

THE WATCHTOWER

MAY 15, 2006

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



**WHAT IS GOD'S
PURPOSE FOR
THE EARTH?**

THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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THE PURPOSE OF THE WATCHTOWER is to exalt Jehovah God as Sovereign Lord of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as these fulfill Bible prophecy. It comforts all peoples with the good news that God's Kingdom will soon destroy those who oppress their fellowmen and that it will turn the earth into a paradise. It encourages faith in God's now-reigning King, Jesus Christ, whose shed blood opens the way for mankind to gain eternal life. *The Watchtower*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879, is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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WHAT IS GOD'S PURPOSE FOR THE EARTH?

WHY do you enjoy walking in a park or strolling through a field of sweet-smelling flowers? Why is it that your spirits soar when you see a beautiful lake or towering mountains with their peaks in the clouds? Why do you stop to listen as birds sing their cheery songs in the treetops? And why is it so pleasant to watch a graceful deer bounding along or a flock of sheep grazing in a meadow?

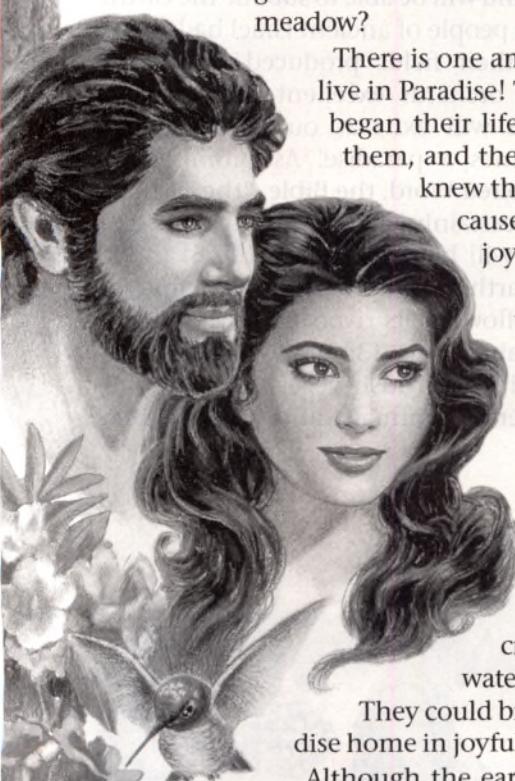
There is one answer to all these questions. We were made to live in Paradise! That is where our first parents, Adam and Eve, began their life. We got our desire to live in Paradise from them, and they got it from their Creator, Jehovah God. He knew that we humans would be happy in Paradise because he created us with the qualities needed to enjoy such a wonderful earthly home.

Why did Jehovah create the earth? He "formed it even to be inhabited" by humankind. (Isaiah 45:18) "The Maker of the earth" gave Adam and Eve a beautiful paradise home, the garden of Eden. (Jeremiah 10:12; Genesis 2:7-9, 15, 21, 22) How they must have enjoyed its streams, its flowers, its trees!

Graceful birds could be seen in the sky, and animals of various kinds roamed the land—none of them a threat to humans. Fish and other creatures moved about in earth's clear, clean waters. Best of all, Adam and Eve were together.

They could bring forth their kind and expand their Paradise home in joyful association with their growing family.

Although the earth is not a paradise today, it can be compared to the fine home of a happy family. Our God-given global home has what we need—light, heat, water, and food. How we appreciate the sun's light and heat and the moon's soft glow at night! (Genesis 1:14-18) In earth's cellar there are fuels, such as coal and oil, that we can use for heating. Because of the water cycle



and earth's system of rivers, lakes, and seas, we have water. And as a carpet, the earth has green grass.

Just as food may be stored in a home, there is plenty in earth's pantry. By means of crops in the fields and fruit in the orchards, Jeho-

vah 'gives us fruitful seasons and fills our hearts with good cheer.' (Acts 14:16, 17) Since the earth is already such a fine home, imagine what it will be like when "the happy God," Jehovah, makes it a paradise!—1 Timothy 1:11.

GOD'S PURPOSE FOR THE EARTH *Soon to Be Fulfilled*

WHEN Adam and Eve were still in Paradise, they received this God-given mandate: "Be fruitful and become many and fill the earth and subdue it, and have in subjection the fish of the sea and the flying creatures of the heavens and every living creature that is moving upon the earth."—Genesis 1:28.

Subduing the earth meant more than cultivating or caring for only a small part of it. Adam and Eve and their offspring were to extend Paradise until it covered the whole globe. However, the first human couple sinned and were driven out of the garden of Eden. (Genesis 3:23, 24) But that did not mean that the earth would never be subdued.

Because they will be blessed by God, obedient mankind will be able to subdue the earth. When the people of ancient Israel had God's blessing, their fields produced fine crops and their orchards excellent fruit. Similar conditions will exist as our globe gradually becomes a paradise. As promised in God's inspired Word, the Bible, "the earth itself will certainly give its produce; God, our God, will bless us." (Psalm 67:6) In effect, the earth's meadows and mountains, its trees and flowers, its rivers and seas will rejoice. (Psalm 96:11-13; 98:7-9) Our globe will be alive with lush vegetation, colorful birds, splendid animals, and warmhearted people.

With God's blessing, Israel's fields produced plenty



A New World Soon!

We are now on the threshold of a new world promised by Jehovah God. "There are new heavens and a new earth that we are awaiting according to his promise," wrote the apostle Peter, "and in these righteousness is to dwell." (2 Peter 3:13) After reading those words of Peter, some may conclude that this planet will never become a paradise. They may think that the physical heavens and earth will be replaced. Can that be so?

What are the "new heavens"? They are not the physical heavens that were created by God. (Psalm 19:1, 2) Peter had just referred to symbolic "heavens"—human governments that are lifted up or exalted above their subjects. (2 Peter 3:10-12) These "heavens" have failed mankind and will pass away. (Jeremiah 10:23; Daniel 2:44) The "new heavens" that will replace them is God's Kingdom made up of the King Jesus Christ and his 144,000 joint-heirs resurrected to heavenly life.—Romans 8:16, 17; Revelation 5:9, 10; 14:1, 3.

The "new earth" that Peter mentioned is not a new planet. Jehovah made the earth perfect for everlasting human life. (Psalm 104:5) At times, the Bible refers to "the earth" when people are meant. (Genesis 11:1) The earth that will soon be destroyed consists of people who have made themselves part of this wicked world. Similarly, a world of ungodly people suffered destruction in the Flood of Noah's day. (2 Peter 3:5-7) What, then, is the "new earth"? It is a new society of people—God's true worshippers, who are "upright in their hearts." (Psalm 125:4; 1 John 2:17) All laws for the "new earth" will come from the "new heavens." Faithful men on earth will see that these instructions are carried out.

Things New and Wonderful!

Jehovah certainly gave us a splendid home when he prepared the earth for human life.

He himself said that all his earthly work was "very good." (Genesis 1:31) Satan the Devil led Adam and Eve into rebellion. (Genesis 3:1-5; Revelation 12:9) However, God will soon see to it that the upright have "the real life." That is "everlasting life" under perfect conditions in Paradise. (1 Timothy 6:12, 19) Let us now consider some of the blessings that will be enjoyed at that time.

During Christ's Thousand Year Reign, Satan will be restrained and will be unable to bring woe upon humankind. Says the apostle John: "I saw an angel [the archangel Michael, or Jesus Christ] coming down out of heaven with the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he seized the dragon, the original serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. And he hurled him into the abyss and shut it and sealed it over him, that he might not mislead the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended." (Revelation 20:1-3; 12:12) Besides freedom from Satan's influence while he is abysmed, mankind will enjoy many other blessings under Kingdom rule.

Wickedness, violence, and warfare will be things of the past. The Bible promises: "Just a little while longer, and the wicked one will be no more; and you will certainly give attention to his place, and he will not be. But the meek ones themselves will

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

God Cares for the Elderly

Find Contentment by Applying
Bible Principles

Jehovah Tells "From the Beginning
the Finale"

possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace. The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it." (Psalm 37:10, 11, 29) Jehovah God 'will make wars cease to the ends of the earth.' (Psalm 46:9) What wonderful assurances of security and peace!

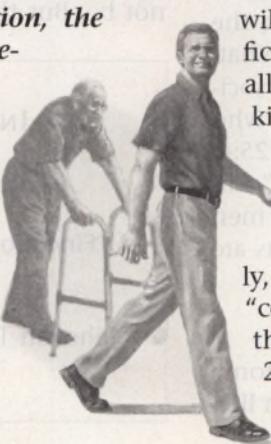
An abundance of healthful and delicious food will be on our tables. "There will come to be plenty of grain on the earth," sang the psalmist. "On the top of the mountains there will be an overflow." (Psalm 72:16) At that time, no one will have to endure dreadful pangs of hunger.

Nobody will suffer from illness and disease. Indeed, "no resident will say: 'I am sick!'" (Isaiah 33:24; 35:5, 6) When Jesus Christ was on the earth, he cured lepers and healed the lame and the blind. (Matthew 9:35; Mark 1:40-42; John 5:5-9) Imagine what he will do in the new world! Think of the happiness there will be when the blind, the deaf, the lame, and the speechless are healed.

As obedient mankind advances to human perfection, the ravages of aging will be reversed. Gone will be eyeglasses, canes, crutches, wheelchairs, hospitals, and medicines. What changes there will be as our youthful vigor is restored! (Job 33:25) Each morning, we will awake from a good night's sleep, refreshed and ready to start another day of joyful activity.



The resurrection of loved ones and others will bring joy to our hearts. (John 5:28, 29; Acts 24:15) How thrilling it will be to welcome Abel, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Job, Moses, Ruth, David, Elijah, Esther, and so many more! Millions of others will also be resurrected. Most of them never learned about Jehovah, but they will be welcomed by people eager to teach them about God, his purposes, and his Son, Jesus Christ. As resurrected ones come to know their Creator, the knowledge of Jehovah will truly cover the earth.



