

MAY 15, 2015

# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

SIMPLIFIED EDITION



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## ARMENIA

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## STUDY ARTICLES

- **Be Watchful—Satan Wants to Devour You!**
- **You Can Fight Satan—And Win!**

The Bible compares Satan to a roaring lion that is hungry for more victims. He is powerful, cruel, and deceptive. These articles will help us to see why we must fight against this dangerous enemy. They will also show us how we can protect ourselves from his traps.

- **They “Saw” the Things Promised**
- **Imitate the One Who Promises Everlasting Life**

Jehovah gave us the ability to imagine things that we have never seen. We can use this ability in good ways or in bad ways. In these two articles, we will discuss some people in Bible times and learn from their example how we can use our imagination to have more faith. We will also learn how our imagination can help us to imitate Jehovah’s love, kindness, wisdom, and happiness.

## ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

27 Questions From Readers

29 Why Disfellowshipping Is a Loving Provision

THE **WATCHTOWER**®  
ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

This publication is not for sale. It is provided as part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations. Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the modern-language *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*.

*The Watchtower* (ISSN 0043-1087) is published semi-monthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; L. Weaver, Jr., President; G. F. Simonis, Secretary-Treasurer; 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483, and by Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Canada, PO Box 4100, Georgetown,

ON L7G 4Y4. Periodicals Postage Paid at Brooklyn, NY, and at additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to Watchtower, 1000 Red Mills Road, Wallkill, NY 12589-3299. © 2015 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. Printed in Canada.

**May 15, 2015**

Vol. 136, No. 10 Semimonthly ENGLISH



## Be Watchful Satan Wants to Devour You!

*“Be watchful! Your adversary, the Devil, walks about like a roaring lion, seeking to devour someone.”*

—1 PETER 5:8.

AT ONE TIME, he had a good relationship with Jehovah. But later, this spirit creature, or angel, wanted humans to worship him. Instead of quickly rejecting this wrong desire, he allowed it to grow until he sinned. (James 1: 14, 15) We do not know his original name, but we now call him Satan. He “did not stand fast in the truth.” He rebelled against Jehovah and became “the father of the lie.”—John 8:44.

<sup>2</sup> Since his rebellion, Satan has been Jehovah’s greatest enemy and an enemy of all mankind. We can see how corrupt Satan really is by looking at how the Bible describes him. Satan means “Resister,” which shows that this wicked angel hates God’s rule and fights it with all

**HOW HAS SATAN  
SHOWN THAT HE IS . . .**

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powerful?

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cruel?

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deceptive?

1. Explain how an angel became Satan.
- 2, 3. What do the words “Satan,” “Devil,” “serpent,” and “dragon” show about Jehovah’s greatest enemy?



his power. What Satan really wants is to see the end of Jehovah's rule.

<sup>3</sup> At Revelation 12:9, Satan is called Devil, which means "Slanderer." Satan has dishonored God by calling him a liar. The words "the original serpent" remind us of how Satan used a snake to deceive Eve. The expression "the great dragon" is also a good way to describe Satan. He is fierce, he is cruel, and he is evil. He wants to stop Jehovah's purpose from coming true and to destroy God's people.

<sup>4</sup> Clearly, Satan is the greatest threat to our integrity. That is why the Bible warns us: "Keep your senses, be watchful! Your adversary, the Devil, walks about like a roaring lion,

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## Without Jehovah's help, we could never win our fight against Satan

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seeking to devour someone." (1 Peter 5:8) Therefore, this article will discuss three traits of Satan that show why we need to protect ourselves from this wicked enemy of Jehovah and His people.

### SATAN IS POWERFUL

<sup>5</sup> Angels are "mighty in power." (Psalm 103:20) They have greater in-

4. What will we discuss in this article?

5, 6. (a) Give examples showing that angels are "mighty in power." (b) In what way does Satan have "the means to cause death"?

telligence and strength than humans. Of course, faithful angels use their power for good. For example, one of Jehovah's angels killed 185,000 enemy Assyrian soldiers. This would have been impossible for one human to do and difficult even for an entire army. (2 Kings 19:35) Another time, an angel used his skills and power to free Jesus' apostles from jail. Although guards were nearby, they did not notice that the angel unlocked the doors, let the apostles out, and then locked the doors behind them! —Acts 5:18-23.

<sup>6</sup> Faithful angels use their power for good, but Satan uses his power for evil. And Satan surely has great power and influence. The Bible refers to him as "the ruler of this world" and "the god of this system of things." (John 12:31; 2 Corinthians 4:4) Satan even has "the means to cause death." (Hebrews 2:14) This does not mean that he kills all people directly. So, what does it mean? First, this world is filled with Satan's hateful and violent attitude. Second, because Eve believed Satan's lie and Adam disobeyed God, all humans sin and die. (Romans 5:12) Satan is, as Jesus called him, "a murderer." (John 8:44) He really is a powerful enemy.

<sup>7</sup> When we oppose Satan, we also oppose all those who support him and who rebel against God's rule. That includes a large group of other rebellious angels, who are called

7. How have the demons shown that they are powerful?



Satan is very happy when one of Jehovah's servants commits a sin  
(See paragraph 10)

demons. (Revelation 12:3, 4) Many times they have shown that they are much stronger than humans, causing great suffering to them. (Matthew 8:28-32; Mark 5:1-5) Never forget how powerful the demons and their ruler really are. (Matthew 9:34) Without Jehovah's help, we could never win our fight against Satan.

### **SATAN IS CRUEL**

<sup>8</sup> The apostle Peter compared Satan to "a roaring lion." One reference book explains that the Greek word translated "roaring" means "the howl of a beast in fierce hunger." How

8. (a) What is Satan's goal? (See opening picture.) (b) From what you have seen, how is this world cruel like Satan?

well that describes Satan's cruel and wicked attitude! He already controls the whole world, yet that is not enough for him. Satan is like a lion that is hungry for more victims. (1 John 5:19) His main targets are the anointed still on earth, who are joined by the "other sheep." (John 10:16; Revelation 12:17) Satan's goal is to destroy Jehovah's people. The persecution of true Christians from the first century until now proves just how cruel Satan is.

<sup>9</sup> Satan has shown his cruelty in

9, 10. (a) How did Satan attack the nation of Israel? (Give examples.) (b) Why did Satan have special reason to target ancient Israel? (c) How do you think the Devil feels when one of Jehovah's servants commits a serious sin today?

another way. A starving lion does not feel sorry for its prey. It does not feel any compassion before the kill, and it does not feel guilty after the kill. In a similar way, Satan does not feel any compassion for those whom he attacks. For example, how do you think Satan felt each time he saw the Israelites give in to sins such as sexual immorality and greed? Can you picture Satan enjoying his victory as he saw the tragic results of Zimri's immorality and Gehazi's greed?—Numbers 25:6-8, 14, 15; 2 Kings 5:20-27.

<sup>10</sup> Satan had special reason to target ancient Israel. Remember that the Messiah would come from that nation, and he would be the one to crush Satan and prove that Jehovah has the right to rule. (Genesis 3:15) Satan did not want the Israelites to have God's approval, so he did everything he could to corrupt them with sin. Do not imagine that Satan felt

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## Satan does not care about what is right or wrong

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sorry for David when he committed adultery. Do not think that he had any compassion for Moses when he lost the opportunity to enter the Promised Land. Satan is actually very happy to see one of God's servants commit a serious sin. In fact, the Devil uses such victories to taunt Jehovah.—Proverbs 27:11.

