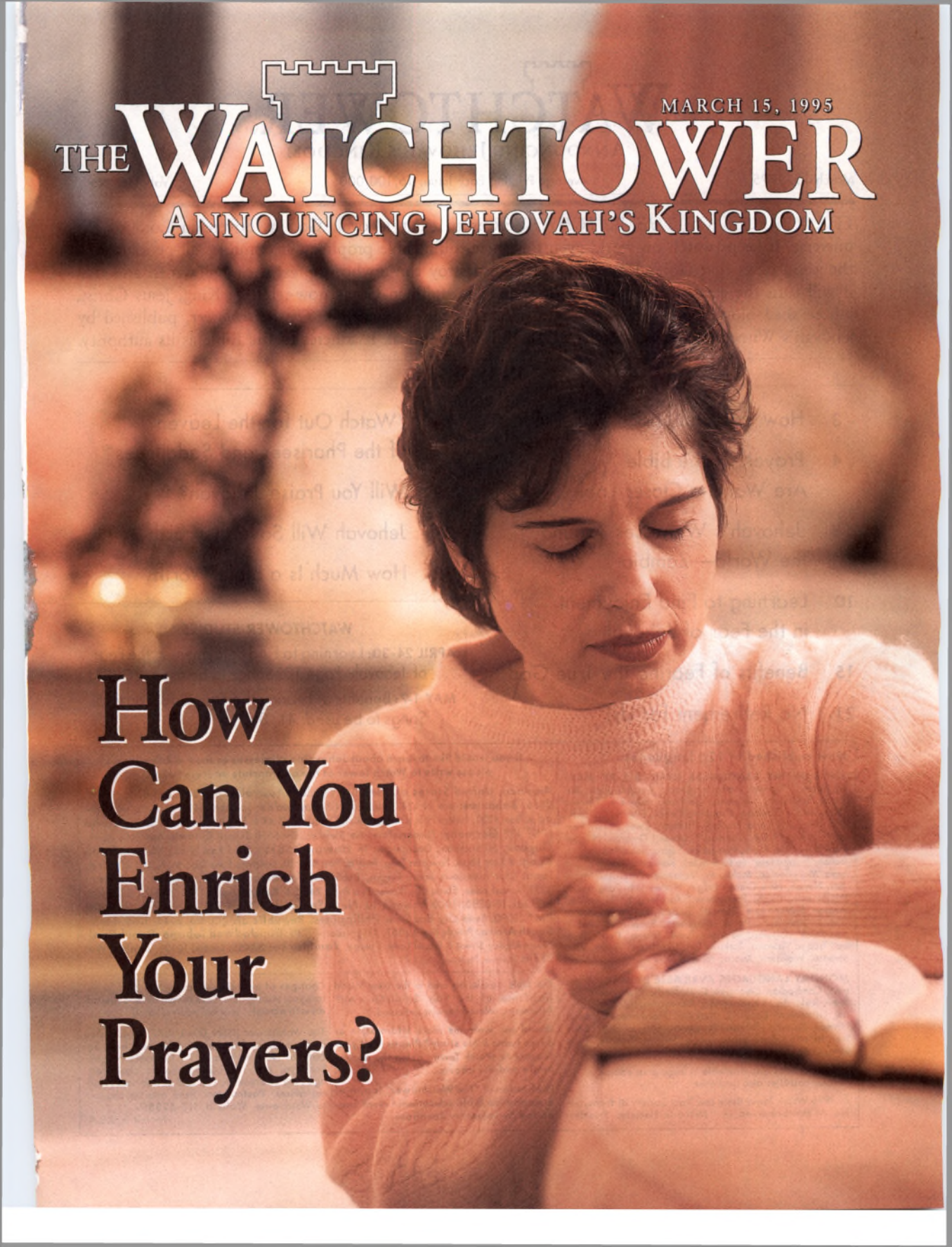




MARCH 15, 1995

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

How
Can You
Enrich
Your
Prayers?

THE WATCHTOWER[®]

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

March 15, 1995

Average Printing Each Issue: 16,100,000

Vol. 116, No. 6

THE PURPOSE OF *THE WATCHTOWER* is to exalt Jehovah God as Sovereign Lord of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as these fulfill Bible prophecy. It comforts all peoples with the good news that God's Kingdom will soon destroy those who oppress their fellowmen and that it will turn the earth into a paradise. It encourages faith in God's now-reigning King, Jesus Christ, whose shed blood opens the way for mankind to gain eternal life. *The Watchtower*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879, is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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

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

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

Printed in U.S.A.



How Can You Enrich Your Prayers?

PRAYER is unique among the loving provisions of Jehovah God. Opposers may confiscate your Bible or prevent you from meeting with fellow worshipers, but no one can rob you of prayer. To overstate the value of prayer is impossible. How important it is, then, for each one of us to cherish and take full advantage of this privilege. What can help you to enrich your prayers?

The Bible is not a prayer book. Yet, it could be described as mankind's greatest textbook on prayer. The Hebrew Scriptures alone contain over 150 prayers. Some are short; others are long. They were uttered in public or in private, by kings or by captives, in triumph or in tribulation. As David sang in Psalm 65:2, "people of all flesh" turn to Jehovah, the "Hearer of prayer." Why did God inspire the writers of the

Bible to record such a broad selection of prayers?

To answer that question, consider 2 Timothy 3:16. It says: "All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial." Thus, Biblical prayers are there to guide us, as are Scriptural prophecy, principles, and history. How can these prayers be of benefit to us?

By looking closely at Scriptural prayers, we can identify those said in situations similar to our own. We can learn how prayers vary in purpose and setting. Moreover, we will discover new expressions of praise and thanksgiving and will find fresh words for our petitions and supplications. In short, Biblical prayers can help us to enrich our own prayers.

Mary, who became the mother of Jesus, was a person who apparently benefited

from expressions used in a prayer recorded in the Bible. She visited her relative Elizabeth after each of them had conceived a son with divine assistance. Mary offered praise and thanksgiving to God, and some of her words are remarkably similar to those contained in a prayer in the Hebrew Scriptures. It seems likely that Mary was familiar with the prayer uttered by Hannah, the mother of Samuel the prophet. Hannah had also conceived a son with God's help, more than 1,000 years earlier. Could it be that

Mary meditated on this prayer because it reflected her own feelings?—1 Samuel 2: 1-10; Luke 1:46-55.

What about you? Can you recall a Biblical prayer spoken under circumstances similar to your own? Finding, reading, and meditating on such prayers will help you to enrich your own communication with God. In the next article, we invite you to examine three prayers from the Holy Scriptures. They were offered under different circumstances, perhaps similar to yours.

Prayers in the Bible Are Worth a Closer Look

AN ANXIOUS woman, a king, and God's own Son said the prayers we will take a close look at now. Each prayer was prompted by a different set of circumstances. Yet, such situations could affect us today. What can we learn from these examples?

"Look Upon the Affliction of Your Slave Girl"

Are you struggling with a persistent problem? Or have you become weighed down with anxiety? Then you have much in common with Hannah before she gave birth to her first child, Samuel. She was childless and was being taunted by another woman. In fact, Hannah's situation so vexed and concerned her that she would not eat. (1 Samuel 1:2-8, 15, 16) She appealed to Jehovah and offered the following supplication:

"O Jehovah of armies, if you will without fail look upon the affliction of your slave girl and actually remember me, and you will not forget your slave girl and actually give to your slave girl a male offspring, I will give him to Jehovah all the days of his life, and no razor will come upon his head."
—1 Samuel 1:11.

Notice that Hannah did not speak in generalities. She addressed Jehovah with a specific request (for a male offspring) and coupled this with a definite resolve (to put him at God's disposal). What does this tell us?

When in adversity, be specific in prayer. Regardless of what your problem is—whether it is your domestic situation, loneliness, or ill health—pray to Jehovah about it. Describe to him the exact nature of your difficulty and how you feel. "Every evening I entrust all my troubles to Jeho-

vah,” says a widow named Louise. “Sometimes there are quite a few, but I clearly mention each one.”

Speaking to Jehovah in exact terms brings benefits. Doing so helps us to define our problem, which might then appear less formidable. Saying specific prayers relieves us of anxiety. Even before her prayer was answered, Hannah felt reassured, and “her face became self-concerned no more.” (1 Samuel 1:18) Moreover, being exact makes us alert to identify the answer to our prayer. “The more exactly I phrase my prayers,” says Bernhard, a Christian in Germany, “the clearer are the answers.”

“I Am But a Little Boy”

However, a person might feel a different type of concern if he receives an assignment of which he feels unworthy. Are you at times overwhelmed by the responsibility granted you by Jehovah? Or do some people regard you as unsuitable for your assignment? Young Solomon was in that situation when he was anointed as king of Israel. Certain prominent men preferred that someone else be on the throne. (1 Kings 1:

5-7, 41-46; 2:13-22) Early in his reign, Solomon made a request in prayer:

“Jehovah my God, you yourself have made your servant king . . . I am but a little boy. I do not know how to go out and how to come in. . . . Give to your servant an obedient heart to judge your people, to discern between good and bad.”—1 Kings 3:7-9.

