

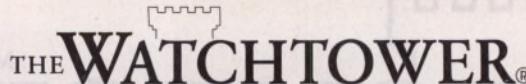
THE WATCHTOWER

MARCH 15, 2007

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

CHRIST'S COMING

How Does It Affect You?



THE WATCHTOWER®
ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

March 15, 2007

Average Printing Each Issue: 28,578,000

Vol. 128, No. 6

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 fellow men 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.

IN THIS ISSUE

- 3 Christ's Coming—Should We Fear It?
- 4 What Christ's Coming Will Accomplish
- 8 Jehovah's Word Is Alive—Highlights From the Book of Jeremiah
- 12 Look! The Light Is Wonderful!
- 15 How Hannah Found Peace
- 18 Ancient Scribes and the Word of God
- 21 Angels—How They Affect Mankind
- 26 Demons—How Can We Resist Them?
- 31 Questions From Readers
- 32 "She Just Made Us Come"

WATCHTOWER STUDIES

APRIL 23-29:

Angels—How They Affect Mankind.

Page 21. Songs to be used: 5, 211.

APRIL 30—MAY 6:

Demons—How Can We Resist Them?

Page 26. Songs to be used: 21, 55.

Publication of *The Watchtower* is part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations. Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the modern-language *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References*.

The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) is published semimonthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; M. H. Larson, President; G. F. Simons, Secretary-Treasurer; 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483. Periodicals Postage Paid at Brooklyn, NY, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Watchtower, Wallkill, NY 12589.

Changes of address should reach us 30 days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label).

© 2007 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania.

All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A.

Semimonthly

ENGLISH

Would you welcome more information or a free home Bible study? Please send your request to Jehovah's Witnesses, using the appropriate address below.

America, United States of: Wallkill, NY 12589. **Antigua:** Box 119, St. Johns. **Australia:** Box 280, Ingleburn, NSW 1890. **Bahamas:** Box N-1247, Nassau, N.P. **Barbados, W.I.:** Crusher Site Road, Prospect, St. James B2 24012. **Britain:** The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN. **Canada:** Box 4100, Halton Hills (Georgetown), Ontario L7G 4Y4. **Germany:** Niederselters, Am Steinfiels, D-65617 Selters. **Ghana:** P. O. Box GP 760, Accra. **Guyana:** 352-360 Tyrell St., Republic Park Phase 2 EBD. **Hawaii 96819:** 2055 Kame IV Rd., Honolulu. **Hong Kong:** 4 Kent Road, Kowloon Tong. **India:** Post Box 6440, Yelahanka, Bangalore 560 064, KAR. **Ireland:** Newcastle, Greystones, Co. Wicklow. **Jamaica:** P. O. Box 103, Old Harbour, St. Catherine. **Japan:** 4-7-1 Nakashinden, Ebina City, Kanagawa Pref., 243-0496. **Kenya:** P.O. Box 47788, GPO Nairobi 00100. **New Zealand:** PO Box 75142, Manurewa, Manukau 2243. **Nigeria:** P.M.B. 1090, Benin City 300001, Edo State. **Philippines, Republic of:** P. O. Box 2044, 1066 Manila. **South Africa:** Private Bag X2067, Krugersdorp, 1740. **Trinidad and Tobago, Republic of:** Lower Rapsey Street & Laxmi Lane, Curepe. **Zambia:** Box 33459, Lusaka 10101. **Zimbabwe:** Private Bag WG-5001, Westgate.

NOW PUBLISHED IN 158 LANGUAGES. SEMIMONTHLY: Afrikaans, Albanian,* Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Bengali, Bicol, Bulgarian, Cebuano,* Chichewa,* Chinese, Chinese (Simplified),* Ciembema,* Croatian,* Czech, * Danish,** Dutch,** Efik,* English**+ (also Braille), Estonian, Ewe, Fijian, Finnish,** French**+ (also Braille), Ga, Georgian,* German,** Greek,* Gun, Hebrew, Hiligaynon, Hungarian,** Igbo,* Iloko,* Indonesian, Italian,**+ Japanese**+ (also Braille), Kinyarwanda, Kirundi, Korean**+ (also Braille), Latvian, Lingala, Lithuanian, Luvale, Macedonian, Malagasy,* Malayalam, Maltese, Myanmar, Norwegian,* Pangasinan, Papiamento (Aruba), Papiamento (Curaçao), Polish,** Portuguese**+ (also Braille), Punjabi, Rarotongan, Romanian,* Russian,*+ Samoan-Leyte, Samoan, Sepedi, Serbian, Sesotho, Shona,* Silozi, Sinhala, Slovak,* Slovenian, Spanish**+ (also Braille), Sranantongo, Swahili,* Swedish,** Tagalog,* Tamil, Telugu, Thai, Tigrinya, Tok Pisin, Tongan, Tshilubwa, Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Twi, Ukrainian,* Vietnamese, Xhosa, Yoruba,* Zulu*

MONTHLY: American Sign Language,[□] Armenian (West), Azerbaijani, Azerbaijani (Cyrillic), Boulé, Bislama, Brazilian Sign Language,[□] Cambodian, Chitonga, Chuukese, Gilbertese, Greenlandic, Guarani, Gujarati, Haitian Creole, Hausa, Hindi, Hiri Motu, Icelandic, Isoko, Kannada, Kaonde, Kazakh, Kikongo, Kiluba, Kirghiz, Kongo, Kosraean, Kwanyama/Ndonga, Luganda, Lunda, Marathi, Marshallese, Mauritian Creole, Maya, Mexican Sign Language,[□] Mizo, Moore, Nepali, Niuean, Ossetian, Otetela, Palauan, Persian, Popeanca, Sango, Seychelles Creole, Solomon Islands Pidgin, Tahitian, Tatar, Tiv, Tumbuka, Tuvaluan, Umbundu, Urdu, Urundu, Uzbek, Venda, Wallisian, Yapese, Zande, Zapotec (Isthmus)

* Study articles also available in large-print edition.

[□] Audiocassettes also available.

[□] CD also available.

[□] MP3 CD-ROM also available.

[△] Videocassette

[□] DVD

TAHW

CHRIST'S COMING

Should We Fear It?

WHAT images does the coming of Jesus Christ bring to your mind? Do you see it as an event that spells doom, desolation, and punishment for mankind? Or do you expect it to bring an end to all our problems? Is Christ's coming something to be feared? Or should we look forward to it?

Concerning Christ's coming, the Bible states: "Look! He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, . . . and all the tribes of the earth will beat themselves in grief because of him." (Revelation 1:7) This coming refers to Jesus' appearing in the future to reward the just and punish the wicked.

Rather than fearing it, the apostle John looked forward to Christ's coming. After receiving the revelation about this coming and about what it will mean for the earth, John earnestly prayed: "Come, Lord Jesus." (Revelation 22:20) But why do "all the tribes of the earth . . . beat themselves in grief because of him"? In what way will "every eye" see him? What will Christ's coming accomplish? How can putting faith in it benefit us now? The following article will answer these questions.



WHAT CHRIST'S COMING *Will Accomplish*

"TERROR IN SÃO PAULO." That is how *Veja* magazine described the four days in May 2006 when organized crime brought Brazil's largest and richest city "to its knees." Some 150 law-enforcement officers, criminals, and ordinary citizens were killed during "more than 100 hours of terror."

Violence is making news headlines in just about every corner of the earth. Human leaders seem unable to stop it. Our world is becoming an increasingly dangerous place in which to live. Perhaps you feel discouraged because wherever you look, there is so much bad news. However, the time for a change is near.

Jesus taught his followers to pray for God's Kingdom to come and for God's will to take place, "as in heaven, also upon earth." (Matthew 6:9, 10) This Kingdom is a government with Christ Jesus as its God-appointed King. It will solve all of mankind's problems. For God's Kingdom to bring about changes on the earth, however, there has to be a change from human rulership to the rulership of Christ. This is exactly what Christ's coming will accomplish.

A Peaceful Transition?

Will the nations submit to Christ's rule peacefully? The apostle John was given a vision that provides the answer. John relates: "I saw the wild beast [the world's political system] and the kings of the earth and their



armies gathered together to wage the war with the one [Jesus] seated on the horse and with his army." (Revelation 19:19) How will the kings of the earth fare in this war? Jehovah's anointed King "will break them with an iron scepter, as though a potter's vessel [he] will dash them to pieces," states the Bible. (Psalm 2:9) The political system will be completely smashed. God's Kingdom "will crush and put an end to all [human] kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite."—Daniel 2:44.

What about the people who oppose God's Kingdom? "At the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with his powerful angels in a flaming fire," Jesus is portrayed as someone who "brings vengeance upon those who

do not know God and those who do not obey the good news." (2 Thessalonians 1:7, 8) "As regards the wicked," states Proverbs 2:22, "they will be cut off from the very earth; and as for the treacherous, they will be torn away from it."

With regard to Christ's coming, the Bible says: "Look! He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him." (Revelation 1:7) People will not see him with their literal eyes. Since his ascension to heaven, Jesus is a spirit person "who dwells in unapproachable light, whom not one of men has seen or can see."—1 Timothy 6:16.

Jesus does not need to take on a human form to be "seen" by the inhabitants of the earth any more than Jehovah needed to do so when he brought the Ten Plagues on the Egyptians in the days of Moses. The people of that time had no doubt that Jehovah was causing the plagues, and they were forced to recognize his power. (Exodus 12:31) In a similar way, when Christ takes action as God's Executioner, the wicked will be forced to "see," or perceive, that Jesus is being used by God to judge them. They will know this because mankind will have been warned in advance. Yes, "every eye will see [Jesus], and all the tribes of the earth will beat themselves in grief because of him."—Revelation 1:7.

The destruction of the wicked and the removal of wicked rulership are essential before true peace and prosperity can be restored to the earth. Christ will accomplish that. Then he will take full control of all affairs on the earth, and momentous changes will follow.

A Restoration That Brings Benefits

The apostle Peter spoke about the "restoration of all things of which God spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets of old time." (Acts 3:21) This restoration includes the transformation that will take place

on the earth during Christ's rule. Among the prophets through whom God spoke of the "restoration of all things" on earth is the prophet Isaiah, of the eighth century B.C.E. He foretold that Jesus Christ, the "Prince of Peace," would restore peace to the earth. Regarding Christ's rulership, Isaiah's prophecy states: "To the abundance of the princely rule and to peace there will be no end." (Isaiah 9:6, 7) Jesus will educate earth's peoples in the ways of peace. Those inhabiting the earth "will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace."—Psalm 37:11.

What will happen to poverty and hunger under Christ's rulership? Isaiah said: "Jehovah of armies will certainly make for all the peoples, in this mountain, 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." (Isaiah 25:6) The psalmist sang: "There will come to be plenty of grain on the earth; on the top of the mountains there will be an overflow." (Psalm 72:16) Moreover, regarding earth's inhabitants, we read: "They will certainly build houses and have occupancy; and they will certainly plant vineyards and eat their fruitage. They will not build and someone else have occupancy; they will not plant and someone else do the eating. For like the days of a tree will the days of my people be; and the work of their own hands my chosen ones will use to the full."—Isaiah 65:21, 22.