<sup>11</sup> Satan especially hated the family line that the Messiah would come from. For example, think about what happened after Jehovah told Abraham that he would become "a great nation." (Genesis 12:1-3) While Abraham and Sarah were in Egypt, Pharaoh brought Sarah to his home and wanted her to become **his** wife. However, Jehovah protected Sarah and saved her from this difficult situation. **(Read Genesis 12:14-20.)** Something similar happened in the city of Gerar before Isaac was born. (Genesis 20:1-7) Is it possible that Satan was responsible for these situations? Remember that Sarah had left the rich city of Ur to live in tents. So, did Satan hope to tempt her with the luxurious palaces of Pharaoh and Abimelech? Did Satan think that she would betray her husband and even Jehovah by marrying one of those kings? The Bible does not say, but it is very likely that the Devil would have been overjoyed if Sarah had lost the opportunity to become part of the Messiah's family line. Satan would have felt no guilt at all if that good woman's marriage, reputation, and relationship with Jehovah had been ruined. How cruel and wicked Satan is!

<sup>12</sup> Jesus was born hundreds of years after Abraham. Do not imagine that Satan saw this baby as beautiful or adorable. Satan knew

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**11.** Why did Satan probably target Sarah?

**12, 13.** (a) How did Satan show his cruelty after Jesus was born? (b) How do you think Satan feels about young ones who love Jehovah and who are trying to serve Him today?

that this baby would grow up to become the promised Messiah. Jesus was the main part of Abraham's offspring, and he would later "break up the works of the Devil." (1 John 3:8) Would Satan think that killing a child was too cruel? No. He does not care about what is right or wrong. And he acted quickly to try to kill the child Jesus. How?

<sup>13</sup> When King Herod heard from the astrologers that the "king of the Jews" had been born, he was very angry and wanted to kill the baby. (Matthew 2:1-3, 13) So he ordered the murder of **all** boys two years old and younger in Bethlehem and its districts. (**Read Matthew 2:13-18.**) Jesus survived that terrible slaughter, but what does this tell us about our enemy Satan? The Devil does not value human life. He does not even care about children. Satan truly is "a roaring lion." Never forget how cruel he is!

### SATAN IS DECEPTIVE

<sup>14</sup> The only way that Satan can turn people against our loving God, Jehovah, is by deceiving them. (1 John 4:8) Satan deceives people so that they are not "conscious of their spiritual need," that is, they do not realize that they need a relationship with God. (Matthew 5:3) The Devil has "blinded the minds of the unbelievers" so that they cannot see the truth about Jehovah.—2 Corinthians 4:4.

**14, 15.** How has Satan "blinded the minds of the unbelievers"?

<sup>15</sup> One of Satan's greatest ways of deceiving people is through false religion. He knows that Jehovah "requires exclusive devotion." (Exodus 20:5) So imagine how pleased Satan

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## Satan can fool even zealous servants of Jehovah

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is when he sees people worship their ancestors or nature or animals, that is, anyone or anything other than Jehovah. Sadly, even many who think that their worship is acceptable to God are actually controlled by false beliefs and useless rituals. Israelites in Isaiah's day were in a similar situation. Jehovah asked them: "Why do you keep paying out money for what is not bread, and why spend your earnings for what brings no satisfaction? Listen intently to me, and eat what is good, and you will find great delight in what is truly rich."—Isaiah 55:2.

<sup>16</sup> Satan can fool even zealous servants of Jehovah. For example, think about what happened when Jesus told his disciples that he would soon be killed. The apostle Peter, who loved Jesus, said: "Be kind to yourself, Lord; you will not have this

**16, 17.** (a) Why did Jesus tell Peter: "Get behind me, Satan"? (b) How might Satan deceive us so that we stop being watchful?

happen to you at all.” Jesus told Peter: “Get behind me, Satan!” (Matthew 16:22, 23) Why did Jesus call Peter “Satan”? Because Jesus knew what was about to happen. Soon, Jesus would die as a ransom sacrifice and would prove that the Devil is a liar. This was a critical time in human history and not the time for Jesus to “be kind” to himself. Satan would have loved it if Jesus had stopped being watchful.

<sup>17</sup> The end of this system of things is near, so we too are living at a critical time. Satan wants us to “be kind” to ourselves by having us focus on being successful in this world. He wants us to forget that we are living in the last days and to stop being watchful. Do not let that happen to you! Instead, “keep on the watch.” (Matthew 24:42) Never believe Satan’s lie that the end is far away or that it is not coming at all.

<sup>18</sup> Satan tries to trick us in another way. He wants us to believe that we

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**18, 19.** (a) How might Satan try to trick us and make us think that we do not deserve Jehovah’s love? (b) How does Jehovah help us to remain watchful?

do not deserve Jehovah’s love and that God will never forgive our sins. But these are lies from Satan. Think about it, who is it that **really** does not deserve Jehovah’s love? It is Satan. Who is it that God will **never** forgive? It is Satan. But as for us, the Bible says: “God is not unrighteous so as to forget your work and the love you showed for his name.” (Hebrews 6: 10) Jehovah appreciates everything we do to please him, and our service to him is **never** worthless. (**Read 1 Corinthians 15:58.**) So do not be fooled by Satan’s lies.

<sup>19</sup> As we have seen, Satan is powerful, cruel, and deceptive. How can we win our battle against an enemy like this? Jehovah gives us help. His Word teaches us about Satan’s methods so that “we are not ignorant of his designs.” (2 Corinthians 2:11) When we understand the different ways Satan attacks us, it is easier for us to remain watchful. But just **knowing** Satan’s methods is not enough. The Bible says: “**Oppose** the Devil, and he will flee from you.” (James 4:7) The next article will discuss three areas in which we can fight Satan and win.

## SOME EXPRESSIONS EXPLAINED

### To be watchful:

To be alert to the lies that Satan uses to try to trick us. For example, Satan wants us to believe that we do not live in the last days and that Jehovah does not love us





# You Can Fight Satan and Win!

*“Take your stand against [Satan], firm in the faith.”*

—1 PETER 5:9.

SATAN is fighting against the anointed who are still on earth and the “other sheep.” (John 10:16) In the short time that he has left, the Devil wants to destroy the faith of as many of Jehovah’s servants as he can. **(Read Revelation 12:9, 12.)** But we can win the fight against Satan. The Bible says: “Oppose the Devil, and he will flee from you.”—James 4:7.

<sup>2</sup> Many laugh at the idea that Satan even exists. To them, Satan and the demons are characters found only in books, horror movies, and video games. Such people feel that if you are intelligent, you would not believe that wicked spirits exist. Does it bother Satan that people do not believe that he and his demons are real? No. It is easier for Satan to trick those who doubt that he

1. (a) Why is our fight against Satan important especially now?
- (b) How do we know that we can win the fight against Satan?
- 2, 3. (a) Why does Satan want people to believe that he does not exist?
- (b) How do you know that Satan is real?

**HOW CAN WE SUCCESSFULLY AVOID SATAN'S TRAP OF . . .**

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pride?

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materialism?

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sexual immorality?

exists. (2 Corinthians 4:4) Satan actually promotes ideas like this so that he can mislead people.

<sup>3</sup> As Jehovah's servants, we are not misled. We **know** that the Devil is a real person. How do we know this? The Bible tells us that Satan spoke to Eve through a serpent. (Genesis 3:1-5) He spoke to Jehovah, questioning Job's motives. (Job 1:9-12) Satan tried to tempt Jesus. (Matthew 4:1-10) And after Jesus became King in 1914, Satan began "to wage war" with the anointed still on earth. (Revelation 12:17) This war continues as the Devil tries to destroy the faith of the anointed and the other sheep. To win this battle, we must fight against Satan and keep our faith strong. This article discusses three ways to do so.

## REJECT PRIDE

<sup>4</sup> Satan is extremely proud. This wicked angel dared to challenge God's right to rule, and he tried to make others worship him instead of Jehovah. So he is the perfect example of pride and arrogance. Therefore, one way that we can fight against Satan is to reject pride and to be humble. (**Read 1 Peter 5:5.**) But what is pride? Is it always bad?

