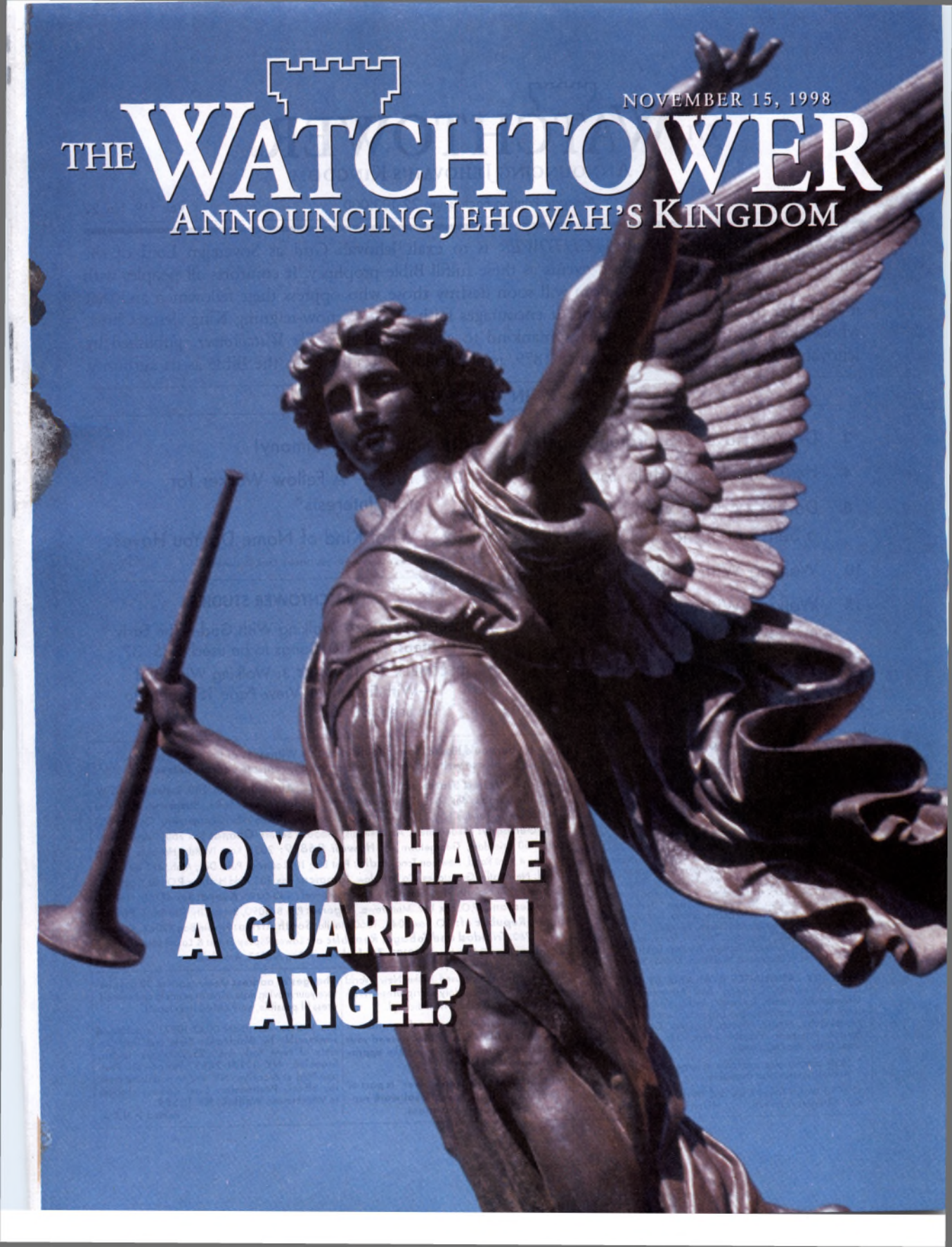




NOVEMBER 15, 1998

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

**DO YOU HAVE
A GUARDIAN
ANGEL?**

THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

November 15, 1998

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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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DO YOU HAVE A GUARDIAN ANGEL?

DO YOU believe that you have a guardian angel? Many people think that they do. For that matter, a certain woman in western Canada is said to have a special gift involving angels. If you give her your full name along with \$200, she claims that she will put you in touch with your guardian angel. First, she meditates by focusing on the flame of a candle. Next, she has a vision in which your angel gives her a message to pass on to you. As a bonus, the woman provides a sketch of what your angel looks like.

To some, this may seem to be on a par with a tale about French King Louis IX. He supposedly bought very expensive feathers said to have fallen from the wings of the Archangel Michael. While questioning that story, many would not for a moment doubt the Canadian woman's claims.

Fascination With Angels

In recent years there has been tremendous interest in angels. On television and in movies, books, magazines, and newsletters, we are told about angels who comfort those seriously ill, console the bereaved, impart wisdom, and snatch individuals from death. In the United States, about 20 million viewers watch a weekly television se-

ries that portrays angelic intervention in the lives of people. One bookstore lists over 400 books that focus on angels.

A recent book relates experiences about how guardian angels have saved the lives of soldiers in combat. Automobile bumper stickers state that the drivers are protected by guardian angels. Organizations,



conferences, and seminars promote the study of angels and are said to help people communicate with them.

Eileen Freeman is the writer of three books about angels and the publisher of a journal devoted exclusively to them. She contends: "I believe that for every angel in heaven there is a guardian angel on Earth, a being whose duties are not solely the praise of God in the heavenly sphere but the actual care of human beings and other forms of life on Earth. A guardian angel is assigned to each of us when we are conceived and watches over us through our growth in

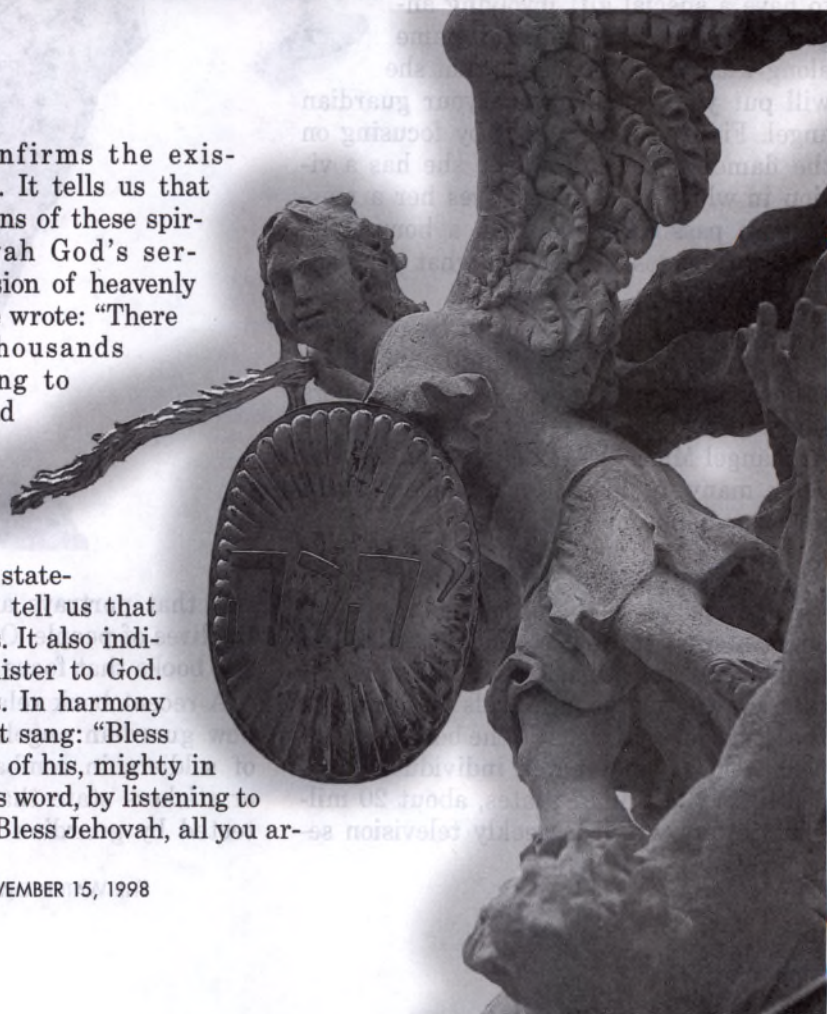
the womb, through our birth, through our life in this world, until the angel guides us from the confines of this world into the glory of heaven." This well describes the popular view of guardian angels.

In these stressful and difficult times, it is appealing to believe that we have our own guardian angel, whose duty it is to protect us. What does God's Word, the Bible, say about this? Should we try to contact angels? Do they care about our moral standards and religious beliefs? What help can we expect from them? These questions will be answered in the following article.

HOW ANGELS CAN HELP YOU

GOD'S Word confirms the existence of angels. It tells us that there are millions of these spirit creatures. Jehovah God's servant Daniel had a vision of heavenly things about which he wrote: "There were a thousand thousands that kept ministering to [God], and ten thousand times ten thousand that kept standing right before him."—Daniel 7:10.

Notice that Daniel's statement does more than tell us that there are many angels. It also indicates that angels minister to God. They are his servants. In harmony with this, the psalmist sang: "Bless Jehovah, O you angels of his, mighty in power, carrying out his word, by listening to the voice of his word. Bless Jehovah, all you ar-



mies of his, you ministers of his, doing his will.”—Psalm 103:20, 21.

The Bible also explains that angels did not begin their lives as humans on earth. Jehovah created angels in heaven even before he created the earth. When God ‘founded the earth, all the angelic sons of God shouted in applause.’—Job 38:4-7.

Angels are spirit creatures—invisible, powerful, intelligent. In the Bible, the Hebrew word *mal’akh* and the Greek term *ag’ge-los* are translated “angel” when a spirit creature is indicated. These words occur nearly 400 times in the Bible. Both have the same meaning, that is, “messenger.”

Angelic Encounters

Angels are certainly messengers. You may be familiar with the Bible account about the time when the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary. He told her that although she was a virgin, she would bear a son who was to be named Jesus. (Luke 1:26-33) An angel also appeared to some shepherds who were in the field. He announced: “There was born to you today a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” (Luke 2:8-11) Similarly, angels delivered messages to Hagar, Abraham, Lot, Jacob, Moses, Gideon, Jesus, and others of Bible record.—Genesis 16:7-12; 18:1-5, 10; 19:1-3; 32:24-30; Exodus 3:1, 2; Judges 6:11-22; Luke 22:39-43; Hebrews 13:2.

It is noteworthy that all these messages delivered by angels were in harmony with the outworking of God’s purposes and not necessarily those of the humans involved. Angels appeared as representatives of God, according to his will and timetable. Humans did not summon them.

Should We Call Upon Angels for Help?

