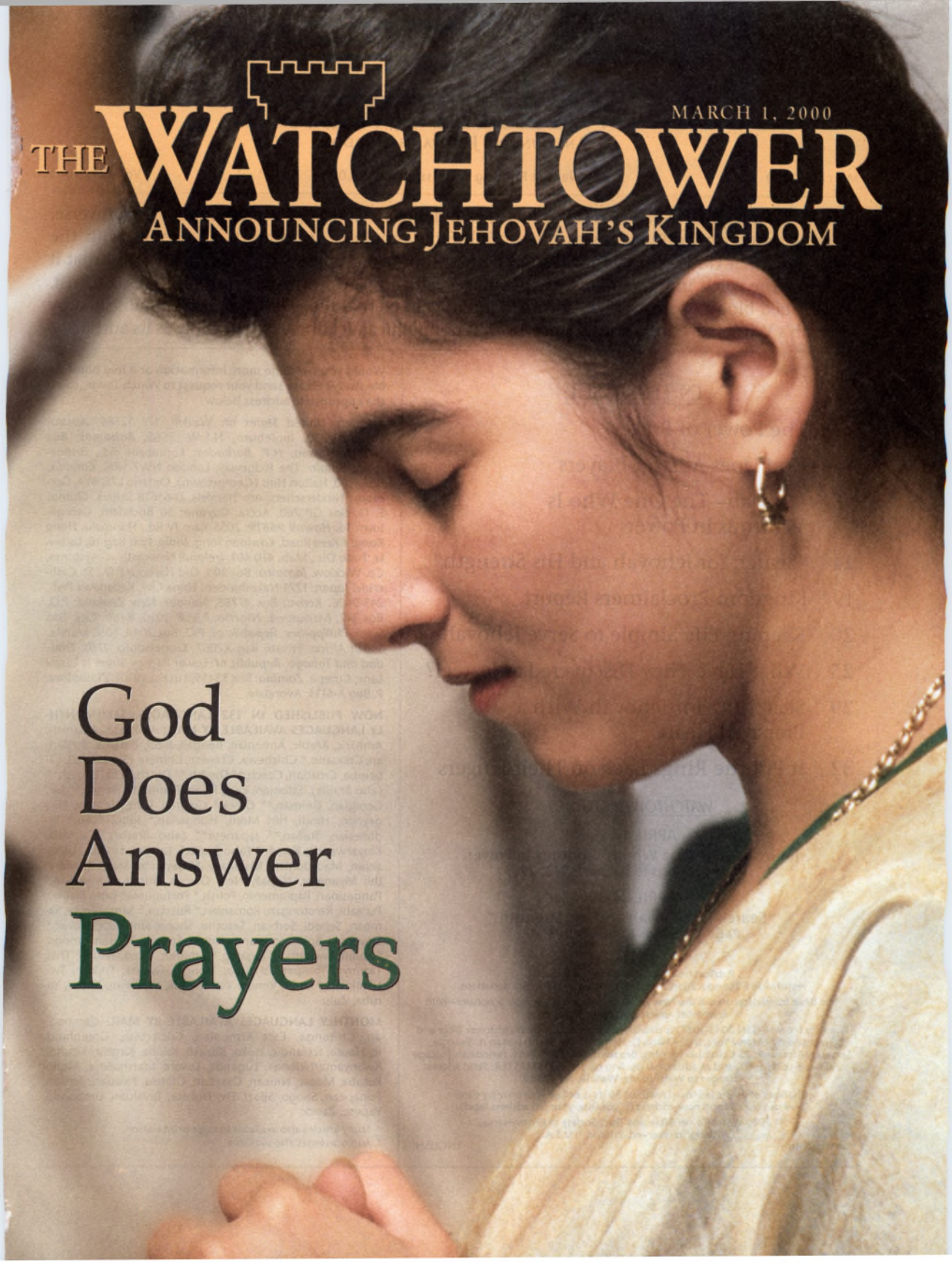
MARCH 1, 2000

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



God Does Answer Prayers

THE WATCHTOWER®
ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

March 1, 2000 | Average Printing Each Issue: 22,398,000 | Vol. 121, No. 5

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

IN THIS ISSUE

3 The Power of Prayer

5 God Does Answer Prayers

8 Jehovah—The One Who Is Vigorous in Power

14 "Search for Jehovah and His Strength"

19 Kingdom Proclaimers Report

20 Keeping Life Simple to Serve Jehovah

25 What Have They Discovered at Jezreel?

29 Searching for Jehovah With a Prepared Heart

32 It Put the Rings Back on Their Fingers

WATCHTOWER STUDIES

APRIL 17-23:
Jehovah—The One Who Is Vigorous in Power.
Page 8. Songs to be used: 143, 29.

APRIL 24-30:
"Search for Jehovah and His Strength."
Page 14. Songs to be used: 3, 47.

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

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

The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) is published semimonthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; Milton G. Henschel, President; Lyman A. Swingle, Secretary-Treasurer; 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483. Periodicals Postage Paid at Brooklyn, NY, and at additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to Watchtower, **Wallkill, NY 12589.**

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

© 2000 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A.

Semimonthly ENGLISH

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

America, United States of: Wallkill, NY 12589. ***Australia:*** Box 280, Ingleburn, N.S.W. 2565. ***Bahamas:*** Box N-1247, Nassau, N.P. ***Barbados:*** Fontabelle Rd., Bridgetown. ***Britain:*** The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN. ***Canada:*** Box 4100, Halton Hills (Georgetown), Ontario L7G 4Y4. ***Germany:*** Niederselters, Am Steinfels, D-65618 Selters. ***Ghana:*** P. O. Box GP 760, Accra. ***Guyana:*** 50 Brickdam, Georgetown 16. ***Hawaii 96819:*** 2055 Kam IV Rd., Honolulu. ***Hong Kong:*** 4 Kent Road, Kowloon Tong. ***India:*** Post Bag 10, Lonavla, Pune Dis., Mah. 410 401. ***Ireland:*** Newcastle, Greystones, Co. Wicklow. ***Jamaica:*** Box 103, Old Harbour P.O., St. Catherine. ***Japan:*** 1271 Nakashinden, Ebina City, Kanagawa Pref., 243-0496. ***Kenya:*** Box 47788, Nairobi. ***New Zealand:*** P.O. Box 142, Manurewa. ***Nigeria:*** P.M.B. 1090, Benin City, Edo State. ***Philippines, Republic of:*** P.O. Box 2044, 1060 Manila. ***South Africa:*** Private Bag X2067, Krugersdorp, 1740. ***Trinidad and Tobago, Republic of:*** Lower Rapsey Street & Laxmi Lane, Curepe. ***Zambia:*** Box 33459, Lusaka 10101. ***Zimbabwe:*** P. Bag A-6113, Avondale.

NOW PUBLISHED IN 132 LANGUAGES. SEMIMONTHLY LANGUAGES AVAILABLE BY MAIL: Afrikaans, Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Bengali, Bicol, Bislama, Bulgarian, Cebuano,* Chichewa, Chinese, Chinese (Simplified), Cibemba, Croatian, Czech,*# Danish,*# Dutch,* Efik, English*# (also Braille), Estonian, Ewe, Fijian, Finnish,*# French,*# Ga, Georgian, German,*# Greek,* Gujarati, Gun, Hebrew, Hiligaynon, Hindi, Hiri Motu, Hungarian,* Igbo, Iloko,* Indonesian, Italian,*# Japanese*# (also Braille), Kannada, Kinyarwanda, Korean* (also Braille), Latvian, Lingala, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Malagasy, Malayalam, Maltese, Marathi, Myanmar, Nepali, New Guinea Pidgin, Norwegian,# Pangasinan, Papiamento, Polish,* Portuguese* (also Braille), Punjabi, Rarotongan, Romanian,* Russian,* Samar-Leyte, Samoan, Sepedi, Serbian, Sesotho, Shona, Sinhalese, Slovak,* Slovenian, Solomon Islands Pidgin, Spanish,*# Sranantongo, Swahili, Swedish,*# Tagalog,* Tahitian, Tamil, Telugu, Thai, Tigrinya, Tongan, Tshiluba, Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Twi, Ukrainian,* Urdu, Venda, Vietnamese, Wallisian, Xhosa, Yoruba, Zulu

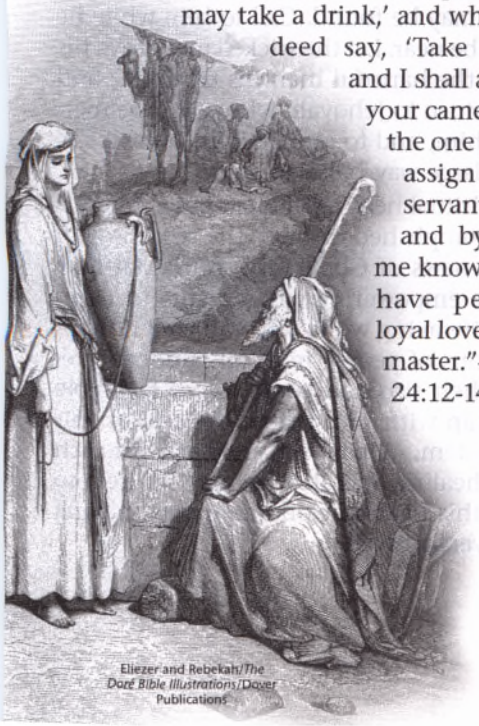
MONTHLY LANGUAGES AVAILABLE BY MAIL: Cambodian, Chitonga, East Armenian, Gilbertese, Greenlandic, Hausa, Icelandic, Isoko, Kazakh, Kiluba, Kirghiz, Kirundi, Kwanyama/Ndonga, Luganda, Luvale, Marshallese, Monokutuba, Moore, Niuean, Ossetian, Otetela, Palauan, Persian, Ponapean, Sango, Silozi, Tiv, Trukese, Tuvaluan, Umbundu, Yapese, Zande

* Study articles also available in large-print edition.
\# Audiocassettes also available.

The Power of Prayer

The sun is setting over the city of Nahor in the Middle East. A Syrian man named Eliezer arrives with a train of ten camels at a well outside the city. Though no doubt tired and thirsty, Eliezer is more concerned about the needs of others. He has come from a foreign land to find a wife for the son of his master. Moreover, he must find this wife among his master's relatives. How will he accomplish this difficult task?

ELIEZER believes in the power of prayer. With remarkable, childlike faith, he makes this humble request: "Jehovah the God of my master Abraham, cause it to happen, please, before me this day and perform loving-kindness with my master Abraham. Here I am stationed at a fountain of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. What must occur is that the young woman to whom I shall say, 'Let your water jar down, please, that I may take a drink,' and who will indeed say, 'Take a drink, and I shall also water your camels,' this is the one you must assign to your servant, to Isaac; and by this let me know that you have performed loyal love with my master."—Genesis 24:12-14.



