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The Watchtower

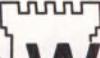
Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



**"Let
your
kingdom
come"**

Why? When? How?

—see page 8



The Watchtower[®]

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

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THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER" is to exalt Jehovah God as the Sovereign of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as they 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 the now-reigning king, Jesus Christ, whose shed blood opens the way for mankind to gain eternal life. "The Watchtower," published by Jehovah's Witnesses since 1879, is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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In Search of Success

IT WAS July 20, 1969. The Apollo 11 spacecraft and the lunar landing module named Eagle circled the moon making last-minute preparations for the first historic landing of man on the moon. I sat in the mission support room at the Manned Spacecraft Center in Houston, Texas, with dozens of thoughts rebounding in my mind: Will the landing be a safe one? Will the system for which I was responsible operate properly and carry out its necessary functions?

I, as well as many others who had worked diligently many years for this moment, waited and listened intently. Suddenly, a voice from 240,000 miles* in space said: "Houston, the Eagle has landed." How excited and thrilled I was at hearing those words!

And, yet, although I had helped to design, build and test the spacecraft that brought man to the moon's surface, I soon realized that I had not found success—real success—and happiness in life. But before I tell you more about that, let me first explain how I got involved



in the space program and the effect it had on my life.

Early Influences

I grew up on a farm in Oklahoma where hard physical work was a way of life. Even though we had sufficient food, clothing and shelter, there were times when we did not have enough money to purchase a postage stamp, which at that time cost only three cents (U.S.).

My father had been reared in a very poor family and had re-

ceived only a second-grade education. So he instilled in his children the need to get a good college education in order to succeed. This is what I determined to do. I worked long hours during summer months and worked part-time jobs during school months. I attended class all day and studied each night until the wee hours of the morning. In 1961 I graduated from the University of Oklahoma, receiving a Bachelor of Science degree in electrical engineering.

During the four years that I was in college the aerospace program had begun to build momentum, and many companies were clamoring for engineering graduates. This certainly appealed to me

* 1 mile equals 1.6 km.

"The Eagle has landed!" I had helped to design the guidance system that placed the first man on the moon'

as it seemed like a huge step up from life on the farm. Since I had made good grades in college, I received numerous offers of employment from all over the United States. I accepted one at Cape Canaveral, Florida, the launch site for all manned space flights.

Striving for Success

It took little time for me to get caught up in the atmosphere of the space program. Just three weeks after I started on the job, the first United States manned orbital spacecraft was launched. Even though I had not worked on that specific mission, I nevertheless felt a part of it. The spirit of nationalism was very high at that time, since the president of the United States had publicly committed the country to landing a man on the moon and safely returning him to earth in that decade (the 1960's). The Soviet Union seemed to have embarked upon a similar course, so it was, in fact, viewed as a "space race." I was eager to do my patriotic duty and help to win this race.

I desired very much to succeed in my profession. To that end I was careful to take advantage of every opportunity to get ahead. Regularly I worked long hours (not being paid overtime) and willingly accepted out-of-town business trips that others refused because of not wanting to be away from their families. I enrolled in night courses and worked out a Master's Degree, as my supervisor encouraged this as a means for advancement. Since my immediate supervisor enjoyed playing poker, I joined in, viewing this also as an opportunity to promote my success.

Within two years I was promoted to

supervise a group of five to seven engineers and, although the group was small, a large responsibility was involved. By this time I had got to know some of the astronauts, and part of my job was to keep them informed as to the flight readiness of the spacecraft's inertial guidance system. I enjoyed not only my work but also the prestige that came with knowing and associating with the astronauts.

Before long I was promoted to supervise the activities of 10 to 12 engineers during tests of the spacecraft while it was on the launching pad. Since our responsibility entailed one of the major spacecraft systems and I was the spokesman for the group, this certainly made me feel very important. To my way of thinking at the time, I had achieved success.

At the conclusion of the Gemini Program (two-man spacecraft), I was offered an opportunity to move from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida to the Manned Spacecraft Center in Houston, Texas, to work on the three-man Apollo Lunar Landing Program. Since this looked like a good means to make further advancement, I wasted no time in accepting the offer.

The next few years were spent working hard on the first moon landing flight, developing computer software for the guidance and navigation systems, planning mission techniques and simulating the flight on a ground computer. I remember being told by one of my superiors: "Nothing is more important than making a success of this flight."

As a result, I became a workaholic. My whole life revolved around contributing to a successful moon landing mission and

also in making a name for myself with my superiors. My family received very little attention. Pride certainly was evident in me, when on July 20, 1969, for the first time in history, an individual whom I had known and worked with stepped onto the surface of the moon from a spacecraft that I had helped to design and build.

A Change in Thinking

During the year or two that followed this first lunar landing flight, I began to consider seriously my profession and what the future held for me. I had seemingly achieved a measure of success—a well-paying job, apparent financial security, a home, a family and respected associates. But it was becoming more and more obvious to me that I was caught up in a system of things that in actuality led nowhere. The more I accomplished, the more I had to accomplish and there was no stopping place. In reality what I had achieved was a false sense of security. Real success and true happiness did not result from what I had attained.

Then, during the summer of 1973, a relative of my wife came to visit us. He and his wife had been studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses, and they were planning to attend a convention of Witnesses being held in Houston, Texas. Since we were not doing anything else that weekend, my family and I attended the convention with them. I was very much impressed by the honesty, and the patient, courteous attitude of individuals as they waited in lines for meals.

Shortly after that convention, my family and I started attending the meetings at the local Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, and a weekly Bible study was arranged for us. The first thing that deeply impressed me from what I was learning was the prospect of living on an earth cleansed of greed, wickedness

and injustice. (Psalm 37:10, 11, 29; Proverbs 2:21, 22; 2 Peter 3:13) Certainly this stood out in stark contrast to the selfish, competitive spirit that I had seen and become a part of for so many years.

As I progressed in my studies of the Bible, I appreciated being able to relate my own situation in life to what I was learning. For example, I placed myself in King Solomon's shoes when I read his words recorded at Ecclesiastes 4:4: "I myself have seen all the hard work and all the proficiency in work, that it means the rivalry of one toward another; this also is vanity and a striving after the wind." How true this was in my own case! I had worked hard and had become very proficient in what I did. Yet it had been futile, or worthless, in securing for me lasting happiness and peace of mind.

Making Changes in My Life

From the knowledge I was acquiring, I decided that I would have to make some changes in my life. For instance, I learned from Galatians 5:26 that Christians should "not become egotistical, stirring up competition with one another, envying one another." Although I had



'My family and I have certainly experienced that serving Jehovah gives a better life now'

already thought about breaking free of my competitive profession, I now became convinced of the need to do so.

'But how will I be able to do it and still support my family of five in the standard we had grown accustomed to?' I asked myself. I was encouraged by the reassuring words of Jesus at Matthew 6:33, where he said: "Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other things [life's necessities] will be added to you."

'What will my former associates think when I give up a supposedly secure, excellent-paying position?' I also wondered. But both my wife and I became firm in our resolve to make the decision that would be right for us, no matter what former associates might think.

A few years prior to our study of the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses, we had purchased a house and 120 acres* of land near where I had grown up in Oklahoma. We had talked on numerous occasions about moving there, but had not done so. However, now we were sure that this was the best thing for us to do. So about six months after I attended that convention of Jehovah's Witnesses in 1973, I quit my position on the space program and moved my family to our new home in Oklahoma.

In order to "put bread on the table" after leaving the space program, I went to work for a small electronics firm, earning about one half the salary that I had previously earned. However, it was not long before I was faced with another big decision.

I came to realize that the work I was now performing was directly linked to the manufacture of military equipment. I just could not conscientiously support such endeavors and live in harmony with what the Bible says at Isaiah 2:4 and

1 John 3:11, 12. So I decided to terminate this source of income. It took courage and faith in Jehovah's ability to provide for us the necessities of life. But, looking back, I can honestly say that never did my family and I lack sufficient food, shelter and clothing.

Eight years have now passed since I made the decision to leave the space program. My family and I have certainly experienced the truthfulness of what the Bible says at 1 Timothy 4:8: "Godly devotion is beneficial for all things, as it holds promise of the life *now* and that which is to come." Indeed, serving Jehovah has given us a better life now.

We have also benefited economically by learning to be content with the necessities of life. (1 Timothy 6:8) Unlike the glamorous position I once held, I now own a parking-lot sweeper and operate it about two days a week. This allows time for me to share regularly in public-preaching activity, and it also provides more time for me to spend with my family, whom I had neglected for many years when I worked for the space program.

Of course, serving Jehovah has not completely eliminated our problems. But it certainly has better equipped us to cope with them. No longer do I worry about succeeding or getting ahead in this world, since I now know that this system of things is destined to pass away and be replaced with a righteous new order of God's making.—1 John 2:17; 2 Peter 3:11-13.

As I look back on the changes that I have made in my life, I heartily agree with the words of the apostle Paul recorded at Philippians 3:8. Worldly prestige and prominence are like refuse in comparison to an accurate knowledge of God and Christ, and the marvelous hope of eternal life on a paradise earth.—Contributed by Wendell Marley.

* One acre equals 0.405 ha.

Insight on the News

"A National Medical Resource"

In a recent article on 'artificial blood,' the New York *Times* refers to a fluid that "holds the promise of making important contributions to therapy and research." The report notes that Fluosol-DA, a product developed in Japan, may soon be licensed there for human use, "making that country the first in the world to do so." According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), clinical trials are now slated for a number of American hospitals.

Interestingly, the article also notes that the blood substitute "might do some things better than blood and may ultimately play a priceless role in such aspects of medicine as emergency care after accidents, cancer diagnosis and therapy, and treatment of carbon monoxide and some other poisonings."

"Expansion of the American trials is putting the 590,000 Jehovah's Witnesses in this country in the singular position of serving as a national medical resource," observed the *Times*. "Because the F.D.A. has restricted such experiments to acutely anemic patients in need of elective surgery who refuse to accept blood transfusions, most patients in the new studies are expected to be Jehovah's Witnesses."

The Bible-based stand of Jehovah's Witnesses on blood has often resulted in health benefits for them. Now it seems that this will also result in benefits to many others as well.—Acts 15:28, 29.