Isaiah also foretold the end of sickness and death. God spoke through Isaiah, saying: "At that time the eyes of the blind ones will be opened, and the very ears of the deaf ones will be unstopped. At that time the lame one will climb up just as a stag does, and the tongue of the speechless one will cry out in gladness." (Isaiah 35:5, 6) Then "no resident will say: 'I am sick.'" (Isaiah 33:24) God "will actually swallow up death forever, and the

Sovereign Lord Jehovah will certainly wipe the tears from all faces.”—Isaiah 25:8.

What about all the dead “in the memorial tombs”? (John 5:28, 29) Isaiah prophesied: “Your dead ones will live. . . . They will rise up.” (Isaiah 26:19) Yes, those sleeping in death will be brought back to life!

“God Is Your Throne Forever”

Christ’s coming will lead to nothing less than the complete restoration of planet Earth. The earth will be transformed into a glorious paradise, and mankind will be united in the worship of the true God. Can we be certain that Jesus Christ will succeed in removing wickedness from the earth and in bringing about righteous conditions?

Consider the source of the power and authority bestowed upon Jesus. With reference to the Son, the Bible states: “God is your throne forever and ever, and the scepter of your kingdom is the scepter of uprightness. You loved righteousness, and you hated lawlessness.” (Hebrews 1:8, 9) Jesus’ throne, that is, his office or authority, has its source in Jehovah. God is the Originator and Giver of this throne. No problems will be too grave for Jesus to resolve.

After his resurrection, Jesus told his disciples: “All authority has been given me in heaven and on the earth.” (Matthew 28:18) “Angels and authorities and powers were made subject to him,” states 1 Peter 3:22. No power or authority will be successful in opposing Jesus. Nothing can prevent him from bringing lasting benefit to mankind.

How Christ’s Coming Affects People

In his letter to the Thessalonians, the apostle Paul wrote: “We bear incessantly in mind your faithful work and your loving labor and your endurance due to your hope in our Lord Jesus Christ before our God and Father.” (1 Thessalonians 1:3) Paul attributed fruitful

labor and endurance to hope in Jesus Christ. That hope includes faith in Christ’s coming and in the restoration for which it paves the way. Such a hope can sustain true Christians, or keep them going, in spite of very difficult situations.

Take, for example, Carlos, who lives in São Paulo, Brazil. In August 2003, Carlos discovered that he had cancer. Since then, he has undergone eight operations that resulted in painful and debilitating side effects. Yet, he has continued to be a source of encouragement to others. For instance, while evangelizing on the street in front of a large hospital, he met another one of Jehovah’s Witnesses, whose husband was undergoing chemotherapy. Having experienced the devastating effects of cancer, Carlos was able to give encouragement and comfort to both husband and wife. Afterward, they commented that the conversation was a morale booster for them. Carlos thus experienced the truthfulness of these words of Paul: “God . . . comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.”—2 Corinthians 1:4, *New International Version*.

What helps Carlos find the strength to continue encouraging others in spite of his illness? The hope of Christ’s coming and all that it will accomplish motivates Carlos to keep “doing what is fine.”—Galatians 6:9.

Consider also the case of Samuel, whose brother was murdered just 150 feet from their father’s house. Ten bullets were fired into his brother’s body. The corpse remained on the sidewalk for eight hours while the police investigated the crime. Samuel cannot forget what happened that day. However, he is sustained by the hope that Christ will purge the earth of all wickedness and that the righteous rule that follows will bring blessings to mankind. Samuel often

imagines himself embracing his resurrected brother in Paradise on earth.—Acts 24:15.

What Must You Do?

You will find much comfort in the hope of Christ's coming and what it will accomplish. Jesus Christ is sure to address all the root causes of human problems and of the evils that beset us.

What must you do to enjoy the blessings that Christ's rule will shower upon mankind? Undertake a careful study of God's Word, the Bible. In a prayer to his Father, Jesus said: "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ." (John 17:3) Make it your goal to examine what the Bible teaches. Jehovah's Witnesses in your area will be happy to assist you in this regard. You have our warm invitation to contact them or to write to the publishers of this magazine.

*Christ's coming will lead
to nothing less than the complete
restoration of the earth*

Inset, background only:
Rhino and Lion Park,
Gauteng, South Africa



Jehovah's Word Is Alive

Highlights From the Book of Jeremiah

HOW shocking the catastrophes that Jeremiah proclaimed to his own people must have sounded! The glorious temple that had been a center of worship for over three centuries would be burned to the ground. The city of Jerusalem and the land of Judah would lie desolate, their inhabitants taken captive. A record of these and other judgment proclamations appears in the second-largest book of the Bible, the book of Jeremiah. It also relates what Jeremiah personally experienced as he faithfully carried out his 67-year-long ministry. The information in the book is presented, not in chronological order, but by subject.

Why is the Bible book of Jeremiah of interest to us? Its fulfilled prophecies fortify our faith in Jehovah as the Fulfiller of his promises. (Isaiah 55:10, 11) Jeremiah's work as a prophet and the attitude of the people toward his message find parallels in our day. (1 Corinthians 10:11) Moreover, the record of how Jehovah dealt with his people highlights his qualities and should have a profound effect on us.—Hebrews 4:12.

"TWO BAD THINGS THAT MY PEOPLE HAVE DONE" (Jeremiah 1:1–20:18)

Jeremiah is commissioned as a prophet in the 13th year of the reign of Josiah, the king of Judah, 40 years prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in 607 B.C.E. (Jeremiah 1:1, 2) Proclamations made most-

ly during the remaining 18 years of Josiah's reign expose Judah's badness and pronounce Jehovah's judgments against her. "I will make Jerusalem piles of stones," declares Jehovah, "and the cities of Judah I shall make a desolate waste, without an inhabitant." (Jeremiah 9:11) Why? "Because there are two bad things that my people have done," he says.—Jeremiah 2:13.

The message is also about the restoration of a repentant remnant. (Jeremiah 3:14-18; 12:14, 15; 16:14-21) The messenger, though, is not well-received. "The leading commissioner in the house of Jehovah" strikes Jeremiah and puts him in stocks overnight.—Jeremiah 20:1-3.

Scriptural Questions Answered:

1:11, 12—Why is Jehovah's keeping awake concerning his word associated with "an offshoot of an almond tree"? The almond tree is "one of the first trees to bloom

Jeremiah's pronouncements included Jehovah's judgment against Jerusalem



in the spring." (Verse 11, footnote) Jehovah figuratively kept "getting up early and sending [his prophets]" to warn his people about his judgments and was "keeping awake" until their fulfillment.—Jeremiah 7:25.

2:10, 11—What made the deeds of the unfaithful Israelites so unusual? While pagan nations westward to Kittim and eastward to Kedar might bring in deities of other nations to add to their own, the idea of totally replacing their gods with foreign ones was unheard of. However, the Israelites abandoned Jehovah, exchanging the glory of the living God for lifeless idols.

3:11-22; 11:10-12, 17—Why did Jeremiah include the northern ten-tribe kingdom in his pronouncements, even though Samaria had fallen in 740 B.C.E.? This was because the destruction of Jerusalem in 607 B.C.E. was an expression of Jehovah's judgment on the entire nation of Israel, not on Judah alone. (Ezekiel 9:9, 10) Moreover, after its fall, the interests of the ten-tribe kingdom continued to be represented in Jerusalem, since the messages of God's prophets continued to include the Israelites.

4:3, 4—What is the meaning of this command? Unfaithful Jews needed to prepare, soften, and cleanse the soil of their hearts. They had to remove "the foreskins" of their hearts, that is, get rid of unclean thoughts, feelings, and motives. (Jeremiah 9:25, 26; Acts 7:51) This called for a change in lifestyle—from carrying on what was bad to doing what brought God's blessing.



How did Jehovah 'use his strength' against Jeremiah?

4:10; 15:18—In what sense did Jehovah deceive his renegade people? In Jeremiah's day, there were prophets 'prophesying in falsehood.' (Jeremiah 5:31; 20:6; 23:16, 17, 25-28, 32) Jehovah did not prevent them from proclaiming misleading messages.

16:16—What is implied by Jehovah's "sending for many fishers" and "for many hunters"? This may refer to the sending forth of enemy forces to look for unfaithful Jews upon whom Jehovah would execute his judgment. In view of what Jeremiah 16:15 states, however, the verse could also allude to the searching out of the repentant Israelites.

20:7—In what way did Jehovah 'use his strength' against Jeremiah and fool him? Because of facing indifference, rejection, and persecution when declaring Jehovah's judgments, Jeremiah might have felt that he did not have the strength to continue. However, Jehovah used his strength against such inclinations, empowering Jeremiah to continue. Jehovah thus fooled Jeremiah

by using him to accomplish what the prophet himself thought he could not do.

Lessons for Us:

1:8. Jehovah may at times deliver his people from persecution—perhaps by raising up fair-minded judges, by replacing hostile officials with reasonable ones, or by imparting to his worshippers the strength to endure.
—1 Corinthians 10:13.

2:13, 18. Unfaithful Israelites did two bad things. They left Jehovah, the sure source of blessing, guidance, and protection. And they

hewed out for themselves their own figurative cisterns by seeking to make military alliances with Egypt and Assyria. In our time, to abandon the true God in favor of human philosophies and theories and worldly politics is to replace “the source of living water” with “broken cisterns.”

6:16. Jehovah exhorts his rebellious people to pause, examine themselves, and find their way back to “the roadways” of their faithful ancestors. Should we not examine ourselves from time to time to see if we are really walking in the way Jehovah wants us to walk?

7:1-15. Putting their trust in the temple, viewing it as some kind of protective charm, did not save the Jews. We should walk by faith, not by sight.—2 Corinthians 5:7.

15:16, 17. Like Jeremiah, we can fight discouragement. We can do so by rejoicing in meaningful personal Bible study, by exalting Jehovah’s name in the ministry, and by avoiding bad associations.

17:1, 2. The sins of the people of Judah made their sacrifices displeasing to Jehovah. Moral uncleanness makes our sacrifices of praise unacceptable.

17:5-8. Humans and institutions are worthy of our trust only to the extent that they act in harmony with God’s will and divine principles. When it comes to such matters as salvation and genuine peace and security, we are wise to put our trust in Jehovah alone.—Psalm 146:3.

20:8-11. We should not allow apathy, opposition, or persecution to dampen our zeal for the Kingdom-preaching work.—James 5: 10, 11.



*“Like these good figs,
so I shall regard the exiles of
Judah.”—Jeremiah 24:5*

“BRING YOUR NECKS UNDER THE YOKE OF THE KING OF BABYLON”

(*Jeremiah 21:1-51:64*)

Jeremiah pronounces judgments against the last four kings of Judah as well as against false prophets, bad shepherds, and corrupt priests. Referring to the faithful remnant as good figs,

Jehovah says: “I will set my eye upon them in a good way.” (*Jeremiah 24:5, 6*) Three prophecies in chapter 25 summarize judgments expounded on in later chapters.

The priests and the prophets scheme to put Jeremiah to death. His message is that they must serve the king of Babylon. To King Zedekiah, Jeremiah says: “Bring your necks

under the yoke of the king of Babylon.” (*Jeremiah 27:12*) However, “the One scattering Israel will himself collect him [Israel] together.” (*Jeremiah 31:10*) For good reason, a promise is made to the Rechabites. Jeremiah is placed “in custody in the Courtyard of the Guard.” (*Jeremiah 37:21*) Jerusalem is destroyed, and most of its inhabitants are taken captive. Jeremiah and his secretary, Baruch, are among those left behind. Despite Jeremiah’s warning not to do so, those frightened people go to Egypt. Chapters 46 to 51 relate the word that Jeremiah speaks concerning the nations.

