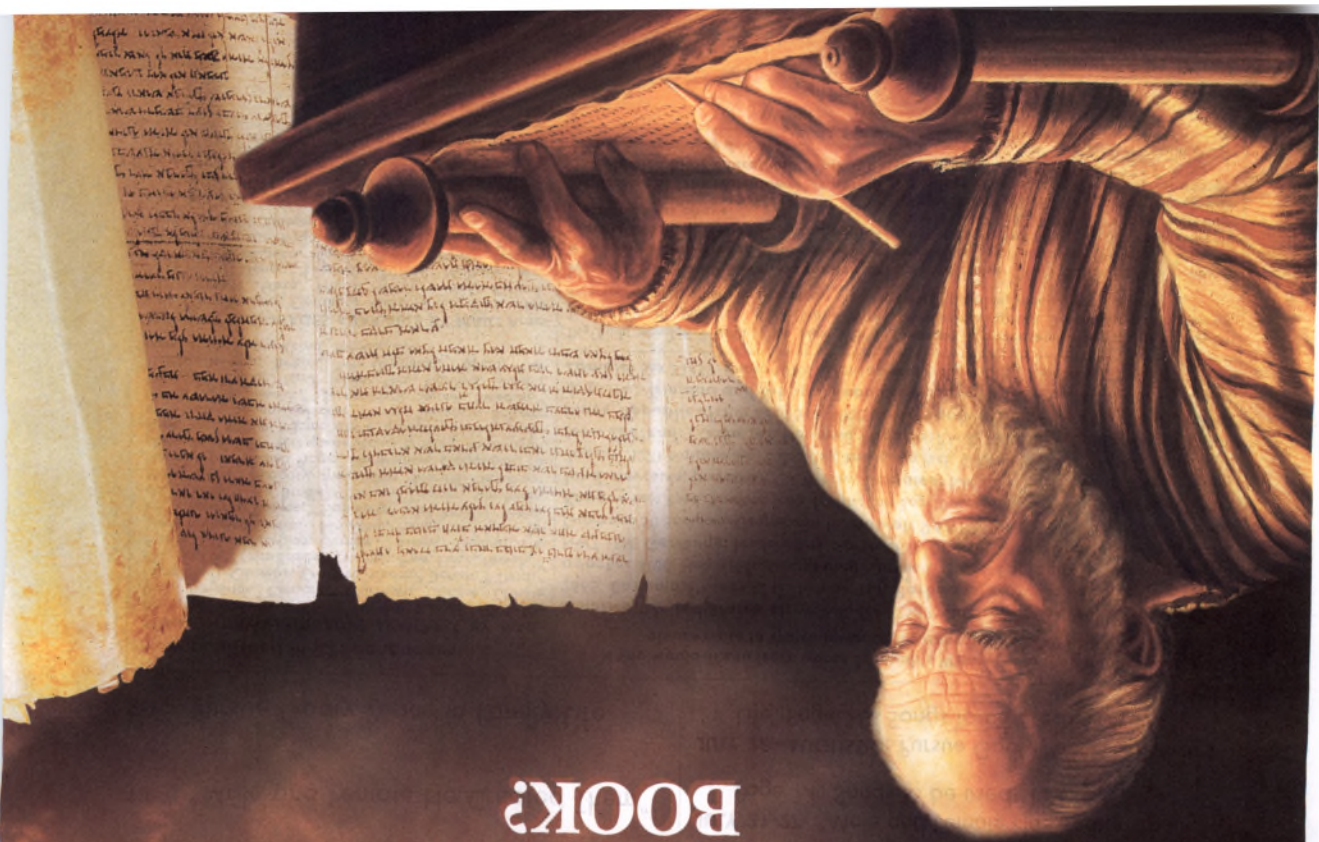




THE BIBLE AN INSPIRED BOOK?

THE WATCHTOWER ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

JUNE 15, 1997

THE WATCHTOWER[®]

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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

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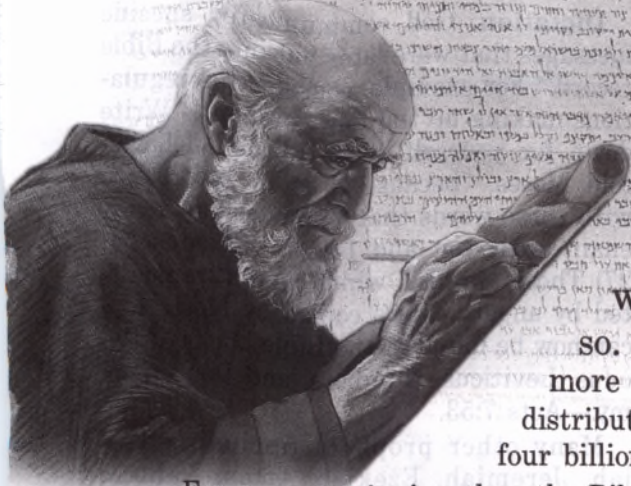
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THE BIBLE A Unique Book

It has been called the world's best-seller, and rightly so. The Bible is read and cherished more than any other book. To date, its distribution (in whole or in part) is estimated at four billion copies in more than 2,000 languages.

Far more intriguing than the Bible's circulation, however, is its claim to divine authorship. "All Scripture is inspired of God," wrote the Christian apostle Paul. (2 Timothy 3:16) What does this mean? The phrase "inspired of God" (Greek, *the-o'pneu-stos*) literally means "God-breathed." A related Greek word, *pneu'ma*, means "spirit." Hence, the claim is that God's holy spirit moved human writers, breathing upon them, as it were, so that the end product could truthfully be called the Word of *God*, not that of man. Indeed, many who have studied the Bible marvel at its overall harmony, its scientific accuracy, the honesty and candor of its writers, and most important, its fulfilled prophecies—all of which have convinced millions of thinking readers that this book is from a source higher than man.*

But how closely did God guide the writing of the Bible? Some say that he dictated the Bible verbatim. Others say that he inspired merely the thoughts found in the Bible, not the words. In reality, though, inspiration cannot be reduced to a single process, for God spoke "in many ways to our forefathers by means of the prophets." (Hebrews 1:1; compare 1 Corinthians 12:6.) In the following article, we will examine ways in which God spoke to the some 40 human writers who penned the Bible.

* For further information, see pages 53-4, and 98-161 of the book *The Bible—God's Word or Man's?*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

How Did God Inspire THE BIBLE?

COMMUNICATION is more fascinating today than at any other time in history. Telephones, fax machines, computers—years ago who could have imagined a time when messages would be transmitted virtually anywhere around the world instantly?

But the most intriguing kind of communication is one that man cannot master—divine inspiration. Jehovah inspired some 40 human writers to produce his written Word, the Holy Bible. Just as humans have more than one means of communication available to them, so Jehovah used several methods of communication to inspire the Scriptures.

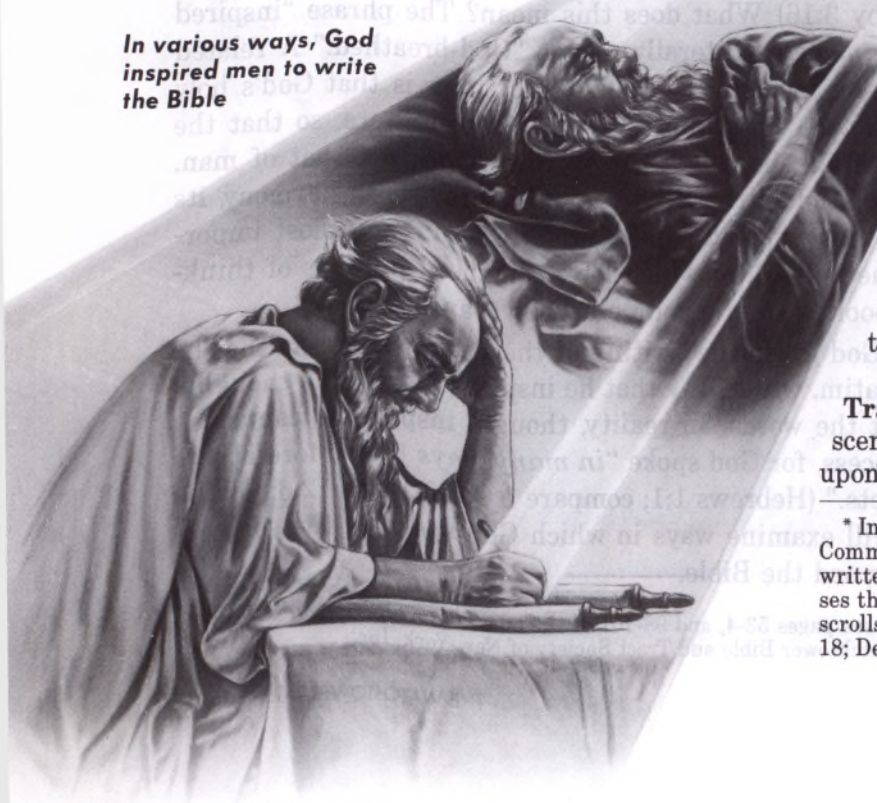
In various ways, God inspired men to write the Bible

Dictation. God communicated specific messages that were later put into the Bible record.* For example, consider the regulations making up the Law covenant. "Write down for yourself these words," Jehovah told Moses, "because it is in accordance with these words that I do conclude a covenant with you and Israel." (Exodus 34:27) Those "words," which were "transmitted by angels," were copied by Moses and can now be found in the Bible books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.—Acts 7:53.

