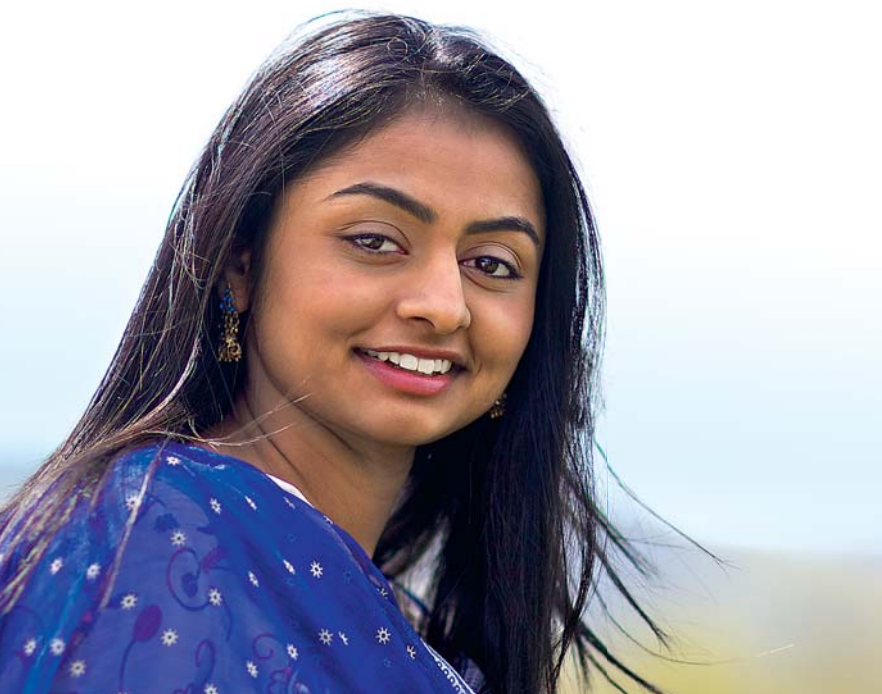


# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

SEPTEMBER 1, 2012



## Does God Care About Women?



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.

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—With References*.

## FROM OUR COVER

- 3 The Odds Against Women
- 4 Does God Really Care About Women?
- 8 Respect and Dignity Under God's Care



## REGULAR FEATURES

- 16 Learn From God's Word  
—What Will Happen on Judgment Day?
- 21 Draw Close to God  
—"The Nations Will Have to Know That I Am Jehovah"
- 22 Did You Know?
- 23 Our Readers Ask . . .  
Do Jehovah's Witnesses Have Women Ministers?
- ◀ 24 A Letter From Greece
- 30 Teach Your Children  
—Gehazi Was Ruined by Greed

## ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

- 12 Now I Know the God I Worship
- 18 Kindness—Essential in the Sight of God
- ◀ 26 God's Name Made Known in Swahili

THE words of the young girl, shown at the right, reveal a grim reality—worldwide, violence and discrimination affect girls and women throughout their lives. Consider these facts.

- **Gender discrimination.** In Asia, most parents prefer boys to girls. A 2011 UN report estimates that in that part of the world, nearly 134 million women are missing from the population as a result of abortion, infanticide, and neglect.
- **Education.** Worldwide, women and girls make up two thirds of those who had less than four years of schooling.
- **Sexual harassment.** Over 2.6 billion women live in countries where marital rape is still not considered a crime.
- **Health.** In developing countries, about every two minutes, a woman dies from pregnancy or childbirth complications as a result of the lack of basic medical care.
- **Property rights.** Although women cultivate more than half the world's crops, in many countries they have no legal right to own property or inherit land.

Why have women been deprived of such basic rights? Some cultures follow religious beliefs and practices that foster or even justify abuse of women and violence against them. A French daily quoted Indian lawyer Chandra Rami Chopra, who noted: "All religious laws have something in common: They support discrimination against women."

Do you share this view? Do you think that the Bible belittles women, as many other religious books do? To some, certain Bible verses seem to give that impression. But how does the God of the Bible really view women? Though this can be an emotional issue, careful and honest analysis of what the Bible says will help us find the answer.

"When I see how women are treated, I really don't want to become one."

—ZAHRA, 15 YEARS OLD,  
quoted in the  
magazine *GEO*, French edition.

# The Odds Against Women



© G.M.B. Akash/Panos Pictures



# Does God Really Care About Women?

“Sin began with a woman, and thanks to her we must all die.”

—ECCLESIASTICUS, SECOND CENTURY B.C.E.

“You are the devil’s gateway: you are the unsealer of that forbidden tree: you are the first deserter of the divine law . . . You destroyed so easily God’s image, man.”

—TERTULLIAN, ON THE APPAREL OF WOMEN, SECOND CENTURY C.E.

**T**HOSE ancient verses are not from the Bible. For centuries, they have been used to justify discrimination against women. Even today, some extremists still cite religious texts to legitimize the domination of women, claiming that women are to blame for mankind’s ills. Did God really purpose for women to be scorned and abused by men? What does the Bible say? Let us see.

## ■ Have women been cursed by God?

No. Instead, it is “the original serpent, the one called Devil,” who has been “cursed” by God. (Revelation 12:9; Genesis 3:14) When God said that Adam would “dominate” his wife, God was not indicating his approval of the subjugation of woman by man. (Genesis 3:16) He was simply foretelling the sad consequences of sin on the first couple.

Thus, the abuse of women is a direct outcome of the sinful nature of humans, not of God’s will. The Bible does not support the idea that women must be subjugated to men

in order to atone for the original sin.—Romans 5:12.

## ■ Did God create woman inferior to man?

No. Genesis 1:27 states: “God proceeded to create the man in his image, in God’s image he created him; male and female he created them.” So from the very beginning, humans—both male and female—were created with the ability to reflect God’s qualities. Although Adam and Eve had their own unique emotional and physical makeup, they both received the same commission and enjoyed the same rights before their Maker.—Genesis 1:28-31.

Prior to Eve’s creation, God declared: “I am going to make a helper for him [Adam], as a *complement* of him.” (Genesis 2:18) Does the word “complement” imply that the woman was inferior to the man? No, because this Hebrew word can also be rendered “counterpart” or “a help corresponding to” man. Think of the complementary roles

  
THE WATCHTOWER®  
ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH’S KINGDOM

Would you welcome more information or a free home Bible study? Please send your request to Jehovah’s Witnesses, using one of these addresses. For a complete list of addresses, see [www.jw.org/contact](http://www.jw.org/contact).

**America, United States of:** 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483. **Australia:** PO Box 280, Ingleburn, NSW 1890. **Britain:** The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN. **Canada:** PO Box 4100, Georgetown, ON L7G 4Y4. **Germany:** 65617 Selters. **Guam:** 143 Jehovah St, Barrigada, GU 96913. **Jamaica:** PO Box 103, Old Harbour, St. Catherine. **Japan:** 4-7-1 Nakashinden, Ebina City, Kanagawa-Pref, 243-0496. **Puerto Rico:** PO Box 3980, Guaynabo, PR 00970. **South Africa:** Private Bag X2067, Krugersdorp, 1740. **Trinidad and Tobago:** Lower Rapsey Street & Laxmi Lane, Curepe.

*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, Walkill, NY 12589-3299. © 2012 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. All rights reserved. Printed in Canada.



*Eve was created as a helper and complement to Adam*

played by a surgeon and an anesthetist during surgery. Can one manage without the other? Hardly! Though the surgeon performs the actual operation, is he more important? It is hard to say. Likewise, God created the man and the woman to cooperate closely, not to compete with each other.—Genesis 2:24.

### ■ What shows God's concern for women?

Foreseeing what fallen, sinful men would do, God early on expressed his intention to protect women. Speaking of the Mosaic Law, instituted in the 16th century B.C.E., author Laure Aynard, in her book *La Bible au féminin* (The Bible in the Feminine Gender), notes: "For the most part, when the Law covenant speaks of the woman, it is to defend her."

For instance, the Law commanded honor and respect for both father and mother. (Exodus 20:12; 21:15, 17) It also required that due consideration be shown to pregnant

women. (Exodus 21:22) Even today, the protection provided by those laws of God stands in sharp contrast with the lack of legal rights that some women experience in many parts of the world. But there is more.

### A Law That Reflects God's View of Women

The Law that Jehovah God gave the nation of Israel provided the people—men and women—with boundless physical, moral, and spiritual benefits. As long as they listened and obeyed, the nation was "high above all other nations of the earth." (Deuteronomy 28:1, 2) What was the woman's place under the Law? Consider the following.