Eliezer and Rebekah/*The Doré Bible Illustrations*/Dover Publications

Eliezer's confidence in the power of prayer is not in vain. Why, the very first woman who comes to the well happens to be the granddaughter of Abraham's brother! Her name is Rebekah, and she is single, morally chaste, and beautiful. Remarkably, she not only gives Eliezer a drink but kindly offers to quench the thirst of all his camels. Later, after a family consultation, Rebekah willingly agrees to go back with Eliezer to a distant land to become the wife of Abraham's son Isaac. What a dramatic and clear answer to Eliezer's prayer back at a time when God occasionally intervened miraculously in events!

We can learn much from Eliezer's prayer. It showed his outstanding faith, humility, and unselfish concern for the needs of others. Eliezer's prayer also showed his submission to Jehovah's way of dealing with mankind. No doubt he was aware of God's special attachment to Abraham as well as His promise that future blessings would come to all mankind through Abraham. (Genesis 12:3) Thus, Eliezer started his prayer with the words: "Jehovah the God of my master Abraham."

Jesus Christ was the descendant of Abraham who would be the means for blessing all obedient mankind. (Genesis 22:18) If we want our prayers to be answered today, we need to show humble recognition of God's way of dealing with mankind through his Son. Jesus Christ

said: "If you remain in union with me and my sayings remain in you, ask whatever you wish and it will take place for you."—John 15:7.

A follower of Christ who experienced the truthfulness of these words of Jesus was the apostle Paul. His belief in the power of prayer was certainly not in vain. He encouraged fellow Christians to take all their anxieties to God in prayer and testified: "For all things I have the strength by virtue of him who imparts power to me." (Philippians 4:6, 7, 13) Does this mean that all of Paul's prayerful requests to God were granted? Let us see.

Not All Requests Are Granted

In his unselfish ministry, Paul suffered from what he described as "a thorn in the flesh." (2 Corinthians 12:7) This could have been the mental and emotional distress caused by opposers and "false brothers." (2 Corinthians 11:26; Galatians 2:4) Or it could have been the physical discomfort of a chronic eye affliction. (Galatians 4:15) Whatever the case, this "thorn in the flesh" had a weakening effect on Paul. "I three times entreated the Lord that it might depart from me," he wrote. However, Paul's request was not granted. It was explained to Paul that the spiritual benefits he had already received from God, such as power to endure trials, were sufficient. Furthermore, God said: "My power is being made perfect in weakness."—2 Corinthians 12:8, 9.

What do we learn from the examples of Eliezer and Paul? Jehovah God indeed listens to the prayers of those who humbly seek to serve him. But this does not mean that he always grants their requests because God has a long-range view of matters. He knows better than we do what is in our best interests. More important, he always acts in harmony with his stated purpose as recorded in the Bible.

A Time for Spiritual Healing

God promises to heal mankind of all physical, mental, and emotional maladies during the Thousand Year Reign of his Son over the earth. (Revelation 20:1-3; 21:3-5) Sincere Christians eagerly await this promised future, with full faith in God's power to make it a reality. While not expecting such miraculous healing now, they pray to God for his comfort and strength to cope with trials. (Psalm 55:22) When they fall sick, they may also pray for God's guidance in obtaining the best medical treatment within their economic means.

Some religions encourage the sick to pray to be healed now, pointing to the miraculous cures that Jesus and his apostles performed. But such miracles were done for a special purpose. They served to prove that Jesus Christ was the true Messiah and to show that God's favor had been transferred from the Jewish nation to the young Christian congregation. Back then, miraculous gifts were needed to strengthen the faith of the newly established Christian congregation. When the infant congregation got on its feet, as it were, and became mature, the miraculous gifts were "done away with."—1 Corinthians 13:8, 11.

At this crucial time, Jehovah God is directing his worshipers in the more important work of spiritual healing. While they yet have time, people desperately need to respond to this appeal: "Search for Jehovah, you people, while he may be found. Call to him while he proves to be near. Let the wicked man leave his way, and the harmful man his thoughts; and let him return to Jehovah, who will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will forgive in a large way."—Isaiah 55:6, 7.

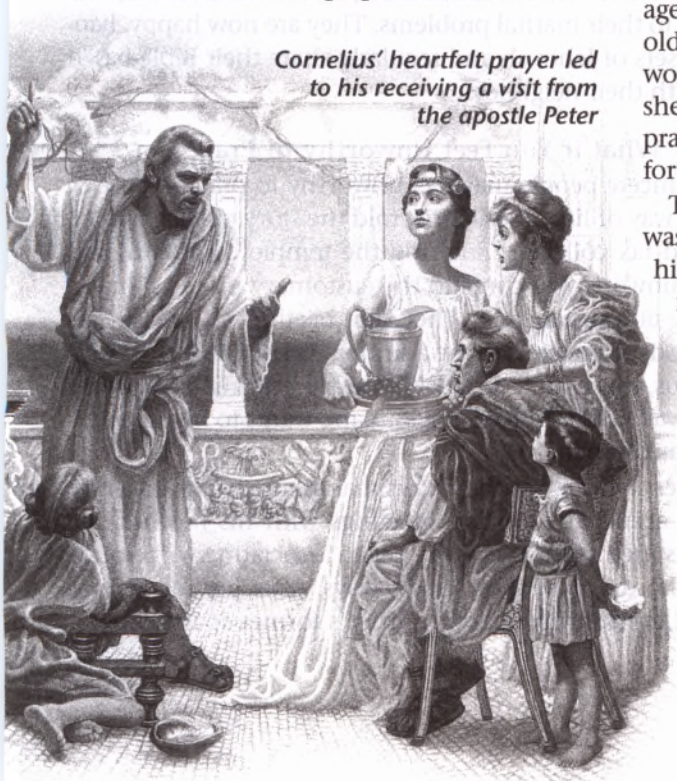
This spiritual healing of repentant sinners is being accomplished through the preaching of the good news of God's Kingdom. (Matthew 24:14) By empowering his servants to carry out this lifesaving work, Jehovah God is helping millions of people from all nations to repent of their sins and come into a favorable relationship with him before the end of this wicked system. All who sincerely pray for such spiritual healing and all who pray for help to perform this healing work are indeed having their prayers answered.

God Does Answer Prayers

Cornelius was a man who sought God's favor by means of frequent, heartfelt prayers. Moreover, he made good use of his position as an army officer. According to the Bible, "he made many gifts of mercy" to needy people.—Acts 10:1, 2.

AT THAT time, the Christian congregation was made up of believing Jews, proselytes, and Samaritans. Cornelius was an uncircumcised Gentile and not part of the Christian congregation. Does that mean that his prayers were in vain? No. Jehovah God took note of Cornelius and his prayerful works.—Acts 10:4.

Through angelic guidance, Cornelius was brought into contact with the Christian congregation. (Acts 10:30-33) As a result, he and his household were privileged to become the first uncircumcised Gentiles to be accepted into the Christian congregation. Jehovah God deemed Cornelius' personal experience worthy of being included in the Bible record. No doubt, he made many changes to bring his life into complete harmony with God's standards. (Isaiah 2:2-4; John 17:16) Cornelius' experience should be of great encouragement to people of all nations who are seeking God's favor today. Consider some examples.

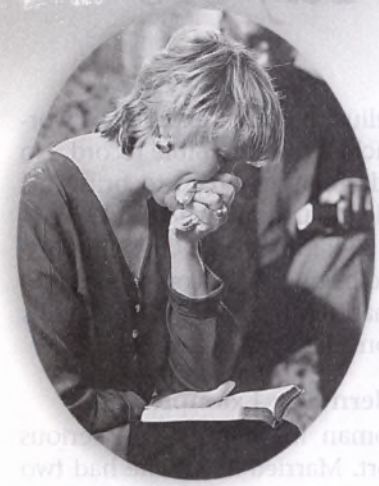


Cornelius' heartfelt prayer led to his receiving a visit from the apostle Peter

Modern-Day Examples

A young woman in India was in serious need of comfort. Married at 21, she had two children. But soon after the birth of the second child, her husband died. Suddenly, at the age of 24, she was a widow with a 2-month-old daughter and a 22-month-old son. No wonder she needed comfort! Where could she turn? One night, in deep distress, she prayed, saying, "Heavenly Father, please comfort me through your Word."

The next morning, she had a visitor. He was one of Jehovah's Witnesses. That day, his house-to-house ministry had been difficult because few had opened the door to him. Tired and rather discouraged, he was about to go home, but somehow he felt impelled to visit just one more house. That was where he met the young widow. She invited him in and accepted a publication that explained the Bible. The woman drew great comfort from reading that publication and from her discussions with the Witness. She learned of God's promise to raise the dead and of God's Kingdom,



Prayer has helped many through times of distress

which will soon make the earth a paradise. Most important, she came to know and love the one true God, Jehovah, who had answered her prayer.

Nora, who lives in the city of George, South Africa, set aside a month to share in the full-time evangelizing work. Before starting, she earnestly prayed to Jehovah to help her find someone who was genuinely interested in studying the Bible. The territory she was assigned to work included the home of a person who had been very rude to Nora on previous visits. Courageously, Nora called at that home again. To her surprise, she found that a new tenant, named Noleen, had moved in. Moreover, Noleen and her mother had been praying to God for help to understand the Bible. "When I offered them a Bible study," explains Nora, "they were delighted." Noleen and her mother progressed quickly. In time, they both began to share with Nora in the spiritual healing work.

Another example showing the power of prayer is that of a couple who live in the South African city of Johannesburg. On a Saturday night in 1996, Dennis and Carol's marriage reached the breaking point. As a last resort, they decided to pray for help, which they repeatedly did until late into the night. The next morning, at 11 o'clock, two of Jehovah's Witnesses knocked at their door. Dennis answered the door and told them to wait until he called his wife. Dennis then warned Carol that if she invited the Witnesses in, it might be hard to get rid of them. Carol reminded Dennis that they had been praying for help and said that this might be God's answer to their prayers. So the Witnesses were invited in, and a Bible study was started in the book *Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life.* Dennis and Carol were thrilled with what they learned. That same afternoon, they attended their first meeting at the local Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses. By applying the knowledge they had learned from the Bible, Dennis and Carol found solutions to their marital problems. They are now happy, baptized praisers of Jehovah and regularly share their Bible-based beliefs with their neighbors.

What if You Feel Unworthy to Pray?

Some sincere people may feel unworthy to pray because of their bad way of life. Jesus Christ told the story of such a man, a despised tax collector. Entering the temple courtyard, this man felt unworthy to come to the customary place of prayer. "Standing at a distance . . . [he] kept beating his breast, saying, 'O God, be gracious to me a sinner.' " (Luke 18:13) According to Jesus, this man received a favorable hearing. This proves that Jehovah God is indeed gracious and wants to help sincerely repentant sinners.