Many other prophets, including Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Nahum, and Micah, received specific messages from God through angels. Sometimes these men began their pronouncements with the phrase: "This is what Jehovah has said." (Isaiah 37:6; Jeremiah 2:2; Ezekiel 11:5; Amos 1:3; Micah 2:3; Nahum 1:12) Then they put what God said into written form.

Visions, Dreams, and Trances. A vision is a sight, scene, or message superimposed upon a person's mind while he

* In at least one case, that of the Ten Commandments, the information was written directly "by God's finger." Moses then merely copied those words onto scrolls or other materials.—Exodus 31:18; Deuteronomy 10:1-5.





is awake, usually by some extraordinary means. For example, Peter, James, and John, “when they got fully awake,” saw a vision of the transfigured Jesus. (Luke 9:28-36; 2 Peter 1:16-21) In some cases a message was conveyed in a *dream*, or night vision, being impressed upon the recipient’s subconscious while he was asleep. Daniel thus writes of “the visions of my head upon my bed”—or, as translator Ronald A. Knox renders it, “as I lay watching in my dream.”—Daniel 4:10.

A person whom Jehovah put in a *trance* was evidently absorbed in a state of deep concentration, though at least partially awake. (Compare Acts 10:9-16.) In the Bible the Greek word rendered “trance” (*ekstasis*) means ‘a putting away or a displacement.’ It suggests the idea of throwing the mind out of its normal state. Thus, a person in a trance would be oblivious of his surroundings while being fully receptive to the vision. The apostle Paul was likely in such a trance when he was “caught away into paradise and heard unutterable words which it is not lawful for a man to speak.”—2 Corinthians 12:2-4.

In contrast with those who transcribed

dictated messages from God, Bible writers who received visions or dreams or who experienced trances often had some latitude to describe in their own words what they saw. Habakkuk was told: “Write down the vision, and set it out plainly upon tablets, in order that the one reading aloud from it may do so fluently.”—Habakkuk 2:2.

Does this mean that these parts of the Bible are somehow less inspired than passages that were dictated? Not at all. Through his spirit, Jehovah firmly fixed his message in each writer’s mind, so that God’s thoughts and not man’s were conveyed. While Jehovah allowed the writer to select appropriate words, he guided the writer’s mind and heart in order that no essential information was omitted and in the end the words were properly viewed as God’s.—1 Thessalonians 2:13.

Divine Revelation. The Bible contains prophecy—history revealed and written in advance—that is well beyond mere human capability. One example is the rise and fall of “the king of Greece,” Alexander the Great, foretold some 200 years in advance! (Daniel 8:1-8, 20-22) The Bible also reveals events never witnessed by human eyes. The creation of heaven and earth is one example. (Genesis 1:1-27; 2:7, 8) Then there are conversations that took place in heaven, like those reported in the book of Job.—Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6.

If not directly revealed by God to the writer, such events were made known by God to someone so that these became part of oral or written history, passed down from one generation to the next until they became part of the Bible record. (See box on page 7.) In any case, we can be sure that Jehovah was the Source of all such information, and he guided the writers so that their accounts were not tainted with inaccuracy, exaggeration, or myth. Peter wrote regarding prophecy:

"Men spoke from God as they were borne along by holy spirit."*—2 Peter 1:21.

Painstaking Effort Required

Though the Bible writers "were borne along by holy spirit," careful thought on their part was nonetheless required. For example, Solomon "pondered and made a thorough search, that he might arrange many proverbs in order. [He] sought to find the delightful words and the writing of correct words of truth."—Ecclesiastes 12:9, 10.

Some Bible writers had to engage in considerable research to document their material. Luke, for example, wrote regarding his Gospel account: "I have traced all things from the start with accuracy, to write them in logical order." Of course, God's spirit blessed Luke's efforts, no doubt moving him to locate trustworthy historical documents and to interview reliable eyewitnesses, such as the surviving disciples and possibly Jesus' mother, Mary. God's spirit would then guide Luke to record the information accurately.—Luke 1:1-4.

In contrast with Luke's Gospel, John's was an eyewitness account, written some 65 years after Jesus died. Jehovah's spirit no doubt sharpened John's memory so that it would not be weakened by the passing of time. This would be consistent with what Jesus had promised his followers: "The helper, the holy spirit, which the Father will send in my name, that one will teach you all things and bring back to your minds all the things I told you."—John 14:26.

In some cases Bible writers included compilations from eyewitness documents of earlier historical writers, not all of whom were

inspired. Jeremiah compiled First and Second Kings largely in this way. (2 Kings 1:18) Ezra referred to at least 14 noninspired sources to gather material for First and Second Chronicles, including "the account of the affairs of the days of King David" and "the Book of the Kings of Judah and of Israel." (1 Chronicles 27:24; 2 Chronicles 16:11) Moses even quoted from "the book of the Wars of Jehovah"—apparently a reliable record of the wars of God's people.—Numbers 21:14, 15.

In such cases holy spirit was actively involved, moving Bible writers to select only reliable material, which then became part of the inspired Bible record.

Practical Counsel—From Whom?

The Bible contains a wealth of practical counsel based on perceptive personal observations. For example, Solomon wrote: "With a man there is nothing better than that he should eat and indeed drink and cause his soul to see good because of his hard work. This too I have seen, even I, that this is from the hand of the true God." (Ecclesiastes 2:24) Paul stated that his advice regarding marriage was "according to [his] opinion," though he added: "I certainly think I also have God's spirit." (1 Corinthians 7:25, 39, 40) Paul certainly did have God's spirit, for as noted by the apostle Peter, what Paul wrote was "according to the wisdom *given him*." (2 Peter 3:15, 16) Thus, guided by God's spirit, he was giving his opinion.

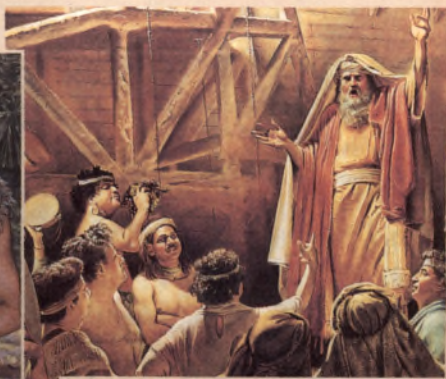
When Bible writers expressed such personal convictions, they did so against a background of study and application of the scriptures that were available to them. We can be sure that their writings harmonized with God's thinking. What they recorded became part of God's Word.

Of course, the Bible does contain statements of some whose thinking was

(Continued on page 8)

* The Greek word here translated "were borne along," *phero*, is used in another form at Acts 27:15, 17 to describe a ship that is carried along by the wind. So holy spirit "navigated the course" of the Bible writers. It moved them to reject any information that was spurious and to include only that which was factual.

Where Did Moses Get His Information?



MOSES wrote the Bible book of Genesis, but everything he recorded took place long before his birth. From where, then, did he get such information? It could have been revealed to him directly by God, or knowledge of some of the events may have been passed down orally from one generation to the next. Since

humans had a longer life span in early times, much of what Moses recorded in Genesis could have been passed from Adam to Moses through just five human links—Methuselah, Shem, Isaac, Levi, and Amram.

Additionally, Moses may have consulted written records. In this regard, it is noteworthy that Moses frequently uses the phrase “this is the *history* of,” before naming the person to be discussed. (Genesis 6:9; 10:1; 11:10, 27; 25:12, 19; 36:1, 9; 37:2) Some scholars say that the

Hebrew word here translated “history,” *toh-le-dhohth'*, refers to an already existing written historical document that Moses used as a source for his writing. Of course, this cannot be stated conclusively.

It could be that the information contained in the book of Genesis was obtained by all three of the above methods—some by direct revelation, some by oral transmission, and some from written records. The important point is that Jehovah’s spirit inspired Moses. Hence, what he wrote is rightly viewed as the word of God.





erroneous. (Compare Job 15:15 with 42:7.) It also includes a few expressions that conveyed the anguished feelings of God's servants, though such did not convey the complete picture of matters.* While making such personal statements, the writer was still guided by God's spirit to make an accurate record, which served to identify and expose wrong reasoning. Furthermore, in each case the context makes clear to any reasonable reader whether the writer's thinking is valid.

In sum, we can be confident that the whole Bible is God's message. Indeed, Jehovah saw to it that everything it contains suited his purpose and provided essential instruction for those desiring to serve him.—Romans 15:4.