Best of all, we will be able to worship the only true God forever. We will be privileged to "serve Jehovah with rejoicing," and we will work together harmoniously as we build beautiful homes, till the soil and, ultimately, subdue the whole earth. (Psalm 100:1-3; Isaiah 65:21-24) What a delight it will be to live forever in a productive, peaceful, and beautiful paradise that brings honor to Jehovah's holy name!—Psalm 145:21; John 17:3.

A Final Test for Mankind

During his Thousand Year Reign, Jesus will apply the benefits of his ransom sacrifice to every obedient human. In time, all sin will thus be removed, and mankind will be lifted to human perfection.

(1 John 2:2; Revelation 21:1-4) With the effects of Adam's sin completely gone, perfect humans will meet God's standards physically, mentally, morally, and spiritually. They will thus "come to life" in the fullest sense when they reach sinless perfection. (Revelation 20:5) How this and the Paradise earth will glorify Jehovah!

For a short time after Christ's Thousand Year Reign has ended, Satan the Devil and his demons, or wicked angels, will be released from the abyss into which they were cast some ten centuries earlier. (Revelation 20:1-3) They will be allowed to make a final effort to turn people away from God. Although some people will give in to wrong desires, this rebellion will fail. Jehovah will execute the selfish ones along with Satan and all his demons. Wickedness will never again arise. All wrongdoers will be gone forever, and the righteous will receive life everlasting.—Revelation 20:7-10.

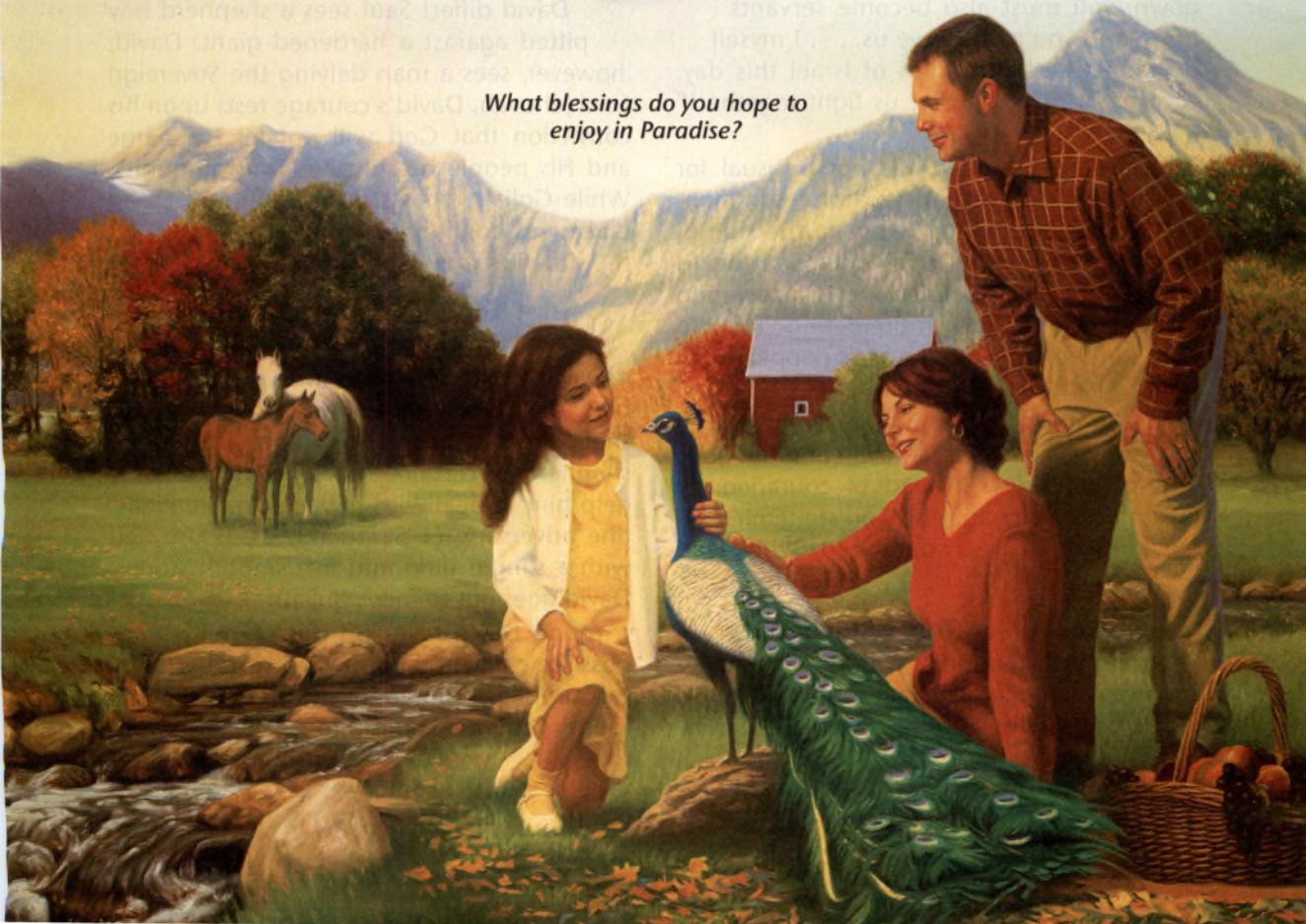
Will You Be There?

An eternity of happiness lies before those who love Jehovah God. There will be nothing boring about everlasting life in Paradise. In fact, life will get more interesting with the passing of time, for there is no limit to the

knowledge of Jehovah God. (Romans 11:33) You will always have something new to learn, and you will have plenty of time to take in knowledge. Why? Because you will live, not for just 70 or 80 years, but for eternity.—Psalm 22:26; 90:10; Ecclesiastes 3:11.

If you love God, you will always be very happy doing his will. The apostle John wrote: "This is what the love of God means, that we observe his commandments; and yet his commandments are not burdensome." (1 John 5:3) So let nothing stop you when it comes to pleasing Jehovah God by doing what is righteous. Keep in mind the wonderful hope that God's Word, the Bible, places before you. Set your heart on doing Jehovah's will, and never turn aside from that course. Then you will be there when God's purpose for the earth is fulfilled and our global home has become an eternal paradise.

What blessings do you hope to enjoy in Paradise?



"To Jehovah Belongs the Battle"

TWO rival armies face each other on opposite sides of a valley. For 40 days the men of Israel cower in fear and are barraged by the insults of Goliath, the champion of the Philistines.—1 Samuel 17:1-4, 16.

Goliath loudly challenges the Israelites with these words: "Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. If he is able to fight with me and he does strike me down, we must then become servants to you. But if I myself am a match for him and I do strike him down, you must also become servants to us, and you must serve us. . . . I myself do taunt the battle lines of Israel this day. Give me a man, and let us fight together!"—1 Samuel 17:8-10.

In ancient times, it was not unusual for champions to represent their armies in man-to-man combat. Victory went to the side of the winner. But this challenger of Israel is not just a regular soldier. He is a towering giant—a fierce and intimidating foe. In mocking the army of Jehovah's people, however, Goliath seals his doom.

This is not a mere military contest. The showdown is between Jehovah and the gods of the Philistines. Instead of courageously leading his army against God's enemies, Israel's King Saul is paralyzed with fear.—1 Samuel 17:11.

A Young Man Trusts in Jehovah

During this standoff, a young man already anointed to become Israel's king visits his brothers in Saul's army. His name is David.



Upon hearing the words of Goliath, he asks: "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he has to taunt the battle lines of the living God?" (1 Samuel 17:26) In David's eyes, Goliath represents both the Philistines and their gods. Righteously indignant, David desires to stand up for Jehovah and for Israel and to fight the pagan giant. But King Saul says: "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him, for you are but a boy."—1 Samuel 17:33.

How the perspectives of Saul and David differ! Saul sees a shepherd boy pitted against a hardened giant. David, however, sees a man defying the Sovereign Lord Jehovah. David's courage rests upon his conviction that God will not let His name and His people be ridiculed with impunity. While Goliath boasts of his strength, David places his confidence in Jehovah, assessing the situation from God's point of view.

"I Am Coming to You With the Name of Jehovah"

David's faith is well-founded. He remembers that God helped him to deliver his sheep from a bear and a lion. The young shepherd is certain that Jehovah will now help him to deal with this formidable Philistine adversary. (1 Samuel 17:34-37) Armed with a simple sling and five smooth stones, David goes out to meet Goliath.

Young David takes up this seemingly impossible challenge in the strength that Jehovah supplies. Courageously, he tells the Philistine: "You are coming to me with a sword



HOW BIG WAS GOLIATH?

The account at 1 Samuel 17:4-7 tells us that Goliath's height was more than six cubits—over nine feet. Indicative of the Philistine's size and strength was his copper coat of mail. It weighed 126 pounds! The shaft of his spear was like a wooden beam, and its iron blade weighed 15 pounds. Why, it is very likely that Goliath's armor was heavier than David himself!

and with a spear and with a javelin, but I am coming to you with the name of Jehovah of armies, the God of the battle lines of Israel, whom you have taunted. This day Jehovah will surrender you into my hand . . . People of all the earth will know that there exists a God belonging to Israel. And all this congregation will know that neither with sword nor with spear does Jehovah save, because to Jehovah belongs the battle."—1 Samuel 17:45-47.

What is the outcome? Says the inspired account: "David, with a sling and a stone, proved stronger than the Philistine and struck the Philistine down and put him to

death; and there was no sword in David's hand." (1 Samuel 17:50) There was no sword in his hand, but he had the powerful backing of Jehovah God.*

How David's faith in Jehovah was vindicated in that contest! When we must choose between fearing humans and trusting in Jehovah's saving power, the choice is obvious: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men." (Acts 5:29) Moreover, when we look at challenging situations from Jehovah God's standpoint, we are able to put even daunting problems in proper perspective.