Consider a young South African man named Paul. As a boy, Paul had attended Christian meetings with his mother. But during his high school years, he began associating with young people who did not follow God's ways. After leaving school, he served in the army of South Africa's former apartheid gov-

It is good to pray for help to understand the Bible

Married couples can pray for help to strengthen their marriage

ernment. Then, unexpectedly, his girlfriend broke off their relationship. This unsatisfying way of life left Paul feeling very depressed. "One evening," he recalls, "I prayed to Jehovah and asked for his help, even though I had not approached God sincerely for years."

Not long after this prayer, Paul's mother invited him to attend the annual Memorial of Christ's death. (Luke 22:19) Paul found it strange that his mother did this, as he had been wayward and had shown little interest in the Bible. "I viewed this invitation as Jehovah's answer to my prayer and felt that I had to reciprocate." From that time onward, Paul began attending all Christian meetings. After four months of Bible study, he qualified for baptism. Moreover, he terminated his engineering studies and chose the career of sharing in the full-time evangelizing work. Today, Paul is a happy man, no longer depressed about his past life. For the last 11 years, he has served at the branch office of the Watch Tower Society in South Africa.

Indeed, Jehovah God graciously answers prayers and "becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him." (Hebrews 11:6) Soon the great day of Jehovah will arrive and bring an end to all wickedness. In the meantime, Jehovah is answering the prayers of his people for strength and guidance as they zealously share in the vital work of witnessing. Thus, millions of individuals from all nations are being brought into contact with the Christian congregation and are being blessed with Bible knowledge that leads to everlasting life.—John 17:3.

JEHOVAH —THE ONE WHO IS VIGOROUS IN POWER

"Due to the abundance of dynamic energy, he also being vigorous in power, not one of them is missing."—ISAIAH 40:26.

POWER is something many of us take for granted. For example, we give little thought to the electrical power that gives us light and heat or to the convenience of plugging in any electrical appliance we may own. Only an unexpected power outage brings home to us that without power, man's cities would practically shut down. Most of the electricity on which we depend comes indirectly from the earth's most reliable power source—the sun.* Every second this solar reactor consumes five million tons of nuclear fuel, showering the earth with life-sustaining energy.

[2] Where does all this solar power come from? Who constructed this celestial power plant? Jehovah God did. Referring to him, Psalm 74:16 says: "You yourself prepared the luminary, even the sun." Yes, Jehovah is the ultimate Source of all power, just as he is the Source of all life. (Psalm 36:9) Never should we take his power for granted. Through the prophet Isaiah, Jehovah reminds us to look up at the heavenly bodies, such as the sun and the stars, and meditate on how they came into existence. "Raise your eyes high up and see. Who has created these things? It is the One who is bringing forth the army of them even by number, all of whom he calls even by name. Due to the abundance of dynamic energy, he also being vigorous in power, not one of them is missing."—Isaiah 40:26; Jeremiah 32:17.

[3] Since Jehovah is vigorous in power, we can rest assured

* It is widely held that such fossil fuels as oil and coal—the principal sources of energy for power stations—derive their energy from the sun.

1, 2. (a) On what physical power source do we all depend? (b) Explain why Jehovah is ultimately the Source of all power.

3. How do we benefit from manifestations of Jehovah's power?

that the sun will continue to provide us the light and heat on which our lives depend. However, we rely on the power of God for much more than our basic physical needs. Our redemption from sin and death, our hope for the future, and our trust in Jehovah are all inseparably linked to his exercise of power. (Psalm 28:6-9; Isaiah 50:2) The Bible abounds with examples that testify to Jehovah's power to create and redeem, to save his people and destroy his enemies.

God's Power Is Manifest in Creation

4 The apostle Paul explained that our Creator's 'eternal power can be clearly perceived in the things he has made.' (Romans 1:20) Centuries earlier, the psalmist David, who as a shepherd must frequently have looked up at the night sky, perceived the grandeur of the universe and the might of its Maker. He wrote: "When I see your heavens, the works of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have prepared, what is mortal man that you keep him in mind, and the son of earthling man that you take care of him?" (Psalm 8:3, 4) Despite his limited knowledge of celestial bodies, David understood that he was very insignificant in comparison with the Creator of our vast universe. Today, astronomers know much more about the immensity of the universe and the power that sustains it. For example, they tell us that our sun every second emits energy equivalent to the explosion of 100,000 million megatons of TNT.* A very small fraction of that energy reaches the earth; yet that is enough to sustain all life on our planet. Still, our sun is by no means the most powerful star in the heavens. Some stars radiate in only one second the

* In contrast, the most powerful nuclear bomb ever tested had an explosive power equivalent to 57 megatons of TNT.

4. (a) How was David affected by observing the night sky? (b) What do the heavenly bodies reveal regarding divine power?

energy that the sun radiates in a whole day. Imagine, then, the power at the disposal of the One who created such heavenly bodies! Elihu rightfully exclaimed: "As for the Almighty, we have not found him out; he is exalted in power."—Job 37:23.

[5] If we 'search for God's works' as David did, we will see evidence of his power everywhere —in wind and waves, in thunder and lightning, in mighty rivers and majestic mountains. (Psalm 111:2; Job 26:12-14) Furthermore, as Jehovah reminded Job, animals testify to His strength. Among these is Behemoth, or the hippopotamus. Jehovah told Job: "Its power is in its hips . . . Its strong bones are like wrought-iron rods." (Job 40:15-18) The fearsome power of the wild bull was also well-known in Bible times, and David prayed that he might be spared from "the mouth of the lion, and from the horns of wild bulls."—Psalm 22:21; Job 39:9-11.

[6] Because of its strength, the bull is used in

5. What evidence of Jehovah's strength do we find in his works?

6. What does the bull symbolize in the Scriptures, and why? (See footnote.)

"Raise your eyes high up and see. Who has created these things?"

Photo by Malin, © IAC/RGO 1991

the Bible to symbolize Jehovah's power.* The apostle John's vision of Jehovah's throne depicts four living creatures, one of which had a face like a bull. (Revelation 4:6, 7) Evidently, one of the four principal attributes of Jehovah portrayed by these cherubs is power. The others are love, wisdom, and justice. Since power is such an important facet of God's personality, a clear understanding of his power and how he uses it will draw us closer to him and help us to imitate his example by using well any power at our disposal.—Ephesians 5:1.

"Jehovah of Armies, the Powerful One"

7 In the Scriptures, Jehovah is called "God Almighty," a title that reminds us that we should never underestimate his power or doubt his ability to vanquish his enemies. (Genesis 17:1; Exodus 6:3) Satan's wicked system of things may seem well entrenched, but in Jehovah's eyes "the nations are as a drop from a bucket; and as the film of dust on the scales they have been accounted." (Isaiah 40:15) Thanks to such divine power, there is no doubt that good will triumph over evil. At a time when wickedness is rampant, we can take comfort in knowing that "Jehovah of armies, the Powerful One of Israel" will eliminate evil forever.—Isaiah 1:24; Psalm 37:9, 10.

8 The expression "Jehovah of armies," which occurs 285 times in the Bible, is another reminder of God's power. The "armies" here referred to are the host of spirit creatures that Jehovah has at his command. (Psalm 103:20, 21; 148:2) In a single night, just one of these angels slew 185,000 Assyrian soldiers who were threatening Jerusalem. (2 Kings 19:35) If we recognize the power of Jehovah's celestial armies, we will not easily be intimidated by opposers. The prophet Elisha was unconcerned when trapped by an entire army that was seeking him because, unlike his servant, he could see with the eyes of faith a vast host of heavenly forces supporting him.—2 Kings 6:15-17.

9 Jesus was likewise conscious of angelic support when he faced a mob armed with swords and clubs in the garden of Gethsemane. After telling Peter to return his sword to its place, Jesus told him that, if necessary, He could appeal to his Father for "more than twelve legions of angels." (Matthew 26:47, 52, 53) If we have a similar appreciation for the heavenly armies at God's disposal, we will also trust implicitly in divine backing. The apostle Paul wrote: "What, then, shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who will be against us?"—Romans 8:31.

10 We have every reason, then, to trust in Jehovah's protection. He always uses his power for good and in harmony with his other qualities—justice, wisdom, and love. (Job 37:23; Jeremiah 10:12) While powerful men frequently trample on the poor and humble ones for selfish gain, Jehovah 'raises up the lowly one from the very dust' and 'abounds in power to save.' (Psalm 113:5-7; Isaiah 63:1) As Mary, the modest and unassuming mother of Jesus, understood, "the powerful One" unselfishly exercises his power in behalf of those who fear him, humbling the haughty and exalting the lowly. —Luke 1:46-53.

Jehovah Reveals His Power to His Servants

11 On several occasions, Jehovah manifested

* The wild bull referred to in the Bible was likely the aurochs (Latin *urus*). Two thousand years ago, these animals were found in Gaul (now France), and Julius Caesar wrote the following description of them: "These *uri* are scarcely less than elephants in size, but in their nature, colour, and form, are bulls. Great is their strength, and great their speed: they spare neither man nor beast when once they have caught sight of them."

7. How can we be sure that good will triumph over evil?

8. What heavenly armies does Jehovah command, and what indication do we have of their power?

9. Why, like Jesus, should we have confidence in divine protection?

10. In behalf of whom does Jehovah employ his power?

11. What testimony to God's power did the Israelites witness in the year 1513 B.C.E.?

his might to his servants. One of such occasions was at Mount Sinai in 1513 B.C.E. During that year the Israelites had already seen impressive evidence of God's power. Ten devastating plagues had revealed the strong hand of Jehovah and the impotence of Egyptian gods. Soon thereafter, the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea and the destruction of Pharaoh's army gave further proof of divine strength. Three months later, at the foot of Mount Sinai, Jehovah invited the Israelites to become his "special property out of all other peoples." For their part, they promised: "All that Jehovah has spoken we are willing to do." (Exodus 19:5, 8) Then, Jehovah provided a vivid demonstration of his power. Amid thunder and lightning and the loud sound of a horn, Mount Sinai smoked and trembled. The people, standing at a distance, were terrified. But Moses told them that this experience should teach them godly fear, a fear that would move them to obey their all-powerful and only true God, Jehovah.—Exodus 19:16-19; 20:18-20.

12 Several centuries later, during the time of Elijah, Mount Sinai witnessed another display of divine power. The prophet had already seen God's power at work. For three and a half years, God "shut up the heavens" because of the apostasy of the Israelite nation. (2 Chronicles 7:13) During the resulting drought, ravens fed Elijah in the torrent valley of Cherith, and later a widow's meager supply of flour and oil was miraculously extended to provide him with food. Jehovah even empowered Elijah to resurrect this widow's son. Finally, in a dramatic test of Godship on Mount Carmel, fire came down from heaven and consumed Elijah's sacrifice. (1 Kings 17:4-24; 18:36-40) Nevertheless, soon thereafter, Elijah became afraid and discouraged when Jezebel threatened to kill him. (1 Kings 19:1-4) He fled the country, thinking that his work as a prophet was over. To reassure and strengthen him, Jehovah kindly gave him a personal demonstration of divine power.

