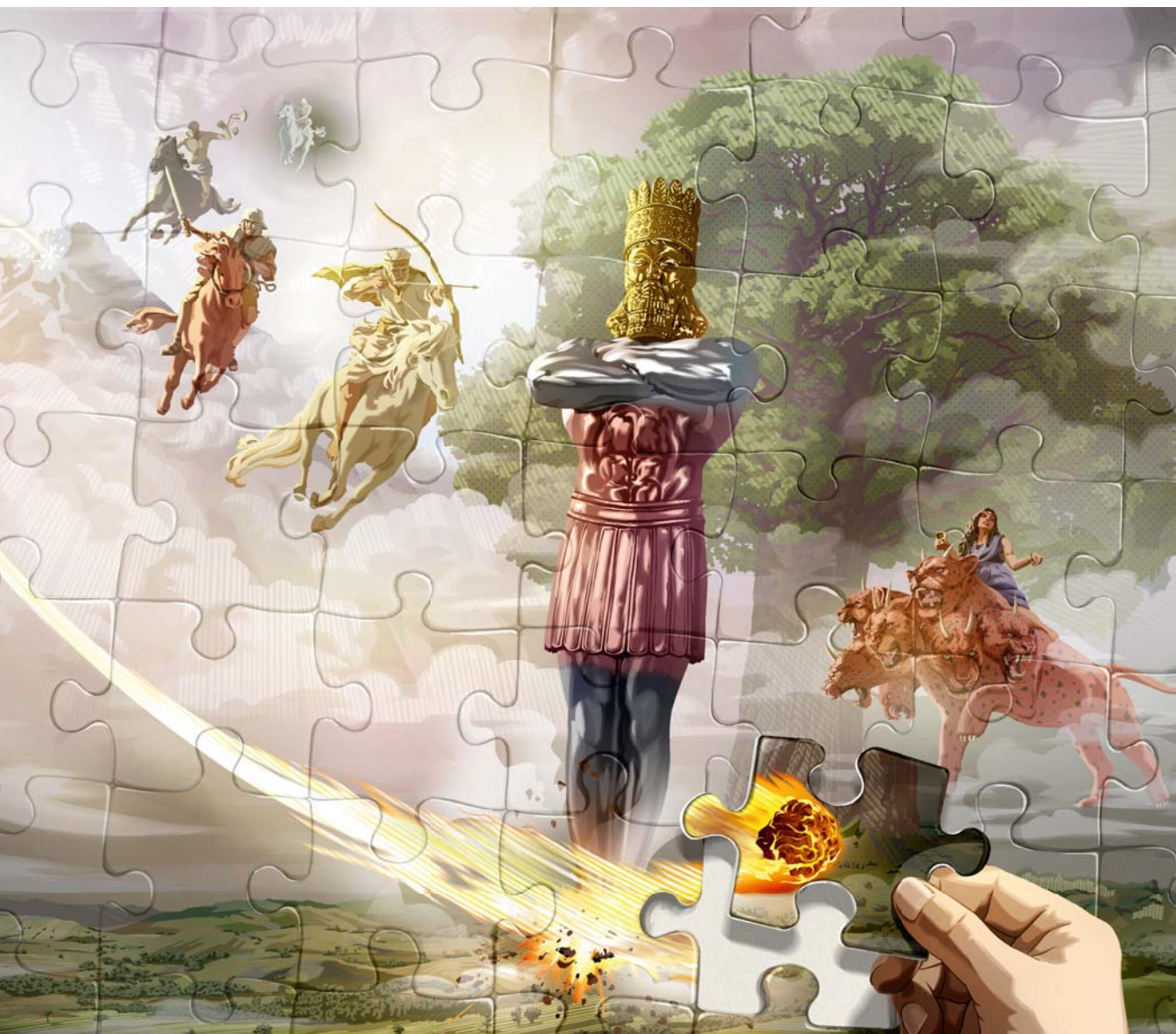


JULY 2022

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
SEPTEMBER 5–OCTOBER 2, 2022

SONG 22

The Kingdom Is in Place
—Let It Come!

PREVIEW

We are living in one of the most exciting times in history! God's Kingdom has been established, just as was foretold in a number of Bible prophecies. This article will examine some of those prophecies with a view to deepening our faith in Jehovah and helping us to remain calm and confident now and in the days ahead.

The Kingdom Is in Place!

“The kingdom of the world has become the Kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ.”—REV. 11:15.

WHEN you look at world conditions, do you find it difficult to maintain a positive outlook? Family ties are fraying. People in general are becoming more and more violent, selfish, and aggressive. Many find it difficult to trust those in authority. But these very conditions can give you confidence. Why? Because people are acting exactly as was foretold in a remarkable prophecy about “the last days.” (2 Tim. 3:1-5) The fulfillment of this prophecy, which is impossible for any sincere person to deny, provides evidence that Christ Jesus has begun ruling as King of God's Kingdom. But this is only one of many prophecies concerning the Kingdom. It will be faith-strengthening for us to review other prophecies that have been fulfilled in recent years.

² In this article, we will consider (1) a prophecy that helps us discern when the Kingdom was established, (2) prophecies that help us perceive Jesus' invisible presence as King of God's Kingdom, and (3) prophecies that reveal how enemies of God's Kingdom will come to their end. We will see that these prophecies fit together like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle to provide a clear pic-

1. Of what are we certain, and why?
2. What will we consider in this article, and why? (Comment on the cover picture.)

ture of where we are in Jehovah's timetable of events.

HOW TO KNOW WHEN THE KINGDOM WAS ESTABLISHED

³ The prophecy found at Daniel 7:13, 14 assures us that Christ Jesus will be the ideal Ruler of God's Kingdom. People from every nation will gladly "serve him," and he will never be replaced as Ruler. Another prophecy in the book of Daniel foretold that Jesus would receive his Kingdom at the end of a prophetic period of seven times. Is it possible to know when that joyous event occurred?

⁴ **Read Daniel 4:10-17.** The "seven times" represent a period of 2,520 years. That time period began in 607 B.C.E. when the Babylonians removed the last king from Jehovah's throne in Jerusalem. It ended in 1914 C.E. when Jehovah enthroned Jesus—"the one who has the legal right"—as King of God's Kingdom.*—Ezek. 21:25-27.

⁵ **How can this prophecy benefit us?** Knowing about the "seven times" reassures us that Jehovah fulfills his promises right on time. Just as he set a definite time for the establishment of

* See lesson 32 point 4 in the *Enjoy Life Forever!* book, and on jw.org, watch the video *God's Kingdom Began Ruling in 1914*.

3. What assurance does the prophecy found at Daniel 7:13, 14 give us concerning the King of God's Kingdom?

4. Explain how Daniel 4:10-17 leads us to the year when Christ would take up Kingdom power. (See also footnote.)

5. What is one way we can benefit from the prophecy about the "seven times"?

his Kingdom, he will also see to it that all the other prophecies will be fulfilled according to his timetable. Yes, Jehovah's day "will not be late!"—Hab. 2:3.

HOW TO PERCEIVE CHRIST'S PRESENCE AS KING OF GOD'S KINGDOM

⁶ Near the end of his earthly ministry, Jesus foretold certain world events that would help his followers know that he had begun ruling in heaven. Among other things, he mentioned wars, famines, and earthquakes. He also foretold that there would be pestilences, or diseases, "in one place after another"—of which the recent COVID-19 pandemic is an example. These events are part of what the Bible calls "the sign" of Christ's presence. (Matt. 24:3, 7; Luke 21:7, 10, 11) More than 60 years after his death and return to heaven, Jesus gave the apostle John further confirmation that these events would occur. **(Read Revelation 6:2-8.)** All these events have occurred since Jesus took up Kingdom power in 1914.

⁷ Why did world conditions take a turn for the worse when Jesus became King? Revelation 6:2 gives an important detail—Jesus' first mission as newly crowned King was to wage war. Against whom? Against the Devil and his demons. According to Revelation chapter 12, Satan lost the battle, and he and the demons

6. (a) What is the visible evidence of Christ's invisible rule in heaven? (b) How is this evidence confirmed by the prophecy found at Revelation 6:2-8?

7. Why has Jesus' rule resulted in woe for the earth?



We do not rejoice over bad news, but seeing Bible prophecies fulfilled gives us confidence that God's Kingdom is in place (See paragraph 8)

were hurled down to the earth. Enraged, Satan began to vent his anger on humankind, resulting in “woe for the earth.”—Rev. 12:7-12.

