

**THE WATCHTOWER**  
ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

FEBRUARY 15, 2001

**What Is the Truth  
About the  
DEAD SEA SCROLLS?**

# 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 the Truth About The Dead Sea Scrolls?

Over 50 years ago, a stone thrown by a Bedouin shepherd into a cave led to what some have called the greatest archaeological discovery of the 20th century. The Bedouin heard the stone crack open an earthenware jar. Upon investigating, he found the first of what came to be known as the Dead Sea Scrolls.

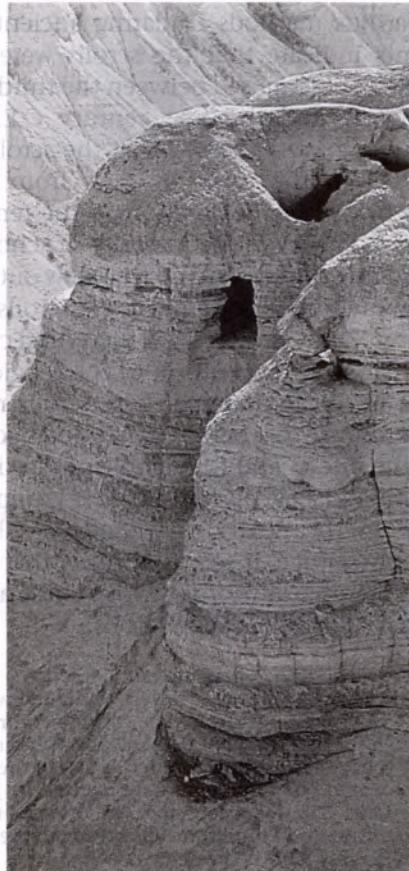
THESE scrolls have been the focus of attention and controversy both in scholarly circles and in the general media. Among the public, confusion and misinformation abound. Rumors have circulated about a massive cover-up, prompted by fear that the scrolls reveal facts that would undermine the faith of Christians and Jews alike. But what is the true significance of these scrolls? After more than 50 years, can the facts be known?

## What Are the Dead Sea Scrolls?

The Dead Sea Scrolls are ancient Jewish manuscripts, most of them written in Hebrew, some in Aramaic, and a few in Greek. Many of these scrolls and fragments are over 2,000 years old, dating to before the birth of Jesus. Among the first scrolls obtained from the Bedouins were seven lengthy manuscripts in various stages of deterioration. As more caves were searched, other scrolls and thousands of scroll fragments were found. Between the years of 1947 and 1956, a total of 11 caves containing scrolls were discovered near Qumran, by the Dead Sea.

When all the scrolls and fragments are sorted out, they account for about 800 manuscripts.

*These are among the caves near the Dead Sea in which ancient scrolls were found*



About one quarter, or just over 200 manuscripts, are copies of portions of the Hebrew Bible text. Additional manuscripts represent ancient non-Biblical Jewish writings, both Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha.\*

Some of the scrolls that most excited scholars were previously unknown writings. These include interpretations on matters of Jewish law, specific rules for the community of the sect that lived in Qumran, liturgical poems and prayers, as well as eschatological works that reveal views about the fulfillment of Bible prophecy and the last days. There are also unique Bible commentaries, the most ancient antecedents of modern running commentary on Bible texts.

### Who Wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls?

Various methods of dating ancient documents indicate that the scrolls were either copied or composed between the third century B.C.E. and the first century C.E. Some scholars have proposed that the scrolls were hidden in the caves by Jews from Jerusalem before the destruction of the temple in 70 C.E. However, the majority of scholars researching the scrolls find this view out of harmony with the content of the scrolls themselves. Many scrolls reflect views and customs that stood in opposition to the religious authorities in Jerusalem. These scrolls reveal a community that believed that God had rejected the priests and the temple service in Jerusalem and that he viewed their group's worship in the desert as a kind of substitute temple service. It seems unlikely that Jerusalem's temple authorities would hide a collection that included such scrolls.

\* Both the Apocrypha (literally, "hidden") and the Pseudepigrapha (literally, "falsely attributed writings") are Jewish writings from the third century B.C.E. through the first century C.E. The Apocrypha are accepted by the Roman Catholic Church as part of the inspired Bible canon, but these books are rejected by Jews and Protestants. The Pseudepigrapha are often in the form of expansions on Biblical stories, written in the name of some famous Bible character.

Although there likely was a school of copyists at Qumran, probably many of the scrolls were collected elsewhere and brought there by the believers. In a sense, the Dead Sea Scrolls are an extensive library collection. As with any library, the collection may include a wide range of thought, not all necessarily reflecting the religious viewpoints of its readers. However, those texts that exist in multiple copies more likely reflect the special interests and beliefs of the group.

### Were the Qumran Residents Essenes?

If these scrolls were Qumran's library, who were its residents? Professor Eleazar Sukenik, who obtained three scrolls for the Hebrew University in Jerusalem in 1947, was the first to propose that these scrolls had belonged to a community of Essenes.

The Essenes were a Jewish sect mentioned by first-century writers Josephus, Philo of Alexandria, and Pliny the Elder. The exact origin of the Essenes is a matter of speculation, but they seem to have arisen during the period of turmoil following the Maccabean revolt in the second century B.C.E.\* Josephus reported on their existence during that period as he detailed how their religious views differed from those of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Pliny mentioned the location of a community of Essenes by the Dead Sea between Jericho and En-gedi.

Professor James VanderKam, a Dead Sea Scroll scholar, proposes that "the Essenes who lived at Qumran were just a small part of the larger Essene movement," which Josephus numbered at about four thousand. Although not perfectly fitting all descriptions, the picture that emerges from the Qumran texts seems to match the Essenes better than any other known Jewish group of that period.

Some have claimed that Christianity had its beginnings at Qumran. Nevertheless, many striking differences can be noted be-

\* See the article "Who Were the Maccabees?" in *The Watchtower* of November 15, 1998, pages 21-4.

tween the religious views of the Qumran sect and the early Christians. The Qumran writings reveal ultrastrict Sabbath regulations and an almost obsessive preoccupation with ceremonial purity. (Matthew 15:1-20; Luke 6:1-11) Much the same could be said regarding the Essenes' seclusion from society, their belief in fate and the immortality of the soul, and their emphasis on celibacy and mystical ideas about participating with the angels in their worship. This shows them to be at variance with Jesus' teachings and those of early Christians.—Matthew 5:14-16; John 11:23, 24; Colossians 2:18; 1 Timothy 4:1-3.

### No Cover-up, No Hidden Scrolls

In the years following the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, various publications were produced that made the initial finds readily available to scholars around the world. But the thousands of fragments from one of the caves, known as Cave 4, were far more problematic. These were in the hands of a small international team of scholars set up in East Jerusalem (then part of Jordan) at the Palestine Archaeological Museum. No Jewish or Israeli scholars were included in this team.

The team developed a policy of not allowing access to the scrolls until they published the official results of their research. The number of scholars on the team was kept to a set limit. When a team member died, only one new scholar would be added to replace him. The amount of work demanded a much larger team, and in some cases, greater expertise in ancient Hebrew and Aramaic. James VanderKam put it this way: "Tens of thousands of

fragments were more than eight experts, however skilled, could handle."

With the Six-Day War in 1967, East Jerusalem and its scrolls came under Israeli jurisdiction, but no policy change for the scroll research team was instituted. As the delay in publishing the scrolls from Cave 4 extended from years to decades, an outcry was heard from a number of scholars. In 1977, Professor Geza Vermes of Oxford University called it the academic scandal par excellence of the 20th century. Rumors started to spread that the Catholic Church was deliberately hiding information from the scrolls that would be devastating to Christianity.

In the 1980's, the team was finally expanded to 20 scholars. Then, in 1990, under the direction of its newly appointed editor in chief, Emanuel Tov, of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, the team was further expanded to over 50 scholars. A strict schedule was set up for publishing all the scholarly editions of the remaining scrolls.

A real breakthrough came unexpectedly in 1991. First, *A Preliminary Edition of the Unpublished Dead Sea Scrolls* was published. This was put together with computer assistance based on a copy of the team's concordance. Next, the Huntington Library in San Marino, California, announced that they would make available for any scholar their complete set of photographs of the scrolls. Before long, with the publication of *A Facsimile Edition of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, photographs of the previously unpublished scrolls became easily accessible.

So for the last decade, *all* the Dead Sea Scrolls have been available for examination. The research reveals that there was no cover-up; there were no hidden scrolls. As the final official editions of the scrolls are being published, only now can full analysis begin. A new generation of scroll scholarship has been born. But what significance does this research have for Bible students?



Courtesy of Shrine of the Book, Israel Museum, Jerusalem

# The Dead Sea Scrolls

## Why Should They Interest You?

**Before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the oldest manuscripts of the Hebrew Scriptures were from about the ninth and tenth centuries C.E. Could these manuscripts truly be relied upon as faithful transmissions of God's Word, since the writing of the Hebrew Scriptures was completed well over one thousand years earlier? Professor Julio Trebolle Barrera, a member of the international team of editors of the Dead Sea Scrolls, states: "The *Isaiah Scroll* [from Qumran] provides irrefutable proof that the transmission of the biblical text through a period of more than one thousand years by the hands of Jewish copyists has been extremely faithful and careful."**

THE scroll that Barrera refers to contains the complete book of Isaiah. To date, among over 200 Biblical manuscripts found at Qumran, portions have been identified of every book of the Hebrew Scriptures except the book of Esther. Unlike the *Isaiah Scroll*, most are represented only by fragments, containing less than one tenth of any given book. The Bible books that were most popular at Qumran were Psalms (36 copies), Deuteronomy (29 copies), and Isaiah (21 copies). These are also the books most frequently quoted in the Christian Greek Scriptures.

Although the scrolls demonstrate that the Bible has not undergone fundamental changes, they also reveal that to some extent there were different versions of Hebrew Bible texts used by Jews in the Second Temple period, each with its own variations. Not all the scrolls are identical to the Masoretic text in spelling or wording. Some are closer to the Greek *Septuagint*. Previously, scholars thought that the *Septuagint's* differences

might be the result of mistakes or even deliberate inventions by the translator. Now the scrolls reveal that many of these differences were actually due to variations in the Hebrew text. This may explain some cases in which early Christians quoted Hebrew Scripture texts using wording different from the Masoretic text.—Exodus 1:5; Acts 7:14.

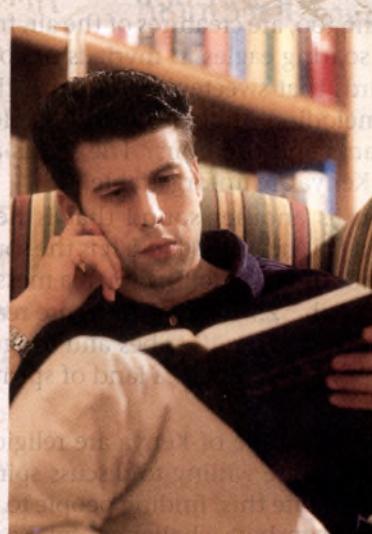
Thus, this treasure trove of Biblical scrolls and fragments provides an excellent basis for studying the transmission of the Hebrew Bible text. The Dead Sea Scrolls have confirmed the value of both the *Septuagint* and the Samaritan Pentateuch for textual comparison. They provide an additional source for Bible translators to consider for possible emendations to the Masoretic text. In a number of cases, they confirm decisions by the New World Bible Translation Committee to restore Jehovah's name to places where it had been removed from the Masoretic text.

The scrolls describing the rules and beliefs of the Qumran sect make very clear that there



was not just one form of Judaism in the time of Jesus. The Qumran sect had traditions different from those of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. These differences likely led to the sect's retreating to the wilderness. They incorrectly saw in themselves a fulfillment of Isaiah 40:3 about a voice in the wilderness making the way of Jehovah straight. A number of the scroll fragments refer to the Messiah, whose coming the authors saw as imminent. This is of particular interest because of Luke's comment that "the people were in expectation" of the Messiah's coming.—Luke 3:15.

The Dead Sea Scrolls help us to a degree to understand the context of Jewish life during the time that Jesus preached. They provide comparative information for the study of ancient Hebrew and the Bible text. But the text of many of the Dead Sea Scrolls still needs closer analysis. Therefore, new insights may yet be gained. Yes, the greatest archaeological discovery of the 20th century continues to excite both scholars and Bible students as we move along in the 21st century.



Qumran excavations: Pictorial Archive (Near Eastern History) Est.; manuscript: Courtesy of Shrine of the Book, Israel Museum, Jerusalem



## Searching for Deserving Ones in

# Kenya

**K**ENYA is a land of great natural splendor. Lush forests, vast open plains, blistering hot deserts, and snow-clad mountains grace this delightful land. It is home to more than a million wildebeests and the endangered rhino. One can also see large herds of giraffes moving across the grasslands.

