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THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



**WHAT MAKES A
GOOD LEADER?**



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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The Search for Good Leadership

*"Depart, I say, and let us have done with you.
In the name of God, go!"*—Oliver Cromwell; quoted
by Leopold Amery, member of the British Parliament.



Chamberlain: Photo by Jimmy Sime/Central Press/Getty Images; Amery: Photo by Kurt Hutton/Picture Post/Getty Images; Churchill: The Trustees of the Imperial War Museum (MH 26392)



LEADERSHIP is a basic need of mankind, but not just any leader will do. Even in a family, the father must be up to the task of taking the lead if his wife and children are to be happy. Imagine, then, what is required of a national or world leader! Little wonder that good leaders have proved very hard to find.

Consequently, for thousands of years, uncountable coronations, revolutions, coups, appointments, elections, assassinations, and regime changes have occurred. Kings, prime ministers, princes, presidents, secretaries-general, and dictators have found themselves in and out of power. Unexpected changes have removed even powerful rulers.

World War II had run its destructive course for eight months, and it was not going well for Britain and her allies. To Leopold Amery and others in the government, a change in leadership was needed. Therefore, on May 7, 1940, in the House of Commons, Mr. Amery quoted the words above to Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain. Three days later, Mr. Chamberlain left office, and Winston Churchill took his place.

Top left: Neville Chamberlain

Top right: Leopold Amery

Bottom: Winston Churchill

(See the box "Suddenly out of Power," on page 5.) Still, competent and enduring leadership has proved elusive.

"We Must Make Do"—Or Must We?

It is no wonder, therefore, that many have lost hope when it comes to finding good leadership. In some countries, the people's feelings of apathy and hopelessness become especially evident at election time. Geoff Hill, a journalist in Africa, noted: "Apathy or abstention [from voting] holds sway when people feel powerless to change the misery of their lives. . . . In Africa, when people don't vote, it doesn't necessarily mean they are content. More often, it is a cry for help

from those who feel that no one is listening." Similarly, a newspaper columnist in the United States wrote regarding a pending election: "I wish a perfect candidate were running." He added: "There's no such being. There never is. We must make do."

Has mankind, indeed, no choice but to "make do" with imperfect leaders? Does the

fact that human leaders have been unable to satisfy the needs of their subjects prove that we will never have good leadership? No. Leadership of the highest quality is available. The next article will consider who the ideal leader of mankind is and how his service can benefit many millions of people of all backgrounds—including you.

Who Is the Right Leader for Today?

In 1940, there was a leadership crisis in the British Parliament. Seventy-seven-year-old David Lloyd George, who listened to the debate, had led Britain to victory in World War I, and his many years in politics enabled him to evaluate keenly the work of high officials. In a speech to the House of Commons on May 8, he stated: "The nation is prepared for every sacrifice so long as it has leadership, so long as the Government show clearly what they are aiming at and so long as the nation is confident that those who are leading it are doing their best."



Lloyd George: Photo by Kurt Hutton/Picture Post/Getty Images

THE words of Lloyd George make it clear that people expect their leaders to be competent and to make honest efforts to try to improve things. An election campaign worker put it this way: "When people cast a vote for president, they are casting a vote for someone in whom they are entrusting their lives, their future, their children." Guarding such a trust is a monumental task. Why so?

Our world is beset with problems that defy solution. What leader, for example, has proved himself so wise and powerful that he can eradicate crime and war? Who among today's leaders has the resources and compassion to provide every human with food, clean water, and health care? Who has the

knowledge and determination to protect and restore the environment? Who is competent and powerful enough to ensure that all mankind enjoy a long and happy life?

Humans Cannot Do the Job

It is true that some leaders have achieved a measure of success. However, they can serve at most for a few decades—and then who is next? One of the most competent leaders who ever lived, King Solomon of ancient Israel, pondered this question. He concluded: "I, even I, hated all my hard work at which I was working hard under the sun, that I would leave behind for the man who would come to be after me. And who is there knowing whether he will prove to be wise or fool-

SUDDENLY OUT OF POWER

A ruler can usually count on the respect and support of his subjects if he brings them a reasonable measure of peace and secure living conditions. However, if people lose confidence in him for any reason, someone else may soon be sitting in the seat of power. Following are some examples of conditions that suddenly forced strong rulers out of power.

Bad living conditions. By the late 18th century, many French citizens were forced to live a life that was long on taxes and short on food. These conditions contributed to the French Revolution, which in 1793 sent King Louis XVI to the guillotine.

War. World War I put an end to the rule of

some of the most powerful emperors in history. For example, in 1917 a war-induced food shortage in St. Petersburg, Russia, turned into the February Revolution. This revolt de-throned Czar Nicholas II and led to Communist rule. In November 1918, Germany wanted peace, but the Allies would not stop fighting until a change in rulership had been made. As a result, German Emperor Wilhelm II was forced into exile in the Netherlands.

Desire for different systems of government. In 1989 the Iron Curtain was removed. Regimes that seemed as hard as rock crumbled as their subjects rejected Communism and established different forms of rule.

ish? Yet he will take control over all my hard work at which I worked hard and at which I showed wisdom under the sun. This too is vanity."—Ecclesiastes 2:18, 19.

Solomon did not know whether his successor would continue his good work or tear it all down. To Solomon, the cycle of replacing old rulers with new ones was "vanity." Other Bible translations call this process "futile," or "pointless." One version says: "It doesn't make sense."

At times, violence is used to force a change in rulers. Capable leaders have been cut down as they were doing their work. Abraham Lincoln, a highly esteemed president of the United States, once told an audience: "I have been selected to fill an important office for a brief period, and am now, in your eyes, invested with an influence which will soon pass away." His service was indeed brief. Despite all he did and his desire to do more for the people, President Lincoln led his coun-

try for only four years. At the start of his second term in office, he was murdered by a man who wanted a change in leadership.

Even the best human leaders cannot guarantee their own future. Should you, then, trust them to guarantee yours? The Bible says: "Do not put your trust in nobles, nor in the son of earthling man, to whom no salvation belongs. His spirit goes out, he goes back to his ground; in that day his thoughts do perish." The *Byington* translation renders the last part of verse 4: "That day his goodwill is a total loss."—Psalm 146:3, 4.

The advice not to trust in human leaders may be hard to accept. However, the Bible does not say that mankind will never have good, steady leadership. "Look! A king will reign for righteousness itself," says Isaiah 32:1. Jehovah God, man's Creator, has prepared "a king," a Leader, who will soon take full control of earth's affairs. Who is he? Bible prophecy identifies him.

One Truly Qualified to Lead

Two thousand years ago, an angel told a young Jewish woman named Mary: "You will conceive in your womb and give birth to a son, and you are to call his name Jesus. This one will be great and will be called Son of the Most High; and Jehovah God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule as king over the house of Jacob forever, and there will be no end of his kingdom." (Luke 1:31-33) Yes, Jesus of Nazareth is the King of Bible prophecy.

Religious artwork often portrays Jesus as a baby, as an undernourished weakling, or as an ascetic who passively submits to whatever befalls him. These images do not inspire confidence in him as Ruler. The real Jesus Christ of the Bible, however, grew up to be a vigorous, well-developed man full of zeal and initiative. And he possessed other traits that qualified him for leadership. (Luke 2:52) Following are a few aspects of his outstanding personality.

Jesus maintained perfect integrity. His honest, upright conduct was such that he publicly challenged his enemies to present a valid accusation against him. They could not. (John 8:46) His unhypocritical teachings persuaded many sincere people to become his followers.—John 7:46; 8:28-30; 12:19.

Jesus was completely dedicated to God. He was so determined to finish his God-assigned work that no opponent—human or demon—could deter him. Violent attacks did not frighten him. (Luke 4:28-30) Fatigue and hunger did not discourage him. (John 4:5-16, 31-34) Even though his friends abandoned him, he never swerved from his goal.—Matthew 26:55, 56; John 18:3-9.

Jesus had deep concern for people. He provided food for the hungry. (John 6:10, 11) He gave comfort to the depressed. (Luke 7:11-15) He restored sight, hearing, and health to those needing a cure. (Matthew 12:22;

Luke 8:43-48; John 9:1-6) He gave encouragement to his hardworking apostles. (John, chapters 13-17) He proved to be "the fine shepherd" who cared for his sheep.—John 10:11-14.

Jesus was willing to work. He washed the feet of the apostles in order to teach them an important lesson. (John 13:4-15) His own feet got dirty as he preached the good news along the dusty roads of Israel. (Luke 8:1) Even when he was planning on resting in "a lonely place," he responded when the crowds sought him out for more instruction. (Mark 6:30-34) He thus set an example of diligence for all Christians.—1 John 2:6.