⁸ How can these prophecies benefit us? World events and the noticeable change in people's attitude would help us discern that Jesus has become King. So rather than become upset when we see people act selfishly and hatefully, we remember that their actions are fulfilling Bible prophecy. The Kingdom is in place! (Ps. 37:1) And we can expect world distress to increase as Armageddon draws ever nearer. (Mark 13:8; 2 Tim. 3:13) Are you not thankful to our loving heavenly Father for helping us to make sense of our turbulent times?

8. As we see prophecies about the Kingdom being fulfilled, how can we benefit?

HOW ENEMIES OF GOD'S KINGDOM WILL COME TO THEIR END

⁹ Read Daniel 2:28, 31-35. We see this prophecy being fulfilled today. Nebuchadnezzar's dream pointed to what would happen “in the final part of the days,” after the start of Christ's rule. Jesus' earthly enemies would include the final world power foretold in the Bible, the one represented by the “feet of iron and of clay.” This world power has already appeared. It came into existence during World War I when Britain and the United States forged a special partnership, the Anglo-American alliance. Nebuchadnezzar's dream image also foretold at least two things about

9. How does the prophecy recorded at Daniel 2: 28, 31-35 describe the final world power, and when did it come into existence?

this world power that would distinguish it from the previous kingdoms.

¹⁰ First, unlike the previous world powers mentioned in the vision, the Anglo-American alliance is symbolized, not by a solid metal like gold or silver, but by a mixture of iron and clay. The clay represents “the offspring of mankind,” or the common people. (Dan. 2:43, ftn.) As is plainly evident today, their influence in elections, civil rights campaigns, mass protests, and labor unions weakens the ability of this world power to implement its policies.

¹¹ Second, as represented by the feet of the immense image, Anglo-America is the last world power foretold in the Bible. It will not be succeeded by another political power. Rather, it will come to a swift end at Armageddon when God’s Kingdom crushes it and all other human governments.*—Rev. 16:13, 14, 16; 19:19, 20.

¹² *How can this prophecy benefit us?* Daniel’s prophecy provides additional evidence that we are living in the time of the end. More than 2,500 years ago, Daniel foretold that after Babylon, four other world powers would have a significant impact on God’s peo-

* For more information on Daniel’s prophecy, see the June 15, 2012, issue of *The Watchtower*, pp. 14-19.

10. (a) How does Daniel’s prophecy accurately portray the Anglo-American alliance? (b) What danger must we avoid? (See the box “Beware of the Clay!”)

11. How does the arrival of the Anglo-American World Power strengthen our confidence that we are living in the time of the end?

12. What additional evidence does Daniel’s prophecy provide that gives us comfort and hope?

ple. Furthermore, he revealed that the Anglo-American World Power would be the last of these. This gives us comfort and hope that soon God’s Kingdom will sweep away every trace of human rule and take full charge of the earth.—Dan. 2:44.

¹³ **Read Revelation 17:9-12.** The destruction caused by World War I led to the fulfillment of yet another Bible prophecy about the last days. World leaders wanted to ensure future world peace. So in January 1920, they established the League of Nations, which was replaced by the United Nations in October 1945. This organization is called “an eighth king.” But it is not a world power. Its strength and influence depend on the political powers that support it. The Bible symbolically refers to those powers as “ten kings.”

¹⁴ **Read Revelation 17:3-5.** Under divine inspiration, the apostle John saw in vision a prostitute, “Babylon the Great,” which symbolizes the world empire of false religion. What does the vision reveal? False religious organizations have long cooperated closely with the world’s political powers and have given them their blessing. Soon, however, Jehovah will put it into the hearts of the political powers “to carry out his thought.” With what result? Those political powers, the “ten kings,” will turn

13. What do the “eighth king” and the “ten kings,” mentioned at Revelation 17:9-12, symbolize, and how has this prophecy been fulfilled?

14-15. (a) What does Revelation 17:3-5 reveal about “Babylon the Great”? (b) What is happening to the support for false religion?

Beware of the Clay!

In Daniel's prophecy, the clay in the feet of the immense image symbolizes the common people. They have the power to influence political leaders and their policies. (Dan. 2:41-43) Could a danger lie there for us? Yes! If we do not safeguard our heart, we might compromise our neutrality. For example, we could be tempted

to embrace the views of those who advocate change by means of protests or political endeavors. (Prov. 4:23; 24:21, ftn.) How can we avoid that danger? We must remember that Satan is the world's ruler. (1 John 5:19) And God's Kingdom is our only hope.—Ps. 146:3-5.



on false religious organizations and destroy them.—Rev. 17:1, 2, 16, 17.

¹⁵ How do we know that the end of Babylon the Great is near? To answer that question, it is helpful to remember that the ancient city of Babylon was partly protected by the waters of the mighty Euphrates River. The book of Revelation compares the millions of supporters of Babylon the Great to protective “waters.” (Rev. 17:15) But it also reveals that the waters would ‘dry up,’ indicating that the world empire of false

religion would lose many of its supporters. (Rev. 16:12) In fulfillment of that prophecy, today a considerable number of people have abandoned false religion and have begun looking elsewhere for answers.

¹⁶ ***How can these prophecies benefit us?*** The appearance of the United Nations and the decline of support for false religion add to the evidence that we are

16. How can we benefit from understanding the prophecies about the appearance of the United Nations and the end of Babylon the Great?

living in the last days. Although Babylon's symbolic waters of support are drying up, the final end of false religious organizations will come by a different means. As mentioned earlier, Jehovah will put it into the hearts of the "ten kings"—the political powers supporting the United Nations—"to carry out his thought." The end of false religion by those nations will come suddenly, catching the world by surprise.* (Rev. 18:8-10) The destruction of Babylon the Great will be world-shaking and may cause hardships, but God's people will have at least two reasons to rejoice. This long-standing enemy of Jehovah God will be gone forever, and our deliverance from this wicked system of things will be at hand!—Luke 21:28.

FACE THE FUTURE WITH CONFIDENCE

¹⁷ Daniel foretold that "true knowl-

* For more details about what the near future holds, see chapter 21 of the book *God's Kingdom Rules!*

17-18. (a) How can we continue to fortify our faith? (b) What will we discuss in the next article?

edge" would "become abundant." And indeed it has! We have received insight into prophecies about our time. (Dan. 12:4, 9, 10) The accuracy of these prophecies leaves us in awe of Jehovah and his inspired Word. (Isa. 46:10; 55:11) So continue to fortify your faith by diligently studying the Scriptures and by helping others to develop an approved relationship with Jehovah. He will safeguard all who fully lean on him, and he will give them "continuous peace."—Isa. 26:3.

¹⁸ In the next article, we will focus on prophecies about the Christian congregation in the time of the end. As we will learn, these prophecies fit perfectly into the overall pattern of prophecies about the last days. We will see further evidence that Jesus—our reigning King—is actively involved with his loyal followers.

HOW DO THESE PROPHECIES INDICATE THAT GOD'S KINGDOM IS IN PLACE?

■ Daniel 4:10-17

■ Revelation 6:2-8

■ Daniel 2:28, 31-35;
Revelation 17:3-5, 9-12

SONG 13

Christ, Our Model

PREVIEW

Millions of men, women, and children are now zealously preaching the good news. Are you among them? If so, you are working under the oversight of our Lord Jesus Christ. In this article, we will consider evidence that Jesus is supervising the preaching work today. Meditating on this information will help us to be determined to continue serving Jehovah under the direction of Christ.

Support Our Overseer Jesus

“All authority has been given me in heaven and on the earth.”—MATT. 28:18.

TODAY it is God’s will that the good news of the Kingdom be preached in all the earth. (Mark 13:10; 1 Tim. 2:3, 4) This is Jehovah’s work, and it is so important that he has placed it under the direction of his beloved Son. We can be sure that under Jesus’ capable oversight, the preaching work will be completed to Jehovah’s satisfaction before the end comes.—Matt. 24:14.

² In this article, we will see how Jesus is using his “faithful and discreet slave” to provide spiritual food and to organize his followers for the greatest preaching campaign in history. (Matt. 24:45) We will also see what each one of us can do to support Jesus and the faithful slave.

JESUS OVERSEES THE PREACHING WORK

³ Jesus is overseeing the preaching work. How can we be sure of that? Shortly before he ascended to heaven, Jesus met with a number of his faithful followers on a mountain in Galilee. He told them: “All authority has been given me in heaven and on the earth.” Note his very next statement: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of people of all the nations.” (Matt. 28:18, 19) So, among other things, Jesus has been given the authority to direct the preaching work.

