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THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



SIMPLIFIED ENGLISH EDITION

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The purpose of this magazine, *The Watchtower*, is to honor Jehovah God, the Supreme Ruler of the universe. Just as watchtowers in ancient times enabled a person to observe developments from afar, so this magazine shows us the significance of world events in the light of Bible prophecies. It comforts people with the good news that God's Kingdom, which is a real government in heaven, will soon bring an end to all wickedness and transform the earth into a paradise. It promotes faith in Jesus Christ, who died so that we might gain everlasting life and who is now ruling as King of God's Kingdom. This magazine has been published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879 and is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the modern-language *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*—With References.

"Some Words Explained" are contextual explanations of words used within an article.



PURPOSE OF STUDY ARTICLES

STUDY ARTICLES 1, 2 PAGES 4-16

Because Jehovah loves us, he gives us the directions that we need to live forever. He also warns us about dangers that can make us disobey him. In these two articles, we will learn about six of these dangers and what we must do to avoid them.



STUDY ARTICLES 3, 4 PAGES 17-27

The Bible says that after Jehovah created the first humans, he "rested" on the seventh day. (Hebrews 4:4) The third article in this magazine will explain why God rested on the seventh day and why his day of rest is important to us. The next article will talk about how we can show if we have entered into Jehovah's rest.



ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

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The New Simplified English *Watchtower*

WE ARE happy to introduce the first issue of *The Watchtower* in simplified English. This new edition will be tried for one year, and if it is helpful, it will continue to be printed. It will be sent to the congregations at the same time as the standard, or regular, edition.

It is very important that everyone understands the information that we study in *The Watchtower* each week. This is because the *Watchtower* Study is the main way that “the faithful and discreet slave” teaches God’s people today. (Matthew 24:45) But why is a **simplified** *Watchtower* needed?

Many of our brothers and sisters around the world attend English meetings but do not always understand the kind of English used in *The Watchtower*. There are several reasons for this. For example, English is used in many countries in Africa, Asia, and the South Pacific. Our brothers in those places use English at meetings and in the preaching work, but they may speak other languages at home. Also, the English that is spoken in those countries may be different from the English that is used in the standard edition of *The Watchtower*. Some of our brothers and sisters are refugees in countries where they attend meetings in English. But it is dif-

ficult for them to understand *The Watchtower* because English is not their native language. Some young ones whose main language is English sometimes find *The Watchtower* hard to understand. The simplified English magazine will make it easier for more of our brothers and sisters around the world to benefit from the *Watchtower* Study.

Although this magazine uses simpler English than the standard magazine, both magazines will teach the same truths from the Bible. Both will have the same number of paragraphs, and both will have questions, pictures, and review questions. This means that each person can decide which magazine he wants to study and use at the *Watchtower* Study.

We are sure that the simplified English magazine will make it easier for many brothers and sisters, including young ones, to prepare for the *Watchtower* Study each week. Jehovah loves “the whole association of brothers,” and we thank him that he is using “the faithful and discreet slave” to give us everything we need at the right time.—1 Peter 2:17.

*Governing Body
of Jehovah’s Witnesses*

Will You Follow Jehovah's Loving Guidance?

THEME SCRIPTURE

“Every false path I have hated.”—PSALM 119:128.

IMAGINE this: You need to travel somewhere, but you need help because you are not sure of the way. You have a friend who knows how to get there. You trust him, so you ask for his help. He gives you the directions you need, and he also gives you some advice to help you avoid dangers on the way. For example, he warns you that on the road there is a sign that is not clear. A lot of people followed it and got lost. Will you be happy to get his warning and pay attention to it? In a way, we are on a journey. Our journey is a journey to everlasting life. Jehovah is our friend, and he gives us the directions we need to live forever. And he also warns us about dangers that can cause us to disobey him.—Deuteronomy 5:32; Isaiah 30:21.

² In this article and in the next one, we will talk about some of these dangers. Remember that our friend, Jehovah God, warns us about them because he loves us. He wants us to live forever. It makes him sad when people make bad decisions and stop serving him. (Ezekiel 33:11) In this article, we will talk about three dangers. The first danger comes from other people. The second comes from inside of us. The third

1. 2. (a) When you ask a friend for directions, what warning are you happy to receive, and why? (b) What does Jehovah warn us about, and why?

comes from something that is not real. We need to learn what these dangers are and how Jehovah helps us to avoid them. One Bible writer knew about these dangers and said: “Every false path I have hated.” (Psalm 119:128) He hated everything that could make him disobey Jehovah. Do you feel that way? Let us talk about how we can be determined to avoid every “false path.”

DO NOT FOLLOW “AFTER THE CROWD”

³ Imagine that you are on a long journey and suddenly do not know which is the right way to go. You see that many choose to go a certain way. It would be so easy to follow them. But it is dangerous to go a certain way just because many other people go that way. Maybe they are not going where you want to go. Or maybe they are lost just like you. This example helps us to understand the principle, or lesson, that Jehovah wanted to teach the Israelites in one of the laws he gave them. Jehovah spoke to those who were judges and witnesses in a legal case. He warned them of the danger of following after the crowd and of making bad decisions only to please other people. **(Read Exodus 23:2.)** It is very easy for imperfect humans to do that. But the principle “you must not follow after the

3. (a) On a journey, why could it be dangerous just to follow other people when we do not know which is the right way to go? (b) What important principle do we find at Exodus 23:2?



Do you ever want to follow after the crowd?

crowd” was not only for judges and witnesses in a legal case.

⁴ We could be in danger of following after the crowd in almost any situation in life. These situations can happen suddenly, and it can be very difficult not to do what other people do. For example, think about what happened to Joshua and Caleb. These two Israelites went to spy out the Promised Land with ten other men. When they came back, the ten men said things about the Promised Land that made the other Israelites afraid. For example, they said that the people there were giants from the family of the Nephilim. (Genesis 6:4) This was impossible because all the Nephilim died in the Flood of Noah’s time hundreds of years earlier, and they did not have any children. But the Israelites believed what those ten men said because their faith was weak. When someone has weak faith, he stops trusting in God and he begins to believe false ideas of humans. Soon, most of the Israelites started to think that they should

not follow Jehovah’s direction to enter the Promised Land. What did Joshua and Caleb do in that difficult situation? —Numbers 13:25-33.

⁵ Joshua and Caleb did not follow after the crowd. Although the Israelites did not want to hear the truth, those two men were not afraid to tell it. They did what was right, even when the Israelites wanted to kill them! What gave them this courage? Their faith in Jehovah. When someone has strong faith in Jehovah, he believes what Jehovah God says and not what humans with false ideas say. When Joshua and Caleb later talked about their faith in Jehovah, they told everyone that he always does what he promises. **(Read Joshua 14:6, 8; 23:2, 14.)** Joshua and Caleb loved their God and trusted in him. They did not want to do anything that could make Jehovah sad just to please other people. So they did not follow after the crowd, and they are a very good example for us today.—Numbers 14:1-10.

⁶ Do you sometimes want to follow after the crowd? Most people do not

4, 5. When were Joshua and Caleb in danger of following after the crowd? What helped them to have courage?

6. In what situations are we in danger of following after the crowd?

SOME WORDS EXPLAINED

- **Nephilim (Genesis 6:4):**
The children from wicked angels and women
- **Perceptive powers (Hebrews 5:14):**
The ability to think carefully about things and then choose between right and wrong
- **Unrealities (1 Samuel 12:21):**
Things that people believe can help them but that cannot really make them happy and safe

respect Jehovah. They think that what he says about right and wrong is foolish. They have their own ideas about what is right and what is wrong and try to make us believe these false ideas. For example, they say that there is nothing wrong with television programs, movies, and computer games that show sexual immorality, violence, and spiritism. (2 Timothy 3:1-5) How do you decide what you and your family will do to enjoy yourselves? Do you decide that something is right or wrong because of what other people say and do? If this is how you make decisions, you are following after the crowd.

