

# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

JANUARY 15, 2011

## STUDY EDITION

STUDY ARTICLES FOR THE WEEKS OF:

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

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## PURPOSE OF STUDY ARTICLES

### STUDY ARTICLE 1 PAGES 3-7

Where can we find refuge at this critical time? God's Word explains that we can take refuge in the name of Jehovah. This article considers how we can find protection both now and when "the great day of Jehovah" strikes. This discussion highlights the yeartext for 2011.

### STUDY ARTICLES 2, 3 PAGES 13-21

Marriage and singleness are both gifts from God, each with its own blessings. Whether we are married or single, these articles will discuss reasons to appreciate these gifts and show us how to demonstrate our appreciation for them.

### STUDY ARTICLES 4, 5 PAGES 22-30

We need Jehovah's assistance to fulfill our dedication to him. These articles will discuss how holy spirit helps us to fight temptation, cope with discouragement, withstand persecution, resist negative peer pressure, and endure adversity.

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### 9 Grateful for Serving Jehovah, Even Under Trials

### 31 Dwell on What Jehovah Has Done for You ►



# “TAKE REFUGE IN THE NAME OF JEHOVAH”

*“I shall certainly let remain . . .  
a people humble and lowly, and they will actually  
take refuge in the name of Jehovah.”—ZEPH. 3:12.*

**H**AVE you ever had to take refuge from a rainstorm or a hailstorm by seeking cover under a bridge? A bridge might well offer you adequate shelter from a rainstorm or a hailstorm, but it would probably provide little protection from a tornado or a hurricane.

<sup>2</sup> A different type of storm is approaching—one that threatens the very existence of the human race. It is a figurative “day of storm.” This “great day of Jehovah” will affect all mankind. However, we can find the refuge we need. (**Read Zephaniah 1:14-18.**) How can we do so during “the day of Jehovah’s fury” that is soon to begin?

## Days of Storm in Bible Times

<sup>3</sup> The day of Jehovah will break out with the destruction of all false religious systems on earth. As to how to find refuge, we can look for the answer in the history of God’s ancient people. Isaiah, who lived in the eighth century B.C.E., likened Jehovah’s judgment on the apostate ten-tribe kingdom of Israel to a “thunderous storm” that people would not be able to prevent. (**Read Isaiah 28:1, 2.**) That prophecy found fulfillment in 740 B.C.E. when Assyria invaded the land of those tribes, Ephraim being the most prominent of the ten.

1, 2. What figurative storm will soon strike mankind?

3. What “thunderous storm” came upon the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel?



<sup>4</sup> The judgment against unfaithful Israel was followed in 607 B.C.E. by a “great day of Jehovah” against Jerusalem and the kingdom of Judah. That event occurred because the people of Judah had also turned apostate. The Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar threatened Judah and its capital, Jerusalem. The Judeans had turned for help to “the refuge of a lie,” that is, to their political alliance with Egypt. Nevertheless, like a destructive hailstorm, the Babylonians swept away that “refuge.”—Isa. 28:14, 17.

<sup>5</sup> The great day of Jehovah that struck Jerusalem was an indication of the judgment to come upon apostate Christendom in our time. Furthermore, the rest of

4. How did a “great day of Jehovah” strike Jerusalem in 607 B.C.E.?

5. How will God’s people fare during the destruction of all false religion?

“Babylon the Great,” the world empire of false religion, will be destroyed. Thereafter, the remaining parts of Satan’s wicked system of things will be annihilated. Yet, God’s people as a group will survive because they are taking refuge in Jehovah.—Rev. 7:14; 18:2, 8; 19:19-21.

### Spiritual and Physical Refuge

<sup>6</sup> How can God’s people find refuge *even now* during this time of the end? We find *spiritual* refuge by prayerfully “thinking upon [God’s] name” and by serving him zealously. (**Read Malachi 3:16-18.**) We can appreciate, though, that we need to do more than just think upon his name. We read: “Everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah will be saved.” (Rom. 10:13) There is a connection between calling on Jehovah’s name and the resulting salvation by him. And many honesthearted people can see the difference between true Christians, who are reverently “thinking upon his name” and serving as his Witnesses, and those of mankind who are not serving him.

<sup>7</sup> Still, the salvation available to us is not limited to finding spiritual refuge. *Physical* salvation is promised for God’s people. We see indication of this in what happened in 66 C.E. after a Roman army under Cestius Gallus attacked Jerusalem. Jesus had foretold that the days of that tribulation would be “cut short.” (Matt. 24:15, 16, 21, 22) That happened when the Roman forces unexpectedly abandoned the siege of the city, which allowed some “flesh,” namely true Christians, to be “saved.” They were able to flee the city and the surrounding area. Some crossed the Jordan and found refuge in

the mountains on the eastern side of that river.

<sup>8</sup> We can draw a parallel between those Christians and God’s people today. In the past, first-century Christians sought refuge, and God’s servants today will do likewise. However, this time it will not involve an actual flight to a single geographic spot, for true Christians are located all around the globe. Still, as a people, “the chosen ones” and their loyal companions will physically survive the end of apostate Christendom by taking refuge in Jehovah and his mountain-like organization.

<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, Christendom deserves the coming destruction for contributing to the spiritual illiteracy common among churchgoers and for its manifest hatred of God’s name. In the Middle Ages, God’s personal name was rather widely known in Europe. That name, represented by four Hebrew letters called the Tetragrammaton and commonly transliterated YHWH (or JHVH), appeared on coins, on facades of houses, in many books and Bibles, and even in some Catholic and Protestant churches. However, the trend in recent times is to eliminate the name of God from Bible translations and from other uses. One indication of this is the Letter to the Bishops’ Conferences on ‘the Name of God,’ dated June 29, 2008, issued by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. In it the Roman Catholic Church advised that the Tetragrammaton in its various renderings should be replaced by “Lord.” The Vatican instructed that God’s personal name should not be used or pronounced in hymns and prayers during Catholic religious services. And the leaders of other religions inside and outside

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6. How can Jehovah’s people find refuge?

7, 8. In what way did first-century Christians experience physical salvation, with what parallel today?

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9. Who have tried to cause Jehovah’s name to be forgotten? Give an example.

of Christendom have also hidden the identity of the true God from millions upon millions of worshippers.

### Protection for Those Sanctifying God's Name

<sup>10</sup> In stark contrast with what other religions are doing, Jehovah's Witnesses honor and glorify the divine name. They sanctify it by using it in a dignified way. Jehovah takes pleasure in those who trust in him, and he becomes whatever is necessary to bless and protect his people. "He is cognizant of those seeking refuge in him."—Nah. 1:7; Acts 15:14.

<sup>11</sup> Although the majority in ancient Judah had become apostate, there were some who took "refuge in the name of Jehovah." (**Read Zephaniah 3:12, 13.**) Yes, when God punished faithless Judah by allowing the Babylonians to conquer the land and take her people captive, some individuals, such as Jeremiah, Baruch, and Ebed-melech, were spared. They had lived "in the midst" of an apostate nation. Others stayed faithful while in captivity. In 539 B.C.E., the Medes and Persians under Cyrus conquered Babylon. Cyrus soon issued a decree allowing a Jewish remnant to return to their homeland.

<sup>12</sup> Regarding those who would enjoy that restoration of true worship, Zephaniah foretold that Jehovah would save them and rejoice over them. (**Read Zephaniah 3:14-17.**) This has proved true in our time too. After God's Kingdom was set up in heaven, Jehovah delivered the faithful remnant of anointed ones from spiritual captivity to Babylon the Great. And he rejoices over them down to this day.

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10. How is God's name being honored today?

11, 12. Who upheld Jehovah's name in ancient Judah, and who have done so in modern times?

<sup>13</sup> Those with the hope of living forever on earth have also got out of Babylon the Great and enjoy spiritual liberation from false religious teachings. (Rev. 18:4) Thus, Zephaniah 2:3 finds its major fulfillment in our time: "Seek Jehovah, all you meek ones of the earth." Meek ones of *all* nations, whether they cherish the heavenly or the earthly hope, are now taking refuge in Jehovah's name.

### God's Name Is Not a Talisman

<sup>14</sup> Some Israelites viewed the temple as a talisman that would protect them from enemies. (Jer. 7:1-4) Earlier, Israelites viewed the ark of the covenant as a charm that would protect them in battle. (1 Sam. 4:3, 10, 11) Constantine the Great painted the Greek letters *khi* and *rho*, the first two letters of the title "Christ" in Greek, on his soldiers' shields in hopes of protecting his soldiers in battle. And King Gustav Adolph II of Sweden, who fought in the Thirty Years' War, is thought to have worn the armor shown on page 7. Note that the name Iehova is featured prominently on the collar.

<sup>15</sup> Some of God's people who have been attacked by demons have found refuge in Jehovah by calling his name out loud. Still, an object that features God's name should not be considered a talisman or used as a charm in everyday life as if it had some magical power of protection. This is not what it means to take refuge in the name of Jehovah.

### Taking Refuge Today

<sup>16</sup> We find refuge today in the spiritual security enjoyed by God's people as a whole.

13. What liberation are people of all nations experiencing?

14, 15. (a) What have some used as talismans? (b) What should not be used as a charm?

16. Spiritually, how can we take refuge today?



The yeartext for 2011 is:  
“Take refuge in the name  
of Jehovah.”  
—Zephaniah 3:12.

(Ps. 91:1) Through “the faithful and discreet slave” and elders in the congregation, we are alerted to trends in the world that could endanger that security. (Matt. 24:45-47; Isa. 32: 1, 2) Think of how often we have been warned about materialism, and consider how such warnings have protected us from spiritual calamity. And what about the danger of developing an easygoing attitude, which could lead to our becoming inactive in Jehovah’s service? God’s Word says: “The easygoingness of the stupid is what will destroy them. As for the one listening to me, he will reside in security and be undisturbed from dread of calamity.” (Prov. 1:32, 33) Striving to keep morally clean also helps us to maintain our spiritual security.