* See the 2006 Calendar of Jehovah's Witnesses, May/June.

ΣΕΡΑΦΕΙΜ.

A VALIANT EFFORT to Promote the Bible

He breathed his last on the frigid steppe of eastern Siberia, vilified and disgraced. Few recall that he was one of the main figures in the spiritual advancement of his fellow Greeks. The name of this ignored pioneer was Seraphim. His valiant effort to promote the Bible contributed to his demise.

SERAPHIM lived at the time when Greece was part of the Ottoman Empire. According to Greek Orthodox scholar George Metalinos, that period was marked by “a shortage of suitable schools” and by “a lack of education among most of the people,” including even the clergy.

There was a chasm between Koine (common) Greek and the vernacular, with its numerous variants. That chasm became so wide that Koine, in which the Christian Greek Scriptures were written, was no longer understood by those who had no formal education. In the controversy that ensued, the church chose to promote the unintelligible Koine Greek.

In this climate, Stephanos Ioannis Pogonatus was born to a well-known family on the island of Lesbos, Greece, in about 1670. Poverty and illiteracy were prevalent on the island. The scarcity of schools forced Stephanos to receive his elementary education at a local monastery. At a very young age, he was ordained as a deacon of the Greek Orthodox Church and was given the name Seraphim.

In about 1693, a yearning for knowledge took Seraphim to Constantinople (now Istanbul, Turkey). In time, his skills earned him the respect of Greek notables. Soon,

he was sent by a secret Greek nationalistic movement as an emissary to Czar Peter the Great of Russia. The trip to Moscow and back took Seraphim through much of Europe, where he was exposed to winds of religious and intellectual reform. In 1698, Seraphim traveled to England and made important contacts in London and Oxford. He was introduced to the Archbishop of Canterbury, the head of the Anglican Church, a connection that would soon prove to be useful to Seraphim.

Publishing a Bible

While in England, Seraphim came to the conclusion that there was a pressing need among Greeks for a new, easy-to-understand version of the “New Testament” (Christian Greek Scriptures). Working from the translation produced more than half a century earlier by the monk Maximus, Seraphim set out to publish a fresh, error-free, easier-to-comprehend version. He enthusiastically began his work but soon ran out of funds. Prospects looked brighter when the Archbishop of Canterbury promised to provide the needed financial assistance. Spurred on by such



Photos: Courtesy American Bible Society

support, Seraphim bought printing paper and negotiated with a printer.

Printing, however, progressed only as far as halfway through the Gospel of Luke. Then, political change in England led the Archbishop of Canterbury to withdraw any further funding. Undaunted, Seraphim recruited some wealthy sponsors and managed to publish his revised version in 1703. Part of the cost was covered by the Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts.

The older two-volume translation by Maximus included the original Greek text. It was large and heavy. Seraphim's revised version was set in a smaller font, contained only the modern Greek translation, and was thinner and cheaper.

Fueling a Controversy

"Certainly, this updated publication filled a real need of the people," notes scholar George Metallinos. "However, Seraphim seized the opportunity to attack a faction of the clergy that opposed [Bible] translations." The clergy were enraged when Seraphim said in the preface that he had produced his version 'expressly for the sake of some priests and certain presbyters who did not understand [Koine] Greek, so that with the help of the Most Holy Spirit they could read and understand something from the original text, in order to convey it to ordinary Christians.' (*The Translation of the Bible Into Modern Greek—During the 19th Century*) Seraphim thus plunged into the Bible-translation maelstrom within the ranks of the Greek Orthodox Church.

On one side were those who realized that the spiritual and moral development of people depended on exposure to the Bible. They also felt that members of the clergy needed to improve their own knowledge of the Scriptures. Moreover, proponents of Bible translation held that Scriptural truths can

be expressed in any language.—Revelation 7:9.

Opponents of Bible translation used the pretext that any rendering of the Bible would adulterate its contents and invalidate the authority of the church over interpretation and dogma. But their real fear was that Protestants were using the translation of the Bible to make inroads into the Greek Orthodox Church. Many clergymen thought that they were duty-bound to oppose any trend that might be sympathetic to Protestants, including efforts to make the Bible understandable to the common people. Translation of the Bible thus became the flash point in the conflict between Protestantism and Orthodoxy.

Although he had no inclination to abandon the Orthodox Church, Seraphim spoke out against the ignorance and bigotry of his clerical opponents. In the preface to his "New Testament," he wrote: "Every God-fearing Christian needs to read the Holy Bible" so that he "becomes an imitator of Christ and obedient to [his] teaching." Seraphim maintained that prohibiting the study of the Scriptures was from the Devil.

A Wave of Opposition

When Seraphim's version reached Greece, it provoked the anger of the religious establishment. The new version was proscribed. Copies of the translation were burned, and anyone who possessed or read it was threatened with excommunication. Patriarch Gabriel III banned the circulation of Seraphim's version, calling it unnecessary and useless.

Though Seraphim did not lose hope, he saw the need to be circumspect. Despite the official ban by the church, a number of clerics and laymen embraced his translation. He was very successful in distributing the version. Yet, his clash with powerful opponents was far from over.

The Beginning of the End

Besides promoting Bible distribution, Seraphim became involved in revolutionary and nationalistic movements. To pursue these, he returned to Moscow in the summer of 1704. He became a confidant of Peter the Great and for a time was a professor at the Russian Royal Academy. Concerned about what might happen to his translation, however, Seraphim returned to Constantinople in 1705.

In a reprint of his version in that same year, Seraphim removed the critical preface of the original printing. He added a simple foreword that encouraged the reading of the Bible. This edition enjoyed wide circulation, and there is no record of any adverse reaction from the patriarchate.

Nevertheless, in 1714 a devastating blow came from Alexander Helladius, a Greek traveler and opponent of Bible translation. In his book *Status Præsens Ecclesiae Græcœ* (The Current Status of the Greek Church), he viciously attacked the translators and renderings of the Bible. Helladius devoted a whole chapter to Seraphim, presenting him as a thief, a swindler, and an illiterate and immoral fraud. Was there any truth to such charges? Author Stylianos Bairaktaris expresses the informed opinion of many scholars when he calls Seraphim 'a workman and an enlightened pioneer' who was attacked because he was ahead of his time. Yet, Helladius' book contributed to the troubled end of Seraphim.

Under a Cloud of Suspicion

By the time Seraphim returned to Russia in 1731, Peter the Great had died. The Greek deacon therefore enjoyed no official protection. Reigning Empress Anna Ivanovna was very cautious about any potentially



Peter the Great

unsettling activity in her realm. In January 1732, it was rumored in St. Petersburg that a Greek spy was working against the interests of the empire. The suspect was Seraphim. He was arrested and was sent to the Nevsky monastery for interrogation. At the monastery was a copy of Helladius' book accusing Seraphim of various crimes.

In three written refutations, the deacon tried to counter the accusations. The interrogation lasted about five months, and the cloud of suspicion hanging over Seraphim was hard to dispel.

Since no tangible evidence was presented against Seraphim, he was spared the death penalty. Because of Helladius' smears, however, the authorities were reluctant to let Seraphim go free. The Greek deacon was sentenced to exile in Siberia for life. The verdict mentioned that the indictment was based on the charges contained "in the essay published by the Greek author Helladius." In July 1732, Seraphim arrived in eastern Siberia bound in irons and was thrown into the infamous Okhotsk prison.

About three years later, Seraphim died, abandoned and forgotten. At times, his judgment and methods were misguided and imprudent, but his version is one of many Bible translations now available in modern Greek.* Among them is the easily understood *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, also available in a number of other languages. How thankful we can be that Jehovah God has preserved his Word so that people everywhere have the opportunity to "come to an accurate knowledge of truth"! —1 Timothy 2:3, 4.

* See "The Struggle for a Bible in Modern Greek," in *The Watchtower*, November 15, 2002, pages 26-9.

Do You Have “Freeness of Speech”?

OVER six million people in 235 lands enjoy what the Bible calls “freeness of speech.” The expression occurs 16 times in the text of the Christian Greek Scriptures of the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*. (Philippians 1:20; 1 Timothy 3:13; Hebrews 3:6; 1 John 3:21) What does “freeness of speech” involve? What helps us to acquire it? In what areas of communication does this freedom allow us to make unhindered expressions?

According to *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, the Greek term for the expression “freeness of speech” denotes “freedom of speech, unreservedness of utterance, . . . the absence of fear in speaking boldly; hence, confidence, cheerful courage, boldness, without any connection necessarily with speech.” However, such outspokenness is not to be confused with bluntness or rudeness. “Let your utterance be always with graciousness,” states the Bible. (Colossians 4:6) Freeness of speech involves remaining tactful while not allowing distressing circumstances or fear of man to inhibit our speech.