* For examples, compare 1 Kings 19:4 with verses 14 and 18; Job 10:1-3; Psalm 73:12, 13, 21; Jonah 4:1-3, 9; Habakkuk 1:1-4, 13.

Human Writers—Why?

Jehovah's use of humans to write the Bible shows his great wisdom. Consider this: If God delegated the matter to angels, would the Bible have the same appeal? Granted, we would be thrilled to read of God's qualities and dealings from an angel's perspective. But if the human element were completely lacking, we might have difficulty grasping the Bible's message.

To illustrate: The Bible could simply report that King David committed adultery and murder and that he thereafter repented. Yet how much better it is to have David's own words, as he expressed heartrending anguish over his course and begged for Jehovah's forgiveness! "My sin is in front of me constantly," he wrote. "A heart broken and crushed, O God, you will not despise." (Psalm 51:3, 17) Hence, the Bible has the warmth, variety, and appeal that the human element gives it.

Yes, Jehovah chose the finest way to give us his Word. Even though humans with weaknesses and frailties were used, they were borne along by holy spirit so that there would be no error in their writings. Thus, the Bible has superlative value. Its advice is solid, and its prophecies regarding the future Paradise on earth are dependable.—Psalm 119:105; 2 Peter 3:13.

Why not make it a practice to read a portion of God's Word each day? Peter wrote: "Form a longing for the unadulterated milk belonging to the word, that through it you may grow to salvation." (1 Peter 2:2) Since it is inspired of God, you will find all Scripture to be "beneficial for teaching, for reproving, for setting things straight, for disciplining in righteousness, that the man of God may be fully competent, completely equipped for every good work."—2 Timothy 3:16, 17.

JERUSALEM IN BIBLE TIMES

What Does Archaeology Reveal?



Reproduction of the City of Jerusalem at the time of the Second Temple — located on the grounds of the Holyland Hotel, Jerusalem

INTERESTING major archaeological activities have taken place in Jerusalem, especially since 1967. Many of the excavated sites are now open to the public, so let us visit some of them and see how archaeology matches Bible history.

King David's Jerusalem

The area that the Bible refers to as Mount Zion, on which the ancient City of David was built, looks quite insignificant in the metropolis of modern Jerusalem. Excavations of the City of David, led by the late professor Yigal Shiloh between 1978-85, revealed a massive stepped-stone structure, or supportive wall, on the eastern side of the hill.

Professor Shiloh claimed that it must be remains of an immense substructure of terrace walls on which the Jebusites (inhabitants prior to David's conquest) built a citadel. He explained that the stepped-stone structure he found on top of these terrace

walls belonged to the new stronghold built by David on the site of the Jebusite citadel. At 2 Samuel 5:9, we read: "David took up dwelling in the stronghold, and it came to be called the City of David; and David began to build all around from the Mound and inward."

Near this structure are the entrances of the city's ancient water systems, parts of which seem to be from David's time. Some statements in the Bible about Jerusalem's water-tunnel system have given rise to questions. For instance, David told his men that "anyone striking the Jebusites, let him, by means of the water tunnel, make contact" with the enemy. (2 Samuel 5:8) David's commander Joab did this. What exactly is meant by the expression "water tunnel"?

Other questions have been raised about the famous Siloam Tunnel, likely dug by King Hezekiah's engineers in the eighth century B.C.E. and referred to at 2 Kings 20:20 and 2 Chronicles 32:30. How



Above: Southwest corner of Jerusalem's Temple Mount
Right: Descending into Warren's Shaft



could the two teams of tunnelers, digging from opposite ends, manage to meet? Why did they choose a serpentine path, making the tunnel considerably longer than a straight one? How did they get enough air to breathe, especially since they would likely have used oil-burning lamps?

The magazine *Biblical Archaeology Review* has offered possible answers to such questions. Dan Gill, a geological consultant of the excavation, is quoted as saying: "Underlying the City of David is a well-developed natural karst system. *Karst* is a geological term that describes an irregular region of sinks, caverns and channels caused by groundwater as it seeps and flows through underground rock formations. . . . Our geological examination of the subterranean waterworks beneath the City of David indicates that they were fashioned essentially by skillful human enlargement of natural (karstic) dissolution channels and shafts that were integrated into functional water supply systems."

This may help to explain how the Siloam Tunnel was excavated. It could have followed the winding course of a natural channel under the hill. Teams working from each end could have dug a provisional tunnel by altering existing caverns. Then a sloping channel was dug for the water to flow from the Gihon spring to the Pool of Siloam, which probably was located inside the city walls. This was a real engineering feat as the height difference between the two ends is only 12.5 inches, despite its length of 1,749 feet.

Scholars have long recognized that the ancient city's main source of water was the Gihon spring.

It was located outside the city walls but close enough to allow for a tunnel and a 36-foot-deep shaft to be excavated, which would enable the inhabitants to draw water without going outside the protective walls. This is known as Warren's Shaft, named after Charles Warren, who discovered the system in 1867. But when were the tunnel and the shaft made? Did they exist in David's time? Was this the water tunnel used by Joab? Dan Gill answers: "To test whether Warren's Shaft was in fact a natural sinkhole, we analyzed a fragment of calcareous crust from its irregular walls for carbon-14. It contained none, indicating that the crust is more than 40,000 years old: This provides unequivocal evidence that the shaft could not have been dug by man."

Remains From Hezekiah's Time

King Hezekiah lived when the nation of Assyria was sweeping everything in its path. In the sixth year of his reign, the Assyrians took Samaria, the capital of

the ten-tribe kingdom. Eight years later (732 B.C.E.) the Assyrians were back again, threatening Judah and Jerusalem. Second Chronicles 32:1-8 describes Hezekiah's defense strategy. Are there any visible evidences from this period?

Yes, in 1969, Professor Nahman Avigad discovered remains from this period. Excavations revealed a section of a massive wall, the first part being 130 feet long, 23 feet wide, and, according to estimates, 27 feet high. The wall stood partly on bedrock and partly on recently built houses. Who built the wall and when? "Two passages in the Bible helped Avigad pinpoint the date and purpose of the wall," an archaeological magazine reports. These passages read: "Furthermore, he took courage and built up all the broken-down wall and raised towers upon it, and on the outside another wall." (2 Chronicles 32:5) "You will also pull down the houses to make the wall unattainable." (Isaiah 22:10) Today visitors can see part of this so-called Broad Wall in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City.

Various excavations also reveal that Jerusalem at this time was much larger than had heretofore been thought, probably because of the influx of refugees from the northern kingdom after it was defeated by the Assyrians. Professor Shiloh estimated that the Jebusite city covered an area of about 15 acres. In Solomon's time it covered almost 40 acres. By the time of King Hezekiah, 300 years later, the fortified area of the city had grown to about 150 acres.

The First Temple Period Cemeteries

Cemeteries from the First Temple period, that is, before the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem in 607 B.C.E., have been another source of information. Spectacular findings were made when a group of burial caves on the slopes of the Hinnom Valley were exca-

vated in 1979/80. "In all the history of archaeological research in Jerusalem, this is one of the very few First Temple repositories to be found with all its contents. It contained over one thousand objects," says archaeologist Gabriel Barkay. He continues: "The fondest dream of every archaeologist working in Israel, and especially in Jerusalem, is to discover written material." Two small silver scrolls were found, containing what?

Barkay explains: "When I saw the unrolled silver strip and placed it under the magnifying glass, I could see that the surface was covered with delicately made characters, scratched with a sharp instrument onto the very thin and fragile sheet of silver. . . . The Divine Name that clearly appears in the inscription is composed of the four Hebrew characters written in ancient Hebrew script, *yod-he-waw-he*." In a later publication, Barkay adds: "To our surprise both silver plaques were inscribed with benediction formulas almost identical with the biblical Priestly Blessing." (Numbers 6:24-26) This was the first time Jehovah's name was found in an inscription discovered in Jerusalem.

How did scholars date these silver scrolls? Mainly by the archaeological context within which they were discovered. More than 300 pieces of datable pottery were found in the repository, pointing to the seventh and sixth centuries B.C.E. The script, when compared to other dated inscriptions, points to the same period. The scrolls are displayed in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem.

Jerusalem's Destruction in 607 B.C.E.

The Bible tells of Jerusalem's destruction in 607 B.C.E. in 2 Kings chapter 25, 2 Chronicles chapter 36, and Jeremiah chapter 39, reporting that Nebuchadnezzar's



army put the city to the torch. Have recent excavations verified this historical account? According to Professor Yigal Shiloh, "the evidence [of the Babylonian destruction] in the Bible . . . is complemented by the clear-cut archaeological evidence; the total destruction of the various structures, and a conflagration which consumed the various wooden parts of the houses." He further commented: "Traces of this destruction have been found in each of the excavations carried out in Jerusalem."