Jesus finished his assignment and passed off the earthly scene. As a reward for his faithfulness, Jehovah God granted him kingship and immortality in the heavens. Of the resurrected Jesus, the Bible says: "Christ, now that he has been raised up from the dead, dies no more; death is master over him no more." (Romans 6:9) You can be assured that he is the best possible Leader of mankind. Once Christ Jesus takes full control over the earth, there will be no need to empower someone else, nor will there ever be a need for change in leadership. He will never be cut off while in office, and his work will not be undone or ruined by an inept successor. But what specifically will he do to benefit mankind?

What This New Leader Will Do

Psalm 72 gives us some prophetic details of how this perfect, immortal King will rule. In verses 7 and 8, we read: "In his days the righteous one will sprout, and the abundance of peace until the moon is no more. And he will have subjects from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth." Under his beneficial rule, earth's inhabitants will enjoy everlasting and unbroken security. He will destroy all existing weapons and will remove



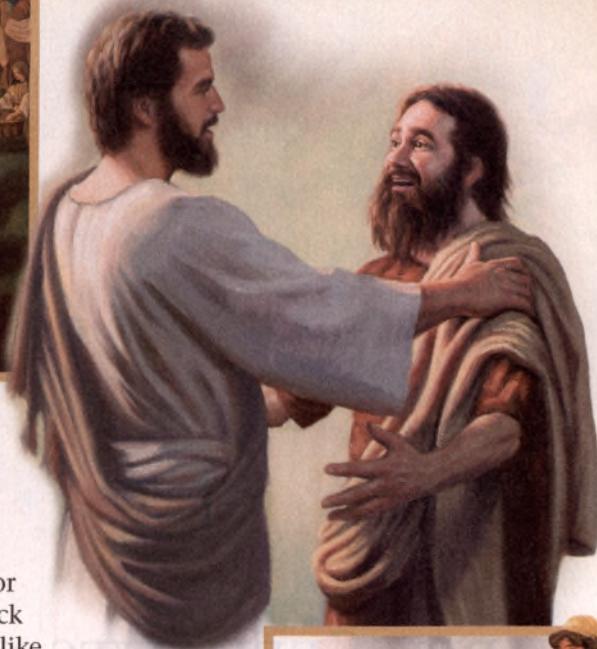
Jesus fed the hungry, healed the sick, and set a fine example for all Christians

from man's heart even the desire for conflict. Those men who today attack others like voracious lions or who act like ill-tempered bears toward their neighbors will have changed their dispositions completely. (Isaiah 11:1-9) Peace will be abundant.

Psalm 72 further says in verses 12 through 14: "He will deliver the poor one crying for help, also the afflicted one and whoever has no helper. He will feel sorry for the lowly one and the poor one, and the souls of the poor ones he will save. From oppression and from violence he will redeem their soul, and their blood will be precious in his eyes." The lowly, poor, and afflicted will become part of one happy human family, unified under the leadership of the King Jesus Christ. Joy, not pain and despair, will characterize their lives.

—Isaiah 35:10.

Verse 16 promises: "There will come to be plenty of grain on the earth; on the top of the mountains there will be an overflow." Hunger is the constant companion of millions on earth today. Politics and greed often prevent the fair distribution of sufficient food, so that multitudes, especially children, die of starva-



tion. But under the rule of Jesus Christ, this problem will vanish. The earth will be blessed with good harvests of delicious food. All mankind will be well fed.

Would you like to enjoy those blessings of good leadership? If so, we encourage you to learn about the Leader who will soon exercise full control over all the earth. Jehovah's Witnesses will gladly help you to do so. You will not be disappointed, for Jehovah God himself says of his Son: "I, even I, have installed my king upon Zion, my holy mountain."—Psalm 2:6.



HAPPY SERVANTS OF JEHOVAH

"Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need."—MATTHEW 5:3.

HAPPINESS is a precious possession of Jehovah's people. The psalmist David exclaimed: "Happy is the people whose God is Jehovah!" (Psalm 144:15) Happiness is a feeling of well-being. The deepest happiness—reaching to the very depths of our being—comes from the awareness that we are blessed by Jehovah. (Proverbs 10:22) Such happiness reflects a close relationship with our heavenly Father and the knowledge that we are doing his will. (Psalm 112:1; 119: 1, 2) Interestingly, Jesus enumerated nine reasons for which we can be counted happy. An examination of these so-called happinesses, or beatitudes, in this and the following article will help us to realize how happy we can be if we faithfully serve "the happy God," Jehovah.—1 Timothy 1:11.

1. What is true happiness, and what does it reflect?

Awareness of Our Spiritual Need

² In 31 C.E., Jesus delivered one of the most famous discourses of all time. It is called the Sermon on the Mount because Jesus gave it on a mountainside overlooking the Sea of Galilee. The Gospel of Matthew relates: "When [Jesus] saw the crowds he went up into the mountain; and after he sat down his disciples came to him; and he opened his mouth and began teaching them, saying: *'Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need, since the kingdom of the heavens belongs to them.'*" Translated literally, Jesus' opening words read: "Happy the poor ones (as) to the spirit," or "Happy are those who are beggars for the spirit." (Matthew 5:1-3; *Kingdom Interlinear*; footnote)

2. On what occasion did Jesus speak about happiness, and what was his opening statement?



Today's English Version reads: "Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor."

³ In his hillside sermon, Jesus pointed out that a person is far happier if he is aware of being in need spiritually. Humble Christians, fully aware of their sinful condition, beg Jehovah for his forgiveness on the basis of Christ's ransom sacrifice. (1 John 1:9) They thus find peace of mind and true happiness.

"Happy is the one whose revolt is pardoned, whose sin is covered."—Psalm 32:1; 119:165.

⁴ Awareness of our spiritual need moves us to read the Bible daily, to absorb spiritual food dispensed "at the proper time" by "the faithful and discreet slave," and to attend Christian meetings regularly. (Matthew 24:45; Psalm 1:1, 2; 119:111; Hebrews 10:25) Love for neighbor makes us aware of the spiritual need of others and prompts us to be zealous in preaching and teaching the good news of the Kingdom. (Mark 13:10; Romans 1:14-16) Sharing Bible truths with others brings us happiness. (Acts 20:20, 35) Our happiness is further deepened when we meditate on the wonderful hope of the Kingdom and the blessings that Kingdom will bring. For the "little flock" of anointed Christians, the Kingdom hope means immortal life in heaven as part of Christ's Kingdom government. (Luke 12:32; 1 Corinthians 15:50, 54) For the "other sheep," it means everlasting life on a paradise earth

3. How does a humble disposition contribute to our happiness?

4. (a) In what ways can we show awareness of our spiritual need and that of others? (b) What adds to our happiness when we are conscious of our spiritual need?

under that Kingdom government.—John 10:16; Psalm 37:11; Matthew 25:34, 46.

How Mourners Can Be Happy

⁵ The words of the next happiness that Jesus mentioned seem contradictory. He said: "*Happy are those who mourn, since they will be comforted.*" (Matthew 5:4) How can a person mourn and at the same time be happy? To understand the meaning of Jesus' statement, we need to consider what sort of mourning he is speaking about. The disciple James explains that our own sinful state should be a cause for mourning. He wrote: "Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you indecisive ones. Give way to misery and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into dejection. Humble yourselves in the eyes of Jehovah, and he will exalt you." (James 4:8-10) Those who are truly saddened over their sinful state are comforted when they learn that their sins can be forgiven if they exercise faith in Christ's ransom sacrifice and show true repentance by doing Jehovah's will. (John 3:16; 2 Corinthians 7:9, 10) They can thus have a precious relationship with Jehovah and entertain the hope of living forever to serve and praise him. This brings them deep inner happiness.—Romans 4:7, 8.

⁶ Jesus' statement also includes those who mourn because of the detestable conditions that prevail in the earth. Jesus applied to himself the prophecy of Isaiah 61: 1, 2, which states: "The spirit of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah is upon me, for the

5. (a) What is meant by the expression "those who mourn"? (b) How are such mourning ones comforted?

6. In what sense do some mourn, and how are they comforted?



"Happy are those hungering and thirsting for righteousness"



"Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need"



"Happy are the merciful"

reason that Jehovah has anointed me to tell good news to the meek ones. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, . . . to comfort all the mourning ones." That commission also applies to anointed Christians yet on earth, who carry it out with the help of their companions, the "other sheep." All share in the work of symbolically marking the foreheads of "the men that are sighing and groaning over all the detestable things that are being done in the midst of it [apostate Jerusalem, picturing Christendom]." (Ezekiel 9:4) Such mourning ones are comforted by the "good news of the kingdom." (Matthew 24:14) They are happy to learn that Satan's wicked sys-

tem of things will shortly be replaced with Jehovah's righteous new world.

Happy Are the Mild-Tempered Ones

⁷ Jesus continued his Sermon on the Mount by saying: "*Happy are the mild-tempered ones, since they will inherit the earth.*" (Matthew 5:5) Mildness of temper is sometimes thought to imply weakness of character. However, that is not the case. Explaining the sense of the word translated "mild-tempered," one Bible scholar wrote: "The supreme characteristic of the man who is [mild of temper] is that he is the man

7. What is not meant by the term "mild-tempered"?

who is under perfect control. It is not a spineless gentleness, a sentimental fondness, a passive quietism. It is a strength under control." Jesus stated about himself: "I am mild-tempered and lowly in heart." (Matthew 11:29) Yet, Jesus was courageous in defending righteous principles.—Matthew 21:12, 13; 23:13-33.