<sup>5</sup> According to one dictionary, pride is a feeling of confidence and respect for ourselves. It is also "a feeling of satisfaction which you have because you or people close to you

have done something good or possess something good." There is nothing wrong with feeling that way. The apostle Paul said to the brothers in Thessalonica: "We ourselves take pride in you among the congregations of God because of your endurance and faith in all your persecutions and the hardships that you are suffering." (2 Thessalonians 1:4) So feeling good about the work of others and even having some pride in ourselves can benefit us. We do not need to be ashamed of our family, culture, or the place where we grew up.—Acts 21:39.

<sup>6</sup> However, there is a kind of pride that can ruin relationships, especially our friendship with Jehovah. This type of pride can cause us to feel upset when we are counseled. It can even cause us to reject the counsel instead of humbly accepting it. (Psalm 141:5) This kind of pride is described as thinking too much of ourselves or as "a haughty attitude shown by people who believe, often unjustifiably, that they are better than others." Jehovah hates arrogant pride. (Ezekiel 33:28; Amos 6:8) But Satan loves it when humans imitate his arrogance by bragging about themselves. Imagine how Satan rejoiced when Nimrod, Pharaoh, and Absalom showed improper pride by their bragging! (Genesis 10:8, 9; Exodus 5:1, 2; 2 Samuel 15:4-6) Pride was also a reason why Cain lost his relationship with God. Jehovah himself counseled Cain, but Cain was too proud to listen. He was stubborn, ignored God's

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4. How is Satan the greatest example of pride?  
5, 6. (a) Is pride always bad? Explain.  
(b) What kind of pride is dangerous, and what are some Bible examples of this?

warning, and did not hesitate to sin against Jehovah.—Genesis 4:6-8.

<sup>7</sup> Today, people show pride in many harmful ways. Pride is sometimes related to racism. According to one dictionary, racism is prejudice against people who belong to other races. It is also “the belief that people of different races have different qualities and abilities, and that some races are inherently superior or inferior.” Racism has resulted in fights, wars, and even mass murder.

<sup>8</sup> Of course, such things should not happen in the Christian congregation. Still, disagreements between brothers and sisters may start with pride and can get out of control. That happened to some early

ter than others, we need to remember that Jehovah hates “everyone proud in heart.” (Proverbs 16:5) We also need to examine our hearts and ask ourselves, ‘Do I feel that I am better than people who are of another race, nationality, or culture?’ If so, we are forgetting that God “made out of one man every nation of men.” (Acts 17:26) So in a way, we are all one race because everyone came from Adam. It is very foolish to believe that God made some races better than others. If we think this way, we are allowing Satan to destroy our Christian love and unity. (John 13:35) To fight Satan and win, we must avoid all kinds of improper pride.—Proverbs 16:18.

### **AVOID MATERIALISM AND LOVE FOR THE WORLD**

<sup>10</sup> Satan is “the ruler of this world,” and he controls it. (John 12:31; 1 John 5:19) Many of the things this world promotes go against Bible standards. Of course, not everything in the world is evil. However, we can be sure that Satan will use his world to take advantage of our desires and try to cause us to sin. Or he will try to get us to love the world and neglect our worship of Jehovah.—**Read 1 John 2:15, 16.**

<sup>11</sup> Some early Christians loved the world. For example, Paul wrote: “Demas has forsaken me because he loved the present system of things.” (2 Timothy 4:10) The Bible does not

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## **Pride can harm the peace of a congregation**

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Christians, which is why James asked them this powerful question: “What is the source of the wars and fights among you?” (James 4:1) If we feel hatred for others and feel that we are better than they are, we may say or do something that really hurts them. (Proverbs 12:18) Clearly, pride can harm the peace of a congregation.

<sup>9</sup> If we tend to feel that we are bet-

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**7, 8.** (a) What is racism, and how is it related to pride? (b) Explain how pride could destroy the peace of a congregation.

**9.** How does the Bible help us to fight against racism and other kinds of improper pride? (See opening picture.)

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**10, 11.** (a) Why might it be easy to love the world? (b) What was the result of Demas’ love for the world?

say exactly what part of this world Demas loved, which caused him to abandon Paul. It could be that Demas began to love material things more than his service to Jehovah. If that was true, Demas lost the opportunity to have exciting privileges in God's service. Was it worth it? No. Demas could have remained Paul's helper. The world could never offer him anything better than Jehovah could! —Proverbs 10:22.

<sup>12</sup> The same can happen to us today. As Christians, it is normal to want to provide for ourselves and for our family. (1 Timothy 5:8) Jehovah wants us to enjoy life. We know that

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## May we never let money become more important than our friendship with Jehovah

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because he gave Adam and Eve a beautiful paradise to live in. (Genesis 2:9) But Satan can take advantage of our desires using "the deceptive power of riches." (Matthew 13:22) Many think that money and material things will make them happy or successful. If we think this way, it can cause us to lose the most valuable thing we have, our friendship with Jehovah. Jesus warned: "No one can slave for two masters; for either he will hate

<sup>12</sup>. How can Satan take advantage of our desires using "the deceptive power of riches"?

the one and love the other, or he will stick to the one and despise the other. You cannot slave for God and for Riches." (Matthew 6:24) If we slave only for material things, we have stopped serving Jehovah. That is exactly what Satan wants us to do. May we never let money or the things it can buy become more important than our friendship with Jehovah. To fight Satan and win, we must have the right attitude toward material things.—**Read 1 Timothy 6:6-10.**

### RESIST SEXUAL IMMORALITY

<sup>13</sup> Another one of Satan's traps is sexual immorality. Many people think that being faithful to a husband or a wife, as well as marriage itself, is outdated and limits their freedom. For example, one actress said that it is impossible to be faithful to one person. She added, "I don't know anyone who's faithful or wants to be." An actor said, "I'm not sure if it really is in our nature to be with someone for the rest of our lives." Satan must be very happy when famous people criticize God's gift of marriage. The Devil does not support the marriage arrangement, and he does not want marriages to succeed. So to fight Satan and win, we must have God's view of marriage.

<sup>14</sup> Whether married or single, we must work hard to fight all kinds of sexual immorality. Is this easy? Not

<sup>13</sup>. How has this world promoted a wrong view of marriage and sex?

<sup>14</sup>, <sup>15</sup>. What can you do if you are tempted to commit sexual immorality?



at all! For example, if you are a young person, you might hear your school-mates brag about having sex with whomever they want to. They may also brag about sexting, that is, sending sexual messages and pictures on their cell phones. In fact, in some countries, sexting is understood to be the same as sending someone child pornography. The Bible says: "Whoever practices sexual immorality is sinning against his own body." (1 Corinthians 6:18) Much suffering and death have resulted from diseases that are spread by sexual relations. And most young people who had

sex but were not married say that they regret what they did. The entertainment world wants us to believe that there are no consequences for breaking God's laws. If we believe such lies, we can be misled by "the deceptive power of sin."—Hebrews 3:13.

<sup>15</sup> If you are tempted to commit sexual immorality, what can you do? Recognize that you have a weakness. (Romans 7:22, 23) Pray to God for strength. (Philippians 4:6, 7, 13) Avoid situations that could cause you to commit immorality. (Proverbs 22:3) And when there is

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Satan will be destroyed  
(See paragraph 18)



a temptation, reject it immediately. —Genesis 39:12.

<sup>16</sup> Jesus set a powerful example for us. He was not fooled by Satan's promises. He did not even stop to think about them. Instead, he immediately told Satan: "It is written." **(Read Matthew 4:4-10.)** Jesus knew God's Word, so it was possible for him to quote scriptures right away when Satan tried to tempt him. To fight Satan and win, we must not allow ourselves to be tempted to commit sexual immorality.—1 Corinthians 6:9, 10.

### WIN THE FIGHT BY ENDURING

<sup>17</sup> Pride, materialism, and sexual immorality are just three of Satan's traps. There are many more. For example, some Christians have family members who oppose them or schoolmates who make fun of them. Others live in countries where the government tries to stop them from

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**16.** What did Jesus say when Satan tried to tempt him, and what can we learn from that example?