Abundant, too, are creatures of the air, from powerful, soaring eagles to myriads of colorful songbirds that sweeten the air with their cheerful melodies. And who could overlook the elephants and the lions? The sights and sounds of Kenya are unforgettable.

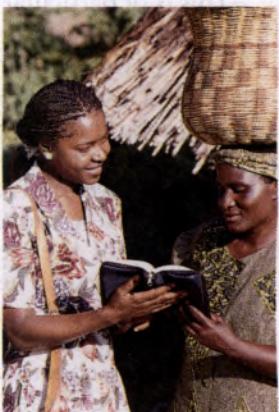
Yet, there is another sound that is heard throughout this beautiful land. It is the sound of thousands of voices telling forth a message of hope. (Isaiah 52:7) These voices are reaching people from over 40 tribes and tongues. In this sense, Kenya is also a land of spiritual splendor.

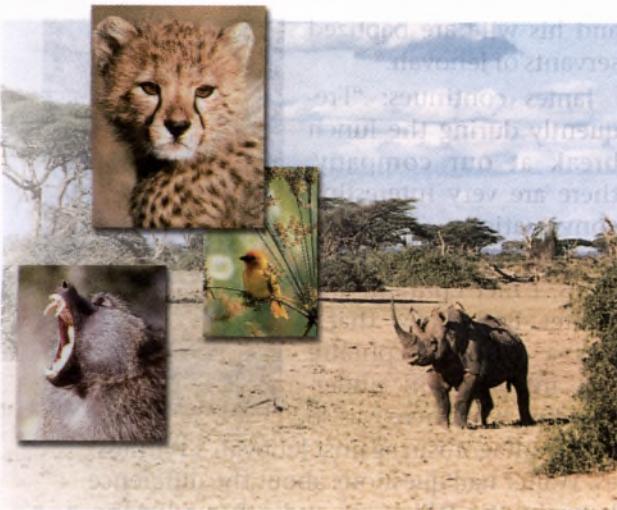
Most of the people of Kenya are religiously inclined and are willing to discuss spiritual matters. Despite this, finding people to talk to has proved to be a challenge, for Kenya, like many other countries, is experiencing a change.

Difficult economic conditions have forced many to adjust their way of life. Women, who have traditionally worked at home, find themselves in offices or along roadways sell-

ing fruits, vegetables, fish, and woven baskets. Men work long, tiring hours trying to provide for their families. Even children, their little arms filled with packets of roasted peanuts and boiled eggs, walk the streets selling their goods. The result is that few people are home during the day. This situation has made it necessary for the proclaimers of the Kingdom good news to make adjustments.

Congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses were advised to focus more on people who are outside their homes, moving about in their daily activities, as well as on friends, relatives, business people, and workmates. And the brothers responded, talking to people wherever they could be found. (Matthew 10:11) Has this effort to widen out produced results? Yes, it has! Consider some examples.





### Relatives—Our Closest Neighbors

Kenya's capital, Nairobi, has some three million inhabitants. On the east side of the city lived a retired army major who harbored a general dislike for Jehovah's Witnesses, although, much to his dismay, his own son was a Witness. One February the retired officer traveled 100 miles to the son's home in the Rift Valley town of Nakuru. During the visit, the son gave him a gift—the book *Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life*.\* The father accepted it and left.

Back home, the former officer gave the book to his wife, who began reading it, not realizing that it was published by Jehovah's Witnesses. Slowly, Bible truth began to touch her heart, and she shared the information with her husband. Out of curiosity, he also began reading the book. When they discovered who the publisher was, they concluded that they had not been told the truth about Jehovah's Witnesses. They contacted local Witnesses, and a Bible study was started. From their own reading of the book, they came to realize that it is unchristian to use or sell tobacco. (Matthew 22:39; 2 Corinthians 7:1) Without hesitation, they destroyed all the cigarettes in their shop. After several

months they qualified to become unbaptized publishers, and they were soon baptized at a district convention.

### Trash Yields a Treasure

In some parts of the capital district, there are sprawling villages that accommodate hundreds of thousands of people. Here one finds row upon row of homes built of mud, wood, metal scraps, or corrugated iron sheets. When work in the industries and factories is scarce, people improvise. *Jua kali* (Swahili for "fierce sun") workers labor in the open sun, making sandals from old car tires or kerosene lamps from discarded tins. Others sift through rubbish heaps and trash bins looking for paper, tin cans, and bottles to recycle.

Can trash yield a treasure? Yes! One brother recalls: "A strong, unkempt, and rough-looking man carrying a big plastic sack full of discarded newspapers and magazines walked onto the grounds of our Assembly Hall. After telling me that his name was William, he asked: 'Do you have the recent issues of *The Watchtower*?' I was rather apprehensive, wondering what he might be up to. When I showed him five copies of the magazine, he looked at one after another and said: 'I will take all of them.' Surprised, I went back to my room and returned with the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*.\* I showed him the picture of Paradise and explained that we study the Bible with people free of charge. Then I suggested: 'William, why don't you come tomorrow, and we will start studying?' He did just that!"

"One Sunday he came to his first meeting. I was giving the public talk that day. When William walked in, he quickly glanced at the audience, saw me on the platform, and shot out of the hall. I asked him later why he did that. He shyly answered: 'The people were too clean. I got nervous.'

\* Published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

"As William progressed in his study, Bible truth began to transform his life. He bathed, cut his hair, wore clean and neat clothes, and soon was regular at the meetings. When the book *Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life* was released, we began to study it. Meanwhile, he had given two talks in the Theocratic Ministry School and had become an unbaptized publisher. I was thrilled to welcome him as my spiritual brother when he was baptized at the special assembly day."

Where had William first seen the value of the *Watchtower* magazine? "I found some issues among discarded papers in the trash." Yes, he found a treasure in that unlikely way!

### Witnessing at the Workplace

Are we always alert to opportunities for informal witnessing at our workplace? James, an elder in a Nairobi congregation, was introduced to Bible truth in that manner. In turn, he has become skillful in using this method to reach others. For example, on one occasion, James saw a fellow worker come into the office wearing a badge with the words "Jesus Saves." Imitating the evangelizer Philip, James asked the coworker: "Do you actually understand the meaning of those words?" (Acts 8:30) That question opened up a fine discussion. A Bible study was started, and the man was later baptized. Has James had success with others? Let him explain:

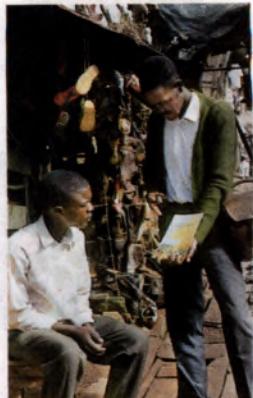
"Tom and I worked in the same company. We often rode our staff bus together. One morning, we happened to be seated together. I was reading one of our books, and I held it in such a way as to make sure that Tom got a good look at it. Just as I had hoped, his attention was captured, and I gladly lent him my book. He was very impressed with what he read and agreed to have a Bible study. Now he

and his wife are baptized servants of Jehovah."

James continues: "Frequently during the lunch break at our company, there are very interesting conversations. That was when, on separate occasions, I met Ephraim and Walter. Both knew that I was a Witness. Ephraim was interested in understanding why there was so much antagonism against Jehovah's Witnesses. Walter had questions about the difference between the Witnesses and other religions. They were both very satisfied with the Scriptural answers I provided and agreed to study. Ephraim made rapid progress. In time, both he and his wife dedicated their lives to Jehovah. He now serves as an elder, and his wife is a regular pioneer. Walter, however, encountered such strong opposition that he threw away his study book. Because of my persistence, though, he resumed his study. He too now enjoys the privilege of serving as an elder." In all, 11 persons have become true Christians because James seized opportunities to witness informally at his workplace.

### A Most Amazing Outcome

In a small village on the shores of Lake Victoria, friends and relatives gathered at a burial ceremony. Among the mourners was an elderly Witness. He approached a schoolteacher named Dolly and explained to her the condition of the dead and Jehovah's purpose to remove death forever. Noticing her favorable response, he assured her: "When you re-



turn to your hometown, one of our missionaries will call on you and teach you the Bible."

Dolly's hometown is the third-largest city in Kenya. Only four Witness missionaries were serving there at the time. The elderly brother did not actually notify any of the missionaries to call on Dolly. He just had complete confidence that it would turn out that way. And it did! Within a short time, a missionary sister met Dolly and started a study with her. Dolly is now baptized, her young daughter is enrolled in the Theocratic Ministry School, and her two sons are also baptized. She has even had the joy of attending the Pioneer Service School.

### Caring for the Increase

The emphasis on informal witnessing has enabled thousands more to hear the good news in Kenya. Over 15,000 publishers are now busy in this all-important work, and more than 41,000 attended the Memorial of Christ's death last year. Throughout Kenya, meeting attendance is often double the number of Kingdom publishers. This has created a need for more Kingdom Halls.

Kingdom Halls are being built both in major cities and in remote areas. One of these is in an isolated Samburu town about 200 miles northeast of Nairobi. In 1934, the town was named Maralal, meaning "glittering" in the Samburu tongue, because the first corrugated iron roof used there gleamed in the sun. Sixty-two years later another building with a corrugated iron roof was built in Maralal. It too "gleams" and "sparkles" because it is the local place for true worship.

The 15 publishers made a wonderful effort to build the first Kingdom Hall in this remote part of Kenya. Funds were limited, so the brothers had to rely on local materials. They made walls from the red earth moistened with water and packed tightly between upright poles. The walls were smoothed and

plastered with a mixture of cow dung and ashes, providing a hard finish that lasts for years.

To obtain the poles for the building, the brothers acquired a permit to cut down trees. But the nearest forest was about six miles away. The brothers and sisters had to walk to the forest, cut down the trees, trim them, and carry the poles back to the construction site. Once, on their trek from the forest, the brothers were stopped by the police, who claimed that their permit was invalid. The police told a special pioneer that he was under arrest for cutting down trees. One local sister, well-known in the community and by the police, spoke up: "If you arrest our brother, you'll have to arrest all of us, since we all cut down the trees!" The officer then let them all go.

There were wild animals in the forest, so walking there was not without danger. One day a sister felled a tree. As it hit the ground, she saw an animal jump and run. She thought from the flash of tawny color that it was just an impala, but later she saw by the footprints that it was a lion! Despite such dangers, the brothers completed the hall, and it stands as a "glittering" source of praise to Jehovah.

February 1, 1963, was a significant day in the theocratic history of Kenya. On that day the first branch office was opened, just one room of 80 square feet. October 25, 1997, was another milestone in Kenya's theocratic history—dedication day for a new Bethel complex of 84,000 square feet! The finished project was a grand culmination to three years of dedicated toil. Volunteers from 25 different nations had transformed a muddy, weed-filled, 7.8-acre field into a beautiful gardenlike setting for the new branch facility, accommodating 80 members of the Bethel family.

We have every reason to rejoice in what Jehovah has done for his people. Thanks be to him for stirring the hearts of his servants to widen out and intensify the search for deserving ones in Kenya, making it a land of spiritual splendor.

# JEHOVAH'S DAY OF JUDGMENT IS NEAR!

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

J EHOVAH GOD is about to swing into action against the wicked. Listen! This is his warning: "I shall finish off earthling man . . . I will cut off mankind from the surface of the ground." (Zephaniah 1:3) Those words of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah were spoken through his prophet Zephaniah, perhaps the great-great-grandson of faithful King Hezekiah. That pronouncement, made in the days of good King Josiah, did not bode well for the wicked ones residing in the land of Judah.

<sup>2</sup> Zephaniah's prophesying undoubtedly heightened young Josiah's awareness of the need to purge Judah of unclean worship. But the king's actions in purging the land of false religion did not remove all wickedness from among the people or atone for the sins of his grandfather, King Manasseh, who had "filled Jerusalem with innocent blood." (2 Kings 24:3, 4; 2 Chronicles 34:3) So Jehovah's day of judgment was sure to come.

<sup>3</sup> Yet, there would be survivors of that fear-inspiring day. Therefore, God's prophet urged: "Before the statute gives birth to anything, before the day has passed by just like chaff, before there comes upon you people the burning anger of Jehovah, before there comes upon you the day of Jehovah's anger, seek Jehovah, all you meek ones of the earth,

1. What warning did God issue through Zephaniah?
2. Why did Josiah's actions not forestall Jehovah's day of judgment?
3. How can we be sure that it is possible to survive "the day of Jehovah's anger"?

who have practiced His own judicial decision. Seek righteousness, seek meekness. Probably you may be concealed in the day of Jehovah's anger." (Zephaniah 2:2, 3) With the hope of survival during Jehovah's day of judgment in mind, let us undertake a consideration of the Bible book of Zephaniah. Written in Judah before 648 B.C.E., it is part of God's "prophetic word," to which all of us should wholeheartedly pay attention.—2 Peter 1:19.