⁸ Mildness of temper, then, is closely related to self-control. Indeed, mildness and self-control were listed together by the apostle Paul when he outlined "the fruitage of the spirit." (Galatians 5:22, 23) Mildness of temper must be cultivated with the help of the holy spirit. It is a Christian quality that makes for peace with outsiders and with those in the congregation. Paul wrote: "Clothe yourselves with the tender affections of compassion, kindness, lowliness of mind, mildness, and long-suffering. Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely."—Colossians 3: 12, 13.

⁹ Mildness of temper is, however, not limited to our relationship with other humans. By willingly submitting ourselves to Jehovah's sovereignty, we demonstrate that we are mild-tempered. The prime example in this regard is Jesus Christ, who while here on earth manifested mildness of temper and complete submission to his Father's will. (John 5:19, 30) Jesus preeminently inherits the earth, for he is its appointed Ruler. (Psalm 2:6-8; Daniel 7:13, 14) He shares this heritage with 144,000 "joint heirs," chosen from "among mankind" to "rule as kings over the earth." (Romans 8:17; Reve-

8. To what is mildness of temper closely related, and why do we need this quality in our relationships with others?

9. (a) Why is being mild-tempered not limited to our relationship with other people? (b) How do the mild-tempered ones "inherit the earth"?

lation 5:9, 10; 14:1, 3, 4; Daniel 7:27) Christ and his associate rulers will govern millions of sheeplike men and women upon whom the prophetic psalm will find its happy fulfillment: "The meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace."—Psalm 37:11; Matthew 25:33, 34, 46.

Happy Are Those Hungering for Righteousness

¹⁰ The next happiness outlined by Jesus when he was speaking on that Galilean hillside was: "*Happy are those hungering and thirsting for righteousness, since they will be filled.*" (Matthew 5:6) For Christians, Jehovah sets the standard for righteousness. Hence, those hungering and thirsting for righteousness in effect hunger and thirst for divine guidance. Such ones are keenly aware of their sin and imperfection and long for an acceptable standing before Jehovah. How happy they are when they learn from God's Word that if they repent and seek forgiveness on the basis of Christ's ransom sacrifice, they will be in a position to attain a righteous standing before God!—Acts 2:38; 10:43; 13:38, 39; Romans 5:19.

¹¹ Jesus said that such ones would be happy, since they would "be satisfied." (Matthew 5:6, *Kingdom Interlinear*) Anointed Christians called to "rule as kings" with Christ in heaven are declared "righteous for life." (Romans 5:1, 9, 16-18) Jehovah begets them, thus adopting them as spiritual sons. They become joint heirs with Christ, called to become kings and

10. What is one way in which those who 'hunger and thirst for righteousness' can be filled?

11. 12. (a) How do anointed Christians attain to righteousness? (b) How do the companions of the anointed have their thirst for righteousness filled?

priests in his heavenly Kingdom government.—John 3:3; 1 Peter 2:9.

•¹² The companions of the anointed ones are not yet declared righteous for life. However, they have a measure of righteousness credited to them by Jehovah through their faith in Christ's shed blood. (James 2:22-25; Revelation 7:9, 10) They are accounted righteous as Jehovah's friends in line for deliverance at the time of "the great tribulation." (Revelation 7:14) Their thirst for righteousness will be further satisfied when, under the "new heavens," they become part of the new earth in which "righteousness is to dwell."—2 Peter 3:13; Psalm 37:29.

Happy Are the Merciful

•¹³ Continuing his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said: "*Happy are the merciful, since they will be shown mercy.*" (Matthew 5:7) In a legal sense, mercy is understood to refer to clemency on the part of a judge who refrains from inflicting on a wrongdoer the full punishment allowed under law. As used in the Bible, however, the original words translated "mercy" refer mostly to an expression of kind consideration or pity that brings relief to those who are disadvantaged. Thus, those who are merciful are actively compassionate. Jesus' illustration of

13, 14. In what practical ways should we show ourselves to be merciful, and with what benefit to us?

By Way of Review

- What happiness comes to those who are conscious of their spiritual need?
- In what ways are those who mourn comforted?
- How do we show mildness of temper?
- Why should we be merciful, pure in heart, and peaceable?

the neighborly Samaritan provides a fine example of an individual who "acted mercifully" toward a person in need.—Luke 10:29-37.

•¹⁴ To experience the happiness that results from being merciful, we need to engage in positive deeds of kindness toward those in need. (Galatians 6:10) Jesus felt compassion for the people he saw. "He was moved with pity for them, because they were as sheep without a shepherd. And he started to teach them many things." (Mark 6:34) Jesus realized that mankind's greatest need was spiritual. We too can show ourselves to be compassionate and merciful by sharing with others what they need most—the "good news of the kingdom." (Matthew 24:14) We can also offer practical help to older fellow Christians, widows, and orphans and "speak consolingly to the depressed souls." (1 Thessalonians 5:14; Proverbs 12:25; James 1:27) Not only will this bring us happiness but it will also make us recipients of Jehovah's mercy.—Acts 20:35; James 2:13.

Pure in Heart and Peaceable

•¹⁵ Jesus outlined the sixth and seventh happinesses as follows: "*Happy are the pure in heart, since they will see God. Happy are the peaceable, since they will be called 'sons of God.'*" (Matthew 5:8, 9) A pure heart is one that is not only morally clean but also spiritually untainted and unified in its devotion to Jehovah. (1 Chronicles 28:9; Psalm 86:11) The original-language word rendered "peaceable" literally means "peacemakers." The peaceable live in peace with their Christian brothers and, as far as it depends on them, with their neighbors. (Romans 12:17-21) They "seek peace and pursue it."—1 Peter 3:11.

15. How can we be pure in heart and peaceable?

¹⁶ To the peaceable who are pure in heart, the promise is made that they “will be called ‘sons of God’” and “will see God.” Anointed Christians are spirit-begotten and are adopted by Jehovah as “sons” while still on earth. (Romans 8:14-17) When they are resurrected to be with Christ in heaven, they serve in Jehovah’s presence and actually see Him.—1 John 3:1, 2; Revelation 4:9-11.

¹⁷ The peaceable “other sheep” serve Jehovah under the Fine Shepherd, Christ Jesus, who becomes their “Eternal Father.” (John 10:14, 16; Isaiah 9:6) Those who successfully pass the final test after the Millennial Reign of Christ will be adopted as Jehovah’s earthly sons and “have the glorious freedom of the children of God.” (Romans 8:21; Revelation 20:7, 9) In anticipation of

16, 17. (a) Why are the anointed called “sons of God,” and how do they “see God”? (b) How do the “other sheep” “see God”? (c) How and when, in the fullest sense, will the “other sheep” become “sons of God”?

this, they address Jehovah as their Father, since they dedicate their lives to him, recognizing him as their Life-Giver. (Isaiah 64:8) Like Job and Moses of old, they can “see God” with eyes of faith. (Job 42:5; Hebrews 11:27) With ‘the eyes of their heart’ and through accurate knowledge of God, they perceive Jehovah’s wonderful qualities and endeavor to imitate him by doing his will.—Ephesians 1:18; Romans 1:19, 20; 3 John 11.

¹⁸ We have seen that those conscious of their spiritual need, those who mourn, the mild-tempered, those hungering and thirsting for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, and the peaceable find true happiness in serving Jehovah. Yet, such ones have always encountered opposition, even persecution. Does this mar their happiness? That question will be considered in the following article.

18. In line with the first seven happinesses outlined by Jesus, who find true happiness today?

PERSECUTED YET HAPPY

“Happy are you when people reproach you and persecute you and lyingly say every sort of wicked thing against you for my sake.”—MATTHEW 5:11.

WHEN Jesus first sent out his apostles to preach the Kingdom, he warned them that they would encounter opposition. He told them: “You will be objects of hatred by all people on account of my name.” (Matthew 10:5-18, 22) Earlier, however, in his Sermon on the Mount, he gave his apostles and others the assurance that

1. What assurance did Jesus give his followers regarding happiness and persecution?

such opposition would not necessarily endanger their deep-felt happiness. In fact, Jesus even linked being happy with being persecuted as Christians! How could persecution bring happiness?

Suffering for Righteousness’ Sake

² The eighth happiness that Jesus stated

2. According to Jesus and the apostle Peter, what kind of suffering brings happiness?

is: "*Happy are those who have been persecuted for righteousness' sake, since the kingdom of the heavens belongs to them.*" (Matthew 5: 10) Suffering in itself is not meritorious. The apostle Peter wrote: "What merit is there in it if, when you are sinning and being slapped, you endure it? But if, when you are doing good and you suffer, you endure it, this is a thing agreeable with God." He further stated: "However, let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a busybody in other people's matters. But if he suffers as a Christian, let him not feel shame, but let him keep on glorifying God in this name." (1 Peter 2:20; 4:15, 16) According to Jesus' words, suffering brings happiness when it is endured for righteousness' sake.