Scriptural Questions Answered:

22:30—Did this decree annul Jesus Christ’s right to ascend the throne of David? (*Matthew 1:1, 11*) No, it did not. The decree barred any descendant of Jehoiachin from “sitting upon the throne of David . . . in Judah.” Jesus was to rule from the heavens, not from a throne in Judah.

23:33—What is “the burden of Jehovah”? In Jeremiah’s day, the weighty pronouncements uttered by the prophet regarding Jerusalem’s destruction were a burden to his fellow countrymen. In turn, the unresponsive people were such a burden to Jehovah that he would cast them off. Similarly, the Scriptural message regarding the coming destruction of Christendom is a burden to Christendom, and the people who give no heed are wearisome to God.

31:33—How is God’s law written in hearts? When a person loves God’s law so much that he has a fervent desire to do Jehovah’s will, it can be said that God’s law is written in his heart.

32:10-15—What was the purpose of making two deeds of the same transaction? The deed left open was for consultation. The sealed deed served as a backup to verify the accuracy of the open one if needed. By following reasonable legal procedures even when dealing with a relative and fellow believer, Jeremiah set an example for us.

33:23, 24—What are “the two families” spoken of here? One is the royal family through the line of King David, and the other, the priestly family of the descendants of Aaron. With the destruction of Jerusalem and Jehovah’s temple, it appeared that Jehovah had rejected these two families and would no longer have a kingdom over the earth or have his worship revived.

46:22—Why is the voice of Egypt likened to that of a serpent? This may refer either to a hissing retreat or to the lowness of her national voice because of experiencing disaster. The analogy also shows how futile it was for Egyptian Pharaohs to wear a representation of the sacred snake on their headdress for supposed protection by the serpent-goddess Uatchit.

Lessons for Us:

21:8, 9; 38:19. Even at the last hour, Jehovah provided a choice for the unrepentant inhabitants of Jerusalem, who deserved to die. Yes, “many are his mercies.”—2 Samuel 24:14; Psalm 119:156.

31:34. How comforting it is to know that Jehovah does not recall the sins of those he forgives and take action against them in the future!

38:7-13; 39:15-18. Jehovah does not forget our faithful service, which includes ‘ministering to the holy ones.’—Hebrews 6:10.

45:4, 5. As was the case during the last days of Judah, “the last days” of the present system of things is no time to seek “great things,” such as wealth, prominence, or material security.—2 Timothy 3:1; 1 John 2:17.

JERUSALEM AFLAME (Jeremiah 52:1-34)

The year is 607 B.C.E. Zedekiah is in the 11th year of his kingship. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon has laid siege against Jerusalem for the past 18 months. On the seventh day of the fifth month of the 19th year of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign, Nebuzaradan, the chief of the bodyguard, ‘comes to,’ or arrives at, Jerusalem. (2 Kings 25:8) Perhaps from his camp outside the city walls, Nebuzaradan surveys the situation and plans a course of action. Three days later, on the tenth of the month, he ‘comes into,’ or enters, Jerusalem. And he proceeds to set the city aflame.—Jeremiah 52:12, 13.

Jeremiah gives a detailed account of the fall of Jerusalem. His description thus provides a basis for laments, or dirges. These compositions appear in the Bible book of Lamentations.

Look! THE LIGHT IS WONDERFUL!

IF YOU have ever had to grope your way through darkness, you know how frustrating it can be. What relief light brings! You may also have been in a situation that can be likened to darkness. Perhaps this happened when you could not see your way out of a problem. Then gradually you saw light—there was a solution. To emerge from such darkness into light is a wonderful experience.

In the first century, people in general were in spiritual darkness. Addressing those who left their former beliefs and embraced Christianity, the apostle Peter wrote: “[God] called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” (1 Peter 2:9) For them, this was like a change from being in utter darkness to emerging into bright light. It might also be compared to being alone without hope and then becoming a member of a family with a secure future.—Ephesians 2:1, 12.

“You Have Left the Love You Had at First”

The early Christians found “the truth”—the true Christian faith. (John 18:37) They saw the wonderful light of truth and made the transition from spiritual darkness to illuminating light. With the passing of time, however, the initial enthusiasm and zeal of some Christians cooled off. By the end of the first century, for example, a serious problem had developed in the congregation in Ephesus. The resurrected Jesus Christ identified the problem, saying: “I hold this against

you, that you have left the love you had at first. Therefore remember from what you have fallen, and repent and do the former deeds.” (Revelation 2:4, 5) Christians in Ephesus needed to reawaken their love for God and for the truth.

What about us? We too have experienced the joy of seeing the light, of coming to know the wonderful truth of God’s Word. We have come to love the truth. But difficulties common to mankind can diminish our love for the truth. Added to this may be the problems peculiar to “the last days.” We are living in a world characterized by “critical times hard to deal with”—a world populated by people who are “lovers of themselves, lovers of money, self-assuming, haughty, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, disloyal.” (2 Timothy 3:1, 2) Their influence can dampen our zeal and cause our love for Jehovah to cool off.

If we have lost the love we had at first, we need to ‘remember from what we have fallen and repent.’ We need to return to our former spiritual state. Moreover, we must take care not to allow our appreciation for the truth to wane. How vital it is that all of us maintain a positive and cheerful outlook and keep our love for God and his truth alive!

‘The Truth That Sets Us Free’

The light of Scriptural truth is wonderful because the Bible answers important ques-

tions that have perplexed mankind for millennia. Among such questions are these: Why are we here? What is the purpose of life? Why does evil exist? Is there life after death? Jehovah has enlightened us with wonderful doctrinal truths. Should we not be grateful at heart? May we never take for granted what we have learned!

Jesus told his disciples: "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:32) Jesus' ransom sacrifice has made possible freedom from sin and death. But these precious truths have also set us free from the ignorance and uncertainties of a world enveloped in darkness. Appreciatively meditating on what we have learned will help us to fortify our love for Jehovah and for his Word.

To Christians in Thessalonica, the apostle Paul wrote: "When you received God's word, which you heard from us, you accepted it, not as the word of men, but, just as it truthfully is, as the word of God, which is also at work in you believers." (1 Thessalonians 2:13) The Thessalonians heard and "accepted the word [of God] with joy." They were no longer "in darkness." Rather, they had become "sons of light." (1 Thessalonians 1:4-7; 5:4, 5) Those Christians came to know that Jehovah is the Creator and that he is almighty, wise, loving, and merciful. Like other followers of Christ, they also learned that Jehovah made provision for the blotting out of their sins through the ransom sacrifice of his Son, Jesus Christ.—Acts 3:19-21.

Although the Thessalonians did not know all there is to know about the truth, they knew where to look for knowledge. The inspired Scriptures can make the man of God "fully competent, completely equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16, 17) The Christians in Thessalonica could continue to study, experiencing time and again that the light from God is truly wonderful. They had

reason to rejoice at all times. (1 Thessalonians 5:16) And so do we.

A Light to Our Roadway

Stating a reason why the light is marvelous, the psalmist sang: "Your word is a lamp to my foot, and a light to my roadway." (Psalm 119:105) The divine guidance we receive from God's Word can help us to chart a sure course and enjoy a meaningful life. We need not be like a ship adrift. Knowing and applying the truth protects us from being "tossed about as by waves and carried hither and thither by every wind of teaching." —Ephesians 4:14.

"Do not put your trust in nobles, nor in the son of earthling man, to whom no salvation belongs," states the Bible. It also says: "Happy is the one who has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in Jehovah his God." (Psalm 146:3, 5) Moreover, placing confidence in Jehovah helps us to overcome fear and anxiety. The apostle Paul wrote: "Do not be anxious over anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God; and the peace of God that excels all thought will guard your hearts and your mental powers by means of Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6, 7) Being led by the light of God's Word truly benefits us.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Faith in Bible Prophecy
Preserves Life

Offering Sacrifices
That Please God

Humbly Submitting to
Loving Shepherds

Shine as Illuminators in the World

Yet another reason why the light from God's Word is wonderful is that it opens the door to the most lofty assignment available to humans. Jesus instructed his followers: "Go . . . and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit, teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you. And, look! I am with you all the days until the conclusion of the system of things." He prefaced the command by saying: "All authority has been given me in heaven and on the earth."

—Matthew 28:18-20.

Consider who is assisting true Christians in the work of preaching the good news and teaching Bible truths to people of all the nations. Jesus promised his followers that he would be with them. He has indeed been helping them and supporting them in their ministry as they 'let their light shine' in that way and through other "fine works." (Matthew 5:14-16) Angels are also involved in this evangelizing work. (Revelation 14:6) And what about Jehovah God? The apostle Paul

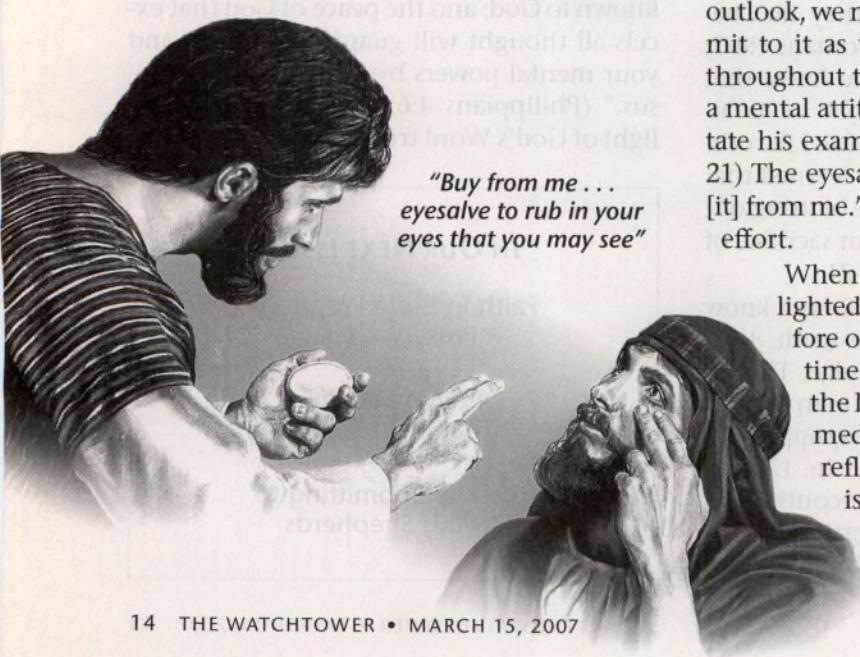
wrote: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God kept making it grow." What a privilege it is to be among "God's fellow workers"!—1 Corinthians 3:6, 9.

Think, too, of how our efforts in this God-assigned work are blessed. There is nothing to compare with our God-given privilege of "shining as illuminators in the world." By reflecting the light from God's Word in our speech and actions, we are able to provide real help to honesthearted individuals. (Philippians 2:15) And we can rejoice as we zealously preach and teach, 'for God is not unrighteous so as to forget our work and the love we showed for his name.'—Hebrews 6:10.

'Buy Eyesalve to Rub in Your Eyes'

In a message to the first-century congregation in Laodicea, Jesus said: "Buy from me . . . eyesalve to rub in your eyes that you may see. All those for whom I have affection I reprove and discipline." (Revelation 3:18, 19) The sure remedy for spiritual blindness is "eyesalve"—the teachings and discipline of Jesus. If we want to maintain a spiritually healthy outlook, we must accept his counsel and submit to it as well as to the guidance found throughout the Bible. We should also adopt a mental attitude like that of Christ and imitate his example. (Philippians 2:5; 1 Peter 2:21) The eyesalve is not free. Jesus said: "Buy [it] from me." The cost involves our time and effort.