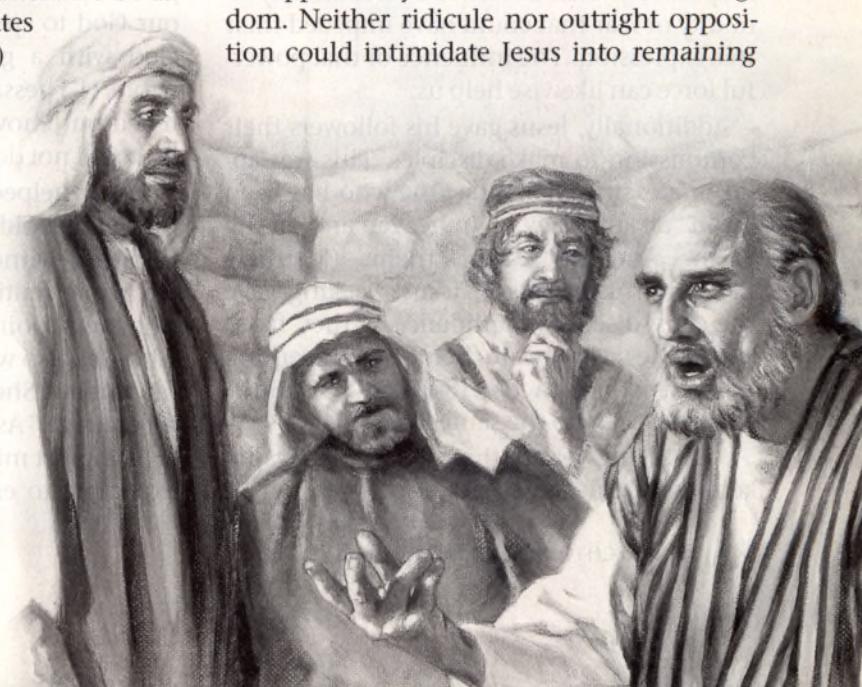
Is freeness of speech our inherent right? Consider what the apostle Paul wrote to the Christians in Ephesus. He said: “To me, a man less than the least of all holy ones, this undeserved kind-

ness was given, that I should declare to the nations the good news about the unfathomable riches of the Christ.” Paul added that it was by means of Jesus Christ that “we have this freeness of speech and an approach with confidence through our faith in him.” (Ephesians 3:8-12) Rather than being a privilege we are innately entitled to, freeness of speech stems from our relationship with Jehovah God based on faith in Jesus Christ. Let us see what can help us to acquire this freedom and how we can manifest it when we preach, teach, and pray.

What Helps Us Preach With Boldness?

Jesus Christ is the foremost example of one who exercised freeness of speech. His zeal moved him to seize opportunities to preach. Whether resting, dining at someone’s home, or walking on the road, he never passed up an opportunity to talk about God’s Kingdom. Neither ridicule nor outright opposition could intimidate Jesus into remaining

The apostle Paul spoke with boldness



silent. Rather, he courageously exposed the false religious leaders of his day. (Matthew 23:13-36) Even when arrested and put on trial, Jesus spoke fearlessly.—John 18:6, 19, 20, 37.

Jesus' apostles acquired the same outspokenness. At Pentecost 33 C.E., Peter spoke with freeness of speech before a crowd of over 3,000 people. Remarkably, just a short time earlier, he had cowered when identified by a servant girl. (Mark 14:66-71; Acts 2:14, 29, 41) When hauled before religious leaders, Peter and John did not cringe in fear. Without hesitation, they boldly witnessed concerning the resurrected Jesus Christ. In fact, it was this outspokenness of Peter and John that led the religious leaders to recognize that these men had been with Jesus. (Acts 4:5-13) What enabled them to speak so boldly?

Jesus had promised his apostles: "When they deliver you up, do not become anxious about how or what you are to speak; for what you are to speak will be given you in that hour; for the ones speaking are not just you, but it is the spirit of your Father that speaks by you." (Matthew 10:19, 20) Holy spirit helped Peter and others to overcome any timidity or fear that could have impeded their free expression. The influence of that powerful force can likewise help us.

Additionally, Jesus gave his followers their commission to make disciples. This was appropriate, since he is the One who has been given "all authority . . . in heaven and on the earth." And 'he is with them.' (Matthew 28:18-20) Awareness of Jesus' backing gave the early disciples confidence as they faced authorities who were bent on preventing their preaching. (Acts 4:18-20; 5:28, 29) Such awareness can do the same for us.

Identifying yet another reason for outspokenness, Paul associated hope with "great

freeness of speech." (2 Corinthians 3:12; Philippians 1:20) Since the message of hope was too good to keep to themselves, Christians had to tell others about it. Indeed, our hope is a reason for us to exercise freeness of speech. —Hebrews 3:6.

Preaching With Boldness

How can we preach with boldness even under potentially intimidating circumstances? Consider the example of the apostle Paul. While a prisoner in Rome, he asked his fellow believers to pray that 'ability to speak might be given him with the opening of his mouth, that he might speak with boldness as he ought to speak.' (Ephesians 6:19, 20) Were those prayers answered? Yes! While imprisoned, Paul continued "preaching the kingdom of God . . . with the greatest freeness of speech, without hindrance."—Acts 28:30, 31.

Taking advantage of opportunities to give a witness at work, in school, or while traveling can test our freeness of speech. Shyness, fear of the reaction we might get, or lack of confidence in our ability may keep us quiet. Here again, the apostle Paul provides a good example. "We mustered up boldness by means of our God to speak to you the good news of God with a great deal of struggling," he wrote. (1 Thessalonians 2:2) Only because he relied on Jehovah was Paul able to do what he could not do on his own.

Prayer helped a woman named Sherry to muster up boldness when an opportunity for informal witnessing presented itself. One day while waiting for her husband to return from an appointment, she noticed a woman who was also waiting. "With a huge lump in my throat," Sherry said, "I prayed to Jehovah for courage." As Sherry approached the woman, a Baptist minister arrived. Sherry was not expecting to encounter a clergyman. How-

*Effective teaching requires
freeness of speech*



developing brain function

ever, she prayed again and was able to give a witness. She placed literature with the woman and made arrangements for a return visit. When we seize opportunities to give a witness, we can be confident that reliance on Jehovah will help us to be outspoken.

When Teaching

Freeness of speech is closely associated with teaching. Concerning "the men who minister in a fine manner" in the congregation, the Bible says: "[They] are acquiring for themselves a fine standing and great freeness of speech in the faith in connection with Christ Jesus." (1 Timothy 3:13) They acquire this freeness of speech by applying to themselves what they teach others. Their doing so protects and strengthens the congregation.

When we have freeness of speech in this way, our counsel is more effective and more likely to be followed. Rather than being distracted by a poor example, listeners are encouraged by seeing a practical application of what they are being taught. This freeness enables those with spiritual qualifications to 'readjust their brother' before a problem escalates. (Galatians 6:1) In contrast, a person setting a poor example may hesitate to speak up, sensing that he has no right to talk. The

delay in giving needed counsel may lead to disastrous consequences.

Our speaking with boldness does not mean becoming critical, dogmatic, or opinionated. Paul exhorted Philemon "on the basis of love." (Philemon 8, 9) And the apostle's words evidently met with a favorable response. Indeed, love should be the force behind any advice that an elder may offer!

Freeness of speech is certainly vital when counsel is to be given. It is also important at other times. Paul wrote to the congregation in Corinth: "I have great freeness of speech toward you. I have great boasting in regard to you." (2 Corinthians 7:4) Paul did not hold back from giving his brothers and sisters commendation when it was due. Love moved him to focus on the good qualities of his fellow believers, even though he was aware of their flaws. The Christian congregation today is likewise built up when elders freely command and encourage their brothers and sisters.

To be effective in their teaching, all Christians need to have freeness of speech. Sherry, mentioned earlier, wanted to encourage her children to witness at school. "Even though I was raised in the truth," she admits, "I seldom witnessed at school. And I hardly



Freeness of speech in prayer is essential

pathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tested in all respects like ourselves, but without sin. Let us, therefore, approach with freeness of speech to the throne of undeserved kindness, that we may obtain mercy and find undeserved kindness for help at the right time." Such is the value of Jesus' death and

of his role as High Priest.

If we earnestly seek to obey Jehovah, we have every reason to expect that he will hear us favorably. The apostle John wrote: "Beloved ones, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have freeness of speech toward God; and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we are observing his commandments and are doing the things that are pleasing in his eyes."—1 John 3:21, 22.

Unrestricted approach to Jehovah in prayer means that we can tell him anything. Whatever fears we have, whatever concerns, anxieties, or apprehensions plague us, we can take them to Jehovah, confident that he will never turn a deaf ear to our sincere prayers. Even if we have sinned gravely, guilt does not have to block our expressions in prayer if we are sincerely repentant.

The undeserved gift of freeness of speech is truly precious. With it we can glorify God in our preaching and teaching activity and draw ever closer to him in prayer. Let us 'not throw away our freeness of speech, which has a great reward to be paid it'—the reward of everlasting life.—Hebrews 10:35.

witness informally. I asked myself, 'What kind of example am I setting for my children?'" This moved Sherry to make a greater effort to witness informally.

Yes, others observe our deeds and notice if we fail to practice what we teach. Let us, then, acquire freeness of speech by striving to have our actions match our words.

In Prayer

Freeness of speech is especially important when it comes to our prayers to Jehovah. Without inhibition, we can pour out our hearts to Jehovah with the confidence that he hears our prayers and will answer them. We thus enjoy a warm, intimate relationship with our heavenly Father. Never should we hesitate to approach Jehovah, thinking that we are too insignificant. What if our feeling guilty over some failing or sin inhibits our heartfelt expressions? Can we still approach the Sovereign of the universe freely?

Jesus' exalted position as High Priest gives added basis for confidence in prayer. At Hebrews 4:15, 16, we read: "We have as high priest, not one who cannot sym-

Jehovah's Word Is Alive

Highlights From Book One of Psalms

WHAT would be an appropriate title for a Bible book that consists mostly of praises to our Creator, Jehovah God? No name could be more fitting than Psalms, or Praises. This longest book of the Bible contains beautifully composed songs that recount God's wonderful qualities and mighty acts and relate numerous prophecies. Many of the songs express the emotions their writers felt while suffering adversity. These expressions span a period of some one thousand years—from the days of the prophet Moses to postexilic times. The writers were Moses, King David, and others. The priest Ezra is credited with arranging the book in its final form.

From antiquity, the book of Psalms has been divided into five collections, or sections, of songs: (1) Psalms 1-41, (2) Psalms 42-72, (3) Psalms 73-89, (4) Psalms 90-106, and (5) Psalms 107-150. This article considers the first collection. All but three psalms in this section are attributed to King David of ancient Israel. The composers of Psalms 1, 10, and 33 are not identified.