³ True righteousness is measured by conformity to God's will and his commands. Suffering for righteousness' sake, therefore, means suffering because one resists pressure to violate God's standards or requirements. The apostles were persecuted by the Jewish leaders because of refusing to stop preaching in the name of Jesus. (Acts 4:18-20; 5:27-29, 40) Did this undermine their joy or halt their preaching? Far from it! "[They] went their way from before the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy to be dishonored in behalf of his name. And every day in the temple and from house to house they continued without letup teaching and declaring the good news about the Christ, Jesus." (Acts 5: 41, 42) This persecution brought them joy and renewed their zeal in the preaching work. Later, the early Christians were persecuted by the Romans because of refusing to practice emperor worship.

3. (a) What does it mean to be persecuted for righteousness' sake? (b) What effect did persecution have on the early Christians?

⁴ In modern times, Jehovah's Witnesses have been persecuted because they refuse to stop preaching "this good news of the kingdom." (Matthew 24:14) When their Christian meetings are banned, they are willing to suffer rather than stop gathering together as the Bible commands. (Hebrews 10:24, 25) They have been persecuted because of their Christian neutrality or their refusal to misuse blood. (John 17:14; Acts 15:28, 29) Nevertheless, this stand for righteousness brings God's people today much inner peace and happiness.—1 Peter 3:14.

Reproached for the Sake of Christ

⁵ The ninth happiness that Jesus considered in his Sermon on the Mount also deals with the subject of persecution. He stated: "*Happy are you when people reproach you and persecute you and lyingly say every sort of wicked thing against you for my sake.*" (Matthew 5:11) The basic reason why Jehovah's people are persecuted is that they are no part of the present wicked system of things. Jesus told his disciples: "If you were part of the world, the world would be fond of what is its own. Now because you are no part of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, on this account the world hates you." (John 15:19) Similarly, the apostle Peter stated: "Because you do not continue running with them in this course to the same low sink of debauchery, they are puzzled and go on speaking abusively of you." —1 Peter 4:4.

⁶ We have already seen that the early Christians were persecuted because they re-

-
4. What are some reasons for the persecution of Christians?
 5. For what basic reason are Jehovah's people persecuted today?
 6. (a) Why are the remnant and their companions reproached and persecuted? (b) Does such reproach diminish our happiness?

fused to stop preaching in the name of Jesus. Christ commissioned his followers: "You will be witnesses of me . . . to the most distant part of the earth." (Acts 1:8) The faithful remnant of Christ's anointed brothers, aided by their loyal companions of the "great crowd," have zealously carried out that commission. (Revelation 7:9) Therefore, Satan wages war "with the remaining ones of her seed [the seed of the "woman," the heavenly part of God's organization], who observe the commandments of God and have the work of bearing witness to Jesus." (Revelation 12:9, 17) As Jehovah's Witnesses, we bear witness to Jesus, the now-reigning King of the Kingdom government, which will destroy human governments standing in the way of God's righteous new world. (Daniel 2:44; 2 Peter 3:13) For this we are reproached and persecuted, but we count ourselves happy to suffer for the name of Christ.—1 Peter 4:14.

⁷ Jesus stated that his followers should consider themselves happy even when people "*lyingly say every sort of wicked thing*" against them for his sake. (Matthew 5:11) This was certainly true of the early Christians. When the apostle Paul was detained in Rome, about 59-61 C.E., Jewish leaders there said of Christians: "Truly as regards this sect it is known to us that everywhere it is spoken against." (Acts 28:22) Paul and Silas were accused of having "overturned the inhabited earth," acting "in opposition to the decrees of Caesar."—Acts 17:6, 7.

⁸ Writing of Christians at the time of the Roman Empire, historian K. S. Latourette stated: "The accusations varied. Because they refused to participate in pagan ceremonies the Christians were dubbed atheists.

7, 8. What did opposers lyingly say against the early Christians?

Through their abstention from much of the community life—the pagan festivals, the public amusements . . . —they were derided as haters of the human race. . . . It was said that both sexes met together at night . . . and that promiscuous intercourse followed. . . . The fact that [the Memorial of Christ's death] was celebrated only in the presence of believers fed the rumours that Christians regularly sacrificed an infant and consumed its blood and flesh." In addition, because the early Christians refused to practice emperor worship, they were accused of being enemies of the State.

⁹ Those false accusations did not prevent the early Christians from carrying out their commission to preach the good news of the Kingdom. In 60-61 C.E., Paul was able to speak of the "good news" that was "bearing fruit and increasing in all the world" and that had been "preached in all creation that is under heaven." (Colossians 1:5, 6, 23) The same occurs today. Jehovah's Witnesses are being falsely accused, even as the first-century Christians were. Yet, today the work of preaching the Kingdom message prospers and brings those who share in it much happiness.

Happy to Be Persecuted Like the Prophets

¹⁰ Jesus ended his consideration of the ninth happiness by saying: "*Rejoice . . . , for in that way they persecuted the prophets prior to you.*" (Matthew 5:12) The prophets whom Jehovah sent to warn unfaithful Israel were badly received and often persecuted. (Jeremiah 7:25, 26) The

9. How did the first-century Christians respond to false accusations made against them, and what is the situation today?

10, 11. (a) How did Jesus end his consideration of the ninth happiness? (b) Why were the prophets persecuted? Give examples.

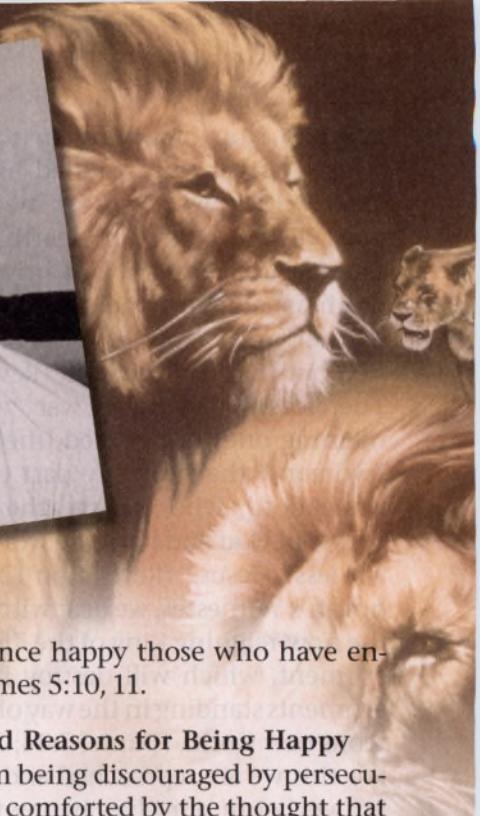
"Happy are you when people reproach you and persecute you"

apostle Paul testified to this fact, writing: "What more shall I say? For the time will fail me if I go on to relate about . . . the other prophets, who through faith . . . received their trial by mockings and scourgings, indeed, more than that, by bonds and prisons."—Hebrews 11:32-38.

¹¹ During the reign of wicked King Ahab and his wife, Jezebel, many of Jehovah's prophets were killed with the sword. (1 Kings 18:4, 13; 19:10) The prophet Jeremiah was put into stocks and later thrown into a miry cistern. (Jeremiah 20:1, 2; 38:6) The prophet Daniel was cast into the lions' den. (Daniel 6:16, 17) All these pre-Christian prophets were persecuted because they defended the pure worship of Jehovah. Many prophets were persecuted by the Jewish religious leaders. Jesus called the scribes and the Pharisees "sons of those who murdered the prophets."—Matthew 23:31.

¹² Today, we as Jehovah's Witnesses are often persecuted because we are zealous in preaching the good news of the Kingdom. Our enemies accuse us of "aggressive proselytizing," but we know that faithful worshipers of Jehovah before us faced similar criticism. (Jeremiah 11:21; 20:8, 11) We count it a privilege to suffer for the same reason that the faithful prophets of old suffered. The disciple James wrote: "Brothers, take as a pattern of the suffering of evil and the exercising of patience the prophets, who spoke in the name of Jehovah. Look!