Solomon focused his prayer on his relationship with Jehovah, on the privilege he had been given, and on his ability to carry out the assignment. In a similar way, whenever we are given responsibility that we feel is beyond our ability, we should petition God to equip us to do the job. Consider the following experiences:

“When asked to care for greater responsibility at the branch office of the Watch Tower Society,” explains Eugene, “I felt completely inadequate. There were others who were better qualified and had much more experience. I slept very little for the next two nights, spending most of the time in prayer, which gave me strength and the necessary assurance.”

Roy was asked to deliver a funeral discourse following the sudden and tragic

NOTABLE PRAYERS IN THE BIBLE

Jehovah's servants offered prayers under a multitude of circumstances.

Can you relate to one or more of the following situations?

Do you need guidance from God, as did Eliezer?—Genesis 24:12-14.

Are you in imminent danger, as was Jacob?—Genesis 32:9-12.

Do you want to know God better, as did Moses?—Exodus 33:12-17.

Are you confronted with opponents, as was Elijah?—1 Kings 18:36, 37.

Is preaching difficult for you, as it was for Jeremiah?—Jeremiah 20:7-12.

Do you need to confess sins and seek forgiveness, as did Daniel?—Daniel 9:3-19.

Do you face persecution, as did Jesus' disciples?—Acts 4:24-31.

See also Matthew 6:9-13; John 17:1-26; Philip-
pians 4:6, 7; James 5:16.

death of a young friend who had been very popular. Hundreds were sure to attend. What did Roy do? "I have seldom prayed so much for strength and for the ability to find correct words to express upbuilding thoughts and to offer comfort."

As the Creator 'speeds things up' and as his organization expands, a natural consequence is that more of his servants are being entrusted with responsibility. (Isaiah 60:22) If you are asked to have an increased share, rest assured that Jehovah can make up for any lack in experience, training, or ability on your part. Approach God in the same manner as Solomon did, and He will equip you to handle the assignment.

"That They May All Be One"

A third situation that arises today is that of being required to represent a group in prayer. When called upon to say a prayer on behalf of others, what should we pray for? Consider Jesus' prayer recorded in John chapter 17. He said this prayer in the presence of his disciples on his last evening

as a man. What sort of petitions did he direct to his heavenly Father?

Jesus stressed the common goals and the shared hope of those present. He mentioned the glorification of Jehovah God's name and the making known of the Kingdom. Jesus emphasized the value of a personal relationship with the Father and the Son, based on knowledge of the Scriptures. He spoke of separateness from the world, which would brace his followers for opposition. Christ also asked his Father to protect the disciples and to unite them in true worship.

Yes, Jesus emphasized unity. (John 17:20, 21) Earlier that evening, the disciples had engaged in some immature bickering. (Luke 22:24-27) In prayer, however, Christ sought not to censure but to unite. In the same way, family and congregation prayers should promote love and seek to overcome friction between individuals. Those being represented should be drawn together in unity.—Psalm 133:1-3.

This unity is manifested when those listening say, "Amen," or "So be it," in con-

WHAT TO PRAY FOR WHEN FIGHTING AN INGRAINED HABIT

Are you struggling against a recurring weakness? How can prayers recorded in the Bible be of benefit? Learn from David, who prayed at various times with regard to his own weaknesses.

David sang: "Search through me, O God, and know my heart. Examine me, and know my disquieting thoughts." (Psalm 139:23) It was David's desire that Jehovah God search out improper desires, emotions, or motives. In other words, David enlisted Jehovah's help in avoiding sin.

But David's weaknesses overcame him,

and he sinned greatly. Here again, prayer helped him—this time to restore his relationship with God. According to Psalm 51:2, David pleaded: "Thoroughly wash me from my error, and cleanse me even from my sin."

We too can humbly pray for Jehovah's assistance in order to curb wrong inclinations. This will strengthen us to overcome an ingrained weakness and can help us avoid sin. If a relapse occurs, we should approach Jehovah again with petitions that he help us to carry on the fight.



clusion. For this to be possible, they have to understand and be in agreement with everything said. It would be unfitting, therefore, to mention in prayer a subject that is unknown to some present. For instance, an elder who is representing a congregation in prayer might seek Jehovah's blessing on a spiritual brother or sister who is seriously ill. But it normally would be best if he did so only if the overwhelming majority of those he is representing know the person and have heard about the illness.

Notice, too, that Jesus did not itemize the personal needs of each member of the group. Doing so would have involved mentioning intimate matters known only to certain individuals. Personal concerns are a fitting subject for *private* prayer, which can be as extended and as intimate as desired.

How should a person prepare himself to represent a large gathering of worship-

Prayers spoken on behalf of a group should emphasize Scriptural hopes and common spiritual goals

ers in prayer? One experienced Christian explains: "I consider in advance what to give thanks for, what requests the brothers might have, and what petitions I could mention on their behalf. I put my ideas, including expressions of praise, in the right order in my mind. Before saying the public prayer, I say a silent prayer, asking for help to represent the brothers in a dignified manner."

Whatever your circumstances, likely you will find a prayer in the Bible that was said by someone in a situation like yours. The broad spectrum of prayers in the Scriptures is evidence of God's loving-kindness. Reading these prayers and meditating on them will help you to enrich your prayers.

Jehovah's Witnesses Around the World

BROAD, undulating plains atop a vast, 4,000-foot-high plateau—this is Zambia, a country in the heart of south-central Africa. In the northeast, the Muchinga Mountains rise up to 7,000 feet. The mighty Zambezi River, which thunders spectacularly over world-renowned Victoria Falls, forms most of the southern border of this landlocked country. There is great variety among the people, with over 70 different ethnic groups. Eight major languages are spoken here, but there are many others.

In 1911 a different language began to take hold and spread in Zambia. Visitors brought in copies of *Studies in the Scriptures*, and Jehovah's Witnesses have from then on endeavored to spread the "pure language" of Bible truth in Zambia. (Zephaniah 3:9) Particularly challenging are unscriptural beliefs about the condition of the dead. When people learn the truth and see how superstitions have enslaved them, the effect is liberating!—John 8:32.

For instance, one faithful sister reports: "When my uncle died suddenly, my mother, a staunch member of the United Church of Zambia, became perplexed. After the week-long burial ritual, I returned to the village to see how she was get-

ting along. Upon arriving, I found an elderly man in the house, and when he left, I asked my grandmother who he was. She said that he was a witch doctor. My mother intended to hire him to avenge the death of her brother so that his soul would be able to rest. She believed that currently it was 'just wandering about,' as she put it.

"Grandmother further explained that my visit was a blessing because the family was looking for funds to pay the witch doctor. She asked me to contribute, but I tactfully explained that as a Christian, I was not able to take part. I reasoned with her from Psalm 146:4, which shows that the dead have no thoughts—so there is no soul 'wandering about.' We also considered Romans 12:19, which points out that vengeance belongs to Jehovah and not to us. After that, I told my mother about the resurrection hope Jesus spoke of, as recorded at John 5:28, 29. She was impressed with my strong faith in God's promises. Soon she started studying with a Witness and made rapid progress. She cut off all ties with her former religion and symbolized her dedication to God by baptism. Now she is one of Jehovah's Witnesses."

Another sister reports: "I went to the funeral of my un-

cle's wife. Upon arriving, I found my uncle and my cousin starving. They had not eaten anything since the day my aunt died. When I asked why, they replied that according to tradition, they are not allowed to light a fire to cook. I offered to cook, but some family members feared that if I broke with this pagan custom, everyone would go mad!

"I explained that as one of Jehovah's Witnesses, I respect what the Bible says at Leviticus 18:30 and do not follow unscriptural traditions. I then showed them the brochure *Spirits of the Dead*. At that the tension cooled down, and I went ahead and prepared food for my uncle and the rest of the people. The relatives of the deceased were touched by my bravery and agreed to study the Bible further. They already are unbaptized publishers, and the whole family hope to get baptized soon."

How pleased we are when the pure language of truth overturns the confusion of religious falsehoods, especially those strongly entrenched reasonings that enslave innocent people! With Jehovah's blessing, the pure language is spreading in Zambia, even as it is throughout the earth.

—2 Corinthians 10:4.



ZAMBIA

COUNTRY PROFILE

1994 Service Year

PEAK NUMBER WITNESSING:

82,926

RATIO:

1 Witness to 107

MEMORIAL ATTENDANCE:

363,372

AVERAGE PIONEER PUBLISHERS:

10,713

AVERAGE BIBLE STUDIES:

108,948

NUMBER BAPTIZED:

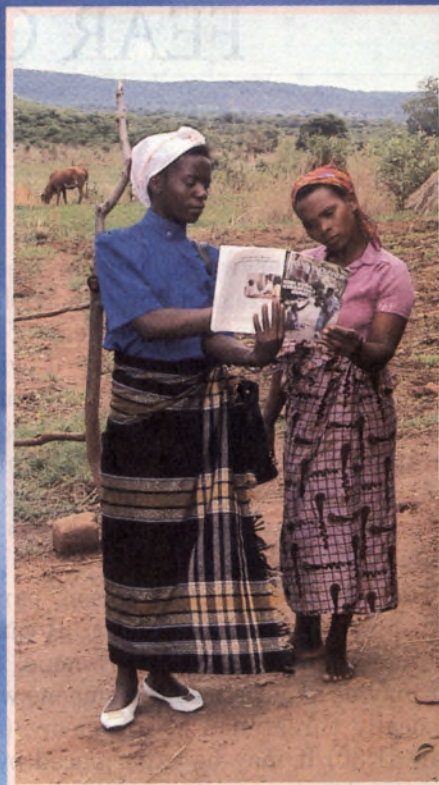
3,552

NUMBER OF CONGREGATIONS:

2,027

BRANCH OFFICE:

LUSAKA



**Watch Tower branch facilities
on the outskirts of Lusaka**

**Preaching in Shimabala,
south of Lusaka**



LEARNING TO FIND ENJOYMENT IN THE FEAR OF JEHOVAH

"Come, you sons, listen to me; the fear of Jehovah is what I shall teach you."