**17, 18.** (a) What other traps does Satan use, and why do we expect that? (b) What will happen to Satan, and how does that encourage you to endure?

preaching. We expect to face such difficulties. Jesus himself warned us: "You will be hated by all people on account of my name, but the one who has endured to the end will be saved."—Matthew 10:22.

<sup>18</sup> How can we fight Satan and win? Jesus said: "By your endurance you will preserve your lives." (Luke 21:19) Nothing that any human can do to harm us is permanent. Nobody can take away our friendship with God unless we allow that to happen. (Romans 8:38, 39) Even if some of Jehovah's faithful servants die, it does not mean that Satan has won. Jehovah will resurrect them. (John 5:28, 29) But Satan has no future. After this wicked world is destroyed, he will be thrown into the abyss for 1,000 years. (Revelation 20:1-3) At the end of the thousand years of Christ's rule, Satan will be "released from his prison" and will try for one last time to mislead perfect mankind. After that, he will be destroyed. (Revelation 20:7-10) Although the Devil has no future, you do! Continue to fight against Satan, and keep your faith strong. You **can** fight Satan and win!

## SOME EXPRESSIONS EXPLAINED

### **Materialism:**

The attitude of someone who thinks that money is more important than his relationship with Jehovah



## They “Saw” the Things Promised

*“They did not receive the fulfillment of the promises;  
but they saw them from a distance.”—HEBREWS 11:13.*

JEHOVAH has given us a wonderful gift. It is the ability to imagine things we have not seen. This ability helps us to look forward to good things in the future and also to plan ahead and avoid problems. Jehovah knows the future, and he tells us some of the things we can look forward to. Although we cannot see them, we can imagine them and have faith that they will happen.—2 Corinthians 4:18.

<sup>2</sup> Of course, sometimes we imagine things that will never happen. For example, a little girl might imagine that she is riding on a butterfly. Of course, that is not possible. But Samuel’s mother, Hannah, imagined things that were possible. She kept thinking about the day when she would take her son to the tabernacle to work with the priests. This was not just a dream. It was

1. Why is it good that we can imagine things we have not seen? (See opening picture.)

2, 3. (a) How can our imagination help us? (b) What questions will we answer in this article?

### CAN YOU EXPLAIN?

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What gift from God helps us to have faith?

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How do we know that people in Bible times had faith and could imagine the things that God promised them?

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Why is it good to talk about the future that Jehovah has promised us?

something that she had decided to do. So imagining that day gave Hannah the strength to keep her promise to Jehovah. (1 Samuel 1:22) And when we imagine what Jehovah has promised to do, we are imagining things that will certainly happen.—2 Peter 1:19-21.

<sup>3</sup> Many of Jehovah's people in Bible times could imagine what he had promised. Why was it good for them to do this? And why is it good for us to imagine how our life will be when God's promises come true?

#### **THEIR FAITH BECAME STRONGER WHEN THEY IMAGINED THE FUTURE**

<sup>4</sup> Abel was the first man who had faith in Jehovah's promises. He knew what Jehovah said to the serpent after Adam and Eve sinned: "I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring. He will crush your head, and you will strike him in the heel." (Genesis 3:14, 15) Abel did not know exactly how this would happen. But he must have thought a lot about what God had said. Abel could have thought, 'Who will be the one injured by the serpent and help humans to become perfect again?' Abel had faith that whatever Jehovah promised would come true, and when he offered a sacrifice, Jehovah was pleased with it.—**Read Genesis 4:3-5; Hebrews 11:4.**

<sup>5</sup> Enoch was another man who

had strong faith in God. He lived among wicked people who said "shocking things" against God. But Enoch was courageous and preached God's message. He told people that Jehovah was going to destroy the wicked. (Jude 14, 15) What helped him to do this? Enoch may have imagined what the world would be like when everybody served Jehovah.—**Read Hebrews 11:5, 6.**

<sup>6</sup> Noah had faith in Jehovah, so he was not destroyed in the Flood. (Hebrews 11:7) And then because of his faith, Noah sacrificed animals to Jehovah. (Genesis 8:20) After the Flood, the world became wicked again. Nimrod began ruling and wanted people to rebel against Jehovah. (Genesis 10:8-12) But Noah's faith stayed strong. Like Abel, he was sure that God would one day remove sin and death. Noah may also have thought about the time when there would be no cruel rulers. We too can imagine this wonderful time, which is now very close!—Romans 6:23.

#### **THEY IMAGINED THE TIME WHEN GOD'S PROMISES WOULD COME TRUE**

<sup>7</sup> Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob could imagine a wonderful future. Jehovah had promised them that people from all the nations would be blessed by means of their "offspring." (Genesis 22:18; 26:4; 28:14)

6. After the Flood, what may Noah have thought about?

7. What future could Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob look forward to?

4. Why could Abel imagine a better future?

5. Why was it good for Enoch to imagine the future?



God had also promised them that their family would become a large nation and would live in the beautiful Promised Land. (Genesis 15:5-7) Because Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob knew that Jehovah's promises would come true, they could clearly imagine their families already living in that land. In fact, ever since Adam and Eve sinned, Jehovah has helped his loyal servants to understand how humans would one day have perfect life again.

<sup>8</sup> Because he had strong faith, Abraham was obedient to Jehovah even when circumstances were very difficult. Abraham and other loyal ones could clearly imagine the things Jehovah promised, even though these promises did not come true while they were alive. The Bible says: "They saw them from a distance and welcomed them." (**Read Hebrews 11:8-13.**) Abraham knew that Jehovah had always kept his promises in the past, so he was sure that all of Jehovah's promises for the future would come true as well.

<sup>9</sup> Because Abraham had faith in what Jehovah had promised him, he kept on doing what Jehovah asked him to do. For example, he left his home in the city of Ur, and for the rest of his life, he did not live in any city permanently. He knew that the cities around him would not last for-

ever because the rulers did not serve Jehovah. (Joshua 24:2) Instead, he looked forward to the time when Jehovah and his government would rule the earth forever. This government is "the city having real foundations, whose designer and builder is God." (Hebrews 11:10) Abraham

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## People in Bible times looked forward to the time when Jehovah and his government would rule the earth forever

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as well as Abel, Enoch, Noah, and others believed in the resurrection. Whenever they thought about living forever on a beautiful earth, their faith in Jehovah grew even stronger. —**Read Hebrews 11:15, 16.**

<sup>10</sup> Abraham's wife, Sarah, had strong faith in Jehovah's promises. Even when she was 90 years old and still had no children, she looked forward to the time when she would have a baby. Sarah could even imagine her children becoming a large nation. (Hebrews 11:11, 12) How could she be so sure of that? Because Jehovah had told her husband: "I will bless her and also give you a son by her; I will bless her and she will become nations; kings of peoples will

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8. What helped Abraham to have strong faith and be obedient?

9. How did Abraham's faith in God's promises help him?

10. Why was it good for Sarah to look forward to the future?

come from her.” (Genesis 17:16) Just as Jehovah promised, Sarah had a son, Isaac. This miracle convinced her that the rest of Jehovah’s promise would come true. We too can strengthen our faith when we imagine all the wonderful things Jehovah has promised us.

### **HE KEPT THINKING ABOUT THE REWARD**

<sup>11</sup> Moses also had faith in Jehovah’s promises. He was raised in Egypt as a prince. But because he loved Jehovah more than anything else, Moses did not want power and riches. He had learned about Jehovah from his Hebrew parents, who taught him that Jehovah promised to free the Hebrews from slavery and give them the Promised Land. (Genesis 13:14, 15; Exodus 2:5-10) The more Moses imagined these promises, the more he loved Jehovah.