12. Why do we as Jehovah's Witnesses count it a privilege to be persecuted like the prophets of old?

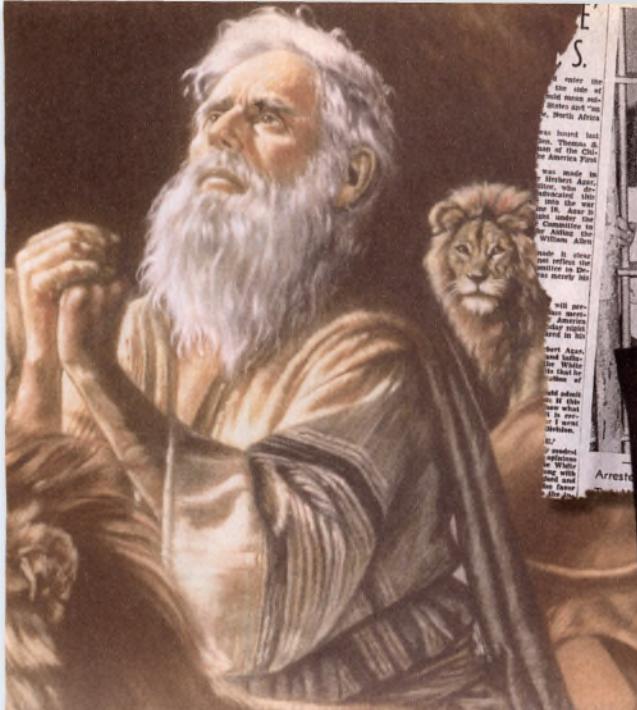


We pronounce happy those who have endured."—James 5:10, 11.

Profound Reasons for Being Happy

¹³ Far from being discouraged by persecution, we are comforted by the thought that we are following in the footsteps of the prophets, the early Christians, and Christ Jesus himself. (1 Peter 2:21) We draw deep satisfaction from the Scriptures, such as the following words of the apostle Peter: "Beloved ones, do not be puzzled at the burning among you, which is happening to you for a trial, as though a strange thing were befalling you. If you are being reproached for the name of Christ, you are happy, because the spirit of glory, even the spirit of God, is resting upon you." (1 Peter 4:12, 14) We know from experience that we are able to stand firm under persecution only because Jehovah's spirit rests upon us and strengthens us. The support of the holy spirit is proof that Jehovah's blessing is upon us, and this brings us great happiness.—Psalm 5:12; Philippians 1:27-29.

13. (a) Why are we not discouraged by persecution? (b) What enables us to stand firm, and what does this prove?



¹⁴ Another reason why opposition and persecution for righteousness' sake makes us happy is that it proves that we are living as true Christians with godly devotion. The apostle Paul wrote: "All those desiring to live with godly devotion in association with Christ Jesus will also be persecuted." (2 Timothy 3:12) We are supremely happy at the thought that our keeping integrity under trial provides a further answer to Satan's challenge that all of Jehovah's creatures serve Him out of selfish interest. (Job 1:9-11; 2:3, 4) We rejoice that we have a share, be it ever so small, in the vindication of Jehovah's righteous sovereignty.—Proverbs 27:11.

Leap for Joy at the Reward

¹⁵ Jesus gave an added reason for joy at

14. What reasons do we have to rejoice at being persecuted for righteousness' sake?

15, 16. (a) What reason did Jesus give for us to "rejoice and leap for joy"? (b) What reward is stored up in the heavens for anointed Christians, and how will their "other sheep" companions also be rewarded?



Group in prison: Chicago Herald-American

being maligned and persecuted like the prophets of old. Toward the end of the ninth happiness, he stated: "*Rejoice and leap for joy, since your reward is great in the heavens.*" (Matthew 5:12) The apostle Paul wrote: "The wages sin pays is death, but the gift God gives is everlasting life by Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23) Yes, the 'great reward' is life, and it is not a wage that we can earn. It is a free gift. Jesus said that the reward is "in the heavens" because it comes from Jehovah.

¹⁶ The anointed receive "the crown of life," that is, in their case, immortal life with Christ in heaven. (James 1:12, 17) Those with an earthly hope, the "other sheep," look forward to inheriting everlasting life in an earthly paradise. (John 10:16; Revelation 21:3-5) For both classes, the "reward" is unearned. Both the anointed and the "other sheep" receive their reward

by Jehovah's "surpassing undeserved kindness," which moved the apostle Paul to say: "Thanks be to God for his indescribable free gift."—2 Corinthians 9:14, 15.

¹⁷ To Christians, some of whom were soon to be cruelly persecuted by Emperor Nero, the apostle Paul wrote: "Let us exult while in tribulations, since we know that tribulation produces endurance; endurance, in turn, an approved condition; the approved condition, in turn, hope, and the hope does not lead to disappointment." He also said: "Rejoice in the hope. Endure under tribulation." (Romans 5:3-5; 12:12) Whether our hope is heavenly or earthly, our reward for faithfulness under trial is immeasurably greater than anything we deserve. Our joy at the prospect of living forever to serve and praise our loving Father, Jehovah, under our King Jesus Christ is unbounded. We figuratively "leap for joy."

¹⁸ In some lands, Jehovah's Witnesses have been and still are persecuted. In his prophecy about the conclusion of the system of things, Jesus warned true Christians: "You will be objects of hatred by *all* the na-

17. Why can we be happy when persecuted and figuratively "leap for joy"?

18. What can be expected of the nations as the end draws near, and what will Jehovah do?

By Way of Review

- What does it mean to suffer for righteousness' sake?
- What effect did persecution have on the early Christians?
- Why can it be said that Jehovah's Witnesses are persecuted like the prophets of old?
- Why can we "rejoice and leap for joy" at being persecuted?



tions on account of my name." (Matthew 24:9) As we near the end, Satan will cause the nations to manifest their hatred against Jehovah's people. (Ezekiel 38:10-12, 14-16) This will signal Jehovah's time to act. "I shall certainly magnify myself and sanctify myself and make myself known before the eyes of many nations; and they will have to know that I am Jehovah." (Ezekiel 38:23) Jehovah will thus sanctify his great name and deliver his people from persecution. Therefore, "happy is the man that keeps on enduring."—James 1:12.

¹⁹ As that great "day of Jehovah" draws ever nearer, let us rejoice because we are "counted worthy to be dishonored" for Jesus' name. (2 Peter 3:10-13; Acts 5:41) Like the early Christians, may we continue "without letup teaching and declaring the good news about the Christ" and his Kingdom government while awaiting our reward in Jehovah's righteous new world.—Acts 5:42; James 5:11.

19. While awaiting the great "day of Jehovah," what should we do?



Do You Know the Happiness That Comes From Giving?

SHE had spent nearly 50 years in active Christian service. Although the effects of old age had left her frail, she was determined to visit the newly built Kingdom Hall. Bracing herself on the arm of a helpful Christian brother, she entered the hall and walked slowly but directly toward her objective—the contribution box. There she deposited the modest sum she had been saving for this purpose. Though she could not lend a hand in the construction of the hall, she wanted to help.

This Christian woman may remind you of another faithful woman—the “poor widow” whom Jesus observed dropping two small coins into the temple treasury. We are not told of her circumstances, but being without a husband back then could put a woman in a precarious financial situation. Surely Jesus’ heart went out to her, for he fully understood her plight. In holding her up as an example for his disciples, he noted that her small gift represented “all of what she had, her whole living.”—Mark 12:41-44.

Why would a needy woman like this poor widow make such a sacrifice? Clearly, it was

because she was deeply devoted to Jehovah God, whose worship was centered at the temple in Jerusalem. Although limited in what she could do, she wanted to promote sacred service. And she must have felt real joy in contributing whatever she could.

Giving to Support Jehovah’s Work

Making material and financial contributions has always been a necessary part of pure worship, and it has always been a source of great joy. (1 Chronicles 29:9) In ancient Israel contributions were used not only to beautify the temple but also to keep all aspects of Jehovah’s worship there in daily operation. The Law specified that the sons of Israel contribute one tenth of their produce to support the Levites, who performed the temple services. But the Levites too were to contribute to Jehovah a tenth of the products they received.—Numbers 18:21-29.

Although Christians were set free from the requirements of the Law covenant, the principle that God’s servants contribute materially in support of true worship

remained unchanged. (Galatians 5:1) In addition, first-century Christians considered it a joy to contribute toward relieving their brothers' needs. (Acts 2:45, 46) The apostle Paul reminded Christians that just as God generously supplied them with good things, so they should show generosity to others. He wrote: "Give orders to those who are rich in the present system of things not to be high-minded, and to rest their hope, not on uncertain riches, but on God, who furnishes us all things richly for our enjoyment; to work at good, to be rich in fine works, to be liberal, ready to share, safely treasuring up for themselves a fine foundation for the future, in order that they may get a firm hold on the real life." (1 Timothy 6:17-19; 2 Corinthians 9:11) Indeed, from personal experience, Paul could confirm Jesus' words: "There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving."

—Acts 20:35.

Christian Giving Today

Today, Jehovah's servants continue to use their material assets to help one another

and to support God's work. Even those with little means contribute what they can. "The faithful and discreet slave" feels responsible to Jehovah to make the best possible use of all these contributed funds. (Matthew 24:45) Funds are used to operate branch offices, translate and produce Bibles and Bible literature, arrange for large Christian gatherings, train and send out traveling overseers and missionaries, provide disaster relief, as well as for many other essential purposes. Let us focus on one such purpose—helping to provide places of worship.