—PSALM 34:11.

PEOPLE everywhere long for freedom from fear—fear of crime and violence, fear of unemployment, fear of serious illness. What a grand day it will be when that freedom becomes a reality under God's Kingdom! (Isaiah 33:24; 65:21-23; Micah 4:4) Yet, not all fear will be banished then, nor should we seek to push all fear out of our lives now. There is fear that is good and fear that is bad.

² Fear can be a mental poison, paralyzing a person's ability to reason. It can undermine courage and destroy hope. Such fear may be experienced by someone who is physically threatened by an enemy. (Jeremiah 51:30) It may be experienced by one who attaches too much importance to having the approval of certain influential humans. (Proverbs 29:25) But there is also fear that is wholesome, the sort that holds us back from doing anything rash, from injuring ourselves. Godly fear includes even more than that. It is awe of Jehovah, a profound reverence for him, coupled with a wholesome dread of displeasing him. (Psalm 89:7) This fear of incurring God's displea-

sure stems from appreciation for his loving-kindness and goodness. (Psalm 5:7; Hosea 3:5) It also includes an awareness that Jehovah is the Supreme Judge and the Almighty, who has the power to inflict punishment, even death, on those who refuse to obey him.—Romans 14:10-12.

³ Godly fear is wholesome, not morbid. It motivates one to be firm for what is right, not to compromise by doing wrong. It is not like the fear associated with the ancient Greek deity Phobos, described as a sinister god that inspired terror. And it is not like the fear associated with the Hindu goddess Kali, who at times is depicted as bloodthirsty, using corpses, snakes, and skulls as ornaments. Godly fear attracts; it does not repel. It is intertwined with love and appreciation. Thus, godly fear draws us to Jehovah.—Deuteronomy 10:12, 13; Psalm 2:11.

Why Some Have It and Others Do Not

⁴ Mankind as a whole is not motivated by the quality of godly fear. At Romans 3:9-18, the apostle Paul describes how far humans have fallen from original per-

1. How will fear be banished by God's Kingdom, but does that mean all fear?
2. (a) What sort of fear is bad, and what kind is desirable? (b) What is godly fear, and how do the cited scriptures indicate that?

3. How does fear of Jehovah contrast with that associated with some pagan deities?
4. As shown by the apostle Paul, to what condition has humankind come, and what accounts for this?

fection. After stating that all are under sin, Paul quotes from the Psalms, saying: "There is not a righteous man, not even one." (See Psalm 14:1.) Then he provides details by citing such things as mankind's negligence in seeking for God, their lack of kindness, their deceitful speech, cursing, and bloodshed. How accurately that describes the world today! The majority of people have no interest in God and his purposes. Any semblance of kindness is too often reserved for occasions when there is something to be gained by it. Lying and foul speech are commonplace. Bloodshed is featured not only in the news but also in entertainment. What accounts for such a situation? It is true that all of us are descendants of the sinner Adam, but when people adopt as their way of life the things described by the apostle Paul, something more than that is involved. Verse 18 explains what it is, saying: "There is no fear of God before their eyes."—See Psalm 36:1.

⁵ Why is it, though, that some people have godly fear, while others do not? Simply stated, it is because some people cultivate it, whereas others do not. None of us are born with it, but all of us have the capacity for it. Godly fear is something that we have to learn. Then, for it to be a powerful motivating force in our lives, we need to cultivate it.

An Appealing Invitation

⁶ An appealing invitation to learn the fear of Jehovah is extended to us in Psalm 34. This is a psalm of David. And whom did David foreshadow? None other than the Lord Jesus Christ. A prophecy that the apostle John specifically applied to Je-

sus is recorded in verse 20 of this psalm. (John 19:36) In our day, Jesus is the one who extends an invitation like that in verse 11: "Come, you sons, listen to me; the fear of Jehovah is what I shall teach you." This clearly shows that godly fear is something that can be learned, and Jesus Christ is superbly qualified to teach us. Why is that?

⁷ Jesus Christ knows the importance of godly fear. Hebrews 5:7 says regarding him: "In the days of his flesh Christ offered up supplications and also petitions to the One who was able to save him out of death, with strong outcries and tears, and he was favorably heard for his godly fear." Such godly fear was a quality that Jesus Christ manifested even before he was confronted with death on a torture stake. Remember, in Proverbs chapter 8, the Son of God is described as the personification of wisdom. And at Proverbs 9:10, we are told: "The fear of Jehovah is the start of wisdom." So this godly fear was a fundamental part of the personality of God's Son long before he came to the earth.

⁸ Furthermore, concerning Jesus as Messianic King, Isaiah 11:2, 3 states: "Upon him the spirit of Jehovah must settle down, the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of mightiness, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah; and there will be enjoyment by him in the fear of Jehovah." How beautifully that is expressed! The fear of Jehovah is nothing unpleasant. It is positive and constructive. It is a quality that will pervade the entire domain over which Christ rules as King. He is ruling now, and to all who are being gathered as his subjects, he is giving instruction in the fear of Jehovah. How?

5. Why do some people have godly fear, while others do not?

6. Who extends to us the invitation recorded at Psalm 34:11, and how does this text show that godly fear must be learned?

7. Why is Jesus especially one from whom to learn godly fear?

8. At Isaiah 11:2, 3, what do we learn about the fear of Jehovah?

⁹ By means of our congregation meetings, assemblies, and conventions, Jesus, as appointed Head of the congregation and as the Messianic King, helps us to understand clearly what godly fear is and why it is so beneficial. Thus he endeavors to deepen our appreciation for it so that we will learn to find enjoyment in the fear of Jehovah just as he does.

Will You Put Forth the Effort?

¹⁰ Of course, our simply reading the Bible or attending meetings in a Kingdom Hall is not going to guarantee that we will have godly fear. Notice what we need to do if we are really to understand the fear of Jehovah. Proverbs 2:1-5 says: "My son, if you will receive my sayings and treasure up my own commandments with yourself, so as to pay attention to wisdom with your ear, that you may incline your heart to discernment; if, moreover, you call out for understanding itself and you give forth your voice for discernment itself, if you keep seeking for it as for silver, and as for hid treasures you keep searching for it, in that case you will understand the fear of Jehovah, and you will find the very knowledge of God." So when attending meetings, we need to pay attention to what is said, put forth earnest effort to concentrate on and remember key thoughts, think deeply about how the way we feel

9. How is Jesus Christ teaching us the fear of Jehovah, and what does he want us to learn about it?

10. When attending Christian meetings, what must we do if we are to understand the fear of Jehovah?



about Jehovah ought to influence our attitude toward counsel given—yes, open our hearts. Then we will understand the fear of Jehovah.

¹¹ Psalm 86:11 draws attention to another important factor, that of prayer. "Instruct me, O Jehovah, about your way. I shall walk in your truth," prayed the psalmist. "Unify my heart to fear your name." Jehovah approved of that prayer, for he had it recorded in the Bible. To cultivate godly fear, we too need to pray to Jehovah for his help, and we will benefit by praying earnestly and frequently.—Luke 18:1-8.

Your Heart Is Involved

¹² There is something else that we ought to notice at Psalm 86:11. The psalmist was not asking simply for an intellectual grasp of the fear of God. He mentions his heart. The cultivating of godly fear involves the

11. To cultivate godly fear, what should we do earnestly and frequently?

12. Why must the heart be given special attention, and what does that include?



**Diligent study is
required to understand
the fear of Jehovah**

not appropriate for Christians. Afterward, however, our conscience bothers us. That is not the sort of person we want to be. With the psalmist, therefore, we pray to Jehovah: "Unify my heart to fear your name." We want the entire inner person, as manifest in all our activities of life, to give evidence that we "fear the true God and keep his commandments."—Ecclesiastes 12:13.

figurative heart, which requires special attention because it is the inner person as manifest in all our activities of life and includes our thoughts, our attitudes, our desires, our motivations, our goals.

¹³ The Bible warns us that a person's heart may be divided. It can be treacherous. (Psalm 12:2; Jeremiah 17:9) It may motivate us to share in wholesome activities—going to congregation meetings and out in the field ministry—but it may also love certain aspects of the world's way of life. This may hold us back from being truly whole-souled in promoting Kingdom interests. Then the treacherous heart may try to persuade us that, after all, we are doing as much as many others. Or perhaps in school or at our place of secular work, the heart may be influenced by fear of man. As a result, in those surroundings we may hesitate to identify ourselves as Jehovah's Witnesses and may even do things that are

¹⁴ Jehovah promised that he would give such a God-fearing heart to his people. He foretold the restoration of Israel and said, as we read at Jeremiah 32:37-39: "I will bring them back to this place and make them dwell in security. And they will certainly become my people, and I myself shall become their God. And I will give them one heart and one way in order to fear me always, for good to them and to their sons after them." In verse 40, God's promise is reinforced: "The fear of me I shall put in their heart in order not to turn aside from me." In 537 B.C.E., Jehovah did bring them back to Jerusalem as he had promised. But what about the rest of that promise—that he would give them 'one heart in order to fear him always'? Why did the ancient nation of Israel turn aside from Jehovah after he had brought them back from Babylon, so

13. (a) What may indicate that a person's heart is divided? (b) As we cultivate godly fear, toward what goal should we work?