<sup>12</sup> The Bible tells us what Moses kept thinking about: “By faith Moses, when grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing to be mistreated with the people of God rather than to have the temporary enjoyment of sin, because he considered the reproach of the Christ to be riches greater than the treasures of Egypt, for he looked intently toward the payment of the reward.”—Hebrews 11:24-26.

<sup>13</sup> Moses must have thought deeply

ly about Jehovah’s promise to free the Hebrews from slavery. Like other servants of Jehovah, Moses also knew that Jehovah would free all humans from death. (Job 14:14, 15; Hebrews 11:17-19) So Moses understood how much Jehovah loves people. This made Moses love Jehovah even more and have stronger faith in him. It helped him to keep serving Jehovah all his life. (Deuteronomy 6: 4, 5) Even when Pharaoh wanted to kill him, Moses was not afraid. He knew that Jehovah would reward him in the future.—Exodus 10:28, 29.

### **IMAGINE THE THINGS GOD’S GOVERNMENT WILL DO**

<sup>14</sup> Many people think about the future and imagine things that will never happen. For example, some people who are very poor dream that they will become rich and have nothing to worry about. But the Bible says that life in Satan’s world will always be “filled with trouble and sorrow.” (Psalm 90:10) Or some imagine that a human government will solve the world’s problems. But the Bible says that only God’s government can do that. (Daniel 2:44) And many people think that the world will never change. But the Bible says that God will destroy this wicked world. (Zephaniah 1:18; 1 John 2:15-17) Those who imagine things that are the opposite of what Jehovah says will be very disappointed.

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**11, 12.** What helped Moses to love Jehovah more and more?

**13.** Why was it good for Moses to keep thinking about Jehovah’s promises?

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**14.** What do some people imagine about the future?

<sup>15</sup> Jehovah has promised us a wonderful future. When we think about that time, we feel happier and we can get the courage we need to keep serving him. Can you imagine yourself doing the things Jehovah has promised you, whether you will be in heaven or on earth? If you look forward to living forever on earth, imagine working with your friends to make the earth into a beautiful garden. Those who supervise this work care about you. And everyone around you loves Jehovah, just as you do. You are healthy and have a lot of energy, and you have nothing to worry about. You are happy because you can use your talents and skills to help others and

15. (a) Why is it good for us to imagine the future that God has promised us? (b) What is one of the things you look forward to?

Can you imagine yourself doing the things Jehovah has promised you?  
(See paragraph 15)



to honor Jehovah. Maybe you are even helping people who have been resurrected to know Jehovah. (John 17:3; Acts 24:15) When you imagine these things, you are not dreaming. They will all come true because of what the Bible says about the future.—Isaiah 11:9; 25:8; 33:24; 35:5-7; 65:22.

### TALK ABOUT WHAT YOU LOOK FORWARD TO

<sup>16</sup> When we tell our brothers and sisters what we would like to do in the new world, we help one another to imagine this beautiful future more clearly. Of course, we do not know exactly what each of us will be doing. But when we talk about what we look forward to, we show that we have faith in what Jehovah has promised. In this way, we encourage one another to keep serving Jehovah in

16, 17. Why is it good to talk about the future that Jehovah has promised us?

difficult times, just as the apostle Paul and his brothers in Rome did. —Romans 1:11, 12.

<sup>17</sup> When you think about the future that Jehovah has promised, you will think less about your own problems. At one time, Peter was worried and said to Jesus: “Look! We have left all things and followed you; what, then, will there be for us?” Jesus wanted Peter and the other disciples with him to think about the wonderful things they would do in the future. He told them: “When the Son of man sits down on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will sit on 12 thrones, judging the 12 tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for the sake of my name will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit everlasting life.” (Matthew 19:27-29) So Peter and the other disciples could imagine them-

selves ruling with Jesus in heaven and helping obedient humans on earth to become perfect.

<sup>18</sup> We have learned what helped Jehovah’s servants to have strong faith. Abel imagined Jehovah’s promise of a better future, and because of his faith in that promise, he pleased Jehovah. Abraham imagined the time when Jehovah’s promises about the “offspring” would come true, so he obeyed Jehovah even when it was very difficult. (Genesis 3:15) Moses looked forward to the reward Jehovah promised him, and this helped him to love Jehovah and be faithful. (Hebrews 11:26) When we imagine the time when Jehovah will do all that he has promised, our faith and love for Jehovah become stronger. In the next article, we will learn about another way that we can use our imagination.

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**18.** Why is it good for us to imagine the time when God will do what he has promised?

## **SOME EXPRESSIONS EXPLAINED**

### **They “saw” the things promised:**

Abraham and others imagined the things Jehovah had promised. They thought deeply about them and were convinced that they would happen just as Jehovah said. We too can imagine the many things we will do when Jehovah and his government rule over the earth

### **To have faith in God and his promises:**

We have proof that what we believe is real, even though we cannot see it with our eyes. And we have no doubt that everything God has promised will happen





# Imitate the One Who Promises Everlasting Life

*“Become imitators of God, as beloved children.”*

—EPHESIANS 5:1.

JEHOVAH created us with the ability to understand how other people feel, even if we have never been in their situation. **(Read Ephesians 5:1, 2.)** How can this ability help us to imitate Jehovah? And why do we need to be careful of how we use this ability?

<sup>2</sup> Jehovah has promised us a wonderful future without any suffering. Both the anointed and the “other sheep” can look forward to everlasting life, whether in heaven or on earth. (John 10:16; 17:3; 1 Corinthians 15:53) But Jehovah understands the pain we feel when bad things happen to us today. In the past, Jehovah felt hurt when his people suffered in Egypt. “It was distressing to him.” (Isaiah 63:9) And later, when his people were rebuilding his temple and were afraid of their enemies, Jehovah understood how they felt. He told them:

1. What ability can help us to imitate Jehovah?
2. How does Jehovah react when we suffer?

## CAN YOU EXPLAIN?

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How did Jesus imitate Jehovah’s qualities?

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How can we imitate Jehovah’s qualities, including his love?

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Why must we be careful regarding what we think about?

“Whoever touches you touches the pupil of my eye.” (Zechariah 2:8) Just as a mother feels love for her baby, Jehovah feels love for his servants and wants to help them. (Isaiah 49:15) We imitate Jehovah’s love when we try to understand how others feel by imagining ourselves in their situation.—Psalm 103:13, 14.

### JESUS IMITATED JEHOVAH AND LOVED PEOPLE

<sup>3</sup> Jesus understood how people felt when they were suffering, even though he had never been in their situation. For example, he knew that many people had a hard life. The religious leaders lied to them and made many rules that were not from God. People were afraid of these leaders. (Matthew 23:4; Mark 7:1-5; John 7:13) Even though Jesus was never afraid of them and never believed their lies, he could understand how the people felt. It hurt Jesus deeply when he saw how badly they were treated. They were left without help, “like sheep without a shepherd.” (Matthew 9:36) Jesus learned from his Father to love people and be “merciful and compassionate.”—Psalm 103:8.

<sup>4</sup> When Jesus saw that people were suffering, he helped them because he loved them. He was just like his Father. For example, one

time after Jesus’ apostles had traveled a long way to preach, they were tired and needed to rest in a quiet place. But Jesus saw many people waiting for him. He understood that they needed his help, so he “started to teach them many things.”—Mark 6:30, 31, 34.

### BE LOVING LIKE JEHOVAH

<sup>5</sup> If we want to be loving like Jehovah, what must we do? Think about this situation. There is a young brother called Alan. He is thinking about an older brother who cannot walk well and who has bad eyesight. Alan thinks of Jesus’ words: “Just as you want men to do to you, do the same way to them.” (Luke 6:31) So Alan asks himself, ‘What do I want others to do to me?’ He says, ‘I really want them to play ball with me!’ But this older brother cannot run and play ball. So, what Alan really needs to ask himself is, ‘If I were that brother, what would I want others to do to me?’