⁷ Jehovah gave us a precious gift to help us make decisions. It is the ability to think carefully about things and then choose between right and wrong. The Bible calls this gift our “perceptive powers” and says that we need to train them “through use.” (Hebrews 5:14) We cannot train our perceptive powers if we only do what other people do or if we expect others to tell us what to do. For many things, we need to use our conscience and make our own decisions. For example, Jehovah’s peo-

7, 8. (a) How do we train our “perceptive powers”? Why is this training better than just following a list of rules? (b) Why are you happy to see the good example of many young Christians?

ple should not expect someone else to make decisions for them and give them a list of movies, books, and Internet sites to avoid. If we followed a list, we would need new lists all the time. (1 Corinthians 7:31) But the most important reason why we do not expect others to make our decisions for us is that we want to use the ability that Jehovah gave us to make decisions. Jehovah wants us to think carefully about what the Bible says, pray for his guidance, and then make decisions that please him.—Ephesians 5:10.

⁸ When we make decisions that agree with the Bible, some people will not like it. For example, it is very difficult for our young people in school because others are always trying to make them do what everyone else is doing. (1 Peter 4:4) But many of our young people do not follow after the crowd. It is beautiful to see Christians young and old show faith as Joshua and Caleb did.

DO NOT FOLLOW “YOUR HEARTS AND YOUR EYES”

⁹ The second danger we will talk about comes from inside of us. Imagine this: You are on a journey to a certain place, and you have a map to help you get there. What will happen if you decide not to use the map but just choose every road that you think has a beautiful view? You will never get where you want to go. This example helps us to understand another principle that Jehovah wanted to teach the Israelites. It is in another law that he gave them. We can read about it at Numbers 15:37-39.

9. (a) When you are on a journey, why can it be dangerous to choose a road just because you like it? (b) Why was the law at Numbers 15:37-39 important for the Israelites?

(Read.) Many people today do not understand the reasons for the law about fringes and blue threads. Do you understand why this law was important? One reason is that it made God's people different from all the other nations around them. And if they really wanted to please Jehovah, they had to be different from the other nations. (Leviticus 18:24, 25) But there was another reason for this law. Let us talk about this reason and learn more about the second danger that could make us disobey Jehovah.

¹⁰ When Jehovah gave that law to his people, he gave them this reason for it: "You must not go about following your hearts and your eyes." Jehovah said this because he knows humans very well. He knows that it is easy for our heart, the person we are inside, to desire the things we see with our eyes. Because Jehovah knows that our heart is dangerous and can make us do wrong things, he warns us: "The heart is more treacherous than anything else and is desperate. Who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9) That is why Jehovah told the Israelites not to follow their hearts and their eyes. He knew that when the Israelites looked at the nations that did not worship Jehovah, they might want to be like them. They might want to look like them, and then

10. How did Jehovah show that he knows humans very well?

they might start to think and act like them.—Proverbs 13:20.

¹¹ Today, it is even easier for our heart to desire what we see with our eyes. We live in a world that makes it easy for us to follow wrong desires. So in what situation could the principle at Numbers 15:39 help us? We could be in danger of following our heart and eyes in the way we dress. People around us dress in a way that shows that they want others to have immoral thoughts. We see people dress that way in school, in the workplace, and in the area where we live. Because we see this all the time, our desire to look like them could become stronger. Then we might start to dress more like them and less like a Christian.—Romans 12:1, 2.

11. When could we be in danger of following our heart and eyes?

Why is it dangerous to follow your heart and eyes?



¹² It is very important to control our desires. We need to stop our eyes from looking at what is bad. The example of the faithful man Job can help us. He said that he made an agreement with his eyes. He was determined never to look in a romantic way at a woman who was not his wife. (Job 31:1) King David made a similar decision. He said: “I shall not set in front of my eyes any good-for-nothing thing.” (Psalm 101:3) Like David, we must decide not to look at any “good-for-nothing thing.” A “good-for-nothing thing” is anything that can end our friendship with Jehovah. It includes anything we look at that could put a wrong desire in our heart and then make us do what is wrong.

¹³ We can even become a “good-for-

nothing thing” to others if we do things that make them have wrong desires. Sometimes the way we dress can do this. That is why we want to obey what the Bible says. It says that we should wear “well-arranged” clothing “with modesty.” (1 Timothy 2:9) If we dress “with modesty,” we do not think only of what we like. We respect what others think. We want to please others more than we want to please ourselves. (Romans 15: 1, 2) There are many thousands of young people in the Christian congregation who are excellent examples in the way they dress. It makes us so happy to see that they do not follow their hearts and their eyes. They choose to please Jehovah in everything they do.

DO NOT FOLLOW “UNREALITIES”

¹⁴ Imagine now that on your journey, you travel through a big desert. At one point, you think you see water. But it is not really water. Nothing is there! What can happen if you leave the road to get what you think is water? You can get lost and die in the desert. In the same way, Jehovah knows how dangerous it is to trust in something that is not real. At one time, he had to warn the Israelites about this danger. All the nations around them had a human king, so the Israelites also wanted one. That desire was a serious sin because it showed that they did not want Jehovah to be their

Are you following
“unrealities”?



14. What warning about “unrealities” did Samuel give?

King. In the end, Jehovah allowed them to have a human king, but he sent his prophet Samuel to give them a warning. Samuel warned the Israelites about the danger of following “unrealities,” that is, the danger of trusting something that could not really help them.—**Read 1 Samuel 12:21.**

¹⁵ Maybe the Israelites thought that they could trust a human king more than they could trust Jehovah. If this is what they thought, they were following “unrealities.” Because they believed one unreality, it was easy to start believing many other “unrealities” that come from Satan. For example, a human king could make them worship idols. People who worship idols think that they can trust in these gods made of wood or stone because they can see and touch these gods. They do not trust in the invisible God, Jehovah, who created all things. But the apostle Paul said that idols are “nothing.” (1 Corinthians 8:4) Idols cannot see, hear, speak, or do anything. So it is foolish to worship idols just because we can see them and touch them. Idols cannot help anybody. They are “unrealities,” and those who trust in them “will become just like them.”—Psalm 115:4-8.

¹⁶ Satan is very clever, and he still makes people follow “unrealities” today. For example, he makes many believe that if they have money, a good job, and nice things, they will be happy and safe. They think that they can trust these things to help them solve all their prob-

lems. But how much can such things help people when they get sick, or when the economy is bad, or when there is a natural disaster? How can these things help them when they feel that their life has no purpose? Can these things answer the important questions they have about life? Do things help people when death is near? If we trust money and things, we will be disappointed. Money and things cannot give us what we need to be happy, and they cannot keep us safe from sickness and death. They are “unrealities.” (Proverbs 23:4, 5) But Jehovah is not an unreality! He is the true God. So it is only when we have a strong friendship with Jehovah that we can really be happy and safe. Only Jehovah can help us with all our problems. We are so happy to be his friends. We never want to leave him and follow “unrealities.”

¹⁷ We are happy that Jehovah is our friend and that he guides us on our journey to everlasting life. If we continue to pay attention to his warnings, we can live forever. In this article, we learned about three dangers that make many people go the wrong way: the crowd, our own hearts, and “unrealities.” In the next article, we will learn about three more warnings that Jehovah gives us to help us hate and avoid every “false path.”—Psalm 119:128.

15. In what ways did the Israelites follow “unrealities”?

16. (a) How does Satan make people follow “unrealities” today? (b) Why can we say that compared with Jehovah, money and things are “unrealities”?

17. What will you do about the warnings in this article?

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

How can you use the principles in these scriptures?

- Exodus 23:2
- Numbers 15:37-39
- 1 Samuel 12:21
- Psalm 119:128

Will You Pay Attention to Jehovah's Clear Warnings?

THEME SCRIPTURE

“This is the way.
Walk in it, you people.”
—ISAIAH 30:21.

WHEN you are traveling on a road, a sign that points in the wrong direction can make you go the wrong way. This may be dangerous. Imagine that a friend warns you that an evil

man changed a sign on the road because he wants people to get lost. You would certainly pay attention to your friend's warning.

² The Bible talks about two roads. One leads to destruction and one leads to everlasting life. It says that many are on the road to destruction. Satan has deceived them like that evil man. He is determined to deceive us too. (Revelation 12:9) All the dangers that we talked about in the last article are things that Satan uses to make us disobey Jehovah and leave the road to everlasting life. (Matthew 7:13, 14) But we also learned that our friend, Jehovah God, warns us about Satan's tricks. We will now talk about three more things that Satan uses to fool us and how the Bible helps us to avoid them. When we read the Bible, we can imagine that Jehovah is walking behind us and that he is saying: “This is the way. Walk in it, you people.” (Isaiah 30:21) As we study these clear warnings, we will become more determined to do what Jehovah says.