<sup>17</sup> Think, too, of the encouragement from the faithful slave to follow Jesus’ command to preach the good news of the Kingdom in all the inhabited earth. (Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20) Zephaniah mentioned a change that would help people to take refuge in God’s name. We read: “Then I shall give to peoples the change to a pure language, in order for them all to call upon the name of Jehovah, in order to serve him shoulder to shoulder.” —Zeph. 3:9.

<sup>18</sup> What is this pure language? The pure language is the truth about Jehovah God and his purposes as found in his inspired

17, 18. What is helping millions to take refuge in the name of Jehovah today?

Word. You are in a sense using that language when you share with others the correct understanding of God’s Kingdom and how it will sanctify his name, when you stress the vindication of God’s sovereignty, and when you happily talk about the everlasting blessings faithful humans will enjoy. As a result of so many speaking this figurative language, a growing number are ‘calling upon the name of Jehovah’ and ‘serving him shoulder to shoulder.’ Yes, millions around the world are now finding refuge in Jehovah.—Ps. 1:1, 3.

<sup>19</sup> People in the world have to deal with seemingly insurmountable problems. Desperate to solve their problems, many look to imperfect men. Or they hope for solutions from political institutions, even as ancient Israel at times looked to neighboring nations for support, making alliances with them. Yet, you know that doing so did not help Israel. And no political state today, nor the United Nations organization, will fully solve mankind’s problems. So why should one regard political institutions and alliances as a refuge? The Bible prophetically calls them a “refuge of a lie.” You can rightly view them as such because all individuals who hope in them will be sorely disappointed.—***Read Isaiah 28:15, 17.***

<sup>20</sup> Soon the figurative hailstorm of Jehovah—  
19, 20. How did trusting in a “refuge of a lie” fail in Bible times?

### Do You Recall?

- How can we take refuge in Jehovah’s name now?
- Why should we not trust in “the refuge of a lie”?
- What refuge is assured us for the future?

vah's day will strike the earth. Human schemes will not be able to provide protection; neither will nuclear shelters nor wealth. Isaiah 28:17 points out: "The hail must sweep away the refuge of a lie, and the waters themselves will flood out the very place of concealment."

<sup>21</sup> Both now and during that future development, God's people will find real security in their God, Jehovah.

21. What benefit can we enjoy by following the yeartext for 2011?



Zephaniah's name, meaning "Jehovah Has Concealed," points to this true source of concealment.

Fittingly, we have as the yeartext for 2011 the wise advice: "Take refuge in the name of Jehovah." (Zeph. 3:12) Even now we can and should take refuge in the name of Jehovah, trusting in him implicitly. (Ps. 9:10) Let us daily keep in mind this inspired assurance: "The name of Jehovah is a strong tower. Into it the righteous runs and is given protection."—Prov. 18:10.



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## See the Name in the Valley

**S**T. MORITZ. Does that name sound familiar? It may, because it is a world famous holiday resort in Switzerland's Engadine Valley. But St. Moritz is just one spot that has long drawn people to this picturesque valley situated among the snowcapped Alps in the southeast corner of Switzerland near the Italian border. It is also home to the Swiss National Park, where the area's natural beauty and rich

variety of flora and fauna praise our Grand Creator, Jehovah. (Ps. 148:7-10) But so do the remnants of a tradition that dates back to the mid-17th century.

An unusual detail on many houses in this valley might catch your eye. It is not rare to find God's name inscribed on the house front, such as over the main door. In centuries gone by, it was traditional to decorate the exterior

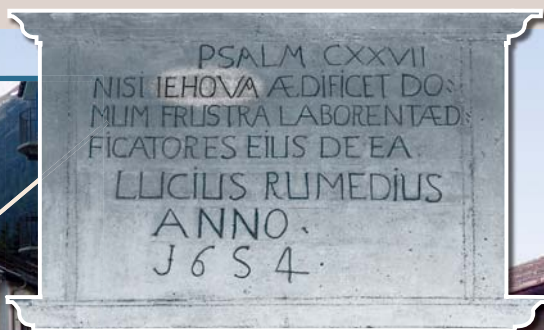
of houses with inscriptions, either painted on the surface, scratched in the plaster, or carved in stone. Here you see a picture of a house in the village of Bever. The translation of the inscription is: "In the year 1715. Jehovah is the beginning, and Jehovah is the end. All things with God, and nothing without him." Yes, the old sign twice incorporates God's personal name.

You can see an even older inscription in the village of Madulain. This sign says: "Psalm 127. Unless Jehovah builds the house, it is in vain that its builders have worked hard on it. Lucius Rumedius. In the year 1654."

Why are there such public displays of the divine name in this valley? Back in the era of

the Reformation, the Bible was published in Romansh, a Latin-based language spoken in Engadine. In fact, it was the first book translated into that language. Moved by what they read in God's Word, many local people inscribed on the exterior of their homes not only their own names but also quotations from the Bible that included God's personal name.

Yes, down to this day, these inscriptions are still announcing Jehovah's name and praising him, centuries after they were first written on the houses. Visitors and residents alike in this valley are welcome to learn more about the wonderful God, Jehovah, by visiting another building that bears his name—the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses in Bever.





# GRATEFUL FOR SERVING JEHOVAH, EVEN UNDER TRIALS

AS TOLD BY  
MAATJE DE JONGE-VAN DEN HEUVEL



I AM 98 years of age. For 70 of those years, I have had the pleasure of serving Jehovah—but not without having my faith tested. During World War II, I ended up in a concentration camp, where discouragement at one point led me to make a decision that I later regretted. Some years later, I faced another painful test. Even so, I am grateful to Jehovah that I have had the privilege of serving him, even under trials.

My life changed in October 1940. I lived in Hilversum, a town some 15 miles (24 km) southeast of Amsterdam in the Netherlands. The country was under Nazi rule. I had been married for five years to Jaap de Jonge, a caring husband, and we had a precious three-year-old daughter named Willy. We lived next to a family who was poor and struggling to feed eight children. Yet, they also provided lodging and meals for a permanent guest, a young man. ‘Why would they take on that extra burden?’ I wondered. When I delivered some food to them, I learned that the young man was a pioneer. He told me about God’s Kingdom and the blessings it will bring. I was deeply moved by what I learned, and I quickly accepted the truth. That very same year, I dedicated myself to Jehovah and was baptized. A year after my baptism, my husband also took his stand for the truth.

Although I had little Bible knowledge, I fully understood that by becoming a Witness, I became part of an organization that was banned. I also knew that numerous Witnesses had already been sent to prison because of preaching the Kingdom message. Still, I immediately set out preaching from house to house, and my husband and I opened our house as a place of lodging for pioneers and traveling overseers. Our home also became a storage place for Bible literature, which was delivered to us by brothers and sisters from Amsterdam. Their heavy transport bikes were loaded with books, which they covered with tarpaulin. What love and courage those couriers had! They risked their lives in behalf of their brothers. —1 John 3:16.

## **“Will You Be Back Soon, Mommy?”**

About six months after my baptism, three police officers showed up at our door. They entered the house and searched it. Although they did not find the closet filled with literature, they did find some books hidden under our bed. Right away, they ordered me to follow them to the police station in Hilversum. When I embraced my daughter to say good-bye, Willy asked, “Will you be back soon, Mommy?” “Yes, darling,” I said,

“Mommy will be home soon.” However, 18 difficult months would pass before I could hold her in my arms again.

You see, a police officer took me by train to Amsterdam for questioning. The interrogators tried to make me identify three brothers from Hilversum as Jehovah’s Witnesses. I said: “I don’t know them, except one. He is our milkman.” And that was true; that brother delivered milk. “But whether he is one of Jehovah’s Witnesses,” I added, “you should ask him, not me.” When I refused to say anything else, they struck me in the face and locked me up in a cell, where they left me for two months. When my husband found out where I was, he was able to bring me some clothes and food. Then, in August 1941, I was sent to Ravensbrück—a notorious concentration camp for women, some 50 miles (80 km) north of Berlin, Germany.

### “Cheer Up, Dear”

On arrival, we were told that we could go home if we signed a declaration renouncing our faith. But, of course, I did not sign it. Instead, I had to hand over my belongings and strip naked in a washroom, where I met some Christian sisters from the Netherlands. We were given camp clothing with a purple triangle sewn on, a plate, a cup, and a spoon. The first night, we were kept in a transit barracks. There, for the first time since my arrest, I broke down in tears. “What is going to happen? How long will I stay here?” I sobbed. Frankly, at that point my relationship with Jehovah was not yet very strong, since I had known the truth for just a few months. I still had so much to learn. The next day at roll call, a Dutch sister must have noticed my sadness. She said: “Cheer up, dear, cheer up! What can harm us?”

After the roll call, we were taken to another barracks, where we were welcomed by sev-

eral hundred Christian sisters from Germany and the Netherlands. Some of the German sisters had already lived in that barracks for over a year. Their company strengthened me—indeed, it cheered me up. I was also impressed that the barracks where our sisters were housed was so much cleaner than other barracks in the camp. Besides being clean, our barracks was also known as a place where no stealing, cursing, or fighting took place. In contrast with the cruel conditions we faced in the camp, our barracks was like a clean island surrounded by a filthy sea.

### Daily Life in Camp

Camp life consisted of working a lot and eating very little. We had to get up at five o’clock in the morning, and shortly thereafter the roll call began. Guards made us stand outside for about an hour, rain or shine. At five o’clock in the afternoon, after a day of hard labor, the roll-call routine was repeated. Then we ate some soup and bread and went to sleep—exhausted.

