

THE WATCHTOWER

MARCH 1, 1997

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



FUNDAMENTALISM

What Is It?
Why Is It Spreading?



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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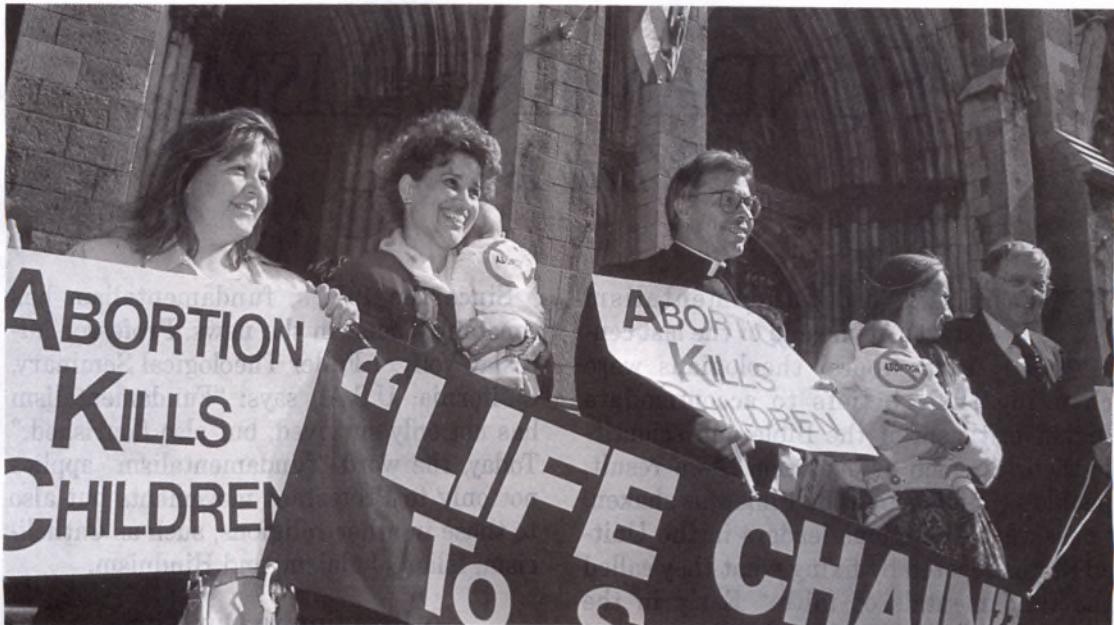
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The Spread of FUNDAMENTALISM

FUNDAMENTALISM—a few short decades ago, this was no more than a minority movement within Protestantism. How things have changed! Bruce B. Lawrence, a commentator on religion, wrote that 30 years ago, few would have foreseen that at the end of the 20th century, fundamentalism* would become such an important and even obsessive theme for the mass media and university research.

Yet, that is what has happened. News-paper reports of violent street demon-strations, murders, antiabortion movements, political maneuverings by religious pres-

* A fundamentalist is one who holds rigidly to traditional, conservative religious values. The meaning of "fundamentalism" will be discussed more fully in the next article.

sure groups, and public bonfires of books considered blasphemous are constant reminders of the actions of fundamentalists. The Italian financial weekly *Mondo Economico* stated that just about everywhere fundamentalism is "on the attack in the name of God."

Fundamentalists are often portrayed as extreme and fanatic, hatching conspiracies and carrying out terrorist attacks. People are alarmed at the growth of such groups as *Comunione e Liberazione* in Roman Catholicism, *Gush Emunim* in Judaism, and the Christian Coalition in North American Protestantism. Why is fundamentalism spreading? What motivates it? Is it perhaps "the revenge of God," as French sociologist Gilles Kepel suggests?

FUNDAMENTALISM

What Is It?

WHERE did fundamentalism start? At the end of the last century, liberal theologians were changing their beliefs to accommodate higher criticism of the Bible and scientific theories, such as evolution. As a result, people's confidence in the Bible was shaken. Conservative religious leaders in the United States reacted by fixing what they called the fundamentals of faith.* Early in the 20th century, they published a discussion of these fundamentals in a series of volumes entitled *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth*. From this title comes the term "fundamentalism."

In the first half of the 20th century, fundamentalism made news from time to time. For example, in 1925, religious fundamentalists took a schoolteacher named John Scopes of Tennessee, U.S.A., to court in what became known as the Scopes trial. His crime? He was teaching evolution, and that was against state law. In those days, some believed that fundamentalism would be short-lived. In 1926, *Christian Century*, a Protestant magazine, said that it was "hollow and artificial" and "wholly lacking in qualities of constructive achievement or survival." How wrong that assessment was!

* The so-called Five Points of Fundamentalism, defined in 1895, were "(1) the plenary inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture; (2) the deity of Jesus Christ; (3) the virgin birth of Christ; (4) the substitutionary atonement of Christ on the cross; (5) the bodily resurrection and the personal and physical second coming of Christ on the earth."—*Studi di teologia* (Studies of Theology).

Since the 1970's, fundamentalism has constantly been in the news. Professor Miroslav Volf, of Fuller Theological Seminary, California, U.S.A., says: "Fundamentalism has not only survived, but also flourished." Today, the word "fundamentalism" applies not only to Protestant movements but also to those in other religions, such as Catholicism, Islam, Judaism, and Hinduism.

A Reaction to Our Times

Why the spread of fundamentalism? Those who study it attribute it, at least in part, to the moral and religious uncertainty of our times. In earlier years most societies lived in an atmosphere of moral certainty based on traditional beliefs. Now those beliefs are challenged or rejected. Many intellectuals assert that there is no God and that man is alone in an indifferent universe. Many scientists teach that mankind is the result of chance evolution, not of the actions of a loving Creator. A permissive mentality prevails. The world is plagued with a loss of moral values on all levels of society.—2 Timothy 3:4, 5, 13.

Fundamentalists hanker after the old certainties, and some of them strive to bring their communities and nations back to what they feel are proper moral and doctrinal foundations. They do all in their power to force others to live according to a "correct" moral code and system of doctrinal beliefs. A fundamentalist is strongly convinced that he is right and others are wrong. Professor James Barr, in his book *Fundamental-*

ism, says that fundamentalism "is often felt to be a hostile and opprobrious term, suggesting narrowness, bigotry, obscurantism and sectarianism."

Since nobody likes to be called narrow, bigoted, or sectarian, not all agree on who is a fundamentalist and who is not. There are, however, certain aspects that characterize religious fundamentalism.

Identifying a Fundamentalist

Religious fundamentalism is usually an attempt to preserve what is believed to be the original traditions or religious beliefs of a culture and to oppose what is perceived as the secular spirit of the world. That is not to say that fundamentalists oppose all that is modern. Some use modern communication very effectively to promote their point of view. But they fight against the secularization of society.*

Some fundamentalists are determined not only to preserve for themselves a traditional structure of doctrines or way of life but to impose these on others, to change social structures so that they conform with the fundamentalists' beliefs. The Catholic fundamentalist, therefore, will not limit himself to rejecting abortion. He may well pressure the legislators of his country to promote laws outlawing abortion. In Poland, according to the newspaper *La Repubblica*, in order to have an antiabortion law approved, the Catholic Church conducted "a 'war' in which it deployed all its power and influence." In doing so, the church authorities were acting very much like fundamentalists. The Protestant Christian Coalition in the United States fights similar "wars."

Fundamentalists are distinguished above

* "Secularization" means stressing the secular, as opposed to the spiritual or sacred. The secular is not concerned with religion or with religious beliefs.

all by their deep-rooted religious convictions. Thus, a Protestant fundamentalist will be a convinced proponent of the literal interpretation of the Bible, likely including the belief that the earth was created in six literal days. A Catholic fundamentalist has no doubts about the infallibility of the pope.

It is understandable, then, why the term "fundamentalism" evokes the image of unreasoning fanaticism and why those who are not fundamentalists are uneasy when they see fundamentalism spreading. As individuals, we may disagree with fundamentalists and be appalled by their political

*In 1926
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achievement or survival"*

maneuverings and their sometimes violent actions. Indeed, fundamentalists of one religion may be horrified at the actions of those of another religion! Still, many thinking people are concerned about the things that provoke the spread of fundamentalism—the growing moral laxity, the loss of faith, and the rejection of spirituality in modern society.

Is fundamentalism the only response to these trends? If not, what is the alternative?

A BETTER WAY

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES are concerned about the erosion of spirituality in the world and the immorality and religious uncertainty that pervade society. As a result, they are sometimes called fundamentalists. But are they? No. While they have strong religious convictions, they are not fundamentalists in the sense that the term has come to be used. They do not pressure political leaders to promote a certain point of view, and they do not resort to demonstrations and violence against those with whom they disagree. They have found a better way. They imitate their Leader, Jesus Christ.

Jehovah's Witnesses are convinced that religious truth exists, that it is found in the Bible. (John 8:32; 17:17) But the Bible teaches Christians to be kind, good, mild, and reasonable—qualities that do not allow for fanaticism. (Galatians 5:22, 23; Philippians 4:5) In the Bible book of James, Christians are encouraged to cultivate "the wisdom from above," which is described as being "first of all chaste, then peaceable, reasonable, ready to obey, full of mercy and good fruits." James added: "The fruit of righteousness has its seed sown under peaceful conditions for those who are making peace."—James 3:17, 18.

Jehovah's Witnesses remember that Jesus was greatly concerned about truth. He told Pontius Pilate: "For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth." (John 18:37) Although he was an intrepid advocate of truth, he did not seek to impose his convictions on others. Rather,

he appealed to their minds and hearts. He knew that his heavenly Father, a "good and upright" God, would decide how and when to eliminate falsehood and injustice from the face of the earth. (Psalm 25:8) Hence, he did not seek to repress those who disagreed with him. On the contrary, it was the orthodox religious leaders of his day who tried to repress Jesus.—John 19:5, 6.