**1. Individual freedom.** Unlike women in many other nations in ancient times, the Israelite woman enjoyed a great measure of freedom. Though the husband was given the role of the head of the family, the wife, with her husband's full trust, could 'consider a

**NOW PUBLISHED IN 195 LANGUAGES:** Acholi, Afrikaans, Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Armenian (West), Aymara,<sup>°</sup> Azerbaijani, Azerbaijani (Cyrillic), Baoulé, Bengali, Bicol, Bislama, Bulgarian, Cambodian, Catalan, Cebuano, Chichewa, Chinese (Simplified), Chinese (Traditional)<sup>°</sup> (audio Mandarin only), Chitonga, Chitumbuka, Chuukese, Cibemba, Croatian, Czech,<sup>°</sup> Danish,<sup>°</sup> Dutch,<sup>°</sup> Efik,<sup>°</sup> English,<sup>°</sup> Estonian, Ewe, Fijian, Finnish,<sup>°</sup> French,<sup>°</sup> Ga, Garifuna, Georgian, German,<sup>°</sup> Greek, Greenlandic, Guarani,<sup>°</sup> Gujarati, Gun, Haitian Creole, Hausa, Hebrew, Hiligaynon, Hindi, Hiri Motu, Hungarian,<sup>°</sup> Icelandic, Igbo, Iloko, Indonesian, Isoko, Italian,<sup>°</sup> Japanese,<sup>°</sup> Kannada, Kazakh, Kikaonde,

Kikongo, Kikuyu, Kiluba, Kimbundu, Kinyarwanda, Kirghiz, Kiribati, Kirundi, Kongo, Korean,<sup>°</sup> Kwangali, Kwanama, Latvian, Lingala, Lithuanian, Luganda, Lunda, Luo, Luvale, Macedonian, Macua, Malagasy, Malayalam, Maltese, Marathi, Marshallese, Mauritian Creole, Maya, Mixe, Mizo, Mongolian, Moore, Myanmar, Nahuatl (Northern Puebla), Ndebele, Ndonga, Nepali, Ngabere, Nuean, Norwegian,<sup>°</sup> Nyaneka, Nzema, Oromo, Otetela, Palauan, Pangasinan, Papiamentu (Aruba), Papiamentu (Curaçao), Persian, Polish,<sup>°</sup> Ponapean, Portuguese,<sup>°</sup> Punjabi, Quechua (Ancash), Quechua (Ayacucho), Quechua (Bolivia),<sup>°</sup> Quechua (Cuzco), Quichua, Rarotongan, Romanian, Russian,<sup>°</sup> Samoan, Sango, Sepedi, Serbian,

Serbian (Roman), Sesotho, Seychelles Creole, Shona, Si-lozi, Sinhala, Slovak, Slovenian, Solomon Islands Pidgin, Spanish,<sup>°</sup> Sranantongo, Swahili, Swati, Swedish,<sup>°</sup> Tagalog,<sup>°</sup> Tahitian, Tamil, Tatar, Telugu, Tetum, Thai, Tigrinya, Tiv, Tok Pisin, Tongan, Totonac, Tshiluba, Tshwa, Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Tuvaluan, Twi, Tzotzil, Ukrainian, Umbundu, Urdu, Uruund, Venda, Vietnamese, Wallisian, Waray-Waray, Wolaita, Xhosa, Yapese, Yoruba, Zande, Zapotec (Isthmus), Zulu

<sup>°</sup> Braille also available.

<sup>+</sup> CD also available.

<sup>°</sup> MP3 CD-ROM also available.

<sup>°</sup> Audio recordings also available at [www.jw.org](http://www.jw.org).



*Women in ancient Israel participated in business*

field and obtain it’ and ‘plant a vineyard.’ If she had skills in spinning and weaving, she could even run her own business. (Proverbs 31:11, 16-19) Women under the Mosaic Law were seen as individuals in their own right and not as just an appendage to man.

In ancient Israel, women were also free to have a personal relationship with God. The Bible speaks of Hannah, who prayed to God about a personal matter and secretly made a vow. (1 Samuel 1:11, 24-28) A woman from the city of Shunem used to consult the prophet Elisha on Sabbath days. (2 Kings 4: 22-25) Women, such as Deborah and Huldah, were used by God as his representatives. Interestingly, prominent men and priests were willing to seek advice from them.—Judges 4:4-8; 2 Kings 22:14-16, 20.

**2. Access to education.** As party to the Law covenant, women were invited to listen to the reading of the Law, which provid-

ed them with opportunities to learn. (Deuteronomy 31:12; Nehemiah 8:2, 8) They could also receive training for participation in certain aspects of public worship. For example, some women likely did “organized service” at the tabernacle, while others performed in a mixed choir of singers.—Exodus 38:8; 1 Chronicles 25:5, 6.

Many women had the knowledge and skill needed to run a profitable business. (Proverbs 31:24) Contrary to the culture in other nations at that time—in which the father alone taught his sons—the Israelite mother was to share in educating her male children until adulthood. (Proverbs 31:1) Obviously, women in ancient Israel were far from being uneducated.

**3. Honored and respected.** The Ten Commandments clearly stipulated: “Honor your father and your mother.” (Exodus 20:12) In the proverbs of wise King Solomon, we read:



“Listen, my son, to the discipline of your father, and do not forsake the law of your mother.”—Proverbs 1:8.

The Law included detailed regulations regarding conduct among unmarried persons, showing respect for females. (Leviticus 18:6, 9; Deuteronomy 22:25, 26) A good husband had to take into account his wife’s physical and biological limitations.—Leviticus 18:19.

**4. Rights to be protected.** In his Word, Jehovah portrays himself as “a father of fatherless boys and a judge of widows.” In other words, he was the Protector of those whose rights were not safeguarded by a father or a husband. (Psalm 68:5; Deuteronomy 10:17, 18) Thus, in one case when the widow of a prophet was treated unfairly by a creditor, Jehovah intervened with a miracle so that she could survive and keep her dignity.—2 Kings 4:1-7.

Before the Israelites entered the Promised Land, the family head Zelophehad died without leaving a son. His five daughters therefore requested Moses to give them “a possession” in the Promised Land. Jehovah’s response went far beyond their request. He told Moses: “Give them the possession of an inheritance in the midst of their father’s brothers, and you must cause their father’s inheritance to pass to them.” From that time on, women in Israel could receive an inheritance from their father and pass it on to their offspring.—Numbers 27:1-8.

#### **God’s View of Women Misrepresented**

Under the Mosaic Law, women enjoyed an honorable status, and their rights were respected. However, from the fourth century B.C.E. on, Judaism started to be influenced by Greek culture, which regarded women as inferior.—See the box “Discrimination Against Women in Ancient Writings.”

## **Discrimination Against Women in Ancient Writings**

From the first century C.E. onward, writers such as Philo of Alexandria began to use Greek philosophy to reinterpret the Genesis account. For Philo, Eve was guilty of sexual sin and was therefore condemned to a life that “utterly deprives her of her freedom and subjects her to the dominion of the man who is her companion.” Such contempt for women infiltrated Judaism, as well as the writings of the Church Fathers.

In the *Midrash Rabba*, a second-century Jewish text, a rabbi explained why he felt women should wear a veil, saying: “She is like one who has done wrong and is ashamed of people.” Theologian Tertullian, whose writings were influential as early as the second century C.E., taught that women should walk about “as Eve mourning and repentant.” Such teachings, often wrongly regarded as coming from the Bible, have contributed to much discrimination against women.

For example, Greek poet Hesiod (eighth century B.C.E.) imputed all mankind’s ills to women. In his *Theogony*, he spoke of “the deadly race and tribe of women who live amongst mortal men to their great trouble.” This idea gained ground in Judaism early in the second century B.C.E. The Talmud, compiled from the second century C.E. on, gave this warning to men: “Do not converse much with women, as this will ultimately lead you to unchastity.”

Throughout the centuries, this distrust has had a profound effect on women’s role in Jewish society. In Jesus’ day, their access to the temple precincts had already been limited to the Court of Women. Religious

education was solely for men, and women were likely separated from men in the synagogues. The Talmud quotes one Rabbi as saying: "Whoever teaches his daughter Torah [the Law] teaches her obscenity." By misrepresenting God's viewpoint, Jewish religious leaders instilled a contempt for women in many men.

When on earth, Jesus noted such prejudices, which were deeply rooted in traditions. (Matthew 15:6, 9; 26:7-11) Did such teachings influence the way he dealt with women? What can we learn from his behavior and attitude? Has true Christianity brought relief to women? The next article will answer these questions.

## Respect and Dignity Under God's Care

**W**HEN on earth, Jesus perfectly reflected his heavenly Father's personality and way of doing things. He said: "I do nothing of my own initiative; but just as the Father taught me I speak . . . I always do the things pleasing to him." (John 8:28, 29; Colossians 1:15) Thus, by noting the way Jesus interacted with women and his attitude toward them, we have a window into understanding God's view of women and his expectations for them.