Each day except Sunday, I was put to work on farms, where I cut wheat with a scythe, dredged ditches, and cleaned pigsties. Though the work was heavy and dirty, I



◀ With Jaap, 1930

Our daughter,  
Willy, at age  
seven ▶



could handle it from day to day because I was still young and quite strong. Also, by singing songs with a Bible message while working, I strengthened myself. However, every day I yearned for my husband and child.

We received very little food, but all of us sisters tried to save a piece of bread every day so that we would have something extra on Sundays, when we had an opportunity to get together to discuss Bible topics. We had no Bible literature, but I eagerly listened to the older, faithful German sisters as they considered spiritual matters. We even observed the Memorial of Christ's death.

### **Distress, Regret, and Encouragement**

At times, we were ordered to do work that directly supported the war effort of the Nazis. Because of our neutrality in political matters, all sisters refused to do that work, and I followed their courageous example. As punishment, we did not receive food for days and had to stand at roll calls for hours. Once, during wintertime, we were locked up for 40 days in a barracks without any heating.

As Jehovah's Witnesses, we were told over and over again that we would be released and could go home if we signed a declaration renouncing our faith. After I had been living in Ravensbrück for over a year, I became very discouraged. The desire to see my husband and daughter became so strong that I went to the guards, asked for the form with the declaration that stated that I would no longer be a Bible Student, and signed it.

When the sisters learned what I had done, some began to avoid me. However, two elderly German sisters named Hedwig and Gertrud sought me out and reassured me of their love. While working together in the pigsties, they kindly explained to me the im-

portance of keeping integrity to Jehovah and how we show our love for him by making no compromises. Their motherly concern and tender affection touched me deeply.\* I knew that what I had done was wrong, and I wanted my declaration to be annulled. One evening I told a sister about my decision to ask for an annulment. A camp official must have overheard our conversation because the very same evening, I was suddenly discharged from the camp and sent on a train back to the Netherlands. One of the supervisors—I can still remember her face—said to me, "You are still a *Bibelforscher* (Bible Student), and you always will be." I replied, "Yes, I will, Jehovah willing." Still, I kept thinking, 'How can I renounce that declaration?'

One of the points in the declaration stated: "I assure by this never again to be active for the International Bible Students Society." I knew what to do! In January 1943, soon after I reached home, I again began to share in the preaching work. Of course, if I was caught a second time by the Nazi authorities while preaching about God's Kingdom, my punishment would be severe.

To demonstrate further to Jehovah my heartfelt desire to be a loyal servant, my husband and I again opened our home as a lodging place for the couriers and the traveling overseers. How grateful I was for having received another opportunity to prove my love for Jehovah and his people!

### **A Painful Ordeal**

A few months before the war ended, my husband and I faced a painful ordeal. In October 1944, our daughter suddenly fell ill.

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\* During that time, in the absence of contact with headquarters, brothers handled matters relative to neutrality to the best of their ability. For that reason, there was some variation in the way individuals dealt with the issue.

Willy had diphtheria. Her condition quickly deteriorated, and she died three days later. She was only seven years old.

Losing our only child was a devastating blow. Truly, the trials I went through in Ravensbrück were nothing compared to the pain I felt when we lost our child. However, in moments of distress, we always drew comfort from the words found at Psalm 16:8: "I have placed Jehovah in front of me constantly. Because he is at my right hand, I shall not be made to totter." My husband and I had firm confidence in Jehovah's promise of the resurrection. We persevered in the truth and were always zealous preachers of the good news. Until my husband's death in 1969, he truly helped me to serve Jehovah gratefully.

### **Blessings and Joys**

During the past decades, one great source of joy has always been close association with full-time servants. As it had been during the war, our home was always open to host traveling overseers and their wives when they visited our congregation. One couple in the

traveling work, Maarten and Nel Kaptein, even lived in our home for 13 years! When Nel became terminally ill, I had the privilege of caring for her in our home for three months until she died. The association with them and with the dear local brothers and sisters has helped me to enjoy the spiritual paradise in which we live right now.

One of the highlights of my life came in 1995—an invitation to attend a commemoration in Ravensbrück. There I met sisters with whom I had been in camp and whom I had not seen for over 50 years! Being together with them was an unforgettable and heartwarming experience and a fine opportunity to encourage one another to look forward to the day when our dead loved ones will live again.

The apostle Paul states at Romans 15:4 that "through our endurance and through the comfort from the Scriptures we might have hope." I thank Jehovah for furnishing this hope, which has enabled me to serve him gratefully, even under trials.

*In 1995, I attended a heartwarming reunion. I am in the first row, second from the left*





# RESPECT MARRIAGE AS A GIFT FROM GOD

*“That is why a man will leave his father and his mother and he must stick to his wife and they must become one flesh.”—GEN. 2:24.*

**J**EHOVAH GOD, the Originator of marriage, surely deserves our respect. As our Creator, Sovereign, and heavenly Father, he is rightly described as the Giver of “every good gift and every perfect present.” (Jas. 1:17; Rev. 4:11) This is a manifestation of his great love. (1 John 4:8) Everything he has taught us, everything he has asked of us, everything he has given to us has been only for our welfare and benefit.—Isa. 48:17.

<sup>2</sup> The Bible presents marriage as one of these “good” gifts from God. (Ruth 1:9; 2:12) When he performed the first wedding, Jehovah gave the couple, Adam and Eve, specific instructions on how to succeed. (**Read Matthew 19:4-6.**) If they had followed God’s direction, they would have enjoyed permanent happiness. However, they foolishly disregarded God’s command and suffered terrible consequences.—Gen. 3:6-13, 16-19, 23.

<sup>3</sup> Like that first couple, many people today make marital decisions with little or no regard for Jehovah’s direction. Some reject marriage outright, while others try to redefine it to suit their own desires. (Rom. 1:24-32; 2 Tim. 3:1-5) They ignore the fact that marriage is a gift from God, and by dis-

respecting that gift, they also disrespect the Giver, Jehovah God.

<sup>4</sup> At times, even some of God’s people lose clear sight of Jehovah’s view of marriage. Some Christian couples decide to separate, or they divorce without having Scriptural grounds to do so. How can this be avoided? How can God’s direction at Genesis 2:24 help married Christians to strengthen their marriage? And how can those who are contemplating marriage prepare for it? Let us look at three successful marriages in Bible times that illustrate how respect for Jehovah is a vital key to a lasting marriage.

## Cultivate Loyalty

<sup>5</sup> Zechariah and Elizabeth did all the right things. Each married a spiritually-minded partner. Zechariah faithfully carried out his priestly duties, and both of them kept God’s Law to the best of their ability. They certainly had much to be thankful for. Yet, if you had visited their home in Judah, you would have soon realized that something was missing. They had no children. Elizabeth was barren, and both of them were well up in years.—Luke 1:5-7.

<sup>6</sup> In ancient Israel, childbearing was highly esteemed, and families were often quite large. (1 Sam. 1:2, 6, 10; Ps. 128:3, 4) An Israelite man back then might treacherously

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1. Why does Jehovah deserve our respect?
  2. What instructions did Jehovah give to the first married couple?
  - 3, 4. (a) How are many today disrespecting both marriage and Jehovah God? (b) What examples will we consider in this article?

5, 6. What situation may have tested Zechariah and Elizabeth, and how was their loyalty rewarded?

divorce his wife if she bore him no children. Zechariah, though, loyally stayed with Elizabeth. He did not look for an easy way out of their marriage, nor did his wife. Although having no children saddened them, they continued to serve Jehovah together faithfully. Miraculously, in time Jehovah richly rewarded them with the birth of a son in their old age.—Luke 1:8-14.

<sup>7</sup> Elizabeth showed commendable loyalty in yet another way. When her son, John, was born, Zechariah could not speak because he had been struck with speechlessness for questioning God's angel. Yet, Zechariah must have communicated to his wife in some way that Jehovah's angel had told him to name the boy "John." The neighbors and relatives wanted to name the boy after his father. But Elizabeth loyally upheld her husband's direction to her. She said: "No, indeed! but he shall be called John."—Luke 1:59-63.

<sup>8</sup> Like Zechariah and Elizabeth, married couples today face disappointments and other challenges. A marriage without loyalty will not flourish. Flirtation, pornography, adultery, and other threats to a wholesome marriage can irreparably destroy marital trust. And when trust within a marriage breaks down, love begins to wither. In some ways, loyalty is like a protective fence around the family home that keeps out unwelcome visitors and threats, providing a measure of security for those inside the home. Thus, when a husband and wife are loyal to each other, they can reside together safely and open their heart to each other, letting their love grow. Yes, loyalty is vital.

7. In what other way did Elizabeth prove loyal to her husband?

8, 9. (a) How does loyalty strengthen a marriage? (b) What are some specific ways in which a husband and wife can show loyalty?

<sup>9</sup> Jehovah told Adam: "A man will leave his father and his mother and *he must stick to his wife.*" (Gen. 2:24) What does that mean? Former ties to friends and relatives have to be adjusted. Each mate must first give the other his or her time and attention. Friends and relatives can no longer take priority at the expense of the new family; nor should the couple allow parents to interfere in family decisions or disagreements. The couple must now stick to each other. That is God's direction.

<sup>10</sup> Even in religiously divided households, loyalty brings rewards. A sister with an unbelieving mate says: "I am so thankful to Jehovah for teaching me how to be in subjection to my husband and have deep respect for him. Staying loyal has resulted in 47 years of sustained love and respect." (1 Cor. 7:10, 11; 1 Pet. 3:1, 2) So work hard to make your marriage mate feel secure. By your words and actions, look for ways to reassure your mate that to you, he or she is the most important person on earth. To the extent that it depends on you, do not let anyone or anything come between you and your mate. (***Read Proverbs 5:15-20.***) Ron and Jeanette, who have been happily married for over 35 years, say, "Because we loyally do what God requires of us, we have a happy, successful marriage."