"Thundering Silence" About War

"In recent weeks, references have been made to the thundering silence of the churches amidst serious world crises, in particular the arms race and the threat of nuclear war," stated the United Church of Canada's magazine *The Observer*. The writer admitted: "The United Church of Canada, my church, has been part of this silence." Among the reasons he gave in explanation were the following:

"The churches are in bondage to the war system. . . . They accept war-making because they, and many of their members, benefit from it through their investments and are reluctant to dissociate themselves from economic privilege and power. The churches serve mammon instead of God. There is little difference between churchgoers and non-churchgoers in attitudes to the war issue. Most church people are part of the mainstream of society and accept war as a normal instrument of public policy, not to be questioned. . . .

"The church, I fear, will continue to be silent about the threat of nuclear war until church members face squarely their involvement in individual and corporate sin against humanity, renounce all war-making, extricate themselves from an economic system that produces war and injustice, and are prepared to accept the personal and institutional costs in-

volved." What these church members have failed to do, Jehovah's Witnesses have already made a way of life, 'beating swords into plowshares, spears into pruning shears and not learning war anymore.'—Isaiah 2:4.

The Cobra's "Ear"

A Biblical phrase that poetically speaks of a cobra's "ear" has often been challenged. (Psalm 58:4, 5) But the German zoological magazine *Grzimeks Tier, Sielmanns Tierwelt* (Grzimek's Animal, Sielmann's Animal World) has published an article that it admits is in "direct contradiction" to the opinion "that cobras are deaf," and goes on to ask: "Who is right—the scientifically held view or our author?"

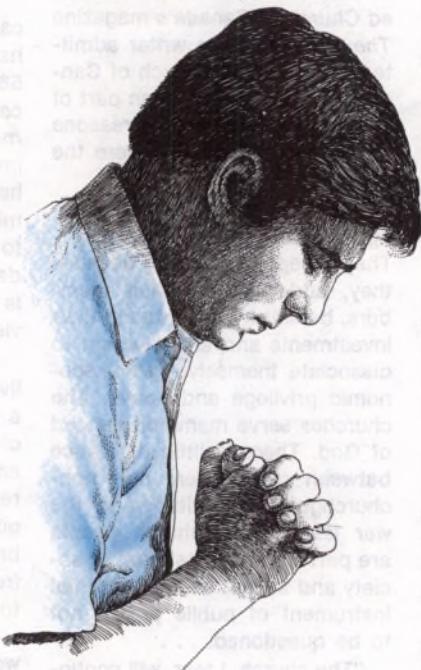
The author tells of a cobra that lived on his estate in Sri Lanka in a termite hill. He asked a snake charmer to catch the wild snake and get it to dance. The author reports: "After I had assured my guest that there really was a cobra living there, he sat down in front of the termite hill and began to play his pipe. After a long time—I no longer believed anything would happen—the cobra raised its head several centimeters out of a hole. Before the snake could open its mouth the charmer hurried over and grabbed its head between his thumb and two fingers." The Indian thereupon actually got the snake to dance. In this instance at least, the cobra really did 'listen to the voice of the charmer.'

Why Pray, "Let Your Kingdom Come"?

"The kingdom of God is not coming with striking observableness, neither will people be saying, 'See here!' or, 'There!' For, look! the kingdom of God is in your midst."—Luke 17:20, 21.

DO WE need God's kingdom? Most certainly we do! For we humans today are passing through the most critical period in all history. These are fearsome times! Underlining this, the Manchester *Guardian Weekly* of June 7, 1981, had this to say: "London, Paris, Bonn, Rome, and Brussels could all be totally destroyed by the SS-20 missiles which the Soviet Union has deployed since the beginning of this month. . . . Each missile carries three warheads of 150 kilotons, so that the total firepower against each city would be 30 times greater than that loosed on Hiroshima. Having fired five of its SS-20s the Soviet Union would still have 210 left for other targets, without calling in aid

1, 2. In line with reliable news sources, why may our times be described as fearsome?



its bomber force, its submarine fleet, or the 1,400 inter-continental missiles, each bearing many megatons which are kept in reserve for more important occasions."

² *Time* magazine of October 26, 1981, in its cover story "Arming the World," described the situation as "out of control and no limits in sight." It spoke of the "alarming and accelerating commonplace: for large and small nations alike, weapon sales have become the chief tools of diplomacy . . . 'major strands in the warp and woof of world politics.' "

³ Truly, "just as the days of Noah were," the earth has become "filled with violence" and with a tremendous potential for even greater violence on a cata-

3. (a) According to Genesis 6:11, 13, how did Noah's day parallel our day? (b) What words of Jesus now have striking application?

strophic scale. (Genesis 6:11, 13; Matthew 24:37) There is no wonder that Jesus, when he prophesied of "these things that are destined to occur" at the world's end, spoke of "anguish of nations, not knowing the way out . . . , while men become faint out of fear and expectation of the things coming upon the inhabited earth."—Luke 21:25, 26, 36.

Take Courage!

⁴ However, can we expect that the loving Creator of our beautiful earth will permit violent, trigger-happy men or nations to bring his handiwork to utter ruin? Can we imagine that Jehovah God will allow those of mankind who have 'beaten swords into plowshares' and who worship him "with spirit and truth" to be annihilated by his enemies? (Isaiah 2:2-4; John 4:24) Never! And that is why Jesus adds to his description of present-day events these words: "As these things start to occur, raise yourselves erect and lift your heads up, because your deliverance is getting near." (Luke 21:28) Jesus tells us to take a positive, optimistic attitude toward the various conditions that surround us at this "conclusion of the system of things."—Matthew 24:3-8, 33.

⁵ In many parts of the world it is no longer safe to walk down the street. The divorce rate soars, families are breaking up, and drug addiction and illicit sex have grown to epidemic proportions. This is the world in which Jehovah's worshipers must live. But though we are in the world, we do not need to be engulfed by the world. For we can be of the same mind as Jesus, who declared: "In the world you are having tribulation, but take courage! I have conquered the world."—John 16:33.

4. Why should our attitude be one of optimism?
5. What kind of world must we live in, and yet of what mind should we be?

⁶ Why was Jesus able to 'conquer the world'? It was because of his firm faith in God's promised kingdom. He knew that Jehovah would bring in the Kingdom in His own due time and way. Jesus deeply treasured his own assignment as King-designate. In order to attain to the Kingdom, he gave up everything that he might have had as a perfect man on earth. He wants us also to enjoy Kingdom blessings. It is for this reason that Jesus taught his disciples to pray: "Let your kingdom come." (Matthew 6:10) Over the centuries, literally hundreds of millions of mankind have repeated that prayer. But how few have understood what the Kingdom really means!

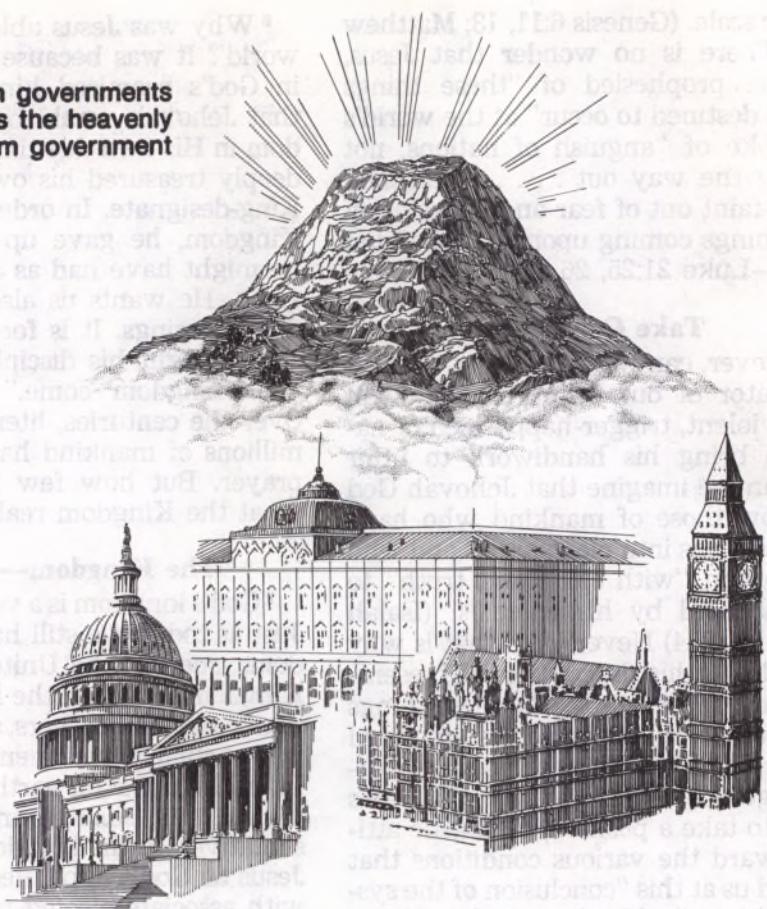
The Kingdom—A Reality

⁷ God's kingdom is a very real kingdom. Just as today we still have human kingdoms, such as the United Kingdom, the Kingdom of Nepal, the Kingdom of Denmark, and many others, so God's kingdom is an actual governmental arrangement. Like kingdoms on earth that have their parliaments, senates and elected representatives, so the kingdom of heaven has Jesus as God's appointed King, together with associate elected rulers. But in this case, they are *elected by God himself* from among trustworthy humans. They are "God's chosen ones [“the elect of God,” *Authorized Version*], holy and loved." (Colossians 3:12) God himself knows best of all what qualities are desirable in righteous rulers, so that these may truly take care of mankind's interests. After their resurrection into the *heavenly* kingdom, these 144,001 heavenly rulers will be in a strategic position for administering the

6. (a) In 'conquering the world,' what fine example did Jesus set? (b) Why did Jesus teach us to pray, "Let your kingdom come"?

7. (a) What comparison helps us to appreciate that God's kingdom is real? (b) How are the Kingdom's rulers elected, and why can we be sure that they will truly care for mankind's interests?

As human governments are real, so is the heavenly Kingdom government



affairs of the realm of the Kingdom on earth.—Revelation 14:1.