Is it proper to call upon angels in times of distress? If so, we would want to know the

name of an angel best able to help us. Consequently, some commercial books list the supposed names of many angels, together with their rank, titles, and duties. One book lists what it calls the “celestial top ten,” the “best-known angels in the Western world.” Along with the list comes the advice to close your eyes, repeat the angel’s name slowly several times, take deep breaths, breathe slowly, and “open yourself to possible contact with them.”

In contrast, the Bible gives us the names of only two of God’s faithful angels, Michael and Gabriel. (Daniel 12:1; Luke 1:26) Possibly, the reason for providing these names was to show that each angel is a unique spirit person with a name, not merely some impersonal energy or force.

It is noteworthy that some angels refused to disclose their names to humans. When Jacob asked an angel to reveal his name, he would not do so. (Genesis 32:29) When asked to identify himself, an angel that approached Joshua said only that he was the “prince of the army of Jehovah.” (Joshua 5:14) When Samson’s parents asked an angel for his name, he said: “Just why should you ask about my name, when it is a wonderful one?” (Judges 13:17, 18) By not providing a list of the names of the angels, the Bible safeguards us from giving angels undue honor and worship. As we will see, it also does not instruct us to invoke them.

Calling on God

The Bible tells us all we need to know about affairs in the spirit realm. The apostle Paul wrote: “All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching . . . that the man of God may be fully competent, completely equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16, 17) If God wanted us to know the names of many angels, he would

have revealed these in his Word, the Bible. And if God desired to instruct us in how to contact angels and talk to them in prayer, he would have provided such information in the Scriptures.

Instead, Jesus Christ taught: "When you pray, go into your private room and, after shutting your door, pray to your Father who is in secret . . . You must pray, then, this way: 'Our Father in the heavens, let your name be sanctified.'" (Matthew 6:6, 9) The Scriptural view is this: We are not to call on angels or pray to them, but we should prayerfully approach the Creator of the angels, God himself. His name is no mystery, and there is no need for a visionary to reveal it. Though attempts have been made to obscure the divine name, it appears in the Bible record over 7,000 times. For instance, it was with reference to the heavenly Father that the psalmist sang: "You, whose name is Jehovah, you alone are the Most High over all the earth."—Psalm 83:18.

Jehovah is never too busy to listen to us if we approach him properly in prayer. The Bible gives this assurance: "As regards Jehovah, his eyes are roving about through all the earth to show his strength in behalf of those whose heart is complete toward him."—2 Chronicles 16:9.

Angels and Morals

Contrary to what is often portrayed in the media, angels do not judge people. That is fitting, for angels are not authorized to judge humans. Jehovah is "the Judge of all," though "he has committed all the judging to the Son," Jesus Christ. (Hebrews 12:23; John 5:22) Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to assume that angels are indifferent about how we live our lives. Jesus said: "Joy arises among the angels of God over one sinner that repents."—Luke 15:10.

Angels are not mere bystanders, however.

In times past, they served as executioners, carrying out the judgments of God. For example, God used angels against the ancient Egyptians. According to Psalm 78:49, "he went sending upon them his burning anger, fury and denunciation and distress, deputations of angels bringing calamity." Similarly, the Bible reports that in one night a single angel destroyed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers.—2 Kings 19:35.

Likewise, in the future, angels will destroy those who by refusing to conform to God's righteous standards threaten the welfare of others. Jesus will come "with his powerful angels in a flaming fire, as he brings vengeance upon those who do not know God and those who do not obey the good news."—2 Thessalonians 1:7, 8.

The Scriptures thus show that God's faithful angels always do his will by carrying out his instructions and upholding his righteous standards. Clearly, if we want God's angels to help us, we need to know what God's will is and earnestly strive to do it.

Guardian Angels

Do angels care for people and protect them? The apostle Paul asked: "Are they [angels] not all spirits for public service, sent forth to minister for those who are going to inherit salvation?" (Hebrews 1:14) Clearly, the answer to Paul's question is yes.

Because of their refusal to bow down before a golden image erected by Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar, the three Hebrews Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were hurled into a superheated furnace. However, those faithful servants of God were untouched by the fire. When the king looked into the furnace, he saw "four able-bodied men," and said that "the appearance of the fourth one [was] resembling a son



**An angel in midheaven is
declaring everlasting good news.
Do you want to learn about it?**

of the gods.” (Daniel 3:25) Some years later, Daniel found himself in a lions’ pit because of his faithfulness. He too escaped unharmed and declared: “My own God sent his angel and shut the mouth of the lions.” —Daniel 6:22.

With the establishment of the congregation of Christ’s followers in the first century C.E., angels again appeared, freeing the apostles from prison. (Acts 5:17-24; 12:6-12) And when Paul’s life was imperiled at sea, an angel assured him that he would arrive safely in Rome.—Acts 27:13-24.

Present-day servants of Jehovah God are fully convinced that God’s invisible angelic forces are real and are able to provide protection, as they did for Elisha and his attendant. (2 Kings 6:15-17) Indeed, “the angel of Jehovah is camping all around those

fearing him, and he rescues them.”—Psalm 34:7; 91:11.

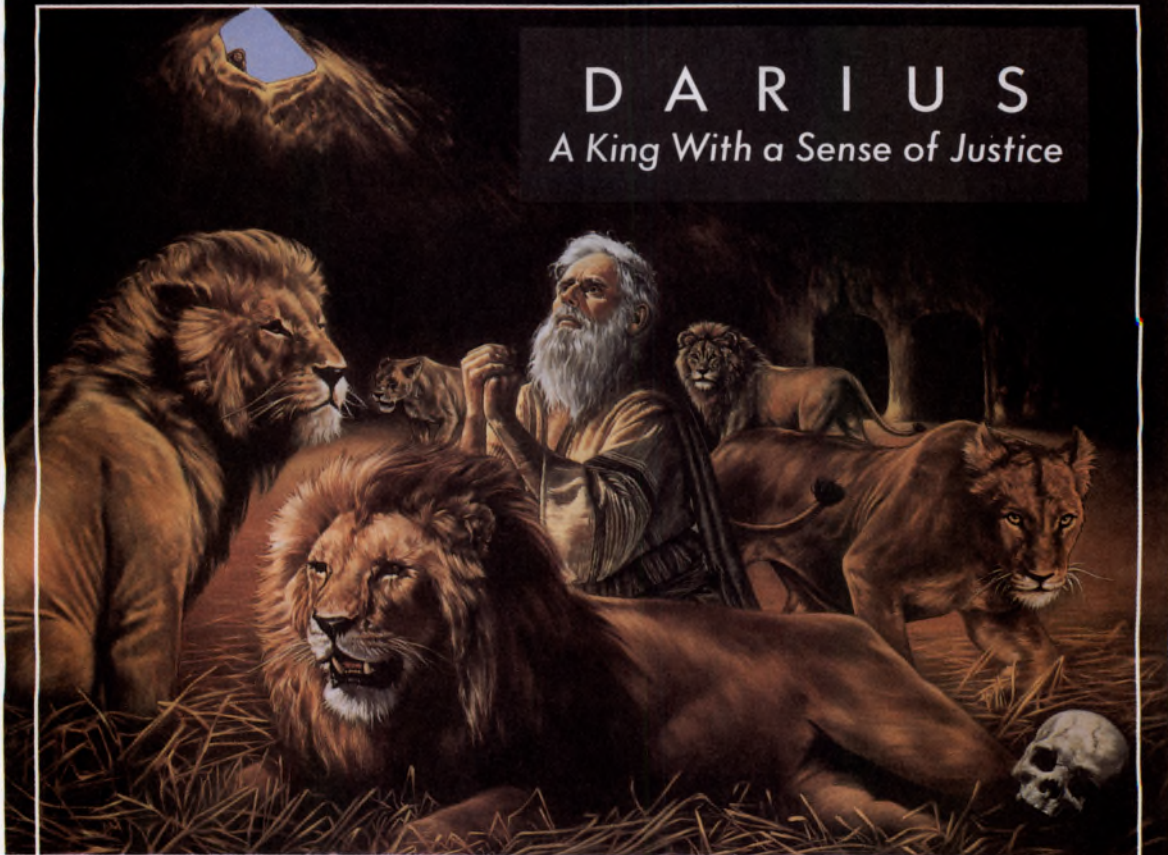
The Message Angels Carry

While the angels are concerned about the welfare of those who serve Jehovah God, they are also involved in seeing to it that people learn about him and his purpose. The apostle John wrote: “I saw another angel flying in midheaven, and he had everlasting good news to declare as glad tidings to those who dwell on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people, saying in a loud voice: ‘Fear God and give him glory.’” —Revelation 14:6, 7.

Do you want to know the content of this “everlasting good news”? If so, ask Jehovah’s Witnesses. They will be glad to share it with you.

D A R I U S

A King With a Sense of Justice



CONCERNING the construction projects he had undertaken, a famous king once boasted: "At the enclosure of Babylon I made an enclosure of a strong wall on the east side. I dug a moat . . . I built with bitumen and brick a mighty wall which, like a mountain, could not be moved." Yes, Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar had engaged in an extensive building program and had worked hard to fortify the capital city of his empire. But the city of Babylon did not prove to be as impregnable as he had imagined.

Proof of this came on October 5, 539 B.C.E. Accompanied by the army of Media, the Persian ruler Cyrus II then conquered Babylon and executed its Chaldean ruler, Belshazzar. Who would

now become the first ruler of this newly conquered city? God's prophet Daniel, who was present inside the city when it fell, wrote: "Darius the Mede himself received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old."—Daniel 5:30, 31.

Who was Darius? What kind of ruler did he prove to be? How did he treat the prophet Daniel, who had been in exile in Babylon for over 70 years?

A KING WITH A SKETCHY HISTORY

Historical information about Darius the Mede is sketchy. The Medes left virtually no written records. Moreover, the hundreds of thousands of cuneiform tablets unearthed in the Middle East present an imperfect history with many gaps. Other ancient secular writings that have

survived are few in number and are separated from the events involving Darius by a century or more.

Nevertheless, evidence suggests that after capturing Ecbatana, the capital of Media, Persian ruler Cyrus II was able to win the loyalty of the Medes. Thereafter, Medes and Persians fought unitedly under his leadership. Concerning their relationship, author Robert Collins observes in his book *The Medes and Persians*: "In peace the Medes were on an equal footing with the Persians. They were frequently appointed to high office in civic government and posts of leadership in the Persian army. Foreigners referred to the Medes and Persians, making no distinction between conquered and conqueror." Media thus merged with Persia to form the Medo-Persian Empire.—Daniel 5:28; 8:3, 4, 20.

The Medes certainly played a major part in the overthrow of Babylon. The Scriptures present "Darius the son of Ahasuerus of the seed of the Medes" as the first king of the Medo-Persian Empire to rule over Babylon. (Daniel 9:1) His kingly power included the authority to establish statutes "according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which is not annulled." (Daniel 6:8) What the Bible says about Darius also gives us a glimpse of his personality as well as a cogent reason for the lack of secular information concerning him.