### Unity Strengthens Marriage

<sup>11</sup> When the apostle Paul spoke about his close friends Aquila and Priscilla, he did not mention one without the other. This united couple is a good example of what God meant when he said that a husband and a

10. What will help marriage mates to cultivate loyalty?

11, 12. How did Aquila and Priscilla cooperate (a) at home, (b) in their secular work, and (c) in the Christian ministry?

wife should become “one flesh.” (Gen. 2:24) They constantly worked together in their home, in their secular work, and in the Christian ministry. For example, when Paul first arrived in Corinth, Aquila and Priscilla kindly invited him to stay in their home, which he apparently used for a time thereafter as a base for his activities. Later, in Ephesus, they used their home for holding congregation meetings and worked together to help new ones, such as Apollos, to grow spiritually. (Acts 18:2, 18-26) This zealous couple then went to Rome, where they again opened their home for congregation meetings. Later, they returned to Ephesus, strengthening the brothers.—Rom. 16:3-5.

<sup>12</sup> For a time, Aquila and Priscilla also worked with Paul in their common trade, tentmaking. Again, we find the couple together, cooperating without competition or strife. (Acts 18:3) Surely, though, it was the time they spent together in Christian activities that kept their marriage on a high spiritual plane. Whether in Corinth, Ephesus, or Rome, they became widely known as “fellow workers in Christ Jesus.” (Rom. 16:3) They worked side by side to further the Kingdom-preaching work wherever they served.

<sup>13</sup> Indeed, unity in goals and activities strengthens a marriage. (Eccl. 4:9, 10) Unfortunately, many couples today spend little time together. They work long hours at their separate jobs. Others travel extensively for their secular work or move abroad alone to

13, 14. (a) What situations can work against unity in a marriage? (b) What are some things marriage mates can do to strengthen their bond as “one flesh”?



*Working together helps couples to stay united*



work to send money back home. Even at home, some marriage partners find themselves isolated from each other because of the time they spend on television, hobbies, sports, video games, or the Internet. Is that true in your household? If so, can you adjust your circumstances to spend more time together? What about sharing in such common tasks as preparing meals, washing the dishes, or working in the yard? Could you work together as you care for the children or assist your aging parents?

<sup>14</sup> Most important, regularly spend time together in activities related to worship of Jehovah. Discussing the daily text together and sharing in family worship provide excellent opportunities to keep your family's thinking and goals aligned. Also share together in the ministry. If possible, try pioneering together, even if your circumstances allow you to do it only for one month or one year. (**Read 1 Corinthians 15:58.**) A sister who pioneered with her husband says: “The ministry was one of the ways we could spend time together and really talk. Because we both had the common goal of helping others spiritually, I felt that we were a real team. I felt closer to him not just as a

husband but also as a good friend.” As you work together in worthwhile pursuits, your interests, priorities, and habits will gradually harmonize with those of your spouse until, like Aquila and Priscilla, you will increasingly think, feel, and act as “one flesh.”

### Let Spirituality Guide You

<sup>15</sup> Jesus knew the importance of putting God first in marriage. He saw Jehovah perform the first wedding. He observed how happy Adam and Eve were as long as they followed God’s direction, and he saw firsthand the trouble that resulted when they ignored it. So when Jesus taught others, he echoed his Father’s instruction found at Genesis 2:24. He also added this thought: “What God has yoked together let no man put apart.” (Matt. 19:6) Deep respect for Jehovah, therefore, is still the key to a happy, successful marriage. In this regard, Jesus’ earthly parents, Joseph and Mary, set an outstanding example.

<sup>16</sup> Joseph was kind and respectful toward Mary. When he first learned that she was pregnant, he wanted to deal mercifully with her, even before God’s angel explained to him what had happened to Mary. (Matt. 1:

15. What is the key to a successful marriage? Explain.

16. How did Joseph and Mary manifest spirituality in their family life?

### How Would You Answer?

- How should loyalty influence married Christians?
- Why will working together in unity strengthen a marriage?
- What are some ways married people can let spirituality guide them?
- How can we show respect for Jehovah, the Originator of marriage?

18-20) As a couple, they obeyed Caesar’s decree and also closely adhered to the Mosaic Law. (Luke 2:1-5, 21, 22) And although only men were required to attend the major religious festivals in Jerusalem, Joseph and Mary, together with members of their family, attended each year. (Deut. 16:16; Luke 2: 41) In these and other ways, this godly couple endeavored to please Jehovah and showed deep respect for spiritual things. It is no wonder that Jehovah had chosen them to care for his Son during the first part of Jesus’ earthly life.

<sup>17</sup> Does spirituality similarly guide your family life? For example, when you make important decisions, do you first research Bible principles, pray about the matter, and then seek advice from a mature Christian? Or do you tend to resolve problems by following your own feelings or those of family and friends? Do you strive to put into practice the many practical suggestions published by the faithful slave on marriage and family life? Or do you find yourself simply following local customs or popular secular advice? Do you regularly pray and study together, set spiritual goals, and talk about your family’s priorities?

<sup>18</sup> Regarding their 50 years of happy married life, Ray says, “We have never had a problem we could not overcome, because we kept Jehovah as part of our ‘threefold cord.’” (**Read Ecclesiastes 4:12.**) Danny and Trina agree. “As we have served God together,” they say, “our marriage has become stronger.” They have been happily married for more than 34 years. If you always put Jehovah first in your marriage, he will help you to succeed and will richly bless you.—Ps. 127:1.

17, 18. (a) In what ways can a couple put spirituality first in their family? (b) How will this benefit them?



### Continue to Respect God's Gift

<sup>19</sup> For many today, the only thing that matters is their personal happiness. But a servant of Jehovah sees things differently. He knows that God provided marriage as a gift to further His purpose. (Gen. 1:26-28) If Adam and Eve had respected that gift, the whole earth would have become a paradise filled with happy, righteous servants of God.

<sup>20</sup> Above all, God's servants see marriage as an opportunity to bring glory to Jehovah. (**Read 1 Corinthians 10:31.**) As we

19. Why did God provide the gift of marriage?

20, 21. (a) Why should we treat marriage as sacred? (b) What gift will we study about next week?

have seen, loyalty, unity, and spirituality are godly qualities that fortify a marriage. So whether we are preparing for, strengthening, or trying to save our marriage, we must first see marriage for what it is: a divine and sacred institution. Keeping that truth in mind will move us to do our best to make marital decisions based on God's Word. In this way we show respect not just for the gift of marriage but also for the Giver of that gift, Jehovah God.

<sup>21</sup> Marriage, of course, is not the only gift Jehovah has given us; nor is it the only road to happiness in life. In our next article, we will look at yet another precious gift from God—the gift of singleness.

## MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR SINGLENES

*"Let him that can make room for it make room for it."*—MATT. 19:12.

MARRIAGE is unquestionably one of God's most precious gifts to mankind. (Prov. 19:14) Yet, many single Christians also enjoy a rich and satisfying life. Harold, a 95-year-old brother who never married, says: "Although I enjoy being with others and showing hospitality, when I am alone I am never lonely. I guess it can truly be said that I have the gift of singleness."

<sup>2</sup> Indeed, both Jesus Christ and the apostle Paul referred to singleness, like marriage, as a gift from God. (**Read Matthew 19:11, 12; 1 Corinthians 7:7.**) Admittedly,

1, 2. (a) How did Jesus, Paul, and others view singleness? (b) Why might some not think of singleness as a gift?

though, not everyone who is unmarried is single by choice. Sometimes circumstances make it hard to find a suitable partner. Or after years of marriage, some unexpectedly find themselves alone because of a divorce or the death of their spouse. In what sense, then, can singleness be a gift? And how can single Christians make the most of their singleness?

### A Unique Gift

<sup>3</sup> A single person often has more time and greater personal freedom than a married person does. (1 Cor. 7:32-35) These are

3. What advantages do single Christians often enjoy?



*Are you making the most of your opportunities in God's service?*

unique advantages that may allow him to expand his ministry, widen out in love for others, and draw closer to Jehovah. A number of Christians, therefore, have come to appreciate the benefits of singleness and have decided to “make room for it,” at least for a time. Others may not have initially planned for singleness, but when their circumstances changed, they prayerfully reflected on their situation and realized that with Jehovah’s help they too could be settled in their heart. Thus, they accepted their changed circumstances and made room for singleness.—1 Cor. 7:37, 38.

<sup>4</sup> Single Christians know that they do not have to get married to be recognized or appreciated by Jehovah or his organization. God’s love reaches out to each of us as individuals. (Matt. 10:29-31) No one and nothing can separate us from God’s love. (Rom. 8:38, 39) Whether married or single, we have every reason to feel complete in God’s service.

<sup>5</sup> Still, as with such gifts as musical or athletic talent, the gift of singleness has to be cultivated in order to realize its full poten-

tial. So how can single Christians today—whether brothers or sisters, young in age or up in years, single by choice or because of circumstances—make the most of their situation in life? Let us consider some encouraging examples from the early Christian congregation and see what we can learn.

### **Singleness in Youth**

<sup>6</sup> The evangelizer Philip had four virgin daughters who shared their father’s zeal for evangelizing. (Acts 21:8, 9) Prophesying was among the miraculous gifts of the holy spirit, and these young women used that gift in fulfillment of Joel 2:28, 29.