13 While Elijah hid in a cave, he saw an awe-inspiring exhibition of three of the forces that Jehovah controls: a strong wind, an earthquake, and finally a fire. However, when Jehovah spoke to Elijah, he did so in "a calm, low voice." He assigned him more work to do and informed him that there were still 7,000 faithful worshipers of Jehovah in the land. (1 Kings 19:9-18) If, like Elijah, we ever feel discouraged at the lack of results in our ministry, we can petition Jehovah for "power beyond what is normal"—a power that can strengthen us to continue preaching the good news without letup. —2 Corinthians 4:7.

Jehovah's Power Guarantees the Fulfillment of His Promises

14 Jehovah's power is also closely connected with his name and the carrying out of his will. The unique name Jehovah, which means "He Causes to Become," reveals that he causes himself to become the Fulfiller of promises. Nothing or nobody can prevent God from bringing his purposes to fruition, however farfetched skeptics may consider them to be. As Jesus once told his apostles, "with God all things are possible."—Matthew 19:26.

15 To illustrate, Jehovah once promised Abraham and Sarah that he would make their descendants a great nation. However, they remained childless for many years. They were both very old when Jehovah told them that the promise was about to be fulfilled and Sarah laughed. In reply, the angel said: "Is anything too extraordinary for Jehovah?" (Genesis 12:1-3; 17:4-8; 18:10-14) Four centuries later, when Moses finally assembled Abraham's descendants—now a great nation—on the Plains

12, 13. What circumstances led Elijah to leave his assignment, but how did Jehovah strengthen him?

14. What does Jehovah's personal name reveal, and how is his power connected with his name?

15. How were Abraham and Sarah reminded that nothing is too extraordinary for Jehovah?

of Moab, he reminded them that God had fulfilled his promise. Moses said: "You continue to live, because [Jehovah] loved your forefathers so that he chose their seed after them and brought you out of Egypt in his sight with his great power, to drive away nations greater and mightier than you from before you, so as to bring you in, to give you their land as an inheritance as at this day."—Deuteronomy 4:37, 38.

Meditating on demonstrations of Jehovah's power builds faith in his promises

16 Centuries later, Jesus censured the Sadducees, who did not believe in the resurrection. Why did they refuse to believe God's promise that he would bring back the dead? Jesus told them: "You know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God." (Matthew 22:29) The Scriptures assure us that 'all those in the memorial tombs will hear the voice of the Son of man and come out.' (John 5:27-29) If we know what the Bible says about the resurrection, our confidence in the power of God will convince us that the dead will be raised up. God "will actually swallow up death forever, . . . for Jehovah himself has spoken it."—Isaiah 25:8.

17 In the near future, there will come a time when every one of us will need to trust in God's saving power in a special way. Satan the Devil will launch an attack on God's people, who will appear to be unprotected. (Ezekiel 38:14-16) God will then manifest his great power in our behalf, and everyone will have to know that he is Jehovah. (Ezekiel 38:21-23) Now is the time to build our faith and confidence in God the Almighty so that we will not waver at that crucial time.

16. Why did the Sadducees fall into the error of denying the resurrection of the dead?

17. On what future day will trust in Jehovah be essential in a special way?

18 Without doubt, there are many reasons for meditating on Jehovah's power. As we contemplate his works, we are humbly moved to praise our Grand Creator and give thanks that he uses his power in such a wise and loving way. We will never be intimidated if we trust in Jehovah of armies. Our faith in his promises will be unwavering. Remember, though, that we have been created in the image of God. Hence, we also have power—albeit to a limited extent. How can we imitate our Creator in the way we exercise our power? This will be considered in the following article.

18. (a) What benefits do we derive from meditating on Jehovah's power? (b) What question will be considered in the following article?

Can You Answer These Questions?

- How does creation testify to Jehovah's power?
- What armies can Jehovah use to support his people?
- What were some occasions when Jehovah demonstrated his power?
- What guarantee do we have that Jehovah will fulfill his promises?

"SEARCH FOR JEHOVAH AND HIS STRENGTH"

"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.

POWER can mean a number of things, such as the possession of control, authority, or influence over others; the ability to act or to produce an effect; physical might (strength); or mental or moral efficacy. Humans do not have a good record when it comes to wielding power. Lord Acton, a historian, speaking of power in the hands of politicians, said: "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely." Modern history abounds with examples showing the general truth of Lord Acton's words. During the 20th century, "man has dominated man to his injury" as never before. (Ecclesiastes 8:9) Corrupt dictators have grossly abused their power and have snuffed out the lives of millions. Power unrestrained by love, wisdom, and justice is dangerous.

2 Unlike many humans, God always uses his power for good. "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) Jehovah directs his power in a controlled way. Patience holds back God's execution of the wicked to give them the opportunity to repent. Love moves him to make the sun shine upon all kinds of men—righteous and unrighteous. Justice will move him finally to use his unlimited power to bring to nothing the one having the means to cause death, Satan the Devil. —Matthew 5:44, 45; Hebrews 2:14; 2 Peter 3:9.

1. What is power, and how have humans handled it?
2. Explain how other divine qualities affect the way that Jehovah uses his power.

3 The awesome power of our heavenly Father is a reason for trust and confidence —both in his promises and in his protection. A small child feels safe among strangers when he clutches the hand of his father, since he knows that his father will not let any harm come to him. Likewise, our heavenly Father, the one "abounding in power to save," will protect us from any permanent harm if we walk with him. (Isaiah 63:1; Micah 6:8) And as a good Father, Jehovah always fulfills his promises. His unlimited power guarantees that his 'word will have certain success in that for which he has sent it.'—Isaiah 55:11; Titus 1:2.

4 Why is it so important that we be determined not to lose sight of the protection of our heavenly Father? Because it is possible to be overwhelmed by circumstances and forget where our real security lies. This is seen in the example of King Asa, a man who generally trusted in Jehovah. During Asa's reign, a million-strong army of Ethiopians attacked Judah. Realizing that the military advantage was on the side of his enemies, Asa prayed: "O Jehovah, as to helping, it does not matter with you whether there are many or those with no power. Help us, O Jehovah our God, for upon you we do lean, and in your name we have come against this crowd. O Jehovah, you are our God. Do not let mortal man retain strength

3. Why is God's almighty power a reason for trusting him?
4, 5. (a) What resulted when King Asa trusted implicitly in Jehovah? (b) What may happen if we rely on human solutions to our problems?

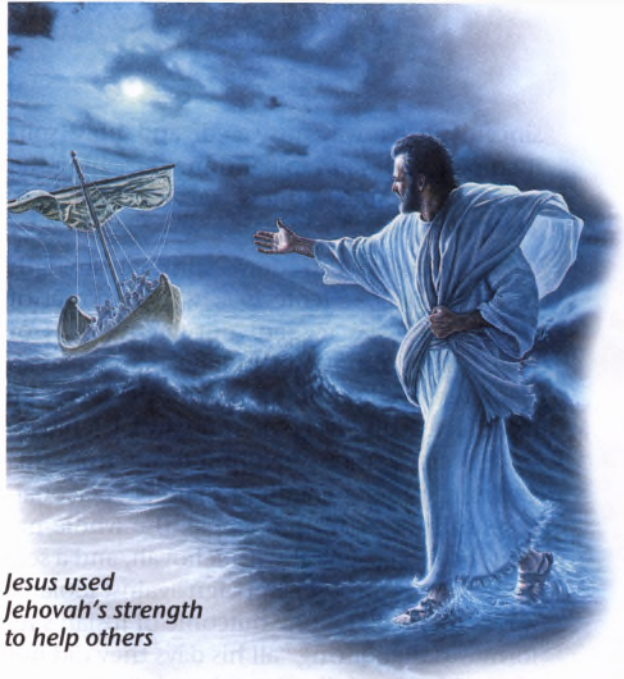
against you." (2 Chronicles 14:11) Jehovah granted Asa's request and gave him a decisive victory.

5 After many years of faithful service, however, Asa's confidence in Jehovah's saving power faltered. To avert a military threat from the northern kingdom of Israel, he turned to Syria for help. (2 Chronicles 16:1-3) Although his bribe to the Syrian King Ben-hadad did result in removing the threat Israel posed to Judah, Asa's covenant with Syria showed a lack of confidence in Jehovah. Hanani the prophet pointedly asked him: "Did not the Ethiopians and the Libyans themselves happen to be a very great military force in multitude, in chariots and in horsemen; and because of your leaning upon Jehovah did he not give them into your hand?" (2 Chronicles 16:7, 8) Nevertheless, Asa rejected this reproof. (2 Chronicles 16:9-12) When faced with problems, let us not rely on human solutions. Instead, let us display confidence in God, for trusting in the power of men will inevitably lead to disappointment.—Psalm 146:3-5.

Seek the Power That Jehovah Gives

6 Jehovah can empower his servants as well as protect them. The Bible urges us to "search for Jehovah and his strength." (Psalm 105:4) Why? Because when we do things in God's strength, our power will be used for the benefit, rather than the harm, of others. Nowhere do we find a better example of this than in Jesus Christ, who performed many miracles in "Jehovah's power." (Luke 5:17) Jesus could have dedicated himself to becoming rich, famous, or even an all-powerful king. (Luke 4:5-7) Instead, he used the power God gave him to train and to teach, to help and to heal. (Mark 7:37; John 7:46) What a fine example for us!

7 Furthermore, when we do things in "the strength that God supplies," this will help us to keep humble. (1 Peter 4:11) Men who seek power for themselves become presumptuous. A case in point is Assyrian King Esar-haddon, who boastfully declared: "I am powerful, I am all powerful, I am a hero, I am gigantic, I am colossal." In contrast, Jehovah "chose the weak things of the world, that he might put the strong things to shame." Thus, if a true Christian boasts, he boasts in Jehovah, for he knows that what he has done has not been accomplished in his own strength. 'Humbling ourselves under the mighty hand of God' will bring true exaltation.—1 Corinthians 1:26-31; 1 Peter 5:6.



Jesus used Jehovah's strength to help others

8 How do we draw on God's strength? First of all, we have to ask for it in prayer. Jesus assured his disciples that his Father would give holy spirit to those requesting it. (Luke 11:10-13) Consider how this imbued Christ's disciples with power when they chose to obey God rather than the religious leaders who had ordered them to stop witnessing about Jesus. When they prayed for Jehovah's help, their

6. Why should we "search for Jehovah and his strength"?

7. What vital quality do we cultivate when we do things in God's strength rather than our own?

8. What should we do first to receive of Jehovah's power?

sincere prayer was answered, and holy spirit empowered them to continue preaching the good news with boldness.—Acts 4:19, 20, 29-31, 33.