<sup>6</sup> Although Alan is still young, he tries to imagine how he would feel if he were old. He spends time with the older brother and listens carefully when he speaks. Then he begins to understand that it is difficult for the brother to read the Bible and walk from house to house in the ministry. Alan sees how he can help him and **wants** to do whatever he

3. How did Jesus feel about people?

4. When Jesus saw people suffering, how did he react?

5, 6. If we want to be loving like Jehovah, what must we do? Give an example. (See opening picture.)

can for him. When we understand how other people feel and show them love, we will be like Jehovah. —1 Corinthians 12:26.

<sup>7</sup> It is not always easy to understand what other people are experiencing, especially if we have never been in their situation. For example, many of our brothers are in pain because they are sick or have been injured or because they are getting older. Some are suffering deeply because of depression or extreme anxiety or because they were abused in the past. Others are raising children alone or have family members who are not serving Jehovah. Everyone has problems, and most of those problems are different from ours. But we want to show love to others and help them. So, what can we do? Each person might need something different. So if we listen carefully and keep trying to understand how that person feels, we will know the best way to help him. Perhaps we can remind him of how Jehovah feels about his problem. Or we may be able to give him help in other ways. When we do this, we imitate Jehovah.—**Read Romans 12:15; 1 Peter 3:8.**

### BE KIND LIKE JEHOVAH

<sup>8</sup> Jehovah is kind to all people. (Luke 6:35) And Jesus is just like his Father. What helped Jesus to be kind to people when he was on earth? He

7. How can we understand what our brothers are experiencing?

8. What helped Jesus to be kind?



Be kind like Jehovah  
(See paragraph 7)

imagined how they would feel about what he might say or do. For example, a woman who had done many bad things came to Jesus. She was crying so much that her tears fell on Jesus' feet. Jesus could see that she felt very sorry about the bad things she had done and that she had repented. He realized that if he was unkind to her, she would feel even worse. So he praised her for the good she did and forgave her. Jesus also spoke kindly to a Pharisee who did not agree with what he had done for this woman.—Luke 7:36-48.

<sup>9</sup> How can we be kind like Jehovah? We need to think before we say or do something so that we

9. What can help us to be kind like Jehovah? Give an example.

are gentle with others and do not hurt their feelings. Paul wrote that a Christian “does not need to fight, but needs to be gentle toward all.” (2 Timothy 2:24) For example, think about how you can be kind in these situations: If your employer is not doing his job well, what will you do? If a brother who has not been to the Kingdom Hall for many months comes to the meeting, what will you say to him? If you are preaching and someone says that he is too busy to

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## Before making a decision, we can imagine how it might affect us or others

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talk to you, how can you be kind to him? If your wife asks you why you did not tell her about some plans you made, will you speak to her in a kind way? We need to imagine how others are feeling and how our words might affect them. Then we will know what we should say and do to be kind like Jehovah.—**Read Proverbs 15:28.**

### BE WISE LIKE JEHOVAH

<sup>10</sup> Jehovah is incredibly wise, and he can choose to see what will happen in the future. Although we do not know the future, we too can be wise. How? Before making a deci-

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**10, 11.** How can we learn from Jehovah and be wise? Give an example.

sion, we can imagine how it might affect us or others. We should not be like the Israelites. They did not think about what would happen to them if they disobeyed Jehovah. And they did not think about their relationship with him and all that he had done for them. Because Moses realized this, he knew that the Israelites were going to do what was bad. He said: “They are a nation devoid of sense, and there is no understanding among them. If only they were wise! They would ponder over this. They would think about their outcome.”—Deuteronomy 31:29, 30; 32:28, 29.

<sup>11</sup> For example, if you are dating, remember that when you are attracted to someone, it is difficult to control your feelings and sexual desires. So do not do anything that could harm your precious relationship with Jehovah! Instead, be wise and avoid danger. Listen to Jehovah’s wise counsel: “The shrewd one sees the danger and conceals himself, but the inexperienced keep right on going and suffer the consequences.”—Proverbs 22:3.

### CONTROL WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT

<sup>12</sup> A wise person controls what he is thinking about. Our thoughts can help us or harm us, just as fire can help us or harm us. When we are careful with a fire, we can use it to cook food. But if we are not careful,

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**12.** How could what we think about harm us?



a fire can burn down our house and even kill us. It is similar with our thoughts. When we think about things we learn from Jehovah, it is good for us. But if we keep thinking about sexual immorality and imagining ourselves doing bad things, we will desire these things so much that we may actually do them. That might end our friendship with Jehovah.

—Read James 1:14, 15.

<sup>13</sup> We can learn from the example of the first woman, Eve. Jehovah had commanded Adam and Eve not to eat the fruit from “the tree of the knowledge of good and bad.” (Genesis 2:16, 17) But Satan told Eve: “You certainly will not die. For God knows that in the very day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and bad.” Eve imagined how much better her life would be if she could decide for herself what was good and what was bad. She kept thinking about this and “saw that the tree was good for food and that it was something desirable to the eyes.” What happened then? “She began taking of its fruit and eating it. Afterward, she also gave some to her husband when he was with her, and he began eating it.” (Genesis 3: 1-6) As a result, “sin entered into the world and death through sin.” (Romans 5:12) Eve should not have kept thinking about doing what was wrong!

13. What did Eve imagine about her life?

<sup>14</sup> Of course, Eve’s sin did not involve sexual immorality. But the Bible clearly warns us not to keep imagining ourselves doing anything sexually immoral. Jesus said: “Everyone who keeps on looking at a woman so as to have a passion for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” (Matthew 5:28) Also, Paul warned: “Do not be planning ahead for the desires of the flesh.” —Romans 13:14.

<sup>15</sup> The Bible also says that we should focus on pleasing Jehovah and not keep thinking about getting rich. Even if someone is rich, his money cannot really protect him. (Proverbs 18:11) Jesus said that a person is foolish if he stores up many treasures for himself but does not keep Jehovah first in his life. He is “not rich toward God.” (Luke 12:16-21) When we store up “treasures in heaven” by doing things that please Jehovah, we make him happy and we feel happy too. (Matthew 6:20; Proverbs 27:11) And a good relationship with Jehovah is more valuable than anything else.

### DO NOT KEEP WORRYING

<sup>16</sup> If we try to get rich in this world, it will bring us a lot of worries. (Matthew 6:19) Jesus said that those who always worry about

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14. What warnings does the Bible give us about sexual immorality?

15. What treasures should we focus on, and why?

16. What can help us when we worry?

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## When you are worried, pray to Jehovah and think of the help that he gives you

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money will find it difficult to keep God's Kingdom first in their lives. (Matthew 13:18, 19, 22) Also, some people worry all the time about bad things that might happen to them. But if we keep worrying, we might become sick or even start to lose faith in Jehovah. Instead, we must trust that Jehovah will help us. The Bible says that "anxiety in a man's heart weighs it down, but a good word cheers it up." (Proverbs 12:25) So if you are worried about something, talk to someone who serves Jehovah and who knows you well. A parent, your husband or wife, or a good friend can encourage you to trust in Jehovah and help you feel less worried.

<sup>17</sup> Jehovah understands how we

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17. How can Jehovah help us when we are worried?

feel better than anyone else and can help us to feel calmer when we are worried. Paul wrote: "Do not be anxious over anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving, let your petitions be made known to God; and the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your mental powers by means of Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6, 7) So when you are worried, think of the help that Jehovah gives you to keep your friendship with him strong, such as the help from your brothers and sisters, the elders, the faithful slave, the angels, and Jesus.

<sup>18</sup> As we have learned, we imitate Jehovah when we use our ability to understand how other people feel. (1 Timothy 1:11; 1 John 4:8) We will be happy when we show love and kindness to others, when we think about the results of what we do, and when we avoid always worrying. Let us imagine what life will be like under Kingdom rule and do our best to imitate Jehovah.—Romans 12:12.

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18. How can our ability to imagine things help us?