Jehovah's Witnesses meet several times a week in their Kingdom Halls to benefit from spiritual education and wholesome association. In many lands, however, economic conditions do not permit local Witnesses to finance the construction of Kingdom Halls without some initial assistance. In 1999, therefore, Jehovah's Witnesses began a program to use funds from wealthier lands to help build Kingdom Halls in poorer countries. In addition, thousands of volunteers have donated their time and skills, often working in remote areas of

Zambia



*Older and newer meeting places
of Jehovah's Witnesses*

these countries. During construction, local Witnesses learn building and maintenance skills, and the Kingdom Hall Fund makes it possible to purchase needed equipment and materials. The Witnesses who now use these new halls are deeply grateful that their fellow believers donated time and money. Local Witnesses also contribute from month to month to maintain the new Kingdom Hall and to help defray the construction costs, thus helping toward the building of more Kingdom Halls.

Kingdom Halls are built using local methods and materials. Although these halls are not elaborate, they are attractive, practical, and comfortable. When the building program began in 1999, some 40 countries with limited resources were included. Since then, the construction program has been expanded to encompass 116 such lands, involving more than half of the congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses in the world. In the past five years, more than 9,000 Kingdom Halls have been built under this arrangement, an average of more than 5 new halls each day! Still, in these 116 lands,

there remains a need for 14,500 new Kingdom Halls. With Jehovah's blessing and through the willingness and generosity of Witnesses around the world, it is hoped that there will be enough funds to meet this need.—Psalm 127:1.

Kingdom Halls Promote Growth

What impact has this tremendous effort had on the local Witnesses and on the Kingdom-preaching work? In many localities, there is a dramatic increase in meeting attendance after a new Kingdom Hall is built. A typical example is found in this report from Burundi: "As soon as the Kingdom Hall is finished, it fills up. For example, one Kingdom Hall was built for a congregation that averaged about 100 in attendance at their meetings. Their new Kingdom Hall comfortably seats 150. By the time it was finished, 250 were attending meetings."

Why does such increase take place? For one thing, groups of Kingdom publishers who have no formal meeting place but who must meet under a tree or in a field are sometimes viewed with suspicion. In one



Central African Republic



land, ethnic violence has been associated with such small religious groups, and the law requires that all religious meetings be held inside a house of worship.

Having their own halls also helps Jehovah's Witnesses to show the community that they are not disciples of some individual pastor. The Zimbabwe branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses writes: "In the past, brothers in this area used to meet in private homes, and the local people identified the congregation with the owner of the home

in which they met. They would refer to the brothers as belonging to the church of Mr. So-and-so. All of this is changing now as people see signs clearly identifying each hall as a 'Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses.'

Joyful Givers

"God loves a cheerful giver," wrote the apostle Paul. (2 Corinthians 9:7) Large donations are, of course, very helpful. But the greater portion of funds contributed to the

Ways in Which Some Choose to Give

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE WORLDWIDE WORK

Many set aside, or budget, an amount that they place in the contribution boxes labeled "Contributions for the Worldwide Work—Matthew 24:14."

Each month, congregations forward these amounts to the office of Jehovah's Witnesses that serves their respective countries. Voluntary donations of money may also be sent directly to **Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, c/o Office of the Secretary and Treasurer, 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, New York 11201-2483**, or to the branch office that serves your country. Checks should be made payable to "Watch Tower." Jewelry or other valuables may be donated as well. A brief letter stating that such is an outright gift should accompany these contributions.

CONDITIONAL-DONATION TRUST ARRANGEMENT

Money may be placed in trust for the benefit of Watch Tower. However, upon request the funds will be returned. For

more information, please contact the Office of the Secretary and Treasurer at the address noted above.

CHARITABLE PLANNING

In addition to outright gifts of money, there are other methods of giving to benefit Kingdom service worldwide. These include:

Insurance: Watch Tower may be named as the beneficiary of a life insurance policy or a retirement/pension plan.

Bank Accounts: Bank accounts, certificates of deposit, or individual retirement accounts may be placed in trust for or made payable on death to Watch Tower, in accord with local bank requirements.

Stocks and Bonds: Stocks and bonds may be donated to Watch Tower as an outright gift.

Real Estate: Salable real estate may be donated either by making an outright gift or, in the case of residential property, by reserving a life estate to the donor, who can continue to live therein during his or her lifetime. Contact the branch office in your country before deeding any real estate.

work of Jehovah's Witnesses comes from Kingdom Hall contribution boxes. Large or small, all contributions are important and are not overlooked. Recall that Jesus stationed himself where he could see the poor widow contribute her two small coins. The angels and Jehovah saw her too. We do not even know the widow's name, but Jehovah saw to it that her selfless act was recorded in the Bible for all time.

In addition to Kingdom Hall construction, our contributions support all other

facets of the vital Kingdom work. Cooperating in this way gives us reason to rejoice and to be "rich with many expressions of thanks to God." (2 Corinthians 9:12) Our Christian brothers in Benin report: "Each day many prayers of gratitude ascend to Jehovah for the financial aid received from the international brotherhood." At the same time, all of us who have a share in supporting the Kingdom work financially experience the happiness that comes from Christian giving!

Gift Annuity: A gift annuity is an arrangement whereby one transfers money or securities to a Watchtower corporation. In exchange, the donor, or someone designated by the donor, receives a specified annuity payment every year for life. The donor receives an income-tax deduction the year the gift annuity is established.

Wills and Trusts: Property or money may be bequeathed to Watch Tower by means of a legally executed will, or Watch Tower may be named as beneficiary of a trust agreement. A trust benefiting a religious organization may provide certain tax advantages.

As the term "charitable planning" implies, these types of donations typically require some planning on the part of the donor. To assist individuals desiring to benefit the worldwide work of Jehovah's Witnesses through some form of charitable planning, a brochure has been prepared in English and Spanish entitled *Charitable Planning to Benefit Kingdom Service Worldwide*. The brochure was

written to provide information on a variety of ways that gifts may be made either now or through a bequest at death. After reading the brochure and conferring with their own legal or tax advisers, many have been able to help support the work of Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide and maximize their tax benefits while doing so. This brochure may be obtained by requesting a copy directly from the Charitable Planning Office.

For more information, you may contact the Charitable Planning Office, either in writing or by telephone, at the address listed below or at the office of Jehovah's Witnesses that serves your country.

Charitable Planning Office

Watch Tower Bible and Tract
Society of Pennsylvania
100 Watchtower Drive,
Patterson, New York 12563-9204
Telephone: (845) 306-0707





WE MADE A FIRM DECISION FOR GOD'S RULERSHIP

AS TOLD BY
MICHAL ŽOBRÁK

After spending a month in solitary confinement, I was dragged to an interrogator. Before long, he turned red and shouted: "You spies! American spies!" What made him so angry? He had just asked me what my religion was, and I had answered: "I am one of Jehovah's Witnesses."

THIS happened more than half a century ago. At that time, the country where I lived was under Communist rule. Long before that, however, we had already experienced fiery opposition to our Christian educational work.

We Feel the Painful Sting of War

When World War I started in 1914, I was eight years old. At that time, my village, Zálužice, was subject to the monarchy of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The war not only upset the world scene but also ended my childhood abruptly. My father, who

was a soldier, died in the very first year of hostilities. This left my mother, my two younger sisters, and me in abject poverty. As the oldest male in the house, I soon found myself shouldering many responsibilities on our small farm and around the house. From an early age, I was very religious. The minister of our Reformed (Calvinist) Church even asked me to substitute for him and teach my schoolmates during his absence.

In 1918 the Great War ended, and we heaved a sigh of relief. The Austro-Hungarian Empire had been overthrown, and we became citizens of the Republic of Czechoslo-

vakia. Soon, many from our area who had immigrated to the United States returned home. Among them was Michal Petrík, who came to our village in 1922. When he visited a family in our neighborhood, my mother and I were also invited.

God's Rulership Becomes Real to Us

Michal was a Bible Student, as Jehovah's Witnesses were then known, and he talked about important Bible issues that intrigued me. Foremost among these was the coming of Jehovah's Kingdom. (Daniel 2:44) When he said that there would be a Christian meeting in the village of Záhor the next Sunday, I was determined to go. I got up at 4:00 a.m. and walked some five miles to my cousin's place to borrow a bicycle. After repairing a flat tire, I continued another 15 miles to Záhor. I did not know where the meeting would take place, so I proceeded slowly along one of the streets. Then I recognized a Kingdom song being sung in one of the houses. My heart leaped with joy. I entered the house and explained why I was there. I was invited to join the family for breakfast, and then they took me to the meeting. Although I had to ride and walk 20 more miles to get back home, I did not feel tired at all.—Isaiah 40:31.

I was fascinated by the clear, Bible-based explanations provided by Jehovah's Witnesses. The prospect of enjoying a full and satisfying life under God's rulership touched my heart. (Psalm 104:28) My mother and I both decided to submit a letter of resignation to our church. This caused quite a stir in our village. Some people would not even speak to us for a while, yet we had good association with the many Witnesses in our area. (Matthew 5:11, 12) It was not long before I was baptized in the Uh River.