When we leave a dark area and enter a lighted room, it may take a while before our eyes adjust. Similarly, it takes time to study God's Word and to see the light of the truth. It takes time to meditate on what we learn and to reflect on how precious the truth is. The cost, though, is not too great. Why? Because the light is wonderful!



"Buy from me . . .
eyesalve to rub in your
eyes that you may see"

How Hannah Found Peace

A FAITHFUL woman raises her voice in a prayer that lauds Jehovah. She feels that God has lifted her out of the dust, replacing her dejection with exultation.

The woman's name is Hannah. What has caused the remarkable change in how she feels? Why is she now so joyful? How can we benefit from her experience? To find the answers to these questions, let us consider Hannah's story.

A Family Under Stress

Hannah is one of the two wives of Elkanah, a Levite who lives in the territory of Ephraim. (1 Samuel 1:1, 2a; 1 Chronicles 6:33, 34) Although polygamy was not part of God's original purpose for mankind, it is permitted and regulated under the Mosaic Law. Elkanah's family worships Jehovah, but polygamous marriages often produce strife, as illustrated in Elkanah's domestic affairs.

Hannah is barren, whereas Peninnah, Elkanah's other wife, has a number of children. Peninnah is Hannah's rival.—1 Samuel 1:2b.

Barrenness is considered a reproach among Israelite women and even a sign of unworthiness in God's sight. But there is no indication that Hannah's inability to bear children is evidence of divine disfavor. Instead of trying to console Hannah, however, Peninnah uses her own ability to bear children to make her rival miserable.

Journeys to Jehovah's Sanctuary

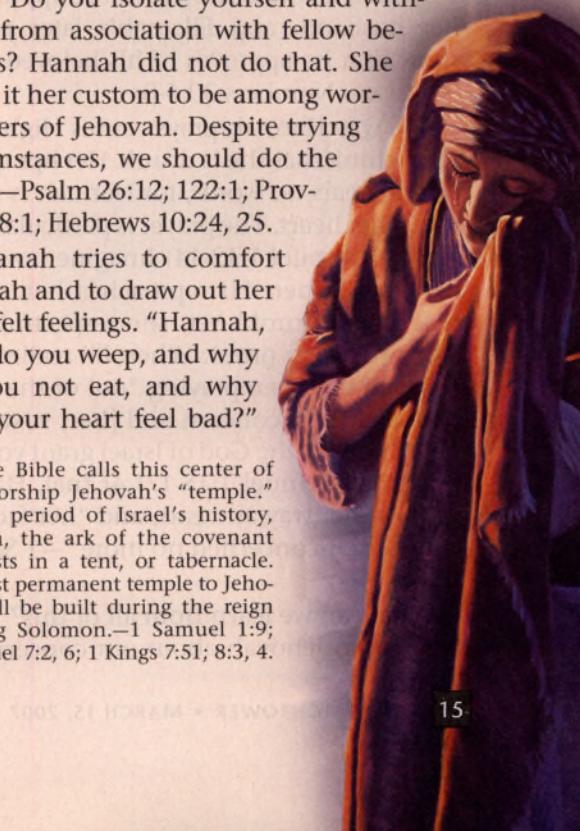
Despite these tensions, Elkanah's family makes an annual journey to offer sacrifices at

Jehovah's sanctuary in Shiloh.* This round-trip of some 40 miles is likely made on foot. These occasions must be especially difficult for Hannah because several portions of the communion sacrifice are given to Peninnah and her children, whereas Hannah receives only one portion. Peninnah seizes such opportunities to vex Hannah, making her feel disconcerted because it seems that Jehovah has "closed up her womb." This torment occurs yearly, with the result that Hannah weeps and will not eat. Trips that should be joyous for her thus become times of anguish. Yet, Hannah makes these journeys to Jehovah's sanctuary.—1 Samuel 1:3-7.

Do you see how Hannah set a good example for us? When downhearted, how do you react? Do you isolate yourself and withdraw from association with fellow believers? Hannah did not do that. She made it her custom to be among worshippers of Jehovah. Despite trying circumstances, we should do the same.—Psalm 26:12; 122:1; Proverbs 18:1; Hebrews 10:24, 25.

Elkanah tries to comfort Hannah and to draw out her heartfelt feelings. "Hannah, why do you weep, and why do you not eat, and why does your heart feel bad?"

* The Bible calls this center of true worship Jehovah's "temple." In this period of Israel's history, though, the ark of the covenant still rests in a tent, or tabernacle. The first permanent temple to Jehovah will be built during the reign of King Solomon.—1 Samuel 1:9; 2 Samuel 7:2, 6; 1 Kings 7:51; 8:3, 4.



he asks. "Am I not better to you than ten sons?" (1 Samuel 1:8) Perhaps Elkanah is not aware of Peninnah's unkindness, and Hannah may prefer to suffer in silence rather than complain. In any event, spiritually-minded Hannah seeks peace by turning to Jehovah in prayer.

Hannah Makes a Vow

Communion sacrifices were eaten at Jehovah's sanctuary. After leaving the dining chamber, Hannah prays to God. (1 Samuel 1:9, 10) "O Jehovah of armies," she begs, "if you will without fail look upon the affliction of your slave girl and actually remember me, and you will not forget your slave girl and actually give to your slave girl a male offspring, I will give him to Jehovah all the days of his life, and no razor will come upon his head." —1 Samuel 1:11.

Hannah's prayer is specific. She asks for a male child and vows that he will be dedicated to Jehovah as a lifelong Nazirite. (Numbers 6:1-5) Such a vow is subject to the approval of her husband, and Elkanah's later actions show that he approves of his beloved wife's promise.—Numbers 30:6-8.

The way Hannah prays causes High Priest Eli to think that she is drunk. Her lips quiver, but he hears no words, for Hannah is speaking in her heart. The prayer is particularly fervent. (1 Samuel 1:12-14) Imagine how Hannah feels when Eli reproaches her, saying that she is drunk! Yet, she respectfully answers the high priest. When Eli realizes that Hannah has been praying "out of the abundance of [her] concern and [her] vexation," he says: "May the God of Israel grant your petition." (1 Samuel 1:15-17) At that, Hannah goes on her way and eats, and "her face [becomes] self-concerned no more." —1 Samuel 1:18.

What can we learn from all of this? When we pray to Jehovah about our concerns, we

can let him know how we feel and make heartfelt requests. If we can do no more to resolve the problem, we should leave the matter in his hands. There is no better course to follow.—Proverbs 3:5, 6.

After praying fervently, servants of Jehovah are very likely to experience a peace similar to that of Hannah. With respect to prayer, the apostle Paul wrote: "Do not be anxious over anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God; and the peace of God that excels all thought will guard your hearts and your mental powers by means of Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6, 7) When we throw our burden on Jehovah, we must allow him to take care of it. Then, like Hannah, we no longer need to be self-concerned.—Psalm 55:22.

A Son Lent to Jehovah

God now turns his attention to Hannah; she becomes pregnant and gives birth to a son. (1 Samuel 1:19, 20) This is one of the few occasions of Bible record when God assumes responsibility for the birth of one who will be his servant. Elkanah and Hannah's son Samuel is to become Jehovah's prophet, one who is to play an important role in the establishment of Israel's monarchy.

Hannah doubtless begins teaching Samuel from infancy about Jehovah. But does she forget the vow she has made? No, indeed! "As soon as the boy is weaned, I must bring him, and he must appear before Jehovah and dwell there to time indefinite," she says. When Samuel is weaned, perhaps when he is three years of age or somewhat older, Hannah takes him to live at Jehovah's sanctuary, just as she vowed.—1 Samuel 1:21-24; 2 Chronicles 31:16.

After a sacrifice is offered to Jehovah, Hannah and her husband lead Samuel to Eli. Hannah very likely holds her little boy's



Hannah lent Samuel to Jehovah

hand as she says to Eli: "Excuse me, my lord! By the life of your soul, my lord, I am the woman that was standing with you in this place to pray to Jehovah. It was with reference to this boy that I prayed that Jehovah should grant me my petition that I asked of him. And I, in my turn, have lent him to Jehovah. All the days that he does happen to be, he is one requested for Jehovah." Thus begins Samuel's lifetime of special service to God.—1 Samuel 1:25-28; 2:11.

As time passes, Hannah certainly does not forget Samuel. The Scriptures state: "A little sleeveless coat his mother would make for him, and she brought it up to him from year to year when she came up with her husband to sacrifice the yearly sacrifice." (1 Samuel 2:

19) Hannah surely keeps praying for Samuel. On her yearly visits, she undoubtedly encourages him to remain faithful in performing his service to God.

On one such occasion, Eli blesses Samuel's parents and says to Elkanah: "May Jehovah appoint to you an offspring from this wife in place of the thing lent, that was lent to Jehovah." In accord with those words, Hannah and Elkanah are blessed with three other sons and two daughters.—1 Samuel 2:20, 21.

What fine examples Elkanah and Hannah provide for Christian parents! Many mothers and fathers have been willing to lend sons and daughters to Jehovah, so to speak, by encouraging them to pursue some form of the full-time ministry away from home. Such loving parents are to be commended for the sacrifices they make. And Jehovah will reward them.

Hannah's Joyous Prayer

How happy once-barren Hannah becomes! Prayers said by women are rarely recorded in the Scriptures. In Hannah's case, however, we know about two of them. The first contains her sentiments when she was vexed and afflicted, and the second is an exultant prayer of thanksgiving. "My heart does exult in Jehovah," Hannah begins. She rejoices that "even the barren has given birth," and she lauds Jehovah as "an Exalter, a Raiser of a lowly one from the dust." Indeed, "from the ashpit he lifts up a poor one."—1 Samuel 2:1-10.

The inspired account involving Hannah shows that we can be hurt by the imperfections or the spite of others. Yet, we must not allow such trials to rob us of the joy of serving Jehovah. He is the great Hearer of prayer, who responds to the outcries of his faithful people, delivering them from affliction and giving them abundant peace and other blessings.—Psalm 22:23-26; 34:6-8; 65:2.

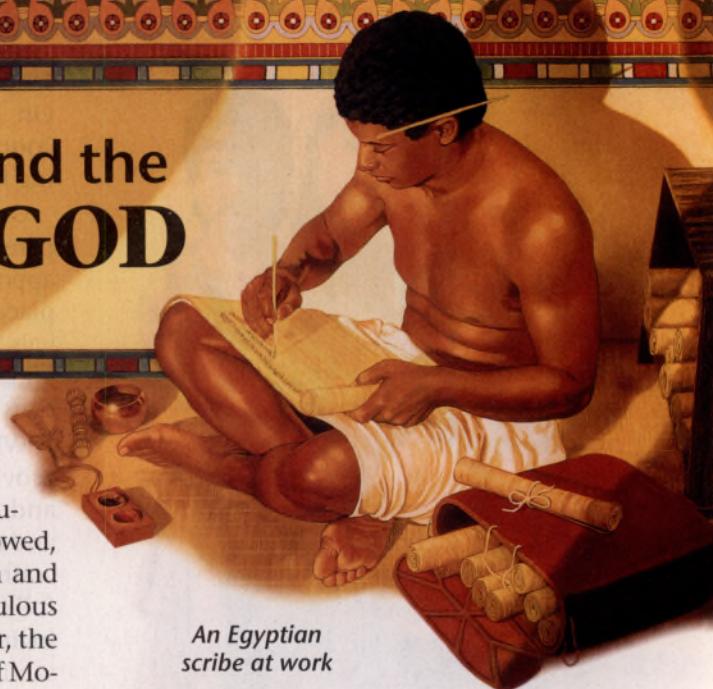
Ancient Scribes and the WORD OF GOD

THE Hebrew Scriptures were completed by the end of the fifth century B.C.E. During the centuries that followed, Jewish scholars, notably the Sopherim and later the Masoretes, proved to be meticulous custodians of the Hebrew text. However, the oldest Bible books go back to the days of Moses and Joshua, a thousand years before the time of the Sopherim. The material upon which those books were written was perishable; so the scrolls must have been copied many times. What is known about the scribal profession in that early period? Were there skilled copyists in ancient Israel?