<sup>7</sup> Timothy was a young man who made good use of his singleness. From infancy he was taught “the holy writings” by his mother, Eunice, and his grandmother Lois. (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14, 15) But they likely embraced Christianity only during Paul’s first visit to Lystra, their hometown, about 47 C.E. Two years later, when Paul visited a second time, Timothy was perhaps in his late teens or early 20’s. Despite being rela-

4. Why can single Christians feel complete in God’s service?

5. What is needed in order to obtain the full rewards of singleness?

6, 7. (a) What privilege did Philip’s virgin daughters receive in God’s service? (b) In what ways did Timothy make good use of his single years, and how was he blessed for his willingness to serve in his youth?

tively young both in age and in the truth, he was “well reported on” by the Christian elders in Lystra and neighboring Iconium. (Acts 16:1, 2) So Paul invited Timothy to join him as a traveling companion. (1 Tim. 1:18; 4:14) We cannot say for certain that Timothy never married. But we do know that as a young man, he cheerfully accepted Paul’s invitation, and for many years thereafter, he enjoyed serving as a single missionary and overseer.—Phil. 2:20-22.

<sup>8</sup> In his youth, John Mark also used his single years to good advantage. He and his mother, Mary, as well as his cousin Barnabas were early members of the Jerusalem congregation. Mark’s family may also have been comfortably situated, since they owned their own home in the city and had a servant. (Acts 12:12, 13) Despite these advantages, however, even as a young man, Mark was not self-indulgent or self-centered; nor was he content to settle down and lead a comfortable family life. His early association with the apostles likely instilled in him a desire for missionary service. So he eagerly joined Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary tour and served as their attendant. (Acts 13:5) Later, he traveled with Barnabas, and later still, we find him serving with Peter in Babylon. (Acts 15:39; 1 Pet. 5:13) How long Mark remained single, we do not know. But he earned an excellent reputation as someone who was willing to minister to others and do more in God’s service.

<sup>9</sup> Many young ones in the congregation today also gladly use their single years to expand their share in God’s service. Like

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8. What enabled John Mark to pursue spiritual goals, and what blessings did he receive for doing so?

9, 10. What opportunities are there today for young single Christians to expand their ministry? Give an example.

Mark and Timothy, they appreciate that singleness allows for “constant attendance upon the Lord without distraction.” (1 Cor. 7:35) This is a real advantage. Opportunities abound—pioneering, serving where the need for Kingdom preachers is greater, learning a foreign language, assisting with Kingdom Hall or branch construction, attending Ministerial Training School, and serving at Bethel. If you are still young and unmarried, are you making the most of your opportunities?

<sup>10</sup> A brother named Mark started pioneering in his late teens, attended the Ministerial Training School, and has served in various assignments around the world. Looking back on 25 years of full-time service, he says: “I’ve tried to work with everyone in the congregation, sharing in the ministry with them, making shepherding calls on them, inviting them to my home for meals, and even arranging gatherings with a spiritual focus. All these things have brought me a great deal of joy.” As Mark’s comments reveal, the greatest joy in life comes from giving, and a full life in sacred service offers many opportunities for giving to others. (Acts 20:35) No matter what your personal interests, skills, or experience in life, for young people today, there is plenty to do in the Lord’s work.—1 Cor. 15:58.

<sup>11</sup> Although most young people would like to marry eventually, there are good reasons not to rush into marriage. Paul encourages youths to wait at least until they are past “the bloom of youth,” when sexual desires are most powerful. (1 Cor. 7:36) It takes time to understand yourself and acquire the experience in life that is needed to choose a suitable mate. Making a marriage vow is a

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11. What are some benefits of not rushing into marriage?

serious decision, one that should last for life.—Eccl. 5:2-5.

### Singleness in Later Life

<sup>12</sup> Anna, mentioned in Luke's Gospel, likely was deeply saddened when her husband died unexpectedly after just seven years of marriage. We do not know whether they had any children or if she ever considered remarrying. But the Bible reports that at age 84, Anna was still a widow. From what the Bible says, we can conclude that Anna used her changed circumstances to draw closer to Jehovah. She was "never missing from the temple, rendering sacred service night and day with fastings and supplications." (Luke 2:36, 37) So spiritual things came first in her life. That took real determination and effort, but she was greatly rewarded. She was privileged to see the young child Jesus, and she witnessed to others about the liberation that was due to be effected through this coming Messiah.—Luke 2:38.

<sup>13</sup> A woman named Dorcas, or Tabitha, lived in Joppa, an ancient seaport northwest of Jerusalem. Since the Bible mentions no husband, she was likely unmarried at the time. Dorcas "abounded in good deeds and gifts of mercy." She evidently made many garments for needy widows and others, and this greatly endeared her to them. So when she suddenly fell ill and died, the whole congregation sent for Peter to implore him to resurrect their dear sister. As news of her resurrection spread throughout Joppa, many became believers. (Acts 9:36-42) Through her extraordinary kindness,

12. (a) How did the widow Anna cope with her changed circumstances? (b) What privilege did she receive?

13. (a) What indicates that Dorcas was actively involved in the congregation? (b) How was Dorcas rewarded for her goodness and kindness?

Dorcas herself may have had a share in helping some of them.

<sup>14</sup> Like Anna and Dorcas, many in congregations today find themselves single later in life. Some may not have found a suitable marriage mate. Others are divorced or widowed. Having no marriage mate to confide in, single Christians often learn to lean more heavily on Jehovah. (Prov. 16:3) Silvia, a single sister who has served at Bethel for more than 38 years, sees this as a blessing. "Sometimes I get tired of being the strong one," she admits. "I wonder, 'Who will encourage me?'" But then she adds: "Trusting that Jehovah knows what I need better than I do helps me to draw closer to him. And the encouragement always comes, sometimes from completely unexpected sources." Whenever we draw closer to Jehovah, he always responds in a most tender and reassuring way.

<sup>15</sup> Singleness affords a special opportunity to "widen out" in love. (*Read 2 Corinthians 6:11-13.*) Jolene, a single sister who has spent the past 34 years in full-time service, says: "I've tried to work hard at building warm relationships, not just with people my own age, but with all types of people. Singleness is a real opportunity to give to Jehovah, your family, and your brothers and sisters, as well as to your neighbors. The older I get, the happier I feel about my single state." The elderly, the infirm, single parents, youths, and others in the congregation certainly appreciate the unselfish support that single ones offer to them. Indeed, whenever we show love to others, we feel better about ourselves. Can you too "widen out" in your love for others?

14. What moves single Christians to draw closer to Jehovah?

15. How may unmarried Christians "widen out" in their love?



## Single for Life

<sup>16</sup> Jesus did not marry; he had to prepare for and carry out his assigned ministry. He traveled extensively, worked from early in the morning until late at night, and eventually laid down his life in sacrifice. Singleness was an advantage in his case. The apostle Paul traveled thousands of miles and faced great hardships in the ministry. (2 Cor. 11:23-27) Although he may have been married earlier, Paul chose to stay single after he was commissioned as an apostle. (1 Cor. 7:7; 9:5) For the sake of the ministry, both Jesus and Paul encouraged others to imitate their example where possible. Yet, neither of them set celibacy as a requirement for ministers.—1 Tim. 4:1-3.

<sup>17</sup> Today, some have likewise made the conscious choice to remain single so that they can better pursue their ministry. Harold, mentioned earlier, has enjoyed over 56 years in Bethel service. “By the time I completed ten years at Bethel,” he says, “I had observed many married couples leaving Bethel because of sickness or the need to care for an aging parent. My parents were both deceased. But I loved Bethel so much

16. (a) Why did Jesus stay single for life? (b) How did Paul make wise use of his single state?

17. How have some today followed in the footsteps of Jesus and Paul, and why can we be sure that Jehovah appreciates those who make such sacrifices?

### Do You Recall?

- In what ways can singleness be a gift?
- How can singleness be a blessing in youth?
- What opportunities do single Christians have to draw closer to Jehovah and widen out in love?

that I did not want to put that privilege in jeopardy by getting married.” Similarly, years ago, a longtime pioneer named Margaret observed: “There have been opportunities for marriage in my life, but I just never got around to it. Instead, I was able to use the extra freedom and mobility that singleness affords to keep busy in the ministry, and this has brought me great happiness.” Surely, Jehovah will never forget any who make such unselfish sacrifices for true worship.—**Read Isaiah 56:4, 5.**

### Make the Most of Your Circumstances

<sup>18</sup> All unmarried Christians who are doing their best to serve Jehovah deserve our genuine commendation and encouragement. We love them for who they are and for the significant contribution they make to the congregation. They will never have to feel lonely if we truly become their spiritual “brothers and sisters and mothers and children.”—**Read Mark 10:28-30.**

<sup>19</sup> Whether you are single by choice or simply because of circumstances, may these Scriptural and modern examples assure you that you can lead a happy and productive life. Some gifts are eagerly anticipated, while others are completely unexpected. Some are immediately appreciated, while others are valued only over time. Much, then, depends on our attitude. What can you do to make the most of your singleness? Draw closer to Jehovah, have plenty to do in God’s service, and widen out in your love for others. Like marriage, singleness can be rewarding when we view it from God’s perspective and make wise use of this gift.

18. How can others encourage and support single Christians?

19. What can you do to make the most of your singleness?

# EMPOWERED TO FIGHT TEMPTATION AND COPE WITH DISCOURAGEMENT

*“You will receive power when the holy spirit arrives upon you.”—ACTS 1:8.*

JESUS knew that his disciples in their own strength were not capable of observing all that he had commanded. Considering the scope of their preaching commission, the strength of their opponents, and the frailty of the human flesh, it was clear that they needed superhuman power. Thus, just before his ascension to heaven, Jesus assured his disciples: “You will receive power when the holy spirit arrives upon you, and you will be witnesses of me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the most distant part of the earth.”—Acts 1:8.