Visitors can see remains from this destruction that took place over 2,500 years ago. The Israelite Tower, the Burnt Room, and the Bullae House are names of popular archaeological sites preserved and open to the public. Archaeologists Jane M. Cahill and David Tarler summarize in the book *Ancient Jerusalem Revealed*: "The massive destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians is apparent not only in the thick layers of charred remains unearthed in structures such as the Burnt Room and the Bullae House, but also in the deep stone rubble from collapsed buildings found covering the eastern slope. The biblical descriptions of the city's destruction . . . complement the archaeological evidence."



Thus, the Bible's picture of Jerusalem from David's time down to its destruction in 607 B.C.E. has in many ways been verified by archaeological excavations made during the past 25 years. But what about Jerusalem of the first century C.E.?

Jerusalem in Jesus' Day

Excavations, the Bible, the first-century Jewish historian Josephus, and other sources help scholars to picture the Jerusalem of Jesus' day, before the Romans destroyed it in 70 C.E. A model, exhibited behind a large hotel in Jerusalem, is regularly being updated according to what new excavations reveal. The main feature of the city was the Temple Mount, which Herod had doubled in size compared to that of Solomon's time. It was the largest man-made platform in the ancient world, about 1,575 feet by 910 feet. Some building stones weighed 50 tons, one even close to 400 tons and "unequaled in size anywhere in the ancient world," according to one scholar.

No wonder that some people were shocked when they heard Jesus say: "Break down this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." They thought he meant the huge temple building, although he meant "the temple of his body." Therefore, they said: "This temple was built in forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?" (John 2:19-21) As a result of excavations of the Temple Mount surroundings, visitors can now see

parts of walls and other architectural features from Jesus' time and can even walk the steps he likely walked up to the southern temple gates.

Not far from the western wall of the Temple Mount, in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City, are two nicely restored excavation sites from the first century C.E., known as the Burnt House and the Herodian Quarter. After the discovery of the Burnt House, archaeologist Nahman Avigad wrote: "It was now quite clear that this building was burnt by the Romans in 70 A.D., during the destruction of Jerusalem. For the first time in the history of excavations in the city, vivid and clear archaeological evidence of the burning of the city had come to light."—See photographs on page 12.

Some of these discoveries throw light upon some of the events in Jesus' life. The buildings were located in the Upper City, where Jerusalem's wealthy people lived, including the high priests. A large number of ritual baths were found in the houses. One scholar observes: "The large number of baths testify to the strict observance of the laws of ritual purity practiced by the residents of the Upper City during the Second Temple period. (These laws are recorded in the Mishnah, which devotes ten chapters to the details of the *mikveh*.)" This information helps us to appreciate Jesus' comments on these rituals to the Pharisees and scribes.—Matthew 15:1-20; Mark 7:1-15.

A surprisingly large number of stone vessels have also been found in Jerusalem. Nahman Avigad notes: "Why, then, did they appear so suddenly and in such quantities in the Jerusalem household? The answer lies in the realm of *halakhah*, the Jewish laws of ritual purity. The *Mishnah* tells us that stone vessels are among those objects that are not susceptible to uncleanness . . . Stone was simply not susceptible to ritual contam-

ination." It is suggested that this explains why the water Jesus turned into wine was stored in stone vessels instead of earthenware vessels.—Leviticus 11:33; John 2:6.

A visit to the Israel Museum will show two unusual ossuaries. *Biblical Archaeology Review* explains: "Ossuaries were used primarily in the roughly one hundred years preceding the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. . . . The deceased was placed in a recess carved into the wall of a burial cave; after the flesh had decomposed, the bones were collected and placed in an ossuary—a container usually of decorated limestone." The two on display were found in November 1990 in a burial cave. Archaeologist Zvi Greenhut reports: "The word . . . 'Caiapha' on two of the ossuaries in the tomb appears here for the first time in an archaeological context. It is probably the name of the family of the High Priest Caiaphas, mentioned . . . in the New Testament . . . It was from his house in Jerusalem that Jesus was delivered to the Roman procurator Pontius Pilatus." One ossuary contained the bones of a man about 60 years old. Scholars speculate that these actually are the bones of Caiaphas. One scholar refers the findings to the time of Jesus: "A coin found in one of the other ossuaries was minted by Herod Agrippa (37-44 C.E.). The two Caiaphas ossuaries might be as early as the beginning of the century."

William G. Dever, professor of Near Eastern archaeology at the University of Arizona, commented concerning Jerusalem: "It is no exaggeration to say that we have learned more of the archaeological history of this key site in the last 15 years than in the previous 150 years put together." Many of the major archaeological activities in Jerusalem during recent decades have certainly presented findings that elucidate Bible history.

“MALE AND FEMALE HE CREATED THEM”

“God proceeded to create the man in his image, in God’s image he created him; male and female he created them.”—GENESIS 1:27.

HOW pleasant it is to be among Jehovah’s people and to associate with men and women, as well as boys and girls, whose priority in life is to love and obey God! The truth also sets us free from attitudes and conduct that displease Jehovah God, and it teaches us how to live as Christians should. (John 8:32; Colossians 3:8-10) For example, people everywhere have traditions or concepts about the way that men should express their masculinity, and women their femininity. Is it just that men are born masculine, and women feminine? Or are there other factors that must be considered?

² For Christians, God’s Word is the authority that we submit to, regardless of personal, cultural, or traditional viewpoints that we may have acquired. (Matthew 15:1-9) The Bible does not elaborate on all aspects of masculinity and femininity. Rather, it leaves room for variety, as we find in different cultures. To be what God created them to be, men must be masculine, and women feminine. Why? Because in addition to man and woman having been made to complement each other physically, they were to complement each other

er through masculine and feminine qualities. (Genesis 2:18, 23, 24; Matthew 19:4, 5) Yet, views on sex have become twisted and distorted. Many equate masculinity with harsh domination, toughness, or machismo. In certain cultures it would be rare or shameful for a man to weep, either in public or in private. Yet, in the crowd outside Lazarus’ tomb, “Jesus gave way to tears.” (John 11:35) That was not inappropriate for Jesus, whose masculinity was perfect. Today many have become unbalanced about femininity, considering it to be mere physical and sexual attractiveness.

True Masculinity and True Femininity

³ What is true masculinity, and what is true femininity? *The World Book Encyclopedia* states: “Most men and women differ from each other not only in anatomy, but in behavior and interests as well. Some of these differences are biologically determined. . . . But many nonanatomical differences appear to be based on sex roles that are learned by every individual. People are born male or female, but they learn to be masculine or feminine.” Our genetic makeup may account for many things, but the development of appropriate masculinity or femininity depends on our learning what God requires and on what we choose to pursue in life.

1. How is the truth a blessing to Christian men and women?
2. (a) What should determine our view of masculinity and femininity? (b) What has happened to views of the sexes?

3. How do men and women differ?



⁴ Bible history reveals that Adam's role was to take the lead as head of his wife and children. He was also to comply with God's will to fill the earth, subdue it, and have all lower earthly creation in subjection. (Genesis 1:28) The feminine family role for Eve was to be a "helper" and "a complement" to Adam, submissive to his headship, co-operating with him in the accomplishment of God's declared purpose for them.—Genesis 2:18; 1 Corinthians 11:3.

⁵ But Adam did not live up to his responsibility, and Eve used her femininity in a persuasive way to entice Adam to join her in disobeying God. (Genesis 3:6) By allowing himself to do what he knew was wrong, Adam failed to display true masculinity. He weakly chose to accept the word of his deceived mate instead of what his Father and Creator had said. (Genesis 2:16, 17) Soon the first couple began to experience what God had foreseen would be the consequence

of disobedience. Adam, who had earlier described his wife in glowing, poetic terms, now coldly referred to her as 'the woman you gave me.' His imperfection now marred and misdirected his masculinity, resulting in his 'dominating his wife.' Eve, in turn, would have a "craving" for her husband, likely in an excessive or unbalanced way.—Genesis 3:12, 16.

⁶ Misuse of masculinity and femininity became grossly apparent prior to the Flood. Angels that forsook their original position in heaven materialized in human bodies to enjoy sexual relations with women. (Genesis 6:1, 2) The record mentions only males being born from those unnatural couplings. And it seems that the offspring were hybrids, unable to reproduce. They became known as mighty ones, Nephilim, or Fellers, since they would cause others to fall down. (Genesis 6:4; footnote) Evidently they were violent, aggressive, displaying no tender compassion.

⁷ Clearly, physical beauty, body shape, size, or strength do not of themselves impart acceptable masculinity or femininity. The angels that materialized were likely good-looking. And the Nephilim were big and muscular, but their mental attitude was twisted. The disobedient angels and their offspring filled the earth with sexual immorality and violence. Hence, Jehovah brought that world to an end. (Genesis 6:5-7) The Flood, though, did not do away with demonic influence, nor did it eliminate the results of Adam's sin. An improper reflection of masculinity and femininity again surfaced after the Deluge, and there are examples in the Bible, both good and bad, that we can learn from.

