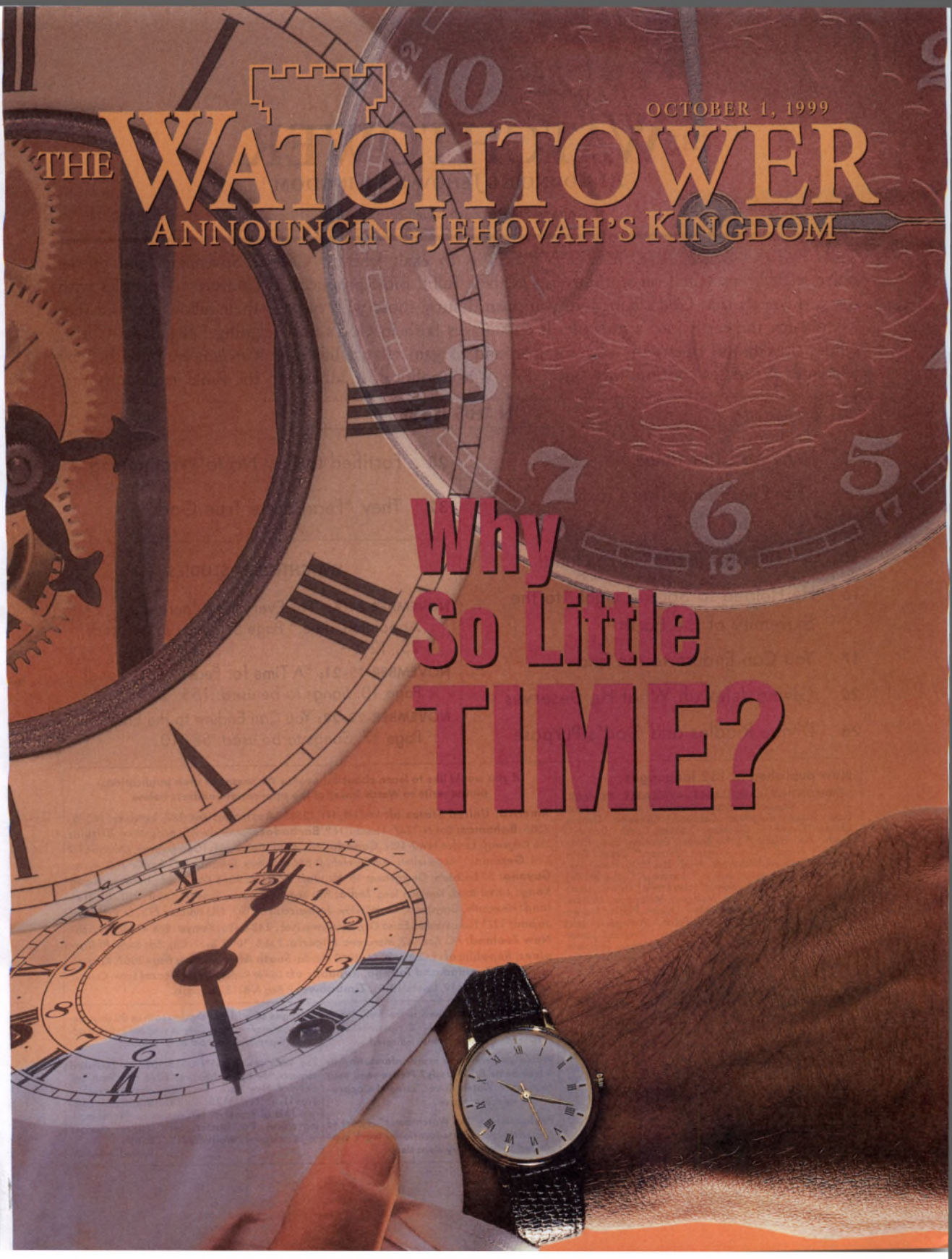
OCTOBER 1, 1999

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



Why So Little TIME?

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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Why So Little TIME?

TIME. We may find it difficult to define the word precisely, but we certainly know that we never seem to have enough time. We also know that it goes by quickly. In fact, we often sigh, "Time simply flies."

Nevertheless, it is evident that the English poet Austin Dobson came closer to the truth when he noted in 1877: "Time goes, you say? Ah no! Alas, Time stays, we go." Since his death in 1921, Dobson has been gone for almost 80 years; time has continued.

Time in Abundance

Of mankind's Creator, the Bible tells us: "Before the mountains themselves were born, or you proceeded to bring forth as with labor pains the earth and the productive land, even from time indefinite to time indefinite you are God." (Psalm 90:2) Or as *The New Jerusalem Bible* renders it, "from eternity to eternity you are God." So time will last as long as God himself lasts—forever!

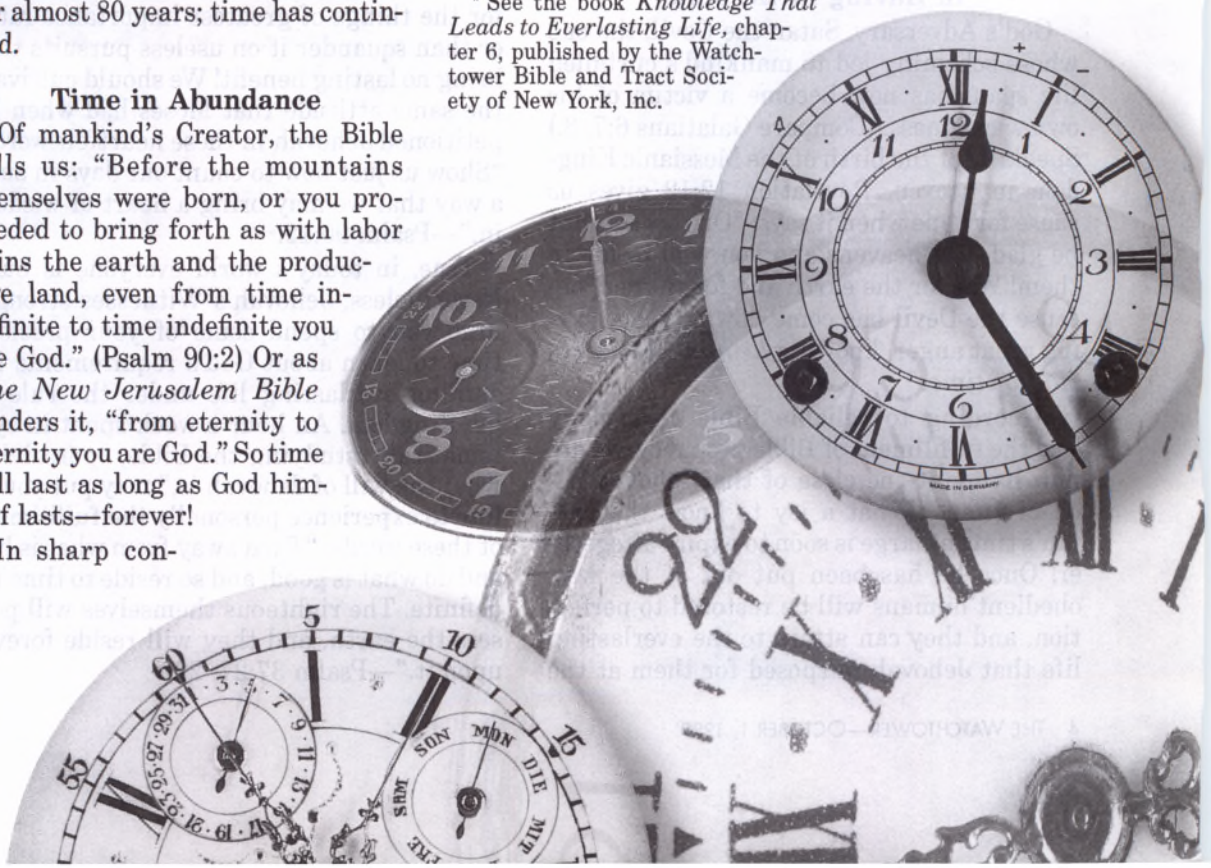
In sharp contrast with God, who has an eternity of time at his disposal, we read of humans: "For all our days have come to their decline in your fury; we have finished our years just like a whisper. In themselves the days of our years are seventy years; and if because of special mightiness they are eighty years, yet their insistence is on trouble and hurtful things; for it must quickly pass by, and away we fly."—Psalm 90:9, 10.

Why is life today so short, since the Bible clearly teaches that God's purpose is for man to live forever? (Genesis 1:27, 28; Psalm 37:29) Instead of an unlimited life span as God purposed, why do humans on an average have, at best, less than 30,000 days? Why do humans have so little time? Who or what is responsible for this sad situation? The Bible provides clear and satisfying answers.*

Ever Less Time

Oldsters will verify that in recent decades the pace of living has speeded up. One journalist, Dr. Sybille Fritsch, pointed out that during the past 200 years, the workweek has dropped from 80 to 38 hours, "yet

* See the book *Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life,* chapter 6, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.



this has not put a stop to our complaining." She clarified: "No time; time is money; gasping for time like gasping for breath; a life of hurry-scurry."

New inventions have opened up opportunities and possibilities never even dreamed of by earlier generations. But the greater the possibility of engaging in a multitude of activities, the greater the frustration at having too little time to do so. Nowadays, in many parts of the world, people live by the clock, rushing from one deadline to the next. Dad must leave for work at 7:00 a.m., Mother must get the children to school by 8:30 a.m., Granddad has a doctor's appointment at 9:40 a.m., and all of us must get ready for an important meeting at 7:30 p.m. In the haste of chasing one deadline after another, there is scarcely time left for any relaxation. And we complain about the daily grind, about the rat race.

We Are Not Alone in Having Little Time

God's Adversary, Satan the Devil, the one whose scheming led to mankind's curtailed life span, has now become a victim of his own wickedness. (Compare Galatians 6:7, 8.) Speaking of the birth of the Messianic Kingdom in heaven, Revelation 12:12 gives us cause for hope when it says: "On this account be glad, you heavens and you who reside in them! Woe for the earth and for the sea, because the Devil has come down to you, having great anger, knowing *he has a short period of time.*"

According to reliable Bible chronology and the fulfillment of Bible prophecy, we are now living at the close of that "short period of time." What a joy to know that Satan's time at large is soon to expire altogether! Once he has been put out of the way, obedient humans will be restored to perfection, and they can attain to the everlasting life that Jehovah purposed for them at the beginning. (Revelation 21:1-4) Lack of time will no longer be a problem.

Can you imagine what it will mean to have everlasting life—to live forever? Never again will you be plagued by things that you had to leave undone. If you need more time, there is tomorrow, or next week, or next year —in fact, a vast eternity stretching out before you!

Using Wisely the Time We Now Have

Realizing that his time to influence humans is limited, Satan tries to keep people so busy that they have no time to listen to the good news of God's established Kingdom. We, therefore, do well to heed the divine counsel: "Keep strict watch that how you walk is not as unwise but as wise persons, buying out the opportune time for yourselves, because the days are wicked. On this account cease becoming unreasonable, but go on perceiving what the will of Jehovah is."—Ephesians 5:15-17.