## SOME EXPRESSIONS EXPLAINED

**We imitate Jehovah** when we think about how he treated people in the past and how Jesus copied his example. Then we think of what others need, and we do what we can to help them

## Who is Gog of Magog mentioned in the book of Ezekiel?

■ For many years, our publications have explained that the name Gog of Magog refers to Satan after he was thrown out of heaven. Why? Because the book of Revelation identifies Satan as the leader of the worldwide attack against God's people. (Revelation 12:1-17) So we understood that Gog must be another name for Satan.

However, there were some problems with this explanation. Think about the following: When talking about Gog's destruction, Jehovah said that he would give Gog "as food to all kinds of birds of prey and the wild beasts of the field." (Ezekiel 39:4) Then Jehovah added: "On that day I will give Gog a burial place there in Israel." (Ezekiel 39:11) But how could Satan, who is an invisible spirit creature, be eaten by birds and wild beasts? How could he be buried on earth? The Bible clearly shows that Satan will be thrown into the abyss for 1,000 years. He will not be eaten or buried.—Revelation 20:1, 2.

The Bible says that at the end of the 1,000 years, Satan will be released from the abyss,

and "he will go out to mislead those nations in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war." (Revelation 20:8) But if Satan is Gog, this means that Satan would have to mislead himself. Therefore, "Gog" does not refer to Satan in either the book of Ezekiel or the book of Revelation.

So who is Gog of Magog? To answer that question, we need to search the Bible to find out who attacks God's people. The Bible mentions the attack by 'Gog of Magog,' the attack by "the king of the north," and the attack by "the kings of the earth." (Ezekiel 38:2, 10-13; Daniel 11:40, 44, 45; Revelation 17:14; 19:19) Are these different attacks? That is not likely. It seems that the Bible is using different names to describe the same attack. Why do we say that? Because the Bible tells us that all the nations of the earth will be part of this final attack that starts the war of Armageddon.—Revelation 16:14, 16.

When we compare all these Bible references about the final attack on God's people, it is clear

### ATTACK OF GOG OF MAGOG

(EZEKIEL 38:2, 10-13)

▲  
GREAT  
TRIBULATION  
BEGINS

GOG OF MAGOG:  
A group of nations that  
unite to try to destroy  
God's people

ARMAGEDDON:  
■ Jesus saves God's people  
■ Gog of Magog destroyed  
(Revelation 16:14, 16)  
■ Satan and the demons  
thrown into the abyss  
(Revelation 20:1-3)

▲  
THE BEGINNING  
OF CHRIST'S 1,000  
YEAR REIGN

that the name Gog of Magog does not refer to Satan. Instead, Gog of Magog refers to a group of nations. Will “the king of the north” lead this group? We cannot say for sure. But this explanation seems to be in harmony with what Jehovah says about Gog: “You will come from your place, from the remotest parts of the **north**, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great assembly, a vast army.”—Ezekiel 38:6, 15.

Similarly, the prophet Daniel, who lived at the same time as Ezekiel, says about the king of the north: “Reports out of the east and out of the north will disturb him, and he will go out in a great rage to annihilate and to devote many to destruction. And he will plant his royal tents between the grand sea and the holy mountain of Decoration; and he will come all the way to his end, and there will be no helper for him.” (Daniel 11:44, 45) This is similar to what the book of Ezekiel says that Gog will do.—Ezekiel 38:8-12, 16.

What will happen after the final attack? Daniel tells us: “During that time Michael [Jesus Christ] will stand up [at Armageddon], the great prince who is standing [since 1914] in behalf of your people. And there will occur a time of distress [the great tribulation] such as has not

occurred since there came to be a nation until that time. And during that time your people will escape, everyone who is found written down in the book.” (Daniel 12:1) We read a similar description of what Jesus will do at Revelation 19:11-21.

But who is “Gog and Magog” mentioned at Revelation 20:8? This name refers to all those who rebel against Jehovah and attack his people during the final test at the end of the 1,000 years. They will have the same hateful attitude as Gog of Magog, the nations that attack God’s people at the end of the great tribulation. And just like those nations that will be destroyed at Armageddon, Gog and Magog will also be destroyed. (Revelation 19:20, 21; 20:9) It seems appropriate, then, that all who rebel at the end of the 1,000 years be called “Gog and Magog.”

As serious students of the Bible, we are eager to find out who will become “the king of the north” in the near future. But no matter who leads the nations against God’s people, we are confident of two things: (1) Gog of Magog and his armies will be defeated and destroyed. (2) Our King, Jesus Christ, will save God’s people and bring them into a new world of peace and true security.—Revelation 7:14-17.

## ATTACK OF GOG AND MAGOG

(REVELATION 20:8, 9)

END OF THE  
1,000 YEARS



### ▲ SATAN RELEASED

Causes some to rebel  
against Jehovah  
and His people

### GOG AND MAGOG:

Rebellious humans will surround righteous  
humans, wanting to destroy them

### ▲ THE END OF WICKEDNESS:

- Fire from heaven  
destroys Gog and Magog  
(Revelation 20:9)
- Satan and the demons  
thrown into lake of fire  
(Revelation 20:10)







# Why Disfellowshipping Is a Loving Provision

JULIAN remembers how he felt when he listened to the announcement that his son was no longer one of Jehovah's Witnesses. "My whole world seemed to come to an end," he says. "He was my oldest child, and we were very close; we did lots of things together." Julian explains that his son had always behaved well, but then he changed and began doing bad things. Julian's wife cried again and again, and he did not know how to comfort her. Julian says, "We kept asking ourselves if we had somehow failed as parents."

What reasons does the Bible give for disfellowshipping someone? And since it causes so much pain, why can we say that disfellowshipping is an act of love?

## WHY A PERSON MAY BE DISFELLOWSHIPED

If one of Jehovah's Witnesses who is baptized commits a serious sin and

does not repent, he will be disfellowshipped.

Jehovah does not expect us to be perfect, but he does expect his servants to obey his laws and to remain holy. For example, Jehovah commands his servants to avoid serious sins such as sexual immorality, idolatry, stealing, extortion, murder, and spiritism.—1 Corinthians 6:9, 10; Revelation 21:8.

What Jehovah expects of us is reasonable and is a protection for us. For example, we all want to live among peaceful, decent, and honest people, and that is what we experience among our spiritual brothers and sisters. Why are they this way? Because they dedicated themselves to Jehovah and promised to live by what he says in the Bible.

But what if a baptized Christian commits a serious sin because of human weakness? This happened to some of Jehovah's

servants in the past, but Jehovah did not reject them completely. For example, even though King David committed adultery and murder, the prophet Nathan told David that Jehovah had forgiven his sin.—2 Samuel 12:13.

Why did Jehovah forgive David? Because Jehovah could see that David was truly repentant. (Psalm 32:1-5) Today, too, someone who sinned will be forgiven if he is truly repentant and stops doing what is bad. (Acts 3:19; 26:20) If the elders on a judicial committee do not discern that the person is truly repentant, then he must be disfellowshipped.

If someone in your family or a close friend has been disfellowshipped, you may find it hard to accept that decision and may feel that it is too harsh. However, Jehovah's Word clearly shows us that disfellowshipping is an act of love.

### THE BENEFITS OF DISFELLOWSHIPING

Jesus said that "wisdom is proved righteous by its results." (Matthew 11:19, footnote) Let us consider three reasons why it is a wise decision to disfellowship a person if he does not repent.

*Disfellowshipping protects Jehovah's name from dishonor.* What we do will bring either honor or dishonor to Jehovah because, as his Witnesses, we bear his name. (Isaiah 43:10) Just as a son's conduct can honor or dishonor his parents, the conduct of Jehovah's servants can honor or dishonor Jehovah. In Ezekiel's time, people of the nations linked the Jews with Jehovah's name. (Ezekiel 36:19-23) Similarly today, people link Jehovah's Witnesses with Jehovah's name. So if we obey

Jehovah's laws, we will bring honor to him.