9 Second, we can draw spiritual strength from the Bible. (Hebrews 4:12) The power of God's word was evident during the days of King Josiah. Although this Judean king had already removed pagan idols from the land, the unexpected discovery of the Law of Jehovah in the temple motivated him to intensify this cleansing program.* After Josiah had personally read the Law to the people, the whole nation made a covenant with Jehovah, and a second, more vigorous, campaign against idolatry was launched. The fine outcome of Josiah's reform was that during "all his days they did not turn aside from following Jehovah."—2 Chronicles 34:33.

10 Third, we draw strength from Jehovah through Christian association. Paul encouraged Christians to attend meetings regularly in order to "incite to love and fine works" and to encourage one another. (Hebrews 10:24, 25) When Peter was miraculously released from prison, he wanted to be with his brothers, so he went straight to the house of the mother of John Mark, where "quite a few were gathered together and praying." (Acts 12:12) Of course, they could all have stayed at home and prayed. But they chose to come together to pray and encourage one another during that difficult time. Near the end of Paul's long and hazardous journey to Rome, he met up with some brothers in Puteoli and later with others who had traveled to meet him. His reaction? "Upon catching sight of them [the latter], Paul thanked God and took courage." (Acts 28:13-15) He was strengthened by being with fellow Christians once again. We too draw strength from association with fellow Christians. As long as we are free and able to associate with one another, we must not try to walk alone along the cramped road leading off into life. —Proverbs 18:1; Matthew 7:14.

11 Through regular prayer, study of God's Word, and association with fellow believers, we "go on acquiring power in the Lord and in the mightiness of his strength." (Ephesians 6:10) All of us undoubtedly need "power in the Lord." Some suffer from debilitating illnesses, others from the ravages of old age or from the loss of a lifetime companion. (Psalm 41:3) Others endure the opposition of an unbelieving mate. Parents, especially single parents, may find that caring for a full-time job while bringing up a family is an exhausting responsibility. Young Christians need the strength to stand up to peer pressure and to say no to drugs and immorality. No one should hesitate to ask Jehovah for "power beyond what is normal" to cope with such challenges.—2 Corinthians 4:7.

"Giving to the Tired One Power"

12 Further, Jehovah gives power to his servants when they carry out their ministry. We read in Isaiah's prophecy: "He is giving to the tired one power; and to the one without dynamic energy he makes full might abound. . . . Those who are hoping in Jehovah will regain power. They will mount up with wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not tire out." (Isaiah 40:29-31) The apostle Paul personally received power to perform his ministry. As a result, his ministry was effective. To Christians in Thessalonica, he wrote: "The good news we preach did not turn up among you with speech alone but also with

* Apparently, the Jews discovered the original copy of the Law of Moses, which had been deposited in the temple centuries earlier.

9. Name a second source of spiritual strength, and cite a Scriptural example to show its efficacy.

10. What is a third way to draw strength from Jehovah, and why is it vital?

11. Mention some circumstances where "power beyond what is normal" is particularly needed.

12. How does Jehovah sustain us in the Christian ministry?

Proclaiming the Word of God is within our power if our heart is in it

power and with holy spirit." (1 Thessalonians 1:5) His preaching and teaching had the power to work great changes in the lives of those who listened to him.

13 When confronted by an indifferent spirit in our territory—a territory in which we may have preached repeatedly for years with little response—we may become disheartened. Jeremiah similarly felt discouraged by the opposition, ridicule, and apathy he met up with. "I am not going to make mention of [God], and I shall speak no more in his name," he told himself. But he could not keep quiet. His message "proved to be like a burning fire shut up in [his] bones." (Jeremiah 20:9) What gave him renewed power in the face of so much adversity? "Jehovah was with me like a terrible mighty one," Jeremiah said. (Jeremiah 20:11) Jeremiah's appreciation of the vital importance of his message and of his God-given assignment made him responsive to Jehovah's encouragement.

13. What strengthened Jeremiah to persevere despite opposition?

The Power to Hurt and the Power to Heal

14 Not all the power we possess comes directly from God. The tongue, for example, has the power to hurt as well as to heal. "Death and life are in the power of the tongue," warns Solomon. (Proverbs 18:21) The results of Satan's brief conversation with Eve show how much havoc can be wrought by words. (Genesis 3:1-5; James 3:5) We too can do much damage with the tongue. Disparaging remarks about a young girl's weight could launch her on the road to anorexia. A thoughtless repetition of some slander might ruin a lifelong friendship. Yes, the tongue needs to be controlled.

15 However, the tongue can build up as well as tear down. The Bible proverb says: "There exists the one speaking thoughtlessly as with the stabs of a sword, but the tongue of the wise ones is a healing." (Proverbs 12:18) Wise Christians use the power of the tongue to comfort the depressed and the bereaved. Sympathetic words can encourage teenagers who are battling harmful peer pressure. A thoughtful tongue can reassure elderly brothers and sisters that they are still needed and loved. Kindly words can brighten the day of those who are sick. Above all, we can employ our tongue to share the powerful Kingdom message with all who will listen. Proclaiming the Word of God is within our power if our

14. (a) How powerful an instrument is the tongue? (b) Give examples to show the damage that the tongue can do.

15. How can we use our tongue to build up and to heal?

heart is in it. The Bible says: "Do not hold back good from those to whom it is owing, when it happens to be in the power of your hand to do it."—Proverbs 3:27.

The Proper Use of Power

16 Although he is almighty, Jehovah rules the congregation with love. (1 John 4:8) Imitating him, Christian overseers care for God's flock lovingly—using, not abusing, their authority. True, overseers sometimes need to "reprove, reprimand, exhort," but this is done "with all long-suffering and art of teaching." (2 Timothy 4:2) So elders constantly meditate on the words that the apostle Peter wrote to those with authority in the congregation: "Shepherd the flock of God in your care, not under compulsion, but willingly; neither for love of dishonest gain, but eagerly; neither as lording it over those who are God's inheritance, but becoming examples to the flock."—1 Peter 5:2, 3; 1 Thessalonians 2:7, 8.

17 Parents and husbands also have authority granted them by Jehovah, and this power should be used to help, nurture, and cherish. (Ephesians 5:22, 28-30; 6:4) Jesus' example shows that authority can be effectively exercised in a loving way. If discipline is balanced and consistent, children do not become downhearted. (Colossians 3:21) Marriages are strengthened when Christian husbands lovingly exercise their headship and wives deeply respect their husbandly head rather than go beyond their God-assigned sphere of influence to dominate or get their way.—Ephesians 5:28, 33; 1 Peter 3:7.

16, 17. When exercising their God-given authority, how can elders, parents, husbands, and wives imitate Jehovah?

Can You Explain?

- How does Jehovah use his power?
- In what ways can we draw on Jehovah's power?
- How should the power of the tongue be employed?
- How can God-given authority be a blessing?

18 Those with authority in the family and in the congregation should be especially careful to control their anger, since anger instills fear rather than love. The prophet Nahum said: "Jehovah is slow to anger and great in power." (Nahum 1:3; Colossians 3:19) Controlling our anger is a sign of strength, whereas giving vent to it is proof of weakness. (Proverbs 16:32) Both in the family and in the congregation, the goal is to instill love—love of Jehovah, love of one another, and love of right principles. Love is the strongest bond of union and the strongest motivation for doing what is right.—1 Corinthians 13:8, 13; Colossians 3:14.

19 To know Jehovah is to recognize his power. Through Isaiah, Jehovah said: "Have you not come to know or have you not heard? Jehovah, the Creator of the extremities of the earth, is a God to time indefinite. He does not tire out or grow weary." (Isaiah 40:28) Jehovah's power is inexhaustible. If we rely on him and not on ourselves, he will not forsake us. He assures us: "Do not be afraid, for I am with you. Do not gaze about, for I am your God. I will fortify you. I will really help you. I will really keep fast hold of you with my right hand of righteousness." (Isaiah 41:10) How should we respond to his loving care? Like Jesus, let us always use whatever power Jehovah gives us to help and to build up. May we control our tongue so that it heals rather than harms. And may we always stay awake spiritually, stand firm in the faith, and grow mighty in the power of our Grand Creator, Jehovah God.—1 Corinthians 16:13.

18. (a) How should we imitate Jehovah's example in controlling our anger? (b) What should those with authority try to instill in those under their care?

19. What comforting assurance does Jehovah give, and how should we respond?

Their Faith Was Rewarded

THE apostle Paul was a man of outstanding faith, and he encouraged fellow believers likewise to cultivate faith. He said: "He that approaches God must believe that he is and that he becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him." (Hebrews 11:6) The following experiences from Mozambique demonstrate how Jehovah rewards strong faith and answers earnest prayers.

• A widowed sister from the northern province of Niassa was concerned about how she and her six children were going to attend the "God's Way of Life" District Convention. Her sole source of income was selling goods at a local market, but when the convention date approached, she had only enough money for one-way train fares for her and her family. Nonetheless, she resolved to put her confidence in Jehovah's provisions and went ahead with her plans to be present at the convention.

She boarded the train with her six children. During the trip the conductor approached her for her ticket. Noticing her lapel card, he asked what kind of identification she was wearing. The sister told him that it was to identify her as a delegate to the district convention of Jehovah's Witnesses. "Where will this convention be held?" asked the conductor. After finding out that the convention was in the neighboring province of Nampula, about 200 miles away, he unexpectedly charged her only half the normal ticket price! He then gave her and her family return tickets for the other half of her fare money. How happy she was to have put her trust in Jehovah! —Psalm 121:1, 2.

• For about 25 years, a very religious woman prayed to God to show her the correct way to worship him. The church she attended combined religious ceremonies with traditional rituals, and she doubted that this form of worship was pleasing to God.

She relates: "I had always remembered the words of Jesus recorded at Matthew 7:7: 'Keep on asking, and it will be given you; keep on seeking, and you will find; keep on knocking, and it will be opened to you.' With this scripture in mind, I prayed regularly for God to lead me to the truth. One day the pastor of our church asked all who worked in the local market to bring him a certain amount of money along with some of their goods so that he could bestow a blessing upon them. I considered this request to be unscriptural, so I did not bring anything. When the pastor saw that I had not brought an 'offering,' he began to insult me in front of all the church members. That day I realized that this was not the way God wants to be worshiped, so I left the church. Meanwhile, I kept persisting in prayer to find the truth.

"Finally, I plucked up the courage and contacted a relative who is one of Jehovah's Witnesses. He offered me a tract, and upon reading it I immediately realized that God was answering my prayers. In time, my companion also began to appreciate Bible truths, and we legalized our marriage. Later, however, my husband got very sick. But right up until his death, he encouraged me to persevere in the way of the truth so that we may meet again in Paradise.