How vital that we use our time wisely for the things of greatest importance rather than squander it on useless pursuits that bring no lasting benefit! We should cultivate the same attitude that Moses had when he petitioned Jehovah in these heartfelt words: "Show us just how to count our days in such a way that we may bring a heart of wisdom in."—Psalm 90:12.

True, in today's world everyone is busy. Nevertheless, Jehovah's Witnesses strongly urge you to spend some of your precious time to learn about God's requirements for gaining everlasting life under the rule of his Kingdom. An hour a week spent in systematically studying the Bible, "perceiving what the will of Jehovah is," may put you in line to experience personally the fulfillment of these words: "Turn away from what is bad and do what is good, and so reside to time indefinite. The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it."—Psalm 37:27, 29.

"FOR EVERYTHING THERE IS AN APPOINTED TIME"

"For everything there is an appointed time, even a time for every affair under the heavens."—ECCLESIASTES 3:1.

PEOPLE often say, "I should have done it sooner." Or possibly in hindsight, "I should have waited." Such reactions demonstrate the difficulty that imperfect humans have in determining the right time for certain things to be done. This limitation has caused relationships to crumble. It has led to disappointment and frustration. And worst of all, it has weakened some people's faith in Jehovah and his organization.

[2] Having the wisdom and the insight that humans lack, Jehovah is capable of foreknowing, if he so desires, the outcome of every action. He can know "from the beginning the finale." (Isaiah 46:10) Hence, he can unerringly pick the most opportune time to do anything he wants to do. Rather than trusting our own faulty sense of timing, therefore, we are wise to accept Jehovah's determination of appointed times!

[3] For example, mature Christians loyally wait for Jehovah's appointed time for certain Bible prophecies to be fulfilled. They stay busy in his service, all the while keeping clearly in mind the principle of Lamentations 3:26: "Good it is that one should wait, even silently, for the salvation of Jehovah." (Compare Habakkuk 3:16.) At the same time, they are convinced that Jehovah's announced execution of judgment, "even if it should delay, . . . will without fail come true. It will not be late."—Habakkuk 2:3.

[4] On the other hand, if we fail to understand fully certain Bible texts or explanations provided in Watch Tower publications, do we have reason to become impatient? Awaiting Jehovah's appointed time to clarify matters is the course of wisdom. "For the Sovereign Lord Jehovah will not do a thing unless he has revealed his confidential matter to his servants the prophets." (Amos 3:7) What a marvelous promise! But we must realize that Jehovah reveals his confidential matters at the time *he* deems advisable. For that purpose God has authorized a "faithful and discreet slave" to provide his people with "their [spiritual] food *at the proper time.*" (Matthew 24:45) There is, therefore, no reason for us to become overly concerned, or even agitated, that certain matters are not fully explained. Rather, we can be confident that if we patiently wait on Jehovah, he will provide, through the faithful slave, what is needed "at the proper time."

[5] Wise King Solomon spoke of 28 different things, each of which has its "appointed

1. What difficulty do imperfect humans have, and to what has this led in some instances?
2, 3. (a) Why is accepting Jehovah's determination of appointed times the course of wisdom? (b) What balanced view should we have as regards the fulfillment of Bible prophecy?

4. How should Amos 3:7 and Matthew 24:45 help us patiently to wait on Jehovah?
5. Of what benefit is a consideration of Ecclesiastes 3:1-8?

time." (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8) An understanding of the meaning and implications of what Solomon said will help us to determine the right time and the wrong time for certain actions, as viewed by God. (Hebrews 5:14) That, in turn, will allow us to pattern our lives accordingly.

"A Time to Weep and a Time to Laugh"

[6] Although there is "a time to weep and a time to laugh," who does not prefer the latter to the former? (Ecclesiastes 3:4) Sad to say, we live in a world that primarily gives us reasons for weeping. Depressing news dominates the media. We recoil in horror when we hear of youngsters gunning down fellow students at school, of parents abusing their children, of terrorists killing or maiming innocent victims, and of so-called natural disasters playing havoc with human lives and property. Starving, hollow-eyed children and uprooted refugees on the run vie for our attention on the television screen. Previously unfamiliar terms like ethnic cleansing, AIDS, germ warfare, and El Niño now create anxiety in our minds and hearts—each in its own way.

[7] No doubt about it, today's world is full of tragedy and heartache. Nevertheless, as if to downplay the seriousness of the situation, the entertainment industry routinely serves up shallow, tasteless, oftentimes immoral and violent offerings, designed to mislead us into ignoring the misery that others are suffering. But the carefree spirit of foolish jesting and frivolous laughter that such entertainment engenders is not to be confused with genuine joy. The joy that is a fruit of God's spirit is something Satan's world simply cannot provide.—Galatians 5:22, 23; Ephesians 5:3, 4.

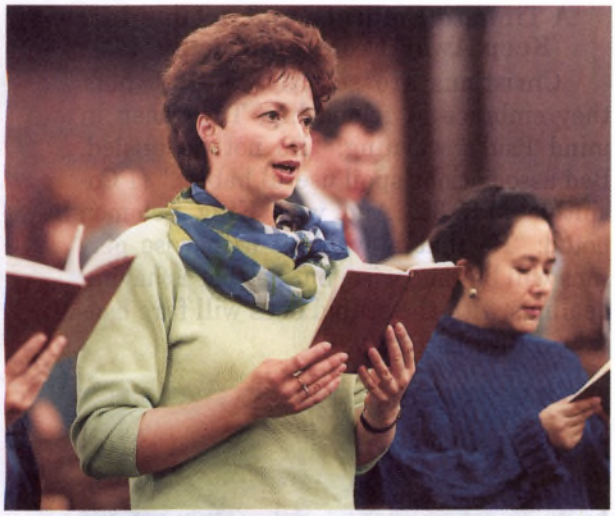
6, 7. (a) What causes concerned people today to "weep"? (b) How does the world try to counteract the serious situation in which it finds itself?

Although Christians "weep" because of world conditions . . .

[8] Recognizing the world's deplorable state, we can understand that today is hardly the time to give high priority to laughter. It is not the time to live only for recreation and entertainment or to allow "having fun" to take precedence over the pursuit of spiritual matters. (Compare Ecclesiastes 7:2-4.) "Those making use of the world" should be "as those not using it to the full," said the apostle Paul. Why? Because "the scene of this world is changing." (1 Corinthians 7:31) True Christians live each day in full recognition of the seriousness of the times in which we live.—Philippians 4:8.

Despite Weeping, Truly Happy!

[9] The people who lived at the time of the global Deluge lacked a serious view of life. They went about their daily routine and

8. Should Christians today give priority to weeping or to laughter? Explain.
9. What regrettable situation existed in the days prior to the Deluge, and what meaning does this have for us today?

. . . they are actually the happiest people in the world

failed to weep over the "badness of man [that] was abundant in the earth," looking on with indifference as "the earth became filled with violence." (Genesis 6:5, 11) Jesus referred to that regrettable state, and he foretold a similar attitude among people in our day. He warned: "As they were in those days before the flood, eating and drinking, men marrying and women being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark; and they took no note until the flood came and swept them all away, so the presence of the Son of man will be."—Matthew 24:38, 39.

[10] Some 1,850 years after the Flood, in the days of Haggai, many Israelites showed a similar lack of serious concern for spiritual matters. Busy pursuing personal interests, they failed to discern that theirs was the time for giving priority to Jehovah's interests. We read: "As regards this people, they have said: 'The time has not come, the time of the house of Jehovah, for it to be built.' And the word of Jehovah continued to come by means of Haggai the prophet, saying: 'Is it the time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, while this house is waste? And now this is what Jehovah of armies has said, "Set your heart upon your ways."'"—Haggai 1:1-5.

[11] As Jehovah's Witnesses today, with responsibilities and privileges before Jehovah like those of the Israelites of Haggai's time, we would also do well to set our hearts upon our ways, doing so in all seriousness. Do we "weep" over world conditions and the reproach these bring upon God's name? Are we pained when people deny God's existence or blatantly ignore his righteous principles? Do we react as did the marked individuals seen by Ezekiel in a vision 2,500 years ago? About them we read: "Jehovah went on to say to [the man with the secretary's inkhorn]: 'Pass through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and you must put a mark on the foreheads of the men that are sighing and groaning over all the detestable things that are being done in the midst of it.'"—Ezekiel 9:4.

[12] The significance of this account for us today becomes apparent when we read the instructions to the six men with weapons for smashing: "Pass through the city after him and strike. Let not your eye feel sorry, and do not feel any compassion. Old man, young man and virgin and little child and women you should kill off—to a ruination. But to any man upon whom there is the mark do not go near, and from my sanctuary you should start." (Ezekiel 9:5, 6) Our survival of that fast-approaching great

10. How did the Israelites living in the days of Haggai show that they lacked appreciation for Jehovah's appointed time?

11. What questions might we appropriately ask ourselves?

12. What significance does Ezekiel 9:5, 6 have for people today?

tribulation depends upon our recognizing that today is primarily a time to weep.

[13] Of course, the fact that Jehovah's servants "weep" over the sorry state of world affairs does not preclude their being happy. On the contrary! They are actually the happiest group of people on earth. Jesus provided the touchstone for happiness when he said: "Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need, . . . those who mourn, . . . the mild-tempered ones, . . . those hungering and thirsting for righteousness, . . . the merciful, . . . the pure in heart, . . . the peaceable, . . . those who have been persecuted for righteousness' sake." (Matthew 5: 3-10) There is abundant evidence to show that this description fits Jehovah's Witnesses, collectively, better than it does any other religious organization.

[14] Especially since the restoration of true worship in 1919 do Jehovah's happy people have reason for "laughter." Spiritually, they shared the exhilarating experience of those who returned from Babylon in the sixth century B.C.E.: "When Jehovah gathered back the captive ones of Zion, we became like those who were dreaming. At that time our mouth came to be filled with laughter, and our tongue with a joyful cry. . . . Jehovah has done a great thing in what he has done with us. We have become joyful." (Psalm 126:1-3) Still, even in the midst of spiritual laughter, Jehovah's Witnesses wisely keep in mind the seriousness of the times. Once the new world has become a reality and earth's inhabitants have taken "a firm hold on the real life," then the time will have arrived when laughter will replace weeping for all eternity.—1 Timothy 6:19; Revelation 21:3, 4.

13, 14. (a) What kind of people did Jesus pronounce happy? (b) Explain why you think that this description well fits Jehovah's Witnesses.

"A Time to Embrace and a Time to Keep Away From Embracing"

[15] Christians are selective about whom they embrace in friendship. They keep in mind Paul's warning: "Do not be misled. Bad associations spoil useful habits." (1 Corinthians 15:33) And wise King Solomon noted: "He that is walking with wise persons will become wise, but he that is having dealings with the stupid ones will fare badly."—Proverbs 13:20.