DANIEL IS FAVORED

Soon after assuming power in Babylon, Darius set up "one hundred and twenty satraps, who were to be over the whole kingdom," says the Bible, "and over them three high officials, of whom Daniel was one." (Daniel 6:1, 2) However, Daniel's high position was very distasteful to the other officials. His integrity undoubtedly tended to restrain corruption, likely causing resentment. Envy must also have influenced the high officials, since the king favored Daniel and contemplated making him the prime minister.

Hoping to put an end to this situation, the two officials and the satraps devised a legal trap. They went before the king and presented for his signature an edict that would prohibit the making of "a petition to any god or man" other than Darius for 30 days. They proposed that any violator should be thrown into the lions' pit. Darius was led to believe that such an edict would be favored by all ranking government officials, and the proposal seemed to be an expression of their loyalty to the king.—Daniel 6:1-3, 6-8.

Darius signed the decree and soon came face-to-face with its effects. Daniel became the edict's first violator, since he continued to pray to Jehovah God. (Compare Acts 5:29.) Faithful Daniel was thrown into the lions' pit despite the king's sincere efforts to find a way of circumventing the unchangeable statute. Darius expressed confidence that Daniel's God had the power to preserve the prophet alive.—Daniel 6:9-17.

After a sleepless night of fasting, Darius hurried to the lions' pit. How glad he was to find Daniel alive and unharmed! As retributive justice, the king promptly had Daniel's accusers and their families thrown into the pit of lions. He also issued an order that 'in every dominion of his kingdom, people were to be quaking and fearing before the God of Daniel.'—Daniel 6:18-27.

Clearly, Darius respected Daniel's God and religion and was eager to right the wrong. Yet, punishing Daniel's accusers must have incurred the animosity of the remaining officials. Moreover, Darius' proclamation ordering all in the kingdom to 'fear before the God of Daniel' must have caused deep resentment among the powerful Babylonian clergy. Since the scribes surely were influenced by these factors, it would not be strange if secular records were altered to eliminate information about Darius. Yet, the brief account in the book of Daniel portrays Darius as a ruler with a sense of fairness and justice.

WALKING WITH GOD

—THE EARLY STEPS

“Draw close to God, and he will draw close to you.”—JAMES 4:8.

THE man had suffered in prison for years. Then he was summoned to appear before the ruler of the land. Events moved swiftly. Suddenly, the prisoner found himself in the service of the most powerful monarch then on the earth. The former prisoner was placed in a position of great responsibility and extraordinary honor. Joseph—the man whose feet were once bound with fetters—now walked with a king!—Genesis 41:14, 39-43; Psalm 105:17, 18.

² Today, humans have the opportunity to engage in the service of someone far greater than Pharaoh of Egypt. The Supreme One of the universe invites all of us to serve him. What an awe-inspiring privilege it is to do so and to cultivate a close relationship with Jehovah, the almighty God! In the Scriptures, majestic power and splendor as well as serenity, beauty, and pleasantness are associated with him. (Ezekiel 1: 26-28; Revelation 4:1-3) Love permeates all his dealings. (1 John 4:8) Never does he lie. (Numbers 23:19) And never does Jehovah

1, 2. Why would you say that it is a great privilege to serve Jehovah?



disappoint those loyal to him. (Psalm 18:25) By conforming to his righteous requirements, we can enjoy happy, meaningful lives now, with everlasting life in view. (John 17:3) No human ruler offers anything remotely comparable to such blessings and privileges.

³ Long ago, the patriarch Noah determined to live in harmony with God's will and purpose. Concerning him, the Bible says: "Noah was a righteous man. He proved himself faultless among his contemporaries. Noah walked with the true God." (Genesis 6:9) Of course, Noah did not literally walk with Jehovah, since no man has even "seen God at any time." (John 1:18) Rather, Noah walked with God in that he did what God told him to do. Because Noah devoted his life to the doing of Jehovah's will, he enjoyed a warm, intimate relationship with Almighty God. Like Noah, millions today are 'walking with God' by living in harmony with Jehovah's counsel and instruction. How does a person begin such a course?

3. In what way did Noah 'walk with the true God'?

Accurate Knowledge Essential

⁴ To walk with Jehovah, we must first come to know him. The prophet Isaiah foretold: "It must occur in the final part of the days that the mountain of the house of Jehovah will become firmly established above the top of the mountains, and it will certainly be lifted up above the hills; and to it all the nations must stream. And many peoples will certainly go and say: 'Come, you people, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will instruct us about his ways, and we will walk in his paths.' For out of Zion law will go forth, and the word of Jehovah out of Jerusalem." (Isaiah 2:2, 3) Yes, we can have confidence that Jehovah will instruct all those seeking to walk in his ways. Jehovah has provided his Word, the Bible, and he helps us to understand it. One way he does this is through "the faithful and discreet slave." (Matthew 24:45-47) Jehovah uses 'the faithful slave' to provide spiritual instruction by means of Bible-based publications, Christian meetings, and the free home-Bible-study arrangement. God also helps his people to understand his Word by means of his holy spirit.—1 Corinthians 2:10-16.

⁵ Though we do not pay money for Bible truth, it is precious. As we study God's Word, we learn about God himself—his name, his personality, his purpose, and the way he deals with humans. We also learn the liberating answers to life's fundamental questions: Why are we here? Why does God permit suffering? What does the future hold? Why do we grow old and die? Is there life after death? Moreover, we learn what God's will is for us, that is, how we should walk in order to please him fully. We learn that his requirements are reasonable

4. How does Jehovah instruct his people?
5. Why is Scriptural truth so precious?

and are wonderfully beneficial when we live up to them. Without God's instruction, we could never understand such things.

⁶ Bible truth is powerful and moves us to make changes in our lives. (Hebrews 4:12) Before taking in knowledge of the Scriptures, we could walk only "according to the system of things of this world." (Ephesians 2:2) But accurate knowledge of God's Word maps out a different course for us so that we can "walk worthily of Jehovah to the end of fully pleasing him." (Colossians 1:10) What a joy it is to take our early steps in walking with Jehovah, the most magnificent Person in the entire universe!—Luke 11:28.

Two Important Steps —Dedication and Baptism

⁷ When we grow in our understanding of the Bible, we begin to examine human affairs and our own lives in the spiritual light of God's Word. An important truth thus becomes evident. That truth was expressed long ago by the prophet Jeremiah, who wrote: "I well know, O Jehovah, that to earthling man his way does not belong. It does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step." (Jeremiah 10:23) Humans—all of us—need God's direction.

⁸ Understanding this vital fact motivates us to seek guidance from Jehovah. And love for God moves us to dedicate our life to him. To make a dedication to God means to approach him in prayer and solemnly promise to use our life to serve him and to walk in his ways faithfully. In doing this, we follow the example of Jesus, who presented himself to Jehovah with firm determination to carry out the divine will.—Hebrews 10:7.

6. What course does accurate Bible knowledge enable us to pursue?
7. As we study God's Word, what truth about human leadership becomes evident?
8. (a) What moves people to make a dedication to God? (b) What is Christian dedication?

⁹ Jehovah God never pressures or coerces anyone to make a dedication to him. (Compare 2 Corinthians 9:7.) Moreover, God does not expect anyone to dedicate his life to Him because of some transient emotion. Before being baptized, a person must already be a disciple, and that requires earnest effort to take in knowledge. (Matthew 28:19, 20) Paul entreated those who were already baptized to 'present their bodies a sacrifice living, holy, acceptable to God, a sacred service with their power of reason.' (Romans 12:1) It is by a similar exercise of our power of reason that we make a dedication to Jehovah God. After learning what is involved and reasoning carefully on the matter, we willingly and joyfully dedicate our life to God.—Psalm 110:3.

¹⁰ After approaching God privately in prayer to express our determination to walk in his ways, we take the next step. We make our dedication known publicly by our baptism in water. This is a public declaration that we have vowed to do God's will. At the beginning of his earthly ministry, Jesus was baptized by John, thus setting an example for us. (Matthew 3:13-17) Later, Jesus commissioned his followers to make disciples and baptize them. Therefore, dedication and baptism are essential steps for any who wish to walk with Jehovah.

¹¹ Becoming a dedicated, baptized disciple of Jesus Christ is somewhat similar to getting married. In many lands, the wedding day is preceded by several steps. A man and a woman meet, get to know each other, and fall in love. Next comes the engagement. The wedding makes public what has been

decided upon in private—to enter wedlock and then live together as husband and wife. It is the wedding that publicly marks the beginning of that special relationship. That date marks the beginning of the marriage. Comparably, baptism marks the start of a life devoted to walking in a dedicated relationship with Jehovah.

¹² Consider another parallel. After their wedding day, the love between husband and wife should deepen and mature. To draw ever closer to one another, both marriage mates must unselfishly strive to maintain and strengthen their marital relationship. Although we do not enter into a marriage with God, after our baptism we must work to maintain a close relationship with Jehovah. He observes and appreciates our efforts to do his will and draws close to us. "Draw close to God," wrote the disciple James, "and he will draw close to you."—James 4:8.

Walking in Jesus' Footsteps

¹³ To walk with Jehovah, we must conform to the example set by Jesus Christ. The apostle Peter wrote: "To this course you were called, because even Christ suffered for you, leaving you a model for you to follow his steps closely." (1 Peter 2:21) Since Jesus was perfect and we are imperfect, we cannot flawlessly follow the example he set. Nevertheless, Jehovah expects us to do the best we can. Let us consider five features of Jesus' life and ministry that dedicated Christians should strive to imitate.

¹⁴ *Jesus had an accurate and thorough knowledge of God's Word.* During his ministry, Jesus frequently quoted from the Hebrew Scriptures. (Luke 4:4, 8) Of course, the wicked religious leaders of those days also quoted from the Scriptures. (Matthew 22:

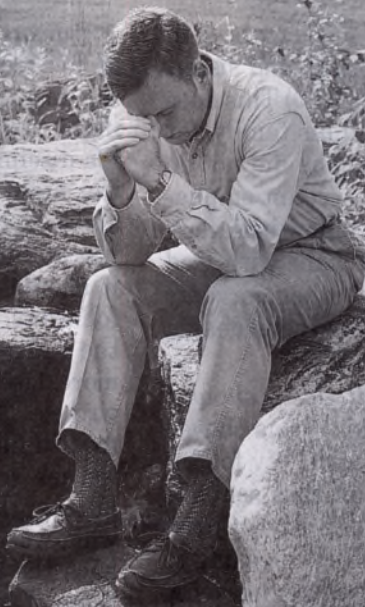
9. Why do individuals dedicate their life to Jehovah?

10. How does dedication relate to baptism?

11, 12. (a) How might baptism be compared to a wedding? (b) What parallel can be drawn between our relationship with Jehovah and that existing between a husband and wife?