1, 2. What is Satan determined to do, and how does the Bible help us?

DO NOT FOLLOW “FALSE TEACHERS”

³ Imagine that on your journey, you go through a desert and you get thirsty. In the distance, you see a well. You think that you will find water in it, so you walk toward it. But when you get to the well, there is no water. You are very disappointed! We can say that the truth is like water and that false teachers are like wells with no water. People who think that these teachers have the truth will be disappointed. Through the apostles Paul and Peter, Jehovah warns us about false teachers. (Read Acts 20:29, 30; 2 Peter 2:1-3.) Who are these false teachers? The words of Paul and Peter tell us where false teachers come from and how they fool people.

⁴ Paul said to the elders of the congregation in Ephesus: “From among you yourselves men will rise and speak twisted things.” And Peter wrote in a letter to several congregations: “There will also be false teachers among you.” So false teachers may come from inside the congregation. These false teachers are apostates.* (See footnote.) What do they want? Paul said that when they leave Jehovah's organization, they want “to draw away **the disciples** after

* Apostasy is a rebellion against true worship and an abandoning of it.

3, 4. (a) Why are false teachers like wells with no water? (b) Where do false teachers come from, and what do they want to do?

themselves.” The disciples Paul is talking about are the disciples of Jesus Christ. These false teachers do not go outside the congregation to make disciples. They try to take, or steal, disciples from inside the congregation. Jesus said that apostates are like wolves that eat the sheep. Apostates want to destroy the faith of the members of the congregation and want them to leave the truth. —Matthew 7:15; 2 Timothy 2:18.

⁵ How do false teachers fool people? They do this in a very clever way. Apostates “quietly” bring their ideas into the congregation, like criminals who secretly bring things into a country. Apostates use “counterfeit words.” This means that they say things that make their false

We are determined to avoid apostates because we love Jehovah and his organization

ideas sound true, like criminals who make false documents look real. They try to get as many people as possible to believe their “deceptive teachings.” Peter also said that they like twisting the Scriptures. They explain Bible verses in the wrong way to make others believe their ideas. (2 Peter 2:1, 3, 13; 3:16) Apostates do not care about us. If we follow them, we will leave the road to everlasting life.

5. How do false teachers fool people?

⁶ How can we protect ourselves against false teachers? The Bible tells us exactly what to do. (Read Romans 16:17; 2 John 9-11.) The clear instruction in the Bible is: “Avoid them.” That means that we have to stay away from them. The warning from the Bible is like a warning from a doctor who tells you to avoid a person who has a disease that may spread to others.

The doctor knows that if you get this disease, you will die. His warning is clear, and you will do what he says. The Bible says that apostates are mentally diseased and that they use their teachings to make others think like them. (1 Timothy 6:3, 4) Jehovah is like that good doctor. He clearly tells us to stay away from false teachers. We must always be determined to follow his warning.

⁷ What must we do to avoid false teachers? We do not speak to them or invite them into our houses. We also do not read their books, watch them on television, read what they write on the Internet, or add our own comments about what they write on the Internet. Why are we so determined to avoid them? First of all, it is because we love “the God of truth.” So we do not want to listen to false teachings that go against the truth in God’s Word. (Psalm 31:5; John 17:17) We also love the

6. What clear warning does the Bible give us about false teachers?

7, 8. (a) What must we do to avoid false teachers? (b) Why are you determined to avoid false teachers?

SOME WORDS EXPLAINED

- **Christendom:** Religions that call themselves Christian but that do not follow the teachings of Christ
- **False teachers, or apostates:** People who rebel against true worship and abandon it



How may some invite apostates into their home?

organization that Jehovah uses to teach us wonderful truths. It was Jehovah's organization that taught us about Jehovah's name and what it means, his purpose for the earth, what happens to us when we die, and the hope of the resurrection. Do you remember how happy you were when you first learned these and other truths? Then do not allow the lies from false teachers to turn you against the organization that taught you these truths.—John 6:66-69.

⁸ No matter what false teachers say, we will not follow them! We have no reason to listen to people who are like wells with no water. Those who listen to them will be disappointed. We are determined to be loyal to Jehovah and to

his organization. This organization has never disappointed us and always gives us an abundance of pure waters of truth from God's Word.—Isaiah 55:1-3; Matthew 24:45-47.

DO NOT "PAY ATTENTION TO FALSE STORIES"

⁹ A sign on the road that someone has turned to point the wrong way can fool us. Sometimes it is easy to see that the sign is pointing the wrong way, but at other times it is not easy. The same is true with the lies that come from Satan. If we are not careful, some of his

9, 10. What warning about false stories did Paul give to Timothy? What false stories was Paul thinking about? (See also footnote.)

lies can easily fool us. The apostle Paul warns us about these lies. He calls them “false stories.” (Read 1 Timothy 1:3, 4.) What are these false stories, and how can we avoid paying attention to them? We need the answers to these questions so that we can stay on the road to everlasting life.

¹⁰ Paul’s warning about false stories is in the first letter he wrote to Timothy, a Christian elder. Paul told Timothy to keep the congregation clean and to help his brothers and sisters to stay loyal to Jehovah. (1 Timothy 1:18, 19) The Greek word that Paul used for “false stories” means “a lie” or “a made-up story.” One book says that a false story is a religious story that has no connection with what is real. (*The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*) Perhaps Paul was thinking about the religious lies that came from old stories that people made up and that made others curious.* (See footnote.) Paul said that these stories were dangerous because they “furnish questions for research.” This means that people who pay attention to these stories start having questions about things that are not true and then use their time trying to find the answers. Satan uses these made-up stories and religious lies to make people forget the most important things. Paul’s words are clear: Do not pay attention to false stories!

* The book of Tobit, or Tobias, which some people think is part of the Bible, is an example of the false stories that existed in Paul’s time. It was written about the third century before Christ. This book is full of false beliefs and stories of magic. It tells impossible stories but says that they are true.—See *Insight on the Scriptures*, Volume 1, page 122.

¹¹ What are some false stories that could fool us if we are not careful? We can say that a false story is any religious teaching that turns our ears “away from the truth,” that is, that makes us stop listening to the truth. (2 Timothy 4: 3, 4) Satan is smart. He uses false religion to fool people. That is why the Bible says that he makes himself into

We must pay attention to the warnings in the Bible if we do not want Satan to deceive us with false stories

“an angel of light.” (2 Corinthians 11: 14) For example, the religions of Christendom say that they follow Christ, but they teach lies like the Trinity and hell-fire. They also teach that some part of humans lives on after the death of the body. Many think that Christmas and Easter please God, but the things that people do during these celebrations really come from false worship. False stories will not fool us if we pay attention to God’s warning to separate ourselves from false religion and “quit touching the unclean thing.”—2 Corinthians 6: 14-17.

¹² There are other lies from Satan that

11. How does Satan use false religion to fool people? What warning should we pay attention to?

12, 13. (a) What are three lies that come from Satan? What is the truth about each of these lies? (b) What must we do if we do not want Satan to fool us with false stories?

can fool us if we are not careful. Let us talk about three of these lies. The first lie is: **You can do whatever you want; you decide what is right and what is wrong.** We often hear this on television, in movies, in magazines, in newspapers, and on the Internet. Because we hear this lie all the time, it is easy for us to start to think that way and follow the immoral ideas of the world. But the truth is that we need God to tell us what is right and what is wrong. (Jeremiah 10:23) The second lie is: **God will never change anything on the earth.** This idea makes people think only about today. They do not care about the future or about pleasing God. We might start to think like them and then become “inactive or unfruitful” in our service to God. (2 Peter

1:8) The truth is that Jehovah will soon change things on the earth, and we must show by the way we live that we really believe this. (Matthew 24:44) The third lie is: **God does not care about you.** Satan wants us to believe that we are not good enough for God to love us. If Satan makes us believe this lie, we might stop serving Jehovah. The truth is that Jehovah loves each one of his servants, and each one is very important to him. —Matthew 10:29-31.

¹³ We must always be careful not to think like people in Satan’s world. Sometimes it seems that what they say and think is really true. But remember that Satan wants to fool us, and no one knows better how to fool people than he does. We must pay attention to the warnings



FEATHERS IN THE WIND

in the Bible if we do not want Satan to fool us with false stories.—2 Peter 1:16.