Jehovah's Witnesses have strong convictions about religious doctrines, and they manifest solid values in the matter of morals. Like the apostle Paul, they are convinced that there is only "one Lord, one faith, one baptism." (Ephesians 4:5) They are also aware of Jesus' words: "Narrow is the gate and cramped the road leading off into life, and few are the ones finding it." (Matthew 7:13, 14) Still, they do not try to force others to follow their beliefs. Rather, they imitate Paul and "beg" all those who so desire to "become reconciled to God." (2 Corinthians 5:20) This is the better way. It is God's way.

Religious fundamentalism, as the word is used today, is very different. Fundamentalists use many strategies—including violence—to impose their principles on society. In doing so, they become an integral part of the political system. Jesus, though, said that his followers should be "no part of the world." (John 15:19; 17:16; James 4:4) In harmony with those words, Jehovah's Witnesses maintain strict neutrality in political controversies. And, as the Italian newspaper *Fuoripagina* acknowledged, they "do not force anything on anybody; everyone is

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free to accept or reject what they say." The result? The peaceable Bible message of the Witnesses attracts people of all sorts, even those who were once fundamentalists.—Isaiah 2:2, 3.

A World With Solid Values

The Witnesses recognize that humans cannot solve the problems that concern fundamentalists. You cannot force a person to believe in God or to accept your personal set of beliefs. Thinking that such a thing is possible led to some of the worst horrors of history, such as the Crusades, the medieval Inquisitions, and the "conversions" of the American Indians. However, if you trust in God, you will be willing to leave matters in his hands.

According to the Bible, God has set a limit on the time in which he permits humans to break his laws and thus cause suffering and pain. That time has almost expired. Already, Jesus is ruling as King in God's heavenly Kingdom, and soon that Kingdom will act to remove human governments and take over the day-to-day governing of mankind. (Matthew 24:3-14; Revelation 11:15, 18) The result will be a worldwide paradise in which peace and righteousness will be abundant. At that time there will be no uncertainty about how the true God should be worshiped. "The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it." (Psalm 37:29) Such eternal values as loving-kindness, truth, justice, and goodness will triumph for the good of all obedient mankind.

Looking forward to that time, the psalmist says in poetic fashion: "As for loving-kindness and trueness, they have met each other; righteousness and peace—they have kissed each other. Trueness itself will sprout out of the very earth, and righteous-



Jehovah's Witnesses invite all to become acquainted with the good news of the Kingdom of God

ness itself will look down from the very heavens. Also, Jehovah, for his part, will give what is good, and our own land will give its yield. Before him righteousness itself will walk, and it will make a way by his steppings."—Psalm 85:10-13.

While we cannot change the world, we can as individuals cultivate godly values even today. Thus, we can try to be the kind of people that God will want as his worshipers in that new world. We will then be among the meek referred to by the psalmist: "The meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace." (Psalm 37:11) God supports and blesses those who do his will, and he promises wonderful things for their future. The apostle John said: "The world is passing away and so is its desire, but he that does the will of God remains forever."—1 John 2:17.

KINGDOM PROCLAIMERS REPORT

"Let Your Light Shine Before Men"

IN HIS Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said to his disciples: "You are the light of the world." He went on to urge them: "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your fine works and give glory to your Father who is in the heavens."

—Matthew 5:14-16.

In Italy the fine works of Jehovah's Witnesses have not gone unnoticed. For example, their good conduct when attending their annual conventions brings praise to God, as the following reports bear out:

■ For years a woman in Terni, Italy, helped her daughter run a café that was located near the stadium in that city. She relates: "I noticed a huge difference between those who came for soccer games and the delegates at the conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses there. The Witnesses were more modest in their dress, and they were honest and respectful. I often used to ask myself how people of various races could get along so well.

"One day a Witness stopped me on the street and asked if I knew God's name. I did not, and since I knew that Jehovah's Witnesses are good people, I agreed to have her visit me. I had questions about the condition of the dead, which she answered from the Bible. Without hesitation, I accepted a Bible study, and two weeks later I began attending meetings.

■ "My daughter at first opposed me, but my conduct and determination changed her attitude. I began to study nine months ago. Today my daughter and her husband make appreciative



comments to the Witnesses who patronize their café. As for me, I was baptized at a convention in this stadium."

■ After a convention in Roseto degli Abruzzi, a campsite manager observed: "I have noticed that Jehovah's Witnesses are very honest in all they do. Last week, I had 40 of them at my campsite, and they did not create any problems. On the contrary, they are the only ones who come and tell you if they have an extra person staying in their trailer or tent. As far as I am concerned, they are the best

customers you can have."

■ After the same convention, a hotel manager stated: "Jehovah's Witnesses are all peaceful. They are not rowdy, and they go to bed early. They are really kind, honest, and well behaved. It would be wonderful if everybody were like them. Others steal everything—vases, ashtrays, even toilet paper and sugar! Nothing like that has ever happened with you. When your children take ice creams from the refrigerator in the evening, I don't bother to go and check what they have taken. They figure out what they owe me and come to pay immediately. I have the utmost trust in them. How wonderful it would be if others were like that! I wish all my guests were Jehovah's Witnesses."

Jehovah's Witnesses are well-known in Italy, as in many other parts of the earth. They 'maintain their conduct fine among the nations' and thus bring praise to the true God, whose name they bear.—1 Peter 2:12.



ARE YOU READY FOR JEHOVAH'S DAY?

"The great day of Jehovah is near. It is near, and there is a hurrying of it very much." —ZEPHANIAH 1:14.

JEHOVAH'S "great and fear-inspiring day" will soon come upon this wicked system of things. The Scriptures describe the day of Jehovah as one of battle, darkness, fury, distress, anguish, alarm, and desolation. Yet, there will be survivors, for "everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah will get away safe." (Joel 2:30-32; Amos 5:

1. How do the Scriptures describe the day of Jehovah?

18-20) Yes, God will then destroy his enemies and save his people.

² God's prophets attached a sense of urgency to Jehovah's day. For instance, Zephaniah wrote: "The great day of Jehovah is near. It is near, and there is a hurrying of it very much." (Zephaniah 1:14) The situation is all the more urgent today because God's

2. Why should we have a sense of urgency about Jehovah's day?

Chief Executioner, the King Jesus Christ, is about to 'gird his sword upon his thigh and ride in the cause of truth, humility, and righteousness.' (Psalm 45:3, 4) Are you ready for that day?

They Had Great Expectations

³ Many have had unfulfilled expectations regarding the day of Jehovah. Some early Christians in Thessalonica said, 'Jehovah's day is here!' (2 Thessalonians 2:2) But there were two basic reasons why it was not at hand. Citing one of these, the apostle Paul had said: "Whenever it is that they are saying: 'Peace and security!' then sudden destruction is to be instantly upon them." (1 Thessalonians 5:1-6) In this "time of the end," we ourselves await the fulfillment of those words. (Daniel 12:4) The Thessalonians also lacked another line of evidence that Jehovah's great day had arrived, for Paul told them: "It will not come unless the apostasy comes first." (2 Thessalonians 2:3) When Paul wrote those words (about 51 C.E.), "the apostasy" from true Christianity had not developed completely. Today, we see it in full bloom in Christendom. Despite their unfulfilled expectations, though, those faithful anointed ones in Thessalonica, who kept on serving God faithfully until death, eventually received a heavenly reward. (Revelation 2:10) We too will be rewarded if we stay faithful as we await Jehovah's day.

⁴ The Bible links "the great day of Jehovah" with "the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thessalonians 2:1, 2) The so-called Church Fathers had various ideas about Christ's return, his presence, and his Thousand Year Reign. (Revelation 20:4) In

3. What expectations did some Thessalonian Christians have, and for what two reasons were they mistaken?

4. (a) With what is Jehovah's day linked at 2 Thessalonians 2:1, 2? (b) What views did so-called Church Fathers have regarding Christ's return and related matters?

the second century C.E., Papias of Hierapolis entertained expectations of fabulous fertility of the earth during the Millennial Reign of Christ. Justin Martyr spoke of Jesus' presence repeatedly and expected restored Jerusalem to be the seat of His Kingdom. Irenaeus of Lyons taught that after the Roman Empire was destroyed, Jesus would appear visibly, bind Satan, and reign in earthly Jerusalem.

⁵ Historian Philip Schaff noted that "the most striking point" in the period prior to the Council of Nicaea in 325 C.E. was "the belief of a visible reign of Christ in glory on earth with the risen saints for a thousand years, before the general resurrection and judgment." A *Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by James Hastings, states: "Tertullian, Irenaeus, and Hippolytus still look for a speedy Advent [of Jesus Christ]; but with the Alexandrine Fathers we enter a new circle of thought. . . . With Augustine's identification of the Millennium with the period of the Church militant, the Second Advent is postponed to a distant future."

Jehovah's Day and Jesus' Presence

⁶ Misconceptions have led to disappointments, but let us not think that Jehovah's day is a long way off. Jesus' invisible presence, with which it is Scripturally associated, has already begun. *The Watchtower* and related publications of Jehovah's Witnesses have often provided Scriptural evidence that Christ's presence began in the year 1914.* So, then, what did Jesus say about his presence?

* See chapters 10 and 11 of the book *Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

5. What have certain scholars said about Christ's "Second Advent" and his Millennial Reign?

6. Why should we not conclude that Jehovah's day is a long way off?

⁷ Jesus' presence became a topic for discussion shortly before his death. After hearing him predict the destruction of Jerusalem's temple, his apostles Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked: "When will these things be, and what will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things?" (Matthew 24:1-3; Mark 13:3, 4) In reply, Jesus foretold wars, famines, earthquakes, and other features of "the sign" of his presence and the conclusion of the system of things. He also said: "He that has endured to the end is the one that will be saved." (Matthew 24:13) We will be saved if we faithfully endure to the end of our present life or to the end of this wicked system.

⁸ Before the end, an especially significant feature of Jesus' presence would be fulfilled. Regarding it, he said: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; *and then the end will come.*" (Matthew 24:14) Before the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the Jewish system of things ended in 70 C.E., Paul could say that the good news "was preached in all creation that is under heaven." (Colossians 1:23) Today, however, a far more extensive preaching work is being done by Jehovah's Witnesses "in all the inhabited earth." During the last few years, God has opened the way for a great witness to be given in Eastern Europe. With printeries and other facilities worldwide, Jehovah's organization is poised for increased activity, even in "untouched territory." (Romans 15:22, 23) Does your heart impel you to do your utmost in giving a witness before the end comes? If so,

7. (a) What are some features of the sign of Jesus' presence and the conclusion of the system of things? (b) How may we be saved?
8. Before the end of the Jewish system, what was to be accomplished, and what is being done about this today?