## Jehovah's Hand Stretched Out

<sup>4</sup> "The word of Jehovah" to Zephaniah starts with the warning cited earlier. God declares: "'I shall without fail finish everything off the surface of the ground,' is the utterance of Jehovah. 'I shall finish off earthling man and beast. I shall finish off the flying creature of the heavens and the fishes of the sea, and the stumbling blocks with the wicked ones; and I will cut off mankind from the surface of the ground,' is the utterance of Jehovah."—Zephaniah 1:1-3.

<sup>5</sup> Yes, Jehovah was going to bring gross wickedness to an end in the land of Judah. Whom would God use to "finish everything off the surface of the ground"? Since Zephaniah apparently prophesied during the early part of King Josiah's reign, which began in 659 B.C.E., those prophetic words found a fulfillment in the desolation of Judah and her capital city, Jerusalem, at Babylonian hands

- 4, 5. How was Zephaniah 1:1-3 fulfilled upon wicked ones in Judah?



From the Self-Pronouncing Edition of the Holy Bible, containing the King James and the Revised versions

in 607 B.C.E. At that time, there was a 'finishing off' of wicked ones in Judah.

<sup>6</sup> Foretelling God's acts against false worshipers, Zephaniah 1:4-6 says: "I will stretch out my hand against Judah and against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and I will cut off from this place the remaining ones of the Baal, the name of the foreign-god priests along with the priests, and those who are bowing down upon the roofs to the army of the heavens, and those who are bowing down, making sworn oaths to Jehovah and making sworn oaths by Malcam; and those who are drawing back from following Jehovah and who have not sought Jehovah and have not inquired of him."

<sup>7</sup> Jehovah's hand was stretched out against the people of Judah and Jerusalem. He was determined to cut off in death the worshipers

6-8. What was foretold at Zephaniah 1:4-6, and how was that prophecy fulfilled in ancient Judah?

**Zephaniah boldly declared that Jehovah's day of judgment was near**

of the Canaanite fertility god Baal. Various local deities were called Baals because their worshipers thought of them as possessing and having influence over particular localities. For instance, there was the Baal worshiped by Moabites and Midianites at Mount Peor. (Numbers 25:1, 3, 6) Throughout Judah, Jehovah would cut off the priests of Baal, as well as unfaithful priestly Levites who were violating God's law by having fellowship with them.—Exodus 20:2, 3.

<sup>8</sup> God would also cut off those 'bowing down to the army of the heavens,' evidently practicing astrology and worshiping the sun. (2 Kings 23:11; Jeremiah 19:13; 32:29) Divine wrath would also be unleashed upon those trying to mix true worship with false religion by 'making sworn oaths to Jehovah and by Malcam.' Malcam is possibly another name for Molech, the chief god of the Ammonites. The worship of Molech included child sacrifice.—1 Kings 11:5; Jeremiah 32:35.

### Christendom's End at Hand!

<sup>9</sup> All of this may well remind us of Christendom, steeped in false worship and astrology. And her role in the sacrificing of millions of lives on the altar of clergy-supported warfare is disgusting indeed! Let us never be like the unfaithful ones of Judah, who 'drew back from following Jehovah,' becoming indifferent and no longer searching for him or seeking his guidance. Instead, let us maintain our integrity to God.

<sup>10</sup> The prophet's next words fit both Judah's wrongdoers and wicked ones of our day. Says Zephaniah 1:7: "Keep silence before the

9. (a) Of what is Christendom guilty? (b) Unlike the unfaithful ones of Judah, what should we be determined to do?

10. How would you explain the prophetic significance of Zephaniah 1:7?

Sovereign Lord Jehovah; for the day of Jehovah is near, for Jehovah has prepared a sacrifice; he has sanctified his invited ones." These "invited ones" apparently were the Chaldean foes of Judah. The "sacrifice" was Judah herself, including her capital city. Zephaniah thus announced God's purpose to destroy Jerusalem, and this prophecy also pointed to the destruction of Christendom. In fact, with God's day of judgment so near today, all the world should 'keep silent before the Sovereign Lord Jehovah' and hear what he says through the "little flock" of Jesus' anointed followers and their companions, his "other sheep." (Luke 12:32; John 10:16) Annihilation awaits all who will not listen and who thereby set themselves against rule by God's Kingdom.—Psalm 2:1, 2.

### Soon—A Day of Howling!

<sup>11</sup> Regarding Jehovah's day, Zephaniah 1:8-11 adds: "'It must occur on the day of Jehovah's sacrifice that I will give attention to the princes, and to the sons of the king, and to all those wearing foreign attire. And I will give attention to everyone that is climbing upon the platform in that day, those who are filling the house of their masters with violence and deception. And there must occur on that day,' is the utterance of Jehovah, 'the sound of an outcry from the Fish Gate, and a howling from the second quarter, and a great crashing from the hills. Howl, you inhabitants of Maktesh, for all the people who are tradesmen have been silenced; all those weighing out silver have been cut off.'"

<sup>12</sup> King Josiah would be succeeded by Je-hoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Jehoiachin. Then would come Zedekiah's rule, marked by the destruction of Jerusalem. Although such calamity was facing them, some apparently

11. What is the essence of Zephaniah 1:8-11?
12. How is it that some are found "wearing foreign attire"?

sought the acceptance of neighboring nations by "wearing foreign attire." Similarly, many today make it evident in various ways that they are not part of Jehovah's organization. As demonstrably part of Satan's organization, they will be punished.

<sup>13</sup> "That day" of accounting for Judah corresponds to Jehovah's day to execute judgment upon his enemies, to end wickedness, and to prove his supremacy. As the Babylonians attacked Jerusalem, an outcry would come from the Fish Gate. Possibly it was so named because it was near the fish market. (Nehemiah 13:16) Babylon's hordes would enter the sector called the second quarter, and the "crashing from the hills" may denote the sound of the approaching Chaldeans. There would be a "howling" by the inhabitants of Maktesh, perhaps the upper Tyropoeon Valley. Why would they howl? Because commercial activity, including that of "those weighing out silver," would cease there.

<sup>14</sup> How far-reaching would Jehovah's examination of his professed worshipers be? The prophecy continues: "It must occur at that time that I shall carefully search Jerusalem with lamps, and I will give attention to the men who are congealing upon their dregs and who are saying in their heart, 'Jehovah will not do good, and he will not do bad.' And their wealth must come to be for pillage and their houses for a desolate waste. And they will build houses, but they will not have occupancy; and they will plant vineyards, but they will not drink the wine of them."—Zephaniah 1:12, 13.

<sup>15</sup> The apostate priests of Jerusalem were

13. In harmony with Zephaniah's prophecy, what was to happen when the Babylonians attacked Jerusalem?
14. How far-reaching would God's examination of his professed worshipers be?
15. (a) What was going to happen to the apostate priests of Jerusalem? (b) What is in store for present-day practitioners of false religion?

mixing the worship of Jehovah with false religion. Although they felt secure, God would seek them out as with bright lamps that would penetrate the spiritual darkness wherein they had taken refuge. None would escape the proclamation and execution of divine judgment. Those complacent apostates had settled down like dregs at the bottom of a wine vat. They did not want to be disturbed by any declaration of divine intervention in human affairs, but they would not escape the execution of God's judgment upon them. There will also be no escape for present-day practitioners of false religion, including members of Christendom and those who have apostatized from Jehovah's worship. Denying that these are "the last days," they say in their heart, "Jehovah will not do good, and he will not do bad." How wrong they are!—2 Timothy 3:1-5; 2 Peter 3:3, 4, 10.

<sup>16</sup> Judah's apostates were warned that the Babylonians would pillage their wealth, desolate their houses, and take the fruitage of their vineyards. Material things would be valueless when divine judgment was executed upon Judah. The same will be true when Jehovah's day of judgment comes upon the present system of things. May we, therefore, have a spiritual outlook and 'store up treasures in heaven' by keeping Jehovah's service first in our lives!—Matthew 6:19-21, 33.

16. What was to happen when divine judgment was executed upon Judah, and how should knowledge of that affect us?

### "The Great Day of Jehovah Is Near"

<sup>17</sup> How close is Jehovah's day of judgment? According to Zephaniah 1:14-16, God gives this assurance: "The great day of Jehovah is



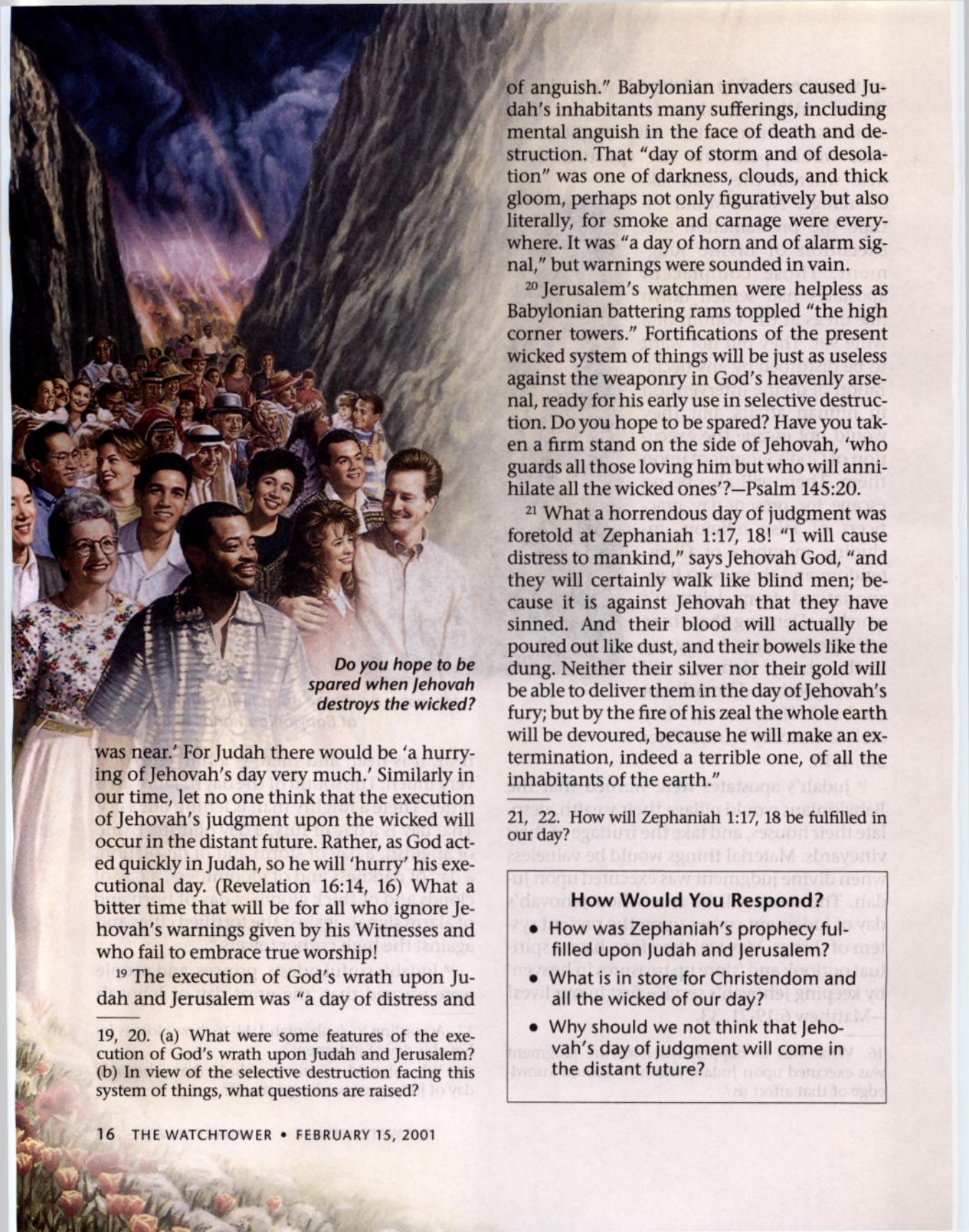
*Jehovah's day came upon Judah and Jerusalem at Babylonian hands in 607 B.C.E.*

near. It is near, and there is a hurrying of it very much. The sound of the day of Jehovah is bitter. There a mighty man is letting out a cry. That day is a day of fury, a day of distress and of anguish, a day of storm and of desolation, a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick gloom, a day of horn and of alarm signal, against the fortified cities and against the high corner towers."

<sup>18</sup> Judah's sinful priests, princes, and people were warned that 'the great day of Jehovah

17. According to Zephaniah 1:14-16, how close is Jehovah's day of judgment?

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



*Do you hope to be spared when Jehovah destroys the wicked?*

was near.' For Judah there would be 'a hurrying of Jehovah's day very much.' Similarly in our time, let no one think that the execution of Jehovah's judgment upon the wicked will occur in the distant future. Rather, as God acted quickly in Judah, so he will 'hurry' his executional day. (Revelation 16:14, 16) What a bitter time that will be for all who ignore Jehovah's warnings given by his Witnesses and who fail to embrace true worship!