Based on what is recorded in the Gospel accounts, a number of scholars have acknowledged Jesus' view of women as nothing short of revolutionary. How is that so? And more important, do his teachings still have a liberating influence on women today?

### How Jesus Treated Women

■ **Jesus did not consider them to be mere sexual objects.** In the view of some Jewish religious leaders, contact with the opposite sex could lead only to lust. Since women were





feared as a source of temptation, they were not allowed to talk to men in public or to go out without wearing a veil. On the other hand, Jesus advised men to control their own fleshly desires and treat women with dignity instead of cutting them off from social relations.—Matthew 5:28.

Jesus also said: “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery *against her*.” (Mark 10:11, 12) He thus rejected the prevailing rabbinic teaching that allowed men to divorce their wives “on every sort of ground.” (Matthew 19:3, 9) The concept of committing adultery *against his wife* was alien to most Jews. Their rabbis taught that a husband could never commit adultery against his wife—only a woman could be unfaithful! As one Bible commentary puts it, “Jesus, by putting the husband under the same moral obligation as the wife, raised the status and dignity of women.”

**The effect of his teaching today:** In the Christian congregation of Jehovah’s Witnesses, women associate freely with men at meetings. However, they need not fear indecent looks or undue familiarity, because Christian men are careful to treat “older women as mothers, younger women as sisters *with all chasteness*.”—1 Timothy 5:2.

■ **Jesus took time to teach women.** In contrast with the prevalent rabbinic view that kept women in ignorance, Jesus taught them and encouraged them to express themselves. By refusing to deprive Mary of the joy of being taught, Jesus showed that a woman’s place is not only in the kitchen. (Luke 10:38-42) Mary’s sister, Martha, also benefited from his teaching, as shown by her intelligent answers to Jesus after Lazarus’ death.—John 11:21-27.

What women thought mattered to Jesus. At that time, most Jewish women believed that the key to happiness was to have a wor-

## Did the Apostle Paul Forbid Women to Speak?

“Let the women *keep silent* in the congregations,” wrote the apostle Paul. (1 Corinthians 14:34) What did he mean? Was he belittling their intelligence? No. In fact, he often referred to the wholesome teaching of women. (2 Timothy 1:5; Titus 2:3-5) In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul advised not only women but also individuals who had the gift of tongues and prophecy to “keep silent” when another believer was speaking.\* (1 Corinthians 14:26-30, 33) Likely some Christian women were so enthusiastic about their newfound faith that they interrupted the speaker to ask questions, as was the custom in that part of the world. In order to avoid such disorder, Paul encouraged them to “question their own husbands at home.” —1 Corinthians 14:35.

\* For further discussion of women’s role in the congregation, see the article “Do Jehovah’s Witnesses Have Women Ministers?” on page 23.

thy son, if possible one who was a prophet. When one of the women cried out: “Happy is the womb that carried you!” Jesus seized the opportunity to tell her about something better. (Luke 11:27, 28) By indicating that spirituality was more important, Jesus pointed her to something more than the traditional role imposed upon women.—John 8:32.

**The effect of his teaching today:** Teachers in the Christian congregation welcome the comments by women at congregation meetings. They respect mature women for being “teachers of what is good,” both in private and by example. (Titus 2:3) They also rely on them to tell publicly the good news of God’s

Kingdom.—Psalm 68:11; see the box “Did the Apostle Paul Forbid Women to Speak?” on page 9.

■ **Jesus cared for women.** In Bible times, daughters were not valued as much as sons. The Talmud reflects this view, saying: “Happy is he whose children are males, and woe to him whose children are females.” Some parents regarded a girl as a greater burden—they would have to find her a mate and give a dowry, and they would not be able to depend on her for support in their old age.

Jesus showed that a little girl’s life is as important as a boy’s—he resurrected Jairus’ daughter, as he did the son of the widow at Nain. (Mark 5:35, 41, 42; Luke 7:11-15) After healing a woman troubled by “a spirit of weakness for eighteen years,” Jesus called her “a daughter of Abraham,” an expression almost unknown in Jewish writings. (Luke 13:10-16) By using this respectful and kind expression, he not only regarded her as a full-fledged member of society but also recognized her great faith.—Luke 19:9; Galatians 3:7.

**The effect of his teaching today:** An Asian saying goes: “Raising a daughter is like water-

ing the neighbor’s garden.” Far from being influenced by that mentality, loving Christian fathers care well for all their children, sons and daughters. Christian parents make sure that all their children receive proper education and health care.

■ **Jesus trusted women.** In the Jewish courts, the testimony of a woman was considered equal only to that of a slave. Josephus, a first-century historian, advised: “From women let no evidence be accepted, because of the levity and temerity of their sex.”

In sharp contrast, Jesus chose to have women bear witness to his resurrection. (Matthew 28:1, 8-10) Though these faithful women had been eyewitnesses of the execution and burial of their Lord, to the apostles, the women’s words were hard to believe. (Matthew 27:55, 56, 61; Luke 24:10, 11) However, by appearing first to women, the resurrected Christ regarded them as worthy of bearing witness as his other disciples were.—Acts 1:8, 14.

**The effect of his teaching today:** In congregations of Jehovah’s Witnesses, men who have responsibilities show consideration for women by taking into account their observations.

Jesus gave Mary Magdalene the honor of reporting his resurrection to the apostles





Those who follow Bible principles respect and dignify women

For their part, Christian husbands ‘assign honor’ to their wives by listening carefully to them.—1 Peter 3:7; Genesis 21:12.

### **Bible Principles Contribute to Women’s Happiness**

When men imitate Christ, women are given the respect and freedom that God originally purposed for them. (Genesis 1:27, 28) Instead of supporting male chauvinism, Christian husbands let themselves be guided by Bible principles, which contribute to their mate’s happiness.—Ephesians 5:28, 29.

When Yelena began to study the Bible, she was silently suffering harsh treatment from her husband. He had been brought up in a violent environment, where the kidnapping of brides and physical abuse were common practices. “What I learned from the Bible gave me strength,” says Yelena. “I understood that there was someone who loved me very much and valued and cared about me. I also understood that if my husband studied the Bible, it could change his attitude toward me.” Her dream came true when her

husband eventually agreed to study the Bible and then got baptized as one of Jehovah’s Witnesses. “He became an example of self-control and restraint,” Yelena says. “We learned to forgive each other freely.” Her conclusion? “Bible principles have truly helped me to feel needed and protected in my marriage.”—Colossians 3:13, 18, 19.

Yelena’s experience is not unique. Millions of Christian women are happy because they and their husbands together endeavor to apply Bible principles in their marriage. They find respect, comfort, and freedom in the association of fellow Christians.—John 13:34, 35.

Christian men and women both recognize that as sinful and imperfect humans, they are part of God’s creation that has been “subjected to futility.” However, by drawing close to their loving God and Father, Jehovah, they have the hope of being “set free from enslavement to corruption” and enjoying “the glorious freedom of the children of God.” What a marvelous prospect for both men and women under God’s care!—Romans 8:20, 21.





# NOW I KNOW THE GOD I WORSHIP

AS TOLD BY MARIETA MANUEL BACUDIO

A Pentecostal evangelist who was said to have the power to heal came to visit. When he touched me, I fell down unconscious, “slain in the spirit.” When I came to, I seemed to have what I wanted—the power to heal. What led me to this experience, and how did it affect my life? Before I tell you about that, let me explain my background.

**I** WAS born in Ilocos Norte, Philippines, on December 10, 1968, the seventh of ten children. Like most Filipinos, we were brought up as Catholics. I graduated from high school in 1986, and my ambition was to be a nurse. However, because I contracted a severe illness, that dream did not materialize. In fact, I thought I would die. In my desperation, I implored God for help and told him that if I recovered, I would serve him all my life.

After a long recovery, I remembered my promise to God. So, in June 1991, I enrolled in a Pentecostal Bible school. The school regimen was said to include acquiring “the free gift of the holy spirit.” I wanted to have the power to heal. The school taught us that this could be obtained through fasting and prayers. Once, in my effort to give the impression that I had a “gift,” I secretly listened to one of my classmates praying aloud in a corner during a prayer session. When she was about to finish, I quickly went back to where I had been kneeling. Afterward, I told her exactly what she had been asking for in her prayer, and she believed that I now had the “free gift”!

While continuing my studies at the school, I had many questions. For example, Matthew 6:9 speaks of the “Father” and his “name.” I asked such questions as “Who is the Father mentioned by Jesus?” and “Whose name should be sanctified?” My instructors’ answers were often quite vague and not satisfying. They talked about the Trinity and said that it is a mystery. I found it quite confusing. Despite that, I continued my training to be a pastor.

## **Exposure to Jehovah’s Witnesses**

In Bible school, we were taught that Jehovah’s Witnesses promoted the worst kind of false religion. They were also referred to as the antichrist. I developed a revulsion for this religion.

