

THE **WATCHTOWER**
ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

SEPTEMBER 15, 2000

**Soon
A World
Without
Despair**

THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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

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A Cry for HELP



"**G**OD has forgotten me!" a Brazilian woman cried out. After the sudden death of her husband, she felt that her life no longer had any meaning. Have you ever tried to comfort someone who is that distressed or who is perhaps crying for help?

Some become so despondent that they end their life—and a number of them are youths. According to the newspaper *Folha de S. Paulo*, a study in Brazil shows that "suicide among youths has increased by 26 percent." For instance, consider the case of Walter,* a young man in São Paulo. He had no parents, no home, no privacy, no friends he could count on. To end his misery, Walter decided to jump off a bridge.

A single mother, Edna already had two children when she met another man. After only a month, they began living together in the home of his mother, who dabbled in spiritism and was

An increasing number of youths and adults commit suicide

an alcoholic. Edna had another child, began drinking excessively, and became so depressed that she tried to commit suicide. Finally, she lost custody of her children.

What about elderly people? Maria used to be fun-loving and talkative. As she grew older, however, she began to worry about her job as a nurse because she feared that she would make mistakes. This made her feel depressed. After trying self-medication, she sought medical attention, and the treatment she received seemed helpful. But when she lost her job at the age of 57, depression returned with such intensity that she could see no way out. Maria began thinking about committing suicide.

"About 10 percent of people who are depressed attempt suicide," says Professor José Alberto Del Porto of São Paulo University. "It's hard to believe that more people have died from suicide than homicide, but it's a sad fact," reports U. S. surgeon general, Dr. David Satcher.

Sometimes an attempted suicide is, in effect, a cry for help. And surely family members and friends want to do the right thing for

* Some names have been changed.

*How can you help one
who has lost hope?*

the one who has lost hope. Of course, it will not help to use expressions such as: "Stop feeling sorry for yourself," "A lot of people are worse off than you are" or, "All of us have a bad day now and then." Instead, why not be a real friend and a good listener? Yes, try to help the despondent one to see that life is worth living.

French author Voltaire wrote: "The man who, in a fit of melancholy, kills himself today, would have wished to live had he waited a week." Well, then, how can people in despair discover that life is worthwhile?



SOON A World Without Despair

LIFE is getting increasingly demanding, and the reasons for despair are many. When frustrated, we may find it hard to control our emotions. Why, even people who love life can become desperately unhappy! Consider a few examples.

In ancient times, the prophet Moses got so discouraged that he said to God: "Please kill me off altogether, if I have found favor in your eyes, and let me not look upon my calamity." (Numbers 11:15) Fleeing from his enemies, the prophet Elijah exclaimed: "It is enough! Now, O Jehovah, take my soul [life] away." (1 Kings

19:4) And the prophet Jonah said: "O Jehovah, take away, please, my soul from me, for my dying is better than my being alive." (Jonah 4:3) But neither Moses, Elijah, nor Jonah committed suicide. All of them knew God's commandment: "You must not murder." (Exodus 20:13) Having strong faith in God, they were aware that no situation is hopeless and that life is a gift from God.

What about the problems we now face? In addition to emotional distress or physical problems, we may at times have to put up with ill-treatment from family members, neighbors, or

colleagues. The Bible speaks of people who are filled "with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, badness, being full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malicious disposition, being whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, insolent, haughty, self-assuming, inventors of injurious things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, false to agreements, having no natural affection, merciless." (Romans 1:28-31) Being surrounded by such people day after day may make life seem like a burden. How can we help those who need comfort and relief?

Willingness to Listen

Adversities and suffering can cause an individual to lose his mental balance. The wise man said: "Mere oppression may make a wise one act crazy." (Ecclesiastes 7:7) So a person who talks about suicide should be taken seriously. The problems he is having, whether emotional, physical, mental, or spiritual, may require prompt attention. Of course, professional treatments and therapies vary, and a personal decision must be made regarding forms of therapy. —Galatians 6:5.

Whatever the reason for suicidal feelings, having a discerning, sympathetic, and patient person to confide in may well make a difference. Family members and friends who are willing to listen may be able to help. In addition to fellow feeling and kindness, upbuilding thoughts from God's Word can be very helpful to those who have lost hope.

Spiritual Help for the Distressed

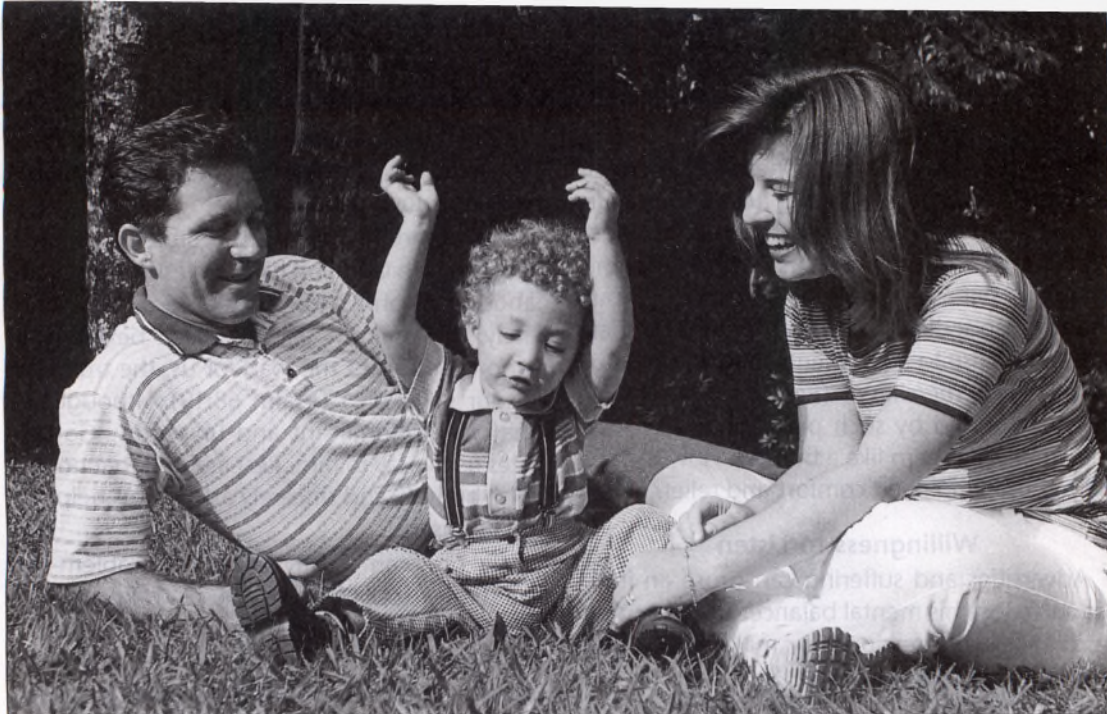
You may be surprised to learn how encouraging Bible reading can be. Although it is not a mental-health manual, the Bible can help us to value life. Said King Solomon: "I have come to know that there is nothing better for them than to rejoice and to do good during one's life; and also that every man should eat and indeed drink and see good for all his hard work. It is the gift of God." (Ecclesiastes 3:12, 13) Besides satisfying work that gives meaning to life,

simple things—such as fresh air, sunlight, flowers, trees, and birds—are God-given gifts that we can enjoy.

Even more uplifting is the Bible's assurance that Jehovah God and his Son, Jesus Christ, care about us. (John 3:16; 1 Peter 5:6, 7) Appropriately, the psalmist said: "Blessed be Jehovah, who daily carries the load for us, the true God of our salvation." (Psalm 68:19) Although we may feel insignificant and unworthy, God invites us to pray to him. Rest assured that no one who humbly and sincerely asks for his help will be despised.

No one can rightly expect a problem-free life today. (Job 14:1) Yet, the truth from God's Word has shown many people that suicide is not the right way to solve their problems. Just consider how the apostle Paul helped a desperate jailer who, "being awakened out of sleep and seeing the prison doors were open, drew his sword and was about to do away with himself, imagining that the prisoners had escaped." In an instant, that jailer had concluded that suicide was better than a humiliating and perhaps protracted death for his failure. The apostle called out: "Do not hurt yourself, for we are all here!" Paul did not stop with that statement. In fact, he and Silas comforted the jailer and responded to his question: "Sirs, what must I do to get saved?" They answered: "Believe on the Lord Jesus and you will get saved, you and your household." Then they spoke Jehovah's word to him and his household, with the result that "he and his were baptized without delay." That jailer and all his household rejoiced greatly and found new meaning in life. —Acts 16:27-34.

Today, what a relief it is to know that God is not responsible for wickedness! His Word identifies a wicked spirit, "the one called Devil and Satan," as the one who is "misleading the entire inhabited earth." But his time is running out. (Revelation 12:9, 12) Soon, all the distress that Satan and his demons have brought upon



There are many occasions for happiness today

earth's inhabitants will end by divine intervention. Then God's promised new world of righteousness will bring about a permanent end to the causes behind hopelessness and suicide. —2 Peter 3:13.

Consolation for Those Crying for Help

Even now, those who are despondent can draw comfort from the Scriptures. (Romans 15:4) The psalmist David sang: "A heart broken and crushed, O God, you will not despise." (Psalm 51:17) True, we inescapably meet with some trials and feel the effects of imperfection. But taking in accurate knowledge of our kind, loving, and reasonable heavenly Father will give us reassurance that we are precious in his eyes. God can become our foremost Friend and Instructor. If we cultivate an intimate relationship with Jehovah God, he will never disappoint us. "I, Jehovah, am your God," says our Creator, "the One teaching you to benefit yourself, the One causing you to tread in the way in which you should walk."—Isaiah 48:17.

Reliance on God has helped many people. To illustrate: Mara had already been weakened by prolonged depression when she lost her only son in a traffic accident.* She panicked and tried to take her own life. Now, however, she wakes up early every day to care for her household. She enjoys listening to music and helping others. The hope that "there is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous" has taken some of the sting out of the tragic death of her dear son and has strengthened her faith in God. (Acts 24:15) Since Mara never had the desire to become like an angel in heaven, the words of Psalm 37:11 have touched her heart: "The meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace."