<sup>19</sup> The execution of God's wrath upon Judah and Jerusalem was "a day of distress and

<sup>19, 20. (a)</sup> What were some features of the execution of God's wrath upon Judah and Jerusalem? (b) In view of the selective destruction facing this system of things, what questions are raised?

of anguish." Babylonian invaders caused Judah's inhabitants many sufferings, including mental anguish in the face of death and destruction. That "day of storm and of desolation" was one of darkness, clouds, and thick gloom, perhaps not only figuratively but also literally, for smoke and carnage were everywhere. It was "a day of horn and of alarm signal," but warnings were sounded in vain.

<sup>20</sup> Jerusalem's watchmen were helpless as Babylonian battering rams toppled "the high corner towers." Fortifications of the present wicked system of things will be just as useless against the weaponry in God's heavenly arsenal, ready for his early use in selective destruction. Do you hope to be spared? Have you taken a firm stand on the side of Jehovah, 'who guards all those loving him but who will annihilate all the wicked ones'?—Psalm 145:20.

<sup>21</sup> What a horrendous day of judgment was foretold at Zephaniah 1:17, 18! "I will cause distress to mankind," says Jehovah God, "and they will certainly walk like blind men; because it is against Jehovah that they have sinned. And their blood will actually be poured out like dust, and their bowels like the dung. Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to deliver them in the day of Jehovah's fury; but by the fire of his zeal the whole earth will be devoured, because he will make an extermination, indeed a terrible one, of all the inhabitants of the earth."

<sup>21, 22.</sup> How will Zephaniah 1:17, 18 be fulfilled in our day?

#### How Would You Respond?

- How was Zephaniah's prophecy fulfilled upon Judah and Jerusalem?
- What is in store for Christendom and all the wicked of our day?
- Why should we not think that Jehovah's day of judgment will come in the distant future?

<sup>22</sup> As he did in the days of Zephaniah, Jehovah will soon bring distress upon “all the inhabitants of the earth,” those who refuse to heed his warning. Because they sin against God, they will walk about as helpless as blind men, unable to find deliverance. In Jehovah’s day of judgment, their blood “will actually be poured out like dust,” as something worthless. Theirs will be a disgraceful end indeed, for God will strew the bodies—even the entrails—of these wicked ones upon the earth, “like the dung.”

<sup>23</sup> Nobody can save those who fight against  
23. Though wrongdoers will not escape “in the day of Jehovah’s fury,” what hope does Zephaniah’s prophecy hold out?

God and his people. Neither silver nor gold could deliver the wrongdoers of Judah, even as hoarded wealth and bribes will provide no protection or escape “in the day of Jehovah’s fury” upon Christendom and the rest of this system of things. In that day of decision, “the whole earth will be devoured” by the fire of God’s zeal as he exterminates the wicked. Because we have faith in God’s prophetic word, we are convinced that we are now deep in “the time of the end.” (Daniel 12:4) Jehovah’s day of judgment is near, and he will soon execute vengeance on his enemies. Yet, Zephaniah’s prophecy does hold out the hope of deliverance. What, then, is required of us if we are to be concealed in the day of Jehovah’s anger?

## SEEK JEHOVAH BEFORE THE DAY OF HIS ANGER

*“Seek Jehovah . . . Seek righteousness, seek meekness. Probably you may be concealed in the day of Jehovah’s anger.”—ZEPHANIAH 2:3.*

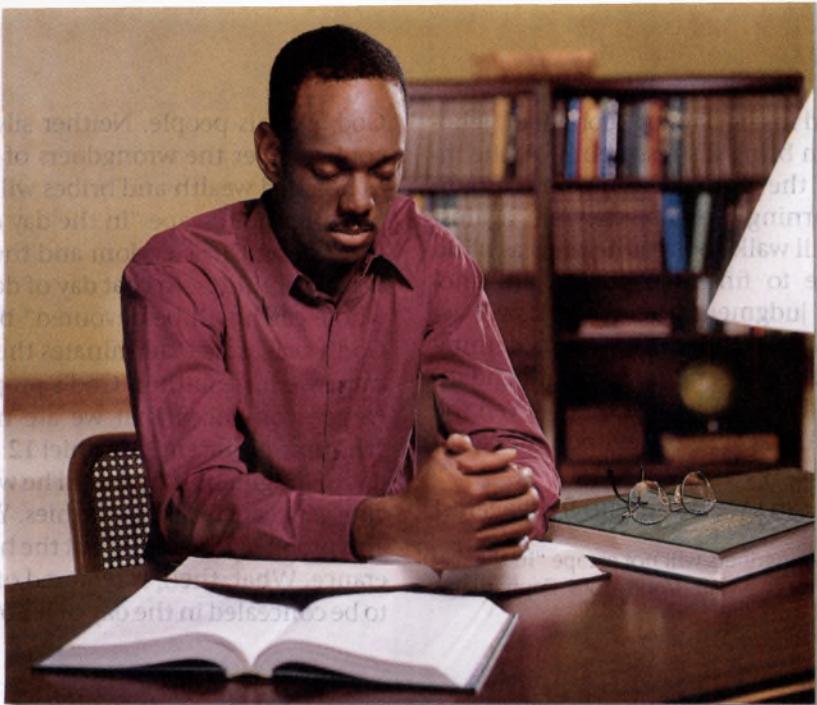
ZEPHANIAH began his prophetic work at a critical time in Judah’s history. The spiritual condition of the nation was at a low ebb. Instead of putting their trust in Jehovah, the people were looking to pagan priests and astrologers for guidance. Baal worship, with its fertility rites, was rampant in the land. The civil leaders—the princes, the nobles, and the judges—were oppressing the very ones they were supposed to protect. (Zephaniah 1:9; 3:3) No wonder Jehovah decided to ‘stretch out his hand’ against Judah and Jerusalem in order to destroy them!—Zephaniah 1:4.

1. What was the spiritual condition of Judah when Zephaniah began his prophetic work?

<sup>2</sup> As bad as the situation was, however, there was a glimmer of hope. Amon’s son Josiah was now on the throne. Although he was a mere boy, Josiah genuinely loved Jehovah. If the new king restored pure worship in Judah, how heartening that would be for the few who were faithfully serving God! Others might be moved to join them and also be preserved in the day of Jehovah’s anger.

### Requirements for Preservation

- <sup>3</sup> Could some individuals really be spared
2. What hope was there for God’s faithful servants in Judah?
  - 3, 4. What three requirements must be met in order for an individual to be spared in “the day of Jehovah’s anger”?



*Are you seeking Jehovah through Bible study  
and fervent prayer?*

in the day of Jehovah's anger? Yes, provided that they met the three conditions outlined at Zephaniah 2:2, 3. As we read these verses, let us take special note of these requirements. Zephaniah wrote: "Before the statute gives birth to anything, before the day has passed by just like chaff, before there comes upon you people the burning anger of Jehovah, before there comes upon you the day of Jehovah's anger, seek Jehovah, all you meek ones of the earth, who have practiced His own judicial decision. Seek righteousness, seek meekness. Probably you may be concealed in the day of Jehovah's anger."

<sup>4</sup> For preservation, then, a person had to (1) seek Jehovah, (2) seek righteousness, and (3) seek meekness. These requirements should be of great interest to us today. Why? Because just as Judah and Jerusalem faced a day of reckoning in the seventh century B.C.E., the nations of Christendom—in fact, all wicked ones—are heading for a showdown with Jehovah God at the coming "great

tribulation." (Matthew 24:21) Any who desire to be concealed at that time must take decisive action now. How? By seeking Jehovah, seeking righteousness, and seeking meekness before it is too late!

<sup>5</sup> You might say: 'I am a dedicated, baptized servant of God, one of Jehovah's Witnesses. Have I not already met those requirements?' Actually, more is involved than dedicating ourselves to Jehovah. Israel was a dedicated nation, but in Zephaniah's day the people of Judah were not living up to that dedication. As a result, the nation was eventually cast off. 'Seeking Jehovah' today involves developing and maintaining a warm personal relationship with him in association with his earthly organization. It means getting to know how God views matters and being attentive to his feelings. We seek Jehovah when we carefully study his Word, meditate upon it, and apply its counsel in life. As we also seek Jehovah, let us consider the following questions:

5. What is involved in 'seeking Jehovah' today?

vah's guidance in fervent prayer and follow the leading of his holy spirit, our relationship with him deepens and we are impelled to serve him 'with all our heart, soul, and vital force.'—Deuteronomy 6:5; Galatians 5:22-25; Philippians 4:6, 7; Revelation 4:11.

<sup>6</sup> The second requirement mentioned at Zephaniah 2:3 is to "seek righteousness." Most of us made important changes so that we could qualify for Christian baptism, but we must continue to uphold God's righteous standards throughout our life. Some who started out well in this respect have allowed themselves to be sullied by the world. It is not easy to seek righteousness, for we are surrounded by people who view sexual immorality, lying, and other sins as normal. Yet, a strong desire to please Jehovah can overpower any tendency to seek the world's approval by trying to blend in with it. Judah lost God's favor because of mimicking her ungodly neighboring nations. Instead of imitating the world, then, let us be "imitators of God," cultivating "the new personality which was created according to God's will in true righteousness and loyalty."—Ephesians 4:24; 5:1.

<sup>7</sup> The third point made at Zephaniah 2:3 is that if we want to be hidden in the day of Jehovah's anger, we must "seek meekness." Each day, we rub shoulders with men, women, and young people who are anything but meek. To them, being mild-tempered is a flaw. Submissiveness is considered a serious weakness. They are demanding, selfish, and opinionated, believing that their personal "rights" and preferences must be accommodated at all costs. How sad it would be if some of those attitudes were to rub off on us! This is the time to "seek meekness." How? By being submissive to God, humbly accepting his discipline and conforming to his will.

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6. How do we "seek righteousness," and why is this possible even in this world?
  7. How do we "seek meekness"?

### Why "Probably" Concealed?

<sup>8</sup> Notice that Zephaniah 2:3 says: "Probably you may be concealed in the day of Jehovah's anger." Why is the word "probably" used when addressing the "meek ones of the earth"? Well, those meek ones had taken positive steps, but there was no room for self-confidence. They had not come to the end of their life course in faithfulness. It was conceivable that some of them might fall into sin. The same is true of us. Jesus said: "He that has endured to the end is the one that will be saved." (Matthew 24:13) Yes, salvation in the day of Jehovah's anger depends upon our continuing to do what is right in his eyes. Is that your firm resolve?

<sup>9</sup> Apparently in response to Zephaniah's words, King Josiah was moved to "seek Jehovah." The Scriptures say: "In the eighth year of his reigning, while [Josiah] was still a boy [about 16 years old], he started to search for [or, "to seek," *New International Version*] the God of David his forefather." (2 Chronicles 34:3) Josiah also kept on 'seeking righteousness,' for we read: "In the twelfth year [when Josiah was about 20 years old] he started to cleanse Judah and Jerusalem from the high places and the sacred poles and the graven images and the molten statues. Further, they pulled down before him the altars of the Baals." (2 Chronicles 34:3, 4) Josiah 'sought meekness' too, humbly acting to please Jehovah by cleansing the land of idolatry and other false religious practices. How other meek ones must have rejoiced over those developments!

<sup>10</sup> Many Jews turned back to Jehovah during Josiah's reign. After the king's death, however, most returned to their old ways

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8. What is indicated by the use of the word "probably" at Zephaniah 2:3?
  9. What upright steps were taken by young King Josiah?
  10. What happened in Judah in 607 B.C.E., but who were spared?

—to practices totally unacceptable to God. As Jehovah had decreed, the Babylonians overran Judah and destroyed her capital city, Jerusalem, in 607 B.C.E. Yet, all was not lost. The prophet Jeremiah, the Ethiopian Ebed-melech, the descendants of Jonadab, and others faithful to God were concealed in that day of Jehovah's anger.—Jeremiah 35:18, 19; 39:11, 12, 15-18.

### God's Enemies—Take Note!

<sup>11</sup> While we await the day of Jehovah's anger upon this wicked system, we "meet with various trials." (James 1:2) In a number of lands claiming to value freedom of worship, manipulative clergymen have used their influence with the secular authorities in order to bring vicious persecution upon God's people. Unscrupulous men slander Jehovah's Witnesses, branding them "a dangerous cult." God is aware of their actions—and these will not go unpunished. His foes would do well to consider what happened to such ancient enemies of his people as the Philistines. Says the prophecy: "As regards Gaza, an abandoned city is what she will become; and Ashkelon is to be a desolate waste. As regards Ashdod, at high noon they will drive her out; and as regards Ekron, she will be uprooted." The Philistine cities of Gaza, Ashkelon, Ash-dod, and Ekron would be devastated.—Zephaniah 2:4-7.

<sup>12</sup> The prophecy continues: "I have heard the reproach by Moab and the abusive words of the sons of Ammon, with which they have reproached my people and kept putting on great airs against their territory." (Zephaniah 2:8) True, Egypt and Ethiopia suffered at the hands of Babylonian invaders. But what was God's judgment against Moab and

11. Why is it a challenge to remain faithful to God today, but what would enemies of Jehovah's people do well to consider?