4. What does the Bible reveal about the roles of man and woman?

5. How was the relationship between man and woman damaged?

6, 7. (a) What distortion of masculinity developed before the Flood? (b) What can we learn from the pre-Flood situation?

⁸ Joseph and Potiphar's wife present a powerful contrast as to appropriate masculinity confronting worldly femininity. Potiphar's wife, having become infatuated with good-looking Joseph, tried to seduce him. At that time, there was no written divine law prohibiting fornication or adultery. Yet, Joseph fled from that immoral woman and proved himself to be a real man of God, one showing masculinity that had God's approval.—Genesis 39:7-9, 12.

⁹ Esther and Queen Vashti provided a remarkable contrast for women. Vashti evidently thought that she was so beautiful that King Ahasuerus would always accede to her wishes. But her beauty went no deeper than many skin creams sold today. She lacked modesty and femininity, for she failed to display submission to her husband and king. The king rejected her and chose a truly feminine woman who, in fact, feared Jehovah to be his queen.—Esther 1:10-12; 2:15-17.

¹⁰ Esther serves as a wonderful example for Christian women. She was "pretty in form and beautiful in appearance," yet she manifested the adornment of "the secret person of the heart in the incorruptible apparel of the quiet and mild spirit." (Esther 2:7; 1 Peter 3:4) She did not view showy adornment as the prime thing. Esther showed tact and self-control, being submissive to her husband, Ahasuerus, even when the lives of her people were in danger. Esther kept silent when it was wise to do so but spoke fearlessly when it was necessary and the right time. (Esther 2:10; 7:3-6) She accepted counsel from her

8. What fine example of appropriate masculinity did Joseph set?

9, 10. (a) How did Queen Vashti abuse her femininity? (b) What fine example of femininity did Esther provide for us?

mature cousin Mordecai. (Esther 4:12-16) She demonstrated love and loyalty toward her people.

Outward Appearance

¹¹ What is a key to appropriate femininity? A mother stated: "Charm may be false, and prettiness may be vain; but the woman that fears Jehovah is the one that procures praise for herself." (Proverbs 31:30) So a reverential fear of God is essential, and loving-kindness, pleasantness, modesty, and a mild tongue contribute far more to femininity than does physical beauty.—Proverbs 31:26.

¹² Sadly, many men and women do not open their mouth in wisdom, nor is loving-kindness on their tongue. Their speech is abusive, sarcastic, vulgar, and inconsiderate. Some men think that filthy language is a mark of masculinity, and some women foolishly imitate them. Yet, if a woman is pretty but lacks sensibleness and is argumentative, sarcastic, or arrogant, can she really be pretty in the best sense, truly feminine? "As a gold nose ring in the snout of a pig, so is a woman that is pretty but that is turning away from sensibleness."—Proverbs 11:22.

¹³ Prettiness coupled with unclean speech, sarcasm, or a lack of sensibleness would be out of harmony with any feminine appearance that a person may project. In fact, such ungodly conduct could even make a physically attractive person appear ugly. We can easily appreciate that the physical appearance of man or woman cannot of itself compensate for or justify outbursts of anger, screaming, or abusive

11. What should we bear in mind as to outward appearance?

12, 13. (a) Sadly, what marks the speech of many? (b) What is the meaning of Proverbs 11:22?



Though she was beautiful, Esther is particularly remembered for her modesty and her quiet and mild spirit

speech. All Christians can and should make themselves attractive to God and to fellow humans by their Bible-based speech and conduct.—Ephesians 4:31.

¹⁴ While valid femininity and masculinity are based on spiritual qualities, physical bearing and appearance, including the clothing that we wear and the way that

14. What type of adornment is praised at 1 Peter 3:3-5, and how do you feel about that?

we wear it, make a statement about us. The apostle Peter undoubtedly had in mind certain first-century styles of dress and grooming, when he counseled Christian women: “Do not let your adornment be that of the external braiding of the hair and of the putting on of gold ornaments or the wearing of outer garments, but let it be the secret person of the heart in the incorruptible apparel of the quiet and mild spirit, which is of great value in the eyes of God. For so, too, formerly the holy women who were hoping in God used to adorn themselves, subjecting themselves to their own husbands.”—1 Peter 3:3-5.

¹⁵ At 1 Timothy 2:9, 10, we find Paul’s comments about feminine dress: “I desire the women to adorn themselves in well-arranged dress, with

modesty and soundness of mind . . . in the way that befits women professing to reverence God, namely, through good works.” He there emphasized the need for modesty and well-arranged dress that reflects soundness of mind.

¹⁶ For a man or woman, boy or girl, to act in or dress in a sexually provocative way would not enhance true masculinity or

15. What should Christian women strive to display in their dress?

16, 17. (a) How has clothing been misused by many men and women today? (b) What should we conclude from the advice found at Deuteronomy 22:5?



Give reasonable attention to grooming while giving greater emphasis to inner beauty

femininity, and it certainly does not honor God. Many people in the world go to extremes to flaunt masculine or feminine sexuality in dress and in conduct. Others obscure the differences between the sexes because of immoral objectives. How thankful we Christians can be that the Bible reveals God's thinking! Jehovah declared to ancient Israel: "No garb of an able-bodied man should be put upon a woman, neither should an able-bodied man wear the mantle of a woman; for anybody doing these

things is something detestable to Jehovah."—Deuteronomy 22:5.

¹⁷ In this regard, you will likely enjoy reviewing what *The Watchtower* of August 15, 1988, said on page 17: "The issue is not whether a certain style is extremely fashionable but whether it is appropriate for one professing to be a minister of God. (Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 6:3) Overly casual or tight-fitting clothes can detract from our message. Styles that blatantly and deliberately feminize men or masculinize women are definitely out of order. (Compare Deuteronomy 22:5.) Of course, local customs may vary, according to the weather, occupational needs, and so forth, so that the Christian congregation does not make hard-and-fast rules to cover the worldwide brotherhood."

¹⁸ What balanced and fitting counsel! Sadly, some Christians, males and females, blindly follow whatever the world promotes in dress and grooming without considering how it might reflect on Jehovah and the Christian congregation. Each of us might do some self-scrutiny to see if we have been influenced by the world's thinking. Or we might approach a respected, experienced brother or sister and ask for observations as to any adjustments we could make in our dressing style and then seriously weigh the suggestions.

Christian Men and Women —Real Men and Women

¹⁹ The god of this world is Satan, and his influence can be seen in the confusion over the sexes, and that goes beyond clothing. (2 Corinthians 4:4) In some lands

18. What steps might we take in applying the Biblical counsel about dress and grooming?

19. What undesirable influence do we need to fight?

many women compete with men over headship, ignoring Bible principles. On the other hand, a great number of men simply abandon their headship responsibilities, as Adam did. There are those who even try to change their sexual role in life from one to the other. (Romans 1:26, 27) The Bible does not set out any alternative lifestyles approved by God. And any who, before becoming Christians, were confused about their identity or sexual preferences can trust that it will be to their everlasting good to live in accord with God's standard, one that will certainly be appreciated by all who reach human perfection.

²⁰ The Scriptures show that Christian men and women need to develop and manifest the fruitage of God's spirit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, and self-control. (Galatians 5:22, 23) God, in his great wisdom, enabled men to enhance their masculinity, and women their femininity, by cultivating those qualities. A man who displays the fruitage of the spirit is easy to respect, and a woman who does so is easy to love.

20. What bearing should Galatians 5:22, 23 have on our view of masculinity and femininity?

How Would You Answer?

- ☐ What appropriate roles for men and women does the Bible describe?
- ☐ How was masculinity distorted before the Flood, and how have it and femininity been twisted in our time?
- ☐ What Bible advice about appearance will you seek to apply?
- ☐ How can Christian men and women prove themselves to be real men and women?

²¹ The greatest man who ever lived was Jesus Christ, and it is his life-style that Christians should imitate. (1 Peter 2:21-23) As Jesus did, both men and women should prove loyal to God and obedient to His Word. Jesus manifested wonderful qualities of love, tenderness, and mercy. As true Christians, we are expected to imitate him to prove that we are his disciples. —John 13:35.

²² Jesus Christ was a real man, and we can see his masculine qualities as we study his life record set forth in the Scriptures. He never married, but the Bible shows that he enjoyed balanced association with women. (Luke 10:38, 39) His relationships with men and women were always chaste and honorable. He is the perfect model of masculinity. He allowed no one—man, woman, or disobedient angel—to rob him of his godly masculinity and faithfulness to Jehovah. He did not hesitate to accept his responsibilities, and he did so without complaining. —Matthew 26:39.

²³ What a delight it is to be among Jehovah's people and to associate with men and women, as well as boys and girls, whose priority in life is to love and obey Jehovah God! We are not hemmed in by obeying God's Word. Rather, we are set free from this world and its ways that debase the beauty, the purpose, and the distinct roles of the sexes. We can experience the genuine happiness that comes from fulfilling our God-given position in life, whether we be male or female. Yes, how grateful we are to Jehovah God, the Creator, for all of his loving provisions in our behalf and for having created us male and female!