The Ministry Becomes Our Way of Life

We used every opportunity to preach about Jehovah's Kingdom. (Matthew 24:14)

We particularly focused on well-organized preaching campaigns on Sundays. As a rule, people back then got up early, so we could start preaching quite early. Later in the day, a public meeting was scheduled. The Bible teachers spoke mostly extemporaneously. They took into consideration the number of interested people, their religious background, and issues that concerned them.

The Bible truths we preached opened the eyes of many honesthearted people. Soon after I was baptized, I worked in the village of Trhovište. At one house, I talked to a very kind and friendly woman, Mrs. Zuzana Moskal. She and her family were Calvinists, as I had been. Despite her familiarity with the Bible, she had many unanswered Bible questions. We had an hour-long discussion, and I placed the book *The Harp of God* with her.*

The Moskals immediately included the reading of the *Harp* book in their regular Bible-reading sessions. More families in that village showed interest and started to attend our meetings. Their Calvinist minister sounded a strong warning against us and our literature. Then some of the interested ones suggested to the minister that he come to our meeting and disprove our teachings during an open debate.

The minister came, but he was not able to present a single argument from the Bible to support his teachings. To defend himself, he stated: "We cannot believe everything in the Bible. It was written by humans, and religious questions can be explained in different ways." This was a turning point for many. Some told the minister that if he did not believe the Bible, they would not come and listen to his sermons anymore. Thus, they broke their ties with the Calvinist Church, and some 30 people from that village took a firm stand for Bible truth.

* Published by Jehovah's Witnesses but now out of print.

Preaching the good news of the Kingdom became our way of life, so naturally I was looking for a companion from a spiritually strong family. One of my coworkers in the ministry was Ján Petruška, who had learned the truth in the United States. His daughter Mária impressed me with her readiness to give a witness to everyone, just like her father. In 1936 we were married, and Mária would be my faithful companion for 50 years, until her death in 1986. In 1938 our only son, Eduard, was born. But at that time, another war in Europe seemed imminent. How would it affect our work?

Our Christian Neutrality Is Put to the Test

When World War II began, Slovakia, which became a separate country, was under Nazi influence. Yet, no specific governmental action was taken against Jehovah's Witnesses as an organization. Of course, we had to work in secret, and our literature was censored. Nevertheless, we discreetly continued with our activities.—Matthew 10:16.

As the war intensified, I was drafted into the army, although I was over the age of 35. Because of my Christian neutrality, I refused to participate in war. (Isaiah 2:2-4) Happily, before the authorities figured out what to do with me, all those belonging to my age group were released.

We realized that it was far more challenging for our brothers in the cities to sustain themselves than it was for us who lived in rural areas. We wanted to share what we had. (2 Corinthians 8:14) Thus, we would take as many food products as we could carry and travel over 300 miles across the country to Bratislava. The bonds of Christian friendship and love that we forged during the war years sustained us in the hard years that lay ahead.



Getting Needed Encouragement

After World War II, Slovakia once again became a part of Czechoslovakia. From 1946 to 1948, nationwide conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses were held either in Brno or in Prague. We from eastern Slovakia traveled by special trains arranged for the convention delegates. You might call the trains the singing trains, as we sang all the way.—Acts 16:25.

I especially remember the 1947 convention in Brno, where three Christian overseers from the world headquarters, includ-

ing Brother Nathan H. Knorr, were present. To advertise the public talk, many of us walked through the city with sandwich signs announcing the theme. Our son, Eduard, who was then only nine years old, was very unhappy that he did not get one. So the brothers made smaller signs not only for him but also for many other children. This younger group did a fine job of advertising the talk!

In February 1948 the Communists came to power. We knew that it was only a matter of time before the government would take steps to restrain our ministry. A convention was held in Prague in September 1948, and we had strong emotions as we anticipated another ban on our public gatherings, after just three years of freedom of assembly. Before leaving the convention, we adopted a resolution that, in part, stated: "We, Jehovah's Witnesses, who have assembled ourselves together . . . , are determined to increase this blessed service still more, and, by the Lord's grace, to persevere therein in season and in times of trial, and to publish the gospel of God's kingdom with yet greater zeal."

"Enemies of the State"

Only two months after the Prague convention, the secret police raided the Bethel

home near Prague. They seized the property, confiscated any literature they could find, and arrested all the Bethelites and some other brothers. But more was to come.

During the night of February 3-4, 1952, security forces swept the country and arrested over 100 Witnesses. I was one of them. At about three in the morning, the police woke up my whole family. Without any explanation, they asked me to go with them. I was shackled and blindfolded and along with several others thrown onto the back of a truck. I ended up in solitary confinement.

A whole month passed without anybody talking to me. The only person I saw was the guard who shoved a meager meal through an opening in the door. Then I was summoned by the interrogator mentioned at the outset. After he called me a spy, he continued: "Religion is ignorance. There is no God! We cannot allow you to fool our working class. Either a hangman will kick the stool out from beneath your feet or you will rot in prison. And if your God were to come here, we would kill him as well!"

Since the authorities knew that there was no specific law forbidding our Christian activities, they wanted to redefine our activities to fit existing laws by portraying us as "enemies of the State" and as foreign spies. To do that, they needed to break our will-power and have us "confess" to trumped-up

charges. After the interrogation that night, I was not permitted to sleep. Within a few hours, I was interrogated again. This time the interrogator wanted me to sign a statement that read: "I as an enemy of the People's Democratic Czechoslovakia did not join the [collective farm] because I was awaiting the Americans." When I refused to sign such a lie, I was sent to a correction cell.

Advertising
the convention in
Brno, 1947



I was forbidden to sleep, lie down, or even sit down. I could only stand or walk about. When I became exhausted, I lay down on the concrete floor. Then the guards took me back to the interrogator's office. "Will you sign now?" the interrogator asked. When I refused again, he hit me in the face. I started bleeding. He then growled to the guards: "He wants to kill himself. Put him on suicide watch!" I was sent back to solitary confinement. For six months these interrogation tactics were repeated on numerous occasions. No ideological persuasion or attempts to make me acknowledge that I was an enemy of the State diminished my resolve to keep my integrity to Jehovah.

A month before I was due to go on trial, a prosecutor came from Prague and interrogated each one of our group of 12 brothers. He asked me: "What will you do if Western imperialists attack our country?" "What I did when this country along with Hitler attacked the USSR. I did not fight then, and I would not fight now because I am a Christian and I am neutral." Then he told me: "We cannot tolerate Jehovah's Witnesses. We need soldiers in case the Western imperialists attack us, and we need soldiers to free our working class in the West."

On July 24, 1953, we were ushered into the courtroom. One after another, the 12 of us were called before the panel of judges. We seized the opportunity to give a witness about our faith. After our responses to the false charges hurled against us, a counsel stood up and said: "I have been in this courtroom many times. Usually, there is a lot of confession, repentance, and even tears. But these men will leave stronger than when they came." Afterward, all 12 of us were declared guilty of conspiring against the State. I was sentenced to three years and forfeiture of all my property to the State.

Old Age Has Not Stopped Me

After coming home, I was still under surveillance by the secret police. Despite that, I resumed my theocratic activities and was entrusted with spiritual oversight in our congregation. Although we were allowed to live in our confiscated house, it was legally returned to us only some 40 years later, after the fall of Communism.

My prison experience was not the last one in my family. I had been home only three years when Eduard was drafted for service in the army. Because of his Bible-trained conscience, he refused and was imprisoned. Years later, even my grandson, Peter, went through the same experience, in spite of his poor health.

In 1989 the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia collapsed. How happy I was when after four decades of ban, I could freely preach from house to house! (Acts 20:20) As long as my health allowed, I enjoyed this kind of service. Now that I am 98, my health is not what it used to be, but I am glad that I can still witness to people about Jehovah's glorious promises for the future.

I can count 12 heads of five different countries that ruled over my hometown. They included dictators, presidents, and a king. None of them provided any lasting solution for the ills that troubled people under their rule. (Psalm 146:3, 4) I am grateful to Jehovah that he allowed me to get to know him early in life. Thus, I was able to appreciate his solution by means of the Messianic Kingdom and avoid the vanity of life without God. I have actively preached the best news for over 75 years, and it has given me a purpose in life, satisfaction, and a bright hope of everlasting life on earth. What else could I ask for?*

* Sadly, Brother Michal Žobrák's strength finally gave out. He died faithful, with confidence in the resurrection hope, while this article was being prepared for publication.

What JEHOVAH'S HUMILITY Means for Us



DAVID was a man who knew adversity. He suffered mistreatment at the hands of King Saul, his jealous father-in-law. Three times Saul tried to kill David with a spear and for years hunted him incessantly, forcing him to become a fugitive. (1 Samuel 18:11; 19:10; 26:20) Yet, Jehovah proved to be with David. Jehovah saved him not only from Saul but also from other enemies. We can, therefore, appreciate David's sentiments, expressed in song: "Jehovah is my crag and my stronghold and the Provider of escape for me. . . . You [Jehovah] will give me your shield of salvation, and it is your humility that makes me great." (2 Samuel 22:2, 36) David achieved a measure of greatness in Israel. How, then, was Jehovah's humility involved?