"I am forever grateful to Jehovah for answering my prayers and showing me the correct way to worship him. My prayers have also been answered in that I have seen all eight of my children become dedicated servants of Jehovah."

KEEPING LIFE SIMPLE TO SERVE JEHOVAH

AS TOLD BY
CLARA GERBER MOYER

I am 92 years old and can barely walk, but I still have a clear, retentive mind. How thankful I am to have had the privilege of serving Jehovah since childhood! Living a simple, uncomplicated life has contributed immeasurably to that treasure.

I WAS born on August 18, 1907, in Alliance, Ohio, U.S.A., the oldest of five children. When I was eight, a full-time minister of the Bible Students, as Jehovah's Witnesses were then called, rode up to our dairy farm on a bicycle. He met my mother, Laura Gerber, at the door and asked if she knew why evil was permitted. Mother had always wondered about that.

After conferring with Father, who was out in the barn, Mother ordered the set of six volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures.* She devoured these and was deeply moved by the Bible truths she was learning. She studied Volume 6, *The New Creation,* and clearly understood the need for Christian baptism by immersion. Not knowing how to find the Bible Students, she asked Daddy to baptize her in the little creek on the farm, even though it was the cold month of March 1916.

Not long afterward Mother saw an ad in the newspaper announcing a talk at the Daughters of Veterans Hall in Alliance. The talk was entitled "The Divine Plan of the Ages." She responded immediately, since Volume 1 of *Studies in the Scriptures* had the same title as the talk. The surrey was hitched up, and the whole family went to our first meeting via horse and buggy. From then on we attended meetings in the homes of the brothers on Sunday and

Wednesday evenings. Shortly thereafter, Mother was baptized again by a representative of the Christian congregation. Daddy, who was always busy with farm work, eventually took an interest in Bible study, and he was baptized a few years later.

Meeting Those Taking the Lead

On June 10, 1917, J. F. Rutherford, then president of the Watch Tower Society, visited Alliance to speak on the subject "Why Do the Nations War?" I was nine years old and attended with my parents and with my two brothers, Willie and Charles. We had a fine crowd of over a hundred in attendance. After Brother Rutherford's talk, most of those attending posed for a photograph outside the Columbia Theater, where his talk was given. The following week, at the same location, A. H. Macmillan gave a talk on the topic "God's Coming Kingdom." It was a privilege to have these brothers visit our small town.

Memorable Early Conventions

The first convention I attended was in 1918 at Atwater, Ohio, a few miles from Alliance. Mama asked the Society's representative there if I was old enough to be baptized. I felt that I had made a valid dedication to God to do his will, so I was permitted to be baptized that day in a creek near a large apple orchard. I changed my clothes in a tent that the brothers had erected for that purpose and was baptized in an old, heavy nightgown.

In September of 1919, my parents and I rode the train to Sandusky, Ohio, on Lake Erie. There we boarded a ferry, and in a short time, we arrived at Cedar Point where our memorable convention was to be held. When we got off the boat, there was a small lunch stand on the dock. I got a hamburger, which was a real luxury for me in those days. It tasted so good! The peak attendance for our eight-day convention was 7,000. There was no public address system, so I had to listen very carefully.

At this convention the companion magazine to *The Watch Tower,* entitled *The Golden Age* (now *Awake!*), was released. To attend that convention, I missed the first week of school, but it was well worth it. Cedar Point was a vacation resort, and they had cooks there at the restaurant who prepared meals for the delegates. But for some reason, the cooks and waitresses walked off the job, so Christian brothers with a knowledge of food preparation pitched in and prepared food for the delegates. For many decades afterward, Jehovah's people prepared their own meals at assemblies and conventions.

We also had the privilege of returning to Cedar Point in September of 1922 for a nine-day convention attended by a peak of more than 18,000. That is where Brother Rutherford encouraged us to "advertise, advertise, advertise, the King and his kingdom." My personal ministry, however, had begun with the distribution of tracts and *The Golden Age* several years earlier.

Appreciation for the Ministry

Early in 1918, I shared in delivering the tract *The Fall of Babylon* to neighboring farms. Because of the cold, we would heat a soapstone on the wood stove at home and take it along in the buggy to keep our feet warm. We dressed in heavy coats and hats, since the buggy had only a top and side curtains but no heater. But those were happy times.

In 1920 a special edition of *The Finished Mystery,* called the ZG, was prepared in magazine form.* My parents and I went out in Alliance with this publication. In those days everyone went to the doors alone, so I apprehensively ascended a porch where several people were seated. After I made my presentation, one woman said: "Doesn't she give a nice little talk," and accepted the publication. I placed

* *The Finished Mystery* was the seventh of a series of volumes entitled *Studies in the Scriptures,* the first six of which were written by Charles Taze Russell. *The Finished Mystery* was published after Russell's death.

13 ZGs that day, the first time that I gave a longer, formal presentation from house to house.

When I was in the ninth grade, Mother contracted pneumonia and was bedridden for more than a month. My youngest sister, Hazel, was an infant, so I quit school to help with the farm work and to care for the children. Still, our family took Bible truth seriously, and we attended all congregation meetings on a regular basis.

In 1928 at the Memorial of Christ's death, a tract entitled *"Where Are the Nine?"* was given to all in attendance. It discussed Luke 17:11-19, where the Bible says that only one of ten cleansed lepers humbly thanked Jesus for the miraculous healing. That touched my heart. I asked myself, 'How appreciative am I?'

Since things were now going well at home and I was healthy and unencumbered, I decided to leave home and enter the pioneer service, as the full-time ministry is called. My parents encouraged me to do so. Thus, my partner, Agnes Aleta, and I received our assignment, and on August 28, 1928, we boarded a train at 9:00 p.m. Each of us had but one suitcase and a satchel to carry our Bible literature. At the station, my sisters and my parents were crying, and so were we. I thought I might never see them again, since we believed that Armageddon was near. The next morning, we arrived at our assignment in Brooksville, Kentucky.

We rented a small room in a boardinghouse and bought cans of spaghetti and also made sandwiches for ourselves. Each day we walked in a different direction, working alone and offering householders five bound books for a contribution of $1.98. Gradually we covered the town, meeting many people who were quite interested in the Bible.

In about three months, we had called on everyone in and around Brooksville as well as Augusta. So we moved on to work the towns of Maysville, Paris, and Richmond. During the next three years, we covered many counties in Kentucky where there were no congregations. We were often assisted by friends and family members from Ohio who drove down and joined us in the ministry for a week or more at a time.

Other Memorable Conventions

The convention in Columbus, Ohio, July 24-30, 1931, was truly memorable. That was where it was announced that we would be identified by the Bible-based name Jehovah's Witnesses. (Isaiah 43:12) Prior to that, when people asked us what religion we were, we said, "International Bible Students." But that really didn't distinguish us very well, since there were Bible students affiliated with various other religious groups.

My partner, Agnes, had married, and I was alone; so I was thrilled when it was announced that those looking for a pioneer partner should report to a certain location. There I met Bertha and Elsie Garty and Bessie Ensminger. They had two cars and were looking for a fourth pioneer sister to work with them. We left the convention together, although we had never met before.

In the summer we worked throughout the state of Pennsylvania. Then, as winter approached, we requested assignments in the warmer southern states of North Carolina, Virginia, and Maryland. In the spring we returned north. That was the custom of pioneers then. In 1934, John Booth and Rudolph Abbuhl, who followed this custom, took Ralph Moyer and his younger brother Willard with them to Hazard, Kentucky.

I had met Ralph on several occasions, and we became better acquainted during the large convention in Washington, D.C., held May 30–June 3, 1935. Ralph and I were sitting together in the balcony when the talk was presented on the "great multitude," or "great crowd." (Revelation 7:9-14) Until then we believed that those of the great multitude were members of a heavenly class less faithful than

We heard Brother Rutherford's talk in 1917 in Alliance, Ohio

With Ralph in front of the trailer he built

the 144,000. (Revelation 14:1-3) So I didn't want to be one of them!

When Brother Rutherford explained that those of the great multitude were an earthly class of faithful Armageddon survivors, many were surprised. Then he invited all those of the great multitude to stand. Well, I didn't stand, but Ralph did. Later, things became clearer in my mind, so 1935 was the last year I partook of the emblematic bread and wine at the Memorial of Christ's death. Mother, however, continued to partake up until her death in November 1957.

A Permanent Partner

Ralph and I continued to correspond. I was serving in Lake Placid, New York, and he was in Pennsylvania. In 1936 he built a small trailer that he could pull with his car. He moved it from Pottstown, Pennsylvania, to Newark, New Jersey, for the convention held there October 16-18. After the program one evening, several of us pioneers went to see Ralph's new trailer. He and I were standing inside the trailer by the small built-in sink when he asked, "Do you like the trailer?"

When I nodded, he asked, "Do you want to live in it?"

"Yes," I responded, and he gave me a tender kiss that I will never forget. A couple of days later, we obtained a marriage license. On October 19, the day after the convention, we went to Brooklyn and toured the Watch Tower Society's printing facility. Then we asked for a territory assignment. Grant Suiter was in charge of territory, and he asked who would be working it. Ralph said, "We will if we can get married."

"If you come back at 5:00 p.m., we can arrange it," Brother Suiter responded. So that evening we were married in the home of a Witness in Brooklyn Heights. We ate a meal with some friends at a local restaurant and then took public transportation to Ralph's trailer in Newark, New Jersey.

Shortly thereafter, we were on our way to Heathsville, Virginia, our first pioneer assignment together. We worked Northumberland County and then moved on to Fulton and Franklin counties in Pennsylvania. In 1939, Ralph was invited to do zone work, an activity in which we would be visiting a number of congregations on a rotating basis. We served congregations in the state of Tennessee. The following year our son, Allen, was born, and in 1941 the zone work was discontinued. We were then assigned to Marion, Virginia, as special pioneers. In those days, that meant spending 200 hours a month in the ministry.

Making Adjustments

In 1943, I found it necessary to give up the special pioneer ministry. Living in a small

trailer, caring for a little child, preparing meals, keeping all of us in clean clothes, and spending about 60 hours in the ministry each month was about all I could do. But Ralph continued as a special pioneer.

With my two children today

We moved back to Alliance, Ohio, in 1945, sold the trailer that had been our home for nine years, and moved into the farmhouse with my parents. It was there, on the front porch, that our daughter, Rebekah, was born. Ralph took part-time work in town and continued as a regular pioneer. I worked on the farm and did what I could to help him to continue pioneering. Although my family offered us free land and a house, Ralph declined. He wanted to remain unencumbered so that we could pursue Kingdom interests more fully.