Another Brazilian woman, Sandra, worked very hard at being the perfect mother to her three children. She admits: "I was so busy that when my father suddenly died and I, at the same time, discovered that my husband was

* Some names have been changed.



Do you look forward to a world without despair?

having an affair with another woman, I did not even think about praying to God for help." In despair Sandra attempted to kill herself. What has helped her to recover? Her appreciation for spiritual things. "Every night before I go to sleep, I read the Bible, and I try to identify with the people I read about. I also read the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines, and I am especially fond of the life stories because they help me to be content with my lot in life." Knowing that Jehovah is her best friend, she has learned to be specific in her prayers.

A Future Without Despair

What a comfort it is to know that human suffering is temporary! Under the rule of God's Kingdom, children and adults who are now victims of crime, injustice, or prejudice will rejoice.

As foretold in a prophetic psalm, Jehovah's appointed King, Jesus Christ, "will deliver the poor one crying for help, also the afflicted one and whoever has no helper." Moreover, "he will feel sorry for the lowly one and the poor one, and the souls of the poor ones he will save." Indeed, "from oppression and from violence he will redeem their soul, and their blood will be precious in his eyes."—Psalm 72:12-14.

The time for the fulfillment of those prophetic words is near. Does the thought of enjoying everlasting life on earth under such conditions appeal to you? If so, you have reason to be joyful and to cherish life as a gift from God. And if you share these comforting Scriptural promises with others, you may bring great happiness into the lives of those who cry for help in this unfeeling, loveless world.

Announcing God's Kingdom in the Islands of Fiji

JESUS CHRIST once spoke of two roads. One is spacious and leads off into death. The other is cramped but leads off into life. (Matthew 7:13, 14) To enable people to choose the right road, Jehovah God purposed that the good news of the Kingdom be preached in all the world. (Matthew 24:14) Hence, people everywhere are listening to the Kingdom message, and some are choosing life by becoming "the sort that have faith to the preserving alive of the soul." (Hebrews 10:39)

We invite you to read of the choice for life made by some in Fiji and other nearby islands of the South Pacific.

They Trusted in Jehovah

Mere was still a schoolgirl when she first heard the Kingdom message in 1964. Because of her isolation on a remote island, she had little contact with Jehovah's Witnesses. Eventually, however, she was able to gain an accurate knowledge of the Bible. By that time, she was married to a man who was a clan head in his village. As a result of Mere's choice to live by Bible principles, her husband and his relatives treated her cruelly, and fellow villagers snubbed her. Nevertheless, she was baptized in 1991.

Shortly thereafter, Mere's husband, Josua, softened in his attitude and even started to sit in on Bible discussions that Mere had with their children. Josua stopped attending the Methodist Church. As a chief, though, he still presided at weekly village meetings. In the eyes of the villagers, Josua was disloyal, for the Methodist Church was an integral part of Fijian village life.

Hence, the local pastor urged Josua to return to his former religion.

Josua courageously affirmed that he and his family had made their choice and were determined to worship Jehovah God "with spirit and truth." (John 4:24) At a subsequent village meeting, the paramount chief ruled that Josua and his family depart from the village as outcasts. They were given seven days to leave the island and their house, land, and crops—yes, their whole livelihood.

Spiritual brothers on another island came to the assistance of Josua and his family, helping them with a place to stay and land on which to grow crops. Josua and his eldest son are now baptized, and another son serves as an unbaptized publisher of the good news. Mere recently enrolled as a regular pioneer (a full-time Kingdom proclaimer). Their choice to serve Jehovah resulted in a loss of position and material goods, but like the apostle Paul, they consider this as nothing compared to what they have gained.—Philippians 3:8.

A Choice Involving Conscience

Choosing to follow a Bible-trained conscience requires faith and courage. This certainly was the case with newly baptized Suraang, a young woman living on Tarawa, one of the islands of Kiribati. Suraang requested permission to be excused from one aspect of her work as a nurse at the hospital. Her request was not received favorably, resulting in her being sent to care for the small medical center on an isolated island where she was cut off from others of her faith.





On that island it is customary for all new arrivals to make an offering to the local "spirit." The people believe that failure to do so will result in death. Since Suraang refused to allow this act of idolatry to be performed for her and her party, the villagers waited for her to be strangled by the offended spirit. When no harm came to Suraang or her party, many opportunities opened up for her to give a fine witness.

But Suraang's tests were not over. Some of the young men of that island consider it a challenge to seduce young women who visit. However, Suraang resisted their advances and kept her integrity to God. In fact, she was able to serve as a regular pioneer, even though she was on call as a nurse 24 hours a day.

Prior to a feast held in Suraang's honor when she was preparing to leave the island, the village elders stated that she was the first real missionary to visit them. Because of her firm stand for Bible principles, others on that island have responded favorably to the Kingdom message.

Physical Challenges

The isolation of some villages means that Jehovah's people have to put forth great effort to share in the ministry and to attend Christian meetings. Consider the example of four baptized Witnesses—one man and three wom-

en—who spend hours traveling to and from the meetings. Their hike involves three river crossings each way. When the water is high, the brother swims across first, towing a large cooking pot containing their bags, books, and meeting clothes. Then he swims back to help the three sisters.

Another small group, who attend the meetings on the remote island of Nonouti in Kiribati, meet different challenges. The house in which they meet holds only seven or eight people. Others attending sit outside and peer in through its chicken-wire walls. The meeting place is in full view of other villagers coming from and going to their impressive churches. Of course, Jehovah's servants realize that people, not buildings, are what are truly desirable from God's point of view. (Haggai 2:7) The one baptized sister on the island is elderly and cannot walk far. Yet, she is helped in the ministry by a young woman, an unbaptized publisher who pushes her around in a handcart. What appreciation they show for the truth!

The more than 2,100 publishers serving in Fiji and Kiribati are determined to continue announcing the good news of God's Kingdom. And they are confident that many more will yet become "the sort that have faith to the preserving alive of the soul."



"HIS HOUR HAD NOT YET COME"

"No one laid a hand upon him, because his hour had not yet come."—JOHN 7:30.

"THE Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his soul a ransom in exchange for many," Jesus Christ told his apostles. (Matthew 20:28) To the Roman governor Pontius Pilate, he said: "For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth." (John 18:37) Jesus knew exactly why he would die and what work he needed to do before his death. He also knew how much time he had to fulfill his mission. His ministry on earth as the Messiah was to be only three and a half years long. It began with his water baptism in the Jordan River (in 29 C.E.) at the start of the foretold 70th symbolic week and ended with his death on a torture stake in the middle of that week (in 33 C.E.). (Daniel 9:24-27; Matthew 3: 16, 17; 20:17-19) Hence, Jesus' entire course of action on earth was essentially governed by two factors: the purpose of his coming and a keen sense of timing.

1. What two factors governed Jesus' course of action?

² The Gospel accounts portray Jesus Christ as a man of action who traveled the length and breadth of the land of Palestine, declaring the good news of God's Kingdom and performing many powerful works. During the earlier part of Jesus' dynamic ministry, it is said of him: "His hour had not yet come." Jesus himself made the statement: "My due time has not yet fully come." Near the end of his ministry, he

2. How is Jesus Christ portrayed in the Gospels, and how did he show awareness of his mission?



used the expression "the hour has come." (John 7:8, 30; 12:23) Jesus' awareness of the hour, or the time for his assigned work, including his sacrificial death, must have affected what he said and did. Understanding this can give us insight into his personality and the pattern of his thinking, helping us "to follow his steps" more closely.—1 Peter 2:21.

Determined to Do God's Will

³ The year is 29 C.E. Only a few days have passed since Jesus personally selected his first disciples. They have all now come to the village of Cana in the district of Galilee to attend a wedding feast. Jesus' mother, Mary, is also there. The wine runs short. Suggesting that he should do something, Mary tells her son: "They have no wine." But Jesus answers: "What have I to do with you, woman? My hour has not yet come."—John 1:35-51; 2:1-4.

⁴ Jesus' reply, "What have I to do with you, woman?" is an ancient form of question that indicates an objection to what is suggested or proposed. Why does Jesus object to Mary's words? Well, he is now 30 years of age. Just a few weeks earlier, he was baptized, anointed with holy spirit, and introduced by John the Baptizer as "the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." (John 1:29-34; Luke 3:21-23) Now his direction must necessarily come from the Supreme Authority who sent him. (1 Corinthians 11:3) No one, not even a close family member, could be allowed to interfere with the work Jesus came to earth to do. What determination to do his Father's will is expressed in Jesus' answer to Mary! May we be similarly determined to fulfill our "whole obligation" to God.—Ecclesiastes 12:13.

⁵ Grasping the point of her son's words,

3, 4. (a) What happens at a wedding feast in Cana? (b) Why does the Son of God object to Mary's suggestion that he should do something about the shortage of wine, and what can we learn from this?

5. What miracle does Jesus Christ perform in Cana, and what effect does it have on others?

Mary immediately steps aside and instructs the attendants: "Whatever he tells you, do." And Jesus solves the problem. He has the attendants fill the jars with water, and he turns the water into the finest of wine. This occurs as an introduction to Jesus' miracle-working power, giving a sign that God's spirit is upon him. When the new disciples see this miracle, their faith is strengthened.—John 2:5-11.

Zealous for Jehovah's House

⁶ Soon it is the spring of 30 C.E., and Jesus and his companions are on their way to Jerusalem to observe the Passover. While there, his disciples see their Leader acting in a manner they have perhaps never seen him act before. Greedy Jewish merchants are selling animals and birds for sacrifices right inside the temple. And they are charging faithful Jewish worshipers very high prices. Filled with indignation, Jesus goes into action. He makes a whip of ropes and drives the sellers away. Pouring out the coins of the money changers, he overturns their tables. "Take these things away from here!" he commands those selling the doves. When Jesus' disciples see him act with such fervor, they remember the prophecy about God's Son: "The zeal for your house will eat me up." (John 2:13-17; Psalm 69:9) We too must zealously guard against allowing worldly tendencies to contaminate our worship.