God can strengthen you to have a rewarding share in the work ahead.—Philippians 4:13; 2 Timothy 4:17.

⁹ The foretold Kingdom-preaching work and other features of the sign of Jesus' presence are being fulfilled right now. Hence, the end is near for this wicked system of things. True, Jesus said: "Concerning that day and hour nobody knows, neither the angels of the heavens nor the Son, but only the Father." (Matthew 24:4-14, 36) But Jesus' prophecy can help us to be ready for "that day and hour."

They Were Ready

¹⁰ To survive the great day of Jehovah, we must stay awake spiritually and stand firm for true worship. (1 Corinthians 16:13) We know that such endurance is possible, for a godly family did so and survived the Flood that destroyed wicked humans in 2370 B.C.E. Comparing that era with his presence, Jesus said: "Just as the days of Noah were, so the presence of the Son of man will be. For as they were in those days before the flood, eating and drinking, men marrying and women being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark; and they took no note until the flood came and swept them all away, so the presence of the Son of man will be."—Matthew 24:37-39.

¹¹ Like us, Noah and his family lived in a violent world. Disobedient angelic "sons of the true God" had materialized and had taken wives by whom they fathered the infamous Nephilim—bullies who undoubtedly made conditions more violent. (Genesis 6:1, 2, 4; 1 Peter 3:19, 20) However,

9. What point did Jesus make, as recorded at Matthew 24:36?
10. How do we know that it is possible to stay awake spiritually?
11. What course did Noah pursue despite the violence that existed in his day?

"Noah walked with the true God" in faith. He "proved himself faultless among his contemporaries"—the wicked generation of his day. (Genesis 6:9-11) With prayerful reliance on God, we can do the same thing in this violent and wicked world as we await the day of Jehovah.

¹² Noah is well-known as the builder of an ark for the preservation of life through the Deluge. He was also "a preacher of righteousness," but his contemporaries "took no note" of his God-given message. They ate and drank, got married, raised families, and carried on the normal affairs of life until the Flood swept them all away. (2 Peter 2:5; Genesis 6:14) They did not want to hear about upright speech and conduct, even as today's wicked generation closes its ears to what Jehovah's Witnesses say about "repentance toward God," faith in Christ, righteousness, and "the judgment to come." (Acts 20:20, 21; 24:24, 25) There is no available record of how many people lived on earth when Noah was declaring God's message. But one thing is certain, earth's population was drastically reduced in 2370 B.C.E.! The Deluge wiped out the wicked, sparing only those ready for that act of God—Noah and the seven others in his family.—Genesis 7:19-23; 2 Peter 3:5, 6.

¹³ God did not give Noah years of advance notice about the exact day and hour for the Flood. However, when Noah was 480 years old, Jehovah decreed: "My spirit shall not act toward man indefinitely in that he is also flesh. Accordingly his days shall amount to a hundred and twenty

12. (a) Besides building an ark, what work did Noah do? (b) How did people react to Noah's preaching, and what were the consequences for them?

13. In what judicial decree did Noah put total confidence, and how did he act in harmony with this?

years." (Genesis 6:3) Noah put total confidence in this divine judicial decree. After reaching the age of 500, he "became father to Shem, Ham and Japheth," and custom of those days suggests that 50 to 60 years passed before his sons got married. When Noah was told to build the ark for preservation through the Flood, those sons and their wives evidently assisted him in that endeavor. The building of the ark likely coincided with Noah's service as "a preacher of righteousness," keeping him busy for the last 40 to 50 years before the Flood. (Genesis 5:32; 6:13-22) For all those years, he and his family acted in faith. Let us also display faith as we preach the good news and await Jehovah's day.—Hebrews 11:7.

¹⁴ As the ark neared completion, Noah may have thought that the Flood was imminent, although he did not know exactly when it would occur. Jehovah eventually did tell him: "In just seven days more I am making it rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights." (Genesis 7:4) That gave Noah and his family just enough time to get all the animal kinds into the ark and enter it themselves before the Flood began. We do not need to know the day and hour for the start of this system's destruction; survival of animals is not entrusted to us, and prospective human survivors are already entering the symbolic ark, the spiritual paradise of God's people.

"Keep on the Watch"

¹⁵ Regarding his presence, Jesus explained: "Then two men will be [working] in the field: one will be taken along and

14. What did Jehovah eventually tell Noah, and why?

15. (a) In your own words, how would you explain Jesus' words found at Matthew 24:40-44? (b) Not knowing the exact time of Jesus' coming to execute God's vengeance has what effect?

the other be abandoned; two women will be grinding [grain into flour] at the hand mill: one will be taken along and the other be abandoned. Keep on the watch, therefore, because you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But know one thing, that if the householder had known in what watch the thief was coming, he would have kept awake and not allowed his house to be broken into. On this account you too prove yourselves ready, because at an hour that you do not think to be it, the Son of man is coming.” (Matthew 24:40-44; Luke 17:34, 35) Not knowing the exact time of Jesus’ coming to execute God’s vengeance tends to keep us vigilant and gives us daily opportunity to prove that we serve Jehovah with unselfish motives.

¹⁶ Individuals “abandoned” to destruction with the wicked will include those once enlightened but who get swallowed up in a selfish way of life. May we be among the ones “taken along,” those fully devoted to Jehovah and truly grateful for his spiritual provisions through “the faithful and discreet slave.”

16. What will happen to individuals “abandoned” and to those “taken along”?

How Would You Answer?

- What expectations have some had regarding Jehovah’s day and Christ’s presence?
- Why can we say that Noah and his family were ready for the Flood?
- What will happen to those who “keep on the watch” and to those who do not?
- Why are holy acts essential, especially as we get closer to Jehovah’s great day?

(Matthew 24:45-47) Right down to the end, let us serve God with “love out of a clean heart and out of a good conscience and out of faith without hypocrisy.”—1 Timothy 1:5.

Holy Acts Essential

¹⁷ The apostle Peter wrote: “Jehovah’s day will come as a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a hissing noise, but the elements being intensely hot will be dissolved, and earth and the works in it will be discovered.” (2 Peter 3:10) The symbolic heavens and earth will not survive the heat of God’s burning anger. So Peter adds: “Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of persons ought you to be in holy acts of conduct and deeds of godly devotion!” (2 Peter 3:11) Among these acts and deeds are regular presence at Christian meetings, doing good to others, and having a meaningful share in preaching the good news.—Matthew 24:14; Hebrews 10:24, 25; 13:16.

¹⁸ “Holy acts of conduct and deeds of godly devotion” require that we ‘keep ourselves without spot from the world.’ (James 1:27) But what if we are developing an attachment to this world? Perhaps we are being lured into a dangerous position before God by seeking unclean entertainment or by listening to music and songs that promote the ungodly spirit of this world. (2 Corinthians 6:14-18) If that is the case, let us seek God’s help in prayer so that we will not pass away with the world but will stand approved before the Son of man. (Luke 21:34-36; 1 John 2:15-17) If we have made a dedication to God, surely we will want to do our best to build and maintain a warm relationship

17. (a) What was foretold at 2 Peter 3:10?
(b) What are some of the acts and deeds encouraged by 2 Peter 3:11?

18. If we are developing an attachment to the world, what should we do?

with him and thus be ready for the great and fear-inspiring day of Jehovah.

¹⁹ Godly Noah and his family lived through the Flood that destroyed the ancient world. Upright individuals survived the end of the Jewish system of things in 70 C.E. For instance, the apostle John was still active in God's service in about 96-98 C.E., when he penned the book of Revelation, his Gospel account, and three inspired letters. Of the thousands who embraced the true faith at Pentecost of 33 C.E., likely many lived through the end of the Jew-

19. Why can throngs of Kingdom proclaimers expect to live through the conclusion of this wicked system of things?

ish system. (Acts 1:15; 2:41, 47; 4:4) Today throngs of Kingdom proclaimers can hope to live through the conclusion of the present wicked system of things.

²⁰ With preservation into the new world before us, let us be zealous 'preachers of righteousness.' What a privilege it is to serve God in these last days! And what a joy it is to direct people to the present-day "ark," the spiritual paradise enjoyed by God's people! May the millions now in it remain faithful, spiritually awake, and ready for the great day of Jehovah. But what will help all of us to stay awake?

20. Why should we be zealous 'preachers of righteousness'?

HAPPY ARE THOSE WHO STAY AWAKE!

"Look! I am coming as a thief. Happy is the one that stays awake and keeps his outer garments."—REVELATION 16:15.

JEOHVAH'S great day is near, and that means war! In vision, the apostle John saw froglike "expressions inspired by demons" going forth to all "kings," or rulers, of the earth. To do what? Why, "to gather them together to the war of the great day of God the Almighty"! John added: "They gathered them together to the place that is called in Hebrew Har-Magedon."—Revelation 16:13-16.

² Soon, Jehovah will move this system's

1. Since Jehovah's day is near, what can we expect?
2. Who is Gog of Magog, and what will happen when he attacks Jehovah's people?

political element to destroy Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion. (Revelation 17:1-5, 15-17) Then Gog of Magog, Satan the Devil debased to the vicinity of the earth, will marshal his hordes and make an all-out attack on Jehovah's peaceful, seemingly defenseless people. (Ezekiel 38:1-12) But God will act to rescue his people. That will mark the outbreak of "the great and fear-inspiring day of Jehovah."—Joel 2:31; Ezekiel 38:18-20.