"MY GOD IS MY ROCK" (Psalm 1:1-24:10)

After the first psalm declares happy the man who takes delight in the law of Jehovah, the second leads right into the Kingdom theme.*

* Psalm 2 has an initial fulfillment in David's day.

David composed most of the first 41 psalms



Entreaties to God dominate this group of psalms. Psalms 3-5, 7, 12, 13, and 17, for example, are petitions for deliverance from enemies. Psalm 8 highlights Jehovah's greatness in comparison with man's littleness.

Describing Jehovah as the Protector of his people, David sings out: "My God is my rock. I shall take refuge in him." (Psalm 18:2) Jehovah is praised as the Creator and the Lawgiver in Psalm 19, as the Savior in Psalm 20, and as the Savior of his anointed King in Psalm 21. Psalm 23 depicts him as the Great Shepherd, whereas the 24th Psalm portrays him as the glorious King.

Scriptural Questions Answered:

2:1, 2—What "empty thing" do the nations keep muttering? The "empty thing" is the constant concern of human governments to keep perpetuating their own authority. This is empty because their purpose is doomed to failure. Can the national groups really hope to succeed when they take their stand "against Jehovah and against his anointed one"?

2:7—What is "the decree of Jehovah"? This decree is the covenant for a Kingdom, which Jehovah has made with his beloved Son, Jesus Christ.—Luke 22: 28, 29.

2:12—In what way can the rulers of the nations "kiss the son"? In Bible times, kissing was an expression of friendship and faithfulness. It was a way to welcome guests. The kings of the

earth are commanded to kiss the Son—that is, welcome him as the Messianic King.

3:superscription—What is the purpose of the heading given to some of the psalms? The heading sometimes identifies the writer and/or provides information about the circumstances under which the psalm was composed, as is the case with Psalm 3. The superscription may also explain the purpose or use of the particular song (Psalms 4 and 5) as well as give musical instructions (Psalm 6).

3:2—What is “Selah”? This term is generally thought to represent a pause for silent meditation, either in the singing alone or in the singing and instrumental music. The pause was used to make the thought or emotion just expressed more impressive. There is no need to read the word aloud during public reading of the Psalms.

11:3—What foundations are torn down? These are the very foundations on which human society rests—law, order, and justice. When these are in disarray, social disorder prevails and there is no justice. Under such conditions, “anyone righteous” must fully trust in God.—Psalm 11:4-7.

21:3—What is significant about “a crown of refined gold”? Whether the crown was literal or was symbolic of added glory because of David’s many victories is not stated. However, this verse prophetically points to the crown of kingship that Jesus received from Jehovah in 1914. The fact that the crown is

made of gold suggests that his reign is of the highest quality.

22:1, 2—Why might David have felt that Jehovah had left him? David was under such intense pressure from his enemies that his ‘heart became like wax and melted deep in his inward parts.’ (Psalm 22:14) It may have seemed to him that Jehovah had abandoned him. When impaled, Jesus also felt this way. (Matthew 27:46) David’s words reflect his human reaction to his desperate situation. From his prayer recorded at Psalm 22:16-21, however, it is evident that David had not lost faith in God.

Lessons for Us:

1:1. Association with those who do not love Jehovah should be avoided.—1 Corinthians 15:33.

1:2. We must not let a day pass by without considering spiritual matters.—Matthew 4:4.

4:4. When angry or wrathful, we are wise to hold our tongue so as not to say something we will regret later.—Ephesians 4:26.

4:5. Our spiritual sacrifices are “sacrifices of righteousness” only if they stem from right motives and our conduct measures up to Jehovah’s requirements.

6:5. What better reason could there be to want to keep living?—Psalm 115:17.

9:12. Jehovah looks for bloodshed in order to punish the bloodguilty, but he remembers “the outcry of the afflicted ones.”

*Do you know which psalm
portrays Jehovah as the Great Shepherd?*

15:2, 3; 24:3-5. True worshippers must speak the truth and avoid false oaths and slander.

15:4. Unless we come to the realization that we have made an unscriptural promise, we should do all we can to fulfill our word, even if it is very difficult to do so.

15:5. As Jehovah's worshippers, we need to guard against misuse of money.

17:14, 15. The "men of this system of things" devote themselves to making a good living, raising a family, and leaving behind an inheritance. David's main concern in life was to make a good name with God so as to 'behold his face,' or to experience Jehovah's favor. Upon "awakening" to Jehovah's promises and assurances, David would feel 'satisfied to see His form,' or rejoice in Jehovah's presence with him. Like David, should we not set our heart on spiritual treasures?

19:1-6. If creation, which can neither speak nor reason, gives glory to Jehovah, how much more should we who can think, talk, and worship do so?—Revelation 4:11.

19:7-11. Jehovah's requirements—how good they are for us!

19:12, 13. Mistakes and presumptuous acts are sins to guard against.

19:14. We should be concerned not only about what we do but also about what we say and think.

"BECAUSE OF MY INTEGRITY YOU HAVE UPHELD ME" (Psalm 25:1-41:13)

What heartfelt desire and strong determination to keep his integrity David expresses in the first two psalms of this group! "As for me, in my integrity I shall walk," he sings. (Psalm 26:11) In his prayer for forgiveness of

sins, he admits: "When I kept silent my bones wore out through my groaning all day long." (Psalm 32:3) To Jehovah's loyal ones, David gives the assurance: "The eyes of Jehovah are toward the righteous ones, and his ears are toward their cry for help."—Psalm 34:15.

How valuable the advice given in Psalm 37 was to the Israelites and is to us, living as we do in "the last days" of this system of things! (2 Timothy 3:1-5) Speaking prophetically of Jesus Christ, Psalm 40:7, 8 states: "Here I have come, in the roll of the book it being written about me. To do your will, O my God, I have delighted, and your law is within my inward parts." The final psalm of the collection is about David's request for Jehovah's help during the turbulent years following his sin with Bath-sheba. He sings: "As for me, because of my integrity you have upheld me."—Psalm 41:12.

Scriptural Questions Answered:

26:6—How do we, like David, figuratively march around Jehovah's altar? The altar represents Jehovah's will in accepting the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the redemption of mankind. (Hebrews 8:5; 10:5-10) We march around Jehovah's altar by exercising faith in that sacrifice.

29:3-9—What is portrayed by likening the voice of Jehovah to a thunderstorm that inspires awe as it travels? Simply this: Jehovah's awesome power!

31:23—How is a haughty person rewarded exceedingly? The reward here is punishment. A righteous one receives his reward for his unintentional mistakes in the form of discipline from Jehovah. Since a haughty person does not turn back from his wrong course, he is rewarded exceedingly with severe punishment.—Proverbs 11:31; 1 Peter 4:18.

33:6; footnote—What is “the spirit,” or “breath,” of Jehovah’s mouth? This spirit is God’s active force, or holy spirit, which he used in creating the material heavens. (Genesis 1:1, 2) It is called the spirit of his mouth because, like a powerful breath, it can be sent forth to accomplish things at a distance.

35:19—What is the meaning of David’s request not to let those hating him wink their eye? The winking of an eye would indicate that David’s enemies were deriving pleasure from the success of their spiteful plans against him. David requested that this not happen.

Lessons for Us:

26:4. We are wise to avoid association with those who hide their identity in Internet chat rooms, those at school or at our place of work who pretend to be our friends for devious reasons, apostates who put on a mask of sincerity, and those who live a double life.

26:7, 12; 35:18; 40:9. We must praise Jehovah publicly at Christian gatherings.

26:8; 27:4. Do we love to attend Christian meetings?

26:11. While expressing his determination to keep his integrity, David also made a request for redemption. Yes, we can maintain our integrity despite our imperfection.

29:10; footnote. By sitting upon “the deluge,” or “heavenly ocean,” Jehovah indicates that he is in full control of his power.

30:5. Jehovah’s dominant quality is love—not anger.

32:9. Jehovah does not want us to be like a mule or an ass that obeys because of a bridle or a whip. Rather, he desires that we choose

to obey him because of our understanding of his will.

33:17-19. No man-made system, regardless of how strong, can bring about salvation. Our trust must be in Jehovah and his Kingdom arrangement.

34:10. What reassurance this is to those who put Kingdom interests first in their lives!

39:1, 2. When the wicked seek information to bring harm to our fellow believers, we are wise ‘to set a muzzle as a guard to our mouth’ and remain silent.

40:1, 2. Hoping in Jehovah can help us cope with depression and come “out of a roaring pit, out of the mire of the sediment.”

40:5, 12. Neither calamities nor personal shortcomings, no matter how many, will overwhelm us if we do not lose sight of the fact that our blessings ‘are more numerous than we can recount.’

“Blessed Be Jehovah”

How comforting and encouraging are the 41 psalms in the first collection! Whether we are suffering trials or are plagued by a bad conscience, we are able to draw strength and encouragement from this portion of God’s powerful Word. (Hebrews 4:12) These psalms contain information that provides sound guidance in living. We are repeatedly assured that regardless of the difficulty we find ourselves in, Jehovah will not forsake us.

The first collection of psalms ends with the words: “Blessed be Jehovah the God of Israel from time indefinite even to time indefinite. Amen and Amen.” (Psalm 41:13) After considering them, are we not moved to bless, or praise, Jehovah?



Do not let a day go by without considering spiritual matters

ARE YOU PREPARED FOR SURVIVAL?

"Go, you and all your household, into the ark, because you are the one I have seen to be righteous before me among this generation."—GENESIS 7:1.

JEHOVAH "brought a deluge upon a world of ungodly people" in the days of Noah, but He also made provision for survival. (2 Peter 2:5) The true God gave righteous Noah explicit instructions on how to build an ark for the preservation of life through a global flood. (Genesis 6:14-16) As we would expect of a conscientious servant of Jehovah, "Noah proceeded to do according to all that God had commanded him." Indeed, "he did just so." Partly because of Noah's obedience, we are alive today.—Genesis 6:22.