12. What happened to Philistia, Moab, and Ammon?

Ammon, nations that descended from Abraham's nephew Lot? Jehovah foretold: "Moab herself will become just like Sodom, and the sons of Ammon like Gomorrah." Unlike their ancestresses—Lot's two daughters, who survived the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah—proud Moab and Ammon would not be concealed from God's judgments. (Zephaniah 2:9-12; Genesis 19:16, 23-26, 36-38) Today, where is Philistia and where are its cities? What about once proud Moab and Ammon? Search though you may, you cannot find them.

<sup>13</sup> In Zephaniah's day, the Assyrian Empire was at the apex of its power. Describing one section of a royal palace that he had uncovered in the Assyrian capital of Nineveh, archaeologist Austen Layard wrote: "The ceilings . . . were divided into square compartments, painted with flowers, or with the figures of animals. Some were inlaid with ivory, each compartment being surrounded by elegant borders and mouldings. The beams, as well as the sides of the chambers, may have been gilded, or even plated, with gold and silver; and the rarest woods, in which the cedar was conspicuous, were used for the wood-work." As foretold in Zephaniah's prophecy, though, Assyria was to be destroyed and its capital city, Nineveh, would become "a desolate waste."—Zephaniah 2:13.

<sup>14</sup> Only 15 years after Zephaniah spoke that prophecy, mighty Nineveh was destroyed, its royal palace being reduced to rubble. Yes, that proud city was brought down to the dust. The extent of the devastation was vividly foretold in these words: "Both pelican and porcupine will spend the night right among her [fallen] pillar capitals. A voice will keep singing in the window. There will be devas-

13. What archaeological discovery was made in Nineveh?

14. How was Zephaniah's prophecy fulfilled upon Nineveh?

tation at the threshold." (Zephaniah 2:14, 15) Nineveh's stately buildings would be fit only as a dwelling place for porcupines and pelicans. Gone from the city streets would be the sounds of commerce, the cries of warriors, the chants of priests. In those once bustling thoroughfares, there would be heard only a voice singing eerily in the window, perhaps the plaintive song of a bird or the howl of the wind. In like manner, may all of God's enemies come to their end!

<sup>15</sup> What can we learn from what happened to Philistia, Moab, Ammon, and Assyria? This: As Jehovah's servants, we have nothing to fear from our enemies. God sees what is done by those who oppose his people. Jehovah took action against his enemies in the past, and his judgments will be brought upon the entire inhabited earth today. Yet, there will be survivors—"a great crowd out of all nations." (Revelation 7:9) You may be among them—but only if you continue to seek Jehovah, seek righteousness, and seek meekness.

### **Woe to Insolent Wrongdoers!**

<sup>16</sup> Zephaniah's prophecy again focuses on Judah and Jerusalem. Says Zephaniah 3:1, 2: "Woe to her that is rebelling and polluting herself, the oppressive city! She did not listen to a voice; she did not accept discipline. In Jehovah she did not trust. To her God she did not draw near." How tragic that Jehovah's efforts to discipline his people went unheeded! Deplorable, indeed, was the ruthlessness of the princes, nobles, and judges. Zephaniah decried the shamelessness of the religious

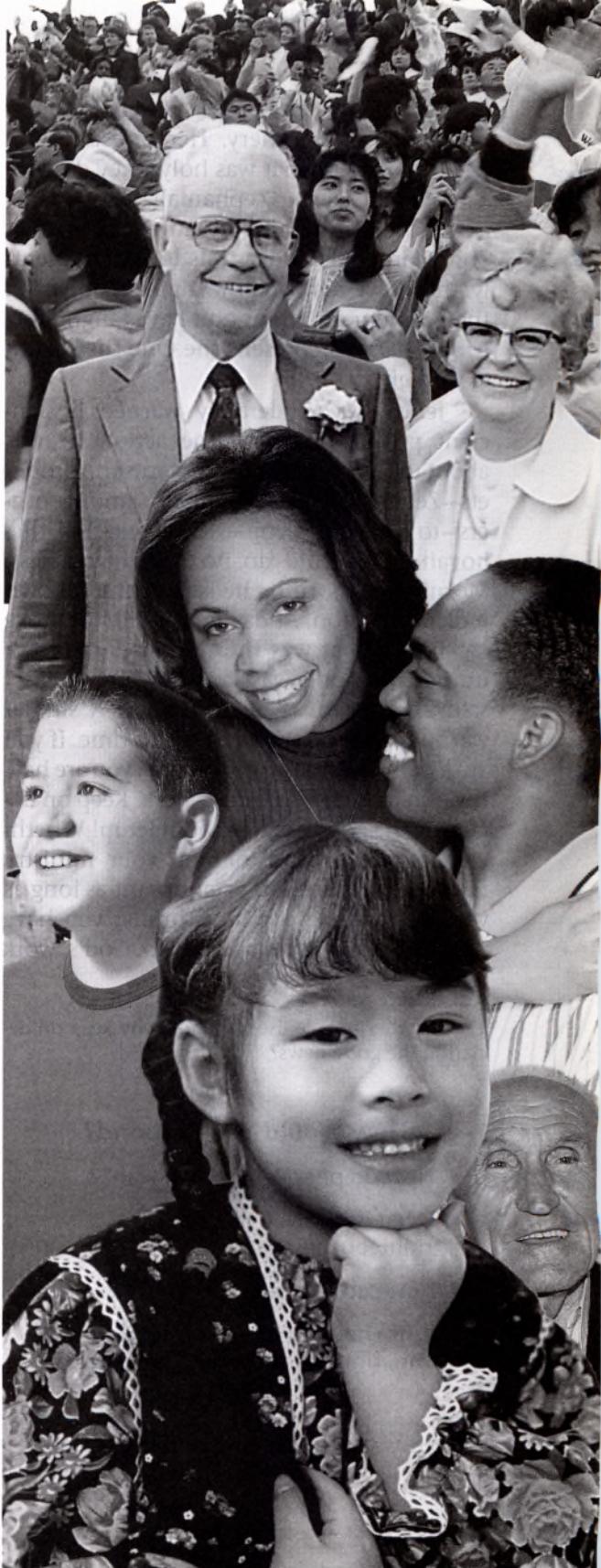
15. What can be learned from what happened to Philistia, Moab, Ammon, and Assyria?

16. What did Zephaniah's prophecy say about Judah's princes and religious leaders, and why do these words fit Christendom?

*Because they continue to seek*

*Jehovah, a great crowd will survive*

*the day of his anger*



leaders, saying: "Her prophets were insolent, were men of treachery. Her priests themselves profaned what was holy; they did violence to the law." (Zephaniah 3:3, 4) How well those words fit the situation of Christendom's prophets and priests today! Insolently, they have removed the divine name from their Bible translations and have taught doctrines that misrepresent the One they claim to worship.

<sup>17</sup> Jehovah considerately warned his ancient people regarding the action he was about to take. He sent his servants the prophets—Zephaniah and Jeremiah, among others—to urge the people to repent. Yes, "Jehovah . . . would do no unrighteousness. Morning by morning he kept giving his own judicial decision. At daylight it did not prove lacking." What was the response? "But the unrighteous one was knowing no shame," said Zephaniah. (Zephaniah 3:5) A similar warning is being sounded at this time. If you are a publisher of the good news, you are having a share in this warning work. Keep on declaring the good news without letup! Whether the people listen or not, your ministry is a success from God's standpoint as long as you are carrying it out faithfully; you have no need for shame as you do God's work with zeal.

17. Whether people listen or not, why keep on declaring the good news?

### How Would You Respond?

- How do people "seek Jehovah"?
- What is involved in 'seeking righteousness'?
- How can we "seek meekness"?
- Why should we keep on seeking Jehovah, righteousness, and meekness?

<sup>18</sup> The execution of God's judgment will not be confined to the desolation of Christendom. Jehovah expands his denunciation to include all the nations: "I cut off nations; their corner towers were desolated. I devastated their streets, so that there was no one passing through. Their cities were laid waste." (Zephaniah 3:6) So trustworthy are these words that Jehovah speaks of the destruction as if it has already occurred. What happened to the cities of Philistia, Moab, and Ammon? And what of the Assyrian capital, Nineveh? Their destruction serves as a warning example to the nations today. God is not to be mocked.

### Keep On Seeking Jehovah

<sup>19</sup> In Zephaniah's day, God's anger was unleashed upon those wickedly "making all their dealings ruinous." (Zephaniah 3:7) The same thing will happen in our time. Do you see the evidence that the day of Jehovah's anger is near? Are you continuing to "seek Jehovah" by reading his Word regularly—daily? Do you "seek righteousness" by living a morally clean life in harmony with God's standards? And are you 'seeking meekness' by displaying a meek, submissive attitude toward God and his arrangements for salvation?

<sup>20</sup> If we faithfully keep on seeking Jehovah, righteousness, and meekness, we can expect to enjoy rich blessings right now—yes, even in these faith-testing "last days." (2 Timothy 3:1-5; Proverbs 10:22) But we may well ask, 'In what ways are we being blessed as Jehovah's present-day servants, and what future blessings does Zephaniah's prophecy set before those who will be concealed in the rapidly approaching day of Jehovah's anger?'

18. How will Zephaniah 3:6 be fulfilled?
19. What thought-provoking questions might we ask?
20. What questions will we consider in the final article of this series on Zephaniah's prophecy?



## JEHOVAH'S RESTORED PEOPLE PRAISE HIM EARTH WIDE

*"I shall give to peoples the change to a pure language, in order for them all to call upon the name of Jehovah."*—ZEPHANIAH 3:9.

**W**HAT powerful judgment messages Jehovah inspired Zephaniah to deliver! Those words of doom were fulfilled upon the nation of Judah and her capital, Jerusalem, because the leaders and the people as a whole were not doing Jehovah's will. Nearby nations, such as Philistia, Moab, and Ammon, would also experience God's wrath. Why? Because of their cruel, centuries-long opposition to Jehovah's people. For that same reason, the world power of Assyria would be destroyed, never to be reestablished.

<sup>2</sup> However, there were some rightly disposed individuals in ancient Judah. They looked forward to the execution of divine judgment against the wicked and apparently were those addressed with the words: "Keep yourselves in expectation of me," is the ut-

1. Why were messages of doom fulfilled upon Judah and other nations?
2. Who apparently were addressed at Zephaniah 3:8?

terance of Jehovah, 'till the day of my rising up to the booty, for my judicial decision is to gather nations, for me to collect together kingdoms, in order to pour out upon them my denunciation, all my burning anger; for by the fire of my zeal all the earth will be devoured.'”—Zephaniah 3:8.

### "A Pure Language" for Whom?

<sup>3</sup> Yes, Zephaniah delivered Jehovah's messages of doom. But the prophet was also inspired to include a wonderful message of hope—one that would be very comforting to those who continued to be faithful to Jehovah. As recorded at Zephaniah 3:9, Jehovah God declared: "Then I shall give to peoples the change to a pure language, in order for them all to call upon the name of Jehovah, in order to serve him shoulder to shoulder."

3. What message of hope was Zephaniah inspired to deliver?

<sup>4</sup> There would be people to whom the pure language would *not* be given. The prophecy takes note of them, saying: "I shall remove from the midst of you your haughtily exultant ones." (Zephaniah 3:11) So the haughty ones who disdained God's laws and practiced unrighteousness would be removed. And who would benefit from this? Zephaniah 3:12, 13 states: "I [Jehovah] shall certainly let remain in the midst of you a people humble and lowly, and they will actually take refuge in the name of Jehovah. As regards the remaining ones of Israel, they will do no unrighteousness, nor speak a lie, nor will there be found in their mouths a tricky tongue; for they themselves will feed and actually lie stretched out, and there will be no one making them tremble."

<sup>5</sup> A faithful remnant in ancient Judah were to benefit. Why? Because they had acted in harmony with the words: "Seek Jehovah, all you meek ones of the earth, who have practiced His own judicial decision. Seek righteousness, seek meekness. Probably you may be concealed in the day of Jehovah's anger." —Zephaniah 2:3.

<sup>6</sup> In the first fulfillment of Zephaniah's prophecy, God punished faithless Judah by

- 4, 5. (a) What would happen to the unrighteous?  
(b) Who would benefit from this, and why?  
6. What happened in the first fulfillment of Zephaniah's prophecy?

- IN OUR NEXT ISSUE**
- How to Find Real Happiness
- What Is the Spiritual Paradise?
- Salvation for Those Who Choose the Light

allowing the Babylonian World Power to overwhelm her and take her people captive in 607 B.C.E. Some, including the prophet Jeremiah, were spared, and others remained faithful to Jehovah in captivity. In 539 B.C.E., Babylon was overthrown by the Medes and the Persians under King Cyrus. About two years later, Cyrus issued a decree that allowed a Jewish remnant to return to their homeland. In time, Jerusalem's temple was rebuilt, and the priesthood was again in a position to instruct the people in the Law. (Malachi 2:7) So Jehovah prospered the restored remnant —as long as they remained faithful.