¹⁸ Who, then, will be the subjects of the Kingdom? If you were to go to Christendom's religions for the answer, they would tell you that there will be no such subjects. They follow the Grecian philosophy that all souls are immortal, and that they go to "heaven" or "hell." They do not believe the marvelous Bible

8, 9. (a) Why does Christendom fail to teach that the Kingdom has subjects? (b) Yet who are those subjects, and over what Bible promises may they rejoice? (c) Who alone today are making known the "good news," and what joy may be yours today?

promise of an earthly resurrection, and that God will "reside" *with mankind* and "wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore." (John 5:28, 29; Revelation 21:3, 4) Yes, the subjects of the Kingdom will be the billions of mankind who will live forever in a global paradise right here on this earth. And of all religions on earth, Jehovah's Witnesses are the only ones today that are telling the people of earth this "good news."—Psalm 37:9, 29.

⁹ If you have already accepted the "good news," are you not glad that some-

one shared this hope with you? Are you not overjoyed to know what God's kingdom will do for mankind? Are you not happy that, in anticipation of all that the Kingdom will accomplish, you may have a part in sanctifying the illustrious name of the Provider of that kingdom, our God, Jehovah? No greater privilege could there be today than to proclaim "this good news of the kingdom" to others of needy mankind!—Matthew 24:14; Psalm 145:10, 11.

Our Fervent Prayer

¹⁰ How fervent we should be, then, in praying for God's name to be sanctified through the coming of his kingdom! How confident we should be that the Kingdom will "come" soon, to carry out God's will toward our earth! Having become God's dedicated, baptized servants, we can be confident, too, that Jehovah will answer our prayers for daily sustenance, for forgiveness of our sins, and for protection against the wiles of that old "serpent," the Devil. Those are the things for which Jesus taught us to pray.—Matthew 6:9-13; Revelation 12:9.

¹¹ It is indeed a cruel, harsh world, in which family heads find it ever more difficult to cope with spiraling inflation and other economic problems. And we need always to keep on guard, so that we do not fail spiritually or morally under the enemy's attacks. In line with the apostle Paul's admonition at Ephesians 6:11-18, let us "with every form of prayer and supplication . . . carry on prayer on every occasion in spirit." For God will assuredly answer the prayers of his devoted ones—prayers that are in harmony with his will.—Psalm 65:2, 4, 5.

10. With regard to the Kingdom, why should we make fervent prayer, and with what confidence?

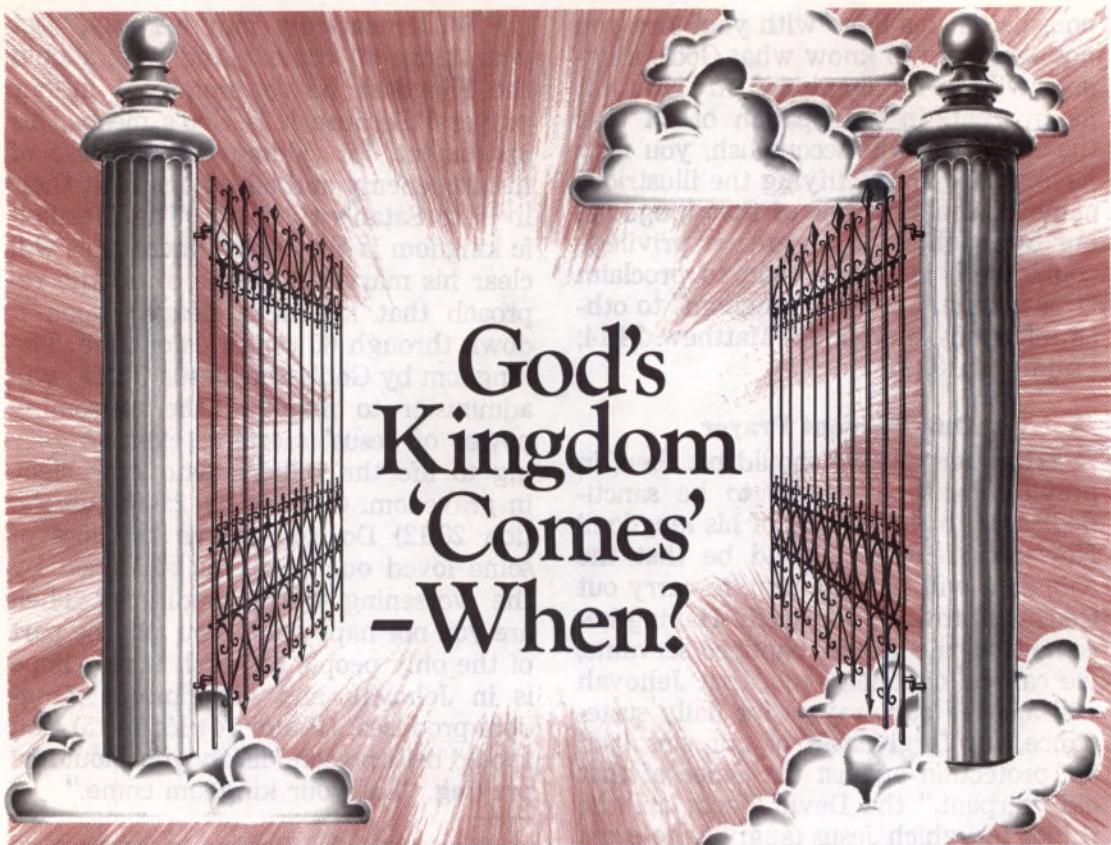
11. In view of world problems, what admonition of Paul is timely, and why?

¹² Wholeheartedly, may we pray, "Let your kingdom come." And why should the Kingdom be so prominent in our prayers? Because it is God's means, his instrument, for ridding the universe of his archenemy and all who submit their lives to Satan's rulership. The Messianic kingdom is His arrangement that will clear his marvelous name of all the reproach that has been heaped upon it down through 60 centuries of time. The kingdom by God's Son, Jesus Christ, will administer to mankind the ransoming power of Jesus' sacrifice, even to raising to life the billions who now sleep in gravedom. (1 Timothy 2:3-6; Revelation 20:12) Do you grieve the loss of some loved one? Are you saddened by the worsening world conditions? Then are you not happy that you may be part of the only people on earth whose hope is in Jehovah and his glorious Kingdom promises? (Psalm 144:15; 146:5) You should be! And confidently you should be praying, "Let your kingdom come."

12. Why should the Kingdom be prominent in our prayers?

WHAT THE KINGDOM'S 'COMING' WILL ACCOMPLISH

- Remove badness, war, oppression
- Deliver all who worship God "with spirit and truth"
- Provide a real government with administrators elected by God
- Raise the dead, unite all races as earthly subjects of the Kingdom
- Replace poverty and corruption with prosperity, justice for all



God's Kingdom 'Comes' -When?

JUST when can we expect the Kingdom promises to come to grand fulfillment? To some who have served Jehovah faithfully for 20, 30, 40 or more years, "the end" may seem to have been delayed. But remember what God's prophet Habakkuk tells us: "Even if it should delay, keep in expectation of it; for it will without fail come true. *It will not be late.*" (Habakkuk 2:3) We do not need to know in advance "that day and hour" when the "great tribulation" will burst upon this world in all its fury. For the present, it is sufficient that we 'glorify our ministry' by proclaiming zealously

the good news of the established kingdom. For we can be confident that, when the Kingdom preaching has been carried out to the extent that Jehovah wants it done, *then "the end will come."*—Matthew 24:14, 21, 36; Romans 11:13.

²In connection with Jehovah's timing of events, this fact is of interest: That God *did* reveal ahead of time the starting dates of the two most important periods in human history up to this present time. What are these? Both of them are judgment periods. The first of these periods was the "last days" of the Jewish sys-

1. (a) Why should we "keep in expectation" of the end? (b) How may we 'glorify our ministry,' and with what confidence?

2. (a) With regard to Jehovah's timing of events, what is of interest? (b) When, and with what event, did the "last days" of the Jewish system get under way?

tem of things, and it got under way with the baptism of Jesus and his anointing as Messiah. (Joel 1:15; 2:28-32; Acts 2:17) Daniel's prophecy, recorded more than 500 years ahead of time, pinpointed the year 29 C.E. as the start of those "last days." How so?

Timing the Jewish "Last Days"

³ In Daniel 9:24-27 we read of a period of "seventy weeks of years" (*An American Translation; Moffatt*), or a total of 490 years, as starting "from the going forth of the word to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem."^{*} When was that? The Bible account at Nehemiah 2:1-7 states that "in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king" of Persia, the king himself instructed his Jewish cupbearer, Nehemiah, to return to the city of his forefathers and "rebuild it." According to secular history this "twentieth year of Artaxerxes" would be 455 B.C.E. Counting 490 years from that date, we come to the year 36 C.E. Daniel's prophecy tells us that the last 'week of years,' 29-36 C.E., is of special importance. And why?

⁴ It is because "from the going forth of the word to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Leader, there will be seven weeks, also sixty-two weeks." So Messiah would appear at the start of that seventieth week of years. This would also mark the start of the "last days" of the Jewish system of things, during the first seven years of which judgment period Messiah would confirm the Abrahamic covenant toward those Jews who accepted him. "At the half" of that week of years, that is, in 33 C.E., Messiah would be "cut off" in death, his

* See "Let Your Kingdom Come," pages 58-66, for a complete discussion of this time feature.

3, 4. (a) What are the "seventy weeks," when did they start, and when end? (b) What events marked the last 'week of years' as important?

own great sin-atoning sacrifice 'causing sacrifice and gift offering [according to Israel's law] to cease' as being no longer of any value.—Hebrews 10:12, 18.

⁵ No doubt the Jews were well acquainted with the time feature of the "seventy weeks," for the Bible writer Luke tells us that in those days "the people were in expectation" of the Christ. (Luke 3:15) However, their hopes were pinned on the coming of a glorious warrior-king, who would lead the Jews to victory over their Roman oppressors. Their faith did not extend to their believing that Messiah would be "cut off," murdered, in 33 C.E. Nor would they place credence in the prophetic warning that Jerusalem and its people would again undergo "an extermination." But how true Daniel's prophecy proved to be when Jerusalem was devastated by the Roman legions under General Titus in 70 C.E.!

Global "Last Days"—When?