The oldest Bible manuscripts available today are parts of the Dead Sea Scrolls, some of which date back to the third and second centuries B.C.E. "Earlier copies of any part of the Bible are denied us," explains Professor Alan R. Millard, a scholar of Near Eastern languages and archaeology. He adds: "Neighboring cultures can show how ancient scribes worked, and such knowledge can aid evaluation of the Hebrew text and its history."

The Early Scribal Profession

Historical, religious, legal, scholarly, and literary texts were being produced in Mesopotamia four thousand years ago. Scribal schools prospered, and one of the disciplines they taught was the faithful copying



An Egyptian
scribe at work

of existing texts. Present-day scholars find only minimal changes in Babylonian texts copied again and again for a millennium or more.

The scribal profession was not limited to Mesopotamia. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East* states: "A Babylonian scribe of the mid-second millennium BCE would probably have felt at home in any number of scribal centers throughout Mesopotamia, Syria, Canaan, and even Egypt."^{*}

The scribal profession enjoyed elite status in Egypt in Moses' day. Scribes were constantly copying works of literature. Such activity is depicted by Egyptian tomb decorations that are more than four thousand years old. The above-quoted encyclopedia says of ancient scribes in this early period: "By the second millennium BCE, they had creat-

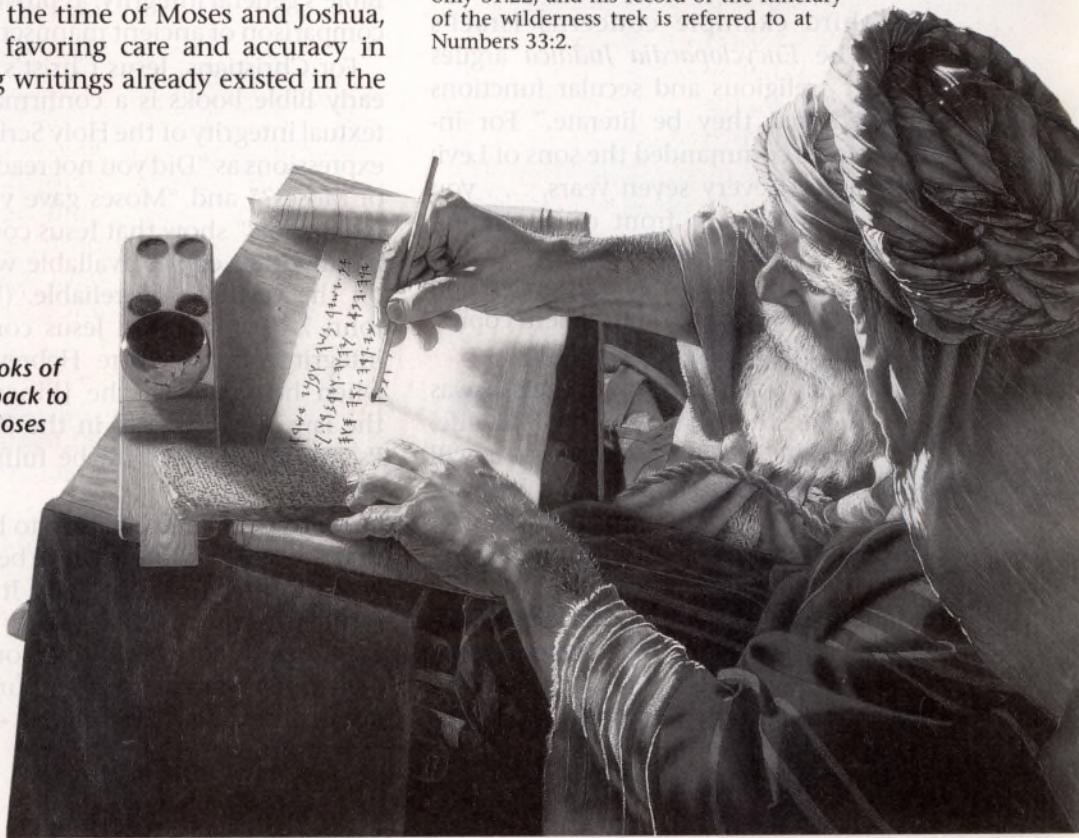
^{*} Joshua, who lived in the mid-second millennium B.C.E., mentions a Canaanite city called Kiriath-sepher, which means "Town of the Book" or "Town of the Scribe."—Joshua 15:15, 16.

ed a canon of literature that exemplified the great civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt and established a code of ethics for the professional scribe."

This "code of ethics" included the use of colophons appended to the main text. Colophons contained the names of the scribe and of the owner of the tablet, the date, the source of the original from which the tablet was copied, the number of lines, and so forth. Very often the scribe added: "According to its original, it was written and checked." These details indicate that ancient copyists were concerned about accuracy.

Professor Millard, quoted earlier, states: "A copying process can be discerned that included checking and correction, a process that had built-in devices to forestall error. Some of these, the counting of lines or words in particular, reemerge in the traditions of the Massoretes in the early Middle Ages." So at the time of Moses and Joshua, an attitude favoring care and accuracy in transmitting writings already existed in the Middle East.

The oldest books of the Bible go back to the days of Moses



Did the Israelites also have qualified copyists? What does the Bible's internal evidence indicate?

Scribes in Ancient Israel

Moses grew up as a member of Pharaoh's household. (Exodus 2:10; Acts 7:21, 22) According to Egyptologists, Moses' education would have included mastering Egyptian script and at least some of the skills of the scribes. In his book *Israel in Egypt*, Professor James K. Hoffmeier states: "There is reason to believe the biblical tradition that ascribes to Moses the ability to record events, compile itineraries, and other scribal activities."¹⁰

The Bible refers to others in ancient Israel who had scribal skills. According to *The*

¹⁰ References to Moses' recording legal matters can be found at Exodus 24:4, 7; 34:27, 28; and Deuteronomy 31:24-26. His recording of a song is noted at Deuteronomy 31:22, and his record of the itinerary of the wilderness trek is referred to at Numbers 33:2.

Cambridge History of the Bible, Moses “appointed literate officials . . . to record decisions and order affairs.” This conclusion is based on Deuteronomy 1:15, which says: “So I [Moses] took the heads of your tribes . . . and put them as heads over you, chiefs of thousands and chiefs of hundreds and chiefs of fifties and chiefs of tens and officers of your tribes.” Who were these officers?

The Hebrew word for “officer” occurs a number of times in Bible texts referring to the days of Moses and Joshua. Various scholars explain that this word means “a secretary for recording,” “one who ‘writes’ or ‘records,’” and “an official who assisted the judge in secretarial work.” The occurrences of this Hebrew word indicate that a considerable number of such secretaries existed in Israel and that they had extensive responsibilities in the early administration of the nation.

The third example concerns Israel’s priests. The *Encyclopaedia Judaica* argues that their “religious and secular functions demanded that they be literate.” For instance, Moses commanded the sons of Levi: “At the end of every seven years, . . . you will read this law in front of all Israel.” The priests became caretakers of the official copy of the Law. They authorized and supervised the writing of subsequent copies.
—Deuteronomy 17:18, 19; 31:10, 11.

Consider how the first copy of the Law was made. During the final month of his life, Moses told the Israelites: “When you will cross the Jordan into the land that Jehovah your God is giving you, you must also set up for yourselves great stones and whitewash them with lime. And you must write upon them all the words of this law.” (Deuteronomy 27:1-4) After the destruction of Jericho and Ai, the Israelites assembled at Mount Ebal, centrally located in the Prom-

ised Land. There Joshua did indeed write upon the stones of an altar “a copy of the law of Moses.” (Joshua 8:30-32) Such inscriptions required both writers and readers. This indicates that the early Israelites had the competence and skill needed to preserve their sacred texts accurately.

Integrity of the Scriptures

After the days of Moses and Joshua, various other Hebrew scrolls were produced, and handwritten copies of them were made. As these copies wore out or succumbed to the effects of humidity or mold, they had to be replaced. This process of copying went on for centuries.

Despite the care taken by Bible copyists, some errors inevitably crept in. But did the copyists’ mistakes substantially change the Bible text? No. On the whole, these errors are insignificant and have no bearing on the Bible’s general integrity, as proved by critical comparison of ancient manuscripts.

For Christians, Jesus Christ’s view of the early Bible books is a confirmation of the textual integrity of the Holy Scriptures. Such expressions as “Did you not read in the book of Moses?” and “Moses gave you the Law, did he not?” show that Jesus considered the handwritten copies available when he was on the earth to be reliable. (Mark 12:26; John 7:19) Moreover, Jesus confirmed the integrity of the entire Hebrew Scriptures when he said: “All the things written in the law of Moses and in the Prophets and Psalms about me must be fulfilled.”—Luke 24:44.

We therefore have reason to be confident that the Holy Scriptures have been accurately transmitted from antiquity. It is just as the inspired prophet Isaiah stated: “The green grass has dried up, the blossom has withered; but as for the word of our God, it will last to time indefinite.”—Isaiah 40:8.

ANGELS—HOW THEY AFFECT MANKIND

"After these things I saw another angel descending from heaven, with great authority . . . And he cried out with a strong voice, saying: 'She has fallen! Babylon the Great has fallen!'"—REVELATION 18:1, 2.

WHILE in exile on the island of Patmos, the aged apostle John is favored with prophetic visions. He beholds thrilling events as “by inspiration” he comes to be in “the Lord’s day.” That day begins with the enthronement of Jesus Christ in 1914 and runs clear down to the end of his Thousand Year Reign.—Revelation 1:10.

² Jehovah God did not give this revelation directly to John. He used a channel. Revelation 1:1 states: “A revelation by Jesus Christ, which God gave him, to show his slaves the things that must shortly take place. And he sent forth his angel and presented it in signs through him to his slave John.” Jehovah, through Jesus, used an angel to make known to John the wonderful things regarding “the Lord’s day.” At one point, John also “saw another angel descending from heaven, with great authority.” What was this angel’s assignment? “He cried out with a strong voice, saying: ‘She has fallen! Babylon the Great has fallen!’” (Revelation 18:1, 2) This powerful angel was privileged to make an announcement about the fall of Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion. Thus, there can be no doubt that Jehovah uses angels in an important way in carrying out his will. Before examining in detail the role that angels play in God’s purpose and how we are affected by them, let us consider the origin of these spirit creatures.

1, 2. What shows that Jehovah uses angels in carrying out his will?

How Did Angels Come to Exist?