<sup>7</sup> Regarding those who would enjoy that restoration, Zephaniah foretold: "Joyfully cry out, O daughter of Zion! Break out in cheers, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! Jehovah has removed the judgments upon you. He has turned away your enemy. The king of Israel, Jehovah, is in the midst of you. You will fear calamity no more. In that day it will be said to Jerusalem: 'Do not be afraid, O Zion. May your hands not drop down. Jehovah your God is in the midst of you. As a mighty One, he will save. He will exult over you with rejoicing. He will become silent in his love. He will be joyful over you with happy cries.'" —Zephaniah 3:14-17.

<sup>8</sup> Those prophetic words referred to the remnant gathered out of Babylonian captivity and brought back to their ancestral land. This is made clear at Zephaniah 3:18-20, where we read: "The ones grief-stricken in absence from your festal season I [Jehovah] shall certainly gather together; absent from you they happened to be, because of bearing reproach on her account. Here I am acting against all those afflicting you, at that time; and I will save her that is limping, and her

- 7, 8. To whom did the prophetic words of Zephaniah 3:14-17 apply, and why do you so answer?



*Jehovah's people returned to their homeland to reestablish pure worship.  
Do you know the significance of this today?*

that is dispersed I shall collect together. And I will set them as a praise and as a name in all the land of their shame. At that time I shall bring you people in, even in the time of my collecting you together. For I shall make you people to be a name and a praise among all the peoples of the earth, when I gather back your captive ones before your eyes,' Jehovah has said."

<sup>9</sup> Imagine the shock of those in surrounding nations who were enemies of God's people! The inhabitants of Judah had been taken captive by mighty Babylon, with no apparent hope of ever being freed. Moreover, their land lay desolate. By God's power, however, they were restored to their homeland after 70 years, whereas the enemy nations were headed for ruin. What a name Jehovah made for himself by bringing back that faithful remnant! He made them "to be a name and a praise among all the peoples." How that res-

9. How did Jehovah make a name for himself in connection with Judah?

toration brought praise to Jehovah and to those bearing his name!

### Jehovah's Worship Exalted

<sup>10</sup> Another restoration took place in the first century of the Common Era, when Jesus Christ gathered a remnant of Israel to true worship. That was a foregleam of what was yet to come, for the major fulfillment of the restoration was still future. Micah's prophecy foretold: "It must occur in the final part of the days that the mountain of the house of Jehovah will become firmly established above the top of the mountains, and it will certainly be lifted up above the hills; and to it peoples must stream."—Micah 4:1.

<sup>11</sup> When would this happen? As the prophecy said, "in the final part of the days"—yes, during these "last days." (2 Timothy 3:1) This would take place before the end of the

10, 11. When was the major fulfillment of Zephaniah's restoration prophecy to take place, and how do we know this?



*By speaking the "pure language," Jehovah's Witnesses offer people the Bible's comforting message*

present wicked system of things while the nations still worshiped false gods. Says Micah 4:5: "All the peoples, for their part, will walk each one in the name of its god." And what about true worshipers? Micah's prophecy answers: "But we, for our part, shall walk in the name of Jehovah our God to time indefinite, even forever."

<sup>12</sup> In these last days, therefore, "the mountain of the house of Jehovah [has] become firmly established above the top of the mountains." The lofty true worship of Jehovah has been restored, firmly established, and elevated above any and all other types of religion. As Micah's prophecy also foretold, "to it peoples must stream." And those practicing true religion "shall walk in the name of Jehovah [their] God to time indefinite, even forever."

<sup>13</sup> Events in fulfillment of Bible prophecy prove that this world entered "the final part of the days"—its last days—in the year 1914. (Mark 13:4-10) History shows that Jehovah began gathering to true worship a faithful remnant of anointed ones having the heaven-

12. How has true worship been elevated in these last days?

13, 14. When did this world enter "the final part of the days," and what has been happening since then in regard to true worship?

ly hope. This has been followed by the gathering of "a great crowd . . . out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues"—those who have the hope of living forever on earth.—Revelation 7:9.

<sup>14</sup> Since World War I and right up to this day, the worship of Jehovah by those who bear his name has moved ahead mightily under his direction. Increasing from

a few thousand after World War I, the worshipers of Jehovah now number about six million, gathered in some 91,000 congregations in 235 lands. Each year, these Kingdom proclaimers are devoting well over a billion hours publicly praising God. It is clear that these Witnesses of Jehovah are the ones fulfilling Jesus' prophetic words: "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.

<sup>15</sup> Zephaniah 3:17 notes: "Jehovah your God is in the midst of you. As a mighty One, he will save." The spiritual prosperity that Jehovah's servants enjoy in these last days is the direct result of having him 'in their midst' as their all-powerful God. This is as true today as it was in the restoration of ancient Judah in 537 B.C.E. Thus we can see how Zephaniah 2:3 finds its major fulfillment in our time when it says: "Seek Jehovah, *all* you meek ones of the earth." In 537 B.C.E., "all" included the remnant of Jews who returned from Babylonian captivity. Now it represents the meek ones of all the nations throughout the entire earth,

15. How is Zephaniah 2:3 now being fulfilled?

those who respond favorably to the global Kingdom-preaching work and who stream to “the mountain of the house of Jehovah.”

### True Worship Prospering

<sup>16</sup> After 537 B.C.E., many in the surrounding nations were astonished by the restoration of God’s servants to true worship in their homeland. Yet, that restoration took place on a relatively small scale. Can you imagine what some—even the enemies of God’s people—are saying now that they see the amazing growth, prosperity, and forward movement of Jehovah’s servants in modern times? Very likely, some of these enemies feel as did the Pharisees when they saw how the people flocked to Jesus. They exclaimed: “See! The world has gone after him.”—John 12:19.

<sup>17</sup> In his book *These Also Believe*, Professor Charles S. Braden said: “Jehovah’s Witnesses have literally covered the earth with their witnessing. It may truly be said that no single religious group in the world displayed more zeal and persistence in the attempt to spread the good news of the Kingdom than Jehovah’s Witnesses. This movement will very likely go on from strength to strength.” How right he was! When he wrote those words 50 years ago, only some 300,000 Witnesses were preaching around the world. What would he say today, when about 20 times that number—some six million—are preaching the good news?

<sup>18</sup> Through his prophet, God promised: “I shall give to peoples the change to a pure language, in order for them all to call upon the name of Jehovah, in order to serve him shoulder to shoulder.” (Zephaniah 3:9) In these last days, it is Jehovah’s Witnesses who call upon

16. What likely is the reaction of our enemies to the prosperity of Jehovah’s servants in modern times?
17. What did one writer say about Jehovah’s Witnesses, and what growth have they experienced?
18. What is the pure language, and to whom has God given it?

the name of Jehovah, who serve him unitedly in an unbreakable bond of love—yes, “shoulder to shoulder.” They are the ones to whom Jehovah has given the pure language. This pure language includes a proper understanding of the truth about God and his purposes. Only Jehovah provides this understanding by means of his holy spirit. (1 Corinthians 2:10) To whom has he given his spirit? Only “to those obeying him as ruler.” (Acts 5:32) Jehovah’s Witnesses alone are willing to obey God as Ruler in everything. That is why they are recipients of God’s spirit and speak the pure language, the truth about Jehovah and his marvelous purposes. They use the pure language to praise Jehovah earth wide on a huge and growing scale.

<sup>19</sup> Speaking the pure language involves not only believing the truth and teaching it to others but also harmonizing one’s conduct with God’s laws and principles. Anointed Christians have taken the lead in seeking Jehovah and speaking the pure language. Think of what has been accomplished! Although anointed ones have diminished in number to fewer than 8,700, some six million others are imitating their faith by seeking Jehovah and speaking the pure language. These are the growing number of the great crowd from all nations who exercise faith in Jesus’ ransom sacrifice, render sacred service in the earthly courtyard of God’s

19. Speaking the pure language involves what?

### How Would You Respond?

- Zephaniah’s restoration prophecy has had what fulfillments?
- How has true worship been prospering in these last days?
- What great teaching work will take place in the new world?

spiritual temple, and will survive “the great tribulation” soon to come upon this unrighteous world.—Revelation 7:9, 14, 15.

<sup>Words of 198</sup>  
20 The great crowd will be ushered into God’s righteous new world. (2 Peter 3:13) Jesus Christ and the 144,000 anointed ones resurrected to heavenly life to serve as kings and priests with him will make up earth’s new ruling body. (Romans 8:16, 17; Revelation 7:4; 20:6) Survivors of the great tribulation will work to make the earth a paradise and will continue to speak the God-given pure language. In principle, to them apply the words: “All your sons [and daughters, of course] will be persons taught by Jehovah, and the peace of your sons will be abundant. You will prove to be firmly established in righteousness itself.”—Isaiah 54:13, 14.

### Greatest Teaching Work in History

<sup>of the</sup>  
21 A very large group that will be given an opportunity to learn the pure language in the new world are those spoken of at Acts 24:15, which says: “There is going to be a resur-

<sup>rection</sup>  
20. What lies ahead for faithful anointed ones and for those who make up the great crowd?

<sup>ture</sup>  
21, 22. (a) As indicated by Acts 24:15, who will need to be taught the pure language? (b) What unparalleled teaching work will be carried out on earth under Kingdom rule?

<sup>reedom</sup>  
22. (a) As indicated by Acts 24:15, who will need to be taught the pure language? (b) What unparalleled teaching work will be carried out on earth under Kingdom rule?

<sup>reedom</sup>  
rection of both the righteous and the unrighteous.” In the past, billions of people have lived and died without an accurate knowledge of Jehovah. In an orderly manner, he will bring them back to life. And such resurrected ones will need to be taught the pure language.

<sup>reality</sup>  
22 What a privilege it will be to take part in that great teaching work! It will be the greatest educational undertaking in the history of mankind. All of it will be accomplished under the benevolent rule of Christ Jesus in Kingdom power. As a result, mankind will eventually see the fulfillment of Isaiah 11:9, which says: “The earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters are covering the very sea.”

<sup>reality</sup>  
23 How privileged we are in these last days to be preparing for that marvelous time when the knowledge of Jehovah will truly fill the earth! And what a privilege we have right now to be God’s people, those experiencing the grand fulfillment of the prophetic words recorded at Zephaniah 3:20! There we find Jehovah’s assurance: “I shall make you people to be a name and a praise among all the peoples of the earth.”

<sup>reality</sup>  
23. Why would you say that we are greatly privileged as Jehovah’s people?

## Questions From Readers

### How should true Christians view the common practice of individuals’ giving to others copies of commercial software programs for computers?

Some might mistakenly try to excuse this practice by referring to Jesus’ words: “You received free, give free.” Of course, Jesus was not referring to giving away free copies of copyrighted literature or computer programs (software), the use of

<sup>which</sup>  
which material is regulated by law. He meant giving as part of the ministry. Jesus told the apostles going off to various cities and villages that they were to preach the Kingdom, cure the sick, and expel demons. Rather than charge for this, the apostles were to “give free.”—Matthew 10:7, 8.

With the soaring number of personal and business computers, many people have needed software. This usually has to be purchased. Grant-

ed, some individuals write programs that they make available free of charge and that they state can be copied and given to yet others. But most computer software is sold commercially. Whether for their personal use at home or for business use, software users are expected to buy it, to pay for it. If someone took or copied a software package without paying, that would be illegal, as would the wholesale photocopying of books, even when giving such away free.

Most computer programs (including games) are covered by a license, the owner/user being required to comply with its specific provisions and limitations. Many such licenses state that only one

Some businesses and schools purchase multiple-user licenses that stipulate a maximum number of users allowed to use the program. In 1995, congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses discussed an article that included this counsel:

"Most companies that prepare and sell computer programs copyright these, and they provide a license outlining how the programs can legally be used. The license usually says that the owner cannot give to others copies of the program; in fact, international copyright law makes it illegal to do so. . . . Some large firms sell computers containing preinstalled and licensed programs. However, certain computer stores do not provide licenses because the programs they preinstall are illegal copies, meaning that the purchaser violates the law in using the programs. Related to this, Christians should avoid putting onto, or downloading from, electronic bulletin boards material that is copyrighted (as are the Society's publications) and that is being copied without legal permission from the owners."

person may install and use the program—usually installing it on only one computer, whether a home computer or one in a business or school. Some licenses say that the user may have a back-up copy for himself, but he is not to make copies for other people. If the owner wants to give away the entire program (including license and documentation), he may do so. However, he thus ends his own right to use it. Licenses vary, so a person buying a program or being offered one should find out what that particular license stipulates.