The full-time ministry is an excellent basis for a happy marriage

[16] Servants of Jehovah choose as friends individuals who have the same love for Jehovah and his righteousness that they do. While they appreciate and enjoy the companionship of their friends, they wisely avoid the permissive, overly liberal view of dating that is prevalent in some countries today. Rather than indulging in it as harmless fun, they view dating as a serious step toward marriage that should be

15. Why are Christians selective in picking friends?

16, 17. How do Jehovah's Witnesses view friendship, dating, and marriage, and why?

taken only when one is physically, mentally, and spiritually ready—as well as Scripturally free—to enter into a permanent partnership.—1 Corinthians 7:36.

17 Some may feel that it is old-fashioned to take such a view of dating and marriage. But Jehovah's Witnesses do not allow peer pressure to influence their choice of friends or their decisions as regards dating and marriage. They know that "wisdom is proved righteous by its works." (Matthew 11:19) Jehovah always knows best, so they take seriously his counsel to marry "only in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 7:39; 2 Corinthians 6:14) They avoid rushing into marriage with the mistaken thought that divorce or separation are acceptable options should the relationship falter. They take their time to seek out a suitable partner, realizing that once marriage vows are taken, Jehovah's law applies: "So that they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has yoked together let no man put apart." —Matthew 19:6; Mark 10:9.

18 Marriage is a lifelong commitment that deserves careful planning. A man will logically ask himself, 'Is she really the right person for me?' But equally important, he should ask, 'Am I really the right person for her? Am I a mature Christian who can care for her *spiritual* needs?' Both prospective partners have an obligation before Jehovah to be spiritually strong, capable of forming a solid marriage union that merits divine approval. Thousands of Christian couples can testify that because of its emphasis on giving rather than on receiving, the full-time ministry is an excellent starting point for a happy marriage.

18. What can serve as a starting point for a happy marriage?

Can You Explain?

- ☐ Why is it vital for us to know that "for everything there is an appointed time"?
- ☐ Why is today chiefly "a time to weep"?
- ☐ Why are Christians, although "weeping," nevertheless truly happy?
- ☐ How do some Christians show that they view the present to be "a time to keep away from embracing"?

19 Some Christians "keep away from embracing" by choosing to remain single for the sake of the good news. (Ecclesiastes 3:5) Others postpone marriage until they feel that they are spiritually qualified to attract a fitting mate. But let us also remember those single Christians who yearn for the intimacies and benefits of marriage and yet fail to find a partner. We can be sure that Jehovah rejoices over their refusal to compromise divine principles in their pursuit of marriage. We also do well to appreciate their loyalty and to offer them the appropriate support that they deserve.

20 Should even married couples occasionally "keep away from embracing"? Evidently so in a sense, for Paul noted: "This I say, brothers, the time left is reduced. Henceforth let those who have wives be as though they had none." (1 Corinthians 7:29) Accordingly, the joys and blessings of marriage must at times take a backseat to theocratic responsibilities. A balanced view of this matter will not weaken a marriage but strengthen it because it helps to remind both partners that Jehovah must always be the central stabilizing figure in their relationship.—Ecclesiastes 4:12.

19. Why do some Christians remain single?
20. Why do even marriage partners at times "keep away from embracing"?

[21] Additionally, some married couples have refrained from having children in order to be freer to carry on their service to God. This has meant sacrifice on their part, and Jehovah will reward them accordingly. Incidentally, whereas the Bible encourages singleness for the sake of the good news, it makes no direct comment on remaining childless for the same reason. (Matthew 19: 10-12; 1 Corinthians 7:38; compare Matthew 24:19 and Luke 23:28-30.) Thus, married couples must make their own decision on the basis of personal circumstances and their own conscientious feelings. Whatever that decision may be, married couples are not to be criticized.

21. Why should we not judge married couples in the matter of parenthood?

[22] Yes, "for everything there is an appointed time, even a time for every affair under the heavens." There is even "a time for war and a time for peace." (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 8) The next article will explain why it is important for us to determine for which of the two it is now the time.

22. What is it important for us to determine?

"A TIME FOR PEACE" IS AT HAND!

"For everything there is an appointed time, . . . a time for war and a time for peace."—ECCLESIASTES 3:1, 8.

MOST people yearn for peace, for good reason. The 20th century has experienced less peace than any century in history. Ironically so, because never before was so much done to secure peace. In 1920 the League of Nations was formed. In 1928 the Kellogg-Briand Pact, called by one reference work "the most grandiose of a series of peacekeeping efforts after World War I," was subscribed to by "nearly all the nations of the world . . . agreeing to renounce war as an instrument of national policy." Then, in 1945 the United Nations organization was set up to replace the defunct League of Nations.

1. What ironic situation has existed during the 20th century as regards war and peace?

[2] Like the League, the professed goal of the United Nations is to secure world peace. But its success has been limited. Granted, the world is nowhere experiencing war on the scale of the two world wars. Nevertheless, dozens of smaller conflicts are still robbing hundreds of thousands of their peace of mind, their belongings, and often their very lives. Dare we hope that the United Nations can turn the 21st century into "a time for peace"?

The Basis for True Peace

[3] Peace between peoples and nations re-

2. What is the professed goal of the United Nations, and to what extent has it had success?
3. Why can genuine peace not exist alongside hatred?

quires more than just toleration. Can anyone really be at peace with someone he hates? Not according to 1 John 3:15: "Everyone who hates his brother is a manslayer." As recent history proves, deep hatreds easily escalate into acts of violence.

[4] Since Jehovah is "the God who gives peace," peace can be experienced only by people who have love for God and deep respect for his righteous principles. Clearly, Jehovah does not grant peace to everyone. "'There is no peace,' my God has said, 'for the wicked ones.'" This is because the wicked refuse to let themselves be guided by God's holy spirit, a fruit of which is peace.—Romans 15:33; Isaiah 57:21; Galatians 5:22.

[5] To wage war on fellow humans—as so-called Christians have so often done, particularly in the 20th century—is unthinkable for genuine Christians. (James 4:1-4) True, they war against *teachings* that misrepresent God, but this warfare is designed to help individuals, not to harm them. To persecute others because of religious differences or to inflict physical harm for nationalistic reasons stands in sharp contrast with true Christianity. "If possible, as far as it depends upon you," Paul instructed Christians in Rome, "be peaceable with all men." —Romans 12:17-19; 2 Timothy 2:24, 25.

[6] Today, divinely granted peace is to be found only among true worshipers of Jehovah God. (Psalm 119:165; Isaiah 48:18) No political differences disturb their unity, since they are everywhere politically neutral. (John 15:19; 17:14) Because they are "fitly united in the same mind and in the same line of thought," no religious differences threaten their peace. (1 Corinthians 1:10) The peace Jehovah's Witnesses enjoy is a modern-day miracle, one brought about by God in harmony with his promise: "I will appoint peace as your overseers and righteousness as your task assigners."—Isaiah 60:17; Hebrews 8:10.

4. Who only can experience peace, and why?
5. What is unthinkable for true Christians?
6. Where only can genuine peace be found today?

Why "a Time for War"?

[7] Despite their peaceful stand, Jehovah's Witnesses nevertheless consider the present to be predominantly "a time for war." Not literal warfare, of course, since forcing the Bible's message upon others by armed might would contradict God's invitation to "let anyone that *wishes* take life's water free." (Revelation 22:17) No forced conversions here! The warfare Jehovah's Witnesses wage is strictly spiritual. Paul wrote: "The weapons of our warfare are not fleshly, but powerful by God for overturning strongly entrenched things."—2 Corinthians 10:4; 1 Timothy 1:18.

[8] Chief among "the weapons of our warfare" is "the sword of the spirit, that is, God's word." (Ephesians 6:17) This sword is powerful. "The word of God is alive and exerts power and is sharper than any two-edged sword and pierces even to the dividing of soul and spirit, and of joints and their marrow, and is able to discern thoughts and intentions of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12) By using this sword, Christians are able to overturn "reasonings and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God." (2 Corinthians 10:5) It enables them to expose false doctrines, harmful practices, and philosophies that reflect human rather than divine wisdom.—1 Corinthians 2:6-8; Ephesians 6:11-13.

7, 8. (a) Despite their peaceful stand, how do Jehovah's Witnesses view the present time? (b) What is the chief weapon of a Christian's warfare?

[9] Another type of spiritual warfare is the one waged against the sinful flesh. Christians follow the example of Paul, who admitted: "I pummel my body and lead it as a slave, that, after I have preached to others, I myself should not become disapproved somehow." (1 Corinthians 9:27) The Christians in Colossae were admonished to deaden their "body members that are upon the earth as respects fornication, uncleanness, sexual appetite, hurtful desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry." (Colossians 3:5) And Bible writer Jude exhorted Christians "to put up a hard fight for the faith that was once for all time delivered to the holy ones." (Jude 3) Why must we do so? Paul answers: "If you live in accord with the flesh you are sure to die; but if you put the practices of the body to death by the spirit, you will live." (Romans 8:13) In view of this clear statement, there can be no letup in our war against bad tendencies.

[10] Yet another reason why the present can be viewed as a time for war is that "the day of vengeance on the part of our God" is imminent. (Isaiah 61:1, 2) In 1914, Jehovah's appointed time had arrived to establish the Messianic Kingdom and to authorize it to wage active war against Satan's system. The allotted time period for humans to experiment with man-made rule without divine interference expired at that time. Instead of accepting God's Messianic Ruler, most people continue to reject him, even as most did in the first century. (Acts 28:27) Consequently, in the face of Kingdom opposition, Christ has been forced to "go subduing in the midst of [his] enemies." (Psalm 110:2) Happily, Revelation 6:2 promises that he will "complete his conquest." This he will do during "the war of the great day of God the Almighty . . . , called in Hebrew Har-Magedon."—Revelation 16:14, 16.

9. Why can there be no letup in our war against the sinful flesh?
10. What occurred in 1914, leading up to what in the near future?

"A Time to Speak" Is Here

[11] Since the 1914 turning point in human affairs, 85 years have passed. Jehovah has been extremely patient with humankind. He has made his Witnesses fully aware of the urgency of the situation. Millions of lives are at stake. These multitudes deserve to be warned because "Jehovah . . . does not desire any to be destroyed but desires all to attain to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9) Nevertheless, soon will come "the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with his powerful angels." Then, all those who have willfully rejected the message of God's Kingdom will experience the "vengeance" that Jesus will bring "upon those who do not know God and those who do not obey the good news about our Lord Jesus."—2 Thessalonians 1:6-9.