14, 15. (a) When foretelling the restoration of Israel from captivity in Babylon, what did Jehovah promise to give his people? (b) What did Jehovah do with a view to implanting the fear of God in the hearts of his people? (c) Why did Israel turn aside from Jehovah's ways?

that their temple was destroyed in 70 C.E., never again to be rebuilt?

¹⁵ This was not due to any failure on Jehovah's part. Jehovah did, indeed, take steps to put the fear of God in the hearts of his people. By the mercy that he showed in delivering them from Babylon and restoring them to their homeland, he gave them every reason to view him with profound reverence. God reinforced all of that with reminders, counsel, and reproof by means of the prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi; by Ezra, who was sent to them as a teacher; by means of Governor Nehemiah; and by God's own Son himself. At times the people listened. They did so when they rebuilt Jehovah's temple at the urging of Haggai and Zechariah and when they sent away foreign wives in the days of Ezra. (Ezra 5:1, 2; 10:1-4) But more often they did not obey. They were not consistent about paying attention; they did not continue to be receptive to counsel; they did not keep their hearts open. The Israelites were not *cultivating* godly fear, and as a result, it was not a powerful motivating force in their lives. —Malachi 1:6; Matthew 15:7, 8.

¹⁶ Yet, Jehovah's promise to put godly fear in the hearts of his people did not fail. He —
¹⁶ In whose hearts has Jehovah implanted godly fear?

How Would You Answer?

- ☐ What is godly fear?
- ☐ How are we being taught to find enjoyment in the fear of Jehovah?
- ☐ To have godly fear, what effort is required on our part?
- ☐ Why does acquiring godly fear involve all aspects of our figurative heart?

made a new covenant with spiritual Israel, those Christians before whom he set a heavenly hope. (Jeremiah 31:33; Galatians 6:16) In 1919, God restored them from captivity to Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion. In their hearts he has firmly implanted the fear of him. This has brought rich benefits to them and to the "great crowd," who have the hope of life as earthly subjects of the Kingdom. (Jeremiah 32:39; Revelation 7:9) The fear of Jehovah has come to be in their hearts too.

How Godly Fear Gets Implanted in Our Hearts

¹⁷ How has Jehovah implanted this godly fear in our hearts? By the operation of his spirit. And what do we have that is a product of holy spirit? The Bible, God's inspired Word. (2 Timothy 3:16, 17) By what he has done in the past, by his dealings with his servants now in fulfillment of his prophetic Word, and by prophecies of things to come, Jehovah provides a sound basis for all of us to develop godly fear. —Joshua 24:2-15; Hebrews 10:30, 31.

¹⁸ It is noteworthy that, as reported at Deuteronomy 4:10, Jehovah said to Moses: "Congregate the people together to me that I may let them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they are alive on the soil and that they may teach their sons." Similarly today, Jehovah has made abundant provisions to help his people to learn to fear him. At conventions, assemblies, and congregation meetings, we recount the evidence of Jehovah's loving-kindness and his goodness. That is what we were doing when studying the book *The Greatest Man Who Ever Lived*. How did that study affect you and your attitude to—

17. How has Jehovah put godly fear in our hearts?

18, 19. How do conventions, assemblies, and congregation meetings help us to acquire godly fear?

ward Jehovah? As you saw various facets of our heavenly Father's grand personality reflected in his Son, did this not strengthen your desire never to be displeasing to God?—Colossians 1:15.

¹⁹ At our meetings, we also study accounts of Jehovah's deliverance of his people in times past. (2 Samuel 7:23) As we study the Bible book of Revelation with the aid of the book *Revelation—Its Grand Climax At Hand!*, we learn about prophetic visions that have already been fulfilled in this 20th century and about fear-inspiring events yet to come. Regarding all such acts of God, Psalm 66:5 states: "Come, you people, and see the activities of God. His dealing with the sons of men is fear-inspiring." Yes, properly viewed, these acts of God implant in our hearts fear of Jehovah, a pro-

found reverence. Thus we can see how Jehovah God fulfills his promise: "The fear of me I shall put in their heart in order not to turn aside from me."—Jeremiah 32:40.

²⁰ It is evident, however, that godly fear does not come to be in our hearts without effort on our part. The results are not automatic. Jehovah does his part. We must do ours by cultivating godly fear. (Deuteronomy 5:29) Natural Israel failed to do that. But with reliance on Jehovah, spiritual Israelites and their companions are already experiencing many of the benefits that come to those who are God-fearing. We will consider some of these benefits in the following article.

20. In order for godly fear to become deeply implanted in our hearts, what is required on our part?

BENEFITS OF FEARING THE TRUE GOD

"I, Jehovah, am your God, the One teaching you to benefit yourself, the One causing you to tread in the way in which you should walk."—ISAIAH 48:17.

IF Adam had cultivated godly fear, it could have restrained him from the sin that led to his own eternal death and to thousands of years of grief for his offspring. If the ancient nation of Israel had heeded Jehovah's counsel to fear him and to love him, that nation would not have been taken captive to Babylon, nor would they

1. What calamities could have been averted by godly fear?

have spurned God's Son and become guilty of shedding his blood. If the world today feared God, there would be no corruption in government or in business, no crime, no war.—Proverbs 3:7.

² Regardless of what the world around us does, however, we as individuals, as families, and as congregations of Jehovah's

2. In spite of conditions in the world around us, why should we cultivate fear of Jehovah?

***"Happy is the man in fear of Jehovah, in whose commandments he has taken very much delight."
—Psalm 112:1***

servants can benefit from cultivating fear of the true God. This is in harmony with the reminder that Moses gave to the nation of Israel: "What is Jehovah your God asking of you but to fear Jehovah your God, so as to walk in all his ways and to love him and to serve Jehovah your God with all your heart and all your soul; to keep the commandments of Jehovah . . . for your good?" (Deuteronomy 10:12, 13) What are some of the benefits that come to us when we fear Jehovah, the true God?

Wisdom—More Precious Than Gold

³ The foremost benefit is true wisdom. Psalm 111:10 declares: "The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom." What does that mean? Wisdom is the ability to use knowledge successfully to solve problems, ward off danger, and attain certain goals. It involves sound judgment. The beginning, the first part, the foundation of such wisdom, is the fear of Jehovah. Why? Because all creation is the work of his hands. It is dependent on him. He endowed humankind with free will but not with the ability to direct their own steps successfully apart from his guidance. (Joshua 24:15; Jeremiah 10:23) Only if we appreciate those fundamental facts about life and live in harmony with them can we have lasting success. If our

3. (a) What is the foremost benefit that we can receive? (b) What is the meaning of Psalm 111:10?



knowledge of Jehovah gives us unshakable conviction that God's will is certain of success and that his promise and ability to reward faithfulness are sure, then godly fear is going to motivate us to act wisely.—Proverbs 3:21-26; Hebrews 11:6.

⁴ Consider an example. Some decades ago, a young man was attending the University of Saskatchewan, in Canada. Included in the curriculum was biology, and he was taught evolution. After graduation, he specialized in atomic physics, receiving a scholarship to continue his studies at the University of Toronto. As he studied, he saw marvelous evidence of order and design in atomic structures. But no answers were given to the questions: Who designed all of

4, 5. (a) Why did a young man's university education leave him without true wisdom? (b) How did this man and his wife later acquire real wisdom, and in what way did this change their lives?



this? When? And why? Without those answers, could he possibly use his knowledge wisely in a world that was then at war? What would guide him? Nationalism? A desire for materialistic rewards? Really, had he acquired true wisdom?

⁵ Not long after his graduation, that young man and his wife began to study the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses. From God's own Word, they began to get the answers that they had been missing before. They came to know the Creator, Jehovah God. As they studied about Moses at the Red Sea and about Daniel and his companions in Babylon, they learned the importance of fearing not men but God. (Exodus 14:10-31; Daniel 3:8-30) Such godly fear coupled with real love for Jehovah began to motivate them. Soon the entire course of their lives changed. The young man at last knew the One whose handiwork he had

studied in biology. He began to understand the purpose of the One whose wisdom he had seen reflected in his study of physics. Instead of using his knowledge to produce instruments that would destroy his fellowman, he as well as his wife wanted to help others to love God and to love their neighbor. They enrolled in full-time service as proclaimers of God's Kingdom. Later, they attended the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead and were sent out as missionaries.

⁶ Of course, not everyone can be a missionary. But all of us can enjoy the wisdom that is rooted in fear of Jehovah. If we cultivate that wisdom, we will not be eagerly absorbing

the philosophies of men who really are only guessing at what life is all about. We will be applying ourselves to the study of the Bible, inspired by the Source of life, Jehovah God, the one who can give us eternal life. (Psalm 36:9; Colossians 2:8) Instead of becoming slaves of a commercial system that is itself tottering on the brink of ruin, we will heed Jehovah's counsel to be content with food and covering, while making our relationship with God the foremost thing in life. (1 Timothy 6:8-12) Rather than act as if our future depended on getting well-situated in this world, we will believe Jehovah's Word when it tells us that the world is passing away and so is its desire, but he who does the will of God remains forever. —1 John 2:17.