21, 22. (a) What pattern did Jesus set as to life-styles? (b) How did Jesus manifest his masculinity?

23. With regard to the roles of the sexes, how are true Christians distinctly blessed?

PURSUE GODLY PEACE IN FAMILY LIFE

"Ascribe to Jehovah, O you families of the peoples, ascribe to Jehovah glory and strength."—PSALM 96:7.

JEHOVAH got family life off to a peaceful and happy start when he united the first man and the first woman in marriage. In fact, Adam was so happy that he expressed his joy in the earliest recorded poetry: "This is at last bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. This one will be called Woman, because from man this one was taken."—Genesis 2:23.

² When God instituted marriage and the family arrangement, he had more in mind than just bringing happiness to his human children. He wanted them to do his will. God told the first pair: "Be fruitful and become many and fill the earth and subdue it, and have in subjection the fish of the sea and the flying creatures of the heavens and every living creature that is moving upon the earth." (Genesis 1:28) A rewarding assignment indeed. How happy Adam, Eve, and their future children would have been if the first married couple had obediently done Jehovah's will!

³ Even today, though, families are happiest when they work together to do God's will. And what splendid prospects such

1. Jehovah got family life off to what kind of start?

2. What did God have in mind for marriage in addition to bringing his human children happiness?

3. What is required for families to live with godly devotion?

obedient families have! The apostle Paul wrote: "Godly devotion is beneficial for all things, as it holds promise of the life now and that which is to come." (1 Timothy 4:8) Families living with true godly devotion follow the principles of Jehovah's Word and do his will. They pursue godly peace and thus find happiness in "the life now."

Family Life Imperiled

⁴ Naturally, we do not find peace and happiness in every family. Citing a study made by a demography institute called the Population Council, *The New York Times* states: "In rich and poor countries alike, the structure of family life is undergoing profound changes." An author of this study was quoted as saying: "The idea that the family is a stable and cohesive unit in which father serves as economic provider and mother serves as emotional care giver is a myth. The reality is that trends like unwed motherhood, rising divorce rates, [and] smaller households . . . are occurring worldwide." Because of such trends, millions of families lack stability, peace, and happiness, and many are breaking up. In Spain the divorce rate rose to 1 out of 8 marriages by the start of the last decade of the 20th century—a big jump from 1 out

4, 5. Why can it be said that family life is now imperiled worldwide?

of 100 just 25 years earlier. England is reported to have one of the highest divorce rates in Europe—4 out of 10 marriages fail. That country has also seen a surge in the number of single-parent families.

⁵ It seems that some people can hardly wait to get a divorce. Many flock to the “Tie Severing Shrine” near Tokyo, Japan. This Shinto temple accepts petitions for divorce and for the breakup of other undesired relationships. Each worshiper writes his or her plea on a thin wooden board, hangs it in the shrine’s precincts, and prays for an answer. A Tokyo newspaper says that when the shrine was founded about a century ago, “the wives of rich local merchants wrote prayers asking that their husbands leave their lovers and come back to them.” Today, however, most pleas are for divorce, not for reconciliation. Without question, family life is imperiled around the world. Should this surprise Christians? No, because the Bible gives us insight into the present family crisis.

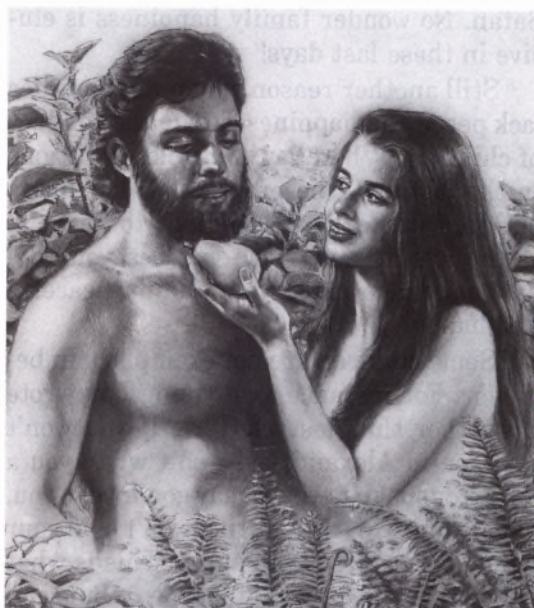
Why the Family Crisis?

⁶ One reason for today’s family crisis is this: “The whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one.” (1 John 5:19) What can we expect of the wicked one, Satan the Devil? He is an evil, immoral liar. (John 8:44) No wonder his world wallows in deceit and immorality, so devastating to family life! Outside of God’s organization, satanic influence threatens to destroy Jehovah’s institution of marriage and bring an end to peaceful family life.

⁷ Another reason for the family problems that now plague mankind is indi-

6. What bearing does 1 John 5:19 have on today’s family crisis?

7. How can families be affected by the traits that many people in these last days manifest?



cated at 2 Timothy 3:1-5. Paul’s prophetic words recorded there show that we are living in “the last days.” Families cannot be peaceful and happy if their members are “lovers of themselves, lovers of money, self-assuming, haughty, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, disloyal, having no natural affection, not open to any agreement, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, without love of goodness, betrayers, headstrong, puffed up with pride, lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God, having a form of godly devotion but proving false to its power.” A family cannot be completely happy if even one of its members lacks natural affection or is disloyal. How peaceful can family life be if someone in the household is fierce and not open to any agreement? Worse still, how can there be peace and happiness when family members are lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God? These are the traits of people in this world ruled by

Satan. No wonder family happiness is elusive in these last days!

⁸ Still another reason why many families lack peace and happiness is the bad conduct of children. When Paul foretold conditions in the last days, he prophesied that many children would be disobedient to parents. If you are a young person, does your behavior help to make your family peaceful and happy?

⁹ Some children are not exemplary in behavior. For instance, one young boy wrote his father this nasty letter: "If you won't take me to Alexandria I won't write you a letter, or speak to you, or say goodbye to you, and if you go to Alexandria I won't hold your hand or ever greet you again. This is what will happen if you won't take me . . . But send me a [harp], I beg you. If you don't, I won't eat and I won't drink. So there!" Does that sound rather up-to-date? Well, that letter from a boy to his father was written in ancient Egypt over 2,000 years ago.

¹⁰ That Egyptian youngster's attitude did not promote family peace. Of course, far more serious things take place within families in these last days. Yet, you younger ones can help your family to pursue godly peace. How? By obeying this Bible counsel: "You children, be obedient to your parents in everything, for this is well-pleasing in the Lord."—Colossians 3:20.

¹¹ What about you parents? Lovingly help your children to become faithful servants of Jehovah. "Train up a boy according to the way for him," says Proverbs 22:6. "Even when he grows old he will not turn

8, 9. What effect can the behavior of children have on family happiness?

10. How can younger ones help their families to pursue godly peace?

11. How can parents help their children to become faithful servants of Jehovah?

aside from it." With fine Scriptural teaching and good parental examples, many boys and girls do not turn aside from the proper way when they get older. But much depends on the quality and extent of Bible training and on the heart of the young one.

¹² If all members of our family are trying to do Jehovah's will, we ought to be enjoying godly peace. A Christian home should be filled with 'friends of peace.' Luke 10:1-6 shows that Jesus had such people in mind when he sent 70 disciples out as ministers and told them: "Wherever you enter into a house say first, 'May this house have peace.' And if a friend of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him." As Jehovah's servants peacefully go from house to house with "the good news of peace," they seek friends of peace. (Acts 10:34-36; Ephesians 2:13-18) Surely, a Christian household made up of friends of peace should be peaceful.

¹³ A home should be a place of peace and rest. The elderly widow Naomi hoped that God would grant her young, widowed daughters-in-law, Ruth and Orpah, the rest and comfort that result from having a good

12. Why should a Christian home be peaceful?

13, 14. (a) What did Naomi desire for Ruth and Orpah? (b) A Christian home should be a resting-place of what kind?

In Our Next Issue

The Miraculous Healing
of Mankind Is Near

"Jehovah Will Not
Forsake His People"

Are You God's Friend?
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husband and home. Naomi said: "May Jehovah make a gift to you, and do you find a resting-place each one in the house of her husband." (Ruth 1:9) Concerning Naomi's wish, one scholar wrote that in such homes Ruth and Orpah "would find deliverance from unrest and anxiety. They would find *rest*. It would be a position in which they could *abide*, and in which their tenderest feelings and most honourable desires would find satisfaction and *repose*. The peculiar force of the Hebrew . . . is finely displayed by the texture of the associated expressions in [Isaiah 32:17, 18]."

¹⁴ Please note this reference to Isaiah 32:17, 18. There we read: "The work of the true righteousness must become peace; and the service of the true righteousness, quietness and security to time indefinite. And my people must dwell in a peaceful abiding place and in residences of full confidence and in undisturbed resting-places." A Christian home should be a resting-place of righteousness, quietness, security, and godly peace. But what if trials, differences,

or other problems arise? Then we especially need to know the secret of family happiness.