[12] When will Jehovah's patience finally run out? Any speculation as to when the "great tribulation" might begin is of no value. Jesus clearly stated: "Concerning that day and hour nobody knows." On the other hand, he admonished: "Keep on the watch, therefore, because you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. . . . Prove yourselves ready, because at an hour that you do not think to be it, the Son of man is coming." (Matthew 24:21, 36, 42, 44) Plainly expressed, this means that every day we should remain watchful of world events and reckon with the outbreak of the great tribulation. (1 Thessalonians 5:1-5) How dangerous to think that we can take it easy, living so-called normal lives, waiting to see how

11. Why has Jehovah been extremely patient, but what will eventually come?
12. (a) Why is speculation as to when the great tribulation might begin of no value? (b) Of what danger in this regard did Jesus warn?

things might develop! Jesus said: "Pay attention to yourselves that your hearts never become weighed down with overeating and heavy drinking and anxieties of life, and suddenly that day be instantly upon you as a snare." (Luke 21:34, 35) Of this we can be sure: The "four winds" of destruction presently being held back by Jehovah's "four angels" will not be held back forever.—Revelation 7:1-3.

13 In view of this fast-approaching day of reckoning, Solomon's words about there being "a time to speak" take on special meaning. (Ecclesiastes 3:7) Having recognized that now is indeed a time to speak, nearly six million Jehovah's Witnesses are zealously talking about the glory of God's kingship and warning of his day of vengeance. They offer themselves willingly on this day of Christ's military force.—Psalm 110:3; 145:10-12.

Those Who Speak "Peace, When There Is No Peace"

14 During the seventh century B.C.E., God's prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel delivered divine messages of judgment against Jerusalem for its wayward course in disobedience to God. The destruction they foretold took place in 607 B.C.E., even though God's messengers had been contradicted by prominent and influential religious leaders. These latter ones proved to be "stupid prophets [who] . . . led [God's] people astray, saying, 'There is peace!' when there is no peace."—Ezekiel 13:1-16; Jeremiah 6:14, 15; 8:8-12.

15 Like the "stupid prophets" of that time, most religious leaders today also fail to warn people of God's coming day of judgment. Instead, they paint an optimistic picture that political groups will ultimately achieve peace and security. More anxious to please humans than God, they tell their parishioners what they want to hear instead of explaining that God's Kingdom is established and that the Messianic King is soon to complete his conquest. (Daniel 2:44; 2 Timothy 4:3, 4; Revelation 6:2) As false prophets, they too speak of "peace, when there is no peace." But their conviction will soon turn into sudden horror when they must face the fury of the One they have misrepresented and upon whose name they

13. What have nearly six million persons recognized?
14. What false prophets existed during the seventh century B.C.E.?
15. Do similar false prophets exist today? Explain.

Jehovah Has an Appointed Time for

- ☐ drawing Gog into an attack on God's people.—Ezekiel 38:3, 4, 10-12
- ☐ putting it into the hearts of human rulers to destroy Babylon the Great. —Revelation 17:15-17; 19:2
- ☐ performing the marriage of the Lamb. —Revelation 19:6, 7
- ☐ initiating the war of Har–Magedon. —Revelation 19:11-16, 19-21
- ☐ binding Satan to start Jesus' Thousand Year Reign.—Revelation 20:1-3

These events are simply listed in the order in which they are referred to in the Scriptures. We can be sure that all five events will occur in the order that Jehovah determines and exactly when he determines.

have brought untold reproach. The leaders of the world empire of false religion, described in the Bible as an immoral woman, will choke on their own misleading cries of peace.—Revelation 18:7, 8.

16 That the majority of prominent and influential leaders persist in their hypocritical promise of peace does not shake the confidence of those who have faith in God's promise of true peace. For over a century, Jehovah's Witnesses have gone on record as being loyal defenders of God's Word, courageous opponents of false religion, and resolute supporters of God's Kingdom. Far from lulling people to sleep with sweet-sounding platitudes about peace, they diligently strive to awaken them to the reality that today is a time for war.—Isaiah 56:10-12; Romans 13:11, 12; 1 Thessalonians 5:6.

Jehovah Breaks His Silence

17 Solomon also said: "The true God will judge both the righteous one and the wicked one, for there is a time for every affair." (Ecclesiastes 3:17) Yes, Jehovah has an appointed time for executing judgment on false religion and on "the kings of earth [who] take their stand . . . against Jehovah and against his anointed one." (Psalm 2:1-6; Revelation 16:13-16) Once that time has arrived, Jehovah's days of staying "quiet" will be over. (Psalm 83:1; Isaiah 62:1; Jeremiah 47:6, 7) Through his enthroned Messianic King, Jesus Christ, he will "speak" in the only language his opposers apparently understand: "Like a mighty man Jehovah himself will go forth. Like a warrior he will awaken zeal. He will *shout,* yes, he will *let out a war cry;* over his enemies he will show himself mightier. 'I have kept quiet for a long time. I continued silent. I kept exercising self-control. Like a woman giving birth I am going to groan, pant, and gasp at the same time. I shall devastate mountains and hills, and all their vegetation I shall dry up. And I will turn rivers into islands, and reedy pools I shall dry up. And I will make the blind ones walk in a way that they have not known; in a roadway that they have not known I shall cause them to tread. I shall turn a dark place before them into light, and rugged terrain into level land. These are the things that I will do for them, and I will not leave them.'"—Isaiah 42:13-16.

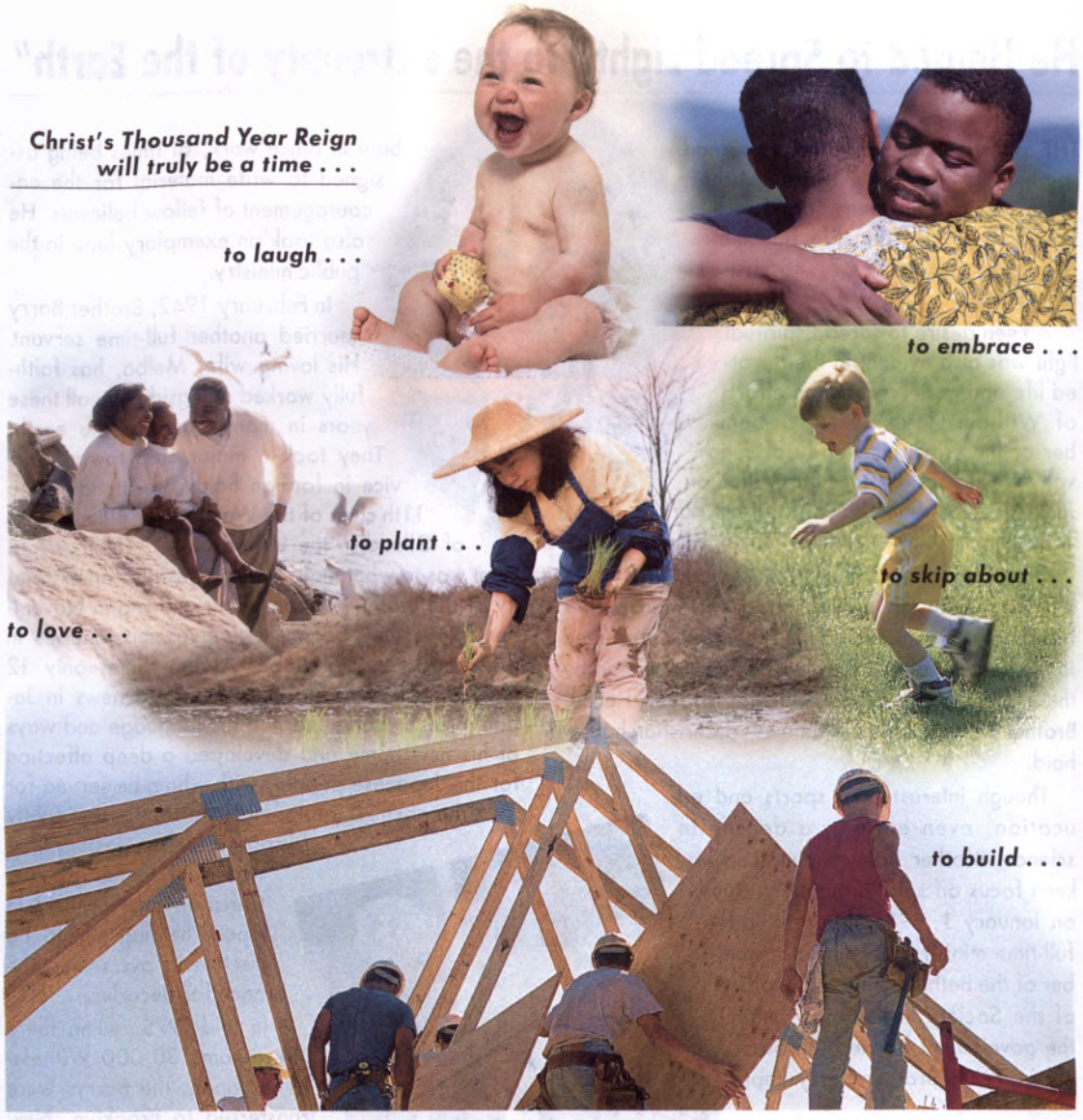
18 When Jehovah 'speaks out' in defense of his Godship, his people will no longer need to speak out in their own defense. It will be their turn "to keep quiet." As they did to servants of God in times past, these words will apply: "You will not need to fight in this instance. Take your position, stand still and see the salvation of Jehovah in your behalf."—2 Chronicles 20:17.

19 What a crushing defeat for Satan and his organization! The glorified brothers of Christ will take part in striking an out-

16. (a) As being what have Jehovah's Witnesses gone on record? (b) How do they differ from those who cry "peace, when there is no peace"?
17. What does it mean that Jehovah will soon break his silence?
18. In what respect will God's people soon "keep quiet"?
19. What privilege will Christ's spiritual brothers soon have?

What Is Your Answer?

- ☐ What is the basis for lasting peace?
- ☐ Why do Jehovah's Witnesses consider the present "a time for war"?
- ☐ When are God's people "to speak," and when are they "to keep quiet"?
- ☐ How and when will Jehovah break his silence?



standing victory for righteousness, in accord with the promise: "For his part, the God who gives peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly." (Romans 16:20) The long-awaited time for peace is finally at hand.

[20] How blessed the lot of all on earth who survive this great manifestation of Jehovah's power! Soon afterward they will be joined by faithful men and women of the past whose appointed time for resurrection will have arrived. Christ's Thousand Year Reign will truly be "a time to plant . . . , a time to heal . . . , a time to build . . . , a time to laugh . . . , a time to skip about . . . , a time to embrace and . . . a time to love." Yes, and it will everlastingly be "a time for peace"!—Ecclesiastes 3:1-8; Psalm 29:11; 37:11; 72:7.

20. For what will it soon be the time?

He Helped to Spread Light "to the Extremity of the Earth"

THE apostle Paul was used to spread spiritual light "to the extremity of the earth." As a result, many "rightly disposed for everlasting life became believers."—Acts 13:47, 48; Isaiah 49:6.