³ Yes, Jehovah will rescue his people and

3. How would you describe the developments foretold at Ezekiel 38:21-23?

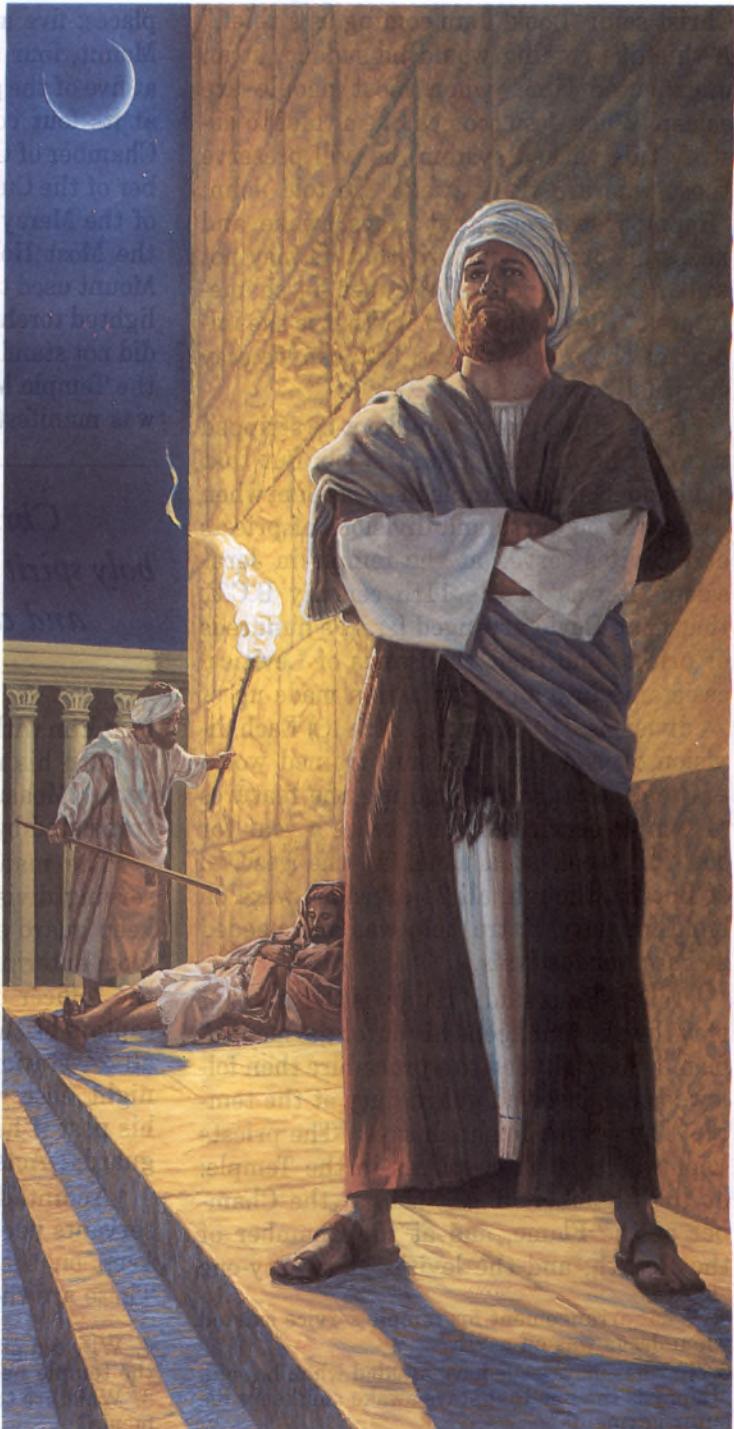
Are you determined to stay awake spiritually and keep on your figurative outer garments?

destroy every last vestige of Satan's system when we reach the world situation called Har-Magedon, or Armageddon. Read the prophetic words of Ezekiel 38:21-23, and visualize the scene. Jehovah wields his power to bring about flooding cloudbursts, devastating hailstones, streaking fire, deadly pestilence. Panic reigns worldwide as Gog's hordes are thrown into confusion, fighting against one another. Any surviving foes of Almighty God are executed as Jehovah uses supernatural means to save his servants. When the foretold "great tribulation" has run its course, nothing will be left of Satan's ungodly system. (Matthew 24:21) Even in their death throes, however, the wicked will learn who is responsible for their calamity. Our victorious God himself says: "They will have to know that I am Jehovah." These extraordinary events will occur in our day, during Jesus' presence.

Coming as a Thief

⁴ The glorified Lord Jesus

4. In what manner will Jesus come to destroy this wicked system of things?



Christ said: "Look! I am coming as a thief." A thieflike coming would be sudden, at an unexpected time, when most people are asleep. When Jesus comes like a thief to destroy this wicked system, he will preserve those who are truly awake. He told John: "Happy is the one that stays awake and keeps his outer garments, that he may not walk naked and people look upon his shamefulness." (Revelation 16:15) What is the import of those words? And how can we stay spiritually awake?

⁵ Generally, a guard would not be stripped naked if he fell asleep on the job. But that did happen at the temple in Jerusalem when Jesus was on earth and divisions of priests and Levites served at the temple in Jerusalem. It was in the 11th century B.C.E. that King David arranged Israel's hundreds of priests and their thousands of Levitical assistants into an organization made up of 24 divisions. (1 Chronicles 24:1-18) Each division of over one thousand trained workers took its turn in handling the features of temple service at least twice a year for one full week at a time. At the Festival of Booths, though, all 24 divisions were on hand for duty. Extra help was also needed at Passover festivals.

⁶ When Jesus said, "Happy is the one that stays awake and keeps his outer garments," he may have alluded to a procedure then followed that involved guard duty at the temple. The Jewish Mishnah says: "The priests kept watch at three places in the Temple: at the Chamber of Abtinas, at the Chamber of the Flame, and at the Chamber of the Hearth; and the levites at twenty-one

5. What arrangement for temple service existed when Jesus was on earth?

6. To what may Jesus have alluded when he said, "Happy is the one that stays awake and keeps his outer garments"?

places: five at the five gates of the Temple Mount, four at its four corners inside, five at five of the gates of the Temple Court, four at its four corners outside, and one at the Chamber of Offerings, and one at the Chamber of the Curtain, and one behind the place of the Mercy Seat [outside the rear wall of the Most Holy]. The officer of the Temple Mount used to go round to every watch with lighted torches before him, and if any watch did not stand up and say to him, 'O officer of the Temple Mount, peace be to thee!' and it was manifest that he was asleep, he would

*Christians have God's
holy spirit to help them stay awake
and carry out their duties*

beat him with his staff, and he had the right to burn his raiment."—The Mishnah, Middoth ("Measurements"), 1, paragraphs 1-2, translated by Herbert Danby.

⁷ The many Levites and priests of the serving division stayed awake all night to keep guard and to prevent anyone unclean from entering the temple courtyards. Since the "officer of the Temple Mount," or "the captain of the temple," made the rounds of all 24 stations during the watches of the night, each watchman had to stay awake at his post if he did not want to be caught off guard.—Acts 4:1.

⁸ Anointed Christians and their fellow servants need to stay spiritually awake and keep on their figurative outer garments. These are the outward evidences of our ap-

7. Why did priests and Levites on guard duty at the temple need to stay awake?

8. What are the Christian's figurative outer garments?

pointment to the ministry at Jehovah's spiritual temple. In recognition of this, we have God's holy spirit, or active force, to help us perform our duties and carry out our privileges as Kingdom proclaimers. Falling asleep at our posts as God's ministers would put us in danger of being caught by Jesus Christ, the Captain of the great spiritual temple. If we were spiritually asleep at that time, we would figuratively be stripped naked and would have our symbolic garments burned. So how can we stay awake spiritually?

How We Can Stay Awake

⁹ *Diligent study of the Scriptures with the help of Christian publications is a stimulant to spiritual wakefulness.* Such study will equip us for the ministry, will help us to meet crises, and will show us the way to eternal happiness. (Proverbs 8:34, 35; James 1:5-8) Our study should be thorough and progressive. (Hebrews 5:14-6:3) Good food eaten regularly can help to keep us awake and alert. It can prevent the lethargy that may be a sign of malnutrition. We have no reason to be spiritually malnourished and sleepy, for God is making abundant provision for spiritual food by means of the anointed "faithful and discreet slave." (Matthew 24:45-47) Regular consumption of spiritual food through personal and family study is one way to stay awake and to be "healthy in the faith."—Titus 1:13.

¹⁰ *Christian meetings, assemblies, and conventions help to keep us spiritually awake.* They provide encouragement and opportunities to 'incite one another to love and fine works.' Especially should we gather regularly as we "behold the day drawing

9. Why is study of the Bible with the help of Christian publications so important?

10. How do Christian meetings, assemblies, and conventions help us to stay spiritually awake?

near." That day is now near indeed. It is "Jehovah's day," when he will vindicate his sovereignty. If that day is really important to us—and it should be—we will 'not forsake the gathering of ourselves together.'—Hebrews 10:24, 25; 2 Peter 3:10.

¹¹ *Wholehearted participation in the Christian ministry is essential to spiritual wakefulness.* A regular and zealous share in preaching the good news keeps us alert. Our ministry affords us many opportunities to talk to people about God's Word, his Kingdom, and his purposes. It is satisfying to witness from house to house, make return visits, and conduct home Bible studies in such publications as *Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life*. Elders in ancient Ephesus could testify that Paul had taught them "publicly and from house to house." (Acts 20:20, 21) Of course, some faithful Witnesses of Jehovah have serious health problems that hinder their ministry somewhat, but they find ways to tell others about Jehovah and his kingship and draw great joy from doing so.—Psalm 145:10-14.

¹² *Avoiding overindulgence will help us to stay spiritually awake.* When speaking about his presence, Jesus urged his apostles: "Pay attention to yourselves that your hearts never become weighed down with overeating and heavy drinking and anxieties of life, and suddenly that day be instantly upon you as a snare. For it will come in upon all those dwelling upon the face of all the earth." (Luke 21:7, 34, 35) Gluttony and drunkenness are out of harmony with Bible principles. (Deuteronomy 21:18-21) Proverbs 23:20, 21 says: "Do not come to be among heavy drinkers of wine, among those who are gluttonous eaters of flesh.

11. Why can it be said that the Christian ministry is essential to spiritual wakefulness?

12, 13. For what reasons should we avoid overindulgence in food and drink?

For a drunkard and a glutton will come to poverty, and drowsiness will clothe one with mere rags.”—Proverbs 28:7.