² Building the ark was no small task. Very likely, many people were amazed at what Noah and his family were accomplishing. Yet, that was not enough to convince them that salvation depended upon their entering the ark. Finally, God's patience with that wicked world ran out.—Genesis 6:3; 1 Peter 3:20.

³ After decades of strenuous work on the part of Noah and his family, Jehovah told Noah: "Go, you and all your household, into the ark, because you are the one I have seen to be righteous before me among this generation." With faith and confidence in Jehovah's word, "Noah went in, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him." Jehovah shut the door in order to protect his worshippers. When the Deluge came upon the

1. What provision for survival did Jehovah make in the days of Noah?

2, 3. (a) How did Noah's contemporaries react to Noah's activity? (b) With what confidence did Noah enter the ark?

earth, the ark proved to be God's dependable provision for survival.—Genesis 7:1, 7, 10, 16.

Modern Parallels to Noah's Day

⁴ "Just as the days of Noah were, so the presence of the Son of man will be." (Matthew 24:37) With these words, Jesus indicated that the time of his invisible presence would be similar to the days of Noah, and that has truly been so. Particularly since 1919, a warning message similar to the one given by Noah has been declared to people of all nations. In general, their reaction has been similar to that of people in Noah's days.

⁵ By means of the Flood, Jehovah took action against a world "full of violence." (Genesis 6:13) That Noah and his family refrained from taking part in such violence and instead peacefully went about the work of building an ark was obvious to all who saw them. Here, too, we see a parallel to our day. Sincere people can now "see the distinction between a righteous one and a wicked one, between one serving God and one who has not served him." (Malachi 3:18) The honesty, kindness, peacefulness, and diligence displayed by Jehovah's Witnesses are admired by unprejudiced onlookers, and these qualities distinguish God's people from the world in general. The Witnesses reject violence in

4, 5. (a) To what did Jesus compare the time of his presence? (b) What parallels exist between Noah's day and our time?

all its forms and let themselves be motivated by Jehovah's spirit. That is why they are blessed with peace and why they pursue a righteous course.—Isaiah 60:17.

⁶ Noah's contemporaries failed to appreciate that Noah had divine backing and was acting at God's direction. So they did not take his preaching seriously and act on his warning message. What about today? Although many are impressed by the work and conduct of Jehovah's Witnesses, most do not take the good news and the Bible's warnings seriously. Neighbors, employers, or relatives may speak highly of the fine qualities of true Christians but then lament, "If only they were not Jehovah's Witnesses!" What these observers overlook is that the Witnesses manifest such qualities as love, peace, kindness, goodness, mildness, and self-control because they are led by God's holy spirit. (Galatians 5:22-25) This should add credibility to their message.

⁷ In Russia, for instance, Jehovah's Witnesses were building a Kingdom Hall. A man who stopped to talk to one of the workers remarked: "What a strange construction

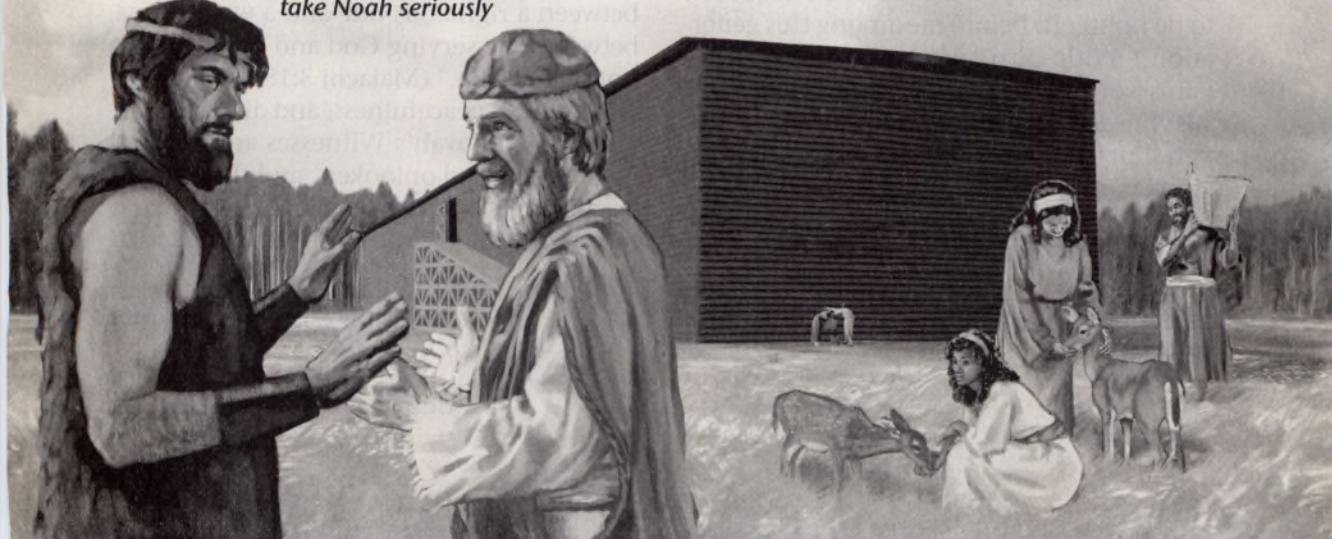
6, 7. (a) What did people in Noah's day fail to appreciate, and how is it similar today? (b) What examples show that Jehovah's Witnesses are generally recognized as being different?

Noah's contemporaries did not take Noah seriously

site—no smoking, no rough speech, and everyone is sober! Are you by any chance one of Jehovah's Witnesses?" The worker asked him, "If I said no, would you believe me?" The man quickly replied, "Not really." In another Russian city, the mayor was greatly impressed when he saw the Witnesses build their new Kingdom Hall. He said that although he had once viewed all religious groups as being the same, after seeing the sincere unselfishness of Jehovah's Witnesses in action, he no longer did so. These are just two examples showing that Jehovah's people differ from those who do not adhere to Bible standards.

⁸ During the final period of the "ancient world" that perished in the Flood, Noah was a faithful "preacher of righteousness." (2 Peter 2:5) In these last days of the present system of things, Jehovah's people are making known God's righteous standards and are declaring good news about the possibility of surviving into the new world. (2 Peter 3:9-13) Just as Noah and his God-fearing family were preserved in the ark, survival of individuals today depends on their faith and their loyal association with the earthly part of Jehovah's universal organization.

8. Our surviving the end of this wicked world depends on what?



Faith Required for Survival

⁹ What must a person do in order to survive the imminent destruction of this world that is lying in Satan's power? (1 John 5:19) He must first recognize the need for protection. Then he must avail himself of such protection. The people of Noah's day went about their daily life in their usual way and saw no need for protection from impending calamity. They lacked something else—faith in God.

¹⁰ On the other hand, Noah and his family recognized their need for protection and deliverance. They also exercised faith in the Universal Sovereign, Jehovah God. "Without faith it is impossible to please [Jehovah] well," wrote the apostle Paul, "for he that approaches God must believe that he is and that he becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him." Paul added: "By faith Noah, after being given divine warning of things not yet beheld, showed godly fear and constructed an ark for the saving of his household; and through this faith he condemned the world, and he became an heir of the righteousness that is according to faith."—Hebrews 11:6, 7.

9, 10. Why is faith essential if we are to survive the end of Satan's system of things?

¹¹ To survive the end of the present wicked system of things, we must do more than believe that it will be destroyed. We must exercise faith, taking full advantage of God's provisions for survival. Of course, we need to exercise faith in the ransom sacrifice of God's Son, Jesus Christ. (John 3:16, 36) However, we do well to remember that only those actually inside Noah's ark survived the Flood. Similarly, the cities of refuge in ancient Israel provided protection for the unintentional manslayer only if he first fled to such a city and then remained inside it until the death of the high priest. (Numbers 35:11-32) In the tenth plague upon Egypt in Moses' day, the firstborn of the Egyptians were killed, but those of the Israelites were spared. Why? Jehovah had instructed Moses: "They [the Israelites] must take some of the blood [of the Passover lamb] and splash it upon the two doorposts and the upper part of the doorway belonging to the houses in which they will eat it. . . . And none of you should go out of the entrance of his house until morning." (Exodus 12:7, 22) Which firstborn among the Israelites would have dared to ignore such

11. What can we learn from how Jehovah provided protection in times past?

It pays to take God's warning messages seriously



God-given instructions by going outside a house marked with the blood splashed on the two doorposts and the upper part of the doorway?

¹² We therefore have reason to think carefully about our personal situation. Are we actually inside Jehovah's arrangement of spiritual protection? When the great tribulation strikes, tears of joy and thankfulness will stream down the faces of those who have sought such protection. For others, there will be only tears of sorrow and regret.

Progressive Adjustments Prepare Us

¹³ Jehovah has brought about progressive adjustments in the earthly part of his organization. These have served to beautify, stabilize, and strengthen his arrangement for our spiritual protection. From the 1870's to 1932, elders and deacons were voted into office by members of the congregation. In 1932 the elective elders were replaced with a service committee elected by the congregation to assist an appointed service director. During 1938, arrangements were made for the theocratic appointment of all servants in the congregation. Under the direction of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses, since 1972, recommendations are made and if these are approved, the congregations receive letters theocratically appointing overseers and ministerial servants. Over the years, the role played by the Governing Body has intensified and changes have been made to facilitate its work.

¹⁴ Back in 1950, careful consideration of Psalm 45:16 gave rise to an ongoing training

12. What question should each of us ask himself, and why?

13. (a) What purpose have organizational adjustments served? (b) Explain some of the progressive refinements.