⁷ While in Jerusalem, Jesus performs remarkable signs, and many people put faith in him. Even Nicodemus, a member of the Sanhedrin, or Jewish high court, is impressed with Jesus and comes to him in the night to learn more. Then, Jesus and his disciples stay in "Judean country" for about eight months, preaching and making disciples. Following the imprisonment of John the Baptizer, however, they leave

6. Why is Jesus indignant at what he sees at the temple in Jerusalem, and what action does he take?

7. (a) What prompts Nicodemus to visit the Messiah? (b) What do we learn from Jesus' witnessing to a Samaritan woman?

Judea for Galilee. As they travel through the district of Samaria, Jesus seizes an opportunity to give a thorough witness to a Samaritan woman. This paves the way for many Samaritans to become believers. Let us too be alert to opportunities to speak about the Kingdom. —John 2:23; 3:1-22; 4:1-42; Mark 1:14.

Extensive Teaching in Galilee

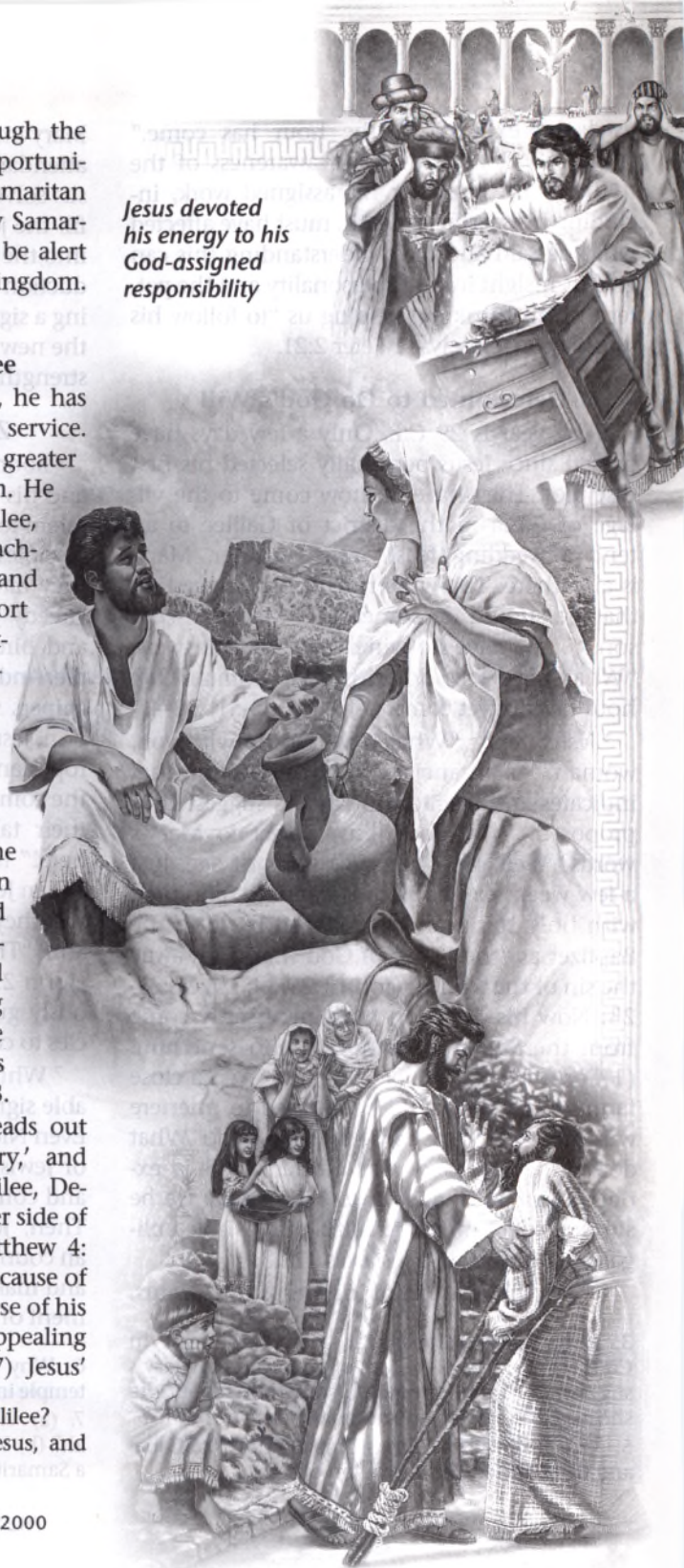
⁸ Before the “hour” of Jesus’ death, he has much to do in his heavenly Father’s service. In Galilee, Jesus commences an even greater ministry than in Judea and Jerusalem. He goes “throughout the whole of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the good news of the kingdom and curing every sort of disease and every sort of infirmity among the people.” (Matthew 4:23) His challenging words: “Repent, you people, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn near,” ring out in the entire district. (Matthew 4:17) In a few months, when two disciples of John the Baptizer come to get a firsthand report about Jesus, he tells them: “Go your way, report to John what you saw and heard: the blind are receiving sight, the lame are walking, the lepers are being cleansed and the deaf are hearing, the dead are being raised up, the poor are being told the good news. And happy is he who has not stumbled over me.”—Luke 7:22, 23.

⁹ ‘Good talk concerning Jesus spreads out through all the surrounding country,’ and great crowds flock to him—from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and the other side of the Jordan River. (Luke 4:14, 15; Matthew 4:24, 25) They come to him not only because of his miraculous healings but also because of his marvelous teachings. His message is appealing and encouraging. (Matthew 5:1-7:27) Jesus’

8. What work does Jesus commence in Galilee?

9. Why do the crowds flock to Christ Jesus, and what lesson may we draw from this?

Jesus devoted his energy to his God-assigned responsibility



words are winsome and delightful. (Luke 4:22) The crowds are "astounded at his way of teaching," for he speaks from the Scriptures with authority. (Matthew 7:28, 29; Luke 4:32) Who would not be drawn to such a man? May we too cultivate the art of teaching so that honest-hearted individuals will be drawn to the truth.

¹⁰ However, not all of Jesus' hearers are receptive. Even early in his ministry, when he is teaching in his hometown synagogue in Nazareth, there is an attempt to kill him. Although the townspeople marvel at his "winsome words," they want to see miracles. Rather than performing many powerful works there, however, Jesus exposes their selfishness and lack of faith. Filled with anger, those in the synagogue rise up, seize Jesus, and rush him out to a mountainside to hurl him headfirst over the cliff. But he escapes from their grasp and safely slips away. The "hour" of his death has not yet come.—Luke 4:16-30.

¹¹ Religious leaders—scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees and others—are also often present where Jesus preaches. Many of them are there, not to listen and learn, but to find fault and try to entrap him. (Matthew 12:38; 16:1; Luke 5:17; 6:1, 2) For example, while visiting Jerusalem for the Passover of 31 C.E., Jesus cures a man who has been sick for 38 years. The Jewish religious leaders accuse Jesus of breaking the Sabbath. He replies: "My Father has kept working until now, and I keep working." Now the Jews charge him with blasphemy for claiming to be God's Son by calling him Father. They seek to kill Jesus, but he and his disciples leave Jerusalem for Galilee. Similarly, we are wise to avoid undue confrontations with opposers as we devote our energy to the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making work.—John 5:1-18; 6:1.

10. Why do the townspeople of Nazareth try to kill Jesus, and why do they fail?

11. (a) Why do some religious leaders come to hear Jesus? (b) Why is Jesus accused of breaking the Sabbath?

¹² For the next year and a half or so, Jesus confines most of his ministry to Galilee, visiting Jerusalem only to attend the three annual festivals of the Jews. All in all, he has undertaken three preaching tours in Galilee: the first with 4 new disciples, the second with the 12 apostles, and an expanded one with the trained apostles also being sent out. What an extensive witness to the truth is given in Galilee!—Matthew 4:18-25; Luke 8:1-3; 9:1-6.

Witnessing Courageously in Judea and Perea

¹³ It is the autumn of 32 C.E., and Jesus' "hour" is yet future. The Festival of Tabernacles is near. Jesus' half brothers now urge him: "Pass on over from here and go into Judea." They want Jesus to show his miraculous powers to all those gathered at the festival in Jerusalem. Jesus, though, is aware of the danger. So he says to his brothers: "I am not yet going up to this festival, because my due time has not yet fully come."—John 7:1-8.

¹⁴ Delaying in Galilee for some time, Jesus goes up to Jerusalem "not openly but as in secret." The Jews indeed are looking for him at the festival, saying: "Where is that man?" When the festival is half over, Jesus goes into the temple and courageously begins teaching. They seek to get hold of him, perhaps to put him in prison or to have him killed. Yet, they do not succeed because 'his hour has not yet come.' Many now put faith in Jesus. Even the officers that the Pharisees have dispatched to get hold of him return empty-handed, saying: "Never has another man spoken like this."—John 7:9-14, 30-46.

¹⁵ The clashes between Jesus and his Jewish opposers continue as he teaches about his

12. How extensively does Jesus cover the territory in Galilee?

13, 14. (a) On what occasion are the Jews seeking to get hold of Jesus? (b) Why do the officers fail to arrest Jesus?

15. Why do the Jews pick up stones to hurl at Jesus, and what preaching campaign does he launch next?

Father at the temple during the festival. On the final day of the festival, enraged at Jesus' statements about his prehuman existence, the Jews pick up stones to hurl at him. But he hides and escapes unharmed. (John 8:12-59) Staying outside of Jerusalem, Jesus launches an intensive witnessing campaign in Judea. He selects 70 disciples and, after instructing them, sends them by twos to work the territory. They go in advance to every place and city into which Jesus, accompanied by his apostles, is planning to go.—Luke 10:1-24.

¹⁶ In the winter of 32 C.E., Jesus' "hour" is drawing closer. He comes to Jerusalem for the Festival of Dedication. The Jews are still seeking to kill him. While Jesus is walking in the temple colonnade, they encircle him. Accusing him again of blasphemy, they pick up stones to kill him. But as he did on previous occasions, Jesus escapes. Soon he is on the road teaching, this time from city to city and village to village in the district of Perea, across the Jordan from Judea. And many put faith in him. But a dispatch concerning his beloved friend Lazarus calls him back to Judea.—Luke 13:33; John 10:20-42.