13. In walking with God, whose example should we follow?

14. What is involved in knowing God's Word?



Study, dedication, and baptism are early steps in walking with God

23, 24) The difference was that Jesus understood what the Scriptures meant, and he applied them in his life. He knew not only the letter of the Law but also the spirit of it. As we follow Christ's example, we too should strive to understand God's Word, getting the sense, or spirit, of it. By doing so, we may become divinely approved workers who are able to 'handle the word of the truth aright.'—2 Timothy 2:15.

¹⁵ *Christ Jesus spoke to others about his heavenly Father.* Jesus did not keep his knowledge of God's Word to himself. Even his enemies addressed him as "Teacher," because everywhere he went he talked to others about Jehovah and His purposes. (Matthew 12:38) Jesus preached publicly in the

15. How did Jesus set an example in speaking about God?

temple area, in synagogues, in cities, and in the countryside. (Mark 1:39; Luke 8:1; John 18:20) He taught with compassion and kindness, showing love for the ones whom he helped. (Matthew 4:23) Those who follow Jesus' example also find many places and ways to teach others about Jehovah God and his marvelous purposes.

¹⁶ *Jesus felt a close bond with others who worshiped Jehovah.* While Jesus was speaking to the crowds on one occasion, his mother and his unbelieving brothers came to speak with him. The Bible account says: "Someone said to him: 'Look! Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak to you.' As an answer he said to the one telling him: 'Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?' And extending his hand toward his disciples, he said: 'Look! My mother and my brothers! For

16. How close was Jesus' relationship with fellow worshipers of Jehovah?

whoever does the will of my Father who is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.’” (Matthew 12:47-50) This does not mean that Jesus rejected his family, for subsequent events prove that he did not do so. (John 19:25-27) Yet, this account emphasizes the love Jesus had for fellow believers. Similarly today, those who walk with God seek the companionship of other servants of Jehovah and grow to love them dearly. —1 Peter 4:8.

¹⁷ *By doing the divine will, Jesus showed love for his heavenly Father.* Jesus obeyed Jehovah in everything. He said: “My food is for me to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work.” (John 4:34) Christ also said: “I always do the things pleasing to [God].” (John 8:29) Jesus loved his heavenly Father so much that “he humbled himself and became obedient as far as death, yes, death on a torture stake.” (Philippians 2:8) In turn, Jehovah blessed Jesus, exalting him to a position of authority and honor second only to Jehovah himself. (Philippians 2:9-11) Like Jesus, we show our love for God by keeping his commandments and by doing his will. —1 John 5:3.

17. How did Jesus feel about doing his heavenly Father’s will, and how should that affect us?

How Would You Respond?

- ☐ Why is it an honor to walk with the true God?
- ☐ Why are study, dedication, and baptism early steps in walking with Jehovah?
- ☐ How might we follow in the footsteps of Jesus?
- ☐ How do we know that Jehovah will sustain us as we walk with him?

¹⁸ *Jesus was a man of prayer.* He prayed at his baptism. (Luke 3:21) Before choosing his 12 apostles, he devoted the entire night to prayer. (Luke 6:12, 13) Jesus taught his disciples how to pray. (Luke 11:1-4) On the night before his death, he prayed for and with his disciples. (John 17:1-26) Prayer was an important part of Jesus’ life, even as it should be in our lives, since we are his followers. What an honor it is to speak to the Universal Sovereign in prayer! Furthermore, Jehovah answers prayers, for John wrote: “This is the confidence that we have toward him, that, no matter what it is that we ask according to his will, he hears us. Further, if we know he hears us respecting whatever we are asking, we know we are to have the things asked since we have asked them of him.” —1 John 5:14, 15.

¹⁹ There is so much to learn from closely examining the earthly life and ministry of Jesus Christ! Reflect on the qualities he manifested: love, compassion, kindness, strength, balance, reasonableness, humility, courage, and unselfishness. The more we learn about Jesus, the greater is our desire to be his faithful followers. Knowledge of Jesus also draws us closer to Jehovah. After all, Jesus was a perfect reflection of his heavenly Father. So intimate was he with Jehovah that he could say: “He that has seen me has seen the Father also.” —John 14:9.

Trust in God to Sustain You

²⁰ When children are just learning to walk, their steps are unsteady. How do they learn to walk with confidence? Only with practice and perseverance. Well, those walking with Jehovah strive to walk with a con-

18. In what way did Jesus set an example in the matter of prayer?

19. (a) What qualities of Jesus should we imitate? (b) In what ways do we benefit from studying Jesus’ life and ministry?

20. How may we gain confidence in walking with Jehovah?

fidant, steady stride. This too requires time and perseverance. Paul pointed out the importance of perseverance in walking with God when he wrote: "Finally, brothers, we request you and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, just as you received the instruction from us on how you ought to walk and please God, just as you are in fact walking, that you would keep on doing it more fully." —1 Thessalonians 4:1.

²¹ If we are wholly devoted to God, he

21. As we walk with Jehovah, what blessings can we enjoy?

will help us to keep on walking with him. (Isaiah 40:29-31) Nothing this world has to offer can compare with the blessings that he bestows on those walking in his ways. He is 'the One teaching us to benefit ourselves, the One causing us to tread in the way in which we should walk. And if we actually pay attention to his commandments, our peace will become just like a river, and our righteousness like the waves of the sea.' (Isaiah 48:17, 18) By accepting the invitation to walk with God and by faithfully doing so, we can enjoy peace with him forever.

WALKING WITH GOD —WITH ETERNITY IN VIEW

*"We . . . shall walk in the name of Jehovah our God
to time indefinite, even forever."—MICAH 4:5.*

JEHOVAH GOD did not have a beginning. He is fittingly called "the Ancient of Days," since his existence stretches endlessly into the past. (Daniel 7:9, 13) Jehovah will also enjoy an eternal future. He alone is the "King of eternity." (Revelation 10:6; 15:3) And in his eyes, a thousand years are "but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch during the night."—Psalm 90:4.

² Since the Giver of life is eternal, he could hold out to the first human pair, Adam and Eve, the prospect of endless life in Paradise. Because of disobedience, how-

ever, Adam forfeited the right to everlasting life, passing sin and death on to his descendants. (Romans 5:12) Yet, Adam's rebellion did not thwart God's original purpose. It is Jehovah's will that obedient humans live forever, and he will accomplish his purpose without fail. (Isaiah 55:11) How fitting, then, that we focus our hopes and plans on serving Jehovah with eternity in view. While we want to keep "the day of Jehovah" close in mind, it is vital to remember that our goal is to walk with God *forever*.—2 Peter 3:12.

Jehovah Acts at His Appointed Time

³ As those walking with God, we are

3. How do we know that Jehovah has an "appointed time" to fulfill his purposes?

1. Why can Jehovah be called the "King of eternity"?

2. (a) What is God's purpose for obedient humans? (b) On what should we focus our hopes and plans?

keenly interested in accomplishing his will. We know that Jehovah is the Great Timekeeper, and we have confidence that he never fails to fulfill his purposes at his appointed time. For example, “when the full limit of the time arrived, God sent forth his Son.” (Galatians 4:4) The apostle John was told that there was an “appointed time” for the fulfillment of the prophetic things he saw in signs. (Revelation 1:1-3) There is “the appointed time for the dead to be judged.” (Revelation 11:18) More than 1,900 years ago, the apostle Paul was inspired to say that God “has set a day in which he purposes to judge the inhabited earth in righteousness.”—Acts 17:31.

⁴ Jehovah will bring an end to this wicked system of things, for his name is being reproached in today’s world. The wicked have blossomed. (Psalm 92:7) Through their words and deeds, they insult God, and it pains him to see his servants reviled and persecuted. (Zechariah 2:8) No wonder Jehovah has decreed that Satan’s entire organization will soon be brought to an end! God has determined exactly when this will occur, and the fulfillment of Bible prophecies makes it clear that we are now living in “the time of the end.” (Daniel 12:4) He will soon act for the blessing of all who love him.

⁵ Jehovah’s servants of the past longed to see the end of wickedness. Righteous Lot “was greatly distressed by the indulgence of the law-defying people in loose con-

4. How do we know that Jehovah desires to bring an end to this wicked system of things?

5. How did Lot and Habakkuk view the conditions that surrounded them?



duct.” (2 Peter 2:7) Grieved by the conditions surrounding him, the prophet Habakkuk pleaded: “How long, O Jehovah, must I cry for help, and you do not hear? How long shall I call to you for aid from violence, and you do not save? Why is it that you make me see what is hurtful, and you keep looking upon mere trouble? And why are despoiling and violence in front of me, and why does quarreling occur, and why is strife carried?”—Habakkuk 1:2, 3.

⁶ In part, Jehovah answered Habakkuk in these words: “The vision is yet for the appointed time, and it keeps panting on to the end, and it will not tell a lie. Even if it

6. What did Jehovah say in reply to the prayer of Habakkuk, and what can we learn from this?



Walking with God requires that we serve him zealously as did Christ's early disciples

should delay, keep in expectation of it; for it will without fail come true. It will not be late." (Habakkuk 2:3) God thus made it known that he would act at "the appointed time." Though there might seem to be a delay, Jehovah will fulfill his purpose—without fail!—2 Peter 3:9.

Serving With Unflagging Zeal

⁷ Is knowing Jehovah's exact timing of events a prerequisite for us to walk with God zealously? No, it is not. Consider some examples. Jesus was keenly interested in the time when God's will would be done

7. Although Jesus did not know exactly when Jehovah's day would come, how did he carry on his activities?

on earth as it is in heaven. Indeed, Christ taught his followers to pray: "Our Father in the heavens, let your name be sanctified. Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth." (Matthew 6:9, 10) Though Jesus knew that this request would be answered, he did not know the precise timing of matters. In his great prophecy regarding the end of this system of things, he said: "Concerning that day and hour nobody knows, neither the angels of the heavens nor the Son, but only the Father." (Matthew 24:36) Since Jesus Christ is central to the outworking of God's purposes, he will be directly involved in the execution of his heavenly Father's enemies. When Jesus was on earth, however, even he did not know when God would act. Did

that make him less zealous in Jehovah's service? Certainly not! Upon seeing Jesus zealously cleanse the temple, "his disciples called to mind that it is written: 'The zeal for your house will eat me up.'" (John 2:17; Psalm 69:9) Jesus kept himself fully occupied with the work he was sent to do, and he did it with unflagging zeal. He also served God with eternity in view.

⁸ This was also true of Christ's disciples. Jesus met with them just before he ascended to heaven. The account says: "When, now, they had assembled, they went asking him: 'Lord, are you restoring the kingdom

8, 9. When the disciples asked about the restoration of the Kingdom, what were they told, and how did they respond?

to Israel at this time?" Like their Master, they yearned for the Kingdom to come. Yet, Jesus replied: "It does not belong to you to get knowledge of the times or seasons which the Father has placed in his own jurisdiction; but you will receive power when the holy spirit arrives upon you, and you will be witnesses of me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the most distant part of the earth." —Acts 1:6-8.