14. What training program began in 1959?



What purpose does the Kingdom Ministry School serve?

program. That text reads: "In place of your forefathers there will come to be your sons, whom you will appoint as princes in all the earth." Elders now taking the lead in the congregation are being trained for present and post-Armageddon theocratic duties. (Revelation 16:14, 16) The Kingdom Ministry School was started in 1959. At that time, a month-long course of instruction was provided primarily for congregation servants, as presiding overseers were then called. This school has now been extended to offer instruction to all overseers and ministerial servants. These brothers, in turn, take the lead in training individual Witnesses of Jehovah in their respective congregations. Thus, all are assisted spiritually and are helped to increase the effectiveness of their ministry as proclaimers of the good news of the Kingdom.—Mark 13:10.

¹⁵ Individuals wanting to become part of the Christian congregation must meet certain requirements. Logically, modern-day ridiculers are kept out, even as such ones found no place in Noah's ark. (2 Peter 3:3-7) Particularly since 1952, Jehovah's Witness-

15. What are two ways in which the purity of the Christian congregation is preserved?

es have given increased support to an arrangement that helps to protect the congregation—that is, the disfellowshipping of unrepentant sinners. Of course, truly repentant wrongdoers are lovingly helped to ‘make straight paths for their feet.’—Hebrews 12:12, 13; Proverbs 28:13; Galatians 6:1.

¹⁶ The spiritually prosperous condition of Jehovah’s people is neither a surprise nor an accident. Through the prophet Isaiah, Jehovah said: “Look! My own servants will eat, but you yourselves will go hungry. Look! My own servants will drink, but you yourselves will go thirsty. Look! My own servants will rejoice, but you yourselves will suffer shame. Look! My own servants will cry out joyfully because of the good condition of the heart, but you yourselves will make outcries because of the pain of heart and you will howl because of sheer breakdown of spirit.” (Isaiah 65:13, 14) Jehovah continues to provide us with an abundant supply of timely and healthful spiritual food that keeps us spiritually strong.—Matthew 24:45.

Be Prepared for Survival

¹⁷ As never before, now is the time to “consider one another to incite to love and fine works, not forsaking the gathering of ourselves together, as some have the custom, but encouraging one another.” (Hebrews 10:23-25) Sticking close to and staying active with one of the over 98,000 congregations of Jehovah’s Witnesses will help us to prepare ourselves for survival. We will have the support of fellow believers as we strive to manifest “the new personality” and put forth wholehearted efforts to help oth-

16. What is the spiritual condition of Jehovah’s people?

17. What will help us to prepare for survival?



Now is the time to stay close to the Christian congregation

ers learn of Jehovah’s provision for salvation.—Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:9, 10; 1 Timothy 4:16.

¹⁸ Satan and his evil world are keenly desirous of luring us away from the Christian congregation. However, we can remain a part of it and can survive the end of the present wicked system of things. May love for Jehovah and gratitude for his loving provisions move us to be more determined than ever to thwart Satan’s efforts. Meditating on our present-day blessings will strengthen our resolve. Some of these blessings will be discussed in the next article.

18. Why are you determined to stay close to the Christian congregation?

What Are Your Answers?

- How do our times parallel Noah’s day?
- What quality is essential for survival?
- What progressive adjustments have strengthened Jehovah’s arrangement for our protection?
- How can we personally prepare for survival?

THE JOYS OF WALKING IN INTEGRITY

"The blessing of Jehovah—that is what makes rich, and he adds no pain with it."—PROVERBS 10:22.

A PREOCCUPATION with the future . . . prevents us from seeing the present as it is," noted one American philosopher. This is true of children who are so preoccupied with the privileges of adulthood that they overlook the benefits of childhood until it is long gone.

² Even Jehovah's worshippers are not immune to this pattern of thinking. Consider what can happen. We long for the fulfillment of God's promise to bring about a paradise on earth. We eagerly await a life free of sickness, old age, pain, and suffering. While it is good to be in expectation of such things, what if we become so preoccupied with future physical blessings that we are blind to our present-day spiritual blessings? What a

shame that would be! We could easily become discouraged and feel 'sick at heart because our expectations have been postponed' beyond what we imagined. (Proverbs 13:12) Problems and difficulties in life might throw us into the trap of despondency or self-pity. Instead of coping with bad situations, we could develop a complaining attitude. All of this can be avoided by appreciatively meditating on our present blessings.

³ "The blessing of Jehovah—that is what makes rich, and he adds no pain with it," states Proverbs 10:22. Is not the spiritually prosperous condition of the modern-day servants of Jehovah a blessing to rejoice over?

Let us consider some aspects of our spiritual prosperity and see

1, 2. Why should we guard against being overly preoccupied with the future?

3. On what will we focus our attention in this article?



what they mean to us personally. Taking time to reflect on the favors that Jehovah has showered upon 'the righteous one walking in his integrity' will indeed strengthen our resolve to continue serving our heavenly Father joyfully.—Proverbs 20:7.

'Blessings That Make Us Rich' Now

⁴ An accurate knowledge of Bible teachings. The religions of Christendom generally claim to believe the Bible. However, they fail to agree on what it teaches. Even members of the same religious group often differ in their views of what the Scriptures really teach. How different their condition is from that of Jehovah's servants! Regardless of our national, cultural, or ethnic background, we worship the God we know by name. He is not some mysterious triune god. (Deuteronomy 6:4; Psalm 83:18; Mark 12:29) We are also aware that the paramount issue of God's universal sovereignty is due for settlement and that by maintaining our integrity to him, each one of us is personally involved in that issue. We know the truth about the dead and are free of the morbid fear of a God who is said to torment humans in hellfire or consign them to purgatory.—Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10.

⁵ Moreover, what a joy it is to know that we are not an accidental product of blind evolution! Rather, we are God's creation, made in his own image. (Genesis 1:26; Malachi 2:10) "I shall laud you because in a fear-inspiring way I am wonderfully made," sang the psalmist to his God. "Your works are wonderful, as my soul is very well aware."—Psalm 139:14.

⁶ Release from detrimental habits and practices. Warnings about the dangers of smoking, excessive drinking, and sexual pro-

4, 5. Which Bible teaching do you especially appreciate, and why?

6, 7. What changes in your life or in the life of others you know have proved to be a blessing?



miscuity abound in the media. For the most part, these warnings go unheeded. What happens, though, when a sincere person learns that the true God condemns such things and is saddened by those who practice them? Why, that person is moved to exclude such practices from his life! (Isaiah 63:10; 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Ephesians 4:30) While he does this primarily to please Jehovah God, he also receives additional benefits—better health and peace of mind.

⁷ Breaking bad habits is very difficult for many. Still, each year tens of thousands are doing so. They dedicate themselves to Jehovah and submit to water baptism, thus making it public that they have eliminated from their lives the practices that displease God. What an encouragement that is to all of us! Our determination to remain free from enslavement to sinful and hurtful conduct is reinforced.

⁸ Happy family life. In numerous countries family life is faltering. Many marriages end in divorce, often leaving behind painfully scarred children. In some European countries, one-parent families make up close to 20 percent of all households. How has Jehovah helped us walk in the way of integrity in this regard? Please read

8. What Bible-based counsel contributes to family happiness?

Ephesians 5:22–6:4, and note the fine counsel that God's Word gives to husbands, wives, and children. Applying what is stated there and elsewhere in the Scriptures certainly strengthens the marriage bond, helps parents to bring up children properly, and contributes to a happy family life. Is that not a blessing to rejoice over?

9 Assurance that world problems will soon be solved. Despite scientific and technological know-how and the sincere efforts of certain leaders, serious problems of present-day life remain unsolved. Klaus Schwab, founder of the World Economic Forum, recently noted that "the list of challenges facing the world grows ever longer and the time to address them grows shorter." He spoke of "dangers that transcend national boundaries like terrorism, environmental degradation and financial instability." Schwab concluded: "Now, more than ever, the world is faced with realities that call for collective *and* decisive action." As the 21st century moves forward, the overall outlook for mankind's future remains bleak.

10 How gratifying to know that Jehovah has instituted an arrangement that is capable of solving all of mankind's problems—the Messianic Kingdom of God! By means of it, the true God will 'make wars to cease' and bring about 'abundant peace.' (Psalm 46:9; 72:7) The anointed King, Jesus Christ, 'will deliver the poor one, the afflicted one, and the lowly one from oppression and from violence.' (Psalm 72:12-14) Under Kingdom rule, there will be no food shortage. (Psalm 72:16) Jehovah "will wipe out every tear from [our] eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away." (Revelation 21:4) The Kingdom has already been established in heaven

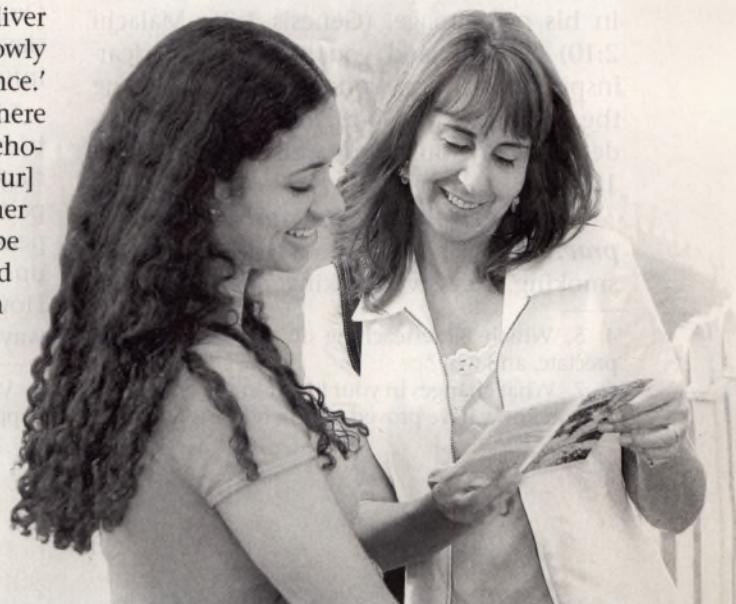
9, 10. How does our outlook for the future differ from that of the world?

and will shortly take the necessary action to affect every affair on the earth.—Daniel 2:44; Revelation 11:15.