6. If we have wisdom that is rooted in the fear of Jehovah, what shortsighted pursuits will we avoid, and what will we be doing instead?

⁷ Proverbs 16:16 encourages us by stating truthfully: "The getting of wisdom [the wisdom that starts with fear of Jehovah] is O how much better than gold! And the getting of understanding is to be chosen more than silver." Such wisdom and understanding are going to move us to make the doing of God's will the focal point of our lives. And what is the work that God has entrusted to his Witnesses for this period in human history? Preaching about his Kingdom and helping honesthearted ones to become genuine disciples of Jesus Christ. (Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20) This is work that yields rewards of true satisfaction and much happiness. With good reason, then, the Bible says: "Happy is the man that has found wisdom."—Proverbs 3:13.

Safeguard Against Wrongdoing

⁸ A second benefit from fearing God is that we are thus safeguarded against doing what is bad. Those who deeply respect God do not decide for themselves what is good and what is bad. They do not view as bad what God says is good, nor do they consider things that God says are bad to be good. (Psalm 37:1, 27; Isaiah 5:20, 21) Furthermore, a person who is motivated by godly fear does not stop at simply *knowing* what Jehovah says is good and what he says is bad. Such a person *loves* what Jehovah loves and *hates* what Jehovah hates. As a result, he acts in harmony with God's standards. Thus, as stated at Proverbs 16:6, "in the fear of Jehovah one turns away from bad." Such godly fear becomes a powerful

7. (a) How does Proverbs 16:16 help us to have a balanced sense of values? (b) What rewards come from making God's will the focal point of our lives?

8. (a) Name a second benefit that comes from fearing God. (b) What is the bad against which we are safeguarded? (c) How does godly fear become a powerful motivating force?

motivating force to achieve what a person may not be able to do in his own strength.

⁹ Even if godly fear is only beginning to develop in a person, it may fortify him to avoid doing something that he could regret for the rest of his life. For example, a pregnant woman in Mexico asked one of Jehovah's Witnesses about abortion. The Witness read several scriptures to the woman and then reasoned: "To the Creator, life is very important, even the life of those who have not yet been born." (Exodus 21:22, 23; Psalm 139:13-16) Clinical examination had suggested that her baby might be abnormal. But now, motivated by what she had seen in God's Word, the woman decided to have her baby. Her doctor refused to see her again, and her husband threatened to leave her, but she was firm. In time, she gave birth to a girl—normal, healthy, and beautiful. Moved with gratitude, she sought out the Witnesses, and they began to study God's Word with her. Within a year she and her husband were baptized. At a district convention a few years later, they were delighted to meet the first Witness again and introduce her to their lovely four-year-old daughter. Proper respect for God and a strong desire not to displease him certainly exercise powerful influences in one's life.

¹⁰ Godly fear fortifies us against a broad range of wrongdoing. (2 Corinthians 7:1) When properly cultivated, it can help a person to put a stop to secret sins, known only to himself and Jehovah. It can help him to break free from slavery to alcohol abuse or drug abuse. A former drug addict in South Africa explained: "As I took in knowledge of God, I also developed a fear of hurting or displeasing him. I knew he was

9. How did a strong desire not to displease God influence the decision of a woman in Mexico, and with what outcome?

10. Godly fear can fortify people to break free from what forms of wrongdoing?

watching, and I had a longing to be approved in his sight. It moved me to destroy the drugs that were in my possession by flushing them down the toilet." Godly fear has helped thousands more in similar ways.—Proverbs 5:21; 15:3.

Protection Against Trembling at Men

¹¹ Wholesome fear of God also safeguards us against fear of man. Most people are afflicted by fear of man to a greater or lesser degree. Even the apostles of Jesus Christ abandoned him and fled when he was seized by soldiers in the garden of Gethsemane. Later, in the courtyard of the high priest, thrown off balance and in the grip of fear, Peter denied that he was one of Jesus' disciples and that he even knew him. (Mark 14: 48-50, 66-72; John 18:15-27) But the apostles were helped to regain spiritual balance. On the other hand, in the days of King Jehoiakim, Urijah the son of Shemaiah was so overcome with fear that he abandoned his service as a prophet of Jehovah and fled the country, only to be seized and killed anyway.—Jeremiah 26:20-23.

¹² What can help a person to conquer fear of man? After warning that "trembling at men is what lays a snare," Proverbs 29:25 adds: "He that is trusting in Jehovah will be protected." Trust in Jehovah is the key. Such trust is based on knowledge and experience. By studying his Word, we see evidence of the rightness of Jehovah's ways. We become acquainted with events demonstrating his dependability, the surety of his promises (including that of the resurrection), his love and almighty power. Then when we act on that knowledge, doing the things that Jehovah directs and firmly re-

jecting what he warns against, we begin to experience firsthand his loving care and his dependability. We personally see evidence that his power is brought to bear to accomplish his will. Our confidence in him grows and, with it, our love for him and our earnest desire to avoid displeasing him. Such trust is built on a solid foundation. It serves as a bulwark against fear of man.

¹³ Our trusting in Jehovah, coupled with godly fear, will make us firm for what is right if an employer threatens us with the loss of our job for refusal to participate in dishonest business practices. (Compare Micah 6:11, 12.) Such godly fear enables many thousands of Christians to persevere in true worship in the face of opposition from unbelieving family members. It also gives youths attending school the courage to identify themselves as Jehovah's Witnesses, and it fortifies them to deal with ridicule from classmates who make light of Bible standards. Thus, a teenage Witness said: "What they think really doesn't matter. What Jehovah thinks is what counts."

¹⁴ That same conviction strengthens true Christians to hold firmly to Jehovah's ways even when their lives are threatened. They know that they must expect persecution from the world. They realize that the apostles were flogged and that Jesus Christ himself was beaten and killed by wicked men. (Mark 14:65; 15:15-39; Acts 5:40; compare Daniel 3:16-18.) But Jehovah's servants have full confidence that he can strengthen them to endure; that with God's help they can come off victorious; that without fail Jehovah will reward those who are faithful—if necessary even by resurrection to life in his new world. Their love for God coupled

11. Against what common snare can wholesome fear of Jehovah safeguard us?

12. (a) To what protection against fear of man does Proverbs 29:25 point? (b) How is trust in God developed?

13. How can godly fear help us at our secular work, at home, and at school?

14. How are Jehovah's servants able to come off victorious even when their lives are threatened?

with godly fear powerfully motivates them to avoid doing anything that would displease him.

¹⁵ This motivation enabled Jehovah's Witnesses to stand up to the horrors of the Nazi concentration camps during the 1930's and 1940's. They took to heart Jesus' counsel found at Luke 12:4, 5: "I say to you, my friends, Do not fear those who kill the body and after this are not able to do anything more. But I will indicate to you whom to fear: Fear him who after killing has authority to throw into Gehenna. Yes, I tell you, fear this One." Thus, Gustav Auschner, a Witness who was in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp, later wrote: 'The SS shot August Dickmann and threatened to shoot the rest of us if we did not sign a paper renouncing our faith. None of us signed. We had more fear of displeasing Jehovah than of their bullets.' Fear of man leads to compromise, but fear of God makes one firm for what is right.

The Preservation of Life

¹⁶ Noah lived through the last days of the antediluvian world. Jehovah had determined to destroy the wicked world of that time because of man's badness. In the meantime, however, Noah was in that world that was filled with violence, gross immorality, and indifference toward the divine will. Despite Noah's preaching of righteousness, "they took no note until the flood came and swept them all away." (Matthew 24:39) Yet Noah was not deterred from the work that God set before him. He did "according to all that God had commanded him. He did just so." (Genesis 6:22) What kept Noah on

15. What enabled Jehovah's Witnesses to maintain their integrity in the Nazi concentration camps?

16. What enabled Noah to maintain a right course decade after decade till the Deluge, and what was the outcome for him and his household?

course year after year right down till the Deluge? Hebrews 11:7 answers: "By faith Noah, after being given divine warning of things not yet beheld, showed godly fear." As a result, he and his wife and his sons and their wives were preserved through the Deluge.

¹⁷ We live in a period similar in many respects to Noah's day. (Luke 17:26, 27) Again a warning is being sounded. Revelation 14: 6, 7 tells of an angel flying in midheaven who urges people of every nation and tribe and tongue to "fear God and give him glory." Regardless of what the world around you does, heed those words, and then extend the invitation to others. Like Noah, act in faith and show godly fear. Your doing so can lead to the preservation of your life and the lives of many others. As we contemplate the benefits enjoyed by those who fear the true God, we can only agree with the inspired psalmist who sang: "Happy is the man in fear of Jehovah, in whose commandments he has taken very much delight."—Psalm 112:1.

17. (a) Regardless of what other people do, what should we do? (b) Why are those who fear Jehovah the truly happy people?

How Would You Answer?

- ☐ What are some outstanding benefits from fearing the true God?
- ☐ How can wisdom that is rooted in godly fear protect us?
- ☐ Why does godly fear make us turn away from bad?
- ☐ How does godly fear protect us against fear of man?
- ☐ What bearing does godly fear have on our future life prospects?

No Retirement for Us!