⁹ There is no indication that the disciples were disheartened by this reply. Instead, they zealously busied themselves with the work of preaching. Within weeks, they had filled Jerusalem with their teaching. (Acts 5:28) And within 30 years, they had expanded their preaching activity to such an extent that Paul could say that the good news was preached "in all creation that is under heaven." (Colossians 1:23) Although the Kingdom was not 'restored to Israel' as the disciples had wrongly expected and it was not established in heaven during their lifetime, they kept on serving Jehovah zealously with eternity in view.

Examining Our Motives

¹⁰ Modern-day servants of Jehovah also long to see the end of this evil system of things. Our main concern, however, is not our deliverance into God's promised new world. We want to see Jehovah's name sanctified and his sovereignty vindicated. Because of this, we can rejoice that God has not told us the 'day or hour' set for the destruction of Satan's system. This allows us to give evidence that we are determined to walk with God eternally because we love him and not because we have short-term, selfish goals.

10. Not knowing when God will destroy Satan's system allows us to prove what?

¹¹ Maintaining our integrity to God also helps to prove that the Devil was wrong when he charged that upright Job—and thus humans like him—serve God out of self-interest. After Jehovah described his servant Job as a blameless, upright, God-fearing man, Satan wickedly alleged: "Is it for nothing that Job has feared God? Have not you yourself put up a hedge about him and about his house and about everything that he has all around? The work of his hands you have blessed, and his livestock itself has spread abroad in the earth. But, for a change, thrust out your hand, please, and touch everything he has and see whether he will not curse you to your very face." (Job 1:8-11) By keeping his integrity under trial, Job proved this malicious claim to be false.

¹² By similarly holding to a course of integrity, we can disprove any satanic charge that we serve God only because we know that a reward is imminent. Not knowing the exact time when God's vengeance will be executed upon the wicked gives us the opportunity to prove that we truly love Jehovah and want to walk in his ways forever. It shows that we are loyal to God and trust in his way of handling matters. Moreover, not knowing the day and hour helps to keep us vigilant and spiritually awake because we realize that the end may come at any time, like a thief in the night. (Matthew 24:42-44) By daily walking with Jehovah, we make his heart rejoice and furnish a reply to the Devil, who taunts him.—Proverbs 27:11.

Plan for Eternity!

¹³ Those who walk with God know that it 11, 12. In what way was Job's integrity challenged, and how does that challenge relate to us? 13. What does the Bible indicate about planning for the future?

is wise to make reasonable plans for the future. Aware of the problems and limitations of old age, many people try to make good use of their youth and strength so that their later life will be financially secure. What, then, of our far more important spiritual future? Proverbs 21:5 says: "The plans of the diligent one surely make for advantage, but everyone that is hasty surely heads for want." Planning ahead with eternity in view is truly advantageous. Since we do not know precisely when the end of this system will come, we need to give some thought to our future needs. But let us be balanced and put divine interests first in life. People who lack faith may conclude that centering one's interests on doing God's will is shortsighted. But is it?

¹⁴ Jesus spoke an illustration that is enlightening in this regard. He said: "The land of a certain rich man produced well. Consequently he began reasoning within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, now that I have nowhere to gather my crops?' So he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my storehouses and build bigger ones, and there I will gather all my grain and all my good things; and I will say to my soul: 'Soul, you have many good things laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, enjoy yourself.'" But God said to him, 'Unreasonable one, this night they are demanding your soul from you. Who, then, is to have the things you stored up?' So it goes with the man that lays up treasure for himself but is not rich toward God." —Luke 12:16-21.

¹⁵ Was Jesus making the point that the rich man should not have worked in an effort to have future material security? No, for the Scriptures encourage hard work.

14, 15. (a) What illustration did Jesus speak concerning plans for the future? (b) Why was the rich man of Jesus' illustration shortsighted?

(2 Thessalonians 3:10) The rich man's mistake was that he did not do what was necessary to be "rich toward God." Even if he had been able to enjoy his material wealth for many years, he would have died eventually. He was shortsighted, not thinking about eternity.

¹⁶ Walking with Jehovah with eternity in view is both practical and farsighted. It is the best way to plan for the future. While it is wise to make practical plans concerning schooling, employment, and family responsibilities, we should always remember that Jehovah never abandons his loyal servants. King David sang: "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) Jesus likewise gave assurance that God will provide for all who seek first the Kingdom and walk in Jehovah's righteous ways.—Matthew 6:33.

¹⁷ Though we serve God with eternity in view, we still keep Jehovah's day close in mind. The fulfillment of Bible prophecy eloquently testifies to the nearness of that day. This century has been characterized

16. Why can we confidently rely on Jehovah for a secure future?

17. How do we know that the end is near?

In Our Next Issue

Basis for True Faith

Legally Protecting the Good News

From Emperor
Worship to True Worship

by wars, pestilences, earthquakes, and food shortages, along with the persecution of true Christians and the global preaching of the good news of God's Kingdom. All of these are features of the time of the end of this wicked system of things. (Matthew 24:7-14; Luke 21:11) The world is full of those who 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." (2 Timothy 3:1-5) In these critical last days, life is difficult for us as Jehovah's servants. How we yearn for the day when Jehovah's Kingdom will sweep away all badness! Meanwhile, let us be determined to walk with God with eternity in view.

Serving With Endless Life in View

¹⁸ As we walk with Jehovah, let us bear in mind the faith of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Sarah. After mentioning them,

18, 19. What shows that faithful ones of old served God with eternity in view?

How Would You Respond?

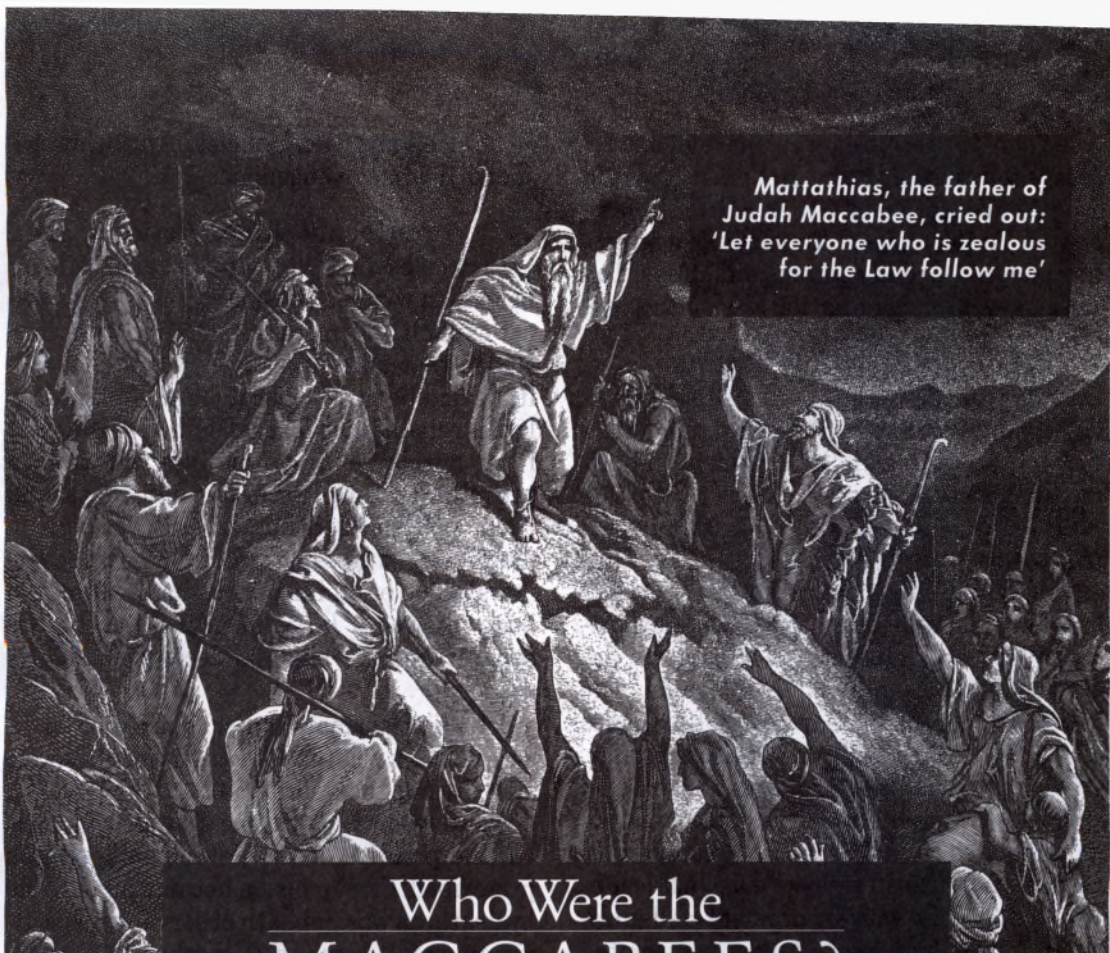
- ☐ What is God's purpose for obedient humans?
- ☐ Why has Jehovah not yet acted to bring an end to the ungodly world?
- ☐ Why should not knowing exactly when God will act not diminish our zeal?
- ☐ What are some benefits of walking with God with eternity in view?

Paul wrote: "In faith all these died, although they did not get the fulfillment of the promises, but they saw them afar off and welcomed them and publicly declared that they were strangers and temporary residents in the land." (Hebrews 11:13) Those faithful ones were "reaching out for a better place, that is, one belonging to heaven." (Hebrews 11:16) In faith, they looked forward to a better place under the rulership of God's Messianic Kingdom. We may be sure that God will reward them with life eternal in that better place—the earthly Paradise under Kingdom rule.—Hebrews 11:39, 40.

¹⁹ The prophet Micah expressed the determination of Jehovah's people to worship God eternally. He wrote: "All the peoples, for their part, will walk each one in the name of its god; but we, for our part, shall walk in the name of Jehovah our God to time indefinite, even forever." (Micah 4:5) Until his death, Micah loyally served Jehovah. Upon being resurrected in the new world, no doubt that prophet will continue to walk with God for all eternity. What a fine example for those of us living deep in the time of the end!

²⁰ Jehovah appreciates the love we show for his name. (Hebrews 6:10) He knows that it is difficult for us to maintain integrity to him in this world dominated by the Devil. Whereas "the world is passing away," however, "he that does the will of God remains forever." (1 John 2:17; 5:19) With Jehovah's help, then, let us be resolved to endure the trials we face from day to day. May our thinking and way of life focus on the wonderful blessings promised by our loving heavenly Father. These can be ours if we keep on walking with God with eternity in view.—Jude 20, 21.