1. What is Jehovah’s will today?
2. What will we discuss in this article?
3. What authority has Jesus been given?

⁴ Jesus stated that the preaching and disciple-making work would be accomplished in “all the nations” and that he would be with his followers “all the days until the conclusion of the system of things.” (Matt. 28:20) Those statements clearly indicate that the preaching work would continue under Jesus’ supervision right down to our day.

⁵ Jesus was not worried that there would be a shortage of workers during the conclusion of the system of things. He knew that the prophetic words of the psalmist would be fulfilled: “Your people will offer themselves willingly on the day of your military force.” (Ps. 110:3) If you are sharing in the preaching work, you are supporting Jesus and the faithful slave and are helping to fulfill that prophecy. The work is going ahead, but there are challenges.

⁶ One challenge that Kingdom preachers face is opposition. Apostates, religious leaders, and politicians have given many the wrong impression about our work. If our relatives, acquaintances, and workmates are misled by this propaganda, they may pressure us to stop serving Jehovah and to stop preaching. In some countries, the opposition takes the form of intimidation, threats, arrests, and even imprisonment. We are not surprised at this reaction. Jesus foretold: “You will be hated by all the nations on account of my name.” (Matt.

24:9) The very fact that we are experiencing such hatred is proof that we have Jehovah’s approval. (Matt. 5:11, 12) The Devil is behind this opposition. But he is no match for Jesus! With Jesus’ support, the good news is reaching people of all nations. Consider the evidence.

⁷ As Kingdom preachers, we also face the challenge of overcoming a language barrier. In the revelation that he gave to the apostle John, Jesus disclosed that in our day the good news would overcome that obstacle. (**Read Revelation 14:6, 7.**) How so? We are giving as many people as possible a chance to respond to the Kingdom message. Today, people around the world can read Bible-based material on our jw.org website because it contains information in over 1,000 languages! Approval was given to translate the *Enjoy Life Forever!* book—our main study tool for making disciples—into more than 700 languages! Spiritual food has also been made available by means of video recordings for the deaf and publications in braille for the blind. We are seeing Bible prophecies being fulfilled. People “out of all the languages of the nations” are learning to speak the “pure language” of Bible truth. (Zech. 8:23; Zeph. 3:9) All of this is being accomplished under the capable oversight of Jesus Christ.

⁸ Today, well over 8,000,000 people in 240 lands are associating with Jehovah’s organization, and each year tens

4. Why can we be sure that Jesus is still supervising the preaching work?

5. What part are we having in the fulfillment of Psalm 110:3?

6. What is one challenge that Kingdom preachers face today?

7. What evidence do you see that Revelation 14:6, 7 is being fulfilled?

8. What have been the results of our preaching activity thus far?



1946

“Let God Be True”

1968

***The Truth That Leads to
Eternal Life***



1982

***You Can Live
Forever in Paradise
on Earth***



of thousands get baptized! More important than numbers, however, are the spiritual qualities, “the new personality,” that these new disciples have cultivated. (Col. 3:8-10) Many stopped being immoral, violent, prejudiced, and nationalistic. The prophecy recorded at Isaiah 2:4 is being fulfilled; they are ‘not learning war anymore.’ As we work hard to put on the new personality, we help draw people to God’s organization and we prove that we are following our overseer Christ Jesus. (John 13:35; 1 Pet. 2:12) None of this happens by accident. Jesus is giving us the help we need.

JESUS APPOINTS A SLAVE

⁹ Read Matthew 24:45-47. Jesus foretold that during the time of the end,

9. According to Matthew 24:45-47, what was foretold concerning the time of the end?

he would appoint a “faithful and discreet slave” to provide spiritual food. So we would expect that slave to be hard at work in our day. This has proved to be the case. Our overseer has used a small group of anointed men to provide God’s people and interested ones with spiritual “food at the proper time.” These men do not view themselves as masters over the faith of others. (2 Cor. 1:24) Instead, they recognize that Jesus Christ is the “leader and commander” of his people. —Isa. 55:4.

¹⁰ Since 1919 the faithful slave has prepared a variety of publications that have given newly interested ones their first taste of nourishing spiritual food. In 1921 the slave prepared the book *The*

10. Which of the publications shown in the artwork convinced you to walk on the path to everlasting life?

1995

**Knowledge
That Leads to
Everlasting Life**



2021

Enjoy Life Forever!



2005/2015

**What Does the Bible
Really Teach?/
What Can the
Bible Teach Us?**

Harp of God to help interested ones to learn basic Bible teachings. As times changed, additional publications were provided. Which publication helped you to come to know and love our heavenly Father? Was it “*Let God Be True*,” *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*, *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*, *Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life*, *What Does the Bible Really Teach?*, *What Can the Bible Teach Us?*, or *Enjoy Life Forever!*, our newest publication? All these publications were designed to meet a specific need at the time of their release.

¹¹ Newly interested people are not the only ones who need solid spiritual food. All of us do. The apostle Paul wrote: “Solid food belongs to mature people.” Paul added that applying such spiritu-

al sustenance would help us “to distinguish both right and wrong.” (Heb. 5: 14) In these difficult times when morals are at an all-time low, it can be a real challenge to adhere to Jehovah’s standards. But Jesus sees to it that we obtain the strength we need through appetizing spiritual food. The source of this food is God’s inspired Word, the Bible. The faithful slave prepares and distributes this food under Jesus’ direction.

¹² Like Jesus, we have given God’s name the prominence that it deserves. (John 17:6, 26) For example, in 1931 we adopted the Scriptural name Jehovah’s Witnesses, thus attaching ourselves in a very personal way to our heavenly Father. (Isa. 43:10-12) And since October of that year, the divine

11. Why is it vital that all of us receive spiritual food?

12. Like Jesus, how have we regarded God’s name?

Jehovah Blesses Our Preaching

- A couple from Central America have lived in Europe for over 15 years. When the pandemic broke out, the couple decided to preach to all their relatives and acquaintances back in Central America. To reach everyone, they sent more than 200 letters, using an electronic messaging application. They followed up with return visits and sent publication and video links to those who showed interest. Jehovah blessed their effort. Within eight months, the couple were conducting 14 Bible studies!
- During the November 2020 campaign—in which we distributed *The Watchtower* entitled “What Is God’s Kingdom?”—a brother decided to call an old classmate from elementary school. The man accepted the magazine and agreed to discuss it with the brother the following week. During their next conversation, the man said: “Before you called, I had prayed to God, asking him to help me find out what he wants from me.” The man accepted a Bible study, began attending meetings, and started applying what he was learning. He later told the brother: “In the past, I felt that something was missing in my life. Now I understand that it was Jehovah. I thank you every day for helping me to draw close to him.”

name has appeared on the front cover of each issue of this magazine. In addition, the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* has restored God’s name to its rightful place in his Word. What a contrast to the churches of Christendom that have removed Jehovah’s name from many of their Bible translations!

JESUS ORGANIZES HIS FOLLOWERS

¹³ By means of “the faithful and discreet slave,” Jesus has built up a remarkable organization on earth to promote pure worship. How do you feel about that organization? In response, perhaps you think of the words of the apostle Peter, who said to Jesus: “Whom shall we go away to? You have sayings of everlasting life.” (John 6:68) Where would any of us be today if we had not come in contact with Jehovah’s organization? Through it, Christ makes sure that we are well-fed spiritually. He also trains us to carry out our ministry effectively. Further, he helps us to put on “the new personality,” so that we are pleasing to Jehovah.—Eph. 4:24.

¹⁴ Jesus provides wise direction in times of crisis. The benefits of that direction were evident when the COVID-19 pandemic broke out. While many in the world were uncertain about what course to take, Jesus made sure that we received clear guidance to keep us safe. We were encouraged to wear

13. What convinces you that Jesus is using “the faithful and discreet slave” today? (John 6:68)

14. How have you benefited from being part of Jehovah’s organization during the COVID-19 pandemic?

face coverings when out in public and to practice physical distancing. The elders were reminded to maintain regular contact with all in the congregation and to be aware of their physical and spiritual needs. (Isa. 32:1, 2) We received additional direction and encouragement by means of Governing Body updates.