“NO RETIREMENT FOR US” is the message you get when you visit one unusual home in Tokyo, Japan. A family of 22 men and women, averaging 70 years of age, live there. They are bound not by blood ties but by a common interest—missionary service. They have persevered in the full-time preaching work for a total of 1,026 years! The three oldest members were born in 1910. Seven of them started their full-time service while they were teenagers. Nine of them have seen the growth of the Kingdom-preaching work in Japan since its infancy after World War II.—Isaiah 60:22.

However, this six-story former Watch Tower branch building is a place of encouragement, especially because of the spirit, the dominant inclination, of the missionaries who live there. Although most of them have physical limitations related to age and poor health, none of these spiritual warriors are ready to quit. The Japanese Witnesses have completely renovated the building for them, providing a Kingdom Hall in the basement and a passenger elevator.

What Makes Them Happy

Having been in their assignment for so many years, these missionaries feel that this is their home. “When I went back to Australia for the district convention this past summer,” said one of the oldest members of the family, “I was ready to come home after two weeks!” They love the people they are serving and have cultivated deep affection for them. All the missionaries cherish letters and phone calls that recall activities of bygone days.

That is the result of a diligent ministry.

Moved by love for Jehovah, the missionaries have preached God’s Word urgently under various circumstances. (Compare 2 Timothy 4:2.) “We trained ourselves to be joyful just because we are serving Jehovah,” says Vera MacKay, who has served in Japan for 37 years. “Even if nobody comes to the door, we are there to witness about Jehovah.”

Twelve of these missionaries have never been married, but they are happy to be able to serve the Lord without distraction. (1 Corinthians 7:35) Gladys Gregory, who has served as a missionary for 43 years, is one of them. She says: “In order to have greater freedom for Jehovah’s service, I went into the pioneer work, later to Gilead [Watchtower Bible School of Gilead], and then into the missionary work. Without having made any vow to that effect, I have remained single, and like a number of friends, I have never regretted that.”

Willingness to Adjust

Although some people become stubborn as they grow older, the missionaries have been willing to adjust. Lois Dyer, Molly Heron, and Lena and Margrit Winteler were in a smaller missionary home in a residential area of Tokyo. They lived there for more than 20 years and became attached to the people in that locality. In their territories, the Winteler sisters had 40 people on their magazine routes, and Molly and Lois had 74 on theirs. Then, the Society asked them to move to the six-story missionary home in the heart of Tokyo. “I was despondent and unhappy at first,” admits Lena. As always, however, they adjusted to their new assignment. How do they feel now? “Very happy,” answers Lena. “Now two

Bethel brothers are here to cook for us and to clean the home. We are well cared for." They all agree with Lois, who says: "The loving care Jehovah's organization gives us helps us to persevere."

Norrine Thompson too adjusted to new circumstances. "For 15 years," she says, "I had the privilege of accompanying my husband [originally from New Zealand] in the district work when all of Japan was just one district." However, her husband's health deteriorated, and she had to overcome the greatest trial of her life—his death 18 years ago. "At that time," she says, "what enabled me to continue in the missionary work was the love shown by the brothers throughout Japan, along with prayer and keeping busy in service."

Bearing Up Under Health Problems

"Most have some kind of health problem, but they are cheerful, and their desire to serve is an outstanding quality," says Albert Pastor, the overseer of the missionary home. To care for the missionaries, a doctor and his wife, who is a nurse, have been assigned to the home.

One day some three years ago, Elsie Tanigawa, a graduate of the 11th class of Gilead School, suddenly lost the sight in her left eye. Four months later, her right eye was also affected. "At times I do get a bit despondent that I am not able to serve as I once did. But with all the kind provisions of the Society and the loving assistance of my partner and others, I continue to find joy in Jehovah's service," says Elsie.

Shinichi Tohara and his wife, Masako, who were Elsie's Gilead classmates, have faced many trials regarding their health over the past few years. For Shinichi, a capable speaker, it is a great challenge not being able to see his notes because of

his failing eyesight. Although he has gone through major and minor surgery in recent years, his eyes shine when he talks about a 90-year-old Bible student whom he is now helping.

Despite having "a thorn in the flesh," these missionaries regard their weaknesses as did the apostle Paul, who said: "When I am weak, then I am powerful." (2 Corinthians 12:7-10) And powerful they are indeed! They are up for morning worship every day at seven o'clock. After breakfast, those physically able to do so go out in the early morning field ministry.

Richard and Myrtle Shiroma are among those who regularly go out in service. Myrtle has had strokes caused by the onset of arteriosclerosis of the brain in 1978, but she accompanied her husband in the traveling work until November 1987. Now Richard, who himself is 70 years of age, helps Myrtle do everything. He gets up at 5:00 a.m., gets her out of bed, bathes her, dresses her, puts her makeup on for her, and spoon-feeds her. Then he takes her out in her wheelchair for field service every morning, going from house to house for about an hour and afterward witnessing to people at bus stops. Myrtle is no longer able to speak, but the last words she uttered were *Dendo, dendo*, Japanese for "Preaching, preaching."

Their daughter, Sandra Sumida, has moved into the missionary home to help them. Sandra recently lost her dear husband to a heart attack. She appreciates the Watch Tower Society's kind arrangement in assigning her back to Japan from Guam, where she had served as a missionary with her husband. "I always felt I didn't have much of a share in helping my parents because I was in Guam," she says. "My sister, Joanne, looked after them in this home. So when the opportunity opened up, I felt good

about it. Feeling needed here has been my therapy since my husband's sudden death."

Still a Going Concern

Even though the missionaries feel the effects of old age, they refuse to give up their missionary spirit. (Psalm 90:10; Romans 5:12) Jerry and Yoshi Toma, who were among the first Gilead graduates to come to Japan, still go out in the business territory in downtown Shibuya. "When we came to the two-story building that stood here in 1949, we went from dugout to dugout. Now Tokyo has changed into a metropolis. We are old and cannot do as much as we used to. But when we come back from preaching, we are so refreshed," says Yoshi.

Lillian Samson has been a missionary in Japan for 40 years and enjoys her ministry very much. "I'm now helping an 80-year-old woman who studied with my partner, Adeline Nako, who is back in Hawaii looking after her sick mother. The woman recently

became a Kingdom publisher after having overcome the problem of ancestor worship. She went to the temple and told the priest's wife, 'I've converted to Christianity!'" With such joys in her life, Lillian has never regretted the day when she, at age 19, quit her secular work and began pioneering.

Ruth Ulrich and Martha Hess, missionary partners for over 45 years, have worked from this missionary home for 35 years. They have established themselves well in the territory. Once a circuit overseer asked Martha: "May I borrow your face to go from door to door?" People knew Martha's face and reached out for the magazines, while the circuit overseer had a hard time starting conversations.

Ruth has a woman on her magazine route who is unable to read because of health problems. Still, the woman continues to receive the magazines and even accepted the hardbound book *Mankind's Search for*



God. Ruth wondered whether she should continue to deliver the magazines since nobody seemed to be reading the literature. Then one day the woman's husband approached Ruth with the *Search* book, saying: "This is a wonderful book! I've read it through twice." Ruth started a Bible study with him and his wife.

This missionary home itself attracts interested people. One evening, a young man came to the home and said: "I understand that if I come here, I can get help to learn the Bible." A Bible study was started with him. As a cook in a Chinese restaurant, he worked with a woman who had been disfellowshipped for many years. Magazines placed when a publisher called at the restaurant found their way into the kitchen. The young cook liked them and started to ask the former Witness questions. Unable to answer them, she told him to visit the

missionary home. He is now serving as a ministerial servant and a pioneer. In time, the disfellowshipped woman was reinstated, and eventually she also became a regular pioneer.

All the missionaries in the home are appreciative of what Jehovah has done for them. They came from Australia, Canada, Hawaii, Switzerland, and the United States, and 11 were from the 11th class or earlier classes of Gilead missionary school. They have seen the progress of the Kingdom work in Japan and share the sentiments of King David, who said: "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) In appreciation for God's loving care, these missionaries are determined not to retire but to keep right on serving Jehovah.

"Watch Out for the Leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees"

WHEN Jesus Christ uttered those words over 19 centuries ago, he was alerting his disciples to harmful religious teachings and practices. (Matthew 16:6, 12) The account at Mark 8:15 specifies: "Look out for the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod." Why was Herod mentioned? Because some of the Sadducees were Herodians, a political group.

Why was such a special warning necessary? Were not both the Pharisees and the Sadducees outright opposers of Jesus?

(Matthew 16:21; John 11:45-50) Yes, they were. Yet, some of them would later accept Christianity and then try to impose their ideas on the Christian congregation.—Acts 15:5.

There was also the danger that the disciples themselves might imitate those religious leaders under whose influence they had been raised. At times, just coming from such a background proved to be an obstacle to their getting the sense of Jesus' teachings.

What made Pharisaism and Sadducee-

ism so dangerous? A look at the religious conditions in Jesus' day will give us an idea.

Religious Disunity

Concerning the Jewish community during the first century C.E., historian Max Radin wrote: "The independence of the Jewish congregations of one another was quite real, and was even insisted upon.

... Often, when the reverence for the temple and the holy city was most strongly emphasized, intense contempt might be manifested for those who were at the moment the holders of the supreme authority in the mother-country."

A sad spiritual state of affairs indeed! What were some contributing factors? Not all Jews lived in Palestine. The influence of Greek culture, in which priests were not community leaders, had played its part in undermining respect for Jehovah's arrangement of the priesthood. (Exodus 28:29; 40:12-15) And not to be overlooked were the educated laymen and scribes.