⁶ However, what is the other starting date that Jehovah kindly revealed ahead of time? It is the start of "the last days" of Satan's entire world system of things. (2 Timothy 3:1-5) These are the "critical times hard to deal with" that began earth wide in the year 1914 C.E.

⁷ For 34 years prior to 1914, keen Bible students had been looking forward to that date. *The Watchtower* had frequently called advance attention to its significance from the year 1880 onward. And now, 68 years after 1914, we look back

5. (a) What indicates that the Jews were well acquainted with the time feature of the "seventy weeks"? (b) Why were the Jews disappointed as to their expectation? (c) How true did Daniel's prophecy prove to be?

6. What other date did Jehovah reveal ahead of time, and as the start of what?

7, 8. (a) How have keen Bible students regarded that date since 1880, and down into the 1980's? (b) What statements of well-informed men of the world have likewise focused on 1914?



FROM the "going forth of the word" of king of Persia to Nehemiah in 455 B.C.E.

"SEVENTY WEEKS OF YEARS" (Daniel 9:24-27)

455 - 1 B.C.E. =	454 years
1 B.C.E. - 1 C.E. =	1 year
1 C.E. - 36 C.E. =	35 years
455 B.C.E. - 36 C.E. =	490 years
Messiah "cut off . . . at the half of the week," April 33 C.E.	



TO the end of special favor to Jews in 36 C.E. with conversion of Cornelius' household

on that year as one pulsating with meaning. We are not alone in this. One well-informed writer referred to 1914 as the year when "the world, as it was known and accepted then, came to an end."* Another described 1914 as starting "the modern era [which] everyone is acutely aware . . . could end in mass annihilation."†—See also the book "*Let Your Kingdom Come*," pages 127-140, 186-189.

More than 50 years after 1914, German statesman Konrad Adenauer reflected: "Thoughts and pictures come to my mind, . . . thoughts from before the year 1914 when there was real peace, quiet and security on this earth—a time when we didn't know fear. . . . Security and quiet have disappeared from the lives of men since 1914." And as late as November 1980, British statesman Harold Macmillan looked back on his 86 years of life and spoke wistfully of the "automatic progress" of Queen Victoria's age. He said: "Everything would get better and better. This was the world I was born in. [But] suddenly, unexpectedly, one morning in 1914 the whole thing came to an end."

* The book *1914*, by James Cameron, published in 1959.

† Editorial, the Seattle *Times*, January 1, 1959.

How did earnest Bible students, now known as Jehovah's Witnesses, appreciate 34 years ahead of time that 1914 would mark such a change? It was because the "faithful and discreet slave" (Matthew 24:45-47), made up of anointed Christians serving under their Master, Jesus Christ, was, in the words of Second Peter 1:19, 'paying attention to the prophetic word as to a lamp shining in a dark place.' Through the prophecy of Daniel chapter 4, they learned that the overthrow of the dynasty of King David in Jerusalem, which occurred in 607 B.C.E., would not mark forever the end of Jehovah's rule in the earth. The "tree" of God's kingly authority would sprout again. After "seven times," or 2,520 years, of beastlike Gentile rule of the earth, it would be known again "that the Most High is Ruler in the kingdom of mankind and that to the one whom he wants to, he gives it and he sets up over it even the lowliest one of mankind."—Daniel 4:14-17.

Yes, it would be in that calamitous year 1914 that the 'lowly' One who, at his first coming as Messiah, had been

9. (a) How did Bible students come to appreciate in advance that the year 1914 could be significant? (b) What interpretation of Daniel's prophecy in chapter 4 led to this view?

10. How does Messiah's appearing in 1914 contrast with his first coming?



Banding of Jehovah's Sovereignty as Gentile Times start, 607 B.C.E.

"APPOINTED TIMES OF THE NATIONS"

(Daniel 4:14-25;
Luke 21:24-26)

"SEVEN TIMES" = $7 \times 360 = 2,520$ years
(See Revelation 12:6, 14; Ezekiel 4:6b)
607 - 1 B.C.E. = 606 years
1 B.C.E. - 1 C.E. = 1 year
1 C.E. - 1914 C.E. = 1,913 years
607 B.C.E. - 1914 C.E. = 2,520 years

1914

Jehovah's Sovereignty restored in Messianic Kingdom, 1914 C.E.

cruelly "cut off, with nothing for himself," would appear again. But this time Christ comes invisibly, in heavenly glory, and all the holy angels with him, to "sit down on his glorious throne."
—Daniel 9:26; Matthew 25:31.

The "Generation" of 1914

¹¹ At that time of the start of Christ's presence, or *parousia*, he was unseen by human eyes. But that generation of 1914 certainly *did see* what happened here on earth as a "sign" of his presence and as "a beginning of sorrows" for mankind! (Matthew 24:8, *Authorized Version*) And the remaining ones of that generation of 1914 are still talking about it. Some of them will be talking about it right down to the time when the "great tribulation" wipes Satan's wicked system of things off the face of our globe. For Jesus Christ himself assures us: "Truly I say to you that this generation [the generation that saw the 'beginning of pangs of distress' in 1914] will by no means pass away [completely] until all these things occur. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away." —Matthew 24:3, 8, 34, 35.

11. (a) Which "generation" will not pass away before the things foretold by Jesus occur? (b) What may remaining ones of this "generation" expect to see?

¹² The "sorrows" foretold to begin in 1914 burst upon the world scene with startling suddenness. And they continue to afflict mankind! They provide the convincing "sign" that 1914 marked the beginning of "the conclusion of the system of things." However, our faith is not based simply on a date, such as 1914. Our faith is firmly anchored in the entire word of God, in the "good news" that was preached first by Jesus and his disciples, in the marvelous fulfillments of so many of the Bible prophecies in this, our day, and especially as these apply to and identify the "faithful and discreet slave" and his companion workers. It is "this good news of the kingdom," the entire message of the Bible, that is the foundation of our faith. All of this focuses on Jesus Christ, God's Son, whom he sent to earth to redeem mankind, and who now reigns gloriously in the established kingdom of the heavens. (Matthew 24:3, 14, 45-47; 25:31-33; Revelation 19:10) Having faith, we can appreciate also *how* the Kingdom will "come" for the salvation of all who love and practice righteousness. How will that be?

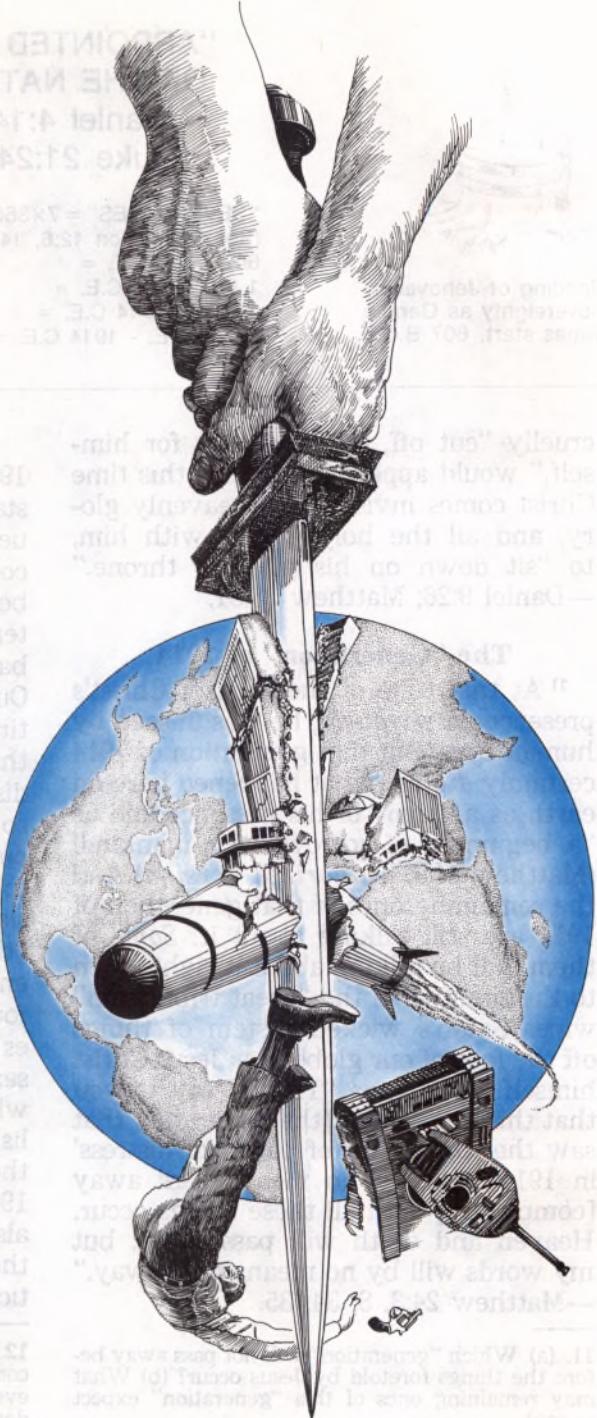
12. (a) What happenings beginning in 1914 should convince us of the accuracy of prophecy? (b) However, in what is our faith anchored? (c) On what does the "good news" focus?

How the Kingdom 'Comes'

WHAT period of time remains until the "great tribulation" strikes, we do not know. The "last days" of the Jewish system of things embraced the years 29 to 70 C.E., a total of 41 years. But now a much larger system faces God's execution of judgment. It is the Devil's entire world system, of which the world empire of false religion, and especially Christendom's counterfeit religion, is the most reprehensible part. So it is not surprising that the "last days" of this world system have stretched out now for nearly 68 years, from 1914 to 1982. This has all been for a purpose. And what is that?

² Well, what did the first-century Christians do during the "last days" of the Jewish system? They preached! They sounded the warning! So, within just a few decades, the apostle Paul could write: "The hope of that good news which you heard . . . was preached in all creation that is under heaven."—Colossians 1:23.

1. Why is it not surprising that the global "last days" have continued down to 1982?
2. How were first-century Christians an example to us today?