Four Vital Principles

¹⁵ Every family on earth owes its name to Jehovah God, the Creator of families. (Ephesians 3:14, 15) So those desiring family happiness should seek his guidance and praise him, as did the psalmist: "Ascribe to Jehovah, O you families of the peoples, ascribe to Jehovah glory and strength." (Psalm 96:7) The secret of family happiness lies in the pages of God's Word, the Bible, and in the application of

its principles. A family that applies these principles will be happy and will enjoy godly peace. Let us therefore look at four of these important principles.

¹⁶ One of these principles centers on this: Self-control is vital to godly peace in family life. King Solomon said: "As a city broken through, without a wall, is the man that has no restraint for his spirit." (Proverbs 25:28) Restraining our spirit—exercising self-control—is vital if we desire to have a peaceful and happy family. Though we are imperfect, we need to exercise self-control, which is a fruit of God's holy spirit. (Romans 7:21, 22; Galatians 5:22, 23) The spirit will produce self-control in us if we pray for this quality, apply Bible counsel about it, and associate with others who manifest it. This course will help us to "flee from fornication." (1 Corinthians 6:18) Self-control will also help us to reject violence, avoid or

15. How would you define the secret of family happiness?

16. What role should self-control play in family life?



**Good communication helps us to pursue
godly peace in family life**

overcome alcoholism, and deal more calmly with difficult situations.

¹⁷ Another essential principle can be stated in this way: Recognition of headship will help us to pursue godly peace in our families. Paul wrote: "I want you to know that the head of every man is the Christ; in turn the head of a woman is the man; in turn the head of the Christ is God." (1 Corinthians 11:3) This means that a man takes the lead in the family, that his wife is loyally supportive, and that the children are obedient. (Ephesians 5:22-25, 28-33; 6:1-4) Such conduct will promote godly peace in family life.

¹⁸ A Christian husband needs to remember that Scriptural headship is not dictatorship. He must imitate Jesus, his Head. Al-

17, 18. (a) How does 1 Corinthians 11:3 apply to Christian family life? (b) How does recognition of headship promote godly peace in a family?

though he was to be "head over all things," Jesus "came, not to be ministered to, but to minister." (Ephesians 1:22; Matthew 20:28) In a similar way, a Christian man exercises headship in a loving manner that enables him to care well for the interests of his family. And surely a Christian wife wants to cooperate with her husband. As his "helper" and "a complement," she supplies qualities that her husband lacks and thus gives him needed support. (Genesis 2:20; Proverbs 31:10-31) The proper exercise of headship helps husbands and wives to treat each other with respect and moves children to be obedient.

Yes, recognition of headship promotes godly peace in family life.

¹⁹ A third important principle can be expressed in these words: Good communication is vital for family peace and happiness. James 1:19 tells us: "Every man must be swift about hearing, slow about speaking, slow about wrath." Family members need to listen and talk to one another because family communication is a two-way street. Even when what we say is true, however, it is likely to do more harm than good if it is said in a cruel, proud, or insensitive manner. Our speech should be tasteful, "seasoned with salt." (Colossians 4:6) Families that follow Scriptural principles and communicate well are pursuing godly peace.

²⁰ A fourth principle is this: Love is essential to family peace and happiness. Romantic love may play an important part in marriage, and deep affection can develop

19. Why is good communication essential for family peace and happiness?

20. Why would you say that love is essential to family peace?



among members of a family. Even more important, though, is the love denoted by the Greek word *a-ga'pe*. This is the love that we cultivate for Jehovah, for Jesus, and for our neighbor. (Matthew 22:37-39) God showed this love for mankind by giving "his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) How wonderful it is that we can display the same kind of love for our family members! This elevated love is "a perfect bond of union." (Colossians 3:14) It binds a married couple together and motivates them to do what is best for each other and for their children. When difficulties develop, love helps them to handle matters unitedly. We can be certain of this because "love . . . does not look for its own interests . . . It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails." (1 Corinthians 13:4-8) Happy indeed are families in which love for one another is cemented by love for Jehovah!

Keep On Pursuing Godly Peace

²¹ The foregoing principles and others

21. What is likely to increase the peace and happiness of your family?

drawn from the Bible are outlined in publications that Jehovah has kindly provided through "the faithful and discreet slave." (Matthew 24:45) For example, such information is found in the 192-page book *The Secret of Family Happiness*, released at "Messengers of Godly Peace" District Conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses held around the world in 1996/97. Personal and family study of the Scrip-

tures with the aid of such a publication can result in many benefits. (Isaiah 48:17, 18) Yes, applying Scriptural counsel is likely to increase the peace and happiness of your family.

²² Jehovah has wonderful things in store for families doing his will, and he deserves our praise and service. (Revelation 21:1-4) May your family therefore center its life on the worship of the true God. And may our loving heavenly Father, Jehovah, bless you with happiness as you pursue godly peace in your family life!

22. On what should we center our family life?

How Would You Answer?

- ☐ What is required if families are to live with godly devotion?
- ☐ Why is there a family crisis today?
- ☐ What is the secret of family happiness?
- ☐ What are some principles that will help us to promote peace and happiness in family life?



Visiting Our Home Missionary Field

THE group of Christian congregations that I visit takes me from Portugal to China—or that is how it seems. Yet, my wife, Olive, and I never leave Britain.

We visit the growing number of foreign-language congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses scattered throughout the country. From the island of Jersey, some 12 miles off the Normandy coast of France, where we have a Portuguese group, to the town of Sunderland in the north of England, where we visit interested Chinese-speaking people, we share in a thriving, spiritually prosperous, multilingual field. How did we come

to have this unusual assignment? And what is happening in our home missionary field? Let me explain.

Olive and I have served some 20 years in the traveling work, visiting a different congregation each week. Our travels have taken us from north to south, east to west, throughout Britain, and latterly to our Christian brothers on the Mediterranean island of Malta, where we experienced outstanding Christian hospitality. (Compare Acts 28:1, 2.) After three years in Malta, we began to wonder where our next assignment would be. We imagined that we would prob-

ably visit a rural English area, and we began to adjust our minds to this possibility. What a surprise when we received our assignment to serve this new circuit made up of groups and congregations speaking 23 different languages!

We wondered how we would cope. Apart from our experience in Malta, we had never been involved much with people of a different background and culture. Would we really be able to encourage those who did not understand a great deal of English? How would we communicate without knowing other languages? What about the food and the diverse customs of others? Would we be adaptable enough? Questions like these went through our minds as we prayerfully considered answering this Macedonian call.—Acts 16:9, 10; 1 Corinthians 9:19-22.

Overcoming the Language Barrier

“At first I felt inadequate because I had no knowledge of languages,” explains Olive. “I didn’t see how I could help the sisters. Then I remembered how the couple who first studied the Bible with us encouraged us never to refuse an assignment. They taught us that Jehovah never asks us to do something we can’t do.” So we both willingly accepted the assignment.

On reflection, we see that our lack of knowing another language has helped us treat everybody in exactly the same way. For instance, attending meetings conducted in a different language each week has made us appreciate how brothers felt when they had to sit through English-language meetings while understanding little of what was said. We really have to prepare well for the meetings so that we can grasp the sense of what is presented. Olive always answers one of the questions in the meeting. She prepares the answer in English and has a sister translate it for her, writing out the transla-



tion phonetically. She admits that it is with some hesitation that she raises her hand to comment. Sometimes her efforts provoke laughter. But this does not put her off. “I know the brothers appreciate my trying,” she says. “In fact, my answering encourages those more conversant with the language to share in the meeting.”

For me, giving talks is different, too, because I have to allow time for the interpreter after every sentence. It is so easy to lose my train of thought. I find I have to concentrate much more and cut down my material extensively. But I enjoy it.

Our Varied Ministry

In many urban areas of Britain, the people who speak foreign languages are scattered about, two on one street maybe, and then you have to travel some distance to find others. Yet, when you greet them in their own language and see the reaction, you feel it is worthwhile. If the brother I am accompanying presents the Kingdom message in the householder's own language, the response is often overwhelming delight.

Indeed, the ministry in the foreign-language field is one of the most exciting we have experienced during our 40 years of Kingdom service. The potential for growth is tremendous. There is no doubt that many people learn much more quickly and with deeper appreciation when they are taught in their mother tongue. (Acts 2:8, 14, 41) It is emotionally very moving to see brothers and sisters with tears of joy at the end of a meeting, in some cases for the first time having been able to listen to and understand the whole program.

When preaching from house to house, we endeavor to make at least an introduction in the householder's language, even though we sometimes get ourselves into a bit of difficulty. For example, a common greeting to a Gujarati household is *Kemcho*, which simply means "Hello." Apparently what I said in error one time sounded as if I were advertising a well-known brand of coffee. Nonetheless, at one home the husband and wife smiled when I greeted them in Gujarati. They immediately invited us in and kindly offered us coffee—not because of any mispronunciation. It turned out that they were related to some of Jehovah's Witnesses in the group we were visiting, and they showed a genuine interest in the truth.