11 Knowing what brings true happiness. What does bring true happiness? One psychologist said that happiness has three components—pleasure, engagement (involvement in such activities as work and family), and meaning (working toward a larger end or goal than self). Of the three, he listed pleasure as the least consequential and observed: "This is newsworthy because so many people build their lives around pursuing pleasure." What is the Bible's view in this regard?

12 King Solomon of ancient Israel stated: "I said, even I, in my heart: 'Do come now, let me try you out with rejoicing. Also, see good.' And, look! that too was vanity. I said to laughter: 'Insanity!' and to rejoicing: 'What is this doing?' " (Ecclesiastes 2:1, 2) Scripturally, whatever happiness pleasure offers is at best temporary. What about involvement in work? We have the most meaningful work to get involved in—the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making work. (Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20) By sharing with others the message of salvation outlined in the Bible, we engage in

11, 12. (a) Does pursuit of pleasure bring lasting happiness? Explain. (b) What brings true happiness?





a work that can result in our own salvation and in that of those who listen to us. (1 Timothy 4:16) As "God's fellow workers," we experience that "there is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving." (1 Corinthians 3:9; Acts 20:35) This work adds meaning to our life and provides the Creator with an answer for his taunter, Satan the Devil. (Proverbs 27:11) Indeed, Jehovah has shown us that godly devotion brings genuine and lasting happiness.—1 Timothy 4:8.

¹³ **An important and effective training program.** Gerhard serves as an elder in a congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses. Recalling his youth, he says: "As a young person, I had great problems speaking. When under pressure, I could scarcely articulate and would begin to stutter. I felt inferior and developed a complex. My parents arranged for me to take a speaking course, but their efforts were to no avail. My problem was psychological, not physical. There was, though, a wonderful provision from Jehovah—the Theocratic Ministry School. Enrolling in this school gave me renewed courage. I tried my best to practice what I learned. And it worked! I became freer, lost my complex, and became more courageous in the ministry. Now I even deliver public talks. I am truly grateful to Je-

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13. (a) In what way is the Theocratic Ministry School a blessing for us to rejoice over? (b) How have you benefited from the Theocratic Ministry School?

hovah, who gave me a new life through this school." Is not the way Jehovah trains us to do his work a reason to be joyful?

¹⁴ **A personal relationship with Jehovah and support from the united international brotherhood.** Katrin, who lives in Germany, was greatly dismayed upon hearing reports of a severe earthquake and resultant tsunami in southeast Asia. Her daughter was visiting Thailand when the catastrophe hit. For 32 hours this mother did not know whether her daughter was alive or was among the casualties that mounted hour by hour. How relieved Katrin was finally to receive a telephone call that assured her of her daughter's safety!

¹⁵ What helped Katrin during those hours of anxiety? She writes: "I spent almost all of this time in prayer to Jehovah. I noticed over and over again how much strength and peace of mind this gave me. Moreover, loving spiritual brothers visited me and stood by my side." (Philippians 4:6, 7) How much worse her situation would have been if she had had to spend those agonizing hours without the benefit of prayer to Jehovah and the comfort of a loving spiritual brotherhood! Our intimate relationship with Jehovah and his Son along with our close association with the Christian brotherhood is a unique blessing, too precious to be taken for granted.

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- 14, 15. In times of distress, what help is readily available? Illustrate.



¹⁶ *The hope of seeing dead loved ones again.* (John 5:28, 29) A young man named Matthias was raised as one of Jehovah's Witnesses. Unaware of his blessings, however, he drifted away from the Christian congregation when he was a teenager. He now writes: "I never really had deep discussions with my father. Over the years, we had many arguments. Still, my father always wanted the best for me. He loved me dearly, something I failed to realize at the time. In 1996, as I sat at his bedside, holding his hand and crying bitterly, I told him how sorry I was for all that I had done and that I loved him so much. But he could not hear me. After a short illness, he slipped away in death. If I live to see my father in the resurrection, we will make up for the past. And he will surely be happy to hear that I now serve as an elder and that my wife and I are privileged to serve as pioneers." What a blessing the resurrection hope is to us!

"He Adds No Pain With It"

¹⁷ Concerning his heavenly Father, Jesus Christ said: "He makes his sun rise upon wicked people and good and makes it rain upon righteous people and unrighteous." (Matthew 5:45) If Jehovah God bestows blessings upon even the unrighteous

16. Give an experience that illustrates the value of the resurrection hope.
17. What should meditating on Jehovah's blessings do for us?

What Did You Learn?

- Why is it unwise to be overly preoccupied with the future?
- What blessings do we enjoy now?
- Why do God's faithful servants suffer?

and the wicked, how much more so upon those who walk in the way of integrity! "Jehovah himself will not hold back anything good from those walking in faultlessness," states Psalm 84:11. When we meditate on the special care and concern he has shown for those who love him, how our hearts swell with gratitude and joy!

¹⁸ "The blessing of Jehovah"—that is what has given spiritual prosperity to his people. And we are assured that "he adds no pain with it." (Proverbs 10:22) Why, then, do tests and trials befall many of God's loyal ones, causing them much pain and suffering? Difficulties and distress come our way for three main reasons. (1) Our own sinful inclination. (Genesis 6:5; 8:21; James 1:14, 15) (2) Satan and his demons. (Ephesians 6:11, 12) (3) The wicked world. (John 15:19) While Jehovah permits bad things to happen to us, he is not the originator of them. In fact, "every good gift and every perfect present is from above, for it comes down from the Father of the celestial lights." (James 1:17) Jehovah's blessings are without pain.

¹⁹ Experiencing spiritual prosperity always involves drawing close to God. When we develop an intimate relationship with him, we 'safely treasure up for ourselves a fine foundation for the future, in order that we may get a firm hold on the real life'—everlasting life. (1 Timothy 6:12, 17-19) In the future new world of God's making, our spiritual riches will be coupled with physical blessings. The real life will then be the lot of all those who "keep listening to the voice of Jehovah." (Deuteronomy 28:2) With strengthened determination, let us joyfully continue walking in integrity.

18. (a) How can it be said that Jehovah adds no pain with his blessing? (b) Why do many of God's loyal ones suffer?
19. What awaits those who continue to walk in integrity?

Questions From Readers

What is causing “the desirable things of all the nations” to come into the “house” of true worship?—Haggai 2:7.

Through the prophet Haggai, Jehovah foretold: “I will rock all the nations, and the desirable things of all the nations must come in; and I will fill this house with glory.” (Haggai 2:7) Is the rocking “of all the nations” causing “the desirable things” of the nations—honest-hearted individuals—to embrace true worship? The answer is no.

Consider what rocks, or shakes, the nations and what this shaking leads to. The Bible says that “the nations [have] been in tumult and the national groups themselves kept muttering an empty thing.” (Psalm 2:1) The “empty thing” they keep “muttering,” or meditating on, is the continuation of their own sovereignty. Nothing shakes them more than any threat to their rulership.

The worldwide preaching of the established Kingdom of God done by Jehovah’s Witnesses has become just such a threat to the nations. After all, the Messianic Kingdom of God in the hands of Jesus Christ is going to “crush and put an end to all [man-made] kingdoms.” (Daniel 2:44) The message of judgment included in our preaching work is sending out a tremor among the nations. (Isaiah 61:2) And the shaking gets more severe as the preaching work increases in scope and intensity. Of what is the rocking foretold at Haggai 2:7 a portent?

At Haggai 2:6, we read: “This is what Jehovah of armies has said, ‘Yet once—it is a little while—and I am rocking the heavens and the earth and

the sea and the dry ground.’” Quoting from this verse, the apostle Paul wrote: “He has promised, saying: ‘Yet once more I will set in commotion not only the earth but also the heaven.’ Now the expression ‘Yet once more’ signifies the removal of the things being shaken as things that have been made, in order that the things not being shaken [the Kingdom] may remain.” (Hebrews 12:26, 27) Yes, the entire present system of things is going to be shaken out of existence to make room for the new world of God’s making.

Honesthearted people are drawn to true worship but not because the nations are rocked, or shaken. The action that is drawing them to Jehovah and his worship is the same action that is causing the nations to rock, namely the worldwide preaching of the established Kingdom of God. The declaration of the ‘glad tidings of everlasting good news’ draws rightly inclined individuals to the worship of the true God.—Revelation 14:6, 7.

The Kingdom message is one of judgment and of salvation. (Isaiah 61:1, 2) The results of preaching it worldwide are twofold: the rocking of the nations and the coming in of the desirable things of the nations to Jehovah’s glory.



THE VALUE OF “a Weaker Vessel”



“YOU husbands, continue dwelling [with your wives] according to knowledge,” wrote the apostle Peter, “assigning them honor as to a weaker vessel, the feminine one.” (1 Peter 3:7) Does this Scriptural reference to a woman as “a weaker vessel” belittle women in any way? Let us see what the inspired writer originally intended to convey.

The Greek noun rendered “honor” means “price, value, . . . respect.” Thus, a Christian husband is to treat his wife with tenderness, showing her due consideration as a delicate, precious vessel. This is not demeaning at all. As an example, consider the Tiffany lotus lamp. This exquisitely fine lamp can indeed be considered delicate. Does the lamp’s fragile nature diminish its value? Far from it! In 1997 the original Tiffany lotus lamp sold at an auction for 2.8 million dollars! Its delicate makeup served to enhance its value, not diminish it.

Likewise, assigning a woman honor as to a weaker vessel does not devalue or demean her. Dwelling with his wife “according to knowledge” means that a husband takes into account her strengths and limitations, likes and dislikes, outlook and feelings. A caring husband recognizes and respects personality differences between him and his wife. He shows due consideration for her “in order for [his] prayers not to be hindered.” (1 Peter 3:7) A husband who fails to respect his wife’s feminine virtues endangers his own relationship with God. Clearly, God’s Word does not belittle women. Rather, it dignifies and honors them.

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