¹³ Even if overeating and heavy drinking have not reached that point, however, they can make a person drowsy, even lazy and negligent about doing God’s will. Naturally, there will be anxieties involving family life, health, and so forth. Yet, we will be happy if we put Kingdom interests first in life and have confidence that our heavenly Father will provide for us. (Matthew 6:25-34) Otherwise, “that day” will come upon us as “a snare,” perhaps as a camouflaged trap that will catch us unawares or as a baited trap, such as those that attract and then seize unsuspecting animals. This will not happen if we stay awake, fully aware that we are living in “the time of the end.”—Daniel 12:4.

¹⁴ *Earnest prayer is another aid to spiritual wakefulness.* In his great prophecy, Jesus further urged: “Keep awake, then, all the time making supplication that you may succeed in escaping all these things that are destined to occur, and in standing before the Son of man.” (Luke 21:36) Yes, let us pray that we may always be on Jehovah’s side and enjoy an approved standing when Jesus, the Son of man, comes to destroy this wicked system of things. For our own good and for the good of fellow believers for whom we pray, we need to ‘remain awake in prayer.’—Colossians 4:2; Ephesians 6:18-20.

Time Is Running Out

¹⁵ As we await the great day of Jehovah, doubtless we desire to do all we can in his service. If we earnestly pray to him about this, “a large door that leads to activity” may be opened to us. (1 Corinthians 16:8, 9) At God’s appointed time, Jesus will

14. Why should we engage in earnest prayer?
15. What is accomplished by our service as preachers of righteousness?

render judgment and separate righteous “sheep” worthy of everlasting life from ungodly “goats” deserving eternal destruction. (John 5:22) We are not the ones who separate the sheep from the goats. But our service as preachers of righteousness now is affording people the opportunity to choose a life of service to God and thus have the hope of being separated to life when Jesus “arrives in his glory.” The shortness of the time left for this system of things heightens the need for wholehearted activity as we search for those “rightly disposed for everlasting life.”—Matthew 25:31-46; Acts 13:48.

¹⁶ Time ran out for the world of Noah’s day, and it will soon run out for this system of things. Let us therefore be zealous Kingdom proclaimers. Our preaching work is prospering, for each year hundreds of thousands are being baptized in symbol of their dedication to God. They are becoming part of Jehovah’s blessed organization—“his people and the sheep of his pasturage.” (Psalm 100:3) What a joy it is to share in the Kingdom-preaching work that brings hope to so many before “the great and fear-inspiring day of Jehovah”!

¹⁷ Like Noah, we have God’s support and protection. Yes, the people, the materialized angels, and the Nephilim must have scoffed at Noah’s message, but that did not stop him. Today, some scoff when we point to the overwhelming evidence that we are living in “the last days.” (2 Timothy 3:1-5) Such ridicule is in fulfillment of Bible prophecy regarding Christ’s presence, for Peter wrote: “In the last days there will come ridiculers with their ridicule, proceeding according to their own desires and saying: ‘Where is this

16. Why should we be zealous Kingdom proclaimers?

17, 18. (a) As we preach, what reaction should we expect from some? (b) What is sure to overtake ridiculers?

promised presence of his? Why, from the day our forefathers fell asleep in death, all things are continuing exactly as from creation's beginning.”—2 Peter 1:16; 3:3, 4.

¹⁸ Present-day ridiculers may think: ‘Nothing has changed since creation. Life goes on, with people eating, drinking, getting married, and raising families. Even if Jesus is present, he will not execute judgment in my day.’ How wrong they are! If they do not die from other causes in the meantime, the fear-inspiring day of Jehovah will definitely overtake them, just as cataclysmic destruction in the Flood brought an end to a wicked generation in Noah’s day.—Matthew 24:34.

By All Means, Stay Awake!

¹⁹ If we are dedicated to Jehovah, may we never be lulled to sleep by improper reasoning. This is a time to stay awake, to exercise faith in divine prophecy, and to carry out our commission to “make disciples of people of all the nations.” (Matthew 28:19, 20) As this system faces its final end, we could have no greater privilege than that of serving Je-

19. How should we view our disciple-making activities?

How Would You Answer?

- How would you define our figurative outer garments, and how can we keep them?
- What are some ways to stay awake spiritually?
- Why should we expect ridiculers, and how should we view them?
- How should we view our disciple-making work in these last days?

hovah God under the leadership of Jesus Christ and sharing in the worldwide work of preaching “this good news of the kingdom” before the end comes.—Matthew 24:14; Mark 13:10.

²⁰ Some of Jehovah’s people have been serving him for decades, perhaps for a lifetime. And even if we have more recently embraced true worship, may we be like the Israelite Caleb, who “followed Jehovah fully.” (Deuteronomy 1:34-36) He and Joshua were quite prepared to enter the Promised Land shortly after Israel’s deliverance from Egyptian bondage. Adult Israelites in general, however, lacked faith and had to spend 40 years in the wilderness, where they died. Caleb and Joshua endured hardships along with them all that time, but eventually those two men entered the land of promise. (Numbers 14:30-34; Joshua 14:6-15) If we ‘follow Jehovah fully’ and stay spiritually awake, we will have the joy of entering God’s promised new world.

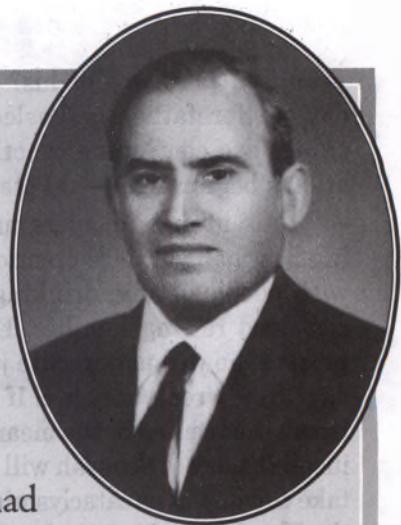
²¹ Evidence clearly proves that we are living in the time of the end and that the great day of Jehovah is near. This is not the time to become sleepy and negligent in doing the divine will. We will be blessed only if we stay awake spiritually and keep our garments of identification as Christian ministers and servants of Jehovah. May it be our determination to “stay awake, stand firm in the faith, carry on as men, grow mighty.” (1 Corinthians 16:13) As Jehovah’s servants, may each one of us be steadfast and courageous. Then we will be among those who are ready when the great day of Jehovah strikes, faithfully serving in the ranks of the happy ones who stay awake.

20. What example was set by Caleb and Joshua, and what does their course indicate for us?
21. What will be our experience if we stay awake spiritually?

“INSTEAD OF GOLD, I FOUND DIAMONDS”

AS TOLD BY MICHALIS KAMINARIS

After five years in South Africa where I had gone in search of gold, I was returning home with something much more valuable. Let me tell you about the wealth that I now possessed and desired to share.



I WAS born in 1904 on the Greek island of Cephalonia in the Ionian Sea. Both my parents died soon afterward, so I grew up an orphan. I longed for help, and I often prayed to God. Even though I regularly attended the Greek Orthodox Church, I was in total ignorance of the Bible. I found no consolation.

In 1929, I decided to emigrate and search for a better life. Leaving my barren island, I set sail for South Africa by way of England. After 17 days at sea, I reached Cape Town, South Africa, where I was immediately hired by a fellow countryman. However, I did not find consolation in material wealth.

Something More Precious

I had been in South Africa about two years when one of Jehovah's Witnesses visited my workplace and offered me Bible literature in the Greek language. It included the booklets *Where Are the Dead?* and *Oppression, When Will It End?* I well re-

member the eagerness with which I read them, even learning by heart all the quoted scriptures. One day I said to a colleague: “I have found what I have been looking for all these years. I came to Africa for gold, but instead of gold, I found diamonds.”

It was with great joy that I learned that God has a personal name, Jehovah, that his Kingdom has already been established in the heavens, and that we are living in the last days of this system of things. (Psalm 83:18; Daniel 2:44; Matthew 6:9, 10; 24:3-12; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; Revelation 12:7-12) How thrilling it was to learn that Jehovah's Kingdom will bring endless blessings to all races of mankind! Another fact that impressed me was that these precious truths were being preached worldwide.—Isaiah 9:6, 7; 11:6-9; Matthew 24:14; Revelation 21:3, 4.

I soon located the address of the Watch Tower Society's branch office in Cape Town and obtained more Bible literature. I was es-

pecially delighted to obtain a personal copy of the Bible. What I read moved me to want to give a witness. I started by sending Bible publications to my relatives, friends, and acquaintances back in my hometown of Lixoúrion. From my studies, I gradually came to understand that to please Jehovah one has to dedicate one's life to him. So I immediately did so in prayer.

On one occasion, I attended a meeting of Jehovah's Witnesses, but since I did not know English, I did not understand a word. When I learned that there were many Greeks living in Port Elizabeth, I moved there, but I failed to find any Greek-speaking Witnesses. Hence, I decided to return to Greece in order to become a full-time evangelizer. I recall saying to myself, 'I will return to Greece even if I have to get there half naked.'

Full-Time Ministry in Greece

The spring of 1934 found me on the deck of the Italian ocean liner *Duilio*. I reached Marseilles, France, and, after a ten-day stay there, left for Greece aboard the passenger ship *Patris*. While we were at sea, the ship had mechanical problems, and during the night the order was given to lower the lifeboats into the sea. Then I recalled my thoughts about getting to Greece half naked. However, an Italian tugboat eventually arrived and towed us to Naples, Italy. Later we finally reached Piraiévs (Piraeus), Greece.

From there I headed for Athens where I visited the branch office of the Watch Tower Society. In a conversation with Athanassios Karanassios, the branch overseer, I asked to receive a full-time preaching assignment. The following day I was on my way to the Peloponnisos, in the southern part of mainland Greece. This entire district was assigned to me as my personal territory!

With unbounded enthusiasm I started in the preaching work, going from town to town, from village to village, from farm to farm, and from isolated house to isolated house. Soon I was joined by Michael Triantafilopoulos, who baptized me in the summer of 1935—more than one year after I had started in the full-time ministry! No public transportation was available, so we walked everywhere. Our greatest problem was the opposition of the clergy, who would do anything to stop us. As a result, we encountered much prejudice. Yet, despite the obstacles, witnessing was done, and Jehovah's name was advertised far and wide.