20. What should be our resolve?



*Mattathias, the father of
Judah Maccabee, cried out:
'Let everyone who is zealous
for the Law follow me'*

Who Were the MACCABEES?

FOR many, the period of the Maccabees is like a black box hidden between the completion of the last books of the Hebrew Scriptures and the coming of Jesus Christ. Even as certain details are revealed when an airplane's black box is studied after a crash, some insight can be gained by a close look into the Maccabean era—one of transition and transformation for the Jewish nation.

Who were the Maccabees? How did they affect Judaism before the coming of the foretold Messiah?—Daniel 9:25, 26.

The Tidal Wave of Hellenism

Alexander the Great conquered territories all the way from Greece to India (336-

323 B.C.E.). His vast kingdom was a factor in the spreading of Hellenism—the language and culture of Greece. Alexander's officers and troops married local women, causing a fusion of Greek and foreign cultures. After Alexander's death, his kingdom was divided among his generals. At the beginning of the second century B.C.E., Antiochus III of the Grecian Seleucid dynasty in Syria wrested Israel from the control of the Greek Ptolemies of Egypt. How were the Jews in Israel affected by Hellenistic rule?

One historian writes: "Since Jews could not avoid contact with their Hellenized neighbors, still less with their own brethren abroad, absorption of Greek culture and

Mattathias appealing to the Jewish refugees/The Doré Bible Illustrations/Dover Publications

Greek ways of thinking was unavoidable. . . . Merely to breathe in the Hellenistic period involved absorption of Greek culture!" Jews took on Greek names. To varying degrees, they adopted Greek customs and dress. The subtle power of assimilation was on the rise.

Corruption of the Priests

Among the Jews most susceptible to Hellenistic influence were the priests. To many of them, accepting Hellenism meant allowing Judaism to progress with the times. One such Jew was Jason (called Joshua in Hebrew), the brother of the high priest Onias III. While Onias was away in Antioch, Jason offered a bribe to the Greek authorities. Why? To induce them to appoint Jason as high priest in place of Onias. The Greek Seleucid ruler Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164 B.C.E.) readily accepted the offer. Greek rulers had not previously interfered with the Jewish high priesthood, but Antiochus needed funds for military campaigns. He was also pleased to have a Jewish leader who would more actively promote Hellenization. At Jason's request, Antiochus granted Jerusalem the status of a Greek city (*polis*). And Jason built a gymnasium where young Jews and even priests competed in the games.

Treachery begat treachery. Three years later Menelaus, who may not have been of the priestly line, offered a higher bribe, and Jason fled. To pay Antiochus, Menelaus took large sums of money from the temple treasury. Since Onias III (in exile in Antioch) spoke out against this, Menelaus arranged his murder.

When a rumor spread that Antiochus had died, Jason returned to Jerusalem with a thousand men in an effort to take the high priesthood from Menelaus. But Antiochus was not dead. Hearing of Jason's action and of disturbances among the Jews in defiance

of his Hellenization policies, Antiochus responded with a vengeance.

Antiochus Takes Action

In his book *The Maccabees*, Moshe Pearlman writes: "Although the records are not explicit, Antiochus appears to have concluded that allowing the Jews religious latitude had been a political error. To him, the latest rebellion in Jerusalem had sprung not from purely religious motives but from a prevailing pro-Egyptian mood in Judea, and these political sentiments had been given dangerous expression precisely because the Jews, alone of all his people, had sought and been allowed a large measure of religious separatism. . . . This, he decided, would be stopped."

Israeli statesman and scholar Abba Eban summarizes what followed: "In rapid succession during the years 168 and 167 [B.C.E.], Jews were massacred, the Temple was looted, the practice of the Jewish religion was proscribed. Circumcision became punishable by death, as was Sabbath observance. The ultimate insult came in December 167, when, by order of Antiochus, an altar to Zeus was erected within the Temple, and the Jews were required to sacrifice swine flesh—unclean, of course, by Jewish law—to the god of the Greeks." During this period, Menelaus and other Hellenized Jews continued in their positions, officiating at a now defiled temple.

While many Jews accepted Hellenism, a new group calling themselves Hasidim—pious ones—encouraged stricter obedience to the Law of Moses. Now disgusted with the Hellenized priests, the common people sided more and more with the Hasidim. A period of martyrdom set in as Jews throughout the country were forced to conform to pagan customs and sacrifices or die. The apocryphal books of the Maccabees give numerous accounts of men, wom-

en, and children who preferred death to compromise.

The Maccabees React

The extreme actions of Antiochus prompted many Jews to fight for their religion. In Modi'in, northwest of Jerusalem near the modern city of Lod, a priest named Mattathias was called to the center of town. Since Mattathias was respected by the local populace, the king's representative tried to convince him to participate in a pagan sacrifice—to save his own life and to set an example for the rest of the populace. When Mattathias refused, another Jew came forward, ready to compromise. Filled with indignation, Mattathias grabbed a weapon and killed him. Stunned by the violent reaction of this elderly man, the Greek soldiers responded slowly. Within seconds, Mattathias had killed the Greek official as well. The five sons of Mattathias and the town's residents overpowered the Greek troops before they could defend themselves.

Mattathias cried out: 'Let everyone who is zealous for the Law follow me.' To escape reprisals, he and his sons fled to the hill country. And as word of their actions spread, Jews (including many Hasidim) joined them.

Mattathias appointed his son Judah over military operations. Perhaps because of Judah's military prowess, he was called Maccabee, meaning "hammer." Mattathias and his sons were called Hasmonaeans, a name derived from the town Heshmon or from a forefather so named. (Joshua 15:27) Since Judah Maccabee became the prominent figure during the rebellion, however, the whole family came to be called the Maccabees.

The Temple Reclaimed

During the first year of the revolt, Mattathias and his sons were able to organize a small army. On more than one occasion,

Greek troops attacked groups of Hasidim fighters on the Sabbath. Though capable of defending themselves, they would not violate the Sabbath. Mass slaughters therefore resulted. Mattathias—now viewed as a religious authority—instituted a ruling that allowed Jews to defend themselves on the Sabbath. This ruling not only gave new life to the rebellion but also set a pattern in Judaism of allowing religious leaders to adapt Jewish law to changing circumstances. The Talmud reflects this trend in the later statement: "Let them desecrate one Sabbath so that they may sanctify many Sabbaths." —Yoma 85b.

After the death of his elderly father, Judah Maccabee became the undisputed leader of the revolt. Realizing that he had no ability to defeat his enemy in open battle, he devised new methods, like guerrilla warfare of modern times. He struck the forces of Antiochus in areas where they could not resort to their usual methods of defense. In one battle after another, Judah thus succeeded in defeating forces overwhelmingly larger than his own.

Faced with internal rivalries and Rome's rising power, rulers of the Seleucid Empire were less concerned with enforcing anti-Jewish decrees. This opened the way for Judah to press his attack to the very gates of Jerusalem. In December 165 B.C.E. (or perhaps 164 B.C.E.), he and his troops captured the temple, cleansed its utensils, and rededicated it—three years to the day after its desecration. The Jews commemorate this event annually during Hanukkah, the festival of dedication.

Politics Over Piety

The goals of the revolt had been attained. Prohibitions against the practice of Judaism had been removed. Worship and sacrifices at the temple had been restored. Now

satisfied, the Hasidim left the army of Judah Maccabee and returned to their homes. But Judah had other ideas. He had a well-trained army, so why not use it to establish an independent Jewish state? The religious causes that set the revolt in motion were now replaced by political incentives. So the struggle continued.

Looking for support in his fight against Seleucid domination, Judah Maccabee made a treaty with Rome. Although he was killed in battle in 160 B.C.E., his brothers continued the fight. Judah's brother Jonathan maneuvered matters so that the Seleucid rulers agreed to his appointment as high priest and ruler in Judea, though still under their sovereignty. When Jonathan was deceived, captured, and killed as the result of a Syrian plot, his brother Simeon—the last of the

Maccabee brothers—took over. Under Simeon's rule, the last vestiges of Seleucid domination were removed (in 141 B.C.E.). Simeon renewed the alliance with Rome, and the Jewish leadership accepted him as ruler and high priest. An independent Hasmonaeen dynasty was thus established in the hands of the Maccabees.

The Maccabees reestablished worship at the temple before the coming of the Messiah. (Compare John 1:41, 42; 2:13-17.) But just as confidence in the priesthood was broken by the actions of Hellenized priests, it was shaken even further under the Hasmonaeans. Indeed, rule by politically minded priests rather than by a king of faithful David's line did not bring true blessings to the Jewish people.—2 Samuel 7:16; Psalm 89:3, 4, 35, 36.

Should I Ask My Brother for a Loan?

SIMON'S youngest child is sick and in urgent need of medicine. But Simon is very poor and cannot afford it. What can he do? Well, a fellow Christian named Michael is better off than he is financially. Perhaps Michael will lend him the money. In his heart, however, Simon knows it is unlikely that he will be able to repay the loan.*

When Simon approaches him, Michael is faced with a dilemma. He realizes that there is a genuine need but suspects that Simon will not be able to pay back the money because he has a struggle just to feed his family. What should Michael do?

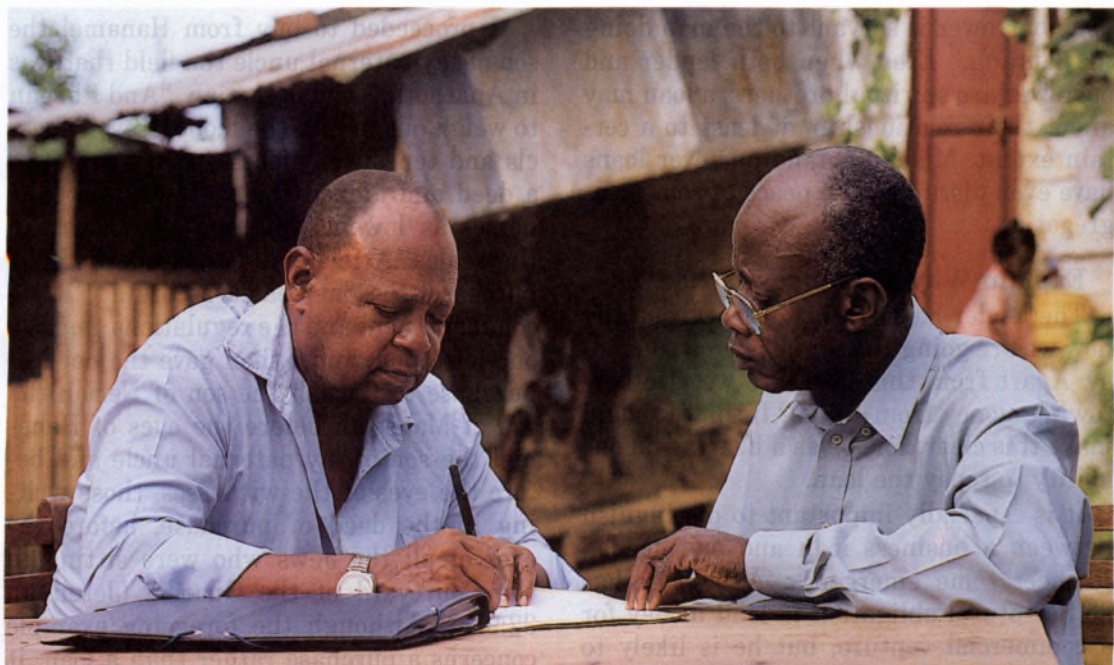
* Substitute names are used here.