¹⁷ The urgent message is from Martha and Mary, sisters of Lazarus, who live in Bethany of Judea. "Lord, see! the one for whom you have affection is sick," the messenger relates. "This sickness is not with death as its object," answers Jesus, "but is for the glory of God, in order that the Son of God may be glorified through it." To accomplish this purpose, Jesus deliberately remains where he is for two days. Then he says to his disciples: "Let us go into Judea again." Incredulously, they respond: "Rabbi, just lately the Judeans were seeking to stone

16. From what danger does Jesus escape during the Festival of Dedication, and with what work is he busy once again?

17. (a) What urgent message does Jesus receive while preaching in Perea? (b) What shows that Jesus is aware of the purpose of the action he must take and of the timing of events?

you, and are you going there again?" But Jesus is aware that the remainder of the "hours of daylight," or the time that God has allotted for his earthly ministry, is short. He knows exactly what he must do and why.—John 11:1-10.

A Miracle No One Could Ignore

¹⁸ In Bethany, Martha is the first one to meet Jesus, saying: "Lord, if you had been here my brother would not have died." Mary and those who had come to their house follow. All are weeping. "Where have you laid him?" Jesus asks. They answer: "Lord, come and see." When they arrive at the memorial tomb—a cave with a stone lying against its opening—Jesus declares: "Take the stone away." Not understanding what Jesus intends to do, Martha objects: "Lord, by now he must smell, for it is four days." But Jesus asks: "Did I not tell you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?"—John 11:17-40.

¹⁹ As the stone covering the entrance of Lazarus' tomb is removed, Jesus prays out loud so that the people will know that what he is about to do is accomplished through the power of God. Then he cries out with a loud voice: "Lazarus, come on out!" Lazarus comes out with his feet and hands still bound with buri-

18. When Jesus arrives in Bethany, what is the situation there, and what happens after his arrival?

19. Why does Jesus pray publicly before resurrecting Lazarus?

How Would You Answer?

- How did Jesus show that he was aware of his God-assigned work?
- Why does Jesus object to his mother's suggestion about wine?
- What can we learn from the way Jesus often dealt with opposers?
- Why does Jesus delay in responding to Lazarus' illness?

al wrappings and his face covered with a cloth. "Loose him and let him go," says Jesus. —John 11:41-44.

²⁰ On seeing this miracle, many of the Jews who had come to comfort Martha and Mary put faith in Jesus. Others go off to tell the Pharisees what has occurred. Their reaction? Immediately, they and the chief priests call an emergency meeting of the Sanhedrin. In panic, they lament: "What are we to do, because this man performs many signs? If we let him alone this way, they will all put faith in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." But High Priest Caiaphas says to them: "You do not reason out that it is to

20. How do those who see Jesus resurrect Lazarus respond?

your benefit for one man to die in behalf of the people and not for the whole nation to be destroyed." Therefore, from that day on they take counsel to kill Jesus.—John 11:45-53.

²¹ So it is that by delaying his arrival in Bethany, Jesus is able to perform a miracle that no one can ignore. Empowered by God, Jesus resurrects a man who has been dead for four days. Even the prestigious Sanhedrin is forced to take note and pass a death sentence upon the Miracle Worker! The miracle thus serves as a prelude to an important turning point in Jesus' ministry—a shift from the period when "his hour had not yet come" to the time when "the hour has come."

21. To what is the miracle of the resurrection of Lazarus a prelude?

"THE HOUR HAS COME!"

"His hour had come for him to move out of this world to the Father."—JOHN 13:1.

AT HIS baptism in 29 C.E., Jesus embarked on the course that would lead to the "hour" of his death, resurrection, and glorification. Now it is the spring of 33 C.E. Only a few weeks have passed since the Jewish high court, the Sanhedrin, took counsel to kill Jesus. Learning of their plan, possibly from Nicodemus, a member of the Sanhedrin who has been friendly to him, Je-

1. As the Passover of 33 C.E. approaches, Jerusalem is alive with what speculations, and why?

sus has left Jerusalem and has gone into the countryside across the Jordan River. As the Festival of the Passover nears, many people go from the country into Jerusalem, and the city is buzzing with speculations about Jesus. "What is your opinion?" people ask one another. "That he will not come to the festival at all?" The chief priests and Pharisees have added to the excitement by giving orders that anyone seeing Jesus should report his whereabouts to them. —John 11:47-57.



² On Nisan 8, six days before the Passover, Jesus is back in the vicinity of Jerusalem. He comes to Bethany—the hometown of his beloved friends Martha, Mary, and Lazarus—a place located about two miles outside of Jerusalem. It is Friday evening, and Jesus spends the Sabbath there. The next evening when Mary ministers to him using precious perfumed oil, the disciples object. Jesus replies: “Let her alone, that she may keep this observance in view of the day of my burial. For you have the poor always with you, but me you will not have always.” (John 12:1-8; Matthew 26:6-13) Jesus knows that ‘his hour has come for him to move out of this world to the Father.’ (John 13:1) Five days more and he will “give his soul a ransom in exchange for many.” (Mark 10:45) Henceforth, a sense of urgency affects everything Jesus does and teaches. What a marvelous example this provides for us as we eagerly await the end of this system of things! Consider what happens in Jesus’ case the very next day.

The Day of Jesus’ Triumphal Entry

³ On Sunday, Nisan 9, Jesus comes to Jerusalem triumphantly. As he approaches the city—riding on the colt of an ass in fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9—most of the people that have gathered around him spread their outer garments on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them out. “Blessed is the One coming as the King in Jehovah’s name!” they cry. Some Pharisees in the crowd want Jesus to rebuke his disciples. However, Jesus replies: “I tell you, If these remained silent, the stones would cry out.”—Luke 19:38-40; Matthew 21:6-9.

⁴ Just a few weeks earlier, many in the crowd

2. What act of Mary stirs controversy, and Jesus’ answer in her defense indicates what about his awareness of “his hour”?

3. (a) How does Jesus enter Jerusalem on Sunday, Nisan 9, and how do most of the people around him respond? (b) What answer does Jesus give the Pharisees who complain about the crowd?

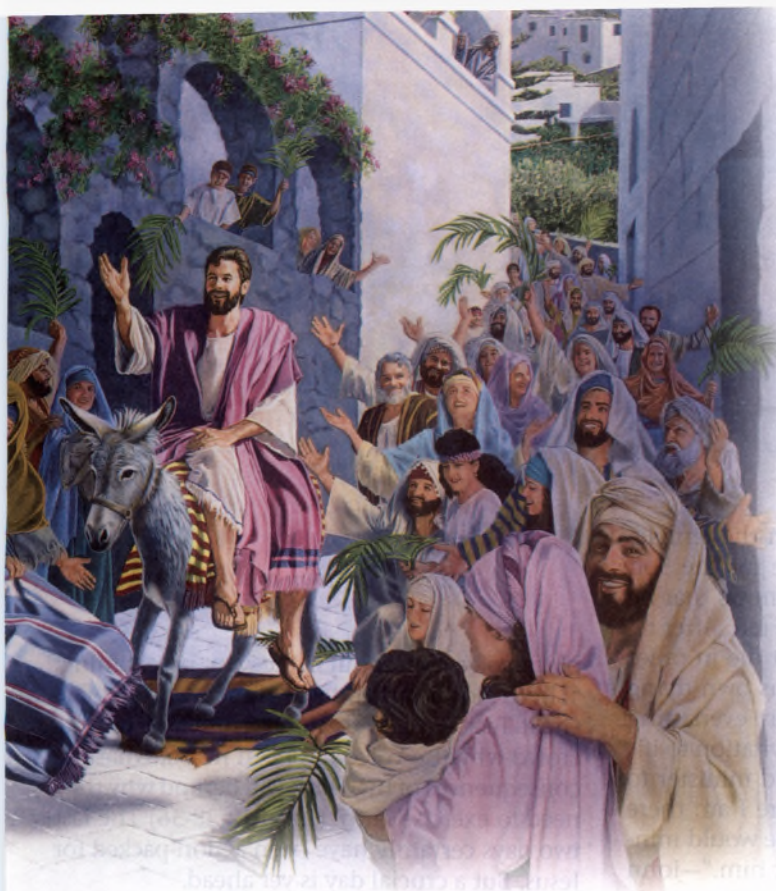
4. Why is Jerusalem set in commotion when Jesus enters the city?



had seen Jesus resurrect Lazarus. Now these keep telling others about that miracle. So as Jesus enters Jerusalem, the whole city is set in commotion. “Who is this?” people ask. And the crowds keep saying: “This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee!” Seeing what is happening, the Pharisees lament: “The world has gone after him.”—Matthew 21:10, 11; John 12:17-19.

⁵ As is his custom when visiting Jerusalem, Jesus, the Great Teacher, goes to the temple to teach. There the blind and the lame come to him, and he cures them. When the chief priests and the scribes see this and they hear the boys in the temple crying out, “Save, we pray, the Son of David!” they become angry. “Do you hear what these are saying?” they protest. “Yes,” Jesus replies. “Did you never read

5. What happens when Jesus goes to the temple?



Messiah—and he rebuffs the religious leaders' requests to silence them! Why the change? Because "the hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified," as Jesus announces the very next day.—John 12:23.

Bold Action—Then Lifesaving Teachings

⁷ Upon arriving at the temple on Monday, Nisan 10, Jesus acts on what he saw the preceding afternoon. He starts 'to throw out those selling and buying in the temple, and he overturns the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves; and he does not let anyone carry a utensil through the temple.' Condemning the wrongdoers, he declares: "Is it not written, 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all

this, 'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings you have furnished praise?'" As Jesus continues teaching, he takes a good look at what is going on in the temple.—Matthew 21:15, 16; Mark 11:11.