A keen desire to spread spiritual light was also evident in the devoted life and tireless Christian efforts of William Lloyd Barry, a member of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses. Brother Barry died on July 2, 1999, while having a direct part in serving a district convention in Hawaii.

Lloyd Barry was born in New Zealand on December 20, 1916. His mother and father had earlier taken an active interest in the Bible truths presented in the publications of C. T. Russell, as distributed by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. Hence, Brother Barry grew up in a devoted Christian household.

Though interested in sports and education, even earning a degree in science, Brother Barry maintained his keen focus on spiritual matters. Thus, on January 1, 1939, he took up the full-time ministry, becoming a member of the Bethel family at the office of the Society in Australia. After the government banned the Society in 1941, Brother Barry kept busy in office work, at times being assigned to write material for the encouragement of fellow believers. He also took an exemplary lead in the public ministry.

In February 1942, Brother Barry married another full-time servant. His loving wife, Melba, has faithfully worked alongside him all these years in many parts of the earth. They took a major step toward service in foreign fields by attending the 11th class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead in the United States. Their assignment was to what many would consider 'an extremity of the earth'—Japan. After arriving in November 1949, they began serving as missionaries in the seaport city of Kobe. At that time, only 12 individuals were preaching the good news in Japan. Brother Barry learned the language and ways of his new home and developed a deep affection for the Japanese people, with whom he served for the next 25 years. His love for those "rightly disposed for everlasting life" was clear to the growing Christian brotherhood in Japan, helping him to be effective in overseeing the branch for decades.

In mid-1975, when there were some 30,000 Witnesses in Japan, the Barrys were transferred to Brooklyn, New York. As a spirit-anointed Christian, Brother Barry had been invited to serve as a member of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses. (Romans 8:16, 17) His writing experience proved very use-

Lloyd Barry and John Barr when "Insight on the Scriptures" was released in 1988

Graduates of the 11th class of Gilead, meeting in Japan after 40 years

ful in his new role in the Writing Department. And his extensive branch and international experience equipped him to make a valuable contribution as a member of the Publishing Committee of the Governing Body.

Over the years, Brother Barry retained his love for the Orient and its people. Students in Gilead School as well as members of the Bethel family could be sure that his talks and comments would highlight heartwarming stories about many who had served in the missionary work. Kingdom-preaching activities at 'the extremities of the earth' truly came to life as Brother Barry enthusiastically recounted his own experiences. Some of these are mentioned in his personal account published in *The Watchtower* of September 15, 1960.

We are confident that as a 'joint heir with Christ,' Brother Barry's interest in those "rightly disposed for everlasting life" will continue. Of course, he will be greatly missed by all who knew and loved him as a spiritual man, wholly devoted to Jehovah and having warm affection for God's people. Yet, we rejoice that Brother Barry endured faithfully to the end of his earthly course.—Revelation 2:10.

YOU CAN ENDURE TO THE END

"Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us."—HEBREWS 12:1.

"YOU have need of endurance," wrote the apostle Paul to the first-century Hebrew Christians. (Hebrews 10:36) Emphasizing the importance of this quality, the apostle Peter likewise urged Christians: "Supply to your faith . . . endurance." (2 Peter 1:5, 6) But what exactly is endurance?

[2] A Greek-English lexicon defines the Greek verb for "endure" as *"remain* instead of fleeing . . . *stand one's ground, hold out."* Concerning the Greek noun for "endurance," one reference work says: "It is the spirit which can bear things, not simply with resignation, but with blazing hope . . . It is the quality which keeps a man on his feet with his face to the wind. It is the virtue which can transmute the hardest trial into glory because beyond the pain it sees the goal." Endurance, then, enables one to stand firm in the face of obstacles and hardships and not lose hope. Who especially have need of this quality?

[3] All Christians are figuratively engaged in a race that requires endurance. In about the year 65 C.E., the apostle Paul wrote to his fellow worker and faithful traveling companion Timothy these reassuring words: "I have fought the fine fight, I have run the course to the finish, I have observed the faith." (2 Timothy 4:7) With the expression "run the course to the finish," Paul was comparing his life as a Christian to a race, with a set course and a finish line. By that time, Paul was triumphantly approaching the end of the race, and he was confidently looking forward to receiving the reward. "From this time on," he went on to say, "there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the

1, 2. What does it mean to endure?

3, 4. (a) Who have need for endurance? (b) Why must we endure to the end?

righteous judge, will give me as a reward in that day." (2 Timothy 4:8) Paul was sure that he would gain the reward because he had endured to the end. What about the rest of us?

[4] To encourage those who have taken up the race, Paul wrote: "Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us." (Hebrews 12:1) As Christians, we enter this endurance race when we dedicate ourselves to Jehovah God through Jesus Christ. A good start in the course of discipleship is important, but what ultimately counts is that we finish the course. Jesus declared: "He that has endured to the end is the one that will be saved." (Matthew 24:13) The prize awaiting those who successfully finish the race is everlasting life! Hence, having a goal in mind, we must endure to the end. What will help us attain that goal?

Proper Nutrition—A Must

[5] Near the city of Corinth, Greece, was the site where the famous Isthmian Games were held in ancient times. Paul was no doubt aware that the Corinthian brothers were familiar with the athletic contests and other competitions held there. Drawing upon their knowledge, he reminded them of the race for life in which they were engaged: "Do you not know that the runners in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may attain it." Paul emphasized the importance of staying in the race and pressing forward until the finish. But what would help them to do so? "Every man taking part in a contest exercises self-control in all things," he added. Yes, the contestants in the ancient games submitted themselves to rigorous training, took scrupulous care in what they ate and drank, and regimented

5, 6. (a) To endure in the race for life, to what must we give attention? (b) What spiritual provisions must we avail ourselves of, and why?

their every activity in order to win.—1 Corinthians 9:24, 25.

[6] What about the race that Christians have entered? "You have to give attention to your spiritual nutrition if you are going to endure in the race for life," says an elder in a congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses. Consider what spiritual food Jehovah, "the God who supplies endurance," has provided for us. (Romans 15:5) Our main source of spiritual nourishment is his Word, the Bible. Should we not maintain a good Bible-reading schedule? Through "the faithful and discreet slave," Jehovah has also provided the timely journals *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* and other Bible-based publications. (Matthew 24:45) Diligently studying these will fortify us spiritually. Yes, we must take the time—'buy out the opportune time'—for personal study. —Ephesians 5:16.

[7] To stay on the course of Christian discipleship, we need to go beyond the basic "primary doctrine" and "press on to maturity." (Hebrews 6:1) So we must develop an interest in "the breadth and length and height and depth" of the truth and draw nourish-

7. (a) Why should we not be satisfied with merely knowing the basic Christian doctrines? (b) How may we "press on to maturity"?

ment from the "solid food [that] belongs to mature people." (Ephesians 3:18; Hebrews 5:12-14) Take, for example, the four reliable accounts of Jesus' life on earth—the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Through a careful study of these Gospel records, we can not only know the acts that Jesus performed and the type of person he was but also perceive the pattern of thinking that motivated his actions. Then we can come to "have the mind of Christ."—1 Corinthians 2:16.

[8] Paul admonished fellow believers: "Let us consider one another to incite to love and fine works, not forsaking the gathering of ourselves together, as some have the custom, but encouraging one another, and all the more so as you behold the day drawing near." (Hebrews 10:24, 25) What a source of encouragement Christian meetings are! And how refreshing it is to be with loving brothers and sisters who are interested in us and want to help us endure to the end! We cannot afford to treat lightly this loving provision from Jehovah. Through our diligent personal study and regular meeting attendance, let us "become full-grown in powers of understanding."—1 Corinthians 14:20.

Spectators to Spur You On

[9] Regardless of how well prepared a runner is, however, things may happen along the way that can cause him to falter. "You were running well. Who hindered you from keeping on obeying the truth?" asked Paul. (Galatians 5:7) Evidently, some of the Galatian Christians fell into bad company and, as a result, were distracted in their race for life. On the other hand, support and encouragement from others can make the race easier to endure. This is much like the effect that the spectators in a game can have on the participants. Enthusiastic crowds intensify the excitement that keeps the contestants motivated from start to finish. The cheers of the onlookers, often combined with loud music and clapping, can give the participants the extra push they need as they come in for the finish. Indeed, sympathetic spectators can exert a positive influence on those in the race.

[10] In the race for life that Christians have entered, who are the spectators? After enumerating faithful pre-Christian witnesses of Jehovah, as recorded in the 11th chapter of Hebrews, Paul wrote: "So, then, because we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, . . . let us run with endurance the race that is set before us." (Hebrews 12:1) In employing the metaphor of a cloud, Paul did not use the Greek word that describes a sharply outlined cloud of definite size and shape. Instead, he employed one that according to lexicographer W. E. Vine "denotes a cloudy, shapeless mass covering the heavens." Clearly, Paul had in mind a great multitude of witnesses—so many that they were like a cloud mass.

[11] Can faithful pre-Christian witnesses be literal present-day spectators? Hardly. They are all sleeping in death, awaiting a resurrection. However, they were themselves successful runners when alive, and their examples live on in the pages of the Bible. As we study the Scriptures, these faithful ones can come to life in our minds and can cheer us on, as it were, to run the race to the finish. —Romans 15:4.*

[12] For instance, when worldly opportunities tempt us, would not a consideration of

8. How do Christian meetings help us to endure in the race for life?

9, 10. (a) In what way can spectators be a source of encouragement in an endurance race? (b) What is 'the great cloud of witnesses surrounding us' mentioned at Hebrews 12:1?

* For a discussion of Hebrews 11:1–12:3, see *The Watchtower,* January 15, 1987, pages 10-20.

11, 12. (a) How can faithful pre-Christian witnesses cheer us on, as it were, to run the race with endurance? (b) How may we benefit more fully from the 'great cloud of witnesses'?

how Moses rejected the glories of Egypt motivate us to stay on the course? If a trial confronting us seems severe, remembering the hard test Abraham faced when he was asked to offer up his son Isaac would certainly encourage us not to give up in the contest of faith. The extent to which the 'great cloud' of these witnesses spurs us on in this way depends on how clearly we see them with our eyes of understanding.

[13] We are also surrounded by a great many Witnesses of Jehovah in modern times. What grand examples of faith have been set by anointed Christians as well as men and women of the "great crowd"! (Revelation 7:9) We can read their life stories from time to time in this magazine and other Watch Tower publications.* As we reflect on their faith, we are encouraged to endure to the end. And how wonderful it is to have the support of close friends and relatives who themselves are serving Jehovah faithfully! Yes, we have many to spur us on in the race for life.

Set Your Pace Wisely

[14] When running a long race, such as a marathon, a runner must set his pace wisely. "Going out too fast sets you up for failure," says the magazine *New York Runner*. "The likely result is either a long struggle over the last several miles or dropping out." One marathoner recalls: "The speaker at a lecture I attended in preparation for the race clearly warned: 'Do not chase after faster runners. Run at your own pace. Otherwise you will get exhausted and may have to drop out.' Heeding this advice helped me finish the race."