³ Now, today, the field is more extensive. It is the world, *all* the world! But again, under the empowering force of God's spirit, Christian witnesses of Jehovah have gone forth to the ends of the earth. They have preached the truth in more than 160 different languages. They have gathered together the sheeplike ones out of all nations, up to some 5,980,000 that attended the Memorial of Jesus' death in 1981. As a watchman class, the "faithful and discreet slave" has taken the lead in proclaiming the day of Jehovah's vengeance, while comforting all that mourn. (Isaiah 21:11, 12; 61:1, 2) In connection with their preaching work, over the past century Jehovah's Witnesses have distributed Bibles and bound books to the number of 460,000,000, and *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines to the number of 4,767,000,000 copies. Has this not been a stupendous witness to Jehovah's name and kingdom?

⁴ Now this preaching of the Kingdom good news nears its climax! Unitedly, throughout the earth, faithful missionaries, pioneers and congregation publishers have accomplished a marvelous work—"not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit," says Jehovah of armies. (Zechariah 4:6, *American Standard Version*) As a result, millions of mankind have come forward to join the 'faithful slave,' saying: "We will go with you people, for we have heard that God is with you people."—Zechariah 8:23.

⁵ It remains, now, only for God's kingdom to "come"! To come in what way? Why, in the way that the prophet Daniel describes in chapter two of his prophecy! Here the Messianic kingdom is portrayed as a "stone" of the symbolic "mountain"

3, 4. Whom has Jehovah's spirit empowered to give the modern-day witness, and with what results?

5. How does Daniel chapter 2 portray the 'coming' of the Kingdom?

of Jehovah's age-abiding sovereignty. Like a missile, this "stone" hurtles, yes, 'comes,' to strike down the structure of man-made governments, crushing these to powder. Then the Kingdom "stone" itself becomes a "mountain," filling the earth, all to Jehovah's praise and glory.
—Daniel 2:34, 35, 44, 45.

Devastating the "Harlot"

⁶ However, there are some preliminaries to the final crushing of man-rule in the earth. The prophetic book of Revelation shows that first Jehovah will use radical powers from within the United Nations as a forge hammer of destruction. This should not sound strange, for in ancient times Jehovah used the Babylonian world power as "the forge hammer of all the earth" in executing his judgment on the nations, and on apostate Jerusalem in particular. (Jeremiah 50:23) Jerusalem of old has a modern-day counterpart in the organized religion of Christendom. This claims to worship the God of the Bible, but, instead, it has made itself part of the world empire of false religion. The prophecy identifies that empire as "Babylon the Great, the mother of the harlots and of the disgusting things of the earth."—Revelation 17:5.

⁷ That world empire of false religion has made its choice. It has rejected God's incoming kingdom by Messiah in favor of man-made substitutes. Today, the clergy of the world's religions give the United Nations their wholehearted support. In the words of a Jewish rabbi, the United Nations is "the sole hope for lasting peace in a world whose survival depends on it." And Pope John Paul II

6. (a) Why should it not seem strange that Jehovah will use radical human agencies in executing judgment? (b) What modern counterpart does Jerusalem have, and of what empire is it also a part?

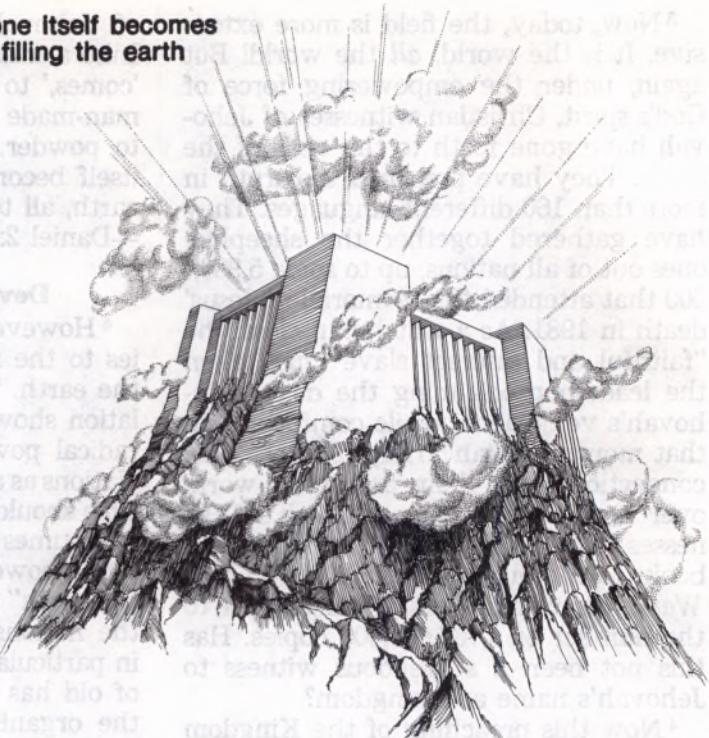
7. (a) What choice has false religion made? (b) How do its spokesmen indicate their hope? (c) But what do the Scriptures show to be mankind's hope?

**The Kingdom stone itself becomes
a "mountain" filling the earth**

describes it as "the supreme forum of peace and justice." But has the United Nations brought peace and justice to our earth? Is the United Nations really mankind's "sole hope"? Or is that hope God's kingdom? Indeed, that hope is centered in the 'coming' of God's kingdom by Messiah! —Matthew 12:18, 21.

⁸ In its Charter, the United Nations states its first purpose to be "to maintain international *peace and security*." As Jehovah's Witnesses, do we not detect a familiar ring in those words? Yes! For the apostle Paul said: "Whenever it is that they are saying: '*Peace and security!*' then sudden destruction is to be *instantly* upon them just as the pang of distress upon a pregnant woman; and they will by no means escape." (1 Thessalonians 5:3) So, as we progress toward the *finale* of these "last days," we can look for some striking pronouncement about "*Peace and security!*" When that sounds forth from the nations, what follows? The prophecy answers: "Instant, sudden and inescapable destruction!"

⁹ World religion's illicit "affair" with the United Nations will come to a catastrophic end! In "one hour" it will be over! The "ten horns" of the United



Nations "beast" will turn upon Babylon the Great. Militaristic radical elements from within that world body will rip her apart, devastate her, strip her of her luxurious garments and incinerate her. Corrupt politicians who have used false religion to bolster their position and big business moguls who have used her as a front for gunrunning and other profiteering will wail over her from afar. They will lament, saying: "Too bad, too bad, you great city, Babylon you strong city, because in one hour your judgment has arrived! . . . because in one hour such great riches have been devastated!" —Revelation 18:10, 17.

Armageddon—And After

¹⁰ Events will move quickly to a finish.

10. Why will Armageddon follow quickly, and with what result?

8. What statement of the U.N. Charter reminds us of 1 Thessalonians 5:3, and why should this be of interest to us?

9. (a) What catastrophic end awaits false religion? (b) How will leaders in politics and big business regard this, and why?

Those same political "horns" that devastate the great "harlot" will turn on the seemingly defenseless witnesses of Jehovah. But now they will find themselves battling with none other than Jehovah's "Lord of lords and King of kings." They will be at Armageddon. That is where Jehovah's kingdom by Messiah 'comes' to perform its greatest act in vindication of Jehovah's sovereignty and of his faithful servants. The battle will be sharp and decisive. Satan's militaristic, political rule of the earth will be cut off, and Satan himself will be bound and hurled into the abyss for 1,000 years, "that he might not mislead the nations anymore."—Revelation 16:14; 17:14; 19:11-21; 20:2, 3.

¹¹ What next? Why, the millennial kingdom will be here! How the Armageddon survivors will rejoice! How wonderful the love, the joy, the peace that will then spread throughout all the earth! How marvelous the resurrection that will reunite loved ones the world over! How stimulating the healing program, as Jesus and his fellow kings and priests apply the soothing benefits of his ransom sacrifice, lifting the billions of mankind up to perfection! And for all who are transferred from the realm of Christ's 1,000-year kingdom to the realm of Jehovah's everlasting sovereignty, and who resist the final test from Satan, what exultation there will be as they share in the unfolding of the marvels of eternity!—Revelation 20:7-9; 21:3, 4.

¹² It is the 'coming' of God's kingdom by Messiah that makes possible all these wonderful things. Does this not move us, during the dying days of Satan's system, to speak to others about the "magnificent things of God," the glory of his kingship

11. (a) How will the 'coming' of the Kingdom then bless all mankind? (b) What transfer follows as the 1,000 years end, and with what happy prospect in view?

12. What makes possible these wonderful things, so what should we be moved to do now?

and the unshakable kingdom of Messiah? (Psalm 145:11; Acts 2:11; Hebrews 12:28) Are we not moved to pray fervently to our heavenly Father, "Let your kingdom come"?—Matthew 6:9, 10.

¹³ Yes, "COME," God's kingdom, to destroy Satan's works and organization out of the earth! Yes, "COME," to provide for all mankind the right kind of government! Yes, "COME," to bring in Christ's glorious millennial reign, for the restoration of Paradise, the resurrection of the dead and the uplifting of the billions of mankind to human perfection! Yes, "COME," O kingdom of Messiah, to sanctify for all eternity the matchless name of the Sovereign Lord JEHOVAH!

13. Why should we pray wholeheartedly for the Kingdom to "COME"?

THE KINGDOM IN GOD'S PURPOSE

- Jehovah's prophets foretold it
- Typified by David's kingdom
- Jesus' disciples preached it
- Established in heavens, 1914
- Preached for a witness to all the nations, since 1919
- "Great crowd" now being gathered for salvation
- End comes with—
 - Cry of "Peace and security!"
 - 'Great Babylon' destroyed
 - Kingdom devastates political rulers, armies, supporters
- Kingdom fills earth with joy, peace, praise to Jehovah

How Should John's Gospel Affect You?



WHY were the four Christian Gospels written? Merely as a historical record of the Messiah's life? Or was there a deeper motive? Christ's final command to his disciples casts light on these questions: "Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations, . . . teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you."—Matthew 28:19, 20.

Clearly, the Christian message would have to motivate people worldwide to imitate Jesus' example. They really would have to believe that Christ is the Savior. Thus the apostle John says he recorded Jesus' life story "that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that, because of believing, you may have life by means of his name."—John 20:31.

A Controversial Introduction □

At what point in time does John introduce Jesus to us? At his birth, as do the Gospel writers Matthew and Luke? No. He precedes that by countless ages. He takes us back to the beginning of all creation with the simple but profound introduction: "In the beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god [was divine, Schonfield]. This one was in the beginning with God. All things came into existence through him, and apart from him not

even one thing came into existence."