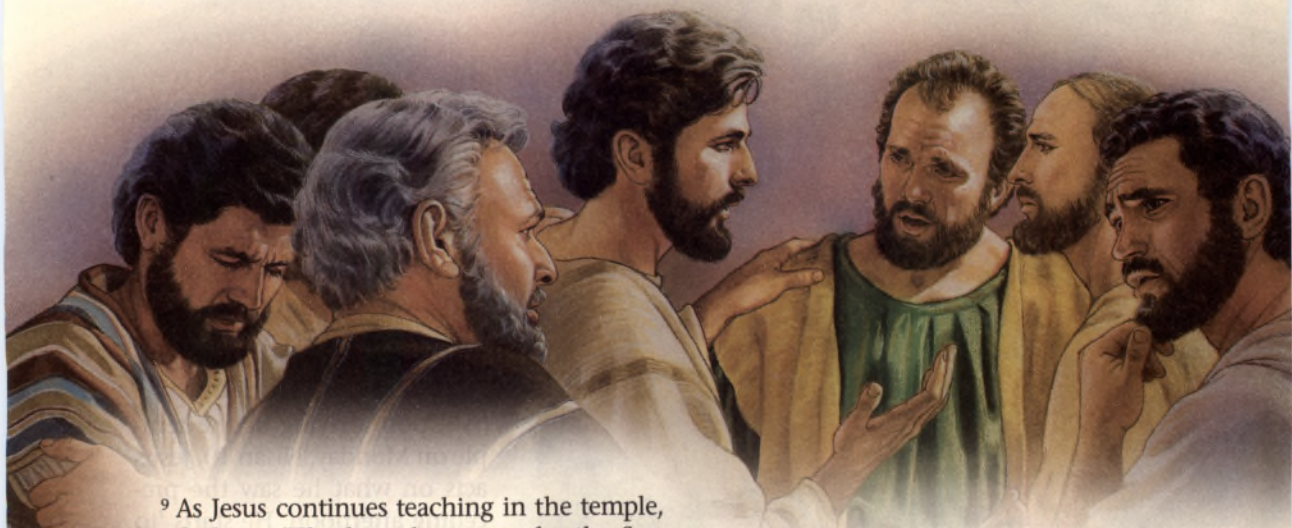
⁶ How different Jesus' approach is now from what it was six months earlier! He then came into Jerusalem for the Festival of Tabernacles "not openly but as in secret." (John 7:10) And he always took measures to get away safely when his life was threatened. Now he openly enters into the city where orders have been issued to seize him! It was also not Jesus' custom to advertise himself as the Messiah. (Isaiah 42:2; Mark 1:40-44) He did not want noisy advertising or distorted reports about him passed from mouth to mouth. Now the crowds are openly declaring him King and Savior—the

the nations'? But you have made it a cave of robbers."—Mark 11:15-17.

⁸ Jesus' actions reflect what he did three years before when he visited the temple at the Passover of 30 C.E. The denunciation, however, is more pungent this time. The merchants in the temple are now referred to as "robbers." (Luke 19:45, 46; John 2:13-16) They are such because they demand exorbitant prices from those who need to buy animals for sacrifice. The chief priests, scribes, and principal ones of the people hear about what Jesus is doing and again seek ways to have him killed. Yet, they do not know how to eliminate Jesus, since all the people, being astounded at his teaching, are hanging onto him to hear him.—Mark 11:18; Luke 19:47, 48.

7, 8. How do Jesus' actions on Nisan 10, 33 C.E., reflect what he did in the temple at the Passover of 30 C.E.?

6. How is Jesus' approach now different from what it was earlier, and why?



⁹ As Jesus continues teaching in the temple, he declares: "The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified." Yes, he knows that he has only a few days of human life left. After relating how a grain of wheat must die in order to bear fruit—corresponding to his own dying and becoming a means to impart everlasting life to others—Jesus extends an invitation to his listeners, saying: "If anyone would minister to me, let him follow me, and where I am there my minister will be also. If anyone would minister to me, the Father will honor him."—John 12:23-26.

¹⁰ Thinking about his agonizing death that is only four days away, Jesus continues: "Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me out of this hour." But what awaits Jesus cannot be avoided. "Nevertheless," he says, "this is why I have come to this hour." Indeed, Jesus is in agreement with the entire arrangement of God. He is determined to let the divine will govern his actions down to his sacrificial death. (John 12:27) What an example he set for us—one of full submission to the divine will!

¹¹ Being deeply concerned about how his Father's reputation will be affected by his death, Jesus prays: "Father, glorify your name." To the amazement of the crowd gathered at the tem-

9. What lesson does Jesus teach, and what invitation does he extend to his listeners at the temple?

10. How does Jesus feel about the agonizing death that awaits him?

11. What teachings does Jesus impart to the crowd that has just heard a voice from heaven?

Jesus "loved them to the end"

ple, a voice comes out of heaven, proclaiming: "I both glorified it and will glorify it again." The Great Teacher uses this opportunity to tell the crowd why the voice has been heard, what the consequences of his death will be, and why they need to exercise faith. (John 12:28-36) The last two days certainly have been action-packed for Jesus. But a crucial day is yet ahead.

The Day for Denunciations

¹² On Tuesday, Nisan 11, Jesus once again goes into the temple to teach. A hostile audience is at hand. Referring to Jesus' actions the previous day, the chief priests and older men of the people ask him: "By what authority do you do these things? And who gave you this authority?" The Master Teacher confounds them by his answer, and he relates three vivid illustrations—two of them about a vineyard and one about a marriage feast—that expose just how wicked his opposers are. Angered by what they hear, the religious leaders want to seize him. But they fear the crowds, who consider Jesus to be a prophet. So they seek to trick him into saying something for which they can have him arrested. The answers Jesus gives silence them. —Matthew 21:23-22:46.

12. On Tuesday, Nisan 11, how do the religious leaders try to trap Jesus, and with what result?

¹³ Since the scribes and the Pharisees profess to teach God's Law, Jesus now urges his listeners: "All the things they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds, for they say but do not perform." (Matthew 23:1-3) What a powerful public denunciation! But Jesus is not through with them. This is his last day at the temple, and he boldly issues a series of exposés—one after another like rolling thunder.

¹⁴ "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" Jesus declares six times. They are such because, as he explains, they shut up the Kingdom of the heavens before men, not permitting those on their way in to go in. These hypocrites traverse sea and dry land to make one proselyte, only to make him a subject for eternal annihilation. While neglecting "the weightier matters of the Law, namely, justice and mercy and faithfulness," they give great attention to paying the tithe. In effect, they cleanse "the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of plunder and immoderateness" in that their inner rottenness and putrefaction are hidden behind an outward display of piety. Furthermore, they are willing to build tombs for the prophets and decorate them to draw attention to their own deeds of charity, even though they "are sons of those who murdered the prophets."—Matthew 23:13-15, 23-31.

¹⁵ Condemning the lack of spiritual values on the part of his opponents, Jesus says: "Woe to you, blind guides." They are morally blind because they put more emphasis on the gold of the temple than on the spiritual value of that place of worship. Going on, Jesus utters his strongest words of denunciation. "Serpents, offspring of vipers," he says, "how are you to flee from the judgment of Gehenna?" Yes, Jesus is telling them that for pursuing their wicked course, they will suffer everlasting destruction.

13. What advice does Jesus give his listeners concerning the scribes and the Pharisees?

14, 15. What scathing denunciations does Jesus pronounce against the scribes and Pharisees?

(Matthew 23:16-22, 33) May we too show courage in proclaiming the Kingdom message, even when it involves exposing false religion.

¹⁶ Jesus now leaves the temple. In the fading afternoon sun, he and his apostles climb the Mount of Olives. While sitting there, Jesus gives the prophecy about the destruction of the temple and the sign of his presence and of the conclusion of the system of things. The significance of these prophetic words reaches down to our time. That evening, Jesus also tells his disciples: "You know that two days from now the passover occurs, and the Son of man is to be delivered up to be impaled."—Matthew 24:1-14; 26:1, 2.

Jesus 'Loves His Own to the End'

¹⁷ For the next two days—Nisan 12 and 13—Jesus does not openly show himself at the temple. The religious leaders are seeking to kill him, and he does not want anything to interfere with his celebrating the Passover with his apostles. The setting sun on Thursday begins Nisan 14—the last day of Jesus' life on earth as a human. That evening, Jesus and his apostles are together in a house in Jerusalem where preparation has been made for them to celebrate the Passover. As they enjoy the Passover together, he teaches the 12 a beautiful lesson in humility by washing their feet. After dismissing Judas Iscariot, who has agreed to betray his Master for 30 pieces of silver—the price of a mere slave according to the Mosaic Law—Jesus introduces the Memorial of his death.—Exodus 21:32; Matthew 26:14, 15, 26-29; John 13:2-30.

¹⁸ Following the inauguration of the Memorial, the apostles become involved in a heated

16. While sitting on the Mount of Olives, what important prophecy does Jesus give his disciples?

17. (a) During the Passover on Nisan 14, what lesson does Jesus teach the 12? (b) What commemoration does Jesus institute after dismissing Judas Iscariot?

18. What further teachings does Jesus lovingly impart to his 11 faithful apostles, and how does he prepare them for his imminent departure?

argument over which one of them is the greatest. Rather than scolding them, Jesus patiently teaches them about the value of ministering to others. Appreciating that they have stuck with him during his trials, he makes a personal covenant with them for a kingdom. (Luke 22:24-30) Jesus also commands them to love one another just as he has loved them. (John 13:34) As he lingers in that room, Jesus lovingly prepares them for his imminent departure. He assures them of his friendship, encourages them to exercise faith, and promises them the help of the holy spirit. (John 14:1-17; 15:15) Before leaving the house, Jesus petitions his Father: "The hour has come; glorify your son, that your son may glorify you." Indeed, Jesus has prepared the apostles for his departure, and he surely 'loves his own to the end.'—John 13:1; 17:1.

¹⁹ It may be well past midnight when Jesus and his 11 faithful apostles reach the garden of Gethsemane. He has often gone there with his apostles. (John 18:1, 2) Within hours, Jesus is to die as though he were a despicable criminal. The agony of this anticipated experience and how it may bring reproach upon his Father is so intense that while Jesus prays, his sweat becomes as drops of blood falling to the ground. (Luke 22:41-44) "The hour has come!" Jesus says to the apostles. "Look! My betrayer has drawn near." While he is yet speaking, Judas Iscariot approaches, accompanied by a large crowd carrying torches and lamps and weapons. They have come to arrest Jesus. He does not resist. "In that case," he explains, "how would the Scriptures be fulfilled that it must take place this way?"—Mark 14:41-43; Matthew 26:48-54.

The Son of Man Glorified!