DO NOT “FOLLOW SATAN”

¹⁴ Imagine that a sign on the road says: “This Way to Follow Satan.” Of course, no Christian wants to follow a sign like that. But even true Christians could start to “follow Satan.” Paul warns us about how this could happen. (**Read 1 Timothy 5:11-15.**) He wrote about some younger widows in the congregation at that time, but all of us can learn from what he said. Those widows did not think that they were following Satan, but what they did and what they talked about

14. What warning did Paul give to some younger widows? Why do all of us need to pay attention to this warning?

showed that they really were doing that. How can we avoid following Satan without knowing it? We will now talk about Paul’s warning against harmful gossip, that is, saying bad things about other people.

¹⁵ Satan does not want us to talk about what we believe in. He wants us to stop preaching the good news. (Revelation 12:17) He wants us to use our time to do things that are foolish or that cause fights among Jehovah’s people. Paul mentioned some of the things that Satan uses to make us do what he wants. Paul said that the widows in his time were “**unoccupied, gadding**

15. What does Satan want? According to Paul, what things does Satan use to make us do what he wants?

There is an old Jewish story that shows what harmful gossip does.

A man told lies to many people about the wisest man in his village. Some time later, the man who lied wanted the wise man to forgive him. So he asked the wise man: “What can I do to show you that I am sorry for what I said about you?” The wise man told him: “There is one thing you can do. Take a pillow full of feathers. Cut it open, and let the wind take the feathers.” The man did not know the reason for that, but he did what the wise man asked him to do. Later, he returned to the wise man and asked him: “Do you forgive me now?” The

wise man said: “First, go and find all the feathers.” The man said: “But that is very difficult. The wind blew the feathers everywhere. I cannot find them anymore.” Then, the wise man replied: “Just as the feathers went to many places, your lies went to many people. And just as you cannot find the feathers, you cannot make people forget what you said.”

The lesson is clear. We cannot change what we say after we say it. And sometimes we cannot change the bad results of what we said. So before we say something bad about others, it is good to remember that our words are like feathers in the wind.

WHAT IS YOUR ANSWER?

How can you show that you pay attention to the warnings in these scriptures?

- 2 Peter 2:1-3
- 1 Timothy 1:3, 4
- 1 Timothy 5:11-15

about.” These widows used most of their time to visit their friends and talk about things that were not important. We need to be careful not to do the same thing. For example, we could use a lot of our time and the time of other people by reading and sending e-mails about things that are not important and sometimes not true. Paul also said

that the widows were **“gossipers.”** Gossipers sometimes say bad things about other people. This is dangerous because gossip can become slander, that is, lies about others. These lies often cause people to fight. (Proverbs 26:20) Those who tell lies about others are like Satan the Devil, even if they do not know it.* (See footnote.) Next, Paul said that the widows were **“meddlers in other people’s affairs.”** They tried to tell others how to live their lives. No one has the right to do that. All these dangers can make us stop thinking about the important work that Jehovah gave us to do. We should use our time to preach about God’s Kingdom. If we stop preaching, we start following Satan. And if we are on Satan’s side, we are against Jehovah. We all have to choose which side we are on.—Matthew 12:30.

¹⁶ If we pay attention to what the Bible

* The Greek word for “devil” means “someone who tells lies about others to harm them.” This word is used as another title of Satan, who was the first one to lie.—John 8:44; Revelation 12:9, 10.

16. What should we do if we do not want to follow Satan?

says, we will not follow Satan. Paul mentions some things that will help us. He says that we should have **“plenty to do in the work of the Lord.”** (1 Corinthians 15:58) When we work hard for Jehovah, we have no time for things that are not important and that can be dangerous for us. (Matthew 6:33) Something else that Paul tells us to do is to speak what is **“good for building up.”** (Ephesians 4:29) Do not gossip, and do not listen to others who gossip. (See the box “Feathers in the Wind.”) Trust and respect your brothers and sisters. If you do, you will always say good things about them. Paul also tells us what our aim should be. He says: **“Mind your own business.”** (1 Thessalonians 4:11) Show people that you care about them, but do this with respect. Remember that there may be personal things that they do not want to talk about and that they do not want others to know about. And remember that we should not make decisions for others about things that they need to decide for themselves.—Galatians 6:5.

¹⁷ We thank Jehovah for telling us so clearly what **not** to follow! We should always remember that Jehovah gives us the warnings that we talked about because he loves us very much. He does not want Satan to deceive us and make us suffer. The road that Jehovah wants us to choose is difficult, but it is the only road to everlasting life. (Matthew 7:14) We must always be determined to pay attention to Jehovah when he tells us: **“This is the way. Walk in it.”**—Isaiah 30:21.

17. (a) Why does Jehovah give us the warnings that we talked about? (b) What must we be determined to do?

What Is God's Rest?

FROM the first chapter of Genesis, we learn that during six days, God prepared the earth for people to live on. These were not days of 24 hours each but much longer periods of time. The Bible says about the end of each of these periods: "There came to be evening and there came to be morning." (Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31) But the seventh day was different. The Bible says about that day: "God proceeded to bless the seventh day and make it sacred, because on it he **has been resting** from all his work that God has created."—Genesis 2:3.

² When the book of Genesis said that God has been resting, it meant that God was **still** resting at that time. So we can say that when Moses wrote the book of Genesis, in the year 1513 before Christ, God was still resting. Also, God said later in the Bible that people can enter into his rest, that is, have a part in his rest. Is God still resting today? If he is, how can **we** enter into his rest? It is very important for us to know the answers to these questions.

IS JEHOVAH STILL RESTING?

³ There are two reasons why we can say that it was still the seventh day during the time of Jesus and the first Christians. We learn the first reason from

1, 2. What do we learn from Genesis 2:3? What questions will we answer?

3. How do the words of Jesus at John 5:16, 17 show that it was still the seventh day during the time of Jesus?

what Jesus said to some of his enemies. They were angry at Jesus because he healed people on the Sabbath. They thought that it was wrong to heal on the Sabbath because the Law of Moses said that the Sabbath was a day of rest from work. To answer them, Jesus said: "My Father **has kept working until now**, and I keep working." (John 5:16, 17) What did he mean? He meant: "My Father and I are doing the same kind of work. My Father has worked during his Sabbath of thousands of years, and he is still working, so I can work on the Sabbath." The words of Jesus show that as regards the earth, it was still the seventh day, that is, God's day of rest, in the time of Jesus.*—See footnote.

⁴ There is a second reason why we know that it was still the seventh day during the time of Jesus and the first Christians. The apostle Paul wrote about God's rest in his letter to the Hebrews. In chapter 4 of his letter, before he repeated the words from Genesis 2:2, Paul

* The priests and Levites worked at the temple on the Sabbath, and this was not against the Law of Moses. God chose Jesus to be our high priest. So it was not wrong for Jesus to do on the Sabbath the work that Jehovah gave him to do.—Matthew 12:5, 6.

4. From what Paul said, how do we know that it was still the seventh day during the time of the first Christians?

THEME SCRIPTURE

"There remains a sabbath resting for the people of God."
—HEBREWS 4:9.

SOME WORDS EXPLAINED

■ Sabbath:

The seventh day of the week and a day of rest from regular work for the Israelites

■ God's day of rest:

A period of thousands of years that Jehovah uses to complete his purpose for the earth and obedient humans

wrote: "We who have exercised faith **do enter into the rest.**" (Hebrews 4:3, 4, 6, 9) This shows that it was still the seventh day in the time of Paul. When does the seventh day end?

⁵ To answer that question, we must remember that Jehovah chose the seventh day for something special. Genesis 2:3 tells us: "God proceeded to bless the seventh day and **make it sacred.**" Jehovah made that day sacred because he chose it to be the day that he completes his purpose for the

earth. His purpose is for **obedient** men and women to live on the earth and take care of it and everything on it. (Genesis 1:28) The reason that Jehovah God and Jesus Christ, who is the "Lord of the sabbath," "kept working until now" is to make God's purpose for the earth come true. (Matthew 12:8) So God's day of rest will continue until he completes his purpose. This will be at the end of the thousand years of Christ's reign.