<sup>2</sup> That promise began to have its fulfillment at Pentecost 33 C.E. when holy spirit empowered the followers of Jesus Christ to fill Jerusalem with their preaching. No opposition was able to halt it. (Acts 4:20) “All the days until the conclusion of the system of things,” Jesus’ faithful followers, including us, would be in urgent need of that same God-given strength.—Matt. 28:20.

<sup>3</sup> Jesus promised his disciples that ‘they would receive *power* when the holy *spirit* arrived upon them.’ The terms “power” and “spirit” are distinct in their meaning. God’s spirit, his active force, describes energy that is projected and exerted on people or things

to accomplish God’s will. Power, however, can be defined as the “ability to act or produce an effect.” It can lie dormant in someone or something until it is needed to produce a given result. Thus, holy spirit might be likened to the electric current that energizes a rechargeable battery, whereas power is more like the latent energy that is then stored in the battery. The power that Jehovah grants to his servants by means of holy spirit gives each one of us the ability to fulfill our Christian dedication and, when necessary, to resist negative forces that are exerted upon us.—**Read Micah 3:8; Colossians 1:29.**

<sup>4</sup> How is the power given to us by holy spirit manifested? What kinds of actions or reactions might be the result of its influence? As we seek to serve God faithfully, we face numerous obstacles caused either by Satan, by his system of things, or by our own imperfect flesh. It is important that we overcome such obstacles in order to persevere as Christians, share regularly in the ministry, and maintain a good relationship with Jehovah. Let us consider how holy spirit helps us to fight temptation and cope with tiredness and discouragement.

## Empowered to Fight Temptation

<sup>5</sup> Jesus taught his followers to pray: “Do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us

1, 2. What help did Jesus promise his disciples, and why would they need it?

3. (a) Explain the difference between holy spirit and power. (b) What can power from Jehovah help us to do?

4. What will be considered in this article, and why?  
5. How can prayer empower us?

from the wicked one.” (Matt. 6:13) Jehovah will not abandon his faithful servants who make this request. On another occasion, Jesus said that “the Father in heaven [will] give holy spirit to those asking him.” (Luke 11:13) How reassuring that Jehovah promises to grant us this force for righteousness! This, of course, does not mean that Jehovah will prevent us from being tempted. (1 Cor. 10:13) But when we face temptation, that is a time to pray even more intensely.—Matt. 26:42.

<sup>6</sup> In answer to the Devil’s temptations, Jesus quoted scriptures. God’s Word was clearly in Jesus’ mind when he responded: “It is written . . . Again it is written . . . Go away, Satan! For it is written, ‘It is Jehovah your God you must worship, and it is to him alone you must render sacred service.’ ” Love for Jehovah and for his Word impelled Jesus to reject the allurements that the Tempter put before him. (Matt. 4:1-10) After Jesus repeatedly resisted temptation, Satan left him.

<sup>7</sup> Since Jesus relied on the Scriptures to resist the Devil’s temptations, how much more so should we! Indeed, our ability to resist the Devil and his agents begins with a determination to be acquainted with God’s standards and to adhere to them fully. Many people have been moved to live by Bible standards as they studied the Scriptures and came to appreciate God’s wisdom and righteousness. Indeed, “the word of God” exerts a power that is capable of discerning “thoughts and intentions of the heart.” (Heb. 4:12) The more one reads and ponders over the Scriptures, the more one can gain ‘insight into Jehovah’s trueness.’ (Dan. 9:13) That being so, we do well to meditate

6. Upon what did Jesus base his answers to Satan’s temptations?

7. How does the Bible help us to resist temptation?

on scriptures that deal with our specific weaknesses.

<sup>8</sup> In addition to knowing the Scriptures, Jesus could resist temptation because he was “full of holy spirit.” (Luke 4:1) In order to have similar strength and ability, we need to draw close to Jehovah by taking full advantage of all the provisions he has made to fill us with his spirit. (Jas. 4:7, 8) Among these are Bible study, prayer, and association with fellow believers. Many have also appreciated the benefit of maintaining a full schedule of Christian activities, which helps to keep the mind focused on upbuilding spiritual thoughts.

<sup>9</sup> What enticements to err do you have to resist? Have you ever been tempted to flirt with someone who is not your marriage mate? If you are not married, have you ever had the urge to accept a date with an unbeliever? When watching television or using the Internet, Christians may suddenly be tempted to view something unclean. Has that happened to you, and if so, how did you react? It would be wise to meditate on how one false step could lead to another and then to serious wrongdoing. (Jas. 1:14, 15) Think about the pain that an unfaithful act would bring to Jehovah, to the congregation, and to your family. A clean conscience, on the other hand, results from maintaining loyalty to divine principles. (***Read Psalm 119:37; Proverbs 22:3.***) Whenever you face such tests, be determined to pray for strength to resist them.

<sup>10</sup> There is something else to remember about the Devil’s temptations. Satan approached Jesus after He had been fasting for

8. Through what means can we obtain holy spirit?  
9, 10. (a) What temptations are common in your area? (b) How can meditation and prayer empower you to fight temptation even when you feel tired?

40 days in the wilderness. No doubt the Devil thought that this was a particularly “convenient time” to test Jesus’ integrity. (Luke 4:13) Satan looks for convenient times to test our integrity too. It is vital, therefore, that we keep ourselves spiritually strong. Satan often attacks when he perceives that his target is at its weakest point. So whenever we feel tired or discouraged, we should be more determined than ever to petition Jehovah for his protective help and holy spirit.—2 Cor. 12:8-10.

### **Empowered to Cope With Tiredness and Discouragement**

<sup>11</sup> As imperfect humans, we feel discouraged from time to time. That may particularly be true today because the period in which we live is especially stressful. We are passing through perhaps the most difficult times that mankind as a whole has yet experienced. (2 Tim. 3:1-5) As Armageddon approaches, economic, emotional, and other pressures are mounting. It should not come as a surprise, then, that some find it increasingly hard to fulfill their responsibility to

11, 12. (a) Why do many feel discouraged today? (b) What can empower us to resist discouragement?

look after and provide for their families. They feel tired, burdened down, worn-out, and even burned-out. If that is true in your case, how can you cope with the pressure?

<sup>12</sup> Remember, Jesus assured his disciples that he would give them a helper—God’s holy spirit. (**Read John 14:16, 17.**) This is the most powerful force in the universe. With it, Jehovah can “more than superabundantly” provide the strength that we need to endure any trial. (Eph. 3:20) By relying on it, said the apostle Paul, we receive “power beyond what is normal,” even though we are “pressed in every way.” (2 Cor. 4:7, 8) Jehovah does not promise to remove stress, but he does assure us that by means of his spirit, he will give us the strength to deal with it.—Phil. 4:13.

<sup>13</sup> Consider the example of Stephanie, a 19-year-old regular pioneer. At age 12, she suffered a stroke and was diagnosed with a brain tumor. Since then, she has undergone surgery twice, received radiation treatment, and suffered two more strokes, which left her with limited movement on her left side

13. (a) How has one young person been empowered to cope with a difficult situation? (b) Do you know of similar examples?

*Christian meetings can invigorate us spiritually*





and limited vision. Stephanie has to save her energy for the things that she considers more important, such as Christian meetings and field service. Yet, she perceives Jehovah's strengthening hand helping her to endure in many ways. Bible-based publications containing experiences of fellow Christians have uplifted her when she has been downhearted. Brothers and sisters have supported her by sending her letters or by speaking encouragingly to her before and after meetings. Interested people too have shown appreciation for what Stephanie is teaching them by going to her home to receive their Bible instruction. For all of this, Stephanie feels a great debt of gratitude to Jehovah. Her favorite scripture is Psalm 41:3, which she believes has been fulfilled in her case.

<sup>14</sup> When we are tired or under pressure, we must never reason that the way to deal with stress is to cut back on spiritual activities. That is the worst thing we could possibly do. Why? Because such activities as personal and family Bible study, field service, and meeting attendance are the means by which we receive revitalizing holy spirit. Christian activities are always refreshing. (**Read Matthew 11:28, 29.**) How often brothers and sisters arrive at meetings feeling weary, but when the time comes to go home, it is as if their energy has been renewed, their spiritual batteries recharged!

<sup>15</sup> This is not to say, of course, that the load of Christian discipleship is weightless. It takes effort to be a faithful Christian. (Matt. 16:24-26; Luke 13:24) Nevertheless, by means of holy spirit, Jehovah can give the tired one strength. "Those who are hoping

14. What must we avoid when we are discouraged, and why?

15. (a) Does Jehovah promise that he will make life effortless for a Christian? Explain Scripturally. (b) What does God promise us, leading to what question?

in Jehovah will regain power," wrote the prophet Isaiah. "They will mount up with wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not tire out." (Isa. 40:29-31) That being the case, we would do well to ask, What truly is at the root of spiritual fatigue?

<sup>16</sup> Jehovah's Word urges us to "make sure of the more important things." (Phil. 1:10) Likening the Christian life course to a long-distance footrace, under inspiration the apostle Paul recommended: "Let us also put off every weight . . . , and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us." (Heb. 12:1) His point was that we must avoid needless pursuits, needless weights, that will tire us out. It may be that some of us are simply trying to squeeze too much into already busy lives. So if you often feel tired and under pressure, you might benefit from reviewing how you meet the demands of secular work, the frequency with which you travel for pleasure, and the intensity with which you pursue sports or other leisure activities. Reasonableness and modesty should move all of us to recognize our limitations and keep unnecessary commitments to a minimum.