³ Millions of people today believe that angels exist. But many have mistaken ideas about them and their origin. For example, some religious people think that when a loved one dies, that person is called to join God and becomes an angel. Is that what God’s Word teaches about the creation, the existence, and the purpose of angels?

⁴ The angel foremost in power and authority—the chief angel—is named Michael the archangel. (Jude 9) He is none other than Jesus Christ. (1 Thessalonians 4:16) Countless ages ago when Jehovah purposed to be a Creator, the very first of his creations was this angelic Son. (Revelation 3:14) Later, through this firstborn Son, Jehovah created all other spirit creatures. (Colossians 1:15-17) Referring to these angelic creatures as his sons, Jehovah asked the patriarch Job: “Where did you happen to be when I founded the earth? Tell me, if you do know understanding. . . . Who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars joyfully cried out together, and all the sons of God began shouting in applause?” (Job 38:4, 6, 7) Clearly, the angels are God’s creation, and they came into existence long before humans.

- ⁵ “God is a God, not of disorder, but
3. What misconception about angels do many people have?
4. What do the Scriptures tell us about the origin of angels?
5. How are angels organized?

of peace," states 1 Corinthians 14:33. Accordingly, Jehovah has his spirit sons organized into three basic categories: (1) seraphs, who serve as attendants at God's throne, declare his holiness, and keep his people spiritually clean; (2) cherubs, who uphold Jehovah's majesty; and (3) other angels who carry out his will. (Psalm 103:20; Isaiah 6:1-3; Ezekiel 10:3-5; Daniel 7:10) What are some ways in which these spirit creatures affect humans?—Revelation 5:11.

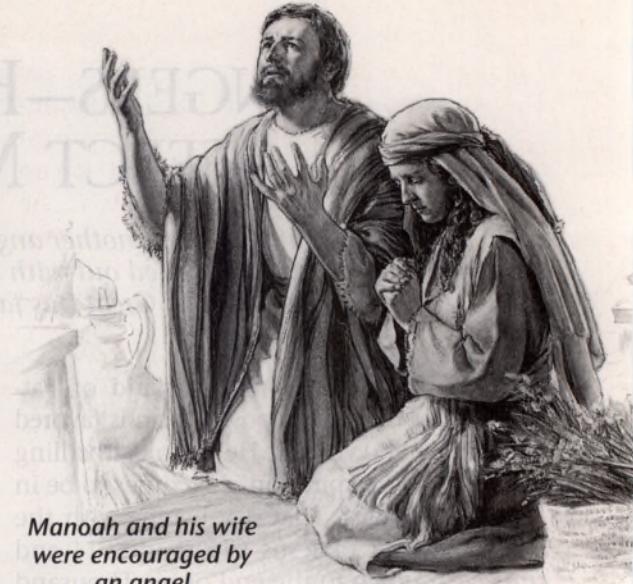
What Role Do Angels Play?

⁶ The first direct reference to spirit creatures is made at Genesis 3:24, where we read: "[Jehovah] drove the man out and posted at the east of the garden of Eden the cherubs and the flaming blade of a sword that was turning itself continually to guard the way to the tree of life." These cherubs made it impossible for Adam and Eve to reenter their original garden home. That was at the beginning of human history. What role have angels played since then?

⁷ Angels are mentioned nearly 400 times in the Bible. Both the Hebrew and the Greek words for "angel" can be translated "messenger." Angels have thus served as a means of communication between God and mankind. As noted in the first two paragraphs of this article, Jehovah used an angel to deliver his message to the apostle John.

⁸ Angels are also used to give support and encouragement to God's servants on earth. Back in the time of the Judges in Israel, for example, Manoah and his barren wife ear-

6. How did Jehovah use cherubs in connection with the garden of Eden?
7. What does the meaning of the original-language words for "angel" show about one of the roles angels play?
- 8, 9. (a) How did visits from an angel affect Manoah and his wife? (b) What can parents learn from Manoah's encounter with God's angel?



Manoah and his wife were encouraged by an angel

nestly desired a child. Jehovah sent his angel to inform Manoah's wife that she would have a son. The account tells us: "Look! you will be pregnant, and you will certainly give birth to a son, and no razor should come upon his head, because a Nazirite of God is what the child will become on leaving the belly; and he it is who will take the lead in saving Israel out of the hand of the Philistines."—Judges 13:1-5.

⁹ The wife of Manoah eventually gave birth to a son, Samson, who became famous in Bible history. (Judges 13:24) Before the child was born, Manoah requested that the angel return to them to instruct them as to what they ought to do in the upbringing of the boy. Manoah asked: "What will become the child's mode of life and his work?" Jehovah's angel repeated the instructions he had given to Manoah's wife. (Judges 13:6-14) How encouraged Manoah must have felt! Angels do not visit individuals in the same way today, but like Manoah, parents can seek Jehovah's mind when training their children.—Ephesians 6:4.

¹⁰ There was an impressive example of angelic support in the days of Elisha the prophet. Elisha was staying in Dothan, a city in Israel. One day when Elisha's servant got up early in the morning and looked outside, he saw that the city was surrounded by horses and war chariots. The king of Syria had sent a powerful military force to capture Elisha. How did Elisha's attendant react? Fearful, perhaps panic-stricken, he cried out: "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" To him, all seemed lost. But Elisha answered: "Do not be afraid, for there are more who are with us than those who are with them." What did he mean?—2 Kings 6:11-16.

¹¹ Elisha was aware that angelic hosts were present to support him. However, his servant saw nothing. So "Elisha began to pray and say: 'O Jehovah, open his eyes, please, that he may see.' Immediately Jehovah opened the attendant's eyes, so that he saw; and, look! the mountainous region was full of horses and war chariots of fire all around Elisha." (2 Kings 6:17) The attendant could then see the angelic hosts. With spiritual insight, we too can perceive that

10, 11. (a) How were Elisha and his servant affected by the invading Syrian army? (b) How can we benefit from contemplating this event?

gels, all under the direction of Jehovah and Christ, lend support and protection to Jehovah's people.

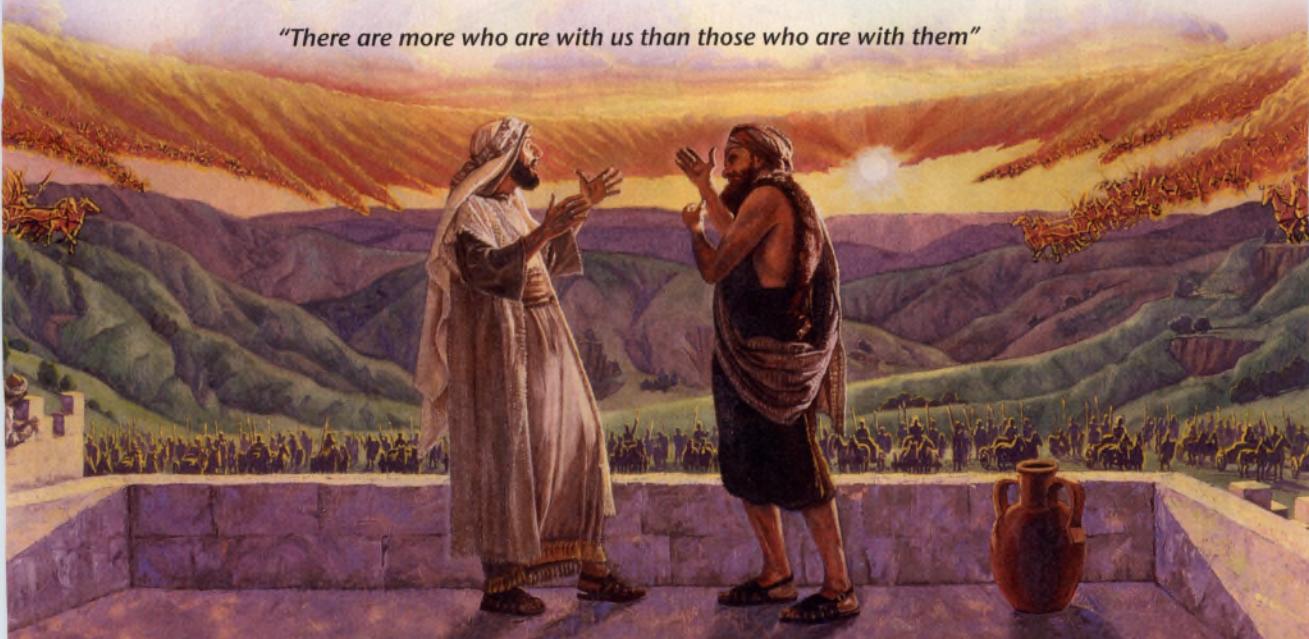
Angelic Support in the Time of Christ

¹² Consider the support that the virgin Jewess Mary received when hearing the news: "You will conceive in your womb and give birth to a son, and you are to call his name Jesus." Just before delivering this startling message, the angel Gabriel, who was sent forth from God, said to her: "Have no fear, Mary, for you have found favor with God." (Luke 1:26, 27, 30, 31) How Mary must have been encouraged and strengthened by these words that assured her of divine favor!

¹³ Another instance of angelic support occurred after Jesus resisted the three temptations that Satan placed before Him in the wilderness. The account tells us that at the conclusion of the tests, "the Devil left him, and, look! angels came and began to minister to him." (Matthew 4:1-11) Something similar happened on the night before Jesus was to die. In anguish, Jesus bent his knees and began to pray, saying: "Father,

12. What support did Mary receive from the angel Gabriel?
13. How did angels support Jesus?

"There are more who are with us than those who are with them"



if you wish, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, let, not my will, but yours take place.' Then an angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him." (Luke 22:42, 43) But what kind of angelic support do we have today?

Angelic Support in Modern Times

¹⁴ When we consider the modern-day history of the preaching work of Jehovah's Witnesses, do we not see evidence of angelic support? For example, Jehovah's people were able to withstand the onslaught of Nazism in Germany and Western Europe before and during World War II (1939-45). Under Catholic Fascist regimes in Italy, Spain, and Portugal, they had to withstand persecution even longer. And for decades, they endured persecution in the former Soviet Union and its satellite nations. Not to be

14. What persecution have Jehovah's Witnesses had to endure in modern times, and what has been the result?

overlooked is the persecution that the Witnesses have endured in some African nations.* In more recent times, Jehovah's servants have suffered ferocious persecution in the country of Georgia. Satan has done everything in his power to put an end to the activity of Jehovah's Witnesses. Yet, as an organization, they have survived such opposition and have prospered. This is, in part, due to the protective shield that the angels have provided.—Psalm 34:7; Daniel 3:28; 6:22.

¹⁵ Jehovah's Witnesses take to heart their commission to preach the good news of God's Kingdom earth wide and to make disciples by teaching Bible truth to interest-

* For detailed accounts of these waves of persecution, see the *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses* for 1983 (Angola), 1972 (Czechoslovakia), 2000 (Czech Republic), 1992 (Ethiopia), 1974 and 1999 (Germany), 1982 (Italy), 1999 (Malawi), 2004 (Moldova), 1996 (Mozambique), 1994 (Poland), 1983 (Portugal), 1978 (Spain), 2002 (Ukraine), and 2006 (Zambia).