DO NOT "FALL IN THE SAME PATTERN OF DISOBEDIENCE"

⁶ God clearly told Adam and Eve what his purpose was for the earth, but they acted against it. After Adam and Eve, millions of other people have also been

5. What did Jehovah choose to do on the seventh day? When will God complete his purpose?

6. What examples can be a warning to us? What lesson can we learn from these examples?



disobedient. Even God's people, the Israelites, disobeyed him again and again. And Paul warned Christians in his time that some of them could become disobedient like the Israelites. He wrote: "Let us therefore do our utmost to enter into that rest, for fear anyone should fall in the same pattern of disobedience." (Hebrews 4:11) What Paul says shows that disobedient people cannot enter into God's rest. What does that mean for us? Does it mean that if we act against God's purpose in some way, we will not enter into God's rest? It is very important for us to know the answer to this question, and we will talk more about it in this article. But first we will talk about the bad example of the Israelites and why they did not enter into God's rest.

"THEY SHALL NOT ENTER INTO MY REST"

⁷ In the year 1513 before Christ, Jehovah told his servant Moses what his purpose was for the Israelites. God said: "I am proceeding to go down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a land good and spacious, to a land

7. What was Jehovah's purpose for the Israelites when he freed them from Egypt? What did the Israelites have to do?



flowing with milk and honey.” (Exodus 3:8) Jehovah freed the Israelites from Egypt to make them his people, just as he promised Abraham. (Genesis 22:17) God gave the Israelites laws that could help them to have peace with God and to be his friends. (Isaiah 48:17, 18) He told the Israelites: “If you will strictly **obey** my voice and will indeed **keep** my covenant, then you will certainly become my special property out of all other peoples, because the whole earth belongs to me.” (Exodus 19:5, 6) So the Israelites could be God’s people **only** if they obeyed his laws.

⁸ Think of the opportunities the Israelites had! Jehovah promised that if they obeyed him, he would bless their fields, their vineyards, and their animals. He also promised to protect them from their enemies. **(Read 1 Kings 10:23-27.)** They had the opportunity to be free from the rule of other nations, even during the time of Jesus when the Romans ruled many nations. Jehovah wanted the nation of Israel to be a good example for other nations. He wanted everyone to understand clearly that those who obey him, the true God, will receive blessings from him.

8. What opportunities did the Israelites have if they obeyed God?

⁹ The Israelites had the special opportunity to allow Jehovah to use them to fulfill his purpose. They could receive Jehovah’s blessings and also bring blessings to all the families of the earth. (Genesis 22:18) But most of the Israelites did not consider important the opportunity to be God’s nation and to be an example for other nations. They even said that they wanted to return to Egypt! **(Read Numbers 14:2-4.)** But if they returned to Egypt, they could not worship Jehovah the way he wanted them to and be an example for other nations. If they became slaves in Egypt again, they could not be free to obey God’s Law and receive forgiveness of sins. When they said that they wanted to return to Egypt, they were thinking only of themselves. They were not thinking of God and his purpose. That is why Jehovah said about them: “I became disgusted with this generation and said, ‘They always go astray in their hearts, and they themselves have not come to know my ways.’ So I swore in my anger, ‘They shall not enter into my rest.’”—Hebrews 3:10, 11; Psalm 95:10, 11.

9, 10. (a) Why was it wrong for the Israelites to want to return to Egypt? (b) Could the Israelites worship Jehovah the way he wanted them to if they returned to Egypt?

What continues to be necessary for God’s people to enter into his rest?

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

- What did Jehovah want to do on the seventh day?
- How do we know that it is still the seventh day today?
- Why did the Israelites in the time of Moses and some of the Christians in the time of Paul not enter into God's rest?
- How can we enter into God's rest today?

¹⁰ Their desire to return to Egypt showed that they did not value the blessings they received from Jehovah. Instead, those disobedient Israelites wanted the good food they had in Egypt. (Numbers 11:5) They were like Esau, who did not value his right as firstborn and sold it for a plate of food.—Genesis 25:30-32; Hebrews 12:16.

¹¹ Although those Israelites who left Egypt did not show faith in Jehovah, he did not change his purpose for Israel. Their children were more obedient than their parents. They obeyed Jehovah's command to enter the Promised Land and conquer it. Joshua 24:31 says: "Israel continued to serve Jehovah all the days of Joshua and all the days of the older men who extended their days after Joshua and who had known all the work of Jehovah that he did for Israel."

¹² But those obedient Israelites grew old and died. The Israelites who lived after them "did not know Jehovah or the work that he had done for Israel." So they started to do "what was bad in the eyes of Jehovah" and to serve false gods. (Judges 2:10, 11) Because these Israelites were disobedient, they were not at peace with God anymore. So the Prom-

ised Land was not "a place of rest" for them. Paul wrote about these Israelites: "If Joshua had led them into a place of rest, God would not afterward have spoken of another day." Then, he said: "So there remains a sabbath resting for the people of God." (Hebrews 4:8, 9) "The people of God" whom Paul talked about were Christians. These included those who followed the Law of Moses before they became Christians and also those who never followed the Law of Moses. What Paul said means that Christians today can also enter into God's rest.

SOME CHRISTIANS DID NOT ENTER INTO GOD'S REST

¹³ Paul wrote to the Hebrew Christians because some of them were acting against God's purpose. (**Read Hebrews 4:1.**) What were they doing? They were still obeying some of the things in the Law of Moses. It is true that for about 1,500 years, God's people had to obey the Law of Moses to please God. But after Jesus died, they did not need the Law of Moses anymore. Some Christians did not understand that, and this is why they believed that they still needed to obey some parts of the Law.*—See footnote.

* We do not know if any of the Hebrew Christians offered sacrifices on the Day of Atonement, or the Day of Forgiving of Sins, even after Pentecost in the year 33. But if they did, they showed no respect for the sacrifice of Jesus. We do know that some Hebrew Christians were still following traditions that were part of the Law of Moses.—Galatians 4:9-11.

11. The Israelites who left Egypt did not show faith. Did that change Jehovah's purpose?

12. How do we know that Christians today can enter into God's rest?

13, 14. (a) In the time of Moses, what did the Israelites have to do to enter into God's rest?

(b) In the time of Paul, what did Christians have to do to enter into God's rest?

¹⁴ Paul explained to these Hebrew Christians that Jesus was a better high priest than any imperfect high priest. He showed that the new covenant was better than the covenant with Israel. He also showed that Jehovah's great temple was "greater and more perfect" than the temple "made with hands." (Hebrews 7: 26-28; 8:7-10; 9:11, 12) Paul used the example of the Sabbath in the Law of Moses to explain how Christians can enter into Jehovah's day of rest. He wrote:

We can enter into Jehovah's rest if we obey him and work with his organization

"There remains a sabbath resting for the people of God. For the man that has entered into God's rest has also himself rested from his own works, just as God did from his own." (Hebrews 4:8-10) Those Hebrew Christians had to stop thinking that someone could have God's approval because of "his own works," that is, because he obeyed the Law of Moses. Since the day of Pentecost of the year 33, Jehovah's approval is a gift that he generously gives to those who show faith in Jesus Christ.

¹⁵ Why did the Israelites in the time of Moses not enter the Promised Land? Because they did not obey Jehovah. Why

15. How do we know that we need to obey Jehovah to enter into his rest?

did some Christians in the time of Paul not enter into God's rest? Because of the same thing. They did not obey Jehovah. They did not believe that Jehovah now wanted his people to worship him in a different way and stop obeying the Law of Moses.

HOW WE CAN ENTER INTO GOD'S REST TODAY

¹⁶ None of us today believe that Christians have to obey the Law of Moses to receive salvation. Paul's words to the Ephesians are very clear: "By this undeserved kindness, indeed, you have been saved through faith; and this not owing to you, it is God's gift. No, it is not owing to works." (Ephesians 2:8, 9) So today, how can Christians enter into God's rest, that is, have a part in his rest? Remember that Jehovah chose his day of rest to be the day that he completes his purpose for the earth and obedient humans. Jehovah tells us through his organization about his purpose and what he wants from us. **We can enter into Jehovah's rest if we obey him and work with his organization.**

¹⁷ But we are acting against Jehovah's purpose if we do not obey the faithful and discreet slave or if we choose to obey only what **we** think is important. And if we act against Jehovah's purpose, we cannot be his friends. In the next article, we will talk about some situations that give us the opportunity to show if we are obedient. The decisions we make in these situations will show if we have entered into God's rest.

16, 17. (a) How can Christians enter into God's rest today? (b) What will we talk about in the next article?