* Some recent examples of such encouraging experiences can be found in *The Watchtower* of June 1, 1998, pages 28-31; September 1, 1998, pages 24-8; February 1, 1999, pages 25-9.

13. In what way do modern-day Witnesses of Jehovah spur us on in the race for life?
14, 15. (a) Why is it important to set our pace wisely? (b) Why should we be reasonable in setting goals?

[15] In the race for life, God's servants must exert themselves vigorously. (Luke 13:24) However, the disciple James wrote: "The wisdom from above is . . . reasonable." (James 3:17) While the good example of others may encourage us to do more, reasonableness will help us set realistic goals in harmony with our abilities and circumstances. The Scriptures remind us: "Let each one prove what his own work is, and then he will have cause for exultation in regard to himself alone, and not in comparison with the other person. For each one will carry his own load."—Galatians 6:4, 5.

[16] At Micah 6:8, we are asked this thought-provoking question: "What is Jehovah asking back from you but . . . to be modest in walking with your God?" Modesty includes an awareness of our limitations. Has failing health or advanced age placed some limits on what we can do in God's service? Let us not become discouraged. Jehovah accepts our efforts and sacrifices 'according to what we have, not according to what we do not have.'—2 Corinthians 8:12; compare Luke 21:1-4.

Keep Your Eyes on the Prize

[17] In pointing out to the Corinthian Christians the need to endure in the race for life, Paul mentioned another aspect of the Isthmian Games that was worthy of their attention. Regarding the contestants in those games, Paul wrote: "Now they, of course, [run] that they may get a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible one. Therefore, the way I am running is not uncertainly; the way I am directing my blows is so as not to be striking the air." (1 Corinthians 9:25, 26) The victor's prize in those ancient games was a crown, or wreath, made of pine or other plants, or even of dried wild celery—truly a

16. How does modesty help us in setting our pace?
17, 18. Keeping what in sight helped Jesus endure the torture stake?

"corruptible crown." What, though, awaits Christians who endure to the end?

[18] Referring to our Exemplar, Jesus Christ, the apostle Paul wrote: "For the joy that was set before him he endured a torture stake, despising shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:2) Jesus endured to the end of his human life by looking beyond the torture stake to his reward, which includes the joy he has in contributing to the sanctification of Jehovah's name, in ransoming the human family from death, and in ruling as King and High Priest as he restores obedient humans to endless life on a paradise earth.—Matthew 6:9, 10; 20:28; Hebrews 7:23-26.

[19] Consider the joy that is set before us as we pursue the course of Christian discipleship. Jehovah has given us the deeply satisfying work of preaching the good news of God's Kingdom and of imparting the life-saving knowledge of the Bible to others. (Matthew 28:19, 20) What a delight it is to find someone interested in the true God and to help that one enter the race for life! And regardless of the response of the people to whom we preach, it is a privilege to have a share in the work connected with the sanctification of Jehovah's name. When we endure in the ministry despite indifference or opposition on the part of those in our witnessing territory, we have the joy of making Jehovah's heart glad. (Proverbs 27:11) And the grand reward he promises us is everlasting life. What a joy that will be! We need to keep these blessings in sight and persist in the race.

As the End Draws Closer

[20] In the race for life, we have to contend with our chief enemy, Satan the Devil. As we approach the end, he is relentlessly trying to trip us or slow us down. (Revelation 12:12, 17) And it is not easy to carry on as faithful, dedicated Kingdom proclaimers in view of the wars, the famines, the pestilences, and all the other hardships that mark "the time of the end." (Daniel 12:4; Matthew 24:3-14; Luke 21:11; 2 Timothy 3:1-5) Moreover, the end may at times seem farther away than we expected, particularly if we entered the race decades ago. Yet, God's Word assures us that the end will come. Jehovah says it will not be late. The end is in sight.—Habakkuk 2:3; 2 Peter 3:9, 10.

[21] To succeed in the race for life, then, we must draw strength from what Jehovah has lovingly provided for our spiritual nourishment. We also need all the encouragement we can get from regular association with our fellow believers, who are also running the race. Even if severe persecution and unforeseen occurrences along the way should make our race more difficult, we can endure to the end because Jehovah provides "the power beyond what is normal." (2 Corinthians 4:7) How reassuring to know that Jehovah wants us to finish the course triumphantly! With firm determination, "let us run with endurance the race that is set before us," fully confident that "in due season we shall reap if we do not tire out."—Hebrews 12:1; Galatians 6:9.

19. What should we keep in focus as we pursue the course of Christian discipleship?
20. How may the race for life get more difficult as its end draws closer?
21. (a) What will fortify us as we continue in the race for life? (b) What should be our determination as the end draws nearer?

Do You Remember?

- ☐ Why must we endure to the end?
- ☐ What provisions of Jehovah should we not neglect?
- ☐ Why is it important to set our pace wisely?
- ☐ What joy is set before us as we continue in the race?

GIVING JEHOVAH WHAT HE DESERVES

AS TOLD BY TIMOLEON VASILIOU

I had been arrested for teaching the Bible in the village of Aidhonochori. The police took off my shoes and started beating the soles of my feet. As the beating continued, my feet became numb and I could no longer feel the pain. Before I explain what had led up to this abuse, which at the time was not uncommon in Greece, let me relate how I became a Bible teacher.

SOON after I was born in 1921, our family moved to the town of Rodholívos, in northern Greece. During my youth, I led an unruly life. When I was 11, I started smoking. Later, I became a heavy drinker and a gambler, and I went to wild parties almost every night. I had a flair for music, so I joined a local band. In about a year, I could play most of the band's instruments. Yet, at the same time, I was studious and loved justice.

Early in 1940, while World War II was raging, our band was invited to play at the funeral of a little girl. At the graveside, relatives and friends were weeping with unrestrained grief. Their sheer hopelessness made a profound impression on me. I began to wonder, 'Why do we die? Is there anything more to life than our brief existence? Where can I find the answers?'

A few days later, I spotted a copy of the New Testament on a shelf in my house. I took it down and began to read. When I read Jesus' words at Matthew 24:7 about war on a large scale being part of the sign of his presence, it dawned on me that his words must apply to our time. In the following weeks, I read this copy of the Christian Greek Scriptures several times.

Then in December 1940, I visited a family nearby—a widow and her five children. In their attic, among a stack of booklets, I found one entitled *A Desirable Government,* published by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. I stayed up there in the attic and read the entire booklet. I became fully convinced from what I read that we are indeed living in what the Bible calls "the last days" and that Jehovah God will soon bring this

system of things to an end and replace it with a righteous new world.—2 Timothy 3: 1-5; 2 Peter 3:13.

What particularly impressed me was the Scriptural evidence that faithful ones will live forever in an earthly paradise and that suffering and death will be no more in that new world under the rule of God's Kingdom. (Psalm 37:9-11, 29; Revelation 21:3, 4) As I was reading, I thanked God in prayer for these things, and I asked him to show me what his requirements are. It became clear to me that Jehovah God deserved my whole-souled devotion.—Matthew 22:37.

Acting on What I Learned

From that time on, I quit smoking, ceased getting drunk, and stopped gambling. I gathered together the widow's five children and my three younger brothers and sisters, and I explained to them what I had learned from the booklet. Soon we all started spreading what little we knew. We became known in the community as Jehovah's Witnesses, although we had never met any Witnesses. Right from the start, I devoted more than a hundred hours every month to telling others the wonderful things I had learned.

One of the local Greek Orthodox priests went to the mayor to complain about us. But some days previously, unbeknownst to us, a young Witness had found a lost horse and had returned it to its owners. As a result of such honesty, the mayor respected the Witnesses, and he refused to listen to the priest.

One day in about October 1941, while I was witnessing in the marketplace, someone spoke about a Witness of Jehovah who lived in a nearby town. He was a former policeman named Christos Triantafillou. I went to see him and learned that he had been a Witness since 1932. How happy I was when he provided me with many older Watch Tower publications! These really helped me make spiritual progress.

In 1943, I symbolized my dedication to God by water baptism. By then I was conducting Bible studies in three of the neighboring villages—Dhravískos, Palaeokomi, and Mavrolofos. I used the book *The Harp of God* as our Bible study aid. Eventually, I was privileged to see four congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses formed in this area.

Preaching Despite Obstacles

In 1944, Greece was freed from German occupation, and sometime later, communication was established with the branch office of the Watch Tower Society in Athens. The branch office invited me to share in preaching in a territory where hardly anyone had heard the Kingdom message. After moving there, I worked on a farm for three months and spent the rest of the year in the ministry.

That year I was blessed to see my mother get baptized, as well as the widow and her children, except her youngest daughter, Marianthi, who was baptized in 1943 and became my beloved wife in November of that year. Thirty years later, in 1974, my father also became a baptized Witness.

Early in 1945 we received the first mimeographed copy of *The Watchtower* from the branch office. Its feature article was entitled "Go, Disciple All the Nations." (Matthew 28: 19, *The Emphatic Diaglott*) Marianthi and I immediately left our home to work faraway territories east of the Strymon River. We were later joined by other Witnesses.

We often walked barefoot to reach a village, covering miles through ravines and over mountains. We did this to save our shoes because when they wore out, we had no others to replace them. During the years from 1946 to 1949, civil war was ravaging Greece, and it was very dangerous to travel. It was not unusual to see corpses lying by the open road.

Giving a talk while our preaching work was under ban

Rather than being discouraged by the difficulties, we continued serving zealously. Many times I felt as did the psalmist who wrote: "Even though I walk in the valley of deep shadow, I fear nothing bad, for you are with me; your rod and your staff are the things that comfort me." (Psalm 23:4) During this period we were often away from home for weeks, and I sometimes spent 250 hours a month in the ministry.

Our Ministry in Aidhonochori

One of the villages we visited in 1946 was Aidhonochori, perched high on a mountain. There we met a man who told us that there were two men in the village who wanted to hear the Bible message. However, because of fear of his neighbors, the man was unwilling to direct us to them. We located their homes anyway and were received hospitably. In fact, after a few minutes, the living room was filled with people! They were either relatives or close friends. I was absolutely amazed to see with what attentiveness they sat and listened to us. We soon learned that they had eagerly been waiting to come in contact with Jehovah's Witnesses, but during the German occupation, there were none in the area. What had stimulated their interest?

The two family heads had been prominent in the local Communist party, and they had introduced Communistic ideas to the people. But then they came across a copy of the book *Government,* published by the Watch Tower Society. As a result of reading it, they were convinced that the only hope for a perfect, righteous government was God's Kingdom. We sat up talking to these men and their friends until midnight. They were completely satisfied with the Bible-based answers to their questions. Soon afterward, however, Communists in the village plotted to kill me because I was considered responsible for converting their former leaders. Incidentally, among those present that first night was the man who told me about the interested ones in the village. Eventually he progressed in Bible knowledge, got baptized, and later became a Christian elder.