15, 16. What angelic support do Jehovah's Witnesses receive in their worldwide ministry?



ed people everywhere. (Matthew 28:19, 20) However, they are well-aware that they cannot fulfill this commission without support from the angels. Therefore, what is stated at Revelation 14:6, 7 has been a constant source of encouragement to them. There we read: "I [the apostle John] saw another angel flying in midheaven, and he had everlasting good news to declare as glad tidings to those who dwell on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people, saying in a loud voice: 'Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of the judgment by him has arrived, and so worship the One who made the heaven and the earth and sea and fountains of waters.'"

¹⁶ These words clearly show that the great worldwide evangelizing work of Jehovah's Witnesses has angelic backing and direction. Jehovah is using his angels to direct sincere people to his Witnesses. The angels have also guided the Witnesses to deserving ones. This would explain why it is that on so many occasions—too often to be just coincidence—one of Jehovah's Witnesses meets a person at the precise time that he or she is going through a crisis and needs spiritual help.

A Dramatic Role in the Near Future

¹⁷ In addition to serving as messengers and strengthening aids to Jehovah's worshippers, angels serve another purpose. In times past, they carried out divine judgments. Back in the eighth century B.C.E., for example, Jerusalem was threatened by a vast horde of Assyrian soldiers. How did Jehovah respond? He said: "I shall certainly defend this city to save it for my own sake and for the sake of David my servant." The Bible account tells us what happened: "It came about on that night that the angel of Jehovah proceeded to go out and strike down a hundred and eighty-

17. How did the Assyrians fare against just one angel?

five thousand in the camp of the Assyrians. When people rose up early in the morning, why, there all of them were dead carcasses." (2 Kings 19:34, 35) How puny man's armies are when compared with the strength of just one angel!

¹⁸ Angels will serve as God's executional forces in the near future. Very soon now, Jesus will come "with his powerful angels in a flaming fire." Their mission will be to bring "vengeance upon those who do not know God and those who do not obey the good news about our Lord Jesus." (2 Thessalonians 1:7, 8) What an effect this action will have on mankind! Those who refuse to respond to the good news of God's Kingdom now being declared earth wide will suffer destruction. Only those who seek Jehovah, righteousness, and meekness will be "concealed in the day of Jehovah's anger" and be unharmed. —Zephaniah 2:3.

¹⁹ We can be grateful that Jehovah uses his powerful angels to support and strengthen his worshippers on earth. Our appreciation for the role that angels play in God's purpose is particularly comforting, since there are angels who have rebelled against Jehovah and have come under Satan's leadership. The following article will discuss what measures true Christians can take to protect themselves from the powerful influence of Satan the Devil and his demons.

18, 19. What dramatic role will angels play in the near future, and how will that affect mankind?

What Did You Learn?

- How did angels come into existence?
- How were angels used in Bible times?
- What does Revelation 14:6, 7 reveal about the activity of angels today?
- What dramatic role will angels play in the near future?

DEMONS—HOW CAN WE RESIST THEM?

"Angels that did not keep their original position but forsook their own proper dwelling place [God] has reserved with eternal bonds under dense darkness for the judgment of the great day."—JUDE 6.

KEEM your senses, be watchful," warns the apostle Peter. "Your adversary, the Devil, walks about like a roaring lion, seeking to devour someone." (1 Peter 5:8) Concerning the demons, the apostle Paul says: "I do not want you to become sharers with the demons. You cannot be drinking the cup of Jehovah and the cup of demons; you cannot be partaking of 'the table of Jehovah' and the table of demons."—1 Corinthians 10:20, 21.

2 Who, though, are Satan the Devil and the demons? How and when did they come into existence? Did God create them? How powerful is their influence over humans? What defense, if any, do we have against them?

How Did Satan and the Demons Come to Be?

3 Early in human history, when mankind had its start in the garden of Eden, an angel of God became rebellious. Why? Because he was not satisfied with his role in Jehovah's heavenly arrangement. With the creation of Adam and Eve, he saw an opportunity to divert their obedience and worship away from

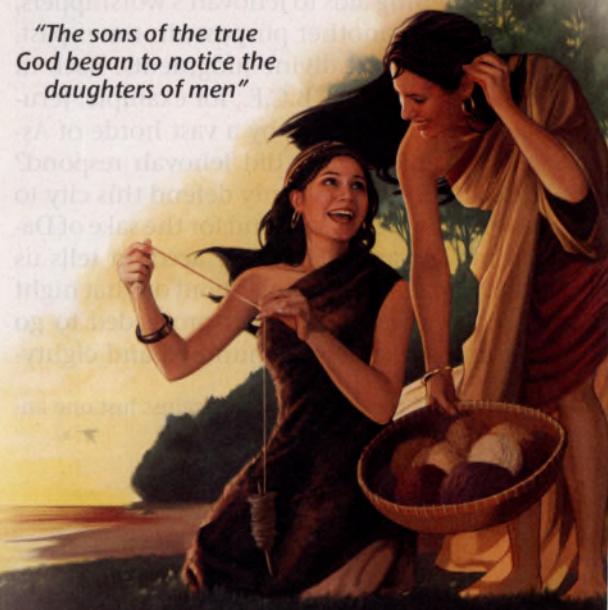
- 1, 2. What questions arise about Satan the Devil and the demons?
3. How did an angel of God become Satan the Devil?

the true God and to himself. By rebelling against God and by inducing the first human pair to pursue a sinful course, this angel made himself Satan the Devil. In time, other angels got involved in his rebellion. How?—Genesis 3:1-6; Romans 5:12; Revelation 12:9.

4 The inspired Scriptures tell us that sometime before the great Flood of Noah's day, certain angels began to take an unusual interest in the women on earth. For a wrong purpose, "the [heavenly] sons of the true God began to notice the daughters of men, that they were good-looking," states the Bi-

4. What did some rebellious angels do before the Flood of Noah's day?

"The sons of the true God began to notice the daughters of men"



ble, "and they went taking wives for themselves, namely, all whom they chose." These unions were unnatural, and they produced hybrid offspring known as Nephilim. (Genesis 6:2-4) The spirit creatures who thus disobeyed God joined in Satan's rebellion against Jehovah.

⁵ When Jehovah brought the Flood upon mankind, the Nephilim and their human mothers perished. The rebel angels were forced to dematerialize their human bodies and return to the spirit realm. However, they could not resume "their original position" with God. Rather, they were consigned to "dense [spiritual] darkness," known as Tartarus.—Jude 6; 2 Peter 2:4.

⁶ Ever since the wicked angels lost "their original position," they have been the demon companions of Satan and have served his evil interests. From that time onward, the demons have no longer had the power to materialize human bodies. However, they can entice men and women to engage in various forms of sexual perversion. Demons also actively deceive mankind by means of spiritism, which can involve such things as magic spells, voodoo, and spirit mediums. (Deuteronomy 18:10-13; 2 Chronicles 33:6) The destiny of the wicked angels is the same as that of the Devil—eternal annihilation. (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10) In the meantime, though, we need to stand firm and resist them. We are wise to consider how powerful Satan is and how we can successfully resist him and his demons.

How Powerful Is Satan?

⁷ Satan has maligned Jehovah throughout history. (Proverbs 27:11) And he has influ-

5. How were the rebels affected when Jehovah brought about destruction by means of the great Flood?

6. How do the demons deceive people?

7. What power does Satan have over the world?

enced a large part of mankind. "The whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one," states 1 John 5:19. That is why the Devil could tempt Jesus by offering him the authority and the glory of "all the kingdoms of the inhabited earth." (Luke 4:5-7) Concerning Satan, the apostle Paul says: "If, now, the good news we declare is in fact veiled, it is veiled among those who are perishing, among whom the god of this system of things has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, that the illumination of the glorious good news about the Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine through." (2 Corinthians 4:3, 4) Satan is "a liar and the father of the lie," but he portrays himself as "an angel of light." (John 8:44; 2 Corinthians 11:14) He has the power and the methods needed to blind the minds of the world's rulers and their subjects. With propaganda and religious myths and lies, he has deceived mankind.

⁸ Satan's power and influence were evident in the time of the prophet Daniel, some five centuries before our Common Era. When Jehovah sent an angel to deliver a message of encouragement to Daniel, the angel encountered resistance from "the [spirit] prince of the royal realm of Persia." The faithful angel was held up for 21 days until "Michael, one of the foremost princes," came to help him. The same account also speaks of "the [demon] prince of Greece." (Daniel 10:12, 13, 20) And at Revelation 13:1, 2, Satan is portrayed as "the dragon" who gives to the political wild beast "its power and its throne and great authority."

⁹ No wonder the apostle Paul wrote: "We have a wrestling, not against blood and

8. What does the Bible indicate regarding Satan's influence?

9. Against whom are Christians fighting?

flesh, but against the governments, against the authorities, against the world rulers of this darkness, *against the wicked spirit forces in the heavenly places.*" (Ephesians 6:12) Even today, demonic forces under the control of Satan the Devil are behind the scenes, exercising influence on human rulers and on mankind in general, prompting them to commit unspeakable acts of genocide, terrorism, and murder. Let us now examine how we can successfully resist these powerful spirit forces.

What Defense Do We Have?

¹⁰ We cannot resist Satan and his wicked angels in our own strength, whether physical or mental. Paul counsels us: "Go on acquiring power in the Lord and in the mightiness of his strength." We need to turn to God for protection. Paul adds: "Put on the complete suit of armor from God that you may be able to stand firm against the machinations of the Devil . . . Take up the complete suit of armor from God, that you may be able to resist in the wicked day and, after you have done all things thoroughly, to stand firm."—Ephesians 6:10, 11, 13.

¹¹ Paul twice urges his fellow Christians to put on "the complete suit of armor from God." The word "complete" implies that no halfhearted approach would be sufficient to resist demonic attacks. So, what are the vital components of the spiritual armor that Christians today urgently require in order to resist the demons?

"Stand Firm"—How?

¹² Paul explains: "Stand firm,

- 10, 11. How can we resist Satan and his wicked angels?
12. How can Christians gird their loins with truth?

therefore, with your loins girded about with truth, and having on the *breastplate of righteousness.*" (Ephesians 6:14) The two pieces of armor referred to here are a girdle, or a belt, and a breastplate. A soldier had to keep his belt tight in order to protect his loins (hips, groin, and lower abdomen) and to bear the weight of his sword. Likewise, Bible truth needs to be wrapped around us tightly, as it were, so that we live in harmony with it. Do we have a schedule for reading the Bible daily? Is the whole family involved? Do we have a routine to consider the day's text as a family? In addition, do we keep up with the explanations in publications provided by "the faithful and discreet slave"? (Matthew 24:45) If so, we are endeavoring to apply Paul's counsel. We also have videos and DVDs that can provide Scriptural guidance. Keeping a tight hold on the truth can help us make wise decisions and protect us from following a wrong course.