²⁰ Following his arrest, Jesus is accused by false witnesses, convicted by biased judges, sen-

19. Why is Jesus in agony in the garden of Gethsemane?

20. (a) What atrocities befall Jesus following his arrest? (b) Just moments before dying, why does Jesus cry out: "It has been accomplished"?

tenced by Pontius Pilate, derided by priests and mobs, and mocked and tortured by soldiers. (Mark 14:53-65; 15:1, 15; John 19:1-3) By Friday noon, Jesus is nailed to a torture stake and suffers excruciating pain as the weight of his body tears at the nail wounds in his hands and feet. (John 19:17, 18) At about three in the afternoon, Jesus cries out: "It has been accomplished!" Yes, he has completed all that he came to earth to do. Entrusting his spirit to God, he bows his head and dies. (John 19:28, 30; Matthew 27:45, 46; Luke 23:46) On the third day thereafter, Jehovah resurrects his Son. (Mark 16:1-6) Forty days after his resurrection, Jesus ascends to the heavens and is glorified. —John 17:5; Acts 1:3, 9-12; Philippians 2:8-11.

²¹ How may we 'follow Jesus' steps closely? (1 Peter 2:21) Like him, let us exert ourselves vigorously in the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making work and be bold and courageous in speaking the word of God. (Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20; Acts 4:29-31; Philippians 1:14) Let us never lose sight of where we are in the stream of time or fail to incite one another to love and fine works. (Mark 13:28-33; Hebrews 10:24, 25) May we let our entire course of action be governed by Jehovah God's will and the awareness that we are living in "the time of the end."—Daniel 12:4.

21. How may we imitate Jesus?

How Would You Answer?

- Jesus' knowledge that his death was near had what effect on his final ministry at the temple in Jerusalem?
- What shows that Jesus 'loved his own to the end'?
- What do the events of the last few hours of Jesus' life indicate about him?
- How may we imitate Christ Jesus in our ministry?



Why Be Self-Sacrificing?

Bill is a family man in his 50's who is a teacher of building technology. Throughout the year, at his own expense, he spends many weeks helping to plan for and build Kingdom Halls for congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses. Emma is a well-educated and well-qualified single 22-year-old. Instead of pursuing purely personal goals and pleasures, she spends over 70 hours each month as a minister, helping people to understand the Bible. Maurice and Betty are retired. Rather than take things a bit easier now, they have moved to another country to assist people there to learn about God's purpose for the earth.



THESE individuals do not consider themselves to be special or extraordinary. They are just normal people doing what they consider to be the right thing to do. Why do they use their time, energy, abilities, and resources in the interests of others? What motivates them is a deep love for God and for their neighbor. This love has generated in each one of them a genuine self-sacrificing spirit.

What do we mean by a self-sacrificing spirit? Well, to be self-sacrificing does not require leading an austere or ascetic life. It need not involve extreme self-denial that robs us of joy or satisfaction. As *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* puts it, self-sacrifice simply means "the giving up

of one's own interests, happiness, and desires, for the sake of duty or the welfare of others."

Jesus Christ—The Prime Example

God's only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, is the prime example of someone with a self-sacrificing spirit. In his prehuman existence, his life must have been stimulating and satisfying to the highest degree. He had close, intimate association with his Father and with spirit creatures. Moreover, God's Son used his abilities in challenging and exciting activities as "a master worker." (Proverbs 8:30, 31) He certainly lived amid conditions far superior to anything that even the richest person on earth could ever have



enjoyed. Next to Jehovah God, he had an exalted and privileged position in heaven.

Yet, God's Son "emptied himself and took a slave's form and came to be in the likeness of men." (Philippians 2:7) He willingly relinquished all his personal advantages by becoming a human and offering his life as a ransom in order to undo the harm caused by Satan. (Genesis 3:1-7; Mark 10:45) That meant coming to live among sinful mankind in a world lying in the power of Satan the Devil. (1 John 5:19) It also meant putting up with personal discomfort and inconvenience. Whatever it cost him, however, Jesus Christ was determined to do his Father's will. (Matthew 26:39; John 5:30; 6:38) This tested Jesus' love and loyalty to the limit. How far was he willing to go? "He humbled himself," said the apostle Paul, "and became obedient as far as death, yes, death on a torture stake."—Philippians 2:8.

"Keep This Mental Attitude in You"

We are encouraged to follow Jesus' example. "Keep this mental attitude in you that was also in Christ Jesus," urged Paul. (Philippians 2:5) How can we do this? One way is by "keeping an eye, not in personal interest upon just your own matters, but also in personal interest upon those of the others." (Philippians 2:4) Genuine love "does not look for its own interests."—1 Corinthians 13:5.

Caring individuals have often shown selfless dedication in the service of others. Today, however, many people tend to be self-centered. The world has a me-first attitude. We need to guard against the spirit of the world because if it succeeds in molding our outlook and attitude, likely we will make our own desires of paramount importance. Then everything we do—how we spend our time, our energy, our

resources—will be dominated by self-centered concerns. We therefore need to put up a hard fight against this influence.

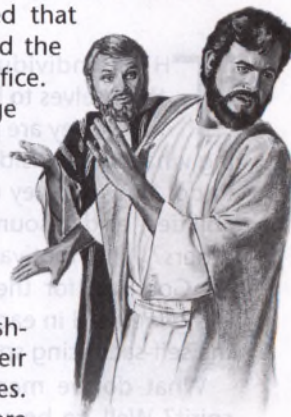
Even well-intentioned advice can at times dampen our spirit of self-sacrifice. Realizing where Jesus' self-sacrificing course was leading, the apostle Peter said: "Be kind to yourself, Lord." (Matthew 16:22) He apparently found it difficult to accept Jesus' willingness to go as far as death in the interests of his Father's sovereignty and the salvation of mankind. So he tried to dissuade Jesus from pursuing such a course.

'Disown Yourself'

How did Jesus react? The account says: "He turned, looked at his disciples and rebuked Peter, and said: 'Get behind me, Satan, because you think, not God's thoughts, but those of men.'" Jesus then called the crowd to him with his disciples and said: "If anyone wants to come after me, let him disown himself and pick up his torture stake and follow me continually."—Mark 8:33, 34.

Some 30 years after he gave this advice to Jesus, Peter showed that by then he understood the meaning of self-sacrifice. He did not encourage fellow believers to take it easy and be kind to themselves. Instead, Peter exhorted them to brace up their minds for activity and quit being fashioned according to their former worldly desires. Despite trials, they were to put the doing of God's will first in their lives.—1 Peter 1:6, 13, 14; 4:1, 2.

The most rewarding course any of us can pursue is to give ownership of ourselves to Jehovah, following Jesus Christ faithfully



and letting God direct our activities. In this regard, Paul set a fine example. His sense of urgency and his gratitude to Jehovah moved him to relinquish worldly aspirations or prospects that could have side-tracked him from doing God's will. "For my part," he said, "I will most gladly spend and be completely spent" in serving the interests of others. (2 Corinthians 12:15) Paul used his abilities to further divine interests, not his own.—Acts 20:24; Philippians 3:8.

How might we examine ourselves to see if we have an outlook like that of the apostle Paul? We might ask ourselves questions like these: How do I use my time, my energy, my abilities, and my resources? Do I use these and other precious gifts simply to further my own interests, or do I use them to help others? Have I considered sharing more fully in the lifesaving work of declaring the good news, perhaps as a full-time Kingdom proclaimer? Could I get more fully involved in such activities as building or maintaining Kingdom Halls? Am I seizing opportunities to assist needy ones? Do I give Jehovah my best?—Proverbs 3:9.

"More Happiness in Giving"

Yet, is it really wise to be self-sacrificing? It is indeed! Paul knew from personal experience that such a spirit brings rich rewards. It brought him great happiness and immense personal satisfaction. He explained this to the older men from Ephesus when he met with them at Miletus. Said Paul: "I have exhibited to you in all things that by thus labor-



*Jesus had a self-sacrificing spirit.
Do you?*

ing [in a self-sacrificing way] you must assist those who are weak, and must bear in mind the words of the Lord Jesus, when he himself said, 'There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving.' " (Acts 20:35) Millions of people have found that manifesting this kind of spirit brings great happiness right now. It will also bring joy in the future when Jehovah rewards those who put his interests and those of others ahead of their own.—1 Timothy 4:8-10.

When asked why he exerted himself in assisting others to build Kingdom Halls, Bill commented: "Helping what are often smaller congregations in this way gives me great personal satisfaction. I enjoy using what skills and expertise I have for the benefit of

Paul focused his efforts on the Kingdom-preaching work

others." Why has Emma chosen to devote her energies and abilities to help others to learn Scriptural truth? "I could not imagine doing anything else. While still young and able to do so, I just want to do as much as I can to please Jehovah and help others. Sacrificing some material advantages is no big thing. I am doing only what I ought to do in view of what Jehovah has done for me."



Maurice and Betty have no regrets over not taking up a life of ease, following years of hard work in raising and providing for their family. Now that they are retired, they want to continue doing something useful and meaningful with their lives. "We do not simply want to sit back and relax now," they say. "Helping others learn about Jehovah in a foreign country gives us the opportunity to keep doing something purposeful."

Are you determined to be self-sacrificing? This will not be easy. There is a constant battle between our imperfect human desires and our earnest wish to please God. (Romans 7:21-23) But it is a battle that can be won if we let Jehovah direct our lives. (Galatians 5:16, 17) He surely will remember our self-sacrificing work in his service and will bless us richly. Indeed, Jehovah God will 'open the floodgates of the heavens and actually empty out upon us a blessing until there is no more want.'—Malachi 3:10; Hebrews 6:10.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

**Bible Reading—Profitable
and Pleasurable**

Blessed With a Special Heritage

"A Charming Mountain Goat"

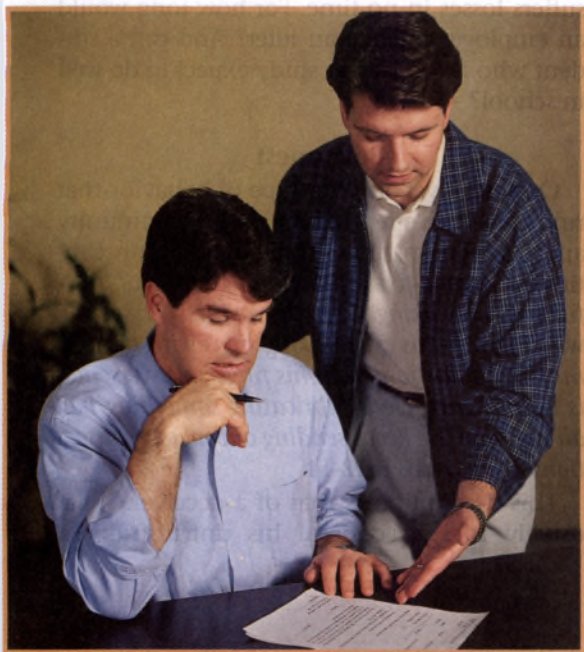


SAFEGUARD YOUR NAME

A MAN who designs beautiful buildings makes a name for himself as an expert architect. A young woman who excels scholastically becomes known as a brilliant student. Even a person who does nothing may make a name for himself as a sluggard. Emphasizing the value of making a favorable name, the Bible states: "A good name is more desirable than great riches, a good reputation than silver and gold."—Proverbs 22:1, *An American Translation*.