Enduring Opposition

One morning, while preaching in the mountainous district of Arcadia, I reached the village of Magouliana. After an hour of witnessing, I heard church bells and soon realized that they were tolling for me! A mob gathered under the leadership of a Greek Orthodox archimandrite (a church dignitary ranking below a bishop). I quickly closed my witness bag and prayed silently to Jehovah. The archimandrite, with a crowd of children following him, headed straight for me. He began shouting, "That's him! That's him!"

The children formed a tight circle around me, and the clergyman stepped forward and started to push me with his big protruding stomach, saying that he did not want to lay a hand on me 'in case I might be contaminated.' He screamed, "Hit him! Hit him!" But just then a police officer appeared and led both of us to the police station. The clergyman was brought to trial for instigating a mob and was fined 300 drachmas plus court expenses. I was set free.

When we arrived in a new area, we made a larger town the base of our activity, and from there we covered all the territory within a four-hour walking distance. That

meant that we left in the morning while it was still dark and returned home after evening darkness had fallen, generally visiting a village or two each day. After covering the surrounding villages, we preached in the base town and then moved on. Often we were arrested because the clergy stirred up the people against us. In the region of Parnassus, in central Greece, I was sought by the police for months. However, they never did catch up with me.

One day Brother Triantafilopoulos and I were preaching in the village of Mouriki, in the district of Boeotia. We divided the village into two sections, and I began working the steep slopes, since I was the younger. Suddenly I heard cries from below. As I ran down, I thought to myself, 'Brother Triantafilopoulos is being beaten up.' Villagers had gathered in the local coffeehouse, and a priest was stomping up and down like an angry bull. "These people call us 'the seed of the Serpent,'" he was shouting.

The priest had already broken a walking stick on Brother Triantafilopoulos' head, and blood was streaming down his face. After I cleaned off the blood, we were able to get away. We walked three hours until we reached the city of Thebes. There, in a clinic, the wound was attended. We reported the episode to the police, and a lawsuit was filed. However, the priest had connections and was finally acquitted.

While we were working the town of Leukas, the followers of one of the political leaders of the area "arrested" us and brought us to the village coffeehouse, where we found ourselves being accused in a makeshift people's court. The political leader and his men took turns hovering over us and making a speech—ranting on and on—and threatening us with their clenched fists. They were all drunk. Their tirades against us continued from noon until sunset, but we remained unperturbed and kept smiling

as we professed our innocence and silently prayed to Jehovah God for help.

At dusk two policemen rescued us. They took us to the police station and treated us well. To justify his actions, the political leader came the following day and accused us of spreading propaganda against the King of Greece. So the police sent us, escorted by two men, to the town of Lamia for further examination. We were kept in custody for seven days and then taken handcuffed to the town of Larissa for trial.

Our Christian brothers in Larissa, who had been notified in advance, awaited our arrival. The great affection they showed us was a fine witness to the guards. Our attorney, one of Jehovah's Witnesses and a former lieutenant colonel, was well-known in town. When he appeared in court and argued our case, the charges against us were exposed as false, and we were set free.

The general success of the preaching of Jehovah's Witnesses led to an intensification of the opposition. Laws were passed in 1938 and 1939 forbidding proselytism, and Michael and I were involved in dozens of court cases on this issue. Afterward, the branch office advised us to work separately so as to draw less attention to our activity. I found it difficult not to have a companion. Yet, trusting in Jehovah, I covered on foot the districts of Attica, Boeotia, Phthiotis, Euboea, Aetolia, Acarnania, Eurytania, and the district of the Peloponnisos.

What helped me during this period were the psalmist's beautiful words of trust in Jehovah: "By you I can run against a marauder band; and by my God I can climb a wall. The true God is the One girding me closely with vital energy, and he will grant my way to be perfect, making my feet like those of the hinds, and upon places high for me he keeps me standing."—Psalm 18: 29, 32, 33.



Michalis and Eleftheria Kaminaris
(Right) The printery on Lombardou Street



In 1940, Italy declared war on Greece, and soon thereafter German armies invaded the country. Martial law was declared, and the Watch Tower Society's books were banned. Those were hard times for Jehovah's Witnesses in Greece; nevertheless, they grew in numbers dramatically—from 178 Witnesses in 1940 to 1,770 by the end of World War II in 1945!

Serving at Bethel

In 1945, I was invited to serve at the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in Athens. Bethel, meaning "House of God," was then located in a rented house on Lombardou Street. Offices were on the first floor, and the printery was in the basement. It consisted of a small press and a trimming machine. The printery staff at first was made up of only two persons, but soon other volunteers began commuting from their homes to assist with the work.

Contact with the Watch Tower Society's headquarters in Brooklyn, New York, was reestablished in 1945, and that year we again started printing *The Watchtower* on a regular basis in Greece. Then, in 1947, we moved our branch to 16 Tenedou Street, but the printery remained on Lombardou Street. Later the printery was moved from

Lombardou Street to a factory belonging to a Witness some three miles away. So for a time we were running back and forth between three locations.

I can remember leaving our living quarters on Tenedou Street before dawn and traveling to the printery. After working there until 1:00 p.m., I went to Lombardou Street where the sheets of paper we had printed were taken. There these were folded into magazines, stitched, and trimmed by hand. Afterward we took the completed magazines to the post office, carried them to the third floor, helped the staff sort them, and put the stamps on the envelopes for mailing.

By 1954 the number of Witnesses in Greece had grown to more than 4,000, and enlarged facilities were needed. Hence, we moved to a new three-story Bethel in downtown Athens on Kartali Street. In 1958, I was asked to take charge of the kitchen, and that was my responsibility until 1983. Meanwhile, in 1959, I married Eleftheria, who has proved to be a loyal helpmate in Jehovah's service.

Enduring Opposition Again

In 1967 a military junta seized power, and restrictions were once again imposed on

our preaching work. However, because of our previous experience in coping with bans on our activities, we quickly adjusted and carried on successfully underground.

We held our meetings in private homes and used caution in our door-to-door ministry. Nevertheless, our brothers were regularly arrested, and the court cases multiplied. Our lawyers were always on the run to handle the trials held in various parts of the country. Despite the opposition, the majority of Witnesses kept regular in their preaching activity, especially on weekends.

On a typical Saturday or Sunday after our preaching was completed for the day, a check was made to see who was missing from our groups. Generally, those missing were being detained at the nearest police station. So we took them blankets and food and offered them encouragement. Also, we notified our lawyers, who then appeared on Monday before the prosecutor to defend those who were being held. We happily faced this situation because we were suffering for the sake of the truth!

During the ban our printing operations at Bethel were closed. So the house in which Eleftheria and I lived in the suburbs of Athens became a kind of printery. Eleftheria typed copies of *Watchtower* articles using a heavy typewriter. She put ten sheets of paper at a time into the typewriter and had to press very hard so that the letters would print. I then collected the pages and stitched them together. Every evening this went on until midnight. A policeman lived on the floor below, and we still wonder why he never became suspicious.

Rejoicing in Continued Expansion

Democracy was restored to Greece in 1974, and our preaching work was again carried on more openly. Yet, during the sev-

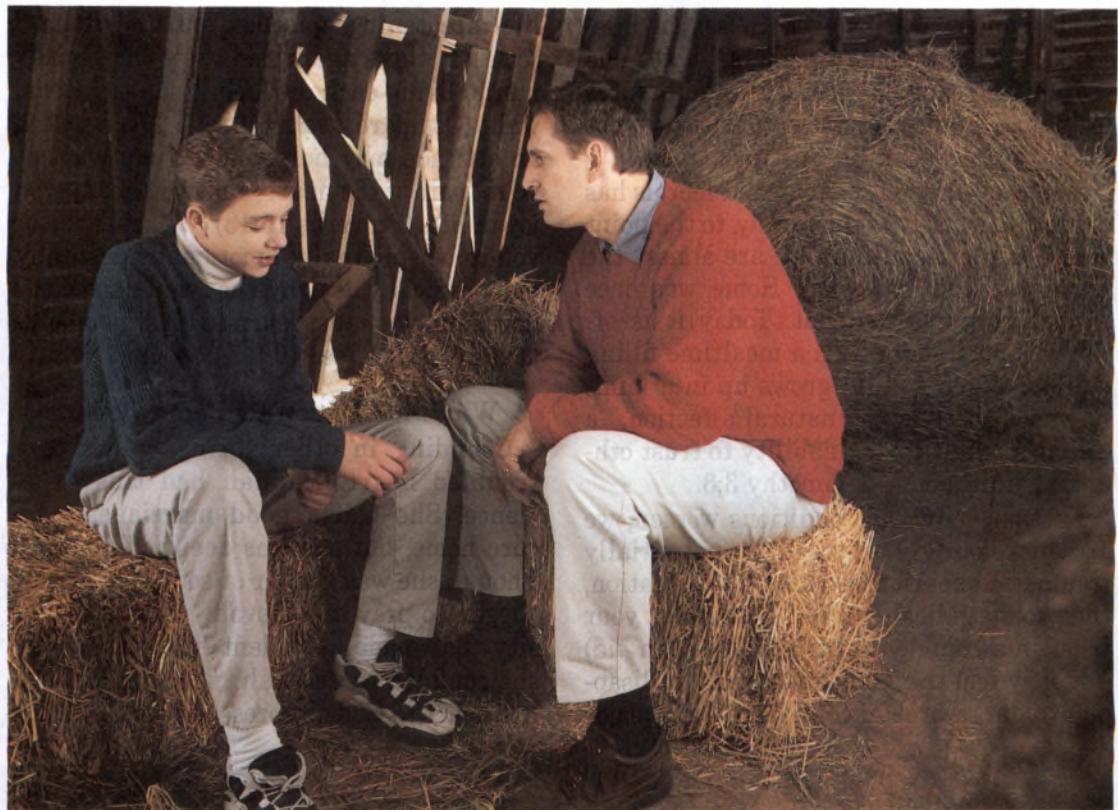
en years of restrictions on our work, we enjoyed a marvelous increase of more than 6,000 new Witnesses, reaching a total of over 17,000 Kingdom proclaimers.