¹⁵ During the pandemic, we also received clear direction about how to hold congregation meetings and engage in the preaching work. Almost overnight, we began attending Christian meetings, assemblies, and conventions by means of videoconferencing tools. We also began witnessing almost entirely by letter and telephone. Jehovah blessed our efforts. Many branches have reported notable increases in the number of publishers. In fact, many have had encouraging experiences during this time.—See the box “Jehovah Blesses Our Preaching.”

15. What direction was given for holding meetings and carrying out the preaching work during the pandemic, and with what results?

¹⁶ Some may have felt that the organization was being overly cautious with regard to the pandemic. But time and time again, it became evident that the direction we received was well-founded. (Matt. 11:19) And as we meditate on the loving way in which Jesus is leading his people, we are assured that no matter what tomorrow may bring, Jehovah and his beloved Son will be with us.—**Read Hebrews 13:5, 6.**

¹⁷ How blessed we are to be working under Jesus’ oversight! We belong to an organization that is overcoming all cultural, national, and linguistic barriers. We are spiritually well-nourished and equipped to carry out the preaching work. On a personal level, we are being helped to put on the new personality and we are learning to love one another. We have every reason to boast in our overseer Jesus!

16. Of what can we be assured?

17. How do you feel about working under Jesus’ oversight?

WHAT CONVINCES YOU THAT JESUS IS . . .

- overseeing the global preaching work?
- directing “the faithful and discreet slave” to provide spiritual food?
- guiding his followers during difficult times?

SONG 15

Praise Jehovah's
Firstborn!

PREVIEW

We cannot fully appreciate the Bible's message unless we understand the prophecy recorded at Genesis 3:15. Studying this prophecy can build our faith in Jehovah and strengthen our conviction that he will fulfill all his promises.

An Ancient Prophecy That Affects You

"I will put enmity between you and the woman."—GEN. 3:15.

SOON after Adam and Eve sinned, Jehovah gave hope to their descendants by means of a remarkable prophecy. What he said is recorded at **Genesis 3:15.—Read.**

² The prophecy appears in the first book of the Bible. But in one way or another, all the other books of the Bible relate to it. Just as the spine of a printed book binds all the pages together, the words recorded at Genesis 3:15 bind the content of every book of the Bible into one united message, namely, that a Deliverer would be sent to destroy the Devil and all his wicked followers.* What a blessing that will be for those who love Jehovah!

³ In this article, we will answer the following questions about the prophecy of Genesis 3:15: **Who** are the characters mentioned in it? **How** is the prophecy fulfilled? And **how** are we benefiting from it?

WHO ARE THE CHARACTERS IN THE PROPHECY?

⁴ The characters in the account recorded at Genesis

* See Appendix B1, "The Message of the Bible," in the *New World Translation*.

1. What did Jehovah do soon after Adam and Eve sinned? (Genesis 3:15)
2. What is remarkable about this prophecy?
3. What will we discuss in this article?
4. Who is "the serpent," and how do we know?

The Characters of Genesis 3:14, 15



THE SERPENT

Satan the Devil, whom Revelation 12:9 identifies as “the original serpent”
(See paragraph 4)



THE OFFSPRING OF THE SERPENT

Wicked spirit creatures and humans who resist Jehovah God and oppose His people
(See paragraph 5)



THE WOMAN

The heavenly part of Jehovah's organization made up of his faithful spirit creatures
(See paragraph 7)



THE OFFSPRING OF THE WOMAN

Jesus Christ and his 144,000 anointed co-rulers
(See paragraphs 8-9)

3:14, 15 include a “serpent,” the “offspring” of the serpent, a “woman,” and the “offspring” of the woman. The Bible helps us to identify each of them.* Let us begin with “the serpent.” A literal snake could not have understood what Jehovah said in the garden of Eden. So the object of Jehovah's judgment must have been an intelligent creature. Who? Revelation 12:9 leaves no doubt on this matter. There “the original serpent” is clearly identified as Satan the Devil. But who make up the offspring of the serpent?

⁵ When the Bible speaks of offspring in a figurative sense, it is referring to those who think and act like their symbolic fa-

* See the box “The Characters of Genesis 3:14, 15.”

ther. So the offspring of the serpent is made up of spirit creatures and humans who, like Satan, resist Jehovah God and oppose His people. That would include the angels who abandoned their assignments in heaven in Noah's day as well as wicked humans who behave like their father the Devil.—Gen. 6:1, 2; John 8:44; 1 John 5:19; Jude 6.

⁶ Next, let us identify “the woman.” She could not have been Eve. Why not? Consider just one reason. The prophecy states that the offspring of the woman would “crush” the serpent's head. As we just discussed, the serpent is the spirit creature Satan, and no imperfect human offspring of Eve's would have the ability to crush him. Something more was needed.

5. Who make up the offspring of the serpent?

6. Why could “the woman” not have been Eve?

⁷ The identity of the woman mentioned at Genesis 3:15 is revealed in the last book of the Bible. **(Read Revelation 12:1, 2, 5, 10.)** This is no ordinary woman! She has the moon at her feet and a crown of 12 stars on her head. She gives birth to a most unusual child—the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom is heavenly, so the woman must also be heavenly. She represents the heavenly part of Jehovah’s organization made up of his faithful spirit creatures.—Gal. 4:26.

⁸ God’s Word also helps us to identify the primary offspring of the woman. This offspring was to be a natural descendant of Abraham. **(Read Genesis 22:15-18.)** True to the prophecy, Jesus was a direct descendant of that faithful patriarch. (Luke 3:23, 34) But the offspring would have to be more than a human because he was to crush Satan the Devil out of existence. Accordingly, when Jesus was about 30 years old, he was anointed as the spirit-begotten Son of God. At his anointing, Jesus became the primary part of the offspring of the woman. (Gal. 3:16) After Jesus’ death and resurrection, God “crowned him with glory and honor” and gave him “all authority . . . in heaven and on the earth,” including the authority “to break up the works of the Devil.”—Heb. 2:7; Matt. 28:18; 1 John 3:8.

⁹ But there would be a secondary part

of the offspring. The apostle Paul identified this part of the offspring when he told both Jewish and Gentile anointed Christians: “If you belong to Christ, you are really Abraham’s offspring, heirs with reference to a promise.” (Gal. 3:28, 29) When Jehovah anoints a Christian with holy spirit, that person becomes part of the offspring of the woman. So the offspring is made up of Jesus Christ and his 144,000 corulers. (Rev. 14:1) All of these reflect the spirit of their Father, Jehovah God.

¹⁰ Now that we have identified the characters mentioned at Genesis 3:15, let us briefly review how Jehovah has progressively been fulfilling this prophecy and how we are benefiting.

HOW HAS THE PROPHECY BEEN FULFILLED?

¹¹ According to the prophecy of Genesis 3:15, the serpent would strike the woman’s offspring “in the heel.” That was fulfilled when Satan incited the Jews and the Romans to put the Son of God to death. (Luke 23:13, 20-24) Just as a literal heel wound can temporarily cripple someone, Jesus’ death temporarily put him out of action and he lay lifeless in the grave for parts of three days.—Matt. 16:21.

¹² If the prophecy of Genesis 3:15 was to be fulfilled, Jesus could not remain in the grave. Why not? Because according to the prophecy, the offspring would crush the serpent’s head. This meant