A good name is developed by many small acts over a period of time. All that is needed to spoil it, though, is one foolish act. A single incident of sexual misconduct, for example, can sully a fine reputation. In the 6th chapter of the Bible book of Proverbs, King Solomon of

Be cautious about cosigning a loan



ancient Israel provides a warning against attitudes and actions that can spoil our reputation as well as damage our relationship with Jehovah God. Among these are thoughtless pledges, laziness, deceit, and sexual immorality—essentially things that Jehovah hates. Giving heed to this advice will help us safeguard our good name.

Deliver Yourself From Foolish Pledges

The 6th chapter of Proverbs opens with the words: "*My son, if you have gone surety for your fellowman, if you have given your handshake even to the stranger, if you have been ensnared by the sayings of your mouth, if you have been caught by the sayings of your mouth, take this action then, my son, and deliver yourself, for you have come into the palm of your fellowman: Go humble yourself and storm your fellowman with importunities.*"—Proverbs 6:1-3.

This proverb counsels against getting involved in the business dealings of others, especially of strangers. Yes, the Israelites were to 'sustain their brother who had grown poor and become financially weak.' (Leviticus 25:35-38) But some enterprising Israelites got involved in speculative business ventures and obtained financial backing by convincing others to 'go surety' for them, thus making them liable for the debt. Similar situations may arise today. Financial institutions, for example, may require a cosigner before approving a loan they consider risky. How unwise to make such a commitment hastily in behalf of others! Why, it may entrap us financially, even giving us a bad name with banks and other creditors!

What if we find ourselves in the predicament of having taken an action that seemed

wise at first but upon closer scrutiny appears foolish? The advice is to set aside pride and "storm your fellow-man with importunities"—with persistent requests. We must do all we possibly can to set matters straight. One reference work points out: "Leave no stone unturned until you have agreed with your adversary and compromised the matter, so that your bond may not come against you or yours." And this should be done without delay, for the king adds: "Do not give any sleep to your eyes, nor any slumber to your beaming eyes. Deliver yourself like a gazelle from the hand and like a bird from the hand of the birdcatcher." (Proverbs 6:4, 5) Better it is to withdraw from an unwise commitment when possible than to be entrapped by it.

Be Industrious Like the Ant

"Go to the ant, you lazy one; see its ways and become wise," admonishes Solomon. What wisdom can we gain from the ways of a little ant? The king answers: "Although it has no commander, officer or ruler, it prepares its food even in the summer; it has gathered its food supplies even in the harvest."—Proverbs 6:6-8.

Ants are marvelously organized and remarkably cooperative with one another. Instinctively, they gather food supplies for the future. They have "no commander, officer or ruler." True, the queen ant is there, but she is queen only in the sense that she lays eggs and is the mother of the colony. She gives no commands. Even with no foreman to drive them or supervisor to check on them, the ants keep tirelessly at their work.

Like the ant, should we not also be industrious? Working hard and striving to improve in our work is good for us whether we are being monitored or not. Yes, in school, at our place



Be industrious like the ant

of employment, and while sharing in spiritual activities, we should do our best. As the ant benefits from its industriousness, so God wants us to 'see good for all our hard work.' (Ecclesiastes 3: 13, 22; 5:18) A clean conscience and personal satisfaction are the rewards of hard work.—Ecclesiastes 5:12.

Using two rhetorical questions, Solomon tries to awaken a slothful one from his indolence: "How long, you lazy one, will you keep lying down? When will you rise up from your sleep?" Mimicking him in speech, the king adds: "A little more sleep, a little more slumbering, a little more folding of the hands in lying down, and your poverty will certainly come just like some rover, and your want like an armed man." (Proverbs 6:9-11) While the lazy one is supine, poverty overtakes him with the speed of a bandit, and scarcity attacks him like an armed man. The fields of a slugard quickly become full of weeds and nettles. (Proverbs 24:30, 31) His business enterprise suffers losses in no time. For how long would an employer tolerate an idler? And can a student who is too lazy to study expect to do well in school?

Be Honest

Outlining yet another type of behavior that ruins a person's reputation in the community and his relationship with God, Solomon continues: "A good-for-nothing man, a man of hurtfulness, is walking with crookedness of speech, winking with his eye, making signs with his foot, making indications with his fingers. Perverseness is in his heart. He is fabricating something bad all the time. He keeps sending out merely contentions."—Proverbs 6:12-14.

This description is that of a deceiver. A liar usually tries to conceal his untruthfulness.

How? Not merely “with crookedness of speech” but also with body language. One scholar points out: “Gestures, tone of voice, and even facial expressions are calculated methods of deception; behind a facade of sincerity lurks a perverted mind and spirit of discord.” Such a good-for-nothing man is fabricating evil schemes and is causing contentions all the time. How will things turn out for him?

“That is why suddenly there will come his disaster,” answers the king of Israel. *“In an instant he will be broken, and there will be no healing.”* (Proverbs 6:15) When he is exposed, the liar’s reputation is ruined instantly. Who will trust him again? His end is indeed disastrous, for “all the liars” are listed among those who will suffer everlasting death. (Revelation 21:8) By all means, let us “conduct ourselves honestly in all things.”—Hebrews 13:18.

Hate What Jehovah Hates

Hatred for badness—what a deterrent that is from committing acts that damage our reputation! Should we not then cultivate an abhorrence for what is bad? But exactly what should we hate? Solomon states: *“There are six things that Jehovah does hate; yes, seven are things detestable to his soul: lofty eyes, a false tongue, and hands that are shedding innocent blood, a heart fabricating hurtful schemes, feet that are in a hurry to run to badness, a false witness that launches forth lies, and anyone sending forth contentions among brothers.”*—Proverbs 6:16-19.

The seven categories that the proverb mentions are basic and cover virtually all types of wrongs. “Lofty eyes” and “a heart fabricating hurtful schemes” are sins committed in thought. “A false tongue” and “a false witness that launches forth lies” are sinful words. “Hands that are shedding innocent blood” and “feet that are in a hurry to run to badness” are wicked deeds. And especially hateful to Jehovah is the type of individual who takes keen delight in kindling strife among people who otherwise would dwell together peaceful-



Guard against harmful gossip

ly. The increase in the number from six to seven suggests that the list is not intended to be complete, since humans ever keep multiplying their evil deeds.

Indeed, we need to develop a loathing for what God hates. For instance, we must shun “lofty eyes” or any other display of pride. And harmful gossip is certainly to be avoided, for it can easily cause “contentions among brothers.” By spreading unkind hearsay, unjustifiable criticism, or lies, we may not be “shedding innocent blood,” but we surely can destroy another person’s good reputation.

“Do Not Desire Her Prettiness”

Solomon begins the next segment of his counsel by saying: *“Observe, O my son, the commandment of your father, and do not forsake the law of your mother. Tie them upon your heart constantly; bind them upon your throat.”* The reason? *“When you walk about, it will lead you; when you lie down, it will stand guard over you; and when you have waked up, it itself will make you its concern.”*—Proverbs 6:20-22.

Can a Scriptural upbringing really safeguard us from the snare of sexual immorality? Yes, it can. We are assured: *“The commandment is a lamp, and a light the law is, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life, to guard you against the bad woman, against the smoothness of the tongue of the foreign woman.”* (Proverbs 6:23, 24) Remembering the counsel of God’s Word and using it as ‘a lamp to our foot and a light to our roadway’ will help us resist the smooth

invitations of a bad woman, or a bad man for that matter.—Psalm 119:105.

“Do not desire her prettiness in your heart,” admonishes the wise king, *“and may she not take you with her lustrous eyes.”* Why? *“Because in behalf of a woman prostitute one comes down to a round loaf of bread; but as regards another man’s wife, she hunts even for a precious soul.”* —Proverbs 6:25, 26.

Does Solomon refer to an adulterous wife as a prostitute? Perhaps. Or it could be that he distinguishes between the consequences of committing immorality with a prostitute and those resulting from adultery with another man’s wife. The one having intimacies with a prostitute can be reduced to “a round loaf of bread” —to extreme poverty. He may even succumb to painful and crippling sexually transmitted diseases, including deadly AIDS. On the other hand, the one seeking intimacies with another’s marriage mate would be in greater immediate danger under the Law. An adulterous wife endangers the “precious soul” of her illicit partner. “More than the shortening of life by dissipation . . . is intended,” says one reference work. “The sinner is liable to the death penalty.” (Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22) In any case, regardless of her physical beauty, such a woman is not to be desired.

‘Do Not Rake Fire Into Your Bosom’

To emphasize the danger of adultery further, Solomon asks: *“Can a man rake together fire into his bosom and yet his very garments not be burned? Or can a man walk upon the coals and his feet themselves not be scorched?”* Explaining the meaning of the illustration, he says: *“Likewise with anyone having relations with the wife of his fellowman, no one touching her will remain unpunishable.”* (Proverbs 6:27-29) Such a sinner will surely be punished.

“People do not despise a thief just because he commits thievery to fill his soul when he is hungry,” we are reminded. Even so, *“when found, he will make it good with seven times as much;*

all the valuables of his house he will give.” (Proverbs 6:30, 31) In ancient Israel, a thief was required to make payment even if it took all he had.* How much more worthy of punishment would be an adulterer, who has no excuse for what he has done!