Many nations are party to copyright agreements that protect "intellectual property," such as computer programs, and they try to enforce copyright laws. For instance, *The New York Times* of January 14, 2000, reported that "German and Danish police officers arrested members of what they described as a major software-piracy gang" that was duplicating and distributing computer programs and games, even selling some over the Internet.

Where does the Christian congregation stand on this? Well, Jesus said: "Pay back Caesar's things to Caesar, but God's things to God." (Mark 12:17) That calls for Christians to obey laws of the land that do not conflict with God's law. Regarding governments, the apostle Paul wrote: "Let every soul be in subjection to the superior authorities . . . He who opposes the authority has taken a stand against the arrangement of God; those who have taken a stand against it will receive judgment to themselves."—Romans 13:1, 2.

Elders in the Christian congregation are not responsible for checking others' computers, as if authorized to interpret and enforce copyright laws. But they believe and teach that Christians should avoid taking what does not belong to them and should strive to be law-abiding. This protects Christians from being punished as law-breakers, and it enables them to have a good conscience before God. Paul wrote: "There is therefore compelling reason for you people to be in subjection, not only on account of that wrath but also on account of your conscience." (Romans 13:5) Similarly, Paul expressed the desire of true Christians with the words: "We trust we have an honest conscience, as we wish to conduct ourselves honestly in all things."—Hebrews 13:18.

# 2001 “TEACHERS OF GOD’S WORD” DISTRICT CONVENTION LOCATIONS

## MAY 18-20

DENVER, CO, Coliseum, 4600 Humboldt St.  
PORTLAND, ME, Cumberland County Civic Center,  
One Civic Center Sq.

SAN DIEGO, CA, Qualcomm Stadium, 9449 Friars Rd.

## MAY 25-27

CHICAGO, IL, Comiskey Park, 333 W. 35th St.

DENVER, CO, Coliseum, 4600 Humboldt St.

LONG BEACH, CA, Long Beach Convention Center  
Arena, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.

## JUNE 1-3

DENVER, CO, Coliseum, 4600 Humboldt St.  
FORT WORTH, TX, Fort Worth Convention Center,  
1111 Houston St.

LONG BEACH, CA, Long Beach Convention Center  
Arena, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.

PHILADELPHIA, PA (TENTATIVE), Veterans Stadium,  
S. Broad & Pattison Ave.

PORTLAND, ME, Cumberland County Civic Center,  
One Civic Center Sq.

SAN DIEGO, CA (Spanish only), Qualcomm Stadium,  
9449 Friars Rd.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, Cow Palace, 2600 Geneva Ave.

TUCSON, AZ (Spanish only), Convention Center, 260

S. Church St.

WEST PALM BEACH, FL, Christian Convention Center  
of Jehovah’s Witnesses, 1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.

## JUNE 8-10

BAKERSFIELD, CA, Centennial Garden Arena,  
1001 Truxtun Ave.

COLUMBIA, SC, Carolina Coliseum, Assembly  
& Blossom Sts.

FORT WORTH, TX (Spanish only), Fort Worth  
Convention Center, 1111 Houston St.

HOUSTON, TX, Astrodome, Loop 610 at Kirby Dr.

KANSAS CITY, MO, Kemper Arena, 1800 Genessee St.

MADISON, WI, Alliant Energy Center Memorial  
Coliseum, 1881 Expo Mall E.

NEW HAVEN, CT, Veterans Memorial Coliseum,  
275 S. Orange St.

PONTIAC, MI, Silverdome, 1200 Featherstone Rd.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, Cow Palace, 2600 Geneva Ave.

TUCSON, AZ (Spanish only), Convention Center,

260 S. Church St.

WEST PALM BEACH, FL, Christian Convention Center  
of Jehovah’s Witnesses, 1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.

WINSTON-SALEM, NC, Lawrence Joel Veterans  
Memorial Coliseum, 2825 University Pkwy.

## JUNE 15-17

ALBANY, GA, Civic Center, 100 W. Oglethorpe Ave.

BAKERSFIELD, CA (Spanish only), Centennial Garden  
Arena, 1001 Truxtun Ave.

COLUMBIA, SC, Carolina Coliseum, Assembly &  
Blossom Sts.

FORT WORTH, TX (Spanish only), Fort Worth

Convention Center, 1111 Houston St.

HOUSTON, TX (Spanish only), Astrodome, Loop 610  
at Kirby Dr.

HUNTINGTON, WV, Civic Arena, 3rd Ave. & 8th St.

LONG BEACH, CA (Spanish only), Long Beach  
Convention Center Arena, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.

MACON, GA, Coliseum, 200 Coliseum Dr.

NEW HAVEN, CT, Veterans Memorial Coliseum,

275 S. Orange St.

ROCHESTER, MN, Mayo Civic Center Arena,

30 2nd Ave. SE.

ST. PETERSBURG, FL, Bayfront Center, 400 1st St. S.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, Cow Palace, 2600 Geneva Ave.

TUCSON, AZ, Convention Center, 260 S. Church St.

WEST PALM BEACH, FL, Christian Convention Center  
of Jehovah’s Witnesses, 1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.

WINSTON-SALEM, NC, Lawrence Joel Veterans

Memorial Coliseum, 2825 University Pkwy.

## JUNE 22-24

ALBANY, GA, Civic Center, 100 W. Oglethorpe Ave.

AMARILLO, TX, Civic Center Coliseum,

3rd & Buchanan Sts.

AMHERST, MA, The Mullins Center, University of

Massachusetts, Commonwealth Ave.  
BILLINGS, MT, MetraPark Arena, 308 6th Ave. N.  
CHICAGO, IL (Spanish only), Comiskey Park,  
333 W. 35th St.

COLUMBIA, SC (Spanish only), Carolina Coliseum,

Assembly & Blossom Sts.  
FLORENCE, SC, Florence Civic Center,  
3300 W. Radio Dr.

FORT WORTH, TX, Fort Worth Convention Center,  
1111 Houston St.

JACKSON, MS, Mississippi Coliseum,  
1207 Mississippi St.

LONG BEACH, CA (Spanish only), Long Beach

Convention Center Arena, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.

MACON, GA, Coliseum, 200 Coliseum Dr.

MEMPHIS, TN, Mid-South Coliseum, Mid-South  
Fairgrounds, 996 Early Maxwell Blvd.

NEW HAVEN, CT, Veterans Memorial Coliseum,

275 S. Orange St.

ROCHESTER, MN, Mayo Civic Center Arena,  
30 2nd Ave. SE.

ST. PETERSBURG, FL, Bayfront Center, 400 1st St. S.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, Cow Palace, 2600 Geneva Ave.

WEST PALM BEACH, FL (Spanish only), Christian

Convention Center of Jehovah’s Witnesses,  
1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.

JUNE 29-JULY 1

AMARILLO, TX (Spanish only), Civic Center Coliseum,  
3rd & Buchanan Sts.

AMHERST, MA, The Mullins Center, University of

Massachusetts, Commonwealth Ave.

FLORENCE, SC, Florence Civic Center,  
3300 W. Radio Dr.

FORT WORTH, TX, Fort Worth Convention Center,  
1111 Houston St.

JACKSON, MS, Mississippi Coliseum,  
1207 Mississippi St.

KENNEWICK, WA, Tri-Cities Coliseum,  
7100 W. Quinault Ave.

LONG BEACH, CA (Spanish only), Long Beach

Convention Center Arena, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.

MADISON, WI, Alliant Energy Center Memorial

Coliseum, 1881 Expo Mall E.

MEMPHIS, TN, Mid-South Coliseum, Mid-South

Fairgrounds, 996 Early Maxwell Blvd.

ODDEN, UT, Dee Events Center,

4450 S. Harrison Blvd.

ROCHESTER, MN, Mayo Civic Center Arena,  
30 2nd Ave. SE.

ST. PETERSBURG, FL (Spanish only), Bayfront Center,

400 1st St. S.

TACOMA, WA, Tacoma Dome, 2727 E. “D” St.

TULSA, OK, Tulsa Convention Center,

100 Civic Center.

UNIONDALE, NY, Nassau Veterans Memorial

Coliseum, 1255 Hempstead Tpk.

WEST PALM BEACH, FL (Spanish only), Christian

Convention Center of Jehovah’s Witnesses,  
1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.

JULY 6-8

AMARILLO, TX (Spanish only), Civic Center Coliseum,  
3rd & Buchanan Sts.

AMHERST, MA, The Mullins Center, University of

Massachusetts, Commonwealth Ave.

BIRMINGHAM, AL, Civic Center Coliseum, One Civic

Center Plaza.

BISMARCK, ND, Civic Center Arena, 601 E. Sweet Ave.

DAYTON, OH, Ervin J. Nutter Center, Wright State

University, 3640 Colonel Glen Hwy.

JERSEY CITY, NJ (American Sign Language only),

Assembly Hall of Jehovah’s Witnesses,

2932 Kennedy Blvd.

LINCOLN, NE, Devaney Sports Center,

16th St. & Military Rd.

LONG BEACH, CA, Long Beach Convention Center

Arena, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.

LONG ISLAND CITY, NY (Tagalog only), Assembly

Hall of Jehovah’s Witnesses, 44-17 Greenpoint Ave.

LOUISVILLE, KY, Freedom Hall Coliseum, Kentucky

Fair & Expo Center, 937 Phillips Ln.

MACON, GA, Coliseum, 200 Coliseum Dr.

MADISON, WI, Alliant Energy Center Memorial

Coliseum, 1881 Expo Mall E.

MOBILE, AL, Civic Center, 401 Civic Center Dr.

NATICK, MA (Portuguese only), Assembly Hall of

Jehovah’s Witnesses, 85 Bacon St.

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK, Myriad, One Myriad Gardens,

PHILADELPHIA, PA (TENTATIVE), Veterans Stadium,

S. Broad & Pattison Ave.

RICHMOND, VA, Coliseum, 601 E. Leigh St.

ROANOKE, VA (Spanish only), Civic Center,

710 Williamson Rd. NE.

ROCHESTER, MN, Mayo Civic Center Arena,

30 2nd Ave. SE.

ROCHESTER, NY, Blue Cross Arena,

100 Exchange Blvd.

ST. CHARLES, MO, St. Charles County Family Arena,

2002 Avenue Pkwy.

ST. PETERSBURG, FL (Spanish only), Bayfront Center,

400 1st St. S.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (Spanish only), Cow Palace,

2600 Geneva Ave.

TACOMA, WA, Tacoma Dome, 2727 E. “D” St.

TUCSON, AZ, Convention Center, 260 S. Church St.

TULSA, OK, Tulsa Convention Center, 100 Civic

Center.

UNIONDALE, NY, Nassau Veterans Memorial

Coliseum, 1255 Hempstead Tpk.

WEST PALM BEACH, FL (Spanish only), Christian

Convention Center of Jehovah’s Witnesses,

1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.

WICHITA, KS (Spanish only), Century II Convention

Hall, 225 W. Douglas.

WILLOUGHBY, OH (Greek only), Assembly Hall of

Jehovah’s Witnesses, 38025 Vine St.

JULY 13-15

ALBANY, GA, Civic Center, 100 W. Oglethorpe Ave.

AMARILLO, TX, Civic Center Coliseum,

3rd & Buchanan Sts.

AMHERST, MA, The Mullins Center, University of

Massachusetts, Commonwealth Ave.

CHICAGO, IL, Comiskey Park, 333 W. 35th St.

CLEVELAND, OH, Cleveland State University

Convocation Centre, Prospect & E. 21st Sts.

COLUMBUS, GA, South Commons Civic Center,

400 4th St.

HAMPTON, VA, Coliseum, 1000 Coliseum Dr.

JERSEY CITY, NJ (French only), Assembly Hall of

Jehovah’s Witnesses, 2932 Kennedy Blvd.

JOHNSON CITY, TN, Freedom Hall Civic Center Arena,

Liberty Bell Blvd.

KENNEWICK, WA, Tri-Cities Coliseum,

7100 W. Quinault Ave.

LONG BEACH, CA, Long Beach Convention Center

Arena, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.

MACON, GA, Coliseum, 200 Coliseum Dr.

RICHMOND, CA (Tagalog only), Richmond Memorial

Convention Center Arena, 403 Civic Center Plaza.

ROCHESTER, NY, Blue Cross Arena,

100 Exchange Blvd.

ST. PETERSBURG, FL, Bayfront Center, 400 1st St. S.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (Spanish only), Cow Palace,

2600 Geneva Ave.

SPRINGFIELD, IL, Prairie Capital Convention Center,

One Convention Center Plaza.

TACOMA, WA, Tacoma Dome, 2727 E. “D” St.

TUCSON, AZ, Convention Center, 260 S. Church St.

UNIONDALE, NY (Spanish only), Nassau Veterans

Memorial Coliseum, 1255 Hempstead Tpk.

WEST PALM BEACH, FL (French only), Christian

Convention Center of Jehovah’s Witnesses,

1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.

WOODLAND HILLS, CA (Armenian only), Assembly

Hall of Jehovah’s Witnesses, 20600 Ventura Blvd.