The apostle Peter counseled Christians: "As obedient children, stop being molded by the desires you formerly had in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, become holy yourselves in all your conduct, for it is written: 'You must be holy, because I am holy.'" (1 Peter 1:14-16) For example, if we practiced sexual immorality, we would dishonor God's name. But when we keep our conduct clean, we honor Jehovah.

If one of Jehovah's Witnesses practices what is bad, people who know him will probably become aware of what he is doing. So when they learn that he is no longer one of Jehovah's Witnesses, they will realize that Jehovah's people obey what the Bible says and keep the congregation clean. For example, a man came to a meeting in Switzerland and said that he wanted to become a member of the congregation. His sister had been disfellowshipped for immorality and now he wanted to join an organization that "does not tolerate bad conduct."

*Disfellowshipping keeps the Christian congregation clean.* The apostle Paul warned the Corinthians of the danger of letting an unrepentant sinner stay in the congregation. He compared the bad influence of these sinners to that of leaven that causes a batch of dough to rise. Paul said: "A little leaven ferments the whole batch of dough." Then he counseled them: "Remove the wicked person from among yourselves."—1 Corinthians 5:6, 11-13.

That "wicked person" practiced sexual immorality without any shame. Some in

his congregation had even begun to excuse his bad conduct. (1 Corinthians 5: 1, 2) This was dangerous because other Christians could have been affected by the immoral lifestyle that was common in Corinth. Similarly today, if the congregation ignores serious sin, some could begin to view Jehovah's standards as unimportant. (Ecclesiastes 8:11) Just as "rocks hidden below water" can cause shipwreck, unrepentant sinners can destroy the faith of others in the congregation.—Jude 4, 12.

*Disfellowshipping may help the sinner realize he is wrong.* Jesus used an illustration of a young man who left his father's home and spent all his inheritance living an immoral life. The young man eventually realized that life away from his father's home had no meaning. So he repented and decided to go back to his family. The father was very happy when he saw that his son had changed his attitude, and he welcomed him home. (Luke 15:11-24) This illustration helps us understand how Jehovah feels when someone repents. He says: "I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that someone wicked changes his way and keeps living."—Ezekiel 33:11.

The Christian congregation is our spiritual family. When someone is disfellowshipped, he is no longer a part of that family. After experiencing the results of his bad conduct, he may realize his mistake and remember how much happier he was when he had a good relationship with Jehovah and the congregation. This may encourage him to come back to his spiritual family.

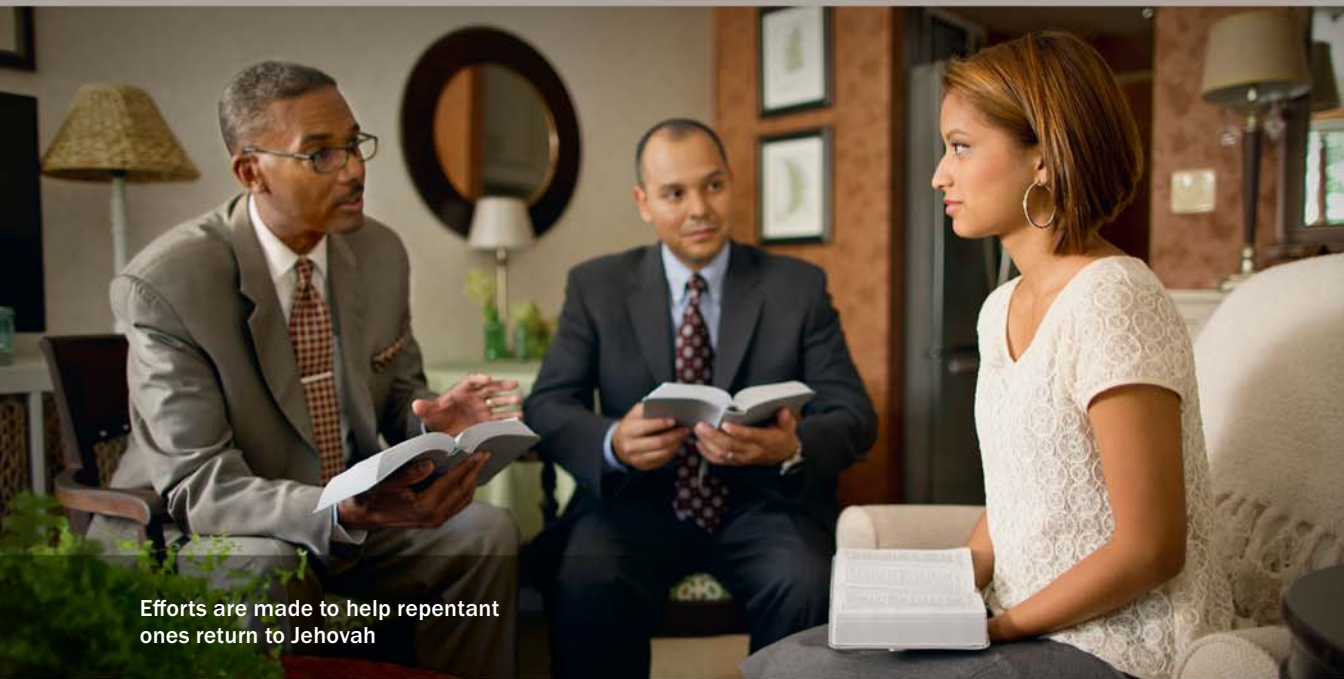
To help a disfellowshipped person come back to the congregation, we need to show him love by being firm. For example, imagine two hikers waiting to be rescued on a cold winter day. Because it is so cold, one hiker gets very tired and wants to sleep. But if he falls asleep in the snow, he will die. To help him stay awake, his friend slaps him in the face. Even though this hurts, it could save his life. David expressed a similar idea when he said: "Should the righteous one strike me, it would be an act of loyal love." (Psalm 141:5) David recognized that even though discipline was painful, it would help him.

Just like that slap, disfellowshipping is often what a person needs to come back to Jehovah. Julian's son, mentioned at the beginning of this article, changed his life and returned to the congregation ten years after he was disfellowshipped. Now he is an elder. He admits: "Being disfellowshipped brought me face-to-face with the consequences of my lifestyle. I needed that sort of discipline."—Hebrews 12:7-11.

#### HOW CAN WE SHOW THAT WE LOVE DISFELLOWSHIPPED ONES

It is a tragedy when someone is disfellowshipped. But it does not mean that he can never come back to Jehovah. It is important that all of us allow the discipline to work. How can we do that?

*Elders* always try to imitate Jehovah's love, especially when they have to tell someone that he is no longer one of Jehovah's Witnesses. They kindly and clearly explain what he needs to do to come back to Jehovah and be a part of



Efforts are made to help repentant ones return to Jehovah

the congregation again. If someone who has been disfellowshipped shows that he wants to come back to the congregation, the elders may visit him from time to time to remind him of what he can do to come back to Jehovah.\*—See footnote.

*Family members* show love for the congregation and the disfellowshipped person when they support the decision made by the elders. Julian explains, “He was still my son, but his lifestyle had put up a barrier between us.”

*All in the congregation* show true love to the disfellowshipped person by supporting the discipline that Jehovah has

given him through the elders. This means that they should not spend time with him or even talk to him. (1 Corinthians 5: 11; 2 John 10, 11) Also, the congregation should give extra love and support to the family of the disfellowshipped one. This is a very difficult time for the family. We should never make them feel that they have also been excluded from the congregation.—Romans 12:13, 15.

“Disfellowshipping is an arrangement that we need, one that helps us live according to Jehovah’s standards,” Julian concludes. “In the long run, despite the pain, it brings good results. Had I been tolerant of my son’s bad conduct, he would never have recovered.”

\* See *The Watchtower*, April 15, 1991, pages 21-23.