The Pharisees

The name Pharisees, or *Peru-shim'*, likely meant "separated ones." Pharisees considered themselves to be followers of Moses. They formed their own league, or fraternity (Hebrew, *chavurah'*). To be admitted, one had to pledge before three members strict observance of Levitical purity, avoidance of close association with the

'am-ha-'a'rets (the unlearned multitude), and scrupulous payment of tithes. Mark 2:16 speaks of "the scribes of the Pharisees." Some of this party were professional scribes and teachers, while others were laymen.—Matthew 23:1-7.

The Pharisees believed in an omnipresent God. They reasoned that since "God was everywhere, He could be worshiped both in and outside the Temple, and

was not to be invoked by sacrifices alone. They thus fostered the synagogue as a place of worship, study, and prayer, and raised it to a central and important place in the life of the people which rivaled the Temple."—*Encyclopaedia Judaica*.

The Pharisees lacked appreciation for Jehovah's temple. This can be seen from Jesus' words: "Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'If anyone swears by the temple, it is nothing; but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is under obligation.' Fools and blind ones! Which, in fact, is greater, the

gold or the temple that has sanctified the gold? Also, 'If anyone swears by the altar, it is nothing; but if anyone swears by the gift on it, he is under obligation.' Blind ones! Which, in fact, is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift? Therefore he that swears by the altar is swearing by it and by all the things on it."—Matthew 23:16-20.

How could the Pharisees become so twisted in their reasoning? What were they overlooking? Note what Jesus says next.



"And he that swears by the temple is swearing by it and by him that is *inhabiting* it." (Matthew 23:21) Concerning this verse, scholar E. P. Sanders observed: "The temple was holy not only because the holy God was worshipped there, but also because he *was* there." (*Judaism: Practice and Belief*, 63 BCE—66 CE) However, Jehovah's special presence would mean little to those who thought that he was everywhere.

The Pharisees also believed in a combination of predestination and free will. In other words, "everything is foreseen, yet freedom of choice is given." They nevertheless held that Adam and Eve were predestined to sin and that even a minor cut on the finger is preordained.

Jesus may have had such false ideas in

mind when he spoke about the collapse of a tower that resulted in 18 deaths. He asked: "Do you imagine that [the victims] were proved greater debtors than all other men inhabiting Jerusalem?" (Luke 13:4) As is true of most accidents, this was the result of "time and *unforeseen* occurrence," not fate as the Pharisees taught. (Ecclesiastes 9:11) How would such supposedly knowledgeable ones handle Scriptural commandments?

They Were Religious Innovators

The Pharisees maintained that Scriptural commandments had to be interpreted by the rabbis of each generation in accordance with advanced ideas. Thus, the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* says that they "found

JESUS CONSIDERED HIS AUDIENCE

JESUS CHRIST taught with clarity, taking his listeners' ideas into account. For instance, he did so when he spoke to the Pharisee Nicodemus about the matter of being "born" again. Nicodemus asked: "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter into the womb of his mother a second time and be born, can he?" (John 3:1-5) Why was Nicodemus so puzzled, since the Pharisees believed that rebirth was necessary for converts to Judaism, and a rabbinical saying likened the proselyte to "a child new born"?

A *Commentary on the New Testament From the Talmud and Hebraica*, by John Lightfoot, offers the following insight: "The common opinion of the Jews about the qualification of an Israelite . . . still sticks in the mind of this Pharisee" who cannot "easily get off from his first prejudice . . . : 'Whereas the Israelites . . . have a right to be admitted into the kingdom of the Messiah, do you therefore mean by this expression of yours, that it is necessary for any to en-

ter a second time into his mother's womb, that he may be an Israelite anew?' "—Compare Matthew 3:9.

While acknowledging a new birth for proselytes, Nicodemus would view such a process as impossible for natural Jews—reentry to the womb as it were.

On another occasion, many took offense when Jesus spoke of 'eating his flesh and drinking his blood.' (John 6:48-55) However, Lightfoot points out that "there was nothing more common in the schools of the Jews than the phrases of 'eating and drinking' in a metaphorical sense." He also noted that the Talmud mentioned "eating the Messiah."

So it was that the views of the Pharisees and the Sadducees had quite an effect on first-century Jewish thinking. Appropriately, however, Jesus always took into account the knowledge and experience of his audience. This was one of many factors that made him the Great Teacher.

no great difficulty in harmonizing Torah teachings with their advanced ideas, or in finding their ideas implied or hinted at in the words of the Torah."

As respects the annual Day of Atonement, they transferred the power of atoning for sins from the high priest to the day itself. (Leviticus 16:30, 33) At the Passover celebration, they put greater emphasis on the reciting of the lessons of the Exodus account over wine and matzo than on the paschal lamb.

In time, the Pharisees became influential at the temple. They then instituted a procession involving the carrying of water from the pool of Siloam and a libation of it during the Festival of Ingathering, as well as the beating of willow branches upon the altar at the conclusion of the festival and regular daily prayers that had no basis in the Law.

"Especially significant" were "the Pharisaic innovations in connection with the Sabbath," says *The Jewish Encyclopedia*. A wife was expected to welcome the Sabbath by lighting lamps. If it appeared that some activity might lead to unlawful labor, the Pharisees prohibited it. They even went so far as to regulate medical treatment and expressed irritation over Jesus' miraculous healing on the Sabbath. (Matthew 12:9-14; John 5:1-16) However, these religious innovators did not stop with establishing new institutions in an attempt to create a hedge, or fence, for the protection of Scriptural laws.

Abrogation

The Pharisees claimed authority to suspend or abolish Scriptural laws. Their reasoning is reflected in a Talmudic maxim: "It is better that a single law be uprooted than that the whole Torah be forgotten." A

case in point was the discontinuance of the Jubilee on the grounds that for fear of losing his claim as that period approached, no one would lend to the poor.—Leviticus, chapter 25.

Other examples are the abrogation of the trial of a woman suspected of adultery and in the case of an unsolved murder, the suspension of the expiation procedure. (Numbers 5:11-31; Deuteronomy 21:1-9) It was only a matter of time before the Pharisees would abrogate the Scriptural requirement of providing for one's needy parents.—Exodus 20:12; Matthew 15:3-6.

Jesus warned: "Watch out for the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." (Luke 12:1) Pharisaism, with its untheocratic attitudes, could be nothing but hypocritical—definitely something not to be brought into the Christian congregation. Nevertheless, Jewish reference works present the Pharisees in a more favorable light than they do the Sadducees. Let us now consider this more conservative group.

The Sadducees

The name Sadducees was taken possibly from Zadok, high priest in the days of Solomon. (1 Kings 2:35, footnote) The Sadducees formed a conservative party representing the interests of the temple and priesthood. Unlike the Pharisees, who claimed authority by virtue of learning and piety, the Sadducees based their prerogative on genealogy and position. They opposed Pharisaic innovations down to the destruction of the temple in 70 C.E.

In addition to rejecting predestination, the Sadducees refused to accept any teaching not mentioned explicitly in the Pentateuch, even if it was stated elsewhere in God's Word. In fact, they "considered it a virtue to dispute" these matters. (*The*

Jewish Encyclopedia) This calls to mind the occasion when they challenged Jesus concerning the resurrection.

Using the illustration of the widow of seven husbands, the Sadducees asked: "In the resurrection, to which of the seven will she be wife?" Of course, that hypothetical widow of theirs might just as well have had 14 or 21 husbands. Jesus explained: "In the resurrection neither do men marry nor are women given in marriage."—Matthew 22: 23-30.

Aware of Sadducean rejection of inspired writers other than Moses, Jesus proved His point by quoting from the Pentateuch. He said: "Concerning the dead, that they are raised up, did you not read in the book of Moses, in the account about the thornbush, how God said to him, 'I am the God of Abraham and God of Isaac and God of Jacob'? He is a God, not of the dead, but of the living."—Mark 12:26, 27.

Persecutors of Jesus and His Followers

The Sadducees believed in using statecraft in dealing with other nations rather than waiting for the Messiah—if they believed in his coming at all. Under an agreement with Rome, they were to operate the temple and did not want any Messiah appearing on the scene, disturbing matters. Viewing Jesus as a threat to their position, they joined forces with the Pharisees to plot his death.—Matthew 26:59-66; John 11:45-50.

Being politically oriented, the Sadducees logically made an issue of loyalty to Rome and shouted: "We have no king but Caesar." (John 19:6, 12-15) After Jesus' death and resurrection, it was the Sadducees who took the lead in trying to stop the spread of Christianity. (Acts 4:1-23; 5:17-42; 9:14)

After the destruction of the temple in 70 C.E., this group ceased to exist.

The Need to Remain on Guard

How appropriate Jesus' warning has proved to be! Yes, we need to "watch out for the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." One has only to observe its bad fruitage in both Jewry and Christendom today.

In stark contrast, however, qualified Christian elders in more than 75,500 congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses around the world 'pay constant attention to themselves and to their teaching.' (1 Timothy 4:16) They accept the entire Bible as inspired of God. (2 Timothy 3:16) Rather than being innovative and promoting their own religious procedures, they work unitedly under the direction of a Bible-based organization that uses this magazine as its principal instrument of instruction.—Matthew 24:45-47.

The result? Millions of people around the world are being elevated spiritually as they come to understand the Bible, apply it to their lives, and teach it to others. To see how this is being accomplished, why not visit the nearest congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses or write to the publishers of this magazine?