**JULY 20-22**

AMHERST, MA, The Mullins Center, University of Massachusetts, Commonwealth Ave.  
BELTON, TX, Bell County Expo Center Arena, 301 W. Loop 121.  
CLEVELAND, OH, Cleveland State University Convocation Centre, Prospect & E. 21st Sts.  
HAMPTON, VA, Coliseum, 1000 Coliseum Dr.  
HUNTSVILLE, AL, Von Braun Civic Center Arena, 700 Monroe St.  
JERSEY CITY, NJ (French only), Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 2932 Kennedy Blvd.  
JOHNSON CITY, TN, Freedom Hall Civic Center Arena, Liberty Blvd.  
KENNEWICK, WA, Tri-Cities Coliseum, 7100 W. Quinault Ave.  
LONG ISLAND CITY, NY (Japanese only), Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 44-17 Greenpoint Ave.  
NEW HAVEN, CT (Spanish only), Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 275 S. Orange St.  
RICHMOND, VA, Coliseum, 601 E. Leigh St.  
ST. CHARLES, MO, St. Charles County Family Arena, 2002 Arena Pkwy.  
ST. PETERSBURG, FL, Bayfront Center, 400 1st St. S.  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA (Spanish only), Cow Palace, 2600 Geneva Ave.  
TACOMA, WA, Tacoma Dome, 2727 E. "D" St.  
UNIONDALE, NY (Spanish only), Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 1255 Hempstead Tpk.  
WEST PALM BEACH, FL, Christian Convention Center of Jehovah's Witnesses, 1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.  
WOODLAND HILLS, CA (Vietnamese only), Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 20600 Ventura Blvd.  
YAKIMA, WA (Spanish only), SunDome, 1301 S. Tenth St.

**JULY 27-29**  
BELTON, TX, Bell County Expo Center Arena, 301 W. Loop 121.  
CLEVELAND, OH, Cleveland State University Convocation Centre, Prospect & E. 21st Sts.  
DAYTON, OH, Ervin J. Nutter Center, Wright State University, 3640 Colonel Glen Hwy.  
HUNTSVILLE, AL, Von Braun Civic Center Arena, 700 Monroe St.  
JERSEY CITY, NJ (Korean only), Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 2932 Kennedy Blvd.  
LONG BEACH, CA, Long Beach Convention Center Arena, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.  
LONG ISLAND CITY, NY (Italian only), Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 44-17 Greenpoint Ave.  
RICHMOND, VA, Coliseum, 601 E. Leigh St.  
ST. PETERSBURG, FL, Bayfront Center, 400 1st St. S.  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA (Portuguese sessions also), Cow Palace, 2600 Geneva Ave.  
UNIONDALE, NY, Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 1255 Hempstead Tpk.  
WEST PALM BEACH, FL, Christian Convention Center of Jehovah's Witnesses, 1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.  
WOODLAND HILLS, CA (Japanese only), Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 20600 Ventura Blvd.

**AUGUST 3-5**  
CLEVELAND, OH, Cleveland State University Convocation Centre, Prospect & E. 21st Sts.  
DAYTON, OH, Ervin J. Nutter Center, Wright State University, 3640 Colonel Glen Hwy.  
LONG ISLAND CITY, NY (Chinese only), Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 44-17 Greenpoint Ave.  
MIRA LOMA, CA (Korean only), Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 3300 Cornerstone Dr.  
RICHMOND, VA, Coliseum, 601 E. Leigh St.  
ROANOKE, VA, Civic Center, 710 Williamson Rd. NE.  
ST. PETERSBURG, FL, Bayfront Center, 400 1st St. S.  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA, Cow Palace, 2600 Geneva Ave.  
UNIONDALE, NY (Polish sessions also), Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 1255 Hempstead Tpk.  
WEST PALM BEACH, FL (Spanish only), Christian Convention Center of Jehovah's Witnesses, 1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.

**AUGUST 10-12**  
BELTON, TX (Spanish only), Bell County Expo Center Arena, 301 W. Loop 121.  
DAYTON, OH, Ervin J. Nutter Center, Wright State University, 3640 Colonel Glen Hwy.  
LONG ISLAND CITY, NY (Russian only), Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 44-17 Greenpoint Ave.  
MIRA LOMA, CA (American Sign Language only), Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 3300 Cornerstone Dr.

ROCHESTER, NY, Blue Cross Arena, 100 Exchange Blvd.

UNIONDALE, NY (Spanish only), Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 1255 Hempstead Tpk.  
WEST PALM BEACH, FL (Spanish only), Christian Convention Center of Jehovah's Witnesses, 1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.

**AUGUST 17-19**

BAKERSFIELD, CA, Centennial Garden Arena, 1001 Truxtun Ave.  
BELTON, TX (Spanish only), Bell County Expo Center Arena, 301 W. Loop 121.  
BILOXI, MS, Mississippi Coast Coliseum, 3800 W. Beach Blvd.  
LONG BEACH, CA (Spanish only), Long Beach Convention Center Arena, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.  
UNIONDALE, NY, Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 1255 Hempstead Tpk.  
WEST PALM BEACH, FL (Spanish only), Christian Convention Center of Jehovah's Witnesses, 1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.  
YAKIMA, WA (Spanish only), SunDome, 1301 S. Tenth St.

**AUGUST 24-26**

BAKERSFIELD, CA (Spanish only), Centennial Garden Arena, 1001 Truxtun Ave.  
BELTON, TX, Bell County Expo Center Arena, 301 W. Loop 121.  
BILOXI, MS, Mississippi Coast Coliseum, 3800 W. Beach Blvd.  
LONG BEACH, CA (Spanish only), Long Beach Convention Center Arena, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.

**SEPTEMBER 7-9**

LONG BEACH, CA (Spanish only), Long Beach Convention Center Arena, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.

**SEPTEMBER 14-16**

LONG BEACH, CA, Long Beach Convention Center Arena, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.

**Britain****JUNE 8-10**

JERSEY, C.I., Fort Regent Leisure Centre, St. Helier, Jersey.

**JUNE 15-17**

LONDON, London Arena, Limeharbour, London, E4 9th.

NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE, Newcastle Telewest Arena, Arena Way, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, NE4 7NA.

PORTRUSH, Portrush City Football Club, Fratton Park, Frogmore Rd., Portrush, PO4 8RA.

**JUNE 22-24**

COVENTRY, Coventry City Football Club, King Richard St., Coventry, CV2 4FW.

PLYMOUTH, Plymouth Argyle Football Club, Home Park, Plymouth, PL2 3DQ.

**JUNE 29-JULY 1**

CARDIFF, Cardiff City Football Club, Ninian Park, Sloop Rd., Cardiff, CF1 8SX.

LEEDS, Leeds United Football Club, Elland Rd., Leeds, LS11 OES.

LONDON (Italian only), Edgware Kingdom Hall Complex, Avion Crescent, London NW9.

**JULY 6-8**

LONDON, (French only), North London Assembly Hall, 174 Bowes Rd., London, N11 2JG.

MANCHESTER, Manchester Evening News Arena, Hunts Bank, Manchester, M3 1AR.

PERTH, St. Johnstone Football Club, McDiarmid Park, Crieff Rd., Perth, PH1 2JS.

WOLVERHAMPTON, (English and Punjabi), Wolverhampton Wanderers Football Club, Molineux Grounds, Waterloo Rd., Wolverhampton, WV1 4QR.

**JULY 13-15**

LONDON, (Greek only), North London Assembly Hall, 174 Bowes Rd., London, N11 2JG.

NOTTINGHAM, Nottingham Ice Rink, Lower Parliament St., Nottingham, NG1 1LA.

**JULY 20-22**

BRIGHTON, The Brighton Centre, King's Rd., Brighton, BN1 2GR.

NORWICH, Norwich City Football Club, Carrow Rd., Norwich, NR1 1JE.

**JULY 27-29**

LONDON, (English and Spanish), Rugby Football Union, Whitton Rd., Twickenham, Middx, TW1 1DZ.

**Malta****SEPTEMBER 7-9**

ST. PAUL'S BAY, New Dolmen Hotel Conference Centre, Qawra.

**Ireland****JULY 6-8**

SWORDS, National Show Centre, Cloghran, Swords, County Dublin.

**JULY 20-22**

SWORDS, National Show Centre, Cloghran, Swords, County Dublin.

**JULY 27-29**

SWORDS, National Show Centre, Cloghran, Swords, County Dublin.

**Canada****JUNE 15-17**

CALGARY, AB, Pengrowth Saddledome, 555 Saddledome Rise SE.

CORNWALL, ON, Ed Lumley Arena, Cornwall Civic Complex, 100 Water St. E.

DARTMOUTH, NS, Dartmouth Sportsplex, 110 Wyse Rd.

KITCHENER, ON, Kitchener Memorial Auditorium Complex, 400 East Ave.

NORTH BAY, ON, Memorial Gardens Sports Arena, 100 Chippewa St. E.

VICTORIA, BC, Esquimalt's Archie Browning Sports Centre (Arena), 1151 Esquimalt Rd.

**JUNE 22-24**

CORNWALL, ON (French only), Ed Lumley Arena, Cornwall Civic Complex, 100 Water St. E.

GRANDE PRAIRIE, AB, Canada Games Arena, 10017 99th Ave.

HAMILTON, ON (Polish sessions also), Copps Coliseum, 101 York Blvd.

KITCHENER, ON (Spanish only), Kitchener Memorial Auditorium Complex, 400 East Ave.

MONCTON, NB, Coliseum Agrena, Killam Dr.

NANAIMO, BC, Frank Crane Arena, Beban Park Recreation Centre, 2300 Bowen Rd.

VANCOUVER, BC, Pacific Coliseum, 100 Renfrew St.

**JUNE 29-JULY 1**

CORNWALL, ON, Ed Lumley Arena, Cornwall Civic Complex, 100 Water St. E.

HAMILTON, ON, Copps Coliseum, 101 York Blvd.

KITCHENER, ON, Kitchener Memorial Auditorium Complex, 400 East Ave.

**JULY 6-8**

EDMONTON, AB, Skyreach Centre, Northlands Park, 7242 118th Ave.

KAMLOOPS, BC, Riverside Coliseum, 300 Lorne St.

MOUNT PEARL, NF, Mount Pearl Glacier, Olympic Dr.

PRINCE ALBERT, SK, Cominplex Arena, 690 32nd St. E.

QUEBEC CITY, QC (French only), Colisee Pepsi, 250, boul. Wilfred-Hamel.

SELKIRK, MB, Selkirk Recreation Complex, 180 Easton Dr.

**JULY 13-15**

KAMLOOPS, BC, Riverside Coliseum, 300 Lorne St.

MONTRÉAL, QC (Arabic only), Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 12700, boul. Métropolitain Est, Pointe-aux-Trembles.

PRINCE ALBERT, SK (Sign language also), Cominplex Arena, 690 32nd St. E.

SELKIRK, MB, Selkirk Recreation Complex, 180 Easton Dr.

SHERBROOKE, QC (French only), Palais des sports, 360, rue du Parc.

SURREY, BC (Chinese only), Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 15577 82nd Ave.

**JULY 22-24**

BRAMPTON, ON (Portuguese only), Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, Hwy. 7, 1 mile W. of Mississauga Rd.

MONTRÉAL, QC (Italian only), Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 12700, boul. Métropolitain Est, Pointe-aux-Trembles.

PRINCE GEORGE, BC, Prince George Multi-plex Arena, 2188 Osprey Blvd.

SHERBROOKE, QC (French only), Palais des sports, 360, rue du Parc.

SURREY, BC (Spanish only), Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 15577 82nd Ave.

**JULY 27-29**

SHERBROOKE, QC (French only), Palais des sports, 360, rue du Parc.

# The Fight Against Poverty

## A Losing Battle?

**T**OURISTS visiting the United Nations in New York City see the Economic and Social Council Chamber, with its exposed pipes and ducts in the ceiling above the public gallery. The tour guide explains: "The 'unfinished' ceiling is commonly seen as a symbolic reminder that the economic and social work of the United Nations is never finished; there will always be something more that can be done to improve the living conditions of the world's people."

Although the Council is committed to the worthy cause of encouraging a higher standard of living for all, the task seems to be unending. Interestingly, during Jesus Christ's ministry on earth in the first century C.E., he said: "Jehovah's spirit is upon me, because he anointed me to declare good news to the poor." (Luke 4:18) What was the "good news" that he declared? It was the message concerning the Kingdom that



Jehovah God, who becomes "a stronghold to the poor one in . . . distress," will establish with Jesus Christ as King. What will that Kingdom accomplish? Isaiah prophesied: "Jehovah of armies will certainly make for all the peoples . . . a banquet of well-oiled dishes, a banquet of wine kept on the dregs, of well-oiled dishes filled with marrow, of wine kept on the dregs, filtered. He will actually swallow up death forever, and the Sovereign Lord Jehovah will certainly wipe the tears from all faces."—Isaiah 25:4-6, 8.