Brutal Persecution

It was not long after meeting these former Communists that two policemen stormed into a house where we were conducting a meeting. They arrested four of us at gunpoint and escorted us to the police station. There the police lieutenant, who had close connections with the Greek Orthodox clergy, berated us. Finally, he asked, "Well, what am I going to do with you?"

"Let's give them a good beating!" the other policemen standing behind us shouted in unison.

By then it was late at night. The policemen locked us in the basement and went to the tavern next door. When they were quite

With my wife, Marianthi

drunk, they came back and I was brought upstairs.

Seeing what condition they were in, I realized that they might kill me at any moment. So I prayed to God to give me the strength to endure whatever I might have to suffer. They took some wooden rods and, as I related at the beginning, started beating me on the soles of my feet. After that they beat my whole body, and then they threw me back into the basement. Next they brought out another victim and began beating him.

In the meantime, I used the opportunity to prepare the other two young Witnesses to face the test ahead. But the policemen chose instead to bring me back upstairs. They took off my clothes, and the five of them beat me for about an hour, trampling on my head with their army boots. Then they threw me down the stairs, where I lay unconscious for about 12 hours.

When we were finally released, a family in the village put us up for the night and looked after us. The following day, we left to return home. We were so worn out and exhausted from the beatings that the trip, which was normally a two-hour walk, took us eight hours. I was so swollen from the beatings that Marianthi hardly recognized me.

Growth Despite Opposition

In 1949, while the civil war was still going on, we moved to Thessalonica. I was assigned to serve as assistant congregation servant in one of the four congregations in the city. After one year the congregation increased to such an extent that we formed another one, and I was assigned as the congregation servant, or presiding overseer. A year later the new congregation had nearly doubled in size, and yet another congregation was formed!

Opposers were angry with the growth of Jehovah's Witnesses in Thessalonica. One day in 1952 when I came home from work, I found our house burned to the ground. Marianthi had barely escaped with her life. At the meeting that night, we had to explain why we were there in dirty clothes—we had lost everything else. Our Christian brothers were very sympathetic and supportive.

In 1961, I was assigned to the traveling work, visiting a different congregation each week to strengthen the brothers spiritually. For the next 27 years, Marianthi and I visited the circuits and districts in Macedonia, Thrace, and Thessaly. Although my dear Marianthi had been practically blind since 1948, she courageously served with me, enduring many tests of faith. She too was arrested, tried, and imprisoned many times. Then her health began to deteriorate, and she died in 1988 after a long battle with cancer.

That same year, I was appointed to serve as a special pioneer in Thessalonica. Now, after more than 56 years of service to Jehovah, I can still work hard and share in all features of the ministry. At times, I have conducted as many as 20 Bible studies with interested ones each week.

I have come to appreciate that we are really at the start of a great teaching program that will continue into Jehovah's new world and on for a thousand years. Yet, I feel that this is no time for us to take things easy, to put things off, or to spend our time satisfying our fleshly desires. I thank God for helping me to keep the promise I made at the very beginning because Jehovah truly deserves our whole-souled devotion and service.

DIVINE RIDDLES AND GOD'S PURPOSE

WHEN one does not know what it is, then it is something; but when one knows what it is, then it is nothing. What is it? A riddle.

In today's highly pragmatic society, people tend to view riddling as child's play, but in ancient times the riddle "was a test of wisdom," notes *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible.*—Compare Proverbs 1:5, 6.

Rather than stating his will or purpose plainly, at times Jehovah has intentionally obscured his prophetic sayings, using analogies, mystifying "dark sayings," or riddles that perplex. (Psalm 78:2, *King James Version;* Numbers 12:8, *The Emphasized Bible*) In fact, while the Hebrew word for riddle is used only 17 times in the Bible, the Scriptures are literally full of riddles and proverbs.

Biblical Riddles Abound

King Solomon was reportedly able to solve even the most perplexing questions, or riddles, brought to him. (1 Kings 10:1, footnote) This was certainly a result of God-given wisdom. If there is any truth in reports of ancient historians that Solomon once lost a riddling contest with King Hiram of Tyre, it likely happened after he lost Jehovah's spirit as a result of his apostasy. Judge Samson similarly showed a fondness for riddling. On one occasion, empowered by holy spirit, a riddle provided him with the opportunity to strike fear into the hearts of God's enemies.—Judges 14:12-19.

Many Biblical riddles, though, are directly involved with Jehovah's purposes. Consider, for example, Genesis 3:15. This prophecy, which lays the basis for the theme of the Bible, is in itself something of an enigma, a "sacred secret." (Romans 16:25, 26) Besides being given supernatural visions and revelations, the apostle Paul also saw certain aspects of God's purpose in "hazy outline," or literally, "obscure expression." (1 Corinthians 13:12; 2 Corinthians 12:1-4) And what about the endless speculation that has surrounded the mysterious number of the wild beast—"six hundred and sixty-six"—introduced suddenly and without explanation at Revelation 13:18? Who is able to solve these divine riddles, and what purpose do they serve?

Unlocking Sacred Secrets

For many of us, sight is the most precious of our five senses. But without light, human vision would be almost useless. We would be virtually blind. So, too, the human mind. It has an amazing ability to match patterns, apply logic, and thus solve puzzles. Yet, something more is needed to unlock sacred secrets. While others may offer solutions to the riddles posed in the Bible, only their Author, Jehovah, the God of light, can reveal their intended meaning.—1 John 1:5.

Unfortunately, men are often too proud and independent to wait on Jehovah for answers. Intrigued by the mystery, there are those who, seeking intellectual stimulation but not necessarily truth, sought solutions outside of God's Word. For example, Jew-

Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia,
Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft Stuttgart

ish mysticism with its Cabala pondered the magical significance of numbers and the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The Gnostics of the second century, on the other hand, made use of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures in an attempt to extricate secret meanings from them.

All such searching, however, led them further into pagan rites or superstitions and away from divine truth. 'Why, if the world is full of evil,' the Gnostics reasoned, 'then its Creator, Yahweh, cannot be a good God.' Is this the best conclusion they could offer? How shallow human reasoning is! No wonder the apostle Paul, fighting apostate ideas that were later developed by Gnostic sects, strongly warned in his letters: "Do not go beyond the things that are written"! —1 Corinthians 4:6.

Turning the Light on "Dark Sayings"

Yet, why would a God of light speak "dark sayings" at all? The very nature of a riddle challenges one's imagination and deductive powers. So, sprinkled throughout the Scriptures like tasty garnishes in a gourmet meal, they were sometimes used simply to arouse the interest of the audience or to make the message conveyed more vivid. In these instances, explanations are usually given immediately afterward.—Ezekiel 17: 1-18; Matthew 18:23-35.

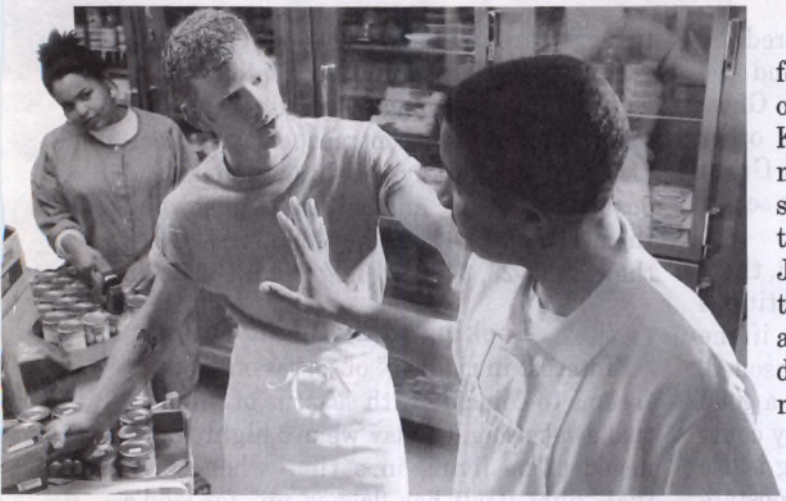
Jehovah grants wisdom generously but never indiscriminately. (James 1:5-8) Consider the book of Proverbs, an inspired collection of many puzzling sayings that some might view as riddles. Understanding them takes time and meditation. But how many people are willing to make the effort? The wisdom they contain is accessible only to those who are willing to dig for it.—Proverbs 2:1-5.

Jesus likewise used illustrations to expose his listeners' heart attitude. Crowds thronged around him. They enjoyed his stories. They loved his miracles. Yet, how many were willing to change their life-style and follow him? What a contrast to Jesus' disciples, who repeatedly sought to understand Jesus' teachings and willingly disowned themselves to become his followers!—Matthew 13:10-23, 34, 35; 16:24; John 16:25, 29.

Looking to the Light

"Interest in riddles," observes one source, "seems to coincide with seasons of intellectual awakening." Today we are highly privileged to be living in a time when spiritual "light itself has flashed up" for God's people. (Psalm 97:11; Daniel 12:4, 9) Can we patiently wait on Jehovah to reveal his purposes according to his timetable? More important, do we act promptly to change our lives when we become aware of how to conform more fully to God's revealed will? (Psalm 1:1-3; James 1:22-25) If we do, Jehovah will bless our efforts, so that, just as eyeglasses correct blurred vision, holy spirit will bring the beautiful mosaic of the divine purpose clearly into focus in our mind's eye, sharpening our spiritual vision.—1 Corinthians 2:7, 9, 10.

Indeed, Scriptural riddles magnify Jehovah as the "Revealer of secrets." (Daniel 2:28, 29) Moreover, he is also a Searcher of hearts. (1 Chronicles 28:9) It should not surprise us to learn that the unveiling of the light of divine truth has always been progressive. (Proverbs 4:18; Romans 16:25, 26) Rather than seek knowledge of the deep things of God through mysticism or shallow human wisdom, which can only lead to futility, let us confidently look to Jehovah God to turn the light of truth on his "dark sayings," making known his wonderful purposes to faithful servants at his appointed time.—Amos 3:7; Matthew 24:25-27.



FORTIFIED to Say No to Wrongdoing

"WHEN I was still in my teens and working at a grocery store," explains Timothy, "a workmate invited me over to his house. He said that his parents would be away, girls would be there, and there would be opportunity to engage in sex." Many young people today would be quick to say yes to such an invitation. But what was Timothy's response? "I told him there and then that I would not be coming and that because of my Christian conscience, I did not wish to have sex with someone to whom I was not married."

While explaining his refusal, Timothy was unaware that a young female employee was listening in. His innocence challenged her, and soon he was faced with having to say no to her as well—on a number of occasions, as we shall see later.

Having temptation thrown before us is, of course, not unique to our times. Some 3,000 years ago, King Solomon wrote: "My son, if sinners try to seduce you, do not consent. . . . Hold back your foot from their roadway." (Proverbs 1:10, 15) Jehovah himself commanded the nation of Israel: "You must not follow after the crowd for evil ends." (Exodus 23:2) Yes, at times we must say no, resisting the temptation to do wrong, even though it may not be the popular course.