Have You Entered Into God's Rest?

THEME SCRIPTURE

“The word of God is alive and exerts power.”

—HEBREWS 4:12.

WE HAVE already learned that we enter into God's rest today if we obey Jehovah and work with his organization. Our obedience shows Jehovah that we want his purpose to come true. But sometimes it can be hard to obey. For example, when we learn that Jehovah wants us to stop doing something that we like to do, it may be hard to obey him immediately. If this happens to us, we need to learn to be “**ready** to obey.” (James 3:17) In this article, we will talk about some situations that give us an opportunity to show if we are really ready to obey all the time.

² When you learn from the Bible that you need to make a change in your life, are you ready to obey? Think about this: The Bible says that the people whom Jehovah wants to bring into his organization are “the desirable things of all the nations.” (Haggai 2:7) This means that God chooses people who are precious to him because they love what is right. It is true that when we first started studying the Bible, most of us were doing wrong things. But because we loved God and his Son and wanted to please God, we were happy to make important changes in the way we thought and acted. We

1. How do we enter into God's rest today? Why can it be difficult to obey?
- 2, 3. What must we continue to do to please Jehovah?

asked for Jehovah's help in prayer and then worked hard to make the necessary changes. Finally, we could get baptized and receive Jehovah's approval.—**Read Colossians 1:9, 10.**

³ But we are still imperfect. We still need to make changes in our life and to work hard to do what is right. But Jehovah promises to help us if we continue to do our best to please him.

WHEN WE NEED TO MAKE CHANGES IN OUR LIFE

⁴ Before we make changes in our life, we have to know what we need to change. Jehovah helps us with this in different ways. He can use a talk at the Kingdom Hall or an article in our magazines to show us that there is something in our thinking or actions that is wrong. Sometimes we do not understand that we need to make changes even after we hear a talk or read a publication, so Jehovah can use a brother or sister in the congregation to correct us with kindness.—**Read Galatians 6:1.**

⁵ When another imperfect human corrects us, it can be very hard to accept what he says, even if he talks to us in a kind way. But Jehovah **commands** the elders to “try to readjust” us “in a spirit of mildness,” that is, to correct us in a kind

4. What three ways does Jehovah use to show us that we need to make changes?
5. In what ways do we sometimes act when someone corrects us? Why must Christian elders continue to try to help us?

way. (Galatians 6:1) If we accept their help, we will become even more “desirable,” or precious, to Jehovah. Of course, in our prayers, we often tell Jehovah that we are imperfect and make many mistakes. But then when an elder tells us that we made a mistake, we sometimes act in a different way. We try to give reasons for what we did, or we say that our mistake was not so bad. Maybe we say that the person who corrected us does not like us or that he did not talk to us in a kind way. (2 Kings 5:11) Or we may get very angry if the elders tell us something that we especially do not like to hear. For example, they may tell us that a person in our family is doing something wrong or that the way we dress is not proper. Maybe they tell us that we need to keep our bodies cleaner or that Jehovah hates what we do for recreation. Because we are angry, we may say things that we should not say. This can make us feel sad with ourselves and it can make the brother who is trying to help us sad as well. But later, when we are no longer angry, we usually accept that what he said was good for us.

⁶ The theme scripture for this article, Hebrews 4:12, tells us that the word of God “exerts power.” This means that God’s word has the power to help people to change their lives. His word helped us to make the changes that we needed to make before we got baptized. And it can help us to make changes in our life after our baptism. In his letter to the Hebrew Christians, Paul also writes that the word of God “pierces even to the dividing of soul and spirit” and that it “is able to discern thoughts and in-

6. How is the word of God “able to discern thoughts and intentions of the heart”?

tentions of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12) The “soul” here means what we are on the outside, what people can see when they look at us. The “spirit” here means what we really are on the inside, what people cannot see when they look at us. So Paul was saying that when we understand what God wants us to do, our actions will show what we are on the inside. Is there sometimes a difference between what other people see and what we really are on the inside? (**Read Matthew 23: 27, 28.**) Think about what **you** would do in the situations that we will now talk about.

CONTINUE TO PROGRESS WITH JEHOVAH’S ORGANIZATION

⁷ Many of us know these words from Proverbs 4:18 very well: “The path of the righteous ones is like the bright light that is getting lighter and lighter until the day is firmly established.” That means that with time, we understand better and better what Jehovah wants from us and we get better at doing what pleases him.

⁸ We already learned that after Jesus died, many Hebrew Christians still

7, 8. (a) Why did some Hebrew Christians want to continue to obey some parts of the Law of Moses? (b) Why can we say that they were acting against Jehovah’s purpose?

SOME WORDS EXPLAINED

- **Imperfect:**
Someone who is imperfect makes mistakes, does things wrong
- **Faithful and discreet slave:**
Those whom God chooses for heavenly life who are still on earth. They are represented by a small group of brothers who form the Governing Body
- **Bible Students:**
Before 1931, Jehovah’s Witnesses were called Bible Students
- **Disfellowship:**
To “remove the wicked man” or woman from the congregation

wanted to obey the Law of Moses. (Acts 21:20) Paul explained clearly that Christians no longer had to obey the Law of Moses, but some still did not accept what Jehovah wanted from them. (Colossians 2:13-15) Maybe they thought

We need to obey the faithful and discreet slave to have Jehovah's approval

that if they continued to obey some parts of the Law of Moses, they could avoid persecution by those who followed the Jewish religion. But Paul was very clear when he told those Hebrew Christians that if they continued to act against God's purpose, they could not enter into God's rest.* (See footnote.) (Hebrews 4:1, 2, 6; **read Hebrews 4:11.**) To have Jehovah's approval, they had to accept that Jehovah now wanted his people to worship him in a different way.

⁹ Today, the faithful and discreet slave sometimes helps us to understand a teaching in the Bible in a way that is different from what we thought before. We should be happy about these changes. They show us that Jehovah is using the faithful and discreet slave to teach us the

* Many Jewish religious leaders tried to obey every detail of the Law of Moses. But when Jesus came to earth, they did not want to believe that he was the Messiah. They acted against God's purpose.

9. How should we feel when the faithful and discreet slave makes changes in the way we understand something in the Bible?

truth. Sometimes the Governing Body, who represents the faithful and discreet slave, reviews how we understand certain truths. If these brothers decide that changes are necessary, they are not afraid to correct the way they explained some teachings in the past or to make their explanations clearer. They know that some will say bad things about the faithful and discreet slave because of these changes, but that is not the most important thing to them. The most important thing to them is that they cooperate with God's purpose. How do **you** feel when the faithful and discreet slave makes a change in the way we understand something in the Bible?—**Read Luke 5:39.**

¹⁰ Let us talk about another example. About a hundred years ago, some of the Bible Students who gave excellent public talks thought that giving talks was the best way for them to preach. They liked to speak in front of people. Some of them really liked it when people praised them for their talks. But later, Jehovah's people understood more clearly that Jehovah wanted them to do more than just give public talks. He wanted them to preach from house to house and in other ways. Some of those very good speakers did not want to do that. Their talks made others think that they loved and obeyed Jehovah, but their actions in this situation showed that they did not. We know that Jehovah was not pleased with their actions. They left his organization.—Matthew 10:1-6; Acts 5:42; 20:20.

10, 11. What did some Bible students do when they learned that they should try new ways of preaching? What do we learn from this example?

¹¹ It was also hard for many of the other Bible Students to preach from house to house, especially in the beginning. But they obeyed and were loyal to Jehovah's organization. After some time, it became easier for them to preach from house to house. Jehovah blessed them very much. What do **you** do when the faithful and discreet slave tells you to try a way of preaching that you never tried before? Do you obey even if this way of preaching seems very difficult to you?

WHEN SOMEONE WE LOVE LEAVES JEHOVAH

¹² We certainly agree that to please Jehovah, we must obey the command to be clean in every way. (Read **Titus 2: 14.**) But there are situations that can make it difficult for us to obey this command. For example, think of this situation: A loyal Christian couple have only one son and he leaves the truth. He prefers "the temporary enjoyment of sin" to his friendship with Jehovah and with his parents. Because of his actions, he cannot be part of the congregation anymore. So the congregation removes him, or disfellowships him, from among God's people.—Hebrews 11:25.