<sup>17</sup> It may also be that some among us feel

16. What can we do to eliminate possible causes of tiredness or discouragement?

17. Why may some feel discouraged, but what assurance does Jehovah provide in this regard?

### How Would You Answer?

- How does Bible reading empower us?
- How do prayer and meditation empower us?
- How can you eliminate potential causes of discouragement?

a measure of discouragement because the end of this system of things has not come as soon as we expected. (Prov. 13:12) Any who feel this way, however, can draw encouragement from the words found at Habakkuk 2:3: “The vision is yet for the appointed time, and it keeps panting on to the end, and it will not tell a lie. Even if it should delay, keep in expectation of it; for it will without fail come true. It will not be late.” We have Jehovah’s assurance that the end of this system of things will come right on schedule!

<sup>18</sup> Surely, all of Jehovah’s faithful servants

18. (a) What promises give you strength? (b) How will the next article be of benefit to us?

long for the day when tiredness and discouragement will be gone, when all alive will enjoy “youthful vigor.” (Job 33:25) Even now we can be made mighty on the inside through the action of holy spirit as we participate in invigorating spiritual activities. (2 Cor. 4:16; Eph. 3:16) Do not let fatigue cause you to miss out on eternal blessings. Every trial—whether caused by temptation, tiredness, or discouragement—will pass, if not immediately, then in God’s new world. In the following article, we will examine how holy spirit empowers Christians to withstand persecution, resist harmful peer pressure, and endure various other adversities.

# EMPOWERED TO OVERCOME ANY TRIAL

*“For all things I have the strength by virtue of him  
who imparts power to me.”—PHIL. 4:13.*

**J**EHOVAH’S people are no strangers to adversity of one type or another. Some trials are due to our own imperfections or are a consequence of the system of things in which we live. Others are due to the enmity that exists between those who serve God and those who do not. (Gen. 3:15) From early on in human history, God has helped his faithful servants to withstand religious persecution, resist harmful peer pressure, and endure all kinds of other adversities. His holy spirit can empower us to do the same.

1. Why do Jehovah’s people face many adversities?

## Helped to Withstand Religious Persecution

<sup>2</sup> Religious persecution is harassment or injury deliberately inflicted on people because of their faith or beliefs. Its purpose is to stamp out such beliefs, prevent their spread, or break the integrity of believers. Persecution can take various forms, some overt, some subtle. The Bible likens Satan’s attacks to those of both a young lion and a cobra.—**Read Psalm 91:13.**

2. What is the aim of religious persecution, and what forms can it take?

<sup>3</sup> Like a savage lion, Satan has often made open, frontal attacks by means of violence, imprisonment, or ban. (Ps. 94:20) *Yearbook* reports describing acts of Jehovah's Witnesses in modern times contain numerous accounts of such tactics. Lawless mobs, some led by clergymen or political fanatics, have mistreated God's people in many places. These lionlike attacks have caused a few to stumble. Like a cobra, the Devil also launches treacherous strikes from hidden places in order to poison minds and deceive people into doing his will. This type of attack is designed to weaken or corrupt us spiritually. But by means of God's holy spirit, we can withstand both forms of persecution.

<sup>4</sup> Imagining different scenarios of possible future persecution is not the best way to prepare for it. The fact is that we simply cannot know what the future holds in such matters, so there is little to be gained from worrying about things that may never happen. There is, however, something that we *can* do. Most of those who have successfully endured persecution have done so by meditating on the faithful course of integrity keepers, as recorded in the Scriptures, as well as on the teachings and example of Jesus. This has enabled them to deepen their love for Jehovah. That love, in turn, helped them to resist whatever trials came their way.

<sup>5</sup> Consider the example of two of our sisters in Malawi. In an effort to get them to buy political party cards, a violent mob beat, stripped, and threatened to rape them. The mob lyingly told them that even the members of the Bethel family had obtained party cards. The sisters' response? "We serve only Jehovah God. So if the brothers at the

branch office have bought cards, that does not make any difference to us. We will not compromise, even if you kill us!" After taking that courageous stand, the sisters were released.

<sup>6</sup> The apostle Paul noted that Christians in Thessalonica had accepted the message of truth "under much tribulation" yet "with joy of holy spirit." (1 Thess. 1:6) Indeed, many Christians, past and present, who have faced and overcome persecution report that at the height of their trials, they experienced inner peace, one aspect of the fruitage of God's holy spirit. (Gal. 5:22) That peace, in turn, helped to guard their hearts and mental powers. Yes, Jehovah uses his active force to empower his servants to cope with trials and to act wisely when adversity strikes.\*

<sup>7</sup> Onlookers have been amazed by the determination of God's people to maintain their integrity even in the face of vicious persecution. The Witnesses seemed imbued with superhuman strength, and indeed they were. The apostle Peter assures us: "If you are being reproached for the name of Christ, you are happy, because the spirit of glory, even the spirit of God, is resting upon you." (1 Pet. 4:14) That we are persecuted for upholding righteous standards indicates that we have divine approval. (Matt. 5:10-12; John 15:20) What joy this proof of Jehovah's blessing brings!

### Helped to Resist Peer Pressure

<sup>8</sup> A more subtle form of opposition that

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\* For examples, see *The Watchtower*, May 1, 2001, page 16; and *Awake!* February 8, 1993, pages 21 and 22.

6, 7. How does Jehovah empower his servants to face persecution?

8. (a) What enabled Joshua and Caleb to resist peer pressure? (b) What can we learn from Joshua and Caleb's example?

3. What characterizes lionlike and cobralike persecution?

4, 5. What is the best way to prepare for persecution, and why? Give an example.

Christians must endure is negative peer pressure. However, because Jehovah's spirit is much more powerful than the spirit of the world, we can resist people who ridicule us, who spread untruths about us, or who attempt to force us to conform to their standards. What was it, for example, that enabled Joshua and Caleb to disagree with the views of the ten other spies who were sent into the land of Canaan? Holy spirit stirred within them a different "spirit," or mental inclination.—*Read Numbers 13:30; 14:6-10, 24.*

<sup>9</sup> Holy spirit likewise empowered Jesus' apostles to obey God rather than those whom many esteemed as teachers of true religion. (Acts 4:21, 31; 5:29, 32) Most people prefer to go along with the crowd, so to speak, to avoid confrontation or conflict. True Christians, though, often have to take a stand for what they know to be right. Even so, thanks to the strength imparted by God's active force, they do not fear to be different. (2 Tim. 1:7) Consider one area in which we must not give in to peer pressure.

<sup>10</sup> Some young ones might face a dilemma if they learn that a friend has engaged in unscriptural conduct. They may feel that seeking spiritual help for their friend would violate an unwritten code of silence; therefore, they refuse to speak about the matter because of a misguided sense of loyalty. A wrongdoer may even pressure his friends to keep his sin hidden. Of course, this kind of problem is not unique to young people. Some adults too may find it difficult to approach congregation elders

9. Why must Christians be willing to differ from the majority?

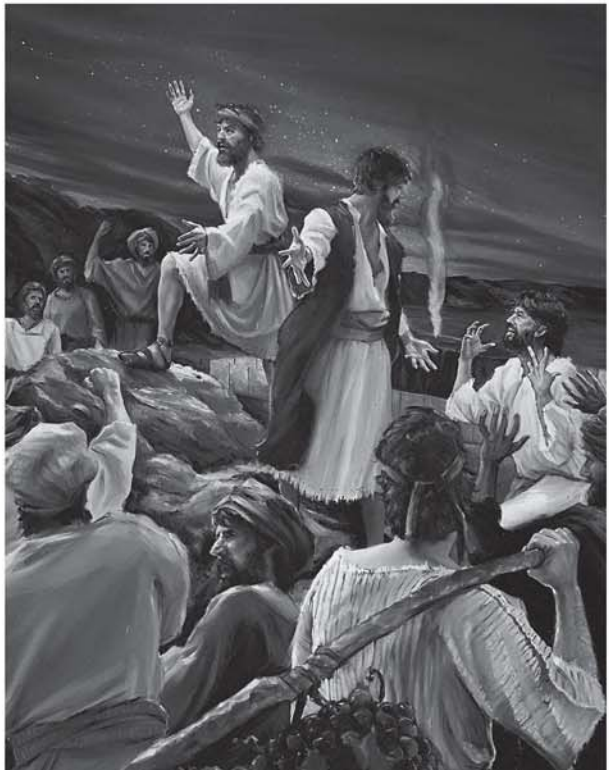
10. What dilemma might some Christians face?

concerning the wrongdoing of a friend or a family member. But how should true Christians react to such pressure?

<sup>11</sup> Imagine this situation. Suppose that Alex, a young brother, learned that Steve, his friend in the congregation, was in the habit of viewing pornography. Alex tells Steve that he is deeply concerned about what his friend is doing. However, Steve shrugs off his words. When Alex urges him to talk to the elders about it, Steve responds that if the two really are friends, then Alex will not tell on him. Should Alex be afraid of losing his friend? He might wonder whom the elders would believe if Steve denied everything. Still, the situation is not going to improve if Alex keeps quiet about it. Indeed, it could lead to Steve's losing his relationship with Jehovah. Alex would do well to recall that "trembling at men is what lays

11, 12. What is the best response if a member of the congregation urges you not to reveal his or her wrongdoing, and why?

*What can we learn from Joshua and Caleb?*





***How can you help a friend who commits some wrong?***

a snare, but he that is trusting in Jehovah will be protected.” (Prov. 29:25) What else could Alex do? He might lovingly approach Steve again and lay bare his fault. That will take courage. It may well be, though, that this time Steve will welcome the opportunity to talk about his problem. Alex should again encourage Steve to speak to the elders and tell him that if he does not do so within a reasonable period of time, then Alex will alert them.—Lev. 5:1.