Saying No Is Especially Important Today

Saying no to wrongdoing has never been easy, and nowadays it can be especially difficult, for we are living in what the Bible calls "the last days" of this system of things. True to Bible prophecy, people en masse have become lovers of pleasures and violence, devoid of both spirituality and morality. (2 Timothy 3:1-5) A Jesuit university president stated: "We've had a traditional set of standards that have been challenged and found wanting or no longer fashionable. Now there don't seem to be any moral landmarks at all." In a similar vein, a superior court judge said: "Things aren't black and white anymore. Everything is gray. . . . Fewer people recognize the difference between right and wrong. The sin now is getting caught, not the violation."

The apostle Paul wrote about people with such attitudes: "They are in darkness mentally, and alienated from the life that belongs to God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the insensibility of their hearts. Having come to be past all moral sense, they gave themselves over to loose conduct to work uncleanness of every

sort with greediness." (Ephesians 4:18, 19) But trouble looms for them. Isaiah declared: "Woe to those who are saying that good is bad and bad is good, those who are putting darkness for light and light for darkness." (Isaiah 5:20) Not only do these ones reap what they sow now but they will soon experience their greatest "woe"—adverse judgment from Jehovah.—Galatians 6:7.

"When the wicked ones sprout as the vegetation and all the practicers of what is hurtful blossom forth, it is that they may be annihilated forever," says Psalm 92:7. In other words, this bumper crop of wickedness will not go on indefinitely, making life unbearable for all. In fact, Jesus said that the "generation" sponsoring this wickedness will be the very one that God will do away with in a "great tribulation." (Matthew 24:3, 21, 34) So if we want to be spared through that tribulation, we need to know right from wrong *according to God's standards;* and, of course, we also need the moral strength to say no to wrongdoing in all its forms. Though this is not easy, Jehovah has furnished us with some encouraging examples in Bible times and today.

Learning From a Young Man Who Said No

Saying no to fornication and adultery seems to be especially difficult, even for some in the Christian congregation. Timothy, mentioned in the opening paragraph, took to heart the example of young Joseph, recorded in the Scriptures at Genesis 39:1-12. Joseph displayed moral strength when invited repeatedly by the wife of the Egyptian official Potiphar to have relations with her. Joseph, the account says, "would refuse and would say . . . 'How could I commit this great badness and actually sin against God?'"

How did Joseph acquire the moral strength to say no to Potiphar's wife day after day? For a start, he valued his relationship with Jehovah far more than he valued momentary pleasures. Additionally, although he was not under a divine law code (the Law of Moses was yet to come), Joseph had a clear grasp of moral principles; he knew that committing fornication with Potiphar's infatuated wife would be a sin not only against her husband but also against God.—Genesis 39:8, 9.

Joseph evidently understood the importance of not even lighting the match of desire that could ignite an uncontrollable inferno of passion. A Christian is wise to follow Joseph's example. The July 1, 1957, *Watchtower* stated: "He must recognize his fleshly weaknesses and not think he can follow sensual desires to the Scriptural boundary line and stop there. Even if he may succeed in doing that for awhile, he will eventually be drawn over that boundary line into sin. This is certain to happen, since lusts that are nourished grow in strength and get a tighter grip on a person. He then has greater difficulty getting his mind off them. His best defense is to resist them at the outset."

Resisting at the outset becomes easier as we develop a love for what is right and a hatred for what is wrong. (Psalm 37:27) But we need to keep working at it, to be persistent. If we do, with Jehovah's help our love for right and our contempt for wrong will grow stronger. Meanwhile, of course, we must remain vigilant, as Jesus directed, constantly praying to be spared from temptation and to be delivered from the wicked one.—Matthew 6:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:17.

Saying No to Peer Pressure

Another influence toward wrongdoing is peer pressure. One youth confessed: "I'm

living two lives—one at school and one at home. At school I hang around kids who swear almost every time they open their mouths. And I'm turning out just like them. What should I do?" What is needed is the courage to be different, and one way to obtain it is by reading and meditating on Bible accounts that tell us about God's loyal servants like Joseph. Other fine examples are Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—four young men who had the courage to be different from their peers.

While being educated with other young men in the royal court of Babylon, these four young Israelites were required to eat "a daily allowance from the delicacies of the king." Not wanting to violate the dietary aspects of the Law of Moses, they said no to this food. That took strength—and all the more so because the dishes, being "delicacies of the king," were probably quite tempting. What a fine example these young men set for Christians today who may be tempted, even pressured, to overindulge in alcohol or to take drugs and use tobacco! —Daniel 1:3-17.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego also demonstrated the truth of what Jesus Christ later said: "The person faithful in what is least is faithful also in much." (Luke 16:10) Their courageous stand on the comparatively small matter of food and the fine outcome Jehovah gave no doubt fortified them for a later, more serious test. (Daniel 1:18-20) This test came when they were ordered, on pain of death by fire, to participate in idolatry. Courageously, the three young men remained determined to worship only Jehovah, trusting fully in him whatever the outcome might be. Once again Jehovah blessed them for their faith and courage—this time by miraculously protecting them from the flames when they were thrown into a superheated furnace. —Daniel 3:1-30.

God's Word contains many other examples of those who said no to wrongdoing. Moses said no to being "called the son of the daughter of Pharaoh," even though this would have given him ample opportunity to indulge in "the temporary enjoyment of sin" in Egypt. (Hebrews 11:24-26) The prophet Samuel refused to abuse his authority by accepting bribes. (1 Samuel 12:3, 4) The apostles of Jesus Christ boldly answered no when ordered to stop preaching. (Acts 5:27-29) Jesus himself firmly said no to all wrongdoing—right down to the last moments of his life when soldiers offered him "wine drugged with myrrh." Accepting it might have weakened his resolve at that critical time.—Mark 15:23; Matthew 4:1-10.

Saying No—A Matter of Life and Death

Jesus said: "Go in through the narrow gate; because broad and spacious is the road leading off into destruction, and many are the ones going in through it; whereas narrow is the gate and cramped the road leading off into life, and few are the ones finding it."—Matthew 7:13, 14.

The broad road is popular because it is easy to travel. Its travelers are self-indulgent, given to fleshly thinking and ways, and they want, not to be different, but to conform to Satan's world. They feel morally hemmed in by God's laws and principles. (Ephesians 4:17-19) Yet, Jesus specifically said that the broad road leads "off into destruction."

But why did Jesus say that only a few choose the cramped road? Primarily because only a minority want God's laws and principles to govern their lives and to help them resist the many inducements to and opportunities for wrongdoing around them.

Furthermore, only a comparative few are prepared to fight illicit desire, peer pressure, and the fear of ridicule that may come their way because of the path they have chosen.—1 Peter 3:16; 4:4.

These ones understand fully how the apostle Paul felt when he described the fight that he had in saying no to sin. Like today's world, the Roman and Greek world of Paul's time provided a broad road of opportunity to indulge in wrongdoing. Paul explained that his mind, which knew what was right, waged an ongoing 'war' with his flesh, which leaned toward wrongdoing. (Romans 7:21-24) Yes, Paul knew that his body was a good servant but a bad master, so he learned to say no to it. "I pummel my body and lead it as a slave," he wrote. (1 Corinthians 9:27) How did he achieve such mastery? Not in his own strength, which was unequal to the task, but with the help of God's spirit.—Romans 8:9-11.

As a result, Paul, though imperfect, kept his integrity to Jehovah right to the end. Not long before his death, he could write: "I have fought the fine fight, I have run the course to the finish, I have observed the faith. From this time on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness." —2 Timothy 4:7, 8.

As we war against our imperfections, what encouraging examples we have, not just in Paul, but also in those who served as examples to him—Joseph, Moses, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and many others. Imperfect humans though they were, each one of these men of faith said no to wrongdoing, not because of doggedness or stubbornness, but because of moral strength born of Jehovah's spirit. (Galatians 5:22, 23) They were spiritual men. They hungered for every utterance of Jehovah's mouth. (Deuteronomy 8:3) His word meant life to them. (Deuteronomy 32:47) Above all, they loved Jehovah and feared him, and with his help, they patiently cultivated a hatred for wrongdoing.—Psalm 97:10; Proverbs 1:7.

May we be like them. Indeed, to endure in saying no to wrongdoing in all its forms, we need Jehovah's spirit just as they did. Jehovah generously gives us his spirit if we sincerely ask for it, study his Word, and regularly attend Christian meetings.—Psalm 119:105; Luke 11:13; Hebrews 10:24, 25.

Timothy, mentioned at the outset, was glad he did not neglect his spiritual needs. The young female employee, who overheard his conversation with his workmate and was wrongly attracted by Timothy's innocence, later quietly invited Timothy to her home when her husband was out. Timothy declined. Not easily put off, she extended the invitation on many occasions, like Potiphar's wife. Timothy firmly but kindly said no each time. He even gave this woman a fine witness from God's Word. Deeply grateful to Jehovah for giving him the moral fortitude to say no, Timothy is now happily married to a delightful fellow Christian. Indeed, Jehovah will bless and fortify all who want to maintain their Christian integrity by saying no to wrongdoing.—Psalm 1:1-3.

In Our Next Issue

Our Quest for a Longer Life

Forgive From Your Heart

Can You Serve in a Foreign Field?

THEY "FEARED THE TRUE GOD"

WHILE the Israelites were in slavery in Egypt, the Hebrew midwives Shiphrah and Puah were put in a distressing position. In an attempt to control the mushrooming foreign population, Pharaoh commanded these women: "When you help the Hebrew women to give birth . . . , if it is a son, you must also put it to death."—Exodus 1:15, 16.

Shiphrah and Puah "feared the true God," so they took courage and "did not do as the king of Egypt had spoken to them." Instead, they preserved alive the male infants, though this bold stand could have put them in danger. Jehovah "dealt well with the midwives," and he rewarded them for their life-saving acts. —Exodus 1:17-21.

This account underscores Jehovah's appreciation for those who serve him. He could have viewed what Shiphrah and Puah did, though courageous, as simply humanitarian. After all, no woman of sound mind would murder infants! Still, Jehovah no doubt took into consideration the fact that some humans, out of fear of man, have committed heinous acts. He knew that these midwives were motivated not only by human kindness but also by godly fear and devotion.

How grateful we can be to serve a God who takes note of our faithful acts! True, perhaps none of us have faced the test of faith that was thrust upon Shiphrah and Puah. Yet, when we stand firm for what is right—whether in school, at our place of employment, or in any other situation—Jehovah does not take our loyal love for granted. On the contrary, he "becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him." (Hebrews 11:6) Yes, "God is not unrighteous so as to forget your work and the love you showed for his name, in that you have ministered to the holy ones and continue ministering."—Hebrews 6:10.

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