One English-speaking sister frequently left magazines with a Chinese-speaking

lady over a period of years. She had occasionally offered the lady a free home Bible study, but this was declined. One day a sister who was learning Chinese accompanied her and offered the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth* in that language, which the interested householder readily accepted.* Now having the book in her own tongue, she agreed to a Bible study. Those few words spoken in the lady's own language made all the difference.

Diverse Cultures

We had not realized that in some cultures men do not like their womenfolk going out alone at night. This makes it very difficult for many sisters to attend the meetings held in the evening. Some Asian communities believe that young women who choose not to marry and continue to live at home slight the family. One young sister's father wanted to poison himself when she refused to marry the man the family had chosen for her. Yes, what such sisters have to put up with is quite remarkable! Still, when you see the effect the truth has on the family's life and how the sisters' loyalty to Jehovah impresses the parents, it is truly marvelous.

In sharing in this assignment, we have had to make some changes. Before we started out in the traveling work, my food had to be plain English cooking, but now the spicier the food, the better. We regret the many years we let slip by before we started to enjoy such a varied cuisine—from raw fish to curries.

Bright Prospects

It seems clear that this is the time for the foreign-language field to blossom in many areas. More and more publications are now available in different languages. You can

* Published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

sense Jehovah's blessing as new congregations are organized. Brothers with a knowledge of other languages come from far afield to help.

An outstanding example has been the response to preaching the Kingdom good news in French. Many French-speaking refugees from Zaire and other African countries have come to Britain in recent years. When the first French-language congregation was formed in London, some 65 Kingdom publishers were associated. A year later the number had jumped to 117, and of these, 48 served full-time as regular pioneers. Before long a second congregation was established to care for the growing interest. Now more attention can be given to the interested ones, 345 of whom attended the 1995 Memorial celebration. Former Gilead graduates who had served in Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Morocco, and Zaire now use their experience to care for this growing field, and the response is amazing.

On one visit to the French congregation, I went along on a Bible study with a young African woman. When we had to leave, the young woman cried: "Please don't go. Stay longer." She just wanted to know more. She reminded me of first-century Lydia.—Acts 16:14, 15.

Our initial work has been to help the small foreign-language groups become congregations. Where the brothers held a weekly Congregation Book Study, we introduced a shortened Theocratic Ministry School for them once a month. This helps them to express themselves well in the field ministry. They then gradually work toward holding all five weekly congregation meetings. Already we have new congregations that speak Chinese (Cantonese), French, Gujarati, Japanese, Portuguese, Punjabi, Tamil, and Welsh.

We have also enjoyed the privilege of attending meetings of brothers who are deaf.



Watching the brothers sing with their hands is quite moving. Realizing that in their ministry they speak by means of gestures, I appreciate their sterling efforts to share in Kingdom preaching. There are even signers for those who are both deaf and blind. It seems that Jehovah makes sure that no one is left out.

If we had to make a particular request, it would be the same as that of Jesus: "Beg the Master of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest." (Matthew 9:38) Many of our brothers are accepting the challenge of learning the language of the ethnic groups in their congregation territory. Although we are not miraculously gifted with the ability to speak different languages, Jehovah is certainly opening up the ministry in this home missionary field—a field that is ripe for harvesting. (John 4:35, 36)—*As told by Colin Seymour.*

QUESTIONS FROM READERS

What does the Bible indicate about capital punishment, the death penalty, for criminals?

Understandably, each of us might have our own personal feelings on this, based on our experience or situation in life. Yet, as Jehovah's Witnesses, we should try to conform to God's thoughts about capital punishment, while remaining neutral regarding the political stands that many take on this issue.

To put it pointedly, in his written Word, God does not indicate that capital punishment is wrong.

Early in human history, Jehovah shared his thoughts on the matter, as we read in Genesis chapter 9. This involved Noah and his family, who became ancestors of the entire human family. After they came out of the ark, God said that they could eat animals—that is, animals could be killed, drained of their blood, and eaten. Then, at Genesis 9:5, 6, God said: "Besides that, your blood of your souls shall I ask back. From the hand of every living creature shall I ask it back; and from the hand of man, from the hand of each one who is his brother, shall I ask back the soul of man. Anyone shedding man's blood, by man will his own blood be shed, for in God's image he made man." So Jehovah authorized capital punishment in the case of murderers.

While God dealt with Israel as his people, various other serious offenses against divine law were punishable by death. At Numbers 15:30, we read this broad statement: "The soul that does something deliberately, whether he is a native or an alien resident, he speaking abusively of Jehovah, in that case that soul must be cut off from among his people."

But what about after the Christian congregation was set up? Well, we know that Jehovah

authorized human governments to exist, and he called them the superior authorities. In fact, after advising Christians to be obedient to such governmental authorities, the Bible says that such serve as "God's minister to you for your good. But if you are doing what is bad, be in fear: for it is not without purpose that it bears the sword; for it is God's minister, an avenger to express wrath upon the one practicing what is bad."—Romans 13:1-4.

Does that mean that governments are authorized even to take the lives of those who commit serious crimes? From the words at 1 Peter 4:15, we would have to conclude, yes. In that passage the apostle exhorted his brothers: "Let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a busybody in other people's matters." Did you note, "let none of you suffer as a murderer"? Peter did not suggest that governments had no right to make a murderer suffer for his crime. On the contrary, he indicated that a murderer might rightly receive due punishment. Would that include punishment by death?

It could. This is clear from Paul's words found in Acts chapter 25. Jews had accused Paul of offenses against their Law. In sending his prisoner, Paul, to the Roman governor, the military commander reported, as noted at Acts 23:29: "I found him to be accused about questions of their Law, but not charged with a single thing deserving of death or bonds." After two years Paul found himself before Governor Festus. We read at Acts 25:8: "Paul said in defense: 'Neither against the Law of the Jews nor against the temple nor against Caesar have I committed any sin.'" But now focus on his remarks about punishment, even capital punishment. We read at Acts 25:10, 11:



"Paul said: 'I am standing before the judgment seat of Caesar, where I ought to be judged. I have done no wrong to the Jews, as you also are finding out quite well. If, on the one hand, I am really a wrongdoer and have committed *anything* deserving of death, I do not beg off from dying; if, on the other hand, none of those things exists of which these men accuse me, no man can hand me over to them as a favor. I appeal to Caesar!'"

Paul, standing before a duly constituted authority, admitted that Caesar had the right to punish wrongdoers, even to execute them. He did not object to punishment in his case if he were guilty. Furthermore, he did not say that Caesar could use capital punishment only for murderers.

Admittedly, the Roman judicial system was not perfect; nor are human court systems today. Some innocent people back then and today

have been convicted and punished. Even Pilate said about Jesus: "I found nothing deserving of death in him; I will therefore chastise and release him." Yes, even though the governmental authority admitted that Jesus was innocent, this innocent man was executed.—Luke 23:22-25.

Such injustices did not move Paul or Peter to argue that capital punishment is fundamentally immoral. Rather, God's thought on the matter is that as long as the superior authorities of Caesar exist, they 'bear the sword to express wrath upon the ones practicing what is bad.' That includes applying the sword in the sense of employing capital punishment. But when it comes to the controversial question of whether any government of this world should exercise its right to execute murderers, genuine Christians remain carefully neutral. Unlike the clergy of Christendom, they keep out of any debate on this subject.

"Slave for the Master, Christ"



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THROUGHOUT history, millions of people have endured the burden of slavery. Thousands of years ago, the Israelites, for example, suffered greatly at the hands of Egyptian overseers. As the Bible says, they "put slave-drivers over the Israelites to wear them down under heavy loads," particularly at making bricks.—Exodus 1:11, *The Jerusalem Bible*.

In many countries today, people may not slave in a literal sense, but many have to work long hours under demanding—sometimes hostile—conditions. They are under the heavy burden of what might be called economic slavery.

There is, however, one form of slavery that is not burdensome. The apostle Paul urged fellow believers: "Slave for the Master, Christ." (Colossians 3:24) Those who choose to become slaves of Christ find relief from their heavy loads. Jesus himself said: "Come to me, all you who are toiling and loaded down, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am mild-tempered and low-

ly in heart, and you will find refreshment for your souls. For my yoke is kindly and my load is light."—Matthew 11:28-30.

Accepting Christ's yoke does not free one from the obligation to provide materially for one's family. (1 Timothy 5:8) It does, however, offer freedom from many of the entanglements of materialistic pursuits. Rather than making material comfort their main goal in life, Christians find contentment with basic necessities.—1 Timothy 6:6-10; compare 1 Corinthians 7:31.

Christians also find refreshment in fulfilling their responsibility of preaching the "good news" of God's Kingdom. (Matthew 24:14) This brings real joy and satisfaction!

We should be thankful that we can "slave for the Master, Christ"!