“Anyone committing adultery with a woman is in want of heart,” states Solomon. A man in want of heart lacks good judgment, since he *“is bringing his own soul to ruin.”* (Proverbs 6:32) Outwardly, he may appear to be a reputable person, but the inner man is seriously lacking in proper development.

There is more to the fruitage that an adulterer reaps. *“A plague and dishonor he will find, and his reproach itself will not be wiped out. For the rage of an able-bodied man is jealousy, and he will not show compassion in the day of vengeance. He will have no consideration for any sort of ransom, neither will he show willingness, no matter how large you make the present.”* —Proverbs 6:33-35.

A thief can compensate for what he stole, but an adulterer can make no repayment. What compensation could he offer an angry husband? No amount of pleading is likely to win the wrongdoer compassion. In no way can the adulterer make restitution for his sin. The reproach and dishonor heaped upon his own name remains. Moreover, he can in no way ransom himself or buy freedom from the punishment he deserves.

How wise it is to stay clear of adultery as well as other conduct and attitudes that defame our good name and may bring reproach upon God! May we, then, be careful not to make foolish pledges. Let industriousness and truthfulness adorn our reputation. And as we endeavor to hate what Jehovah hates, may we make a good name with him and our fellowman.

* According to the Mosaic Law, a thief was required to pay back double, fourfold, or fivefold. (Exodus 22:1-4) The term “seven times” likely denotes a full measure of penalty, which could be many times more than what he stole.

HUMBLE JOSIAH HAD JEHOVAH'S FAVOR

FIVE-YEAR-OLD Prince Josiah of Judah must be frightened. His mother, Jedidah, is mourning. Jedidah has reason to cry because Josiah's grandfather, King Manasseh, has died.—2 Kings 21:18.

Now Josiah's father, Amon, will be Judah's king. (2 Chronicles 33:20) Two years later (659 B.C.E.), Amon is murdered by his servants. The people strike down the conspirators and make young Josiah king. (2 Kings 21:24; 2 Chronicles 33:25) During Amon's reign, Josiah had become accustomed to the smell of incense that filled Jerusalem's air because of the many rooftop altars before which people prostrated themselves to false gods. Pagan priests could be seen parading about, and devotees—even some who claimed to be worshiping Jehovah—were swearing by the god Malmam.—Zephaniah 1:1, 5.

Josiah knows that Amon acted wickedly by worshiping false deities. Judah's young king also comes to a better understanding of the proclamations of God's prophet Zephaniah. By the time Josiah is 15 (652 B.C.E.), he is in the eighth year of his reign and has determined to heed Zephaniah's words. While he is still a boy, Josiah begins to search for Jehovah.—2 Chronicles 33:21, 22; 34:3.

Josiah Swings Into Action!

Four years pass and Josiah begins to purge Judah and Jerusalem of false religion (648 B.C.E.). He destroys the idols, the sacred poles, and the incense altars used in Baal worship. Images of false gods are ground into powder that is then scattered on the graves of those who sacrificed to them. Altars used for unclean worship are desecrated and then demolished.—2 Kings 23:8-14.

Josiah's purge is in full swing when Jeremiah, the son of a Levite priest, comes to Jerusalem (647 B.C.E.). Jehovah God has appointed young



Young King Josiah earnestly searched for Jehovah

Jeremiah as his prophet, and how forcefully he declares Jehovah's message against false religion! Josiah was about the same age as Jeremiah. Despite Josiah's courageous purge and Jeremiah's fearless proclamations, though, the people quickly relapse into false worship.—Jeremiah 1:1-10.

A Priceless Discovery!

Some five years pass. Twenty-five-year-old Josiah has been ruling for about 18 years. He summons Shaphan, the secretary; Maaseiah, the chief of the city; and the recorder Joah. The king commands Shaphan: 'Tell Hilkiah, the high priest, to take the money that the doorkeepers of the temple have gathered from the people and hand it over to the workmen so that they may repair the house of Jehovah.'—2 Kings 22:3-6; 2 Chronicles 34:8.

From early morning, repairers of the temple work industriously. Surely Josiah is grateful to Jehovah that the workers are undoing the damage that some of his wicked ancestors did to God's house. As the work progresses, Shaphan comes to make a report. But what is this? Why, he is carrying a roll! He explains that High Priest Hilkiah has found "the book of Jehovah's law by the hand

of Moses." (2 Chronicles 34:12-18) What a discovery—undoubtedly the original copy of the Law!

Josiah is eager to hear every word of the book. As Shaphan reads, the king tries to see how each command applies to him and to the people. Especially is he impressed by how the book emphasizes true worship and foretells the plagues and exile that would come if the people engaged in false religion. Now realizing that not all of God's commands have been carried out, Josiah tears his garments and gives Hilkiah, Shaphan, and others the order: 'Inquire of Jehovah about the words of this book; for great is Jehovah's rage set afire against us because our forefathers did not listen to the words of this book.'—2 Kings 22:11-13; 2 Chronicles 34:19-21.

Jehovah's Word Is Relayed

Josiah's messengers go to Huldah the prophetess in Jerusalem and return with a report. Huldah has relayed the word of Jehovah, indicating that the calamities recorded in the newly found book will befall the apostate nation. Because of humbling himself before Jehovah God, however, Josiah will not have to look upon the calamity. He will be gathered to his forefathers and be taken to his graveyard in peace.—2 Kings 22:14-20; 2 Chronicles 34:22-28.

Was Huldah's prophecy accurate, since Josiah died in battle? (2 Kings 23:28-30) Yes, for the "peace" in which he was gathered to his graveyard is in contrast with "the calamity" due to come upon Judah. (2 Kings 22:20; 2 Chronicles 34:28) Josiah died before the calamity of 609-607 B.C.E. when the Babylonians besieged and destroyed Jerusalem. And 'being gathered to one's forefathers' does not necessarily exclude dying a violent death. A comparable expression is used with reference to both violent and non-violent deaths.—Deuteronomy 31:16; 1 Kings 2:10; 22:34, 40.

True Worship Advances

Josiah gathers the people of Jerusalem at the temple and reads to them "all the words of the book of the covenant" that had been found in

Jehovah's house. He then makes a covenant "to walk after Jehovah and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all the heart and with all the soul by carrying out the words of this covenant that were written in this book." All the people take their stand in the covenant.—2 Kings 23:1-3.

King Josiah now launches another and evidently more intensive campaign against idolatry. The foreign-god priests of Judah are put out of business. Levite priests involved in unclean worship lose their privilege of serving at Jehovah's altar, and the high places built during King Solomon's reign are rendered unfit for worship. The purge also takes in the territory of the former ten-tribe kingdom of Israel, overthrown earlier by the Assyrians (740 B.C.E.).

In fulfillment of words spoken 300 years earlier by an unnamed "man of the true God," Josiah burns the bones of priests of Baal on the altar that King Jeroboam I set up at Bethel. High places are removed there and in the other cities, and idolatrous priests are sacrificed on the very altars where they have officiated.—1 Kings 13:1-4; 2 Kings 23:4-20.

A Grand Passover Is Held

Josiah's acts in promoting pure worship have divine backing. As long as he lives, the king will thank God that the people do "not turn aside from following Jehovah the God of their forefathers." (2 Chronicles 34:33) And how can Josiah forget a wonderful event that took place in the 18th year of his reign?

The king commands the people: "Hold a passover to Jehovah your God according to what is written in [the recently found] book of the covenant." (2 Kings 23:21) Josiah rejoices to see the fine response. For this observance, he himself contributes 30,000 Passover animals and 3,000 head of cattle. What a Passover! In its offerings, well-planned arrangements, and number of worshipers, it surpasses any Passover held since the days of the prophet Samuel.—2 Kings 23:22, 23; 2 Chronicles 35:1-19.



Josiah destroyed the high places and promoted true worship

Greatly Lamented in Death

For the rest of his 31-year reign (659-629 B.C.E.), Josiah rules as a good king. Toward the end of his rule, he learns that Pharaoh Necho plans to pass through Judah on his way to intercept the armies of Babylon and thus help Assyria's king at Carchemish on the Euphrates River. For some undisclosed reason, Josiah goes out to fight the Egyptian. Necho sends messengers to him, saying: "Refrain for your own sake because of God, who is with me, and do not let him bring you to ruin." But Josiah disguises himself and tries to turn the Egyptians back at Megiddo. —2 Chronicles 35:20-22.

Too bad for the king of Judah! Enemy archers hit their mark, and he tells his servants: "Take me down, for I have been very severely wound-

ed." They remove Josiah from his war chariot, place him in another one, and head for Jerusalem. There on en route to the city, Josiah breathes his last. "Thus he died and was buried in the graveyard of his forefathers," says the inspired account, "and all Judah and Jerusalem were mourning over Josiah." Jeremiah chanted over him, and the king became the subject of dirges on special occasions thereafter.—2 Chronicles 35:23-25.

Yes, King Josiah made a regrettable mistake when he engaged the Egyptians in battle. (Psalm 130:3) Nevertheless, his humility and his firmness for true worship brought him God's approval. How well Josiah's life illustrates that Jehovah shows favor to his devoted servants of humble heart!—Proverbs 3:34; James 4:6.

Christian Love

More Than Just Talk

WHEN a fire consumed their home in Trinidad, the Bartholomew family lost everything except their lives. A relative living nearby was able to take them in, but that did not end the story.

Olive Bartholomew is one of Jehovah's Witnesses, and members of the congregation in which she serves—as well as those in surrounding areas—began making contributions toward rebuilding the house that she and her family lost. A committee was set up to oversee the rebuilding project, and construction began. About 20 Witnesses, along with some

neighbors, were on the scene. Even youths joined in, while others were on hand to offer refreshments.

"My family is overwhelmed," said Olive, as reported in Trinidad's *Sunday Guardian*. "They are not Witnesses, and my husband is still in shock at what he is seeing."

In summarizing the effort, the coordinator of the construction project stressed that such acts are truly identifying marks of true Christianity. "We don't just go from home to home talking about love," he stated. "We are trying to practice what we preach."—John 13:34, 35.



**Olive Bartholomew
with her husband**