During my second year in the school, I went home to visit my parents during a school break. One of my older sisters, Carmen, heard that I was home and came to visit too. She was already a baptized, full-time minister of Jehovah’s Witnesses. When she tried to teach me about God, I responded furiously: “I already know the God I am serving!” After loudly insulting her, I pushed her

away and did not give her another opportunity to speak to me.

After I returned to the Bible school, Carmen sent me a copy of the brochure *Should You Believe in the Trinity?*\* I immediately crumpled it up and threw it in the fire. I was still angry with her.

### Advancement as a Pastor

As I continued my studies in the Bible school, I was able to make some converts. I was especially proud when my mother and my brother joined me in the Pentecostal religion.

In March 1994, I graduated from the Pentecostal Bible school. As mentioned at the outset, a visiting evangelist was present at that time. All of us graduates wanted to be with him because we believed he had the gift of healing. We joined him on the stage, jumping and clapping with him to the beat of a band. Then, each one he touched fell down, “slain in the spirit.”# When he touched me, I too fell down and lost consciousness. When I regained my senses, I was in fear, but I sensed that I now had the power to heal, so I was happy.

\* Published by Jehovah’s Witnesses but now out of print.

# “Slain in the spirit” refers to a phenomenon in some religions where it is believed that the “spirit” comes on believers with such force that they fall to the ground.



*When I graduated as a pastor*

Soon thereafter, I used this power to heal a child who was very sick with a high fever. When I offered a prayer, the child immediately began to perspire and the fever disappeared. At last, I felt that I could fulfill my promise to God. Strangely, though, I felt a

I used this power to heal  
a child who was very sick with  
a high fever

void. Deep inside, I believed that there is only one God, but I did not really know who he is. And I had nagging doubts about many of the doctrines of the church.

### Things That Changed My Thinking

After those events, my hostility toward Jehovah’s Witnesses became even more intense. Whenever I found Witness publications, I burned them. Then, something unexpected happened. I was shocked to find that Mother no longer wanted our religion. Carmen had been studying the Bible with her! I was so angry with my sister.

Then I found an *Awake!* magazine at Mother’s house. Normally I would have burned it. But curious about what she was reading, I flipped through the pages. My eyes fell upon an article about an individual who was a firm believer in what the church taught. However, when he began reading the Witnesses’ publications along with the Bible, he became convinced that the teachings of the Trinity, hellfire, and the immortality of the soul were unscriptural. My heart was touched. These were the very things I wanted to understand. Starting then, I longed for the time when I would understand Bible truth.

After reading another life story in the *Awake!* magazine about an alcoholic and

drug addict who made big changes for the better because of studying the Bible, I began reading more of the Witnesses' publications. I found a copy of the brochure *The Divine Name That Will Endure Forever*.<sup>\*</sup> Reading that, I learned that God's name is Jehovah. It made me so happy to learn the truth about the only true God! —Deuteronomy 4:39; Jeremiah 10:10.

I kept reading secretly and learned many more Bible truths. For example, in the Pentecostal school, I had been taught that Jesus is God, but I learned from the Bible that he is "the Son of the living God." —Matthew 16:15, 16.

### A Change of Heart

When I saw Carmen again, she was surprised when I asked for a personal copy of the brochure *The Divine Name That Will Endure Forever* and some other literature. I had spent many years in that Bible school, but I was not taught the truth there; I had been blinded. My heart now overflowed with joy because of the truths I was learning from the Bible. I fully felt the impact of Jesus' words: "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:32) Those truths were beginning to change my life.

For a while, I thought that I could secretly worship Jehovah God and continue as a pastor. Soon I realized that I could no longer teach many of the church's doctrines. Nonetheless, I was fearful. What would happen to my livelihood if I resigned as a pastor? How embarrassing for the church if one of their pastors became one of Jehovah's Witnesses!

<sup>\*</sup> Published by Jehovah's Witnesses.



*Precious studied the Bible with me*

So I continued teaching as a pastor, but I avoided the church's false doctrines.

When I saw my sister Carmen again, she suggested that I attend a meeting of Jehovah's Witnesses. Since I usually reported to our mother church in Laoag City, I secretly looked for the Witnesses' meeting place, the Kingdom Hall, there. I was introduced to Alma Preciosa Villarin, nicknamed "Precious," a full-time minister in that congregation. Although I still had negative

These truths were  
beginning to change  
my life

feelings about the Witnesses, I accepted her offer to teach me the Bible.

My sister had been very patient in sharing Bible truths with me. Now I saw this same patient spirit in Precious. She helped me so much to understand the Bible, even though I got irritated, tried to argue with her, and sometimes raised my voice, insisting on some of the things I had formerly





*When my mother and I were baptized*



*As a full-time minister of Jehovah's Witnesses*



*With my husband, our daughter, and many of my relatives who have joined us in true worship*

been taught. The personal interest, humility, and mildness shown by Precious and other Witnesses touched my heart. This moved me to want to worship Jehovah.

In July 1995, I realized that there was no recourse but to leave my position as pastor. Why? Revelation 18:4 speaks of false religion symbolically and says: "Get out of her, my people, if you do not want to share with her in her sins, and if you do not want to receive part of her plagues." What about my means of living? Hebrews 13:5 taught me that if we do God's will, he promises: "I will by no means leave you nor by any means forsake you."

Though my father and brother now vehemently opposed me, two weeks before my baptism as a Witness, I mustered up the courage to go home to burn all the things I had used in my former work as a pastor. After doing so, I realized that any special powers previously given to me were gone. In the past, when I slept, I felt that something was constantly pressing down on me. That feeling was gone too. The shadows I used to see at the window of my room never appeared again. My study of the Bible had taught me

that any so-called gifts today, like the power to heal, are not from God but from wicked spirits. I am so happy that I broke free from their influence, just as the servant girl did whom Paul freed from "a demon of divination."—Acts 16:16-18.

What a joy it was to be side by side with Mother as we presented ourselves for baptism as Jehovah's Witnesses in September 1996! After my baptism, I enrolled as a full-time minister of Jehovah's Witnesses

*It made me so happy  
to learn the truth about  
the only true God!*

and enjoyed many years of serving in that way.

I am now married to my husband, Silver. Together, we are working hard to train our daughter in the way of Bible truth. Some of my other siblings have also joined us in serving Jehovah. Although I regret that for many years I didn't really know God, I am very happy that now I know the God I worship.



## LEARN FROM GOD'S WORD

# What Will Happen on Judgment Day?

This article considers questions you may have raised and shows where you can read the answers in your Bible. Jehovah's Witnesses would be pleased to discuss these answers with you.

### 1. What is Judgment Day?

As depicted in the picture on the right, many people imagine that on Judgment Day billions of souls will be brought before God's throne to be judged according to their former deeds—some to be rewarded with life in heaven, others to be tormented in hell. The Bible shows, however, that the purpose of Judgment Day is to rescue people from injustice. (Psalm 96:13) God has appointed Jesus to be the Judge who will restore justice to mankind. —Read Isaiah 11:1-5; Acts 17:31.



"THE LAST JUDGEMENT,"  
BY GUSTAVE DORÉ, 1832-1883  
Engravings by Doré



### 2. How will Judgment Day restore justice?

When the first man, Adam, deliberately rebelled against God, he subjected all his offspring to sin, suffering, and death. (Romans 5:12) To correct that injustice, Jesus will bring back to life, or resurrect, billions from the dead. The book of Revelation reveals that this will take place during the thousand-year rule of Christ Jesus.—Read Revelation 20:4, 11, 12.

The resurrected ones will be judged, not on the basis of what they did before they died, but on what they do when the contents of the "scrolls" mentioned in Revelation chapter 20 are revealed. (Romans 6:7) Among those who will come back to life and have the opportunity to learn about God are "both the righteous and the unrighteous," said the apostle Paul.—Read Acts 24:15.

### 3. What will Judgment Day accomplish?

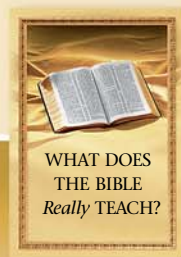
Those who died without ever having come to know Jehovah God and serve him will have the opportunity to change and do good. If they do so, their resurrection will turn out to be “a resurrection of life.” Some of the resurrected ones, however, will not want to learn Jehovah’s ways. Theirs will turn out to be “a resurrection of judgment.”—*Read John 5:28, 29; Isaiah 26:10; 65:20.*

By the end of the thousand-year-long Day of Judgment, Jehovah will have restored obedient mankind to its original perfect condition. (1 Corinthians 15:24-28) What a marvelous prospect that is for all obedient ones! In a final test, God will release from the abyss Satan the Devil, who will have been confined there for a thousand years. Satan will again try to turn people away from Jehovah, but those who reject Satan will enjoy life on earth forever.—*Read Isaiah 25:8; Revelation 20:7-9.*



### 4. What other day of judgment will benefit mankind?

The Bible also uses the term “day of judgment” to refer to the event that will bring the present system of things to its end. This day of judgment will come as suddenly as the Flood of Noah’s day, which swept away an entire wicked generation. Happily, the imminent destruction of “ungodly men” will clear the way for a new earthly society in which “righteousness is to dwell.”—*Read 2 Peter 3:6, 7, 13.*



For more information, see pages 213-215 of this book, published by Jehovah’s Witnesses.