—John 1:1-3.

Without prior knowledge of the rest of the Bible this introduction can be difficult to understand. For example, at Proverbs 8:22-31 the Word (Christ in his prehuman existence) is spoken of under the symbol of wisdom as a "master worker" collaborating with God in His creative work. (See also 1 Corinthians 1:24.) The apostle Paul confirms this thought in his letter to the Colossians, where Christ is spoken of as "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; because by means of him all other things were created." From this we can see that the Word who "became flesh and resided among us" was God's first creation and was then used by his Father to carry out all further creative work.—Colossians 1:15, 16; John 1:14.

How should this knowledge affect us? Should we not be grateful to Jehovah, the Creator, for our very existence? And are we not appreciative of the role the Word has played in this? God endowed man and woman with powers of procreation that have resulted in the present human family of more than four billion

persons. However, there are many more reasons for gratitude toward God and his Son and these are related to the great themes of John's Gospel—light, life, love and loyalty.

How Are We Affected by Light?

In verses three and four of the first chapter of his Gospel, John takes us into two of those key themes that are interwoven into the fabric of his inspired account by saying: "What has come into existence by means of him [the Word] was life, and the *life* was the *light* of men." What does John convey by this statement? That the Word, or Christ, was God's Chief Agent for communicating both life and light to mankind. (Acts 3:15) John continues by telling us that John the Baptizer arose to bear witness about "the true light that gives light to every sort of man." (John 1:9) Yes, to every sort of man, because Christ did not come into the world just to be a Messiah for the Jews. He came for the benefit of all mankind, as he himself explained: "God loved the world [of mankind since Abel]

so much that he gave his only-begotten Son [Christ, the Word], in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life."—John 3:16.

Now, how should this oft-quoted text affect us? If God sent his Son to the earth to act as a light in the world's spiritual darkness, should we not at least reflect that light to others? God's unselfish course of action should touch a responsive chord in our heart. Who of us would be willing to sacrifice in ignominious death the person dearest to our heart and in behalf of mainly indifferent people? So what should God's love move us to do? To exercise active faith in Jesus Christ and in the life-redeeming value of his sacrifice. The result will be life, for Jesus said: "I am the light of the world. He that follows me will by no means walk in darkness, but will possess the light of life."—John 8:12.

**Jesus offers water
that imparts
everlasting life**



What Quality of Life Offered?

Without pretending any deep knowledge of scientific principles, John expresses one, namely, that earthly life depends on light. And in the symbolic sense that is just as true. Christ is the light that leads to life. But to what kind of life? Jesus' answer to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well gives us a clue: "Whoever drinks from the water that I will give him will never get thirsty at all, but the water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water bubbling up to impart *everlasting life*." (John 4:7-15) Christ offered the "real life," everlasting life with God's blessing.—1 Timothy 6:19.

Where would that everlasting life be enjoyed? For the relatively small number who form the "little flock," Jesus answers: "In the house of my Father there are many abodes. Otherwise, I would have told you, because I am going my way to prepare a place for you." He was obviously referring to heavenly abodes.—Luke 12:32; John 14:2.

But Christ also said: "I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; those also I must bring, and they will listen to my voice, and they will become one flock, one shepherd." John knew from his previously recorded book of Revelation that the "little flock" would consist of 144,000 members, while the "other sheep" would include a "great crowd" and other earthly subjects under Christ's Kingdom rule.—John 10:16; Revelation 7:4, 9, 10.

Now, how should that prospect of everlasting life, whether in heaven or on earth, affect us? It is so easy to say "everlasting life," but for a moment just think about what it really means and implies. To live eternally! To enjoy life in all its fullness with God's eternal blessing. To be free from worry about one's age or health. The question "How old are you?" will no longer be a matter of concern.

For those with a heavenly calling,

eternal life will be enjoyed as part of Christ's invisible government directing earth's affairs and applying the value of his sacrifice to the physical and spiritual benefit of obedient mankind. What a sublime privilege! Without a doubt John's Gospel should move us to appreciate Jehovah's undeserved kindness.—Revelation 20:4-6.

What Hope for the Dead?

Another question now arises regarding the gift of everlasting life. How will the dead receive that promised life? Jesus answered that in a convincing way by actually resurrecting different persons, including his close friend Lazarus, who had been dead for four days. John's unique account informs us that Jesus said on that occasion: "I am the resurrection and the life. He that exercises faith in me, even though he dies, will come to life." This theme is also developed in chapter five, where Jesus proclaims: "Do not marvel at this, because the hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear [the Son of God's] voice and come out."—John 11:1-44; 5:25-29.

How does that resurrection promise affect you? Just think of those who have been dearest to you but who are no longer alive. Would you not thrill to see them again and converse with them? Jehovah God has promised such a miracle. That is why Martha, sister of the dead Lazarus, was convinced of such a hope even before Jesus raised her brother to life again, for she said: "I know he will rise in the resurrection on the last day." Do we as Christians have such strong conviction?—John 11:24.

How Does Christ's Love Affect You?

If we had to reduce the Gospel of John to just one word, which would it be? Light? Life? Resurrection? No, it would be LOVE. Why? Because all these other

blessings spring from God's love. Jesus proclaimed and reflected that love. Thus he said: "Just as the Father has loved me and I have loved you, remain in my love. If you observe my commandments, you will remain in my love." What was Jesus' most outstanding commandment? "This is my commandment, that you love one another just as I have loved you. No one has love greater than this, that someone should surrender his soul in behalf of his friends."—John 15:9-14.

Did Christ himself fulfill those words? Did he manifest superlative love on behalf of his friends? John's detailed record answers with a positive Yes! The account through chapters 18 and 19 explains how Jesus was arrested and then submitted to a series of interrogations and physical torture at the hands of the Jewish and Roman authorities. Through all this abuse Jesus gave a witness regarding God's kingdom. He testified: "My kingdom is no part of this world . . . my kingdom is not from this source." His love for his Father and mankind was so strong that he did not seek an easy way out or try to dilute his message. "For this I have been born, . . . that I should bear witness to the truth." Baffled, Pilate could only reply: "What is truth?"—John 18:36-38.

Rejected by the clergy-led Jewish crowd, Jesus was condemned to die and

was impaled on a torture stake. He suffered the supreme humiliation for a Jew, to die accursed on a stake. (Deuteronomy 21:22, 23; Galatians 3:10-13) Yet the victory was his. His own belief in the resurrection was vindicated. On the third day he was raised from the dead. Mary Magdalene, a disciple, saw him and spoke to him. Can you imagine how excited she was when she brought to the disciples the news: "I have seen the Lord!"—John 20:18.

Then, how should Christ's sacrifice and resurrection affect us? Should they not fill us also with conviction, hope and enthusiasm? We know the truth about Christ, based on the historical record of the Gospels. It is a record of love in action. Will we be moved to express that same surpassing Christian love and offer the message of the Kingdom to others?—John 20:31; Matthew 24:14.

In a final review of John's account, what further lesson can we extract? The lesson of loyalty—Christ's loyalty to his Father's cause; his loyalty to his followers in spite of their abandoning him. (Mark 14:50; John 18:15-27) Originally, the 12 apostles also had demonstrated loyalty. Later when many disciples left Jesus, how impressive was Peter's answer to Jesus' poignant question: "You do not want to go also, do you?" Simon Peter answered him: "Lord, whom shall we go away to? You have sayings of everlasting life; and we have believed and come to know that you are the Holy One of God."—John 6:66-69.

Do you believe that Jesus is "the Holy One of God," "the Son of God"? If so, then you, too, can walk in the light that leads to life. You, too, can manifest love and loyalty to Jehovah God and his kingdom by Christ. You, too, can benefit by the soul-stirring Gospel of John.—John 20:31.

In Coming Issues

■ Whatever Happened to Appreciation?

■ Loyally Submitting to Theocratic Order

■ "Good Health to You!"

'Return to the Shepherd of Your Souls'

TWO heartwarming parables of Jesus describe God's intense concern for those who are still his people but who have strayed. Just imagine the anguish of the shepherd who leaves the flock of 99 and searches in the wilderness for the lost sheep "until he finds it." Or consider the earnestness of the woman who loses the drachma coin, perhaps part of a priceless set. She spares no effort to find it—lighting a lamp and sweeping her entire house "until she finds it." And what rejoicing upon the recovery!—Luke 15:4-10.

No doubt you realize that Jesus was talking about people who have a dedicated relationship with God, and yet for various reasons have drifted away or become "lost." Perhaps you may be one of these. The great effort indicated in the parables to retrieve something cherished and the rejoicing upon its recovery may be touching to you. They show the interest God, his Son, the holy angels and your spiritual brothers and sisters have in you. The parable that follows these two gives more details about the course of the one who is "lost."

The Parable of the Prodigal

With heartrending vividness Jesus shows in the parable of the prodigal son (1) why a person would drift away,



(2) what can happen while away, (3) what it takes to return, and (4) the welcoming attitude of God. The two sons in the parable may be compared to people who, like you, have come to know the Father, enjoyed the 'abundance of spiritual bread' in the household of faith and dedicated their lives to Jehovah.—Luke 15:11-32.

There are various reasons why some, like the younger son, leave the "home" of our heavenly Father. Often it is simply the increasing burden of the "anxieties of life." (Luke 21:34) Occasionally the influence of bad associates has hindered some from "keeping on obeying the truth." (Galatians 5:7, 8, 10, 12) Hard feelings over a doctrinal matter may have caused a number to go "off to the things behind." (John 6:60-66) Basically, some either consciously or subconsciously have considered the environment in Jehovah's spiritual household to be too confining. These ones, like the prodigal, no longer want to be under the watchful eye of the Father. They seek ease of movement in a "distant country."

Alone in a Distant Country

The prodigal—after he used up all his money—found anything but freedom and fun. He gravitated in conduct to the point of “living a debauched life.” When hard times struck, in desperation he “attached himself” to one of the citizens who “sent him” to herd swine—the lowest task for a Jew. He even hungered for the pigs’ food!—Luke 15:13-16.