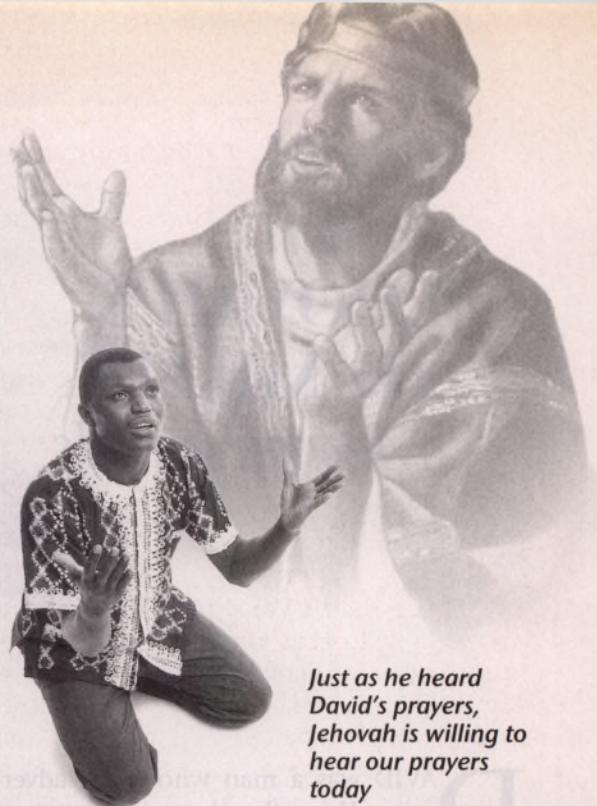
When the Scriptures speak of Jehovah as being humble, they do not mean that he is limited in any way or that he is subject to others. Instead, this beautiful quality indicates that he has deep compassion for humans who sincerely strive to gain his approv-

al and extends mercy to them. At Psalm 113: 6, 7, we read: "[Jehovah] is condescending to look on heaven and earth, raising up the lowly one from the very dust." His "condescending" means that "he bends down to see" or that "he is humbling Himself to look." (*Today's English Version; Young's Literal Translation of the Holy Bible*) So from the heavens Jehovah himself 'bent down,' or 'humbled himself,' in order to pay attention to David, an imperfect but humble man who desired to serve God. Therefore, David reassures us: "Jehovah is high, and yet the humble one he sees." (Psalm 138:6) The merciful, patient, and compassionate way in which Jehovah dealt with David should encourage all who seek to do God's will.

Though Jehovah as the Sovereign occupies the most exalted position in the universe, he is willing to have dealings with each one of us. This gives us confidence that we may count on his unfailing help in even the most difficult of circumstances. There is no reason to fear that he will forget us. With regard

to his people of ancient Israel, Jehovah is aptly spoken of as the one “who during [their] low condition remembered [them]: for his loving-kindness is to time indefinite.” —Psalm 136:23.

As Jehovah’s present-day servants, we may suffer adversity as David did. It may be that we face ridicule from those who do not know God, or perhaps we are struggling with poor health or have experienced bereavement. Whatever our situation, if our heart is sincere, we can approach Jehovah in prayer, appealing to his mercy. Jehovah will ‘bend down’ to take note of us and listen to our prayers. The inspired psalmist wrote: “The eyes of Jehovah are toward the righteous ones, and his ears are toward their cry for help.” (Psalm 34:15) Does it not touch your heart to reflect on Jehovah’s endearing quality of humility?



Just as he heard David's prayers, Jehovah is willing to hear our prayers today

Questions From Readers

How does the Christian congregation view gluttony?

God’s Word condemns both drunkenness and gluttony as behavior that is incompatible with serving God. Therefore, the Christian congregation regards a confirmed glutton in the same manner as it views a habitual drunkard. Neither a drunkard nor a glutton can be part of the Christian congregation.

Proverbs 23:20, 21 states: “Do not come to be among heavy drinkers of wine, among those who are gluttonous eaters of flesh. For a drunkard and a glutton will come to poverty, and drowsiness will clothe one with mere rags.” At Deuteronomy 21:20, we read about

a “stubborn and rebellious” individual, who deserved to be put to death under the Mosaic Law. According to this verse, two characteristics of that rebellious and unrepentant individual were that he was “a glutton and a drunkard.” Clearly, in ancient Israel, gluttony was viewed as an unacceptable practice for those who desired to serve God.

What, though, constitutes a glutton, and what do the Christian Greek Scriptures say about this topic? A glutton is defined as “one given habitually to greedy and voracious eating and drinking.” Thus, for one thing, gluttony is a form of greed, and God’s Word tells us that “greedy persons” are the sort of peo-

ple who will not inherit God's Kingdom. (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10; Philippians 3:18, 19; 1 Peter 4:3) In addition, when the apostle Paul warned Christians against practicing "the works of the flesh," he mentioned "drunken bouts, revelries, and things like these." (Galatians 5:19-21) Overeating often accompanies drunken bouts and revelries. Moreover, gluttony certainly is included in Paul's expression "and things like these." As with the other "works of the flesh," a Christian who is widely known for his gluttony and who stubbornly refuses to change his greedy behavior ought to be removed from the congregation.—1 Corinthians 5:11, 13.*

Although God's Word places a drunkard on the same level as a glutton, the former is much easier to identify than the latter. The signs of drunkenness are usually quite visible. However, determining the point at which an individual becomes a confirmed glutton is much harder because it cannot be determined simply by outward appearance. Therefore, handling situations in this area of concern requires great care and discernment on the part of the elders in the congregation.

For example, obesity may be a sign of gluttony, but that is not always the case. One's being overweight may be the result of an ailment. Hereditary factors may also contribute

* See "Questions From Readers" in the May 1, 1986, issue of *The Watchtower*.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Do You Want to Live Forever?

Speak God's Word With Boldness

"The Tent of the Upright Ones
Will Flourish"

to obesity. We should also keep in mind that obesity is a physical condition, while gluttony is a mental attitude. Obesity is defined as "a condition characterized by excessive bodily fat," whereas gluttony is "greedy or excessive indulgence." Thus, gluttony is not determined by someone's size but by his attitude toward food. A person may be of normal size or may even be thin and yet be a glutton. Furthermore, what is viewed as the ideal weight or shape varies considerably from place to place.

What are signs of gluttony? A glutton routinely shows a lack of restraint, even gorging himself on food to the point of feeling very uncomfortable or becoming sick. His lack of self-control indicates that he has no real concern about the reproach he brings upon Jehovah and the good reputation of His people. (1 Corinthians 10:31) On the other hand, a person who overeats on a few occasions would not automatically be viewed as a "greedy person." (Ephesians 5:5) Nevertheless, in the spirit of Galatians 6:1, such a Christian might need help. Paul states: "Brothers, even though a man takes some false step before he is aware of it, you who have spiritual qualifications try to readjust such a man in a spirit of mildness."

Why is the Bible's counsel to avoid excessive eating especially important today? Because, particularly regarding our day, Jesus warned: "Pay attention to yourselves that your hearts never become weighed down with overeating and heavy drinking and anxieties of life, and suddenly that day be instantly upon you as a snare." (Luke 21:34, 35) Avoiding overindulgence in food is one important way to shun a spiritually damaging life-style.

Moderation is a Christian virtue. (1 Timothy 3:2, 11) Therefore, Jehovah will surely help all those who earnestly seek to apply the Bible's counsel on moderate eating and drinking habits.—Hebrews 4:16.

Will We Ever Enjoy Real Security?

CHILDREN happily playing with their loving parents—who does not enjoy watching such a scene? The children feel totally secure in the presence of caring parents. Yet, for many young ones, such moments of happiness hardly exist. Instead, some children have to worry every day about where they will find a place to sleep for the night. Is there any hope for such homeless children and others who live without security?

Although the future may look grim, God's Word provides hope. The prophet Isaiah foretold that the day will come when all will live in total security. He wrote: "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."—Isaiah 65:21, 22.

But is this hope well-founded? After all, the word "hope" does not always indicate certainty. For example, in Brazil, one often hears the expression: "*A esperança é a última que morre.*" It literally means, "Hope is the last thing that dies." This implies that many people remain hopeful even when there is no real basis for hope. However, the hope that the living God extends to us is different. The apostle Paul wrote: "None that rests his faith on [God] will be disappointed." (Romans 10:11) Bible prophecies that have already been fulfilled give us the confidence that all other promises made by Jehovah God will also come true. When those promises become realities, the conditions that force children to live in the street will be a thing of the past.

Even today the practical counsel found in the Bible can help those without hope to improve their lives and find true security. How is that possible? Jehovah's Witnesses in your community will be happy to assist you in finding the answer to this question.