7. As indicated at Revelation 12:1, 2, 5, 10, who is the woman mentioned at Genesis 3:15?

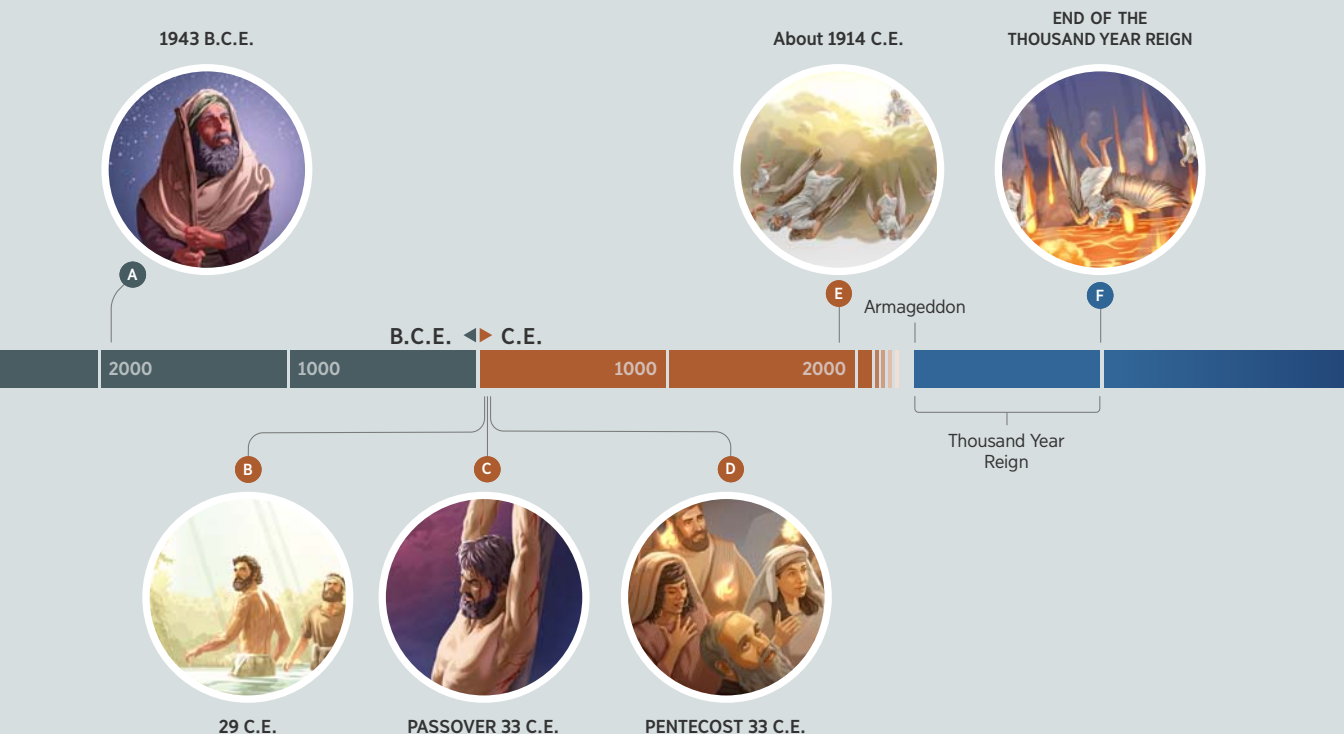
8. Who is the primary offspring of the woman, and when did he become such? (Genesis 22:15-18)

9-10. (a) Who else are part of the offspring of the woman, and when do they become such? (b) What will we review next?

11. In what sense was the offspring of the woman bruised “in the heel”?

12. How and when will the serpent’s head be crushed?

Some Key Events in the Fulfillment of Genesis 3:15



A 1943 B.C.E.

God's promise that the primary offspring would be one of Abraham's descendants goes into effect. (Gen. 12:1-3; 22:15-18)

B 29 C.E.

Jesus is anointed, becoming the primary part of the offspring of the woman. (Matt. 3:16; Gal. 3:16)

C PASSOVER 33 C.E.

Jesus is struck in the heel but recovers three days later. (Matt. 16:21; 26:1, 2)

D PENTECOST 33 C.E.

The first ones of the secondary part of the woman's offspring are anointed with holy spirit. (Acts 2:1-4; Gal. 3:29)

E ABOUT 1914

Satan is cast out of heaven, and persecution of the offspring of the woman intensifies. (Rev. 12:9, 12, 17)

F END OF THE THOUSAND YEAR REIGN

Satan is permanently crushed. (Rev. 20:7, 10)

that Jesus would need to recover from his heel wound. And indeed he did! On the third day after his death, Jesus was resurrected as an immortal spirit creature. In God's due time, Jesus will crush Satan out of existence. (Heb. 2:14) Those who will rule with Christ will share in ridding the earth of all of God's enemies—the offspring of the serpent.—Rev. 17:14; 20:4, 10.*

HOW ARE WE BENEFITING FROM THIS PROPHECY?

¹³ If you are a dedicated servant of God, you are benefiting from the fulfillment of this prophecy. Jesus came to earth as a man. He has perfectly reflected his Father's personality. (John 14:9) So through him we have come to know and love Jehovah God. We have also benefited from Jesus' teachings and his guidance as he directs the Christian congregation today. He has taught us how to live in a way that will help us to gain Jehovah's approval. And we all can benefit from Jesus' death—the bruising of his heel. How? When Jesus was resurrected, he offered the value of his blood as a perfect sacrifice that “cleanses us from all sin.”—1 John 1:7.

¹⁴ The words that Jehovah pronounced in Eden implied that some time would pass before the complete fulfillment of the prophecy. It would take time for the woman to produce the

promised offspring, for the Devil to gather his followers, and for enmity (or, hatred) to develop between the two groups. We benefit from knowing about the prophecy because it warns us that the world controlled by Satan will hate worshippers of Jehovah. Jesus later gave his disciples a similar warning. (Mark 13:13; John 17:14) We have certainly seen the fulfillment of that part of the prophecy, especially during the last 100 years. How so?

¹⁵ Shortly after Jesus was installed as Messianic King in 1914, Satan was cast out of heaven. He is now confined to the vicinity of the earth, awaiting his destruction. (Rev. 12:9, 12) But he is not waiting passively. Satan is desperate and furious, venting his anger on God's people. (Rev. 12:13, 17) For that reason, the world's hatred of God's people has intensified. We have no reason, though, to fear Satan and his followers. Instead, we can have the same conviction as did the apostle Paul, who wrote: “If God is for us, who will be against us?” (Rom. 8:31) We can have complete confidence in Jehovah because, as we have seen, much of the prophecy recorded at Genesis 3:15 has already been fulfilled.

¹⁶ Jehovah's promise found at Genesis 3:15 can help us to cope with whatever trials come our way. Curtis, who serves as a missionary in Guam, says: “At times, I have dealt with trials and disappointments that tested my devo-

* See the box “Some Key Events in the Fulfillment of Genesis 3:15.”

13. How are we benefiting from the fulfillment of this prophecy?

14. Should mankind have expected an immediate fulfillment of the prophecy in Eden? Explain.

15. Why has the world's hatred intensified, but why do we have no reason to fear Satan?

16-18. How have Curtis, Ursula, and Jessica benefited from their understanding of Genesis 3:15?

tion to Jehovah. But meditating on the prophecy at Genesis 3:15 has helped me to maintain my trust in my heavenly Father.” Curtis looks forward to the day when Jehovah will bring an end to all our trials.

¹⁷ A sister in Bavaria named Ursula says that understanding Genesis 3:15 helped to convince her that the Bible is inspired of God. She saw how all the other prophecies are connected to this prophecy, and that deeply impressed her. She also says: “I was touched when I learned that Jehovah took action immediately so that mankind would not be left without hope.”

¹⁸ Jessica, from Micronesia, says: “I can still remember how I felt when I first realized that I had found the truth! The prophecy recorded at Genesis 3:15 was being fulfilled. It has helped me to remember that what we are experiencing today is *not* the real life. This prophecy has also strengthened my belief that serving Jehovah results in the best pos-

sible life I can have now and an even better life in the future.”

¹⁹ As we have seen, Genesis 3:15 is now undergoing fulfillment. The offspring of the woman and the offspring of the serpent have been clearly identified. Jesus, the primary part of the offspring of the woman, recovered from his heel wound and is now a glorious, immortal King. The selection of those making up the secondary part of the offspring is nearing completion. Because the first part of the prophecy has been fulfilled, we have every reason to be confident that the final part, the crushing of the serpent’s head, will also come true. What a relief it will be for faithful mankind when Satan comes to his end! Until then, do not give up. Our God is trustworthy. Through the offspring of the woman, he will bring countless blessings to “all nations of the earth.”—Gen. 22:18.

19. What confidence can we have that the final part of the prophecy will be fulfilled?

CAN YOU EXPLAIN THE PROPHECY AT GENESIS 3:15?

- Who are “the serpent” and its offspring, and who are “the woman” and her offspring?
- How has the prophecy been fulfilled thus far?
- How have you personally benefited from the prophecy’s fulfillment?

SONG 47

Pray to Jehovah Each Day

PREVIEW

We deeply appreciate the privilege of approaching Jehovah in prayer. We want our prayers to be like sweet-smelling incense, pleasing to him. In this article, we will discuss what we can properly include in our prayers. We will also consider a few points that we should keep in mind when we are invited to represent others in prayer.

Treasure Your Privilege of Prayer

“May my prayer be as incense prepared before you.”

—PS. 141:2.