We also resumed our regular printing activity on the branch premises. As a result, the Bethel facilities on Kartali Street soon became too small. So a 2.5-acre piece of land was purchased in the Athens suburb of Marousi. New Bethel premises were built that included 27 bedrooms, a factory, offices, and other facilities. These were dedicated in October 1979.

In time we needed even more space. So 54 acres of land were purchased about 40 miles north of Athens. The site is in Eleona, on a hillside with a view of mountains and well-watered valleys. There, in April 1991, we dedicated a much larger facility that includes 22 houses, each of which can accommodate eight people.

After spending over 60 years in the full-time ministry, I am still blessed with good health. Happily, I am "thriving during gray-headedness." (Psalm 92:14) I am especially thankful to Jehovah that I have lived to see with my own eyes the grand increase in the number of his true worshipers. The prophet Isaiah foretold such an increase: "Your gates will actually be kept open constantly; they will not be closed even by day or by night, in order to bring to you the resources of the nations."—Isaiah 60:11.

How marvelous it is to see millions of people from all nations flocking into Jehovah's organization and being taught how to survive through the great tribulation into God's new world! (2 Peter 3:13) I can truthfully say that the full-time ministry has proved more valuable to me than anything this world has to offer. Yes, I have found, not treasures of gold, but spiritual diamonds that have enriched my life beyond measure.



ARE YOU AFRAID TO TRUST OTHERS?

ITHERE is no one I can talk to. People won't understand. They're too busy with their own problems. They don't have time for mine.' Many feel that way, so they keep things to themselves. When others ask how they are, they often want to tell them, but they do not. They just cannot open up.

True, there are those who do not want help from others. Yet, many desperately do want help but are afraid to reveal their most personal thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Are you one of them? Is there really no one whom you can trust?

Understanding the Fear

In today's world there is a climate of mistrust. Young people do not talk to their parents. Parents cannot talk with each other. Few are willing to talk to those in authority. Unable to confide in others, some turn to alcohol, drugs, or a wild life-style to try to escape from their problems.—Proverbs 23:29-35; Isaiah 56:12.

Confidence in authority figures, such as clergymen, doctors, therapists, and teachers, has been rocked by endless revelations of dishonesty and immorality. For example, one estimate says that over 10 percent

of clergymen are involved in sexual misconduct. These "trust-breakers," notes one writer, "dig canyons, crevasses and fissures in human relations." How does this affect their congregations? It destroys trust.

The widespread breakdown of morals has also led to a crisis in the family, to the point that dysfunctional families are almost the norm, not the exception. Home was once a nurturing environment. Today it is often not much more than a mealtime filling station. When a child grows up in a family where there is "no natural affection," a common result is the inability to trust others in adulthood.—2 Timothy 3:3.

Further, as world conditions worsen, we are increasingly exposed to potentially traumatic experiences. In a like situation, the prophet Micah wrote: "Do not put your trust in a confidential friend." (Micah 7:5) You may feel the same after a minor disappointment, a broken confidence, or a major

life-threatening episode. You find it hard to trust others again and grow emotionally numb, living each day behind an emotional wall. (Compare Psalm 102:1-7.) True, such an attitude may help you to function, but your "pain of the heart" robs you of any real joy in life. (Proverbs 15:13) The truth is, for you to be spiritually, emotionally, mentally, and physically healthy, that wall must come down and you must learn to trust people. Is that possible? Yes.

Why Must the Wall Come Down?

Confiding in others brings relief to a troubled heart. Hannah had this experience. She had a good marriage, a secure home, but she was deeply distressed. Though she was "bitter of soul," she wisely "began to pray to Jehovah" with an intensity that made her silent lips quiver. Yes, she confided in Jehovah. Then she opened her heart to God's representative Eli. With

*Any Christian may be called upon to assist a relative, a friend, or a spiritual brother with a personal problem.
Do you know how to help?*

AN EFFECTIVE COUNSELOR

is approachable: Matthew 11:28, 29; 1 Peter 1:22; 5:2, 3

chooses the right setting: Mark 9:33-37

seeks to understand the problem: Luke 8:18; James 1:19

does not overreact: Colossians 3:12-14

helps with painful emotions: 1 Thessalonians 5:14; 1 Peter 3:8

knows his limitations: Galatians 6:3; 1 Peter 5:5

gives specific counsel: Psalm 19:7-9; Proverbs 24:26

maintains confidentiality: Proverbs 10:19; 25:9

what result? “[Hannah] proceeded to go on her way and to eat, and her face became self-concerned no more.”—1 Samuel 1:1-18.

Most cultures have known the benefits of intimate disclosure. For example, sharing ideas and experiences with those who have been in similar situations can prove beneficial. Researchers conclude: “Emotional isolation produces sickness—we need to disclose to stay sane.” A growing body of scientific research confirms the truth of the inspired proverb that says: “One isolating himself will seek his own selfish longing; against all practical wisdom he will break forth.”—Proverbs 18:1.

If you do not open up to others, how can they help you? While Jehovah God is a reader of hearts, your innermost thoughts and feelings are a closed book to family and friends—unless you open up. (1 Chronicles 28:9) When the problem involves a transgression of God’s law, putting off confessing a matter only makes it worse.—Proverbs 28:13.

Surely, the benefits of confiding distress to others far outweigh the risks of getting hurt. Of course, that does not mean that we should divulge personal details indiscriminately. (Compare Judges 16:18; Jeremiah 9:4; Luke 21:16.) “There exist companions disposed to break one another to pieces,” Proverbs 18:24 warns but then adds: “There exists a friend sticking closer than a brother.” Where can you find such a friend?

Trust in Your Family

If you have a problem, have you tried discussing it with your marriage partner or with your parents? “For lots of problems, talking them all the way through is all that’s needed,” acknowledges one experienced counselor. (Proverbs 27:9) Christian husbands who ‘love their wives as themselves,’ wives who are “in subjection to their

husbands,” and parents who take seriously their God-assigned responsibility to ‘bring up their children in the mental-regulating of Jehovah’ will work hard at becoming empathetic listeners and helpful counselors. (Ephesians 5:22, 33; 6:4) Although he had neither wife nor children in the fleshly sense, what a wonderful example Jesus set in this regard!—Mark 10:13-16; Ephesians 5:25-27.

What if the problem is more than can be handled within the family? In the Christian congregation, we need never be alone. “Who is weak, and I am not weak?” said the apostle Paul. (2 Corinthians 11:29) He admonished: “Go on carrying the burdens of one another.” (Galatians 6:2; Romans 15:1) Among our spiritual brothers and sisters, we can undoubtedly find more than one “brother that is born for when there is distress.”—Proverbs 17:17.

Trust in the Congregation

In the more than 80,000 congregations of Jehovah’s Witnesses earth wide, there are humble men who serve as “fellow workers for your joy.” (2 Corinthians 1:24) These are the elders. “Each one,” Isaiah notes, “must prove to be like a hiding place from the wind and a place of concealment from the rainstorm, like streams of water in

In Our Next Issue

Faith in God—Should It Call for a Miracle?

Do You Long to Serve More Fully?

Ehud—A Man of Faith and Courage

a waterless country, like the shadow of a heavy crag in an exhausted land." That is what elders endeavor to be.—Isaiah 32:2; 50:4; 1 Thessalonians 5:14.

Elders meet Scriptural requirements before being 'appointed by holy spirit.' Knowing this will strengthen your confidence in them. (Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:2-7; Titus 1:5-9) What you discuss with an elder will remain strictly confidential. Being trustworthy is one of his qualifications.—Compare Exodus 18:21; Nehemiah 7:2.

The elders in the congregation are "keeping watch over your souls as those who will render an account." (Hebrews 13:17) Does this not move you to place your trust in these men? Naturally, not all elders excel in the same qualities. Some may seem more approachable, kind, or understanding than others. (2 Corinthians 12:15; 1 Thessalonians 2:7, 8, 11) Why not confide in an elder with whom you feel at ease?

These men are not paid professionals. Rather, they are "gifts in men," provided by Jehovah to help you. (Ephesians 4:8, 11-13; Galatians 6:1) How? Skillfully using the Bible, they will apply its healing power to your personal situation. (Psalm 107:20; Proverbs 12:18; Hebrews 4:12, 13) They will pray with you and for you. (Philippians 1:9; James 5:13-18) Help from such loving counselors can do much to heal a troubled spirit and restore peace of mind.

How to Build Trusting Relationships

Asking for help, advice, or just a listening ear is not a sign of weakness or failure. It is only a realistic acknowledgment that we are imperfect and that no one has all the answers. Certainly, the greatest counselor and confidant we have is our heavenly Father, Jehovah God. We agree with the psalmist who wrote: "Jehovah is

my strength and my shield. In him my heart has trusted, and I have been helped." (Psalm 28:7) In prayer we can unreservedly 'pour out our heart' to him at any time, confident that he hears us and cares for us.—Psalm 62:7, 8; 1 Peter 5:7.

But how can you learn to trust the elders and others in the congregation? First, look at yourself. Are your fears solidly grounded? Are you suspicious of others' motives? (1 Corinthians 13:4, 7) Is there a way to minimize the risk of getting hurt? Yes. How? Try to get acquainted with others personally in a spiritual setting. Talk to them at congregation meetings. Share in the house-to-house work together. Trust, like respect, must be earned. So be patient. For example, as you get to know a spiritual shepherd, your confidence in him will grow. Reveal your concerns gradually. If he responds in an appropriate, sympathetic, and discreet way, you might then try disclosing more.

Fellow worshipers of Jehovah, especially Christian elders, work hard at imitating God's endearing qualities in their relationships with one another. (Matthew 5:48) This results in an atmosphere of trust in the congregation. Says one longtime elder: "The brothers have to know one thing: Regardless of what a person does, the elder doesn't lose his Christian love for him. He might not like what was done, but he still loves his brother and wants to help him."

So there is no need to feel alone with a problem. Talk to someone with "spiritual qualifications" who can help you shoulder your burden. (Galatians 6:1) Remember that "anxious care in the heart of a man is what will cause it to bow down," but "pleasant sayings are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and a healing to the bones."—Proverbs 12:25; 16:24.