# Kindness

## Essential in the Sight of God

**A** YOUTH in Japan was moved by the kindness of a gentle elderly man. The man, a missionary, had not been in this Asian country for many years and was still limited in his use of Japanese. Yet, each week he visited the young man's home to discuss the Bible. With friendly smiles and kindly manners, he patiently answered the many questions that the curious young student raised.

The kind ways of the elderly missionary left an indelible impression on the young man. 'If the Bible makes a man so kind and loving,' thought the young man, 'then by all means I should learn about it.' This gave him the incentive he needed to study something totally foreign to him. Yes, kindness touches the human heart and speaks to it, often more powerfully than words can.

### A Quality in the Image of God

It is natural for us to be kind to those closely related to us, for kindness basically means affection arising from kinship.\* However, kindness is fundamentally a divine quality. Jesus said that his heavenly Father is kind not only to those who love Him but also "toward the unthankful." Jesus urged his followers to imitate God in this regard: "Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."—Luke 6:35; Matthew 5:48; Exodus 34:6.

Humans, created in God's image, are capable of reflecting or manifesting the quality of kindness. (Genesis 1:27) Yes, we can imitate God and broaden the reach of our kindness

---

\* *The Oxford English Dictionary* shows that the original meaning of "kindness" is "kinship; near relationship; natural affection arising from this."

beyond those related to us. The Bible describes kindness as part of the desirable fruitage of God's holy spirit, or active force. (Galatians 5:22) Hence, it can be developed and cultivated as one learns more about God, the Creator, and comes closer to him.

Since kindness is not only woven into the fabric of human nature but also highly esteemed by God, it is, therefore, reasonable that God tells us to "become kind to one another." (Ephesians 4:32) We are also reminded: "Do not forget hospitality," or "kindness to strangers."—Hebrews 13:2, footnote.

In today's largely unkind and unthankful world, is it possible for us to be kind to others, even strangers? What can help us to do so? In fact, why should we even be concerned about it?

### Essential Before God

Interestingly, the apostle Paul, after speaking about showing kindness to strangers, went on to say: "Through it some, unknown to themselves, entertained angels." Can you imagine how you would feel if you were given the opportunity to entertain angels? But Paul prefaced this with the expression "unknown to themselves." Putting it another way, his point was that if we have the habit of showing kindness to others, including strangers or people we do not really know, we might be rewarded in unexpected ways.

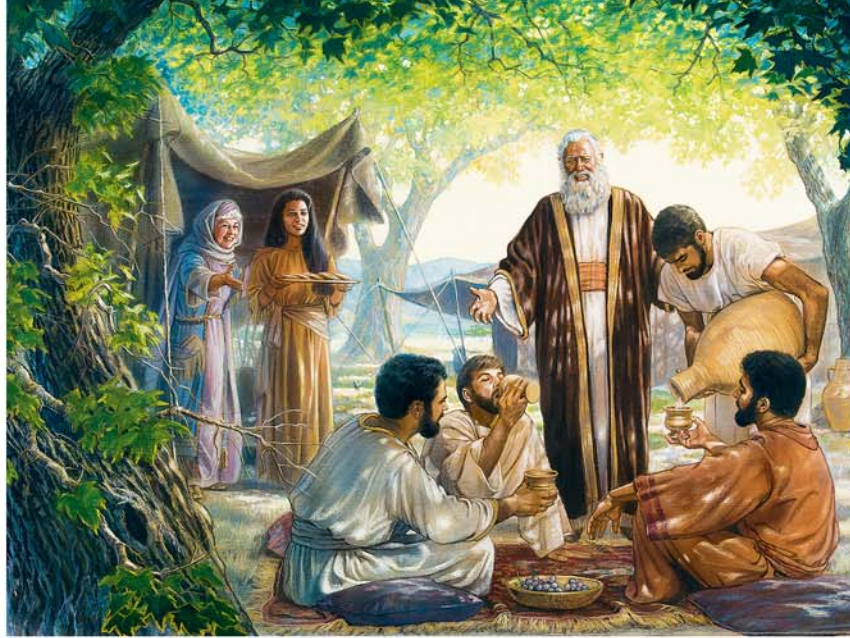
Most Bible versions with cross-references link Paul's words with the accounts about Abraham and Lot in Genesis chapters 18 and 19. In both cases, we read about an-

***Abraham's kindness  
was richly rewarded***

gels appearing to them as strangers with important messages. In Abraham's case, the message was about the fulfillment of God's promise of a son, and in Lot's case, it was about deliverance from the impending destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.—Genesis 18: 1-10; 19:1-3, 15-17.

If you read the scriptures cited above, you will note that both Abraham and Lot extended kindness to passersby who were unknown to them. Of course, in Bible times, showing hospitality to travelers and passersby—whether friends, relatives, or strangers—was a matter of custom and duty. In fact, the Mosaic Law required that Israelites not overlook the needs of non-Israelites in the land. (Deuteronomy 10:17-19) Even so, it is apparent that Abraham and Lot went beyond what later came to be required by law. They put forth extraordinary effort to show kindness to strangers, and they were blessed for doing so.

Abraham's acts of kindness brought blessings not only for himself in that he had a son but also for us. In what way? Abraham and his son Isaac played a vital role in the outworking of God's purpose. They became key figures in the family line leading to the Messiah, Jesus. And their faithful course foreshadowed how the basis for human salvation was to be provided through God's love and undeserved kindness.—Genesis 22:1-18; Matthew 1:1, 2; John 3:16.



Those accounts impressively indicate what God expects of people whom he favors and how much he esteems the quality of kindness. It is not optional but essential in the sight of God.

**Exercising Kindness Helps Us  
to Know God Better**

The Bible states that in our day, many would be “unthankful, disloyal, having no natural affection.” (2 Timothy 3:1-3) No doubt you are confronted with such people every day. Still, that is no reason to suppress our kind feelings for others altogether. Christians are reminded: “Return evil for evil to no one. Provide fine things in the sight of all men.”—Romans 12:17.

We can expend ourselves and be open-hearted in extending kindness. The Bible says: “Everyone who loves . . . gains the knowledge of God,” and one way our love is displayed is by being kind to others. (1 John 4:7; 1 Corinthians 13:4) Yes, by being kind to our fellow humans, we come to know God better, and that makes us happier. Jesus said in his Sermon on the Mount: “Happy the kind—because they shall find kindness.

Happy the clean in heart—because they shall see God.”—Matthew 5:7, 8, *Young’s Literal Translation*.

Consider the example of Aki, a young Japanese housewife with two sons. After suddenly losing her mother, she became seriously depressed. At times, she felt so bad that she had to see a doctor. Then, a family

moved into her neighborhood. They had recently lost their father in an accident, and the mother was left with five minor children. Aki felt very sorry for the family and extended herself to become friends with the mother and her children. Doing everything she could to

When you  
are not sure  
of what to do  
or say, do or  
say the kind  
thing

help the family—sharing food, outgrown clothing, and so on—Aki regained her own emotional stability. She felt the truthfulness of what the Bible says: “There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving.” (Acts 20:35) Yes, showing kindness to others can be the best thing you can do for yourself when you feel down.

### **“Lending to Jehovah”**

Showing kindness does not necessarily cost much. Neither does it depend on your ability or even your physical strength. A smile, a compassionate word, a helping hand, a small thoughtful gift, or just letting others go first in a line can often mean much. When you are not sure of the right thing to say or do under a certain circumstance, say or do the kind thing. The young man mentioned at the beginning of this article was deeply touched by the older missionary’s kind demeanor, which transcended the language barrier. No wonder one of God’s requirements for his worshippers is that they “love kindness”!—Micah 6:8.

“One kind word can warm three winter months.” As eloquently expressed in this Oriental saying, a small kindness can go a long way. When it comes with a proper motive, and especially when coupled with one’s love for God, it can warm the hearts of all involved. Even when your kindness is not appreciated, that does not mean it is wasted. It is valued in the sight of God. The Bible assures us that kindness shown to others is actually “lending to Jehovah.” (Proverbs 19:17) Why not watch for opportunities to express kindness to those around you?