¹³ The literal breastplate served to protect the soldier's chest, heart, and other vital organs. The Christian can protect his figurative heart—the person he is on the inside—by cultivating love for God's righteousness and by adhering to Jehovah's righteous standards. The figurative breastplate protects us from watering down God's Word. As we come to "hate what is bad, and love what is

13. How can we protect our figurative heart?



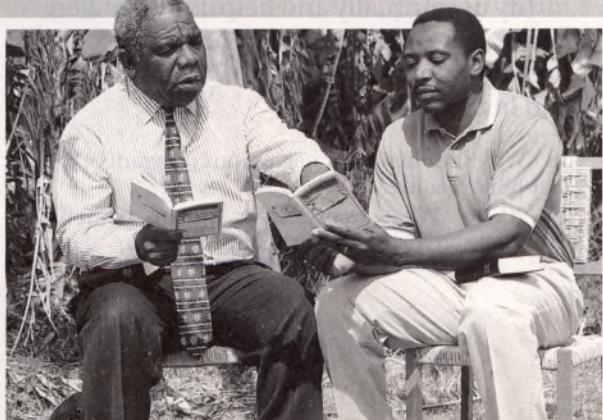
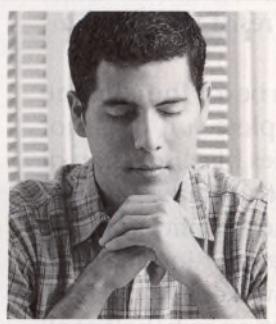
Can you identify the six components of our suit of spiritual armor?

good," we restrain our feet "from every bad path."—Amos 5:15; Psalm 119:101.

¹⁴ The feet of Roman soldiers were usually well shod for long marches along the hundreds of miles of Roman highways that crisscrossed the empire. What does the expression "feet shod with the equipment of the good news of peace" mean for Christians? (Ephesians 6:15) It means that we are prepared for action. We are ready to share the good news of God's Kingdom on every suitable occasion. (Romans 10:13-15) Our being active in the Christian ministry is a protection against Satan's "machinations," or "crafty acts."—Ephesians 6:11; footnote.

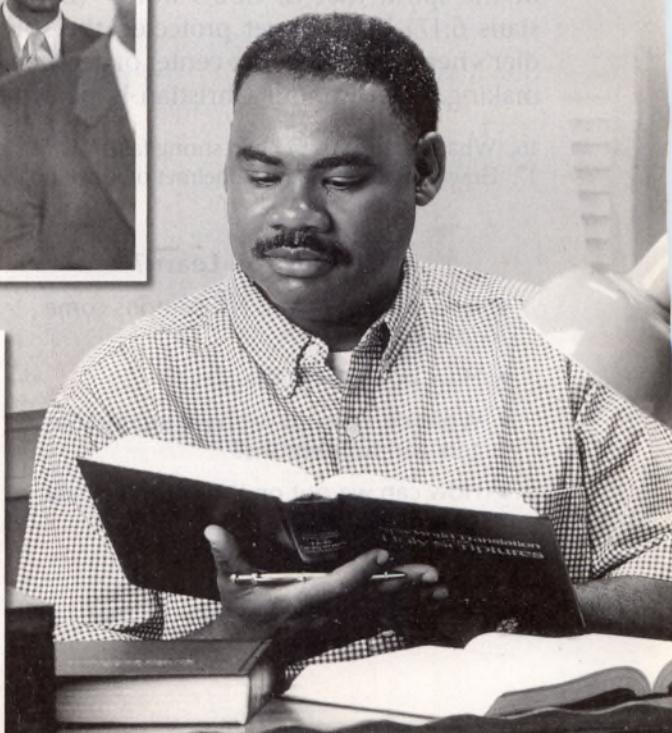
14. What does it mean to have our "feet shod with the equipment of the good news of peace"?

How is sharing in these activities a defense against Satan and his demons?



¹⁵ "Above all things," Paul continues, "take up the large shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the wicked one's burning missiles." (Ephesians 6:16) The advice to take up the large shield of faith is introduced with the expression "above all things," indicating that this piece of armor is very important. There must be no deficiency in our faith. Like a large protective shield, our faith protects us from Satan's "burning missiles." What might these represent today? They could be penetrating insults, lies, and half-truths put out by enemies and apostates trying to weaken our faith. These "missiles" could also be temptations to be materialistic, causing us

15. (a) What shows that the large shield of faith is very important? (b) What "burning missiles" can have a detrimental effect on our faith?



to become preoccupied with buying many consumer goods and even inducing us to compete with those who have fallen into an ostentatious lifestyle. Perhaps they have invested in bigger and better homes and vehicles or make a show of their expensive jewelry and the latest clothing fashions. Regardless of what others do, we must have faith that is strong enough to turn aside these "burning missiles." How do we build and retain strong faith?—1 Peter 3:3-5; 1 John 2:15-17.

¹⁶ We can draw close to God by means of regular personal study of the Bible and by earnest prayers. We can supplicate Jehovah for a strengthened faith and then back up our prayers with the necessary actions. For example, do we carefully prepare for the weekly *Watchtower* Study with a view to participating? Our faith will be strong if we study the Bible and Bible-based publications.—Hebrews 10:38, 39; 11:6.

¹⁷ Paul concludes his description of the suit of spiritual armor with the counsel: "Accept the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, that is, God's word." (Ephesians 6:17) The helmet protected the soldier's head and brain, the center of decision making. Likewise, our Christian hope pro-

16. What can help us to build strong faith?
17. How may we "accept the helmet of salvation"?

What Did You Learn?

- How did Satan and his demons come into existence?
- How powerful is the Devil?
- What defense do we have against Satan and his demons?
- How can we put on the complete suit of armor from God?

tects our mental powers. (1 Thessalonians 5:8) Rather than filling our minds with worldly goals and materialistic dreams, we should focus our thinking on our God-given hope, even as Jesus did.—Hebrews 12:2.

¹⁸ Our final protection against the influence of Satan and his demons is God's word, or message, recorded in the Bible. This is yet another reason why we should not neglect our program of regular Bible reading. A thorough knowledge of God's Word protects us from Satan's lies and demonic propaganda as well as from the embittered outpourings of apostates.

"Carry On Prayer on Every Occasion"

¹⁹ The removal of Satan, his demons, and the wicked world is near. Satan knows he has "a short period of time." He is wrathful and at war with those "who observe the commandments of God and have the work of bearing witness to Jesus." (Revelation 12:12, 17) It is vital that we resist Satan and his demons.

²⁰ How grateful we can be for the admonition to put on the complete suit of armor from God! Paul concludes his discussion of the spiritual armor with this counsel: "With every form of prayer and supplication you carry on prayer on every occasion in spirit. And to that end keep awake with all constancy and with supplication in behalf of all the holy ones." (Ephesians 6:18) Prayer can fortify us spiritually and help us to stay alert. Let us take Paul's words to heart and carry on prayer, for this will help us to resist Satan and his demons.

18. Why should we not neglect our program of regular Bible reading?
- 19, 20. (a) What awaits Satan and his demons?
(b) What can fortify us spiritually?

Questions From Readers

How many of the clean beasts did Noah take into the ark—seven of each clean beast or seven pairs of each?

After Noah finished building the ark, Jehovah told him: "Go, you and all your household, into the ark, because you are the one I have seen to be righteous before me among this generation. Of every clean beast you must take to yourself by sevens, the sire and its mate; and of every beast that is not clean just two, the sire and its mate." (Genesis 7: 1, 2) Some translations, such as *The New English Bible*, *The New Jerusalem Bible*, and *Tanakh—The Holy Scriptures*, render the original Hebrew "seven pairs."

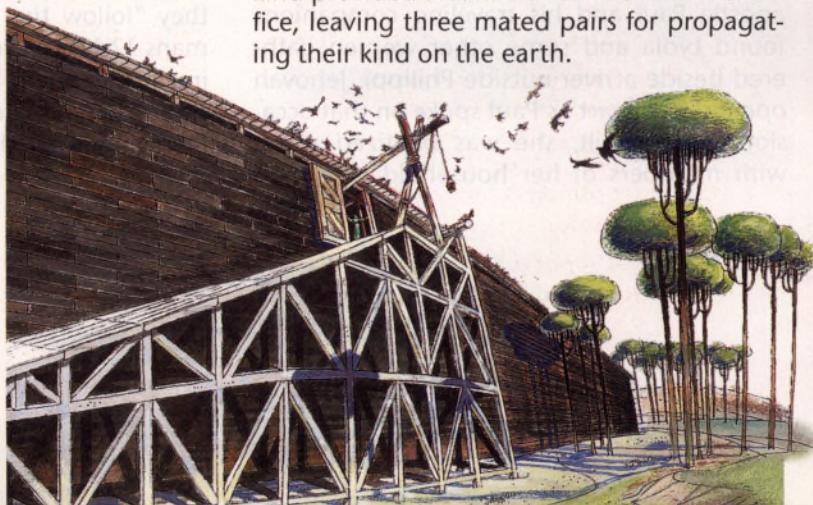
In the original language, the expression "sevens" literally reads "seven seven." (Genesis 7:2, footnote) However, the repetition of a number in the Hebrew language does not necessarily mean that the numbers should be added together. For example, 2 Samuel 21:20 describes "a man of extraordinary size" as having "six fingers on each of his hands and six toes on each of his feet." In Hebrew, the number "six" is repeated. This, though, does not mean that the giant had six pairs of fingers (or, 12) on each hand and six pairs of toes on each foot. The repetition relates only to the distribution of fingers on a hand and of toes on a foot.

What guidance do the grammatical rules of the Hebrew language provide in the matter of repeating numbers? When discussing Genesis 7: 2, 9, William R. Harper's *Introductory Hebrew Method and Manual* states: "Words are often

repeated in order to express the *distributive relation*." Gesenius' *Hebrew Grammar* (Second English Edition) says: "Distributives are expressed . . . by repetition of the cardinal number." It gives as examples Genesis 7:9, 15 and 2 Samuel 21:20, where the repeated numbers are "two" and "six" respectively.

So "seven seven" in Genesis 7:2 does not mean seven pairs, or 14, just as the repeating of "two" does not mean two pairs, or four, in Genesis 7:9, 15. The repetition of a number in each verse merely denotes a distribution—not an addition of the numbers. Hence, while clean animals were taken into the ark "by sevens," of the unclean ones, "just two" were taken.

What, though, of the expression "the sire and its mate" immediately after the word "sevens" at Genesis 7:2? That has led some to think that Noah was instructed to take seven pairs of every kind of clean animal. The clean beasts, however, were preserved not strictly for the purpose of procreation. Genesis 8:20 tells us that after coming out of the ark, "Noah began to build an altar to Jehovah and to take some of all the clean beasts and of all the clean flying creatures and to offer burnt offerings upon the altar." Having on hand the seventh animal from each clean kind provided Noah with an animal for sacrifice, leaving three mated pairs for propagating their kind on the earth.





"She Just Made Us Come"

HOSPITALITY is proverbial in Eastern lands. For example, in India a family may even go hungry in order to feed an unexpected guest. A mother in Iran always stocks the refrigerator with food so that she can extend hospitality to unexpected visitors.

The spirit of such generous giving was evident among many people mentioned in the Bible. One outstanding example is that of Lydia, probably a Jewish proselyte living in Philippi, the principal city of the district of Macedonia. On a certain sabbath day, the apostle Paul and his traveling companions found Lydia and some other women gathered beside a river outside Philippi. Jehovah opened her heart as Paul spoke on that occasion. As a result, she was baptized along with members of her household. She then

entreated the travelers: "If you men have judged me to be faithful to Jehovah, enter into my house." Paul's companion Luke observes: "She just made us come."—Acts 16:11-15.

Like Lydia, Christians today extend hospitality to fellow believers, such as traveling overseers and their wives. The hosts 'just make them come.' In turn, those extending hospitality are blessed with upbuilding conversation and spiritual fellowship. Although most of Jehovah's Witnesses are of limited means, they "follow the course of hospitality." (Romans 12:13; Hebrews 13:2) Their spirit of giving makes them happy. Jesus certainly was right when he said: "There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving."—Acts 20:35.