"Only one of the many lives that you touched"

BACK in January 1996, Carol was sick with a brain tumor. She was in her 60's and until then had always been a happy, robust woman with a positive word for everybody. But now the doctors were striving to overcome the deadly growth.

In the midst of her struggle, Carol received the following letter:

"Dear Carol:

"I am so sorry about your failing health. Fortunately, we have the real hope that the Bible helps us to know and love. This hope is for Jehovah's Kingdom to rule the earth so that we can live in a paradise condition, a time that we all look forward to.

"I want you to know that your personal preaching work saved many people from everlasting death. *I am one of these people.* I am not sure if you remember the first time we met. At that time I was 20 years old. I had long hair, was selling drugs, and was hanging around with a bunch of hoodlums. We all carried guns and had no real love except for ourselves.

"You knocked on my door with another Witness and offered me *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* I tried to give you a dollar and said that I did not want the magazines. You let me know that you were not out merely to obtain donations. You told me that you were doing a work to help people read the Bible. I am not sure if I took the magazines or read them. However, you planted the seed of truth in my life.

"Some years later another Witness, Gary, came to my mother's house when I was present. I told him of the visit you had made some years before. Gary studied the Bible with me for a long time until I was finally baptized in 1984. Now I am teaching my children the truth of God's Kingdom.

"I am sure that I am only one of the many lives that you touched in your years of faithful service. However, through this loving kindness, you have enabled me and my family to come to know the Great God, Jehovah, and his Son, Christ Jesus. I look forward to the day when I can see you in the new system of things when Jehovah will wipe out every tear from our eyes, and death will be no more.—Revelation 21:4.

"As for me and my family, we are glad that we had the chance to know you and to be a part of your witnessing work. Thank you.

"With brotherly love,

Peter"

After an illness of six months, Carol died in March 1996, having sown many seeds of truth in the course of her 35 years as a zealous evangelizer. She learned that one never knows when a seed will bear fruit, even years later.—Matthew 13:23.

Jesus Is Hailed as Messiah and King!

THE noisy crowd entering Jerusalem on Nisan 9, 33 C.E., took many Judeans by surprise. Though it was not unusual to see people streaming into the city before the Passover, these visitors were different. The central figure among them was a man riding upon the colt of an ass. The man was Jesus Christ, and the people were spreading out garments and palm branches before him as they shouted: "Save, we pray, the Son of David! Blessed is he that comes in Jehovah's name! Save him, we pray, in the heights above!" Upon seeing the crowd, many who were already in Jerusalem were moved to join the procession.—Matthew 21:7-9; John 12:12, 13.

Even though he was now being hailed, Jesus knew that trials awaited him. Why, in just five days, he would be put to death in this same city! Yes, Jesus knew that Jerusalem was hostile territory, and he staged his conspicuous entry into the city with that very thought in mind.

An Ancient Prophecy Fulfilled

In 518 B.C.E., Zechariah foretold Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. He wrote: "Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem. Look! Your king himself comes to you. He is righteous, yes, saved; humble, and riding upon an ass, even upon a full-grown animal the son of a she-ass. . . . And he will actually speak peace to the nations; and his rulership will be from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth."—Zechariah 9:9, 10.

So Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on Nisan 9 fulfilled Bible prophecy. It was no random event but was carefully planned. Earlier, while just outside Jerusalem, Jesus had instructed two of his disciples: "Be on your way into the village that is within sight of you, and you will at once find an ass tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring

them to me. And if someone says anything to you, you must say, 'The Lord needs them.' At that he will immediately send them forth." (Matthew 21:1-3) But why did Jesus want to ride into Jerusalem on an ass, and what was the significance of the crowd's reaction?

A Message Regarding Kingship

A visual image is often more powerful than the spoken word. Thus, at times Jehovah had his prophets enact their message to reinforce their prophetic message. (1 Kings 11:29-32; Jeremiah 27:1-6; Ezekiel 4:1-17) This highly visual means of communication left an indelible impression on the mind of even the most hardhearted observer. In a similar way, Jesus enacted a powerful message by riding an ass into the city of Jerusalem. How?

In Bible times the ass was used for noble purposes. For example, Solomon rode to his anointing as king on his father's "she-mule," a hybrid offspring of a male ass. (1 Kings 1:33-40) So for Jesus to ride into Jerusalem on an ass would mean that he was presenting himself as a king.* The actions of the crowd reinforced this message. The group, no doubt largely composed of Galileans, spread out their garments before Jesus—a gesture reminiscent of the public announcement of Je-hu's kingship. (2 Kings 9:13) Their reference to Jesus as "the Son of David" underscored his legal right to rulership. (Luke 1:31-33) And their use of palm branches evidently showed their submission to his kingly authority.—Compare Revelation 7:9, 10.

* Mark's account adds that the colt was one "on which none of mankind has yet sat." (Mark 11:2) Evidently, an animal that had not yet been put to use was especially suitable for sacred purposes.—Compare Numbers 19:2; Deuteronomy 21:3; 1 Samuel 6:7.

So the procession that came into Jerusalem on Nisan 9 sent out the clear message that Jesus was God's appointed Messiah and King. Of course, not all were happy to see Jesus presented in this way. The Pharisees in particular thought it grossly inappropriate for Jesus to be showered with such royal honor. "Teacher," they demanded, no doubt with anger in their voices, "rebuke your disciples." Jesus replied: "I tell you, If these remained silent, the stones would cry out." (Luke 19:39, 40) Yes, God's Kingdom was the theme of Jesus' preaching. He would boldly proclaim this message whether people accepted it or not.

Lesson for Us

It took great courage for Jesus to enter Jerusalem in the manner foretold by the prophet Zechariah. He knew that in doing so he was incurring

the wrath of his enemies. Before his ascension to heaven, Jesus commissioned his followers to preach the good news of God's Kingdom and to "make disciples of people of all the nations." (Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20) To accomplish this work also takes courage. Not all are happy to hear the message. Some are indifferent to it, while others oppose it. Some governments have placed restrictions on the preaching work or have banned it outright.

Still, Jehovah's Witnesses realize that the good news of God's established Kingdom must be preached, whether people listen or refrain from doing so. (Ezekiel 2:7) As they continue to perform this lifesaving work, they are reassured by Jesus' promise: "Look! I am with you all the days until the conclusion of the system of things." —Matthew 28:20.



Who Is in Control?

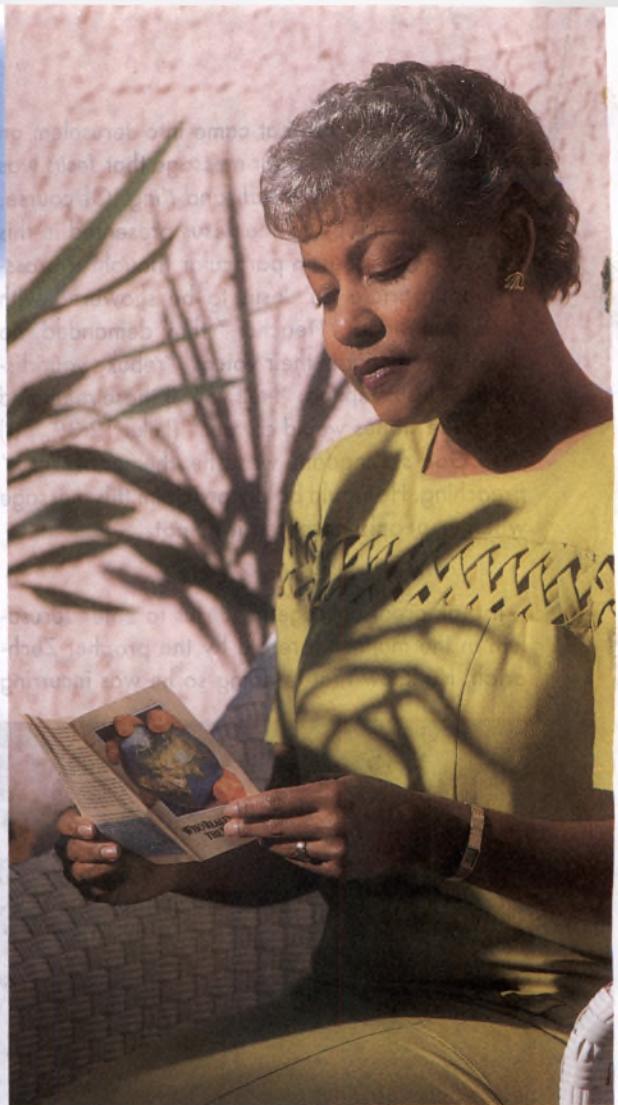
"Who rules the world?" If someone were to ask you that question, how would you reply? Most religious people might say "God" or "Jesus."

An article appearing in *The Freeport News*, a Bahamian newspaper, gave an answer that few would expect.

"I found a tract on my doorstep," the writer of the article begins. "Normally I'll ignore such a communication, but this time I decided to read it. The headline asked the question, 'Who Really Rules the World?' By reading the Bible-based tract, this woman learned that the ruler of this world is neither God nor Jesus but Satan the Devil.—John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 1 John 5:19.

"Consider the cold-blooded excesses in monstrous cruelty," the tract explains. "Humans have used gas chambers, concentration camps, flamethrowers, napalm bombs, and other heinous methods to torture and slaughter one another mercilessly. . . . What forces drive men to such loathsome deeds or maneuver them into situations where they feel compelled to commit atrocities? Have you ever wondered whether some wicked, invisible power is influencing people to commit such acts of violence?" Is it surprising that the Bible calls Satan "the god of this system of things"?—2 Corinthians 4:4.

Happily, the time is near when Satan and his demons will be no more. "The world is passing away and so is its desire, but he that does the will of God remains forever." (1 John 2:17) Yes, the Bible promises that those who do God's will have the hope of living forever in a righteous new world.



(Psalm 37:9-11; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:3, 4)
What a relief it will be to have the evil influence of Satan and his demons removed!

After summarizing the contents of this small tract, the writer of *The Freeport News* article concluded: "I am really glad I read that tract . . . because I too have been concerned about the state of the world, and who is in control."