*Showing kindness to  
others is like “lending  
to Jehovah”*







# “The Nations Will Have to Know That I Am Jehovah”

**H**OW would you feel if you were accused of a crime you did not commit? And what if that crime caused much suffering to others, including many innocent people? Surely you would want to clear your name! Are you aware that Jehovah faces a similar challenge? Today many wrongly blame God for the injustice and suffering in this world. Is Jehovah concerned about clearing his name? Indeed, he is! Consider what is said in the book of Ezekiel.—**Read Ezekiel 39:7.**

“I shall no more let my holy name be profaned,” Jehovah says. When humans blame him for injustice, they are profaning his name. How so? In the Bible, “name” often denotes reputation. One reference work says that God’s name refers to “what is known of him—his revelation of himself; it also represents his fame, and then his honour.” Jehovah’s name embraces his reputation. What is known of Jehovah when it comes to injustice? He hates it! He also has compassion for its victims.\* (Exodus 22:22-24) When humans claim that God is responsible for the very things he abhors, they are sully his reputation. They are thus “treating [his] name with disrespect.”—Psalm 74:10.

Notice that Jehovah twice uses the expression “my holy name.” (Verse 7) In the Bible, Jehovah’s name is associated with the terms “holy” and “holiness” numerous times. The word “holy” conveys the idea of separateness; it also denotes cleanness and purity. Jehovah’s

name is holy because the God who bears it is holy—completely separated from anything that is sinful and unclean. Can you see why those who blame Jehovah for wickedness are heaping the greatest possible reproach upon his “holy name”?

Jehovah’s purpose to clear his name by means of his Kingdom is the main theme of the Bible. That theme is emphasized in the book of Ezekiel, which repeatedly states that “the nations will have to know that I am Jehovah.” (Ezekiel 36:23; 37:28; 38:23; 39:7) Notice that the nations will not *choose* whether to know that he is Jehovah or not. Rather, they “will *have to know*.” In other words, Jehovah purposes to take action that will compel the nations on earth to recognize that he is who he says he is—Jehovah, the Sovereign Lord, whose name stands for all that is holy, pure, and clean.

The oft repeated promise “the nations will have to know that I am Jehovah” is good news for those who long to see the end of injustice and suffering. Jehovah will soon fulfill that promise and clear his name of all reproach. He will eliminate wickedness and those who promote it but will preserve alive those who recognize and respect his name and what it stands for. (Proverbs 18:10) Are you moved to learn how you can draw closer to Jehovah, the holy God, who is “a lover of justice”?—Psalm 37:9-11, 28.

---

**SUGGESTED BIBLE READING FOR SEPTEMBER:**  
■ **Ezekiel 39–Daniel 3**


---

\* See the article “Draw Close to God—A Lover of Justice,” in the November 1, 2008, issue of *The Watchtower*.



## DID YOU KNOW?

### How were letters sent in Bible times?




■ Official Persian government dispatches dealing with national interests were entrusted to a State postal service. The Bible book of Esther describes how the Persian system worked: “[Mordecai] proceeded to write in the name of King Ahasuerus and do the sealing with the king’s signet ring and send written documents by the hand of the couriers on horses, riding post horses used in the royal service, sons of speedy mares.” (Esther 8:10) The Roman Empire had a similar service for administrative and military dispatches.

Private mail, such as letters written by the apostle Paul or others, did not qualify to be carried by such means. If

one was wealthy, he could dispatch a slave to deliver a letter. Most, however, would have letters conveyed by acquaintances, or even strangers, who were traveling in the right direction. Family, friends, soldiers, or merchants were all potential postmen. An important concern, of course, would be how trustworthy the letter carrier was and whether he would convey the message carefully and intact. The Bible suggests that Paul entrusted at least some of his letters to fellow Christians who were traveling.—Ephesians 6:21, 22; Colossians 4:7.

### How were buying and selling done in ancient Israel?



■ The nation’s economy was mainly based on farming, herding, and bartering. The Bible mentions markets at city gates—“the Sheep Gate,” “the Fish Gate,” and “the Gate of the Potsherd.” (Nehemiah 3:1, 3; Jeremiah 19:2) These names appear to refer to the merchandise sold in each location. The Scriptures also mention Jerusalem’s “street of the bakers,” as well as a number of trade goods.—Jeremiah 37:21.

What about prices? One Bible commentary states: “Prices naturally fluctuated through the centuries, and it is difficult to ascertain how much a particular commodity may have cost at a given time and place.” Still, information from ancient sources, including the

Bible, shows that even back then, prices were subject to inflation. For example, slaves were commonly traded in antiquity. Joseph was sold for 20 silver pieces, which may have been shekels, probably the average price for a slave during the 18th century B.C.E. (Genesis 37:28) Three hundred years later, the price was 30 shekels. (Exodus 21:32) By the eighth century B.C.E., the price was 50 shekels. (2 Kings 15:20) Two centuries later, during the Persian period, prices went as high as 90 shekels or more. Apparently, rising prices are not just a plague of modern-day life.

RELIEF OF A  
FRUIT MARKET

© DeA Picture Library / Art  
Resource, NY

## Do Jehovah's Witnesses have women ministers?

■ Yes, worldwide Jehovah's Witnesses have several million women ministers. They are a great host of preachers of the good news of God's Kingdom. Psalm 68:11 says prophetically of those ministers: "Jehovah himself gives the saying; the women telling the good news are a large army."

However, do not confuse the ministry of women who are Jehovah's Witnesses with the ministry performed by female clerics of other religions. There is a striking contrast that sets them apart. In what ways are they different?

The audience of their ministry is different. Clergywomen, particularly of Christendom, assume leadership roles *within* their congregations, and their main audience is made up of members of the flock. For women ministers of Jehovah's Witnesses, the main audience of their preaching is *outside* the congregation, namely the public, whom they meet in their house-to-house ministry and elsewhere.

Another way in which women ministers of Jehovah's Witnesses differ from those in other religions is their activity in the congregation. Female clerics of Christendom and other churches preside over and instruct members of their congregation in the dogma of their religion. Women ministers of Jehovah's Witnesses, however, do not teach in the congregation when baptized men are present. Only men who are appointed as teachers do so.—1 Timothy 3:2; James 3:1.

The Bible describes only men as being charged with oversight of a congregation. Notice the pattern set by the apostle Paul when he wrote to a fellow overseer, Titus: "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you might . . . make appointments of older men in city after city." Paul added that each man so appointed had to be



"free from accusation, a husband of one wife." (Titus 1:5, 6) Paul gave similar instructions to Timothy in his pastoral letter: "If any man is reaching out for an office of overseer, he is desirous of a fine work. The overseer should therefore be irreprehensible, a husband of one wife, . . . qualified to teach."—1 Timothy 3:1, 2.

Why are oversight functions in the congregation limited to men? Paul says: "I do not permit a woman to teach, or to exercise authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve." (1 Timothy 2:12, 13) Thus, the order of creation indicates God's purpose in the delegation of teaching and oversight.

Ministers of Jehovah follow the example of their Leader, Jesus Christ. The disciple Luke wrote about Jesus' ministry: "He went journeying from city to city and from village to village, preaching and declaring the good news of the kingdom of God." Later, Jesus sent out his followers to do the same work: "They went through the territory from village to village, declaring the good news."—Luke 8:1; 9:2-6.

Today, ministers of Jehovah—male and female—have an active share in carrying out what Jesus foretold: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come."—Matthew 24:14.





## A LETTER FROM GREECE

# Preaching in Europe's Southernmost Frontier



**T**HE imposing Levká Mountains of the island of Crete slowly slip away as our boat heads for a small plateau jutting out from the depths of the Mediterranean. On board is our group of 13, who are looking forward to a preaching trip to the island of Gavdos, a tiny dot on the map, which marks Europe's southernmost frontier.

It seems that we should have a smooth journey on this hot summer day. But soon gusts of wind lash the sea into a fury, causing the boat to bob like a cork. Feeling sick, I recall the Bible account of the apostle Paul, who experienced a violent storm in these waters centuries ago—when Gavdos was known as Cauda. (Acts 27:13-17) I only hope that we will make it safely to Gavdos.

At last we see our destination, a rocky outcrop with cliffs plunging into the sea. It is relatively flat, only about 1,000 feet (300 m) high, with no defining peaks. Thick growths

of pine trees and scrub cover most of this island of roughly ten square miles (26 sq km). In some areas, coastal junipers go right down to the shores.

At one time the island had about 8,000 inhabitants. Today, the number of permanent residents is fewer than 40 people. Modern civilization seems to have bypassed Gavdos. Even though freighters and tankers often sail by its coasts, the island has only an infrequent ferry connection with Crete, often delayed or canceled because of bad weather.

We have come to Gavdos to offer the people something cheerful and uplifting—a sure hope for a better future and the prospect of endless life in perfect health. As our boat gets ready to dock, we are eager to go ashore to share such good news.

Having been tossed about for four and a half hours, our pale faces betray that the trip to Gavdos was hardly a relaxing cruise. But a refreshing nap and a cup of coffee perk us up nicely. After a brief review of the Bible account about the apostle Paul's trip, as well as an earnest prayer, we are ready to begin our work.