In many countries, people can lose their means of livelihood overnight and find themselves with no money or insurance to cover medical bills. Bank loans may be unavailable or far too expensive. When an emergency arises, the only solution might seem to be a loan. Before asking for a loan, though, there are some important matters to consider.

Count the Cost

The Scriptures provide guidelines for both the lender and the borrower. By heeding this counsel, we can avoid many misunderstandings and hurt feelings.

For instance, the Bible reminds us that we should not view lightly the matter of



borrowing money. The apostle Paul urged Christians in Rome: "Do not you people be owing anybody a single thing, except to love one another; for he that loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law." (Romans 13:8) Ideally, the only debt a Christian should owe others is love. Hence, we might first ask ourselves, 'Is this loan really essential?'

If the answer is yes, then it is wise to consider the consequences of getting into debt. Jesus Christ showed that important decisions require careful thought and planning. He asked his disciples: "Who of you that wants to build a tower does not first sit down and calculate the expense, to see if he has enough to complete it?" (Luke 14: 28) This principle applies when considering whether to ask a brother for a loan. Calculating the expense of a loan means calculating how and when we will repay it.

The lender has a right to know how and

**Putting loan agreements in writing
is a sign of love, not of mistrust**

when the loan will be repaid. By weighing matters carefully, we will be able to give him concrete answers. Have we calculated the cost of paying back the loan within a reasonable period of time? Of course, it would be easier to tell our brother: "I will repay you as soon as possible. You know you can trust me." But should we not handle such matters in a more responsible way? We must be determined from the outset to repay the loan, since that is what Jehovah requires of us. "The wicked one is borrowing and does not pay back," says Psalm 37:21.

By calculating how and when we will repay the loan, we remind ourselves of the serious commitment we are making. This reduces the likelihood that we will incur debt needlessly. If we can avoid going into debt, there are advantages. Proverbs 22:7 warns:

"The borrower is servant to the man doing the lending." Even when both lender and borrower are spiritual brothers, a loan may affect their relationship, at least to a certain extent. Misunderstandings over loans have even disrupted the peace of some congregations.

Explain Why the Money Is Needed

The lender has a right to know basically how we are going to use the borrowed money. Apart from this loan, are we also borrowing money from others? If so, we should make this clear, for it has a bearing on our ability to repay the loan.

It is especially important to distinguish between a business loan and one needed to meet some emergency. A brother has no Scriptural obligation to lend money for a commercial venture, but he is likely to feel inclined to help if another brother, through no fault of his own, finds himself unable to pay for such basic necessities as food, clothing, or essential medical care. Frankness and truthfulness in these matters will help to prevent misunderstandings.—Ephesians 4:25.

Put It in Writing

A written record of the agreement is a vital step if we would avoid future misunderstandings. It is easy to forget specific details of an agreement unless they are put in writing. We need to write down the amount borrowed and when it is to be paid back. It would be advisable for both the borrower and the lender to sign the agreement and for each of them to keep a personal copy. The Bible indicates that financial transactions should be documented. Shortly before the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem, Jehovah told Jeremiah to buy a plot of land from one of his relatives. We can benefit from a review of the procedure.

"I proceeded to buy from Hanamel the son of my paternal uncle the field that was in Anathoth," said Jeremiah. "And I began to weigh out to him the money, seven shekels and ten silver pieces. Then I wrote in a deed and affixed the seal and took witnesses as I went weighing the money in the scales. After that I took the deed of purchase, the one sealed according to the commandment and the regulations, and the one left open; and I then gave the deed of purchase to Baruch the son of Neriah the son of Mahseiah before the eyes of Hanamel the son of my paternal uncle and before the eyes of the witnesses, those writing in the deed of purchase, before the eyes of all the Jews who were sitting in the Courtyard of the Guard." (Jeremiah 32:9-12) Although the foregoing example concerns a purchase rather than a loan, it shows the importance of handling monetary transactions in a clear, unambiguous way.—See *The Watchtower*, May 1, 1973, pages 287-8.

If difficulties arise, Christians should try to resolve them in harmony with Jesus' counsel recorded at Matthew 18:15-17. But one elder who has tried to be helpful in such matters comments: "In nearly every case, there was an absence of a written agreement. As a result, there was no clear understanding between the two parties as to how the loan had to be repaid. I am convinced that putting these matters in writing is a sign of love, not of mistrust."

Once we have made an agreement, we should certainly strive to keep our word. Jesus exhorted: "Just let your word *Yes* mean *Yes*, your *No*, *No*; for what is in excess of these is from the wicked one." (Matthew 5:37) If some unforeseen problem prevents us from repaying the loan on schedule, we should immediately explain the situation to

the lender. Perhaps he will allow us to repay the loan in smaller amounts over a longer period of time.

Yet, unfavorable circumstances do not excuse us from our responsibilities. A person who fears Jehovah does his best to keep his word. (Psalm 15:4) Although matters may not turn out as we expected, we should be prepared to make sacrifices in order to pay our debts, since that is our Christian responsibility.

Be Cautious About Lending Money

Of course, the borrower is not the only one who needs to weigh matters carefully. A brother who is asked for a loan also has to calculate the expense. Before lending money, we are wise if we take the time to consider matters carefully and objectively. The Bible urges caution, saying: "Do not get to be among those striking hands, among those who go security for loans."—Proverbs 22:26.

Before committing yourself, consider what might happen if the brother is unable to pay you back. Would you then have serious financial problems yourself? Even though the brother may have the best of intentions, circumstances can change or his calculations may be mistaken. James 4:14 reminds all of us: "You do not know what your life will be tomorrow. For you are a mist appearing for a little while and then disappearing."—Compare Ecclesiastes 9:11.

Especially in the case of a business loan, it would be wise to consider the reputation of the borrower. Is he known for being trustworthy and reliable, or is he inept at handling financial matters? Does he have a tendency to go around the congregation asking various ones for money? It is wise to bear in mind these words: "Anyone inexpe-

rienced puts faith in every word, but the shrewd one considers his steps."—Proverbs 14:15.

At times, a loan may not be in the best interests of the borrower either. It could easily become a burden for him, robbing him of his joy. Do we want such a brother to become our "servant"? Might a loan affect our relationship, fostering uneasiness or even embarrassment if he is unable to repay it?

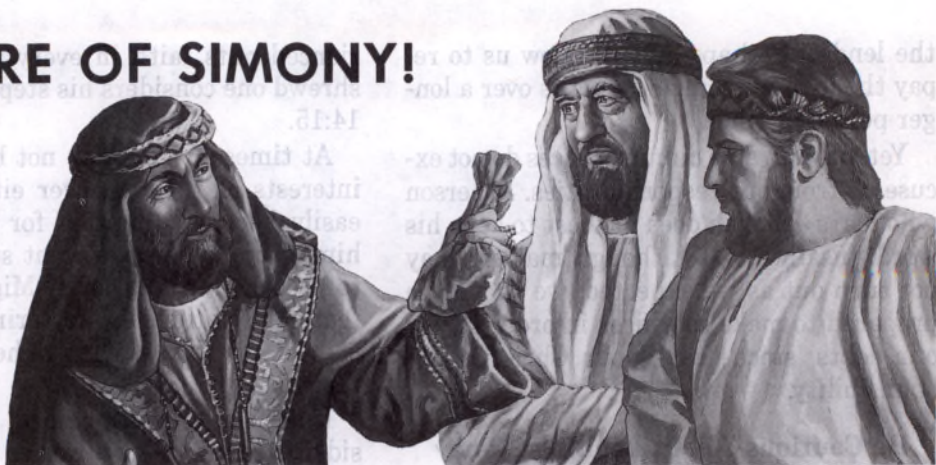
If there is a genuine need, could we consider making a gift rather than a loan, even though the amount may be smaller? The Scriptures encourage us to be compassionate when we see our brother in need. "The righteous one is showing favor and is making gifts," sang the psalmist. (Psalm 37:21) Love should move us to do what we can to give practical help to needy brothers.—James 2:15, 16.

Consider Your Steps Carefully

Since loans are a potential source of friction, we might view them as a last resort rather than an easy option. As noted earlier, the borrower should be frank with the lender, putting into writing how and when the loan will be repaid. And in a case of true hardship, a gift may be the best solution.

Michael did not lend Simon the money he requested. Instead, Michael gave him a smaller amount as a gift. Simon was grateful for such help toward paying for his child's medicine. And Michael was happy that he was able to show his brotherly love in a practical way. (Proverbs 14:21; Acts 20:35) Both Michael and Simon look forward to the time under Kingdom rule when Christ "will deliver the poor one crying for help" and nobody will say, "I am sick." (Psalm 72:12; Isaiah 33:24) Until then, let us consider our steps carefully if we ever feel obliged to ask a brother for a loan.

BEWARE OF SIMONY!



SIMON of Samaria was highly regarded in his community. He lived in the first century C.E., and people were so enthralled by his practice of magical arts that they would say of him: "This man is the Power of God, which can be called Great."—Acts 8:9-11.

After Simon became a baptized Christian, however, he took note of a power much greater than what he formerly displayed. It was the power that was conferred upon Jesus' apostles, enabling them to impart to others miraculous gifts of the holy spirit. Simon was so impressed that he offered the apostles money and requested: "Give me also this authority, that anyone upon whom I lay my hands may receive holy spirit."—Acts 8:13-19.

The apostle Peter rebuked Simon, saying: "May your silver perish with you, because you thought through money to get possession of the free gift of God. You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not straight in the sight of God."—Acts 8:20, 21.

From this Bible account comes the word "simony," which has been defined as "the sin of buying or selling positions or promotions in the church." The *New Catholic Encyclopedia* acknowledges that especially from the 9th to the 11th century "simony pervaded the monasteries, the lower clergy, the episcopacy, and even

the papacy." The ninth edition of *The Encyclopedia Britannica* (1878) notes: "A study of the history of the Papal conclaves leaves the student with the conviction that no election untainted by simony has ever yet been made, while in a great number of instances the simony practised in the conclave has been of the grossest, most shameless, and most overt kind."