WE HAVE been granted a marvelous privilege—that of approaching the Maker of heaven and earth in prayer. Just think: We can pour out our hearts to Jehovah at any time and in any language, without needing to make an appointment. We can pray to him from a hospital bed or from a prison cell, confident that our loving Father will listen to us. We do not take this privilege for granted.

² King David treasured the privilege of prayer. He sang to Jehovah: “May my prayer be as incense prepared before you.” (Ps. 141:1, 2) In David’s time, the sacred incense used in true worship by the priests was prepared with great care. (Ex. 30:34, 35) David’s reference to incense suggests that he wanted to give careful thought to what he was going to say to his heavenly Father. That is our earnest desire too. We want our prayers to please Jehovah.

³ When we pray to Jehovah, we should avoid being overly familiar. Instead, we pray with an attitude of deep respect. Think about the amazing visions that Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and John received. Those visions differ one from the other, but they have something in common. They all depict Jehovah as a majestic King. Isaiah “saw Jehovah sitting on a lofty and elevated throne.” (Isa. 6:

1. How should we view the opportunity to pray to Jehovah?
2. How did King David show that he treasured the privilege of prayer?
3. What should be our attitude when we approach Jehovah in prayer, and why?



What can a husband pray about with his wife?

(See paragraph 6)



1-3) Ezekiel saw Jehovah seated on his celestial chariot, surrounded by “a brilliance . . . like that of a rainbow.” (Ezek. 1:26-28) Daniel saw “the Ancient of Days” clothed in white garments, with flames of fire coming from His throne. (Dan. 7:9, 10) And John saw Jehovah seated on a throne surrounded by something like a beautiful emerald-green rainbow. (Rev. 4:2-4) As we reflect on Jehovah’s incomparable glory, we are reminded of the incredible privilege of approaching him in prayer and the importance of doing so with reverence. But how should we pray?

“YOU MUST PRAY, THEN, THIS WAY”

4 Read Matthew 6:9, 10. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught his disciples how to pray in a way that pleases God. After saying “you must pray, then, this way,” Jesus first mentioned important matters that are directly related to Jehovah’s purpose: the sanctifi-

cation of His name; the coming of the Kingdom, which will destroy all of God’s opposers; and the future blessings that He has in mind for the earth and for mankind. By including such matters in our prayers, we show that God’s will is important to us.

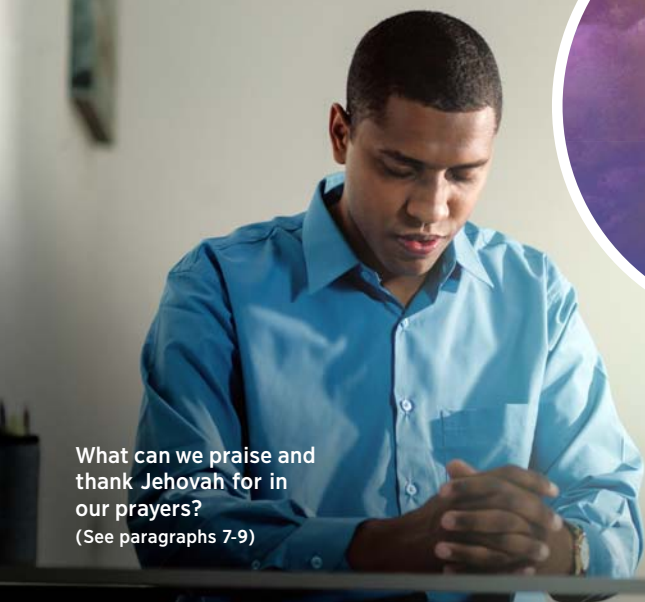
⁵ In the next part of the prayer, Jesus showed that it is proper to pray about personal matters. We can ask Jehovah to give us our food for the day, to forgive us for our sins, to protect us from temptation, and to deliver us from the wicked one. (Matt. 6:11-13) When we ask Jehovah for these things, we are acknowledging our dependence on him and expressing our desire to obtain his approval.

⁶ Jesus did not expect his followers to adhere rigidly to the wording of the model prayer. In other prayers that

4. What do we learn from the opening words of the model prayer found at Matthew 6:9, 10?

5. Is it proper for us to pray about personal matters?

6. Are the matters we pray about limited to those specifically mentioned in the model prayer? Explain.



What can we praise and thank Jehovah for in our prayers?
(See paragraphs 7-9)



Jesus offered, he mentioned different matters that were of concern to him at the time. (Matt. 26:39, 42; John 17:1-26) Likewise, we can pray about anything that concerns us. When we have a decision to make, we can pray for wisdom and understanding. (Ps. 119:33, 34) When we are about to begin a difficult assignment, we can pray for insight and discernment. (Prov. 2:6) Parents can pray for their children, children can pray for their parents, and all of us can and should pray for our Bible students and for those to whom we preach. Of course, our prayers should go beyond petitions.

⁷ We should remember to **praise** Jehovah in our prayers. No one deserves praise more than our God. He is “good and ready to forgive.” He is also “merciful and compassionate, slow to anger and abundant in loyal love and faithfulness.” (Ps. 86:5, 15) We certainly have

good reason to praise Jehovah for who he is and for what he does.

⁸ In addition to praising Jehovah in our prayers, we are moved to **thank** him for the marvelous things he provides. For instance, we can thank him for the magnificent colors seen in flowers, the endless variety of delicious food, and the refreshing company of dear friends. Our loving Father gives us this and much more, just to make us happy. **(Read Psalm 104:12-15, 24.)** Even more important, we thank Jehovah for the abundant spiritual food he provides and for the marvelous hope we have for the future.

⁹ It can be so easy to forget to thank Jehovah for all that he does for us. What can help you to remember? You could make a list of specific requests you have made and periodically check

8. What are some things we can thank Jehovah for? (Psalm 104:12-15, 24)

9. What can help us remember to thank Jehovah? (1 Thessalonians 5:17, 18)

7. Why should we praise Jehovah in prayer?

it to see how Jehovah has answered them. Then say a prayer to thank him for his help. **(Read 1 Thessalonians 5:17, 18.)** Think about this: We feel happy and appreciated when others show gratitude to us. Likewise, when we remember to thank Jehovah for answering our prayers, it warms his heart. (Col. 3:15) What, though, is another important reason to thank our God?

THANK JEHOVAH FOR HIS BELOVED SON

10 Read 1 Peter 2:21. We should thank Jehovah for sending his beloved Son to teach us. We learn so much about Jehovah and about how to please him by studying the life of Jesus. If we exercise faith in the sacrifice of Christ, we can have a warm, personal relationship with Jehovah God and enjoy peace with Him. —Rom. 5:1.

11 We thank Jehovah that we can pray to him through his Son. Jesus is the channel that Jehovah uses to grant our requests. Jehovah listens to and answers prayers that are offered in Jesus' name. Jesus explained: "Whatever you ask in my name, I will do this, so that the Father may be glorified in connection with the Son."—John 14:13, 14.

12 Jehovah forgives our sins on the basis of Jesus' ransom sacrifice. The Scriptures describe Jesus as our "high priest

[sitting] at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." (Heb. 8:1) Jesus is our "helper with the Father." (1 John 2:1) How thankful we are to Jehovah for providing us with a sympathetic High Priest who understands our weaknesses and who "pleads for us"! (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 4:15) We are imperfect humans, so without Jesus' sacrifice we would not be able to approach Jehovah in prayer. No doubt you would agree that we can never adequately express our gratitude for the precious gift that Jehovah has given us—the gift of his dear Son!

PRAY FOR YOUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS

13 On the night before his death, Jesus prayed at length for his disciples, asking his Father to "watch over them because of the wicked one." (John 17:15) How loving of Jesus! He was about to undergo a difficult trial of his own; yet, he was concerned about the welfare of his apostles.

14 In imitation of Jesus, we do not focus only on our own needs. Instead, we regularly pray for our brothers and sisters. When we do that, we are obeying Jesus' command to love one another and we show Jehovah just how much we love our fellow believers. (John 13:34) Praying for our brothers and sisters is not a waste of time. God's Word tells us that "a righteous man's supplication has a powerful effect."—Jas. 5:16.