John had been a congregation elder before his trip to a spiritually “distant country.” “Following the truth is definitely a safeguard, but when you are not active, you let your guard down,” explains John. “Even though you might not do anything really bad, little things begin to be tolerated. You say to yourself, ‘Well, I’m not attending any congregational meetings, so does it really make a difference what I do?’” Another Witness who was inactive for several years admitted: “I really did get involved in bad conduct. I found out very quickly that there is no limit to how low a person can sink by associating with persons of the world. The only way to enjoy their association is to keep your mouth shut about Jehovah. When you do, you are headed for a lot of trouble.”

Yet many who become inactive do not drift back into a “debauched life” as did the prodigal of Jesus’ parable. Still all become aware of the separation from a close relationship with God. One inactive couple “never picked up a Bible for 15 years,” and yet remained morally chaste. The wife explains: “Materially speaking, things were extremely good for us during those years. You can be led to believe that there is no need to come back to Jehovah. We built our entire lives around our jobs and ourselves. We tried to block off all memories of the truth to the point of moving to an area where no one knew us. But all this happiness was candy coated. Inside we were

torn apart. My husband was deeply depressed for years. We stopped praying, even before meals. I couldn’t sleep many nights worrying about the truth and feeling guilty.” The husband added: “We felt that we were on death row.”

To be estranged from Jehovah, to feel all alone spiritually, is a painful situation. One Christian woman who once was inactive said: “There is nothing like having Jehovah’s favor. When you feel bad and you can’t pray to him, or you have doubts that he is going to answer your prayers, it is a terrible condition.”

“He Came to His Senses”

The prodigal recognized his inner spiritual feelings and responded. Jesus said: “He came to his senses.” The original Greek words literally mean, “He came into himself.” He had been “beside himself,” in an unreal world. And now he became aware of his own true spiritual condition. He reflected on the peace and abundance he had enjoyed in his father’s home.—Luke 15:17.

Though the prodigal achieved this realization on his own, often such insight follows several spiritual discussions that rekindle dormant feelings. For example, Diane, while inactive, confided in a Witness with whom she had become acquainted: “I can’t come back to Jehovah. I don’t love him and I know that that must be the motive.” The Witness asked: “Did you love your husband at the beginning of your courtship?” “No, how could I? I didn’t know him,” replied Diane. “I then realized,” confessed Diane, “that loving Jehovah would come with getting to know him once again. I later got in touch with the congregation and asked for help. A couple, under the elders’ direction, studied the Bible with my husband and me for over a year, and we became active again.”

However, one of the biggest obstacles

to returning is an overwhelming feeling of guilt.

Have I Gone Too Far?

"Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy of being called your son," is how the prodigal felt after he "came to his senses." Others have felt the same way—unworthy of being called one of God's family.—Luke 15:17-19.

"You realize that you have *knowingly* turned your back on Jehovah. This guilt gave me a sick feeling," admitted Virginia. "When I started becoming active again, I had a real battle starting to pray again. I kept thinking, 'What does Jehovah want with me, since I turned my back on him?'" Others have felt that they committed the "unforgivable sin."

Did the father, who knew that his son's sins were great, view them as unforgivable? Was he cold and indifferent when the boy reappeared? Not at all! He had been looking for his son. "While he was yet a long way off, his father caught sight of him," according to Jesus. (Luke 15:20) Neighbors may only have seen the rags, the dirt, the bare feet, but the father saw "him." *He knew what a long way the son had come.* It was obvious he had left his "debauched life" and was truly repentant.—Proverbs 28:13.

The father ran to embrace his son. The most the son had hoped for was to become a 'hired man,' someone really not a member of the household and in some respects worse off than a slave. Never could he have imagined his father's response: "Quick! Bring out a robe, the *best one*, and clothe him with it, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the *fattened* young bull, slaughter it and let us eat and enjoy ourselves." How wonderfully Jesus illustrated the wholehearted response of the father!—Luke 15:22, 23.

The father knew that the prodigal had already paid a dear price—the emotional scars of "living a debauched life" and losing all his money, the agony of being friendless and without food and shelter during a famine, the shame of eating with pigs, and finally, the long journey home. So, too, Jehovah realizes that one truly suffers while "lost" and that it is not easy to return. Yet our compassionate heavenly Father, who is "abundant in loving-kindness," "will not for all time keep finding fault nor according to our errors bring upon us what we deserve" if we are genuinely repentant and "set matters straight" with him. Some who have committed even gross sins while separated from the Christian congregation, but who return in true repentance, confessing their sins before the elders, may expect loving, considerate treatment leading on to full recovery.—Psalm 103:8-10; 130:3; Isaiah 1:18, 19.

True, the Bible speaks of some unfaithful Christians whose sins are not forgiven. However, Paul shows that these are "in opposition" to the Truth and contemptuously trample on the ransom sacrifice by esteeming it as of ordinary value. (Hebrews 10:26-31) But have you ever taken such an extreme step? Your sincere consideration of this material, rather than having contempt for it, indicates that you still have some love for spiritual things. The fact that you feel guilty and disturbed at heart shows that you have not gone too far. Be assured that Jehovah will answer your prayerful request just as he answered that of David, who pleaded: "Forgive my error, for it is considerable."—Psalm 25:11.

'Do Not Be Afraid. I Will Really Help'

Two elders made a call on an inactive couple who in the past had been exceptionally zealous Witnesses. No soon-

er had the conversation begun than the inactive husband defensively remarked that he knew he should be out in the field service teaching others. "Right now I don't think you should," was the surprising reply of Russell, one of the elders. "If you had a member of your family sick, would you tell him to go out and mow the lawn? Well, we're not going to tell you to 'mow the lawn' either. We want you to get well. What can we do to help?" Loving assistance, including warm hospitality by the elders, helped the couple get well spiritually, and the husband is even serving as an elder once again.—Compare James 5:14, 15.

Some repentant ones hesitate to reassociate because they feel unable to take on the full responsibilities of a Witness all at one time. However, Jehovah is reasonable. A gradual step-by-step recovery is usually most practical. Paul said that some who in his day had become spiritually "dull" needed someone to teach them again the elementary things of the Truth. (Hebrews 5:11, 12) This spiritual food builds strength and makes other steps possible. In a number of interviews with Witnesses who once became inactive but later recovered, the majority said they had needed regular assistance. Yet those in the congregation are more than willing to render such assistance. They feel as does Jehovah, who told his chosen people: "Do not be afraid, for I am with you. Do not gaze about, for I am your God. I will fortify you. *I will really help you.*"—Isaiah 41:10.

Yes, God says: "I will really help you." You may have to break off from some bad associates. You may have to brave opposition from relatives who do not approve of your attending Christian meetings. There may be some matters that you will have to confess to the elders. (Psalm 32:3-5) But never forget that Jehovah is there to help. One Witness who

recovered said: "Jehovah just allowed me to see one step at a time and he greatly helped me." Another one added: "The minute I stepped into the Kingdom Hall all my old friends gave me hugs and kisses. Their happiness just overwhelmed me. I thought 'Why was I afraid?' " Though some might have an attitude similar to that of the prodigal's older brother, the vast majority will rejoice to see you return.—Luke 15:25-32.

Why not taste for yourself? One Christian woman who recovered after staying away for some time declared: "There is no other place to find inner peace. Everything else just fell into place once I became spiritually active again. This world offers nothing of value. You have such a good feeling knowing you are pleasing to Jehovah and have his protection. You can sleep at night. Your life now is satisfying and you can develop a real hope for life in the New Order."

If you are a sheep that has strayed, why not invite the Witness who brought you this magazine to help you to get in touch with the elders in the local congregation. Experience the joy and contentment that result from taking the course described by Peter: "For you were like sheep, going astray; but now you have returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls."—1 Peter 2:25.

A Loyal "Soldier of Christ Jesus"

Johan Henrik Enerothe was born June 9, 1893. He symbolized his dedication to Jehovah God by water baptism on June 9, 1918. Two years later he entered full-time Kingdom service at the Watch Tower Society's branch in Sweden. Later he served there for 50 years as branch overseer, as well as taking care of responsibilities from time to time in other northern European countries. Beloved by many for his loyal support of theocratic organization, Johan Enerothe finished his earthly course on February 7, 1982.

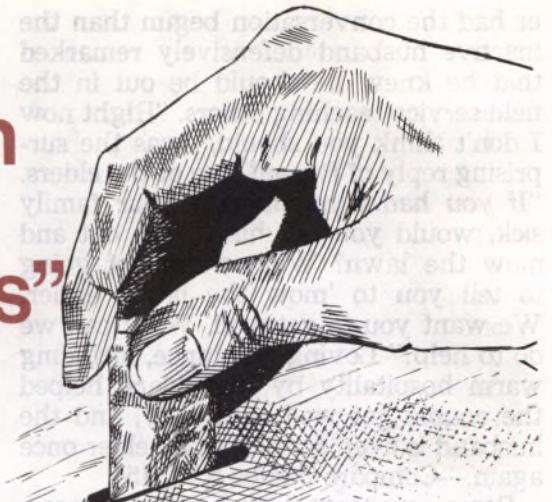
"Honor Jehovah with Your Valuable Things"

HONOR Jehovah with your valuable things and with the firstfruits of all your produce. Then your stores of supply will be filled with plenty; and with new wine your own press vats will overflow." (Proverbs 3:9, 10) Locked within those inspired words of wisdom written by King Solomon is the key to anyone's receiving Jehovah's blessings in abundance. Jehovah is pleased for us to 'honor him with our valuable things,' knowing the pleasure and the subsequent benefits that this brings to us humans.

What are our "valuable things"? Our life, our time, our natural talents and skills, as well as any material possessions that we may have. What is meant by 'the firstfruits of all our produce'? It means that we must give of our best to Jehovah in all that we have. Jehovah is then pleased to accept these "firstfruits" of our "valuable things" as a gift from our hands.

Good Examples to Follow

Good examples of such openhearted giving are to be found in God's Word, especially in connection with the various construction programs undertaken



to promote true worship among God's typical people, Israel.

For example, when the time came for Jehovah to provide the tabernacle in the wilderness as a place of worship for the Israelites, the sons of Israel "came, everyone whose heart impelled him, and they brought, everyone whose spirit incited him, Jehovah's contribution for the work of the tent of meeting and for all its service and for the holy garments. And they kept coming, the men along with the women, every willing-hearted one... Every man and woman whose hearts incited them to bring something for all the work that Jehovah had commanded to make by means of Moses did so; the sons of Israel brought a voluntary offering to Jehovah."—Exodus 35:21, 22, 29.