In Our Next Issue

Religion—A Taboo Subject?

You Are Precious in God's Eyes!

**How Christians Cope
With Public Reproach**

Will You Praise Jehovah?

“LIKE your name, O God, so your praise is to the borders of the earth.” These are words from a prophetic song of the sons of Korah. (Psalm 48:10) Today, a mighty chorus of millions of Jehovah’s Witnesses is praising God and making known his name by preaching the good news of his Kingdom. By doing this in 232 lands and islands of the sea and in more than 300 languages, they are literally reaching “the borders of the earth.”

What is it that compels people of different cultural, social, and linguistic backgrounds to praise Jehovah? Their gratitude for an accurate knowledge of God’s Word, the Bible, is a major reason. Spiritual truth has liberated them from superstitions and from such enslaving religious beliefs as eternal torment. (John 8:32) The truth also helps them to appreciate God’s marvelous qualities, such as his love, power, wisdom, and justice that is tempered with mercy. Coming to an understanding of God’s offering his only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, as a ransom sacrifice for mankind motivates upright people to praise and serve Jehovah.

According to the Bible book of Revelation, a celestial chorus exclaims: “You are worthy, Jehovah, even our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power, because you created all things, and because of your will they existed and were created.” (Revelation 4:11) Such praise does not result from a mere sense of obligation. Rather, it stems from reverence for Jehovah.

Praise God by Declaring the Good News

In praising Jehovah, a person is imitating the superb example of Jesus Christ, the

principal praiser of God. Following in Jesus’ footsteps includes participating in the work of preaching the good news of God’s Kingdom. (Matthew 4:17, 23; 24:14) This preaching activity has become the greatest worldwide effort in praising Jehovah.

This preaching work is so important that the Bible clearly connects it with salvation. Romans 10:13-15 reads: “‘Everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah will be saved.’ However, how will they call on him in whom they have not put faith? How, in turn, will they put faith in him of whom they have not heard? How, in turn, will they hear without someone to preach? How, in turn, will they preach unless they have been sent forth? Just as it is written: ‘How comely are the feet of those who declare good news of good things!’”

Last year alone, Jehovah’s Witnesses devoted more than a billion hours to the preaching work. And what good results came from this praising of God! Some 314,000 joined the chorus of praisers by symbolizing their dedication to Jehovah by water baptism.

Yet, what could be said about the 12,288,917 who attended the 1994 Memorial of Christ’s death? Among them were over 7,000,000 who do not yet praise Jehovah as preachers of the good news. But their presence on this important occasion could eventually result in the addition of millions more to the chorus of praisers. What can be done to help these interested ones to become praisers of Jehovah?

Available Help

Many interested persons may have the desire to praise Jehovah but feel that they

cannot meet the requirements. They do well to remember the psalmist's words: "I shall raise my eyes to the mountains. From where will my help come? My help is from Jehovah, the Maker of heaven and earth." (Psalm 121:1, 2) Evidently, the psalmist raised his eyes to the mountains of Jerusalem where Jehovah's temple and the earthly seat of the theocratic government were situated. From this we can rightly conclude that help needed to praise God and declare the Kingdom message comes only from Jehovah and his organization.—Psalm 3:4; Daniel 6:10.

Today, those who desire to praise Jehovah can expect loving assistance from his earthly organization. For example, Jehovah's Witnesses offer help by conducting free home Bible studies with interested people. This educational program includes more than just learning Bible doctrines. It helps the student to develop an appreciation for what he is learning and for the organization that Jehovah is using.

In harmony with this, the Witness conducting the Bible study tries to make sure that the newfound truths reach not only the head but also the heart. And the teacher should not hold back from showing the student how Jehovah is using His organization to accomplish His purpose on earth. The brochure *Jehovah's Witnesses—Unitedly Doing God's Will Worldwide* and the videotape *Jehovah's Witnesses—The Organization Behind the Name* have often proved helpful in accomplishing this.

Christian meetings also play a vital role in assisting prospective praisers of Jehovah. At the very early stages of a Bible study, the student may be invited to attend Christian meetings. In time, he will learn the importance of regular attendance at and participation in all congregation meetings. (Hebrews 10:24, 25) Overseers can

provide invaluable help for fellow believers and prospective praisers of Jehovah by preparing meetings that are spiritually uplifting and practical.

Help Children to Praise Jehovah

Children are among the many who could become publishers of the good news in the near future. Especially do fathers have the Biblical responsibility to bring their children up "in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah." (Ephesians 6:4) When properly trained by godly parents, even very young children can develop the desire to praise Jehovah.

One little girl in Argentina approached the congregation elders repeatedly for several months, asking for their help so that she could qualify as a Kingdom publisher. In time, her parents and the elders agreed to allow her to become an unbaptized publisher. She already presents the Kingdom message effectively at the doors. Even though this little girl is only five years old and does not know how to read, she has memorized the location of some Bible texts. After finding a scripture, she asks the householder to read it, and then she gives an explanation.

It is clear that both elders and parents can accomplish much good by encouraging and helping those progressing toward being praisers of Jehovah.—Proverbs 3:27.

An Eternal Relationship With Jehovah

Yet, what if you yourself have been associating with Jehovah's Witnesses for some time but have not yet joined them in their preaching work? It may be beneficial to ask yourself the following questions, 'Do I believe that I have found the truth and that Jehovah is the only true God? Am I convinced that God's Kingdom is the only so-

lution to mankind's problems? Have I abandoned all false religion and worldly customs and practices that offend Jehovah? Do I have a deep love for God and for his righteous requirements?" (Psalm 97:10) If you can honestly answer yes to these questions, what prevents you from praising Jehovah?—Compare Acts 8:36.

Praising Jehovah involves more than preaching the good news. If you have taken in accurate knowledge, have true faith, and are conforming your life to divine requirements, you need to solidify your personal relationship with God. How? By making a dedication to him in prayer and then

symbolizing this by water baptism. Everlasting life is at stake. Therefore, act now on Jesus' counsel: "Go in through the narrow gate; because broad and spacious is the road leading off into destruction, and many are the ones going in through it; whereas narrow is the gate and cramped the road leading off into life, and few are the ones finding it."—Matthew 7:13, 14.

With the present system of things nearing its catastrophic end, this is no time to hesitate. Take immediate steps toward an eternal relationship with Jehovah. Indeed, now is the time to respond positively to the question, Will you praise Jehovah?

Jehovah Will Save the Earth

AN AIRPORT located on an island of the Maldives is closed for several hours each day. Why? Because water at high tide floods the runway, making it unsafe for planes to land. Some scientists fear that sea level at the Maldivian islands may rise at least three feet in the next century. While this is seemingly an insignificant amount, such an increase could wipe seven island nations clear off the map. Indeed, according to the *UN Chronicle*, a six-foot rise could bury virtually the entire archipelago, some 1,200 islands!

What is the cause of the rising sea level? According to the UN Environment Program, pollution of the earth's atmosphere by "greenhouse gases" causes seas in warm-



Drawing based on NASA photo

er regions to expand, ice caps and glaciers to melt, and hence, sea levels to rise. London-based Panos Institute says that pollution "may have triggered a slow-moving global catastrophe that alters the very boundaries of land and sea."

The existence of global warming is still debated among scientists. However, we can be assured that environmental problems will not block God's purpose. "The productive land is firmly established," states the Bible. "Never will it be made to totter." (1 Chronicles 16:30) Jehovah has control over the earth's environment, and we can rejoice that he will soon save both earth and mankind from ruin.—Psalm 24:1, 2; 135:6; 2 Peter 3:13.

How Much Is a Bible Worth?

THE British Library recently agreed to pay almost \$1,600,000 for a copy of William Tyndale's English translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures. Published 468 years ago, it is the only complete first edition of the Tyndale Bible to have survived the determined efforts to destroy it. This Bible has been on public display in London.



William Tyndale

The Tyndale Bible was purchased from Bristol Baptist College in England, where it has been kept since 1784. Dr. Roger Hayden, vice-chairman of the college committee, said: "This is a national, cultural and Christian document of huge importance and we wanted it to be more widely accessible, as we have kept it in the vaults."

For centuries the Bible had been available mostly in Latin and could be read only by the clergy and an educated elite. Like John Wycliffe before him, Tyndale wanted to make available a Bible that could be read and understood by all. He once said to a clergyman who opposed him: 'If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy who drives the plough to know more of the Scriptures than you do.'

This was a dangerous undertaking, since the clergy bitterly opposed any effort to make the Scriptures available to the common people. Consequently, Tyndale fled from England to Germany. There he translated the "New Testament" from the original Greek. Some 3,000 copies were printed and smuggled into England. The bishop of London bought every copy he could find and burned them publicly in St. Paul's

churchyard. Eventually, Tyndale was captured, tried, and convicted of heresy. In 1536 he was strangled and burned at the stake. How interesting it is that a Bible so hated by the clergy is now worth so much!

Jehovah's Witnesses earnestly strive to impart accurate Bible knowledge to all who seek it. Besides printing and distributing other versions, they have produced from the original languages a translation of the entire Bible that is both accurate and easy to read. By 1995 well over 74,000,000 copies of this *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* had been published in 12 languages. Of course, the real value of any Bible is its life-giving message.

From an old engraving in the Bibliothèque Nationale