¹³ The parents suffer so much! They know that the Bible says to "quit mixing in company with **anyone** called a brother that is a fornicator or a greedy person or an idolater or a reviler or a drunkard or an extortioner, not even eating with such a man." It also says: "Remove the wicked man from among yourselves." (1 Corinthians 5:11, 13) And they under-

stand that the word "anyone" includes members of the family who do not live in the same house. But because of their strong love for their son, they may think: "We need to talk to our son as much as we can. We cannot help him return to Jehovah if we cannot talk to him."*—See footnote.

¹⁴ We are sad to see those parents suffer. Their son had the choice to change what he was doing. But he wanted to continue to do what was wrong more than he wanted to be with his parents and the congregation. The parents want to help their son, but they cannot control what he decides to do. We can really understand why they are suffering so much.

Our love for Jehovah must be stronger than our love for family members who are not loyal to Jehovah

¹⁵ What will our dear brother and sister do? Will they obey the clear command from Jehovah? It is true that there may be **rare** occasions when they need to talk to their son because of a necessary family matter. But will they think that they have **many** reasons to talk to their son? When they make their decision

* See "Keep Yourself in God's Love," pages 207-209.

12, 13. (a) Why does Jehovah tell us to "remove the wicked man" from among us? (b) What can be a difficult situation for Christian parents?

14, 15. What must parents remember when deciding if they will talk to their disfellowshipped child?



**The parents
suffer so much!**

about this, they must remember what Jehovah wants them to do. They must remember that Jehovah wants to keep his people clean. That is why he gives the command to “remove the wicked man” from the congregation. He also wants to help the person who did what is wrong to change his actions and return to the congregation. How can Christian parents show that they want the same as Jehovah?

¹⁶ Aaron, the brother of Moses, was in a difficult situation because of what

16, 17. What lesson do we learn from the example of Aaron?

two of his sons did. His sons Nadab and Abihu made an offering in a way that Jehovah did not approve. Jehovah sent fire from heaven and killed them. Imagine how much Aaron suffered because of this. Aaron could no longer talk to his sons. They were dead. But there was something else that made that situation even more difficult for Aaron and his family. Moses told Aaron and his other sons that Jehovah did not want them to show that they were sad. Moses said: “Do not let your heads go ungroomed, and you must not tear your garments, that you may not die and that he may

not become indignant against all the assembly.” (Leviticus 10:1-6) The lesson is clear. Our love for Jehovah must be stronger than our love for family members who are not loyal to Jehovah.

¹⁷ Today, Jehovah does not immediately kill those who disobey his laws. He shows them love and gives them an opportunity to stop their wrong actions. But how does Jehovah feel if parents disobey his command and think that they have many reasons to talk to their disfellowshipped son or daughter?

¹⁸ Many say that they returned to the congregation because their friends and family continued to be loyal to Jehovah and did not talk to them. For example, a young woman told the elders that one thing that made her change her way of life was the way her brother acted. He was loyal to Jehovah and obeyed Jehovah’s command while she was disfellowshipped. This made her want to return to the congregation.

¹⁹ So what do we need to do? We need to obey Jehovah in all situations in life. Because we are imperfect, this will be difficult for us sometimes. But we must strongly believe that what Jehovah tells us to do is always the best for us.

“THE WORD OF GOD IS ALIVE”

²⁰ When Paul wrote at Hebrews 4:12: “The word of God is alive,” he was not speaking about the Bible.* (See foot-

* Today, God speaks to us through the Bible. The Bible has the power to change our lives. So, what we read at Hebrews 4:12 is also true about the Bible.

18, 19. What blessings can family members have if they continue to be loyal to Jehovah?

20. In what two ways can we understand Hebrews 4:12? (See footnote.)

note.) The other verses in that chapter show that he was speaking about God’s promises. Paul was saying that God’s promises always come true. Jehovah said about his word: “It will not return to me without results.” And he said: “It will have certain success in that for which I have sent it.” (Isaiah 55:11) So we must be patient if God does not fulfill his promises when we want him to. We can be sure that Jehovah is working to complete his purpose.—John 5:17.

²¹ Many of the “great crowd” have served Jehovah for many years now. (Revelation 7:9) They did not expect to get old in this wicked world. But they are still doing their best in Jehovah’s service. (Psalm 92:14) They know that the word of God is alive and that Jehovah’s promises will come true. (Hebrews 4:12) They know that he is working to fulfill his purpose for the earth and humans. Because God’s purpose is very important to him, it makes him happy when we show that his purpose is also important to us. During this seventh day of rest, nothing will stop Jehovah from completing his purpose. And he knows that his people, as a group, will continue to cooperate with his purpose. What about you? Have **you** entered into God’s rest?

21. How can Hebrews 4:12 help older ones to continue serving Jehovah?

DO YOU REMEMBER?

- What do we need to do to enter into God’s rest today?
- When we understand from the Bible what God wants us to do, how do we show that we want to please God?
- In what situations can it be difficult to do what Jehovah tells us to do? But why is it very important that we obey him?
- In what two ways can we understand Hebrews 4:12?



A LEGAL VICTORY FOR JEHOVAH'S PEOPLE!

IN 1991 the government of the Soviet Union registered Jehovah's Witnesses as an official religion in that country. When the Soviet Union ended, the new Russian government also put Jehovah's Witnesses on the list of official religions in Russia. The new government admitted that the old government had persecuted the brothers. In 1993, Moscow's Department of Justice registered the Witnesses legally as the Moscow Community of Jehovah's Witnesses. Also in 1993, the Russian government made a new constitution, that is, a document that promises certain rights for the people. This constitution says that everyone is free to practice his own religion. Our brothers and sisters had waited many years for these changes to happen.

After this, the brothers and sisters in Russia increased their preaching work, and many people learned the truth. (2 Timothy 4:2) From 1990 to 1995, the number of Witnesses in Moscow increased from about 300 to over 5,000! Because of this, the enemies of Jehovah's Witnesses became worried. About this time, they started to attack, or oppose, Jehovah's people in the legal courts.

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS BEGIN

The first attack began in June 1995. A group of people in Moscow who support the Russian Orthodox Church officially accused our brothers of participating in criminal activities. In June 1996, the investigators said that they did not find any evidence against Jehovah's Witnesses. But the Moscow group accused our brothers of the same things four more times. And each time, the investigators searched for evidence but could not find anything against Je-

hovah's Witnesses. Finally, on April 13, 1998, the legal case was closed.

The prosecutor's representative said that there was no evidence that Jehovah's Witnesses did anything against the criminal law. But then she gave her advice and said that another way to stop the Witnesses was to bring a civil suit against them. A civil suit is an official complaint made by the people, not by the police. So the prosecutor of the Northern Administrative Circuit of Moscow made a civil suit against the brothers. On September 29, 1998, the legal case started in Golovinsky District Court in Moscow.

THE BIBLE IN COURT

In this case the prosecutor was Tatyana Kondratyeva. She used a national law signed in 1997 to attack the Witnesses. This law says that only Orthodox Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and Buddhism are traditional religions. One newspaper said that the Russian Orthodox Church worked hard to make the government write this law because the Church wanted the government to ban Jehovah's Witnesses. (Associated Press, June 25, 1999) This law allows courts to ban, or prohibit, religions that cause people to hate others. The prosecutor said that the government should ban Jehovah's Witnesses because they make people hate others and because they destroy families.

A lawyer who defended our brothers asked: "Who are the individuals in the Moscow Congregation who disobey the law and make people hate others?" The prosecutor could not name anyone. But she said that the literature of Jehovah's Witnesses makes them hate peo-

ple of other religions because it teaches that Jehovah's Witnesses have the true religion.

Another lawyer, one of our brothers, gave a copy of the Bible to the judge and the prosecutor. Then he read Ephesians 4:5, which says: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." The judge, the prosecutor, and the lawyer all had a Bible in their hands, and they talked about some scriptures including John 17:18 and James 1:27. The judge asked: "Do these scriptures make people hate those of other religions?" The prosecutor said that it did not matter what she thought because she was not an expert on the Bible. Then the lawyer showed publications of the Russian Orthodox Church that said things against Jehovah's Witnesses and asked: "Are the things they say in these publications against the law?" The prosecutor again said that it was not important what she thought because she was not an expert on religion.