*Trypiti Cape, the southernmost tip of Europe*

The local people are friendly and hospitable. They invite us into their homes and offer us refreshments. In addition to sharing the good news from the Bible with them, we respond by extending practical help when needed. While speaking to a woman, one member of our group who is an electrician notices a broken appliance in her place of business and offers to fix it. The woman is touched. She accepts the Bible literature we offer and commends us and our ministry. Another woman expresses her appreciation and says, "Your work is from God, not from men, and this is obvious because you came to preach on this remote island."

The Bible literature we brought along seems to be greatly appreciated by the people. One man accepts the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines and wants more literature to read during the winter months. Another man not only wants some of our literature for himself but also asks for more to put in his shop for his clients to read. He gives us his contact details so that we can mail him the magazines every month. One family is very impressed when they are shown that their small island is mentioned in the Bible. They also happily accept our magazines.

Although such responses are very encouraging, the visit to Gavdos brings back sad personal memories for some of us. Near Sarakíniko Bay, there is a building that once housed political exiles. Emmanuel Lionoudakis, one of Jehovah's Witnesses, was exiled here in the late 1930's for his preaching activity.\* Gavdos of that time has been described as a "barren island producing only deadly scorpions, a place where many . . . died of starvation, privations and diseases, [a place] which has been rightfully called the island of death." Lionoudakis fished for food, though

\* For the life story of Emmanuel Lionoudakis, see *The Watchtower*, September 1, 1999, pages 25-29.



*Sarakíniko Bay, showing a building that housed the exiles and a plaque commemorating them*

he was also busy preaching to other detainees, being the only Witness here. Seeing the place where he stayed some 70 years ago, his daughter, son-in-law, and granddaughter are touched to the heart. For us his example is an inspiration to remain loyal and active in the ministry.

For those exiled here, Gavdos was hardly a tourist paradise. But for us, it proves to be a welcoming place as we preach in every part of the island this weekend, placing 46 magazines and nine brochures with the warm-hearted people there. How we look forward to seeing our new friends again!

Before we know it, the time has come for us to leave. But once again the weather is against us, and our 5:00 p.m. departure is postponed. We embark at midnight, preparing ourselves for another rough trip. Finally, we depart at 3:00 a.m., and after being tossed about for five hours on stormy seas, we make it to Crete. We are exhausted as we set our unsteady feet on dry land, but we are glad that we were able to make Jehovah's name known on the island of Gavdos. (Isaiah 42:12) All in the group agree that the effort was well worth it. The hardship we experienced will soon be forgotten, but we are sure that the memory of this trip will remain indelibly embedded in our hearts.



Courtesy of Hellenic Post





## GOD'S NAME MADE KNOWN IN **SWAHILI**

“Swahili.” To many that language brings to mind visions of Africa and wild animals roaming the grasslands of the Serengeti. Yet, there is much more to Swahili and the people who speak it.



**S**WAHILI is a language spoken by as many as 100 million people in at least 12 countries across central and eastern Africa.\* It is the national or official language in several countries, such as Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. And in the surrounding lands, it serves as a common tongue, enabling people from different regions to carry on commerce and communicate easily.

Swahili has played a very important role in unifying the people of East Africa. For example, in Tanzania alone there are at least 114 different tribal languages spoken. Imagine traveling just 25 to 50 miles (40-80 km) from your home and meeting people who speak a language completely different from yours! And in some cases all the people who speak a certain language live in only a few small villages. How would you communicate with them? It is not hard to see why having a common language is so beneficial.

### **History of Swahili**

It is believed that Swahili has been spoken since at least the tenth century. It became a written language in the 16th cen-

\* Swahili in various forms is used in these countries.





tury. Those who learn to speak Swahili soon realize that a number of the words have an Arabic feel. In fact, at least 20 percent of the words in Swahili are of Arabic origin, while the majority of the remainder are of African origin. Thus, it is not surprising that for several hundred years, Swahili was written with Arabic script.

Today, Swahili is written in the Roman script. What happened? Why the change? For the answer, we must go back to the mid-19th century when the first European missionaries arrived in East Africa, intent on sharing the message of the Bible with the native inhabitants.

### God's Word First Arrives in East Africa

In 1499, during Vasco da Gama's epic voyage around the southern tip of Africa, Portuguese missionaries introduced Catholicism to East Africa by setting up a mission in Zanzibar. However, within 200 years, the Portuguese along with "Christianity" were ousted from the region by local opposition.

It would be another 150 years before God's Word again made the journey to East Africa. This time it was brought there by a German missionary, Johann Ludwig Krapf. When he arrived in Mombasa, Kenya, in 1844, the reli-

	In the beginning	created	God	the heaven and
1.	Mooanzo	alioomba	Mooigniazimoongo	oowingo na
		the earth.		n'tee.
	And was	earth without form	void	darkness
2.	Yalikooa	n'tee aina	oozoree na toopoo	; yalikooa keeza
	upon	depth and the spirit	of God	was
	katika shimo	na roorkhoo	ya Mooigniazimoongo	yali
	moving	water.		
	ikipepēa	katika	madjee.	
	Said		let there be light	and there was
3.	Alinēna	Mooigniazimoongo,	iwa	nooroo, ikāwa
	light.			
	nooroo.			

### Johann Krapf's 1847 translation of Genesis 1:1-3 into Swahili

gious practice on the coast of East Africa was predominately Muslim, while many of the peoples who lived inland held to their traditional, animistic religious beliefs. Krapf believed that it was vital that the Bible be made available to all.

Krapf did not waste any time getting started with a study of the Swahili language. In June 1844, shortly after his arrival, he began the challenging task of translating the Bible. Sadly, the very next month, he suffered a tragic loss—the death of his wife of two years, followed by that of their infant daughter just a few days later. Though no doubt grieved by this, he continued the vital task of translating the Bible. In 1847, the first three chapters of the book of Genesis were published and became the first printed text in the Swahili language.

Krapf was the first to use Roman script instead of the customary Arabic script for writing Swahili. Among the reasons he gave for abandoning the Arabic script were that "the Arabic alphabet would only be an encumbrance on the Europeans" who would later be learning the language and that "the Roman script would make it easier for 'the Natives in studying European languages.'" The Arabic script continued to be used by some

ي مَسِيحَ مُوَانِ وَدَاوُدَ  
سَحَاقَ آسَحَاكَ أَكْزَا  
نَدْعُ زَاكٍ يُونَهُ أَكْزَا

*A section of Matthew chapter 1  
in Swahili Arabic script, 1891*

Tunza. Katika Kitabu hiki, neno hili BWANA, au  
MUNGU, lionekanapo kuandikwa hivi kwa herufi  
kubwa, ni kuonyesha hilo **JINA** lilo takatifu sana  
la Mwenyezi Mungu yaani **YEHOVA**, walilolitungia  
Wayahudi, kwa lugha ya Kiebrania.

*The paragraph containing God's name,  
Jehovah, on an opening page of the  
"Swahili Union Version"*

for many years; portions of the Bible were published in it. However, using the Roman script has indeed made it easier for many to learn Swahili. No doubt many missionaries and other students of Swahili are very happy that this change was made.

In addition to pioneering the translation of God's Word into Swahili, Krapf laid the groundwork for later translators. He produced the first grammar book on Swahili, as well as a dictionary of that language.

### God's Name in Swahili

In the initial publication of the first three chapters of Genesis, God's name was simply translated "Almighty God." However, toward the end of the 19th century, several other men arrived in East Africa who carried on the work of translating the entire Bible into Swahili. Among them were Johann Rebmann, William Taylor, Harry Binns, Edward Steere, Francis Hodgson, and Arthur Madan.

Noteworthy in some of those early translations was the inclusion of God's name, not in just a few places but throughout the Hebrew Scriptures! Those translating in Zanzibar rendered the divine name "Yahuwa," while the ones based in Mombasa translated it "Jehova."

By 1895 the entire Bible was available in Swahili. In the following decades, several other translations were made available,

though some of them did not receive a large distribution. During the early years of the 20th century, much effort was put into standardizing Swahili in East Africa. This led to the production of the *Swahili Union Version* of the Bible in 1952, which has become the translation with the widest circulation. This also resulted in "Yehova" becoming the most commonly accepted translation of God's name in Swahili.

Regrettably, as those early translations ceased to be printed, the divine name began to disappear along with them. Some of the newer translations have removed it entirely, while others retain it in just a few locations. For example, in the *Union Version*, God's name appeared only 15 times, and in its 2006 revision, that name is found but 11 times.\*

While that translation omits nearly every occurrence of the divine name, it does have a noteworthy feature. Prominently displayed on one of the opening pages is a clear statement that God's name is Jehovah. This has proved to be very useful in helping truth-seekers to learn the personal name of our heavenly Father from their own copy of the Bible.