<sup>12</sup> If you ever have to handle such a situation, your friend may not at first appreciate your efforts to help. But he might in time come to realize that you are acting in his best interests. If the erring one receives and accepts help, then he might be lastingly grateful to you for your courage and loyalty. On the other hand, if he becomes hardened against you, is he really the kind of friend that you want? Pleasing our greatest Friend, Jehovah, is always the right thing to do. When we put him first, others who love him will respect us for our loyalty and become true friends. We should never allow place for the Devil in the Christian congregation. If we were to do so, we truly would grieve Je-

hovah’s holy spirit. We act in harmony with it, however, by working to keep the Christian congregation pure.—Eph. 4:27, 30.

### **Empowered to Endure All Kinds of Adversity**

<sup>13</sup> Adversity may take many forms—a financial reversal, the loss of employment, a natural disaster, the death of a loved one, a health crisis, and so on. Since we live in “critical times,” it is to be expected that sooner or later all of us will have to deal with some kind of trial. (2 Tim. 3:1) When that occurs, it is important not to panic. Holy spirit can empower us to endure any kind of adversity.

<sup>14</sup> Job suffered one adversity after another. He lost his livelihood, children, friends, and health, and his wife lost confidence in Jehovah. (Job 1:13-19; 2:7-9) Yet, Job found a true comforter in Elihu. His message, as well as the substance of Jehovah’s own message to Job, was: “Stand still and show yourself attentive to the wonderful works of God.” (Job 37:14) What helped Job to endure his trials? And what can help us to endure ours? Remembering and pondering the various manifestations of Jehovah’s holy spirit and power. (Job 38:1-41; 42:1, 2) Perhaps we recall times in our own life when we saw evidence of God’s interest in us personally. He is still interested in us.

<sup>15</sup> The apostle Paul endured many life-threatening adversities for the sake of his faith. (2 Cor. 11:23-28) How did he maintain balance and emotional stability under those

13. What kinds of adversity are Jehovah’s people facing, and why are such things so prevalent?

14. What empowered Job to endure his adversities?

15. What strengthened the apostle Paul to endure trials?



trying circumstances? By prayerful reliance on Jehovah. During the time of testing that apparently culminated in his martyrdom, Paul wrote: “The Lord stood near me and infused power into me, that through me the preaching might be fully accomplished and all the nations might hear it; and I was delivered from the lion’s mouth.” (2 Tim. 4:17) Therefore, from personal experience, Paul could assure fellow believers that there was no need to “be anxious over anything.” —**Read *Philippians 4:6, 7, 13*.**

<sup>16</sup> A pioneer named Roxana is one who has seen how Jehovah provides for his people. When she asked her employer for permission to take some days off to attend one of our conventions, he angrily retorted that if she went, he would fire her. Roxana went anyway, fervently praying that she might keep her job. After that, she felt calm. Sure enough, on the Monday after the convention, her boss did fire her. Roxana was perturbed. She needed that job, low-paying though it was, to help support her family. Again she prayed, and she reflected on the fact that God had provided for her spiritually at the convention, so he could surely also provide for her physically. As she walked home, Roxana saw a “Help Wanted” sign for experienced operators of industrial sewing machines, and she applied for a job. The

16, 17. Give an example of how Jehovah is empowering his people to face adversities today.

#### **How Would You Answer?**

- How can you prepare to withstand persecution?
- How should you react if someone urges you not to reveal wrongdoing?
- What confidence can you have in the face of any kind of adversity?

manager realized that she had no experience but offered her a job anyway, at almost double the wages she had been earning. Roxana felt that her prayers had been answered. The greatest blessing, however, was that she was able to share the good news with several of her fellow workers. Five of them, including the manager, accepted the truth and were baptized.

<sup>17</sup> At times, it might seem that our prayers are not being answered—at least not right away or in the way we expect. If so, doubtless there is a good reason. Jehovah knows it, but it may become clear to us only in the future. Of one thing we can be sure—God does not abandon his faithful ones.—Heb. 6:10.

#### **Helped to Overcome Trials and Temptations**

<sup>18</sup> Jehovah’s people are not surprised to meet up with temptation, discouragement, persecution, and peer pressure. The world is basically hostile toward us. (John 15:17-19) Yet, holy spirit can make us equal to any challenge we might face in our service to God. Jehovah will not let us be tempted beyond what we can bear. (1 Cor. 10:13) He will by no means ever leave or forsake us. (Heb. 13:5) Obedience to his inspired Word protects and fortifies us. Moreover, God’s spirit can impel fellow believers to impart the assistance we need when we need it most.

<sup>19</sup> May all of us continue to seek holy spirit through prayer and study of the Scriptures. May we go on “being made powerful with all power to the extent of [God’s] glorious might so as to endure fully and be long-suffering with joy.”—Col. 1:11.

18, 19. (a) Why can we expect to face trials and temptations? (b) How can you face trials successfully?

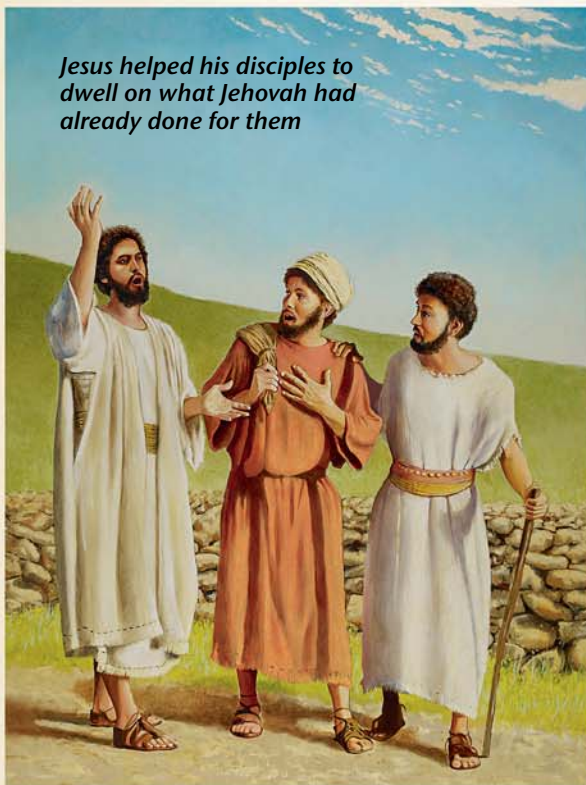
# Dwell on What Jehovah Has Done for You

**S**HORTLY after Jesus was resurrected, two of his disciples were walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus. “As they were conversing and discussing,” says Luke’s Gospel account, “Jesus himself approached and began walking with them; but their eyes were kept from recognizing him.” Then, Jesus said to them: “‘What are these matters that you are debating between yourselves as you walk along?’ And they stood still with sad faces.” Why were they sad? The disciples held the view that Jesus would at that time deliver Israel from Gentile domination, but

such deliverance had not taken place. Instead, Jesus had been put to death. Hence, their sadness.—Luke 24:15-21; Acts 1:6.

Jesus began to reason with the disciples. “Commencing at Moses and all the Prophets he interpreted to them things pertaining to himself in all the Scriptures.” Indeed, many significant and faith-strengthening events had taken place during Jesus’ ministry! As the disciples listened to Jesus’ explanation, their disposition changed from being sad to being joyful. Later that evening, they said: “Were not our hearts burning as he was speaking to us on the road, as he was fully opening up the Scriptures to us?” (Luke 24:27, 32) What lesson can we learn from the reaction of Jesus’ disciples?

*Jesus helped his disciples to dwell on what Jehovah had already done for them*



## How Do Unfulfilled Expectations Affect Us?

The two disciples on the road to Emmaus felt sad because the events they expected had not taken place. They experienced what is described at Proverbs 13:12: “Expectation postponed is making the heart sick.” Similarly, some of us who have faithfully been serving Jehovah for decades thought that the “great tribulation” would have come and gone by now. (Matt. 24:21; Rev. 7:14) It is understandable that for the moment, such an unfulfilled expectation may cause sadness.

Remember, though, that those two disciples regained their joy after Jesus helped them to focus on the fulfillment of prophecies that had already taken place—even during their own lifetime. We can maintain our



*Relive in your mind the sounds and images of a recent convention*



inner joy and cope with feelings of disappointment in a similar way. An experienced Christian elder named Michael said: “Do not concentrate on what Jehovah has not yet done. Rather, dwell on what he has already done.” Good advice indeed!

### **What Jehovah Has Done**

Consider some of the outstanding things that Jehovah has already accomplished. Jesus stated: “He that exercises faith in me, that one also will do the works that I do; and he will do works greater than these.” (John 14:12) Today, God’s servants are accomplishing the greatest Christian works ever. Over seven million individuals look forward to surviving the great tribulation. Imagine,

never before have so many faithful servants of Jehovah been active in so many lands throughout the earth! Jehovah has made Jesus’ prophetic words about “works greater than these” a reality.

What else has Jehovah done for us? He has made it possible for honesthearted ones to move out of the wicked world, figuratively speaking, and into the spiritual paradise that he has created. (2 Cor. 12:1-4) Take time to reflect on some of the features of that paradise that are within our easy reach. For instance, take a look at your personal library or at the one in the Kingdom Hall. Page through the *Watch Tower Publications Index*, or browse through *Watchtower Library*. Switch on a recording of a Bible drama. Relive in your mind the sounds and images of a recent convention. In addition, think about the wholesome association we enjoy with our Christian brothers and sisters. How generous Jehovah has been in providing us with abundant spiritual food and a loving brotherhood—a spiritual paradise indeed!

The psalmist David stated: “Many things you yourself have done, O Jehovah my God, even your wonderful works and your thoughts toward us.” (Ps. 40:5) Yes, by dwelling on the wonderful things that Jehovah has already done for us and by reflecting on the loving thoughts that he has toward us, we will find renewed strength to endure faithfully in our wholehearted service to our heavenly Father, Jehovah.—Matt. 24:13.