True Christians today must beware of simony. For example, some might shower excessive praise or generous gifts upon those who can grant them added privileges. Conversely, those who can grant such privileges might show favoritism toward those able—and often eager—to shower them with gifts. Both situations involve simony, and the Scriptures clearly condemn such a course. "Repent, therefore, of this badness of yours," Peter urged Simon, "and supplicate Jehovah that, if possible, the device of your heart [“this scheme of yours,” *New Jerusalem Bible*] may be forgiven you; for I see you are a poisonous gall and a bond of unrighteousness."—Acts 8:22, 23.

Happily, Simon saw the seriousness of his wrong desire. He begged the apostles: "You men, make supplication for me to Jehovah that none of the things you have said may come upon me." (Acts 8:24) Heeding the important lesson contained in this account, genuine Christians strive to avoid any taint of simony.

T I T U S

"A Fellow Worker for Your Interests"

PROBLEMS sometimes arose in the first-century Christian congregation. These had to be resolved, and this required courage and obedience. A man who successfully faced more than one such challenge was Titus. As one who shared in the work with the apostle Paul, he made earnest efforts to help others do things Jehovah's way. Paul therefore told Christians in Corinth that Titus was 'a fellow worker for their interests.'—2 Corinthians 8:23.

Who was Titus? What part did he play in resolving problems? And how can we benefit from considering his conduct?

The Circumcision Issue

Titus was an uncircumcised Greek. (Galatians 2:3)* Since Paul calls him "a genuine child according to a faith shared in common," Titus may have been one of the apostle's spiritual children. (Titus 1:4; compare 1 Timothy 1:2.) Titus was with Paul, Barnabas, and others from Antioch, Syria, when they went to Jerusalem in about 49 C.E. to discuss the question of circumci-

* Galatians 2:3 describes Titus as a Greek (*Hel'len*). This may mean that he was of Greek descent. However, it is claimed that some Greek writers used the plural form (*Hel'le-nes*) in referring to non-Greeks who were Greek in language and culture. It is possible that Titus was Greek in that sense.



sion.—Acts 15:1, 2; Galatians 2:1.

It has been suggested that since the conversion of uncircumcised Gentiles was under discussion in Jerusalem, Titus was taken along to demonstrate that Jews and non-Jews could gain God's favor whether they were circumcised or not. Some members of the Jerusalem congregation who had been Pharisees before accepting Christianity argued that Gentile converts were obliged to get circumcised and to observe the Law, but this argument was resisted. Compelling Titus and other Gentiles to get circumcised would have been denying that salvation depends on Jehovah's undeserved kindness and on faith in Jesus Christ rather than on works of the Law. It would also have been a rejection of evidence that Gentiles, or people of the nations, had received God's holy spirit.—Acts 15:5-12.

Dispatched to Corinth

When the circumcision issue was settled, Paul and Barnabas were given full authority to preach to the nations. At the same time, they also endeavored to keep the poor in mind. (Galatians 2:9, 10) Indeed, when Titus reappears in the inspired record about six years later, he is in Corinth as Paul's envoy in organizing a collection for

the holy ones. As Titus went about doing this work, though, he found himself in another situation charged with tension.

Paul's correspondence with the Corinthians reveals that he first wrote them to "quit mixing in company with fornicators." He had to tell them to remove an unrepentant fornicator from their midst. Yes, Paul wrote them a strong letter, doing so "with many tears." (1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 2 Corinthians 2:4) Meanwhile, Titus was dispatched to Corinth to assist in the collection taking place there for needy Judean Christians. Possibly, he was also sent to observe the response of the Corinthians to Paul's letter.—2 Corinthians 8:1-6.

How would the Corinthians react to Paul's counsel? Anxious to find out, Paul may have sent Titus from Ephesus across the Aegean Sea to Corinth, with instructions to report back as soon as possible. If such a mission was completed before navigation ceased for the winter (in about mid-November), Titus could go to Troas by ship or take the longer overland route via the Hellespont. Paul probably arrived at the agreed meeting place in Troas early, since the riot sparked by the silversmiths caused him to leave Ephesus sooner than anticipated. After an anxious wait in Troas, Paul realized that Titus would not be coming by sea. Hence, Paul struck out overland in the hope of meeting him along the way. Once on European soil, Paul would take the Via Egnatia, and he finally met up with Titus in Macedonia. To Paul's great relief and joy, the news from Corinth was good. The congregation had reacted favorably to the apostle's counsel.—2 Corinthians 2:12, 13; 7:5-7.

Though Paul had worried about the kind of welcome his envoy was going to experience, God helped Titus to fulfill his commission. Titus had been received with "fear

and trembling." (2 Corinthians 7:8-15) To use the words of expositor W. D. Thomas: "We can assume that without diluting the strength of Paul's censure, [Titus] pleaded skilfully and tactfully with the Corinthians; assuring them that Paul, in speaking as he did, had only their spiritual well-being in mind." In the process, Titus had come to love the Corinthian Christians because of their obedient spirit and positive changes. Their commendable attitude had proved to be a source of encouragement to him.

What about the other aspect of Titus' mission to Corinth—organizing the collection for the holy ones in Judea? Titus had been working on that as well, as can be deduced from information found in 2 Corinthians. That letter was probably written in Macedonia during the fall of 55 C.E., soon after Titus and Paul met. Paul wrote that Titus, who had initiated the collection, was now being sent back with two unnamed helpers in order to complete it. Being earnestly interested in the Corinthians, Titus was very willing to return. As Titus made his way back to Corinth, likely he was carrying Paul's second inspired letter to the Corinthians.—2 Corinthians 8:6, 17, 18, 22.

Not only was Titus a good organizer but he was also the kind of man that could be entrusted with delicate commissions in difficult situations. He was courageous, mature, and firm. Paul evidently considered Titus capable of dealing with the ongoing challenges presented by Corinth's "superfine apostles." (2 Corinthians 11:5) This impression of Titus is confirmed by his next appearance in the Scriptures, in another demanding assignment.

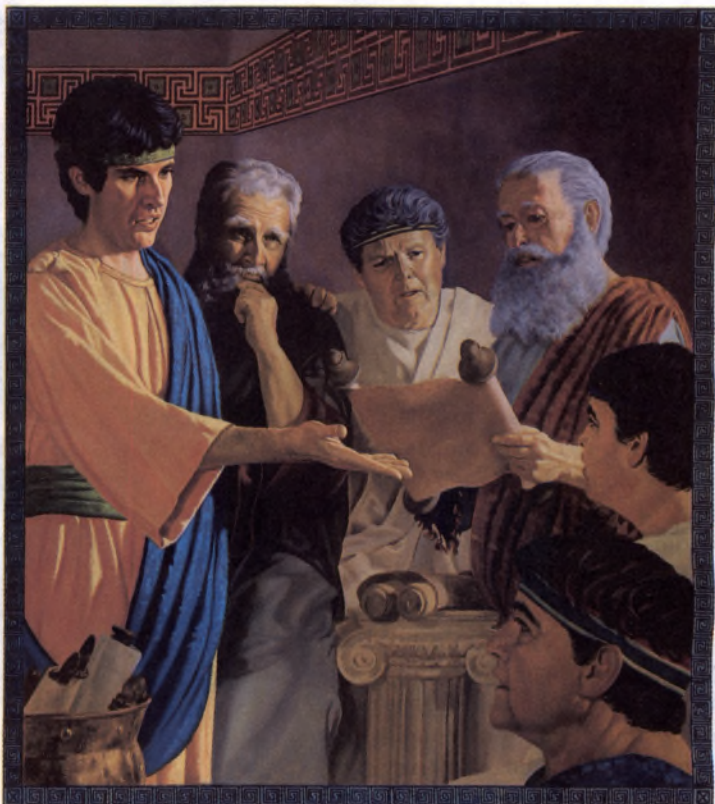
On the Island of Crete

It is probable that sometime between 61 and 64 C.E., Paul wrote to Titus, who was

then serving on the Mediterranean island of Crete. Paul had left him there to “correct the things that were defective” and to “make appointments of older men in city after city.” In general, Cretans had the reputation of being “liars, injurious wild beasts, unemployed gluttons.” In Crete, therefore, Titus would again be called upon to act with courage and firmness. (Titus 1:5, 10-12) That was a very responsible task, for it was likely to shape the future of Christianity on the island. Under inspiration, Paul helped Titus by specifying what to look for in potential overseers. Those qualifications are still weighed in connection with the appointment of Christian elders.

The Scriptures do not indicate when Titus left Crete. He was there long enough for Paul to ask him to provide for the needs of Zenas and Apollos, who were stopping there on a journey at some unspecified time. But Titus would not be on the island very long. Paul was planning to send either Artemas or Tychicus there, and then Titus was to rendezvous with the apostle in Nicopolis, likely the prominent city of that name located in northwest Greece.—Titus 3:12, 13.

From the Bible’s last fleeting reference to Titus, we learn that probably in about 65 C.E., Paul sent him on yet another assignment. It took him to Dalmatia, a region east of the Adriatic Sea in present-day Croatia. (2 Timothy 4:10) We are not told what Titus was to do there, but it has been suggested that he was being sent to regulate



Titus was a courageous fellow worker for the interests of Christians in Corinth and elsewhere

congregational affairs and engage in missionary activity. If so, Titus would be acting in a capacity similar to the one in which he served in Crete.

How thankful we are for mature Christian overseers like Titus! Their clear understanding of Scriptural principles and their courageous application of them help to safeguard the spirituality of the congregation. Let us imitate their faith and prove to be like Titus by promoting the spiritual interests of our fellow believers.—Hebrews 13:7.

What kind of name do you have?

IN THE Bible, the word "name" sometimes refers to one's reputation. For example, wise King Solomon wrote: "A name is better than good oil, and the day of death than the day of one's being born." (Ecclesiastes 7:1; compare Proverbs 22:1.) According to Solomon's words, a person is not born with a good name. Rather, it is during the course of his life that he gains a reputation with real meaning. His name identifies him as to his personal qualities, whether he is generous or selfish, compassionate or cold, humble or haughty, even righteous or wicked.

Consider David. During his kingship, he proved himself strong and unwavering. At the same time, David humbly acknowledged his mistakes and repented of his gross sins. With good reason, Jehovah's prophet indicated that David was "a man agreeable to [God's] heart." (1 Samuel 13:14) Young David already had a good name with God.



In contrast, Judean King Jehoram made a bad name for himself. He turned his subjects away from the worship of Jehovah and even had his six brothers and some of the princes of Judah put to death. Eventually, Jehovah afflicted Jehoram with a painful illness that led to his death. The Bible says that Jehoram "went away without being desired," or as *Today's English Version* puts it, "nobody was sorry when he died." —2 Chronicles 21:20.

The life course of David and Jehoram illustrates the truthfulness of the Bible proverb: "The remembrance of the righteous one is due for a blessing, but the very name of the wicked ones will rot." (Proverbs 10:7) Each of us should therefore soberly consider the question, "What kind of name am I making with God and with my fellowman?"