This, though, is not the end of the story. In 1996 the *New World Translation of the Chris-*

\* It is found at Genesis 22:14; Exodus 6:2-8 (two times); 17:15 (as Yahweh); Judges 6:24; Psalm 68:20; 83:18; Isaiah 12:2; 26:4; 49:14; and Jeremiah 16:21.

### *Early translations showing the divine name rendered "Yahuwa" and "Jehova"*

bwini katika ukiwa wa Yerusalemi. N  
mwekea **Yahuwa** Muungu uso wangu k  
ka kwa sala, na kwa kuombea, na kwa  
fanya na kwa sala na kwa mifika

hai; basi Adamu akawa nafusi  
hai. 8 Kisha **Jehova** Mwenyezi  
kafanya busitani huko upande wa  
hariki, katika Eden; akamweka

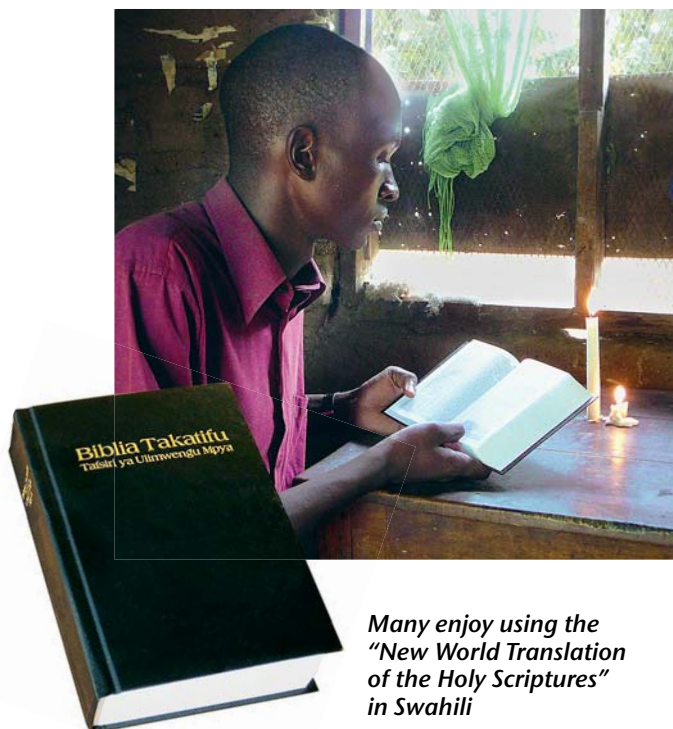
*tian Greek Scriptures* was released in Swahili. This is the first Swahili translation to restore Jehovah's name in 237 places from Matthew to Revelation. That was followed up in 2003 by the release of the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, the complete Bible, in Swahili. To date, all told, some 900,000 copies of Swahili editions have been printed.

No longer is God's name buried under certain titles or relegated to an explanatory note in the foreword. Now, when honesthearted people open up the *New World Translation* in Swahili, they are drawn closer to Jehovah each time they read one of the more than 7,000 occurrences of his name.

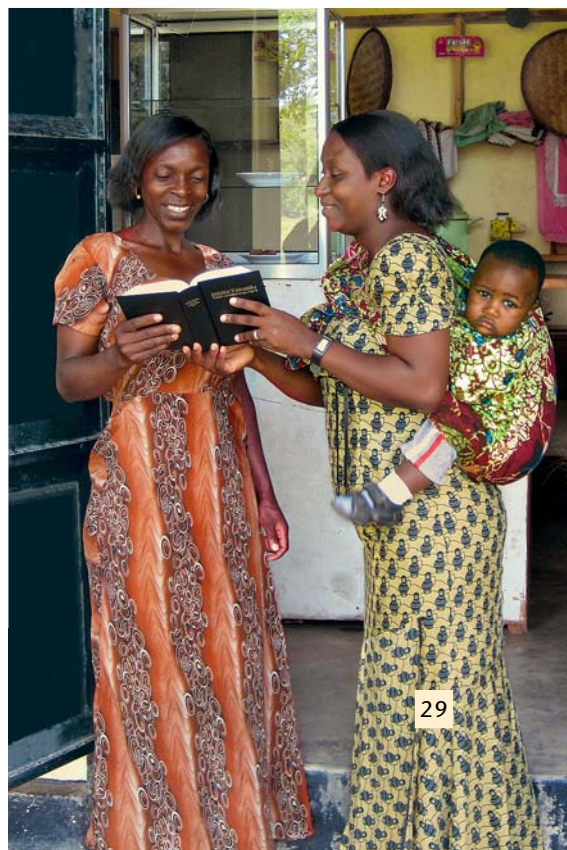
This translation has also endeavored to use an easy-to-understand, modern Swahili that is accessible to all Swahili speakers in East Africa. In addition, a number of Scriptural errors that have crept into many other translations have been removed. As a result, the reader can feel confident that he or she is reading "correct words of truth" as they were inspired by our Creator, Jehovah God.—Ecclesiastes 12:10.

Many have expressed their appreciation for the *New World Translation* in Swahili. Vicent, a 21-year-old full-time minister of Jehovah's Witnesses, said, "I was overjoyed because of the simple Swahili in the *New World Translation* and because it has put Jehovah's name back in the places from which others removed it." Frieda, a mother of three, feels that this translation has made it easier for her to explain Bible truths to people.

From its humble beginnings, the task of translating God's Word into Swahili has continued on for over 150 years. Jesus said that he 'had made his Father's name manifest.' (John 17:6) Now, by using the *New World Translation*, the more than 76,000 Swahili-speaking Witnesses of Jehovah in central and eastern Africa rejoice to have a share in making Jehovah's name known to all.



Many enjoy using the "New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures" in Swahili







# Gehazi Was Ruined by Greed



**HAVE** you ever wanted something very much?—\* If so, you are like most people. But **should you try to get what you want by telling a lie?**— No, you shouldn't. A person who does that is greedy. Let's see how a man named Gehazi was ruined by greed. He was a servant of Elisha, a prophet of the true God, Jehovah.

Elisha and Gehazi lived long ago, about a thousand years before God's Son, Jesus, was born on earth. Jehovah used Elisha to do really wonderful things—to perform miracles! For example, the Bible tells about an important man in the Syrian army who had the bad disease leprosy. No one could heal him, but Elisha does.

When Elisha is used by God to help people get well, he never accepts money. **Do you know why?**— Because Elisha knows that those miracles come from Jehovah—not himself. When Naaman is healed, he is so happy that he wants to give Elisha gifts of gold, silver, and fine clothes. Elisha won't take anything, but Gehazi wants these gifts very much.

After Naaman leaves, Gehazi chases after him without telling Elisha. When he catches up with Naaman, **do you know what Gehazi tells him?**— 'Elisha sent me to tell you that two visitors just came. He would like to have two changes of clothes so that he can give them to the men.'

\* If you are reading with a child, the dash provides a reminder to pause and encourage the child to express himself.

But that is a lie! Gehazi has made up the story about the two visitors. He tells it because he wants to have the clothes that Naaman tried to give to Elisha. Naaman, of course, does not know this. So he is happy to give Gehazi the gifts. Naaman even gives more things to Gehazi than Gehazi asks for. ***Do you know what happens next?—***

When Gehazi gets back home, Elisha asks him: 'Where have you been?'

'Oh, nowhere,' Gehazi answers. Jehovah, however, has let Elisha know what Gehazi has done. So Elisha says: 'This is no time to accept money and clothes!'

Gehazi has taken money and clothes that do not belong to him. So God makes Naaman's leprosy come upon Gehazi. ***What do you think we can learn from this?—*** One thing it teaches us is that we should not make up and tell stories that are not true.

***Why did Gehazi make up a story that was, in fact, a lie?—*** It was because Gehazi was greedy. He wanted to have what did not belong to him, and he tried to get those things by lying. Because of this he suffered a terrible disease for the rest of his life.

Really, Gehazi suffered something worse than leprosy. ***Do you know what that was?—*** It was the loss of God's favor, the loss of his love. May we never do anything to cause us to lose that! Instead, let us be kind and ready to share the things we have.

READ IN YOUR BIBLE

2 Kings 5:5, 20-27; Jude 21

John 15:10







How will true respect and dignity come to all women?

SEE PAGES 4-11.



Should you be concerned about being kind to all people?

SEE PAGES 18-20.



Learn about the eventful history of how God's name, Jehovah, came to be in the Swahili Bible. SEE PAGES 26-29.



## Would you welcome a visit?

Even in this troubled world, you can gain happiness from accurate Bible knowledge of God, his Kingdom, and his wonderful purpose for mankind. If you would welcome further information or would like to have someone visit you to conduct a free Bible study, please write to Jehovah's Witnesses at the appropriate address listed on page 4.