In 1950 we relocated to Pottstown, Pennsylvania, and rented a house for $25 a month. Over the next 30 years, the rent increased to only $75. We felt that Jehovah was helping us to keep our life simple. (Matthew 6:31-33) Ralph worked three days a week as a barber. Every week we studied the Bible with our two children, attended congregation meetings, and preached the good news of the Kingdom as a family. Ralph served as the presiding overseer of the local congregation. By keeping our life simple, we were able to do much in Jehovah's service.

Loss of My Dear Mate

On May 17, 1981, we were sitting in the Kingdom Hall, listening to a public talk. Ralph felt poorly, walked to the back of the hall, and had an attendant bring me a note saying that he was going home. This was so unlike Ralph that I asked someone to drive me home right away. Ralph died of a massive stroke within the hour. By the end of the *Watchtower* study that morning, it was announced to the congregation that he had passed away.

That month Ralph had already spent more than 50 hours in the ministry. His full-time career as a pioneer spanned more than 46 years. He had conducted Bible studies with over a hundred people who eventually became baptized Witnesses of Jehovah. The spiritual blessings we received were well worth any sacrifices we made through the years.

Grateful for My Privileges

For the past 18 years, I have lived by myself, attending meetings, preaching to others as I am able, and studying God's Word. Now I live in a retirement apartment for senior citizens. I own only a few pieces of furniture and choose not to have a television. But my life is full and spiritually rich. My parents and my two brothers were faithful until their death, and my two sisters continue faithfully in the way of the truth.

I rejoice that my son, Allen, is serving as a Christian elder. For many years he has installed Kingdom Hall and Assembly Hall sound systems and has worked at sound installation for summer conventions. His wife is a loyal servant of God, and their two sons serve as elders. My daughter, Rebekah Karres, has spent more than 35 years in the full-time ministry, including four years at the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in Brooklyn. She and her husband have spent the past 25 years in the traveling work in various parts of the United States.

Jesus said that the Kingdom is like a hidden treasure that can be found. (Matthew 13:44) I am thankful that my family found that treasure so many years ago. What a privilege to look back over 80 years of dedicated service to God—with no regrets! If I could live my life again, I would live it the same way because, indeed, 'God's loving-kindness is better than life itself.'—Psalm 63:3.

WHAT HAVE THEY DISCOVERED AT JEZREEL?

FOR centuries the site of the ancient city of Jezreel has lain desolate. At one time it was prominent in Bible history. Now, stripped of its former glory and covered by layers of earth, it has been reduced to a mound, or tell. In recent years archaeologists have begun to examine Jezreel's remains. What do these ruins reveal about the Bible accounts?

Jezreel in the Bible

Situated in the eastern portion of the Jezreel Valley, Jezreel was in one of the more fertile areas of the ancient land of Israel. Directly across the valley to the north lies the hill of Moreh where the Midianites camped while preparing to attack Judge Gideon and his troops. Slightly to the east is the well of Harod, at the foot of Mount Gilboa. It was here that Jehovah reduced Gideon's army of thousands to a mere 300 men in order to demonstrate his ability to deliver his people without a mighty military force. (Judges 7:1-25; Zechariah 4:6) On nearby Mount Gilboa, Saul, the first king of Israel, was defeated by the Philistines in a dramatic battle, during which Jonathan and two of Saul's other sons were killed and Saul himself committed suicide.—1 Samuel 31:1-5.

Biblical references to the ancient city of Jezreel provide striking contrasts. They tell of the abuse of power and the apostasy of Israel's rulers and also about the faithfulness and zeal on the part of Jehovah's servants. It was in Jezreel that King Ahab—ruler of the northern ten-tribe kingdom of Israel in the latter half of the tenth century B.C.E.—set up his royal residence, although the official capital was Samaria. (1 Kings 21:1) It was from Jezreel that Jehovah's prophet Elijah received death threats from Ahab's foreign wife Jezebel. She was angered because Elijah had fearlessly executed the prophets of Baal, following the test of true Godship that Elijah had performed on Mount Carmel.—1 Kings 18:36–19:2.

Then at Jezreel a crime was committed. Naboth the Jezreelite was murdered. King Ahab had coveted Naboth's vineyard. When the king demanded to receive the land, Naboth loyally responded: "It is unthinkable on my part, from Jehovah's standpoint, for me to give the hereditary possession of my forefathers to you." This principled answer greatly displeased Ahab. Seeing the king's sullen mood, Queen Jezebel arranged a mock trial, accusing Naboth of blasphemy. Innocent Naboth was found guilty and stoned to death, and the king took possession of his vineyard. —1 Kings 21:1-16.

Because of this wicked deed, Elijah prophesied: "The very dogs will eat up Jezebel in the plot of land of Jezreel." The prophet further declared: "Anyone of Ahab's that is dying

Archaeological excavations in Jezreel

in the city the dogs will eat up . . . Without exception no one has proved to be like Ahab, who sold himself to do what was bad in the eyes of Jehovah, whom Jezebel his wife egged on." However, because Ahab humbled himself when Elijah pronounced Jehovah's judgment, Jehovah declared that this punishment would not come in Ahab's lifetime. (1 Kings 21:23-29) The Bible account goes on to relate that in the days of Elijah's successor, Elisha, Jehu was anointed to be king of Israel. As he rode into Jezreel, Jehu commanded that Jezebel be thrown out of her palace window, and she was trampled underfoot by the horses. Later, it was found that scavenger dogs had left only her skull, her feet, and the palms of her hands. (2 Kings 9:30-37) The final Biblical event directly related to Jezreel follows the execution of 70 of Ahab's sons. Jehu piled their heads in two great heaps at Jezreel's city gate, after which he struck down other leading men and priests involved in Ahab's apostate reign. —2 Kings 10:6-11.

What Have Archaeologists Found?

In 1990 a joint project of excavating the site of Jezreel began. Participating were the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University (represented by David Ussishkin) and the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem (represented by John Woodhead). For seven seasons (each season lasting six weeks) during the years of 1990-96, between 80 and 100 volunteers worked on the site.

The modern approach to archaeology is to examine the evidence at a site on its own merits, without reference to preconceived ideas and theories. Therefore, for the archaeologist studying the lands of the Bible, the Scriptural account is not the final word on the subject. All other sources and physical evidence must be considered and carefully weighed. However, as John Woodhead relates, there is no ancient written evidence regarding Jezreel outside of a few chapters in the Bible. So the Bible's accounts and chronology should be part of any investigation. What have archaeologists' efforts revealed?

As fortifications and pottery were unearthed, it became clear from the start that the ruins went back to the so-called Iron Age, placing them squarely within the time period of the Biblical Jezreel. But as the excavations continued, there were a number of surprises. The first was the size of the site and its massive fortifications. The archaeologists were expecting a site with fortifications comparable to those of ancient Samaria, the capital city of the kingdom of Israel. However, as the dig continued, it became clear that Jezreel was far larger. Measur-

ing some 1,000 feet by 500 feet along the length of its walls, the total area within its fortifications was more than three times that of any other city discovered in Israel from that period. It was surrounded by a dry moat, creating a 35-foot drop from the fortifications. According to Professor Ussishkin, this moat was an unprecedented feature for Biblical times. "We don't find anything else like this in Israel until the period of the Crusaders," he said.

Another unexpected feature was the absence of extensive structures within the center of the city. Large amounts of reddish-brown soil brought in during the construction of the city had been used to create an elevated level surface—a type of large raised podium, or platform—within the enclosure. The *Second Preliminary Report* on the excavations at Tel Jezreel comments that this prominent podium could be evidence that Jezreel was more than a royal residence. It said: "We would like to raise the possibility that Jezreel was the central military base for the royal Israelite army at the time of the Omride [Omri and his descendants] kings . . . where the royal chariotry and cavalry were kept and trained." Judging from the size of this raised podium, as well as that of the enclosure itself, Woodhead speculates that this could have been a type of parade ground for showing off the military might of the largest chariot force in the Middle East at the time.

The unearthed remains of the city gate are a feature of special interest to archaeologists. They show an entrance of at least a four-chambered gate. However, since many stones at the site have been pillaged over the centuries, the finds are inconclusive. Woodhead is of the opinion that the remains point to a six-chambered gate similar in dimensions to those found at Megiddo, Hazor, and Gezer.*

The archaeological findings point to a surprisingly short-lived existence for a city so ideally located, both militarily and geographically. Woodhead emphasizes that as a great fortified city, Jezreel was a single-period site —in use for only a few decades. This stands in stark contrast with many other key Biblical sites in Israel, such as Megiddo, Hazor, and the capital city Samaria, which were repeatedly rebuilt, expanded, and inhabited during various periods. Why did this ideal site fall out of use so quickly? Woodhead conjectures that Ahab and his dynasty had nearly caused an economic collapse because of their squandering of the nation's resources. This was evident in the excessive size and strength of Jezreel. The new regime under Jehu likely wanted to disassociate itself from the memory of Ahab and therefore abandoned the city.

All the evidence unearthed thus far confirms that the site of Jezreel was a major Israelite center in the period of the Iron Age. Its size and fortifications agree with its description in the Bible as a prominent royal residence for Ahab and Jezebel. The signs of its limited habitation during this period agree with the Biblical accounts of the city: It quickly rose to prominence during Ahab's reign and then, at Jehovah's command, was apparently brought down in disgrace when Jehu "went on to strike down all who were left over of the house of Ahab in Jezreel and all his distinguished men and his acquaintances and his priests, until he

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Why Mankind Needs a Helper

How Jehovah Is Leading Us

Modesty—A Quality That Promotes Peace

* See the article "The Mystery of the Gates" in *The Watchtower* of August 15, 1988.

had let no survivor of his remain."—2 Kings 10:11.

The Chronology of Jezreel

"It's so difficult in archaeology to get an exact anchor for dating," admits John Woodhead. So as the archaeologists survey the results of the seven years of excavations, they compare these with findings on other archaeological sites. This has led to reevaluation and debate. Why? Because ever since Israeli archaeologist Yigael Yadin's excavations at Megiddo during the 1960's and early 1970's, it was considered confirmed by many within the archaeological world that he had discovered fortifications and city gates that date from the period of King Solomon. Now, the fortifications, pottery, and gates found at Jezreel are causing some to question these conclusions.

Canaanite idol found at Jezreel

For example, the pottery found at Jezreel is identical to that of the stratum at Megiddo that Yadin associated with Solomon's reign. The gate structure and dimensions of the two sites are similar, if not identical. Says Woodhead: "All the evidence either puts the Jezreel site back to the Solomonic period or lowers the dating of these features at the other sites [Megiddo and Hazor] to the period of Ahab." Since the Bible clearly associates the Jezreel site with the period of Ahab, he views it as more reasonable to accept that these strata reflect the time of Ahab's rule. David Ussishkin concurs: "The Bible says that Solomon built up Megiddo—it doesn't say that he built those exact gates."

Can Jezreel's History Be Known?