ACCUSATIONS WITH NO EVIDENCE

When the prosecutor accused the Witnesses of destroying families, she said that one evidence of this is that they do not celebrate holidays. She also said that the Witnesses do not let their children have normal rest or do things that make them happy. She later admitted that Russian law does not tell Russians to celebrate holidays. She also said that she had never talked to any children of Jehovah's Witnesses and that she had never attended a meeting of Jehovah's Witnesses.

The prosecutor invited a professor of psychiatry to give his opinion in court. The professor said that reading our literature causes mental problems. He admitted that he just copied many of the things that he wrote about this legal case from the document that the Moscow Patriarchate, or leaders of the Orthodox Church in Moscow, wrote. He also said that he had never treated a patient who was one of Jehovah's Witnesses. Another doctor said in court that he



had studied more than 100 Witnesses in Moscow. He said that these Witnesses were mentally healthy and that after becoming Jehovah's Witnesses, they had more respect for other religions than they had before.

WE HAD A VICTORY, BUT IT WAS NOT FINAL

On March 12, 1999, the judge chose five educated people to study the literature of Jehovah's Witnesses, and she suspended the legal case for some time. But before this happened, the Ministry of Justice for the country of Russia also ordered a group of educated people to study our literature. On April 15, 1999, this group said that they found nothing bad in our publications. So on April 29, 1999, the Ministry of Justice decided that Jehovah's Witnesses could continue to be a legal religion in Russia. But in Moscow the judge still decided that the five people she chose should study our literature. This was a strange situation. The Ministry of Justice for the whole country of Russia said that Jehovah's Witnesses obeyed the law and could be a legal religion. At the same time, the Department of Justice of Moscow was

investigating the Witnesses because others accused them of breaking the law!

Two years later the legal case in Moscow started again. On February 23, 2001, Judge Yelena Prokhorycheva decided that there was no reason to ban the activity of Jehovah's Witnesses in Moscow. Finally, the court decided that all the accusations against our brothers were false! But the prosecutor did not agree with the decision and this time asked the Moscow City Court to study the case. Three months later, on May 30, 2001, that court canceled the decision of Judge Prokhorycheva. The court ordered the start of another legal case with the same prosecutor but with a different judge.

WE LOST, BUT IT WAS NOT FINAL

On October 30, 2001, the legal case started again. The judge was Vera Dubinskaya. Prosecutor Kondratyeva once again accused Jehovah's Witnesses of making people hate others. But then she said that the government should ban Jehovah's Witnesses for their own protection! When they heard this, all of the 10,000 Jehovah's Witnesses in Moscow immediately signed a petition, or document, to tell the judge that they did not need the "protection" offered by the prosecutor. It is interesting that it was exactly on the same date ten years before, on October 30, 1991, that the government officially admitted that the Soviet government had persecuted Jehovah's Witnesses because of their religion.

The prosecutor said that she did not need to give evidence that the Witnesses were doing something wrong. She said that the case was not about what Jehovah's Witnesses do, but it was about their literature and what they believe in. She said that she was going to invite someone from the Russian Orthodox Church to be a witness in court. This showed that leaders



of the Russian Orthodox Church were the ones who wanted to ban the Witnesses. On May 22, 2003, the judge ordered that a group of experts on religion study the publications of Jehovah's Witnesses **again**.

On February 17, 2004, the court met to hear the results of the study. In their study, the experts found that our publications teach people how to have a happy family and a happy marriage. They did not find anything that shows that we teach people to hate others. Other experts agreed. The judge asked a professor of religious history: "Why do Jehovah's Witnesses preach?" The professor said that Christians must preach. He said that the Bible tells them to preach and that Christ commanded his disciples to go and preach in all lands. Even with all the evidence, on March 26, 2004, the judge banned the activities of Jehovah's Witnesses in Moscow. On June 16, 2004, the Moscow City Court supported that decision. This action meant that the congregations in Moscow no longer had a legal organization to represent them. The enemies hoped to cause problems for our brothers and stop their preaching work.

What did the brothers do? Our brothers in Moscow did not allow their enemies to stop them. They continued to preach the good news. (1 Peter 4:12, 16) They were sure that Jehovah

was going to help them. And they were ready to defend their right to worship Jehovah.

MORE ATTACKS

On August 25, 2004, our brothers sent a petition to Vladimir Putin, who at that time was president of Russia. In this document, they told him how they felt after the courts of Moscow banned their work. The petition had 76 volumes, and 315,000 people signed it. At the same time, the leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church said: “We are very much against the activities of Jehovah’s Witnesses.”

Some people in Russia believed the false accusations against Jehovah’s Witnesses and began to attack them. They punched and kicked the Witnesses while they were preaching in Moscow. One angry man wanted a sister to leave the building where she was preaching. He chased her and kicked her in the back. The sister fell and hit her head and needed to get treatment in a hospital. But the police did not arrest the man who attacked her. The police arrested many Witnesses, treated them as criminals, and held them in jail overnight. Because they were afraid of losing their jobs, people who took care of the buildings that our brothers used for their meetings did not want to rent them to the Witnesses anymore. Many congregations did not have a place to meet. For example, 40 congregations had to use just four Kingdom Halls that were located in one building. One of these congregations had to meet for their Public Meeting at half past seven in the morning. A traveling overseer said that the publishers had to get up at five o’clock to attend the meeting, but they were happy to do it, and they did it for more than a year.

A COURT CASE THAT WAS “FOR A WITNESS”

The Witnesses wanted to show that the decision to ban their preaching work in Mos-

On June 10, 2010, the European Court of Human Rights decided that the accusations against the Witnesses were false

cow was against the law. So in December 2004 our lawyers asked for the help of the European Court of Human Rights. Six years later, on June 10, 2010, after studying all the accusations, the Court decided that the Witnesses were not guilty of any of them! The Court said that the accusations were completely false. It also decided that the government of Russia had to end the ban and do everything possible to correct what it did to the Witnesses. After this decision, the government of Russia wanted the case to be heard again. So it asked an even higher authority in the Court, that is, the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights, to consider the case. But on November 22, 2010, five judges from the Grand Chamber decided that it did not need to listen to this case. That meant that the decision of June 10, 2010, is final and that it must be obeyed.—See the box “The Court’s Judgment,” on page 32.

The Court decided that the European Convention on Human Rights protects the activities of Jehovah’s Witnesses. This decision applies not only to Russia. It also applies to the other 47 nations that are members of the Council of Europe. Many judges, lawmakers, and people around the world who study human rights will also be interested in the decision. Why? Because when the judges of the Court made their decision, they used as examples eight other

decisions that the Court had made earlier in favor of Jehovah's Witnesses. They also used nine decisions that the highest courts of Argentina, Canada, Japan, Russia, South Africa, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States made in favor of the Witnesses. Jehovah's Witnesses all around the world can now use the decision of the Court to defend their worship.

Jesus told his disciples that people will take them "before governors and kings" for his sake, "for a witness to them and the nations." (Matthew 10:18) All these legal cases in Russia during the last 15 years gave the people in Moscow and in other places the opportunity to hear about Jehovah like never before. Everything that happened in these cases resulted in "a witness" and helped in "the advancement of the good news." (Philippians 1:12) Nothing and no one can stop us from preaching the good news of the Kingdom. We pray that Jehovah continues to help our courageous brothers and sisters in Russia, whom we love very much.*—See footnote.

* This is a summary of the full article that appears in *The Watchtower*, July 15, 2011, pages 4-9, in standard English.



THE COURT'S JUDGMENT

Here are parts of the decisions that the judges of the European Court of Human Rights made.

One accusation was that Jehovah's Witnesses destroy families. The judges decided that this was false. They said:

"It is the resistance and unwillingness of non-religious family members to accept and to respect their religious relative's freedom to manifest and practise his or her religion that is the source of conflict."—Paragraph 111.

The judges of the European Court also found no evidence to support the accusation that Jehovah's Witnesses use "mind control." They said:

"The Court finds it remarkable that the [Russian] courts did not cite the name of a single individual whose right to freedom of conscience had allegedly been violated by means of those techniques."—Paragraph 129.

Another accusation was that by not accepting blood transfusions, Jehovah's Witnesses damage the health of believers. The judges of the European Court did not accept the accusation. They said:

"The freedom to accept or refuse specific medical treatment, or to select an alternative form of treatment, is vital to the principles of self-determination and personal autonomy. A competent adult patient is free to decide, for instance, whether or not to undergo surgery or treatment or, by the same token, to have a blood transfusion."—Paragraph 136.