10. According to 1 Peter 2:21, why do we have reason to thank Jehovah for sending Jesus to the earth?

11. What role does Jesus play in our prayers to Jehovah?

12. What is another reason to thank Jehovah for his Son?

13. On the night before his death, how did Jesus show that he loved his disciples?

14. How can we show that we love our brothers and sisters?



What can we pray about for our brothers and sisters?
(See paragraphs 14-16)

¹⁵ Our fellow worshippers need our prayers because they face many trials. We can ask Jehovah to help them to endure sickness, natural disasters, civil war, persecution, or other difficulties. We can also pray for our self-sacrificing brothers and sisters who provide relief for those in need. You may personally know some who are facing such challenges. Why not mention them by name in your personal prayers? We show genuine brotherly love by asking Jehovah to help them to endure.

¹⁶ Those who take the lead in the congregation greatly appreciate the prayers of others and benefit from them. That was true of the apostle Paul. He wrote: “Pray also for me, that the words may be given to me when I open my mouth, so that I may be able to speak boldly in making known the sacred secret of the good news.” (Eph. 6:19) Today, too, we

15. Why do our fellow worshippers need our prayers?

16. Why should we pray for those who take the lead among us?

have many hardworking brothers who take the lead among us. We show love for them by asking Jehovah to bless their work.

WHEN REPRESENTING OTHERS IN PRAYER

¹⁷ At times, we are invited to offer a prayer on behalf of others. For example, a sister who is conducting a Bible study may ask the sister who has accompanied her to offer a prayer. The visiting sister might not know the student well, so she might prefer to offer the concluding prayer at the study. In that way, she can more easily adapt her prayer to the needs of the student.

¹⁸ A brother may be asked to pray at a meeting for field service or at a congregation meeting. Brothers who have that privilege should keep in mind the purpose of the meeting. Prayer is not to be used to counsel the congregation or to

17-18. On what occasions may we be asked to pray on behalf of others, and what should we keep in mind?

make announcements. For most congregation meetings, a total of five minutes is allotted for song and prayer, so the brother who is offering the prayer need not use “many words,” especially at the beginning of a meeting.—Matt. 6:7.

MAKE PRAYER A PRIORITY IN YOUR LIFE

¹⁹ We need to make prayer an even greater priority in our life as we approach Jehovah’s day of judgment. In this regard, Jesus said: “Keep awake, then, all the time making supplication that you may succeed in escaping all these things that must occur.” (Luke 21:36) Yes, constant prayer will help us to keep spiritually awake so that God’s day does not catch us unprepared.

²⁰ What have we discussed? We highly

19. What will help us to be ready for Jehovah’s day of judgment?

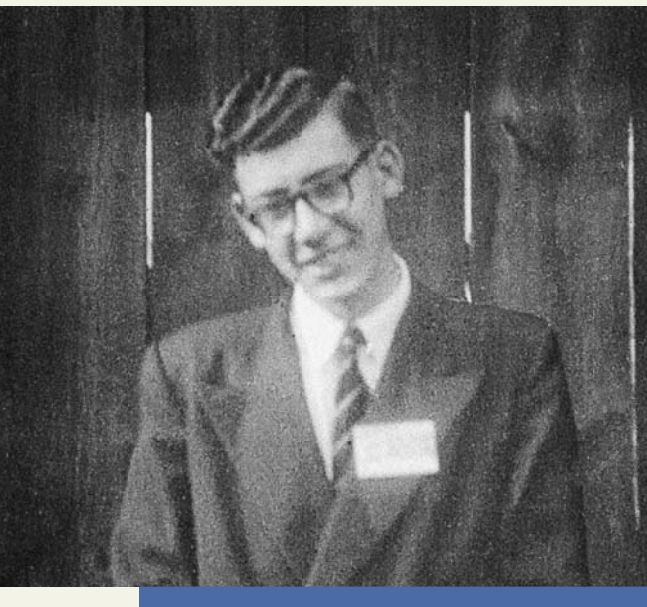
20. How can our prayers be like sweet-smelling incense?

value our privilege of prayer. The main focus of our prayers should be on matters directly related to Jehovah’s purpose. We also express appreciation for God’s Son and his Kingdom rule, and we pray for our fellow worshippers. And, of course, we can pray for our own physical and spiritual needs. When we think carefully about what we say in our prayers, we show that we treasure this marvelous privilege. Our words will be like sweet-smelling incense to Jehovah—“a pleasure to Him.”—Prov. 15:8.

PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS **Page 21:** A husband prays with his wife about their child’s safety in school, an aged parent’s health, and a Bible student’s progress. **Page 22:** A young brother thanks Jehovah for Jesus’ ransom sacrifice, our beautiful earthly home, and nutritious food. **Page 24:** A sister prays that Jehovah bless the Governing Body with his spirit and help those who are suffering from disasters and persecution.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

- What can we properly include in our prayers?
- Why should we pray for our brothers and sisters?
- What should we keep in mind when praying on behalf of others?



Allowing Jehovah to Direct My Path

AS TOLD BY KEITH EATON

AS A teenager, I chose a path for myself, a secular career that I thoroughly enjoyed. But Jehovah invited me to take a different path, generously offering: “I will give you insight and instruct you in the way you should go.” (Ps. 32:8) Allowing Jehovah to direct my path has led to a spiritual career of beautiful opportunities and blessings, including 52 years serving in Africa.

FROM THE BLACK COUNTRY TO THE WARM HEART OF AFRICA

I was born in 1935 in Darlaston, part of the Black Country, a region of England named after the black smoke that filled the air from many foundries and other factories. When I was about four years old, my parents began to study the Bible with Jehovah’s Witnesses. In my early teens, I became convinced of the truth and got baptized in 1952 at the age of 16.

About the same time, I started a commercial apprenticeship in a large factory that produced hand tools and parts for motor vehicles. I began training to be a company secretary, work that I thoroughly enjoyed.

I faced an important decision when a traveling overseer invited me to begin conducting the midweek Congregation Book Study in my home congregation of Willenhall. But I had a dilemma. At the time, I was associating with two congregations. During the week, I attended the congregation nearest to my workplace in Bromsgrove, some 32 kilometers (20 mi) away from home. And on the weekends, when I went back to my parents’ home, I attended the congregation in Willenhall.

Desiring to support Jehovah’s organization, I accepted the traveling overseer’s invitation, although this meant leaving the apprenticeship I enjoyed so much. Allowing Jehovah to direct my path on that occasion opened the door to a life that I have never regretted.

While attending the Bromsgrove Congregation, I met someone—an attractive, spiritually-minded sister named Anne. We got married in 1957, and together we enjoyed the privileges of regular pioneering, special pioneering, traveling work, and Bethel service. Anne has been a source of joy throughout my life.

In 1966 we were thrilled to attend the 42nd class of Gilead. Our assignment was Malawi, popularly known as the warm heart of Africa because of its kind and welcoming people. Little did we know that we would not be welcomed there for long.

SERVING DURING DRAMATIC EVENTS IN MALAWI

We arrived in Malawi on February 1, 1967. After an intensive monthlong language course, we started out in district work. We drove a Kaiser Jeep that some imagined could drive anywhere, even through rivers. But despite such expectations, we could ford only the shallowest of water. At times, we stayed in thatched mud huts that needed a tarpaulin under the roof during the rainy season. It was quite an introduction to missionary work, but we loved it!

In April, I became aware of trouble brewing in the country. I heard a speech on the radio by Malawi's president, Dr. Hastings Banda. He claimed that Jehovah's Witnesses did not pay taxes and that they interfered with politics. Of course, these accusations were false. We all knew that the real issue was our neutrality, especially our refusal to buy political party membership cards.



The Kaiser Jeep used in traveling work in Malawi

By September, we read in the newspaper that the president had accused the brothers of causing trouble everywhere. He announced at a political convention that his government would act quickly on a resolution recommending that Jehovah's Witnesses be banned. This ban went into effect on October 20, 1967. Shortly thereafter, police officers and immigration officials arrived at



Being arrested and deported from Malawi in 1967 with fellow missionaries Jack and Linda Johansson

the branch office to close it down and deport the missionaries from the country.

After three days in prison, we were deported to a country controlled by Britain—Mauritius. However, the authorities in Mauritius would not permit us to stay as missionaries. So we were assigned to Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). On arriving there, we ran into a belligerent immigration officer who refused us entry, saying: “You’re prohibited from staying in Malawi. They won’t let you stay in Mauritius, and now you’re here because it’s convenient.” Anne began to cry. It seemed that nobody wanted us! At that moment, I wanted to leave and go straight back home to England. Finally, the immigration authorities allowed us to stay overnight at the branch office on the condition that we report to their headquarters the following day. We were exhausted, but we continued to leave things in Jehovah’s hands. By the next afternoon, we unexpectedly received permission to stay as visitors in Zimbabwe. I will never forget how I felt on that day—I was convinced that Jehovah was directing our path.