Do these archaeological findings and the ensuing debate cast doubt on the Bible's account of Jezreel or Solomon? Actually, the archaeological controversy has little direct bearing on the Bible account. Archaeology examines history on a different basis from that of the Biblical narrative. It poses different questions and has a different emphasis. One could compare the Bible student and the archaeologist to travelers on roughly parallel routes. One traveler is driving in the street, the other is walking on the sidewalk. Their focus and concerns are different. Yet, their perspectives are often complementary rather than contradictory. Comparing the two travelers' impressions can lead to fascinating insights.

The Bible contains a written record of ancient events and people; archaeology tries to recover information about these events and people by examining whatever traces of them can be found still remaining in the soil. However, these remains are usually very incomplete and open to various interpretations. In this regard, in his book *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible—10,000–586 B.C.E.,* Amihai Mazar comments: "Archaeological field work . . . is to a great extent an art as well as a combination of training and professional skill. No rigid methodology can ensure success, and flexibility and creative thought by field directors are mandatory. The character, talent, and common sense of the archaeologist are no less important than his training and the resources available to him."

Archaeology has confirmed the existence of a major royal and military center at Jezreel, a center that existed for a surprisingly short time during the historical period that coincides with Ahab's rule—just as the Bible relates. Many other intriguing questions have been raised that archaeologists may be studying for years to come. Yet, the pages of God's Word, the Bible, continue to speak out with clarity, providing for us the full story in a way that archaeologists never can.

Searching for Jehovah With a Prepared Heart

ISRAELITE priest Ezra was an outstanding researcher, scholar, copyist, and teacher of the Law. For Christians today he is also a fine example of whole-souled service. How so? In that he maintained his godly devotion even while living in Babylon, a city filled with false gods and demon worship.

Ezra's godly devotion did not just happen. He worked at it. Indeed, he tells us that he *"had prepared his heart* to consult the law of Jehovah and to do it."—Ezra 7:10.

Like Ezra, Jehovah's people today want to do all that Jehovah asks of them while living in a world that is hostile to true worship. So let us examine ways in which we too can prepare our heart, the inner person—including our thoughts, attitudes, desires, and motivations—to "consult the law of Jehovah and to do it."

Preparing Our Heart

"To prepare" means "to make ready beforehand for some purpose: put into condition for a particular use, application, or disposition." Of course, if you have come to an accurate knowledge of God's Word and have dedicated your life to Jehovah, then your heart has certainly proved to be in a prepared state and can be compared to "the fine soil" that Jesus spoke about in his parable of the sower.—Matthew 13:18-23.

Nevertheless, our heart needs constant attention and refinement. Why? For two reasons. First, because harmful tendencies, like weeds in a garden, can readily take root, especially during these "last days" when "the air" of Satan's system is more than ever filled with hurtful seeds of fleshly thinking. (2 Timothy 3:1-5; Ephesians 2:2) The second reason concerns the soil itself. Left untended, soil may soon dry out, harden, and become unfruitful. Or too many people may carelessly walk over the garden and tread down the soil into a hard mass. The figurative soil of our heart is similar. It may become infertile if neglected or trodden down by people who have no interest in our spiritual well-being.

How important it is, then, for all of us to apply the Bible's admonition: "More than all else that is to be guarded, safeguard your heart, for out of it are the sources of life." —Proverbs 4:23.

Factors That Enrich the "Soil" of Our Heart

Let us consider some factors, or qualities, that will enrich the "soil" of our heart so that it favors healthy growth. There are, of course, many things that will improve our heart, but here we will consider six: a recognition of our spiritual need, humility, honesty, godly fear, faith, and love.

"Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need," Jesus said. (Matthew 5:3) Like physical hunger that reminds us of our need to eat, an awareness of our spiritual need keeps us hungry for spiritual food. By nature, humans have a craving for such food because it gives

meaning and purpose to life. Pressures from Satan's system of things or sheer laziness when it comes to study may dull our consciousness of this need. Even so, Jesus said: "Man must live, not on bread alone, but on every utterance coming forth through Jehovah's mouth."—Matthew 4:4.

In a literal way, regular, balanced, and wholesome meals promote bodily health, and they also incline the body to develop an appetite for the next meal when the time arrives. The same is true in a spiritual sense. You may not consider yourself to be a studious person, but if you make it a habit to read God's Word daily and you study Bible-based publications on a regular basis, you will find that your appetite increases. In fact, you will eagerly look forward to your times for Bible study. So do not give up easily; work hard to develop a wholesome spiritual appetite.

Humility Softens the Heart

Humility is a vital factor in having a prepared heart because it makes us teachable and helps us to accept more readily loving counsel and correction. Consider the fine example of King Josiah. During his reign a document containing God's Law given through Moses was found. When Josiah heard the words of the Law and realized how far his forefathers had strayed from pure worship, he ripped his garments apart and wept before Jehovah. Why did God's Word so deeply touch the king's heart? The account says that his heart was "soft," so that he humbled himself upon hearing Jehovah's words. Jehovah noted Josiah's humble, receptive heart and blessed him accordingly.—2 Kings 22:11, 18-20.

Humility enabled Jesus' "unlettered and ordinary" disciples to grasp and apply spiritual truths that escaped those who were "wise and intellectual" but only "in a fleshly way." (Acts 4:13; Luke 10:21; 1 Corinthians 1:26) The latter were not prepared to accept Jehovah's word because their hearts were hardened by pride. Is it any wonder that Jehovah hates pride?—Proverbs 8:13; Daniel 5:20.

Honesty and Godly Fear

The prophet Jeremiah wrote that "the heart is more treacherous than anything else and is desperate. Who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9) This treachery manifests itself in various ways, such as when we make excuses for ourselves when we do wrong. It also appears when we rationalize away serious personality flaws. *Honesty,* however, will help us to gain the victory over a treacherous heart by assisting us to face the truth about ourselves so that we can improve. The psalmist displayed such honesty when he prayed: "Examine me, O Jehovah, and put me to the test; refine my kidneys and my heart." Clearly, the psalmist had prepared his heart to accept refining and testing by Jehovah, even though it may have meant acknowledging the existence of dross-like traits so that these could be overcome. —Psalm 17:3; 26:2.

Godly fear, which includes "the hating of bad," is a powerful aid in this refining process. (Proverbs 8:13) While appreciating Jehovah's loving-kindness and goodness, a person who truly fears Jehovah is ever aware that Jehovah has the power to inflict punishment, even death, upon those who disobey him. Jehovah showed that those who fear him would also obey him when he said about Israel: "If only they would develop this heart of theirs to fear me and to keep all my commandments always, in order that it might go well with them and their sons to time indefinite!" —Deuteronomy 5:29.

Clearly, the object of godly fear is, not to keep us in a state of terrified submission, but to move us to obey our loving Father, who we know has our very best interests at heart. In fact, such godly fear is elevating and even joy-inspiring, which was amply demonstrated by Jesus Christ himself.—Isaiah 11:3; Luke 12:5.

A Prepared Heart Is Rich in Faith

A heart strong in *faith* knows that whatever Jehovah asks or directs through his Word is al-

ways right and in our best interests. (Isaiah 48: 17, 18) A person with such a heart gets deep satisfaction and contentment from applying the exhortation at Proverbs 3:5, 6, which says: "Trust in Jehovah with all your heart and do not lean upon your own understanding. In all your ways take notice of him, and he himself will make your paths straight." A heart lacking in faith, however, would be disinclined to trust in Jehovah, especially if doing so involved sacrifices, such as simplifying one's life in order to focus on Kingdom interests. (Matthew 6:33) For good reason, Jehovah views a faithless heart as "wicked."—Hebrews 3:12.

Our faith in Jehovah is reflected in many areas, including the things we do in the privacy of our own home. Take, for example, the principle at Galatians 6:7: "Do not be misled: God is not one to be mocked. For whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap." Our faith in this principle will be reflected in such things as the movies we watch, the books we read, the amount of Bible study we do, and in our prayers. Yes, a strong faith that moves us to sow "with a view to the spirit" is a key factor in having a heart that is prepared to accept Jehovah's Word and to obey it.—Galatians 6:8.

Love—The Greatest Quality

More than all other qualities, *love* truly makes the soil of our heart responsive to Jehovah's Word. Thus, when comparing it with faith and hope, the apostle Paul described love as "the greatest of these" qualities. (1 Corinthians 13:13) A heart filled with love for God gets intense satisfaction and joy from obeying him; it certainly does not chafe at God's requirements. The apostle John said: "This is what the love of God means, that we observe his commandments; and yet his commandments are not burdensome." (1 John 5:3) Along similar lines, Jesus said: "If anyone loves me, he will observe my word, and my Father will love him." (John 14:23) Note that such love is reciprocated. Yes, Jehovah deeply loves those who are drawn to him in love.

Ezra maintained his godly devotion even in Babylon

Jehovah knows that we are imperfect and regularly sin against him. Even so, he does not keep himself distant from us. What Jehovah looks for in his servants is "a complete heart," one that moves us to serve him willingly with "a delightful soul." (1 Chronicles 28:9) Of course, Jehovah knows that it takes time and effort for us to cultivate good qualities in our heart and thus to produce the fruitage of the spirit. (Galatians 5:22, 23) Hence, he is patient with us, "for he himself well knows the formation of us, remembering that we are dust." (Psalm 103:14) Reflecting the same attitude, Jesus never severely criticized his disciples for their faults but patiently helped and encouraged them. Do not such love, mercy, and patience of Jehovah and Jesus move you to love them all the more?—Luke 7:47; 2 Peter 3:9.

If you at times find it a struggle to pull up deep-rooted, weedlike habits or to break up pockets of hard, claylike traits, do not become downhearted or discouraged. Instead, keep working at making improvement as you "persevere in prayer," including frequent supplication to Jehovah for his spirit. (Romans 12:12) With his willing help, you will, like Ezra, succeed in having a heart fully prepared "to consult the law of Jehovah and to do it."

IT PUT THE RINGS BACK ON THEIR FINGERS

"LOOK at my fingers. Do you see anything different?" A man held out his hand to a woman, one of Jehovah's Witnesses, who looked at it and immediately noticed that his wedding ring was gone. He explained that he and his wife could no longer get along, so they decided to get a divorce. "No!" the Witness said. "Take this book and read it. It will help you with your marriage." With that, she gave him a copy of the Bible-based book *Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life.**

Some days later the man returned to the Witness in a happy mood. He showed her his hand. This time he was wearing his wedding ring. He told her that he and his wife had read the *Knowledge* book and that they now were very happy. The book had literally put the rings back on their fingers.

The Bible's counsel can help a husband and wife to show genuine love for each other. This is so because the Bible's author is none other than our Creator, who says: "I, Jehovah, am your God, the One teaching you to benefit yourself, the One causing you to tread in the way in which you should walk."—Isaiah 48:17.

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