It is true that Jehovah had specified the various kinds of materials to be used in the construction of the tabernacle, but the Israelites were not in any way goaded on to contribute. No, they did so willingly, voluntarily and most liberally in response to what Jehovah had told Moses previously: "Let every *willing-hearted* one bring it as Jehovah's contribution."—Exodus 35:5; 36:4-7.

When the tabernacle had served its purpose and the temple was about to be constructed, King David made his personal contribution toward the temple building. After that he asked the people: "Who is there volunteering to fill his hand today with a gift for Jehovah?" What was the response? "The people gave way to rejoicing over their making *voluntary offerings*, for it was with a complete heart that they made *voluntary offerings* to Jehovah; and even David the king himself rejoiced with great joy."—1 Chronicles 29:5, 9.

On that occasion David offered a heartfelt prayer of thanksgiving to Jehovah for the spirit of willingness shown by all the people. Among other things, he said: "And yet, who am I and who are my people, that we should retain power to make voluntary offerings like this? For everything is from you, and out of your own hand we have given to you." (Verse 14) This again underscores the fact that when we offer any gift to Jehovah, we are merely returning what he, out of the goodness of his heart, has already given to us. We are just custodians of what is his.

Following King David's death, his son Solomon used these many "voluntary offerings" as Jehovah had directed in building a glorious temple. And as long as he remained faithful in his worship of God, he and his people dwelt in peace and security. We read: "Judah and Israel continued to dwell in security, . . . from Dan to Beer-sheba, all the days of Solomon." (1 Kings 4:25) Stores were filled, wine vats overflowed—as long as Israel 'honored Jehovah with their valuable things.'

Doing It in Our Day

We are many centuries removed from those days, but it is still the course of wisdom for true worshipers to 'honor Jehovah with their valuable things.' When

we contribute our time, efforts and material things, really our all, to advance the Kingdom interests, we are merely returning to Jehovah what rightfully belongs to him. As Paul asks: "What do you have that you did not receive?" —1 Corinthians 4:7.

However, here is something always to remember: The size of any contribution to the Kingdom work does not necessarily give a true picture of the giver's generosity. Do you recall that Jesus was once watching different ones depositing money in the temple's treasury chest? The rich were pouring in many coins. But Jesus was so impressed by the whole-hearted generosity of a needy woman who dropped in only two coins of little value that he said: "I tell you this, . . . this poor widow has given more than any of the others; for those others who have given had more than enough, but she, with less than enough, has given all that she had to live on."—Mark 12:43, 44, *The New English Bible*.

That same thought was emphasized by the apostle Paul in writing to the congregation in Corinth about contributions to aid poor fellow Christians. He said: "If the readiness is there first, it is especially acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what a person does not have."—2 Corinthians 8:12.

Worldwide Expansion—How Possible

Today Jehovah's Witnesses are thrilled to observe the worldwide progress being made in the preaching of "this good news of the kingdom." (Matthew 24:14) Many interesting reports have been printed recently in the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines describing the expansive building programs in many lands. This expansion is necessary because thousands of persons are coming into Jehovah's organization. In some cases additional land has been purchased so that

new missionary homes, branch offices, Bethel homes and printing plants can be constructed. In other cases, existing branch properties have been enlarged. Of the 106 branches worldwide, the following are still involved in construction projects: Australia, Bolivia, Britain, Denmark, France, Germany, Ghana, India, Italy, Japan, Korea, Liberia, Martinique, Kenya, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Peru, South Africa, Spain, Tahiti, United States, Zaire and Zambia.

As in the days of ancient Israel, so today these theocratic projects have been made possible by the voluntary contributions of those who have 'honored Jehovah with their valuable things.' We want to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to everyone whose 'heart impelled him' in such a way.

And we are confident that in the future Jehovah's spirit will continue to stir up the hearts of his people to support the ever-expanding need of the Kingdom work. If you feel moved to give such support, send your contribution to the local branch office of the Watch Tower Society in your country. Should you live in the United States, please send any contributions to the Office of the Secretary and Treasurer, 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, New York 11201. Every donation will receive an acknowledgment.

Jehovah's Promises Fulfilled

Jehovah promised: "Then your stores of supply will be filled with plenty; and with new wine your own press vats will overflow." Has our loving God fulfilled his promise in our day? From a spiritual standpoint—Yes, he certainly has fulfilled his promise! The "floodgates of the heavens" have been opened, and Jehovah has 'emptied out upon us a blessing until there is no more want.'—Proverbs 3:10; Malachi 3:10.

Consider, for example, the constant supply of "food at the proper time" provided by the "faithful steward." (Matthew 24:45-47; Luke 12:42-44) There is also the loving spiritual oversight through the elders in the congregations, circuits and districts. Further, we enjoy so much the upbuilding circuit assemblies and district conventions. All these blessings testify to there being "no more want." They have the same effect as "new wine" on Jehovah's worshipers—they 'make the heart rejoice.'—Psalm 104:15.

Look also at the fulfillment of this promised blessing from another viewpoint. Jehovah has certainly provided us with all the up-to-date equipment we need to speed up the distribution of the "good news" by means of the printed page, and to present it now in such a way that it will appeal to both the eye and the ear.

However, the wisdom of Solomon's words about 'honoring Jehovah with our valuable things' can find its outworking in the personal lives of the devoted servants of God. How? By giving of themselves in his "sacred service." (Romans 12:1) Ask any of Jehovah's Witnesses who have spent many years in the ministry, especially the full-time ministry, and what will you hear? That they have personally experienced in their daily life the fulfillment of the psalmist's heartfelt words: "A young man I used to be, I have also grown old, and yet I have not seen anyone righteous left entirely, nor his offspring looking for bread."—Psalm 37:25.

Have you found the key to unlock the door of opportunity to honor Jehovah? Are you using it? If you are, then surely you are experiencing the truthfulness of Solomon's further words of wisdom: "The blessing of Jehovah—that is what makes rich, and he adds no pain with it."—Proverbs 10:22.

Questions from Readers

■ Why does the rendering of Proverbs 11:16 in the *New World Translation* differ from some other translations, and how is this verse to be understood?

According to the *New World Translation*, Proverbs 11:16 reads: "A woman of charm is the one that takes hold of glory; but the tyrants, for their part, take hold of riches."

This is a careful rendering of the verse as preserved in the Hebrew Masoretic text, and it is similarly translated in many other modern versions.—*Revised Standard Version, The Jerusalem Bible, Moffatt, Darby*.

Yet, because of having difficulty understanding this verse, some Bible translators have attempted to make it plainer. They have done so after the pattern of the *Septuagint Version*, an early translation from Hebrew into Greek. In the following quotation from that version we italicize the portion that is not rendered from the Hebrew text:

"A gracious wife brings glory to her husband: but a woman hating righteousness is a theme of dishonour. The slothful come to want: but the diligent [footnote, "manly"] support themselves with wealth."—Proverbs 11:16, Bagster's *Septuagint Version*.

Today's English Version and the Catholic *New American Bible* are two recent versions in the English language that expand the verse in this way. The German-language *Göttinger Bibelwerk* does also, but says: "The Greek translation that we have followed has added two lines and

thereby made two distinct and separate proverbs, both of which convey a clear thought; whether they are in agreement with the original text, however, is still questionable."—Volume 16, page 51.

There is, though, no need to follow a "questionable" rendering. The sense of this verse can be understood from the Hebrew text, such as the *Biblia Hebraica* by Rudolf Kittel upon which the *New World Translation* is based. The verse draws a contrast between the enduring glory that a godly woman may obtain and the transitory riches that a tyrant acquires.

The Bible shows that practical wisdom, thinking ability and proper use of the tongue contribute to a person's value and charm. (Proverbs 2:21, 22; 4:7-9; 22:11; Psalm 45:1, 2) Certainly that can be true of a woman, as we can see from Abigail, the wife of foolish Nabal. Though she was "good in discretion and beautiful in form," David particularly praised Abigail for her "sensibleness."—1 Samuel 25:3, 33.

Any godly woman who acquires true charm through wisdom, sensibleness and wise use of her tongue will receive "glory." She will achieve "glory" in the eyes of her husband, if married, and be well spoken of by others. This reflects well on and brings "glory" to the entire family. Nor need hers be a fleeting

glory. Proverbs 22:1 says: "A name is to be chosen rather than abundant riches; favor is better than even silver and gold." The good name of a true worshiper has permanent value in the eyes of our God and Life-Giver.—See Acts 9:36-39.

Contrast that with a tyrant, as the proverb does. The Scriptures categorize tyrants with 'wicked men' and men who are 'adversaries' of those worshiping Jehovah God. (Job 6:23; 27:13) Tyrants "have not set God in front of them." (Psalm 54:3) Such a man, by suppressing and taking advantage of the innocent, may "pile up silver like dust itself." Yet at any time he may lie down and not arise. Or any day that he opens his eyes may be his last. Then all his wealth and accomplishment amount to nothing. —Job 27:16, 19; compare Luke 12:16-21.

Though a tyrant may have taken hold of riches and trust in these, his confidence is misplaced. Later in the same chapter of Proverbs we read: "The one trusting in his riches—he himself will fall."—Proverbs 11:28.

Hence, Proverbs 11:16 should bring home to us an important lesson. The tyrant's riches, which may seem to be a mark of success in this world, have no lasting value with God. It is possible, though, to win His approval. The "glory" gained by those who fear God—well illustrated by Christian women—can bring endless blessing.—1 Peter 3:1-6.

"I love how they face reality"

That is what a reader from Peru, South America, wrote about the publishers of the *Watchtower* magazine. She expressed appreciation for the straightforward way *The Watchtower* discusses family problems, explaining:

"It is so real. Of course, I feel all the things (some positive, others negative) described here. It is just that it was hard for me to believe that I could read them in *The Watchtower*. I was mistaken. I thought Jehovah's Witnesses would never write that way. But I love how they face reality, using the right words. It is all true! . . . While I was reading *The Watchtower* I thought to myself, 'Well, finally you have found someone who is honest enough to tell you how things are, not avoiding the subject.'"