A NEW ASSIGNMENT—SERVING MALAWI FROM ZIMBABWE

At the Zimbabwe branch office, I was assigned to work in the Service Department, caring for Malawi and Mozambique. The brothers in Malawi were being severely persecuted. As part of my work, I translated reports sent in by the Malawian circuit overseers. Working late one evening to complete a report, I wept over the violent abuse my brothers and sisters were experiencing.* Yet, I was also deeply moved by their loyalty, faith, and endurance.—2 Cor. 6:4, 5.

We did everything possible to provide spiritual food to the brothers remaining in Malawi and also to those who had fled to

Mozambique to escape the violence. The translation team for Chichewa, Malawi’s most widely spoken language, relocated to a brother’s large farm in Zimbabwe. He kindly erected homes and an office for them. There they continued their vital work of translating Bible literature.

We arranged for the circuit overseers in Malawi to attend the Chichewa district convention every year in Zimbabwe. There they obtained the convention talk outlines. On their way back to Malawi, they shared the material with the brothers as best they could. One year during their visit to Zimbabwe, we managed to organize a Kingdom Ministry School to upbuild these courageous circuit overseers.

In February 1975, I traveled to visit Witnesses from Malawi who had fled to camps in Mozambique. These brothers were keeping right in step with the rest of Jehovah’s organization, including putting into operation the elder arrangement. The new elders had arranged many spiritual activities that included giving public talks, discussing the day’s text and *The Watchtower*, and even holding assemblies. They had organized the camps just like a convention, with departments for cleaning, food distribution, and security. Those faithful brothers had accomplished so much with Jehovah’s blessing, and I left encouraged beyond measure.

In the late 1970’s, the Zambia branch office began caring for Malawi. Still, I kept the situation in Malawi close to my heart and in my prayers, and so did many others. On several occasions, as a member of the Zimbabwe Branch Committee, I met with representatives from world headquarters, along with responsible brothers from Malawi, South Africa, and Zambia. Each time, we asked the same question, “What more can we do for the brothers in Malawi?”

As time passed, the persecution lessened. Brothers who had fled the country

* Malawi’s theocratic history is published in the 1999 *Yearbook of Jehovah’s Witnesses*, pp. 148-223.

were filtering back to Malawi, while those who had remained were gradually finding relief from the cruel treatment they had suffered. Nearby countries were legally recognizing Jehovah's people and lifting restrictions. Mozambique followed suit in 1991. But we wondered, 'When will Jehovah's Witnesses in Malawi be free?'

RETURNING TO MALAWI

Malawi's political situation eventually changed, and in 1993 the government lifted the ban on Jehovah's Witnesses. Soon thereafter, I was talking to a missionary who asked, "Will you be going back to Malawi?" I was then 59 years old, so I responded, "No, I'm too old!" However, that very day we received a fax from the Governing Body inviting us to return there.

We loved our assignment in Zimbabwe, so this was a hard decision for us. We had put down roots and developed some wonderful, long-standing friendships. The Governing Body very kindly offered not to change our assignment unless we were willing. So we could easily have chosen our own path and stayed in Zimbabwe. But I remem-

ber thinking about how Abraham and Sarah left their comfortable home in their older years in obedience to Jehovah's direction. —Gen. 12:1-5.

We decided to follow the direction from Jehovah's organization and returned to Malawi on February 1, 1995, the 28th anniversary of our original arrival date there. A Branch Committee was formed, consisting of me and two other brothers, and we were soon at work reestablishing the activities of Jehovah's Witnesses.

JEHOVAH MAKES IT GROW

What a blessing to see Jehovah make the work grow rapidly! The number of publishers shot up from about 30,000 in 1993 to over 42,000 in 1998.* The Governing Body approved plans for a new branch office to care for the growing needs in the field. We acquired a 12-hectare (30-ac) plot in Lilongwe, and I was appointed to the construction committee.

Brother Guy Pierce of the Governing Body gave the dedication talk for the new facilities in May 2001. Over two thousand local

* Malawi now has over 100,000 publishers.



A

A. Delivering a talk in Chichewa at a Chichewa/Shona convention in Zimbabwe

B. With Anne at Zimbabwe Bethel, 1968



B



With Anne at Britain Bethel

Witnesses attended, most of whom had been baptized for more than 40 years. These faithful brothers and sisters had endured years of indescribable hardships under the ban. They were materially poor but spiritually rich beyond measure. And now they were delighted to tour their new Bethel. Everywhere they went, Bethel echoed to the sound of Kingdom songs sung in African-style harmony, which made the entire event the most moving experience I have ever witnessed. It was living testimony that Jehovah richly blesses those who faithfully endure trials.

After the branch construction was completed, I was delighted to start receiving assignments for Kingdom Hall dedications. The congregations in Malawi were benefiting from the accelerated program for building Kingdom Halls in lands with limited resources. Previously, some congregations met in shelters made from eucalyptus

trees. They used grass reed mats for a roof and long mud benches for seating. Now the brothers enthusiastically baked bricks in kilns that they had constructed and built beautiful new meeting places. But they still favored benches because, as the saying goes, There is always room for one more on a bench!

I have also been thrilled to see Jehovah help people grow spiritually. Young African brothers especially impressed me as they willingly volunteered their services and quickly gained experience through divine education and practical training. They took on greater responsibility in Bethel and in the congregations. The congregations were further strengthened by newly appointed local circuit overseers, many of whom were married. These couples chose to serve Jehovah more fully by postponing the joy of having children, despite cultural and, in some cases, family pressure.

SATISFIED WITH MY DECISIONS

After 52 years in Africa, I experienced some health problems. The Governing Body approved the recommendation of the Branch Committee that we be reassigned to Britain. We were disappointed to leave an assignment we loved, but Britain's Bethel family is taking very good care of us in our older years.

I am convinced that allowing Jehovah to direct my path in life has been the best decision I ever made. If I had relied on my own understanding, who knows where my secular career would have taken me. Jehovah knew all along what I needed to 'make my paths straight.' (Prov. 3:5, 6) As a young man, I was fascinated to learn the details of the work at a large company. Yet, Jehovah's global organization provided a spiritual career that more than satisfied me. For me, serving Jehovah was and continues to be a very fulfilling life!

What did Jesus mean when he said: “Do not think I came to bring peace”?

■ Jesus proclaimed a peaceful message. On one occasion, though, he told his apostles: “Do not think I came to bring peace to the earth; I came to bring, not peace, but a sword. For I came to cause division, with a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.” (Matt. 10:34, 35) What did Jesus mean?

Jesus did not want to separate family members from one another, but he knew that his teachings would cause divisions in some families. Therefore, those desiring to become disciples of Christ and get baptized would need to be aware of the consequences of their decision. If they faced opposition from an unbelieving mate or others in the family, it could be a challenge to remain faithful to Christ’s teachings.

The Bible encourages Christians to “be peaceable with all men.” (Rom. 12:18) But Jesus’ teachings can act as “a sword” in some families. This happens when a member of a family accepts Jesus’ teachings while others reject or oppose them. In such a case, the relatives—those within the household—become “enemies” of the one who is learning the truth.—Matt. 10:36.

Christ’s disciples who live in a religiously divided household sometimes face situations that test their affection for Jehovah and Jesus. For example, unbelieving relatives may urge them to celebrate a religious holiday. When put to the test, whom will they please? Jesus said: “Whoever has greater affection for father or mother than for me is not worthy of me.” (Matt. 10:37)

Of course, Jesus was not saying that to be considered worthy of him, his disciples had to love their parents less. Rather, he emphasized keeping things in their proper perspective. If unbelieving family members oppose our efforts to worship Jehovah, we continue to love them, but we recognize that our love for God comes first.

Without a doubt, family opposition can be very painful. Still, Jesus’ disciples keep in mind his words: “Whoever does not accept his torture stake and follow after me is not worthy of me.” (Matt. 10:38) In other words, Christians view family opposition as part of the sufferings that Christ’s disciples willingly accept. At the same time, they hope that their good conduct will motivate their unbelieving family members to relent and to look into the Bible’s message.—1 Pet. 3:1, 2.



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Just like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle that fit together, prophecies from the Bible books of Daniel and Revelation fit together to provide a clear picture of where we are in Jehovah's timetable of events (See study article 28, paragraph 2)

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